Systematic Mental Illness and Oppression in Ultra-Rich Communities

This is Edward Harshman, who has an ex-wife from an ultra-rich community, Nantucket, Massachusetts. There, as in southwest Florida and other communities of the ultra-rich, there are social-political doctrines and tendencies that feel oppressive to the lower classes and are destructive in the long run. Here, I will try to explain these doctrines and tendencies, how they come to exist, their consequences, and how to react to them constructively.

[The rabbit-wolf continuum]

Most or all can be explained by the rabbit-wolf continuum, r/K theory, from evolutionary biology.

My source for the analysis of this material itself is anonymousconservative.com

In equation form, defining

r = reproductive capacity: the rate of population increase per unit time, including births, deaths, and net immigration, assuming infinite resources in the habitat

K = carrying capacity, from the German word *Kapazitätsgrenze* = maximum population that the resources in the habitat can support

N = population size

t = time

the rate of change of population per unit time is

$dN/dt = rN(1-(N/K))$

In words, the rate of change in population is the reproductive capacity multiplied by the population and reduced by a factor that represents how close the total population is to its maximum possible population relative to available resources. Note that if N is greater than K, then dN/dt is negative and the population shrinks at an orderly rate.

Some animals have a high reproductive rate and high random mortality. For them, survival of the species requires a reproductive rate high enough to compensate for the high probability of death of any one of them. Rabbits are the classic example, though essentially all cold-blooded animals also fit that model. The reproductive rate is high, and parents offer little or no resources to their offspring. Parents needn't bother with such resources, for the latter will survive or suffer random mortality regardless of what care the parents do or don't provide.

Copyright 2023 Edward J. Harshman

Other animals have a low reproductive rate and low random mortality. For them, starvation is the major worry and substantial effort is required to obtain scarce resources. But if they are obtained, then random mortality is not a concern. Survival of the species requires not a high reproductive rate, but a high rate of survival not only to parenthood but also sufficient to raise offspring until they too are independent and can themselves become parents. Wolves are the classic example. The reproductive rate is low, with one gestation per year; and parents offer substantial care to their offspring. The major care that parents provide is because their offspring must compete against others of their species; merely existing will not suffice.

Tendencies of a species, or a localized subset of a species, to be at one or another place in the r-K continuum are not always constant with time. Famine or other major stress will demand careful husbanding of resources and erase the reproductive urge, pushing the population toward K (wolf-like) behavior. Conversely, a major but short-lasting catastrophe, such as war damage or earthquake, that greatly reduces population and not resources will effect a sharp increase of resources per person (though not resources totally) and push the population toward r (rabbit-like) behavior.

The correlations between high reproductive rate and high random mortality and that between low reproductive rate and low random mortality are not coincidences. The former pair of characteristics is associated with high activity in the anterior cingulate gyrus (part of the brain), and the latter pair is associated with high activity in the amygdala (another part).

Sequelae to the original r/K theory have, if detailed analysis is needed, superseded it. Age-specific mortality is omitted in the original theory, for example. Here, I use the original theory, which is adequate for an explanation of communities that include the ultra-rich and others.

[We-they and the rationale for bullying]

In ultra-rich communities, there are of necessity people who are not ultra-rich, to maintain infrastructure and provide food preparation, domestic servitude, and building and landscape maintenance. The ultra-rich do not manage their own home repairs and food transport and preparation personally; they delegate such activity. A community dominated by the ultra-rich must also include those who are not rich, for the formers' lifestyle support, in subordinate roles.

Someone who is extremely rich is not bothered by scarcity including blissfully lacking the capacity to admit emotionally (i.e. empathy) to its existence and therefore learns to think and act as if everyone is also extremely rich, obviously denying reality. Such people, of course, can afford to do so. They can, and often do, adopt the lazy habit of imputing their beliefs to everyone else, instead of learning how other people really do think and feel. They make guesses, always unverified and often wrong, about the mindsets of us hoi polloi.

