

A Tale of Two Revolutions



All the suffering of millions of human beings terrorized by totalitarian governments would be sentenced to total oblivion if something precious is not saved from the disaster, namely, the discovery made by those people of a clear line dividing good from evil, truth from lie. Central European countries made this discovery even as the literati of America and Western Europe were treating the opposition of good and evil as a somewhat obsolete notion.

Czeslaw Milosz in "The Telltale Scar"

- **The Good (G)**
- **Dogmatization of (g)**
- **Moral Relativism (b=b)**
- **Man-made “truth” (B)**
- **Traditional vs. Modern**
- **Moderate vs. Modern revolution**

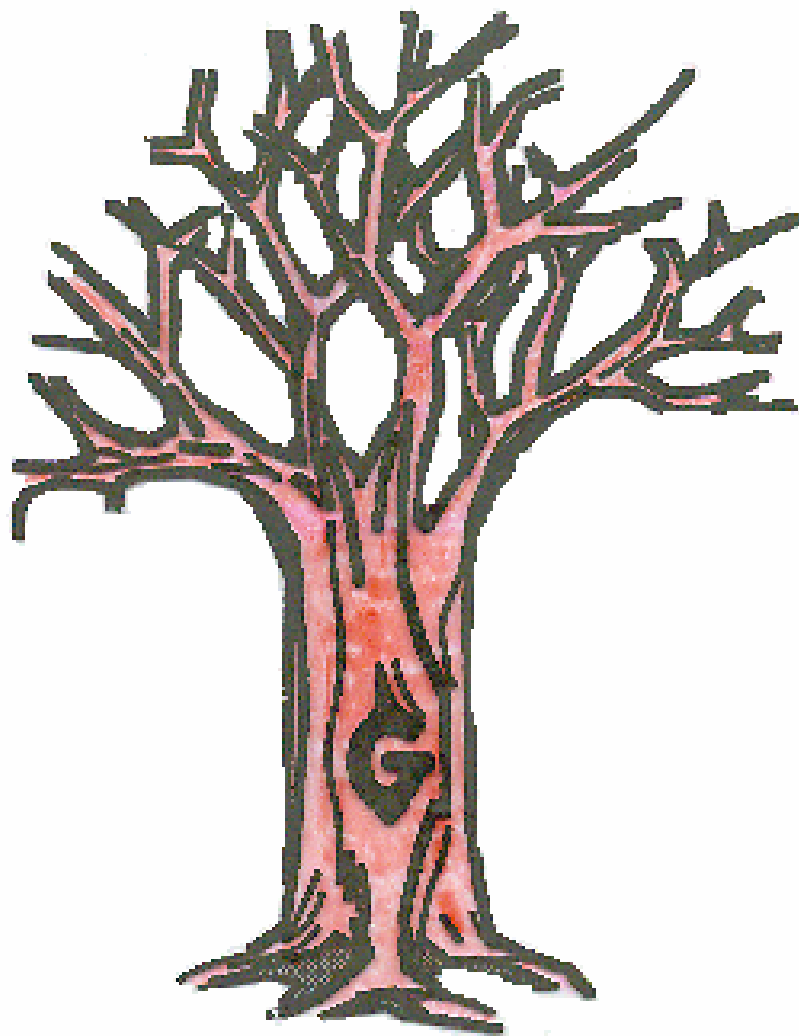
THE GOOD

Universal moral truth

A standard of what is right and wrong, moral and immoral.

($2+2=4$: Slavery is wrong)

THE GOOD



III. DUTIES TO PARENTS, ELDERS, ANCESTORS

‘Your father is an image of the Lord of Creation, your mother an image of the Earth. For him who fails to honour them, every work of piety is in vain. This is the first duty.’ (Hindu Janet, i.9.)

‘Has he despised Father and Mother?’
(Babylonian. List of Sins. ERE v. 446)

‘I was a staff by my father’s side... I went in and out at his command.’ (Ancient Egyptian. Confession of the Righteous Soul. ERE v. 481.)

‘Honour thy father and thy mother.’ (Ancient Jewish. Exodus xx.12)

‘To care for parents.’ (Greek. List of duties in Epicetetus, III. vii.)

‘Children, old men, the poor, the sick, should be considered as the lords of the atmosphere.’
(Hindu. Janet, i.8.)

‘Rise up before the hoary head and honour the old man.’ (Ancient Jewish. Lev. Xix. 32.)

‘I tended the old man, I gave him my staff.’
(Ancient Egyptian. ERE v. 481.)

‘You will see them take care...of old men.’
(Redskin, Le Jeune, quoted ERE v. 437.)

