

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

– A Letter from Our Great Grandchildren

Our Forefathers, writes a 22nd century citizen, in the late 1900's and early 2000's, conceived the theory of sustainability – to consider inter-generational equity in their actions. That is, to leave the planet at least in the state that they had found. It failed – due to the good, the bad and the ugly of humankind. I am not writing about how they may have succeeded, for I know not, but indeed about why they failed.

The good – came from a sense of self-examination. They started cleaning up their act, especially when they realised that certain substances and actions had associated harmful health effects. They noticed that the biodiversity of the planet was starting to shrink, and saved the Tiger, the Panda and the Rhino. They also made the vital link between ecology, and biodiversity, as well as recording climate change. They gave a helping hand to those in need in – to what were then - poorer nations. They had good intentions, but did not know what to do with them.

The bad – rose through the debate of social versus environmental change. Instead of considering the possibility of both social and environmental betterment, they traded-off between, with only token improvements in both. It also rose through the need for certain value systems to precede others – a belief that, in the past, had their own forefathers in trouble. In this pursuit, they fought wars, spending effort and resources on worthless pursuits, at least as it seems to us now.

The ugly – came from growth of capitalism and materialism. The romanticism with growth grew. The love affair with money, became a marriage. They each wanted a house, a car, a holiday and a Chardonnay, and the politicians responded. They were greedy – in the nicest possible way. This was the origin of the term 'the big eaters'. As the hunger for raw materials, and thirst for fossil fuels grew, they forgot the need for basic necessities, such as clean air and adequate water. They started looking outside our planet – to other planets, as their stomachs started to growl.

Today, we are left with a land so dry and barren.

The above account is entirely fictional, and for the sake of future generations, I pray it remains so.

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