

A Cryonics Manifesto

By Mike Darwin

A New Problem

Over the past two years cryonics has come under attack in a way that is unprecedented in its 47 year history. It would be both foolish and unfair to assert that we cryonicists have not played a singular and significant role in generating these attacks, and more specifically, enabling them.

I doubt that there is anyone now living who can justly call himself a cryonicist who has been more harshly or consistently critical of cryonics than I have. While not all of my criticisms have been justified, all have been made with a sincere desire to improve and strengthen cryonics. And most importantly, all have had a real basis in facts, and been supported by data that could be accessed and evaluated by all.



Mike Darwin (photo by Murray Ballard)

Some aspects of cryonics, as is the case with any discipline that involves human lives and human well being, as well as animal lives and animal well being, will necessarily provoke discussions of ethics and morals where recourse to objective facts, for refutation or validation, is difficult, or where radically different conclusions can be drawn from the same data by different people; all of whom are both of good will, and who are also fair minded. In such instances, discourse can become and remain heated, but a fundamental respect for the rules of honest debate still pertains. In short, it is *not acceptable to slander your opponents, debase their moral character, nor denigrate or invade their personal lives.*

The objective in any civilized discourse is not to ruin your opponent any way you can, nor to gut his personal or professional life by 'forcing' him to respond to endless and baseless rounds of attacks. And it certainly is not to do this: <http://www.cryonicsfactsheet.co.uk/> (look to the index on the left and go to the article, the title of which you immediately find shocking). If anyone reading this thinks this is appropriate or fair in any discussion of cryonics, then they have just located themselves among the denizens of the subhuman. A person's sexuality or lack thereof, has zero bearing upon their opportunity to extend their life via cryonics. This is especially true in the case of individuals who neither take, nor have taken, any position of advocacy, public or private, about the way they have chosen to live the most intimate and private parts of their personal life. About this, and about the apparent impending death of privacy, I'll have more to say later.

A Nest of Dipers

The malice, venom and obvious contempt with which cryonics is attacked on Melody's Maxim's blog 'Cryonics Meets Medicine' (<http://cryomedical.blogspot.com/>), Richie Arnold's 'Cryonics Factsheet' (<http://www.cryonicsfactsheet.co.uk/>), on the pages of the Cult Education Forum (<http://forum.rickross.com/read.php?12,64749,page=76>) or on Cold Filter, is not only unacceptable, it is intolerable. It might be understandable, if not excusable, if there were even the flimsiest factual basis for most of these attacks. But the fact is there is not. One outrageous lie follows another, and the burden of proof falls not on the accuser, but on the accused. The reason that libel law reverses this position is that it is understood that while the liar can easily and endlessly generate lies and fractional truths, the victim of those falsehoods must spend increasingly large and increasingly futile amounts of time trying to defend against them. As such, it is a brilliant strategy to wear down your opponent and to make him as bankrupt of time and money as the liars who use it are of morals and decency.

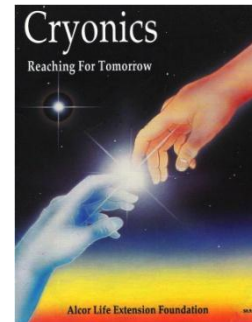
The Truth from Lies

Of course, the problem arises of how to separate the truth from the lies. This is not easy to do for people who have little or no knowledge of cryonics, medicine, or its related or supporting disciplines. The only solution for issues of that kind, *for technical issues*, is education; and that burden vis-à-vis cryonics, lies squarely and justly on our shoulders as cryonicists. And I will add that it is not merely a burden, but a *responsibility* – and one that we have not discharged well over the past decade or so. That deficiency can and will be remedied.

A more difficult task is the frank and open discussion of the social, ethical and moral implications of cryonics and its supporting technologies. In this difficulty we are at least in good company, because the vast majority of the medical and technological advances (including agricultural and scientific advances) of this past century have transformed and stressed the culture and the biosphere in heretofore unimaginable ways. Public health, vaccination, antisepsis, birth control, assisted reproduction, and what Lewis Thomas has so elegantly christened “half way medicine” that treats symptoms, but does not definitively *cure* disease (i.e., most of what we call medicine today, from insulin injections to artificial hips) have wreaked havoc, as well as saved lives. Answers to the dilemmas and deep problems raised by these transformative technologies are far from clear, and are certainly not settled business for this civilization. In this long parade, cryonics must dutifully take its place for moral scrutiny and debate.

