

CIVILIZATION – PROGRESSION OR REGRESSION?

Can you imagine life back then living in a cave without civilization? Human beings went through the complex process stated evolution. Then, the evolutionary process was followed by the civilization and also globalization. Nowadays as civilized creatures of our contemporary earth let us take a pause and ask ourselves: what will the result of this civilization and modern world be? Although civilization has had a positive impact upon the modern world a lot of things at some point went wrong and we are not absolutely good at every aspect of our lives.

It's obvious that every human being knows about Darwin's theory of Evolution, which brought the idea that our life is related

and has progressed from a common ancestor: that complex creatures developed from more simplistic ancestors naturally over time. So, according to Darwin's theory homo sapience, – the reasonable man, genetically comes from the sort of apes and we members of the contemporary world are the only homo genes that survived through history (Darwin, 1859). Now, let's look at the Figure 1, which precisely shows the evolution of human kind. From the first sight it may seem quite abrupt to see a pig at the end, but let's analyze why the painter put it there. We see the starting of human race from ape-to-human, then the stages of development.

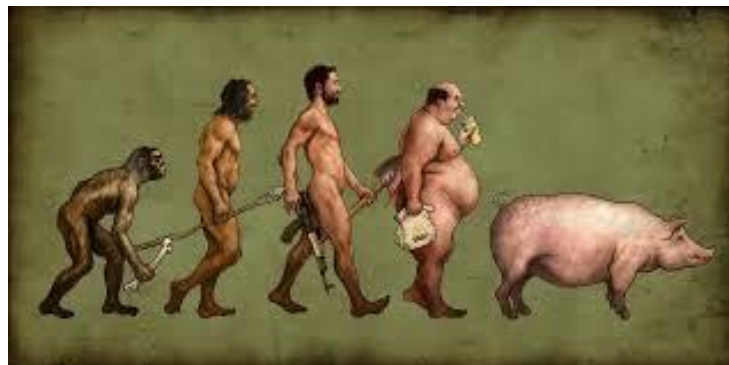


Figure 1. Freud on Evolution

This picture has much deeper meaning rather than it can initially seem to have. It shows even the technological development of the world – if the early type of homo sapience is holding an arrow as a weapon, the later one is already using a powerful gun. These perhaps are the positive sides of the picture, the technology really made some things easier for people. But let's move on. We see a fat man eating and holding a package which reminds and supposes to contain fast food. This actual-

ly shows the greediness of human kind and the result of it will be becoming a "pig" or already being a "pig". So what? We are civilized, we became thinking creatures, and the advanced technology makes our lives more "pleasant" and easier. But is that what we actually were supposed to become? This civilization has caused a great gap between man and nature, which existed long before it. All we do is destroy and pollute the nature that our grand ancestors lived in. For me even the

background color of the picture symbolizes the separation from the nature – a dark polluted green color. So, the picture depicts about

the great problem of our times – we are far away from nature and are becoming day by day.

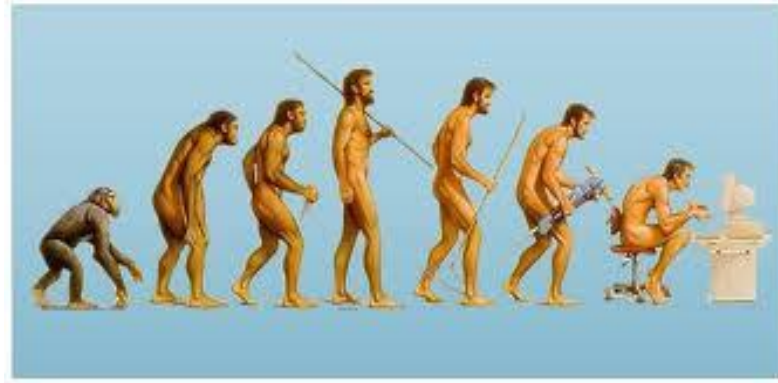


Figure 2. Entertainment: The Evolution of Life Skills

Now next let's look at the Figure 2, which again looks like those pictures showing the human evolution, but with a different ending. Again, at first, we see apes evolving into modern human beings. The main focus of the picture I find in technology. In the picture it is clearly shown how the weapons changed during time periods of human development. This progress of the technology is ongoing. Of course I can never imagine my life without these modern equipments, but the way equipment takes us may insinuate new situations the results of which can be adverse and incorrigible. Isn't this ongoing process again about human greediness? The more we achieve the more we want. Where is the end? Is there a predictable end? The picture suggests how catastrophically the contemporary human being comes close to the shape of the

ape. This precisely witnesses the adverse effects of technological development and how it causes degradation of human relations. If the first picture was focused on human and nature separation this one is more focused on not only human – human separation, but also the separation of people from their own spiritual essence. In the picture we see both regressive and progressive sides of civilization. It shows how the modern technology makes people live easier, feel safe and sound and at the same time causes degradation, separation and transformation from humans to robots. However, these kinds of problems that occur in our society and humanity have not yet destroyed us at all. Yet, we are only the slaves of technology until we become a "technology" ourselves.

