

## 5. Masculinity Lives in the Real World

### From a natural real life, to a manmade virtual life



***Life in the Past - Natural and Real***



***Life Today - Manmade and Virtual***

It's not just the triggers for the fight-or-flight response that are becoming more virtual, but nearly everything that we do. The table below lists just a few observations associated with the change from a life Natural and Real to one Manmade and Virtual:

<b>In the PAST, more masculine men</b>	<b>TODAY, virtual men</b>
Felt the intense focus of fighting a real human enemy who was actually trying to kill us or someone we love.	Fight over ideological matters, against our sports rivals, political opponents, religions, nations, etc., often on internet.
Ran away in real fear from a tiger, so it wouldn't eat us.	Avoid or flee any conflict that makes us uncomfortable.
Felt the force of, and were tuned in to, nature every time we stepped outdoors - frequently feeling helplessness and humbled in the face of its power.	Have umbrellas, hand-sanitizer, sunglasses, sunscreen, cars, and feel next to nothing – except for relative invincibility and pride.
Rarely had heart disease, erectile dysfunction, or depression.	Take statins, Viagra, and Prozac.
Were usually lean and strong	Are usually both fat and weak
Risked their lives out of necessity, sometimes saving the lives of others.	Get their thrills through unnecessary risks – driving fast, extreme sports, climbing mountains – helping nobody, while fantasizing about being a “hero”.
Cared intensely for the lives of plants and animals and killed them for food, feeling deep sorrow and gratitude.	Go to a grocery store and pick cheap packaged food off a shelf.....an experience completely devoid of feeling.
Regularly labored with animals, in the soil, were filthy	Are afraid of germs, have clean pets, and take showers daily
As a baby were breastfed, maintained frequent	As a baby are put in car seats and strollers, sleep

skin-to-skin contact with their parents, did not sleep alone, and were comforted to stop from crying, especially at night when he could be a tasty meal for a predator.	in separate rooms, are allowed to cry, and are encouraged to “self-soothe” - at the advice of pediatricians – in opposition to the senses.
Had healthy colons that contained thousands of different species of micro-organisms.	Have unhealthy colons that have more than 50% fewer species of micro-organisms.
Cut wood and made fires to cook or stay warm.	Turn a dial on the stove/thermostat to cook or stay warm.
To make light, had to procure lamp oil regularly, and put fires out themselves if a mistake was made.	To make light, flip a switch. In the event of a fire, push 911 and professionals rush over to put it out.
Might go for days or weeks without food, sometimes facing starvation	Don't know what real hunger feels like, and whine about low blood sugar and “needing” a snack or a meal every few hours.
Made and bought things for their physical form and function, and kept them until their utility degraded beyond repair.	<i>Make</i> nothing. <i>Buy</i> things for style - their capacity to promote an image - to make us look successful and happy, and discard them when they are out of fashion.
Physically handed to each other money that was made of precious metals or of paper backed by precious metals.	Electronically transfer money that does not physically exist and is not backed by anything real.
Felt genuine love and joy of intimate communion while working on survival requirements with other men	Scream at the TV and hug each other when our soccer team scores the winning goal.
Spent time with about a dozen friends with whom we subconsciously exchanged sensory information. We could see, hear, smell, and touch them; knowing them <i>both</i> rationally and intuitively.	Post on Facebook and text hundreds of “friends” with no sensory involvement. All information is controlled and virtual – through letters, words, and symbols – knowing them <i>only quasi-rationally</i> .
Lied less. Even in business, his word was his honor (a word that shares the same etymological root as honesty).	Lies more. It's not a big deal. Everyone does it, especially in business.
Cared for our elders, out of genuine respect, empathy, and compassion.	Set our parents up in assisted-living homes to grow old and die, secretly hoping they'll leave us some money.
Cared for children, played with them, taught them. (Nearly all teachers were men)	Leave children to be raised by mothers and female child care professionals. (Nearly all teachers are women.)
Mourned profoundly and often, because our babies and children frequently died in front of us.	Drop our babies off at daycare because of “more important” things to do; then cry at movies, or when famous people die, like our favorite racecar driver, musician, politician, etc.
Earned their feelings of success and fulfillment by doing the hard work of taking care of families, neighbors, and friends.	Are not actually <i>needed</i> by their families, so the desire to feel successful is an <i>obsession</i> with careerism, competition, and winning for winning's sake, and the greedy accumulation of money, things, adventures, and ideas.
Out of necessity, observed and noticed more of what comes through the senses – and produced material things that can be sensed.	Are lost in thought, not valuing or noticing what's coming through their senses – and produce ideas and symbols,.....nonsense (non sense).