Educate or Die

And it is here that I must pause to criticize institutional cryonics. There was a time when the quality and quantity of communications issuing from Alcor (in particular) was such that there was a growing contingent of youthful, activist members who were not just highly knowledgeable about all areas of cryonics, and fully informed (and confident in) the details of the operation of Alcor, they were also at once both inspired and inspiring. At the time these people were being created, we had no idea what their true value was. That lack of understanding was quickly remedied when the Dora Kent and subsequent California Department of Health Services crises hit. To our surprise, we found that there was a veritable army of articulate, energetic and above all credible people who leapt to the defense of both Alcor and cryonics. And the really amazing thing was that no one in management (or outside of it, for that matter), had to even suggest that this be done. Even more surprising, there was virtually no need to supervise this 'spontaneously self assembling army' because its soldiers knew the facts, understood what was at stake, and acted instinctively to protect their own interests - and thus acted to protect both cryonics and Alcor.



Today, there is practically no one, not even an 'appointed spokesperson from Alcor' to competently answer the basic (but important) questions people ask about cryonics, as well as to take on the vicious lunatics who want to destroy it. To the extent anyone involved with Alcor wants to debate that, let them take personal action to disprove it.

Our enemy's may be many things, but one thing they are certainly *not*, is flaky. They launch blogs and websites and they *relentlessly stick to their pursuit of our destruction*. That energy and persistence are something that many of our most persuasive people do not exhibit. It should not be the case that all the detailed and reliable information is scattered among many different blogs and forums, or even in comment sections that can only be found by chance. Much worse still is the poor behavior of people like Mark Plus and Luke Parrish (both of whom I greatly respect), who start blogs, end them, start new blogs and end them again, ad infinitum. This is not a sane strategy for cryonics advocacy, and in fact, it damages cryonics by fragmenting information and discouraging others from doing a high quality and consistent job of educating the global public.

Manufacturing Mavericks

But to be fair, other credible and energetic young spokesmen for cryonics don't exist because they have yet to be made - *and they are made, not born*. As Alcor became increasingly empowered, and as cryonics grew, bright young men began to show up on our doorstep - often unannounced. They came from Detroit, New York City, Winnipeg, Sydney and London, and they lived and worked at or near Alcor. These men did this because they were able to - not just in terms of native ability or education about cryonics per se, but because they were *empowered* to do it. They were 'inside' not 'outside,' and they did not fear censure because they knew the facts and they knew how to use them. Thus, if cryonics is to be free of some of the misery it is

currently experiencing, and if it is to have a future, then a conscious decision must be made to exercise judgment about which people, young and old who exist out there in this world of 6+ billion people, are worth effort - and then to give them everything we've got. That will be a long hard process requiring passion, a commitment to openness, and an absolutely overwhelming love of cryonics – coupled with an insatiable desire to share cryonics with others, and to protect and grow it.

The Stigmata of the Sociopath

Having said that, we are still left with the problem of how to tell the credible from the incredible and the legitimate query, or cry of alarm, from the savagery of the perpetually malcontent, or the seriously disturbed. Fortunately, there are several fairly straightforward ways to do just that. One of the few positive things about the malicious liar and the florid sociopath is their inability to see, let alone observe some of the most basic moral and practical boundaries in social discourse; and similarly, to use a graduated approach to threat resolution. These things are best illustrated by example. For instance, if you see a serious fire hazard in a public or private venue your first reaction would likely be to find the owner or manager and bring the problem to their attention, with the caveat that the responsible party(ies) are also now aware of the hazard, are concerned, and are likely to attend to remedying it. On the other hand, if you see a raging fire, such a leisurely course of action would not be an appropriate response. In that situation, shouting “FIRE!” would be a mandatory course of action.

