

The Zeitgeist Of Suicide (Part Four): A Soup Tureen Of Trouble

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"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To speak of many things:
Of gold—and oil—and souls of men—
Of frankincense—and slaves—
And why the faith of men is not—
And whether folk are knaves."

Adapted by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson
from *Through the Looking Glass*

Part Three of this series focused on some of the steps economists have urged governments to take to resolve the crisis in national pension programs. The principal cause of this crisis is an increasingly unmanageable disparity between the vast number of Baby Boomers retiring in the next few years and the relatively small number of young people replacing them in the workplace. This gap in the numbers of workers and retirees is the result of steadily decreasing fertility rates during the last thirty years.

Moreover, this gap is not just academic, but one that threatens the viability of the modern welfare state, since it is young workers who, through their taxes, foot the bill for most entitlement programs. Commonly proposed economic solutions to the problem miss the mark because they aim at fixing symptoms, not causes. The solutions do nothing to reverse the widespread low fertility rates responsible for today's pension imbroglio.

This final article will look at yet another solution to problems caused by sub-replacement fertility rates. This is a radical technological solution fraught with dangers for everyone.

Progress and Choice: Babylon's Worldview

Have you ever wondered what is *really* behind the seemingly inordinate interest in genome mapping, genetic engineering, stem-cell research, and related matters? They get a lot of press today. Biotechnologists, in their rare moments of candor and honesty—when they are not issuing wild promises to cure everyone of everything—talk about the potential to generate millions of dollars over the years through stem-cell research. In speaking of dollars, they are hitting the nail on its head. *Profit* is the reason biotechnology firms are so interested in garnering research funding.

In 2004, they conned California voters into funding stem-cell research to the tune of \$3 billion, promising that these selfsame voters would be the ultimate beneficiaries through better health. Voters in New York, Maryland, and Connecticut—blue (liberal) states all—are also considering coughing up cold cash in support of stem-cell research.¹ Why would biotech firms and governments be willing to invest multiple billions for mere millions in return? This is not a sensible return-on-investment. Entrepreneurial math does not work that way.

In fact, biotech firms are chasing a *trillion* dollar market. To grasp that fact, we need to understand how they see the world. What is their worldview?

The leaders of this present, evil world (Galatians 1:4) are not blind to the numbers behind the new demography. They are greatly aware of the irrefutable trendlines showing falling fertility rates in modern nations. Further, they believe that the driving forces behind these lower rates are implicitly, probably inextricably, built into our urbanized, industrialized culture. They have come to look at that culture much as they look at physical life: as the result of mindless, unrelenting evolution yielding increasingly better results. They conclude that industrialization (and all that comes with it) is natural, is permanent, and will unstoppably march around the world. So falling trendlines do not represent temporary dips in fertility, but a long-term dive. They will continue to fall, yielding compounding results, as long as the cultures of the planet are configured around industrialization.

To state it a bit differently: Barring a meteorological or seismic catastrophe, the elite movers and shakers of East and West hold that the causes of lower fertility rates—industrialization, urbanization, consumerist capitalism, secularism,² self-determination (democracy), and technology—are part of modernity. Hence, they conclude that the downward trend in birthrates is both irreversible and permanent. In other words, modern society is locked on a course toward its own self-destruction.

This is the paradox built into the evolutionary worldview.

Supporting this worldview are two deeply Masonic doctrines that have lain at the heart of the Western *zeitgeist* since at least the Enlightenment: progress and individualism. Albert Pike's³ statement, "Progress is the normal condition of man," encapsulates the approach moderns take toward society. Giuseppe Mazzini, a nineteenth-century Italian patriot, offers the same sentiment: "The moral law of the universe is progress." An American author of the same century, William Simms, concurs: "The true law of the race is progress and development." Both Mazzini and Simms connect progress with law, even moral law—as if progress were the eleventh commandment.

