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Scientific Statesmanship, Governance, and the History of Political Philosophy

Edited by
Kyriakos N. Demetriou and
Antis Loizides

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Over the centuries, the question of "good" or "effective" governance has undergone several transformations and ramifications to fit within certain social, cultural, and historical contexts. What defines political knowledge? What is the measure of expert political leadership? Various interpretations, perspectives, and re-conceptualizations emerge as one moves from Plato to the present.

This edited volume explores the relationship between political expertise, which is defined as "scientific statesmanship or governance," and political leadership throughout the history of ideas. An outstanding group of experts study and analyze the ideas of significant philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Kant, Burke, Comte, and Weber, among others. The contributors aim to interpret these thinkers' approaches to "scientific statesmanship," deepening our understanding of the idea itself and decoding its theoretical complexities.

In the face of the ongoing crisis of the traditional party system and the eroding structures within the new cultural-financial and political environment in the era of globalization, tracing the connection between Plato's idealist statesmanship to twentieth-century modernist politics is an important and ever-challenging enterprise, one that promises to interest scholars of the history of Western political thought, philosophy, classics and the classical tradition, political science, and sociology.

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Preface

This volume engages with the emergence of the idea that governance is an art or craft or science in the sense that actions integral to political experience can be founded on as well as modified by reason, and hence being able to understand the principles that underlie political action is a prerequisite for achieving certain ends. At the same time, the contributors of this volume take up the theme of how particular ideas such as political wisdom and political leadership as well as the nature of political science itself have been addressed in the history of Western political philosophy—that is, in what ways the elements that constitute statesmanship have over the centuries undergone several transformations and ramifications to fit within certain contexts and historical developments. Hence, the volume neither proposes that "scientific statesmanship" is a self-contained "unit-idea," nor does it presume a notional or conceptual continuum—that is, that there are no discursive and practical breaks as one moves from Plato to Weber and that one can abstract a well-defined idea of scientific statesmanship from the work of great philosophers. However, this volume does follow the idea of "scientific statesmanship" in philosophical discussions and explores its meaning and significance in the history of political thought. Great philosophers were inspired by the Platonic ideal of "political craft" (statecraft), or the science of governance, and there is a long chain of followers behind a wide and often dissimilar range of classical appropriation. By focusing on some of the most important philosophers in the history of political thought, this book aims to bring out the ideas, conditions, contexts and actualities, or even assertions and assumptions associated with the idea that statesmanship can be scientifically pursued. The underlying rationale of this volume was that catching the connection from Plato to Weber—a challenging enterprise, to say the least— would interest those who study (from different perspectives) the history of political thought, intellectual history, philosophy, classics and the classical tradition, and political theory, as well as political science and sociology.

Edited volumes are frequently faced with methodological and structural problems. Even though this volume does focus on a particular theme, and the discussions revolve around a common axis, we have left room to the contributors to explore a variety of themes and aspects connected with

statesmanship and governance. Predictably, given certain typical logistics and space limitations, omissions were inevitable; for example, Aquinas, Locke, Hegel, Hume, Marx, and Bosanquet—to mention just a few names, without going further into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries—are not examined in the present volume. In this sense, exploring female philosophers would add another hue to the term "states*man*ship." Perhaps, a future supplement to the present volume could extend its scope and framework to deal with the vastness and inexhaustible sources related to "scientific statesmanship."

At this point, we would like to thank the distinguished panel of contributors to the volume, who have acted besides as a sort of counseling body in setting up the volume. The overall scheme and structure of the project benefited significantly from the invaluable suggestions of John Wallach, Ryan Balot, and Terence Ball. The volume is not intended to be a sort of a "companion" to the idea of "scientific statesmanship," that is, projecting "standard" interpretations or summarizing major issues and conceptualizations associated with the idea of scientific governance. So we cannot stress enough how grateful we are to the authors, not only for their encouragement and enthusiastic support, but also for being very well aware that what was expected of them was to offer fresh outlooks and challenging interpretations.

Introduction

Kyriakos N. Demetriou and Antis Loizides

I

Why is political science a science? How scientific is political science? More specifically, the question of what statesmanship is and whether or not it is a *technê*—in modern terms, a science—is as old as political theorizing. In one way or another, similar questions have surfaced and been addressed by philosophers ever since Plato's Socrates claimed that he might as well be the sole practitioner of the true political art—the only one in Athens who could practice statesmanship.[1] Let us have a closer look at this strikingly curious statement by Socrates as a way of introduction to the themes and ideas revisited and explored by the contributors of this volume.

It is well known that Athens, by entrusting the rule of the polis to the *dêmos*—notwithstanding the perceived limitations of who is a *dêmotês* (i.e., vested with the rights, duties, and privileges of a citizen) from today's standpoint—presented something of a paradox to Plato. In *Protagoras*, Plato had Socrates ask the great Sophist, who claimed to make a "good citizen" out of anyone, how the Assembly could adopt such an inconsistent position on matters of public affairs. Athenians sought the advice of specialists when the city had to take action on specific technical matters—dismissing almost routinely non-specialized and inexpert input coming from anyone "not regarded as a craftsman." That said, the Assembly could take the advice of anyone on city management: "carpenter, blacksmith, shoemaker, merchant, ship-captain, rich man, poor man, well-born, low-born—it doesn't matter—and nobody blasts him for presuming to give counsel without any prior training under a teacher."[2] In *Republic*, Socrates paints a bleaker picture of what is at stake by deploying the vivid metaphor of a ship only to emphasize what takes place within a *polis*. The ship-owner (i.e., the *dêmos*) is "bigger and stronger than everyone else on board, but he's hard of hearing, a bit short-sighted, and his knowledge of seafaring is equally deficient." Symbolically, many attempt to take control of the ship—in effect, to rule over others in a polis. And through a manipulation of some kind—deception, exploitation, trickery, or demagoguery—some do actually manage to persuade the ship-owner to put the fate of the ship into

their own hands. Dismissing all others as inept and incompetent to steer, they name themselves navigators and captains, and "rule the ship, using up what's in it and sailing in the way that people like that are prone to do." But what is a "true captain"? Socrates typically criticizes his interlocutors because "[t]hey don't understand that a true captain must pay attention to the seasons of the year, the sky, the stars, the winds, and all that pertains to his craft, if he's really to be the ruler of a ship."[3] For Plato, not only is there such a craft as statesmanship, not only are there some who can become experts in and by doing it, but also the multitude (*hoi polloi* or the *plêthos*) are incapable of practicing that craft to a high level of competency. In fact, Socrates in *Gorgias* considered himself the only one who could practice the *politikê technê* with any instrumental and productive competency.

Much of what has been said so far hinges on the meaning of *technê*. According to Charles Kahn:

> [A]n art will have investigated the nature (*phusis*) that it cares for and the causal explanation (*aitia*) of its procedures, so as to be able to give a rational account (*logos*) of both, just like the doctor who has studied the nature of the body and the causes of disease, and so can give an explanation of his treatment.[4]

At this point, a distinction emerges between theoretical, or scientific, knowledge and practical, empirical, or experiential knowledge. However, this is not to invoke the well-known Aristotelian distinction between knowledge geared for practice and knowledge geared for speculation; both practical and theoretical knowledge in the sense used here are geared for practice. Practical knowledge involves doing and acting from experience; theoretical knowledge originates in the ability to provide a rational account (*logos*) of the principles—that is, the causal underpinnings of practice. As Socrates made clear in his discussion with the sophist Gorgias, unless an art is accompanied with *logos*, it will simply be considered a skill acquired by mimesis, a routinely generalized form of imitation, a knack with no knowledge essentially associated with the "principles involved." The difference in knowledge is one that we would today draw between a spontaneous or unreflective generalization, or a generalization from an isolated incident, and a generalization that satisfies certain inductive criteria. Unlike doing from experience, a *technê* is thus universal, teachable, and precise, and also concerns itself with explanation.[5] Not only does a clear conception of causes enable one to reproduce the effect with accuracy and precision; but also, to use Plato's quoted metaphor, once the "true captain" has acquired the *logos* or mastered the theory of navigation, he can adapt to any contingent, local, or specific circumstance employing the principles that underlie the practice of the art to reach his set goal. Having such knowledge means that one can explain both one's thought process and thus account for one's actions; what is more, the true craftsman can transmit this knowledge to others.

