

Modern Apocalypse. The Human Condition

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Theme: [History](#)

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The following text is a selection from Jim Miles book entitled *Modern Apocalypse*

[The entire text of Jim Miles book is available in E-book pdf format](#)

The Human Condition

Within the universe I am completely insignificant. Insignificance opens up the awe, wonder, and on our temporal scale, the powers to understand and to comprehend the marvels of our natural existence. Marvels include creativity both artistic and technological, and the disgust and fear of our primitive uglier nature. Insignificance is both inspirational beauty and gut-wrenching insanity, for how can we as a natural species so proud and arrogant of our supposed superior morality, intellectual capacity, and emotional sensitivity be so primitively unaware and destructive so as to destroy not only ourselves but our one tiny blue watery planet? My lifetime will pass and I can choose to a degree the manner in which it passes: to live life at its best and to reach for the best in others; or to fall back into hedonistic pleasure; or choose a complacency bathed in entertainments and mediocre artificial status quo.

A point is reached in life where one's mortality is recognized. Its first glimpse may not be at all soul searching, earth shattering, but simply an awareness. For many it comes under the duress of war and famine, losses so significant that the psyche is scarred forever, maybe gentled over time, maybe aggravated, always there. That sense generalizes to everyone in one's sphere, indeed to everyone alive – family, friends and foes, strangers – all equally are subject to death. Within that awareness people generally work through life without any great emotional trauma as it is a commonality for everyone. Instead life is pursued in support of oneself, one's family, one's group, one's nation, not necessarily in that order of importance. In western societies the cult of youth disguises much of this common human endpoint under an almost overwhelming assault of entertainment, distractions, and the general pursuit of self-interest and self-satisfaction based mainly on acquiring things. Some escape this chase early, some escape it as age itself kicks them outside of cultural consumer norms, many others never escape it, always striving to pretend that life will never end, or simply so saturated with their beliefs that strangely enough life goes on eternally after this corporal body passes.

Part of the problem is the human inability to think beyond more than short term survival, securing food, shelter, and clothing, working perhaps towards some retirement planning, which in the grand scheme of things, is still very short. It is a combination of our natural heritage as hunter gatherers challenged for survival, and our perceptions which are limited to a range suitable for survival but not broad enough to perceive much or most of the universe. In our modern world, somewhat detached from the natural world, seasonal sports, seasonal movie and TV episodes, quarterly and semi-annual and annualized business

reports, cycles of life tend to turn around the short term.

Given a long enough time line, and even then not all that long on a universal scale, and it all ends for everyone. The reality of that awareness can produce some mundane results, but it can also induce some awe inspiring moments as a realization arrives of an individual's infinitely tiny existence in a seemingly eternal universe. Generations pass, and as the time line extends forwards and backwards through memory and expectations, the beginnings of homo sapiens and the end of homo sapiens become apparent. A trillion years from now our universe may have expanded into a stretched thin nothingness; or perhaps it will contract into an infinitely small undefinable point before bursting forth in another round of existence; or maybe - nothing - forever - a nothing even devoid of time as it is the fourth dimension allowing the physical dimensions to exist and move.

We will never know, but take a shorter timeline, a billion years on, and our technological advances and mathematical physics advances do allow us to understand a bit more of what our universe is all about. The sun and earth, the stars and galaxies, will still exist, but will we, the all inclusive human "we", still walk this earth? Considering that early life originated on earth some three and a half billion years ago, chances are some form of life will continue to exist. But also considering that homo sapiens, "we" the people, have only been around for an estimated one hundred to three hundred thousand years at most, and that most species have cycles within millions of years or shorter, chances are it will not be human life. Cockroaches will assuredly wander around in the crevices of newer species habitats.

The human timeline brings us to the inflection point where our current circumstance are brought into a bit more focus as the timeline based on past geological and biological evidence is realizable if still a seeming infinity away for a species averaging at best around 80 years per individual. The concept of individual life and death, of a few remembered generations past, of a few unconceived generations of the future, and the present reality is very focussed on day to day existence. So focussed perhaps, that most cannot see, or do not want to see, the reality of our own creations may be the very things terminating our existence well before its natural due date.

