

SHAKING FIXED BELIEFS

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The thesis of this discussion may be particularly difficult to grasp because of the underlying assumptions that will be brought forward and questioned. No matter how vital they have always been thought to be, they must be rooted out, discarded, and replaced. And here's the second difficult hurdle to get over – they must be replaced with what all civilized societies have traditionally held to be one of the most basic of evils – what they characterize as Man's animal brutality.

If everybody knows that the world is flat, and that you must not sail too far from land, or risk falling off – selling around-the-world cruises will be a difficult business. Well, patient reader, I am setting out to sell you what might seem at first glance to be a trip to certain destruction.

Let's see if we can reach some agreements before we tackle your inevitable, albeit improbable conclusions. Throughout history, man has striven to curb his bestial nature in favor of the more humane. One might say, that the story of history itself is Man's ongoing fight to repress certain aspects of himself, and to promote other aspects. Philosophers back to the Greeks have been trying to determine what the Good is; and then with the carrot and the stick enlightened leaders have tried to guide their people towards that Good.

Let us at this juncture take a look at, and root out the nonsense in one popular set of assumptions (just for practice):

- 1) Nature is good.
- 2) Mankind is bad.
- 3) Within Mankind, men are relatively worse, and White men definitely the worst.

If Nature is good, how can Man be bad, unless Man is somehow unnatural? It gets ontologically tricky to maintain the above.

Nevertheless, many find it convenient to saddle Man with original sinfulness, many then further differentiate that within Man, men – notably White, Anglo-Saxon men – are bad. Oh, yes, and that makes most other members of the race good – at least by comparison. And so we find many laws being put in place to rectify the unnatural proclivities of these unnatural and sinful men.

If you are a member of PITA, or Lesbians for a World without Men, you may be wondering what all this fuss is about. I have a question for you PITA-philes out there: At what point in man's history should he have been stopped from using animals for food, clothing, and work? When Joe Caveman finally tamed that first wolf cub, just exactly who or what authority should have arrested him for cruelty to animals? (In your answer, you have to stay within the natural – no momentary appearances of a compulsive rendition of a Deist's God, just popping in to set things right, then disappearing again forever.)

I am currently watching a nature program of a woman training an otter to be able to handle itself in the wild. The otter is quite cute, the woman seems quite nice, and her mission and the otter's reaction to it appear to be a win/win situation. I would say that this situation is quite natural. It may not be the norm, but so what? What is the norm, and so what? It's all natural! To pronounce ex cathedra that what we don't like or perhaps just don't understand, to be unnatural is a bit presumptuous. Absent an umpire God, pronouncements from well-meaning groups about what is right and what is wrong are just

their opinions – no matter how enlightened they think they are.

Let us discuss the Enlightened, for a moment. Somewhere a light gets turned on; they go, “Wow!” and they are thereafter enlightened. In all of the history of Man, the Enlightened have had the option of doing something with their enlightenment, or doing nothing with their enlightenment. We have little evidence of the effect created by those who chose to do nothing with their enlightenment. Those who chose to do something with their enlightenment are a different story. History is written by, and about them.

There are plenty of examples of bad guys doing bad stuff in history, but let's not talk about them – let's talk about the good guys. Once enlightened, these good guys, who know what is best, basically have two avenues open to them if they want others to benefit from their knowledge: 1) They can share their wisdom, and hope that others will see and understand it, and then change their behavior so as to benefit from this wisdom. (And if those others really understand it, it becomes theirs as much as it is their enlightened instructor's.) Or, 2) They can force others into the correct behavior, hoping that once they are behaving in the correct manner, the forcees will recognize that it is indeed a better way, and adopt that enlightened way for themselves. In either case the intention is to enlighten others for the good of all.

Number two above is definitely suspect because it uses the same methodology used by those who wish to take advantage of others for less than noble goals. Criminals (those bad guys we weren't going to talk about – who steal, enslave, and murder), generally use Force on others to reach their ends too.

Most folks in society just go about their business in harmony with their fellows without trying to force them against their will into any particular behavior. So, there are basically two Groups here: Criminals, along with those Enlightened who force others to be better; and just plain folks, including the Enlightened who enlighten others through teaching or just by example. (Dear reader, how would you like to live in a town made up of that second group?)