The Amoral Society

Introduction

In the early 1990s a new cultural narrative emerged. It started out in cult movies such as Léon and Nikita, made its way into blockbusters like Kill Bill and Sin City, and then spread to television, music, and even advertising. What distinguishes this narrative is that it centres around men being physically harmed and humiliated by women. As the narrative has evolved, the depiction of physical harm and humiliation has become increasingly celebratory and graphically detailed. Typically, it occurs through the following plot device: The villains are men with well-defined masculine traits, both physical and behavioural, often exaggerated for effect. The heroes are women with well-defined feminine traits. The men start out by harming the women, brutally and unjustifiably, after which the women regroup and set out to revenge themselves, ending with the men being beaten up and humiliated in graphic detail. The plot is typically supported by overt symbolism, alongside music and imagery intended to provoke intense emotional reactions, bordering on overstimulation. The most interesting thing, though, is not the narrative itself, but its producers and viewers. They are almost exclusively men. Why?

Like any culture, contemporary Western culture repeats a small number of narratives over and over with slight variations: The physically unimpressive hero who defeats the powerful villain. The alliance of selfless heroes who collaborate to defeat the selfish villains. The aggressive and overconfident man who is eventually humbled. The victimised woman who overcomes. The businessman who ultimately is punished for his greed. There is a pattern to these narratives that extends beyond superficial gender-based attributes: a *set of values* that aligns almost exactly with gender. Research in psychology suggests that men typically have stronger tendencies toward individualism, competitiveness, confidence, and aggressiveness, while women typically have stronger tendencies toward altruism, collaboration, humility, and restraint. Yet, heroes are almost always altruistic, collaborative, humble, restrained, and physically unimposing, while villains are almost always individualistic, competitive, confident, aggressive, and physically imposing. Often the behaviour and attributes of the villains are exaggerated for effect: they are selfish, hypercompetitive, overconfident, and overaggressive, sometimes to the point of absurdity. The opposite never occurs: villains are never overly altruistic, overly collaborative, overly humble, or overly restrained.

By studying these cultural narratives, we can derive our underlying moral belief system: Altruism is morally superior to individualism. Collaboration is morally superior to competition. Humility is morally superior to confidence. Restraint is morally superior to aggressiveness. Now, of course, we didn't invent this. It goes back at least to Judaism, perhaps best illustrated by the story of David and Goliath, which contains many of these elements. Yet, it seems we've drawn out this aspect of Judaeo-Christian morality while eliminating the rest. And so, as religion is disappearing from Western society these narratives have become the sole focus of our culture, making them more and more intense. Consequently, men have picked up on this, at least implicitly, and are realising that there is a connection between being a man and being immoral. They start to feel guilty not only for what they do, but for what they are, and this strengthens as they come into maturity and their tendencies develop. They recognise that their masculinity is at the centre of the conflict and that their guilt is tied to it, which explains the new cultural narrative: it is both an embrace and an amplification of the established cultural narratives. They identify with the male villains through their overtly masculine traits and project onto them as they are punished and humiliated, with the female characters serving as a device for maximal humiliation, the whole experience amplified through overt symbolism and intense emotional stimulation. When it's over, they can leave the theatre or turn off the television exhausted from overstimulation, but with a feeling of release. For all our notions of having left religion behind there is something strangely religious about this process. It is self-flagellation.

This isn't the only noteworthy societal development. Something else has been going on for a while, in another area of society: government keeps growing. In fact, it has been growing so consistently and for so long that it invites the uncomfortable observation that we seem to be moving closer and closer to communism. Communism has already been tested in several societies, and the results were universally catastrophic. Millions of people died of starvation. Millions more were killed by the regimes for voicing opposing beliefs. Secret police and surveillance systems were set up to monitor people. People were forbidden from leaving and were shot for trying. So why are we seemingly moving in this direction? It's not just increased redistribution of resources, it's all aspects: Increased regulation. Increased surveillance. Increased limits on free speech. And while we're not there yet, it seems that we're seeing many of the outcomes of communism, just to a lesser degree, including economic stagnation and limits on personal freedoms.

The explanation is tied to the moral belief system we just uncovered. If altruism is morally superior to individualism, it follows that in a situation where one person has more resources than another, the morally correct behaviour is for that person to share the difference between them. And this will *always be the case* when one person has more than another. Since government is the enforcer of society's moral beliefs, this explains not only why government has grown, but why it consistently keeps growing: communism follows necessarily from the belief that altruism is morally superior to individualism. This also explains why many intellectuals were so enthusiastic about communism when it was first developed, and even after its failures started to present themselves. They intuitively felt that communism followed necessarily from their moral beliefs. Of course, intellectuals no longer talk about communism as an ideal, given its disastrous results. Instead, they have adopted an incremental approach, focusing on one issue at a time while refusing to discuss the long-term outlook. But since our underlying moral beliefs haven't changed we're still moving in that direction, we're just not talking about it anymore.

This leads to a third strange issue in contemporary Western society: an apparent lack of scientific interest and progress on these issues. Millions of people have died because of communism. Where is the body of research examining what went wrong, asking why so many intellectuals were so convinced of its future success, questioning whether there is a core belief somewhere that is false? Where is the research examining why there has been a virtually unbroken growth in government over the past hundred years, and what happens if that development is extrapolated? Where is the body of research studying why so many young men are feeling alienated by Western society, not just a superficial acknowledgement but a study of the underlying causes? Where are the studies of the cultural narratives of contemporary society and how they tie into the promotion of specific moral beliefs? It's not just a lack of research on these issues. When someone does address them, typically someone from outside academia, the response from within academia is often vitriolic. A good illustration of this is Ayn Rand's persistently popular novel Atlas Shrugged. Whatever one thinks of the quality of the novel or the philosophical system it expounds, the fact that so many people, especially young men, find it so deeply moving should be a clue that there's *something* here worth studying. Yet responses by people who should be taking this phenomenon as an opportunity to study and learn, moral philosophers and psychologists, have almost exclusively been attempts to disprove it. And doing so without making any attempt to understand, or even acknowledge, the criticisms of contemporary morality that form the basis of this novel and which clearly is driving much of its appeal. What happened to the scientific ideal that one should always look to prove oneself wrong? It's no surprise that moral philosophy has made virtually no progress in the 150 years since it reached a dead end with Karl Marx. How could it, if moral philosophers are unwilling to question their core beliefs?