Progress has led inescapably to the second great Masonic doctrine,⁴ the elevation of the individual over God, family, and community. This idea, exaltation of self over *everything*, is best stated by Francis Monfort, an American preacher: "The great political controversy of the ages has reached its end in the recognition of the individual." The controversy was in fact as much social as political, involving the most important and intimate decisions people make.

The Reign of Choice

Once, a person's family, driven by cultural norms, made his decisions. A young woman's parents, for instance, chose her lifelong mate. She had little or no choice. Culture mandated that her "vocation" be homemaking, full stop. Her husband's choices were also heavily circumscribed and conditioned by culture: His marriage was arranged and more often than not, his work was that of his father. How many small businesses called "Smith & Sons" have existed over the centuries? In societies characterized by caste and class, even clothing, lifestyle, and residence were not a matter of individual choice.

Today, that has all changed in the Western and Westernizing worlds. Rare is the son who enters his father's line of work. Arranged marriage is a cultural artifact practiced only in the most traditional of societies. Secular humanism has exalted choice: choice of vocation, of mate, of lifestyle, of residence.

In the context of the present discussion, individualism means the "valorization of choice in reproductive matters."⁵ If a couple (yes, it still takes two people to make a child!) determines to sex-select, so as to control the gender of their unborn child, that decision is a matter of choice, protected almost as a sacrosanct "right."⁶ In our world where tolerance and moral relativism are norms, the couple's preference is considered neutral—neither right nor wrong. If another couple wishes to use contraceptives, even post-coital ones (that is, the "morning after" pill), this decision too is a matter of private prerogative. If yet another couple (or a woman acting alone, even an underage one) desires to abort a child, the doctrine of free choice dictates that there be no hindrance.

Finally, if a couple determines not to have children, who has the authority to question their decision? Is it not a private matter, outside the purview of morality, and hence not subject to public debate? Who dares point out God's authoritative command that the man and woman multiply (Genesis 1:28)? God, the progressive individualist claims, was certainly not justified in slaying Onan for refusing to reproduce, as Genesis 38:8-10 testifies He did.

It is by no means apparent to the builders of our civilization that society should—or even can—question the values of progress and individualism. Yet, their predilections for those dual values leave them with a conundrum. If pro-family and pro-natal policies fly in the face of evolution and the eminence of free choice, how will civilization avert dissolution from mass (albeit gradual) suicide? Put differently: If God's teaching that reproduction is a positive good violates the sensibilities of today's elite, how are they to ensure a steady output of young workers to support their crowning creation, the industrialized-secularized-consumerist, cradle-to-grave welfare state?

Technology to the Rescue

To resolve this problem, today's policymakers look to technology. This is where biotechnology enters the picture. If the problem is too few young workers to sustain the welfare state, the solution is to *make* babies. It is precisely in this "solution" that the biotech firms' enormous return-on-investment lies. That is why they are spending billions of dollars on genetic and stem-cell research. They are responding to the call of a very lucrative market indeed, potentially a trillion-dollar baby business. If couples will not produce children who will grow up to be workers supporting the welfare colossus, baby factories will.

Technology is not quite there yet. However, the gap between wishing and implementation is fast closing. For example, the well-intentioned fight (mounted by the March-of-Dimes folk) to save the lives of premature children has led to the development, at least in prototype, of an artificial womb.⁷ It will probably be rolled out for use before the end of this decade.⁸ Biotechnology firms are learning how to modify cells genetically, how to breed for strength or intelligence—whatever the labor market may one day need.

Operationally, these firms will probably at first buy sperm and eggs from people and bring children to term in machines. As time goes on, the firms will likely develop huge banks of sperm and eggs, to be mixed and matched at will in their machines.

These "machines," the artificial wombs, are in fact warm soup tureens, the soup being a simulation of the liquids in natural wombs and in the lungs of fetuses. We will call the offspring of these machines "soup kids," SKs for short.

