

From the Notebook of John T. Cacciopo: A Brief Biography of Ann Coulter

by Rebecca Coffey

"Even cockroaches develop psychological problems if they are denied a normal social life." John T. Cacciopo and William Patrick in "Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection," Nature, July 2009.

May 4, 2009: William Patrick and I separated Roach #7845, a female, from her friends and family in order to study her reaction to isolation. Time will tell whether, by doing so, we push her over some psychological precipice.

May 25, 2010: After nearly three weeks of no noticeable effect, I believe I'm beginning to see results. When Roach # 7845 awoke this evening, she found herself transformed into Ann Coulter.

And right away, I could tell she didn't like it. For starters, her front legs got entangled in blonde hair and false eyelashes, keeping her from the styrofoam cup that was to have been her breakfast. She wiggled the stumpy remains of one antenna wistfully, but was helpless to reach it. Those legs, once so dark, strong, and beautifully articulated, are now mere and wan. Worse, the front ones are "arms." Oh, the horrible alterations that friendlessness can wreak!

Thankfully, Ms. Coulter is adaptable and perseverant. By dawn she had reached the cup, consumed it, and started using her arms to pose photogenically. She'd also learned to casually flip her hair off her shoulders when accentuating conversational points.

Still, with grease-gobbed food packaging all around her and no one special with whom to share it, "When will I waken from this nightmare?" must have been her overriding thought as the sun broke on the horizon.

June 1, 2010: Change has continued, steadily, and Ms. Coulter's antennae have disappeared entirely. But if I'm not mistaken, the metamorphosis seems suddenly to be picking up speed. As of this evening, as she gnawed on cigarette butts, she also nibbled on a picture of the Obama girls. Which was unprecedented for her. Furthermore, as she chewed, the crucifix on her necklace dangled too closely to the picture, and she chewed on it, as well. "Lab accident," I'd call it. These things happen all the time. But she became enraged, and began strafing the Obama girls' photo with terrifying invective. Their mother is a freakish Jackie O imitator. Their father, B. Hussein Obama, should nuke North Korea to give the world a warning. "I'm a Christian first and bigoted, mean-sprites conservative second, and don't you ever forget it," she screeched just before wiggling her cockroach rump and wailing, "When will I awaken from this nightmare?" Meanwhile, that's exactly what I'm beginning to ask myself. (Well, *you* try listening to her for an entire lab shift. Pinch me when it's over.)

June 2, 2010: Muslims should be banned from U.S. airlines, and should make do with flying carpets and camels. Jews need to perfect themselves and become Christians. Ms. Coulter's mental distress is making me sick. Indeed, I was reaching for a can of Raid(R) this evening when my conscience got the better of me. After all, her predicament is my fault—mine and William Patrick's! Furthermore, this experiment is Patrick's and mine to discontinue!

Heroically (I thought), I removed the top from the roach box so that I could also remove the barrier that separated Ms. Coulter from the other roaches. This simple act, of course, allowed her to see her fellows for the first time in several months, and it allowed her fellows to see her. To my dismay, once they saw Ms. Coulter in her full glory—erect, smug, and spewing venom from her mouth—they scampered up the side of the (momentarily uncovered) box and leapt to the floor. Then they ran like the dickens across the kitchen to hide under the sink. How could they not? Roaches, ugly as they are, live peaceably, honorably, and communally.

June 3, 2010: Now that Ms. Coulter is irretrievably alone, she seems depressed. This evening she let out another epithet (the civilian casualties in Iraq were all terrorists anyway), and took up a routine of repetitively washing and blow-drying her hair. All night long she reached for the bleach, the shampoo, and then the conditioner. She did exhibit some positive, nutrition-seeking behaviors, though, sniffing about between ablutions for traces of stale beer. Late at night, she began drunk-dialing radio hosts, a behavior I hadn't seen before. She also performed an unbelievable number of leg lifts and stomach crunches.

June 4, 2010: It is now proven. Even cockroaches develop psychological problems if they are denied a normal social life. But as repugnant as those problems are, they may not be permanent. Indeed, I actually suspect that Ms. Coulter's metamorphosis is reversing itself slowly. She may be regaining the carapace she only recently lost. Of course, it could just be that the leg lifts and stomach crunches have made her abdomen and neck unusually taught, and that botulism has petrified her facial muscles into a nasty scowl.