It is sometimes asked why the social sciences don't make progress the way the physical sciences do. The answer is invariably that it's because the social sciences deal with much more complexity. I disagree. There's plenty of complexity in the physical sciences as well. The answer, I believe, is that progress in the social sciences is being blocked by moral beliefs. More precisely, the social sciences are pervaded by moral beliefs to an extent that not only disincentivises research into areas that potentially challenge them, but to an extent that prevents social scientists from even asking questions.

There are four basic ways in which this takes place. Firstly, there's the way in which scientific authorities and organisations promote morality to the public. Common examples are: Popular scientific figures engaging in moral debates or writing moralising newspaper commentaries flaunting their scientific authority. Scientific organisations mixing morality into their practices, such as the Nobel Committee giving out their Peace Prize, essentially a morality award, in between science awards. Scientific conferences holding side-sessions promoting certain moral views. None of this makes the moral discussions or awards themselves scientific, but by utilising scientific figures and/or a scientific backdrop it gives the *impression* that they are. While this is intended to promote certain moral beliefs to the public, the side-effect is that it also creates the impression *within* science that these beliefs are more scientific than they are, especially since those figures and organisations carry a lot of weight among rank-and-file scientists. Secondly, there's the way in which scientific terminology and moral terminology overlap. For example, words like 'bias', 'discrimination' and 'equality', words which have distinct scientific meanings, have secondary moral meanings. This not only give moral judgements the illusion of being scientific, but also can lead to equivocation between the scientific and moral meanings, making it difficult to separate the science from the non-science. An extension of that is using scientific *naming practice* for moral terminology, as in words like 'xenophobia' and 'homophobia'. The 'phobia' suffix is normally used to denote mental illness, but these are purely moral judgements. Thirdly, there's the tendency among scientists and other intellectuals to *selectively* appeal to scientific facts and principles to support their moral beliefs. This creates a bias both inside and outside science. And

fourthly, there's the way in which peer-pressures and sensitive environments exist in areas that touch upon prevailing moral beliefs, steering scientific inquiry away from certain topics and thus biasing scientific output accordingly. For example, people will commonly applaud scientific research that sets out to support prevailing moral beliefs, even when it fails ('fighting the good fight'), yet only begrudgingly acknowledge research that sets out to disprove prevailing moral beliefs when it succeeds, and excoriate it when it fails. While sufficiently well-proven research can overcome almost any amount of resistance, as history shows, the reality is that science is difficult and often works through build-ups of vague hypotheses and incomplete observations. If the requirement for any scientist that challenges prevailing moral beliefs is perfectly documented research in order to avoid peer-condemnation and career-harm, there won't be a lot of scientists challenging prevailing moral beliefs. Good science requires a fertile environment where ideas can be advanced and built on gradually. And most students, of course, notice this before choosing their career path. Those students who already have strong beliefs in line with prevailing morality will be drawn toward the social sciences, not just in a quest for truth, but as a vehicle to *promote* their beliefs. Meanwhile those students who don't have these beliefs will recognise the social sciences as hostile and go into other fields, which leads to a vicious circle.

All this is held together by a relatively small and tightly-knit group of influencers. Take the culture. On the surface, it appears quite diverse. The faces of the culture, singers and actors, come from a variety of different backgrounds, and it shows. But singers, especially very popular singers, usually do not write their own songs, and actors certainly do not write their own scripts. They are merely presenting what someone else has written. To understand who is driving the culture one must look to the people behind the scenes: writers, producers, directors, and executives. And what one finds here is a very homogenous group. Almost exclusively people who come from white, middle- or upper-class homes, and who predominantly have graduated from a small set of upscale universities. This explains the remarkable degree of co-ordination that appears to exist in the culture. There is no *deliberate* co-ordination of the culture. Rather, it's the enactment of a belief system that is dominant in this segment of society. Because such a large portion of cultural influencers share it, they can build off each other's work without ever having to communicate. And because they effectively control the culture, they function as gatekeepers, ensuring that when people from other backgrounds want access to cultural influence, only those who share their beliefs are allowed in. The same applies to government. Politicians are quite diverse, but politicians are just the faces of a political apparatus. Many of those behind the scenes come from the same type of background as the cultural influencers. The same is true of academia, and while business has historically been in opposition to government, that has changed as technology companies have replaced old industrial companies. This means that business leaders also increasingly come from the same background as the other branches of society. Hence they share their moral beliefs and consequently offer less resistance to their agenda, including the expansion of government. This is illustrated by the fact that in recent US elections, the richest counties, a good proxy for business leaders, have mostly supported Obama. When held together, this explains why society is moving along its current path so smoothly. Society is increasingly led by a single, homogenous group of people, who are raised according to the same beliefs, go through the same universities where these beliefs are reinforced, and travel in the same groups where they are further reinforced. And the effect of the gatekeeper role they maintain is that there is almost no way for people to gain influence without sharing these beliefs.

People have noticed this, and opposition is spreading. The Tea Party and Donald Trump's support are examples of it. People have recognised that the moralising in the culture is becoming more intense; that going to a movie or tuning into prime-time television increasingly feels like sitting in a sermon. They've realised that there's a systematic attempt to drive societal change through the culture, an attempt that seemingly has intensified. They've also noticed that government keeps growing and the power of the establishment keeps increasing. And finally, they've become increasingly sceptical of the mainstream media and of the scientific community, and for good reason. When someone opens the newspaper and sees an op-ed piece by a group of scientists, full of impenetrable scientific-sounding phrases, moralising on social issues and calling for new government programmes, and then on the next page sees an op-ed piece by another group of scientists, also full of impenetrable scientific-sounding phrases, warning about climate change and calling for government regulations, is it any wonder that that person is suspicious? How can you trust anything that the scientific community says when you can never know where the science ends and the morality begins? Especially when scientists themselves don't seem to know, or even care? To a large portion of the scientific community, science and the prevailing morality is just one big entangled ball of beliefs, making resistance to any part of it not just unscientific, nor just immoral, but both. And so, people are looking around and seeing society become increasingly immersed in guilt and finger-pointing and moral accusations, while government is ever-growing, promising to rectify it all. And seeing scientists, who claim to be

objective, at the forefront of a lot of it. And they are starting to wonder about this, starting to realise that there is something decidedly *unsecular* about all this, and starting to ask questions.

