

## BECOME WORTHY: THE PATH OF THE RIGHT

Daniel Robinson November 14, 2014

I see you've wandered outside of the ballroom. You know, all the most respectable people in town are in there. Oh, you noticed it's on fire, too? Glad it wasn't just me. I know, I know: everything seems to be going to shit, and you're trying to figure out how to turn it all around.

I'd like you to do something. Listen closely and repeat after me: We don't deserve power.

I'm afraid your good intentions mean nothing. Mine don't either. It's a simple truth, really: if you or I deserved power, we'd have it. That's it, and that's all.

One of the reasons the Right collapsed over the past 200+ years is the abandonment of a fundamental principle of civilization.

During the time of the French Revolution, there was a true divide between Right and Left on what constitutes political legitimacy. What gives King Louis or Citizen Robespierre the right to enforce laws, suppress criminality, and implement the death penalty? The Right said that the King ruled by virtue of his noble birth and by the grace of God. The Left said that Robespierre ruled on the basis of the People's sovereignty—and that same sovereignty sent Louis' head rolling.

Joseph de Maistre explains the philosophy of the Right in his *Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions* (1810):

\*To this general rule, that no constitution can be made or written, à priori, we know of but one single exception; that is, the legislation of Moses. This alone was cast, so to speak, like a statue, and written out, even to its minutest details, by a wonderful man, who said, Fiat! without his work ever having need of being corrected, improved, or in any way modified, by himself or others...Thus, this legislation lies evidently, for every intelligent conscience, beyond the circle traced around human power; and this magnificent exception to a general law, which has only yielded once, and yielded only to its Author, alone demonstrates the Divine mission of the great Hebrew Lawgiver...No human institution can endure unless supported by the Hand which supports all; that is to say, if it is not especially consecrated to Him at its origin. The more it is penetrated with the Divine principle, the more durable it will be.\*

In other words, political institutions are legitimate to the extent that they accept divine laws. As a Catholic, de Maistre can debunk the American religious Right's anti-intellectual tendencies. Aside from any revelations, divine will is expressed through nature; thus, rational and empirical inquiry will lead us to discover these laws. Because natural laws and limits exist, the state can never be omnipotent and totalitarian. It cannot change human nature on a whim. It cannot decree that

the economic laws of incentive, supply, and demand no longer apply. Neoreactionary philosophy avoids the potential religious conflict by simply referring to “Nature or Nature’s God.” These limits are the same regardless of whether God is their ultimate cause or not. The road to political failure and chaos is paved with denial of these truths.

Contrast this to Article 3 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, approved in 1789 by the French National Assembly:

\*The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation.\*

Which of these views more closely resembles the philosophy of the modern conservative? The most ardent Christian Republican still adheres to a document that claims to embody the general will of “We the people.” That makes him an ideological cousin of the Jacobin. The fact that one can be considered a right-wing extremist for strict adherence to revolutionary ideology should demonstrate just how marked with failure the history of the Right has been. Despite producing intellectual lights from de Maistre to Julius Evola to Leo Strauss, the tide has only gone leftward.

Let’s think about what tactics the Right has used to try and reclaim the course of history.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, reactionary forces still held institutions like the Church and military. Pope St. Pius X wrote the Oath Against Modernism to rally clergy against subversive currents inside the Church itself. Decades earlier, Prince Klemens von Metternich managed to foster imperial cooperation to contain the forces which threatened to overthrow them. In many countries, revolutionary fervor seemed to have been suppressed by an alliance of Christian monarchies (and France, which joined later) backed by religious authority. This was not to be. Despite its contribution to the sciences, the Church never managed to counter the ideological claims that science represented the triumph of Social Progress over the forces of religion and reaction.

The project of Restoration was overwhelmed by growing nationalism on the one hand and renewed liberal revolts on the other. By the early 1900s, Europe was divided into the power blocs which would lead to the Great War and annihilate the old political order completely.

In the 20th century, the Right tried to play the game of the Left. That being the case, its total cultural and political defeat should not come as a surprise. Many of us today would feel as out of place in old Christian Europe as we would on a foreign continent. Progressives might claim that the Tea Party is full of scary racist ultra-capitalists, but at least it’s the enemy they know. The Right of de Maistre and Carlyle is a different creature entirely. But because it is a different creature, we should consider that its ways are as alien to us as the old world which embodied it.

The goals of the Left are liberty, equality, and fraternity. The tactics of the Left are those which further liberty, equality, and fraternity. Revolution is a tactic of the Left because it destroys obstacles and restrictions to leftist freedom. Anything is better than despots, right? If the Right intends to improve order and not destroy it, does it make sense to follow in their footsteps? The Left likes “social activism” and protest tactics because they create the image of ideological solidarity. The goal of these tactics is to project an image of a society speaking with one voice and demanding that the state accedes to its will. The implicit notion is that the state’s legitimacy is based on that common will, which is the same principle that formed the core of Jacobin ideology.