## The Loss of Community and Bonding

In the real world of the past men bonded together in communities. Cooperation, communication, trust, truth, and honor were essential virtues, bound to a community's ability to survive and thrive. Most of this is lost in today's virtual world, where few of us even know our neighbors very well, and are simply too busy to care. When men get together, it's usually far from home while working to get a paycheck from a company trying to make a profit, or while watching sports – both activities which provide a much lower quality and duration of bonding compared to that of the past, where men struggled together overcoming obstacles associated with keeping people in their homes and villages alive. *AND MAKE NO MISTAKE* people badly miss this lost feeling of unity, bonding, and togetherness. Nearly all of our activities can be construed, rightfully so, as surrogates attempts to regain that lost comradeship (love), and this is true of all efforts to be accepted, respected, and admired. People want simply to feel loved, and they'll take it in any form, however adulterated. But the fact is, as our world becomes more safe, secure and virtual; the necessities and opportunities for deep, sense-based, and meaningful bonding are becoming fewer and weaker.

The political Left has managed to exploit our need for love by offering surrogate actions mandated through taxation, laws, and the promotion of various causes designed to take care of us and intended to make us feel more bonded, more connected, more altruistic, and less guilty. This fails because it is a paternal-servile State doing the work of altruism, primarily through technology, so it is virtual, not real, and not voluntary. Enshrined state power cannot legislate the morality, generosity, and charity of its subjects. Virtue emanates from the hearts and minds of real people, or not at all.

Meanwhile, the political Right has promised that independence, individuality, and self-reliance will ultimately deliver us from evil, but none of the sort is even being attempted on a large-scale, and anyway, it would serve to do very little to satisfy our need to bond with each other. In fact, Ayn Rand, in her reaction to Communism (the quintessential ideological form of mandated bonding) declared altruism to be "evil". This is clearly an over-reaction, but an understandable one, given her experience as a child in which the Communists violently forced everyone to "give to each other," a corrupted type of forced virtue. Redistribution – especially when violent - of wealth and power by governments does not satisfy us, because people do not feel that it is of their own free choice. However, to simply promote individuality, and to discourage communal bonding and mutual caretaking, is throwing the moral baby out with the Marxist bathwater. Even Capitalism founding father Adam Smith declared man to be fundamentally sympathetic and concerned for others, NOT anti-altruistic, yet he still encouraged men to act in their own self-interest. This made sense and would work, with the provision that men still care for each other. Know your neighbor's name, and help her clean her gutters. But evidently the modern virtual man is too busy for this.

That man is a social animal and desires to love and be loved is nothing new. It's also nothing new that man is capable of being self-reliant, and is in fact most fulfilled when he overcomes real obstacles and genuinely provides for his own sustenance. But in the new virtual world, he has lost this too. Very few men can take care of themselves, nor want to, let alone take care of others. This is not a theory, but something that can easily be observed.

Healthy masculinity (Yang) is rational, individualistic, and competitive. Healthy femininity (Yin) is intuitive, communal, and cooperative. We are ALL BOTH. Out of a Yin-Yang balance love

can emerge. Without love no ideology, no -ism (neither socialism, communism, capitalism, liberalism, etc.) can function effectively to fulfill man's objectives and desires.

