

From Savagery to Greatness

Stair-steps to Humanity

Charcon 2019

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Applied Epistemology

- Based on Objectivist Epistemology
- Its application – no changes to Objectivism
- Will be some radical issues and conclusions that will shake your understanding of Objectivist Epistemology
- Profound thinking will be required
- Anything that looks like a change – *Ask*
- Feel free to ask questions at any time
 - Lots to cover; which parts are of interest?

Ayn Rand

- Never repeat or parrot her words; memorization is not understanding
- Except for a definitive quote
- Express Objectivist ideas in your own words to know and understand them better
- To be better able to apply Objectivist principles
- To be better able to live by Objectivist ideals
- Build Objectivism-based culture today
 - Thinking it takes 1,000 years is irrational

Terms – Evolution

- Ayn Rand on Evolution
 - “nothing to say about it”
 - what that means
- Evolution is inarguable fact – a fundamental, integral part of biology as a science
- Our term, not Nature’s
 - Why? What is “Evolution”, at root?

Evolution, DNA, and Mutation

- Evolution – long sequence of successive random mutations of DNA until two groups can no longer inter-breed
 - **Random** – no purpose, no God, no Nature
 - Two groups – old vs. new, or geographically separated
 - i.e., have become separate species
- Isolated, random DNA changes gradually cascade over time
 - At a steady rate of change
 - Specific changes in separated groups will not be the same
 - DNA changes – some bad, some good, most benign
- *Evolutionary*, not revolutionary change
 - Adapting existing characteristics
 - A bird cannot become able to think
- Cause: DNA change. Effect: physical change to anatomy.

Climate Change

- Continual; ongoing – any order of magnitude
1 year, 10 years, 100 years, 1000 years, ...
- Earth was warmer than now
until 3,000,000 years ago (“3mya”)
- Arctic ice year-round only since 3mya
- Earth of 1,000 years ago (“1kya”)
- Research “models” do not emulate ongoing
natural climate change
- <http://climate.scottcrosby.net> for more details

Causes of Climate Change

- Earthly – volcanos, tectonic plates, continental drift, shifting vegetation patterns
- Solar – the Sun is a variable star; its outputs of light, heat, and radiation change over time
- Comets and meteors – material from within the Solar System that strikes the Earth
- Radiation from supernovas

Climate Change - Consequences

- Sahara desert
 - warmer climate – contracts
 - colder climate – expands
 - cuts off access between Africa and Asia
- More and bigger glaciers
 - lowers sea levels
 - coastal access from Africa to Asia, Australia
 - after you get by the Sahara
- Loss of artifacts, fossils now below sea-level
- Impact on life; mutations and evolution
 - Inability to adapt
 - H. Sapiens down to 3,000-10,000 70kya
 - All other hominins extinct

Extinction

- Climate change – most animals cannot adapt
- Loss of food sources
 - fixed quantity of food sources exists
 - (until Agriculture – *production* of food)

Extinction

Australopithecus, Paranthropus, Homo

- Same physiques
- Same foods
- Same environmental niche
- Different levels of intelligence
- More intelligent finds food first; breeds more
- Less food for others; breed less
- Only smartest one can survive; only one did

Hominins

Ardipithecus – Australopithecus anamensis and sediba – Homo habilis, ergaster, rhodesiensis, sapiens



What is a Human?

Abstract conceptualization - Examples

- **Not:** That thing is like me. The other things are like me.
- **Not:** That thing is dangerous. The other things like me flee from it. I flee from other things like it.
- **Is:** We are going hunting. It is my first hunt. The knife-maker has helped me make my first knife. It has a longer blade than the older knives. I can stab the knife deeper into an animal, making it easier to kill it.
- Chimpanzee experiment – “stalk-making tools”

Abstract Conceptualization

- Ayn Rand says need a word and a definition
- Why?
- What is a basic-level concept?
 - Image and pattern
 - Word replaces mental image
 - Definition replaces mental pattern
- chimpanzees not capable of language
 - so cannot have word and definition
 - so cannot have abstract concepts

