

The Invention of Tomorrow

[Daniel S. Milo](#): [Good Enough](#) (p. 189)

Links by Tor Guttorm Syvertsen

all misprints are mine

My additions are typeset in **crimson** **trebuchet** 10pt.

Nature' safety net is impressive, but it is not perfect. Countless species have fallen through its holes, from the dinosaurs to *Homo erectus*, *Homo neanderthalis*, and very, very nearly, *Homo sapiens* himself. What saved us, I argue, is a unique human faculty: the capacity to conceive of a future that might be different from—and hopefully better than—the present. This may be closely tied to why a small number of humans left Africa sixty thousand years ago and flourished beyond its shores. Most humans in Africa did not migrate. Those who did must have had a reason, for the tendency of all things is to remain at rest. Using the tools of natural philosophy, I speculate that the migrants perceived their fortunes to be greater elsewhere.

What follows is a hypothesis. I do not claim it to be true, only that it is plausible, and that a new theory is needed because natural selection does not adequately explain humanity's singular standing on earth. My theory is that among the tiny sliver of humans, the brain overcame itself. Its burdens persisted, but by inventing the future it rescued humanity from extinction. With the future came the seed of restlessness. Thus did a couple of hundred migrants leave Africa, precipitating a demographic explosion. These explorers defied the universal regime of inertia and negative feedback. Where nature yearns for stability, humanity bends to the dream of tomorrow and the change it portends. It is a dichotomy that persists to this day and always will, enabling all our species' brilliance and all its waste. The future is the fifth wave of the CCCP, our human safety net.