It gets more complicated if you fear reprisal, or the responsible party is indifferent or hostile. In such situations, reasonable people notify the authorities. If, after notifying the authorities the situation is not corrected, and lives or property remain at risk, it then it becomes appropriate to speak with those who are exposed to the risk, and to alert the community as a whole. In the very recent past, the appropriate venue for this was some form of the mass media: a letter to the editor of the local newspaper was a commonplace way this was done, especially if calls to reporters or editors failed to elicit a subsequent newspaper article.

The Problem of the World Wide Web

Today, we have the Internet and that presents some new and positive options that did not exist in the past. However, it also presents an unprecedented opportunity for the malicious and the deranged to do enormous harm without the accountability it took centuries of legal and social evolution to impose on the traditional ‘mass media.’ Despite the slow generation of (mostly) responsible controls, reckless, salacious and outright false ‘journalism’ was not abolished and in fact still exists and thrives today. However, such journalism was effectively forced to be marketed in such a way that only the credulous or the feeble minded would actually believe it; whilst the rest of us could be entertained or disgusted by it, as we chose. This is how the Tabloids were born, or more accurately, continued to exist as a niche product in journalism without evolving. Because, truth to tell, the natural state of ‘unrefined’ journalism *is* the uncritical rants, ramblings, and observations of human minds absent fact checking, consideration of relevance, and above all, consideration of basic human decency – more on that, directly.

Now the really interesting thing in the narrative above is that at no point does the reasonable, let alone responsible person, placard their community with the details of the venue's owners'/mangers' private sex lives, let alone their personal medical history. If the person or persons involved in fire code violations also happen to be engaged in unlawful sexual behavior, that is a separate criminal matter, and a healthy mind does not usually conflate the two. And if the private behavior of the fire code scofflaw is *not* a criminal matter or a public civil matter, regardless of how repulsive or distasteful it may be (even to the community at large) it is also not something that becomes material in dealing with public safety in the arena of fire codes. And indeed, responsible journalists today will not touch a story about, say, a male politician who likes to wear ladies undergarments, unless said politician has a public and political stance on such matters at odds with his private behavior. Thus, even in death, J. Edgar Hoover is fair game regarding such behavior, *but only because he made a public career out of destroying the lives and reputations of people who engaged in exactly the same behavior he did, in the privacy of their homes*. Absent hypocrisy of this sort as a public person, and even more specifically as someone who enjoys the public trust, this is a non-issue, and all sane and decent people recognize it as such.

Thus, when you see 'salacious' and inflammatory details of cryonicists' *private* lives being ridiculed, you may know at once that the individuals engaged in this demeaning behavior are certainly not fair minded, and may arguably suffer from some serious defect in reasoning and/or emotional equilibrium. This does not mean that all of their criticisms and complaints are invalid, but it *does* mean that they must now be subjected to an extraordinarily high degree of scrutiny, and that the presumption of innocence until proven guilty must be greatly strengthened in favor of the accused. In the newspaper business of the previous centuries this was referred to as 'loss of journalistic credibility' and it was one of the most feared things that could happen to a publisher and his paper(s).

The Real Truth and the Real Criminals

The blogs I have singled out here (not to mention Larry Johnson's absurd diatribe, Frozen) have accused individual cryonicists of a truly incredible litany of *criminal* misdeeds. If true, presumably the authorities have been notified and law enforcement will act. If they are not true, then a reckless, monstrous and utterly destructive crime has been committed (albeit one very unlikely to result in the prosecution of the real criminals). And this leads to the question, "Why are these salacious allegations about cryonicists of such profound interest to a group of *non-cryonicists* who clearly spend considerable amounts of their time and energy attacking cryonics, often stupidly and baselessly?" The response from these individuals will of course be, "We are just trying to alert you cryonicists to this terrible problem in your community." However, there are two problems with that argument: the absence of victims and the unnatural interest in protecting members of a community from themselves by people who are themselves *not* members of that community.

Where are the Victims?

