



Beware the Beast

The Authoritarian Dark Triad & the Dolphin Defense Strategy

By Robert Porter Lynch (Version 1.3 updated March 2022)
(not for publication!)

We are in difficult times with a disturbing re-emergence of Authoritarianism throughout the world. Recently I have spoken with leaders from Europe and North America and often the discussion gravitated to one of the most disturbing issues since the rise of the Nazis and Communists in the 1930s. Leaders in Britain, Holland, France, and Austria are seeing a new breed of Authoritarians assuming prominent positions in government. Much of this is the result of a precipitous [drop in trust in institutions](#) across Western civilization.

Putin's attack on the Ukraine has now brought the monstrosity of evil into brutal contrast with what should be expected by an enlightened leader for the 21st century. For all the evil he has done, Putin has changed the world.

Leaders with a conscience must understand why this is happening, and how to respond.

Considerable research has been done in the seventy years after the end of the Second World War to understand what happened with the rise of people like Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini. The personalities of these leaders are an amalgamation of two highly disconcerting personality drives:

1. "Authoritarians" who are also.....
2. "Dark" (represented by what is termed the "dark triad," consisting of *Narcissists*, *Machiavellians*, and *Psychopaths* - each of which will be discussed below).

Authoritarians Thrive in the Power Game

Why Authoritarians Arise

Authoritarians will always be in our midst - it's part of the natural dispersion of character types. Because the authoritarian's mind is so convinced their ideas (or vision or values or assessment) is correct and right, those who are either confused, simplistic, of similar belief, or intellectually disengaged will be attracted to the authoritarian.

For many followers, the authoritarian makes life a whole lot easier to comprehend; they seem to be "saying it like it is!"

The authoritarian's ability to cut the Gordian Knot of complexity is refreshing, quick, and easy; while producing a guidance system that looks and feels like the truth.



Thus, following the authoritarian is actually easier, because complexity is reduced. The brain's pattern recognition and prediction systems can move from confusion and ambiguity to clarity.

Many like living in an authoritarian world – as long as the leader is fair, just, and ethical. Many societies have thrived in benevolent dictatorship/kingdoms model, where decisions made by the highest authority are done not in the name of selfish power, but for some version of the greater good.¹ When the authoritarian is ethical, they are revered by many in their realm. This is typically called an “autocracy.”

The problem is that having an autocracy opens the avenue for their successor to be an authoritarian dictator.

In fact, autocracies, because they focus on power first and justice comes later, actually attract dark leaders who see the power centralized in the elites, and gravitate toward this centerpiece of public attention for their personal aggrandizement.

What is most disconcerting is that the authoritarian dictator can be evil, ruthless, and reckless. The worst of the authoritarians lack any modicum of ethics and conscience – oppression prevails, eventually resulting in civil and international wars, as well as revolutions. History is filled with these leaders, all the way back to ancient times.

The Bible highlights leaders who are greedy, unjust, draconian, and unwilling to listen to good advice. Rome produced some of the worst dictators; we all know the blood-curdling names of Caligula and Nero.

Hitler, Mussolini, Khadafi, Saddam Hussein, and a host of others littered the 20th century landscape.

The Nature of the Authoritarian

The Authoritarian Personality should be thought of as a “heads & tails” description

- *Authoritarian Leaders*
and
- *Authoritarian Followers*

Each requires the other to thrive.

Authoritarian Leaders:

1. Thrive in Positions of Power & Authority, often demanding Obedience
2. Seek control, status, and are only comfortable when acting in a superior mode
3. Have difficulty dealing with ambiguity, uncertainty, and nuances; thus they adhere to black and white, simplistic interpretations, staying clear of shades of grey. Many are highly moralistic, seeing the world in terms of right (their way) and wrong (other people's way).
4. People who need guidance and simple solutions (not intellectually curious) gravitate toward the Authoritarian for their promise of security



5. Many Authoritarians have deep seated fears, and thus prey upon fears of others, often in the form of bullying intruders and promising safety and security to followers. By capitalizing on fear and distrust, they position themselves as “saviors” and “protectors.”
6. Attract and thrive where Authoritarian Followers are plentiful.²

In and of themselves, authoritarians are not inherently dangerous -- as long as the authoritarian is ethical. While they do pose challenges to a group, their overly simplistic approaches can sometimes be heartening; and when they are too simplistic, more adept leaders are usually picked to replace them in a democratic, open society, especially when their flawed personality gets in the way of progress.*

The real danger is when the authoritarian is also “dark” – without an ethical conscience to temper their inflated ego.

Ultimate Caution – Beware the Dark Triad: Humans without Conscience

Three basic personality disorders, when “merged” inside one person are known as the *Dark Triad*:

1. ***Psychopaths*** – *self-centered egomaniacs who act only in their self interest*

- Lack the chemical oxytocin in the brain, which prevents them from understanding morality, thus can never develop deep relationship, nor have compassion, thus cannot operate with mercy or morality.
- This is known as having “no conscience,” which means killing carries no empathy or guilt.
- Ruthless intent is often couched in charisma, charm, story-telling, and superficial endearment.
- The only “morality” the Psychopath embraces is: *Might Makes Right*.

