

In Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History*, he successfully makes a case for both the demise of a culture as well as the creation of a new one. In looking at the geneses of civilizations he commences with the reason(s) the preceding civilization fell in the first place. In doing this, he makes the following comments: (somewhat paraphrased)

“..the differentiation takes place in the antecedent civilization *when it begins to lose its creative power*. When this happens, the ailing civilization pays the penalty by being disintegrated into a dominant minority (our current politicians) which rules with increasing oppression, but no longer leading.”

“... the dominant minority's will to suppress evokes in the common man a sense he has a soul of his own that he wants to keep alive; from that comes a desire to secede. As the conflict progresses and the society becomes more and more lifeless, the common man breaks free from what was once his spiritual home, now become a prison house and finally a City of Destruction.”<sup>1</sup>

As Solomon quipped, “There is nothing new under the Sun”; neither are the frustrations under which some of us labor. Indeed, what was once our spiritual home here in the USA has become a prison to our souls. In a prison of the soul, the mind is violated, the will is perplexed and the emotions are damaged. Finally, the “body” is destroyed, usually by violence.

Beneficial creativity always originates with the inward part of man. As it is written, “...he is kept in perfect peace whose creative imagination has confident expectation in the (original) Creator.” Creativity requires room; but when one's soul is in a prison, the room limits and squelches. When one who creates is surrounded by those who can only criticize, manipulate or condemn other's work, the creativity stops. When creativity is closed off, it is put in prison and is no longer free.

Worse yet, a prison is built and maintained by mutually disseminated information. That is, in whichever discipline (or institution) one might mention, there is a commonality of thought (or the lack thereof). Whether the field of endeavor is motorcycling, tire manufacturing, stock trading or oil and gas exploration, there is a fraternity which incorporates a standard pattern of thought and catch-phrases. In oil/gas exploration, the adherents read the same trade journals such as *World Oil*, the *Oil and Gas journal*, *The Oil and Gas Investor*, et al. Managers of related companies go to the same clubs, attend the same seminars, buy the same stock, and socialize with their peers.

As a result, their thought processes follow along the same tracks; catch phrases, operational clichés and *modus operandi* abound in poorly cloaked variations, but are expressed along the same vein. As such, the given field (or level of management) becomes mentally incestuous. Because of the incessant flow of acceptable viewpoints, as well as unspoken peer pressure to conform, few, if any new thoughts or concepts are allowed to enter. The slickest, most acceptable, well-dressed huckster with the latest hot stuff becomes fodder for the group-think.

This process occurs in religious matters, politics, civic organizations and anywhere else there is a substantial group. Hence, “group think” becomes a real (though oft-ignored) manifestation of such groups. This thing becomes pernicious in nature, or in the least counter-productive. It is my opinion “group-think” rears its ugly head wherever there is an organization with a **name**. (I suppose that is why Will Rogers said, he did not want to be a part of any organization that would have him as a member.)

It has been my experience over a 40-year period that new ideas find little reception amongst the Enlightened; even less amongst the Beautiful and Immaculate. It’s not that they are bad people; to the contrary, as citizens they are to be imitated and admired. These are happy people; let us not disturb their reverie with anything maverick.

Ergo, wildcat exploration is to be fortunately left to the blissfully ignorant entrepreneur, (preferably one from out-of-town). His mental corral can easily encompass a well-documented new idea.

As it stands now, I believe I will wait for the rare entrepreneur whose mind is not in a prison. Verily, my mind is violated for the last time, my will refuses to be perplexed, and my emotions are fed up with being contemned. I hate ties...

Somewhere out there is room; somewhere nearby are open spaces in which newness will flourish. I will wait...

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History ((Oxford University Press, New York, 1947) p. 366ff.