Copyright 2023 Edward J. Harshman

Worse, the extremely rich tend to fraternize with each other, forming an in-group of themselves and creating by inference an out-group of the rest of us. To validate the distinction, they adopt bullying and catty behavior that for most of us ends in or before high school. Not stopped by employers or other authorities, they carry over that behavior into adulthood—and into local government if they get a chance, often by using what I call legal friction.

Legal friction I define as the preventable legal or bureaucratic processes that add to the cost of doing something (building a house, starting a business, etc.) and is often justified as providing jobs (per the debunked Keynesian model of stimulating the economy) or as an entry barrier (instead of absolute-criterion-based, i.e. not based on percentile scored, entrance or licensure exams or on the New York City taxi medallion procedure of buying a license from someone who is willing to sell one).

It is obviously used by the ultra-rich as barriers to us the peasantry, for they unlike us can afford big legal expense. The threat of imposing such expense can often effect victories for the ultra-rich against us even without the need for their actually incurring such expense.

Opposing such legal friction is useless through attorney help. If a judge has any personal discretion in how to rule in any particular situation, then perfect representation by an attorney is a theoretical impossibility. See my published analysis at http://www.jpands.org/vol17no2/harshman.pdf in which I explain that lawyers must invest in credibility for future clients, by truckling to judges, by sacrificing the best interests of their current clients.

Not surprisingly, a feeling of oppression results. Its cause is accurate; the oppression is real. Only a legislative overhaul of the legal system, not only changing the day-to-day laws and regulations that affect our lives but also severely restricting the personal leeway that judges have (and often abuse) to allow dissident attorneys to challenge them safely, can cure this social disease.

Do not expect any help from organized mental health. Its intent is essentially proved to be surrender to peer pressure by the use of inability to get along in groups as a criterion for autism in its authoritative guide to mental-health diagnosis, the DSM-V (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Fifth Edition), and not adding a caution that a group itself may be dysfunctional and that not getting along with it is not evidence of any pathology.

Mental illness and destructive tendencies among the ultra-rich can be traced to a malfunction of the r/K consequences, which I exemplify later with the Calhoun mice experiments. They have a mindset of abundance and high random mortality—and there is no high random mortality. Contradictions inevitably result, and while such contradictions remain subconscious there obviously are psychological consequences. To resolve those contradictions, they sometimes adopt the cruel habit of classifying the lower classes as if they are dead, implicitly denying us the peasantry the right to

Copyright 2023 Edward J. Harshman

express opinions or have our needs fairly considered when government decisions are being debated.

[Limited-options paradox]

Related to the we-they polarization is what I call the paradox of limited options. When choosing a device for purchase, perhaps for the kitchen or perhaps for home entertainment, it's rational to prefer more options of how to use it, more versatility, all else being equal. Buy an ordinary gas stove at an appliance store, and you can buy a conversion kit so that you can set it to use propane or compressed natural gas. That's an example of versatility. Buy an ordinary car, and you can bring it for servicing to any of several independent mechanics; and you think nothing of this flexibility. But the very rich prefer devices that are restricted. A top-of-the-line gas stove is either propane or natural gas and cannot be converted. A fancy car requires dealership servicing. The very rich take pride in having devices that require special attention, as part of the benefit of owning them. We the peasantry consider such restrictions absurd and cannot afford them. But the mystique of owning such devices is part of the we-they dichotomy.

More important than chattel possessions in ultra-rich communities are the communities themselves: real estate. Blue-collar neighborhoods abound in pickup trucks, utility vehicles, storage sheds, and unkempt but safe lawns enclosed by fences. With a need for freight vehicles on their jobs, their owners use them without guilt or apology. Lawn maintenance costs money, and as long as the lawns are safe they need little cosmetic attention. Versatility is obvious: take a job that requires a utility truck, and you start driving a utility truck. Your brother gets evicted and moves in with you, and you rent a storage shed for his furniture and put it in your front yard until he can move out again. No problem. Everyone understands. You cut a corner too tightly and dent a rear fender on a street light, and you open the trunk and bang away with a hammer until it is straightened out again. Conversely, the ultra-rich enact formal requirements for neat lawns, restrict or totally ban fences, refuse to permit vehicles that are obviously intended for income-earning activity, refuse to allow at-home vehicle maintenance at all, and eschew storage devices. They can afford so-called pretty neighborhoods, and they delight in suppressing versatility and demanding that everyone else live as they choose to live.