When Putin risked the well-being of all Russian and Ukrainian citizens, both soldiers and civilians, he revealed his Psychopathic side – willing to engage in cold-blooded mass killings to achieve his evil intentions. Putin has no conscience, no soul, no moral center. People are just pawns on his chessboard. The lives of Ukrainian people or Russian soldiers are just numbers, and no more. Sacrifice of lives is the cost of winning at all costs.

* The foremost expert on Authoritarians and their Followers is Professor Bob Altemeyer, now retired from the University of Manitoba. His book is downloadable on the internet. For ease of reading, I have excerpted the [key points of Authoritarians](#) into a quick seven-page synopsis.



2. **Machiavellians** – master manipulators interested only in their aggrandizement.

- These are chronic connivers always angling to gain advantage over others, often by undermining their opposition, setting them up for false accusations, and acting in an underhanded, criminal manner.
- Their inherent cynicism sends the signal that they are more perceptive of evil intent, which is something they know a lot about, thus imputing negative intent on even good people.
- The Machiavellian personality, when not linked to the other two characteristics, may know the difference between right and wrong, but for a wide variety of personal reasons choose self-interest, manipulation, deceit, and out-maneuvering others, by which they gain great advantage, usually power, money, and often sex.

We have known for years that Putin was a Master Machiavellian – cold, calculating, willing to exert power for any reason that would give him an advantage. He is a master of deceit, using cunning and guile to conceal his real motives. You could never trust his words, using language such as “peace-keeping” to disguise his evil motives.

3. **Narcissists**³ -- self-centered egomaniacs & megalomaniacs who act only in their self interest

- Those who have this personality disorder, without the other two, may know the difference between right and wrong, but choose to place self-interest and personal aggrandizement ahead of all other factors.
- They can only demonstrate loyalty to those who admire them.
- Anyone who disputes the Narcissist’s glory is despised.

Putin’s recent declaration of a rationale for overtaking Ukraine revealed two more dimensions of bestial darkness. When he said he wanted to take back all the land of the former Soviet Empire, he showed his formerly hidden Narcissistic side, megalomaniacal, ego-centric, self-aggrandizing legacy for himself.

Collectively these character disorders are known as the “Dark Triad.”

When a leader has all three of these qualities, they are super-dangerous Predators – Evil incarnate. You are looking at the DEVIL before your eyes. He believes he’s smarter than anyone, no one can be trusted (therefore he must lie and deceive) and his plan is bound to succeed. If it fails, he will opt to use more brute force, and the tide will turn in his favor.

Each quality makes them a master at scheming their world, and making their world a living hell for those not embraced in the inner circle.



- The *Narcissist* manipulates more softly, positioning themselves as the focal/pivot point for all great success and consequently glorification.
- The *Psychopath* is often harder, blunter, and more direct, spreading fear, uncertainty, doubt and distrust in their wake.
- The *Machiavellian* is wily, cunning, plotting, scheming, and deceptive; flexing between soft, hard, undercover, and elusive behaviors.

The interplay of each of these three personality disorders is thoroughly vexing to the “normal” human, primarily because “normal” people cannot fathom the framework of dark triad’s manipulative mind. The average person, acting alone, is simply too prosaic to outwit the dark triad, especially reptilian barbarians endowed with superior intellects.

Because of their nature, the Dark Triad gravitates to positions of power and authority, which feed their beliefs, needs, and drives. This is why they gravitate to organizations that have clear hierarchical status that affords them a platform for their exercise of their perverse talents.

When any of the Dark Triad also exhibit Authoritarian Personality⁴ the magnitude of the impact/danger is multiplied dramatically.

The Difference Between Sociopath and Psychopath

It is easy to get confused between the terms: *sociopath* and *psychopath*. The distinction is somewhat subtle, and are measured more in the degree of disorder, not the type of disorder.

By definition, psychopaths have little or no conscience, sociopaths do have a limited, although weak, ability to feel empathy and remorse.

Psychopaths are often sly enough to look and talk normally, especially when they also have Machiavellian tendencies which enables them to it helps their deeper intent.

On the other hand, someone who is purely a sociopath has a greater tendency react violently and lose their temper when pressed or stressed or confronted by opposition or by the consequences of their actions.

Putin wants three things:

- *Power*
- *Control*
- *Glory*

Anything Putin says to the contrary is a deceit to cover his three motives. Because he lacks a soul/conscience, he has no understanding of the courage and spirit of the Ukrainians — he believes his own lies and thinks more propaganda will change people’s minds.