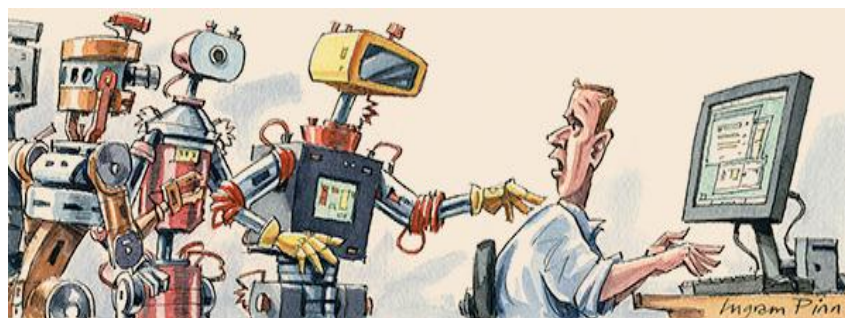


Figure 3. Columnists: If robots divide us they will conquer

This picture is one of the Ingram Pinn's cartoons, that makes much more sense than it can seem to. A man sitting in the shape of "ape" kills his time without even noticing the monsters that he has made. The Figure 3 is kind of the result of the Figure 1 and 2. It represents the final degradation that can be caused because of human greediness and ignorance. An ardent wish to progress more and more makes people blind and they do not notice the harmful side effects of ongoing progression. If we are not yet cyborgs or robots at all, this picture shows how inconspicuously we can become so and realize that only when it would be too late to prevent humanity from being destroyed. We live in a world of chances. The modern technologies and equipments could be a great path for creating a successful and perfect society, but the problem is that we don't know how to use the chances given. Moreover, we constantly regress, without taking a retrospective look, without thinking about recovery. It is in the nature of human being to take everything for granted. We do need to think more about Aristotle's theory of golden mean, where he explains the development, nature and origin of virtues, which are mandatory for achieving happiness and the eventual goal. All of the problems appear because we cannot find that "golden mean" and create a balance between progression and regression. Nowadays, professionals and scientists are producing robot nannies, waitresses, toys that can serve people very effectively. In some countries there also appeared cars that need no driver to be driven. What is this? A robot nanny that can take care of the child while the parents are away. Why don't we think about the consequences? Maybe we later will just make a robot of ourselves so that they can do the entire work instead of us and we will just become

"couch potatoes". By the help of this cartoon Ingram Pinn tries to raise awareness and encourage people to analyze every single aspect of their lives and start a recovery until it's not too late.

The problems of human progression, evolution and civilization are also revealed in a lot of movies. Godfrey Reggio directed an experimental film which is called: ***Powaqqatsi: Life in Transformation***. The film has no dialogue and focuses on the traditional ways of life versus the new ones. The name *Powaqqatsi* itself means: "parasitic way of life" or "life in transition" (Goodfrey-Reggio/ Powaqqatsi Review, 2013-2014). The film is both observational and critical. It reflects the diversity of traditions and modes of transition across the globe and perhaps accepting the inevitable pull of Western-style concepts and products both good and bad. The music is dynamic and seems to have a warning mood. The film starts with early ages when people were used to work in plants and develops to nowadays. It clearly shows the arrival of the civilization and the effects of it, how the fabrics and immense constructions of our modern cities pushed out the nature from our daily lives. This quotes us back to our pictures. As the world is becoming more and more civilized and modern the nature is getting less and less important. Reggio very effectively used the music of the film and scenes that make the watcher think deeper and analyze his or her life. It has a great warning message that is aiming to prevent humanity from becoming or recovering from "pig" and "ape" shapes.

Both the pictures and the movie illustrate that human beings have not been stuck in the same place. They moved, they progressed and to bring into discussion the Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" human beings stepped outside of the cave. But let us think about it,

where did the way from the cave to the contemporary world bring us? Our human race was not afraid to leave the cave and see what's there outside of the cave. We stepped out made a civilized world but where are we going now? How can we make sure that from

that "cave" we didn't pass to another one? Let us look at this case from Einstein's point of view. This figure 4 is made according to his saying: "I do not know with what weapons World War III will be fought, but



Figure 4. World War IV – Einstein

World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones" (Einstein, 1949). We see in the picture how our contemporary world is being destroyed by the same weapons that humans themselves made. And then after it we see that the Darwin's Evolution starts over. To go deeper into the meaning of this quote we see that the danger that the human race could fade away, existed even back then in 1949s. Isn't this all about going back to the Plato's cave? We have created a reality which can eventually destroy us. So, the new inhabitants of our Planet that would be later on already developed men of reason will have to start everything from nothing – from a new "cave age". The human sins and greediness

will actually absolutely destroy the world if we won't find a way to get everything to the point of "Golden Mean". As an initial pace to take we can start thinking about the world of separations that we have created – separation from nature, from humans, from our inner souls.