With the mandated conformity comes the process of enacting it formally and maintaining it through HOA homeowners association complaints or other legal processes. As people come together for these activities, they peer-bond, developing solidarity with each other and strengthening the sense that they are different from everyone else, from us the peasantry. This peer-bonding reinforces the underlying belief that the peasantry consists of people who can be ignored, disparaged, or considered dead.

With the limited-options doctrine comes the concept of how those limited-options decisions are arrived at. "No, you deserve better," say or imply the real-estate agents and the sales staff at luxury-car dealers, the exclusive kitchen appliance shops, the top-

Copyright 2023 Edward J. Harshman

of-the-line dressmakers. The purchase experience itself is one of personal attention and of being gently guided toward top quality (for those who don't care about versatility) and of being separate from and above the masses. If you retain the option of changing something's use or function after the purchase, perhaps adding a trailer hitch to your new car or putting a fence around your lawn, the sales person will be disconcerted and unable to respond helpfully. Acquiring something, to the ultra-rich, is not the only desirable outcome of its being purchased. The purchase experience, which is an affirmation of being better than the rest of us and not having to care about possibilities and flexibility, is important to them too.

[the delegation-versatility continuum]

This insistence on luxury appearance, with prohibitions on economy living in high-status communities, is not purely an entry barrier to entering the ultra-rich class. It has a further psychological component: there is a continuum between delegation and versatility.

At the ultra-rich end of the continuum, there is delegation. The billionaire does not attend to the details of maintaining a jet airplane, instead merely telling the maintenance crew to maintain it and the pilot where to go. The owner of a luxury car brings it to the dealer for service and maintenance, not worrying about what grade of engine oil to use or the correct air pressure in the tires. A moderately expensive mobile telephone can be used for a year or two and, if it deteriorates, can be easily replaced.

At the scarce-resource end, there is versatility. Car and truck owners probably have to hire mechanics to do repairs and maintenance for their vehicles, but they know what needs to be done in some detail and they get to choose their favorite repair shops. A mobile telephone can be repaired at moderate expense while a spare phone is borrowed for a week or two.

Of course the scarce-resource mindset is less expensive than the ultra-rich mindset. But there is more to the difference than money.

Acquire the ultra-rich mindset, and you seek the luxury cars, the one-of-a-kind dresses, the trendy stove for the kitchen, or the fancy computer and other electronics. When you do, you are implicitly denied the option of making further decisions about them. There is only one way to have your car maintained. The stove is set at propane or natural gas, irreversibly. Only an expert can manage your electronics. We hoi polloi get angry or frightened when the options are removed from us. But the ultra-rich are quietly delighted. They are relieved of the options of making decisions about where to have the car maintained, what to do with the stove if they move, what to do with a computer operating system upgrade. Because the lack of such options is not explicitly announced, they don't notice it. And, not having to worry about such details, they can and do blissfully delegate such decisions.

Copyright 2023 Edward J. Harshman

The experience of purchasing a designer dress at a boutique differs from that of purchasing an ordinary dress at a department store. Sales staff usher the customer through the selection process and apply an aura of selectivity and exclusivity, meanwhile quietly suppressing the thought processes that lead to inquiries about fabric durability, capacity to resist stains, tolerance to alterations as the customer's weight changes, and so on. Similarly, a luxury-car dealer has staff that will gently encourage the purchase of a high-price car at a high price, but be repelled by inquiries about trailer hitches and how easy it is to reach and replace spark plugs. There is a quiet push toward blissful ignorance of such concepts. The problems that they pertain to are meant to be delegated, not directly faced.

Furthermore, the process of delegating decisions by the ultra-rich is in most settings not reached by an outright order to store sales staff or to underlings. If it were, then it would demonstrate autonomy and versatility by the very existence of such an order, which the ultra-rich tend to avoid. It is instead reached implicitly, as if it begins by already existing, thereby being hidden from conscious awareness.

