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Odology

*The second part of a slightly outrageous introduction
to post-democratic society and politics*

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Beyond Democracy (Tuesday) Version 3.1

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Tuesday

Moderator: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the second day of our “slightly outrageous introduction to post-democratic society and politics.”

We hope you and your families enjoyed some of the entertainment available on this cruise ship last evening. Or perhaps you just took advantage of the fine weather on deck. But now it is time to get back to work on our unusual social experiment.

We suggested yesterday that, in order to prepare ourselves for an attempt to devise better social solutions for the future, for America and the rest of the world, we must first try to explore the entire spectrum of social possibilities – not just the possibilities that serve the interests of today’s political professionals and professional politicians.

And, to make the idea of a social spectrum seem somewhat less abstruse, we used metaphorical labels from the more-familiar

spectrum of visible light which includes, from “left to right,” the colors red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.

On Monday our three guest experts – Mr. Obso, Mr. Novo and Ms. Demo – discussed several elementary social concepts and problems, using examples from America and other obnoxious “green” societies in the middle of the social spectrum. Because most of the people in our audience come from societies like that, we thought it would be a good idea to start with familiar issues before venturing very far into other, non-green parts of the social spectrum which, for most Americans, are unexplored social territories with very strange-looking people and practices.

If that preliminary discussion can be said to have come to any tentative conclusion, it was probably the suggestion that “virtually all social issues, finally, are questions of social purpose.” So, rather than chasing

around seeking piecemeal solutions for current and future social problems, we will be concentrating instead on those larger social purposes that seem to inspire social solutions sufficiently comprehensive and cohesive to be called social “models.”

The logical place to begin such a survey, it seems to us, is with an examination of the purposes and practices of humanity’s oldest and most successful social model. And that is why the subject of today’s discussions will be the prehistoric Obso social model, which is located at the left or “red” end of our social spectrum.

This very ancient model should not, however, be confused with the “red-communist” model which is usually placed at the left end of the modern American political spectrum. On our much-wider social spectrum, modern communism would be located at the left end of the central, green segment of the social spectrum, or perhaps at the right end of the adjacent yellow segment.

The red Obso model, beyond yellow and orange, is a social model few “green” Americans know very much about. And, because this model is often associated with prehis-

toric tribal societies, most Americans probably think it has little relevance or importance for them. But, in fact, the Obso social model in its modern form is still the best known and most powerful social influence in most parts of the world today.

It may also be the most important single social influence in modern American politics – a largely invisible influence that, unfortunately, seems to be mostly negative and destructive. But we believe that is because the Obso social model is very poorly understood by Americans, or deliberately misunderstood. And, we believe, if this social model were understood better, its influence would be much more positive and constructive.

It is clear that the Obso social model originated long before the dawn of human history and took many different forms in different times and places. But the evolution and elaboration of that model continued for a long time after the emergence of other social alternatives. And, since our primary interest here today is in the Obso model’s modern relevance and influence, we will not examine prehistoric societies in much detail,

except as a source of examples to help explain the logic and necessity of some of their basic social principles.

It is also clear that pure Obso-model societies eventually came to a very bad end, and we will want to know why that happened. But what we really need to understand better are those fundamental characteristics that made Obso-model societies so successful for so many thousands of years, and which might still provide some good solutions for social problems today and even far into the future.

So, to get today's discussion started, we will ask Mr. Obso to give us a brief description of the origin and nature of his kind of societies ...

Obso: Thank you. And the first great misunderstanding we need to overcome is the modern notion that "societies" are some kind of human contrivance. In fact, right from the beginning, human societies were among the most natural things in the world, providing very great benefits to very many people – including the benefit of human survival itself. And all of those advantages can be attributed to the elementary

axiom of:

Cooperation – *The simple solution for the human dilemma is for people to subordinate personal consciousness to social conscientiousness.*

It should be quite obvious, though modern Americans seem to keep forgetting, that the people who received the greatest individual benefits from societies down through the ages were those people who belonged to the most successful societies – communities in which people were willing and able to transcend their own selfish interests in order to advance the mutual interests of everyone in their communities.

Selfish people who were preoccupied with their own personal freedom or personal security made very poor societies – societies that provided neither freedom nor security, nor any other benefits to anyone other than a few exceptionally fortunate or aggressive individuals.

Within the most successful communities, there was a spirit of individual and family cooperation rather than conflict – the kind of cooperation that made possible a simple,

yet good quality of human life even by today's standards.

Modern Americans tend to think social benefits are the product of such human contrivances as huge, complicated bureaucracies and mountains of legal paperwork. But that is certainly not true. Those things are merely the overhead costs of social control in unstable, degenerate social environments, and those costs often greatly exceed any resulting social benefits.

Novo: Big government being one of the many modern luxuries prehistoric societies were able to get along very well without ...

Obso: Yes, the earliest human societies, which were elementary manifestations of the Obso social model, had few overhead costs of that kind but did manage to produce significant benefits through simple, largely informal arrangements that greatly increased human efficiency, security and social stability. In fact, those arrangements were so natural and informal that many people in later ages have made the mistake of assuming those first societies had no social model.

There were, of course, some obvious advantages to cooperation instead of conflict. People working together in such endeavors as the gathering and hunting of food could often accomplish more than the same individuals working separately. So, if that food was shared fairly among all participants, there were extra benefits for everyone.

Moreover, larger groups of people living together meant individual or family misfortune could be overcome much more easily with help from others.

But such cooperation was neither automatic nor sufficient for the establishment of a good community. As was explained in detail yesterday, a good society is not something people can just invent. It is something that exists because it has a social purpose to justify its existence. And it is something good people are willing to join because they recognize the validity and value of a personal commitment to the support of such a larger purpose.

Demo: But that still doesn't explain how the first good societies were created, or how they could have been ready and waiting for the first humans to join ...

Obso: No, it simply means societies, families and individual humans must have been created at exactly the same time because, in fact, they were all complementary parts of the same thing:

***Common Wealth** – To be beneficial to all of its parts, a society must be greater than the sum of those parts.*

In our discussion yesterday, we saw why the earliest individuals could not have survived without family support and why families could not have survived without social support. And good societies used their common wealth to provide that support because societies needed good people and healthy families to ensure their own, long-term survival.

We also saw why modern, degenerate societies, which are something less than the sum of their human parts, do not have common wealth. What little support they can provide for individuals and families is just added to a “public debt” that is passed on as a negative legacy to future generations.

In Obso-model societies, common wealth was a natural thing that needed no defini-

tion or valuation and was not a part of any financial statement. As well as the natural resources available to every family, common wealth included those enhanced social resources that were produced through cooperation and were an automatic benefit to everyone in a community.

Increased human efficiency and security have already been mentioned as instances of those social benefits. Another automatic benefit was increased social stability. When families lived together in a secure, cooperative community, inter-marriage among families greatly increased the stability of both families and the whole community, further increasing cooperation and common wealth.

Family feuds were much less likely if each family included members who had come from other families. If strife within some family threatened to break up that family and upset tribal harmony as well, people from other families – particularly those with kinship ties to the troubled family – could help resolve the conflict.

And, of course, if a feud between unrelated individuals or families threatened to become a larger social problem, tribal lead-

ers could act as arbiters to find a solution supported by all families. That kind of social interaction over time naturally led to agreement about many common standards of social behavior, greatly reducing the dangers of controversy and conflict.

Demo: Pardon me again but, while those advantages are fairly obvious, you still haven't explained where those societies came from, what greater purpose they served, or how those people knew how to behave. Or did I miss something ... ?

Novo: Yes you did, but it's not your fault. Mr. Obso just forgot to mention that when his first, happy package of humanity, families and societies was created, it also included an instruction manual ...

Obso: Mr. Novo is being sarcastic, but he is actually quite right – the first humans were equipped with a social instruction manual that, unfortunately, is no longer available to most people in modern, degenerate societies. But there was nothing very mysterious about it.

It has always been the belief of the vast majority of all the people who ever lived in this world that everyone is born with some

instinctive sense of proper, natural, social relationships and behavior. So the basic elements of the first social model were already apparent to anyone whose natural instincts had not yet been corrupted by later human conceits and contrivances.

It was not, of course, a detailed blueprint. But it did include the essential truths that apply to all successful human societies, which may take many different forms in different times and places.

We have already talked about some of those social instincts and we have seen how they could be destructive rather than constructive forces when taken out of their proper, natural framework. But what has been missing from our discussion so far is recognition of that larger framework, starting with the most important natural truth of all – the subtle, yet pervasive, collective human awareness of the enduring presence of the force that created humanity, along with everything else in our world:

***Providence** – People who have something to look up to are less inclined to worship themselves.*

The human ownership-dependency relationship, for instance, is an important element of social organization – but not the consumptive, divisive kind of ownership we have been talking about. Human ownership is beneficial only if it is seen properly as a constructive form of subsidiary or fiduciary ownership – a trust granted by a *supreme* owner as the means to establish a natural social structure of families and communities which, in turn, provides the basic support and protection all humans require.

That arrangement originally included many natural conventions that were much more powerful and effective than the more-limited family and community traditions we were talking about yesterday. Family traditions or simple moral fictions may have been able to explain the importance of ancestors, for instance, but they were not able to explain where those ancestors came from. Nor could family or community morality fully explain mankind's relationship to the natural environment or explain how people could protect themselves from some of the hazards of that environment.

But natural morality – the full natural

order of things – could explain the whole world to everyone's satisfaction. It gave all members of the earliest societies a significant and secure place in their world and gave them the protection of the greatest natural force of all – as long as they made themselves worthy of that protection by conducting themselves and their communities in ways that served the essential purpose of their existence.

Demo: But I think the members of our audience are going to be very disappointed if you just try to “solve” the problems of social organization with some kind of divine revelation or supernatural hocus-pocus – or by trying to convince people they should be serving the purpose of some celestial dictator, or some self-appointed agents of such a dictator who try to tell everyone what to do, for our own good ...

Obso: No, humanity cannot serve the purpose of Providence because it is very unlikely that anyone with merely human intelligence will ever be able to imagine what purpose Providence might have had in creating humanity, or seriously presume to act as an agent of that purpose. It is also

very unlikely that Providence has ever actually tried to tell anyone what to do – despite those many people who, over the ages, claim to have received such instructions. And it should also become quite apparent through the rest of this week that there was much less need for hocus-pocus in the original Obso social model than in later, degenerate social models.

The real significance of Providence for the first humans was not in what they had been told to do but in what they had been given. They had been given social instincts they could use to help guide themselves in doing the right things. And, even more important, they had been given:

***Faith** – What people think and do today depends largely upon what they think about tomorrow.*

The first people did have faith that they and the rest of the natural environment had been created by Providence for some real and enduring purpose, even if they did not know what that purpose was. The natural world was obviously too complete and wondrous a place to have been created by

accident, as if it might be “here today and gone tomorrow.”

And if the first people were not told explicitly what their role and purpose in that natural world would be, it was probably because they did not need to be told. It would have been perfectly obvious to them that the purpose of Providence would not be served if humanity just destroyed itself, or if humans plundered and destroyed other elements of the natural environment on which their own survival depended, as if there would be no tomorrow.

So those first people must have realized that the essential purpose for humanity in the natural world should be to “Conserve Creation” in the form in which it had been entrusted to them – for their own benefit, for the benefit of all future human generations and for the rest of the natural world as well.

Modern Americans have no such faith and no such purpose because their artificial, degenerate world contains little they could, or would want to conserve beyond their own lifetimes. And some of them even celebrate that fact. During the past century, for instance, a popular school of economic theory

in America and other “advanced” countries was based on the notion that “in the long run we are all dead.”

But, of course, when those people actually were all dead, it was their non-dead children who were left with the awful task of trying to clean up the social and environmental consequences of their parents’ deliberate short-sightedness – proving once again that even the most popular collective personal purposes seldom make good social purposes.

Demo: Well, perhaps for that reason, environmental conservation already seems to be a popular purpose in American politics today, along with many other social purposes. But I don’t think anyone, except for a few fanatical “environmentalists,” has ever suggested it is so important it should take precedence over all other purposes ...

Novo: No, most Americans today are still quite careless about the mess they have made of their own world – perhaps because so many of them still believe that, after they die, they will spend all of their tomorrows for the rest of eternity in a place called “Heaven” which, they also assume, is much like an unspoiled Garden of Eden.

And few of them give much thought to the possibility that some careless Americans who got to Heaven before them may already have turned that place into one big toxic waste dump.

Of course, some Americans reject that possibility because they assume Heaven is governed by agents of Providence who prevent people from making a mess of the place by telling everybody what to do. And those are the people who try to turn parts of this world into their own version of Heaven On Earth by telling other people what to do.

That is not, however, because those people are trying to conserve the natural environment – most of them are no more willing than anyone else to give up their electricity and indoor plumbing. They just seem to think that by telling other people what to do they are demonstrating that they represent some Heavenly purpose or power in this and other social issues – which is another dubious old American political tradition.

Obso: Yes, and when some people start trying to tell other people what to do, the result is usually the kind of controversy and conflict that make it impossible to con-

serve anything. Conservation must be a cooperative effort to which people commit themselves, not because someone is telling them what to do but because they know it is the right thing to do. That is why conservation of a good social environment is always prerequisite to any serious attempt to conserve what Americans think of as the natural environment – the birds and bees and swamps and trees – which is really just good housekeeping.

The Garden of Eden, or some similar representation of the original state of nature, has been preserved and treasured as an ideal by very many people in many different societies over the ages – both as the place where those societies' first ancestors once lived in perfect harmony and contentment and also, for those people who believe in an existence after death, as the kind of place to which they hope, eventually, to return. But no one has ever imagined Heaven to be a one-person paradise, so there must be some kind of society there too.

In fact, the first human groups, and many later ones, did live in places that would have seemed, to them, to be much like that. Those

places were not all the same, and probably none of them was a perfect place. But those people did understand that human happiness does not require perfect surroundings. People can be perfectly happy in just about any kind of natural environment, as long as their society has adapted itself perfectly to the requirements of that environment, and those people have adapted themselves to the requirements of that kind of society.

Even today, some people in a few “primitive” tribes in very remote places still enjoy that kind of harmonious relationship among themselves and with less-than-ideal but still-natural environments. And all that the wisest of those people want or need is to be left alone to conserve and enjoy those natural blessings, without interference from so-called advanced societies and their artificial contrivances.

Demo: But it seems to me that, whenever those two worlds come into contact with each other, it is the primitive people who change the most because, obviously, they have much more to learn from America than Americans have to learn from them ...

Obso: Well, that may be what Americans would like to believe. The attractiveness of material benefits available to “primitive” people who become more like Americans is quite obvious. But just as valuable were many things those “primitive” people could have taught people from modern, degenerate societies about social morality and the proper conduct of good societies. Unfortunately, that opportunity was lost because the Europeans and Americans who destroyed so many moral societies were military or economic gamblers, not civilians, and gamblers have little interest in civil societies or morality.

Demo: But I still can’t imagine any useful way to try to compare the social or moral ideals of small, isolated, primitive communities with the social and personal necessities of life in large, complex, modern societies. You might say the people who design space ships today learned something about elementary ballistics from the people who made the first bows and arrows, but I don’t see how they could have learned much more ...

Obso: No, in terms of social sophis-

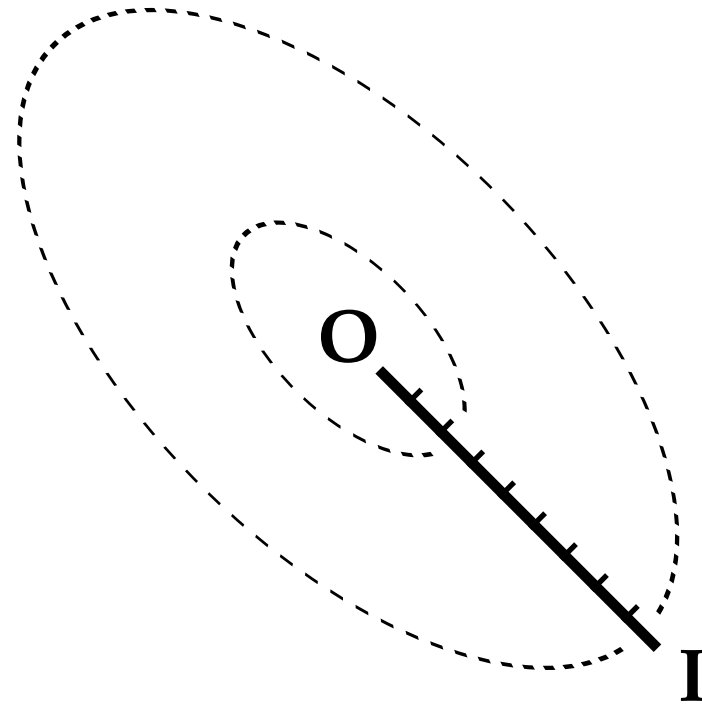


Figure 1: Structure of a simple community with round table (O) at origin, inner and outer social circles and a cross-section (O-I) scale.

tication, it is modern Americans, not those bow-and-arrow people or their moral descendants, who look and act more like “savages” today. And that will become quite evident if we take a closer look at the moral foundations of the elementary communities

we were talking about yesterday.

The basic structure of a civil community was defined yesterday as a “purposive, voluntary association of the owners of several equal, nondependent groups, both voluntary and involuntary.” And, for people who are still having trouble understanding that concept, it is presented in graphical form in the first of the several large diagrams displayed on the wall behind us, which I hope everyone in our audience can see clearly.

The first diagram, Figure 1, shows the arrangement of an elementary community. At the center, the letter “O” represents a round table. And placed on a pedestal at the center of that table is the social purpose which is the community’s moral point of origin.

Surrounding the table is an “inner circle” where the owners of various groups in the community come together for the kind of association and arbitration that serve their social purpose and justify the existence of the community. Most of the various subsidiary groups and their members remain outside the inner circle but within the community’s protected outer circle, where they are free to pursue their own, separate, personal and

group purposes, without interference by others.

Figure 1 also includes a cross-section scale that descends from the point of origin to the letter “I” at the bottom, representing anti-social individualists who may hover around the fringes of civil communities without really being part of them. That scale also appears in most of the other diagrams, where it is used as a basic reference in more-detailed depictions of various community structures.

Of course, people who are more interested in the geometry than the meaning of such diagrams will probably want to put the numbers “zero” and “one” at the ends of that scale instead of letters – which is quite all right because that has become the conventional way for modern analysts to look at such things.

Demo: But as I tried to explain yesterday, that kind of definition or diagram has no relevance for any American community because democratic Americans do not accept such archaic notions as predominant social purposes or inner and outer social circles ...

Obso: Well, using that diagram to describe a degenerate community instead of a moral community would require some adjustments, but those adjustments would also help to explain the difference. For instance, the transparent inner circle would be replaced with a fortified winners circle, giving the whole diagram the appearance of a medieval castle and its domain, with the letter “O” becoming the biggest winners’ castle “keep” or central stronghold.

And then the cross-section scale would look something like the scaling ladders used by people from the outer circle of such societies who attack such fortresses, trying to smash and claw their way up into the winners circle, or even trying to become king of the castle. Most of them do not succeed, of course, and fall back into the outer “losers circle.”

But enough of them do fight their way up into the winners circle from time to time to maintain an illusion of social mobility in the midst of constant, often-violent conflict. And that is about the best an ordinary American can reasonably expect from his society – though he may dream of joining those for-

unate few who become so wealthy and powerful they can go and build or buy a castle of their own in some more-peaceful place.

Demo: But, it seems to me, that is just the inevitable consequence of any social structure with an inner or winners circle. And if your Obso-model communities really did have that kind of structure, I think those people would have behaved in exactly the same way – unless of course, as I suspect, that structure was so rigid or static it denied everyone the freedom to try to do anything about it ...

Obso: No, the distribution of people within the inner and outer circles of a moral, Obso-model community was never the result of violent contests among individuals or social factions. Nor was it the work of any higher authority, such as an agent of Providence.

Rather, the distribution of people within the structure of an Obso-model community was a natural distribution – based on the relative moral stature of individuals, which was recognized by everyone in that kind of community. Those individuals with the

highest moral stature just naturally occupied the positions of greatest influence, as long as they served the moral purpose of their community.

And that kind of society was certainly not static either. Just as young men grew in physical stature as they became older, many of them also grew in moral stature. And, as they did so, they naturally moved closer to their community's inner circle and round table – accepting the obligations as well as the privileges of that status because, in a moral community, that is what everyone naturally expected them to do.

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Moderator: We asked Mr. Obso to give us a brief explanation of the origin and nature of the Obso social model, and that is what he did. But some of the basic ideas he used as shortcuts to make that explanation brief will obviously require much more detailed examination.

We can probably assume most Americans

are familiar with the idea of Providence because we know many Americans still look to Providence, in one form or another, as a primary source of personal and family purpose and support. Most Americans also seem to be familiar with the idea of morality, because many of them claim to use some kind of morality as a standard of proper social behavior, for themselves and others.

But there does not seem to be much agreement among different kinds of Americans about what morality actually is, where it comes from, or how it should be used. And, obviously, without such agreement, it is impossible to devise any common, moral standards of behavior or any recognized measure of moral stature as a qualification or justification for social leadership in a degenerate society.

So now we need to know what the idea of a moral consensus actually meant to the members of Obso-model societies, and how those people could have achieved such agreement ...

Demo: But, again, even if any real moral consensus ever did exist in Obso-model communities, I don't see how that

kind of morality could have much relevance in a modern, advanced society like America.

Mr. Obso seems to be suggesting his grand, natural morality was a unifying force in his kind of societies, but the American experience has always been just the opposite. Many religious leaders, past and present, have certainly tried to make their own versions of morality a more important part of American society and politics. But those attempts have always been very controversial and socially divisive.

That is why America, and most other advanced nations today, have found it necessary to erect barriers between “church” and “state,” to prevent any group from trying to use the powers of government to impose its own peculiar, self-serving definition of morality on other people. In a modern democracy, the only essential moral duty of the state is just to see that all of its citizens are treated fairly ...

Obso: Well, trying to explain the idea of natural morality would be much easier if Americans did not already have so many misconceptions about what morality is and what purpose it serves.

The natural morality of Obso-model communities, for instance, certainly had nothing to do with organized religion and churches. Religion is a social contrivance that made its first appearance in much later, degenerate societies, and you will have to ask Mr. Novo to try to explain it for you when he is describing societies of that kind tomorrow.

And natural morality certainly was nothing like the kind of top-down morality that was invented by religious leaders and imposed on their followers. It was a bottom-up expression of what the voluntary members of a moral community felt and thought were the rights things to do:

***Morality** – A hedonist says anything that makes him feel good must be right. But a moralist insists that, for something to be the right thing to do, it must make everyone feel good.*

So, while the danger that morality might become too large a “part of politics” may seem to be a valid concern for modern Americans, that suggestion would seem utterly astonishing to people in other kinds

of societies because most of them know real morality is something that must always be much larger than politics.

It should be obvious that the political process can never be placed above morality, or used to resolve moral disputes, because politics is merely a symptom of social sickness – a sickness that is either the cause or effect of a lack of moral consensus. Without such consensus, the resolution of social conflict through arbitration is impossible. And the only effective alternative to arbitration is combat.

That is why, over the course of American history, several extraordinarily foolish attempts by politicians to resolve serious moral disputes led, inevitably, to violent combat – one big Civil War and many lesser ones, in which Americans took to killing each other, or threatening to do so, in the name of various conflicting delusions of moral superiority.

