

Adventure Cabaret

What Ever Happened to The Human Potential Movement?

[2:32]

Screen: Dr. Finlay Clinkscales, PhD, HHS
Professor of Horrific Human Stupidity

The professor walks on crisply to downstage right, and whips out his laser pointer again, with gusto.

Professor Clinkscales: It's time for another chart. This one is particularly revealing, on a subject that is terrifying to most people. I am also terrified of this subject, by the way. But we need to talk about it, because it's so important.

Screen: Chart of the use of the phrase "Human Potential Movement," from 1500 to the current time.

Professor Clinkscales: Take a look. For most of human history, even the concept of "human potential" did not exist. Then, quite suddenly, in 1965 humanity appears to wake up and realize that it could *consciously improve itself*.

What an exciting, amazing, inspiring idea! We could make the whole world better by *becoming better ourselves*! This idea then takes hold. During the course of a thrilling fourteen years, from 1965 to 1978, the slope of interest in this idea is close to vertical. Humanity appears to be truly serious about this idea: that the most meaningful progress of all is progress in improving humanity itself.

The mood darkens.

Then, from 1979 on, something horrible happens, which you can see clearly toward the right of the graph. A terrible dwindling begins. In dribs and drabs, humanity appears to either give up on itself, or give up on the effort involved in improving itself.

The Professor begins to become deeply agitated, and appears to be losing control.

This in itself is terrifying, but what is far more terrifying is that humanity may be correct in its own judgment about itself. Let's be honest about this. We are indeed a horrible species. It's true. We are horrible: horrible to each other, horribly lazy and cowardly, horrible to the entire Earth and all the other creatures on it. Maybe we *deserve* to give up on ourselves, because *we just plain fucking suck!*

The Professor suddenly becomes quiet. A visible change occurs in his posture and his demeanor. His chest begins to heave. He is fighting back tears. He can barely speak.

But I can't do it. I just can't give up on us. I know I probably should, but I just can't. I *know* we can do *so much* better! I cry every day, just thinking about all this.

Horrific...Human...Stupidity.

The Professor is at a loss, visibly shaken.

I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

The Professor exits awkwardly, stumbling off, afraid of completely losing control, still fighting back tears.