Cryonics has been around for onto half a century now, and during virtually all of that time it has been the subject of truly enormous media and public scrutiny, the overwhelming majority of which has been skeptical at best, and hostile and mocking at worst. It is all but impossible for anyone considering cryonics, either for themselves or for a loved one, not to be aware of the prevailing social, scientific and medical opinion that cryonics is, being 'kind,' misguided and unworkable, and being cruel, pseudoscience or fraud.

These facts take on special import when considered in the context of yet another fact, namely that the US is among the most litigious societies in the world. Each year approximately 15 million civil cases are filed in the US yielding a litigation rate per capita of ~0.051 cases per person in the US today.

By my personal reckoning there have been 221 people cryopreserved by cryonics organizations since the first man was frozen in 1967. Of those, 203 remain cryopreserved thru the present, five were removed from cryogenic care by the same third-party family member who initiated cryopreservation, one was removed by court order as a result of legal action initiated by her sister (over the objections of the patient's husband and legal next-of-kin) and eleven were lost at Chatsworth as a result of the actions of the Cryonics Society of California. Since the Chatsworth debacle in 1979 in a litigious society where malpractice suits are common, there has never been a malpractice suit against Alcor - and none at all outside the particularly egregious example of Chatsworth.

As someone who has been vocal about the poor standard of care in cryonics for many years, I am quite surprised that this is so. But it is, and this raises the question, "Where are all the victims?" My answer has been that they are cryopreserved, and therefore speechless. But this isn't the whole picture either, because the overwhelming majority of patients who have received what I would deem poor care were well aware of what they were going to get (*before* they got it); and they quite often told me to mind my own business. At which point we enter the treacherous territory of trying to protect people from themselves. This is a generally unrewarding business under the best of circumstances, as when there is robust or even incontrovertible proof of the specific harm that will result. Indeed, people continue to smoke, gamble and consume alcohol in excess: all of which are legal activities in many states, and all of which generate substantial revenue for the very the governments charged to protect the public health and welfare. These oxymoronic situations exist because all concerned are well aware that people don't like other people minding their business and telling them what to do, even when they are unarguably harming themselves.

And people especially don't like it when individuals who are not a part of their community, and do not share their beliefs and their associated risks, begin telling them what to do. This antipathy is further (and quite understandably) compounded when the outsiders are paternalistic, self righteous, humiliating and are also *wrong*, in the bargain. Here, the sorry story of the Christian missionaries in the 18th thru the 20th centuries comes to mind. Much of the disaster that has become the African subcontinent today is a direct result of their mindless and

uninformed intervention, and the imposition of a moral and cultural structure on a social and geographical landscape completely unsuited to sustain it. That great evil is exactly what will be perpetrated upon cryonics and cryonicists by self righteous do-gooders who do not understand our technology, our culture, and most importantly, our core values – and yet would presume to tell us, and in detail, how to live our lives.

The Incubator of Malice

And so we return to the very real and very destructive issue of Cold Filter and its malignant offspring. Jonathan Hinek is a very pleasant and gentle person. I suspect that he has, through no fault of his own, led a life sheltered from many of the hard realities of life in the ‘real’ world. While Jonathan eventually acted to effectively remove Melody Maxim, and the equally corrosive individual known as ‘George,’ from Cold Filter (for which he deserves credit), by the time this was done, most of the damage was also done. As a result, Cold Filter served as an incubator for these sociopaths. I know, from my correspondence with him, that Jonathan is a well-intentioned person who believed that when he started Cold Filter (and believes now) that he was performing an important and positive service for the cryonics community. It is evident that he wanted to provide a highly flexible and accessible forum (with a broad bandwidth) for cryonicists to interact with each other. However, he made at least two crucial mistakes in initializing Cold Filter, which must be both corrected and not repeated:

First, Cold Filter is not an explicit pro-cryonics forum. It is inconceivable how an explicitly pro-cryonics forum could (or would) permit many of the messages that have been posted there to remain for more than a heartbeat or two. The lesson to be learned from this experience is that cryonicists should stay away from initiatives that are not launched by an identifiable pro-cryonics, pro-life extension entity. By engaging in uninformed and all too often carelessly and factually incorrect speculation, many of the well intentioned cryonicists who posted there (and who continue to do so) regurgitated nourishing misinformation into the gaping maws of the infant vipers in the Cold Filter nest.