### **The Loss of "The Importance Gauge" and the Triumph of Nonsense (Non+Sense)**

The pattern is obvious. Our lives are becoming increasingly virtual and less sensory. We can afford to walk, drive our cars, even talk – occupied with thought - with little awareness of what is coming through our senses here and now. In the past, actual survival threats kept us more attuned to our sensory experience. We had a clear understanding that matters of survival were important and other matters were less important. Today, because survival is practically a given, we've lost our "importance gauge", and don't agree on what's important and what isn't. You are free to think whatever nonsense (non-sense) you want, assign to it whatever importance you want at the whim of your own ego, and then defend it as if it is as real as a physical threat. There are no real consequences to prevent us from spreading messages that makes no "sense". For example, we say things like "Sometimes you have to lie", or "All things in moderation", or "Greed is good", or "You deserve a break today at McDonalds", or "Coke adds life", or "Love. It's what makes a Subaru and Subaru", or give advice to our children such as "You can be whatever you want to be, if you just try hard enough", or "It doesn't matter if you're a girl or a boy." This applies to "self-talk" as well: "If I just had more money, or that new car, I would be happy", or "my boss is making me miserable." A rigorous examination reveals that these statements make no "sense" but we say them anyway, unwittingly spreading messages that are misleading, dishonest, and harmful.

The script of "success" that we follow today is a compilation of such nonsense, usually to promote unhindered production and consumption. The belief that obedience to this script will make us happy is spread through "memes" (packets of information transmitted between people by language, symbols, gestures, imitation, and customs). This process has nothing to do with survival or even virtue. It is simply a means of pleasure-seeking through ego-gratification. We are enslaved to this script, not free men. What is important is not's what is real, but what is pleasurable. Through the rapid construction of a manmade rectangular environment, as well as through the replacement of sensory personal contact with texting and apps; we have pushed real life away from our senses. Obedience to this script makes us less free and less inclined to value actual life in this brave new virtual world.

*"What?! Of course I value life. I don't even like killing spiders in my house, certainly not in front of my 4-year-old girl."*

Right! This is true. We do value life, but it is on a steep downward trend in today's virtual world where most of life and death is out of sight and out of mind. Without an importance gauge based in the senses, it can become normal for a man to feel, think, and speak more passionately about his favorite sports team than he does about why his tax dollars are being spent to kill innocent people thousands of miles away. Life and death have become phenomena that occur at a distance, far away from our daily urban scripted action – in national parks, slaughterhouses, hospitals, and battlefields - feeling more like a video game than anything sensed directly.

We are pooling together threats without properly discriminating between virtual and real, and our attention stays focused on the virtual threats, making us vulnerable to the real ones

## The Side-Effects of Unbalanced Growth – Real Threats

Contrasted with the unpredictable volatility of the pre-domesticated natural world; the new manmade environment is engineered and controlled for sameness and the promise of security. Modern virtual living gives us a proud sense that we are safe because there's a routine, few surprises, and survival is practically a given. However, it has grown into a vain attempt to do the impossible - to divorce us from our biology, from nature itself – resulting in an insidiously unconscious contempt for everything natural, hence all of life, including our biological selves.

*“We have come to see ourselves as the lords and masters of the Earth, entitled to plunder her at will. The sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life are symptoms that reflect the violence present in our hearts. We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the Earth; that we breathe her air and receive life from her waters.” – Pope Francis*

The manmade environment (Yang) continues its speedy course of overtaking the natural (Yin), and *both* masculinity and femininity are the casualties, *both* dying fast in the virtual world. We spend more time indoors than ever, and many of us, especially children, now suffer from what some are calling Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD) and Vitamin N deficiency (“N” for Nature). More and more, we view the outdoor world, our Mother Nature, as an entertaining playground at best, as a hostile opponent at worst; but less and less as a complimentary force, let alone what it really is: a complex web of dynamic interrelations that includes human beings and needs respect, nurturing, *real feminine* nurturing, and masculine protection, from both men and women. Pride in the belief that we've “conquered” natural hazards, besides being ignorant of the observations, is making us overconfident and dangerous.

We've dammed the stream of survival threats for now, but they are building, and when the dam breaks, we could be overwhelmed by the consequences.