Sociopath

- Make it clear they do not care how others feels
- Behave in hot-headed and impulsive ways
- Prone to fits of anger and rage
- Recognize what they are doing but rationalize their behavior
- Cannot maintain a regular work and family life
- Can form emotional attachments, but it is difficult

Psychopath

- Pretend to care
- Display cold-hearted behavior
- Fail to recognize other people's distress
- Have relationships that are shallow and fake
- Maintain a normal life as a cover for criminal activity
- Fail to form genuine emotional attachments
- May love people in their own often sexual wa

The distinction between Sociopaths and Psychopaths is more a matter of shades of gray, there are not strict boundaries between the two personality disorders.

Spotting the Socio/Psychopath

- A strong tendency to disregard commitments, promises, and agreements, including financial ones
- Difficulty in making plans, preferring to believe you're able to nimbly navigate problems as they appear
- It is not uncommon for someone to be in repeated fights or assaults.
- Lying as a means to gain social entry or advantage, such as proclaiming yourself a decorated war hero when you have never served
- Making decisions on the spur of the moment with little regard to consequence if an immediate goal is to be achieved
- Persistent anger or irritability, even over small things, as well as mean, spiteful behavior
- Reacting with callousness, aggression, remorselessness, or even sadism when confronted by the fallout of your actions
- Risk taking, becoming easily bored, and an ability to ignore personal boundaries and justify even the most outrageous of actions
- The emotional manipulation of others—for example, pretending to be interested in someone simply to achieve a goal

Socio/Psychopaths cannot trust people, because they cannot build relationships. This means they must demand loyalty and will often feel betrayed, then lash out when others, acting with conscience, do something the socio/psychopath cannot understand.

Their own mindsets and interpersonal interactions make it nigh on to impossible to build the bonds that cure their troubled past or ameliorate their sense of deep isolation. For this reason, both will stretch the limits of manipulation of others, acting in a wide variety of ways, from charming, disarming, frightening, or threatening to achieve their ends. If one method fails, they will escalate to the next highest exercise of power.

Dangerous Dark Triad Authoritarians



The biggest problems in world history have been when Dark Triad Authoritarians have joined forces to wreak havoc upon the world, ramrodding the world into hideous wars. We know the names: Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels, Goering in Germany (11 million just in death camps), or Milosevic, Mladic, Karadzic in Serbia, or Lenin, Stalin in Russia (50 million deaths), Mao Tse Dong (75-100 million deaths from both Great Leap & Cultural Revolution), Pot Pot (3 million deaths), Edi Amin (1/2 million), were among the most notorious. Kaiser Wilhelm II was an unstable Authoritarian, though perhaps not afflicted with deep darkness. Leopold II of Belgium's tyranny in the Congo resulted in 10 million deaths, but is largely unknown.

During the 20th century, probably over 150-200 million deaths can be attributed to crazed Authoritarians, most of whom were from the Dark Triad.

While we are convinced that the vast majority of people are trustworthy, there is a small percentage that is of questionable integrity, and an even smaller percentage of people (perhaps 1-2 percent of the population⁵) that actually genetically deficient, lacking the "bonding gene" – no compassion, shame, empathy, or remorse. (studies seem to indicate 2% of males and 1% of females are psychopathic.)

Of this small segment, many of the most intelligent have very strong ambitions, worming their way into positions of prestige, power, wealth, esteem, and control; and are oft disposed to attack anyone that gets in their way. People are just tools for them to accumulate more power and wealth.

Their lack of moral conscience is masked with potent pseudo-philosophies such as "the purpose of business is to make money (or "create shareholder value," or "if someone screws up, take 'em behind the barn and shoot 'em," or "winning is not the important thing, it's the only thing," or "any executive who doesn't maximize profits should be fired" and on and on.[†]

Rising to the Heights of Corporate Power

In a 2010 study of over 200 U.S. corporate leaders, *Babiak, Hare, and Newmann* found that 4-6% of the executive suite was occupied by psychopaths -- five times the rate expected in the normal population. (see Figure 1: Profile of Corporate Executive Personalities) This strongly suggests our corporations are becoming a magnet for psychopathic behavior.

Moreover, the profiles of fully 10% of those surveyed resemble those of typical males in prison! These are the corporate raiders who, like Al "Chainsaw" Dunlap, manage companies like Attila the Hun. (See sidebar story ⁶) With their intelligence, sometimes they can even mimic the bonding with superficial charm but with no real consideration for honesty, integrity, or human compassion.

[†] Friedrich Nietzsche and Ayn Rand are two modern era "philosophers" that trigger Dark Triad behavior in others. A close reading of their writings shows a dearth of love, compassion, and empathy toward fellow humans – all masked by their deep intelligence and brilliant eloquence.



If Al Dunlap of "CHAINSAW" were a fictional character, he would be dismissed as a figment of bad writing, a one-dimensional caricature: He capitalizes on his notoriety for mass layoffs by writing a book called *Mean Business*. He seems to revel in firing people. He is fond of telling visitors, "I just love predators. They must go out and hunt and kill to survive." An egomaniac, he screams at and purposefully humiliates his employees, including top management. He has a personal life to match: He cut himself off from his family, abused his first wife, and was stunningly stingy in child support payments to a son from his first marriage.....

