LONGTERMISM

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On the one hand: “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less . . . any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.” (Donne)

On the other hand: 110 billion people have lived on Earth. (Roser; “Immortality”)

“About half the people who ever lived lived in the last 2000 years.” Only about 9 billion lived before the Neolithic Revolution (the invention of farming, c. 10,000 BCE). 9 billion is 8.3% of 109 billion. (Roser)

8 billion people are alive now. And the population is rising rapidly.

385,000 babies are born every day. (“Immortality”) That’s 140 million a year.

150,000 people die every day. (“Immortality”) That’s 60 million a year. (Roser; Kaneda and Haub) (Or perhaps 65 million: “Death Rate”)

The population should continue to rise rapidly.

“120: Age that some researchers expect people will live to in the future” (“Immortality”)

“300: Number of bodies frozen in liquid nitrogen in America in the hopes that science will one day bring them back to life” (“Immortality”)

“$610 billion: Estimated size of the immortality industry by 2025” (“Immortality”)

On the other hand, new diseases are appearing. The virus *Pithovirus sibericum* spent 30,000 years in permafrost but now is revived. (“Immortality”)

We are mammals. . . . the lifespan of a typical mammalian species is about 1 million years. Let’s think about a future in which humanity exists for 1 million years: 200,000 years are already behind us, so there would be 800,000 years still ahead. [If] population stabilizes at 11 billion people (based on the UN projections for the end of this century) and . . . the average life length rises to 88 years . . . there would be 100 trillion people alive over the next 800,000 years. (Roser)

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