Abstract Conceptualization

- When did it start?
- Australopithecus after anamensis (earliest):
 - Made stone tools
via copycat (like chimpanzees) or training?
 - Had language
 - as complexity increased, so did explanation

**Incremental (evolutionary) development
of abstract conceptualization**

Not “is” or “is not” – but – *a sliding scale*

Homo Sapiens v.2.0

- 70,000 years ago
- Radical change in brain functioning
- Means DNA mutation occurred that affected brain
- Both before and after considered same species
- Clearly different if considered from Objectivist premises
- What is the difference?
- What are the clues?

Homo Sapiens v.2.0

- Longer-blade stone knives
- Arts – sculpture, painting, necklaces, skin-painting
- Food Harvesting
- Planning – i.e., longer-range planning
- How can we describe what changed?
- Clue:
 - Objectivist definition of *Art*
 - Which of the above list reflects what is in that definition?

Homo Sapiens v.2.0

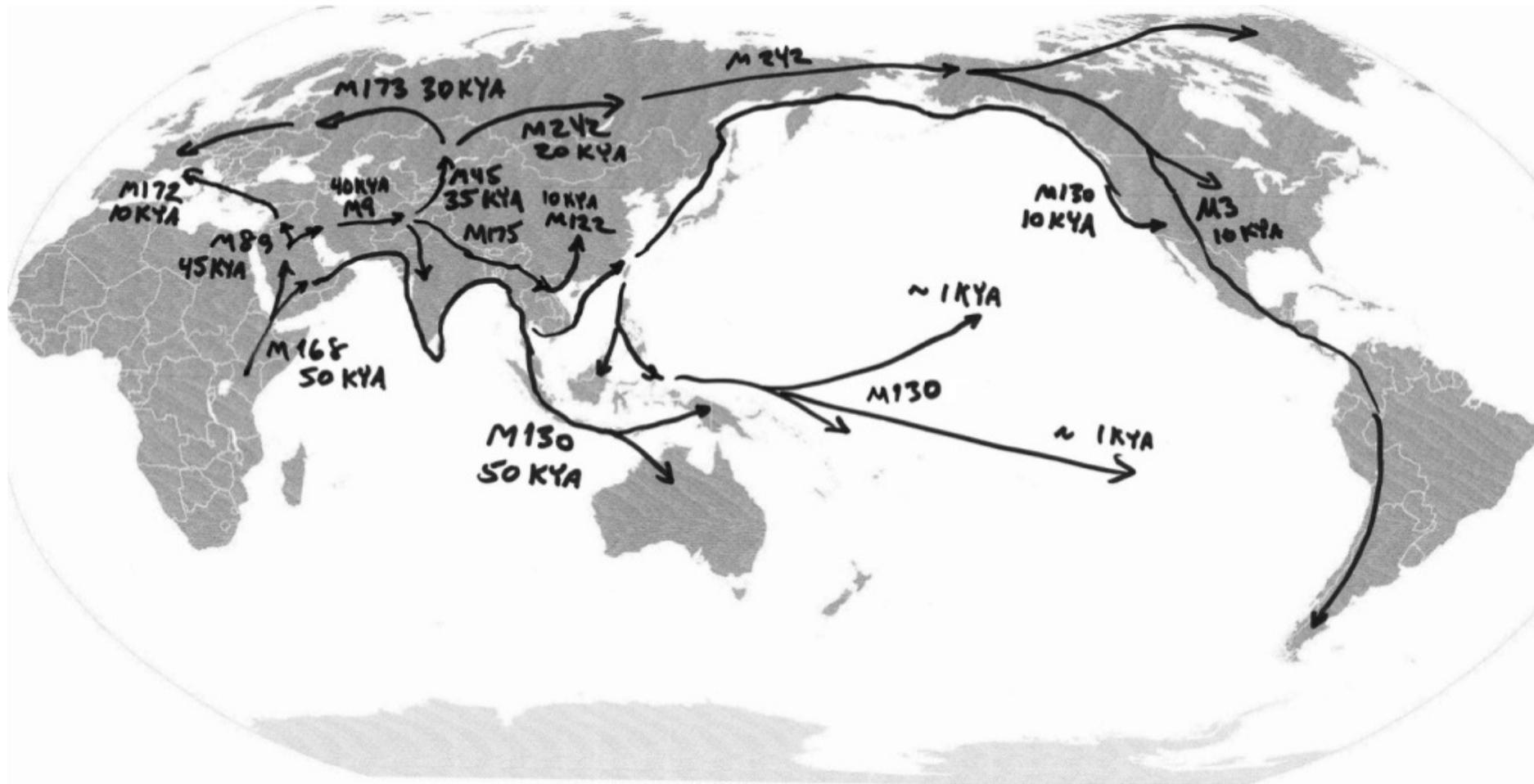
- “selective recreation ...
of metaphysical value judgements”
- One of the changes: ***Planning***
- Long-term overview – cave paintings
- Long-term planning, beyond prep for hunting
- Requires **metaphysical value judgements**
- Result: more complex thinking for H. Sapiens 2.0
as demonstrated by new, greater skills

