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Hope and Pessimism in 'Classical' 20th Century Civilizational Theory

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This paper¹ will involve an analysis of the relation between optimism, pessimism, and realism in 20th century classical civilizational theory, through the perspective offered specifically in Ernst Bloch's magnum opus *The Principle of Hope*. Bloch, a German Jew and unorthodox Marxist, wrote *The Principle of Hope* during 1938–1947 in exile fleeing the Nazi holocaust. Today, humanity in its entirety now faces another set of crises — pandemic, overpopulation, climate change, political impasse, economic inequality, social unrest, growing lawlessness and nuclear threat. One can easily be tempted to give up on the future of our increasingly fragile and endangered world.

It is therefore during catastrophic times that some sort of hope is most needed. How have 'classical' civilizational theories conceptualized hope, and what role does it play in the analyses these theories offer? The paper will attempt to briefly situate the writings of Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, Pitirim Sorokin and Andrew Targowski in this discussion and will specifically analyze the role of hope in these theories. By addressing their views from this particular perspective, I will try to offer a unique and timely focus on the theme for this 51st annual ISCSC conference: "The Future of Civilization."

Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope* and its Philosophical Background

During the 1920s and 1930s in Europe, a number of influential conservative thinkers produced wide-ranging narratives of cultural pessimism invoking a fallen modernity and the decline of western civilization. The most famous among these narratives was Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, which described western civilization as going through stages, from youth to adulthood to a sick, impotent, sterile old age, with high modernity ushering in the final chapters.²

Pessimism in many contexts is not an unreasonable perspective to hold. Pessimism recognizes the seriousness of life's negative events and the catastrophes of history, and the twentieth century was clearly a century of world wars and unprecedented mass death.

¹ This paper is dedicated to the memory of my father, Stanley Rosner (1928-2019).

² The contrast between the worldviews of Bloch and Spengler is highlighted in JP Stern, "Marxism on Stilts- Review of Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope*" , *New Republic*, 196, March 1987).

The problem with pessimism is when it leads to resignation (giving up on finding solutions to problems), or to desperate political “solutions” like Nazi fascism in Germany.³

Against this backdrop of world war and genocide, with German intellectual life marked by this pessimistic worldview, Ernst Bloch’s forward-looking, optimistic work stands out in stark contrast to this apocalyptic ethos. *The Principle of Hope* begins with the following startling introduction:

Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? What are we waiting for? What awaits us? Many only feel confused. The ground shakes, they do not know why and with what. There is a state of anxiety; if it becomes more definite, then it is fear...But now...a feeling that suits us better is overdue...It is a question of learning hope.⁴

Rather than try to recreate a past of idealized nostalgia or outline the specific parameters of some sort of imaginary “ideal state,” he stressed the *noch nicht* — the “not yet” — that which is yet to come, and its role in the formation of the crucial emotion of hope. He wrote: “Only with the farewell to the closed, static concept of being does the real dimension of hope open. Instead, the world is full of propensity towards something, tendency towards something, latency of something, and this intended something means fulfillment of the intending.”⁵

Hope - Its Dangers and Limits

Bloch’s basic conceptualization of hope (see Joe Davidson)⁶ contains within itself a number of other interesting complexities. For example, what exactly is the relation between hope and disappointment as experienced in everyday life? Do hope and disappointment assume each other? Do they somehow contain the seeds of each other within themselves? Just as one couldn’t know light without knowing darkness or darkness without knowing light, could one really know hope without disappointment or disappointment without hope? Bloch admits as much:

³ Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of our Times*, trans. Neville Plaice & Stephen Plaice (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1991), *passim*.

⁴ Ernst Bloch, “Introduction” to *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, et al, Cambridge MA, MIT press, 1995) p. 3.

⁵ Ernst Bloch, “Introduction” to *The Principle of Hope*, p. 18.

⁶ Joe Davidson, “A Dash of Pessimism? Ernst Bloch, Radical Disappointment and the Militant Excavation of Hope.” *Critical Horizons*, 2021.

