A Novel Method to Construct a Consilience Manifesto

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Abstract

As world events spiral ever more closely to the drain, Phalse Prophets (Post Carbon Institute 2023) will likely be compelled to publish increasingly unhelpful or even dangerous manifestos. Given society’s tendency to champion shallow but over-confident thinkers, it may be time for true scholars to hurl a Hail Mary to gain relevance and head off the worst. An experimental protocol is described that successfully induced in a normally reticent scientist the personality traits that enable outlandish manifesto writing. In contrast to most ideologues, this exercise was done with the prosocial goal of bridging divides and creating consilience. The protocol was a success, but the value of the resulting manifesto is doubtful.

Keywords: Phalse Prophets, Cyborgian, cult, mania, grandiose narcissism, Marc Andreesen, modernity, accelerationism, collapse, poly-perma-meta crisis, scholarly relevance, Hail Mary, ayahuasca, anabolic steroids, Tony Robbins, transhumanism, degrowth, dehumanism, sustainability, shrinkage, marmoset, inclusivity, justice, bat-shittery.

1. Introduction

As the world’s preeminent scholar of Phalse Prophets (Bradford 2023), the continued publication of bold, and yet poorly constructed and deeply misguided, manifestos is maddening. A prominent recent example is the staggeringly grandiose treatise by billionaire tech faux-guru Marc Andreesen (Andreesen 2023), who clearly hasn’t read my work. Specimen Andreesen is a member of the species Homo machina-homo, aka Cyborgian, one of the most extreme examples of evolutionary divergence found in the Phalse Prophet lineage. Unique in advocating for the disconnection of humanity from biology, Cyborgians go so far as to promulgate the notion of an eventual saturation of the entire universe with human consciousness in the form of a mythical state of matter called computronium that can spread via wormholes (Kurzweil 2018). Instead of being laughed off and marginalized (or even institutionalized), these essentially religious beliefs are taken seriously by a growing cult centered in the Silicon Valley of California, and Andreesen’s manifesto is viewed as analogous to a biblical text that threatens to quickly expand the species range and population size (Bhalla and Robinson 2023, Ruskoff 2023).

In contrast to the production of incoherent manifestos that spew dubious claims with little evidence, context, or nuance, actual quality scholarship is plodding and considered. Ideas, which can be easy to conjure without solid connection to reality, are weighed and tested against real world data. The aim is to circumscribe the truth, albeit imperfectly. Good scientists view themselves as unable to know it all and are thus willing to point out where their arguments are weak or lacking evidence. Such humble uncertainty is critical for allowing new information to shift rational belief systems, or what we call knowledge. Yet gains in scientific (i.e., tested) knowledge are slow and resistant to dramatic change, as research tends to narrow around edge questions that are tractable, making the institution of science liberal by disposition but conservative by process.

Society, it seems, does not care to be guided by the kind of thought leaders that arise from the institutions of science and the cautious personalities of its dedicated practitioners. Nor does society seem interested in “going slow” to unspool technologies only at the pace they can be tested for safety.
Instead, accelerationism is popularized and offers the irrational hope that damage from today’s technology today will be repaired by a yet-to-be-invented technology tomorrow. More generally, cultural belief systems don’t tend to change rationally at all, and wisdom is exceedingly rare—ironic considering we named ourselves Homo sapiens.

Unfortunately, science itself, as an ideal spelled out above, is easily corrupted by a civilization essentially gone mad. This takes many forms, including rewarding individuals who behave unethically, perhaps by fabricating data to generate attention-getting results (Fountain 2023), funding and reporting the kind of research that serves to propagate existing power structures instead of dealing with root causes (De La Garza 2022), and ignoring and dismissing heterodox work that would suit survivorship in the long-run (Shields 2023).

Therefore, to maintain some relevance, the research described here is an attempt to find methods that enable true scholars to position themselves as potent and recognized thinkers in this admittedly bizarre historical context. To accomplish this goal, it would make sense to acquire, even briefly, the personality characteristics of the Phalse Prophets to generate a manifesto (or set of manifestos) that could shift society towards a more benign path. The alternative and apparent default path is a total collapse of modernity and civilization. For some this collapse may be welcome (Kingsnorth and Hine 2013), while others advocate a soft landing (Hagens 2020). Whatever your hope, the goal here is to devise a method whereby normally reticent scholars can generate ideas and publications that offer far better alternatives than those being flung around carelessly, and—this is crucial—actually get read.

An important goal of this research is not only to write an attention-getting manifesto, but also to construct one that bridges ideological divides. It is recognized that polarization of society is increasing and threatening the political stability required to mitigate or adapt to the cascading poly-meta-permacrises unfurling at breakneck swiftness (Miller and Heinberg 2023).

