

# **The toilet bowl and civilization**

**by Phillip W. Weiss**

**We humans constantly excrete biowastes. It is as if nothing we eat is digested, as if everything we eat is converted into a foul-smelling brown pile of mush. The soup, potato chips, raisins bread and whatever else we eat is combined into one festering mass. Our bodies take in food, most of which is processed, break it down, rendering it unrecognizable, and then purges it out, to be flushed down the toilet which performs its function well. Whoever invented the modern toilet bowl made what may be the single most important contribution to human civilization.**

**A well-functioning toilet bowl makes civilization as we know it possible. There are accounts of how people lived before the invention of the toilet bowl. It was horrible. No wonder people were racked by plagues and other epidemics. The source of these diseases were the human biowastes that made a mockery of human civilization. The unsanitary conditions would have claimed all of us victims. We would have succumbed, as did so many others. Our immune systems would have broken down from the onslaught of microorganisms emanating from the human filth that was the product of a natural process that posed a direct challenge to human survival.**

**Before the toilet bowl, people crapped into buckets or other similar items, then covered the festering pile with straw and then dumped the contents into a sewer or a wagon driven by people whose job was to cart away the droppings.**

Everyone lived this way. The challenge posed by the accumulation of droppings transcended all social classes. Both king and peasant went to the outhouse. For the king, the outhouse was an elaborate structure, while for the peasant, it was a shack covering a hole in the ground. This call of nature was performed by all: men and women, young and old, rich and poor, who ate tainted diseased ridden food which alone could kill them, then excreted it out, and then repeated the cycle, which became the central feature of life.

It can be argued that life is about the production of waste which demands to be disposed. From the moment of birth, the human being demands to be fed. As infants, the child cries for food. The mother gives the breast, that special organ so intimately associated with nurturing, to the baby which sucks greedily until satisfied and then excretes without restraint. This is life at its purest. The baby is unfettered by the social constraints that impose strict rules on how we must excrete our biowastes. That moment of purity ends with toilet training. From then on, the baby must follow the rules or be shamed into complying. The baby is taught to use the toilet bowl. The mother teaches the baby how to operate the contraption and when to use it.

The toilet bowl is a contrivance. In nature there are no toilet bowls. Nature disposes biowastes through chemical processes that break down the waste and recombines it with the earth in what is the largest recycling process on the planet. Nothing is flushed. Rains come and may wash away some of the residue but that merely transports the waste to another place for recycling. However, nature does not reject waste. It is recycled.

Of course, a rainstorm may be imagined as a massive toilet bowl as nature uses the rain to wash away the waste, rendering clean and pure what was fouled by animals and humans leaving behind their fetid deposits. Maybe the person who invented the toilet bowl was inspired by a rainstorm. Yet, what we flush away as waste to be discarded, nature, in her infinite wisdom, collects and recycles which humans later utilize. Petroleum is decomposed vegetable matter that died, was buried, and transformed into a combustible liquid. Indeed, the oxygen we breathe is a waste product emitted by plants. We should be cognizant of these facts before judging too harshly the aesthetics our own biowastes.

The ancient Romans had a strong preoccupation with biowastes. The ancient Romans had no shame. They eliminated their biowastes in public, in massive communal baths whose ruins still exist today. These were massive structures. The Romans understood how flowing water could be used to wash away biowastes. Thus, they constructed massive aqueducts that carried water from reservoirs into the city where the water was channeled to the baths. We can only imagine what went on in these baths, to which people flocked for relief from the heat or to bathe and relieve themselves.

The Romans were natural people. Their conduct was not subject to the religious prohibitions imposed by Christianity which did not exist. They lived according to social rules of conduct that were set by the emperor who was a god and was also supreme military leader of the realm. So, in ancient Rome, conduct that would be considered taboo today was considered normal. These conducts

included incest, indiscriminate copulating, copulating in public, slavery, public depositing of biowastes, and ritualized murder masked as entertainment, i.e., gladiatorial fights. This is how the Roman people lived.

The ancient Romans were of unique genetic stock. They thrived, dominated the world, and then died off, replaced by barbarian hordes from whom emerged modern Europeans. These barbarians wiped away every vestige of ancient Rome. As a result, for the next ten centuries civilization DEVOLVED. It took one thousand years for Europe to recover from the destruction of the Roman empire.

It can be argued that some aspects of Roman civilization did survive, but that is a fallacy. The Roman civilization totally disappeared. It was a clean sweeping. It was as if a greater power took the debris that was Rome and flushed it down a toilet bowl. The symbols of Roman power became ruins. So thorough was this flushing that the Roman language, Latin, disappeared. AN ENTIRE LANGUAGE BECAME EXTINCT. When a language disappears, so goes the culture which utilizes that language. Think about it. There was a moment in history when the last Latin-speaking person died. What a momentous event in history! With the death of that person so ended an epoch. Yet that moment is not noted in history which is averse to chronicling the process by which humans transform entire cultures into junk not to be recycled but permanently trashed.