

Building a Culture of Liberty VI: Moral Outrage



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Here we are at the conclusion of this series. I began by defining several important concepts, each of which I’ve used here and there, except for *moral outrage*. (Alright, I used it once.) That is the topic of this final installment, and the culmination of my thesis on how to build a culture of liberty. Let’s go.

What is Moral Outrage?

Let me share once again the definition I offered in the first part of this series:

Moral outrage is a feeling of disgust and/or anger “to infringements or transgressions on what people perceive to be the immunities they, or others with whom they identify, can expect on the basis of their rights and privileges and what they understand to be their reasonable expectations regarding the behavior of others.” One’s socialization will determine what is considered the immunities, rights, and privileges of different groups or classes of people, their violation of which produces the feeling of moral outrage. As it stands, the possibility of moral outrage is a result of one’s socialization and enculturation.

Where can we see this today? Here's one example: Americans grow up socialized in government schools and raised by parents and grandparents who were socialized in government schools and possibly served in the military or in a public capacity or is close to someone who did. So, what sort of response is given to someone making a show of burning an American flag? Moral outrage (disgust and anger), because most Americans were socialized and enculturated to hold the American flag and its ideals as not only good and true, but *sacred*. Non-Americans, who weren't socialized and enculturated to revere the American flag feel no such particular outrage. As is obvious, how one is socialized and enculturated determines when and why one feels moral outrage. Let us explore the relevance of moral outrage as it concerns each preceding part of this series.

Parenting

How children are treated by their parents sets them up to expect certain types of treatments by others. When they are treated in contrary ways, they'll experience moral outrage. If a child's self-ownership is respected, meaning that he's not handled against his will, and he's given honest knowledge and wisdom, then he'll be far less likely to tolerate others violating his self-ownership or dealing with him dishonestly. I see this all the time in children whose rights have been respected by their parents, primarily in my own. They're more assertive of their boundaries and not afraid to stand up for themselves. And more, they empathize with others whose rights are being violated. They experience these violations as their own and the result is moral outrage.

Schooling

How does schooling socialize and enculturate children? And how likely are children to feel moral outrage at the anti-liberty practices of schooling during and after they've left? As already explained, the intent of modern schooling is the production of a conforming and compliant citizenry. Schooling ensures that children are socialized and enculturated *not* to feel moral outrage toward statist, anti-liberty practices like regimentation, deference to authority, and thought-policing. The requisite culture of liberty for a free society *cannot* be built on a foundation of schooling, of compulsory education.

Radical Unschooling

When those who are committed to achieving a free society abandon schooling (compulsory education) in lieu of the only alternative, radical unschooling (non-compulsory education), they establish an important foundation for increasing the chances of moral outrage toward anti-liberty practices. Children quickly come to expect freedom when they're allowed to experience freedom. When this expectation is unrealized, they'll get confused and angry. They've been allowed to do as they please, and now suddenly someone with more power is telling them they can't. They at first expect a good reason, and failing that their confusion

and anger is likely to become full blown moral outrage, at least until their denier of freedom asserts himself as capable of hurting them. They then become resentful, which resentment may one day become violent. My point is, it becomes very difficult and costly to deny children their freedom once they've been allowed to experience it, like anyone else. Ensuring our children experience freedom this early and for as long as possible will create adults who are far more likely to expect and demand freedom.

Agorism

As I expanded my worldview and understanding of economics, philosophy, and so forth, I began feeling a higher degree of moral outrage toward those who forcefully interfere in the lives of others. Education and free thought are a big part of the agora. Likewise, as one engages in peaceful trade, viewing government-made law as just another risk to be mitigated, any increase to that risk can – either as the law expands or as one's trade networks expand – cause a feeling of moral outrage induced by the stress of mitigating such a risk. This can be a healthy feeling as stress is often a catalyst for creative thinking and the development of solutions to overcome the risk. The culture of liberty is then expanded as others adopt and innovate on the solutions discovered.

Final Thoughts

Here are we at the end of this series. I've written it to provide a way forward for those who value and desire to live in a free society. Unlike others who value liberty, I do not believe that a free society can be achieved through violent revolution. A free society can only result and be maintained on the basis of a culture of liberty, and cultures are the result of socialization, enculturation, and education. As such, I do not believe that a free society and its culture of liberty will remain while parents use either physical or social coercion against their children. Violence in the home teaches domination, not cooperation, nor the equality of liberty and power. Arguably, the home is our greatest sphere of control. We are around our families more than anyone else, and how we behave in relation to them will literally determine our chances of ever enjoying complete liberty, peace, and prosperity. If you, like me, value these things, then your very first commitment *must* be to raise your children in liberty and peace. They deserve it, and you deserve it. Godspeed!

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