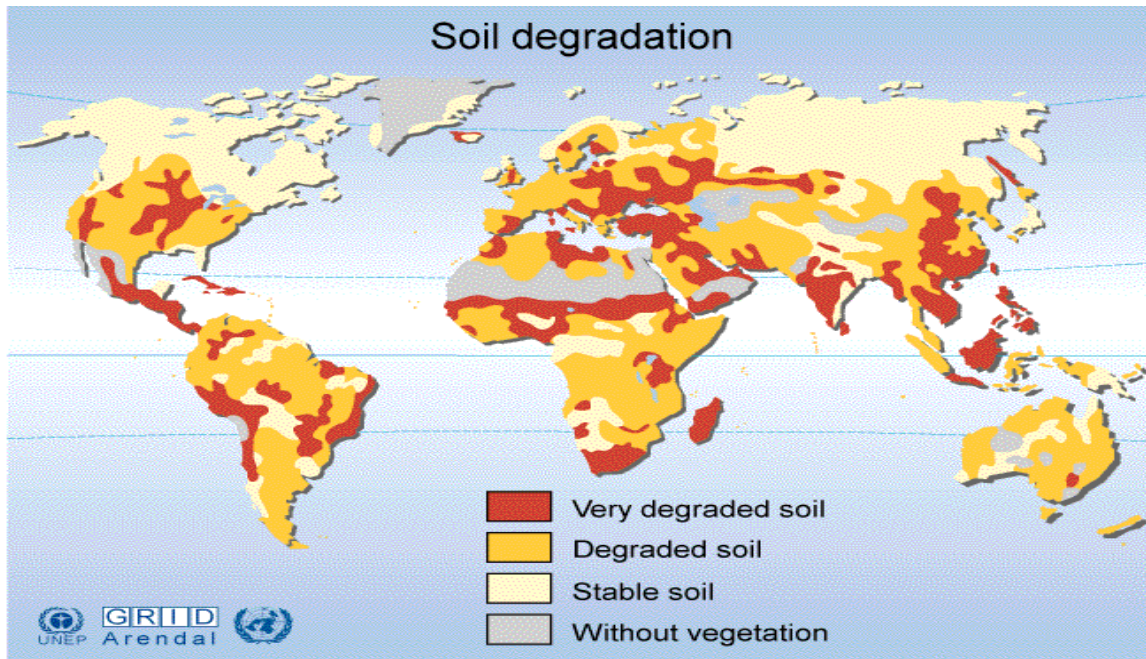
*Our hubris appears to be turning against us in the manner of a boomerang; lacking in love and humility, the will to have power over nature and over life gives rise to the fear in us that we ourselves can become manipulated beings, empty of meaning. If in former times mankind was afraid of the forces of nature, helpless and at the mercy of threatening demons and avenging gods, today we must be afraid of our very selves. -Fritz Riemann*

### What Threats? Let's look at the soil.

Topping the list is the fact that our new mainstream food system, with all the factory farms and transportation networks, is viciously anti-nature, over-optimized and fragile; not redundant, local, robust, and sustainable. Food is a basic biological need, but we take its abundance for granted, because it's so easy to find something eat, and cheaper (as a percentage of ones earnings) than ever before in human history. Yet it's a power-outage or monetary system breakdown away from a (hopefully) short-duration collapse. If the grocery stores cannot use their electronic equipment (refrigerators, freezers, registers, lights, etc.) or if they cannot find a solvent bank (to make payroll, to pay bills), then they must close their doors, and keep them closed, unless forced to reopen them (through martial law?). The vulnerabilities of the new virtual power grid

and virtual currency makes this scenario increasingly plausible. When I raise this concern with others, it is usually met with sophistry, derision, or shallow jokes; not rational arguments.

An even more fundamental and less obvious threat is that we are rapidly destroying the very water and soil on which all life depends. The grasslands are the foundation of all of terrestrial life. These plants are necessary for animals to consume, for the overall health of the soil, and for preventing the evaporation of rainfall and natural aquifers. Yet, huge monocrop agricultural conglomerates continue to till the earth and pump out the water to feed people in distant cities and cattle in feedlots. As a result, grassland destruction is skyrocketing, and soil is eroding at 10-40 times the natural rate, and our fresh waters are dwindling.