‘I have not taken away the oblations of the
blessed dead.’ (Ancient Egyptian. Confession of
the Righteous Soul. ERE v. 478.)

‘When proper respect towards the dead is
shown at the end and continued after they are
far away, the moral force of a people has
reached its highest point.’ (Ancient Chinese.
Analects, i.9.)

IV. DUTIES TO CHILDREN AND POSTERITY

‘Children, the old, the poor, etc., should be considered as lords of the atmosphere.’ (Hindu. Janet, i.8.)

‘To marry and to beget children.’ (Greek. List of duties. Epicetetus, III. Vii.)

‘Can you concieve an Epicurean common wealth?...What will happen? Whence is the population to be kept up? Who will educate them? Who will be Director of Adolescents? Who will be Director of Physical Training? What will be taught?’ (Greek. Ibid.)

‘Nature produces a special love of offspring’ and ‘To live according to Nature is the supreme good.’ (Roman. Cicero)

‘The second of these achievements is no less glorious than the first; for while the first did good on one occasion, the second will continue to benefit the state forever.’
(Roman. Cicero)

‘Great reverence is owed to a child.’
(Roman. Juvenal)

‘The Master said, Respect the young.’
(Ancient Chinese. Analects, ix. 22.)

‘The killing of the women and more especially of the young boys and girls who are to go to make up the future strength of the people, is the saddest part...and we feel it very sorely.’ (Redskin. Account of the Battle of Wounded Knee. ERE v. 432)

...men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil....

2 Nephi 2:5

...the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil....

Moroni 7:16

For there is no respect of persons with God.

For as many as have sinned without law also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

(For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.

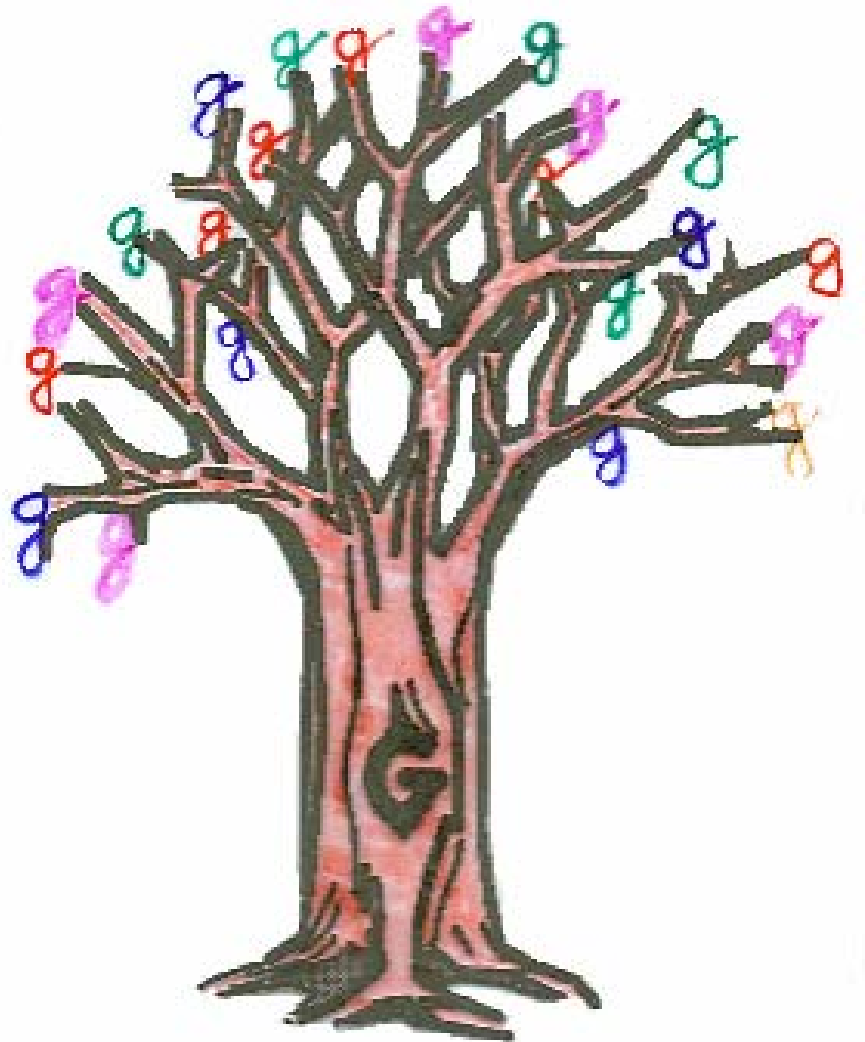
Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Romans 2:11-15