When Sunbeam tapped Dunlap to run the company, Wall Street responded with hosannas. Share price rose a record 60 percent the day after the announcement of his hiring and continued to skyrocket during the first months of his tenure.

Dunlap quickly began ...his slash-and-burn [strategy].... He soon announced plans to sell or close 18 of Sunbeam's 26 factories. Wall Street celebrated, and the company's share value continued to climb.

Profitable facilities were shut down and the costs incurred from production shifts could not be recouped in the foreseeable future. But Dunlap was determined to impress Wall Street with record jobs cuts, and he refused to listen to cautionary warnings.

Sunbeam sellers had inflated sales by offering deep discounts. Product quality slipped.

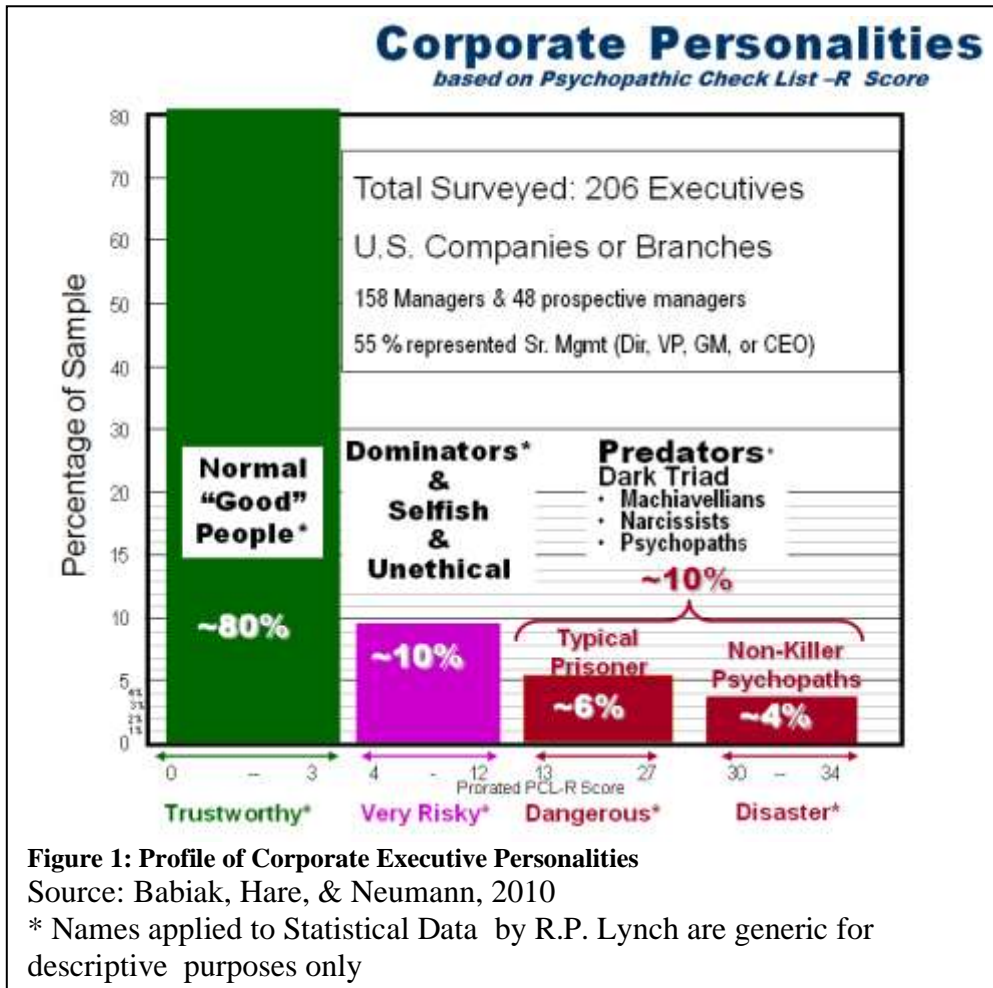
As profitability plummeted and the company fell into the red, the board of directors turned on Dunlap and fired him. Soon it became clear that earlier evidence of increasing profitability had been the result of accounting tricks that auditors retrospectively disallowed.

What is most disturbing about the tale, perhaps, is how many accomplices Dunlap had as he wreaked havoc on a venerable company and the lives of thousands of employees. Executive after executive echoes the one who told Byrne, "I was a greedy son of a bitch along with everyone else" and willing to do whatever Dunlap demanded in exchange for the promise of a big payoff in stock options. The auditors were bullied into going along with questionable accounting measures. And Wall Street analysts, the board of directors and the principal shareholders allowed themselves to be deluded by Dunlap's sham turnaround of the company. - from *Chainsaw - the Notorious Career of Al Dunlap, in the ear of Preprofit at Any Price* by John A. Byrne, Harper, 1999

Frequently found in high positions, and often referred to as "sharks," or "snakes,"⁷ their drives to *Acquire & Defend* are pushed to the limit, manifesting as domination and combative attack. Thus their modus operandi sees anyone opposed to them as the "enemy," requiring constant operations below the belt in secrecy. Their core belief in scarcity and competition obliterates thoughts of anything but a win, always narrowly focusing on the best way to move in for the "kill." Wall Street tends to extol them as heroes, but they are not to be trusted. ***Beware.***

In a newly released study from the University of San Diego,[‡] at least 12% of Supply Chain Managers exhibit strong psychopathic tendencies (which are probably largely attributable to learned behavior).

