

# Anomaly UK

Anomalous Opinions

## Introduction to the Neoreaction

Generally, when I'm asked to explain "What is a neoreactionary?" (perhaps using alternative terms such as nu-reaction or the Dark Enlightenment), my response is to point elsewhere, at [Moldbug](#) or at [Nick Land](#), or even at [Scott Alexander's](#) outsider's view.

However, good sources though they are, they're not always appropriate. They're all extremely verbose. Moldbug and Alexander are really writing for very politically aware progressives, and Land is even more abstruse. Moldbug is the Jeremy Clarkson of political philosophy: while I find his style of presentation highly enjoyable, there's no doubt that many others find it unbearable.

So maybe we need a more concise introduction.

### The Concise Introduction

For five hundred years, there have been attempt to reorder human society on the basis that hereditary privilege, and many other kinds of inequality between humans, are unjust. Reformers have attempted to alter systems of government and other institutions of society with the goal of reducing or eliminating these injustices.

These reformers have consistently underestimated the difficulty of getting people to cooperate in a society. The intellectual techniques of science and engineering that produced miracles in terms of manipulating the natural world, have, time after time, failed catastrophically to improve the lives of humans through changing government and society.

There are a number of reasons for this: For one thing, humans are much more complex than any of the parts and tools with which engineers have made machines. They will not fit in where they are put. Attempts to persuade or compel them to fit into the machine have to be built into the machine themselves, and end up changing the functioning of the machine so much that it no longer achieves its intended goal.

Most importantly, humans have evolved to compete for influence and power, by violence and by deceit. Any reform which attempts to limit or remove the power of the holders of power creates a competition for that power, which will lead to spectacular efforts by everybody else to win it. The innovations that will be produced by such high-stakes competition are impossible to predict or plan for.

Meanwhile, developments in technology have improved people's lives so much that the calamitous decline in quality of government has been disguised. All mainstream political factions are intellectual descendants of the original reformers, and none have any interest in fairly comparing present-day government with traditional government. Those that are called "conservatives" are only reformers who oppose the most recently enacted or proposed reforms: none of them question the principle or the intellectual basis of progressivism.

Most neoreactionary writing consists of detailed criticism of particular progressive reforms, with particular emphasis on the flaws in one specific idea — [democracy](#).

Ultimately, however, if after all these centuries of trying to improve society based on abstract ideas of justice have only made life worse than it would have been under pre-Enlightenment social systems, the time has come to simply give up the whole project and revert to traditional forms whose basis we might not be able to establish rationally, but which have the evidence of history to support them.

### Neoreaction for Reactionaries

Some of the inquiries I spoke of at the beginning have come from old-fashioned reactionaries. The short answer for them is that it doesn't matter. Neoreaction is not a new, better form of reaction that you should be upgrading to — rather, you've found a short-cut past what for us has generally been a long and laborious

journey, one that has mostly passed through libertarianism or other forms of liberalism. A lot of our discussion will seem wrong-headed to you, and your theology is mostly irrelevant to us, but when the subject is more immediately practical, we are likely to be closer together.

 anomalyuk / April 7, 2013 / Main / anti-democracy, highlight

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## 7 thoughts on “Introduction to the Neoreaction”

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 Miklos Hollender

June 5, 2013 at 4:33 pm

One question, mostly about democracy and competition to power. Do I understand it right? That in a monarchical rule for example if the ruler really sucks, there will be a revolution anyway. Of course in the case of typical modern tyrants who arm and pay their own armies it is hard, but in more traditional systems where the army of a state is basically a militia of armed citizens it is fairly easy to revolt. So lack of competition for power does not mean the ruler may be a tyrant and do anything. Similarly, democracy is not the only chance to stop tyrants.

Now, do I get that right that democracy basically makes revolution constant? Instead of a revolution being a special, rare thing for cases when the ruler is really bad, once every ten generations, it becomes a constant stage of living in?

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 anomalyuk 

June 9, 2013 at 4:54 am

The hope is for a ruler who is hard to overthrow, and which will thus be able to concentrate on ruling effectively (in his own interest) rather than securing power and persecuting dissidents.

"Tyranny" is generally a smaller problem for Monarchy than incompetence is. There is some level of incompetence that will make revolution possible, but you would hope to live your whole life without ever experiencing that. People who remember other forms of government, like democracy, would put up with a bad King rather than damage the system just to get rid of him.

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**Miklos Hollender**

July 23, 2013 at 11:35 am

But... many people are content with democracy. I mean the core issue is human quality. The average person wants nothing but the treacherous freedom to pursue his own petty subjective desires + the a leg up from government, preferably in a form of free money. Democracy is happy to deliver that.

So either we find a way to improve human quality first, or we will have to wait until it collapses and then the argument will not be that there is something better than democracy, but rather than democracy is inherently unstable.

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**TomA**

February 6, 2014 at 3:06 am

I can understand the concept of a social structure with a single individual holding ultimate authority and responsibility. Nothing new there. If the monarchy mechanism is so much better than the alternatives, then why aren't the world's most powerful countries ruled by monarchs? It seems to me that Darwinism would have sorted this out already.

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**anomalyuk** 🧑

February 6, 2014 at 7:12 am

@TomA — that's a good first question. The answer is that the ideology of democracy got so popular that even Kings started to believe it.

- \* [Recap of the fall of Monarchism](#)
- \* [Failure modes of monarchy](#)
- \* [Blame the devil](#)

Weakened by the bad ideology, the final destruction of monarchy in the developed world was at Versailles. (I see the first world war as largely an ideological war against monarchy by the democratic countries, though geopolitical rivalries put the Russian Empire on the wrong side. That's debatable, but that the settlement at Versailles was deliberately meant to eliminate monarchy isn't).

The obvious next question after that is why the better-functioning governments in the world today are democracies. That's also covered in the blog, e.g. [Two Kinds of Democracy](#). The brief view: successful democracies are not as democratic as they look, though they get more democratic, and less effective, over time. Britain has only been what people today would call a democracy for a hundred years.

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 **Anonymous**

March 4, 2014 at 2:20 pm

I cannot fathom the full depths of thought and wisdom spewed forth by you, MM, NL and your ilk, such as you are. I do get your points, and cannot, even as devil's advocate, effectively refute the ideas you put forth. In other words, yeah, my little noggin see a bit of sense in your thoughts.

However, in the case of just one geopolitical entity, the USA, if you could roll back the clock to, say 1780, and you could influence the writing of the constitution, but knew that you wouldn't 'win' the argument for a non-republican system, what would you have tried to change in the constitution to stave off, if not eliminate, the democratic virus that plagues the USA today?

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 **Anonymous**

November 12, 2014 at 5:37 pm

hey hey hey AUK.....

do you not have an answer to my previous question about the USA and tweaking it's Constitution? Thanks.

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