Nevertheless, Kahn highlighted another element of Socrates's political art: "just as the doctor's procedures are teleologically subordinated to the goal of bodily health, so the theory and practice of the political art are rationally structured by their relation to the *telos*."[6] For Plato's Socrates, the "superordinate craft," the "royal" or "master" *technê*, employs the products of all other "subordinate" crafts,[7] that is, of all elements pertaining to the statesman's craft. But what are these? According to Socrates in *Gorgias*, the true political art deals with what is good or bad, admirable or shameful, just or unjust.[8] The *telos*, the end, of that art is social happiness (our rendering of eudaimonia), achieving the whole polis's well-being. For Socrates, the primary means to the happiness of the *polis* is achieving "the moral welfare of the citizens, 'putting justice and temperance in their souls,' making their mind (*dianoia*) as noble as it can be." For Socrates, the true practitioner of the political art is thus at once just (*dikaios*) and good (*agathos*), but also noble (*kalos*);[9] in the case of Socrates, being such a craftsman meant engaging with others mostly with words, but with deeds as well, as he tried to explain in the *Apology*.

But why was Socrates so adamant in treating politics as an art? Michael Oakeshott's discussion of political theory might provide a further insight into the meaning of Socrates's statement with regard to the theoretical aspect of the political art—its most important part, according to Plato. Tracing the etymological usages of "theory" Oakeshott distinguished between spectacle (*thea*), observer (*theoros*), the act of observing (*theorein*), the activity of seeking to understand what is being observed (*theoria* or theorizing), and the outcome of that activity (*theorêma* or theorem). As this vocabulary makes clear, the effort to understand—a process of discovery or inquiry—according to Oakeshott, begins with something that is already perceived or observed and is to some degree understood. The observer engages in theorizing only when he is dissatisfied with the degree of knowledge already possessed: "It is making more sense out for what already has some sense."[10] However, coming to a better understanding or trying to make more sense of the world around us is a never-ending process. This does mean not that one cannot limit the inquiry by interposing specific questions. Such questions may be arbitrarily chosen—for example, being satisfied with achieving some practical usefulness—or be contingent to some systematic condition that sets off the inquiry from there—as in the case of biology, which begins with cells, genes, and evolution. Politics offers such a limitation to *theoria*, but the limitation to the questions asked has to deal with the manner in which the *thea*, spectacle, the "fact" of experience, to be understood has been identified. With this in mind, political theorizing, according to Oakeshott, is actually being engaged in a process to understand a "fact," an event or a phenomenon of experience through a system of necessary postulates. For example, in moral theory such necessary postulates would refer to "a set of related concepts such as deliberation, choice, purpose, intention, action, outcome, duty, responsibility, justification, excuse, freedom, happiness," and

so on.[11] Political theorizing does not utilize concepts such as these solely to achieve a practical end. Neither are these postulates systematic preconditions in the sense that political theorizing takes them as granted and goes from there. What they do is supply the materials out of which advances in understanding the political experience are framed and formed.

However, political theorizing does not take place in a vacuum. At this point, the context of Socrates's observation becomes vitally important: Plato had Socrates claim to be the only practitioner of the political art in response to Callicles's warning that philosophy will lead Socrates to trial and death.[12] As Isaiah Berlin asked in 1961: "In what kind of world is political philosophy—the kind of discussion and argument in which it consists— in principle possible?" Given Socrates's death, Berlin's answer was not unpredictable: "Only in a world where ends collide."[13] Even though this should not lead us take the pluralistic society, a society in which there is no total acceptance of any single end, to be a necessary condition for political philosophy, it does force us to think about the role of political theorizing in society. This role linked to political theorizing in society does much to help us see why Socrates's bold statement was not in any sense paradoxical, uttered by someone who famously made no claim to wisdom.[14] Making no claim to knowledge is indispensably the first step to trigger political theorizing. By engaging in political theory we are admitting that the sense we make of the world around us, although enough to help us communicate and cooperate and live with and tolerate each other to some degree, is nonetheless insufficient—much of it remains mysterious and wonderful. Therefore, as John Plamenatz has argued long time ago, political theory is one of those essential activities by which human beings satisfy "a need to 'place' [themselves] in the world . . . to take [their] own and the world's measure."[15] Limiting theorizing to an inquiry about practical usefulness is not striving to understand "facts" of experience; but by treating this process of engaging with political phenomena as a *technê* forces us to approach them through a *system* of "necessary postulates," as Oakeshott has put it; that is, going back to Plato, through *all* that pertains to the statesman's craft. For Plato's Socrates, as we saw, his contemporaries failed to realize the need to envisage living in a *polis* as an art. Plato and other philosophers since have been trying to identify all those elements that "pertain to the statesman's craft," how they relate to each other, and what precisely the ends of statesmanship are. By examining the ideas of major thinkers in the history of Western philosophy, the contributors of this volume engage in just this sort of political theorizing.

II

In chapter 1, John Wallach sets off the volume with a discussion of "the political" itself. Focusing on Plato's redefinition, rather than invention, of

power, reason, and ethics, Wallach analyzes Plato's attempt to construct the political through justice. However, as Wallach notes, in the process Plato engaged with the meaning of *arête* and *technê*, *logos* and *ergon*, consent and coercion, power and corruption, conflict and order. As Wallach argues, Plato's dialogues critically examined the *praxis* of the ancient Greek *politeia* without striving to produce a systematic and formulaic political science—creating a new political and discursive space, but with no clear-cut, definite directions for practice. In chapter 2, Ryan Balot turns to Aristotle's attempt to delineate the nature and the role of political science in a quest for the highest human good through ordinary practices. Because *politikê* is part of practical wisdom, Balot adds, that is, an intrinsically good intellectual virtue combining deliberation, calculation, and good judgment, the good citizen is at the same time a good man. For Aristotle, Balot argues, *politikê epistêmê* combines practical experience with general principles; experience through an apprenticeship of sorts and knowledge of general, although approximate, principles—taking into consideration particulars as well as patterns of practice and behavior. Walter Nicgorski, in chapter 3, discusses Cicero's explicit focus on the role of statesmanship in founding as well as maintaining political communities. Nicgorski suggests that for Cicero experience—expertise gained by actual practice—is the primary requisite for—if not synonymous with—political leadership. However, as Nicgorski shows, the statesman needs to be further equipped with the art of rhetoric and the art of law—these *technai* being the carriers of existing expertise. Yet, Nicgorski argues, history does not constitute the highest priority for Cicero, even though examples, customs, and other historical particulars are scattered throughout his writings: like Plato and Aristotle, service to the human good forms Cicero's priority.

In chapter 4, Miles Hollingworth pays special attention to Augustine's contribution to the history of political philosophy: the introduction of the "fallen man," the negative counterpart to classical philosophy's positive conception of human nature. However, Augustine, Hollingworth points out, did not focus on the past; he steadily fixed his eyes on the future—he does not begin with history, but with what God has stored for the citizens of the Pilgrim City. To this effect, according to Hollingworth, Augustine provides the first break from the tradition of classical antiquity, especially regarding statesmanship; as Hollingworth puts it early on: "[w]hat comes before him must generally be considered pre-Christian; and what comes after him must therefore be considered to have been its Christianization." At this point, the volume rather jumps ahead in time more than a millennium to another key moment in the history of political thought: Machiavelli. In chapter 5, Joseph Femia turns attention to the debate on whether Machiavelli's works developed a genuine political science, submitted to the rigors of inductive methodology, or whether Machiavelli is better situated in the rhetoric tradition—a pragmatist whose reasoning is neither systematic nor rigorous, with selective and anachronistic use of evidence. Femia makes a case that Machiavelli could have attempted both: a scientific instinct led

him to ignore the inherited axioms of quasi-Aristotelian medieval political thought to focus on the observable circumstances of political actions. In this way, Femia argues that Machiavelli did not suspend morality but rather expressed a new and radical understanding of morality. Thus, it was with Hobbes, as Victoria Kahn argues in chapter 6, that the notion that politics can be made into a science was first explicitly formulated and was consistently applied as a means to understanding its meaning for both individuals and political communities. Kahn shows how, for Hobbes, the turn to science was a turn to language, and particularly to the constructive power of metaphor—something that seems to anticipate later aesthetic themes. Breaking away from the available models of political theory, Kahn argues, Hobbes employed the resolutive-compositive method to analyze human nature to its separate component parts and to synthesize them as the basis of the political contract; "contract" is the operative word here, suggesting the central role of the expression of will in Hobbes's theory.