A month-long program was devised and followed that intended to shift a subject’s personality traits away from logical, skeptical, and cautious dispositions towards those commonly found among Phalse Prophets. In this new, and hopefully temporary, state of mind, a manifesto was written and is published here. Because this experiment is dangerous and unethical, it was only conducted on a single subject, renowned Phalse Prophet scholar and author of this paper, Jason Bradford. Note: I don’t tend to refer to myself in the third person, but this is a warm up for what comes next.

2. Methods

Two days prior to the treatment regime, the subject was scored on three standard personality indices: a Big-Five test (Goldberg 1992), one for narcissism (Gentile et al. 2013), and a mood disorder exam screen for mania (Hirschfeld et al. 2000). A focus group with the subject’s wife and children was also conducted but those results have not been included due to negative bias.

On Oct 2, 2023, the subject began a scheduled four-week course with the following routines:

1. Ingest a daily dose of anabolic steroids normally used by bodybuilders, but in this case intended to induce mania.
2. Watch one video per day (minimum 60 minutes in length) of motivational life coach Tony Robbins.
3. At least once per day watch a private rocket launch from either SpaceX, Blue Origin, or Virgin Galactic.
4. Beginning each Friday at 5 pm and for the following 36 hours, ingest as much cocaine as desired.
5. Attend two ayahuasca ceremonies (two weeks apart with first one on Oct 4), with the following stated intentions and mantras:
   b. Write with muscular certitude, where caveats disappear faster than biodiversity and Absolute is not just a vodka brand, it’s your being.
   c. Everyone needs to hear what you have to say, because it can save the world.
   d. You are like a god and you’d better get good at it!
   e. Find the common ground, bringing ideas and people together. It is what the world needs and only you can do it!
   f. For god’s (that’s you) sake, keep the manifesto short!

Subject prepared for the start of the routine by cutting hair the style of Mark Zuckerberg, whose own hair is styled after his hero, Augustus Caesar. Although 28 days were planned for this routine, the manifesto was manifested on day 20, just a couple of days after the second ayahuasca ceremony. A manifesto writing guide (Burgess-Auburn 2022) provided to the subject was totally ignored with the explanation, “Books are for dipshits. I am fully autodidactical now!”

Personality traits, as determined by standardized testing, needed to return to levels not significantly different from the pretreatment baseline before writing the Discussion section.
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Bradford, Jason C.

This was accomplished by following the “return to baseline” protocol, beginning on Oct 23:

1. Cease all steroid and cocaine use.
2. Grow out hair.
3. Watch one video per day (minimum 60 minutes in length) of any David Attenborough production or the series Cosmos (original or remake permitted).
4. Watch at least one episode of Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood each morning.
5. Begin a course on identification of mosses and lichens, and take daily walks collecting specimens.
7. Complete a final ayahuasca ceremony (two weeks from previous and so dated Nov 1), with the following mantras and intentions:
   a. The universe is around 14 billion years old, the Earth 5 billion. If you are lucky you will live a measly hundred years. Just ponder that.
   b. Pretty much anything you have ever felt or thought has also been felt or thought by the billions of humans that have existed, past or present. So you surely are not anything special.
   c. You don’t have any special rights, and any fortune you have is just that, luck. So get over yourself.
   d. Within a few decades after your death, pretty much anyone who ever knew you will also be dead. So remember, you are basically going to be completely forgotten in what is essentially the blink of an eye in geological/universal time.
   e. Wake up each day in awe that you are even here, as it is all a wonderful experience and we don’t even know why there is anything at all. Just love.

Personality tests were conducted five days after the “return to baseline” protocol was initiated and every five days thereafter until the subject returned to pretreatment scores.

3. Results

Personality Changes
Testing of the subject at the time of manifesto writing revealed significant shifts away from baseline scores (which are not revealed for reasons of privacy) and in the directions predicted a priori. Narcissism levels at the time of manifesto writing rose three standard deviations above the mean. The subject was scored as manic, but only barely so. In terms of the Big Five traits, agreeableness declined and extraversion increased, which is consistent with grandiose narcissism (Zajenkowski and Fronczyk 2020).

These scores are based on reports from the subject, which could be considered biased as they match pre-treatment expectations (Johnson 2021). To confirm personality changes, interviews were conducted with several close family members and friends who were unaware of the experiment. These third parties reported behaviors consistent with a dramatically changed personality, indicating the subject recently had been acting like a “big swinging dick,” or had turned into an “insufferable douche.” One party called the subject a “toxic slimeball,” and complained that he “tried to grope me.”

On Nov 7, the subject, following the “return to baseline” protocol, was considered of sound mind again and allowed to finish this paper.