We are at an inflection point, nearing a point of no return, wherein our self created societies could terminate our existence at any given moment. We live in an environment in which the horsemen of the apocalypse lurk, restless, waiting, growing stronger with each passing day. The first apocalyptic rider readily visible is that of global warming, part of climate change, itself part of large scale environmental degradation. The second rider, always visible, but seldom considered inside apocalyptic scenarios, operating openly, seldom truly understood, is financial collapse, not the collapse itself, but the ramifications of how it occurs and what follows. The third rider, also operating openly but seldom discussed, never apparently understood for its true effects, always goaded into more restrained fury, susceptible to ignite on a moment's whim, is nuclear war.

These are not solitary riders, searching for their own particular onslaught, but work in cohort with one another, united in their threat, and their growing efforts to erase humanity - and much more. We are creating possible scenarios that sooner or later one or another rider will find the breakout point.

Seemingly conquered are the ancient scourges of famine, pestilence, and Death, who have become mere groomsmen for the apocalyptic riders, waiting their turn to feast on the

remnants of collapsed societies. Death is much maligned but completely neutral, the harvester of humanity but not a cause unto himself. We all meet him someday, somehow, without malice, revenge, or wilful evil intent on his part. The malice and pain, the agony before Death arrives, comes from the strange workings of the human imperative to survive and have ultimate power over others, or from the natural processes of aging, illness and disease.

The riders of the modern apocalypse simply wait their turn, strengthening on the ever increasing folly of current human endeavour, trained by the past, ready to be present when opportunity appears, as it already is presenting itself, manifesting itself in activities of global current events, the current human condition.

The weakest rider, but still capable of setting off an apocalyptic finale, is financial collapse. Scoff if you must to think that financial problems will end the world – and I would agree to a point and with a major caveat – as will be discussed later, one currency rules us all and binds us all together, and attempts to hold onto and further strengthen its rule. If it fails to do so it may well call upon its groomsmen for assistance, but more fearfully, may call upon his associate, nuclear war. It would be the metaphorical Samson option, to destroy the world if the US\$ was going down, for its destruction would certainly destroy the power of the western oligarchs, banksters, neocons, et al, those who hold the ultimate game button near at hand. For these plotting, conceiving, and believing in a winnable nuclear war, or even a last gasp military send off to a dead empire, financial collapse could release the gate.

The current economic system is built on debt, debt so large it cannot conceivably be paid off, a debt so encompassing that all people and states will suffer as it collapses to a value of zero. Based on debt, electronic credit transactions, ongoing commodity and currency manipulations happening at lightning fast speeds, it could all collapse over a weekend. Hopefully it will be a more controlled softer landing, with one or two state powers rising as the others descend, a transition over years, or if we are lucky, over decades – but lucky only in the sense if current and new tragedies are taken care of.

Debt is not the only problem for the US\$ as more importantly it is also the global reserve currency, the petrodollar. This feature allows the U.S. centered debt to grow very large. When the U.S. went off the gold standard, repositioning the US\$ as a petrodollar necessity for the purchase of oil, the debt soared as the U.S. Federal Bank (a private institution) could essentially print all the money it needed. Seemingly bizarre, but two nations transacting outside of the U.S. still need the US\$ to do so. Now that the petrodollar hegemony is being effectively challenged in part, this apocalyptic rider is champing at the bit to go for a global gallop, perhaps challenging his compatriot, nuclear war, to ride with him.

The second apocalyptic rider presents a more obvious problem as changes are already evident and understood for global warming, climate change, and environmental degradation in general. It is evident from anyone having lived long enough and been able to witness changes to their own environments. It is also evident from the ever increasing scientific awareness – regardless of the manipulations of self-interested deniers – gathering information from a wide range of signals: increasing carbon dioxide levels, species loss, ocean acidification, agricultural herbicides and pesticides among others. It has been a slow inexorable process to date but statistics pertaining to global temperatures, storm frequencies and sizes, insect species loss, epidemics of cancer, diabetes, and other diseases not caused by pathogens – which should not allow us to ignore the newer chemically

resistant superbugs – are all cause for concern.

In my own lifetime of a baby boomer born after the Second World War, significant changes are obvious. I have witnessed the retreat of large glaciers from where I first encountered them in my youth. Forests once forever green have turned brown and then disappeared, partly as humans rush to salvage the bug infested wood, bugs no longer affected by seriously cold winter, and partly as forest fires rage through a much drier fuel source. The seasons are officially the same, but plants bloom earlier in the spring, stay green longer into the fall, and the seering cold of midwinter no longer cuts quite so harshly, if at all.

