

inverse insight?

good?” And I honestly answer them, “There is nothing in history that has not done any good. It doesn’t exist; the question is meaningless.” It’s like asking, well you know, “This guy, it’s true he raped three girls and two boys, murdered four of the five, but there’s a good side to everybody.”

13:00

Well, it doesn’t meaning anything. We all have moral bank-accounts and if they’re deeply in the red, they’re deeply in the red. The moral bank-account of television is bankruptcy.

Decline of the American Mind, etc.

And there was one other development: widespread college attendance. It has enfeebled the American mind just as much, but much more dangerously because people who watch TV don’t assume they are brilliant. But people who do get a PhD do [Prager’s emphasis] think their brilliant—and they’re not. In fact, I have an ongoing policy on my show: when someone calls and says something particularly stupid, I then say, “I’m just curious: what graduate school did you attend?” And then they will say ... people fall in, it’s like beautiful, I feel like a straight man, it works out beautifully ... and then they say, “How do you know I went to graduate school?” And I say, “Well, it’s not meant to insult you” because

14:00

I never insult callers or guests. “But you had to go to graduate school to say something that stupid.” [Light laughter]

I mean that, by the way. You have to have gone to college to belief that men and women are basically the same. My grandmother, who didn’t graduate elementary school, understood men and women better than most PhDs in women’s studies. I mean that literally; I do not mean that hyperbolically. They don’t understand anything. If you get a PhD in the liberal arts, I assume you’re foolish. There are exceptions. Of course there are, I’m not foolish. But they are exceptions. And it’s like getting a PhD in Howdy Doody, alright. But nobody who gets a PhD in Howdy Doody thinks they’re brilliant. But if you get one from college or university you do think that.

15:00

These two developments have been horrific, widespread college attendance, because I remember—I’ll never forget when I was about late teens, early twenties, so I guess I was already at college—I was having a meal at my parent’s house and there was another couple there with their child, something to that effect. Anyway, the child was yelling at the parents, and I don’t mean disrespectfully but was so to speak yelling at the parents, “Look, dad. You just don’t understand. You didn’t go to college.” The father was entirely right about what he was saying, but he was intimidated because his son went to college. And so his son, who had already been indoctrinated into the very opposite values of his father—never have so many people paid so much money to have children become alienated from their values. This has never occurred in the history of mankind until modern American society. I would say Western Europeans, but Western Europeans are not traditional so they don’t find, don’t feel that their kids are alienated from their values; they’re just being reinforced.

a fundamental institutional change

16:00

These two developments have been horrific. We truly do believe ... our intent, when we give reading material—and by the way, Jonah has done some work at Prager U as well; there’s a lot of symbiosis here—we intend to provide reading lists. And so eventually, in not in a far distant future, I will be able to say, under penalty of perjury, that you will learn more about life going to Prager University for free than going to Stanford University for fifty thousand dollars. And by the

moral courage

Doctrine: “moral bank-accounts”—*somewhere there is a “bank” and a “bank manager”* who is keeping track of each individuals “bank-account” (God); acknowledges that no-one is perfectly good or evil, but a mixture of the two where good and evil are so entwined in human affairs that eliminating evil while retaining good is impossible (consequence of a belief in ethical monotheism).

Result is Arrogance: self-righteousness, value-signaling, delusional, unearned merit, self-centered, prone to group-think—that is, not wise and not good, in direct opposition to Prager’s foundational stance and his gut reaction to lies.

Intellectually converted? Prefers truth over lies, over stupidly, over brains (wisdom/goodness)[not Lonergan’s critical realism, but ideas tested against reality non-the-less].

Great respect for human dignity, not in the abstract but in the concrete; so no insults, only a gentle and polity way of informing people that they are idiots.

Exposed to Rousseau, Frankfurt’s school’s critical theory, narrative *is* reality, ethical relativeness, etc.

Why “horrific”? The short answer is that a university education trains students to believe in a “hundred impossible things before breakfast” [Alice and the Red Queen]. The long answer, open to Lonergan people, is that universities are increasingly inauthentic institutions where one is **trained to ignore the transcendental precepts.** In other words, one is education to be less open to experience (snowflakes and safe spaces), less intelligent in understanding (ideologically constrained by political correctness), unreasonable when judging (in a relative world, all morality rests on feelings), and certainly incapable of being responsible members of society (antifa, #myspace, “racists” and “imperialists”).