Second, and there is no escaping this, the inability of the moderator to ban clearly hostile posts with no serious or meaningful content or questions (beyond the rhetorical denigration and ridicule of cryonics and cryonicists) and the toleration of obvious sociopaths, was the primary factor in generating not just one, but a small family of individuals whose principal recreation is the attempted destruction of the lives of individual cryonicists, as well as cryonics as a discipline, and as a community.

In this Jonathan is by no means alone. In my cryonics ‘Failure Analysis’ lectures I devote considerable time to discussion of the bizarre hiring policies at cryonics organizations. We should not hire people who are almost complete strangers to us, let alone promote people who are not cryonicists to positions with authority, or access to sensitive information. This seems such a commonsense point that one has to be either an idiot or a fool not to recognize it. This unfathomable practice has dogged cryonics since its inception, when Bob Nelson ‘froze the first man’ in 1967 and subsequently went on to freeze *and thaw out* eleven more. A recitation of the full list of sociopaths and gross incompetents who have been rapidly empowered in cryonics, at

great cost in lives and money, would be equal to or greater in length than this already lengthily essay.

A flawed Premise

One reason for this, which must be discussed here, is that cryonicists' (social naiveté aside) have been operating from a flawed premise virtually from the beginning. Cryonicists have been, on average, laissez faire, libertarian capitalists who viewed cryonics through the lens of conventional business and commerce. Capitalism is based upon the solid and accurate understanding that businesses, so long as they conduct their affairs without the use of force or fraud, will, on average, produce high quality goods and services as a result of market mechanisms, such as competition and free trade. As a result, the coming and going of individual enterprises in capitalism is of no consequence, and indeed is a healthy and essential part of the free market system. The inventories and other assets of failed enterprises may be recycled or lost, but in any event, the core goal of generating profits and delivering high quality goods and services at the lowest (free market) price is preserved.

The problem is that cryonics is *not* a consumer electronics retailer, a clothing manufacturer, or a food service concern. Cryonics patients are not interchangeable commodities to which can be assigned a dollar amount, and whose loss is value-neutral. This is so because the loss of individual human lives is not value-neutral: especially not to cryonicists, because they are *our* lives!

A Global Historical Perspective

I have spent a considerable amount of time, especially in recent years, going to and fro over the earth; I have seen the great garbage patch in the Pacific – a sterile void of petrochemical end products the size of the state of Texas, and spent days in the Central American jungles whilst ash falls down like rain, day and night, without stopping. I have walked up and down in the earth through the abandoned thermonuclear infrastructure of the previous century and the emerging subterranean earthworks being built to rid the planet of vertebrate life in the event of 'total war' in this century.

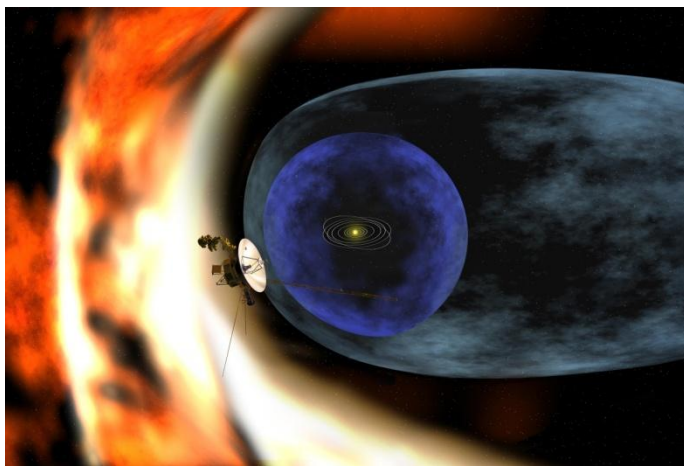


I have seen this earth of ours not from the air conditioned safety and comfort of tour buses and Western-style hotels, but on the streets of men; in buses and trains crowded with steaming masses in the Third World in Mumbai, Delhi, Managua, Bogotá, Panama City and in the cool tunnels set deeply in the earth to shelter against global thermonuclear war that comprise the subterranean landscape of the Moscow Metro. I have stood atop Cheops's pyramid at midnight and stared out the landscape beyond the plains of Giza to look upon the grim and hate filled city that is now