Even well-founded hope can be disappointed, otherwise it would not be hope. In fact, hope never guarantees anything. It...points openly to possibilities that in part depend on chance for their fulfillment. Hope can learn...through damaging experiences, but it can never be driven off course.⁷

Are hope and optimism helpful or dangerous attitudes to uphold? It might be instructive to also inquire into hope through a lens of general psychological attitudes. Consider some of the dangers of optimism, as elucidated by Michael Milona:

A natural concern about dispositional optimism is that it is risky, leaving people open to crushing disappointment. The world is full of heartbreak and tragedy...a person that is pessimistic, or at least less optimistic, may be more insulated from the emotional damage of failure and tragedy.

But there is also some contrary data Milona cites:

There are important studies measuring optimism before and after tragedy. According to Carver and Scheier...the results of such studies indicate that greater optimism before tragedy doesn't lead to greater distress after; and in some cases, optimism even seems to insulate against such distress.⁸

Does optimism lead to crushed aspirations and dashed hopes, or does it foster resilience through these disappointments? It appears that some people are more optimistic, and some more pessimistic, than others. It also seems that, paradoxically, some people who have experienced extreme trauma in their lives remain more positive in general outlook, while others who seemingly have experienced less trauma sometimes end up bitter, frightened and broken. Is it a matter of temperament, upbringing, or other factors?

Moreover, what if one's optimism (either in personal or theoretical matters) is completely misplaced? Bloch's philosophy of hope was sharply criticized as simply inappropriate, given the catastrophic backdrop of Germany in the interwar period. In a particularly memorable quote about Bloch's *Principle of Hope*, Walter Benjamin writes:

⁷ Ernst Bloch, "Kann Hoffnung enttauscht werden"? Quoted in Jack Zipes, *Ernst Bloch: The Pugnacious Philosopher of Hope*, (Cham, Switzerland: Springer/Palgrave, 2019), 17.

⁸ Michael Milona, *Hope and Optimism*. <https://www.templeton.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/JTF-Hope-Optimism.pdf>

The serious objection which I have of this book (if not of its author as well) is that it in absolutely no way corresponds to the conditions in which it appears, but rather takes its place inappropriately, like a great lord, who arriving at the scene of an area devastated by an earthquake can find nothing more urgent to do than to spread out the Persian carpets — which by the way are already somewhat moth-eaten — and to display the somewhat tarnished golden and silver vessels, and the already faded brocade and damask garments which his servants had brought.⁹

There is some truth to this critique. Bloch was a Jewish refugee from Hitler's Germany. How much authentic hope and optimism could he really have had? Bloch intimately knew the horrors of early 20th Century Europe. He lived through it. Was he just ignoring reality? Was he in denial about the catastrophes he had witnessed? Perhaps his masterwork illustrated the truth of TS Eliot's phrase: "Humankind cannot bear very much reality."

Or was it rather that Bloch took the long view of human psychology — he had the wisdom to know that in the final analysis, and after all that we experience and live through in this world, we simply have no choice but look towards the future, to dream of a better life. This is his message of salvation, his version of messianism.¹⁰ As originally said in the Biblical Book of Proverbs, and later reiterated by the scholar of utopia, Ruth Levitas: "where there is no vision, the people perish."¹¹ There is a need for hope in catastrophic times. Compare this with the heartbreaking passage from Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*, written before she was sent to Auschwitz and subsequently murdered:

It's difficult in times like these: ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart.¹²

But there is also false hope, which can also be a dangerous thing. Perhaps the most famous illustration of this comes from Thucydides' chapter "The Melian Dialogue" in *The History of the Peloponnesian Wars*. In this situation, Athens confronted the heretofore neutral city of Melos to side with them against Sparta.

⁹ Walter Benjamin, "Letter to Alfred Cohn (1935)" in Benjamin Walter, *Briefe*, 11. eds. Scholem, G. & Adorno, T. 1966).

¹⁰ See Wayne Cristaudo and Wendy Baker (eds) *Messianism, Apocalypse and Redemption in 20th Century German Thought* (ATF Press, 2006) pp. 79 ff.