And that is why the leaders of democratic societies like America's try so hard to keep morality and claims of moral superiority out of politics altogether. But that is clearly impossible. While those leaders may say

that, in a democracy, all citizens have equal moral stature, they know very well the only way everyone could be equally moral would be to allow as many different definitions of morality as there are people – in which case there would be no morality at all, but just personal “values” that reflect personal interests.

Moreover, while limiting political weaponry to the blunt instruments of euphemism may make some moral disputes look like political issues, it does nothing to help resolve such disputes. If every American believes his personal values are as good as any others, he will use them to justify any kind of behavior, regardless of the effect his behavior may have on other people – as long as other people allow him to get away with it.

Demo: Well, that may seem untidy, but the only alternative I can imagine would be very much worse. It is the worst kind of tyranny, for example, when a government tries to impose a single definition of morality on a whole community, creating a sort of caste system of moral and immoral people – usually to justify victimization of the latter by the former ...

Obso: Yes, any attempt by a government to impose a single definition of morality from the top-down is always tyrannical because the only basis for such a definition is the government's own purposes – moral people being those who serve the government's purposes and immoral people being those who do not.

Obso-model societies, on the other hand, did have a higher social purpose. And a common purpose leads naturally to a consensual, conventional definition of morality which serves that purpose, reducing controversy and conflict while increasing cooperation and common social wealth.

Demo: But I still don't see where you think natural or conventional morality might have come from. The first humans obviously had no history or traditions so, unless they had some divine guidance, they must have made up their own conventions to serve their own interests, just as modern Americans do ...

Obso: Some divine guidance obviously would have made life much easier for the first humans, and for modern Americans as well. But, after the Creation, Providence

was apparently too busy with other, more important matters to assume the thankless task of long-term baby-sitting for humanity.

The first humans may not have had any history or traditions, but they did have faith – faith that Providence had given them at least some instinctive sense of the right things to do, to help Conserve Creation and ensure the survival of humanity. And they knew, above all, they could trust what they found in their own hearts because what they found there was what made them feel good.

Demo: But I'm sure, even in the earliest and simplest communities, there must have been a lot of moral confusion and controversy. When everyone looked into their own hearts I doubt very much if all of them found the same things. And I doubt if anything they found there would have made them feel good unless it also served their own personal purposes ...

Obso: But the fact that different people found different things in their own hearts simply indicated to the first people that the feelings and intelligence they were given by Providence were meant to be used collectively, not individually. The moral

significance of the feelings of any individual could only be determined by how many other people found the same things in their own hearts, and whether those things made them feel good.

Demo: And now, it seems to me, you have just reinvented American democracy. You apparently think moral thoughts and feelings are distributed randomly among all members of a community – though some of those people may be much more intelligent or compassionate than others – and the only test of validity is to see which of those feelings are the most popular.

But that is just what Americans do in every democratic election. They select those candidates who seem to have the greatest moral stature – those people who best express the thoughts and feelings that make most voters feel good ...

Obso: No, real morality is much more than just a popularity contest:

Consensus – Popular agreement is not a moral consensus unless it also serves a social purpose.

People in Obso-model societies, unlike

modern Americans, had no great delusions about their individual interests. They understood very well that individuals cannot succeed or even survive without support from the common wealth of a community. So nothing those first people found in their own hearts would have made them feel good unless it also served their community's social purpose.

In modern America, which has no real social purpose, morality may seem to be distributed randomly throughout the whole population, and moral stature may amount to little more than a reflection of whatever seems to be most popular or fashionable at any particular moment. But purposeless fads and fashions change rapidly, so the popularity and legitimacy of leaders selected in occasional democratic elections seldom lasts very long.

And such disillusionment is even more likely because most Americans also tend to have a rather infantile, black-and-white view of social morality. An ordinary American may feel strongly that his leaders are good, moral people like himself who deserve his full support. But, when those leaders fail

to live up to all of his impossible expectations, he may suddenly begin to feel just as strongly that those leaders are bad, immoral people or criminals who should be locked up in prisons. And any American leader who does not fit into either of those two extreme categories just seems uninteresting or unimportant.

In a community that does have a social purpose, however, the distribution of moral stature among individuals is a natural distribution, not a random one. And, because a natural distribution is much more stable, it is also much more discernible. The identity of people with the highest moral stature is always quite clear to everyone in a moral community, and so is any change in the relative stature of individuals from time to time.

Demo: But the only way I know to make the relative stature of anything apparent to everyone in a community is by having some way to measure it objectively. And I have never heard of any objective way to measure people to determine whether they are moral or immoral ...

Obso: That is true, but there are several other human characteristics which

can be measured objectively and the results of those measurements provide a useful analogy. It may not be possible to measure the moral stature of individuals directly, but it is possible to measure the height or physical stature of individuals. And it is also possible to analyze the distribution of physical stature among different people, to determine how much significance should be given to such terms as “short” and “tall.”

You could, for instance, measure the height of each adult male member of an ordinary community. Then you could add up all those measurements and divide by the number of men to determine their “average” height. And you could say everyone above that average is tall, while everyone below it is short.

But you still wouldn’t know anything about the distribution of heights – whether all of those men are about the same, average height, or whether they are divided into two distinct groups of very-tall and very-short men, with nobody in between.

For that, you would need to draw a diagram which might look something like Figure 2. You would draw a scale across the

bottom of a piece of paper with marks to indicate different heights. The mark at the center would be labeled “zero” for average height, with each mark to the left indicating the number of units, in some appropriate measure, above average or, to the right, below average. Then you would take each individual measurement and draw a small circle above the appropriate mark – a measurement of two units above average would go in the second column to the left of the zero column, and so on.

If there was nothing very unusual about this community, your result would probably look much like Figure 2, with the distribution of height measurements arranged in a way that demonstrates what a modern statistician would call a natural or “normal” distribution of physical stature, with most individual measurements in the central columns. This is a well-known concept that can also be expressed geometrically, as indicated by the familiar curved line at the top of the diagram, which is the mathematical “shape” of a natural distribution.

Demo: Well, I think most people here today know what a “bell curve” is, and

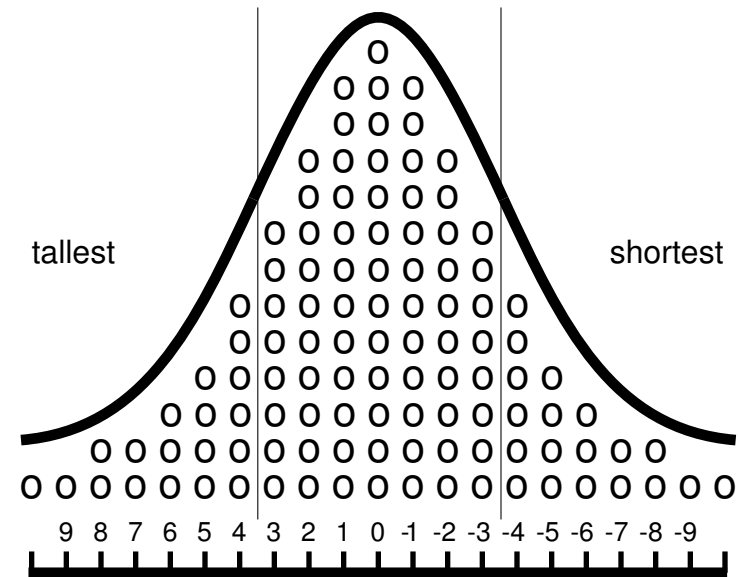


Figure 2: Tabulation of measurements of individual heights shows typical variation, with the bell-shaped curve at top indicating this is a natural or “normal” distribution.

know what it is supposed to mean when applied to the normal distribution of measurable human characteristics. But I think they also know about the bad things that can happen when a bell curve is used as an inappropriate analogy in trying to explain such unmeasurable characteristics as, for example, human intelligence ...

Obso: Yes, it is true that human intelligence cannot be measured objectively because no one knows exactly what intelligence is. And neither can it be measured subjectively – only a very superior intelligence seems capable, by introspection alone, of perceiving its own limitations.

But many methods have been developed for measuring various manifestations of human intelligence indirectly. And most of those methods produce results which seem to indicate that, whatever intelligence may be, its distribution among an unbiased sample of ordinary people does form a pattern of natural or normal distribution.

So, today, any theory that suggests human intelligence is distributed in some unnatural way is likely to be treated with suspicion. And most suspicious of all is any theory that claims to have a method which divides people precisely into such simplistic categories as smart or dumb.

Likewise, everyday experience suggests that the terms “moral” and “immoral” are not a simple dichotomy but just the names of the two ends of a natural distribution of moral stature. And, as the shape of the bell

curve indicates, only a few exceptional people can be found at the two extreme ends of that, or any other natural distribution.

The vertical lines in Figure 2, for instance, divide the scale of heights into three equal parts. And it is known that, in any natural distribution, the central one of those three parts will contain about two-thirds of all of the people in the entire sample. That is, only a relatively small number of people in any population are noticeably tall or short, smart or dumb, moral or immoral. Most people are about average in height, intelligence or morality, or not very far from it.

Demo: But if, as you say, only a small number of exceptional people are noticeably moral or immoral, while the majority of Americans have similar moral stature, I don't see why any elaborate theories of morality would be either interesting or useful to that majority in deciding how their society should be managed ...

Obso: But social morality is always important because it is the only thing that keeps the members of any society aware of which way is “up.” And that is illustrated by Figure 3, which combines the bell curve

from Figure 2 with the community cross-section from Figure 1.

The cross-section scale from Figure 1 now has a zero at the top of it, indicating the community's point of origin and, at the bottom, the number "one." So that scale can be used to locate, with numerical precision, any position on the scale between the point of origin and the outer limit of the community.

The radius of this community's inner circle, for instance, is about one-third of that distance, so the point at which it crosses the scale would have an index value of about .33. And the shaded area under the left end of the bell curve indicates the relatively small proportion of voluntary community members whose moral stature would place them naturally within that inner circle.

Such index values also indicate more precisely the relative moral stature of all voluntary members of a community. People with the highest moral stature, near the center of the community, would be close to the "zero" end of the scale, while people with the lowest moral stature would be found at the other end.

Or, if that seems upside-down, it may be

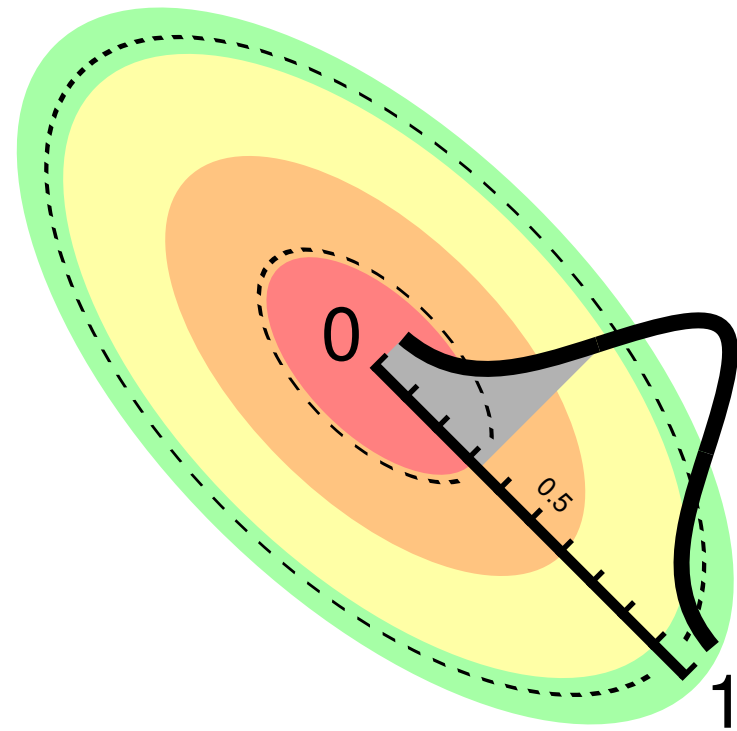


Figure 3: Bell-shaped curve above cross-section scale indicates distribution of moral stature in an Obso-model community.

said each number represents an "Index of Alienation." As moral stature declines, social alienation usually increases, so people at the greatest moral distance from the center of their society and its purpose – at an index of, say, 0.99 – would have the lowest

moral stature and the highest alienation. And that would have been quite apparent to members of even the most elementary Obso-model communities.

Demo: But I don't think any diagram like that has ever been found among the drawings in caves occupied by prehistoric tribal communities ...

Obso: No, the members of prehistoric tribal societies might not have described their communities this way. Since their social arrangements seemed so natural, they probably felt no need to describe them at all, either verbally or pictorially.

In fact, many of the earliest prehistoric communities were probably invisible most of the time because their members were dispersed in small, nondependent family groups, or small groups of families, hunting and gathering food wherever they could find it, in a continuous struggle for survival.

So it may seem even more remarkable that, when those small groups came together necessarily but voluntarily from time to time, they already knew how to get along with each other without someone telling them what to do. And, where better methods

of natural husbandry made it possible for all members of such tribes to remain together more of the time, the same simple social model served as a basis for even more cooperation and common wealth.

It may seem inappropriate or even anachronistic to use modern terminology and analytical devices to describe such simple communities. But that is the language of our audience. And, although it may seem ironical, modern methods of explanation may be the best way to help modern people gain a better understanding of some very ancient ideas – and overcome some of their misconceptions and romantic fantasies about “noble savages” or visions of a primeval paradise.

Demo: Well, appropriate or not, it seems to me your modern-looking “normal distribution” just replaces an arbitrary designation of people as moral or immoral with many arbitrary, relative designations *between* moral and immoral ...

Obso: No, it is not true to say that the attribution of an Index of Alienation, or “IA,” to any individual was ever arbitrary. Whenever the voluntary members of a tribal

community had the opportunity to get together to discuss their feelings about social issues, it would have become quite clear to all of them that, in the formation of a moral consensus, some people would contribute much more than others.

When people looked into their own hearts, some of them would have found their instinctive feelings about Conserving Creation, which was the ultimate purpose of their society, to be both good and strong. Other people probably had the same good feelings but those feelings may have been much weaker.

People with lesser feelings may not have been interested in contributing very much to a moral consensus. But they still supported it because they were not immoral or anti-social people. They recognized the value and necessity of a moral consensus as the foundation for a good, cooperative community. And, while their lack of strong moral feelings may have made them relatively alienated or “amoral” people, they were still willing to recognize the leadership of people with higher moral stature, as long as the resulting consensus did not make them feel

too uncomfortable.

Demo: But I don’t think that is a very convincing explanation or justification for saying some people are more “moral” than others. And I hope you are not going to suggest it was part of the job of people with the highest moral stature to decide if any particular person in their community was more or less moral than anyone else ...

Obso: Well, if you want an explanation of the differences in the strength of moral feelings among different people, and the moral stature that implies, the best explanation is probably the most obvious one. To have strong feelings about conservation, a person must have unusually broad horizons in both time and space.

Conservation implies that the requirements of tomorrow are just as important as the issues of today. But that does not have much meaning to someone whose time horizon is limited to the very near future. And real conservation must also encompass all of Creation, though that may seem extravagant to someone whose perception is limited to the one small part of Creation in which he happens to be at any particular time.

So the determination of relative moral stature among people in a good community was not the result of objective measurement by some moral authority. Nor could it have been done subjectively by people acting individually. It could only have been done by members of a moral community acting collectively – which is why the result was a natural distribution.

Each individual moved himself up or down the moral "obsoscale," and could see everyone else doing the same thing, until all of them found positions in which they felt most comfortable in relation to each other. Those people with the widest horizons naturally placed themselves among others with the lowest IA and those with the narrowest horizons placed themselves among others with the highest IA.

And they kept doing that until no one felt "out of place" – just as modern American families tend to move from neighborhood to neighborhood until they find the one in which they feel most comfortable with their neighbors and their neighbors feel comfortable with them.

Of course, those were never fixed posi-

tions. It is quite natural, for instance, for young people to have a much higher IA than their parents because self-absorbed young people have notoriously narrow social horizons. So young people naturally tend to feel alienated from the broader central purpose of their society, which they do not yet understand very well.

In a moral community, however, as young people grew up and their horizons expanded, their IA declined as they moved closer to the center of their society, where they began to feel more comfortable.

Demo: But, according to your Figure 3, only those people on the top third of the scale are located within the elite inner circle, which amounts to only about one-sixth of all members. And I don't see how you could possibly create a bottom-up consensus by excluding five-sixths of the members of a community from its inner circle ...

Obso: No, that is not what the diagram is intended to suggest. All voluntary members of a moral community were equal members of its inner circle for the purposes of bottom-up consensus-building and social arbitration. What the distribution of moral

stature really implied was the distribution of different primary interests and obligations among those members in everyday life.

Explaining those differences can become quite complicated so, to make it a bit easier to understand, we should return to the analogy of a social color spectrum, as shown in Figure 3, to help identify simplified “classes” of membership in such a community, according to their Indices of Alienation.

From left to right, and upper to lower, the three classes were red, orange and yellow. And, again, the orange middle class had the most members, with the rest divided about equally between upper-red and lower-yellow classes.

Upper-moral-class, red members with low IA between about .01 and .30, for instance, were those people who were most concerned about the need to Conserve Creation, and other inner-circle social issues. Members of this class, which usually included the oldest and wisest members of a tribal community and perhaps an honorary “chief,” were the ones who felt most “at home” within the inner circle. They were the ones who were most influential in the formation of a moral

consensus, and they were the ones who felt the greatest burden of obligation in helping to maintain that consensus and its good effects from generation to generation.

Middle-moral-class, orange members with medium IA between, say, .30 and .60, were usually less concerned about higher moral issues than about everyday social problems. While these people, who were the natural majority of members, did recognize the importance of Conserving Creation, their primary interest and strongest feelings were more likely to be about the immediate issues and obligations of helping to Conserve their Community.

Lower-moral-class, yellow members, with high IA between about .60 and .90, and the lowest moral stature, also participated in the community’s inner circle but they did not usually have much to contribute to its consensus besides their consent and compliance. Their horizons seldom extended very far beyond immediate personal interests, and their opinions about social issues seldom reflected any great amount of thought or feeling beyond a pragmatic assessment of: “What’s in it for us, today?”

And, finally, the influence of any central social purpose disappeared almost entirely beyond an IA value of about .90, in a green peripheral ring where people seemed to be too “far out” to be regarded as being real members of the community anyway.

Demo: But it seems to me, if those “yellow” people with the highest IA and lowest moral stature thought no one was interested in what they had to say, they would have had no reason to participate at all. So I don’t see why they would have bothered to attend inner circle meetings, or why they would have paid any attention to what went on there ...

Obso: But even those people who were most alienated from the central purpose of their community understood very well that their individual success and survival – which may have been their only concern – could not be separated from the success and survival of the whole community. And they understood why their community could not be successful unless all of its members respected its conventional standards of behavior. And that understanding was what came to be known as:

***Conscience** – To be effective, a moral consensus need not make everyone feel very good, as long as it inspires everyone to act as if he feels good.*

It is probably impossible for anyone born without some potential for real moral feelings to ever acquire any. But conscience is the kind of understanding that can be taught and, if learned well enough and given sufficient ritual reinforcement throughout a lifetime, can serve as a fairly effective substitute.

People with strong moral feelings do the right things because that is what makes them feel good. People without strong moral feelings, but with strong prosthetic consciences, do the right things because failing to do so makes them feel guilty. And, for most practical purposes, as long as people know which way is “up” and do the right things, the difference doesn’t really matter very much.

But that is why, in moral communities, one of the most important functions of families was to see that children received proper moral instruction, based on their

community's consensus, from the earliest possible age. Children with a potential for high moral stature may not have needed that kind of instruction. For children without such potential, however, early instruction was essential for the development of a conscience strong enough to take its place.

And members of Obso-model communities knew that family function was important because they knew any child who grew up with neither natural moral potential nor a strong conscience would have an IA that was "off the scale" at 1.0 or more. And any person with an IA that high would never have been able to find a place for himself in any moral community.

3

Moderator: Our previous question was about the nature of moral consensus – what it meant to members of Obso-model societies and how those people could have achieved such fundamental agreement on so many important social issues.

And the answer seems to be that, when a community had a clear social purpose, the dedication of its members to serving that purpose naturally increased their cooperation and common wealth.

As well, the collective determination of individual moral stature within such a community could justify and support the kind of moral leadership and arbitration necessary to resolve disputes and sustain consensus.

Most Americans, like people everywhere else, probably recognize that kind of morality as the proper and natural state of social affairs in small, intimate communities or voluntary associations where personal and social interaction among members is direct and continuous.

But most Americans today also seem to think that, as the scale and complexity of human organization increases, such simple ideals become increasingly irrelevant. In a world of communities full of "strangers" who do not share that kind of intimacy and trust, it is generally assumed that immorality, rather than morality, will become the natural state of social affairs.

On the very largest scale, for example, in

the world's community of nations today, most societies claim to desire the benefits of international cooperation. But, within that community, individual national purposes are still the highest purposes. And, because some nations obtain at least short-term advantages by acting immorally, all other nations feel forced to act just as immorally in order to avoid being disadvantaged.

The prevalence of such cynicism has led, in turn, to casual acceptance of many kinds of human perversity and depravity which make the possibility of achieving higher levels of moral consensus and cooperation seem even more remote, either among or within modern national societies.

So now we need to know if Obso-model morality, which once served the purposes of small societies very well, might be anything more today than naive nostalgia for a time before modern immorality reached levels of power and pervasiveness far beyond anything the members of prehistoric tribes could possibly have imagined ...

Obso: No, despite the moral simplicity of the earliest human societies, it is a mistake to think they were not aware of the

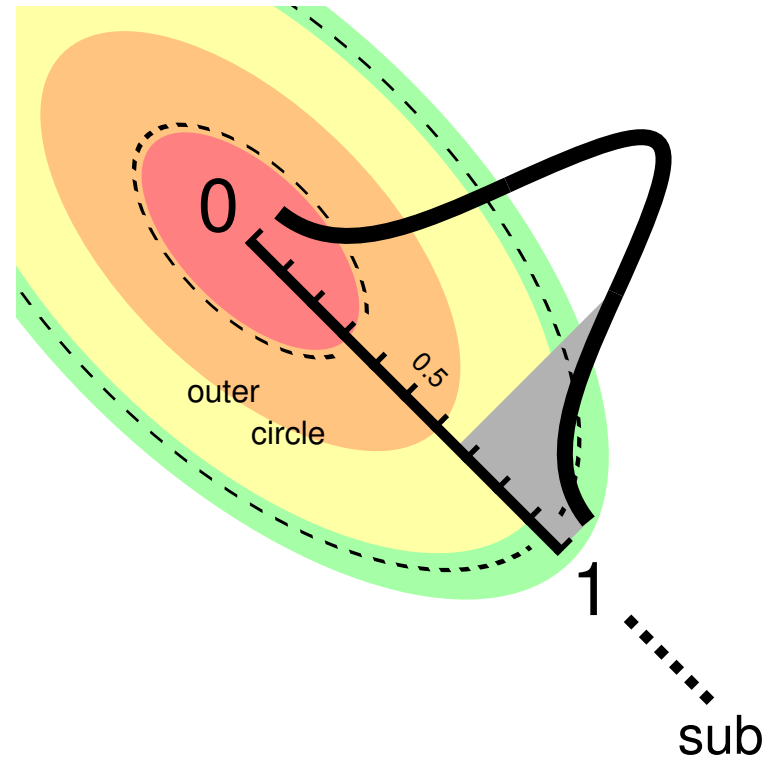


Figure 4: Obsists imagined that, when projected beyond "1," the obsoscale would descend into the realm of subhuman degeneracy.

dangers of human perversity and depravity. As a matter of vital necessity, those less-complicated societies probably understood those things better, and were better able to cope with them, than most modern societies.