Cairo. I have walked amid the stark and barren ruins at Tel el Amarna that were once the rebel Pharaoh Akhenaten's City of the Sun, and I have walked among the ruins of the Ramsesum in Luxor, come to face the crumpled colossus of Ramses the Great, and heard Shelley's words from Ozymandias unfold in my sad and otherwise silent mind:

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

I have seen the magnificent relics of the Maya at Chichen Itza and of the Inca at Macchu Picchu; and the few scattered stones that are the last remains of the Inca civilization at Vilcambamba, Peru where it was exterminated by the Spanish in 1572. I have walked the streets of Rome, Florence and Milan and seen the Sistine Chapel in silence, at night, accompanied only by the quiet breathing of another solitary human being. I have spent weeks, and in some cases months, browsing the collections of the Louvre, the Pompidou in France, the British Museum, the National Gallery, and the Tate Modern in London, the Met, MOMA and the Guggenheim in New York City, the Art Institute in Chicago, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Getty, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, the Vatican Museum, the Uffizi, the Duomo, the Palazzo Pitti and the Ponte Vecchio. I have wandered the ash preserved streets of Pompeii and Herculaneum, stood in the grotto at the Monastery on Mons Quarantana, strolled the Via de la Rosa, and rested in the Garden of Olives. My fingers have explored the Wailing Wall and my bare feet have trod the Dome of the Rock.



Mariner Jupiter-Saturn) pointed towards the Earth as the spacecraft passed within 349,000 km of the roiling Jovian cloud deck on 5 March, 1979. That beautiful bauble of glass and electronics

I have moved Galileo's finger, and I have held in my gloved hands the objective lens, and caressed the two telescopes with which he discovered and documented the moons of Jupiter in the Museo di Storia della Scienza in Florence. I have held in my ungloved hands the Sun Sensor/ Canopus tracker that kept the high-gain antenna of Voyager 1 (then

will soon cross the heliopause and leave our solar system for deep space. I have run my hands across the re-entry scarred surface of Yuri Gagarin's capsule from the Vostok 1 mission at the RKK Energiya museum in Moscow, and stepped across the ropes and done the same with the Apollo 11 Command Module at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. I have transited the Sandwalk at Darwin's Down House, and run my fingers over Newton's boyhood scrawling on the walls of Woolsthorpe Manor.

In short, I have seen a world of empires gone and going, and of new ones being borne. I have seen a world of great wealth and power, and of even greater human sickness (of body and of mind) and of ecological devastation created as a result of a human population explosion with no thought to its sustainability. To see these things, at once wondrous and monstrous, is to realize that capitalism is not merely morally neutral, it is morally blind. And to see the world as I have seen it is to also know that the only things that are worse than Capitalism are Marxism and Totalitarianism.

Capitalism is a marvelous, indeed a fantastic wealth generating tool. But it is blind to the long term consequences of the technologies and the enterprises it creates. As a cautionary 'for instance,' capitalism can, and likely will create technologies such as strong artificial intelligence and self replicating nanoscale machines, and in doing so, it will be insensitive to the possibility that the intelligences so created may be malignant, or that the microscopic engines of creation fabricated to cure disease and create plenty, may instead devour us and much of the rest of the biosphere. Capitalism is a tool; not the tool maker, it is the servant of man; not his master.

But the fact remains that the first generation of cryonicists *was* comprised largely of ardent libertarian capitalists who, for the most part, did know of or consider other possible models for cryonics organizations. This is completely understandable, because cryonics was a new and unprecedented undertaking (and in many ways still is) and those who undertook to birth it had no special qualifications beyond the desire to stay alive. At that time, it was simply not possible to understand that cryonics will necessarily require a new and largely, though not completely, unprecedented structure to carry its members and patients into the distant future whilst using enabling technologies that will carry with them not only enormous power, but even greater peril.