[‡]Research conducted by Professor Simon Croom, Supply Chain Management, 2021



Predators Rising

Those born before or at the end of the Second World War, recall the horrors of Hitler and Stalin. With the release of the stranglehold of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union, many believed the world was ridding itself of all the vestiges of horrible dictators forever. Finally the world's democracies and the enlightened nations, united, or at least intertwined, in common economic markets would have no interest in Authoritarian regimes.

Experiencing the resurrection of Authoritarianism is like Dracula arising in a 1930s horror movie. It certainly bears examination and some deep understanding.

While there is no single, simplistic reason, it is important for the sake of the future of the planet bring some insight to bear on this emerging threat.

The lessons of history are good place to understand the Authoritarian, whether it be Hitler, Castro, Mao, or any other.



Conditions of turmoil or rapid change are the seed-bed of dictators. When the normal order and progression of life becomes misaligned, unpredictable, or filled with inequities, an Authoritarian who can fill the void is always revered.

When [trust in the institutions](#) that hold civilizations together begins to falter, people have a terrible uneasiness that short-circuits the collective pattern recognition processes of the brain. A leader who offers simple solutions and trusted platitudes can gain great credence.

As insecurities build, the Dark Authoritarian leaders will prey upon people's fears, allocating responsibility for their fears to some alien scapegoat (foreigners, outliers, terrorists, thieves, etc.), and often starting a war to consolidate power and loyalty.⁸

The Dark Authoritarian leader, whose nature gravitates to simplistic solutions, attracts those who are not intellectually curious, seeking simplistic solutions, particularly in chaotic times when someone to blame becomes the easy answer to all the problems.

As most leaders are not adept at managing change in their realm, it becomes all-too-easy to use the tried and true methods of allocating blame, starting wars, polarizing people, and identifying enemies of the people.

For a democracy to sustain itself, its electorate must be highly educated in its civic responsibilities, processes, and deeply understanding of what constitutes good leadership in government.⁹

Today, public education focuses primarily on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), and has shied away from character building, morals/ethics, civics, history, and community engagement, leaving our citizenry vulnerable to Machiavellian manipulators.

The real danger is that Authoritarians will also frequently be members of the Dark Triad – “predators” which present a danger not only to the people they govern, but to the world as a whole, with whom they are likely to pick a fight.

Addressing Complexity & Change

There are two basic ways for a leader to deal with highly complex organizational interactions:

- *Simplicity* or
- *Synergy*

The strategy of *Simplicity* is to make everything basic, either/or, in/out, good/bad, dangerous/safe, create clear hierarchies, and put strong rules and laws in place that leave little to the imagination, interpretation, or judgment. This is the path generally chosen by the Authoritarian.

The *Synergy* strategy emphasizes trust, collaboration, teamwork, decentralized decision-making, innovation, and personal development, all of which are essential to enabling all the moving parts to coordinate and synchronize. Synergy conquers complexity by enabling interfaces and interactions to be creative, win-win solutions. This strategy requires highly collaborative leadership skills, compassion, creativity, and championing skills. The *synergy* pathway is seldom understood at first by most people, and requires skilled leadership and followership.

In the short run, *simplicity* is generally more successful, but in the long-run *synergy* is clearly superior. The adept leader knows how to invoke both, using a spectrum of approaches appropriate to the situation.



Recognizing the Danger

These humans are neither a figment of our collective imaginations nor a fiction created by sci-fi writers; they are real and dangerous. Their view of the world is more than just a *belief system*, it is a *modus operandi* that is often hard-wired into their brain.¹⁰ While we will never rid the world of Dark Triad Authoritarians (DTAs), there are two strategies to use to limit their impact.

The first strategy is *preemptive*: identification of the personalities and preventing them from entering the halls of power. This is particularly applicable in government and corporate worlds. The best way to limit their power is to keep them from out of the game in the first place.

In government, political parties must better screen their candidates. The dark personalities should be revealed in high school civics courses so voters can limit the mobility of the DTAs.

In business, corporate boards must be educated on the DTAs. Human Resource departments should screen for this during testing and interviews. Because the Dark Triad have poor personal relationships, they can be identified without too much difficulty.¹¹ Certainly during performance reviews dark qualities can quickly be seen if one looks. Often, based on experience, the evil qualities are masked under charm, wittiness, symbols of power, and passive aggressive behaviors, which can be very deceptive – seldom do evil corporate executives wear their darkness on their sleeves (Chainsaw Dunlap could be quite charming when he was in a public forum).