Sure, there are short term gains. The Tea Party managed to be very successful in backing candidates during the 2010 midterms. But ultimately its claim to represent the Silent Majority—the “Real America” of #rednationrising—will lead to its destruction. What happens when the Real America becomes the Silent Minority? Older white people can be scared into voting GOP during mid-terms, but its success depends on Democratic voters staying home. If you take revolutionary philosophy as your guide, don’t be surprised when it leads you to the revolutionary endgame.

So, where does that leave the agents of Truth and Order?

Astonishingly, it seems that the Right has tried every tactic in the revolutionary playbook and never once considered looking to its own tradition. As we saw above, the criterion of legitimacy for the Right is accordance with the laws of God and nature. A good ruler is one who can turn chaos into order. Augustus was a great ruler because he entered the Roman world at a time of civil war and left it with peace, prosperity, and imperial glory. Isabella and Ferdinand were great rulers because they took the occupied and disunited Iberian peninsula and build a reconquered Catholic Spain under the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon. This requires strength of both intellect and will; intellect to understand the natural law, and will to act in accordance with it to build a lasting political and social order. The ruler who achieves this gains the Mandate of Heaven.

For de Maistre, this was the criterion for legitimacy:

\*God makes kings in the literal sense. He prepares royal races; maturing them under a cloud which conceals their origin. They appear at length crowned with glory and honor; they take their places; and this is the most certain sign of their legitimacy. The truth is that they arise as if of themselves, without violence on their part, and without marked deliberation on the other: it is a species of magnificent tranquility, not easy to express. Legitimate usurpation would seem to me to be the most appropriate expression (if not too bold), to characterize these kinds of origins, which time hastens to consecrate.\*

If this is so and if the Right is correct, then the only path open to it is to become worthy of power. Metternich and his allies possessed tremendous ability, yet they were unable to establish a just and enduring political order. Thus, they were eventually overcome. The Right has never since been worthy of the power it

wielded during that time. The intellectual insights of Kirk, Murras, Evola, and others did not achieve it. Focusing on economics did not achieve it. The mass rallies and protests of the Tea Party will not achieve it. Replacing the highest forms of Western religion with the anti-intellectualism of its demotist bastards won't achieve it. Only knowledge of Truth and the application of that knowledge will achieve it.

In his Gentle Introduction, Moldbug describes the Procedure through which the Right can become worthy of power. Interestingly, it echoes many other voices on the Right. In Ride the Tiger, Evola explains that abandonment of political participation in establishment structures is the only path left:

\*After taking stock of the situation, [the differentiated type] can only feel disinterested and detached from everything that is 'politics' today. His principle will become apoliteia, as it was called in ancient times...He recognizes, as I have said before, that ideas, motives, and goals worthy of the pledge of one's own true being do not exist today; there are no demands of which he can recognize any moral right and foundation outside that which they derive as mere facts on the empirical and profane plane.\*

Evola's belief was that focusing one's energy on the pursuit of truth and personal development was the only path left open. In his writings, it becomes clear that at some point this "hidden elite" will come together and participate in restoring the traditional order. How this works is unclear, although it is suggested that some crisis must first lead to the collapse of the anti-traditional order.

Where Evola assumed uncertainty, Moldbug gives a clear procedure. First, he and Evola are in agreement that apoliteia is desirable for the reactionary. He calls it the steel rule:

\*The logic of the steel rule is simple. As a reactionary, you don't believe that political power is a human right. You will never convince anyone to adopt the same attitude, without first adopting it yourself...you must be the first to make the great refusal...

As a matter of both principle and tactics, the passivist rejects any involvement with any activity whose goal is to influence, coerce, or resist the government, either directly or indirectly. He is revolted by the thought of setting public policy...

One excellent way to make this relationship concrete in your mind is to use the word "subject," rather than "citizen." If by some unfortunate coincidence you remain a resident of the British Isles, you are already taught to say "subject." So you'll have to shift to something even more demeaning, like "peasant." This may still overstate your political impact.

This means no voting (except perhaps for a clear establishment-approved winner, like a tribute), no party membership, no attending protests, no making signs, no signing petitions, etc, etc. For the record, there are two exceptions.

First, one may make personal petitions to the holders of authority, since this is an affirmation of inequality between you and them. Second, political action may be undertaken as a necessity of self-defense. No point to the Restoration if your city has been overrun by looters, although that might just be the kick in the pants your city needs. The fact that this applies to governments is obvious, but the question becomes greyer when it involves universities, media, and other non-state actors in the Cathedral's framework. Judgement calls are necessary and there might not be a best answer for everything.\*

For example, engaging participants in political activism is clearly worthwhile, as #GamerGate showed. Like much activism, #GamerGate had some success. But so did the Tea Party. Maybe they've liberated their space for a while. But unless they keep that space liberated, they'll end up right back where they started. And to keep it liberated, they'll need to understand the opponent.

