Afterthoughts: They Know … and They Don't Care

My Biggest Disagreement with Will T Wilkinson's Essay

MARGARET ANNA ALICE AND ACTIVATIONDEAD1
APR 13, 2023 · FREE

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Last week, after I published They Know … and They Don't Care by Will T Wilkinson, he and I had an email exchange about my major point of disagreement with his essay.

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I thought you might be curious so decided to share these reflections in a new series for paid subscribers I'm titling ***Afterthoughts*** *for situations like this.*

WTW:

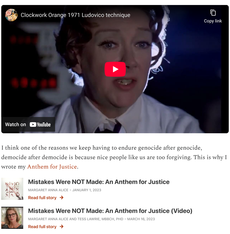
I really liked your intro to the piece, especially your comment about not agreeing with everything I wrote. So refreshing to have some nuance! And, it suggested a conversation that we might have that I might render into another piece down the road. Knowing we are 100% on the same wavelength, what do we see differently? Could be inspiring. To me at least!

MAA:

I'm glad you appreciated the intro and the possibility of differing views—I found that refreshing, too! And yes, I think it would make for an interesting conversation as well as potential fodder for a future piece.

Trying to resist writing an essay here as I'm supposed to be working on taxes, but the short version of I'd say my major sort-of disagreement is the idea that the cruelties, philanthropaths, et al may be salvageable. I don't think there's anything we can do (short of miraculous divine intervention, which you hint at) to persuade them to change their maleficent, rapacious behavior because, as psychopaths, they simply do not possess the traits that make them capable of self-reflection (as you astutely noted), remorse, repentance, and penance.

This is not only a spiritual deficit but also a biological—at a measurable, neurological level—one, like a sort of brain damage that can't be repaired … as far as we know, although the emerging field of neuroplasticity makes me wonder … but then would the methodology used to "reform" psychopaths wind up being like some sort of Clockwork Orange Ludovico technique, monstrous in its own right?



I think one of the reasons we keep having to endure genocide after genocide, democide after democide is because nice people like us are too forgiving. This is why I wrote my Anthem for Justice.

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I used to be against the death penalty, and Tim Robbins's brilliantly nuanced *Dead Man Walking* was Michael's and my favorite film for a spell, but I've increasingly grown to accept the necessity of eradicating pathogenic, irredeemable dark-triad deviants who pose a grave threat to the rest of humanity, especially when their powers are so grotesquely, almost supernaturally (and maybe actually, as you suggest) magnified by wealth, resources, and alliances with fellow cruelties.

I think a lot about the Inuits' approach to sociopaths, and I think they were onto something. In *The Sociopath Next Door*, Martha Stout writes:

> "Psychiatric anthropologist Jane M. Murphy describes the Inuit concept of kunlangeta, which refers to a person whose 'mind knows what to do but does not do it.' Murphy writes that in northwest Alaska, *kunlangeta* 'might be applied to a man who, for example, repeatedly lies and cheats and steals things and does not go hunting, and, when the other men are out of the village, takes sexual advantage of many women.' The Inuits tacitly assume that kunlangeta is irremediable. And so, according to Murphy, the traditional Inuit approach to such a man was to insist that he go hunting, and then, in the absence of witnesses, push him off the edge of the ice."

What do you guys think? Forgiveness or justice—or is there a way to achieve both?

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Note to existing Founding Members: I would be happy to mail you a MWNM shirt, too. I plan to reach out about sending your supplemental gifts and scheduling a Zoom call soon, but feel free to reply to this email to get the conversation going since I'm still overwhelmed and having trouble finding time to get to everything on my infinite todo list.

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I feel boundless gratitude to those whose above-and-beyond support makes it possible for me to do this work. The angels amongst you who have lifted me up in my time of greatest need are keeping our fourteen kitties and me fed and housed. Thank you with all of my heart 😇💜🙏

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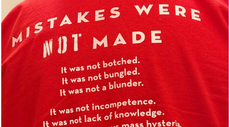

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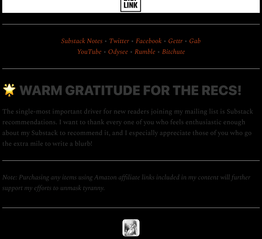

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Consideration of vengeance or forgiveness is of course premature because those (collectively call The Perpetrators) are assigned with progress and are continuing with their coup d'etat of the world.

As MAA says, sic, the more important thing at this time is to do what we can to prevent the perpetrators from accomplishing their evil agenda.

If we were in a period of calm reflection, I'd be all for due process and appropriate punishments.

We'd need procedural justice and that extends to the appropriateness of the sanctions.

Unquestionably, there would be to my mind a substantial group for whom the death penalty would be needed, if for no other reason than to prevent them doing it again in a decade or two.

Very many would be fined to poverty level.

I've always found true forgiveness difficult. That might say more about me than those who've committed wrongdoing. Few people ever truly confess their sins and express remorse. If they did, I then have the opposite problem. I would struggle to withhold forgiveness.

But to remind us again, right now, the more likely outcome is that evil lunatics kill several billion people, like they've dreamed of since the founding of the Fabians in 1884, and much earlier too.

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