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One Square Foot, Gerbera Daisies

For the weekend...

from Douglas E. Welch

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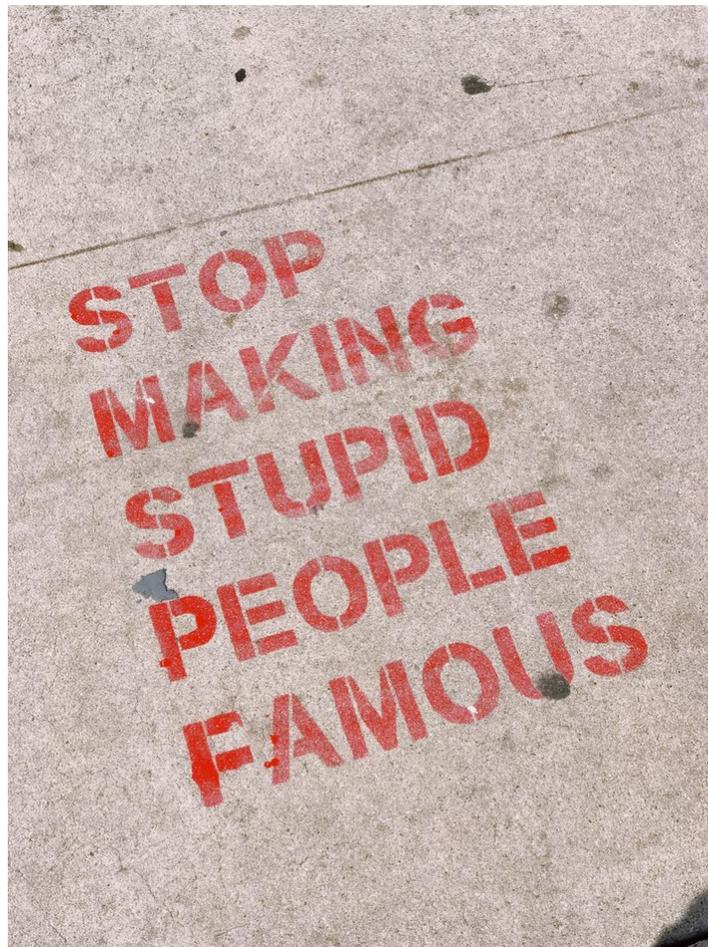
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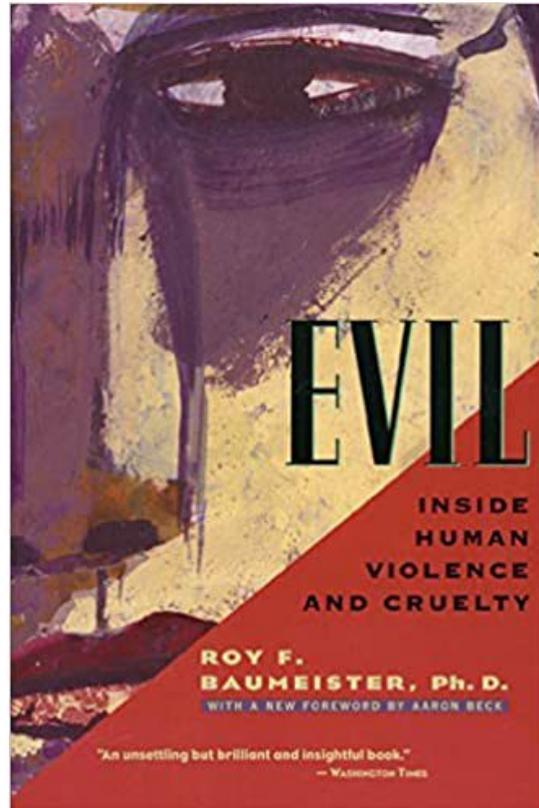


Evil and/or Stupid

I came across this excellent long review article on the nature of evil this week and it led me down a road of thought that I have often traveled before. What is evil? How do people justify it? What leads someone to do evil? Do they know it is wrong?. The review doesn't seek to excuse evil but rather to help us understand the forms of evil in hopes of recognizing it and acting against it when necessary.

[Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty](#)
—A Review by [Rob Henderson](#)

In his review, Henderson reviews what he calls "The best book to understand the psychology of evil, [Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty](#) by [Roy F. Baumeister](#) Ph.D." It is too much to try and sum up his thoughts here but I hope you take the time to read this review, if not the book itself.



One of Henderson's first statements is that we all like to believe that we are incapable of committing evil when in fact there are various ways to goad us into acting evil even if we might otherwise fight against it. There are forays into the intentionality of evil, and the myth of pure evil.

As we have seen both in our recent times, and throughout history, evil will be with us always. It can take many forms. It can lash out in many ways. It can cause horrible things. But it is not something that ever goes away entirely.

I think everyone would do well to read this review of the nature of cruelty and evil to help immunize yourself against the obvious attempts to do evil acts, compose evil laws, and attempt to build a government based on evil ideas. Perhaps then we can find a better way to progress through the next few decades. If we don't, many will suffer, perhaps even yourself and your family.

Stupidity As A Major Societal Problem

A related problem to evil is that of stupidity. Stupidity allows or facilitates the commission of many evil acts. The damage stupidity does is just as great, and perhaps even larger than the damage caused by evil alone. Evil can be understood and guarded against, but stupidity is much more insidious.

To be clear, we can all be stupid on occasion. It is a human trait that is part of our very nature. That said, for me, one of the great powers of humanity is our ability to reason. While we may commit stupid acts out of inattention, anger, and ignorance, we can and should fight against it. For me, I understand that I can do stupid things, but I also understand that it is important for me to do as few stupid things as possible to make my life, and the lives of those around me, a little bit better each day.

Most of us, I think, are frustrated most by those who fail to recognize their stupidity or do anything about it. I call this wanton stupidity. They care not to cure their ignorance and in some cases fight to retain that ignorance in the face of all evidence against it. These are your everyday contrarians who have decided that they know better than everyone else. They think themselves more important than anyone else. It seems that times they barely even consider those around them at all. They cause so much daily inconvenience and outright pain to those around them and yet know or care not.

These are the people who drive as if there is no one else on the road or the other drivers are simply supposed to understand what they are doing and read their minds. These are the people who refuse to follow rules that were made to help society function better for everyone. These are often the people who turn their own lives into a bag of chaos they carry everywhere with them and into whatever endeavor they are engaged in.

What can we do?

The most frightening realization is there is little we can do about these types of people. They simply don't have the will, or ability, to reason and empathize with others. This makes them dangerous. Through their stupidity they can put others and themselves at great risk, they can cause censorship, bad laws, racism, homophobic behavior, abuse, and even death, in the worst cases. Yes, intentional evil is dangerous, but random stupidity is, too.

There was little we can do to counteract these stupid people except isolate them and shun them. We need to identify them and quickly understand that we shouldn't do business with them, we shouldn't interact with them as friends or even family, and we certainly shouldn't support their stupid actions. We owe it to ourselves and others to try to break the cycle of stupidity and reduce the amount of damage it can cause.

Do you have wantonly stupid people around you? Are they leaving damage in the wake? What can you do to limit the damage? Always remember that it is very unlikely you will ever change their stupidity. They can only make that change by their thoughts and actions.

Their stupidity is often deeply ingrained and in many cases, they will fight for it. They will accuse you of the stupidity that they are guilty of. They will call you names. They will get angry with you. They will attack you. Regardless, reining in their stupidity benefits everyone, even the stupid themselves. In many cases, you are preventing the self-harm that these people will bring upon themselves.

Malice vs. Stupidity

There is an old "law" – Hanlon's razor – that states "...never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity." I think about this statement every day. Yes, there is evil in the world, but day-to-day I think we are much more affected by stupidity.

One clear way to make the world a better place is to address stupidity – both personal and societal – whenever and wherever you see it. This has an important carry-on effect. For each quashed act of stupidity, you are preventing countless follow-on effects. One small action can end up improving all.

Video

Ellen and William Craft - Anti-Slavery Fighters



There are so many amazing stories in history and this is just one of them. I love finding them in my reading and online travels. – Douglas

The most extraordinary escape story told.

Ellen Craft (1826–1891) and **William Craft** (September 25, 1824 – January 29, 1900) were [American fugitives](#) who were born and enslaved in [Macon, Georgia](#). They escaped to the [North](#) in December 1848 by traveling by train and steamboat, arriving in [Philadelphia](#) on Christmas Day. Ellen crossed the boundaries of race, class and gender by passing as a white male [planter](#) with William posing as her personal servant. Their daring escape was widely publicized, making them among the most famous of fugitives from slavery. [Abolitionists](#) featured them in public lectures to gain support in the struggle to end the institution. – Wikipedia

Watch

The Sample

Discover a new email newsletter every day. I've been using this to subscribe to a number of new newsletters that feed my mind and also this newsletter. – Douglas

Make your inbox great again

We love email. It's your own little corner of the internet, where you decide what shows up in your feed. It can get a little out of hand, though. The Sample is like a personal assistant for your inbox. We'll help you find things worth subscribing to, and we'll help you read things at your own pace—without getting overwhelmed.