The Manifesto

The Dehumanist Manifesto

Introduction
In the face of unprecedented existential challenges, humanity stands at a precipice. To secure our future, we must think and act with radical intersectionality, turning the cliff into a crossroads. In this vein we pay homage to the legacy of the late visionary, E.O. Wilson, author of Consilience, as we unite two cutting-edge philosophies of high-energy modernity: degrowth and transhumanism. Through this amalgamation, a new and transcendent movement emerges - Dehumanism. Whereas others consider how to fit the world to humanity, we boldly propose to redesign humanity to ensure our enduring presence on Earth.

Section I: Redefining Humanity
Embracing a Sustainable Future: Dehumanism embraces the urgent call for humanity to thrive within the boundaries of our planet’s capacity. It envisions a future where we find equilibrium with nature and pursue abundance without compromising the Earth’s delicate ecosystems.

The Power of Shrinkage: By harnessing targeted selection and breeding, Dehumanism envisions a transformative path, where over 10-15 generations people gracefully shrink to the size of our smallest
primate relatives, the marmosets. Through this conscious choice, we ensure a sustainable human population of 800 billion, a hundredfold increase from today, while maintaining an average individual weight of only 125 grams.

Section II: Uniting Degrowth and Transhumanism

Consilience and Synergy: Dehumanism unites the goals of degrowthers and transhumanists, offering a revolutionary solution to humanity's predicament. With our reduced biomass and minimized planetary impact, we can witness the simultaneous fulfillment of both ideologies, and the fantastic coexistence of prosperity with ecological harmony.

Numerical Abundance and Earth Scale: Our journey towards marmoset-like proportions ensures that human numbers may skyrocket, while our ecological footprint plummets. This transformation paves the way for an unprecedented era of abundance, where humanity prospers without exploitation, depletion, or pollution.

Section III: Nurturing Earth-Just Living

Honoring Earth's Sanctity: Dehumanism recognizes the intrinsic worth of all life forms and commits to honoring the sanctity of Earth. Our symbiotic relationship with nature forms the foundation of a just and equitable existence for all beings. It’s no longer all about us as people, but about us as part of the web of all life.

Embracing Inclusivity: The Dehumanism movement goes far beyond typical notions of diversity and inclusion. Human cultures and ideas are interesting, but we are just one of tens of millions of species on Earth. Many species have vastly more interesting histories and traits than most people possess. Dehumanism fosters inclusion for all life forms by dramatically reducing human impact and rejecting domination by one silly primate.

Conclusion:

As Dehumanists, we embark on a journey of conscious evolution, reimagining humanity's purpose and potential. With courage and wisdom, we chart a course towards a future where human ingenuity coalesces with ecological wisdom, securing a destiny of abundance, equity, and coexistence. Through unwavering dedication to Earth-just living, we usher in an era where Dehumanism thrives, and dehumanity stands resilient amidst the ever-changing tides of time. Join us in this transformative revolution, as together, we define what it means to be dehuman and forge a legacy that transcends generations. Dehumanism: Embracing shrinkage to secure a future of abundance in harmony with all life.

4. Discussion

The experimental protocols induced changes in personality allowing for a manifesto to be written with the kind of self-assurance and panache found in many species of Phalse Prophets. And, thankfully, the changes were reversible. While the sample size was only one, the enormity of the personality shift strongly suggests this will work on other people, although that experiment should never be done.

Another goal was the bridging of ideological divides, as described by Bradford (2023), which the manifesto linked to E.O. Wilson’s Consilience (1998). Analysis of the manifesto indicates this was a successful outcome, as evidenced by:

- Adoption of Cyborgian goals to vastly expand the human population, in this case from 8 billion to 800 billion, and to do so by transforming what it means to be human.
- The species Conevolver (Homo illustratus) is referenced by use of the phrase “a journey of conscious evolution,” which perhaps is to be expected given the use in this protocol of ayahuasca ceremonies that also typifies this species.
- Whereas Cyborgians don’t care one bit about ecology and other species, Industrial Breatharians (Homo spiritus-industriae) do. Therefore, the reference to care for other life on Earth by using advanced technologies to allow for continual growth is reminiscent of this species.
- The use of genetic engineering to shrink the average body size down to 125 grams is aligned with the Complexifixer (Homo multiplicitate), which tends to lock onto a savior technology that has no chance of working as planned.
- The talk of ecological limits is in line with the species Premature Cassandralator (Homo immatura-cassandro), although they would hate this manifesto with a raging passion.
- And lastly, the repeated focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion is likely the result of the subject attending university department meetings over the past six years.
As this publication is the launch of the Dehumanist Manifesto into the world, the viral spread of this idea cannot yet be evaluated. At the time of writing, Jason Bradford (who did refer to Jason Bradford in the third person for about 3 weeks) considered The Dehumanist Manifesto to be the greatest and most important document ever produced. Jason Bradford was rather certain it would change the world for the better. However, upon reflection while not in a state of mania, the manifesto can more accurately be described as absurd bat-shittery. Unfortunately, this probably makes it more likely to become popularized. Oh my god, what has Jason Bradford done?

References