Rebecca Kingston, in chapter 7, identifies an interesting dimension in Montesquieu's thought on the art of statesmanship: timing. Statesmanship according to Montesquieu, Kingston argues, has very different roles to play in different circumstances—such as statesmanship associated with republican and monarchical regimes, the example of China, and statesmanship in times of transition, challenge, and crisis. Rather paradoxically, whereas Montesquieu is known as a defender of moderation in politics, Kingston shows that he was fascinated by extreme political leaders, while being aware of the dangers such leaders pose to liberty. In chapter 8, Paul Guyer illustrates how for Kant political leaders do not need any special scientific knowledge; what Kant thought they really need, Guyer argues, is the "will to be moral": "to do freely what they know to be right." Guyer thus argues that Kant's moral philosophy and political philosophy are not independent from each other. It is true, Guyer notes, that some education to bring out the latent *a priori* ideas (e.g., of justice) is requisite to the holders of power, but as this should be pursued in common with all other members of society, the key element is not such training—even though knowledge of the condition, and what the citizens think about that condition, of their states is indeed necessary—but being just on their own volition.

Chapter 9 takes up the Scottish Enlightenment project of the "science of man." Alexander Broadie focuses on Adam Ferguson's account of the goals and the way towards their implementation of the enlightened political leader. Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, according to Broadie, displayed its scientific intentions early on. However, contrary to what one may assume at first, Broadie shows how Ferguson's *Essay* emphasized the limits of knowledge and of power on the part of the statesman. Exploring a variety of interlinked themes—specific and general—Broadie brings to the surface Ferguson's views on the springs and principles of human action. In chapter 10, Terence Ball takes up the broader theme of a "new," distinctively American, science evinced in the founding of the United

States of America. Ball proposes that the American Founders' "science of politics" was not abstract and ahistorical; rather, it was more like engineering. Ball takes special notice of the battle of two "sciences of politics" that appeared in the debate between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists: Montesquieu versus Hume. Ball pays close attention to a number of features that appeared within that "battle"—for example, virtue and public spirit contrasted to that of self-interest as a basis for political action and the implications of space for political communities as well as turning to experience to identify patterns of human behavior.

Daniel O'Neill, in chapter 11, attempts to challenge a longstanding view on Edmund Burke: that for Burke to "*be* a 'statesman' is actually to be the opposite of 'scientist.'" Hence, whereas one is prone to take Burke to present another discursive break with the idea of "scientific statesmanship," O'Neill argues that Burke had a unique understanding of the "science of man," one that underlies an intellectually coherent approach to statesmanship. By focusing on Burke as "a child of the Enlightenment," O'Neill discusses a number of aspects of Burke's political thought: his views on British politics, on America and the New World, on India, on France, and finally Ireland. With the focus on the British Isles once again, David Leopold, in chapter 12, discusses the communitarian socialism of Robert Owen. Challenging mainstream interpretations of Owen's thought as "socialism from above," Leopold attempts to do justice to the complexities of Owen's ideas about politics and government, by focusing on how science informs Owen's argument in a number of respects: technological innovation, the science of human nature, as well as the science of society.

The next two chapters take the discussion back to France. In chapter 13, Aristide Tessitore focuses on Alexis de Tocqueville's rather neglected 1852 speech on the nature of political science. Tessitore looks to the speech not only to sketch Tocqueville's ideas on the possibility—and limitations—of a science of politics, but also to draw and examine the distinction between the science and art, the theory and praxis, of politics. Tessitore investigates into the practical character of Tocqueville's "new science of politics" as well as its theoretical foundations to reveal a rather ambitious project on Tocqueville's part. However, as Vincent Guillin does much to show in chapter 14, no one had a more ambitious project than Auguste Comte as regards the government of modern societies. Guillin takes issue with the artificial divide of "positivism as a rational, empirically based, philosophy of science and positivism as an oppressive, ideologically biased, political program"; he argues that to grasp the distinctiveness and specificity of Comte's project one must realize the extent to which "positive philosophy" was considered by Comte the only solid basis for social reorganization. In the final chapter of the volume, Peter Breiner examines Max Weber's distinction between science and partisanship and his arguments for the authority of the former over the latter. Breiner argues that the distinction is not so clearcut as it is supposed to be and that Weber's arguments defending it are not

so convincing; however, Breiner tries to show that a case can be made for Weber, subject to certain limitations, such as defining "Wissenschaft" as the sociology of the university, in which the distinction seems to apply.

NOTES

1. Plato, *Gorgias*, 521d–22d.
2. Plato, *Protagoras*, 319b–d (trans. S. Lombardo and K. Bell).
3. Plato, *Republic* 488a–e (trans. G. M. A. Grube; rev. C. D. C. Reeve).
4. Kahn, 1996: 130.
5. Nussbaum, 2001: 95.
6. Kahn, 1996: 130.
7. Plato, *Euthydemus*, 289a–b; Irwin, 1995: 60.
8. Plato, *Gorgias*, 521d, 459d.
9. Kahn, 1996: 130–31; Plato, *Gorgias*, 464a, 504e, 514a; Plato, *Republic*, 420b.
10. Oakeshott, 1973: 393.
11. *Ibid*., 400.
12. Plato, *Gorgias*, 521b. See also, *ibid*. 484c–486c.
13. Berlin, 1961: 149.
14. See, e.g., Plato, *Apology*, 21b.
15. Plamenatz, 1963: xxi. Quoted in MacIntyre, 1983: 17.

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1 The Platonic Moment
Political Transpositions of Power, Reason, and Ethics

John R. Wallach

The moment at which Plato took up his memory of Socrates and instanti-
ated it into dialogical inquiry has caught the attention of classicists and
political theorists from the beginning of the twentieth century until today.[1]
For pre-war theorists, it marked the birth of critical inquiry out of the
morass of democratic politics.[2] For many post-war theorists, it illus-
trated the elevation of philosophy above politics as the coping stone for
ethical and political thought and action—one of dubious value, especially
according to liberals (e.g., Popper, Berlin, Vlastos), political existentialists
(e.g., Arendt), political democrats (e.g., Wolin), and post-Nietzscheans (e.g.,
Geuss).[3] But Plato also has enduring interest as a theorist of "the politi-
cal," which gained new traction in the twentieth century with the work of
Schmitt, Arendt, and Wolin. My interest in what I call "the Platonic moment"
is historical, theoretical, and political: did Plato's critical writing effect a
new attitude toward politics amidst the turbulence of fourth-century BCE
Athens? If so, how did it resonate in subsequent, often quite different,
historical moments? My puzzle about the Platonic moment concerns its
nature as a particular place in space/time that attracts significant intellec-
tual attention in virtually every space/time; what occurs along with what
is gained and, perhaps, lost, in Plato's pivotal turn toward written, dia-
logical inquiry as the royal road to truth and justice, and how the Platonic
notion of the political relates to contemporary iterations of the political.
My argument is not a moral or political judgment of Plato's attitude toward
philosophy, politics, and democracy, nor is it an effort to explain Plato's
literary turn in relation to orality or "why Plato wrote."[4] Rather, it is a
study of the creation and significance of a theoretical, critical, and dia-
logical constituent of "the political" and political judgment as a moment—
literally, pivotal turning point (fr. L. *momentum*)—in historical time, of
what comprises Plato's decision, in the wake of Socrates's trial and death,
to pursue justice and remedy the ills of humanity through philosophy rather
than politics.[5]

Relative to the contributions of this collection, the result of this inquiry
points to Plato as both foundational and marginal to the study of statesman-
ship: foundational, because his dialogical treatments of politics, justice, and

statesmanship are benchmarks for subsequent critical discussions of states-manship and governance; marginal, because he provides neither a single model of statesmanship as an idea, fact, or value nor a view of statesmanship and governance that can be neatly differentiated from other major concepts and phenomena (such as virtue, knowledge, truth, law, *politeia*, etc.). As a result, we shall see how the Platonic moment in the history of political thought about statesmanship has relatively open implications for political practice when that standard is respected and sustained. The puzzle of this moment is how it is *both* philosophical *and* political, so long-lived *and* so Hellenically atmospheric, so traditional *and* so radical. I start with some relatively generic comments about Plato and the political; comment on specific terms of ordinary language (*technê*, *logos*, *politika*, and *politeia*) that Plato redefines, and then close with a historically grounded comparative analysis of Platonic and contemporary conceptions of the political, particularly as they pertain to statesmanship.