I am convinced that if something doesn't change we are headed for disaster. There seem to be two possible scenarios:

In the first scenario, we continue down our current path. The culture takes the final step in the direction it's been heading, as the moralising becomes full-blown propaganda. Government continues to grow, imposing limits on free speech and passing measures to punish opposition through the justice system, concealed under vague and ever-expanding moralistic terms like 'hate crimes'. In the social sciences, peer-pressure continues to mount until opposing views are no longer just regarded as false, but as immoral and harmful, while a growing sensitivity make certain topics uncomfortable to even discuss, let alone challenge. Business increasingly becomes an extension of government, partly due to the imposition of regulations and punitive measures, but even more so due to a shared belief system that drives them toward the same goals. The people in charge, an ever-tightening group with shared moral beliefs, refuse to discuss where society is headed and instead focus on incremental changes argued for in intense moral language. Until eventually, there's a tipping point. The branches of society have become so entwined that the people in charge decide it would be more efficient to run them together. And as society has started to collapse they can use that as an excuse. From here, we know what the result will be. As long as communism follows necessarily from the moral beliefs of the people in charge, this is where we will eventually end up, even if it's not deliberate. It's just a question of how we get there.

In the second scenario, the resistance builds up and explodes, purging the current group of people from power as it becomes apparent that society is headed toward disaster. But then what? What fills the void left by prevailing morality? There seems to only be one possibility, religion. There are two basic forms this society could take: extreme or moderate. An extremely religious society would be able to block the move to communism, of course, as we see in some Middle Eastern countries, but at the cost of extreme religion, which makes for an even worse society than communism. A moderately religious society may be able to temporarily stop the trend, but if it's moderate that means allowing opposing views, including atheism. And herein lies the problem: the prevailing morality is simply more convincing than religious morality, once appeals to God no longer end an argument. Without appeals to God, the moralities must stand on their own. And here, prevailing morality outmanoeuvres religious morality. What has made prevailing morality so successful is that it takes a very simple message, that altruism is morally superior to individualism, and repeats it over and over from a multitude of different angles, using a variety of intellectual and emotional devices. Religious morality, by comparison, is incoherent. There are so many laws, so much interpretation, so many inconsistencies, so much disagreement, that's it's no match for prevailing morality. As soon as specific issues come into play, religious morality invariably loses the debate to prevailing morality. So even if society were to take a step backwards to a moderate version of religious morality, we would very quickly find ourselves back where we are now: headed down the path to scenario one. In fact, we saw a version of this in the 1980s, led by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, as a response to economic issues in both America and Europe. But as soon as those were met, we were back on the path. There's a reason religious morality has gradually faded over the past few hundred years. If it offered a better alternative to prevailing morality we would never have gotten here in the first place.

There must be another way. Prevailing morality has us on course for disaster, but there is no going back to religion. We need to move forward, but how? The answer lies in a better understanding of morality. To understand morality, we need to go back. As far back as we can.

Analysis

As human society developed, our models of the world improved, a process that stretches back as far as we can trace. Early societies seem to have had animist models. In an animist model, natural objects have humanlike decision-making ability: Trees decide to shed their leaves. Clouds decide to rain. The sun decides to rise. Volcanoes decide to erupt. Buffalo decide where to roam. Then we started to develop polytheistic models. In a polytheistic model, natural objects are inanimate. Instead, they are controlled by category gods: The god of thunder controls the weather. The sea god controls the sea. The god of knowledge controls knowledge. Eventually, we moved to monotheistic models. In monotheism, everything is controlled by a single god, who sets the world in motion and intervenes on occasion, typically to cause large-

scale events like earthquakes. More recently, we have moved toward atheism. In atheism, there are no gods. Everything in the world is governed by natural laws.

The reason for this process is knowledge. As we developed, we gradually discovered that natural objects follow predictable patterns: Trees shed their leaves seasonally. Clouds rain in accordance with the wind and other factors. The sun rises predictably by the time of year. This removes the need to posit decision-making. If objects always act in the same way, there are no decisions to be made, it just appears that way to the uninformed. So, the decision-making in our models moved upward over time, toward increasing generalisation, as we discovered predictability in the world from the bottom up. Eventually, this process was formalised in the 17th Century as science, and we soon thereafter achieved a set of general laws that seem to make everything in the world predictable, removing the need to posit decision-making anywhere.

This wasn't an entirely linear process, though, nor was it driven only by intellectual progress. Human history is full of situations where beliefs were enforced by societies on other societies. Take the spread of Christianity through Europe, replacing various animistic and polytheistic beliefs. These societies didn't discover Christianity through an intellectual process, they had it presented to them by the Romans, in some cases even forced upon them. But *why* did the Romans choose Christianity as their religion over their previous polytheistic beliefs, and why did primitive European societies accept it? Why did a very similar transition occur with Islam in the Middle East? One only has to look at some of these earlier religions to realise it: Christianity (and Islam) offers a much more complete and consistent description of the world. Polytheistic religions are full of fragmented and barely plausible myths. Gods emerge from armpits of other gods. Gods are licked into existence by a giant cow. Christianity, in comparison, provides a reasonably consistent description of the world, without many of the obvious gaps that characterise these earlier religions. This makes it both easier to communicate and easier to accept. Convincing people to abandon Christianity in favour of a religion where gods grow out of armpits or are licked into existence by a giant cow would be a lot harder than the reverse, even when using force. The former transition conflicts with our aesthetic sensibility in a way that the latter doesn't.

Morality followed the development of our models. It was assumed that, as part of their decision-making, natural objects set and enforced laws governing human behaviour. Volcanoes required humans to pay a tribute and would erupt if they didn't. Clouds required humans to dance and would only rain if they did. Buffalo required humans to hunt respectfully and only offered themselves up as food if they did. This meant, of course, that when we stopped assigning decision-making to these objects the morality also disappeared from them. If a volcano is believed to follow predictable natural patterns it makes no sense to pay it a tribute. So in polytheism, the category gods set and enforce morality in their respective domains. And in monotheism, God is the sole lawmaker and enforcer of morality. Ancient Jews, for example, believed that God required them to refrain from eating pork, and would punish them if they disobeyed.

Consequently, morality became increasingly consolidated. For an animist, morality is highly fragmented, as there isn't necessarily alignment between the various lawmakers. The volcano doesn't co-ordinate with the cloud before making its requirements. Humans just try to do the best they can in a volatile and unpredictable world. This is still true in polytheism, albeit to a lesser extent. One can be reasonably certain of consistency in, say, the moral law in respect to volcanoes, earthquakes and rainclouds, since they are now set and enforced by the same category god, the nature god, but one can't be certain of consistency between, say, the nature god and the war god. They may simply make conflicting moral requirements of us, and we would have to try and navigate it as best we could. In fact, polytheistic myths *are* full of disagreements between the various category gods.