DOGMATIZATION OF THE GOOD

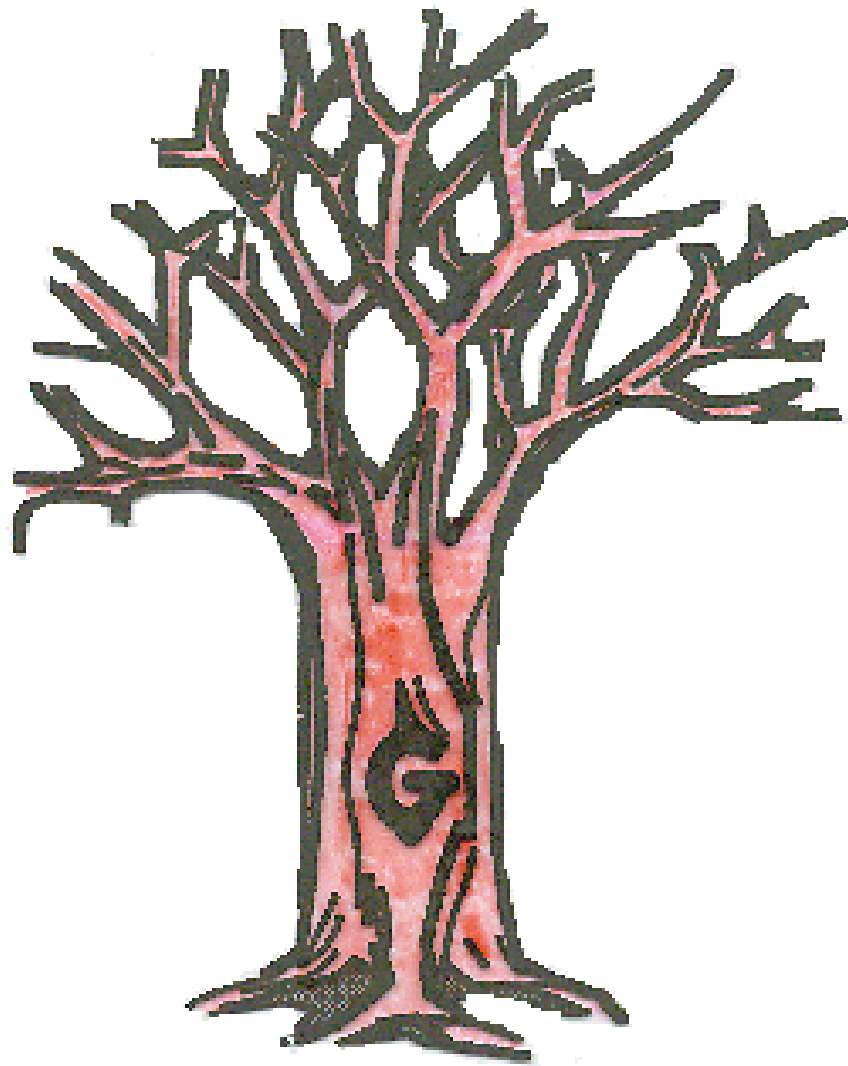
The human tendency, in the various attempts to discern the exact nature of The Good, to narrow it down and dogmatize it into a specific orthodoxy of beliefs and behavioral guidelines.