The productive ultra-rich have a very plausible reason for such delegation. They are busy with their income-earning activities and really don't want to bother with various trivia. But the idle ultra-rich delegate all and, like infants, are burdened with no responsibilities at all. Having contrived to be forced to delegate life decisions to homeowner associations and aftermarket product support and schools and nannies, they have no cares and lead lives with no pushback from the natural stresses of survival. Mental illness results.

The Calhoun mice experiment, which was repeated a few times with essentially identical results, demonstrates mental illness in mice when they are placed in a setting with abundant resources and no random mortality. (Use your favorite search engine to look up details.) At first, population of the mice colony increases as the r reproductive capacity is essentially unrestrained by the essentially infinite K carrying capacity. But later, behavior drifts away from the orderly habits of mating and responsible parenthood and the colony members adopt habits of bullying or social isolation. Mating and reproduction decline sharply, and eventually the colonies die out because there are no births.

This reproduced (no pun intended) experiment gives new meaning to the insult, "Are you a man or a mouse?" And many of today's villainous women have behavior that can be described as catty. Go figure. But seriously, the effects of high r and high perceived K are leading toward a collapse of the ultra-rich enclaves just like those of similarly treated mice.

[Frailty paradox]

With abundance and lack of decision making burdens comes the ability to assume stewardship of delicate assets or those that require special handling to avoid being destroyed. Fine china is to some extent valued not although but because it breaks

Copyright 2023 Edward J. Harshman

easily. Small purebred dogs are valued not although but because their health is delicate and they are easily injured. Children with substantial physical impairments, subnormal general intelligence, or focal deficits in cognition are given privileged status in their families, to the detriment of their normal siblings. Such children are collectively classified as “special needs” even though that term not only labels them as intrinsically privileged because of their impairments, but also stereotypes them as being similar to each other even though a boy with no left wrist or hand is not the same as a girl who is paraplegic or a boy with below-normal general intelligence. Pretending that such people resemble each other is an insult to them and demonstrates bigoted thinking.

[The very rich as rabbits]

Rabbits, as I use the term here, are people with a mindset of abundance and high random mortality. Wolves, as I use the term here, are people with a mindset of scarcity and little random mortality. Let’s look at the implications of these mindsets.

Abundance, or rabbits’ belief in it, leads to:

Fleeing from threats to resources, as rabbits run from clover when challenged because there is in theory an infinite amount of resources so seeking another source is easier than fighting

Tolerance of crimes, including robbery: what is stolen by force is not important because the victim can easily do without it, being rich

Stretching rules to suit those in power, for those hurt by such rule-stretching are presumed rich enough to afford the consequences easily and the process of openly enjoying this rule-stretching while denying it to the rest of us is a bonding process for them

Legal friction, including malicious interference with ordinary real-estate planning and use, because everyone is rich and can afford legal expense, allowing government-assisted delays to be used by bullies in power without recourse, another form of peer-bonding

High emphasis on sexual activity and surrendering to lust, with emphasis on reacting to consequences of hazardous activities not anticipating and avoiding them in the first place

Runaway spending especially with borrowed money, such as frivolous college degrees paid for by education loans with intent to repudiate them, superfluous jewelry and dresses, luxury cars, addictive drugs, gambling, and disparagement of landlords and other creditors

High random mortality, or rabbits’ belief in it, leads to:

Copyright 2023 Edward J. Harshman

Disproportionate emphasis on exaggerated likelihood of early death: nuclear attack, HIV-AIDS and other epidemic declarations, and climate change, with major resistance to rescinding restrictions when a temporary or discredited danger disappears

Denial of gun rights, to keep the threat of apparent random mortality credible

Superficial reasoning, for thorough reasoning and careful planning for a future that won't occur are wastes of energy. "Is it true that the sky is not green?" "No." No, the sky is not green, answering the implied question not the real one (sloppy!)

Pseudomortality: emotionally pretending that various categories of people do not exist, most notably the peasantry and those who dissent from the prevailing ideology.