I.   PLATO AND THE POLITICAL

As a thoughtful Athenian citizen, growing up when its democratic *politeia* experienced its most severe bouts of *stasis*, Plato experienced the raw sides of its whole political life. In response—to this and other particular historical factors—he subjected the features of Athenian political life to critical scrutiny. The result was the first systematic account of what later came to be called "the political," a word that has ambiguous equivalents in Attic Greek. In so doing, Plato transposed the *erga* of Athenian (and many dimensions of ancient Greek) political life into his dialogical realm of *logos* and connected all of its elements (to varying degrees, depending on the context) to the idea and virtue (*aretê*) of justice (*dikaiosunê*). Most fully expressed in *The Republic*, many other Platonic dialogues (some, but not all, mentioned above) engaged this issue. Yet Plato never thematized "the political" itself. In the *Republic* (*Politeia*), he approached "the political" via the idea of justice, and his other directly "political" dialogues, the *Statesman* (*Politikos*) and *Laws* (*Nomoi*), also did not interrogate "the political." As a result, it is Aristotle, not Plato, who is identified as the first "political scientist." Plato, nonetheless, is the one primarily faulted for an authoritarian, if not totalitarian, conception of "the political" that harbors essentially anti-democratic features. This view was popular in the mid-late twentieth century (Popper, Arendt, Strauss, Connolly, Mouffe) and lingered because critics focused not so much on conceptions of the political as on the dangerous tendencies of the practical application of theoretical reason. To appreciate the historicity of the Platonic moment, let us not adhere to these views and return to pivotal places in Plato's dialogues where "the political" is addressed so as to better understand what he has written and how Plato's theorization of the political arguably speaks to us.

II.   THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE PLATONIC MOMENT

The most important factor for explicating the Platonic moment is determined by what he was intending to do by taking up the writing of dialogues (especially in the way he did, by highlighting "Socrates") and founding the Academy. If we take dialogues such as the *Apology of Socrates*, *Crito*, *Gorgias*, and *Republic*, along with the *Seventh Letter*, as useful evidence, then it is clear that Plato was radically exasperated with Athenians' politics and *politeia*. Consequently, he believed that critical philosophy offered a better path to justice than the prevailing alternatives in *logos*—such as tragedy, comedy, poetry, sophistry, rhetoric, Isocratean philosophy, and ordinary and institutionalized politics. His focus on the limitations of these kinds of discourse stemmed with his profound disappointment with the overall course being followed by Athenian political life—the adequacy of its public institutions to their charge; its practice of education; its growing economic inequality; its ethical standards; and its practice of political friendship. In other words, the moment of and motivation for Plato's philosophical turn toward justice and truth involved dissatisfaction not only with Athenian *logoi* but Athenian *erga*—*erga* that had been severely compromised by the loss of the Peloponnesian War and two oligarchic coups, along with Socrates's indictment, trial, and execution.[6]

In using this moment to create new forms of *logos* (the dialogues) and *erga* (the Academy), Plato did not start with a blank slate. He, of course, was an Athenian, and he most likely fought in the Peloponnesian War. He was exposed not only to Socrates but also to the Sophists, poets, tragedians, and comedians. He may have attended the Assembly and Courts, unlike Socrates, and, like Socrates, most surely served on the Council. Having come from a well-to-do family and initially intrigued by a career in public life, he surely sensed the nature and wide range of Athenian cultural and political practices. And when he turned away from political action toward philosophy, it did not mean wholesale withdrawal from Athenian political life—although, like Socrates, he seems to have stayed away from the Assembly and, unlike Socrates, he travelled for short periods of time outside Athens to Egypt and Sicily.[7] To the contrary, he sought to address these Athenian realities in a different discursive key. Indeed, Plato is not known for inventing a new philosophical vocabulary, *pace* Aristotle, as much as he is for endowing ordinary language with new meanings—whether it be the *technê* of politics, *philosophia*, Greek myths, *aretê*, or *paradeigmata*.[8] The most elusive target for his critical reconstruction was the activity of politics itself, insofar as it was available to the *dêmos* (though—crucially—not women, metics, or slaves) and could affect every walk of life but remained under the aegis of *nomoi* of the Athenian *politeia*, the sources of authoritative social conventions and law for politics and ethics.

One might say that there was no ancient Greek conception of "the political"—at least not on the order stipulated by Carl Schmitt. But although that was true literally—no exact linguistic equivalent exists—the Greek word *politeia* designated the body of citizens arranged in a particular scheme for conducting power. Insofar as it did not transpose their individual beings it constituted a political realm, or "the political," a *logos* whose definition was defined by the *erga* of practical political life. The phenomenon was not lost on Plato. In the *Republic*, Socrates's typology of unjust forms of *politeia* in Books VIII–IX, judged in terms of the *politeia* of *kallipolis* (mostly spelled out in Books III–VII), indicates that Plato had some conception of the political that he wanted linked to justice. But whatever conception he had of it, it does not seem to have assumed the character of an immutable form. The good constitution (*politeia* as *paradeigma*) that an actual citizen is supposed to use to guide his life (592a) is defined in the context of individual action. And when Plato later defines, in *The Statesman* (*Politikos*), the nature of an individual statesman (*ho politikos*) empowered to enact a good (or better) constitution under non-ideal circumstances, there is no law superior to his judgment (293c–d). As in the *Republic*, the aim of citizen, statesman, or philosopher is to imitate the perfect or true *politeia* without anyone other than these individuals able to state what true or just political actions are other than by *their* political actions. One can see why Plato was so insistent on justifying the need for and merit of his kind of philosophy. For without it, Platonic political action becomes tyrannical—precisely the kind of action that is anti-political and most destructive of social life.

But now comes the rub. For Plato opposes the meaning of philosophical skill to, for example, standard-variety poetic and political understandings of "expertise," "craft," or "skill" (translations for the Greek *technê* or *epistêmê*).[9] And, like Socrates in the *Apology* and *Crito*, the Athenian Stranger/Visitor (*Xenos*) says that such expertise is unavailable to a "mass of people" (*plêthos*, 292e, 300e). Does Plato's belief in the need for a *technê* unavailable to a crowd illustrate an anti-democratic conception of the political? The answer is not easy to come by, because it depends on one's view of what Plato is trying to accomplish by defining the just *politeia*, the good *politikos*, etc. The answer is only a flat "yes" if Athenian conventions offer the best possible *nomoi* for politics and ethics. If one does not accept that premise, then the answer only is "yes" if the theoretical generation of a standard of political judgment "higher" than convention automatically delegitimizes the *nomoi*, citizens, and politicians of democratic Athens more than it does those of other city-states and their constitutions. It certainly decapitates claims to the sufficiency of whatever virtue the Athenians as a polis of citizens claim to have (which could have encouraged imperial ventures in the previous century), and it would defrock those who claim to be exponents of *aretê*—especially Sophists and Isocrates. But the claims of the Stranger do not automatically endorse other political regimes any more than Socrates did

when he strutted his feathers in opposition to his prosecutors in the Athenian court—claiming both not to know and to know what *aretê* meant—or when Plato's Socrates flayed Protagoras in *Protagoras*; dumbfounded Callicles in *Gorgias*, or responded to the challenges of Thrasymachus, Glaucon, and Adeimantus in the *Republic* about the coherence of a conception of justice *not* principally based on power, personal bounty, or social conventions.[10] Plato is creating a new political and discursive space, but it has no practically determinate meaning. To understand that meaning, one that has generated so much inspiration and consternation in its wake, I think it most revealing to analyze the pivotal terms Plato redefines as he transposes conceptions of power, reason, and ethics into his philosophical lexicon.

III. PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSPOSITIONS OF POLITICAL ETHICS

For Plato to reconstitute the meaning of justice, he had to redefine those terms that comprised its conventional pillars in Athenian political life. He did this in a comprehensive, dialogical spirit in the *Republic*. But one can pinpoint a few concepts that are pivotal for challenge to the ethical, political, and epistemological sufficiency of Greek political and Athenian democratic conventions. These are *aretê*, *technê*, and *logos*. What do his philosophical dialogues politically effect in his transposition of these conventional terms of art and power? The ensuing discussion falls into two parts. The first discusses *aretê* and *technê*, which are necessarily linked politically, if not conceptually. Then I shall turn to the new meaning Plato associates with politically valuable *logos*.