In fact, the Obso social model includes

what is probably still the best explanation of the origin of that kind of immorality, for any scale of human organization at any time, as illustrated by Figure 4.

That diagram, like the previous ones, shows the inner and outer circles of a community with a cross-section obsoscale and a bell curve indicating the natural distribution of moral stature among voluntary members of the community.

And, again, the primary purpose of people at the upper, red end of the obsoscale is to Conserve Creation, while most people in the larger orange, middle moral class are more concerned about the lesser purpose of Conserving their Community.

This time, however, the shaded area under the bell curve indicates those members of the community with the lowest moral stature, in the yellow zone toward the bottom of the obsoscale where the primary purpose is the Conservation of Us – the “Us” usually being some family or multi-family social subgroup.

That shaded area also includes the fringe of green, “one-eyed” individualists, at the bottom of the scale near an IA of 1.0, whose

only real, heart-felt purpose in life is to Conserve Me.

And, finally, Figure 4 also includes an indication of that dark, colorless realm of subhuman degeneracy beyond green, where individuals are not just self-serving but are most likely to be the kind of predators who satisfy their own appetites and interests at the expense of others.

Demo: But the outer limit of the outer circle of the community in Figure 4 apparently crosses the obsoscale at an index of about .95, which suggests to me an attempt to exclude those so-called one-eyed individuals and others beyond an IA of 1.00 from the community altogether ...

Obso: Yes, that is correct. A moral community cannot extend itself to include one-eyed men and degenerates who feel their personal purposes are more important than the community’s central purpose because those people have nothing to contribute to a community’s common wealth. And they are the ones who are most likely to wreck a consensus by trying to replace rules that serve social purposes with rules that serve only their own personal purposes.

So, to preserve the integrity of a community and its bottom-up consensus, the community's outer limit must naturally withdraw from the bottom until it excludes all high-IA people who are not part of its moral consensus – at a radius of .95 in Figure 4, for instance, or even higher in other cases.

And that is why a moral consensus is much more significant than the American idea of political consensus, which requires little more than a decisive popular majority. A moral consensus is, in effect, the definition of a community and its membership because no one who refuses to be part of a moral community's consensus can be a member of that community.

Demo: But I still don't see how any community can try to exclude people just because they do not agree with all of its rules, either moral or political. Those people will continue to exist as some part of a community. Or do you think moral communities had some magical way to make those people disappear ... ?

Novo: Well, in the beginning, it probably was possible to make such people disappear because early tribal societies

were nomadic and nomads could easily make some people and problems disappear – simply by leaving them behind as they moved along.

And even in modern America, many people are made to disappear from communities every day, for “moral” or political reasons, when they are put into prisons apart from communities where they will not be a danger or nuisance to other people.

Obso: Yes, in America today, certain people – murderers, robbers, rapists, and so on – clearly fall into the dark area of subhuman degeneracy. And it should be obvious why no good community would ever extend its outer limit to fully “include” such people, or would even want to try.

Of course, most Americans who think their personal purposes are more important than any social purpose are not nearly that degenerate. And many of them do realize their kind of individualism excludes them from membership in any of the truly moral communities which have survived in America. But few Americans these days seem to have much desire to belong to such unusual communities anyway.

Demo: But now I think you have been defeated by your own generalizations. In fact, America still has many different kinds of communities and most Americans are free to join any kind of community they want to join ...

Obso: Yes, it is true that America does have many special, non-geographical communities – or, at least, associations – which represent just about every color of the social spectrum. There are some red communities whose members’ social horizons are nearly as broad as those of the upper-moral-class members of Obso-model societies, and whose social purposes are almost as profound as that of Conserving Creation.

And there are many orange communities, whose members have narrower social horizons but who are still dedicated to a purpose broad enough to Conserve a Community. And, unfortunately, there are many more yellow social factions whose members are dedicated to the even narrower purpose of Conserving Us.

But America’s political ideal has always been a green society of free, one-eyed people whose only purpose is to Conserve Me –

which is a repudiation of the very idea of social relationships. And that is why America, as a whole, has never had a real society or very much common wealth.

Demo: No, I think what you mean is that Americans have repudiated your peculiar notion and definition of a community, with its antiquated social and moral constraints, because Americans want their communities to be places where everyone is free to pursue their own ideals ...

Obso: Well, it is true that many of America’s one-eyed intellectuals, for instance, seem to think a perfect society would be an amoral, purposeless, “libertarian” paradise where everyone is free to do whatever he wants to do. But most of those intellectuals are sensible enough to realize they need the protection of a community at least as much as anyone else.

If amoral people were free to do whatever they wanted to do, subhuman degenerates would also be free to do whatever they wanted to do. And one-eyed intellectuals would be among the easiest victims for predatory degenerates because members of a moral community have little reason to protect, or

even care what happens to, anti-social, one-eyed intellectuals.

So the next best thing for such individualists is to try to turn a moral community's sharply-defined outer boundary into a fuzzy green zone of confusion where one-eyed men can retain access to a community's common wealth, including its protection, while still remaining free from its social constraints.

But the only way they can create that kind of confusion is by promoting the perversity and depravity that comes from turning morality upside-down or inside-out.

Demo: But if you mean those intellectuals who make themselves unpopular by challenging a community's smug moral certainties, then I think you are overlooking the important role those people play in helping a community avoid social stagnation or the tyranny of conventionality ...

Obso: Well, those people might help to improve a moral consensus if their social horizons were broad enough to allow them to appreciate what makes a consensus moral. But, because the horizons of one-eyed men seldom extend beyond their own immediate, personal interests, all they usually

have to offer anyone else in a community is their own, perverted perception of social relationships, which is known as:

Odiology – *When used as a weapon, poisonous emotion, like poison gas, usually has destructive effects that reach far beyond its intended target.*

Human emotion is the driving force of morality, and emotion is also the driving force of odiology, which sometimes seems to be similar. But it is not the same kind of emotion. There are broadly positive emotions, such as human empathy and compassion, that inspire people to respect and help each other, and encourage the kind of cooperation necessary to maintain and defend a moral consensus.

Odiology, on the other hand, gains its force from such narrowly negative emotions as hatred, fear and envy – emotions that just inspire people to abuse or kill each other. And, while the difference should be obvious, odiology may be confused with morality by some people because negative emotions are usually felt much more strongly than positive emotions by morally-immature people

– people who often make such foolish, childish mistakes as assuming the strength of an emotion is a measure of its “moral” validity, or thinking anything that makes them feel angry must be “immoral.”

It is not surprising, therefore, that one-eyed men naturally prefer odiology to morality. Because their emotions are so entirely self-serving, their feelings are not likely to be shared by many other members of a community, or to be part of any moral consensus. So they are usually “looked down upon” by just about everyone else, and relegated to the outer fringe of a moral community, if not excluded altogether.

And that, of course, only increases a one-eyed man’s alienation from, and resentment of, moral authority. But there is little he can do about that by himself. Nor can he expect much help from other degenerates, who have their own selfish interests.

A one-eyed man may, however, be able to survive and prosper by moving one step “upscale” – or appearing to do so – by offering his odiological skills and services to yellow social subgroups which are always seeking quick and easy solutions for their

own social problems.

Novo: But first you need to explain why yellow subgroups – most of whose problems are caused by their own social alienation – would want to employ the services of green individualists, who are even more alienated ...

Obso: Well, lower-moral-class factions at the fringe of a community are usually alienated not just from their community but also from each other. And factions with very narrow, self-serving social horizons are always getting into fights with each other about something or other.

Moreover, members of yellow factions involved in emotional *Us versus Them* feuds usually prefer that kind of combat to moral arbitration because, to people who cannot see beyond the interests of Us, upper-moral-class arbiters who put the interests of a whole community, or all of Creation, above the interests of any particular Us just seem to be another malevolent Them.

Feuding factions do, however, welcome anyone who takes their side in such disputes. And especially welcome are one-eyed leaders who exalt the righteousness of Us,

and further inflame emotional fear and hatred of Them. In fact, one-eyed leaders are so notorious for their ability and willingness to extol or vilify the interests of almost any kind of social faction that their services are always in great demand by members of all factions.

The special advantage possessed by one-eyed men, of course, is their complete lack of any moral feelings or any vestige of conscience that might hinder them in using hatred and conflict among social factions as the means to attain their own personal end – which is to transform those factions into “constituencies” with one-eyed owners who become not just powerful and prosperous but, eventually, indispensable and irremovable.

In spite of all that, however, it would be wrong to say those one-eyed owners deliberately try to destroy a community. All they usually want to do is bring it close enough to the brink of destruction to frighten most people into begging for a “peaceful” alternative.

And the only expedient alternative in those circumstances is for the one-eyed

owners of various warring factions to get together to negotiate a “truce” that will stop the fighting and “save” the community. That kind of negotiation, as was explained yesterday, is called politics and the people who undertake such negotiations are called politicians.

But a truce devised by politicians is usually just some kind of political “compromise” which, as was also explained yesterday, usually satisfies no one and is not expected to last very long – which is not surprising since, if it did satisfy many people for any length of time, there would be no further need for politics and politicians.

And, again, the only kind of compromise which has much chance of acceptance anyway is one that precisely reflects the relative strengths of the various factions involved in a dispute at a particular time. But the relative strength of factions changes constantly. And the owners and members of factions that are growing stronger are always eager to gamble that a new cycle of combat and compromise will improve their social positions. So those destructive political cycles become self-perpetuating.

Demo: But I think many people feel that any political compromise, however imperfect or impermanent, will probably serve their own interests better than any static, oppressive “moral” consensus that offers them little hope for future improvement. So, if those people prefer to settle their own disputes in their own way, I don’t see why anyone else should interfere ...

Obso: Well, in a moral community, lower-moral-class feuds can be a chronic nuisance, but may not have much social significance. Such squabbling can be a distraction which reduces the ability of yellow factions to cooperate and contribute to a community’s common wealth. But the members of those factions usually contribute very little to communities anyway, even when they are not squabbling.

That kind of conflict does become very dangerous, however, when a community lacks the protection of a central social purpose and a strong moral consensus. Without such a central purpose, no community can be much more than an aggregation of many hostile social factions. Higher-moral-class subgroups may have leaders who are well-

meaning, and whose view of politics and politicians is one of natural revulsion. But odiological politics in a social vacuum can quickly “politicize” or demoralize even the most moral individuals.

A purposeless community will always have at least one alienated social faction whose members think they have some special reason to fear or hate the members of some other faction. And such fear and hatred may seem sufficient to justify aggressive action, using anything from verbal vilification to deadly force.

An attack by one faction on another always causes some injury. And the injury that is most likely and most serious is infection of the target faction with a reciprocal version of the fear and hatred that inspired the original attack – which is sufficient justification for counter-attack. And so it goes, on and on.

Nor can such infection be confined to the periphery of a purposeless community for very long. To increase their personal power, politicians soon begin to organize factional alliances that are stronger than any individual faction. And, to the leaders of such alli-

ances, every other faction is regarded as either an active ally or an enemy. So every faction must seek the protection of some alliance or become an enemy, and eventually a victim, of all of them.

Demo: But I think most Americans are quite well aware of the potential disruptiveness and destructiveness of such emotional factionalism and the need to restrain it. That is why America has laws, for example, to prevent the abuse of members of certain groups by members of other groups ...

Obso: Yes, degenerate societies like America's, which do not have the protection of a moral consensus, must try to deal with the symptoms of that deficiency by doing such things as trying to prohibit the most blatant forms of negative odiology. But skillful politicians can usually circumvent such prohibitions through a process of inversion that turns their negative odiology into something that may be mistaken for positive morality.

A politician who is not allowed to promote hatred of some other group by accusing its members of having vile characteristics or motives, for instance, can easily achieve the

same effect by praising the superior characteristics or motives of his own followers because, in America, anything that increases the "self-esteem" of individuals or groups is thought to be a good thing.

And politicians usually advise their followers against running around telling other people "I hate you" because people who hate other people may be suspected of having something wrong with them. Instead, those followers are instructed to run around telling other people "you hate people like me" because, if that is done with sufficient frequency and aggressiveness, it will probably become a true statement – in which case, there will appear to be something wrong with those other people.

Those are just some of the ways in which negative odiology is often inverted, then shrouded in euphemism, to become the positive-sounding "ideology" that many politicians try to use as if it were some new kind of morality. But such inversion is seldom entirely successful – most "positive" ideology contains a lot of convoluted logic that cannot be understood very well without reference back to its negative, odiological roots.

Demo: But modern political ideology must be more than just inverted odiology. You say odiology is socially divisive and destructive but, it seems to me, there are many nations in the world today where ideology is a primary force for social unification. So perhaps political ideology is, in fact, the modern equivalent of your kind of morality, with the same shortcomings and limitations ...

Obso: No, it is that kind of misunderstanding that makes ideology so dangerous in degenerate communities. It is true that many of today's nations have never had any positive social purposes, or have lost the ones they started with. And it is true that the political owners of those nations often try to promote national unity by adopting or inventing positive-sounding ideological purposes based on little more than manufactured fear and hatred of some ominous "outside" group – another nation or just some vaguely-defined international cabal or conspiracy.

But that is merely an expansion of ideological factionalism to a national scale, and it is why the world's community of nations

has, for such a long time, been subject to endless cycles of international conflict, combat and compromise. And national factions and their political owners who need outside enemies to justify their own existence are never likely to allow fear and hatred among the world's nations to diminish to the point that political "protectors" seem unimportant or even unnecessary.

Moreover, any nation that makes an ideological "purpose" out of hatred of its enemies is, in effect, leaving the definition of its own purpose in the hands of its enemies, so it is never likely to develop any positive moral purpose of its own.

It would, of course, be quite different if individual nations were moral communities rather than ideological alliances. Moral nations would not be represented in world forums by one-eyed politicians seeking to advance – at the expense of anyone else – their own selfish interests or, occasionally, the selfish interests of their own nations.

Instead, moral nations would be represented by upper-moral-class leaders from each nation who would have a common commitment to the same purpose – to Conserve

a Creation that includes all moral communities. So it is not altogether inconceivable that, some day, a world-wide moral consensus might produce the same kind of social stability and common wealth for a global community that such morality and consensus have produced for many good separate communities throughout human history.

Novo: But that is not very likely to happen as long as political ideology is such an easy and popular substitute for social morality and conscience – especially in places like America where people no longer even understand the difference ...

Obso: Yes, unfortunately, in many nations today, including America, people seem so dazzled by the bright green glare of negativistic individualism or yellowish factional ideology that red or even orange morality is no longer even recognized as a superior alternative. And such ignorance can have costly consequences.

America's much-acclaimed notion of social equality, for instance, is as old as the nation itself and may even have had a moral origin. Obviously, no positive social purpose could be served by bestowing special privileges on

any particular group of people, just because they had "aristocratic" parents.

But most Americans, then and now, are much more likely to use that notion in its ideological sense – as an attempted inversion of the hatred, fear and envy that is often felt by inferior people for superior people. Especially morally-superior people. And it is certainly clear that the emotional force of the American Revolution owed much more to anti-aristocratic, anti-English odiology than to any positive, moral conception of a better American social purpose.

The price the American nation has paid for that expedient misconception, however, has been an awful one because the ideological notion of equality has lingered on as a perpetual curse upon American politics – a contentious and divisive element that makes any kind of real American social consensus seem forever unattainable.

And, unfortunately, the same kind of hatred, fear and envy that has always been the source of most political conflict in America has also been the source of huge benefits for certain kinds of people – people like politicians who condemn and ridicule the whole

idea of social morality as being nothing more than the last refuge of naive “idealists” and other pathetic political losers.

Demo: But, again, I think you are overlooking an important advantage of American democracy. Political ideology might be dangerous if, like your version of morality, every American was expected to embrace just one kind of it. But American society tolerates all kinds of ideologies and all Americans are free to choose any kind they prefer – which means most of the worst ideologies just cancel each other out ...

Obso: Well, that might be true if Americans really were free to choose among competing political ideologies – or were free to choose morality instead. But political ideologies, by their nature, tend to capture and isolate their victims in ways that are difficult to escape or even perceive.

Most Americans, for instance, never seriously question nor rise much above the fears and hatreds of their own parents. And even those young people who make a conscious effort to escape from their parent’s ideology may just jump out of one trap into another.

The usual place to look for such “libera-

tion” is an institution of higher learning. But such institutions in America have their own ideology, inherited from the models on which they were based – European institutions that served established churches and aristocracies.

At about the time that model was being imported into America, European aristocrats and their institutions were full of fear and loathing for increasingly powerful “bourgeois” forces that were threatening many aristocratic traditions and privileges in those countries.

And that fear and loathing found a bizarre resonance among the members of contemporary anti-bourgeois American “populist” and “progressivist” political movements – particularly among educators whose traditional importance had also been diminished by the forces of secularization and materialism.

So America’s educators were encouraged to become a priesthood of progressivism, dedicated not just to the mundane task of ameliorating American ignorance but to the much greater calling of improving the character of the American people.

4

Those American “people” may already have been sovereign, but they were not yet divine. And to attain the kind of divinity that justifies sovereignty, it seemed they would need to be remade, in something like the educators’ own image, to become much more than mere shopkeepers.

Of course, most of America’s institutions of higher learning were established by governments who may have thought they were doing so for practical, economic, middle-class purposes. But those were not necessarily to be the purposes those institutions would serve.

Even today, students who linger too long at an American institution of higher learning, in the expectation of being prepared for positions of leadership in American society, often find they have acquired such an intense “moral” antipathy to the common values of mainstream America they are no longer able to function at all except in the quasi-aristocratic, institutional atmosphere of huge governmental, educational or corporate bureaucracies.

And they have no idea why that is so.

Moderator: That first part of today’s discussion was about the origin and nature of prehistoric Obso-model societies and how their inherent morality led them naturally to consensus and cooperation, while also protecting communities from the destructive effects of the deadliest forms of immorality, such as odiology, which is the nemesis of morality.

The Obso social model is still the basis for most social theory, if not practice, in most parts of the world today – probably because of its appeal to those human moral instincts that do not appear to have changed very much throughout the course of human existence. And that kind of morality is certainly more satisfying, both emotionally and intellectually, than any modern ideological imitation or perversion of morality.

But even the most appealing social theory has little value unless it also offers practical social benefits. And even the highest ideals may be ineffective when confronted with the

social cynicism and negativism that are the most striking characteristics of most modern societies.

So, to prove its relevance and usefulness today, the Obso social model would have to be able to overcome not just the most cynical and negativistic derision but also the typically American kind of social analysis that tends to be obsessed with the study of “power politics” to the exclusion of just about everything else.

A conventional method of conducting such analysis – which we will be using here today – is to view any social model as a collective response to a three-level hierarchy of social necessities: social survival, social order and social justice.

The assumption of such analysis is that social survival is the most important of those necessities because all people are more or less dependent on their society for some support or protection. And, obviously, Americans would not want to be slaughtered or enslaved by vicious foreigners.

The second necessity, therefore, is a social order or social structure that supports the requirements of social survival. Many na-

tions with bloodthirsty neighbors, for example, naturally tend to have very militaristic social orders to defend themselves against those enemies.

And, finally, social justice is the way a community deals with the everyday behavior or misbehavior of individuals and groups, in order to sustain the social order that is necessary for social survival.

So the question before us today is whether there is any place in the modern American hierarchy of social necessities where Obso-model morality might be relevant or useful. And we will be seeking answers for that question as we examine each level of the hierarchy separately, beginning with the necessities of social survival.

It is quite likely that most Americans today think that, in terms of the survival of their nation and its society, real morality has no relevance at all and might even impose dangerous disadvantages when dealing with amoral or immoral foreigners.

The basic assumption of this most cynical view is that the natural world, in its most primitive state, was a dismal jungle where humans were just so many vicious animals

fighting for survival against every other kind of vicious animal, including each other. And, according to this view, the first human society was merely an elementary alliance with strong leadership that gave some humans a slightly better chance of survival in a world of constant predation and deadly combat.

Even today's most powerful nation-states still look, to many people, like larger versions of those primitive alliances – still struggling for survival, at any cost to themselves or others, in a world that looks at times to be even more dismal and dangerous.

In this kind of world, social morality may seem to be an exceptional social luxury available only to people who live in a few, fortunate national havens protected by the most powerful and ruthless warriors and governments. And moralists who, in seeking to improve the behavior of people within those nations, may find themselves in the precariously paradoxical position of disparaging the kind of brutality that grants them the luxury of such refined ideals.

So now we need to know how, or if, Obso-

model morality ever had anything at all to do with the necessities of social survival – which must, presumably, be the overriding concern of any viable society ...

Obso: It should be pointed out, however, that the idea of the earliest humans living like animals in some chaotic, primeval jungle is a modern myth that is not even very modern anymore.

That idea was actually invented several centuries ago by people who were trying to justify the absolute authority of contemporary European monarchs by claiming any more “natural” social alternative would be very much worse. And the same old idea is still used today to justify the authority of big national governments that have taken over the absolute powers of those monarchs.

Moreover, since Americans like to think their degenerate society is an “advanced” society, it is necessary for them to try to imagine that earlier, less-advanced societies must somehow have been very much worse.

But what has actually been rediscovered over the past few centuries about the real nature of prehistoric tribal societies, and later Obso-model societies, has provided

little evidence to support the idea of such savage, animalistic human origins. In fact, that “new” knowledge caused some people to imagine an equally fantastic alternative – the myth of “primitive” people living as unspoiled innocents in a natural paradise free from any danger or conflict.

Demo: Yes, and I certainly do think it would be fantastic to suggest the earliest humans were more concerned about higher moral issues than they were about their own survival ...

Obso: Of course the earliest humans were concerned about survival. And they were not just concerned about the survival of a few people or a few human groups. What they had to be concerned about was the very real possibility of human extinction.

In the prehistoric world, the human population was so small and dispersed there was not much contact, cooperation or conflict among individual groups. And, since no one had many artificial possessions which might have been of interest to anyone else, there was little danger of the kind of predatory human behavior that was to become such a

common threat in later, degenerate societies.

In the beginning, however, all human groups were completely dependent on natural sources of sustenance and were always preoccupied with any disruptive force of nature that threatened their survival. So it was very clear to even the earliest humans that natural morality and social survival were parts of the same thing because the forces of nature were something no individual or human group could ever hope to ignore or “defeat.”

Novo: Eventually, however, those forces were made to look less ominous, and the struggle for human survival became less desperate, with the gradual accumulation of knowledge and the invention of some simple tools ...

Obso: No, it was probably because of their lack of such knowledge and inventions, not in spite of it, that the earliest humans were able to survive. Such contrivances would only have distracted those people from perceiving the real necessities of human survival in a natural environment.

The earliest humans may have feared the forces of nature, but they also knew nature was not their enemy. They, like everything else, were a part of nature, not something separate from it. And they knew instinctively that the only human force that could protect them from destructive natural forces was the “force of faith.”

They had faith that Providence had intended that humanity would grow up and find a secure place for itself in the natural order of things. And they had faith that they could ensure their own survival by learning to adapt themselves to the requirements of the natural order.

Individual members of the earliest Obso-model communities understood, first of all, that human survival required viable, cooperative societies with a natural moral purpose. And the only purpose great enough to ensure long-term human survival was the Conservation of Creation in ways that greatly exceeded the personal interests or lifetime of any particular individual.