So, the complex processes of evolution and civilization have had both negative and positive impacts for human race. But what we have now is a great danger of human dissolution. In order to save the planet from a new kind of "cave age" or cyborgs & "pigs" we should really take time to think about the nature, our virtues, greediness and faults.

REFERENCES

1. Aristotle. (1990). *The Nicomachean Ethics Translated with an Introduction by David Rose*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.
2. Darwin, C. (1859). *On the Origin of Species*.
3. Einstein. (1949, April-May). Liberal Judaism 16 . (A. Werner, Interviewer)

4. Goodfrey-Reggio/ Powaaqatsi Review. (2013-2014). Retrieved May 1, 2014, from Dialogue Talk: <http://dialoguetalk.org/godfrey-reggio/powaqqatsi/>
5. The Cave. In Plato, *The Republic*.
6. Figure 1. *Fred on Evolution*. (2012, October 4). Retrieved May 1, 2014, from Apocalypse
- a. Cometh: <http://apocalypsecometh.com/fred-on-evolution/>
7. Figure 2. *Entertainment: Is Gen Y the Outsource Generation?* (2012, August 7). Retrieved May 1, 2014, from Kiki Tea: <http://kikiandtea.com/2012/08/gen-y-outsource-generation/>
8. Figure 3. Wolf, M. (2014, February 4). *If robots divide us, they will conquer*. Retrieved May 20, 2014, from Columnists: <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/e1046e2e-8aae-11e3-9465-00144feab7de.html#axzz32RrrkYws>
9. Figure 4. *Albert Einstein*. (2013, October 12). Retrieved May 23, 2014, from God is Heart: <http://godisheart.blogspot.com/2013/10/i-do-not-know-with-what-weaponsworld.html>

MANE KHACHIBABYAN

CIVILIZATION – PROGRESSION OR REGRESSION?

SUMMARY

This paper is aiming to raise the awareness of the readers to think about the world they are living in and encourages them to effectively separate the progression from regression. The writing is based on analysis of the pictures which accurately help the reader to get the main points and ideas. Nothing can be more effective and obvious for people to get the right point than an immediate visual reference. By referring to the different works or sayings of Aristotle, Plato, Einstein and Goodfrey-Reggio I tried to highlight and bring the attention of the audience to the actual dangers that exist in our world that can very soon cause a dissolution of

human race, because of ongoing progression and greediness. People always tend to progress and get much more civilized than they are and on their way they never take a moment to think about the side effects and regressive consequences. The success causes blindness and makes people more avaricious. Accordingly, we need to take a pause and by analyzing all of the negative side-effects of ongoing progression try to save the planet from being destroyed.

Key concepts: civilization, evolution, progression, regression, nature, human dissolution, cyborg.

ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿՐԹՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ.
ԱՌԱՋԱԴԻՄՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԹԵ՞ ՀԵՏԱԴԻՄՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ

Հոդվածը միտված է ոգեշնչելու և քաջալերելու ընթերցողին մեկ անգամ ևս մտորելու աշխարհի ու դրանում առկա խնդիրների, առաջադիմությունն ու ետադիմությունը սահմանազատելու մասին: Հետազոտությունը հիմնված է նկարների վերլուծության վրա, քանի որ ոչինչ այնքան արդյունավետ և ակնհայտ կերպով չի օգնում առաջադրված խնդրի, հիմնական գաղափարների և տեսակետների ճշգրիտ ըմբռնմանը, որքան ճիշտ ընտրված ակնառու պատկերը: Մեջբերելով Արիստոտելի, Պլատոնի, Էյնշտեյնի և Գոդֆրի-Ռեջոյի տարբեր աշխատությունները և ասացվածքները՝ փորձ է արվել ընթերցողի ուշադրությունը սևեռել իրականության մեջ առկա իրական վտանգների վրա, որոնք կա-

րող են նպաստել մարդկության անհետացմանը: Ձգտելով ավելի առաջադեմ և քաղաքակիրթ լինելու, մարդը մեկ բույե անգամ չի մտածում կողմնակի ազդեցությունների և ետադիմական հետևանքների մասին: Հաջողությունը կուրացնում և նպաստում է նրա ավելի ազաի դառնալուն: Ահա, թե ինչու մենք պետք է մի պահ դադար տանք և առկա առաջադիմության կողմնակի բացասական ազդեցությունները վերլուծելով՝ փորձենք փրկել աշխարհը կործանումից:

Հանգուցային հասկացություններ. քաղաքակրթություն, էվոյուցիա, առաջադիմություն, ետադիմություն, բնություն, մարդկային օտարում, մարդ-մեքենա: