



## Clanking Chains: Contrasting the Conception of Legitimate Motivation between “Tragic” & “Anointed” Visions: Incentives v. Dispositions

We continue now as Sowell discusses the differences between the Tragic Vision and the Vision of the Anointed:

These differences are not random happenstances. They are systematic differences that follow logically from fundamental differences in underlying assumptions, beginning with assumptions about the nature of human beings and the range of possibilities open to them. All these particular differences between the two visions turn ultimately on differences about human limitations and their corollaries. (pp. 104-105)

As a contemporary writer has noted:

Liberalism in America and worldwide has great faith in modifying human behavior by adjusting “underlying social conditions” to make people desire the right thing instead of the wrong thing. In its clearest form, this is the response to crime control by liberals, who are not much interested in tougher sentences, improved security devices, better-armed and equipped police, more escape-proof prisons—they seek to change society or the malefactors, so that people will not want to commit crime. This is also the form of the liberal solution to most foreign policy problems—we should behave in a better manner and reorder the world so that the urge to war will be reduced, and mankind will live in better harmony. [B. Bruce Griggs, *The War against the Automobile* (New York: E. P. Hutton, 1977), p. 125.]

Police, prisons, etc., represent only trade-offs, while creating a society in which crime is prevented from arising in the first place is a solution. Not only today, but for more than two centuries, both crime and war have been seen, by those with the vision of the anointed, as things to be deterred by changing people’s dispositions rather than by confronting them with retaliatory capabilities that provide incentives against crime or war. (p. 107)

One of the reasons that our citizens are unable to distinguish the subtleties of the Invisible War is the lack of an advanced vocabulary. If you cannot efficiently interpret the articles, editorials, writings, and speeches of the illuminati then you will either misunderstand their message or ignore it altogether. Further, it will be difficult to understand an exposition such as Dr. Sowell’s.

Take for example his contrast of those who subscribe to the Tragic Vision and the Vision of the Anointed. The former he classifies as those whose “conception of proper motivation” is based on “incentives.” The latter he defines as those whose conception of proper motivation is based on “dispositions.” Here are the precise definitions of these words:

1) Incentive:

***Oxford English Dictionary, 1:1400:***

Latin: *incendere*, to kindle or set a fire. **A. 1.** Having the quality of arousing to action. **2.** Having the property of kindling or setting on fire. **B.** Something that arouses to action; an exciting cause or motive; provocation, ‘spur.’

***American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 664:***

Something inciting to action or effort, as the fear of punishment or the expectation of reward.

***Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 608, 774:***

**Syn.** See Motive.



**s.v. “motive”:**

Something that causes a person to act. (p. 608)

**Syn:** Motive: Implies a desire operating on the will and causing it to act. Incentive: Applies to an external influence (as an expected reward) inciting to action. (p. 774)

What distinguishes “incentive” from “motive” is positional. Incentive is something external that in turn motivates one to act. For example, an incentive for executing the Christian way of life is the doctrine of escrow blessings. It is knowledge of this external that motivates the volition to act, i.e., consistent advance in the double column phalanx toward spiritual maturity. Thus, a realistic expectation of reward is a legitimate motivation for consistency in the spiritual life.

In the context of Dr. Sowell’s commentary, those who subscribe to the Tragic Vision view mankind as fallen and, in the words of James Madison, are “more evil than good.” Therefore, this conception of human nature requires that laws be passed that hold people personally accountable by means of penalty clauses for behaviors that emerge from an unrestrained sinful nature. Convictions under “due process” result in the imposition of fines, damages, jail time, prison, and even execution in case of capital crimes.

However, those who subscribe to the Vision of the Anointed base their conception of human motivation on one’s “disposition”:

2) Disposition:

**American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 380:**

1. One’s customary manner of emotional response. 2. A tendency, especially when habitual.

**Synonyms:** *Disposition* is equivalent to an habitual frame of mind. *Personality* is the sum of distinctive traits or characteristics of a person that give him individuality, especially in his relationships with other persons. *Nature* suggests those inherent (or intrinsic) qualities that determine characteristic behavior or emotional response in people.

**Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 365:**

**2 a:** Prevailing tendency, mood, or inclination. **b.** Temperamental makeup. **c.** The tendency of something to act in a certain manner under given circumstances.

**Syn.:** **DISPOSITION:** Implies customary moods and attitude toward the life around one. **TEMPER:** Implies the qualities acquired through experience that determine how a person or group meets difficulties or handles situations. **CHARACTER:** Applies to the aggregate of moral qualities by which a person is judged apart from his intelligence, competence, or special talents.

Those who follow the Vision of the Anointed believe that the “dispositions” of those who cause social problems are “habitual” and result in “predictable behaviors.” Such types will not respond to “incentives” based on the expectation of fine, punishment, imprisonment, or even the death penalty.

Instead, the “environment” in which the person is reared or presently lives serves to form dispositions that lead to crime. If a person’s dispositions can be changed, either through psychotherapy or by altered social conditions, then he will “lose the desire” to commit crime. This is just one of the motivations to correct perceived inequities in income, education, housing, etc.



Dr. Sowell elaborates on quite a number of contrasts between the two worldviews of the Tragic and the Anointed. Time does not permit us to examine them in their proper detail so I will leave that to your research.

We will conclude our quotes from Dr. Sowell by giving an illustration pertinent to our study and his summary of the two visions. First the illustration:

**Sowell, Thomas. "Crusades of the Anointed." Chap. 6 in *The Vision of the Anointed*. (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 172-75:**

The family is inherently an obstacle to schemes for central control of social processes. Therefore, the anointed necessarily find themselves repeatedly on a collision course with the family. The preservation of the family as an autonomous decision-making unit is incompatible with the third-party decision making that is at the heart of the vision of the anointed. The incidence of various problems in families is overstated by artful definitions and half-truths. For example, alarmist stories in the media about domestic violence often lump together husbands and boyfriends as "partners" who batter women, when in fact a woman who heads her own household is nearly three times as likely to be beaten as a wife is. Separated, divorced, and never-married women are all more likely to be beaten than a wife is. In other words, the traditional family is the safest setting for a woman—though that is not the message which the anointed seek to convey.

Because the traditional family nor any other setting is perfectly safe, there will always be examples of "battered wives," just as there are battered husbands, battered bachelors, and battered women in lesbian relations. Given that all categories of human beings are both victims and perpetrators of violence, the question is not whether anyone can be absolutely safe from assault but who is more likely or less likely to be victimized. The least likely of all victims is a wife. Men and single women are assaulted more often. Yet the impression spread by those with the vision of the anointed is just the opposite.

It is the [social] setting of unmarried sex partners—the "nontraditional family," as the anointed put it—that is especially violent. A study of men charged with domestic violence found that the offender was typically young, unmarried, and either unemployed or working in a blue-collar job. Other studies indicate that alcohol and drugs are involved in most cases. Ozzie and Harriet are not the problem, though what they represent is a target of the anointed, who seek to undermine the autonomy of families, in order to promote the moral surrogacy which is at the heart of their vision. [NOTE: ser'-o-ga-see': to serve as a substitute mother.]

Among the family decisions which various political crusades are attempting to transfer to third parties are:

1. What age, in what manner, and with what moral principles sex is to be taught to children.
2. What general moral and social philosophy shall be taught to children.
3. Whether a child shall have an abortion.
4. Whether an agreement can be made for surrogate motherhood.