But they believed uncorrupted humans, working together, would do the right things to serve that purpose, instinctively and

voluntarily. They would not just sit around waiting for something or someone else to come along to protect them or tell them what to do.

Demo: But I don’t think prehistoric people could have been quite that confident about their own abilities when they apparently spent a lot of time wondering and worrying about various “spirits,” both good and evil, which were thought to inhabit that natural world ...

Obso: Well, while the earliest humans understood that Providence expected them to grow up and make their own way in the natural world, without direct assistance, they also had faith that Providence would not abandon them altogether.

The merely human talents and intelligence they had been given were not only limited but were distributed quite unevenly among them. So they knew they would probably need some kind of guidance to help them learn how to live together in harmony with nature and with each other, to sustain the common social wealth which, in turn, sustained humanity.

Providential or “spiritual” guidance seem-

ed to include some absolute, natural limits to human error and delusion. A person who had deluded himself and others into thinking he could fly like a bird might have tested that delusion by jumping off a high place – quickly disposing of himself, his delusion and any possibility of further social confusion about the existence of such limits.

And, in some of the most flagrant cases of moral transgression, it was not surprising if degenerate individuals or families were struck down directly by injury, illness or “evil spirits” because it was known from experience that evil is inherently self-destructive.

So, just as a good community received the collective benefits of the talents, intelligence and good behavior of its best members, it was also required to bear the collective burden of responsibility for any bad behavior. No one was allowed to think he could “get away with” bad behavior because Providence, like a distracted parent or policeman, might be too busy to notice. Everyone had to accept some of the blame for anyone’s bad behavior because they knew if such behavior was not rectified it would soon corrupt and

endanger the whole community.

Demo: Well, I suppose it may seem quite appropriate when bad things happen to bad people. But it hardly seems fair when “natural” forces cause bad things to happen to good people as well ...

Obso: No, it may not seem entirely fair. But it must be understood that, in order to encourage humanity to take care of itself, it was necessary for Providence – as it is for every good parent – to find ways to provide guidance without encouraging or prolonging dependency.

And about the only way for Providence, as the parent of all humanity, to do that was through various kinds of instructive natural phenomena. Some of those phenomena were more spectacular or destructive than others, but each included its own moral lesson. And all of those lessons became an important part of every early community’s moral wisdom.

If there was a shortage of food due to a mild drought, for instance, that would have encouraged people to cooperate and share with each other whatever food was available because everyone knew that, if they got into

a big fight over scarce food, the whole community would probably perish.

And a more severe drought may have required even more drastic social action, perhaps including the expulsion of some members, or changes in the leadership and behavior of all members of the community – even those “good” members who had allowed themselves to be misled by the delusions of bad leaders.

Demo: But it seems to me one good indication of human progress today is that people no longer need “moral” explanations, or scapegoats to blame for the destructive effects of natural forces because much more is known about the actual causes of such things as droughts ...

Obso: Of course, modern Americans tend to ridicule the “ignorance” of the earliest humans and what they believed about Providence and the causes of natural disasters because modern science is now able to explain *how* some natural disasters happen. But no modern scientist is much more competent than the earliest humans in trying to explain *why* such natural disasters happen, in particular times and places, or to

particular people.

Demo: But I don’t see what good it would have done for those people to speculate about *why* a particular disaster happened if they had no idea *how* it happened. That kind of speculation, it seems to me, just leads to the worst kinds of superstition ...

Obso: Well, obviously, the moral message of a natural disaster was not of much use to people who had already been destroyed by it. It was only useful to people who made some attempt to learn enough from the bad things that happened to other people to prevent the same things from happening to them. And, in the case of a natural disaster, that could only be done by trying to understand *why* such a disaster might happen. Waiting until it was known *how* it was happening would be far too late.

In modern America, it may seem like superstition to suggest that the bad effects of a drought, for instance, could be caused or exacerbated by human moral deficiency – even if no one has ever offered a better explanation. But if people once believed it, and if behavior was improved by it, then it certainly served a useful social purpose.

When early tribes organized elaborate rituals to pay tribute to Providence, seeking protection from natural disasters, those rituals at the very least had the benefit of reinforcing a tribal sense of community and interdependence, increasing individual commitment to the community and promoting good behavior and social harmony. And all of those things were positive factors in the mitigation of the effects of destructive natural forces and the ultimate survival of humanity, as Providence clearly intended.

Demo: But I don't think many people in modern societies still believe natural disasters have any moral significance. Destructive natural phenomena are now known to be random events or, in certain circumstances, regular occurrences that are quite predictable ...

Obso: Modern scientists may believe many natural disasters are just random events – a belief that may be valid though still misguided because even those scientists are often surprised by the destructiveness of some of the most predictable natural forces.

Good, strong communities are clearly

much better able to cope with all kinds of misfortune than degenerate, demoralized ones. So Providence may just use various kinds of destructive natural phenomena as routine, periodic tests of the moral fitness of all communities. And, when you think about it, that does seem to be a very efficient way to reveal or eliminate automatically those people and societies that do not deserve to survive, while providing useful warnings and guidance to others.

There are all kinds of good examples of this throughout human history, and even quite recently. Most nations today have a superficial appearance of social viability and reasonably good political ownership much of the time. But natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes or hurricanes often reveal the owners of some of those nations to be little more than corrupt and incompetent crooks who were unable or unwilling to do what would have been necessary to prevent an ordinary, predictable natural misfortune from turning into a human catastrophe.

Sensible people may learn from those examples that people who put their faith in politicians rather than Providence often

bring about their own destruction. But the people who put their faith in politicians are people who do not want to serve the purposes of Providence because it would be inconvenient for them to do so – though they may claim to worship imaginary “gods” that look very much like themselves and serve their purposes, without bothering them with any unwanted advice.

Demo: But I still don’t think you can blame many good people for questioning the existence of Providence when, in spite of all their efforts to do the right things, so many bad things are allowed to keep happening to them ...

Obso: Well, that attitude might be appropriate if Providence were just another candidate for some political office. Clearly, the “existence” of any democratic politician does depend entirely on the support of his followers. And, to retain or increase that support, a politician must make people happy, or at least make them think they are happy.

It is probably inconceivable to anyone with severe democratic delusions that a leader might deliberately make people un-

happy, or subject them to unpleasant educational experiences, for their own good. And some democratic Americans, who have been able to make unpopular politicians cease to exist just by withholding their support, may even be foolish enough to think they can do the same thing to Providence.

But that just means the most obvious natural lessons about the usual costs of social degeneration or bad leadership are often overlooked. When political corruption and incompetence in some country turn a bit of bad weather into a human disaster, many people in other countries just want to rush in with emergency assistance for the innocent victims of those apparently capricious, pernicious forces.

No one stops to ask why bad weather in one country seems to do so much more damage than the same weather in other countries. And, in certain circles, any lack of enthusiasm for providing such assistance over and over and over again, without questioning its wisdom or necessity, is even regarded as an indication of moral failure on the part of benefactors, rather than the beneficiaries.

Perhaps even more unfortunate is the encouragement of that kind of moral confusion by modern scientists and engineers who arrogantly claim to be able to “control” or repair any damage caused by natural disasters – while, at the same time, creating some entirely unnecessary disasters as the result of recklessly inadequate technological contrivances, or mindless experimentation that upsets the essential stability of the natural world.

So anyone who is tempted to ridicule early humans for their apparent ignorance and fear in the face of natural dangers should take a good look at the terror and helplessness of many people today, even in America, when they fall victim to needlessly destructive “natural” disturbances, in spite of all their modern knowledge and the popularity of their morally deficient leadership.

Demo: Well, it is probably true that Americans tend to be much too careless about their natural environment, and that carelessness is both destructive to nature and sometimes makes the forces of nature much more destructive than they really need to be.

But we are supposed to be talking about national survival in the modern world and I think only the most naive idealist could ignore the obvious fact that the greatest threats to the survival of America and Americans today comes not from the forces of nature but from the forces of other nations. And, it seems to me, the force of faith is seldom sufficient when confronted with the force of clubs, spears, guns or bombs ...

Obso: That may have seemed quite obvious to many people a century ago, but it is not nearly so obvious today.

Those earlier assumptions caused the emergence of some of human history’s most powerful and predatory nations and leaders, driven by such odious, subhuman ideologies as fascism and communism. But all of those predatory forces were eventually defeated – by each other, by other nations or by their own delusions and contradictions.

And it is true that America helped to defeat those evil forces in two World Wars and a long Cold War. But that was not because America’s government or military leaders were any more powerful or competent than the leaders of other countries.

Those victories were won by the power of American industry and technology, with the moral support of the American people.

Even top-down authorities may enjoy what appears to be enthusiastic, voluntary moral support from their subjects in times of crisis. But such enthusiasm seldom lasts very long. And, without it, as America's political, military and industrial leaders were to learn to their own great embarrassment, America did not have the power to defeat even such an insignificant enemy as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The uncertainty of such moral support is probably what causes American leaders to look to industry and technology for even more powerful weapons for use against America's real and imagined enemies. But each of those more powerful weapons eventually becomes yet another dangerous, double-edged sword that actually reduces American security.

In fact, the primary assurance of America's national survival has always been its geographical peripherality, not its military power. Unlike the Roman Empire, or other empires surrounded with enemies, Ameri-

ca's "empire" has always been more like that of the Vikings or Mongols, whose technical innovations enabled them to venture forth in search of various kinds of loot in other lands without ever having to worry very much about an invasion of their remote homelands.

But America has no monopoly of modern weapons. And modern weapons delivery systems have eliminated much of the advantage of America's geographical peripherality. In today's much-smaller world, there is no place left for anyone to hide.

Novo: So, as American weapons become more and more powerful, America becomes more and more vulnerable – not just to the military forces of other nations but to any gang of lunatic terrorists that can get its hands on some of the most powerful weapons ...

Obso: Yes, but the danger is even greater than that. Today's weapons of mass destruction – nuclear weapons and various chemical and biological weapons – threaten more than just the safety and survival of America or other individual communities or nations.

Those weapons of mass destruction have once again made human extinction – as a direct result of immoral human behavior – a very real possibility. And any thoughtful person, even without a real understanding of the basis of natural morality, can see how that kind of immoral behavior, which may once have seemed to serve good individualistic or nationalistic purposes, has now become a threat to the personal survival of everyone in the world.

That is why many people in America and elsewhere now realize their own safety and survival can no longer be ensured individually or as members of even the most powerful national groups. And that realization has forced them, as a first step toward greater moral wisdom, to contemplate some basic social issues that extend far beyond their own selfish interests.

In fact, it was the world-wide terror induced by the use of atomic weapons in ending the Second World War that probably forced many people in all nations to recognize, for the first time, not just the possibility but the very real necessity of some new kind of international morality – the

kind of morality powerful enough to Conserve all of Creation because it is no longer possible to make any separate piece of the world safe apart from the whole.

And that kind of terror was increased even more a couple of decades later when the first photographs of our planet as seen from outer space finally expanded the horizons of human perception to the realization that humanity's home is merely one tiny, fragile speck within a universal Creation. And with that increased terror came acute embarrassment about how recklessly oblivious and unworthy humanity has proved to be as the custodian of such a precious gift.

Clearly, the only kind of morality powerful enough to Conserve humanity's small part of that Creation and ensure human survival would be one that recognizes one real Providence and one good future for all of mankind – because the only alternative to a good future for everyone is no future for anyone.

What really needs to be understood by everyone today is that, with all of humanity in the same boat, any serious moral leak anywhere must be everyone's concern. And

the ultimate safety of everyone in such a boat depends not on some heroic, short-term military or political exploits in some parts of the world but a permanent commitment to the diligent, long-term moral maintenance of every part of it.

Novo: All of which may sound hopelessly naive in today's "community of nations" where each nation has its own national and even local gods and purposes, and where the attainment of any short-term advantage at the expense of others is every nation's constant objective ...

Obso: Well yes, a moral "community of national communities" may not seem very practical today because nations are not moral communities – they are artificial, morally upside-down, geographical entities that are still owned by the kind of people who created them for their own military or political purposes.

But just as more and more people today understand the growing need for a real international community, they also understand the need for that community to be morally "rightside-up" because the most likely immoral alternative – a Final World

War – has become unthinkable everywhere. And many of those people also realize that a rightside-up international community would be a powerful force for helping to transform its component parts – various kinds of national and regional communities – into something much more like moral communities as well.

Unfortunately, there are two great barriers to such necessary enlightenment in the world today. One barrier is the fact that the Obso social model and its requirements have been scorned and neglected for such a long time that many people do not understand them very well. It is even ironical that some of those "obsolete" ideas, when recruited to the cause of international social understanding and cooperation, are regarded by many Americans and people elsewhere as being completely unfamiliar and even dangerously radical.

The second barrier is the fact that such broad social perception, in both time and space, is something that feels natural only to members of red, upper moral classes, who are relatively small minorities in every part of the world. And, in national political

forums, those red voices are too often overwhelmed by yellow, lower-moral-class clamor for the advancement of narrow, factional interests – with the enthusiastic support of amoral or immoral green politicians who reap most of the spoils from that kind of controversy and conflict.

And that leaves members of today's orange, middle moral classes, who are the natural majorities in most nations, caught in a dilemma. Their social instincts tell them the red end of the social spectrum is "up" and, ideally, that is where they should look for social leadership and social solutions.

But for the past few centuries, orange people have been accustomed to looking instead to green politicians for leadership because, during an era when civil and international wars seemed "winnable," they were led to believe military and political combat were the only practical ways to protect and advance their special personal and community interests. So, in a dangerous world of savage, predatory, self-serving enemies, they naturally chose the most savage, predatory, self-serving leaders.

With the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the increasing irrelevance and disintegration of many nation-states, however, the moral way has clearly become the only practical way to try to ensure human survival in the long term. But it is not easy for most people to overcome such deeply ingrained old habits, fears and hatreds.

5

Moderator: Our previous question was about whether Obso-model morality might have anything to contribute to America's social or national survival, today or in the future. And, with the ongoing development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – along with many other modern contrivances that are inadvertently destructive – it does seem clear that, without something like real, world-wide morality to enforce constraints on the misuse of such lethal contrivances, humanity may have no future at all.

It is probably even fair to say that many Americans now realize the survival of their nation, and their own personal safety, will depend more and more in the future on the moral quality of the leaders and citizens of other nations. And, in fact, individual Americans have always been enthusiastic supporters of the kind of morality that imposes constraints on the behavior of “other” people. They just do not seem to understand why such constraints should ever be imposed on good people like themselves.

But people in other nations are always more likely to be influenced by what Americans do, rather than what Americans say, or what Americans tell other people to do. So the only way Americans can ever hope to improve the behavior of foreigners is by providing the good example of their own better behavior.

Or, in other words, the greatest threat to America’s long-term survival will probably come not from foreign enemies – who are merely emulating American attitudes and behavior – but from Americans themselves. And, unfortunately, for the foreseeable future, that threat seems much more likely to

increase than diminish.

In their own safe national haven, especially over the past century, most individual Americans have become much wealthier and appear to be much more sophisticated. But, over the same period, there seems to have been a corresponding atrophication of individual Americans’ moral instincts and consciences.

So American governments these days feel compelled to make up more and more rules telling people what to do and what not to do – and employ more and more policemen of various kinds to enforce those rules – because it seems that wealthy, sophisticated Americans can no longer be trusted to do the right things, instead of the wrong things, or even to know the difference.

A situation like that is a social absurdity. But it would be even more absurd to try to reverse that trend by suggesting, as some groups of Americans do, that impecuniousness, unsophisticated ignorance or even plain stupidity are morally superior alternatives.

So now we need to know how Americans, in spite of such spectacular social and per-

sonal “progress,” have been afflicted with so much moral confusion and delusion about something so important as the requirements of social survival.

And we also need to know how Americans might be able to overcome that self-destructive confusion before their delusions become an even greater threat to the survival of America and the rest of humanity ...

Obso: Well, to overcome great social delusions it is usually necessary to understand where those delusions come from and what purpose they serve. The notion of “progress,” for instance, serves no social purpose. It is merely the preoccupation of American individualists who believe they can advance their own personal interests in spite of, or at the expense of, the interests of their society.

And it is not difficult to see how that delusion has led many people to a willful and predictable misunderstanding of some very simple and important social issues.

People who believe in progress tend, for instance, to misunderstand such ideas as the theory of biological “evolution” that they think has something to do with natural se-

lection and the survival of the fittest. Those are the people who keep trying to adapt themselves and their society to every kind of change because they think progress means the newest things are always better than older things.

Of course, it is true that adaptation to change in the natural environment is necessary for survival. But, in fact, there have not been many major natural changes in the world’s environment for the past hundred centuries or so. And social “adaptation” in the absence of change, or change for the sake of change, is more likely to be maladaptive or degenerative.

It is also true that the process of natural selection seems to ensure the survival of the fittest. But in the case of humanity, as mentioned earlier, the “unfit” who are most likely to perish are those people and communities that have become the most degenerate and maladapted. The societies that survive the longest have always been those that demonstrated their fitness to survive by dedicating themselves to the Conservation of Creation and by adapting themselves to all of its requirements.

And this should be easy enough to see, even in modern America where countless social “waves of the future” keep surging through, one after another, only to recede and be forgotten. But all of those waves – each of which seemed like a good idea to someone at the time – have contributed to the gradual erosion of America’s original ideals, and the degeneration of American society.

Demo: But I still don’t think there has ever been such a thing as a perfect human society. And I don’t see how any imperfect society can ever be improved by individual members who just sit around doing nothing much more than resisting any kind of change ...

Obso: No, it is a great mistake to think people in “conservative,” Obso-model societies were not interested in the improvement of their communities or their own lives. And it is an even greater mistake to think, as Americans tend to do, that conservation is another name for indolence while innovation is much more laborious, or even heroic.

In fact, the long-term maintenance of a

good, Obso-model society and its common wealth placed a far greater burden of social obligation and effort on its individual members than any modern society. And personal indolence was always more likely to lead to social degeneration – especially if downward social degeneration could be mistaken for “progressive” personal evolution.

Demo: But that is why I think such judgments should be left to each individual in a society as diverse as America’s, which has many different kinds of people with different interests. A change that looks like degeneration to some people may look like evolutionary progress to others. And who is to say which view is right or wrong ... ?

Obso: Well, as our moderator explained at some length on Monday, American society does include a wide variety of people from all parts of the social color spectrum. But, for the sake of coherence and cohesion, every society must emphasize one particular social color or purpose as the “right” color. And the choice of color determines the essential nature of that society.

The predominance of one color of public perception encourages conformity by ob-

scuring most other colors, through the phenomenon of enlightenment blindness. And it is that kind of induced conformity that makes it possible to talk about a “typical” American when, in fact, there are many different kinds of Americans.

Obso-model societies, for instance, were “red” societies because red is the color at the top end of the social spectrum and the Conservation of Creation is the highest social purpose. But that does not mean those societies included only red people. It just means everyone in those societies tried to act as if he was red because, under monochromatic red light, that is the kind of behavior that looked the whitest, while behavior of other colors looked like black, deviant, anti-social behavior.

As was also explained earlier, while upper-moral-class people were the only ones who felt completely comfortable in a red society, they were actually a relatively small part of such a community’s total voluntary membership. It was those red people, however, who worked hardest at maintaining the community’s central purpose and moral consensus.

The predominance of red morality might not have felt quite right to orange, middle-moral-class members of Obso-model communities. But those orange members were willing to bear such discomfort, and the burden of what may have seemed like excessive social rituals and constraints, because the precariousness of human survival in the earliest communities made those people understand the necessity of social security – which depended, in turn, on moral arbitration of personal or political disputes in ways that best served the current and future interests of the whole community and all other human communities as well.

And the burden of social obligation would have seemed even heavier for yellow, lower-moral-class members of such communities. The need for red morality was neither felt strongly nor understood completely by those people. But they were expected to undertake the difficult task of equipping themselves and their families with prosthetic consciences to compensate for their moral disabilities, as a necessary condition of membership and participation in a safe and prosperous community.

Now orange, middle-moral-class members, who were the natural majority in every community, might have felt more comfortable if the predominant color of public perception in the earliest communities had been monochromatic orange instead of red.

And if those orange members became more concerned about their own feelings and interests than about the security of their society – perhaps because they had acquired some of the tools and knowledge Mr. Novo mentioned earlier – they might even have attempted such a “progressive” improvement. But the narrower horizons of an orange-colored society would have limited its social purpose and perception to the Conservation of a particular Community, within a foreseeable future.

Demo: But if the orange, middle moral class included such a large majority of the members of a community, then it seems to me whatever made them feel better would have been the most “natural” thing for everyone to do – certainly more natural than whatever they were told to do by a red, self-appointed, moral minority ...

Obso: Yes, to people with narrower

social horizons in time and space, many social obligations and constraints may seem bothersome and unnecessary because that is the nature of the human dilemma. In struggling to balance contradictory desires for social security on one hand and personal freedom on the other, most people probably feel they have too much of one or not enough of the other. And so, for some people, “liberation” from social obligations and constraints may become both the objective and a measurement of their own personal progress.

Hunters, for instance, might have been liberated from the constraint that prevented them from killing animals not needed for food. Instead, they could kill whatever they wanted to kill, to demonstrate their prowess as hunters or just for the fun of it. And they would not have needed to worry about whether the local extinction of some animals might deny necessary sustenance to other communities, or to their own community some time in the future.

But when “progressive” people start thinking they can Conserve their own Community without having to worry about the rest of Creation or the distant future, that is

the beginning of particularism. And there has never been any good end to that.

A social purpose limited to the Conservation of a particular Community clearly reduced the possibility of cooperation with other communities, and increased the possibility of conflict – though, yes, that may not have seemed to matter very much when the earliest human communities were so small and scattered that the possibility of either cooperation or conflict seemed to be rather remote.

What would have mattered much more was the effect of such particularism within communities. People in those communities may have come to believe they were making real progress when their community started doing whatever a majority of its members wanted to do, without regard to the effects of their actions on other communities or the rest of Creation.

But that belief would have led some people to think it would be even more progressive if families or other particular parts of a community were free to do whatever they wanted to do, without regard to the effects of their actions on the rest of the community.

And they might even have been able to convince themselves that the probable consequences – more conflict, less cooperation and much less common wealth – were merely an inevitable and acceptable “price of progress.”

Demo: But it seems to me the members of a moderate orange majority who reject the extreme social “selflessness” of red morality would be just as likely to reject destructive selfishness at the opposite extreme. And I’m sure those red moralists could be counted on to keep up their harangue about the dangers and disadvantages of excessive particularism ...

Obso: That may seem logical. But let us say the predominant color of perception and opinion in our hypothetical community has shifted from Obso-model red to middle-moral-class orange. That change means members of the red minority are no longer “looked up to” as natural leaders of the community. In fact, orange enlightenment makes them almost invisible.

The adoption of a single, monochromatic social color for a community does not completely obscure all other colors because the

boundaries between colors in a spectrum are not distinct. In a red community, for instance, where red behavior looks white, the orange behavior of dedicated community leaders does not look black. Its looks light gray, or almost as good as white.

Now that the predominant color of our community has shifted from red to orange, however, the visibility and credibility of the red segment is reduced to a gray fringe on the left side of orange – just as the upper end of the yellow social segment has become visible as a gray fringe on the right side of orange. And, because neither red nor yellow seem quite white, and both seem equally peripheral, it is only natural for orange leaders to tend to “look down” on both.

Orange leaders look down on discredited red leaders, with their upper-moral-class insistence on broad social horizons in space and time, because that looks like unrealistic idealism. Orange leaders naturally assume the leaders and members of all other communities are just as parochial and short-sighted as they are because that is what the majority of members of an orange community expect them to do.