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April 12, 2022

The Daily Good

We think Terri, age 4, says it best—"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired." Scroll down to Good News for a link to more wisdom on love from the little ones.

Warmly,
The Good Trade Team



Why It's Worth Rewilding on a Domestic Scale

Via Treehugger

Anyone who has seen my garden – or the picture I post here – knows that I am a big fan of a “wild” garden. We have no lawn at all and are constantly adding new plants, taking cuttings from neighbors, and seeking out anything interesting to add to the garden. Our mature trees give us a woodland feeling even here in the middle of the San Fernando Valley. – Douglas

Rewilding will be crucial for tackling the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. Most often, we talk about rewilding on a grand scale—on farms and large tracts of land, and in wider bioregions. But rewilding in gardens can be just as important.

There are many reasons why we should rewild on a domestic scale. It's useful to think small, in addition to taking the broader view, since even small steps taken at home can help improve our environments. Thinking more "wildly" can help us find solutions for the major challenges we face.

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One-Pot Creamy Cacio e Pepe Orzo

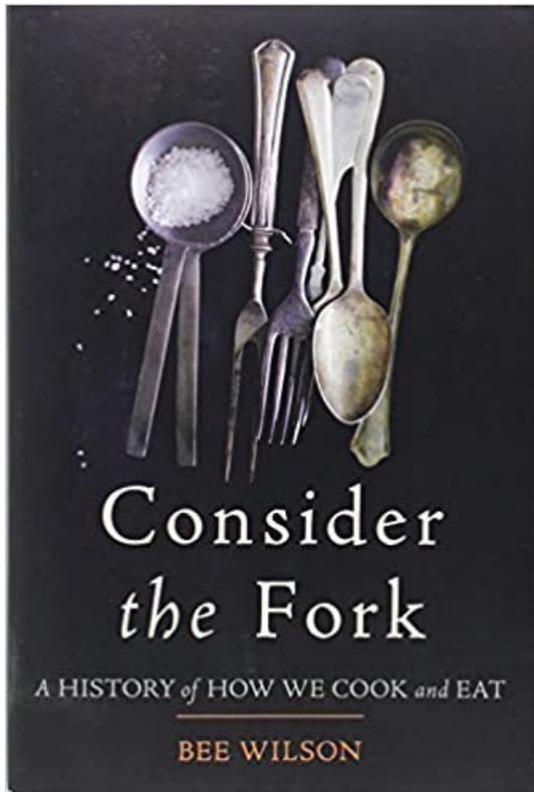
via [The Kitchn](#)

We love Italian food, but it need not be something. This Italian version of mac and cheese (but much better) is flavored mainly with Pecorino Romano (or Parmigiano) and black pepper but provides a warming, comfy, side dish or main course with some vegetables in it or on the side. – Douglas

Some people find comfort in buttered noodles. For me, it's cacio e pepe. The humble Roman dish of pasta tossed with Pecorino Romano cheese and lots of black pepper is a lesson in how satisfying something can be with so few ingredients. It's creamy, salty, spicy, and rich, all at the same time.

This one-pot orzo version of the iconic dish is hardly traditional, but it's both super easy and incredibly delicious. The orzo and sauce are prepared simultaneously in the same pot, leaving you with almost no dishes to wash. Think of it as a whole new way to satisfy cacio e pepe cravings — and it's ready to dig into in under 30 minutes.

[Read More](#)



Consider the Fork: A History of How We Cook and Eat

by Bee Wilson

I love micro-histories like this where they explore overall history through the lens of one particular area of life and culture. – Douglas

Since prehistory, humans have braved sharp knives, fire, and grindstones to transform raw ingredients into something delicious -- or at least edible. But these tools have also transformed how we consume, and how we think about, our food. In *Consider the Fork*, award-winning food writer Bee Wilson takes readers on a wonderful and witty tour of the evolution of cooking around the world, revealing the hidden history of objects we often take for granted. Technology in the kitchen does not just mean the Pacojets and sous-vide machines of the modern kitchen, but also the humbler tools of everyday cooking and eating: a wooden spoon and a skillet, chopsticks and forks. Blending history, science, and personal anecdotes, Wilson reveals how our culinary tools and tricks came to be and how their influence has shaped food culture today. The story of how we have tamed fire and ice and wielded whisks, spoons, and graters, all for the sake of putting food in our mouths, *Consider the Fork* is truly a book to savor.

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