Dolphin Defense Strategy

The second strategy is *reactive*: ridding your organization of a DTA. This is far more difficult to accomplish than the preemptive strategy, mainly because the DTA will have developed a power base that has been carefully crafted to be either loyal/adoring or fearful of retribution.

The top echelon DTA is extremely adept at crafting illusions, masterminding superficial truths, designing subliminal messages, building quasi-alliances, and engaging lawyers who will be their defenders in the event of difficulty (the DTA knows exactly where the law will protect them, and cares not about ethics in decision-making).¹²

[Note: for the purposes of the Dolphin Defense Strategy, we are addressing the two categories labeled *Dominators* (Authoritarians who are non-Dark Triad leaders) and *Predators* (Authoritarian Dark Triad leaders), identified in Figure 1: Profile of Corporate Executive Personalities and lumped them together under the *Predatory* nomenclature. (See Figure 3)]

Sowing FUDD

The strategy to confuse, confound, and disrupt normal thinking in humans is known as “sowing FUDD.”

- Fear
- Uncertainty
- Distrust
- Divisiveness

The most observable use of the FUDD strategy in America is in negative political advertising – making the other candidate look incompetent, unethical, or dirty in the eyes of the electorate.

While this may work in the short run to win an election, in the long run it [damages the citizenry’s trust in their institutions](#), undermining faith in democracy.

Figure 2: Sowing FUDD



“Predators” are our term for individuals who function *as if* they lacked a drive to *Bond*.¹³ These are character types of our culture (sometimes referred to as “sub-clinical,” having some of the symptoms, or milder forms of Psychiatric Disorders¹⁴). Predators believe others don’t count (except as pawns of the Predator) and make personal choices that solely benefit themselves to the exclusion of others.

The “Dark Triad” is at the bottom of the heap, populated by Machiavellians, Narcissists, and Psychopaths, the latter being a genetic disorder (fully lacking the gene that controls conscience and compassion -- the drive to *Bond*). A team of psychopathologists at the University of British Columbia ¹⁵ has made extensive studies of the nature of the Dark Triad and how they infiltrate and operate within organizations. These may

constitute up to ten percent of the senior executive suite, according to their studies (Figure 1).

Once such a Predator has infiltrated our organizational world, how must we deal with them effectively, without having to engage Machiavellian strategies (fighting fire with fire)?

Surviving in a predator-infested ocean is not a sport for the faint at heart.

Clearly, a Predator-infested organization is dangerous for the normal human that yearns for an environment of trust, camaraderie, and co-creation.

What should one do if Predators are in your tank? While the last resort may be to exit the organization, there are other options.

Dolphins Drive Away Sharks

Here is a worthy lesson from the sea – how dolphins (porpoises) avoid being devoured by sharks:

With a small mouth and far fewer and more diminutive teeth, dolphins should be instant victims of sharks. Not so.

Dolphins are some of the most prized creatures of the deep.....they are very intelligent [and highly collaborative]their brains are somewhat larger on average than the typical human brain ... and the dolphin’s associational cortex, the part of the brain specialized for abstract and conceptual thinking is larger than ours ... and has been ... for at least 30 million years.

Dolphin behavior around sharks is legendary ... using their intelligence and their wiles, they can be deadly to sharks. Bite them to death? Oh no.

PREDATORS -- DANGEROUS DEALINGS

Authoritarian Predators: Life Is A Battle, Take What You Can Get, it’s a “survival of the fittest,” “dog-eat-dog” world, including:

Dominators

- **Selfish & Deceptive**
(entitled to get whatever they can)
- **Immoral Cynics**
(personal ends justifies any means)
- **Greedy Aggressors**
(compete viciously – winner takes all)

Dark Triad: Twisted & Malicious

- **Machiavellians**
(devious, cunning, cold, manipulative)
- **Narcissists Ego-Maniacs**
(glory at all costs, me first, I do no wrong)
- **Psychopaths**
(demonic, emotionless, remorseless)

Figure 3: Authoritarian Predators



First, Dolphins never travel alone – always in pods – teams. Whenever a shark is in the area, the Dolphins send a danger signal. They circle together to present a united defense. Then the Dolphins circle and ram, circle and ram. Using their bulbous noses as amphibious bludgeons, together they methodically crush the shark’s rib cage and belly until the murderous creature realizes attacking a dolphin is simply more trouble than it’s worth.

But rather than its skill at shark combat ... the dolphin symbolizes coping and choice-making in rapid change times because of the mammal’s natural abilities to think constructively, [collaboratively,] and creatively.