All of this could be somewhat reasonably argued as part of natural forces, but given the many other anecdotal reports combined with the preponderance of scientific knowledge saying yes, anthropogenic warming is happening, and more importantly, is happening at a rate unprecedented in geological or biological timelines. Importantly that only covers one aspect of environmental change and its future parameters are not truly known other than what is extrapolated from our current knowledge, a decidedly limited set of knowledge. Is there a tipping point beyond which “runaway” global heating will rapidly and drastically alter conditions for human survival? Will I see it in my lifetime, or will it be seen by the next generation, or the next...?

Other factors threaten the environment and human health. The human body is resilient but signs are showing of chemically related concerns for all of our systems – immune, circulatory, reproductive, and endocrine – with cancer attacking all parts of our body and other systemic diseases becoming more pronounced. The external environment suffers under the onslaught of herbicides, pesticides, antibiotics, and thousands of chemicals such as from white phosphorous, Agent Orange, Roundup, and Febreze. Many earlier open air nuclear tests, several very large and many smaller nuclear power plant accidents and incidents have happened globally. Is it a surprise then that cancer rates have exploded along with the rise of the nuclear industry?

The third apocalyptic rider, nuclear war, has so far always held back. His weapons have been tested hundreds of times, and twice on civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a demonstrated threat of U.S. power against the Soviet Union. He is the swiftest and immediately deadliest of the three horsemen, a sprinter, not in it for the long run – when released everything will fall to him. Scenarios of limited war, survivable war, or winnable wars are simply absurd and not in his stable of tricks. Once the gates are dropped, nuclear war will override everything else.

Several underlying human features set the stage for some form of calamity involving one or a combination of all the riders. These factors include abstract geopolitical alignments and posturing, unregulated and unfettered capitalism (the prancing fancy show horse pretending to be a contender in control of the others...), corporate trade agreements, government protectionist policies, a variety of global institutions of formal but not official policy making think tanks, and the power of the private and more or less secretive groups such as the Davos and Bilderberg power festivals. But truly underlying all that is human greed, narcissism, hunger for power and also for affiliation and protection of like minded people with a range of social emotional skills ranging from outright psychopathy to a crafted dissonance accepting that while others have thoughts and feelings, they are too stupid, too ignorant, too irrelevant, too savage and primitive to be honoured with any rights or

protections.

Certainly there are many positive human values but few if any of them seek out power, a few bravely speak truth to power, while the majority appear to want to wish it all away, to get on with their lives undisturbed and unperturbed by the sorrows of the many, the damaging and damning power of the few. This applies more in the “developed” world where comfort and complacency tend to rule, whereas the human condition in exploited regions of the world necessitates more awareness and more alertness to life’s situation.

We live in an age where material security – food, clothing, shelter – and material wealth could construct societies with little if any need or want, and then provide enrichment beyond what any of our ancestors could even conceive. In recognition of human frailties of the psychological kind, it is not to posit a utopia, but societies and cultures being able to explore their own development without outside interference. No interference, but in our world of many kinds of mass communication, a world of human interaction unbounded by the the threats of manipulations from outside.

That both denies and accepts the human condition. Human nature has through its natural growth developed not only material tools for survival, but also many psychological tools that are also used for survival. It is the latter, deeply embedded within our physiological, psychological, and cultural structures, creating our mix of human endeavours ranging from the artistically divine to the divinity of death.

Given how humanity inhabits a world of its own creation with the three horsemen of the apocalypse impatiently biding their time, it is sometimes difficult to see a future for humanity. Solutions present themselves, answers quite simple and plain. It is the implementation of the answers that will prove difficult. Implementing the answers is difficult partly because most of the people in the west do not want to give up their privileges, comforts, and entertainments of life. On top of this heap of complacency and incessant talk are the real power brokers – the politicians, banksters, corporate executives, and the military brass – who do not seem capable of ceding power and authority to a more egalitarian benign system.

In the face of the horsemen, the responses are clear. First, surrender all nuclear arms to a citizen/scientific body dedicated to their dismantlement, conventional armaments to follow later. Secondly, collapse the US\$, float new currencies pegged to gold, and have a global debt jubilee for common citizens after the banksters have been rewarded generously for their fraud and manipulation. Finally change our energy sources from carbon to green, and do away with our consumer throw away economy. See! Simple answers, probably impossible to institute given human nature – leading me to believe humanity will have run its course much sooner rather than much later.

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