Genus Homo – the First Adventurer

- Habilis – Ergaster/Erectus coastal to Indonesia
– Floresiensis
- Erectus – Peking Man, Java Man
- Neanderthalis, Denisova – near Eurasia glaciers
first clothes
- Sapiens – every continent,
extreme cold (also clothes), oceanic navigators
- Why? Immense **Curiosity**
 - The mind's natural effort to associate concepts / patterns
 - For beings with abstract conceptualization,
that effort increases exponentially
 - The *need* for Art

Homo Sapiens Migration

See book *The Journey of Man* by Spencer Wells for more



Humanity's Lifestyle

- Hunter-gatherers
- Follow herds
- Foraging for food
- Primitive
 - lack of ethics
 - feral
- Example – American Indians

The Next Stair-step: Agriculture

- Agriculture in the Levant 19kya-10kya – ***Food production***
 - Can *produce* food – same as *produce* tools
 - No longer fixed quantity of food sources
 - No longer foraging
 - No longer viable to forage – not enough food available from foraging
- Sedentary Lifestyle vs. Hunter Gatherer Lifestyle
- Inevitable conflict, inevitable solution
 - Rise of strong-man rule – kings, nobles, serfs
 - Carryover from animal / instinct-based behavior (“feral”)
- To support ruler, new Stair-steps:
 - Villages / strong-holds, counting and measurement, record-keeping, skills-specialization
 - Scribes, warriors, weapons-makers, architects, builders, priests, astrology and astronomy