The artificial fabrication of humans will support a number of the cosmopolitan elite's goals. Here are two of the more important ones:

» *The modern welfare state will be saved.* Babies can be produced in numbers, bred for strength and health, educated for the workplace, and tasked to produce goods and to pay taxes in support of the welfare state. The economic system God's people term "Babylon" can keep going, buoyed by SKs. The problems caused by falling fertility rates can be resolved before economic paralysis sets in.

» *Radical feminism will be spared embarrassment.* Should the economic crisis caused by the birth-death become deep and lingering enough, society will call feminism into account, putting decided pressure on women to leave the workplace and bear children. The *en masse* synthetic production of individuals in laboratories will forestall any such backlash indefinitely. Women will be free to pursue careers and economic parity with men, without having to "encumber" their lives with childbearing and child-raising.⁹

Is this all an impossible scenario? Not any more than the invention of the iPod, the commonplace deployment of cell phones, or the legalization of same-sex marriage, the last still in its incipient stage. Artificial insemination (the modern term is "assisted reproduction") in a number of forms is already widely practiced. Once artificial gestation becomes technologically feasible and genetic engineering reliable, the liberal establishment will use the media it controls to mold society to accept the "machining" of human beings, just as those same culture-of-death liberals are currently massaging society to accept infanticide in the name of full-term abortions.¹⁰ The elites will argue that SK workers will ensure continued industrial and agricultural productivity and generate tax revenues in an era of irreversibly declining natural fertility. In short, SKs will allow "the system" to progress; the secularism, feminism, and welfarism of modern culture can "mature" unabated.

Baby Futures?

The implications of such a radical development are almost beyond imagination.

First, and probably foremost, *babies will become a commodity.*¹¹ Biotech corporations, responding to governmental and corporate "purchase orders," will produce the required number of soup-boys and soup-girls each month. Because some will die before maturity and because of the long "tail" between conception and entry into the workplace at, say, 16, in all likelihood something like a "futures market"¹² in SKs will develop, as investors weigh the need for industrial and farm workers worldwide against the projected number of SKs that will mature each year. When the labor market becomes "tight," governments will be pressured to lower the age a young SK may enter the workplace from, say, 16 to 14.

Second, *the nuclear family will become even more marginalized.* We can expect the number of well-to-do career women who pay a surrogate to carry their children to increase.¹³ Just as synthetically produced music is becoming more favored than acoustically produced music, so too will artificial insemination and gestation become more popular methods—more safe and sane ways—of propagating *homo sapiens*, even among married couples.

Reproduction will become scientific and commoditized. For example, couples may someday be able to build "designer babies," customized kids bred with selected, and inheritable, traits. The technology enabling this is dubbed *human germline modification*, something still on the other side of the technological horizon. If ever developed, human germline modification would become a logical extension of pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), a technology already widely used in in-vitro fertilization (IVF) clinics. With PGD, an embryo is evaluated (diagnosed) to determine if it has genetic markers of disease before implantation in a womb. If it does carry those markers, it is destroyed (read, *murdered*). Human germline modification goes a step further. The embryo is modified such that it will produce a desired trait such as a strong body, a superlative brain, or resistance to certain diseases. This modification takes place very early in the embryo's existence to ensure that the desired trait(s) is/are inheritable.¹⁴

"The rush down a very worrying slippery slope has begun."¹⁵ Already, genetically modifying fetuses to help treat diseased siblings is legal in the United Kingdom, where a court has ruled that a couple may use stem cells from a fetus they create through IVF in order to treat their six-year-old boy suffering from a blood disease. Of course, the IVF-created fetus will die in the procedure. It is as ironic as it is pathetic that the procedure is not yet technologically feasible.

We-the-People vs. 007

Third, *definitions of equality, freedom, and even humankind itself will radically change*. To grasp the scope of this transformation, consider this plausible biography:

0546007 (007 for short), a male, was delivered of a machine in May 2025. Dienet Inc., the biotech firm that patented his DNA, owns this fellow, bred for upper-body strength. After successful "birth," Dienet placed 007 in a corporate nursery, later a corporate preschool, and still later in a corporate grade school. He learned to read and perform basic arithmetic.