This inconsistency disappears with monotheism. God now sets and enforces *all* the laws, and there is a belief that they are consistent, even if it doesn't always appear that way. However, during early monotheism the laws themselves are still highly fragmented and specific. Judaism has hundreds of very specific laws, covering everything from which foods to eat to how to behave during social interactions. And there is no real attempt to tie them together. It's just a long list of God's commands. So while there may be a belief in consistency, in practice there are inevitable conflicts. This leads to a problem. If two moral laws contradict they can't both be universal. But then what are they? It's easy to see how this would lead to a lot of angst among religious authorities in dealing with these conflicts as they arose. Naturally, as time passed, and especially as Christianity emerged, there was a gradual attempt to synthesise all these laws into a small number of moral principles. By late Christianity, this synthesis had started to settle on principles like 'love thy neighbour' and 'do unto others as you want done to you', with the actual laws in the Bible regarded as contingent.

And then with the success of science in the 17th and 18th Centuries there was another intellectual step: the attempt to separate morality from God. Which, of course, was made much easier now that morality was believed to consist of a small number of principles, rather than hundreds of commands. These God-independent moral principles were typically referred to as natural rights. The idea being that morality is a property of nature, rather than a set of commands, and therefore can be identified and described much like any natural object without appeal to God. When atheism caught on a century later, this idea was already widely accepted and it was simple for atheists to remove reference to God altogether. Now completely removed from God, secular morality moved even further toward synthesis, most clearly illustrated in the work of Jeremy Bentham, who suggested that morality was reducible to a single quantity: aggregate net pleasure. It also moved toward an increasingly broad definition of rights and justice, best exemplified by the work of Karl Marx.

So, what's the problem? Well, where is morality? It's not just that we haven't found it yet, it's that it's unclear what we could possibly be referring to. Is it a special kind of subatomic particle that only humans contain, interacting with all our other particles? Maybe something that emerges when regular particles interact in specific ways? This doesn't seem to make much sense. Yet, it *seems* like we're referring to something. And not just to our personal opinions, but to something outside ourselves. If we weren't, we wouldn't get so worked up about moral arguments, it seems. What do we *mean* when we argue about right and wrong, or about injustice, or about rights?

Let's take a step back in time to our animist society. Say they have the belief that overhunting is wrong, and that failure to comply will result in the buffalo refusing to offer themselves up for food. From a modern perspective, we would say this is silly. Why? Because we now have a natural explanation for it: if society overhunts, the buffalo become scarce. Most likely, they learned this the hard way. But they don't describe it in those terms, because they don't have our modern model of the world. They have a model where buffalo make humanlike decisions, and so they describe the situation accordingly. They may even have constructed narratives around this. Maybe they believe their witchdoctor was visited by the spirit of the head buffalo, who told him this.

Let's move on to our early monotheist society. Say they have the belief that eating pork is forbidden by God, and that failure to comply will be punished by sickness or death. Again, from a modern perspective we would say this is silly. Why? Because we have a natural explanation: pigs carried germs during that time that could make humans very sick. But, of course, this society had no understanding of germs. They believed that God caused people to get sick when they disobeyed Him. So, naturally, when they saw people consistently getting sick from eating pork they inferred that these people were disobeying one of God's laws, and wrote it into the Bible.

These examples suggest that when we make moral statements we are actually describing a natural phenomenon, but are doing so *through our prevailing model*. But we no longer believe in gods, so how does that apply to our current situation? Let's look at the terms that form typical moral statements: 'right' and 'wrong', 'justice', 'rights', 'blame', 'guilt'. These terms have something in common. They are courtroom terms. This explains our model: we are trying to describe some part of the world through the framework of a court. And what we're trying to describe we can also see when we look back at the evolution of morality: human behaviour and its relation to nature. Adding these two together gives us a *definition* of morality: morality is the attempt to describe human behaviour and its relation to nature through a court framework.

This gives us a new perspective on what occurred during the naturalisation of morality in the 17th to 19th Century: we removed the lawmaker, but preserved the court. Certain aspects have certainly changed from religious morality to secular morality. The notions of rights and justice have been emphasised and broadened, while the focus on particular laws has been diminished, but this doesn't change the overall fact that secular morality has carried over the court framework from religion. And from a scientific perspective, this won't do. It's not impossible to imagine an actual cosmic court governing human behaviour, even one without a lawmaker. The Vedic religions arguably have something like it. The problem is that the intellectual process that has led us to gradually replace our anthropomorphic models with more accurate scientific ones clearly requires us to replace the cosmic court in the same way we've replaced the cosmic lawmaker. Few, if any, secular moralists actually believe that a cosmic court exists, they are just acting *as if it did* through their moral beliefs.

But if there is no cosmic court, what governs human behaviour and its relation to nature? There was no answer to that question when secular morality was being developed, but there is now: evolutionary theory. According to evolutionary theory, human behaviour has evolved to form a system whose most general function is species-survival, which it achieves

through adaption to its environment. Now that we know this, it's easy to see why the court framework (i.e., morality) has been an integral part of our beliefs for so long: it provides a good *approximation* of human behaviour and its relation to nature. Why? Because nature has a corrective function that makes it seem like a court. Ancient human societies presumably found themselves engaging in tribunal processes and then inferred that nature is just a larger version of it. It *seems* like the buffalo are punishing humans with starvation when they overhunt, or that God is punishing humans with illness when they eat pork. More broadly, it seems like nature is punishing humans with social disarray when they engage in killing, or stealing, or adultery. Add to that the fact that humans tend to feel bad when they engage in these activities, and it's easy to see why humans would adopt the belief of nature as a cosmic court that punishes law-breaches, laws that humans have built-in knowledge of through their 'moral intuition'. And this approximation works very well, which is why it has prevailed for so long. Evolutionary theory shows why it is only an approximation, though. Nature doesn't 'punish' us for law-breaches, we have evolved mechanisms that steer us away from behaviour that is detrimental to species-survival.

And while it's a good approximation, morality breaks down when used beyond the context it was developed in. And the further it gets from that context, the more pronounced these breakdowns become. Which is good to know, because this is how intellectual progress works. By pushing our descriptions as far as we can, we see where they break down and then can figure out how to replace them with better ones. And the three problems we covered in the introduction do just that: they are situations that morality is unable to account for, but that are well-explained by functional descriptions informed by evolutionary theory. In that sense, they function as experiments that test the applicability of these two models. Let's take a look at each of them.

First, the problem of male guilt and self-flagellation. What has essentially happened over the past half century is that, as secular morality has become the dominant belief system in certain segments of the population, we've run a social experiment. Children have been raised almost entirely in a bubble of secular morality. Their parents, their teachers, their friends, and their culture have almost exclusively instilled in them secular moral beliefs. And what has happened is noteworthy: widespread feelings of alienation, guilt, and self-flagellation among men raised in these environments, as evidenced in the culture. How does secular morality account for this phenomenon? Well, it seemingly is forced to say that men simply have more sinful tendencies than women, and that they are right to feel guilty about them. A moral framework doesn't allow for a more sophisticated account, all it allows for is a set of court-like laws and judgements of innocence or guilt, which is what we've just given. A functional description informed by evolutionary theory, on the other hand, not only explains why men and women have different tendencies, but also why those differences are a major reason humans exist today at all: men and women are functional specialisations that allowed humans, and many species before them, to function more effectively and thus better adapt to their environment. Because of this specialisation, men have stronger tendencies toward certain types of behaviour: individualism, competitiveness, risk-taking, and aggressiveness, while women have stronger tendencies toward altruism, collaboration, restraint, and passivity. It makes no sense to declare altruism morally superior to individualism, or vice versa. They were both functions that contributed to human survival. When we present it like this it makes secular morality look even more silly, for if altruism is morally superior to individualism, when did it become this way? If we say it was always the case, then we are led to the position of having to accept that not only did humans consistently act wrongly, but doing so is the reason we exist at all. If we say it became so at a point in time, say 2500 BC., then we not only have to posit something seemingly quite arbitrary, but we also must account for the fact that people, especially men, evolved deep-seated tendencies before it became wrong who now suddenly are acting wrongly. The problem goes away once we give up morality. There's no need to try to explain how a cosmic court changed its laws, the requirements for human behaviour are set by the environment, and change if the environment changes. Of course, the extent to which it has *actually* changed is the topic of our next problem.

Second, the failures of communism. Communist societies can also be viewed as an experiment, a test of a certain belief system by implementing it wholeheartedly and then seeing what happens. And what happened was remarkable. Communist societies consistently experienced disastrous results, far too consistently to declare it an accident. The question is why. First, let's ask how secular morality accounts for what happened in communist societies. The most common beliefs before communism was implemented was that if it failed it would be due to at least one of two things: incompetent leadership or unmotivated workers. This belief persisted even after the reports of societal disarray in the Soviet Union began to emerge. There was such a strong belief in the 'beauty' of communism as a societal model that it was thought that the flaw must be in the implementation. Understandably so. There just doesn't seem to be any way for secular morality to account for the failures of communism. One could respond by saying that there are other factors that

drive a society's success beyond acting morally, but what does that mean? If there are things that take precedence over moral beliefs, then what are moral beliefs really? At best, this leads to a lot of contortions. Let's set aside our moral framework and try to explain this through a functional framework. An early explanation for the failures of communism came from Ludwig von Mises. He showed that the flaw was not in the implementation of communism, but in the model itself. He explained that communism could never work, regardless of how competent the leaders are and how motivated the workers are, because a communist society lacks something critical: information. Communism eliminates trade, since it removes private property and tells people where to work. But when people trade they aren't just trading products and labour, they're also trading information about their preferences, and when this no longer occurs there's no way for producers to know what to make, and so eventually you end up with a society where people's desires are unfulfilled and there's a spiral into misery. Clearly, there's a level of sophistication here that doesn't exist in a moral framework. But we can go further than Mises went. Instead of regarding people's preferences as our starting point, we can take a step further back. We can treat human society as a system and preferences as effects of environmental pressures. Humans have evolved behaviour that combines to form a system able to continuously address environmental pressures as they occur. Behavioural preferences are just what's visible. Eliminating trade shuts down the system, except for a few top-down pathways. This means that environmental pressures aren't addressed and therefore build up in the system until it collapses. We can compare human society to other systems, for example the human body. Imagine a group of doctors deciding to shut off the arteries in a human body and instead insert blood manually to each organ because they thought it was unjust that some organs received more blood than others. This would be disastrous. Why? Because the human body is a calibrated system of functions that have evolved to address environmental pressures as they occur, thus keeping the body healthy. The same applies to a human society. Trying to force it to conform to a court framework with a set of moral laws and measures of justice is ludicrous. Such a framework can't possibly describe the complexities of a human societal system in the way that a functional framework can.

Third, the suppression of science. We can also treat the social sciences as an experiment. What would secular morality say about suppression of science by secular moral beliefs? Well, secular morality would have to say that that's impossible. After all, secular morality is implicitly based on the notion of a cosmic court, and it's difficult to imagine such a court having laws that conflict with the facts. So it's not even a consideration for social scientists that their moral beliefs are suppressing science. If you hold, say, that altruism is the highest virtue, and this is something you feel intensely, how could any facts possibly contradict it? And if you hold that no facts could possibly contradict your moral beliefs, you don't have to worry about suppressing science when you promote your moral beliefs and attack others for holding different ones. In your view, they are two different realms. Yet, clearly there *is* suppression of science going on in the social sciences, and this disproves the idea of secular morality and science being separate realms. A secular moral framework can't account for this. A functional framework, on the other hand, has no problem explaining it. From this perspective, moral beliefs are simply descriptions of the world, albeit imprecise ones. So, like any other description, they are subject to testing and potential falsification. And if attempts to do so are suppressed, then that is no different from any other scientific situation where challenges to a prevailing description are suppressed. Of course, once one recognises that a functional framework is better than a moral framework for describing the world, one would want to replace the moral framework altogether. But if one *does* have a situation where a set of moral beliefs are held above challenge, as has been the case in the social sciences, then it's easy to explain why this would lead to suppression of science, which is exactly what we see.

The future

We've seen that a group of influencers are trying to reshape society to fit their moral beliefs. We've also seen that morality in general is a simplistic framework for describing human behaviour and its relation to nature, and that it breaks down in important situations, illustrating how disastrous it would be if this continues. Given that human society seems to consistently move toward a better model of the world, I think it's a given that sooner or later morality will disappear, just as theism did. What will an amoral society look like, and how will the transition occur? We can look to the transition from Christianity to atheism as a guide, since many of the same issues apply to this transition. Let's look at how each of these three important areas of society will be affected: culture, government, and science.