Trivial direct care for children, not including care delegated to schools and nannies, including failure to offer a good setting for mental health to develop properly, contributing to ADHD (by imposing cognitive dissonance), autism (by imposing imputed beliefs and feelings), and dysfunctional attitudes about gender identity and sexual behavior (by accepting or even encouraging runaway allegiance to peer pressure because of no credible alternative for children)

Supporting porn, prostitution, deviant sexual beliefs and behaviors, and romance novels, meanwhile suppressing truly valuable assistance for the confused, leaving the romantically inept unable to find healthy remedies for their lack of dating and mating skills

Suppression of fair debate, and refusal to discuss religion, politics, and economics, thereby allowing misguided voters to remain smugly unchallenged and ruin the economy and our society and not caring about life-or-death government decisions

Tolerance of widespread mental illness, including falsely labeling the nonconforming as having it, as a welcome mechanism for pseudomortality and a rationale to denounce the opinion of the distraught or the dissenters as irrelevant and unimportant due to their having a psychiatric diagnosis

Scarcity, or wolves' belief in it, by contrast leads to:

Defense against threats to personal resources

Intolerance of crimes, for only a victim can assess the distress of rape or robbery and the value of bodily autonomy or of wealth of a victim cannot be presumed

Strict adherence to rules, with the rules themselves arranged to permit all behavior that does not directly interfere with the unwilling

Insistence on straightforward legal processes, for legal help is expensive and resources are scarce

Copyright 2023 Edward J. Harshman

Acceptance of a sexual urge, but making sure that it is channeled away from self-destruction, as by carefully screening potential spouses or even arranging marriages

Low random mortality, or wolves' belief in it, leads to:

Careful spending and avoidance of unnecessary debt, eschewing addictive drugs as evasion of personal responsibility

Rational precautions to prevent early death, as during health emergencies, but no obsession and no further attention to threats, therefore easy lifting of restrictions when they are no longer needed

Detailed and multi-step reasoning, for with scarce resources it's important to think and plan carefully. "Is it true that the sky is not green?" "Yes." The sky is blue, therefore yes it is true that the sky is not green

Awareness that people exist with different viewpoints from one's own, that someone else's viewpoint may be not only different but also unknown, and refusal to deny that they or their viewpoints exist

Careful direct, non-delegated, care of children, with home schooling or close supervision of school curricula and nannies, ensuring a setting in which a child's mental health can flourish

Tolerance of dissent, and even welcoming it if it is peaceable; for with dissent and friendly conflict there is intellectual growth and an increased ability to solve society's problems and without it there is complacency and intellectual rot, which in turn ruins society and allows totalitarian government to occur (as happened with Adolf Hitler)

Denouncing porn, prostitution, etc. and making sure that those who are incompetent in the dating market can get credible instruction instead of leaving them untreated and despairing

Challenge to mental illness by requiring rational and straightforward habits with money, recognizing oppression and that anger about it is not evidence of mental illness, and awareness that if people adopt nontraditional attitudes and habits and then become unhappy that those attitudes and habits may be the problem

Our remedy:

Wear political buttons that have images of a wolf, or of a rabbit with the circle-and-slash denoting "not."

When posting arguments on social media, append a statement, "A response comprising a personal attack including reference to race, gender, or sexual orientation is not

Copyright 2023 Edward J. Harshman

credible, for you can refute my argument with ordinary logic if it is faulty" and another statement, "Majority opinion as invariably the right one was debunked half a millennium ago when Galileo told the Pope that the earth goes around the sun." Incidentally, I used that attack on the majority-is-right doctrine at a Maine legislative hearing on a bill regarding Lyme disease treatment. It passed.

Insist on fair debate when challenged with a viewpoint different from one's own, defying the so-called good manners that censor political discussions, aware that it's more important to have rational fellow voters than to have a fake veneer of pleasantness while people with whom you converse are quietly conspiring to ruin you.

Spread the word about this presentation, please. I have no advertising budget, do not own a newspaper or radio station, and have no following on social media. I need your help.

Copyright 2023 Edward J. Harshman