In July 2039, Dienet, responding to a work order from Universal Foods Inc., transferred 007 and some of his buddies to an agricultural worker conditioning school (AWCS), where he learned to drive combines and perform other mechanized farm duties. After passing several proficiency exams, 007 was shipped via steamship to an automated agricultural colony (AAC) in Indonesia, where he adjusted quite quickly to the workload. Since that time, his contract agency has "outsourced" him 23 times to various AACs around the world. He is currently living in company housing in Peru with his wife, 1400634, a dietitian. They seem very happy.

Now, do not let this fact get past you: 0546007 has no last name—unless it is Dienet! This lack of surname reflects his lack of family. He has no family—has nothing to inherit. He has no property. He has no property rights. He has no rights at all. He is a slave.

007's biography is far from impossible. It reflects the degree to which current definitions of freedom, equality, and mankind will need to change. Law, educational institutions, and cultural mores (like marriage) will have to change to accommodate 0546007 and other SKs like him. *Accommodate* may not be the right word, for it is possible that our current liberal ideas of equality and liberty will drown in the soup of the artificial womb. One analyst summarizes this concern by commenting that biotechnology might

undermine the principles of liberty and equality. If children are genetically engineered for greater health, strength, or intellectual capacity, . . . society could be plunged into a brave new world of genetically-based class hierarchy.¹⁶

Our legal system will have to morph mightily over the next several decades to deal with the 007s of the world. "All men are created equal" may become an idea as *passé* as the doctrine of States Rights in America. It is possible that a two-tier social order will evolve. We-the-People, protected by the Constitution or the UN Declaration of Human Rights (or by whatever), will be told that a two-class society is necessary and appropriate. The elite policy makers will assure We-the-People that a thoroughgoing body of law based on humanism will protect the SKs who make up the underclass. This law will dictate that SKs universally be well fed, appropriately clothed, adequately housed, provided health care, educated to their genetically-engineered level, and mercifully euthanized only when they are too old or sick to produce.

What more could 007 want? Certainly not recognition as a human being! That will become increasingly impossible. For in time, 007 will come to have the legal status not of *persona ex machine*, the person from a machine, but of *res ex machine*, the thing from a machine.

Moreover, We-the-People, those normally engendered, pensioned old-timers who have come to make up such a high proportion of this aging world, will not complain about the arrangement. After all, 0546007 and his SK peers pick the strawberries and build the cars We-the-People have convinced themselves they *need*. What's more, SKs generate the payroll taxes that pay We-the-People's pensions.

We-the-People are the voters. Lacking faith that God will provide for them in their old age, they will vote in support of SKs. For the sake of their survival, We-the-People will happily vote for them! In doing so, We-the-People share responsibility, if not culpability, for the brave new world the billion-dollar biotech industry is bringing to us. All are knaves, elite as well as rank and file!

We-the-People will vote and vote and vote for the SKs until We-the-People have died out. Eventually, all that will remain will be SKs ruled by a small, rich, cosmopolitan elite. That is progress.

The Apocalypse and 007

The apostle John may have seen the miserable 007 in vision almost two millennia ago. Revelation 18 catalogs the goods traded by Babylon, the United States being a big part of that economic system. This passage lists some 28 items, the last of which is "slaves, and souls of men" (verse 13, KJV). Will America again be involved in a slave trade, transporting individuals *en masse* via ocean-going vessels?

The Greek word *slave* does not appear in the text. The Greek noun there is *soma*, *body* as in Luke 12: 4: "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body." *Soma* appears over 140 times in the New Testament, rendered in the KJV as *body*, *bodies*, or *bodily*. Nowhere else in the KJV is *soma* ever rendered as *slave*, for which there are other Greek words.¹⁷ The NKJV and any number of other translations use terms equivalent to "the bodies and souls of men." This rendering is both literal and correct.