¹¹ Ruth Levitas, "Where There is No Vision, The People Perish: A Utopian Ethic for a Transformed Future." <https://www.cusp.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/05-Ruth-Levitas-Essay-online.pdf>

¹² Anne Frank, *Diary of a Young Girl* (NY: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2010) p. 333

The Melians deliberated but decided not to side with Athens, citing their faith in the honor of the Spartans and their hope that the Spartans would come to their aid. What happened when their faith in such idealistic abstractions was confronted with the superior military power of Athens? Athens quickly put to death the men of Melos and enslaved the women and children. This was Thucydides' brutal lesson in political realism.¹³

By this account, “might makes right”, and the military balance of power outweighs lofty and high-flown abstractions such as hope, faith, and good will. The story thus illustrates the dangers of false hope. But then again, hope is the necessary precondition for any change for the better in this world. In the political realm, when has any good come out of hopelessness?

Hope and 'Classical' Civilizational Theories of the Twentieth Century

How is this debate relevant to 'classical' civilizational theory? In this paper, I will briefly consider the perspectives of Spengler, Toynbee, Sorokin and Targowski, specifically in connection with the question of hope versus pessimism about “the future of civilizations.” It is no accident that most of these theories came out of interwar Europe and its aftermath or were conceptualized by those who lived through some of its darkest hours.

That is why these theories are concerned with issues like the decline and disintegration of civilizations and the notion of calamity. Bloch wrote of the “not-yet” as the source of hope. But will the “not-yet” run out for humanity? Will it be the end of the anthropocene? What do classical civilizational theories say about the future of civilization?

One interesting thing to consider is that some of these theories offer or involve some version of hope. Some underlying questions are: Is it authentic hope? Is the notion of hope truly organic to the theories? Or is it somehow tacked on, ad hoc? Did these thinkers really believe in hope? And why should they have believed in hope, given the brutality they saw in their lifetimes?

Oswald Spengler and Cultural Pessimism in Interwar Germany

We already have touched upon Spengler's *Decline of the West* as the *locus classicus* for the movement of cultural pessimism of interwar Germany.

¹³ See Schlosser, Joel Alden (2013). “Hope, Danger’s Comforter’: Thucydides’ History and the Politics of Hope.” *The Journal of Politics* 75.1, 169-182.

Like many conservative thinkers of the time, Spengler was basically a romantic and his analysis invoked nostalgia for Germany's agrarian past, a yearning for a world exemplifying simplicity, solidity, tradition and groundedness, as well as a sense of wisdom in holding on to the essentials of life. The move from pre-industrial Europe to urban modernity was depicted in the works of Germany's cultural pessimists specifically in terms of loss — a dissolution of values, solidity and tradition, a move from a nostalgic rural utopia to an alienated industrial money-driven dystopia. These works reveal a basic impetus behind the conservative impulse: people are not able to easily process radical and rapid change.

Wilhelm Michel well expresses this theme here:

From an objective point of view, we have been besieged with too much that is new. Our powers of comprehension have been unable to keep pace with it. We stand, not in front of machines, but rather in front of the machine culture, exactly as if before a war; dragged in mid speech into the midst of the turmoil...in the face of the reality rising up all around us...¹⁴

Pessimism, fear and general overwhelm can be natural psychological reactions to what are perceived as recurring negative events and trajectories. In terms of the future, Spengler also offers a pessimistic prospect for world peace in "Is World Peace Possible?":

The question of whether world peace will ever be possible can only be answered by someone familiar with world history. To be familiar with world history means, however, to know human beings as they have been and always will be. There is a vast difference, which most people will never comprehend, between viewing future history as it will be and viewing it as one might like it to be. Peace is a desire, war is a fact; and history has never paid heed to human desires and ideals.¹⁵

More specifically and perhaps more disturbingly, Spengler also says the following: "It is the great task of the connoisseur of history to understand the actualities of his age and, using them, to sense the future, to indicate and to sketch out what will come, whether we desire it or not."¹⁶

¹⁴ Wilhelm Michel. "Dichtung und Gegenwart" (*Neue Rundschau*, 7, 1931)

¹⁵ Spengler's cultural pessimism and arguments for decline have found some resonance in today's zeitgeist of crisis as well. Hence this quote can be found on the popular website: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/680331-the-question-of-whether-world-peace-will-ever-be-possible>. Original cite: Oswald Spengler, *Reden und Aufsätze* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1937), 292.