Moralising is a huge part of contemporary culture. Is an amoral culture even possible? Yes, I believe so. Once it becomes widely accepted that morality is a simplification, *and* the manipulation devices in the culture become more widely known,

there will be no going back. Just as Western culture was once full of theism and now isn't. There is already a counterculture building against the prevailing morality, aided by the growth in YouTube and other alternative media outlets, and it will continue to gain support as people feel alienated by the increased moralising of mainstream culture, I think. In practice, there will be two main changes: Firstly, a wider variety of narratives, rather than the same ones repeated over and over. Secondly, a move away from plot-justice and other moralising devices: designating characters as heroes and villains, assigning them particular attributes, rewarding or punishing them accordingly. Instead, narratives will be more descriptive, more about exploring people's situations, feelings, and motives without moral judgement. Plenty of cultural products claim to do so, but don't, mostly because most cultural influencers are blind to their own moral beliefs. What amoral narratives *really* look like will become more clear in the future, I think, as they start to emerge. This may seem unrealistic. After all, people today *seek out* narratives that reinforce their moral beliefs. Why would they start doing the opposite? For the same reason people used to seek out theistic narratives, but now increasingly don't. Once people stop *believing in* God, theistic narratives just seem anachronistic, even if they are emotionally appealing. Likewise, once people stop believing in morality, moralising narratives and devices will just seem anachronistic and manipulative, even to people who share the authors' goals.

Morality has historically played a large role in the activities of government. Contemporary governments redistribute resources and make laws in accordance with prevailing moral beliefs, just as Christian governments used to enforce Christian beliefs. Is an amoral government even possible? It seems difficult to imagine morality being removed from government, but that could have been said about theism 300 years ago. Since then, Western societies have all implemented a separation of church and state. The lesson learned is that you don't have to have a population of atheists to remove theism from government. In fact, you don't need *any* atheists. All you need is a general understanding that theistic differences cannot be resolved through argument. The same applies to morality. Contemporary politics is immersed in moral arguments. Even people who disagree with the particular moral arguments of their opponents accept the premise that politics *should be* resolved through moral arguments, they just disagree on what they should be. To disturb this, all it takes is a few people challenging it. When someone says 'this is wrong' or 'that is an injustice' as part of a political argument, one can simply ask 'what do you mean by that?' or 'how do you propose we settle it?'. Even if one stops short of amoralism, it should be clear that moral arguments can't be settled any more than theistic arguments can, at least not without recasting them in functional terms. This leads to two options: either to make morality voluntary or to make the force explicit. I think both will occur to some extent. Government will get smaller, as some of its current activities will become voluntary, but there are some things, in my opinion, that cannot be made voluntary, due to the interconnected nature of human behaviour within a society. What will happen here is we'll move from morality-based argumentation to agreement-based argumentation, for example from 'this behaviour is morally right' to 'the majority agrees to do this'. This may seem like a subtle change, but it will have large consequences, I think, because it will force political debate to become about facts and negotiation, rather than about moralising and emotional manipulation. And it will also make it easier for people who disagree with the majority to go elsewhere without feeling that they're doing something wrong. It also means there is nothing special about a government anymore. It's no longer a moral enforcer, it's just an arbiter, and there's nothing in principle stopping other organisations from performing some or all its activities, if they can do them better. We already see a movement in this direction, in the form of libertarianism. Technically, libertarianism is a minimalist moral theory, not an amoral theory, but the idea is roughly the same: to combat the enforcement of morality through government.

Academia has historically performed two functions: describing the world and rationalising prevailing belief systems. We can see this going back at least to Judaism. The Bible, for instance, is an attempt to fit together broad, religious beliefs with observations of the world. And both Judaism and Christianity have long traditions of religious debate, trying to fit their beliefs to the requirements of the world. In hindsight, we can see that these two processes are trying to do the same thing, describe the world, from two different angles: a top-down approach based on very broad beliefs, and a bottom-up approach based on observations. This is important to understand. We don't gradually fill out empty spaces in our description of the world as we gather observations. Rather, we overdescribe, filling out our model with very speculative beliefs, sometimes in contradiction with each other, and anchored to strong emotional attachment. But this is not clear at the time. In fact, Christians for a long time held to a belief that has later been labelled 'non-overlapping magisteria', the idea that some of our beliefs are beyond scientific treatment, even in principle, and therefore that religion and science address fundamentally different aspects of the world. What happened, though, was that as science progressed it increasingly intruded on what had traditionally been the domain of religion, until finally there was a realisation that they

were describing the same thing, and that science provided the better description. The transition also faced a lot of resistance. While in hindsight it seems that Christianity is essentially just a description of the world, people raised in a Christian environment were emotionally attached to their beliefs and resisted any attempt to challenge them, or even to treat them scientifically. Finally, the transition wasn't seamless. What characterised society after centuries of Christian dominance is that all aspects of it were immersed in Christianity: terminology, social practices, and institutions. This meant there was a long process of gradual removal. How does all this relate to our current situation? Well, it seems that the physical sciences have made a full transition from religion to science. There are no parts of the physical sciences where scientists have deep emotional attachment (beyond people's natural resistance to give up on theories they have invested a lot of time in), nor is there a belief that anything in principle is beyond scientific treatment. The situation in the social sciences is quite different, though. They *are* pervaded by a set of beliefs with deep emotional attachment and which are held to be beyond scientific treatment: moral beliefs. And we *are* seeing a gradual chipping away at these beliefs by science, most notably evolutionary biology, psychology, and economics. Eventually, if history is our guide, there will be an acceptance in the social sciences that they are describing the same thing, and that science is doing it better. Presumably, there will be much resistance, but eventually there will be a split into people who accept science and those who are unable to and withdraw from it, as we saw with Christianity in the split between philosophy/science and theology. Theologians effectively distinguish themselves from regular philosophers and scientists by positing theism as their premise to which everything else must fit. There is an analogue to that in secular morality, what is typically known as 'continental philosophy', a belief system that tends to hold that secular morality is fundamental and that science must conform to it. Most social scientists, however, do not explicitly acknowledge the distinction, wanting to have it both ways. Presumably, that will change, as it did with theology in the sciences two hundred years ago. Then all that is left is the gradual process of weeding out morality from the social sciences.

Possible objections

What if I'm wrong? Let's go through some possible objections.

Objection #1: Amoralism is just a moral system in disguise, individualism.