But the noun *slaves*, appearing there in the KJV as a metonym for *body*, may not be at all malapropos, as the bodies John saw may have been those of slaves. What kind of slaves? In phrases like "the plays of Shakespeare" or "the music of Haydn," what is meant are those plays and that music created by Shakespeare, generated by Haydn. The "novels of Faulkner" are those novels written or produced by Faulkner. Are "the bodies and souls of men," those bodies and souls created by mankind, as distinct from those that are produced through normal, "unassisted" procreation? Did John see in vision 007 and his peers, the creation of mankind's technology, being shipped about the planet as workers?

Admittedly, the noun *slaves* in this context could refer to a trade in immigrant workers. The United States today imports thousands of workers as "H-1a's," a reference to the type of visa granted to work in this country as manual (usually agricultural) workers. There are also tens of thousands of "H-1b's," degreed professionals whose visas permit them to work in hospitals and computer facilities. Currently, most H-1a holders come from Mexico, while most H-1b holders come from the Philippines (specializing in medicine) or from India (specializing in information technology). Substantially profitable "agencies," in fact little more than slave dealers, hire these individuals in their native land and job them out in America to the highest bidder. Perhaps the apostle John refers to this type of activity in Revelation 18:13.

Alternatively, he may be referring to wage workers, hirelings. Any number of mainstream economists have argued that income taxes indexed to salary levels represent a type of forced labor.¹⁸ Thus, workers who give up a share of their income are just "tax slaves" by any other name. John's reference to "bodies and souls" may reflect his vision of workers highly taxed to support today's welfare state—and the army of autocratic bureaucrats who serve as "benefactors" of the masses.¹⁹

Maybe though, as the economic crises rooted in mankind's refusal to "multiply" become manifest and deepen, as the economies of the world settle into long-term stagnation *a la* Japan's "Great Depression," Babylon's godless leaders may attempt to fill the labor shortage by generating individuals artificially. The enabling technology is almost here. The culture of materialism, consumerism, and feminism that would rationalize the use of that technology is already here. It could be only a matter of time before soup-kids work to pay our pensions, harvest our crops, and build our cars.

Oh, I forgot to ask: Would "the bodies and souls" of SKs, born of machine rather than of woman, have in them the spirit of man (Job 32:8)?

God will have the last word yet!

Endnotes

1 "The Embryo Wars: The U.N, Mitt Romney and California Corruption," *The New Atlantis*, Spring 2005, p. 101.

2 For a thorough discussion of how secularism was everything but inevitable, see Smith, Christian, *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life*, University of California Press, 2003.

3 Albert Pike (1859—1891) was the Grand Commander of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, United States. The American headquarters of this branch of Masonry was Charleston, South Carolina.

4 The third pillar of Masonic philosophy is humanistic optimism. Around this triangle of optimism, progress, and individualism, Freemasonry has built its doctrine that mankind will eventually create his own Millennium.

5 Stolba, Christine, "Overcoming Motherhood," *Policy Review*, December 2002/January 2003, p.31. Stolba outlines the implications of unbridled choice in reproductive matters, where we "run the risk of ending up in a consumer-driven eugenic society." Having the "right" to choose does not empower one to make "right" choices. (Current and archived numbers of *Policy Review* are available online at <http://www.policyreview.org>.)

6 Sex-selection generally involves the ultrasound machine and abortion. If ultrasound images suggest a fetus of unwanted gender, the mother aborts the child. Sex-selection in the Orient almost always favors boys; as practiced in America, it almost always favors girls. Another far more sophisticated method of sex-selection is sperm-sorting, a procedure used in connection with in-vitro fertilization (IVF). Here, sperm that will produce a fetus of the "wrong" gender is not allowed to unite with an egg.

7 See Rosen, Christine, "Why Not Artificial Wombs?" *The New Atlantis*, Fall 2003. p. 67, Rosen comments:

It is already possible to save a child born during the early part of the second trimester of pregnancy and weighing only two pounds. Research on liquid ventilation, particularly that conducted by Dr. Thomas Schaffer at Temple University, offers hope for treating premature infants by mimicking the fluid found in the lungs in utero. Isolettes—the technologically sophisticated incubators that fill the neonatal intensive care units of major hospitals—are, one might say, a cruder version of an artificial womb.

