

**Victor Davis Hanson:** In antiquity the Greeks assumed that humans were by nature dangerous. The pre-Christian idea was similar to Christianity: they were fallen creatures and only the law and culture separated them from their nature. Nature versus culture. So, Greek historians for example were very keen on finding historical examples when what they called the thin veneer of civilization was stripped off and you could see what people were really like. And the historian Thucydides was the most successful at the so-called Stasis at Corcyra which is a fancy word for the revolution on the Island of Corfu, for a variety of reasons, these revolutionary cycles continued unabated and finally there was no law, there was no custom, there was no tradition and the result as Thucydides describes, its people killed each other, they informed on their own families, they re-invented language so that words no longer meant what they should. Another example is there's a little town called Mycalessus near ancient Thebes and the Thracians came into that town and were given a blank check by their Athenian masters: do whatever you want, there's no law in the arena to punish the inhabitants of Mycalessus. And the way it devolves, Thucydides says finally they were killing women, children, even the animals were butchered, and in this example--I could cite more at Sicily or the island of Lesbos-- the common thread is that if you take away custom and law, then people will revert to their natural selves, their natural selves are not good, we are born into the world evil. Your family, your religion, your country, the shame of your larger community and that all represses your nature. We come along in the 1960s and say Rousseau was right, strip off religion, strip off family, strip off customs, strip off tradition, and you get a wonderful noble savage. Again, the problem is there's never any historical proof that humans are noble in their natural state, they're like children, they defecate on the floor or they're like convicts out in the prison yard, the rule of the strongest. So, the custom and tradition, family, community, religion are the necessary layers we pad onto our natural selves that forbid us to express ourselves naturally.