In conventional Athenian political discourse, *aretê* and *technê* often go together. This is because *arête* signifies both virtue, as we might understand it, and excellence, and the latter blends into the meaning of *technê*. For in signifying art, craft, or skill, the practice of a *technê* also signifies excellence. Socrates was simply parsing conventional understandings in the *Republic* when he led Thrasymachus to agree that if a ruler made a mistake he did not merit the assignation of ruler—because that implied the ability to do well or act expertly on behalf of his subjects.[11] The connection between *technê* and *aretê* was loosely affirmed by Protagoras in the *Protagoras*, in the activities of both the Athenian *demos* and himself as their teacher, and Pericles in Thucydides's *The Peloponnesian War*, wherein the Athenians presumptively knew the *technê* of politics but needed and seemingly were given skilled political leadership by Pericles. Insofar as Pericles had been elected general, he was deemed to have the *technê* of a general. And insofar as he also was chosen to give the Funeral Oration, he presumably possessed virtue and the political art to a superlative degree.[12]

Given the dubious benefits extended by Sophists such as Protagoras to the Athenians' political elite (because they were not extended to the *dêmos* as a

whole, given the Sophists' fee) and the devastation experienced by Athens from the Peloponnesian War initially sanctioned by Pericles, not to mention the trial and execution of Socrates by a legitimately constituted Athenian Court, it is not absurd that Plato was not inclined to endow the Athenian *dêmos*, Pericles, or Protagoras (one of Pericles' advisers) with the positive labels of possessing the political versions of *aretê* and *technê*. One must also keep in mind the character of the Athenians' democratic *politeia*. Although specialized positions (such as general and, later, head of the Theoric Fund) were elected, the authoritative political institutions had no special echelon of leaders. One might think that that was a good thing, especially given the alternatives (e.g., oligarchy, monarchy, or tyranny—displayed in Sparta, Persia, and the rule of the Thirty). But given the recent Athenian past and if one was dedicated to justice, one might think that the conventional views about political virtue and expertise needed to be radically rethought. Plato undertook this task when he turned to philosophy—at least so we are to believe if we believe the *Seventh Letter* (326a–b).

The question that Plato did not shy away from addressing was the nature of *aretê* and *technê*, especially when understood in their political exercise. (And here it is important to keep in mind that the Greeks and Athenians believed that both *aretê* and *technê* could have collective agents—even if neither was likely to become manifest if the collectivity acted as a crowd [*plêthos*].) Here he directly challenged the conventional assumptions that associated whatever actions by the *dêmos* were procedurally authorized by their political institutions as virtuous and skillful. Now it was not as if there was no debate in Athens about what to do—about, for example, invading Sicily or condemning Socrates. Political criticism and political dissent surely existed, so the novelty of Plato's task was that of a political theorist, to wit: to envision systematically and comprehensively what had gone awry in Athens (leading to *stasis*, defeat, and misjudgment) and how Athenian institutions and beliefs needed to be rethought if political life were to improve.

In constructing his view of a better practice of politics than the Greek *poleis* or Sophists understood, Plato drew on the concepts that signified stable, reliable skill and knowledge in producing intended outcomes for the practitioner of a particular task—*technê*, an actual social practice, and *epistêmê*, theoretical or practical knowledge that often accompanied the practice of a *technê*. The fact that Plato employed these terms in constructing his idea of a political *technê* or *epistêmê* generated tremendous, albeit misplaced, antipathy toward Platonic thought among mid-twentieth-century theorists who had fresh in their memory the programs of systemically misguided but effectively practiced (from the agents' point of view) by the regimes of Hitler's Nazis and Stalin's Communist Party.[13] Each suffocated independent politics and strangled the political realm more generally in order to transform their societies according to their malign visions. Insofar as *any* political theorist could be read as authorizing a *technê*, he would be

regarded as a source of political evil. These analyses, however, were off-base, at least when it came to Plato (or any major figure in the history of Western political thought) for he did not directly transpose the ordinary models of *technê* and *epistêmê* to the political realm. Instead, he sought to adapt them to its distinctive features.

Pericles, Protagoras, Socrates and Plato held that these features resisted programmatic treatment. Pericles sought to supplement the cultural and practical skills of the Athenians with an ethical and strategic vision for collective action in the midst of polemical challenges from the Spartans and others. Protagoras (or, more likely, Plato's self-serving imitation of the historical Protagoras) understood that although skills for social life were distributed in small groups, the benefits would accrue to the many by means of exchange. The political art, however, had to be distributed differently, to all, and would be cultivated by all when all educated one another in its practice. Socrates noted that the craftsmen of various *technai* certainly knew their skills but had no special knowledge about virtue or politics. Plato did not gainsay these insights about the distinctive nature of the political realm, but he did believe that extant conceptions of that realm needed intellectual reformation. Thus, in the *Republic*, he believed that politics ought to be understood in part as a *technê*, insofar as it deserved astute understanding as much or more than other practices. But it would be manifested in radically different ways than other *technai*; in particular, it would have to be supplemented by the skills necessary for philosophy. This not only required an education that would have to be different from the conventional Greek education that was given to children and youths until eighteen years of age. But after their military training, it would require fifteen years of intellectual training that included but transcended the learning of formulae; that is, these were capped by five years of study of *dialektikê*, the distinctive feature of which was its ability to understand the interconnections and interrelations of *technai*, *epistemai*, and *aretai* as features of a just political order. Only this would enable them to understand "the good" (*ho agathos*) and then be in a position to learn from fifteen years of apprenticeship as philosopher-guardians before assuming the actual post of philosopher-guardians for five years and then retiring (amid honors). No other *technê* had these non-rule-governed and socially interactive features.

In the *Statesman*, Plato also had the Stranger/Visitor (*Xenos*) articulate *politikê*, *Basilikê*, or *politikê epistêmê*, articulate features of this *technê* that set it apart from all others. Like the *technê*, *epistêmê*, and *aretê*, of the philosopher-guardians, it would have the distinct charge (unlike garden variety arts, knowledges, and virtues) of benefitting the political community *as a whole* (whatever that might be). But unlike other *technai*, it had a constitutively interactive relationship with the subjects of its practice. Thus, the standard for *politikê* was obtaining the consent of citizens for its practice (*Statesman*, 291e). Force may have to be used, but that was the exception,

not the rule (*Statesman*, 304d; cf. 296a–302b). Similarly, the Athenian Stranger in the *Laws* required that each proposed new law have a preamble that would persuade, not coerce, the citizenry. The implicit model for this kind of interaction was the high-level and dialogical, as opposed to the low-level and technical doctor, who based his diagnosis on a conversation with his patient—not the mere prescription of tests or drugs according to some handbook (*Laws*, 719e–720d). Moreover, both the *Statesman* and *Laws* presupposed second-best conditions, where there would be resistance to change—although clearly not as much as there would be if these ideas were used as blueprints for change in democratic Athens. Even with these characteristics, however, the models for the political art and virtue Plato proposed stood starkly at odds with the conventions of democratic politics of Athens. So what are we to make of this gap? To answer this question, we need to look, ever so briefly, at the effective political role Plato assigned to the philosophical *logos* of his dialogues.

When it came to politics, at least, Plato was not a metaphysician.[14] That is to say, he never held to a view that was justified merely by a self-substantiating *logos*. And when it came to political *logoi*, in the dialogues or with regard to the historical politics appropriated for his dialogues, every *logos* needed some sort of complementary *ergon*. Normally, the *logos*–*ergon* couplet is associated with the political vision of Pericles, the work of Thucydides (e.g., by Adam Parry), or the life of Socrates as presented in Plato's *Apology of Socrates* (insofar as he did not dissociate his private from his public life and could only live his life of critical *logos* by standing by it in *ergon*—e.g., before his accusers in court). But Plato asserted the need for a link between *logos* and *ergon* throughout his dialogues, using its necessity to undermine the views of Melêtus, Anytus, Protagoras, Gorgias, Polus, Callicles, Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus. Sometimes the *ergon* could only be hypothetically asserted—as in the fifth book of the *Republic* where he defended the practicality of his *logos* for a rule by philosophical-guardians (472d–473b)—but he never abandoned it. The truths he affirmed in *logos* could not be disproved by *ergon*—only critical discussion can refute a critically asserted truth—but its merits could only be evaluated by assessing its practicality. Thus, the completion of the training of philosopher-guardians did not end in passing a test in dialectic but in serving the city. This was not a happy venture in itself, but it constituted the happy life they ultimately led. Whether or not the *Seventh Letter* was written by Plato, it is worth recalling that he felt impelled to go to Syracuse to educate Dionysius II by his own philosophy; he would not be true to its lights if he refused the opportunity to try out his philosophy in practice (*Seventh Letter*, 328b–329b). Plato did not for a moment allow the value of his own life or that of the Academy to be evaluated by politicians, Sophists, or the Assembly. But he nonetheless insisted on the practical value of his own life and academic education; it simply could not be evaluated according to the standards maintained by politicians, Sophists, and