Christine Stolba, *ibid.*, writes that "researchers at Juntendou University in Tokyo, who have already had success keeping goat fetuses alive in artificial wombs for short spans of time, predict the creation of a fully functional artificial womb for human beings" by 2009. (Current and archived numbers of *The New Atlantis* are online at <http://www.thenewatlantis.com>.)

8 Kurtz, Stanley, "Demographics and the Culture War," *Policy Review*, February/March 2005, p. 33. Kurtz mentions Christine Rosen's suggestion that, should artificial wombs someday become "safer" and more reliable than natural gestation, insurance companies may be in the vanguard of their use, insisting that they be employed by married couples.

9 See Firestone, Shulamith, *The Dialectic of Sex*, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2003. Firestone argues that evolution's "accident" has created a feminine "caste" below that of men. Only by cybernation can sexual differences be obliterated and evolution's mistake corrected. She believes that childhood should be abolished by granting children the same rights as

adults and that children should experience "as much genital sex (with adults) as they are capable of." When women have rewired themselves through cybernetics to create a new being, death will be dissolved. Of course!

Simone de Beauvoir, who spoke for the Second Wave of Feminists, praises technology (specifically cloning) as a boon to women everywhere: "Perhaps in time the cooperation of the male will become unnecessary in procreation—the answer, it would seem, to many a woman's prayer?" (*The Second Sex*, Everyman' Library, 1953).

10 A good source of information from a conservative viewpoint about bio-ethical issues is at <http://www.bioethics.com>.

11 For a thoroughgoing analysis of the commoditizing of reproduction, see Kass, Leon R., ed., *Human Cloning and Human Dignity: An Ethical Inquiry*, Diane Publishing Company, November 2002.

12 See Smith, Wesley J., *Consumer's Guide to a Brave New World*, Encounter Books, 2004. Smith's title is clearly tongue-in-cheek. He discusses the commercial aspects of biotechnology: the potential profits, the farming of women's eggs, aborted female fetuses bought and sold for ovaries, and the like. Smith, an attorney for the Anti-Euthanasia Task Force, has written an equally readable book entitled *Culture of Death: An Assault on Medical Ethics in America* (Encounter Books, 2002), where he decries in specific terms the devaluation of human life by the medical community and the utilitarianism of medical care driven by profit-seeking insurance companies.

13 Kurtz. *ibid.*, p. 45. The practice has been euphemistically dubbed "social surrogacy."

14 Smith, Heather J., "Customized Kids May Be the Wave of the Future," *Science and Theology News*, June 2005, p. 34. The article is an interview with Professor Cole-Turner of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. (*Science and Theology News* is sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation and is available online at <http://www.stnews.org/index.php>.)

15 Smith, Heather J., "UK Court Finds Designer Babies Legal to Help Siblings," *Science and Theology News*, June 2005, p. 31. Quoted from an unnamed spokeswoman for Comment on Reproductive Ethics, a conservative group in the United Kingdom.

16 Kurtz. *ibid.*, p. 43.

17 *Soma* is *Strong's* #4983. The usual, though not only, Greek word for *slave* is *doulos*, *Strong's* #1401, as in Matthew 25:23: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

18 See Feser, Edward, "Taxation, Forced Labor, and Theft," *The Independent Review*, Fall 2000, p. 219. Mr. Feser teaches at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. (Selected past articles are available online at <http://www.independent.org/publications/the%5Flighthouse>.)

19 In Luke 22:25, Christ asserts that "those who exercise authority over [the Gentiles] are called 'benefactors.'" The noun *benefactor* comes from the Greek word meaning "a

worker of good" and therefore a philanthropist (*Strong's* #2110). Devoted to humanism, the elite of this day and age bear a condescending, patronizing attitude toward the rank and file, thinking they have done the *demos*, the people, a favor by constructing the edifice of the welfare state.