¹⁶ See Oswald Spengler, "Introduction" to *Jahre der Entscheidung* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1933).

He follows this with "...ultimately, man will always resort to violence in some form or another"...a man may "be branded a criminal, a class can be called revolutionary or traitorous, a people bloodthirsty, but that does not alter the actuality" that violence is inescapable.¹⁷

Another famous proponent of pessimism was philosopher Martin Heidegger, who wrote:

The spiritual decline of the earth has progressed so far that peoples are in danger of losing their last spiritual strength, the strength that makes it possible even to see the decline. ...in every corner...the darkening of the world, the flight of the gods, the destruction of the earth, the massification of man, the contemptuous suspicion of everything that is creative and free has reached such proportions that such childlike expressions such as pessimism and optimism have long become laughable.¹⁸

The basic question is 'where are these pessimistic viewpoints ultimately leading'? Pessimism may contain a grain of truth, but in the long run it seems a dead-end, leading mostly to dangerous results.¹⁹ Is there another, more helpful way of thinking through catastrophic times?

Arnold Toynbee: History, Catastrophe and the Comparative Study of Civilizations

The role of hope is somewhat ambiguous in Toynbee's writings. Toynbee was an astute observer of the horrors of the world wars and their aftermath. Hence, David Wilkinson recalls the "cascade of catastrophes" that formed the background of Toynbee's world-view, starting with World War One:

The war's consequences — the destruction of German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian regimes and empires, the near-destruction of the victorious British and French empires, and, most of all, the c. seventeen million military and civilian death toll — justify the name of "catastrophe," in both the senses of "unexpected reversal" and "sudden disaster."

¹⁷ Oswald Spengler, "Introduction" to *Jahre der Entscheidung*.

¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. G. Fried & R. Polt. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 29.

¹⁹ Yet, while Heidegger was a Nazi, we must also confront the fact that Bloch, for all his optimism, was a staunch Stalinist, and Stalin was a mass murderer arguably as bad as Hitler. It has been theorized that Bloch's Stalinism can be explained insofar as Bloch was a Marxist and he shortsightedly saw Stalin as the strongest existing force fighting against Nazi fascism at the time. Yet from a critical distance, both Heidegger's Nazism and Bloch's Stalinism could be seen as object lessons in the dangers of Caesarism in desperate times.

The onset of World War II (1939–1945, or, more accurately and less Eurocentrically, 1937–1945) was another sort of catastrophe, in that this “sudden disaster,” with c. 50–80 million dead, was amply foreshadowed, and followed years of arduous preventive efforts that ultimately failed. World War II of course contained, was capped by, gave birth to, and concluded with, the First Nuclear War (August 6–9, 1945, c. 100,000–300,000 dead), which, in Toynbee’s eyes as in those of others, menaced an even more horrific sequel.²⁰

Toynbee in *A Study in History* had much to say about the decay and disintegration of civilizations. Situating his views into historical context, it is not difficult to see why. In light of his discussions of the disintegration of civilizations, he also appeared to see some light at the end of the tunnel, exemplified through his discussion of the cycles of love and hate throughout history, as well as his idea regarding the role of love as the ultimate salvation of mankind.

This emphasis on universal love shows the influence of Christianity on Toynbee, as well as interesting similarities with the Presocratic philosopher Empedocles, who argued that the universe is ultimately governed by endless cycles of love and strife. Empedocles wrote: “These never cease changing place continuously, now being all united by love into one, now each borne apart by the hatred engendered of strife, until they are brought together into the unity of the all and become subject to it.”²¹

Toynbee asked whether major religions of the world are moving towards reconciliation and progress. Or is it more the “clash of civilizations” scenario as per Samuel Huntington? Toynbee concludes: “In the universe as in the human world love is perpetually striving to overcome hate. But on this larger spiritual battlefield too, love's victory is not assured.”²² So again, Toynbee seemed somewhat undecided and ambivalent about the role of hope with regard to the future of civilizations.

