

"I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled..."

—Jonathan Swift, 1729

WHEN SWIFT WROTE *A Modest Proposal*, suggesting the Irish solve their economic problems by eating their own children, little did he realize, years later, that we Americans would embrace his advice more heartily than he could have ever imagined. We've updated the process, in order to make our children less aware their little lives are being systematically cannibalized, but the end result is the same.

Our feeding process is akin to Tarantula Hawk larvae: we feed off of our victims while keeping them alive in the hope they will live long enough to continue providing fresh nourishment and won't notice we've sucked them completely dry until well after we're gone.

Some predict that the world's oil supplies will dry up in as little as 30 years. About that same time others claim global warming will raise the temperature of the planet enough to have melted most of the polar ice, disrupted the ocean's currents, and altered Earth's weather patterns, turning our breadbaskets into deserts and coastlands into snorkeling spots. Most rainforests will be cleared by then, and the oceans will be fished out. Dodo birds made easy meals way back when, so I'm told; renewable resources are only renewable if there is something left over to renew.

The social dieticians who wrote this hearty menu keep reminding us that to abandon our cannibalistic child-eating process would irreparably disrupt the economy. They are right. The huge economic boom of the 80's and 90's was a direct result of super-sizing our baby-munching meals. Credit card debt, government debt, and borrow-and-spend policies are what have allowed us to enjoy our Hummers, McMansions, designer shoes, Grande Frappuccinos, and type-2 diabetes. Indeed, our offspring's future is just another credit card too, isn't it, and the bills won't come due in time for us to have to pay, so why worry?

Eat, drink and be merry, the Good Book says, for tomorrow we die. Even God is on our side.

And we shouldn't let this current economic downturn or ever-dwindling world resources put us on a diet, lest our children begin to recover from our gnawing on them long enough to gain the strength to fight back, for the very fact that this is not sustainable is also the very reason we must continue on, full-bore. This process is dependent on resources-yet-to-be-created being fully consumed *before* they are truly real. That way, no one notices they are eaten up because they aren't really there yet to begin with. It is a most elegant, abstract form of cannibalism. If we stop now, we'll lose all our cool stuff, have to downsize, to go without things, to die without the most toys. And the main thing we would have to stop doing is having so many kids, to downsize and reverse world population to more sustainable levels, but that

would be like killing the goose that laid the golden egg. Who would we eat then?

Sure, when the current crop of kids reach my age—if they live that long—they may finally grow wise to us having already eaten them alive, but there's not much they'll be able to do about it by then. They'll undoubtedly pout and complain and do what kids *always* do: blame their parents for all their problems. But the truth is our kids should thank us, because, after all, if we had acted more responsibly toward our planet, way back now, they might have never been born.



AURELIO O'BRIEN is a writer and an artist. He spent over 25 years as an artist, animator, designer, and storyteller in Hollywood, working in the field of Feature Animation. He is the author of *EVE*, a science fiction novel. www.evethenovel.com.

CONTACT: aurelio@evethenovel.com

Copyright 2010 Impact Times. The information contained in this article may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or otherwise distributed without the prior written authority of Impact Times.