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## Psychotic Paradox Proposed

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**Received:** March 04, 2020; **Accepted:** March 12, 2020; **Published:** March 19, 2020

In terms of intellectual development, human behavior may be viewed as adaptive and maladaptive. In the short run, it may be adaptive in that it can help an individual adjust to his own cultural values by leading him/her to accept any blatant contradictions between the real and ideal. As a mechanism for short-term adaptation, stupidity is an example of the "Neurotic Paradox" which encourages behavioral which is subject to immediate positive reinforcement while the long-term impact is likely to be negative [1]. A concomitant drawback is that immediate errors may be difficult to transcend long term if the short-term decision sets one off on a deleterious path which then becomes more difficult to overcome later [2]. Addictions or commitments to "Pleasure" could be examples of this principle of life and learning [3]. Honoré de Balzac noted, "Pleasure is like certain drugs, to continue to obtain the same result, one must double the dose, and death or brutalization is contained in the last one" [4]. Deficit spending by the government constitutes a cultural example of this principle.

While such conduct may be adaptive in aiding a person to fit into his/her cultural environment, it may be in the long run maladaptive, as it reduces innovations and positive criticism of one's immediate environment. People fit in with the social group, but it loses the capacity to respond to the contingent surroundings as individuals forego their personal standards, ideals and insights to conform to standard values for social standing and acceptance.

The bottom line, long-term net effect, of course, of the neurotic paradox is essentially negative, but its common existence cannot be understood without appreciation of its role in helping people adapt to their immediate, short-term cognitive situation. Thus, it becomes clear how there can be so much psychic malfunction around while it is, in the long run, maladaptive. Survival within the group is promoted if one is preadapted to the group's stupidities. Also, short-term survival of the group is encouraged through improved psychic cohesion. However, these short-term gains are counter-balanced by the long-term loss of inefficiency in cognitive information processing. Cultural life is really a tradeoff among three interactive features: 1.) Logical, rational, objective processing of information; 2.) self-image of the individual and psychic gratification and 3.) group cooperation and social cohesion [5].

With the qualification of arbitrariness in mind, please note that a majority of people who find maladaptation in other individuals judge efficacy of information processing and do not consider the social and emotional dimensions of decision

making as if affects the lives of both individuals and their institutions. Thus, what could be considered stupidity may be in fact an immediate healthy, compromise between psychological gratification and social cohesion. Real dysfunction develops when one factor (psychic comfort, social cohesion or information processing) disrupts the others.

Let us propose the Psychotic Paradox as a psycho/cultural mechanism of delayed gratification which blocks short-term, immediate presumed advantages for the sake of possible rewards to be gained later-as when a worker goes on strike, \* thus sacrificing the all but tangible reality of the next paycheck for the sake of a potentially bigger one in the future. Corporation founder Walter Chrysler personified this principle: He was always willing to accept a short-term risk for a long-term payoff [6].

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\*Going to the dentists; doing your homework; eating your veggies, getting vaccinated; going to bed at a decent time—all are examples of this phenomenon. (Bloom P. Against Empathy. New York: HarperCollins, USA; 2016. 35 p.)