the Assembly—because they had to observe considerations that, although significant, could distract from his search for justice. The absolute value of the "justice" to which Plato devoted himself, I would argue, can only be understood relatively, that is, in relation to the political and discursive ambience of ancient Greece and ancient Athens in particular. They comprised the *logoi* and *erga* in relation to which he, utilizing all the extant *logoi* of Greek culture, created a new kind of *ergon*, viz., academic education. Plato's imagined *kallipolis* and Magnesia could not have been offered as sculptured political models, whose specific practical features could be transported as policies to any time and place. They simply indicated what Plato had at his disposal to use to illustrate in *ergon* the arguments he made in *logos*. In Athens, he suggested that the best one could hope for was to live by *kallipolis* in nourishing and etching its "political" (*politeia*) in the life of one's *psyche*—which, in current Athenian society, entailed not engaging in conventional politics (*Republic*, 591a–592b). One can only regard this as an anti-political statement if one views every contemporary academic as anti-political. Plato decided that critical thought needed a new institutional lever. That lever was the Academy. Whether its subsequent iterations have lived up to Plato's aspirations for it—as a place where the most stringent intellectual education occurs, one that would have ethical, if not political, benefits to its students—depends on one's judgment of the institutions that could be said to have honorably built upon his legacy (a complicated judgment, indeed).

Plato never envisioned his intellectual moment, which produced the first comprehensive political theory, as an occasion for making the Academy a political empire. He knew all too well the limitations of critical discourse amid the power of practical politics. Only with good luck and a sufficient group of friends could philosophy gain power (*Seventh Letter*, 325d). He even was exceedingly wary of the extent to which the exercise of political power could corrupt the integrity and value of his philosophy. In this he agreed with Lord Acton, in the latter's presumption that every exercise of power generated the possibility of corruption. But Lord Acton's maxim could well inspire political cynicism. Plato's philosophical conception of the political did not. And notably, in so doing, he cannot be held responsible for subsequent political and religious philosophers who believe that their perspective, country, or faith—whether monologically or dialogically understood—would necessarily or perpetually be incorruptible. Plato's conception of the political is a conception of power, one that necessarily abided by standards of *technê*, *epistêmê*, and *aretê* but also went beyond them to embrace a conception of a whole of interdependent parts. They were necessary but not sufficient. Importantly and additionally, it also was filtered through a demanding philosophical *logos* that includes political instruction about the historical particulars of the constitution he would reform and rule and that allows no individual or group to claim for itself a title to rule for long, or for any length of time,

without the most rigorous physical, musical, psychological, philosophical, and political training.

IV. PLATO AND CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTIONS OF THE POLITICAL

In the wake of Plato, Aristotle, and democratic Athens, ancient conceptions of the political began to take back seat to the authority of more modern conceptions—which included novel conceptions of nature; the republic; and divine, prophetic, or institutionalized leadership. Ancient conceptions mostly attracted negative attention when European and American societies from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries began to rejuvenate themselves with politically more inclusive constitutional orders. Ancient conceptions began to regain attention only amid crises of modernity—particularly by Germans faced with the daunting task of reforming their political order and state (e.g., Weber, Schmitt, Habermas); Americans needing to recast their self-image after acquiring hegemonic economic and political power while grappling with the legacy of its history of slavery and religious diversity (Arendt, Wolin, Rawls); and neo-Marxists struggling to say something cogent without a proletariat for practical ballast (Mouffe).[15]

The most important difference to note in placing Plato in their midst, and vice versa, is noticing how "the political" for these moderns is a critical concept with ambiguous practical moorings—unlike Plato's concept that directly engaged the ancient Greek *polis* and (primarily democratic) *politeia*. In addition, these articulations of "the political" in critical *logos* all have ambiguous attachments to any practical agent—although each tended to support their notions of "the political" with a radically reimagined democratic politics. But, like Plato, these theorists believed in the sociological and human importance of "the political" and articulated the conditions under which it would fare better than it currently did.

Weber's work is the *locus classicus* for contemporary reconstructions of "the political." For him, it was understandable first of all in relation to the modern state (not previously, when the use of violence was not a normal sign), which he declared should be identified as "that human community" (*Gemeinschaft*) which can successfully lay claim to a "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force (*Gewaltsamkeit*) for itself over a certain territory" as well as an authority to rule (*Herrschaft*). "Politics," in this context, meant "striving for a share of power (*Machtanteil*) or for influence on the distribution of power (*Machtverteilung*), whether it be between states or between the groups of people contained within a single state." He did not define "political" as a noun, but its meaning as an adjective referred to that aspect of an individual's or association's behavior that was interested in "the distribution, preservation, or transfer of power" (*Macht*) in relation to which violence lay on the horizon.[16] The exercise of power required ethics

understood as the legitimation (or "inner justification") of the (external) use of power, that is, various ways in which superior rule was accepted by the ruled.

Despite the absence in Weber's texts of any defined conception of "the political," it functioned as the hidden compass that should direct practical ethics in modernity. Neither of the two available types of ethical justifications—the ethics of ultimate ends and the ethics of responsibility (or consequentialism) was itself sufficient as a political justification. It was not sufficient for a political community to be legitimated by either values rooted in faith rather than evidence or a practical end that had no ethical compass. Implicitly, practical action that sustained a community marked by the legitimate maintenance of order, potentially through violence, fostered "the political." But although Weber may have held out "the political" for himself as the necessary goal for Germany, he did not justify it rationally as an ethical norm—unlike Plato. The elevation of "the political" to an ethical norm in modernity was ironically fronted by Carl Schmitt, when he pressed the need to give greater recognition to the value of "the political" as the conceptual-practical expression of "the friend–enemy distinction," one that was essentially marked by conflict and ultimately expressed "polemically" (cf. *polemos*) in inter-state war. Oddly, "the political" signified the activities of a human collectivity when at odds with an "other," not with itself. Schmitt noted that "civil war" (citing the Greek *stasis*) indicated the breakdown of an entity's capacity for coherent collective action, and it was the assertive, conflictual dimension of "the political" that highlighted Schmitt's distinctive perspective.[17] In other words, a state was "political" insofar as it was oriented toward the capacity for war with another state. If it did not possess this capacity, it became inert and ineffectual. Schmitt's addition of an ethical component to Weber's conception of the political amounted to preferential treatment for aggressive, decisionistic "realism."[18] To put it mildly, Schmitt's conception of the political lacked the Platonic nexus of the political, justice, and collective order. That is not in and of itself problematic—why should everyone seek to be a Platonic footnote—but Schmitt's theoretical decisionism and realism notably emphasizes the conflictual dimension of the political over and against the cooperative—both of which were sensibly (it would seem) incorporated by Plato in his conception of the political.

When developing his conception, Schmitt mostly had liberalism in his crosshairs, a liberalism that presupposed the individual as its pivotal value and the state as an instrument that naturally did not align itself with conflict or violence. But "liberalism" was always either an academic theory or a relativistic ideology of a political party, so when Schmitt railed against it his object was mostly a straw man. That did not make its target a mirage. Indeed, Schmitt's theory has acquired intellectual traction recently not because it was particularly prescient about the problems of Weimar Germany but because of its anticipation of the limitations of liberal theory.

(In this respect, Schmitt's political theory was more insightful about the distant future than about the "realities" of his own time.) When John Rawls articulated his conception of the political under the aegis of his liberal theory of justice, it was designed to be what was left of human interaction at a public level once the sources of significant conflict had been removed.[19] He defines it in terms of an area of agreement ("the overlapping consensus"), not conflict, where "public reason" can be used so as to generate a binding agreement among representative, reasonable persons dedicated to the practical value of moral deliberation.[20] Believing that anything less leads down a slippery slope toward raw-power politics and ethical nihilism, Rawls forbids the stuff of religious belief, ideology, ethnicity, gender, or class consciousness from determining the principles of *political* deliberation that could lead to just political decisions.[21] He wants to shrink a legitimate conception of the political from the scope it had, for example, for Plato, so as to adapt to the liberal acceptance of diverse "comprehensive views" as well as the quasi-independence of a civil society dominated by capitalism. Attempts to generate a theory of justice on a more comprehensive plane, he argues, are doomed to indeterminacy or despotism, and he is content to derive the ethical and political assumptions that properly constrain political deliberation from "the basic structure of society," that is, "the public political culture of a [i.e., our extant] democratic society."[22] The status quo provides a sufficient starting point for our moral intuitions, and whatever existing political problems that can be solved will be addressed most justly by accepting his political theory.