Tips to Neutralize Predators

Here are some Dolphin tips on fighting the Shark:

- *Collaborate & Innovate to Drive the Sharks out – the Shark has no place in their brain to understand alliances – it’s your best weapon.*
- *Address threats and rapid change using cooperative strategies (teams, alliances, and networks. [Note: in the case of the most devious, collaborations may have to fly under the radar in the early stages.]*
- *Don’t try to Annihilate the Shark – just drive them out, else they will retaliate with a vengeance*
- *Don’t give up or give in easily, you’ve got to show your resolve/toughness. Sharks are tough and see others as weak.*
- *Use ideology, but don’t be overly ideological; Sharks have no ideology, they are practical realists. Stick to high-order principles unless no one cares about those principles.*
- *There will be a lot of heat before generating light. Courage to bear on for the sake of the greater good is essential. Don’t be willing to be a sacrificial lamb, for this will just start a long, slow progression of sacrifices.*
- *Don’t accept illusory win-win trade-offs that produce good feelings in lieu of outstanding results; the Shark revels in illusions, false promises, and putting pretty words into the audience to mask evil thoughts and schemes.*
- *Be persistent and focused. People will not believe you until you have facts, evidence, and specifics. Act on the “Big Picture,” but keep the details in focus.*
- *Be quick to respond if required, but play a chess game, thinking several moves ahead. The Shark is always going to respond to your moves, often unethically, such as accusing you first of what he is accused of, or setting you up for a situation that brings your ethics and trustworthiness into question – the hardball game.*
- *Tell the truth prudently, thus avoiding wasting time, energy, and resources on useless, unproductive drama [note: be prudent in how and when the truth is used].*
- *The Shark will use your philosophy, ideology, and principles against you, so be prepared to answer the most difficult challenges to your inner core.*

With humans, however -- unless trained in collaboration and teamwork (such as military or collaborative leadership training), the natural human response is highly individualistic – people



fend for themselves and simply don't team together when attacked by predators. Predators take advantage of this: first by attacking the weak, then undermining the strong, and ultimately dividing people against each other (see Figure 2: Sowing FUDD)

With a twist of the mental and emotional kaleidoscope, the *human variety of Dolphin* must learn the Dolphin's natural response – work together to prevent polarization, counter FUDD, fight defensively as a team, thwart the Predator's moves and use facts to expose the half-truths the Predator has been using to create the illusions.

For anyone who has one or more Predatory sharks in their organization, the order of the day is to respond. Typically our choices have been *fight, fright, or freeze*. Apocalyptic strategists would advocate a response of Biblical proportions. Machiavelli and game theorists would propose a fight of cunning and coercion with similar tactics.

We suggest a collaborative strategy that sheds light on the realities of the dark force of the snakes and sharks. This standard for behavior embraces the same high level epitomized by George Washington. After a brutal and draining war of revolution, he rejected any suggestion he'd become King of America. He quashed all such thinking, maintaining the people deserved better, rallying people in peace and war to unite for the greater good of all.

Conclusion

The rise of the Authoritarians is not to be taken lightly. Their reemergence is a danger to every democracy on the planet. Authoritarians exploit the fault line of distrust in institutions, sowing fear, uncertainty, distrust, and divisiveness.

Unless our democracies shore up the leadership of our cherished institutions, Authoritarianism will continue to grow, and its prosperity will become civilization's poverty.

In the larger sense, Rome fell because its people could trust neither their government, nor their fellow man, nor their culture for its lack of vision and ideals. When Rome finally crashed, its leaders had no more will to fight the evil barbarians at their gate; instead they made a Faustian bargain, and ultimately sold whatever semblance of their souls to an evil even greater than they.

Fear drained their energy; fear is the greatest destroyer of trust. Ultimately the Roman culture *lacked a conscience*, which put Rome on a pathway to perdition.

We are now following the Romans. Kenneth Clark observed:

Thinking about the almost incredible epoch of the Roman Empire tells one something about the nature of civilization.

It shows that however complex and solid it seems, it is actually quite fragile. It can be destroyed. What are its enemies?

First of all fear – fear of war, fear of invasion, fear of plague and famine, [I might add fear of cruelty and injustice] that make it simply not worthwhile constructing things or planting trees or even planning next year's crops. A world of fear and darkness [was] ready to inflict horrible punishment for the smallest infringement of a taboo.¹⁶



It is the lack of confidence [distrust], more than anything else that kills civilization. Confidence [trust] in the society in which one lives, belief in its philosophy, belief in its laws, and confidence in one's own mental powers... a vigorous belief in law and discipline.

Vigor, energy, vitality: All the great civilizations .. have had a weight of energy behind them.

People sometimes think that civilization consists of fine sensibilities and good conversation and all that. These can be among the agreeable results of civilization, but they are not what make a civilization, and a society can have these amenities and yet be dead and rigid.

We can destroy ourselves with cynicism and disillusion, just as effectively as bombs.¹⁷

However, all is not bleak. The cultural "arrow" must be aimed by enlightened, realistic, collaborative leaders; the point of the "arrow" must be sharpened, primarily by ethical, trust-worthy, guidance. Building trust in our institutions; understanding that times of rapid change require both simplicity and synergy; and preemptive identification and proactive trust-worthy leadership are essential in these challenging times.

It is absolutely essential that the citizenry of the civilized world become attuned to the methods and guile of Authoritarian Dark Triad and push them to the periphery as soon as they are identified, not after they have risen to power.