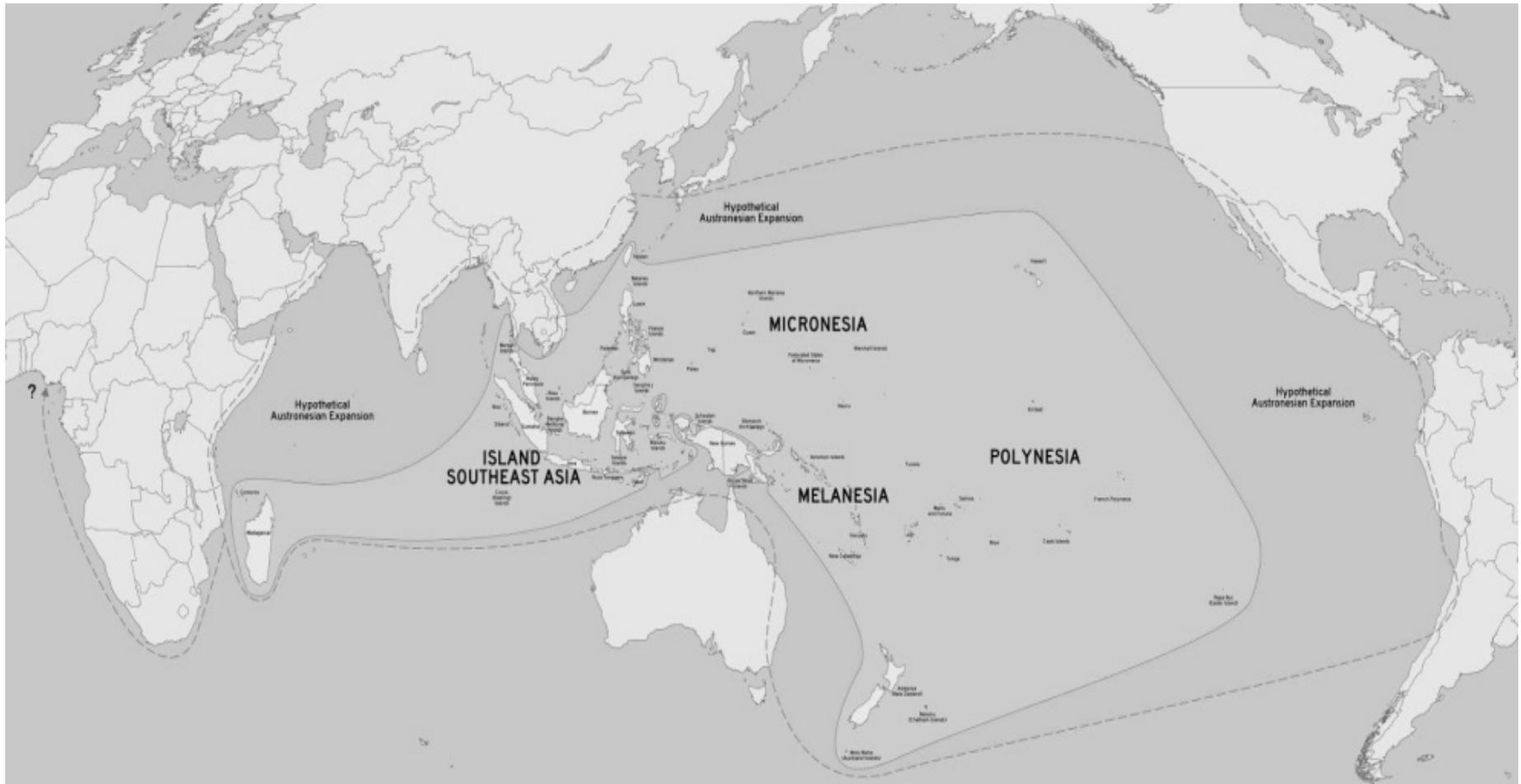
Escape From Oppression

- M172s from Levant to Europe
 - Introduced Europeans to Agricultural techniques
- M130s in coastal China used Agriculture when M122s arrived
 - “Stole” techniques, drove out M130s about 10kya
 - By boat to Taiwan
 - From Taiwan to Indonesia
 - North overland to Mongolia
 - By boat to North America – Navajo Indians (other Indians are M242s / M3s from northern Asia)

Greatest Ocean Navigators

- From Indonesia, M130 oceanic navigators
 - Polynesia
 - Madagascar
 - Hawaii
 - Easter Islands
 - South American coast, Peru
 - North American coast?

M130 Migrations From Coastal China



Next Stair-step – Traders

- Phoenicians – golden age 1200-800 BC
- sailed the Mediterranean,
Atlantic to Morocco, Spain, possibly Britain
- **Items produced for trade** – not personal use
 - Increased wealth vs. seizing wealth; not conquerors
 - No ethics; piracy acceptable
- First alphabet – letters stood for sounds
 - No vowels
 - For trade – contracts, debts

Greeks

- Added vowels to Phoenician alphabet
 - 730-690 BC
 - To record Homer's Iliad and Odyssey
- Colonizers, not Conquerors
- Hunter-gatherers who learned agriculture from empires
- Preserved individual independence
- First studies of ethics
 - 400s-300s BC
 - Evolved from warrior codes



