

Study Guide Taylor Chapter 10

In this chapter, Taylor briefly deals with the third of the malaises described in chapter 1 - the loss of freedom, or, what he calls soft despotism. As in the previous chapter, his argument on this point is very brief.

1. Using this chapter and the discussion in chapter 1, describe what Taylor means by soft despotism and b) the steps by which modern societies succumb to this tendency. The second part of this question should be a bulleted list complete with supporting quotations and page numbers.
2. Taylor writes on p. 110 that "What should have died along with communism is the belief that modern societies can be run on a single principle." Explain what Taylor means by this and what alternate re-imagining of society he seems to be proposing?
3. The theme of constant struggle is again visible in this chapter. Explain what Taylor sees as the components of this struggle with regard to the third malaises.
4. According to Taylor, can soft despotism be resisted? If the answer is yes, what form does Taylor say the resistance must take? Explain your answer carefully.
5. What does Taylor mean by fragmentation? How is this fragmentations connected to the two malaises discussed earlier - individualism and instrumental reason.
6. Taylor spends a good part of the final pages of the book discussing US politics and the impact this fragmentation has had on modern American political life. In bullet form with supporting quotations and page numbers, describe the major consequences of fragmentation on US politics .