And some red members at the bottom of the upper moral class may even agree with them. It is always difficult to expand anyone’s social horizons and personal perceptions. But it is quite easy for any individual to shrink his own horizons – especially if, in doing so, he also seems to be liberating himself from onerous obligations.

So, instead of futile efforts to maintain red moral standards in an orange community, red members might just relax and enjoy complaining to each other about the ingratitude of the majority, and about how the traditional civility and stability of their community is being undermined by an inferior class of leadership.

Demo: But if traditional “stability” had been a hindrance to the majority of community members, it probably did need to be undermined. And, again, it seems to me greater participation by the orange majority in community leadership would produce more real social stability and security than anything that could be imposed by red, minority leadership ...

Obso: No, red leaders never imposed anything on communities because red

leadership was just an honorary moral status. Without the bottom-up, consensual support of all voluntary members of a community, minority red leaders had no authority at all.

Orange leaders with the direct support of a like-minded majority of community members certainly have much more real authority to impose rules of behavior necessary to maintain an appearance of social stability. But the use of such power also tends to reduce both the credibility and legitimacy of such leaders.

In a red society, the narrow-minded factionalism of yellow, lower-moral-class members had just looked like black behavior to everyone and was easily discredited. In an orange society, however, the top edge of the yellow segment on the right is just as visible and credible as the bottom edge of the red segment on the left, and may seem more attractive because it looks even more progressive.

Orange leaders who are dedicated to the Conservation of their Community naturally look down on yellow factional leaders whose only purpose is the Conservation of Us. But,

in doing so, orange leaders may just seem self-serving and hypocritical.

Orange leaders may try to act as social arbiters to resolve factional conflicts in ways that best serve the interests of the community and ensure its security and survival. But their limited social horizons make it difficult for them to comprehend the needs and interests of all members of the community. To such leaders, whatever provides the “greatest good for the greatest number” of members is good enough because that is all that is really necessary to maintain the tyranny of a majority.

So if it had seemed desirable for members of the orange majority to “liberate” themselves from voluntary “oppression” by a weak red minority, it would now seem even more imperative for members of the yellow minority to liberate themselves from real, involuntary oppression by the much stronger orange majority.

And, following the logic and momentum of particularism, yellow factions would probably be joined by many progressive members of the orange majority in seeking liberation from onerous local, as well as

universal, moral obligations and constraints – eventually shifting the predominant social color of the community from orange to yellow.

Novo: But a yellow community that consists of little more than a bunch of hostile factions, constantly at war with each other, can hardly be called a “society” ...

Obso: Yes, and that is why yellow communities are not just the most unpleasant, but also the most unstable and vulnerable kind of communities. They have no basis for social cooperation or arbitration, and little common wealth. And, because they cannot respond coherently to challenges from natural or other destructive forces, they do not normally survive for any great length of time.

That was the natural limit of social degeneration in prehistoric communities. Any community which exceeded that limit soon disintegrated into every-family-for-itself flight and dispersal – with the hope and possibility, perhaps, of forming or joining better voluntary communities elsewhere.

Of course, people in what is left of the orange fringe on the left side of a yellow

community may call for an end to factional conflict and violence through a return to traditional community purposes. But that orange fringe is likely to be outshone by the newly visible green fringe on the right, from which one-eyed politicians peddle all kinds of odiological fuel to further inflame factional passions, encouraging even more conflict and violence.

And it certainly does no good for any remaining red moralists to denounce negative ideology as a perversion of positive morality because red morality – now two steps away on the other side of orange – seems completely invisible and incredible.

Red moralists may be tolerated as long as they restrict their ambitions, like any other faction, to the Conservation of Us. But any attempt to claim moral superiority or to promote higher social purposes would look like the kind of presumptuous, black, anti-social behavior that would invite resentment and persecution by every other faction.

Demo: But it seems to me the real problem of some of the most backward nations in the world today, where such factional turmoil and violence are endemic, is that

they manage to survive much too long – though I suppose you would say that is just because, while many of their unfortunate inhabitants do try to flee, there is no longer anywhere else in the world for them to go ...

Obso: That is one reason. But a more important reason is that some people eventually found a way to overcome the natural limit of social degeneration by learning how to turn their tools into weapons for use against each other.

That allowed the most powerful factions, or just naturally rapacious gangs of sub-human thugs, to restore some kind of nonsocial, “top-down” stability in a community by using deadly force to suppress all other factions.

That is how ancient and medieval warlords, driven by their own ambitions, created the first kingdoms and nation-states. And that is how progressive tyrants like Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong, driven by ideological as well as personal ambitions, created some modern super-states. But in many of those cases, when the successors to such tyrants lost their stomach for the kind of mass murder necessary to sustain such

artificial, involuntary stability, social disorder soon returned.

Demo: And that is why it was necessary and perhaps inevitable that the world’s most progressive people would finally use the force of democracy to get rid of those tyrants and, in recent centuries, take government into their own hands – which, it seems to me, is the best and perhaps the only way to assure voluntary, bottom-up stability in complex, modern societies ...

Obso: It certainly is true that, for ordinary people trapped in tyrannical yellow communities, personal survival is the most urgent concern. And that is why those people may welcome a final transformation of their yellow communities into green communities, where the only purpose is the Conservation of Me.

But a progressive shift from yellow to green does not abolish the power of tyrants by creating new societies from the bottom-up. While the ideology of democracy is inspired by popular fear and hatred of tyrants, it does not question the need for such top-down authority. It just seeks to replace unpopular tyrants with democratic politi-

cians who promise to become benevolent despots who serve the best interests of “the people.”

Behind that democratic facade, a green government still needs a monopoly of deadly force to suppress disruptive conflict and occasional combat among communities, and factions within communities, caused by the particularism inherited from their orange and yellow predecessors.

Moreover, green preoccupation with the Conservation of Me causes even more conflict among individuals within factions and families because those individuals think their personal interests are more important than any group interests. Negativistic green individuals do not trust anybody because they think everyone is just as selfish as they are, and any kind of cooperation just looks like a conspiracy by some people to advance their own interests at the expense of others.

Demo: But if that kind of individualism undermines factionalism – allowing and encouraging every individual to pursue multiple interests and loyalties – then it seems to me it also helps to reduce some of the worst causes of community fragmenta-

tion and conflict ...

Obso: Well, individualism may weaken all kinds of social organization, including factionalism. And a socially atomized, green society may even seem to be less violent and less tyrannical than a yellow society. But that is not because a green community is a superior social condition. It is because a green community is a terminal social condition.

Green politicians can hardly suggest that their kind of top-down, involuntary social organization is very desirable. They just claim it is less undesirable than any visible alternative – a claim which, in a terminal social condition, may seem to be valid.

In a green community, the only visible social alternatives are the yellow fringe of murderous factionalism on the left and, on the right, the dark precipice of subhuman degeneracy. And that precipice cannot be mistaken by most people for the direction of further progressive evolution in human relationships because all it has to offer is a grotesque, dog-eat-dog parody of natural selection, in which only the most depraved and vicious could survive.

But neither can an atomized, green society, stranded between yellow factionalism and the brink of absolute degeneracy, easily resist the worst influences of both – most obviously because a green society cannot provide any kind of legitimate social or moral arbitration as the means to reduce factional or predatory aggression and conflict.

The only remedy green politicians can offer instead is perpetual political combat as an end in itself – political combat that is notoriously susceptible to both factionalism and subhuman degeneracy and which, at best, produces only temporary political compromises.

Of course, politicians claim political warfare may at least relieve some social tensions in a fragmented community before those tensions erupt into the worst kinds of deadly violence. But, even if so, it is only at the cost of a permanently fragmented, chaotic community.

So progressive individuals, who started out thinking they could exchange some oppressive social security for greater personal freedom by disparaging morality and con-

science, finally find themselves at war with every other individual – desperately seeking to survive in an anarchistic jungle where both social security and personal freedom have become rare luxuries, available only to the most fortunate few.

Novo: All of which may help to explain how the power of self-delusion may lead communities and nations – and, occasionally, the whole international community – to the brink of self-destruction. But I don't think it will be easy to convince many Americans that the only way to save themselves and the rest of humanity is by abandoning their faith in progress ...

Obso: Well, it may be too late to save Americans from their own delusions and it may be that America is doomed, like many great empires before it, to disintegration from within. But it is at least becoming more difficult for Americans to impose those delusions on other people – especially those people who are becoming more aware of how absurd those delusions look when projected on a world scale.

A green society like America's is not a real society or any kind of desirable social ar-

rangement. It is just a political contrivance that seeks to rescue humanity from the worst effects of degenerate, yellow tyranny by making humanity even more degenerate – an evolutionary dead end that offers little hope for any better future.

And it certainly has become a less attractive social solution for unfortunate countries, like the ones Ms. Demo mentioned, where factional turmoil and violence are endemic, and from which people have nowhere to flee. Those people may not doubt that democracy is preferable to tyranny. But they are becoming much less willing to accept tyranny as the apparent prerequisite and justification for democracy.

Americans have often tried to justify their support for such tyrannical regimes in other countries with the assumption that a progressive evolution toward democracy requires, as a first step, the kind of social stability that only murderous tyrants can impose on chaotic countries from the top-down. But, of course, most tyrannical regimes tend to regard themselves as the culmination of social progress – not just a temporary, necessary evil – and strongly

resist any further progressive “improvement.”

Moreover, if tyranny is the prerequisite and justification for democracy, the possibility of world-wide democracy seems even more hopeless. Any attempt by one national faction of humanity to impose such tyranny on all of humanity today would most likely be fatal for all of humanity.

So people in some countries with social cultures much older and richer than America’s are looking in the opposite direction for solutions to degenerate factionalism – at least toward traditional orange, communal morality rather than negativistic, individualistic, yellow-green ideology.

Many Americans may be appalled by such “backward-looking,” anti-progressive social movements. But, in the long term, such a retreat from America’s evolutionary dead end seems much more likely to lead toward social success. And such success may even create sufficient momentum to restore the visibility and credibility of red morality, which is the only possible basis for a peaceful and prosperous world community that is greater than the sum of its parts.

6

Moderator: That part of our discussion was about social survival – the first of three levels in the hierarchy of social necessities. And, from what we heard, it does not appear the American nation has gone very far toward meeting those basic requirements.

But that is probably primarily because the geographical peripherality of the American nation has meant seldom having had to face serious threats to its survival from enemy nations – an advantage that has largely been lost in a world of modern transportation and communication.

That advantage allowed the American nation to survive far more “progressive” political nonsense and social turmoil than most other nations, where such social incoherence and vulnerability would have invited invasion by predatory neighbors.

The greatest good fortune for any society that does not face such threats, or thinks it can afford to ignore emerging threats, how-

ever, is not just the luxury of a careless existence. Such security also gives people an opportunity to avoid having the whole nature of their social order – the second level in the hierarchy of social necessities – imposed on them by the brutal, amoral requirements of eternal military vigilance.

In fact, most Americans today seem to think their ancestors did take advantage of just such a special opportunity to create, over the past couple of centuries, a unique “American way of life” or social order that they believe is clearly superior, both morally and materially, to every other way of life in the world.

And many Americans believe it is the superiority of that way of life – not just its mere survival – that makes it worth fighting and dying for, even far away from home and even with the military disadvantages such civility may imply. American super-patriots have even claimed they would rather be “dead than red” or, presumably, orange, or yellow or any other social color that is not good American green.

Of course, the nature of that social order – the structure of American society and the

relationships among its various groups and individuals – could never have unanimous approval because the very idea of social order means different things to different people in a purposeless society.

In our previous discussion, we heard about “bottom-up” red societies with upper-moral-class leadership. We also heard about “top-down” green societies led by politicians from the lowest moral class. And we heard about orange, middle-moral-class societies whose leaders don’t know, or seem to care, which way is “up.”

So now we need to know exactly what kind of social order is implied by the American way of life and how much that way of life actually owes to Obso-model morality. And we also need to know why – if most Americans think their way of life is so obviously superior – there still seems to be a lot of confusion and controversy in America today about its essential nature ...

Obso: Well, if there is confusion and controversy about what kind of social order is implied by the American way of life, it is probably because Americans have had so many different ways of life – real and

imaginary – with different kinds of social order, at various stages in the development of their nation.

When the first Europeans arrived in America, they found a natural and social environment that was still predominantly unspoiled red – an environment for which those degenerate Europeans-in-America, or “Eurinams,” were completely maladapted. And some early settlements perished because their members were unable to adapt themselves to the requirements of such an unfamiliar environment.

There were differences, of course. The main interest of Spaninams was the plunder of gold and souls, so their settlements tended to be armed garrisons that only needed to establish sufficient authority and military order in particular areas to serve their purpose.

The earliest Britinam settlements, on the other hand, were more often expected to fend for themselves as nondependent, self-sustaining communities that would serve as the first steps toward permanent colonization and development on a much larger scale.

And many Britinam settlements did survive in what, to them, was a very hostile environment because their members were willing to learn much of what they needed to know from people who were already perfectly adapted to that kind of environment – the resident “Sibinams,” or Siberians-in-America, who had migrated to America from similar environments several thousands of years earlier.

What those early Eurinams learned from Sibinams helped them to rediscover something like real Obso-model social morality and common wealth in the building of their communities – not through mystical revelation but simply because social cooperation and moral arbitration were clearly the most effective strategy for communal and personal survival in an “uncivilized” environment where yellow and green particularism were unaffordable luxuries.

That early experience was to be repeated again and again as the American frontier gradually moved westward across a whole continent, and it had a profound effect in forming the unique character and ideals of the Eurinams who established the Ameri-

can republic.

Their cooperative, self-reliant communities were clearly different from the European communities from which most of their members had come. Instead of the degenerate, authoritarian social order of European monarchy and aristocracy, the best of those early Eurinam communities were self-governing, bottom-up societies with a social order that was more like a morally “upscale” orange.

And that moral superiority was the real reason those early American communities and their citizens were to be admired, envied and emulated by many other people all over the world.

Demo: But I don’t think that difference had very much to do with social morality. What those early European immigrants learned first of all, it seems to me, was the kind of good American pragmatism that allowed them to do whatever needed to be done, in defiance of any irrelevant “moral” considerations that might have been a hindrance to them ...

Obso: Yes, but pragmatism is not necessarily “amoral” when the most practi-

cal way of doing something is also the right thing to do.

It was a practical necessity in those early communities, for instance, for individuals and families to help each other overcome personal misfortune because a typical Eurinam family was much smaller, more transient and weaker than a robust, extended European family. So informal mutual support was a common interest and a sensible way for those fragile groups to help themselves cope with their special circumstances.

That kind of bottom-up social morality was nothing like the elaborate, top-down, institutional conception of morality that was then prevalent in Europe and elsewhere. But, as you said, Eurinams were pragmatic people who, whenever necessary, just ignored such irrelevant dogma and did the right things for themselves and for each other because, to them, that is what felt like the right thing to do. And what the members of any community actually practice is usually a better indication of social significance and real morality than whatever their leaders may preach.

Those early Eurinams took care of their own families and, without compulsion, helped each other as well because that is what happens quite naturally in any voluntary community that is not corrupted by other influences. And those informal social arrangements in self-sufficient, self-governing communities, with a reasonable balance of individual freedom and cooperative security, was clearly an important part of what made the American nation, in its first century, a place of great opportunities and real success for so many people.

Demo: But, again, I think it would be more accurate to say it was that kind of pragmatism that created America's morally superior way of life, not some kind of morality that led Americans to act pragmatically ...

Obso: Well, again, that is how it may appear when pragmatism is used as a positive social force by people who already know which way is "up." But it is not the same thing when personal pragmatism is used as an excuse for the narrow-minded or short-sighted attitudes of people who think "down" is up. Or, if people are already

confused about which way is up, aimless pragmatism usually just increases that confusion.

And that kind of confusion becomes even greater when people see a pragmatic advantage in preaching something quite different from what they actually practice. That is what happens when politicians try to convert negative odiology into positive-sounding ideology – or when a moral community, as a matter of pragmatic necessity, tries to use negative means to serve a positive end.

Those early Eurinam colonists, for instance, eventually began to realize just how different they had become and began to rebel against perverse rules imposed on them, without their consent, by an oppressive yellow faction of overprivileged European authorities. But successful rebellion required broad popular support that could be recruited only through persuasive explanation and justification.

The prevailing social order of early Eurinam communities was clearly more orange than yellow, and orange was morally superior to yellow. But, in the circumstances of the time, an orange rebellion against yellow

could not be adequately explained or justified, for several reasons:

First of all, Eurinams resented the European tendency to “look down on” colonists as uncouth inhabitants of a cultural wilderness, and those colonists were easily embarrassed by anything which seemed to confirm that stereotype. So European aristocrats could easily discredit people who favored a Sibirnam-influenced, orange social order by accusing those people of having “gone native.”

Second, the parochial nature of self-sufficient, self-governing, orange Eurinam communities in several separate colonies made it difficult for those communities to develop any basis for the kind of coordinated action required for successful rebellion against the forces of imperial European powers.

And, third, given a great deal of time and effort, those Eurinams might have been able to develop the positive, broad-minded, red moral leadership necessary to unite all of their orange communities – and perhaps Sibirnam communities as well – in a common American social purpose. But even the unifying effect of that kind of morality might

not have provided a good basis for rebellion because a moral social order would have required consideration of legitimate European interests in America as well.

Demo: But those Eurinams must have found the pragmatic justification and leadership they needed because, as I recall, they did carry out a successful rebellion – and went on to create a very successful independent American republic ...

Obso: Yes, but that leadership was political, not moral. And the fact that the motive force for American unification and rebellion was negative odiology, rather than positive morality, was to have an indelible effect on the nature of the new republic.

The many different kinds of immigrants and communities that were involved in the creation of the American republic were far too diverse to be able to reach much agreement about what their new nation might be “for.” But many of them could be persuaded to agree on what they were “against” – such as subservience to distant European powers and interests, as well as the odious aristocracies, social inequalities and rigidities of the European societies from which most of

them had come.

Of course, they also despised green politicians and subhuman degenerates who were a danger to all kinds of societies. But, to people who were contemplating a disruptive rebellion and the repudiation of imperial authority, even the most depraved “enemies of their enemy” looked like friends. And, at that time, the most obvious enemy of European aristocracy was a new political ideology that was becoming quite fashionable in Europe itself.

That anti-aristocratic ideology was being used to good effect by green European intellectuals and politicians in their attack on a degenerate social order that, while retaining authority, had lost much of its legitimacy. And any ideology that looked like the nemesis of aristocracy had an obvious appeal to rebellious Eurinams.

But it had an additional benefit that made it even more attractive. Because it was a “progressive” ideology, it gave even the most unsophisticated rustics in America an opportunity to dress themselves up in the garments of the Enlightenment and, instead of “looking up” to European authorities as

agents of civilization, they could “look down” on those authorities as relics of a discredited and increasingly irrelevant social order.

That is, the success of the American Revolution required not just the militarization but also the politicization of colonial communities. And, while no one but generals and politicians thought those were good things, they could be accepted by most people because they seemed to be necessary and only temporary.

When the war had been won, America’s “minutemen” put away their guns, swords and officers and returned to farms and shops where they resumed the way of life they had fought to defend. Those weapons had just been the deplorable means used for the attainment of a worthwhile end.

In many communities that had their own social purposes, politics could likewise be set aside because the destructiveness of that weapon was no longer necessary nor tolerable. But in communities without the protection of such good purposes, politicians soon managed to fan the old embers of mutual suspicion among different groups into flames of factional fear, hatred and violence

that made politics and politicians seem indispensable.

And, of course, the American community most vulnerable to such political corruption was the new American national community itself – a community that was never expected to have any larger social purpose than that of a loose military alliance which, like the minutemen, could be rolled out temporarily in times of crisis.

Demo: But I think the very limitations of that initial arrangement probably did reflect the larger purpose of Americans at that time – which was to guarantee all Americans full equality and freedom, without social or political interference, to be whatever they wanted to be, and to do whatever they wanted to do ...

Obso: Well, it was quite clear that the purpose of the new American Constitution was largely totemic. It was intended to impress Europeans with how progressive the people in their former colonies had become, in order to justify their rebellion and to make any further interference by Europeans in American affairs look uselessly “reactionary.”

And, in the spirit of progressive liberation, that Constitution did impose constraints on government and politicians, in the form of various “checks and balances,” to try to ensure that what most people regarded as a necessary evil would become no more evil than absolutely necessary.

It may have seemed that a government which was so purposeless and powerless would not be able to do much harm. But, of course, neither could it do very much to prevent subhuman degenerates, with the connivance of politicians, from plundering the freedom and equality of everyone else.

Sibinam communities, for instance, were simply shoved aside as the American frontier advanced westward until, eventually, a greatly demoralized Sibinam way of life could survive only by confinement in isolated areas especially reserved for people who had no hope or desire of ever becoming “real” Americans.

Moreover, while some of the earliest Eurinam settlements had been explicitly idealistic, quasi-red, moral communities, they too were shoved aside and, subsequently, such purposely moralistic groups as the Mormons

were forced by murderous political persecution to seek refuge in some of the most remote parts of America.

Nor was such a purposeless government either willing or able to constrain the emergence of another, unexpected and unwelcome but politically powerful American way of life – a way of life associated with the growth of big cities, which most Americans looked down upon as breeding grounds for the worst kinds of subhuman degeneracy.

But some of the people who had played major roles in winning America’s independence did not share that disdain. In fact, they greatly admired European nations and the big cities that were the most obvious engines and manifestations of those nations’ wealth and power – the kind of wealth and power those Americans hoped and intended to acquire for themselves.

And, in the new American republic where people could be whatever they wanted to be, and do whatever they wanted to do, America’s own cabal of capitalist plutocrats and self-appointed industrial aristocrats encountered few real obstacles in laying the foundations for a new, radically un-Ameri-

can, urban-industrial way of life that would soon incite even more factional conflict and violence.

Novo: But it was not entirely un-American. In fact, because of chronic labor shortages and a lack of institutional constraints in the early years of their new republic, inventive Americans excelled in the mechanization of labor-intensive tasks and made several important contributions to what became known as the Industrial Revolution ...

Obso: Well, they may have welcomed the kind of mechanization that, for instance, made farming less labor-intensive because it was difficult to find enough people willing to work as farm laborers anyway. And the effects of that kind of mechanization were usually beneficial, in one way or another, for a whole community. But European-style industrialization as a whole new way of life was something entirely different.

The idea of large numbers of people working as “wage slaves” for capitalist employers in big factories was almost universally abhorrent, both personally and socially. It was

an affront to the American personal ideal of nondependent self-ownership. And, because it was assumed that such serf-like workers were incapable of developing the necessary characteristics of real citizenship, they were often excluded from participation in “democratic” institutions and elections.

In fact, opposition to such industrialization was just as intense among Americans at the beginning of the nineteenth century as it was in most other countries around the world. And most of those other countries deliberately and successfully resisted the ravages of large-scale industrialization for at least another century or two because it was such an obvious threat to their established social orders and traditional ways of life.

In America, however, such opposition was largely futile because the American nation had no positive, traditional social Creation to Conserve – just the chaos of divisive green politics and the remnants of a transitory orange frontier way of life that was already falling victim to its own success.

As the American frontier moved westward, what was left behind was a more

“civilized” country where most people no longer had any direct experience of the harsh, morally purifying challenges of pioneer life.

That cooperative, frontier morality still exerted a strong influence in rural America and on the young people growing up on farms and in small towns. But, while orange morality was still cherished because it was, clearly, the right thing for people in a good community to do, it had by then become a social ideal rather than a pragmatic necessity.