Alternative Mechanisms



An institutional model that would have arguably been a better fit for cryonics is that of the egalitarian, but nevertheless quite powerful 'secret' fraternal organizations, of which the Free Masons is the prototype. This type of structure combines the best elements of a meritocracy with a strong and highly effective mechanism to weed out the mentally unstable and the sociopathic (in the absence of free market mechanisms) that would necessarily sacrifice organizations and members in the pursuit of monetary gain, short term survival or even aimless ego.

The culture of Medieval European cathedral building has much in common with the nascent culture of cryonics; with individual masons moving freely between the nation states and cultures of Europe at that time. The problem with this utterly laissez-faire system was that there was no way to vet the craftsmen who roamed this geographically vast marketplace, either for technical or engineering skills, or for psychological stability and social competence. And the latter are as absolutely essential to the successful completion of a long term enterprise as are the former. As a consequence of this state of affairs, a complex and at the same time surprisingly robust system was developed to ensure *both* the intellectual and emotional competence of the men who successfully undertook these decades, and even centuries' long projects. The system of careful referencing, background checking, and ultimately 'blackballing,' ensured that only men carefully screened and deemed to be acceptable gained admission. This was followed up with a graduated process of psychological stressors, coupled with careful observation and documentation of the work output and the overall suitability of the member to rise through the ranks. In effect, these closed societies developed a variety of mechanisms to deal with the 'no, or limited feedback problem' by creating artificial, intra-organizational feedback or 'testing' mechanisms.

They were compelled to do this in part because they, like the first generation cryonicists, understood that nation states were antithetical to individual liberty and personal survival. The most essential characteristics of nation states are the ability to wage war and to dispose of the lives of their citizens in doing so. Similarly, nation states impose control over the movement of people (as individuals and as groups) and have historically (and in most of the world still do) control the flow of goods, capital and above all, *information, ideas and technologies*. It was these latter things that the Free Masons found most nettlesome and that put them into conflict with the state at every level the world over. This conflict led to a need for relative secrecy and to the existence of what was effectively a Cold War between the Free Masons and the various nation-states of the world that has lasted ~ 6 centuries. (see: Steven C. Bullock, "Initiating the enlightenment?: recent scholarship on European freemasonry," *Eighteenth-Century Life*, Volume 20, Number 1, February 1996, pp. 80-92.) That is an impressive record and there is much cryonicists can learn from this system of omnipresent, yet invisible and highly organized resistance.¹ The West, and its expansive freedoms, comprise only a modest part of the world geographically and a small minority it in terms of population. This can only be truly appreciated by roaming the earth and moving to and fro upon and in it. It is a lesson that once learned cannot be forgotten and it has powerful implications for cryonics.

The Rules of Their Games

The attacks that have recently begun on cryonics (and the underlying reasons for them) must be dealt with, and dealt with starting now. The world has always had a fair number of people who are patently crazy (i.e., severely mentally ill), sociopathic, infected with kooky ideologies, or are just plain mean or sadistic in that they derive pleasure and meaning out of causing harm to others, or destroying things. The ubiquitous schoolyard bully is a classic

¹ And no, I am *not* proposing that cryonics adopt the trappings of Freemasonry, but rather that we give careful consideration to the use of mechanisms such as vetting, internal testing, and the imposition of other measures of validating character and ethics, as well as technical competence. It is also critical that cryonicists understand that their existence and objectives are independent of nation-states, or any other human institution, for that matter.

example of the latter, in that he picks out one or two individuals whom he humiliates, degrades and harasses, *and* these individuals are *always* both vulnerable and weaker than the bully, or otherwise in a position where they cannot adequately defend themselves.

Unfortunately, bullying does not stop with primary or secondary school - or even in university. It is a lifelong phenomenon that simply morphs into slightly different behaviors that are given other names. Because the law makes it a serious offence to physically bully, this behavior is transformed into the stuff of the tabloids, and local witch hunts, which spring up from time to time. Of course, most of these incidents never come to public attention and the victims suffer in silence.

