

Bio-Ethics and Empathy



Before the Wealthy Leave with Elon for Mars, Might they Simply “Leave” Homo Sapiens?

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As the wealth divide widens both in the US and worldwide, the world’s problems will affect rich and poor differently. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, “*let me tell you about the very rich. They are very different than you and me.*” Perhaps some of our willingness to disregard climate science, is conceivably borne by greed or a hopelessness, that makes us willing to ‘believe the lies we want to hear’,¹ and may be rooted, for the very rich, in a belief that one’s affluence affords an escape plan.

While the last 250 years’ history tells of growing equality, a narrowing of the gap of access to services and education, as the masses were essential to power industry and the military, economic evolution and global trade are making many people less relevant to commerce, production, even warfare. Further, the present economic and political climate tests the kindredness, empathy and loyalty those that *have* (or are in power) feel toward those that *have-not* and are powerless.

And the rich are even more different today. The richest 1% own half the world’s wealth. The richest 100 people together own more than the poorest 4 billion.

Concurrently, improvements in technology might make it possible to translate *economic* inequality into *biological* inequality.

Says Yuval Noah Harari in *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, “(the rich) might be able to buy life itself. If new treatments for extending life and upgrading physical and cognitive abilities proves to be expensive, humankind might split into biological castes.” If we think the wealth gap is difficult to narrow, wait until a genuine gap in ability opens between rich and poor. The richest

¹ See “Kill the Messenger”, Peter Lupoff, April, 2019

1% will not only control the world's wealth but could potentially engineer a monopoly on health and longevity, beauty and creativity.

Sounds like science fiction, yes. We are talking probabilities, the varied foreseeable, probable outcomes, and this is one of them. If this bio-engineered divide is fueled by its feasibility, money to pay for it and no ethical limitation, humankind may separate into a small class of superhumans and a massive underclass of (in Harari's words) "useless Homo Sapiens".



As a wealth and biologic divide occurs, the masses will lose their economic importance and the wealthy, the government - *the entitled*, may lose their interest, their empathy for useless Homo Sapiens. How long does an elite feel obliged to care for a lesser caste, a different perceived species?

The escape plan may be to first flee obligation to have-nots, live in protected, environmentally secure and cloistered environs and then, maybe take off for Mars with Elon. Bio-Ethicists wanted.

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This article is a precursor to a more exhaustive study on this topic (as well as others) by student-Fellows of Lupoff Impact Scholars Institute, a non-profit providing stipends to students accepting no/low pay internships and jobs for the benefit of people and planet. www.lupoffimpactscholars.org