

Special Topic: The First Obama-Romney Presidential Debate

This newsletter deals only with the first Obama-Romney debate which took place on Oct 3 2012 in Denver. This is so because the potential impact of this debate for the economy is considerable. In the following I first make some theoretical remarks and then I shall interpret some important parts of the debate.

Traumatic feelings of rage, anxiety, shame and guilt, stemming from traumatic experiences in our life-times, are stored in a special part of our brain which is not connected to our speech centers. They form the core for our dissociated personality parts which I call alter egos. They are not in harmony with our reasonable personalities' explicit values system. Quite the contrary is true. Our reasonable personalities are in favor of growth (economic growth, justice, humanity, protection from abuse by mighty people/companies abusing their power, preservation of nature and environment and so on.)

Our alter egos do not have such preferences. In order to get rid of the traumatic feelings people have to avoid contact with their traumatized inner child and the connected traumatic feelings. An efficient way of defense against those feelings is the identification with the almighty abuser and/or stand up for the propagation of self-hatred in the world. Therefore some people become criminals, murdering and hurting other people as adults. Most of us choose a different approach. We prefer to act out our traumas in groups and nations where we do not have to assume individual responsibility. We, or more precisely, our alter egos do this by giving support to policies and politicians who pursue goals in the interest of our alter egos. I call such policies "alter ego policies" and such politicians "agents of our alter egos". The goals of self-hatred can not be expressed explicitly because that would irritate our reasonable personality parts which is not helpful for the fulfillment of our alter ego' needs. Furthermore they are unconscious. You have to derive their true goals from analyzing their explicitly expressed goals and take into consideration the arbitrariness of those goals and the contradictions between their manifold manifestations.

A leader of alter ego politicians can hardly be a honest person. He permanently has to veile the true intentions of alter ego policies. So they are ruthless demagogues and/or fanatic extremists. I do not know what is worse. Normally they are both, lying to you and at the same time fanatically believing in manifestations of them which could barely be upheld within a

public discourse free of violence. (Saying this I am aware that Romney's extremism is normal insofar as it corresponds to what people spontaneously think when they are uninformed and in their alter egos.)

This is so because the alter ego politicians personally have a very strong alter ego and particularly high personal defense needs against traumatic wishes. Therefore such demagogues normally can become very violent when their goals and thus also their defense is challenged. You could see this repeatedly during the first presidential debates between Obama and Romney on Oct 3 in Denver. Two examples of this pattern:

Example 1 Rude reaction of Romney after being unmasked by Obama

It came to a gaffe after Obama unmasked one of Romney's lies/twistings by citing a serious and credible study of his tax plans.

ROMNEY: ... **First of all, I don't have a \$5 trillion tax cut. I don't have a tax cut of a scale that you're talking about.** My view is that we ought to provide tax relief to people in the middle class.

...

OBAMA: When you add up all the loopholes and deductions that upper income individuals can — are currently taking advantage of — if you take those all away — you don't come close to paying for \$5 trillion in tax cuts and \$2 trillion in additional military spending. And that's why **independent studies looking at this said the only way to meet Governor Romney's pledge of not reducing the deficit — or — or — or not adding to the deficit, is by burdening middle-class families.**

...

ROMNEY: — virtually every — **virtually everything he just said about my tax plan is inaccurate.**

...

So — so if — if the tax plan he described were a tax plan I was asked to support, I'd say absolutely not. I'm not looking for a \$5 trillion tax cut. **What I've said is I won't put in place a tax cut that adds to the deficit.** That's part one. So there's no economist can say Mitt Romney's tax plan adds 5 trillion (dollars) if I say I will not add to the deficit with my tax plan.

Number two, I will not reduce the share paid by high-income individuals. I — I know that you and your running mate keep saying that, and I know it's a popular things to say with a lot of people, but it's just not the case. **Look, I got five boys. I'm used to people saying something that's not always true, but just keep on repeating it and ultimately hoping I'll believe it — (scattered laughter) — but**

that — that is not the case, all right? I will not reduce the taxes paid by high-income Americans.