And, of course, voluntary immigrants to America who were attracted directly to America’s big cities and their industrial opportunities – like Afrinam “immigrants” who had been brought to rural America involuntarily – were seldom exposed to the moral effects of “Americanization” at all. For many of those people and their descendants, America’s frontier and small town way of life and social order would always remain beyond their own experience, interest or understanding.

But just as growing mechanization and industrialization were making those old

American social ideals seem increasingly obsolescent and irrelevant, the horrors of a European, urban-industrial social alternative were becoming more and more apparent – especially in Europe itself. And Americans became even more concerned about the inability of their society to resist such developments.

Novo: But let us not forget that the largest expansion of the American frontier, with the creation of so many pioneer farms and small towns, was actually a consequence of industrialization. Without railway transportation, much of the western frontier would have remained inaccessible and its pioneer way of life economically unviable ...

Obso: Yes, but it was not the same way of life that pioneering had once been. Communities dependent on railway transportation were obviously no longer self-sufficient communities. And, because they had little control over railways or other major industrial and commercial forces, those communities were no longer entirely self-governing either.

But, of course, those social disadvantages were, for many short-sighted individuals,

greatly outweighed by the personal advantages industrialization seemed to offer. For individual capitalists and speculators, it was the way to “get rich quick.” For patriots, large-scale industrialization was the quickest way to make their nation powerful. For young people and new immigrants, industrial employment offered the illusion of a quick and easy way to “make a living” while accumulating enough money to start their own small businesses – though, in fact, that kind of dependence was a seductive and usually fatal detour from any road to real nondependence.

For everyone else, industrialization offered an entirely new role which ordinary Americans seemed eager to play – the role of the industrial “consumer.” What people had consumed before then, especially in rural communities, was usually limited to the necessities of life obtained mainly through laborious, do-it-yourself activities. So it certainly looked like progress when do-it-for-you urban industry began to produce some inexpensive versions of many of those necessities, along with many previously unaffordable luxuries.

And the emergence of free mass markets for those industrial products seemed to give everyone the opportunity to purchase anything they needed, or just wanted, to improve their lives – which, in turn, encouraged the invention of even more new products and services.

But those arrangements soon began to produce some unexpected and undesirable consequences. While industrial mass production and free markets provided many obvious benefits for everyone, it was also clear that some people were receiving far more benefits than others.

Big cities, for instance, kept getting bigger and more important while small towns became smaller and less important – especially when rural young people began moving to big cities in search of greater opportunities. And, it seemed, while America’s subhuman “robber barons” and their minions were steadily becoming even richer and more socially powerful, ordinary Americans were steadily becoming relatively poorer and less powerful.

Demo: Yes, but I don’t think most Americans saw those things as the inevit-

able consequences of industrialization – just the destructive consequences of a primitive, short-sighted, capitalistic version of industrialization.

Those were the Americans who demanded new, long-term social policies to ensure a more civilized and acceptable form of industrialism, with a much broader and more equal distribution of its benefits. But that kind of social reform, especially in a democratic society, is not something that can be accomplished overnight. Rather, it is an ongoing struggle that continues to this day, with much that remains to be done ...

Obso: Well, one of the American republic's first great national controversies was about the threat of urbanization and industrialization to the predominantly rustic American way of life and, particularly, about the various ways in which the American government, to make itself more powerful and important, seemed to be encouraging that trend despite the opposition of most Americans.

But that controversy never became a social issue. Industrialization as a social issue could have been dealt with quite easily by

requiring industrialists to serve America's social purpose. Unfortunately, however, America had no social purpose because Americans had never bothered to try to create a social consensus in support of any positive purpose – even such a trivial social purpose as giving their nation, like its individual states, a proper name.

Now, again, when a community has no real social purpose, its social problems can only become political issues. And politics never resolves social problems – it just causes the fragmentation of a community into many conflicting factions, each of which attempts to justify its own attitudes and behavior in terms of its odiological fear and hatred of other factions.

Of course, America's politicians welcomed that kind of fear and hatred because conflict is what makes politics and politicians seem important. And those politicians even managed to persuade themselves and many other people that growing American social conflict indicated a progressive improvement over an obsolescent, pre-democratic, frontier social order where politicians had been unnecessary.

Politicians never regard a community that has disintegrated into hostile factionalism as being a social or moral failure. They just see it as the best market for the services they have to sell. And, in such a market, the worth of individual factions is never determined by their moral origins or merits. The only difference that really matters to a politician is whether a particular faction is a good or bad long-term customer for his political services.

Demo: No, I think what actually happened was that Americans came to realize the most effective device for reforming a corrupt commercial market was a free, uncorrupted, democratic market where politicians of all kinds would be free to offer their services and solutions, and where the American people would be free to select those social policies, like any other products, that best served their personal purposes ...

Obso: Well, when urbanization and industrialization made do-it-yourself, frontier social management seem less effective, it was probably not surprising that pragmatic, materialistic Americans would turn to do-it-for-you, free-market politics as

the most obvious alternative.

But every kind of freedom has limits. Even in a completely free market, the only things people can buy are things that are offered for sale. And the only things offered for sale in any market are those things that are profitable for vendors to sell.

In a commercial mass market, the most profitable products are those that have the lowest-common-denominator appeal to the largest number of people. And, in a political mass market, the most profitable products are always those odologies and ideologies that appeal to the lowest common human emotions – the “gut” issues that make factional conflict so vicious, and the most successful politicians so popular and powerful.

In a degenerate community where such conflict has become endemic, people even begin to look upon social disorder as an essential part of their ideal way of life. America’s biggest winners naturally abhor any form of “social” order that might reduce their special personal privileges. And even America’s biggest losers decry any social order that seems to interfere with their im-

probable dreams of becoming big winners some day.

In fact, the only peaceful social order most modern Americans can easily imagine – for America or the whole world – is one in which a single faction or nation has become so powerful it is able to impose its own self-serving way of life and social order on everyone else. And, since that most-powerful faction or nation might not be their own, peace may seem less desirable than a permanent state of conflict and uncertainty.

Still, modern Americans have not entirely lost their instinctive feeling that, in a truly moral society, such warfare would not be necessary because, in a moral society, everyone could be a winner. That is why politicians still feel compelled to convert their negative odologies into positive-sounding ideologies that may seem to resemble real morality.

But no free-market politician could ever offer true morality as an alternative to ideology because he could never profit from it. Morality is a do-it-yourself social undertaking, not a do-it-for-you commercial product. And, if people just do the right things

voluntarily, they have no reason to hate or fear each other and no need to purchase expensive political “protection” from each other.

Demo: That might be true in some ideal world. But, in the real world, it seems to me people who try to do the right things are too often victimized by people who do the wrong things.

Democratic politicians may be the only people who have any interest in providing those victims with the social protection they deserve. And yes, you may say that is just because politicians need the support of such victims to serve their own purposes and justify their own existence. But, in the absence of any ideal social solutions, democratic political solutions are probably the only way to make a bad social order any better ...

Obso: But, of course, every faction in a degenerate society regards itself as a victim, or a potential victim, of every other faction. So members of every faction cling desperately to their own self-serving prejudices, allowing social conscience to be overwhelmed by political ideologies that make

fear and hatred of other people feel like the right things to do.

But while fear and hatred are very strong emotions, they are not the kind of emotions that make most people – even emotionally immature people – feel good for very long. Eventually, the personal and social consequences of such negative emotionalism make most people feel bad – and especially bad if vestigial conscience also makes them feel guilty.

And it was probably those bad feelings and frustration that, about a century ago, led many Americans to start thinking about some post-democratic solutions. Democratic politics, with its multitude of warring factions and corrupt political “bosses,” had not produced positive, peaceful social solutions that came from the bottom-up. So perhaps a single, all-powerful faction – a new kind of big government managed by disinterested experts who were “above” politics – might be able to impose some better kind of social order from the top-down.

In practice, however, top-down government mixed with politics seemed to create even more social problems than it actually

solved. But that, its experts claimed, was just because it was not yet big or non-political enough. So big government, over the past century, in serving the interests of those experts, kept getting bigger and bigger. And, as it became more and more powerful, it became less “political” – or seemed less political because it paid less and less attention to the various interests of most other Americans.

So America’s great, big-government social experiments of the past century were failures as great as the small-government experiments of the previous century. And, unfortunately, they failed so badly they discredited not just the notion of benevolent big government but just about every other possibility of beneficial social order as well.

And that, in turn, left many individual Americans with no alternative but the kind of personal cynicism and negativism that regards any form of social order as oppressive and destructive – and which seeks, by the deliberate creation of even more disorder, to escape from all social relationships and obligations into adolescent fantasies of personal liberation and independence.

7

Moderator: Our previous question was about why, if the “American way of life” is such a good thing, there is still so much confusion and controversy about the kind of social order it should imply. But what we found is that, in America, there are many different ways of life, both old and new, and all of them imply different, often contradictory, forms of social order.

The final result of all those contradictions is a modern American political way of life that seems to encourage and celebrate the greatest possible amount of social disorder, short of total chaos, along with the worst kinds of social cynicism and negativism.

Perhaps it was never very realistic to imagine, in a nation of people as materialistic, individualistic and pragmatic as Americans, that any common way of life or positive social order could ever be established or sustained for very long. And it may have been especially unrealistic to imagine that

America’s morally superior but transitory frontier way of life could be conserved for very long after that frontier and its social requirements finally disappeared more than a century ago.

Other countries may have managed to conserve morally superior, traditional ways of life and social orders by repudiating the forces of urbanization and industrialization. But, in doing so, they also deprived themselves of many material benefits. So, when faced with what looks like a simple choice between poverty and prosperity, modern Americans are naturally suspicious of anyone who condones the “instinctive” appeal of traditional social morality.

But it also seems suspiciously simplistic to suggest earlier Americans were just helpless victims of such forces as urbanization and industrialization – as if those were inexorable forces that would have made America what it is today, no matter how many individual Americans were wishing and working for different outcomes.

So now we need to know if there ever was a practical moral alternative that all Americans might have accepted as the best

kind of social order – a better way of life that would have given ordinary Americans the opportunities and prosperity they sought, and the security they needed, without requiring them to abandon their own social ideals, or those of their nation’s founders, as the price of that kind of “progress” ...

Obso: Yes, Americans have always had practical moral alternatives. In fact, the American Revolution, with its moralistic assertion that all men are created equal, was even seen at the time as being something like an American moral rebellion against the immoral degeneracy and inequalities of European societies.

Without the conscious choice of that moral alternative, there would have been no American republic. And the nature of that new republic indicated the clear determination of many good people to enshrine and conserve at least the orange, semi-moral way of life that was uniquely American.

The moral necessity of social equality was regarded by those Americans as being not just an ideal but a self-evident truth because the vast majority of them – farmers, merchants and artisans – were nondependent

proprietors of family businesses whose mutual security and prosperity required non-discriminative social relationships based on an assumption of equality.

And that moral necessity, with proper leadership, might even have inspired those Americans to elevate their do-it-yourself local social management, with the equality it implied, into a positive, permanent definition of a larger social purpose for the entire new nation they had created.

But what they chose instead, perhaps inevitably, was the abandonment of do-it-yourself morality in favor of do-it-for-you political leadership. As mentioned earlier, while the justification for the American Revolution may have been a positive, moral conception of equality, its political driving force was a negative, odiological notion of equality based on fear and hatred of superiority. And that negative notion, rather than helping to enlarge the social equality of local communities into an all-embracing American way of life, only helped to accelerate its destruction.

Within just a few generations, for instance, the vast majority of working Ameri-

cans were no longer a community of equal, nondependent proprietors but had become a proletariat of dependent employees. And a new American way of life which reflected that reality was hardly distinguishable from the way of life in degenerate European societies where equality was looked upon not as a self-evident truth but as merely another political issue.

Demo: But I don't see how you can blame politics or politicians for that. If politicians were to blame at all, it was only for their sins of omission in failing to recognize sooner the need for much greater social control and management of such forces as urbanization and industrialization, in the best interests of all Americans.

In fact, politicians have always been the leading champions of equality in America. They were leaders of the American Revolution against aristocratic European imperialism. They were leading opponents of the inordinate social influence of rapacious industrial and commercial robber barons during America's first century. And, since then, politicians have been leading proponents of the kind of social reform that has

restored personal equality to a position of central concern in America's post-industrial way of life ...

Obso: Well yes, American politicians have been talking about equality as a social virtue for more than two centuries now – which is perhaps the best indication of how little they have actually accomplished in their attempts to conserve or restore it. And that, once again, is because American politicians have never had any positive conception of equality. All they ever offered were several variations on a theme of anti-inequality odiology.

That negative odiology may have been adequate for the purposes of the American Revolution because European inequality was something to which most Americans were clearly opposed. And it certainly served the purposes of politicians because anti-inequality odiology naturally tended to denigrate every form of superiority – even the moral superiority those politicians so conspicuously lacked.

But it also created some deadly misconceptions. Many people, for instance, thought George Washington was a politician, which

he was not, and that other American politicians might be like him, which they would not. Washington could not have done what he did without political support. But political slogans inciting fear and hatred for a foreign enemy were not much of a foundation on which to build a better American society.

A better social order required a positive purpose, which politicians could not provide. So what those politicians provided instead was a cosmetic inversion of their negative, anti-inequality odiology, which is what became America's positive-sounding ideology of equality.

While that ideology remains quite popular even today, it never helped to reduce social disorder in America very much. And, anyway, it should have been obvious that trying to promote an ideal of equality by denouncing inequality was like trying to promote prosperity by opposing poverty. Purely negative means seldom produce very positive ends.

Demo: But you just said the assumption of equality was an essential feature of America's admirable frontier and

small town way of life. So I don't see how you can criticize politicians who sought to conserve that way of life by opposing the forces that undermined equality. Their opposition may not, in the end, have been entirely successful, but I don't see what else they could have done ...

Obso: No, there was not much more politicians could have done to conserve that way of life while serving their own interests. But ordinary Americans could have done much more if they had just taken the trouble to ask themselves why that way of life seemed so admirable and worth conserving.

What made America's frontier and small-town way of life so admirable was its moral superiority. And, yes, one of the admirable features of moral superiority is its assumption of social equality. But the best assurance of a community's moral superiority is not membership equality. The only good assurance is voluntary membership.

Equality is encouraged within a voluntary community because people do not, voluntarily, join an association in which they will be treated unfairly. The converse, however, is

almost never true. An attempt to impose some kind of equality in a community where it does not already exist usually requires that membership be made involuntary or even coercive.

America's earlier, anti-inequality odologists thought they could ignore that distinction because they believed inequality in America was just an unfortunate relic of a colonial era dominated by the agents of traditional European social inequality. And they believed the repudiation of European influence would make every mature American a free, equal, nondependent, self-owned member of one big voluntary American association.

The abolition of overt social inequality in the new American republic did increase social equality, which was a good thing. But what, apparently, was not foreseen was that such an increase in social equality would produce more and more personal inequality, for reasons that were discussed here at some length yesterday. In fact, many members of America's new society, like many members of every other kind of society, would never be capable of attaining the minimum

standard of nondependent self-ownership necessary for plausible equality.

And that, in turn, raised a troubling question for which modern Americans have never been able to find a good answer. Just where, in a free society, do people who are incapable of self-ownership find a good, constructive owner on whom they can depend for the support and protection they need to survive?

Any good answer for that question would have to include a reasonably complete definition of a good social order. And that is probably why Americans, who seem to prefer social disorder instead, have never tried very hard to find such an answer.

Demo: But I don't see why there should be any contradiction between social equality and personal equality when the only purpose of social equality is the support of personal equality.

And, anyway, you said that contradiction became more apparent in America with the repudiation of formal European social inequality. So it seems to me that contradiction, if it ever existed, would have been even more apparent in America's frontier com-

munities, where European authority was always least effective. Yet you say frontier communities had more real equality ...

Obso: Yes, in those frontier communities the normal contradiction between social equality and personal equality was much less apparent. But that was because America's frontier communities were abnormal communities where special circumstances made the requirements of voluntary membership especially rigorous.

People with significant personal deficiencies were seldom willing or able to undertake, voluntarily, the ordinary risks and hardships of membership in a pioneer community. And if such people sought to overcome that deficiency by becoming horse thieves, bank robbers or politicians, voluntary communities would not have accepted them as members anyway.

That kind of self-selected, self-evident equality, in settlements where everyone knew everyone else and everyone seemed to be much the same, made it much easier for people to trust each other, to cooperate with each other, and to do the right things for each other in providing whatever temporary

mutual support some of them might need from time to time.

And as those simple associations of frontier adventurers and speculators turned into real communities, they also began to include involuntary subgroups like families with dependent members. But as long as the personal inequality of involuntary dependents was contained within nondependent families, the essentially voluntary membership of the owners of those subgroups in a community's central association could be conserved.

Now, that meant each family owner had to be sufficiently competent, and his family business sufficiently successful, to be able to support and protect his dependents so they would not become a burden or nuisance to other members of the community – though, of course, most of those owners probably needed the help of a good wife and supportive children in order to fulfill that social requirement.

So, while the social and personal equality of nondependent individuals in temporary frontier encampments was quite notable, the much more significant kind of equality

in settled frontier communities was the general, though never perfect, equality of family subgroups.

Those families could satisfy the moral requirements of social equality while mitigating the distress of personal inequality. And that is why they were the solid foundation at the bottom of every successful bottom-up, self-governing community.

Demo: No, I think the idea of trying to treat families as separate economic subgroups within a community, and family dependents as second-class citizens, was just another unfortunate remnant of the social ignorance and inequality of the cultures from which many of those pioneers had come.

As those communities became more civilized and more enlightened, more and more people began to realize that equality within families was just as important as equality among families and, in fact, the only way to reduce the abuse of family dependents by incompetent “owners” was to extend to those dependents full membership in the community with full equality ...

Obso: No, that kind of “enlight-

enment” just created a lot of unnecessary confusion about the proper functions of voluntary community associations and involuntary families – including the very dubious notion that some of those functions could and should be transferred from one to the other. But, in fact, communities and families are entirely different kinds of association with different purposes and different assumptions.

In a voluntary association or community, an assumption of social equality is the basis of relationships among members. The basis of relationships among members of an involuntary group like a family, however, is an assumption that is almost the exact opposite:

***Equity** – A family owner can give all of his dependents some of what they want, or he can give some of his dependents all they want, but he can seldom give all of his dependents everything they want.*

It is true that, in modern America, the difference between “equality” and “equity” is very poorly understood and those words are often used as if they were synonymous, or as

if one were just a part of the other. But the difference is profound and should be quite obvious.

A situation of social “equality,” where everyone is treated the same, inevitably increases personal inequality among members of associations like chess and gardening clubs because of differences in individual ability and receptibility. And social equality in a moral community reveals significant differences in individual moral stature. But, among members of involuntary groups, “equity” is used to compensate for personal inequality by treating everyone differently.

In an ordinary family, for instance, the needs of young children and their ability to contribute to a family’s business are quite different from the needs and abilities of more mature family members, so children are treated differently. But equity also implies that all family members, though treated differently, have equal entitlement to family protection and support. If business is bad, or if there is a shortage of food, all family members still receive fair shares. It would be unthinkable in a good family for some members to eat well while others

starved.

Demo: And, it seems to me, the definition of a good community is one in which it would be equally unthinkable for some families to eat well while others starved ...

Obso: Yes, that is a nice ideal and that is why some Americans like to think of their whole nation, or even the whole world, as being “one big family.” It may also be why, in recent decades, several American presidents from former Confederate states became very popular by seeming to suggest America should be governed as if it were one big plantation.

But that kind of community, as a larger version of its involuntary, rather than voluntary subgroups, would be a radically different kind of society. Instead of the bottom-up equality of a voluntary association, an involuntary community would have to be governed from the top-down because the imposition of equity requires something like the authority of family ownership and arbitration. And that authority is justified by the fact that the involuntary members at the “bottom” of families are young children,

or people like young children, who do not know what is good for them and need to be told what to do.

Many modern Americans may seem confused about this, but only because they have been led to believe they can have the best of both worlds. They like the idea of America becoming one big equitable family because of the “social security” it might offer them. But they still react with astonishment and outrage if the owner of that one big family tries to treat them as if they were unequal children who need to be told what to do.

Demo: But I don’t see what is so unreasonable about that. Modern American families, whatever their size, do not have “owners.” And even American children these days no longer tolerate being treated as if they were children ...

Novo: Yes, most people like the idea of family dependency but are much less enthusiastic about the necessity of ownership which such dependency and equity imply. And it is true that being subject to ownership authority may seem inconvenient or unpleasant.

But that is the incentive which encour-

ages young men to seek the only good alternative to dependency, which is mature, nondependent self-ownership. Young men who are deprived of that incentive may have no other good reason to ever want to grow up and give up the privileges of childhood – which may explain why the concept of American manhood today, when compared with that of America’s pioneers, seems so infantile.

And that is also why every involuntary group, to serve its proper purpose, must remain small enough to have personal significance for all of its members. An owner can’t force his dependents to become less dependent just by making up rules that require them to grow up. He can only use his influence in personal relationships with each of his dependents to motivate them to do so, by example and encouragement.

The compensation for dependents in such close and perhaps “oppressive” personal relationships is that they are also given opportunities to influence their owners, directly and appropriately, in ways that would obviously be impossible in a larger group or a whole community.

Obso: Yes, and the nature and social purpose of families also required owners to perform several other important functions which were only possible in relatively small, separate subgroups within a community. And it was the moral authority which came with acceptance of those social obligations that allowed them to do so.

A moral community's common wealth could be distributed fairly equally among families because nondependent subgroups were usually more similar and more receptive of such assistance than diverse individuals. But that common wealth was never infinite.

Each owner could acquire a limited amount of common wealth to help support his own dependents. And it was each owner's duty to allocate those resources within his own family in a way that properly recognized the special needs of different family members. So, while that allocation was unequal and might not have satisfied any family member completely, it could be recognized and supported by most family members as being a fair and "equitable" allocation.

But the owner also had to see that his allocation was strictly enforced. If he did not do so, stronger dependents who did not get all they wanted would probably try to take some from weaker dependents, causing disruptive family conflict. In fact, the primary protection any family owner provided to his dependents was protection from each other.

Moreover, the owner had to defend his moral authority to allocate resources and resolve disputes within his own family by preventing interference in those functions from outside the family. In moral communities, the simple way to meet that requirement was for all owners to agree, as part of their moral consensus, that family owners would not interfere, or allow their dependents to interfere, in the affairs of any other family.

When family owners were successful in doing those things, their families were able to serve their essential social function. Looking down from above, Providence saw families with owners who looked reasonably equal and lived harmoniously, as a matter of social necessity. But, to someone looking up from below, the inner workings of each

family probably looked very different, as a matter of personal necessity.

And that was the proper, complementary relationship between families and communities in all successful societies. Families and other subgroups could be big enough and equal enough to maintain their social significance within a community. But, at the same time, they could be small enough to maintain their personal significance for each of their members.

Demo: Well, America may once have had some families of that kind, but I think they would be looked upon today as one of those historical embarrassments that are best forgotten ...

Novo: Yes, Americans have largely forgotten the social role families once played in their communities. And that is why most Americans no longer understand how bottom-up equality and top-down equity could ever have coexisted in the same communities at the same time without a lot of conflict and confusion. But, in communities with a proper ownership nexus, those two ideas were complementary, not contradictory.