But surely doing nothing will get you, well...nowhere? This is where things get interesting. Moldbug describes the steel rule as zen. Decades before, Evola wrote the following in *Revolt Against the Modern World*:

\*[The Mandate of Heaven] acts without acting (wei wu wei)...by virtue of just being present. It is as invisible as the wind, and yet its actions are as ineluctable as the forces of nature. When this power is unleashed, the forces of common men...bend under it as blades of grass under the wind.\*

Moldbug takes another step and explains the effectiveness of this approach. Among other things, the steel rule lets avoids wasting energy in conflict with the Cathedral. The fact that the Right increasingly defined itself in opposition to the Left cost it even the semblance of intellectual cohesion. Ultra-capitalist Rothbardians and protectionist Buchananites, nationalist identitarians and cosmopolitan free traders, authoritarians and libertarians; all these contradictions are grouped under the "right-wing" umbrella. Sorry libertarians and ancaps, but the Left is like a club. You're either in or you're out, and I haven't seen many of you on Upworthy.

The steel rule frees up resources. Activism ties you to the schedule of political competition. You need to make sure to comment on that next big hashtag or else you're no longer relevant. Passivism (Moldbug's term for *apoliteia*) lets you to pursue truth as truth allows. Better ten good thinkers than a thousand retweets. We do not have the privilege of sacrificing quality for quantity.

So what are those resources dedicated to? Very simply, to becoming worthy. And how do we become worthy? Knowledge and application of Truth. Then our path is clear: we must devote ourselves to pursuit of Truth, and most especially those truths which our modern blinders make hardest to uncover.

This is where Moldbug introduces his idea of the Antiversity. It's the ultimate Truth-service whose mandate is to be right or else to be silent. Its first project is to take over from the Cathedral's mentally ill brain. The great tragedy of politics is that a day always comes when leaders stop adapting the Party to Truth, and try

and adapt Truth to the Party. We live in such an age and whatever system comes next will live through such an age as well. But that's the concern of some future generation. We have quite enough to deal with.

In some ways, the prevention of the Right's victory may have been providential. For the first time in history a key resource for an effective Truth-service exists: the internet. The cost of information transfer is minimal to nil, the ease of research is high, and the costs of publishing are laughable. Displacing academia has never been easier. In many ways, the Antiversity just scales up projects like Khan Academy or Coursera. I won't speculate here how it might develop. The Antiversity must combine research on all relevant topics for human survival and advancement. It plunders everything of value from the Cathedral and leaves the rest to stand as a warning to others for what happens when truth is abandoned. From biology to metaphysics, the pursuit of truth is being wrenched from the grip of academia.

The neoreactionary trichotomy has created a good starting point. One current focuses on human biodiversity and the ethnic differentiation; a second focuses on how the phenomenon of capitalism can further human advancement; a third analyzes the social impacts of religion and what philosophical truths lie behind it. Future tasks for the Antiversity include formalizing research structures, including the necessary checks and balances to minimize human bias and error (and hopefully go beyond peer review).

Armed with this knowledge, the task of the Right is to apply it while upholding the steel rule. Trying to seize power is the Left's game; the Right creates and projects it. It's basic economics. The institutions which the Right builds must be better at providing resiliency and a stable, prosperous order. Our time faces a whole lot of crises, from ecological fragility to political instability to economic transition. There's plenty of opportunity to become worthy. Have the resources to support families. Be the ones which intelligent people invest money with. Create the networks where scientific and technological development is free to take place. Survive the crisis. How many people in Syria wish they were in Saudi Arabia right now?

This knowledge must also be applied on a personal level. This diet better suits your metabolism? Change your diet. This organizational structure better allocates resources? Apply it in your business. This religion has a clear understanding of natural and Divine law? Get in a pew. Read some books by Dead White Men (any intelligent mind will do, but we should rescue these ones lest they be consigned to the flames of Literary Social Justice). The Right has always had a microcosm-macrocosm view of things. You might not be an Emperor, but you're still a father. You might not be a warrior-saint, but the inner Holy War still needs fighting.

Since this process will take quite some time and is quite enough to be getting on with, I won't spend more than one sentence on an end goal to all this. Here it is: the end goal must be to be so much better than the Cathedral that we displace its influence over the best and brightest, whom all the rest will follow.

This is the path for the Right which neoreactionary writers have begun to lay out. Does it require a leap of faith? Certainly. We might well fail. If becoming worthy were easy, then the Left would be right and the Right would be wrong. But playing the Left's game hasn't worked in 200 odd years and the insanity of that strategy becomes ever clearer. Leave activism to the revolutionary activists. The Right understands where real authority comes from.

This is not a revolution. Cast aside the wheel and scrap it for firewood.

This is an ascension.