Utopia: 'an ideal community or society possessing a desirable socio-politico-legal system'

An ultimate utopia is at times described as a society in which everyone is equal, content (nobody lacks anything), free of suffering, free of will and regulations. A society where everything is balanced (e.g.: resources and usage thereof). Most utopian concepts make use of only some of these requirements, while mine will merely approach some of them, because most of them are impossible.

I feel that most utopian requirements conflict with (human) nature and are likely to be unattainable, so in an attempt to describe a possible utopia, I would first like to examine us as a species in respect to our society. There are many human qualities that we consider to be detrimental to our society, of which the seven deadly sins are a well-known example. Instead of these sins, however, I say that there are two traits that block our progression towards a utopia: egoism and ignorance.

EGOISM

Life is its own goal. I believe we live to live and so our goal in life is to survive, not reproduce. Every basic function in our bodies is hard-coded to serve this purpose, ranging from genetics to emotions. This means almost any creature alive is hard-coded to be individualistic. Many organisms learned over time that working as a group would increase their personal chances of survival, which in our case has led to our societies today, yet this motivation is individualistic also.

Our brains simply have too much thinking capacity, so we are left to wonder: if survival is no longer an issue, then what do we live for? With the primal urge being taken care of, perhaps now a side-effect of it may be the endless search for a reason to live: an endless desire to reach a certain satisfaction. In order to attain this satisfaction, we attempt to improve the quality of our lives continuously. Most sins from the deadly seven exist because of this desire to improve our lives and they all go hand-in-hand with individualism (egoism).

IGNORANCE

With ignorance, the dominating sin of this age, I mean both the lack of knowledge and lack of insight. Too often do we make decisions based on incomplete and/or incorrect information. While we are capable of empathy: the capacity to recognize feelings that are being experienced by another sentient being - incidentally our greatest gift (from a moral perspective)- most of us are either blind to it or ignorant of an opportunity to use it (e.g.: the assumption that animals do not think and feel).

UTOPIA

In order to create a utopia I think we would have to face these two sins. While ignorance is something that can be remedied through training and philosophy (I think Plato had a point), fighting egoism means fighting our very being. Can we fight our own essence at all? I like to think that (like empathy,) this ability to resist our core is one of our great gifts. Take the churchly sins Lust and Wrath for example: they are both caused by simple hormonal changes in our body, but can both be resisted relatively easily. With egoism, this challenge is much greater, but there have been great examples of altruistic acts throughout our history and many stories herald such acts. Even though we

may never overcome egoism, we should realize that altruism in a controlled environment should benefit us more.

Through philosophy we need to come to realize the way nature works (for example: that equality is a falsehood that we created, again, to preserve ourselves). Danger lies in equality of status and belongings: while egoism can be battled, the desire for satisfaction can't. Should we all be equal in both status and belongings, the only thing left to desire would be to be different than the others, which is right back where we started. Competition is part of (our) nature and should be allowed within certain parameters (e.g.: sportsmanship and even rivalry in economics to an extent). While equality is unattainable, it makes a brilliant moral goal and that is why an equal affection/respect for all life should be one of the most important aims of our existence. The fact that we can do it should be reason enough. This means a utopia would be a society in which unnecessary human-induced suffering is practically non-existent, amongst every known species. In fact it should be our continuous goal to limit suffering as best we can. The resistance of egoism and ignorance should serve this purpose. An ecological balance would follow from this, but in order to achieve this, we should first significantly lower our population through birth-regulations (much like China did) and keep it in check as soon as we reach an acceptable level.

I have only a small concept of a utopian government: one in which well-educated rulers govern the populous thinking only of the people within their society and very little about themselves (much like in Plato's republic). Every team needs overseers, who guard balance. This form of leadership in combination with our controlled population is what I meant when I mentioned a controlled environment. There should be law and order, simply because we need it. Our current punishment system should be completely redesigned, however, for I do not believe in punishment through extensive jail-time, or in punishment for accidental or necessary crimes.

Instead of religion, we would have to come to peace with our nature and realize that the concept of 'God' follows from fear of death, combined with part of our brain that –when submitted to an electrical current- makes us feel like we're being watched. Just as we have respect for life and the preservation of it, we should also respect death and learn to come to peace with the fact that the end of one's life is final.

As a benevolent society, we should still aim to better our existence. We should continue to improve our technology, which should speed up significantly if we lower competition. We should also have lots of cats.

Problem: I fear that in a utopia like this, in which suffering is almost non-existent, the notion of why it is important to love will be forgotten. Philosophical views can only mean so much to the inexperienced, without real-world facts and experience to back it up. (Is there light without darkness? What is this suffering?).