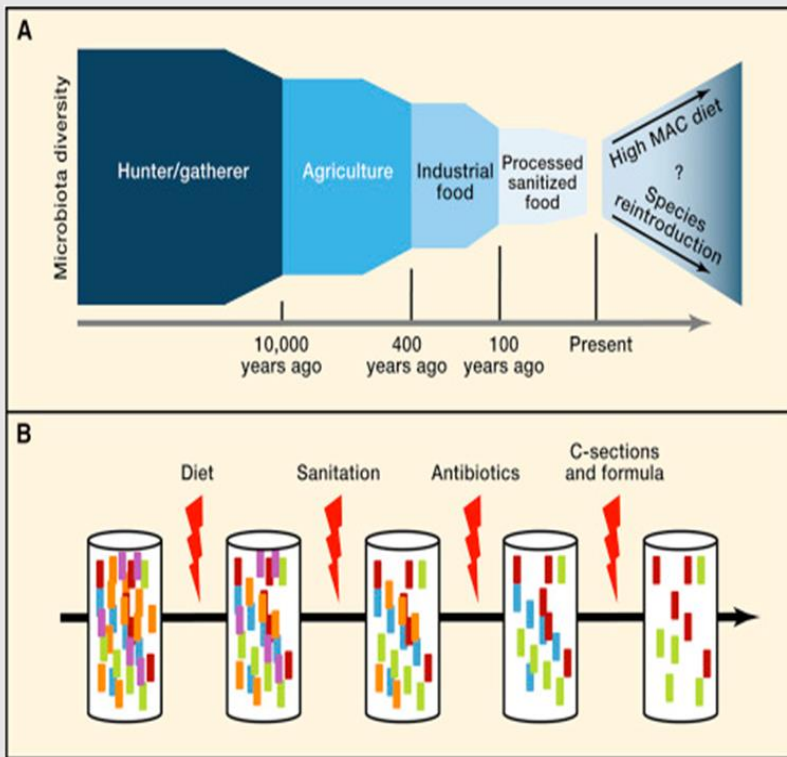


And it is all technically unnecessary, even though the powerful voices of the expert/industrial class tell us otherwise. We are impudently ignoring the many warnings of our wisest ancestors.

*“The system of agriculture, (if the epithet of system can be applied to it) which is in use in this part of the United States, is as unproductive to the practitioners as it is ruinous to the landholders.” -George Washington*

*.....cursed is the ground because of you: in toil you shall eat all the days of your life....thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you... Genesis 2.17-18*

Furthermore, we are destroying the foundation (the soil if you will) of our physiological health. As we poison and starve the paramount microbial life of our guts, we are harming our bodies and brains, which in turn makes us not only sick, but also unwise by compromising our ability to think rationally, and to access intuition.



The Multiple-Hit Hypothesis for How the Microbiota of Industrialized Societies Has Lost Diversity over Time

**A.** Microbiota diversity was likely altered at multiple stages of human evolution. As diversity and quantity of dietary Microbiota Accessible Carbohydrates (MACs) decreased with agriculture, industrialized food production, and processed food, the model reflects data that indicate a corresponding decrease in microbiota diversity.

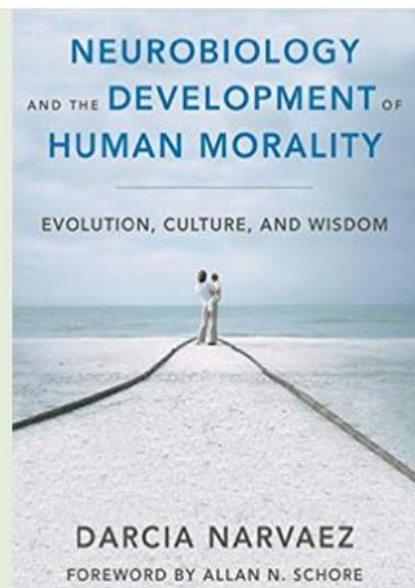
**B.** While diet is likely a key mediator of microbiota diversity, additional technological and medical leaps, while providing solutions for important problems such as infectious disease, have likely served as insults to the microbiota. These multiple hits have prevented the maintenance of microbiota diversity over recent generations.