This is analogous to the objection that atheism is just another religion, which is false. The reason atheism is not just another religion is that it doesn't only remove belief in God, it *replaces* belief in God with something else: scientific description. There's a categorical difference between scientific description and belief in God, because scientific description is subject to empirical examination and is therefore part of a large and well-integrated body of empirical knowledge, which it must fit into. The same applies to amoralism. It doesn't replace one moral system with another, it replaces moral systems with scientific description. But because morality is a deeply-ingrained framework, we automatically assume that everyone else also must have such a framework, even if they claim not to; that it must just be hidden somewhere. It's the same phenomenon that leads some religious people to assume that atheists must have a god hidden somewhere that they're not talking about. It takes a mental leap to realise that one is perceiving the world through a framework and that that framework is not given.

Which brings us to the second point, that from the perspective of a contemporary social scientist this probably looks like a particular *type* of morality, namely individualism. The social sciences are immersed in opaque terminology that has built up over time to insulate the underlying moral beliefs from challenge, and people are emotionally invested in keeping it this way. When someone proposes that morality reduces to patterns in the functional behaviour of individuals (and their relations to other natural objects), and therefore that individuals are a more accurate unit of analysis than groups, it's bound to be met with resistance. But that just shows how much prevailing moral beliefs conflict with actual science. Science's success over the past 400 years is largely due to a consistent attempt to explain phenomena by reducing them to collections of smaller and simpler processes. Chemists don't accuse physicists of 'individualism' when they suggest that chemical processes can be reduced to interactions between subatomic particles. A claim that morality, or any cultural phenomenon, cannot be reduced, in principle, to interactions between individuals (and other natural objects), goes against the entire scientific worldview that has built up over the past 400 years. Ultimately, theories are judged on their ability to make successful predictions, and if it's discovered that there are aspects of human behaviour that are beyond functional description (and thus prediction) then one would have to reject, or at least significantly modify, amoralism. But a very large body of scientific knowledge suggests that that is unlikely to be the case, in my opinion.

There is an important distinction between saying that morality reduces to descriptions of individuals and their interactions, and saying that people should strive toward individual goals, for example pleasure or wealth-accumulation. We can call the latter 'naïve individualism'. That *is* a moral theory, and it's not what I'm suggesting, of course. In the broad sense, people do seek to satisfy their desires, since they can't step out of their bodies, but those desires include altruistic and collaborative behaviour. There's no reason to suggest otherwise.

Objection #2: We don't have to give up morality entirely, we can preserve a more moderate version that is bounded by practical and scientific facts as they become known.

This is analogous to the theistic argument of not giving up God entirely, but just gradually removing Him from our descriptions to fit scientific discoveries. This process, as discussed earlier, is one that has been going on for thousands of years. At some point, though, we realised that we were just using gods to fill gaps in our knowledge, and adopted a framework where there are no gods, just functional descriptions with gaps where necessary. There is no reason to continue that process with morality, as science gradually chips away at it. We can already recognise that it's just an approximate framework and replace it with the correct framework, thus improving the scientific process *and* avoiding any more social disasters.

Objection #3: Without morality, people won't care about anyone but themselves and society will collapse into a dog-eat-dog world.

This assumes a very naïve view of human behaviour, in my opinion. It's a carryover from religious morality, which essentially splits human desires into two categories: cardinal desires and spiritual desires. Cardinal desires need no encouragement, humans are automatically drawn to them, and they are therefore morally neutral or sinful. Spiritual desires need encouragement, either through the promise of an afterlife or through being recognised as a 'good person', and they are therefore virtuous. The actual categorisation of desires as cardinal or spiritual almost perfectly follows gender lines, as we've seen earlier. It made sense in ancient times where men were the main decision-makers in society and religion was written mainly for them, especially if there was a tendency in those societies for men with extreme masculine traits to dominate society (i.e., warlord societies). In those societies, a moral system that restrained masculine traits and encouraged feminine traits would serve as a good balance to prevent things from getting out of control, even if it wasn't deliberately designed as such. That moral split has carried over to secular morality, but it doesn't make sense in modern times. For most men, and even more so for women, the idea that individualism, competitiveness, and aggression are built-in desires, while altruism, collaboration, and restraint need to be encouraged, is simply not true. They are *all* built-in desires that have evolved over time, although they are distributed unevenly. There's no reason to think that people will stop being altruistic, collaborative, and restrained once they accept the idea that there is no cosmic court. People who feel empathy when they see a homeless person aren't going to stop doing so because they no longer believe in a cosmic court. What it will do is prevent people from suppressing their desires because they think they're violating a cosmic law.

Objection #4: Without morality, everything is permissible and society will collapse into nihilistic lethargy.

The assumption here is that we make judgements by checking a given situation against a set of moral laws, and if there are no moral laws to check against, we can never make judgements and therefore everything is 'permissible'. But this is nonsense. We do have to give up the idea of making *moral* judgements, since we have to give up the idea of moral laws, but we make judgements all the time that have nothing to do with morality. What I am arguing against is the belief, inherited from religion, that a subset of human desires and behaviour have a special status, namely that they are 'moral', i.e., regulated by a set of cosmic laws. *All* our desires and behaviour have evolved as biological mechanisms, and there is no need for a categorisation into 'moral' and 'non-moral'. Giving up morality doesn't mean giving up judgement, it means giving up the *interpretation* of judgment as something that must be in accordance with a set of moral laws. Consequently, the actual judgement becomes clearer. It means going from a judgement like 'that person is morally wrong' to 'my desires differ from that person's desires, and I should act accordingly'. In other words, judgement becomes more factual and action-oriented, as opposed to vague and emotionally-oriented. Or more accurately, the emotions are made explicit in the first case, whereas in the second case they are entangled in the judgement.

Objection #5: People need morality for their lives to have meaning.

The assumption here is that people need to have a purpose in their lives, and that that purpose should be to be a good person. Without that purpose, the idea goes, it doesn't matter what you do, because you have nothing to work toward. That is a teleological view of human behaviour, and it doesn't match how people behave, in my opinion. People are driven by biological mechanisms. Part of that is using reason to process information and set goals, but reason itself cannot set goals. This is where morality comes in. It gives us the *impression* that there is some outside purpose that we can use as a starting point and then work our way down to particular behaviour, but it's really the other way around: we generalise our particular emotions and behaviour into moral laws. Once one accepts this, the replacement of morality with a functional description is not a problem. It's simply a better generalisation.

Objection #6: Amoralism is just WRONG!

