



01

[1] It turns out that the secret behind our recently extended life span is not due to genetics or natural selection, but rather to the relentless improvements made to our overall standard of living.

[2] From a medical and public health perspective, these developments were nothing less than game changing.

[3] For example, major diseases such as smallpox, polio, and measles have been eradicated by mass vaccination.

[4] At the same time, better living standards achieved through improvements in education, housing, nutrition, and sanitation systems have substantially reduced malnutrition and infections, preventing many unnecessary deaths among children.

[5] Furthermore, technologies designed to improve health have become available to the masses, whether via refrigeration to prevent spoilage or systemized garbage collection, which in and of itself eliminated many common sources of disease.

[6] These impressive shifts have not only dramatically affected the ways in which civilizations eat, but also determined how civilizations will live and die.



02

[1] A vast academic literature provides empirical support for the thesis that it pays to be green.

[2] Large data sets have been constructed, measuring firm environmental behavior and financial performance across a wide number of industries and over many years.

[3] While the results are not unequivocal, there is evidence suggestive of a positive correlation between environmental performance and financial performance.

[4] In our own work, we find that, on average, a 10% decrease in a company's toxic emissions as reported in the US Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory – a database of toxic emissions from US manufacturing facilities— results in an average 3% increase in a firm's financial performance as measured by return on assets.

[5] Another study suggests that a 10% reduction in emissions could result in a \$34 million increase in market value.



03

[1] Scientific knowledge cannot account for correct aesthetic appreciation of nature because science represents natural objects as members of a specific class, rather than as individual entities.

[2] The science-based approach claims that aesthetically relevant properties are only those properties that all members of a natural kind share with each other.

[3] But this is not true.

[4] When we experience nature, we do not experience it as species, but as individual objects.

[5] And as separated into individual objects, nature can have aesthetic properties that are not entailed by its scientific description.

[6] Natural science can explain, for instance, the formation of the waterfall, but it has nothing to say about our experience of the majestic Victoria Falls when viewed at sunset, its reds and oranges countless and captivating; geology can explain the formation of the Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania, but not its painful and breathtaking beauty at sunrise, the fog slowly lifting above the crater and a lone hippopotamus dark and heavy in the lake.



04

[1] During the late 1800s, printing became cheaper and faster, leading to an explosion in the number of newspapers and magazines and the increased use of images in these publications.

[2] Photographs, as well as woodcuts and engravings of them, appeared in newspapers and magazines.

[3] The increased number of newspapers and magazines created greater competition – driving some papers to print more salacious articles to attract readers.

[4] This "yellow journalism" sometimes took the form of gossip about public figures, as well as about socialites who considered themselves private figures, and even about those who were not part of high society but had found themselves involved in a scandal, crime, or tragedy that journalists thought would sell papers.

[5] Gossip was of course nothing new, but the rise of mass media in the form of widely distributed newspapers and magazines meant that gossip moved from limited (often oral only) distribution to wide, printed dissemination.



05

- [1] The problem of amino acid deficiency is not unique to the modern world by any means.
- [2] Preindustrial humanity probably dealt with protein and amino acid insufficiency on a regular basis.
- [3] Sure, large hunted animals such as mammoths provided protein and amino acids aplenty.
- [4] However, living off big game in the era before refrigeration meant humans had to endure alternating periods of feast and famine.
- [5] Droughts, forest fires, superstorms, and ice ages led to long stretches of difficult conditions, and starvation was a constant threat.
- [6] The human inability to synthesize such basic things as amino acids certainly worsened those crises and made surviving on whatever was available that much harder.
- [7] During a famine, it's not the lack of calories that is the ultimate cause of death; it's the lack of proteins and the essential amino acids they provide.



06

[1] Application of Buddhist-style mindfulness to Western psychology came primarily from the research of Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

[2] He initially took on the difficult task of treating chronic-pain patients, many of whom had not responded well to traditional pain-management therapy.

[3] In many ways, such treatment seems completely paradoxical – you teach people to deal with pain by helping them to become more aware of it!

[4] However, the key is to help people let go of the constant tension that accompanies their fighting of pain, a struggle that actually prolongs their awareness of pain.

[5] Mindfulness meditation allowed many of these people to increase their sense of well-being and to experience a better quality of life.

[6] How so?

[7] Because such meditation is based on the principle that if we try to ignore or repress unpleasant thoughts or sensations, then we only end up increasing their intensity.