This is a radical break in history. History provides an extensive body of knowledge and experience tested down through time; **loose access to this and a society is left vulnerable to fads, fantasies, and the unscrupulous actions of nefarious people.** Under such conditions, dictators and tyrants can rewrite history as they go along according to the demands of the day (socialism is very attractive, once the lessons of the past have been put in the dustbin of history.) This leaves the vast majority of people in a **highly unstable mental condition,** for no one knows what is or will be the “politically correct” thinking either now or in the future. (Satan’s gas-lighting) It is interesting that the two longest surviving cultures are those of the **Jews and the Chinese,** both are merit-orientated (transcendental precepts) with a long history.

way I only say Stanford because we just got a letter from a graduate of Stanford who said that to us: "I learned more at Prager University than four years at Stanford." That's if you care about wisdom. Obviously, you're not going to learn more math, physics, or botany at Prager University. I think you would learn more

17:00
currently a hot topic

if you read National Review's web site then if you went to college. It's not just us. Why that's happened is a subject, part of the reason for the pessimism for the Western world.

I want to say a word about pessimism. I am pessimistic. I am also the happy pessimist you will ever meet. So how is it possible to be happy and pessimistic?

Now, you may or may not know, I've devoted a great deal of time to the subject of happiness. I wrote a book that has sold very well, Happiness Is a Serious Problem. Touched a lot of lives, apparently. And my "happiness hour" on my radio show, that I have *never* [Prager's emphasis] canceled, the second hour on Friday. I broadcast my happiness hour the week of 9/11. That was a Tuesday, if I recall correctly. And on Friday I still did my happiness hour and I made a point. The whole point of a happiness hour is how you can be happy in light of how much suffering there is. To have canceled the happiness hour would have giving in!

18:00 Then I have nothing to say! The whole point of why I titled my book *Happiness Is a Serious Problem*. Harper-Collins hated the title; they said it was a downer. And I'll never forget my discussion with them. I said, "I just want to know, is it true?" "Yeah, of course, it's a serious problem!" "Thank you, that's the title." And that remained the title. But I had to fight for it because it was a downer.

1 But it's true. Anyway, it's true because the world is in a terrible shape; it's
2 always been in terrible shape; except there was reason for optimism. And now
3 there isn't much reason for optimism because the good guys are losing. We're
losing the most important country for goodness ever invented: the United States
of America. And Western Europe is essentially lost, but it's been lost essentially

19:00 since World War I. It gave up on itself after World War I. America gave up on itself after college and the Viet Nam war, and we're just trailing Europe by about a

why? generation. But most intellectuals think Western Europe is a great place.

So here is my argument.

PART II

Virtually everything good in the human species has come from Western civilization.

Incidentally, just for the record, I'm well aware of a lot of evil that has taken place in Western civilization. I wrote a book, which is now in its third edition with Simon and Schuster—coming out its third edition I think next week or last week, I don't recall—*Why the Jews? The Reason for Antisemitism*. I know how Jews have been treated in Western civilization; I wrote a book on it, as it happens. So I am not oblivious to the amount of evil that has taken place in the West.

20:00 However, evil is ubiquitous; evil is universal. The only question mature people, which disqualifies most professors—and I don't mean that as a throwaway line, it does disqualify them. They stay in that profession because colleges are Kindergartens. The only difference between kindergarten and college is the age of the kinder. That is the biggest single difference. So mature people don't ask, "Well" or say, "Look at all the evil!" They say, "Why is there any good?" Good is the outlier, not evil. Slavery was universal; child sacrifice was universal, human sacrifice generally was universal; poverty was universal. So the only mature

differentiated mind?

Hope is one of the virtues (faith, hope, and charity) that come from religious belief. With no god, and with no hope of relief, the world is a dismal place indeed.

The problem of suffering: why do people suffer? Can suffering be avoided? Ignored? Is suffering bad, or is it in some way good (free will)? Avoided, or embraced? (NB. Christianity's "suffering servant.") In any case, it shows that Prager does not block himself from either his own or other's suffering (openness to experience). Humility, but not virtue-signaling?

Loss of hope: Prager is renewed by the honoring the Sabbath, something that allows him to set aside worldly concerns and concentrate on the transcendental realm of meaning. The significance of the generational break for him is that it is **a break from ethical monotheism in favor of a "satanic" anti-religion "atheism" held with all the fever of a devoted religious**. The good guys are represented by the founders of the republic; the bad guys are those who reject such constitutional foundations in favor of a "living constitution" capable of being redefined according to the demands of an elite. **This represents a loss of the law as applicable to all**, for such an "elite" are no longer subject to a law that they can rewrite and reinterpret at will. Judaism is built around the law.

Evil is universal; good is not. This is a fundamental doctrine emerging from Prager's foundational stance re the rarity of wisdom. It leads directly to question, **"Why is there any good in the world?"** The obvious answer, given his foundations, is the **moral revelation** of a single, universal, and transcendent God.

This shift from the need to explain evil to the need to explain the presence of good in the world removes all ethical relativism and grounds morality in revelation. **When phrased in that way, it becomes evident that any moral progress that has been made in human affairs derives from Judeo-Christian traditions**—and of those nations whose roots lie in that tradition, only the United States founders can make the claim that America was constructed around such a prophetic journey. This statement can be verified through a knowledge of history.