There's no question many people feel very strongly about their moral beliefs. Those emotions exist. The purpose of amoralism is not to deny or try to remove them, it's to change the *interpretation* of them. What I have proposed in this paper is that morality is a simplifying framework for describing functional patterns in human behaviour, including our emotions, and their relation to nature. This doesn't say anything about the emotions themselves. Does an emotion, say empathy, becomes less powerful if one interprets it as a biological response rather than as an intuitive recognition of a cosmic, moral law? I don't think it does. What amoralism changes is not so much how we feel about certain situations, but how we think about how *other people* feel about those situations. When there is no cosmic law to refer to we can no longer say that other people are wrong for feeling differently. We can provide them with information to make them realise that it's in their interest to act a certain way, or in some cases force them to do so, but if they don't have a certain emotion then they don't have that emotion.

Objection #7: Amoralism is elitist, therefore it's wrong.

I don't accept the term 'elitist'. It has a negative connotation, which means that it's a conflation of a description and a moral judgement, and I don't accept the moral judgement. It's based on the implicit belief that it's wrong for some people to have more power or resources than others, but this is a belief that is not in accord with reality. Society requires an uneven distribution of power and resources to be dynamic and thus be able to respond effectively to environmental pressures. The environment sets certain requirements, and some people have abilities that meet those requirements better than others. A fit society is one that is able to shift power and resources to those people, thus amplifying their abilities.

Objection #8: You can't reject a belief system that was instrumental in the abolishment of slavery and in women's rights.

There's no question that secular morality was instrumental in the abolishment of slavery and in women's rights. Throughout much of human history the belief was that various groups of people were fundamentally different: men and women, aristocrats and farmers, Europeans and Asians and Africans and native Americans. It seemed that way because they are different on the outside. Men and women are physically different. People of different ethnicities have different skin colour and other physical traits. Aristocrats and farmers talk and act and dress differently. So it *seems* like they really are categorically different. Secular morality challenged this. First by challenging the distinction between aristocrats and farmers, eventually leading to a breakdown of the class structure that had been prevalent in Europe through the middle ages. Then by challenging the distinction between ethnicities, eventually leading to the abolishment of slavery. And then finally by challenging the distinction between men and women, eventually leading to women's rights. Roughly speaking, one could say that secular morality made a claim that humans were more equal than they appeared, and that this was proven when they were given the chance to prove it. This is a big part of why secular morality became so popular. There's no reason to deny any of this. The point is that it's irrelevant. Just as it's irrelevant that Christianity helped end human sacrifice and tribal warfare. As science progresses, we develop better descriptions of the world, which in turn allows us to deal with it better. Those two things go together. Therefore, secular morality will be replaced by amoralism, I believe.

Objection #9: Science proves that freewill is an illusion, and therefore inequality is unjust.

It's a common assumption across the political spectrum that (lack of) freewill and altruism are tied together. The idea is that if people don't have freewill, they aren't responsible for their wealth and therefore don't deserve to have more of it than anyone else. It's an idea that is widely alluded to in the social sciences, often under the guise of derivative theories, but is rarely stated directly. Perhaps the best example of this is the work of John Rawls. In my opinion, this issue is a prime example of how social scientists selectively take observations and theories that support their moral beliefs and then

present them as science, rather than conduct an unbiased search for truth. Let's examine the issue, going directly at its core rather than at derivative theories.

The argument goes like this:

(1) It is unjust if people are punished or rewarded for something they weren't responsible for.

(2) Having more resources than someone else is a form of reward, and having fewer is a form of punishment.

(3) Being responsible for something requires acting freely.

(4) Science proves that people don't act freely.

(5) Therefore, no one is ever responsible for anything.

(6) Therefore, it is unjust for anyone to be punished or rewarded for anything.

(7) Therefore, it is unjust for anyone to have more resources than anyone else.

When we write the argument out like this we see that something is not quite right. If it's unjust for anyone to be punished for anything, do we want to shut down all our jails? Of course not, that would lead to chaos. The issue here is that humans have historically interpreted the world through a moral framework, where concepts like freewill, responsibility, blame, guilt, and justice are tightly connected, so removing one of them warps the entire framework. If you just declare freewill an illusion and remove it from the framework, everything else falls apart, and the framework is unable to describe anything. Removing the concept of freewill without addressing the concept of justice serves only one purpose: activism. It provides a tool for people who want to remove resource inequalities under the guise of science. Now, science is hard, and you can't expect people to solve problems immediately, but the extent to which this issue hasn't even been challenged in the social sciences is a consequence of their bias, in my opinion.

What *is* the answer? Once we accept that morality is an interpretation of underlying, functional behaviour, the problem goes away. 'Justice' is a term we use to describe behavioural patterns that humans have evolved to correct behaviour detrimental to societal well-being. 'Freewill' is a term we use to describe corrective accuracy, i.e., the extent to which we can narrow down our correction to particular causes or have to treat someone as a black box. These terms work well in everyday situations, but break down when we take them beyond that, for example into political philosophy. In these instances, we need to replace morality with a functional framework. The worst mistake we can make is to half-unravel morality by removing freewill but leaving justice unaddressed. Trying to implement something like that would lead to collapse.

So no, accepting that freewill is an illusion, which science seems to suggest, should not lead to removal of resource inequalities. On the contrary, a functional framework without freewill allows for a better understanding of why resource inequalities *do* exist.

Objection #10: Naturalism is false, and therefore so is amoralism.

Amoralism, as I've presented it in this paper, relies on two main claims: 1) that the world consists entirely of many small, simple processes, which combine to form complex processes, with the combination process itself explained by evolutionary theory, and 2) that morality is a simplistic attempt to describe some of this by use of a court analogy. The first claim, naturalism, is not particular to this paper; it's a widely-held belief based on hundreds of years of systematic scientific discovery. The second claim *is* particular, so I've devoted most of this paper to explaining it. But what if the first claim is false? It's certainly possible. There are some strangely difficult philosophical and scientific problems that, in my opinion, should at least give one pause before declaring naturalism true, despite the abundance of scientific evidence. And if naturalism is false maybe there really is a cosmic court. The problem, though, is that not only does one have to show that naturalism is false, one also has to explain the two phenomena covered in this paper: male alienation and the failures of communism. If there is some cosmic law dictating that altruism is the highest virtue, why do we see the two aforementioned phenomena? They seem to be so much easier explained through a simple functional framework: individualism, competitiveness and other related behaviour are necessary functions for a robust and dynamic society; that has been true throughout human evolution and is still true today. Why would a cosmic court dictate laws that are so much in conflict with how nature works?