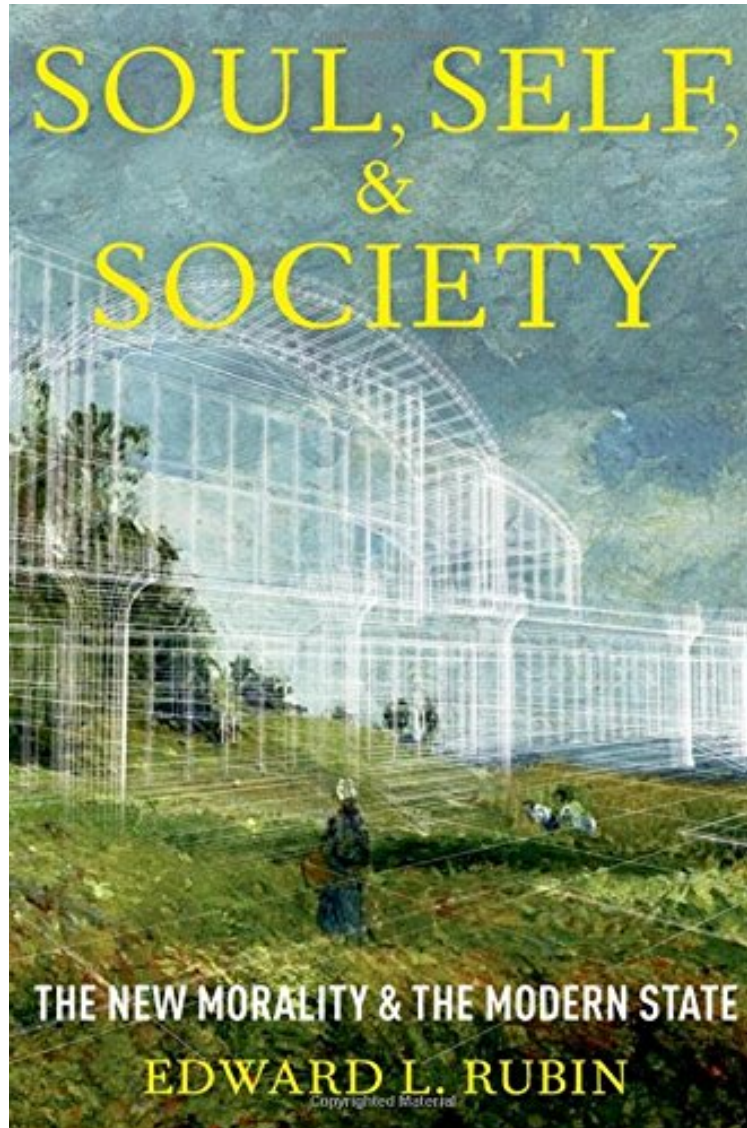


[Download] Soul, Self, and Society: The New Morality and the Modern State

Soul, Self, and Society: The New Morality and the Modern State

Edward L. Rubin

*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#544032 in Books 2015-03-13 Original language: English PDF # 1 6.40 x 1.60 x 9.30l, .0 #File Name: 0199348650504 pages | File size: 63.Mb

Edward L. Rubin : Soul, Self, and Society: The New Morality and the Modern State before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Soul, Self, and Society: The New Morality and the Modern State:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant analysis of how we got to here. By Ray KeckI just finished "Soul, Self, and Society." What a joy, very much like what I felt when reading Louis Menand's "The Metaphysical Club." In Rubin's hands, like Menand's, every sentence moves us forward. Even before reflecting critically upon his