Pitirim Sorokin: Calamity and Reconstruction

In *Man and Calamity* and other works, Pitirim Sorokin (the first president of The International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations, or ISCSC) discussed how modern western culture has become increasingly “sensate” and decadent, reflecting spiritual disintegration and the dissolution of values and higher ideals (see also similar views in Spengler and in H. Broch's novel *The Sleepwalkers*).

²⁰ See David Wilkinson, “Toynbee and the World Wars Catastrophe: From the Philosophy of History to the Comparative Study of Civilizations” in D.J. Rosner (ed.) *Catastrophe and Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019), 222.

²¹ “Empedokles: Fragments and Commentary,” in *The First Philosophers of Greece* (London. K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1898), A. Fairbanks, ed & trans. <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/presoc/emp.html>

²² See David Wilkinson, “Toynbee and the World Wars Catastrophe: From the Philosophy of History to the Comparative Study of Civilizations” in D.J. Rosner (ed), *Catastrophe & Philosophy*, 233.

In this sense Sorokin was also a cultural pessimist, an astute diagnostician of the malaise of western modernity. But he later moved on from analyzing the existing problems of western modernity, and also began to focus his attention on how to reduce our primitive proclivities towards conflict and war in the future and how to improve the human situation overall. He began to promulgate a version of altruism involving the striving towards universal love, which we see in *The Reconstruction of Humanity*, *The Ways and Power of Love*, and elsewhere.

For Sorokin, we ourselves could save the destructive impulses in humanity through a movement towards universal love and he outlined a number of concrete steps for altruistic action. Sorokin wrote “An increase in our knowledge of the grace of love has become the paramount need of humanity.”²³ However, although the belief in altruism and the striving for universal creative love sounds like an impressive solution, the nagging question remains: Is altruism as he saw it basically a utopian and unrealistic idea? Exactly how would the human race as a whole, with all its dizzying complexity and diversity, actualize an abstraction as nebulous as “universal love” in a concrete, tangible way?

Today we witness the growth of a movement called ‘effective altruism’. And we know that human beings as individuals and in groups can make minor changes in the world and hopefully improve things. Some action is certainly better than nothing, and large social movements always start with small steps.

But what are the prospects and limitations of Sorokin’s admittedly admirable and inspiring doctrine of altruism, especially given what some more realist thinkers have always seen as the more violent, selfish, and competitive aspects of human nature? Some more pessimistic (or some would say ‘realistic’) thinkers like Hobbes, Nietzsche, and James Madison would emphasize instead the human propensity for factionalism, selfishness and “the will to power,” and they would be skeptical of notions like universal love as being basically unrealistic and simply not in accord with human nature. However, if we don’t even try to act on our better instincts to improve our world, if we are always citing the inevitability of selfishness in the name of ‘realism,’ of course this selfishness and factionalism will simply become a self-fulfilling prophecy and perpetuate itself — the status quo in the world will therefore remain as is or even worsen.

So, is there a real choice? We will see more on this classic dichotomy between realism and idealism in the next section.

²³ See Pitirim Sorokin, *The Ways and Power of Love: Types, Factors and Techniques of Moral Transformation*. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1954)

Andrew Targowski – Educating for Wisdom

Andrew Targowski (11th President of ISCSC) first became interested in the future of civilization through his personal experiences with suffering and tragedy in World War II Poland under both the Nazis and the Communists. Although formally trained in the information sciences, his theoretical interests eventually began to shift into more philosophical questions about humanity and its future.

In light of what Targowski calls "the death triangle" of civilization (consisting of overpopulation, ecological crisis, and a crisis of resources) currently facing the world, Targowski emphasizes the education of the next generation with "wisdom" which will hopefully help humanity solve some of these problems. This emphasis would "impact almost every kind of higher education and particularly should be practiced in educating leaders of world societies".²⁴ Of course, different definitions of wisdom have been given for centuries by philosophers, religions, and other spiritual sources, but designing a curriculum for wisdom-based education is certainly an interesting idea, especially in today's post-modern world when so many trends in higher education seem focused more directly on material concerns.