Example 2 Romney's extremism and his rude reaction after being unmasked by Obama

OBAMA: **The first role of the federal government is to keep the American people safe.** That's its **most basic function.** And as commander in chief, that is something that I've worked on and thought about every single day that I've been in the Oval Office.

But I also believe that government has the capacity — the **federal government has the capacity to help open up opportunity** and create ladders of opportunity and to create frameworks where the **American people can succeed.** Look, the genius of America is the free enterprise system, and freedom, and the fact that people can go out there and start a business, work on an idea, make their own decisions.

But as **Abraham Lincoln** understood, **there are also some things we do better together.**

So in the middle of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln said, let's help to finance the Transcontinental Railroad. Let's start the National Academy of Sciences. Let's start land grant colleges, because we want to give these gateways of opportunity for all Americans, because if all Americans are getting opportunity, we're all going to be better off. That doesn't restrict people's freedom; that enhances it.

Romney's extremism shows clearly when he talks about the role of government (see next paragraph). His position is similar to that of the conservative members of the Federal Supreme Court who in spring 2012 had threatened to rule Obamacare as unconstitutional and by doing so would have pushed the society behind the times of the New Deal in the 1930s. This threat of the Supreme Court had the consequence that an ongoing economic recovery came to a halt which lasted until June when the Supreme Court decided that Obamacare was constitutional. The resumption of the recovery after this verdict led to last week's positive unemployment number. Without the unemployment number the downswing of stock prices driven by Romney's market extremism and advance in the polls would have been even worse.

ROMNEY: Well, first, I love great schools. Massachusetts, our schools are ranked number one of all 50 states. And the key to great schools: great teachers. So I reject the idea that I don't believe in great teachers or more teachers. **Every school district, every state should make that decision on their own.**

The role of government — look behind us: the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

The role of government is to promote and protect the principles of those documents. **First, life and liberty. We have a responsibility to protect the lives and liberties of our people, and that means the military, second to none. I do not believe in cutting our military. I believe in maintaining the strength of America's military.**

Second, in that line that says, we are endowed by our Creator with our rights — I believe we must maintain our commitment to religious tolerance and freedom in this country. **That statement also says that we are endowed by our Creator with the right to pursue happiness as we choose. I interpret that as, one, making sure that those people who are less fortunate and can't care for themselves are cared by — by one another.**

We're a nation that believes we're all children of the same God. And we care for those that have difficulties — those that are elderly and have problems and challenges, those that disabled, we care for them. And we look for discovery and innovation, all these things desired out of the American heart to provide the pursuit of happiness for our citizens.

But we also believe in maintaining for individuals the right to pursue their dreams, and not to have the government substitute itself for the rights of free individuals.

In the sequence Obama unveils Romney's extremism by showing up the real advantages of students assistance to which Romney reacts very rudely. The rude reaction may have been driven by compulsive needs of his because Obama was able to efficiently support policies which were reasonable but not cleansing from inner traumatic feelings. The lack of respect towards the reasonable president surely did please the alter egos of the audience and gave them relief from traumatic feelings.

OBAMA: Let me just say one final example. When it comes to making college affordable — whether it's two-year or four-year — one of the things that I did as president was we were sending \$60 billion to banks and lenders as middle men for the student loan program, even though the loans were guaranteed. So there was no risk for the banks or the lenders but they were taking billions out of the system.

And we said, why not cut out the middle man? And as a consequence, what we've been able to do is to provide millions more students assistance, lower or keep low interest rates on student loans. **And this is an example of where our priorities make a difference. Governor Romney, I genuinely believe, cares about education. But when he tells a student that, you know, you should borrow money from your parents to go to college, you know, that indicates the degree to which, you know, there may not be as much of a focus on the fact that folks like myself, folks like**

Michelle, kids probably who attend University of Denver just don't have that option.

And for us to be able to make sure that they've got that opportunity and they can walk through that door, that is vitally important — not just to those kids. **It's how we're going to grow this economy over the long term.**

MR. ROMNEY: Mr. — **Mr. President, you're entitled, as the president, to your own airplane and to your own house, but not to your own facts** — (laughter) — all right? I'm — I'm not going to cut education funding. I don't have any plan to cut education funding and grants that go to people going to college. I'm planning on continuing to grow, so I'm not planning on making changes there.

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