And speaking of brains, the soil of psychological health and morality – of our capacity for empathy, compassion, hence cooperation and love – is found in the early brain development that gets adulterated and cut short by the fight-or-flight response chemicals experienced in the womb and in infancy, induced by the stressed-out mother, and/or unnatural caregiving. The stress put on infants and toddlers short-circuits the development of the prosocial behavior necessary for the effective functioning of our socio/economic institutions.

To paraphrase Thomas Paine, men are not angels, and the degree to which they are not angels is the degree to which they need an external power (a paternal/servile state) to keep them from encroaching on each other's liberties, ultimately from harming each other. Only if we nurture morality through balanced Yang and Yin values, beginning with early brain development, can we preserve life and liberty.

*“Breastfeeding infants, responsiveness to crying, almost constant touch, and having multiple adult caregivers are some of the nurturing ancestral parenting practices that are shown to positively impact the developing brain, which not only shapes personality, but also helps physical health and moral development.”*

- Darcia Narvaez, Notre Dame  
Professor of Psychology.



These cases of soil destruction are ultimately different manifestations of our continued unconscious centuries-long assault on authentically feminine (Yin) values.

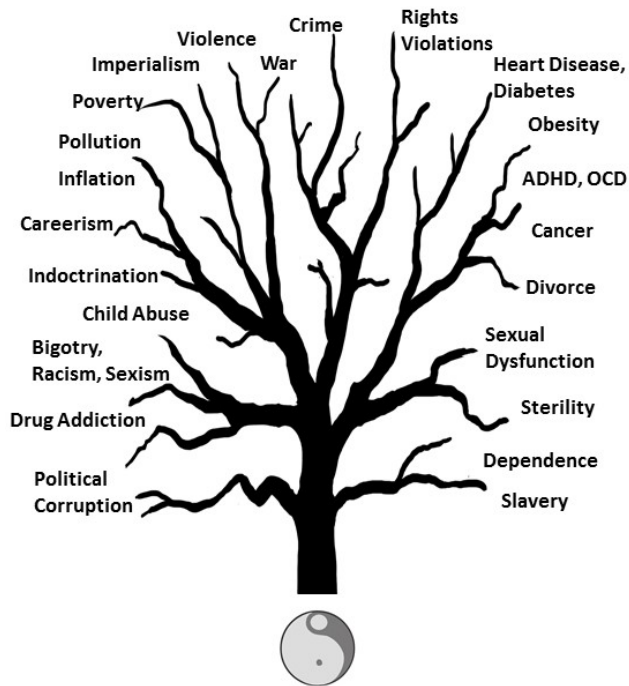
Add to this the high-tech weapons and other ways we can injure ourselves, and the potential for lethal neglect and conflict increases with our pride. Listening to the inflammatory rhetoric of some of our world leaders cannot possibly put us at ease about where we might be headed. Our wives and children are squarely in harm's way, and few men notice or care. When they do, and if they can see through the virtual-video-game mentality, they seem to have blind faith that the "federal government", or "market forces", or an "invisible hand", or "science", or "experts", or some other magical benign paternal power, like a *Deus Ex Machina*, will swoop in and save us from our irresponsible shortsightedness. This is wishful and reckless thinking, not masculine in the least, and indicative of a frightening willingness to abdicate our basic responsibilities required of being alive, as free stewards of the planet, and as loving caretakers of ourselves and of our fellow humans.