Without relying on him as an intellectual source, major contemporary thinkers have also associated liberal theory with a delusional conception of politics that leads to ideological defenses of the status quo or a harmful, misguided perspective for understanding or addressing political problems.[23] Some critics of Rawlsian liberalism, however, return to Schmitt for intellectual energy. The most notable of these is Chantal Mouffe, in her book *On the Political*, where she turns to Schmitt's antagonistic conception of the political as an antidote to the consensual model of Rawlsian liberalism and cure for the maladies of contemporary "democratic politics."[24] She does not directly transport Schmitt into the twenty-first century, adapting the "friend–enemy" first principle of the political to an "agonistic" conception of the political, wherein antagonists can find common ground. But, like another post-structuralist and agonistic democrat, William Connolly, she offers no basis for understanding how that common ground may be found—or even where to look.[25] As a result, these perspectives lack the kind of theoretical sensibility that may aid political actors, whether citizens or statesmen. Unwilling to draw on a Platonic conception of the political that critically asserts the need for a confluence of association and order that allows for difference but stems *stasis*, they evidence how modern statesmen currently lack any help from political theorists.

V. CONCLUSION

The challenges for twenty-first-century statesmen defy any independent science of statesmanship on which they could reasonably draw for immediate guidance. For they need to take their cues from the various peoples they would benefit, more than any independent rational or ethical authority of the kind that Plato thought would aid ancient Greek societies. To this extent, Plato offers little help. Indeed, if one is looking for a political science—systematic, portable, and formulaic political knowledge—Plato's dialogues are not the place to turn. Aristotle is sensibly regarded as the first "political scientist" and his political theory the first "political science" (although its elasticity makes it decidedly anti-modern as a *political science*). But if one is looking for an art and science of statesmanship that offers a radical perspective on and catalytic palliative for many of democracy's ills, then contemplating a freestanding interpretation of the demanding political thought of Plato might well be a good place to begin.

NOTES

1. If not the nineteenth century as well, given the attention bestowed on the relationship between Socrates and Plato from Grote to Nietzsche. But the nineteenth-century writers did not make as much about the division between Socrates and Plato as twentieth-century interpreters, and so will be left aside.
2. Barker, 1918; Cornford, 1933; Jaeger, 1939–1945.
3. For representative works of these major political theorists and interpreters of Plato, see: Popper, 1966; Berlin, 1969; Vlastos, 1991; Arendt, 1958; Wolin, 1960: Ch. 1, and Wolin, 1994. Post-Nietzscheans I particularly have in mind are Jacques Derrida, 1972, and William E. Connolly, 1995.
4. On Plato's literary turn, see, initially Havelock, 1963; for an explanation of Plato's literary motivations, see Allen, 2010.
5. *Seventh Letter*, 325c–326b. The authenticity of this text is undecidable. But external sources tend to validate its biographical statements. See J. M. Cooper's comments on the matter in Cooper, 1997: 1634–35.
6. For two, classic accounts of Plato's effect upon the landscape of Athenian conventions, see the different treatments of Adkins, 1960, and Gouldner, 1967.
7. That Plato erected an entirely new plane of discourse that was untouched by the practices or dispositions of Athenian or Greek life is presupposed by Leo Strauss, 1964: Part II. On Plato's *Seventh Letter*, see Solmsen, 1969, and Cooper, 1997: 1634–35.
8. See Wallach, 2001. For plausible speculation about how Plato's dialogues affected public discourse, see Allen, 2010. For Plato as a contributor to elitist, if not oligarchic discourse, see Ober, 1989 and 1996.
9. See, e.g., Plato, *Statesman*: 293b–d; 296b; 297a–b; 298c; 299e–301b.
10. See Plato, *The Apology of Socrates*. For Socrates claiming not to know *aretê*, at least like the Sophists did, see 20b–c, 33b; for Socrates presuming that he generally knows what *aretê* means, see 31b–32a, 36c. Cf. Wallach, 1988.
11. Plato, *Republic*, 340c–341a.
12. Plato, *Protagoras*, 319a, 320d–328d; Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, I.71, II.37. See Loraux, 1986.

13. Most prominent among these theorists were Karl Popper, Hannah Arendt, and Isaiah Berlin.
14. I say "at least," because many highly regarded Plato scholars don't believe that Plato held to any metaphysical beliefs—at least in terms of conventional (i.e., Aristotelian and subsequent) conceptions of metaphysics. See, e.g., the works of Paul Shorey (1932) at the first part of the twentieth century and Michael Frede (1992) at its end—along with the ancient skeptical Academy.
15. Weber, 1988: 505–60, cf. Weber, 1994: 309–69; Schmitt, 2006; Arendt, 1958; Wolin, 1996, 31–46; Habermas, 1992; Rawls, 1996; Mouffe, 2005.
16. Weber, 1994: 310–11.
17. Schmitt, 2006: 26–30.
18. *Ibid.*, 35, 38, 43–45, 49–50, 58–59, 64.
19. See Wallach, 1987.
20. See Rawls, 1999.
21. See *ibid.*, 22–28.
22. *Ibid.*, 11–15, 154–58.
23. See Wolin, 1996, and Geuss, 2008.
24. See Mouffe, 2005: 4–5, 11–13. Cf. Mouffe, 1993.
25. See Connolly, 1995.

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2   Political Knowledge and Human Excellence in Aristotelian Political Science[1]

Ryan Balot

"Scientific statesmanship" applies more immediately to modern than to ancient political thought. The American Founders (e.g., in *The Federalist*, No. 9) believed that they were implementing a modern "science of politics" that was commensurate and of equal stature with the inquiries characteristic of modern natural science. Even prior to the democratic transformations of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though, Thomas Hobbes had already theorized science as a unified intellectual enterprise whose branches included both politics and the natural sciences. Aristotle, too, thought of politics as the subject of a distinctive form of "scientific" inquiry, but in a sense that differed from that of his modern counterparts. Aristotle's conception of the "statesman" (*politikos*) and of "political science" (*politikê epistêmê*) stresses the differences between practical understanding and theoretical speculation. Whereas the latter is oriented toward understanding the unchanging truths of natural science, metaphysics, mathematics, and logic, the former is oriented toward action—toward helping people to become good (*EN* 2.2.1103b26–31). Aristotle rejects the idea of a unified science of humanity and the natural world, not because free will irreducibly separates human beings from nature, as in German idealism, but rather because Aristotle's practical philosophy, or "philosophy of human things" (as he calls it: *EN* 10.9.1181b15), is necessarily imprecise, and it is bound up with realizing humanity's highest good in action. Aristotle's practical philosophy is dependent on human "choice" or "decision" (*prohairesis*) rather than natural laws; it is subject to the diverse "reason" or "speech" (*logos*) of different human associations; and it involves consideration of their variable acts of "perception" (*aisthêsis*) and "judgment" (*gnômê*). Hence, understanding practical affairs requires maturity and practical experience, but it need be accompanied only by a rough grasp of the theoretical sciences, such as psychology, biology, and metaphysics, that bear on ethical and political questions. In order to appreciate the power of Aristotle's account, it is useful to begin by exploring the very different vision of the key figure in the early modern tradition of scientific statesmanship.

I. HOBBES'S *LEVIATHAN*: EXEMPLAR OF THE MODERN PARADIGM

In broad terms, the most authoritative intellects of the seventeenth century—such as Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, and Spinoza—focused their attention on dismantling the Christian–Aristotelian synthesis that had characterized the later Middle Ages. They aspired to release both politics and science from the grip of religious authority. In the event they transformed political philosophy into a more technical, abstruse, scientific, and narrower enterprise than it had ever previously been, particularly because this new focus enabled them to avoid contentious questions about the good life. Instead of virtue and human flourishing, their focus was on instrumental uses of political power and on individual freedom and rights.