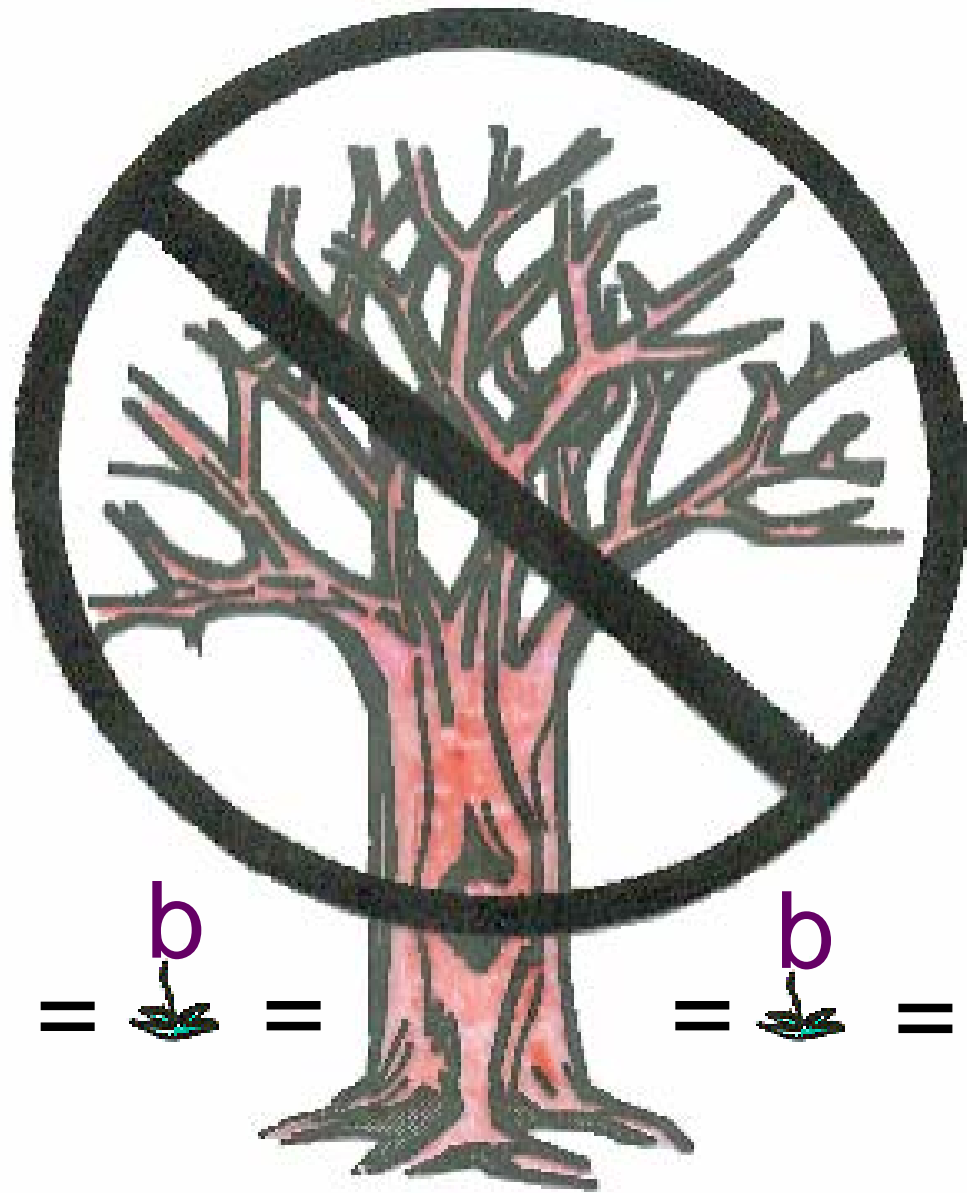
Dogmatization of the Good



RELATIVISM

Denies the existence of a Good.
“Moral Truths” are just beliefs (b)
that vary according to individuals,
cultures, and circumstances.