Rome

- Conquerors
- Influenced by Greek colonists
 - Politics, sciences, math, arts, philosophy
- *Virtue* similar to Greek *ethos*
- Republic with Senate 605-49 BC
- Empire
 - The prize
 - The fight over the prize



Rome – downfall and escape

- Rome's worst enemy
- Destruction of Roman virtue
 - Replacement by mercenary barbarians
- Escape from Rome's worst enemy and invaders

Venice

- Escape into the marshlands starting about 400 AD
- Traders – not conquerors
 - Europe
 - Byzantine Empire
 - Moslems
 - Marco Polo to China 1271-1295
- Conduit for goods, ideas that fed rise of Renaissance
- Printers not controlled by the Church
- Relative freedom, even for Jews
- Republic
 - Council of nobles, rich merchants
 - Executive: *Doge*

Venice

- Trade-based
- No successful invasions, rebellions, revolutions
 - From founding in 400s
 - Until invasion by Napoleon in 1797
 - 1400 years
 - vs. Roman Kingdom – Republic – Empire ?
- Longest-lived country ever

Europe after Rome

- Replacement of Rome in Europe by immigrating tribes
- Rise of Medieval culture
 - Tribes transitioned in sedentary with agriculture
 - Tribesman transitioned into serfs
 - Chieftains transitioned into kings, nobles
- Rome a fading, almost mythical memory

Civilizing of European Barbarians

- Europe starts to learn
 - Europe knows of Classical Greece
 - Legacy of Boethius
 - Charlemagne's false renaissance 800-814
 - Religion-based, not reason-based
 - Does show first glimmers of interest in learning
 - But all learning still controlled by Church
 - Crusades
 - Instigated by Church
 - first in 1095-1099
 - Constantinople
 - capital of East Roman Empire / Byzantine Empire
 - Documents, records from Classical era
 - 70 libraries in Moslem Spain
 - Legacy of declining Moslem Renaissance of 900s

European Renaissance

- Renaissance vs. the Church – 1400s-1500s
 - Arts, World exploration, Sciences
- Copernicus – 1473-1543
 - German – far from the Church
 - Father a merchant, not a noble or priest
- Galileo – 1564-1642
 - “And yet it moves”
 - Church did not reverse its ruling until 1992
- Newton (1642-1726) and Leibniz (1646-1716)

Ethics – A Big Stair-step

- Secularized outgrowth of endemic Christian, which was influenced by Greek
- Hobbes, Descartes, Locke
- Individual rights
 - Not commandments from god or king
 - Rational study and justification

Ethics

- Provided foundation for rise of government of United States
- Anti- strong-man rule
- Only in Europe and ex-British colonies
 - U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand
 - What about ex-Spanish, ex-Portugese colonies?
- Still a tenuous, limited hold in world as a whole
- Still a long way to go for stair-step away from legacy of animal past

Slavery

- Sex and labor
- Endemic throughout history, world-wide until rise and cultural dominance of:
 - Concept of rights of the individual
 - Industrial revolution made it economically infeasible
- Muslim countries – greatest proliferation
 - Into the 1900s (still today?)
 - Far more enslaved in total than all slaves taken from Africa to the Americas – even counting only to 1800

Slavery

- Still 30 million world-wide currently
 - India and Asia
 - Africa
 - i.e., where individual rights, industrialization weakest
- Reparations – who?
 - Everyone has ancestors who were slaves
 - Everyone has ancestors who owned slaves
 - Not that many hundred years ago for anyone
- Endemic world-wide – Not a racial problem

Modern-era Stair-steps

- Rights of the individual
- Creation of a government based on research and study
- Creation of a government with limited authority
 - controlled by citizens
 - not citizens controlled by government
- Industrial Revolution
 - Massive increases in creation of wealth
- Space travel – requires massive rational thinking
 - Exposes limitations of oppressive government policies
- Yet to go: Education designed to support freedom