Owners of involuntary subgroups like families, along with the owners of voluntary subgroups, were at the bottom of bottom-up equality in self-governing community associations. And family owners were at the top of top-down equity within their own families. So subgroup owners, at the intersection of equality and equity, formed the ownership nexus that held the whole thing together and conserved a kind of social order that was capable of long-term stability and survival.

Obso: That is how it worked, more or less, when the frontier settlements which became communities were still quite small and isolated. And it was still the ideal form of social order in America's small towns for many later generations. But, as urbanization and industrialization made American communities larger and less isolated, that social nexus and social order, among other things, began to break down.

In fact, many so-called "urban" problems have always been caused by people from rural areas clinging to some attitudes and habits which were inappropriate in big cities. And, as those people learned to adapt

themselves to the requirements of an urban environment, many of those problems became much less troublesome. Sanitation and transportation are obvious examples.

That kind of adaptation was not very difficult for voluntary associations, which maintained their social significance by becoming much larger as well. Big city chess clubs had many more members than small town chess clubs, though big cities could also have many smaller, neighborhood chess clubs. So big cities allowed voluntary associations to realize the benefits of both scale and diversity in serving their own purposes and their proper social purposes.

And it should have been obvious that something like the same thing should have happened to involuntary groups as well because a typical American small-town or rural family was too small to have much significance in a big city. But families in big cities did not become bigger. Some families just became more significant and influential than others by making their family businesses much bigger – usually by hiring members of other families to work for them.

By then, America's chronic labor shortage

had helped to reform the worst of European-style “wage slavery” that previous generations of Americans had abhorred. And the power of euphemism removed much of the remaining stigma by transforming masters and hired servants into “employers” and “employees.”

The best of those urban-scale family businesses – where ownership was constructive rather than consumptive – even looked something like a new kind of equitable, involuntary association. Good owners encouraged and helped employees to develop their maturity and skills, even at the risk of having those employees leave to start their own businesses. And good employers also stood by their employees in times of personal adversity – not because they were legally required to do so but because it was the kind of thing a good owner would naturally do for his own dependents.

Demo: But I don't think most Americans ever really wanted to be either employers or employees in that kind of business.

Employees wanted to be independent, not dependent, while business owners were

more likely to be consumptive than constructive. And, unfortunately, individual employees were always vulnerable to exploitation by wealthy and powerful owners who were much less interested in what they could do for their employees than in what their employees could do for them ...

Obso: Well, small family businesses are no longer the most prominent kind of business in America today, but they are still by far the most numerous. And, along with voluntary associations, they are still the most important instances of social stability and social order in America which do not require the use of military or paramilitary force.

But yes, as some family and corporate businesses grew much larger, they and their owners lost much of their moral, social and personal significance. A business with more than, say, a hundred employees could not fulfill the requirements of involuntary association because it was impossible for the owner of such a large group to maintain a real personal relationship with every one of his employees.

And when such personal relationships

were lost, big businesses tended to become little more than “inhuman” money-making machines in which both employers and employees were likely to be more consumptive than constructive.

That is why, in a competitive, free-market economy, it became necessary – both legally and economically – for businesses of all sizes to be treated as if they were purely voluntary associations in which, among other things, employers and employees were assumed to have equal legal and social status.

And that, in turn, imposed on employees the kind of “independence” they may have thought they always wanted. But the only employees who ever attained that kind of independence were those who were capable of becoming nondependent, self-employed proprietors of their own businesses – whether they actually did so or not.

Employees without that capability may have wanted to be independent, while still depending on their employers to do the right things for them. But when employers could legally reject such “moral” obligations, those employees just became ownerless dependents without any security or protection.

Demo: But when employees are given the kind of social protection they need and deserve, to ensure decent wages and reasonable security, it seems to me their employment can be made to serve exactly the same purpose as any other kind of independent family business ...

Obso: No, an “independent” business with just one customer is not a real business – it is just a reckless economic risk that is likely to end badly, sooner or later. Real business ownership, like self-ownership or family ownership, requires not just the appearance of self-support but also real self-protection and self-possession.

A truly self-owned, self-protected employee is one who does whatever may be necessary to ensure that the loss of his job does not mean the loss of self-support for himself and his family, or make him so desperate to find another job that he is vulnerable to exploitation. And a self-possessed person is one who does that for himself and his own family because he knows he can blame no one but himself for failing to do so.

Demo: But I think most American

employees understand that well enough. When they are denied the social support they need to protect themselves individually, they often join together to protect themselves collectively against exploitative employers ...

Obso: Yes, but there are two different kinds of collective action dependent employees may take to protect themselves – positive, do-it-yourself moral action or negative, do-it-for-you political action. And it was about a century ago that America’s emerging majority of dependent employees made the choice that was to transform their nation and society into a political wasteland.

A moral, do-it-yourself solution for vulnerable employees and families might, for instance, have meant amalgamating some smaller families into constructive, nondependent “superfamilies” large enough to have equality of social significance with other families in a big city, while remaining small enough to have personal significance for their own members.

Families of that kind could have provided the social security employees and their dependents needed because each of them

would have included several employees with different employers. The loss of any one job would have been a temporary inconvenience rather than a family disaster, so the bargaining power of employees with prospective employers would have been greatly enhanced. And the nondependence of such superfamilies could have enhanced their significance and conserved the social nexus necessary for voluntary, self-governing communities.

In fact, that is just what happened, informally, in many immigrant communities and among some religious sects – with their god-fathers or godly fathers – where families needed special protection and support. But that sensible, moral response to the economic and social hazards of an industrial urban environment never became popular, and was even regarded by many people as being subversively un-American.

Employers did not like the idea because it made employees less dependent and less exploitable. And dependent employees did not like it because they did not want to be members of significant families. They wanted to be “big winners” like their bosses – the

owners of small families with big businesses – which was clearly impossible for all but a very fortunate few of them.

Demo: But I don’t see how it would ever have been possible for any democratic government to force people to join such “collectivist” superfamilies – even if it was for their own good ...

Obso: No, a government could not have forced people to join such families – and probably would not have wanted to do so, even if it could. Larger superfamilies could only have been viable if they were do-it-yourself projects undertaken by people who wanted to take care of themselves. And people who take care of themselves have no need or desire for politicians or governments to do it for them.

That is why, about that time, a new breed of American politician was beginning to offer America’s many victims of progress an even more “progressive” political alternative which provided an illusion of personal independence while making politics and politicians seem much more important.

These more-compassionate politicians were, like their predecessors, primarily

anti-inequality odiologists. But while their predecessors had denounced social inequality, the new politicians denounced the failure of social equality to produce personal and family equality. And, since they could not blame this failure on the majority of Americans who had failed to adapt themselves and their families to the requirements of social equality, they just blamed America's big winners for making everyone else look like losers.

When that new kind of anti-inequality odiology was turned upside-down to make it look more like positive morality, it became America's "ideology of equity" – a doctrine that promised every individual the support and protection of belonging to one big American family.

That all-inclusive family, with politicians acting as its owners and father figures, would be able to avenge abused employees, for instance, by becoming big enough to abuse even the biggest employers. And it promised to provide a secure new home for the growing hordes of social refugees from the wreckage of fragile small families with inadequate ownership.

Obviously, the basis for that kind of all-inclusive family, like any other family, would be some kind of top-down, do-it-for-you paternalism, not bottom-up self-government. But, it was said, it would still be individualistic and democratic because all adult dependents in that one-big-family would be free to choose their own political parents in regular, democratic elections.

Novo: What went wrong with that idea, however, was that those progressive politicians – like other wealthy parents of the time – didn't really want to be bothered with the care and feeding of such obstreperous dependents. What wealthy parents did instead was hire "governesses" to do it for them.

And, since democratic dependents kept changing their choice of political foster parents so frequently and capriciously, none of those parents ever took much real interest in the fundamental obligations of family ownership and management. Instead, most of their moral authority and responsibility was eventually assumed by the governesses politicians had hired to do the family's dirty work for them.

Like any governesses or other servants left without competent and consistent parental supervision, however, those caretakers tended to assume far too much. And, in attempting to manage such a huge, unmanageable family, they found it difficult to confine themselves to just trying to tell the most childish dependents what to do. Before long, more and more “civil servants” – eschewing both civility and servility – were running around trying to tell everybody in America’s one-big-family what to do.

Obso: But, eventually, many of America’s nonpolitical, nondependent individualists would rebel – as their ancestors had done – against that kind of top-down, paternalistic government, and the humiliation of belonging to an involuntary society where bureaucratic hirelings were allowed to treat competent adults as if they were dependent children.

By that time, however, America’s one-big-family had acquired the direct and indirect ownership of such large numbers of dependents of various kinds that the abandonment of those dependents had become politically impossible.

The advocates of greater social equality did point out, correctly, that the newer ideology of equity was committing the human atrocity of denying freedom to people who knew what to do with it. But the advocates of equity just reminded them, correctly, that the older ideology of equality had committed the human atrocity of imposing freedom on many people who did not know what to do with it.

Of course, that contradiction would never have existed if Americans had not forgotten the necessity of a moral ownership nexus to keep equality and equity in their proper places. What is clearly improper, and usually disastrous, is for either equality or equity to be offered separately as a panacea for all social ills.

And nowhere has this been demonstrated more clearly than in America where, for the past century or so, the political conception of a good social order has just kept swinging back and forth like a berserk pendulum between a panacean ideology of equality, which is obviously impractical, and a panacean ideology of equity which is obviously insufferable.

8

Moderator: That part of our discussion was about social order – the second level in the hierarchy of social necessities – and the ways in which a social order or community structure should reflect and support the requirements of the top level of that hierarchy, which is social survival.

And now it is time to move on to the subject of social justice – the third level of the hierarchy of social necessities – and the ways in which social justice should reflect and support the requirements of a community’s social order and the most important mutual interests of its various groups and individual members.

What we have learned so far, however, is that Americans have always tended to be careless about the survival of their society because the security of their nation has seldom been threatened directly. And, because of that, most Americans have also been careless about the requirements of so-

cial order, even seeming to prefer various kinds of political disorder instead.

So, since social justice is supposed to reflect and support an established social order, it might be assumed the real purpose of social justice in America is to encourage disorder. And most Americans today would probably agree their system of justice does an excellent job of that.

It is just that kind of disorder, however, that also creates so much negativism and cynicism about all of America’s political institutions – including the crime of which nearly all Americans are guilty at one time or another, which is contempt of their political courts.

Yet, in the midst of all of that disorder and cynicism, many Americans still cling to an ideal of some higher form of “natural” justice which, by transcending political purposes, might actually be able to improve a degenerate social order or, failing that, even become a substitute for social order. But we know the search for such an ideal form of justice as an end in itself has been going on in obnoxious societies for many centuries in many places, without much success.

In prehistoric Obso-model societies, however, people apparently did enjoy the benefits of something like a natural form of justice, based on the assumption that most people would support their social order by doing the right things voluntarily because that is what made most of them feel good, or at least not guilty.

So now we need to know just how that kind of natural justice encouraged people to do the right things and how it dealt with people who did the wrong things. And we also need to know if the overwhelming artificiality and complexity of modern, technological societies has, in fact, forever precluded the possibility of a return to a less complicated, more natural conception of social justice ...

Obso: Well, when a society has a good social purpose to justify its existence, and a social order to support that purpose and ensure its survival, social justice as the third and lowest level of the hierarchy of social necessities is seldom a matter of any great concern because it largely takes care of itself.

But, as you said, the American nation has

no such social purpose to justify its own existence or survival, nor any consensus about the most appropriate form of social order to serve such a purpose. So the notion of social justice in America has become yet another contentious political dichotomy – this time between those people who regard social justice as a last ditch stand against total anarchy and those people who see laws and law enforcement as the final barrier to total personal liberation.

Ordinary Americans may tend to ignore or neglect the larger issues of social survival and social order because an appreciation of their importance, except in times of crisis, requires an unusual breadth of social perception in both time and space. But it is much more difficult to ignore the practical application of social justice or law enforcement, which directly affects the everyday life of every citizen.

Moreover, as well as affecting them directly, law enforcement also affects Americans perversely because it is subject to so many conflicting and constantly changing ideological perceptions of justice. And that perversity becomes especially painful when

it also conflicts with Americans' natural social instincts, which will never change.

The purveyors of "justice" in America, for instance, have never been very successful in convincing most people that America's extraordinarily elaborate and increasingly arcane apparatus of ideological legalities is a superior form of justice. They have survived and prospered anyway, however, by managing somehow to make most Americans feel embarrassed by their hopes for anything better.

An American who expresses a desire for a better kind of justice that would be less incomprehensible, more direct, effective and natural, is not even called an idealist anymore. Rather, he is accused of surrendering to "base instincts" – as if Americans' basic social instincts, which once encouraged them to do the right things and feel good about it, are something of which they should now feel ashamed.

But there was no such contradiction between personal perceptions and social instincts in early Obso-model societies. And while such societies and their kind of justice may seem "primitive" to modern Americans

– and while many Americans may be ashamed to admit it – the natural, "hellfire" justice of those earlier societies still has a very strong, ineradicable, instinctive appeal.

Demo: I suppose it is true that some unsophisticated Americans feel a kind of guilty pleasure in their emotional conviction that good people can create a heaven-on-earth for themselves just by creating more effective hells-on-earth where bad people – or at least their bad attitudes – can be consumed by some kind of "hellfire." But I think most Americans now understand that real justice in a modern society can't be that simplistic ...

Obso: The most interesting thing about that "guilty pleasure," however, is not the pleasure, which is instinctive and natural. It is the source of guilt, which is probably caused by suspicion that top-down, ideological justice appeals more often to people's worst personal instincts rather than to their best social ones.

Even when, for instance, Americans perceive in particular cases that "justice has been done," they often experience a feeling

of injustice because that kind of legality does nothing to resolve underlying causes of conflict or improve social harmony. In that broader view, American justice just seems ineffective or even inflammatory.

And when their view becomes broad enough to encompass the whole world – where particular personal interests are less predominant – Americans are even more likely to have an instinctive understanding of the real difference between ideological hellfire and moral hellfire. Unlike political hellfire, moral hellfire is not something inflicted on some people by others but is actually a form of spontaneous combustion:

***Hellfire** – The natural force of destruction is also the natural force of purification and renewal, whether it is a physical force or a spiritual force.*

An obvious physical instance of natural hellfire is a forest fire – a phenomenon which, unfortunately, is often misunderstood. Many Americans still seem to think forest fires are an accidental and wasteful form of destruction, so they run around trying to extinguish every one of them as

quickly as possible.

Even America's national parks, which were supposed to represent the Conservation of Creation in its most natural state have, with that kind of human "protection," been turned into the most unnatural museums of perverse preservation.

What those people do not understand is that occasional forest fires are an essential part of a natural process of renewal. A forest fire clears away dead and diseased trees and strangling underbrush, allowing the regrowth of a healthy new forest. And attempts to prevent or delay that natural process just make the forest fires which must eventually break out so much more intense and destructive that renewal may be postponed or even precluded.

Even less well understood today is that a similar, occasional process of moral renewal has always been necessary for the maintenance of healthy societies. And natural social hellfire, as the most elementary kind of social justice, played an essential part in the purification and protection of the moral consensus on which Obso-model societies were based. The spark that ignited social hell-

fire was moral contradiction, and what it consumed was human depravity, error and delusion.

Demo: But it seems to me America already has far too many “moral” arsonists running around trying to incinerate anything or anyone they happen to dislike. And encouraging even more of that kind of intolerance and violent factionalism would just ensure total destruction. So I find it very hard to imagine how any social renewal or improvement could ever come from that kind of “justice” ...

Obso: Well, the members of Obso-model societies did not have as much difficulty understanding such things because they had a different perception of social justice, which Figure 5 is an attempt to illustrate.

Once again, the outer limit of the outer circle of this hypothetical community has a moral radius of about .95, excluding everyone whose Index of Alienation exceeds that number. And that is necessary because the dimensions of any real community can never exceed the extent of its moral consensus without endangering its central social pur-

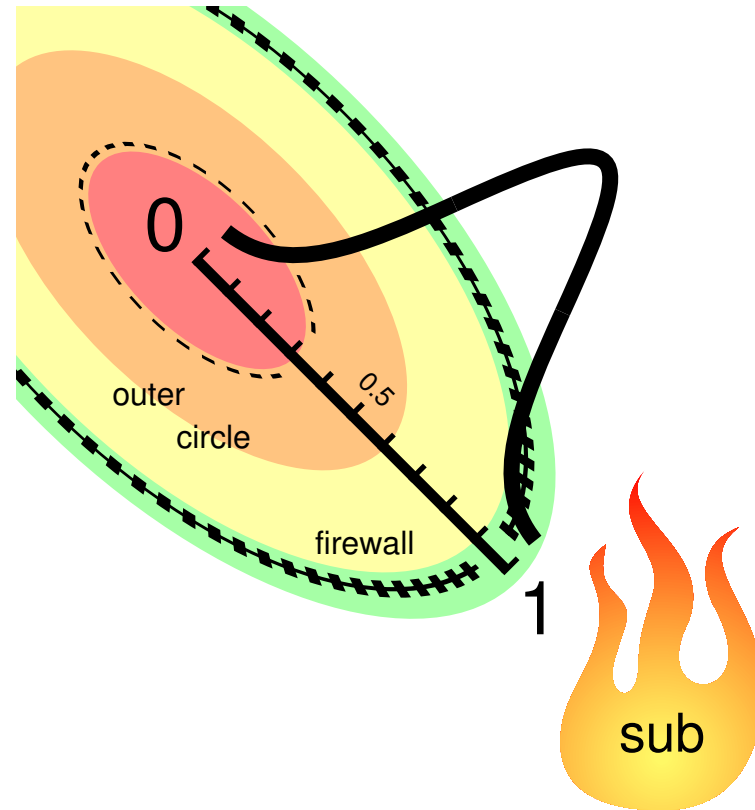


Figure 5: A good community protects itself from the flames of degenerate self-immolation with a moral firewall at its outer limit.

pose and reason for existence.

In Figure 5, however, the outer limit has also become a “firewall” that protects good people within the community from an inferno of hellfire that can be seen consuming

subhuman degenerates outside the firewall as a matter of course.

And that is about the way most Americans perceive the situation of their own nation in today's anarchistic world. They see various kinds of social hellfire consuming people in other countries all the time and, while it is not a pleasant thing to watch, they see no reason to accept any blame for it or repudiate its obvious benefits. Americans simply assume, quite correctly, that such destructive hellfire is usually the consequence of, and the only good remedy for, the moral degeneracy of either the leaders or the people of those other nations.

Of course, there are some Americans who would like to rush out and try to extinguish all of that hellfire everywhere, to reduce what seems to be unnecessary human suffering. But when America's government and military have been persuaded to become such international firefighters, the results have often been disastrous.

So most Americans, who are safe enough within their own national firewall, have little enthusiasm for costly foreign fire-fighting which, as they can see, only post-

pones the natural purification necessary for genuine social regeneration in those places that need it most. And they can see that natural justice is not something anyone causes to happen – it is what happens naturally when people restrain their urge to try to interfere with it.

Demo: But it seems to me real justice must require somebody to do something because, as someone once said, the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing ...

Obso: Yes, but doing something instead of doing nothing may do more harm than good if, instead of doing the right things, people do the wrong things. And about the worst and most harmful thing good people can do – to themselves and others – is set off on crusades against various “forces of evil.”

Such crusades are harmful because, in order to prevail in combat, the forces of good are usually required to become even more evil than the forces they oppose. And that requires everyone else, in order to protect themselves, to become equally evil – which is surely the ultimate triumph of evil.

And such crusades are unnecessary because good people can eventually defeat evil just by doing the right thing instead. And doing the right thing is not very difficult because it consists mainly of allowing evil, which is inherently self-destructive, to defeat itself. In fact, in purposeless societies like America or the world community today, about the only conceivable way to even distinguish between “good” and “evil” is by disengaging one from the other sufficiently to be able to see which one can survive without the other.

Demo: Well, it is no longer possible for Americans to accomplish that kind of “disengagement” by expulsion, which would expose bad people to the hellfire outside the protection of America’s national firewall. So I suppose what you mean is the kind of “ostracism by incarceration” that isolates bad people within places called prisons, which have their own little firewalls to keep criminals in rather than out.

But while Americans have tried their best to make those prisons into good imitations of a “hell-on-earth” for more and more bad people, that effort has never actually in-

creased the safety of other Americans very much. And the inhuman conditions inside prisons have caused more and more good people to regard those prisons as compelling evidence of the increasing brutality and vindictiveness of American society ...

Obso: Well, any place where sub-human degenerates are gathered into a “critical mass” will turn into a dog-eat-dog hell-on-earth very quickly, without any help from anyone else. In fact, putting such degenerates into cages may be the only practical way to prevent them from tearing each other to pieces, either figuratively or literally.

So such incarceration, besides being inhumane and socially ineffective, just looks like a rather weird and very expensive attempt to conserve degeneracy – when it would be much cheaper, humane and effective just to give those degenerates enough freedom and opportunity to dispose of themselves in hellfires of their own making.

Of course, good people would still need to protect themselves and their communities from such conflagrations of purification. But they could do that easily enough by sur-

rounding good communities with the same kind of social firewalls as the one that surrounds the American nation as a whole.

Demo: But I'm sure most Americans would be astonished and appalled by that suggestion. They may doubt that putting more bad people into prisons really increases the freedom and security of good people very much. But they would never accept a situation where good people were forced to lock themselves up in little moral prisons instead, as the only way to protect themselves from bad people who were allowed to do whatever they wanted to do ...

Obso: But most Americans do not look upon their citizenship, for instance, as something that reduces their freedom by confining them to an American "prison." In fact, their freedom, as well as their personal safety, are diminished most severely when they travel outside the protection of America's firewall and are exposed to the effects of various kinds of social chaos and corruption in other countries. And, when they return to the relatively less corrupt and safer haven of America, they cannot help but feel they are regaining much more freedom than they are

giving up.

So it is easy to see why most Americans have a natural affinity for the kind of "isolationism" that supports the maintenance of a strong national firewall to protect American freedom and security from the evils of the rest of the world. What is more difficult to understand, once again, is why the same people, for the same reasons, have not maintained the same kind of protective firewalls around good American communities as well.

Had that been done, those communities today would be much safer havens where people could enjoy much more meaningful personal freedom, rather than being subject to chronic insecurity which extinguishes freedom. And, outside those local firewalls, America's own subhuman degenerates, rather than being a constant danger and costly burden to other people, would be free to take care of themselves, one way or another.

Demo: But, in fact, there are already too many of those firewalls around various parts of American communities today, as the result of attempts to segregate

some kinds of people from others. And, it seems to me, more segregation just causes more and more factionalism and violence.

Besides that, there are far too many examples throughout human history of the active or passive incineration of so-called subhuman degenerates by self-appointed “moral” authorities. In almost every one of those cases, however, it was those immoral authorities, not their innocent victims, who turned out to be the real degenerates ...

Obso: Yes, there is already plenty of social segregation in American cities. But, again, that segregation is based on such things as wealth or race, which have nothing to do with moral merit. And yes, as you say, many communities throughout history have been turned into hells-on-earth by powerful, corrupt, degenerate leaders.

But the members of those communities could hardly claim to be innocent victims when, by tolerating and even welcoming the presence of such degenerates as factional champions, they were actually engaged in acts of consensual self-immolation. That is just how degenerate communities, as well as degenerate individuals, naturally dispose of

themselves – and how America’s subhuman degenerates would dispose of themselves if given sufficient freedom to do so.