central arguments, the reader is thoroughly engaged and even dazzled by wonderfully fresh framings of familiar topics.... and the prose! Does anyone else writing today use use thrilling vocabulary with such ease and lack of pretension? Tesselates, abrading realities, imbricating, quondam (adj), chthonic survival, diadem of definitude, supererogatory, cabin (verb). And then the philological tidbits: chattel-cattle, shire-reeve. In addition, Rubin writes with a combination of seriousness and humor seldom found in this sort of discussion: "To attribute the beginning of the process by which the Church's influence declined to St. Francis, who never expressed anything but reverence for the priesthood and papacy, would be indulging an excessive thirst for paradox." Or, "...ten percent thought that Noah's wife was Joan of Arc." And Rubin gathers so many seemingly disparate yet pivotal moments of Western experience: Wordsworth's daffodils, Roland, Rodrigo Daz el Cid. Rubin also summons many lingering, disturbing truths we must survive, such as Alan Turing's fate. He writes with the clarity of a great teacher, varying his sentence structure to land, forcefully and unexpectedly, on his central points: "The principle of equality does not obviate the need to make difficult choices, of course; it is morality not magic." Or simply brilliant insights: "The crimes of child abuse, spousal abuse, and marital rape are products of High Modernity and its morality of self-fulfillment." Rubin's argument is so wonderfully clear: Western society organized itself first around a morality first of honor, then of higher purposes, and finally of self-fulfillment. In brilliant application of contemporary usage to an ancient custom, Rubin refers to the "outsourcing" of government in the Early Middle Ages, each regional lord commanding his land and people with little national identity. To illustrate the code of honor and its evolution, Rubin discusses in some detail the famous "Poema de Myo Cid," how rough treatment from his king cannot shake el Cid's sense of duty to his lord. In the High Middle Ages, that code of honor shifts to a morality of "higher purposes," with ensuring eternal salvation by accepting one's place in the heavenly-ordained order here. Then, in the eighteenth century, with the American revolution, the third shift, to a morality of self-fulfillment, each man (and eventually each woman) entitled to define for himself or herself "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It is easy to see, following Rubin's analysis, how the social issues which so divide us are, in the end, competing attempts at self-fulfillment. One understands, reading Rubin's masterful study, how each of these moral orders endures, like Neanderthal DNA, in our bodies and in our lives. Religious fanaticism, never completely absent from even the most advanced thinking, reminds us how the morality of higher purposes inspires pitiless abuse of those outside the tribe; tribal assertions to counter nationalism in its best sense abound on Texas bumper stickers screaming SECEDE; Catalans and Scots pursue "independence" even when sober economic analysis suggests the folly of separation. Gay marriage and reproductive rights, gender identification, shifting views of marriage and childbearing---all emerge as Rubin reminds us of the political implications of our founding principles. Only once in reading did I feel at odds with an assertion: John Paul II was for progressive Catholics not "associated with reform." Yes, he fought communists; he also squelched nuns and refused even to allow a discussion of birth control, celibate clergy, ordination of women, reconciliation for divorced Catholics. When his archives are finally opened, in the 2080s, we may, I fear, discover embarrassing truths, rather like what we now know of Father Pacelli's manipulation of Pius XI and the Jewish question. And John Paul, inexplicably, refused to bring Father Maciel, founder of the Legionarios de Cristo, to account, a sick, predatory monster. Rubin has given us the vocabulary and conceptual framework to recognize the origins of our judgments, how our institutions have evolved at the intersection of morality and governance, and therefore how to interrogate those precepts and instantiations. Robert E. Lee came long after Roland, Oliveros, and Rodrigo Daz, but his decision to hang with Virginia---home and hearth---comports very well with Rubin's description of that received notion of honor, of privatized governance. Lee no doubt viewed Jefferson Davis very much the way el Cid understood Alfonso VI. This book and its central theses should undergird and frame public policy discussions, informing political decisions: The reader ends this book in profound gratitude to Rubin's first-rate mind, submitting itself to the discipline of argument and ordered thought. J.S. Bach offering us a massive fugue. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great mind By Olive I ended up giving this book away although I did like what I read of it. Edward Rubin has a great mind and I appreciate his writing this book. I just could not really get into it. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A book for our age By J.J.M. Very informative and thoroughly enjoyable. Helped me to better understand why other people have certain world views and how their systems of morality developed over time. Helped me to put my own values and moral system in better perspective. In our diverse society and world, where we all need to cooperate and understand each other better, this book could not have come at a better time. I hope it is widely read.

Political and social commentators regularly bemoan the decline of morality in the modern world. They claim that the norms and values that held society together in the past are rapidly eroding, to be replaced by permissiveness and empty hedonism. But as Edward Rubin demonstrates in this powerful account of moral transformations, these prophets of doom are missing the point. Morality is not diminishing; instead, a new morality, centered on an ethos of human self-fulfillment, is arising to replace the old one. As Rubin explains, changes in morality have gone hand in hand with changes in the prevailing mode of governance throughout the course of Western history. During the Early Middle Ages, a moral system based on honor gradually developed. In a dangerous world where state power was declining, people relied on bonds of personal loyalty that were secured by generosity to their followers and violence against their

enemies. That moral order, exemplified in the early feudal system and in sagas like *The Song of Roland*, *The Song of the Cid*, and the Arthurian legends has faded, but its remnants exist today in criminal organizations like the Mafia and in the rap music of the urban ghettos. When state power began to revive in the High Middle Ages through the efforts of the European monarchies, and Christianity became more institutionally effective and more spiritually intense, a new morality emerged. Described by Rubin as the morality of higher purposes, it demanded that people devote their personal efforts to achieving salvation and their social efforts to serving the emerging nation-states. It insisted on social hierarchy, confined women to subordinate roles, restricted sex to procreation, centered child-rearing on moral inculcation, and countenanced slavery and the marriage of pre-teenage girls to older men. Our modern era, which began in the late 18th century, has seen the gradual erosion of this morality of higher purposes and the rise of a new morality of self-fulfillment, one that encourages individuals to pursue the most meaningful and rewarding life-path. Far from being permissive or a moral abdication, it demands that people respect each other's choices, that sex be mutually enjoyable, that public positions be allocated according to merit, and that society provide all its members with their minimum needs so that they have the opportunity to fulfill themselves. Where people once served the state, the state now functions to serve the people. The clash between this ascending morality and the declining morality of higher purposes is the primary driver of contemporary political and cultural conflict. A sweeping, big-idea book in the vein of Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History*, Charles Taylor's *The Secular Age*, and Richard Sennett's *The Fall of Public Man*, Edward Rubin's new volume promises to reshape our understanding of morality, its relationship to government, and its role in shaping the emerging world of High Modernity.

A brilliant book that is stunning in its originality. Professor Rubin powerfully describes a shift in this country from a moral system of 'higher purposes' to an emerging one of 'self-fulfillment.' He links this to a major change in how government operates in the United States and to almost every major social issue. This is a tremendously important work about the nature of American government and American society.---Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean, University of California Irvine School of Law