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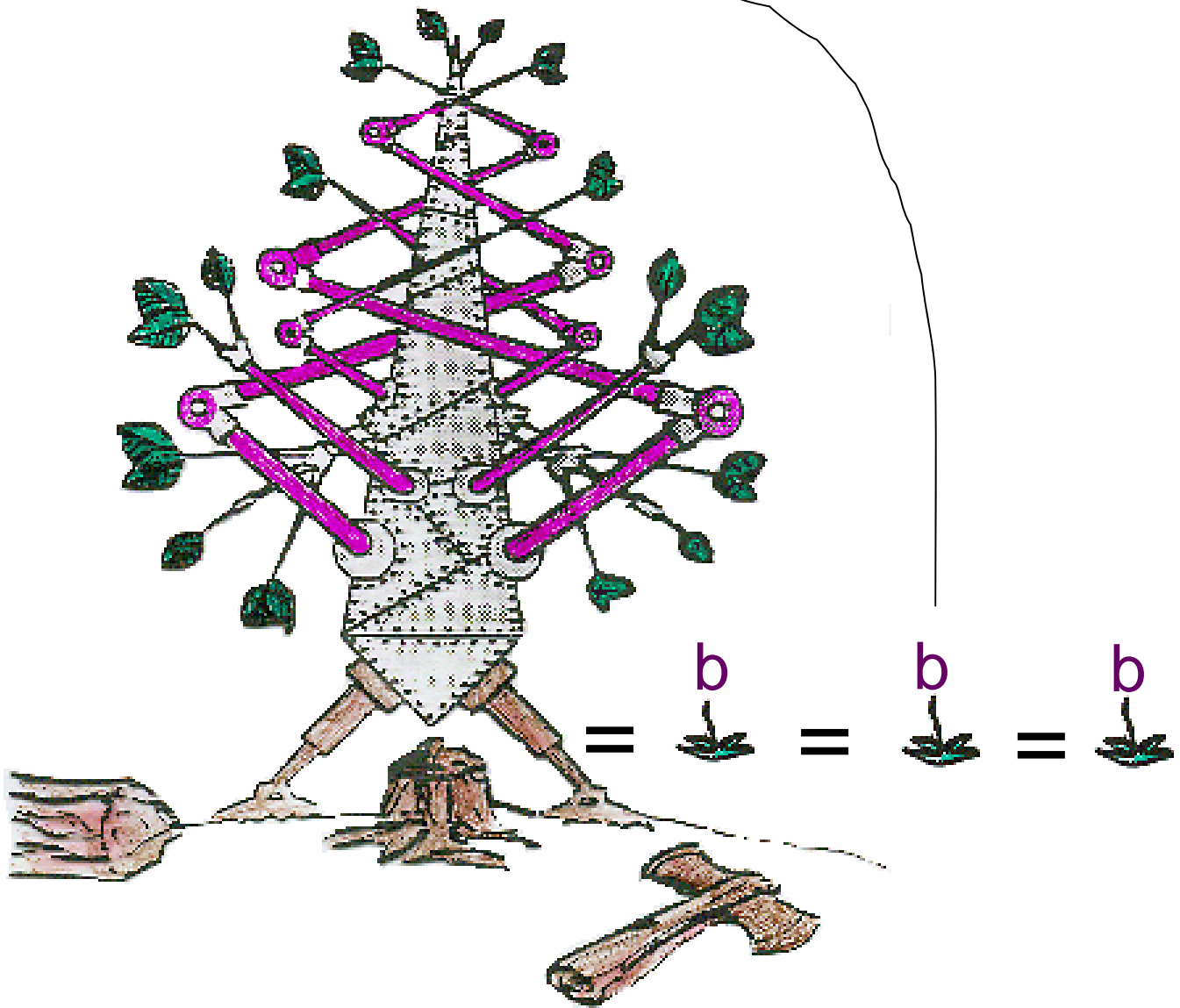
Man-Made “truth”

The notion that man himself can start from scratch and decide what is morally right and wrong.

2+2=5: Slavery is Good



B



TRADITIONAL

Authority

Transcendent Source
of Authority (g)



Human
Nature

Human nature is rather
constant. An attempt to
enforce virtue and suppress
self-interest.



Past

Tradition Dominated, Static



MODERN

-Scientific Reason (?)

SCIENCE:

- What we call “science” is in fact our perception of science.
- “Science” does not speak in one voice.
- Is an amoral means, it is blind to ends (“G”)
- About control and mastery. Can be useful but open to abuse- better tools for tyrants and anarchists.

MODERN

- Scientific Reason (?)
- Power
- Man-Made “Good”

Human nature is malleable.
Attempt to recreate man
into the ideal image of
those in power.

Fresh Start.
Ignore the Past.



- The American Revolution of 1776 inspired imitative revolutions worldwide over the next two decades. But the other republican revolutions were far less successful:
- The French Revolution ended in 1814.
- The Latin American revolutions succeeded initially, but disintegrated into a long history of alternation between military and civilian governments. Simon Bolivar, looking back many years later, lamented: “He arado el mar--- I have ploughed the sea.”
- Others fell sooner:

• Poland	1789-1793	class conflicts
• Hungary	1794	failed
• Austria	1794	failed
• Netherlands	1795-1813	federal v. unitary principle
• Italy	1796-1799	
• Ireland	1798	failed, continues
• Switzerland	1798	ethnic divisions
• Greece	1797	failed
• Belgium	1781-1791	peasants preferred king

“If today’s revolutionaries are ever to abandon the philosophical underpinnings of the Bolshevik (Communist) revolution, they would be wise not to be seduced by 1789 and all that but to go back to 1776.”

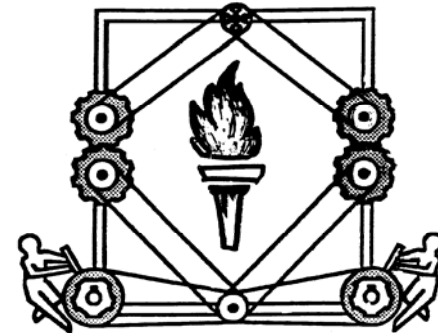
-The Economist (1989)

THE AMERICAN BALANCE

Political Society with
Reference to the Good
(Reason and Revelation)



Acknowledged both sides
of human nature. An attempt
to encourage virtue
and contain self-interest.



Learn from the past:
Disregard the negative (-)
and use the positive (+)