**Even if no threats are growing in the dark, we can be much better.**

Health outcomes, particularly for women and children, have been trending downward over the last several decades in nearly every category: early childhood death, depression, suicide, drug use (OTC, street, and prescription), ADD, ADHD, obesity, cardiovascular disease, cancer, early onset type-2 diabetes, and other chronic diseases of all kinds. There is still a tremendous number of real humans suffering in the real world, especially in the Middle East and Third world; and we who are the spoiled beneficiaries of the hard work and sacrifice of previous generations, are in a unique position of unprecedented wealth, power, and overall capability to help; but don't offer much real help. Instead we offer virtual assistance, occasionally throwing some medications, fiat currency, bombs, and cheap food in their direction and expecting the victims, whose plight is usually worsened by our "aid", to show some gratitude. We then take pride in our sophisticated rationalizations, usually in some liberal or conservative ideology or another, so that we feel less guilty about not having done better. It is our pride that makes us feel safer than we really are, that we *deserve* only the good fortune we've experienced in our lifetimes, and that we *deserve* to continue to receive special treatment, to not work at assisting others who are less fortunate.....and to not even notice unintended negative consequences of our good deeds. Masculinity does not allow itself to be deceived like this.

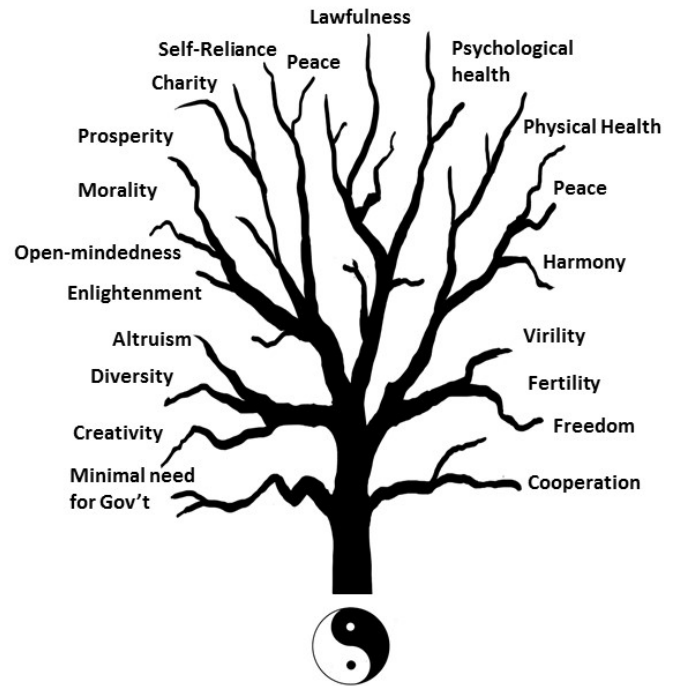


## Sickness



***Pride, Unbalanced Soil***

## Health



***Humility, Balanced Soil***

It may be that all of our problems are rooted, one way or another, in unbalanced soil. These problems are primarily symptoms, and only secondarily causes of yet more problems. They are most visible above ground, in the branches and leaves, so that's where we normally direct our attention and arguments. However, treating symptoms (political action, going to a march, spraying leaves, pruning branches, taking a pill, dropping loved ones off at daycare, fighting for a pre-scripted "cause"), even though it has an immediate effect and we feel good (pride in having "the right answer" or in having made "progress"), does not restore balance to the soil. Yet we continue to act out our primal fight-or-flight response above ground, rarely noticing, let alone healing, the roots and soil.

"Maybe you are searching among the branches for what only appears in the roots." - Rumi

If we first simply notice how Mother Nature does things, we will be on our way to solving not only the problems with our food system, ecology, our physical and psychological health; but ALL our problems. We don't need to invent new technologies, nor to "think" more (Yang). Just observe (Yin), then mimic nature, see what happens, then observe again, mimic nature, see what happens, repeat. A very simple algorithm. This is the process of all natural, holistic, fractal growth. Even non-living things - like the cracks in dry dirt, lightning strikes, river networks - follow this fractal growth process. If our minds mimic these patterns, we live and grow. If we don't, we suffer, like we do today in our virtual, man-made world replete with rectangles and Euclidean geometry. This is hard for me admit, because I have so much pride in all the advancements we've made (or at least those my ancestors made), and it's hard to see the truth through pride's blinding light.