What Darwin said in his 1872 book "the Descent of Man about Sociopathy, Courage, Honor & Sympathy:

"A man who possesses no trace of sympathy and social instincts [is] an unnatural monster."

Self Interest: Selfish and contentious people will not cohere, and without coherence nothing can be effected.

"When tribes come into competition, the tribe with the greater number of courageous, sympathetic, and faithful members... will succeed better and conquer the other."

"Sympathy is of high importance to ...aid & defend one another. [It is] one of the most important elements of the social instincts. "

Law of Honour [is] the law of the opinion of our equals. Man can generally and readily distinguish between the higher and lower moral rules. The higher are founded on social instincts, and relate to the welfare of others. The lower rules ... relate chiefly to self.



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¹ From Wikipedia: A benevolent dictatorship is a form of government in which an authoritarian leader exercises absolute political power over the state but does so for the benefit of the population as a whole. A benevolent



dictator may allow for some economic liberalization or democratic decision-making to exist, such as through public referenda or elected representatives with limited power, and often makes preparations for a transition to genuine democracy during or after their term. It might be seen as a republican form of enlightened despotism.

The label has been applied to leaders such as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Turkey), Josip Broz Tito (Yugoslavia), Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore), Abdullah II of Jordan, Paul Kagame (Rwanda), and Qaboos bin Said al Said (Oman).

² See Altemeyer, Robert; *The Authoritarians*

³ Narcissistic Personality Disorder: (DSM-5 Definition)

- Having an exaggerated sense of self-importance
- Expecting to be recognized as superior even without achievements that warrant it
- Exaggerating your achievements and talents
- Being preoccupied with fantasies about success, power, brilliance, beauty or the perfect mate
- Believing that you are superior and can only be understood by or associate with equally special people
- Requiring constant admiration
- Having a sense of entitlement
- Expecting special favors and unquestioning compliance with your expectations
- Taking advantage of others to get what you want
- Having an inability or unwillingness to recognize the needs and feelings of others
- Being envious of others and believing others envy you
- Behaving in an arrogant or haughty manner

⁴ Authoritarian Personality: Personality characterized by demands for extreme obedience to, and dependence on, a powerful leader or father figure. These traits are accompanied by prejudicial, rigid, and tyrannical behavior against others, especially those who are inferior in rank, or vulnerable or weaker.

⁵ According to Research by University of British Columbia scientists Babiak & Hare – see Hare & Babiak, *Snakes in Suits*, Harper Collins. Note: These 3-Drive humans are often referred to as psycho-paths or socio-paths, *after* they have broken the law. Those that skirt the edges of the law will work in the narrow area that is legal but unethical or insensitive. While their percentage in the population is extremely low, their impact on society is massively disproportionate to their numbers.

⁶ CHAINSAW: The Notorious Career of Al Dunlap in the Era of Profit at Any Price By John Byrne New York: Harper Business, Review by Robert Weissman, Washington Monthly, Nov 1999

⁷ Also referred to as “snakes” – See Hare & Babiak, *Snakes in Suits – When Psychopaths go to Work*, Harper Collins, 2007

⁸ See Altemeyer, Robert, *The Authoritarians*

⁹ Thomas Jefferson, in designing the precepts of modern democracy, wrote extensively about imbedding the qualities of trust, character and virtue into a good education, regarding them as essential to the foundation of a great democracy:

Laws will be wisely formed and honestly administered in proportion as those who form and administer them are wise and honest; whence it becomes expedient for promoting the public happiness that those persons whom nature has endowed with genius and virtue should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens.

-- Thomas Jefferson: Diffusion of Knowledge Bill, 1779. FE 2:221, Papers 2:527

Among the benefits of education [is] the incalculable advantage of training able counselors to administer the affairs of our country in all its departments, legislative, executive and judiciary, and to bear their proper share in the councils of our national government: nothing more than education advancing the prosperity, the power, and the happiness of a nation.

-- Thomas Jefferson: Report for University of Virginia, 1818

Jefferson’s concept of liberal education was very different from what we think of today. Then, a substantial portion of education’s purpose was to make better citizens by focusing on both character and wisdom.

¹⁰ Marauders, like Chainsaw Dunlap, lack the internal drive to care about others, (known as the *Bond* drive).



¹¹ We have developed a Trust and Teamwork Test to assist identification.

¹² See Babiak & Hare, *Snakes in Suits* for a composite case study

¹³ Whether these people are clinically ill is a matter we will leave to be determined by others

¹⁴ People with mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, bi-polar, borderline personality disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder may also present severe difficulties for trustworthiness because they cannot be consistent or objective in their relationships. Their mental illness may not have been diagnosed by a clinical psychiatrist or psychologist, but nevertheless they go to work or school, and wreak daily havoc in their wake.

¹⁵ A team of psychopathologists (Professors Babiak, Hare, Paulhus, Williams, et al.) at the University of British Columbia have made extensive studies of the Dark Triad.

¹⁶ Clark, *Ibid*, p; 2

¹⁷ Clark, *Ibid*, p 4 & 347