Civilized society has developed several (barely) workable ways to deal with this phenomenon. In journalism, there is ostensibly a basic code of ethics that involves source and fact checking, some measure of accountability, and above all, the presence of a seasoned editor who knows, from experience, where the boundaries are. I've been dealing with the print and electronic media for 40+ years. I can't say it has been a happy experience. They lie, they distort, and they are very often careless with the facts. Having said that, nothing I've experienced at the hands of the media even comes close to the base excesses of the sites I've listed above. Someone who I respect a great deal recently wrote to me that he was on the verge of just "giving up" on efforts to keep cryonics going because, "Cryonics has been under siege for the past two years by a group of the most hateful, dishonest, unfair, and nasty people you can imagine, outside of government" and he has been brought to a point of depressed exhaustion. Actually, these past 20 years, I've dealt with people in government all over the world, and most are pretty reasonable (at least in the West), if more than a little rigid. However, even the most rabid bureaucrat doesn't come close to the monsters that were hatched and nourished in the vipers' nest that was Cold Filter. In fact, even the thugs who oversee some of most corrupt nation-states in the Third World are a joy to deal with, when compared to the creatures that inhabit the spaces now attacking cryonics - at least bureaucrats can be bought - and usually for a quite reasonable sum.

In science, much more so than journalism, there is peer review, and the shared understanding that there must be accountability and evidence to back up statements of fact. People are not just allowed to say whatever they please. In journalism, things can get pretty ugly, but even the very worst tabloid story written about cryonics since its inception in 1964 cannot come close to the vile and destructive evil that has been appearing on the web these past few years. It would be bad enough if these creeps were confined to venues of their own making. But what has been done is to set up a public, global bear-baiting arena, where mostly decent and innocent people feel compelled to step into the ring and try and defend themselves and cryonics, in what is a hopeless contest with no rules, and no mercy. I use the word 'innocent' here because most of these people are simply members, or low level activists, who bear no more or less responsibility for any of the deficiencies in cryonics, real or (mostly) imagined, that are trotted out on Cold Filter than does Jonathan Hinek. They were merely trying to do what, sadly, Jonathan did not do: engage in an active debate and defense of cryonics, and of its accomplishments and history.

Several years ago, I wrote Jonathan and attempted to engage him in a meaningful dialog, and to try to persuade him to exercise responsible moderation of Cold Filter. As it turned out, he

had already been told, repeatedly and in detail, that facilitating, aiding and giving comfort to people who have no other objective than to destroy cryonics is at best ethically wrong, and at worst morally bankrupt.

We must therefore understand that there are no rules to their games. Any rules they propose or agree upon will be changed or abandoned at their convenience. This is war, and in war there are, ultimately, no rules of engagement.

First Call to Action

Now comes this message, long overdue as it is. Not only do we as cryonicists bear responsibility for the creation of a milieu where these creatures and their hosts can thrive, some of us bear an even greater responsibility by nourishing them. Indeed, nourishing them with our own blood and treasure. If you post to Cryonics Factsheet, the Cult Education Forum, Cold Filter, or any of the other hateful and destructive anti-cryonics sites, you should understand that *you are directly feeding their bloodlust*. Bullies can only operate effectively when they have someone to bully and someone to argue with. Remove the bear from the ring, the victims from the arena, and the show stops. There is nothing over so quickly as a one sided dialogue.



The message here is as simple as it is succinct. STOP POSTING TO THESE SITES and STOP ALL INTERACTION WITH THOSE WHO POST TO THEM, OR IN ANY WAY AID OR ABET THEM. In other words, stop giving the sanction of the victim.

This is only the opening salvo. There is much more to be done, and we will do it. After all, what is our alternative? The cretins who are attempting to destroy cryonics have, by comparison to us, nothing to gain and a great deal to lose. Their thirst for death and blood in the arena can be satisfied in any of countless other venues, whereas our thirst for life and indefinite personal survival, as well as the survival of our fellow cryonicists, is a battle we must fight here and now - and one that we must win.

10 January, 2011

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