What exactly is wisdom? Targowski seems to be emphasizing a shift away from a selfish, consumerist individualism that is now leading the world to disaster, towards the more universalist needs of the planet as a whole. This emphasis on the cooperation of human beings may also entail going against or resisting what some consider the natural human tendency towards conflict.

The problematic situation today is further compounded by the widespread phenomenon of "moral inertia", in which a problem that doesn't seem to be affecting us personally in the here and now is often postponed and ignored, as we "kick the can down the road" for future generations to deal with.²⁵ One question to ask here in light of these realities is this: does this notion of "wisdom" somehow involve changing or resisting human nature itself?

Thinkers have traditionally been divided into realist versus optimist camps. Realists may be said to include thinkers as diverse as Aristotle, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Nietzsche, Lorenz, Madison, and Freud, while optimists might include thinkers like Plato, More, Locke and Marx. Interestingly enough, pessimists often considered themselves realists.

²⁴ "Civilization's Impact Upon Education in the IIIrd Millennium" January 2011 *Dialogue and Universalism* 21(1): 6-30. See also Andrew Targowski, *The Limits of Civilization* (Hauppauge NY: Nova, 2015)

²⁵ See Carolina Sartorio, "Moral Inertia" *Philosophical Studies* 140 (1): 117 - 133 (2008)

In any case, it is doubtful that these pessimistic thinkers would have much faith in human beings acting collectively for the greater good without this effort ultimately devolving into self-serving, competing factions inevitably moving towards conflict rather than cooperation.

Questions, Prospects and Problems

Ronald Aronson suggests that in light of all the foregoing we don't need to and should not "abandon hope." But he argues further that the catastrophes of the twentieth century underscore how we need to find:

a chastened hope, one that is humbler, more tentative, narrowed, even if just as profoundly (but now critically) connected to...humanity's deepest longings and visions. Realistic hope, grounded in the world we live in even if inspired by utopia, demands seeing how narrowly the window is open, how difficult and dangerous are the currents blowing in. At the same time, emancipatory struggles...have continued, will continue, and sometimes will prevail.²⁶

This seems reasonable, but can we be more specific about the parameters of some sort of realistic middle ground between extremes of pessimism and optimism? It is true that "without vision the people will perish," but without a healthy dose of realism about human motivation, we could end up with a civilizational theory that is interesting but ultimately utopian and unrealistic.

As hinted at earlier, the problem for some of these theories fundamentally involves the problem of the individual versus the collective. The relation between the individual and society has always been conflicted and difficult. Ideals must be true to real patterns of human behavior. For example, it is perhaps a myth of communism that the individual would willingly sacrifice many basic freedoms, opportunities, and comforts for the betterment of the larger society. How much could the individual realistically give up for the greater good of society, and at what point would this sacrifice become experienced as unsustainable?

The matter is complicated. While it seems that a more collective approach to problems like environmental degradation is what the world needs now, consider that many collectivist political systems have not worked out particularly well over time. Most communist systems, such as the USSR, North Korea, and Cuba, ultimately became brutal dictatorships. The answers here are not as easy to solve as they might first appear. Again, this tension has been present in western political philosophy as far back as Plato and Aristotle — the problem won't be solved here.

²⁶ Ronald Aronson, "Review of *The Principle of Hope* by Ernst Bloch" in *History and Theory*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1991, p. 231.

Ultimately, and in conclusion, I believe Bloch was right about the deep need for hope in human life. His views were especially startling and original in that they arose out of such a catastrophic age. Bloch knew that pessimism, although perhaps justified and tempting to uphold in many cases, is ultimately a dead end, both in theory and in practice. We must orient ourselves towards the future, not the past. Of course, the problems and challenges facing humanity today can always be rationalized away as happening somewhere else, or to someone else, and in the future rather than the present. Only if and when these problems arrive at our own front door will people see the urgency of the situation.

It seems this is already happening in many cases. But how will we as a human race address these problems? What will be “the future of civilization”? Perhaps humanity will rally and do what is necessary to help solve the existential problems facing our world today. Or will it be “too little too late”?

As Bloch might have said: “One can only hope.”²⁷

²⁷ Thanks to Prof. David Wilkinson for his help with my understanding of a number of civilizational theories and other readings discussed in this paper.