Demo: But social segregation is not wrong because it is done for the wrong reasons. It is wrong because it is done by the kind of people whose reasons are never right. The only people who can impose such segregation are people with wealth and power. And the only people who can be effectively segregated are the poor and powerless.

That is why all enlightened, modern societies are opposed to all forms of intolerance. What the best communities do instead, it seems to me, is strive to ensure the acceptance and survival of all of their members, in spite of their differences, because any human differences that are not irrelevant are usually insignificant ...

Obso: But anything that threatens the survival of some members of a community may also threaten the community itself. And, of course, to be able to ensure the survival of any of its members, a good community must first of all be able to ensure its own survival. So even the best communities

may not be able to protect all of their members all of the time.

When you look at the natural distribution of moral stature in a good community, like the one shown in Figure 5, it is quite apparent that the greatest dangers lurk not just outside a community's firewall but just inside that wall as well. The people found just inside the firewall, wherever it may be placed, are always the community's most alienated members. And that means they are also its most flammable members – those unfortunate people who are most susceptible to factionalism, depravity, error and delusion.

So extending a firewall outward does not protect more people. It just brings within a community more people who are even more politically flammable – including some groups of people so flammable they may ignite spontaneously for no apparent reason and without any warning.

When hellfire ignites inside a firewall, the only way for good people to protect themselves and their community is by retracting the firewall, which they can do by raising the moral standard of eligibility for mem-

bership in the community. Setting a new outer limit for the community at an index of about 0.67 on the obsoscale, for instance, would place only about one-sixth of a community's members outside the new firewall while greatly increasing the security of the remaining five-sixths.

This is really a matter of simple efficiency. Excluding the social "area" occupied by the most flammable one-sixth of the population of a community with normal moral distribution would reduce the social territory the community would need to protect by about one-half. It would also reduce the length of the firewall, and the cost of its maintenance, by nearly one-third. And, of course, the people located just inside the new firewall would be people who, being much less alienated, would be much less flammable.

To survive in the most extreme conditions of social degeneration and disintegration, a good community might even be forced to retract its outer limit much farther than that – perhaps to within the limit of its own inner circle at 0.33.

At that extreme, the community would look something like a medieval monastery,

or some small island sanctuary of morality surrounded by a forest of depravity. But when that degenerate forest and its inhabitants were eventually consumed by their own hellfire, the outer limit of the sanctuary could expand outward once again, bringing natural moral regeneration to the wasteland around it.

Demo: But again, I don't see how anyone could be sure which people those kinds of "sanctuaries" would protect. If "bad" people were to drive your "higher-moral-class" people out of a community, then those good people would become the most likely victims of your kind of exclusive "justice" ...

Obso: No, that is not true because good people cannot be driven out of a moral sanctuary. As long as they survive, their sanctuary will go with them wherever they go – even as their old sanctuary is turned into the hell-on-earth that subhuman degenerates always create wherever they go.

That is why, in any case of moral class warfare, it soon becomes obvious that members of lower moral classes can never "win" such a war. If those people seem to be win-

ning, it just means the war is not over yet.

There may be countless instances of communities where upper moral classes have apparently been "defeated" by lower-moral-class, political alliances. But then, without the possibility of moral arbitration, the factions within such alliances just start fighting with each other. And, if one of those factions defeats all other factions, the individual members of the victorious faction just start fighting among themselves. And on and on, until there is nothing left to be "won."

So the eventual outcome of moral class warfare, as long as it may go on, is the destruction of a community and most of its members. Fortunately for humanity, however, the most likely survivors are those least-flammable, upper-moral-class people who have the motivation and ability to act as pioneers of moral rehabilitation.

And, of course, that renewal is made much easier by the absence of politicians and other lower-moral-class degenerates who are the ones most likely to have been consumed by the purifying effects of the hellfire of natural justice.

Novo: Modern “class” warfare tends to be economic, rather than moral, but has similar consequences. As has been demonstrated in many cases, when the members of lower economic classes seem to be “winning” such wars, all they are really doing is destroying entire economies.

Fortunately, today, many people in lower economic classes everywhere are beginning to realize they have far more to gain by learning how to participate in thriving economies to make themselves richer, rather than just seeking the kind of equality-in-poverty which is the result of trying to make rich people poorer.

Demo: But that is exactly my point. You can’t expect poor people to learn how to participate in a wealthy community if they are effectively excluded from that community and its opportunities ...

Obso: Mr. Novo may have caused some unnecessary confusion by seeming to suggest economic class warfare has something to do with morality, which is not true. What is true, however, is that people who are excluded from a community for economic or moral reasons cannot blame the com-

munity for trying to protect itself.

In voluntary communities, unlike involuntary families, the onus is always on those people who seek the protection and opportunities within a community to prove that their presence will be more of a benefit than a burden or danger to other members of that community.

Demo: But when you were talking earlier about the kind of social cooperation and mutual support found in pioneer American communities, you said those people instinctively did the rights things to help people in trouble, rather than just “letting nature take its course.” And I think that was the higher conception of social justice which, over the years, has helped to break down most of the social barriers within the larger American community ...

Obso: No, those earlier Americans who instinctively “did the right things” in their own small communities also understood the value and necessity of social firewalls. That is why, in creating their new nation, those Americans designed a federal union that not only restrained their national government but also provided multiple lev-

els and agencies of social justice, as regional and local firewalls within the greater firewall of the nation itself.

In fact, the original union of former British colonies that turned them into American “states” would not have been possible at all without some such assurance of social separation and moral security for the people of each different region and community within that union.

And the consequences of that federal structure were just about what most people expected. Some good regional and local communities, like national communities in today’s larger world community, used their moral superiority to become more peaceful and prosperous places. But morally inferior communities degenerated into more and more depravity and violence until many of their members were consumed altogether by the hellfire of eradication.

Of course, most of those earlier Americans probably thought that outcome was unfortunate and even deplorable. But few of them would have thought such an outcome was in any way unjust.

9

Moderator: Our previous question was about how the natural justice of early Obsolete model communities encouraged people to do the right things, and whether there is any place left in today’s much more complicated national and international communities for such an elementary conception of social justice.

And what we found was that, in the realm of relationships among nations in the world community – which is surely the most complicated of all modern social circumstances – the majority of Americans and their government still instinctively embrace the kind of simple, natural justice that supports the isolation and protection of a distinctive American way of life, which may be repugnant to many foreigners.

So it seems unthinkable, to all but the most alienated Americans, that foreign politicians or international agencies might ever be allowed to endanger the social firewalls of national independence and self-government

that conserve the American community and its ideals.

Yet at the time of the American Revolution, when America first became a self-governing nation, it was equally unthinkable that local communities might ever be governed by – and the conservation of the American way of life entrusted to – politicians and government agencies in a distant national capital. The only American way of life anyone at that time would have thought worth conserving or defending was the one found in self-governing local communities.

Within America today, however, most government policies and programs are based on a radically different conception of social justice that, among other things, has transformed the independence and self-government of most American communities and their citizens into dependence and subservience.

So now we need to know how – if the government of America is truly a government of “the people” – such an astonishing transformation could have been allowed to happen. And we also need to know how Americans could have been persuaded to accept such an

un-American conception of social justice which so obviously contradicts just about all of their own natural and national social instincts.

Obso: Well, the conventional way to explain that astonishing transformation is to blame Americans themselves for the unfortunate social consequences of their all-too-human lust for more and more personal power and profits.

In a federal political structure, it is said, each “senior” level of government, starting with the national government, just naturally tends to try to increase its own power and importance at the expense of all “junior” levels of government, right down to those of the smallest towns and associations. And there is some truth in that.

It is also suggested that, with the emergence of industrial mass production and mass marketing, national standards and regulations became necessary to overcome the obstacles and “inefficiencies” of a multitude of different local standards. And there is some truth in that as well.

But probably the most important reason for the transformation of America from a

bottom-up society of self-governing communities in its first century, to a society increasingly dominated by top-down big government in its second century, was the politicization of the American conception of social justice.

Good, self-governing communities had dealt with their most fundamental social issues by adopting solutions that best served each community's social purpose. But, again, when a community had no social purpose, those social issues just became collective personal, or political issues instead.

The most fundamental of all social issues, for instance, is the human dilemma itself, which arises from everyone's contradictory desires for both freedom and security. And, as a social issue, the proper balance between those conflicting desires is clearly the one that best serves the higher interests of a whole community.

As a personal issue, however, the contradiction of the human dilemma just causes endless conflict between people who want to impose more freedom, and people who want to impose more security, on everyone within the same community. And that kind of

conflict can become especially vicious and intractable when it also exposes a society's most vulnerable natural "fault-lines," such as differences in age, sex or subcultural identity.

Because that kind of conflict does so much social and personal damage, and because it can easily tear a purposeless society apart, it might be expected that the moral deficiency revealed by increasing conflict would be America's most important social issue. But America has no general forum in which social or moral issues can be resolved or even considered. All it has are political forums where social conflict is more likely to be increased than reduced because conflict is the lifeblood of politics.

Of course, politicians may try to turn some moral issues into political issues. But, in serving their own interests, there are certain things about which politicians usually agree not to disagree, or even discuss — the pay, perquisites and privileges of politicians, for instance, or the assumption that politics must always take precedence over such lesser ideals as citizen freedom, security, self-government or natural justice.

Demo: But it seems to me that incumbent politicians who become too complacent or self-serving just make themselves easy targets for new, aspiring politicians who offer better alternatives. So perhaps democratic elections are an actual example of the “hellfire” of renewal you have been talking about ...

Obso: Well, that might be true if newly elected politicians actually implemented any of those better alternatives. But there are always great differences between what democratic politicians promise to do and what they intend to do – or, if elected, what they are actually able to do.

It is easy enough for an aspiring politician to promise to solve serious social problems which an incumbent government’s politicians or governesses seem unable or unwilling to solve. And it might not be very difficult to solve some of those problems. But problem-solvers who make important problems disappear are doomed to making themselves seem much less important, or even unnecessary.

It should be remembered, first of all, that America’s forests got along very well for

many millions of years – and American communities for many thousands of years – before there was any American government to look after them. Those communities were largely free to do whatever they wanted to do and, as a consequence of their own choices, either prospered or perished. And either outcome was seen as an expression of justice in its most natural form.

The creation of the American republic and its new kind of government was certainly seen by most Americans at the time as a commitment to the conservation of that kind of freedom and natural justice, with only a minimal place for what they regarded as the evil of politics and government.

But, even then, many people – especially later immigrants who had never been exposed to the American frontier experience – were reluctant to abandon older, more familiar forms of government and the security they seemed to provide. So those people sought to endow America’s republican government with the same kind of parental omniscience and omnipotence that had once been ascribed to regal or ecclesiastical authorities elsewhere.

It was the faith of the American people, after all, that seemed to give their government its legitimacy and authority. And ordinary people could hardly be expected to have faith in any kind of government or social justice that allowed bad things to happen to good people.

Demo: No, I don't think anyone ever seriously expected American governments to create a Utopia where bad things would never happen to free people. They just expected good government, as a matter of social justice, to help rectify the effects of misfortune or depredation that created undeserved inequality ...

Obso: But the real question was whether governments could actually help to rectify the effects of such "misfortune," or whether their intervention would just make bad situations even worse.

Good, self-governing communities never needed politicians or governesses to take care of them, or to tell them how to take care of themselves. And most communities during America's first century were quite capable of undertaking the responsibilities of that kind of self-government.

There were some obvious exceptions, such as mining camps where the original inhabitants had no long-term social purposes but only short-term personal interests. Those people thought they could afford to be reckless because they had no intention of staying around those settlements long enough to be affected by the consequences of their own recklessness.

And reckless, short-sighted people did some very foolish things, such as locating their settlements on flood plains or in unusually flammable forests, or by allowing those settlements to be "governed" by corrupt politicians or gangs of degenerate thugs.

When those settlements were eventually ravaged by floods, fires, violence or corruption, those calamities were seen by people elsewhere as the natural consequences of foolish recklessness. And, to the people who lived in those settlements, the only alternative to intolerable embarrassment was the belief that those calamities were a betrayal of the democratic expectation that everyone's equally free choices would have equally good outcomes.

Certainly, democratic politicians in such places would rush to reaffirm that expectation. And they would probably promise to rectify such misfortune by damming the rivers, domesticating the forests or arresting the criminals who were “causing” the problems.

Treating ordinary natural phenomena as if they were acts of insurrection against government authority certainly made governments seem even more necessary and important. But both politicians and governesses soon realized they could never win such battles because foolish people who were spared the consequences of foolish behavior just went on to do even more foolish things.

So democratic governments did the only thing they could have done to preserve their own credibility and authority. They started making up more and more top-down rules to reduce the freedom of foolish or incompetent individuals or communities to make the kind of mistakes that were beyond the capability of any government to rectify.

Demo: But I don’t think anyone ever expected American freedom to be abso-

lute. And I don’t think anyone ever objected to reasonable limits on freedom that served to protect public health and safety ...

Obso: But the only limits on freedom that could ever be reasonable, just or effective were moral limits determined and supported by a consensus of the voluntary members of a self-governing community.

Such a consensus, once again, could only be derived from a good, long-term social purpose. And that consensus would include a countless number of bottom-up, informal arrangements and mutual expectations that increased a community’s common social wealth by, among other things, encouraging social relationships that were predictable and cooperative.

In communities without such a purpose, politicians and governesses could only attempt to replicate those arrangements and expectations through a countless number of top-down rules and regulations. And some democratic optimists even imagined the imposition of all those rules and regulations might eventually raise purposeless, degenerate communities to the moral level of self-governing communities.

But rules and regulations made up by politicians always served political purposes before social purposes. And the political process of making up rules just created an infinite number of personal issues, endless factional controversy and countless flimsy political compromises that never resolved anything nor satisfied anyone.

Moreover, the failure of politics to solve social problems in the worst communities also created an even greater, ideological crisis. The ideology of equality, which required that all communities be treated as if they were equals, could not tolerate any differences that might invite invidious moral comparisons. So, if the worst communities could not be “leveled up” to the moral standards of the best communities then, as a matter of democratic necessity, the best communities would have to be “leveled down.”

And that is just what happened when the same assumption of social incompetence and the same democratic rules and regulations were gradually imposed equally on all communities – demolishing moral firewalls and making all communities equally vulner-

able to invasion and corruption by the most flammable degenerates.

Demo: But it seems to me it was the failure of such mindless “equality” that finally enlightened Americans to the need for greater equity in treating different people in different ways ...

Obso: Yes, the political “ideology of equity” did eventually challenge many of the simplistic assumptions of the ideology of equality. But it did nothing to restore the traditional American ideal of community self-government. As an even more progressive democratic ideology, it just went on to attack and destroy the American ideals of family and individual self-ownership as well.

The “equalization” of smaller, local communities destroyed any possibility of self-sufficiency or self-government by making all communities equally dependent upon their equalizer for support and protection. And America’s big cities had never developed within themselves any real communities like the wards and parishes of older and better European cities – just the blight of ghettos from the worst of them.

Without the social compensations and support of such good communities, it soon became obvious that many American families were also incapable of self-support and self-protection. And that is when the ideologists of equity set out to help relieve poor families of the embarrassment of seeming to be less good than other families.

But that effort was equally futile and the only way it was ever made to even seem successful was by equalizing good families down – by disparaging the possibility of family nondependence and self-ownership and encouraging family disintegration.

And, of course, without family support, the only way ownerless dependents could be made to seem “as good as” everyone else was by disparaging the possibility of nondependent individual self-ownership, making every individual seem equally inadequate and dependent.

That is why the democratization or politicization of a society leads inevitably to the infantilization of its members – in this case, turning all American citizens into child-like dependents in one big family with government as its all-powerful owner, equalizer

and arbiter.

Novo: Well, many adult Americans today may resent being treated as if they were children by the politicians and governesses who were supposed to be their servants. But many others seem to be quite happy to have been relieved of the onerous expectations and burdens of self-ownership and self-government ...

Obso: Yes, the development of moral competence or a prosthetic internal conscience necessary for self-ownership and self-government is a difficult do-it-yourself project for most people, and impossibly difficult for many. So effortless acceptance of a do-it-for-you, external political rulebook may be an attractive alternative.

And that is especially true in a degenerate, individualistic society where a good internal conscience is not only much more difficult to develop but may seem to be a real personal disadvantage. An individual whose behavior violates the rules of his own conscience usually feels bad or guilty, and that may limit his freedom of action. But those internal rules have little effect on the behavior of other people.

An external rulebook, on the other hand, implies just the opposite – a way to control the behavior of bad people without in any way diminishing the freedom of good people. In fact, a lack of any internal constraints, combined with external constraints that apply only to “other people,” is the way many Americans today would probably define their ideal form of justice.

Of course, that situation is entirely familiar to the owner of any big family with unruly children – all of whom constantly demand more and more top-down rules to restrain the behavior of other children while fiercely resisting any rules that might restrain their own behavior.

That is why democratic governments, in attempting to satisfy everyone, keep making up more and more rules, but find it increasingly difficult to persuade anyone to obey those rules. And that is why a great surfeit of such rules does not, as many Americans fear, indicate an excess of government control. Rather, it is more likely to reveal the desperation of a government that is losing any kind of control.

Demo: But I think most Americans

voluntarily obey most laws, most of the time – as much as they may dislike some of them – because they are intelligent enough to realize the only possible alternatives to the rule of law are tyranny at one extreme, or social chaos at the other ...

Obso: Yes but, once again, when you use the word “voluntary,” you must not confuse willingness with willfulness. Most Americans today may be willing to obey most of their nation’s laws most of the time. But the rule of law requires much more than that. It requires citizens who are sufficiently self-possessed that their obedience of laws – or their defiance of them – is clearly willful and intentional.

In America, for instance, delinquent children and women are seldom treated as “criminals” because of the traditional assumption that children and women lack the kind of self-possession necessary for their actions to be regarded as truly willful, or as something for which they can be held accountable. And, when democratic government extends the same assumption of moral inadequacy to everyone else, the rule of law becomes increasingly irrelevant.

Instead, to enforce its own rules in a community that has become one big family, a government can only adopt the method families have always used to make children obey their rules willingly, if not willfully. Young children and childish adults may not understand the need for such obedience. But they can be made to fear various kinds of punishment that may be inflicted on them for disobedience.

That kind of coercion may be appropriate and effective in a good family setting where it is just one part of a constructive personal relationship between a good family owner and each of his dependents. But on a much larger scale, where government ownership is impersonal and consumptive, it amounts to little more than bullying. And governments that bully their own citizens often incite more resentment and rebellion, which requires even more bullying.

Demo: But, again, I think that danger has always been obvious. And it was probably their experience with just such bullying by an imperial power that caused colonial Americans, in the interests of social justice, to impose so many democratic safe-

guards on their own government ...

Obso: Well, that was their intention. But most of those safeguards effectively disappeared with the unfortunate emergence of political parties, which made it possible for all of the supposedly separate branches of a republican government to be effectively subsumed by a single dominant political ideology.

The implications of that development did not bother most politicians very much because they tended to believe the only way all Americans could ever be treated fairly was by making government so all-powerful it could bully everyone equally. And that, of course, is the traditional argument in favor of “benevolent despotism” as the only good form of government and justice for childish, dependent people.

But no modern government – especially democratic government – can ever become that all-powerful or afford to be that benevolent. A top-down government’s survival depends, first of all, on maintaining a precarious alliance of social factions, many of which are too powerful to be bullied or to be prevented from bullying others.

So political justice in America is merely one of the many facets of American power politics, where an ordinary citizen's expectation of justice depends almost entirely on the power of the social faction to which he happens to belong, or to which he is entitled or allowed to belong.

And when certain Americans today are heard to complain about social "injustice," all they are really doing is expressing their own dismay about the fact – or perhaps just the feeling – that more people seem capable of bullying them than they are capable of bullying.

10

Moderator: We began today's discussion with a description of the origin and nature of prehistoric Obso-model societies, including the social morality on which they were based and the political odiology that became their nemesis.

Then, to test the relevance of that abstract social model for a modern society like

America's, we attempted to assess how well the Obso model still meets the essential requirements of today's hierarchy of social necessities, including social survival, social order and social justice.

And what we found during the course of those discussions was that many of the best parts of the idealized American "way of life" were not only borrowed directly from the Obso social model but still have significant instinctive appeal for most Americans – despite the efforts of modern politicians to deride and discredit the whole idea of morality and social ideals.

American politicians are fond of pointing out, for example, that those nations which claim most vociferously to be more moralistic or less degenerate than America are seldom regarded as being a good influence anywhere in the world. Instead, such self-righteous societies seem to be the source of most of the modern world's greatest social evils – tribalism, hateful intolerance, racism, mindless extremism, international terrorism and so on.

Of course, we now understand that those social evils are not the products of Obso-

model morality. They are the products of odiology and ideology that masquerade as morality when used by politicians everywhere to incite the destructive fear and hatred that serve those politicians' particular personal purposes.

All of which may cause many Americans to wonder why a social model that served humanity so well for so many hundreds of thousands of years, and still has so much natural veracity, seems to have become so vulnerable to perversion and subversion in the modern world. And Americans are especially perplexed by accusations that they are responsible for much of that subversion in other countries.

It is true, as Mr. Obso explained, that American society has been greatly demoralized by such delusions as progressive individualism or just moral carelessness. Because of the limits of today's discussion, however, he did not mention a far more obvious and common cause of politicization and social corruption in other societies.

The kind of community where morality is most likely to be overwhelmed by fear and hatred is a community which is under

attack by a mortal enemy, or just perceives itself to be under attack by a deadly moral contradiction.

Americans may find it difficult to imagine themselves as being anyone's mortal enemy since their attitude toward other societies is one of almost complete indifference.

But it is quite apparent that the American way of life, by its very existence, presents a profound contradiction to more-traditional societies. How can American society, having abandoned so much traditional morality, have become so prosperous and powerful while more-traditional, less-degenerate societies remain so poor and powerless?

Truly moral societies – the ones seldom noticed because they are not a nuisance or burden to anyone else – may have little to fear from such contradictions because they can usually depend on natural social hellfire to help eliminate the errors and delusions those contradictions contain.

But members of even the best societies cannot avoid some of the envy and fear that comes naturally when another society – if only by example – makes them feel relatively poorer or less powerful. And if those

people lose faith in their own social purpose and moral protection they may become easy victims for politicians offering empty promises of political protection or retribution.

Modern Americans, of course, tend to think they invented that great moral contradiction and disagree only about whether America should accept the blame for it or take credit for it.

But, in fact, the paradox of “degenerate” societies creating rich and powerful cities and empires that survive for extended periods has been a recurring phenomenon for many thousands of years since the emergence of the first prehistoric, Novo-model societies.

In order to explain the Obso social model, it was necessary for us to expand the usual “green” limits of American social perception through yellow and orange to red. And, likewise, in order to explain the Novo social model, a further expansion of perception will be necessary at the other end of the social spectrum, from green through blue and indigo to violet.

America is neither an Obso-model nor a Novo-model society, but some optimistic Americans like to think that, by combining the best elements of both models, they are creating something new and even better. Others, however, would say it is more likely that, by combining the worst of both models, the American empire is just making itself almost as obnoxious as its illustrious imperial predecessors right back to the beginning of recorded human history.

So, to fully understand modern American society and its place in the world today, it will be necessary to ask some even larger and more important questions. How has the Novo social model affected America? How have the contradictory and irreconcilable Obso and Novo models affected each other? And what was the origin and nature of the socially poisonous “obnox” that made so many societies over the course of human history so obnoxious?

Those questions and the implications of their answers will be the topics of our discussions here tomorrow.

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