Thomas Hobbes is perhaps the modern thinker most widely associated with the application of scientific rationality to politics and consequently with the denigration of "prudence" (Hobbes's preferred term for what Aristotle called *phronêsis*, i.e. "practical wisdom") as an intellectual faculty.[2] Hobbes was a careful enough reader of Aristotle to recognize that the chief battleground in these debates was the proper characterization of the intellectual capacities that defined humanity and thus political life. In chapter 3 of *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes downplayed the significance of prudence, by defining it as "a presumption of the future, contracted from the experience of time past." Prudence is nothing more than guesswork derived from a single individual's limited experience, rather than a systematic and precise grasp of causes and consequences. Hence, in Hobbes's view, prudence could never be the foundation of a stable government.

By contrast, Hobbes argues, human beings distinguish themselves "from all other living creatures" by industriously applying their intellectual capacities to the invention of words and speech. It was only "by the help of speech and method" (*Leviathan*, chapter 3) that human beings developed the perfected understanding that Hobbes calls "science":

> By this it appears that reason is not, as sense and memory, born with us, nor gotten by experience only, as prudence is, but attained by industry, first in apt imposing of names, and secondly by getting a good and orderly method in proceeding from the elements, which are names, to assertions made by connexion of one of them to another, and so to syllogisms, which are the connexions of one assertion to another, till we come to a knowledge of all the consequences of names appertaining to the subject in hand; and that is it men call SCIENCE. (*Leviathan*, chapter 5)

Hobbesian science is a general knowledge of causes and consequences, constructed initially by applying precise definitions to things in the world, and subsequently from deductive "reckoning" that proceeds on the basis

of those perspicuous names. The model for Hobbesian science is geometry, "which is the only science that it hath pleased God hitherto to bestow on mankind" (*Leviathan*, chapter 4)—to us, at least, a surprising paradigm for science, because geometry lacks the experimental focus of contemporary science. But for that reason geometry is all the more indicative of Hobbes's thought. In geometry, specifically, Hobbes found a model for the theoretical precision, definitional clarity, deductive validity, and even "infallibility" that, in his view, captured the law-like universality necessary to predict and control the world, including its human beings and their political relations.

Through drawing this contrast between prudence and science, Hobbes persuasively construed political science as a technical specialism, the province of experts, and he convincingly transformed science into a purely instrumental discipline whose primary goal was to impose the human will on the world, including the political world. This transformation has distinctly hierarchical implications: science is a perfection of reasoning that "very few have, and but in few things," whereas "prudence is but experience, which equal time equally bestows on all men in those things they equally apply themselves unto" (*Leviathan*, chapter 13). Hobbes's distinction between science and prudence opened up a striking cleavage between technical experts, on the one hand, and ordinary people, on the other, who rely on ambiguous or even absurd ideas to guide their lives, who are driven by passions that they are ill-equipped to understand, who are likely to behave aggressively toward others in the absence of terrifying state power, and who have little capacity to form reasoned judgments as citizens.[3] Ordinary people will ideally be subjects of a monarch, with the result that the virtues of civic life, for Hobbes, amount to nothing more than anodyne forms of decency, which enable citizens to live peacefully and to choose their own diverse paths. Over all looms the Leviathan state, a scientifically generated "Artificial Man," whose sovereign would wield a type of previously unthinkable power over subjects who (it is hoped) will prosper materially and whose chief good is the avoidance of the ultimate calamity: violent death. Although Hobbes presented himself as a liberator, his work offers a haunting image that we can appreciate now, from our vantage point in time, only with a sense of alienation—from political life, from the natural world, from one another, and from the technology by which we are increasingly controlled—rather than with a sense of the optimism that originally inspired it.

II.   ARISTOTLE'S SCIENCE OF THE HUMAN GOOD

Whereas Hobbes taught that there is no "Summum Bonum," or "highest good" for humanity (*Leviathan*, chapter 11), Aristotle understood the human good as the only proper target of ethical and political understanding (*EN* 1.2.1094b2–7). Ethics and politics are continuous with one another, as twin manifestations of the same practical inquiry. In offering a conception

of the human good, Aristotle's starting point is not, as with Hobbes, a ponderous scientific representation of humanity as "matter in motion"; instead, Aristotle begins with ordinary human practices, such as the "arts" (*technai*) and human "action" (*praxis*), whose familiarity and authority in our lives are unquestioned. Aristotle observes—on the basis of common experience rather than either metaphysics or laboratory experiment—that arts and actions seek particular goods in a hierarchical fashion, subordinating preliminary goals to others that are more "final" or "complete." On this basis, Aristotle proposes that if there is one good sought for its own sake, while all other goods are sought for its sake, then this final "end" (*telos*) will be humanity's highest goal. This highest good is the subject of political science, because political science is the "most authoritative" (*kuriotatê*) and "architectonic" (*architektonikê*) of the sciences, responsible in practice for directing the pursuit of other branches of knowledge (*EN* 1.2.1094a 26–1094b11). Aristotle considers the first political founder to be humankind's chief benefactor, precisely because humanity, when perfected by living under law and with justice, is the best of all animals (*Pol.* 1.2.1253a30–33).

This account of political science is striking in its apparently paradoxical combination of audacity (in seeking the highest human good) and modesty (in approaching that good through ordinary practices). Aristotle assumes without comment that the human good can be understood by reasoning with and through common human experiences or beliefs, rather than by reasoning or experimentation that is far removed from the ordinary; hence his well-known methodological practice of attempting to "save the phenomena," which rests on the belief that nature has arranged things so as to make its truths, whether about humanity or the natural world, intelligible to human inquiry.[4] Working up from these ideas, Aristotle located his political science within the framework of teleological explanation, which he laid out explicitly in his works on physics and biology. The human good is a species-wide attribute, to be predicated of a certain type of animal whose good lies in, among other things, participating in well-developed social and political relationships. As a result, political science makes sense only when viewed as a type of understanding designed to make the good life possible for human beings, rather than to achieve the characteristically modern goals of asserting freedom, exercising power, or realizing economic growth. Political science is concerned with human action rather than the production of goods. In explicating the character of the good human life, Aristotelian political science was both full of substantial content and also flexible enough to allow for significant variation across time and space and for considerable input by the human agents directly involved in citizenship and governance.[5] To be more specific, Aristotle interpreted "happiness" or "human flourishing" (*eudaimonia*) as an "activity of the soul in accordance with excellence" (*EN* 1.7.1098a16–18). This "activity" involved the development of human beings' distinctive capacities to live excellent lives as social, political, and ethical beings, on the one hand, and, in certain cases,

as philosophical beings who pursued the permanent truths of the theoretical sciences.

The absence of religious rigidity and contention in Aristotle's historical world enabled him to reason more freely about the content of ethics and politics without failing to recognize that these subjects can be known in outline only, that is, in a necessarily imprecise way (*EN* 2.2.1103b34–1104a11), rather than as the subject of clear and perspicuous rules or universal laws. Because the defining feature of Aristotle's *politikos* is his practical knowledge of how to bring about human flourishing, it makes sense for us to begin by examining this special form of human "science." Aristotle's political science comes to sight as a special type of reason—one that is not only intrinsically good, but also directive of humanity's practical activities, including both technical production and theoretical speculation. Yet political science understood as a "master craft" does not harbor totalitarian implications, precisely because it is dedicated to helping human beings develop their natural capacities as individuals, with a view to their exercising informed choices and leading lives that they could recognize as worthy and dignified.

III. ARISTOTLE'S POLITICAL SCIENCE AS PRACTICAL WISDOM

Because of the "directive" or "architectonic" character of political science, it makes sense that Aristotle would view political science as a form or subcategory of practical wisdom:

> Political science (*politikê*) and practical wisdom (*phronêsis*) are the same state (*hexis*), although their being is not the same. Of the *phronêsis* concerned with the city, one kind is legislative (*nomothetikê*), since it is architectonic; the other has the name that is common to them, i.e. *politikê*, since it is concerned with each particular thing and is involved in action and deliberation (for a decree is something to be done, because it is the last thing in the act of deliberation), and therefore they say that only those men engage in politics, for they alone act, just as craftsmen do. (*EN* 6.8.1141b23–29)[6]

Like practical wisdom as such, political science is an intellectual virtue, a perfection of reason, and specifically of the reasoned capacity to deliberate (*bouleuesthai*), calculate (*logizesthai*), and judge *(krinein)* well with regard to the city's affairs. Although people commonly think of practical reasoning as focused on the interests of a particular individual (*EN* 6.8–9.1141b 33–1142a9), Aristotle views the specific excellence of this intellectual faculty as applicable also, and even more significantly, to political life, either in a legislative or founding capacity, or in particular acts of statesmanship and leadership, or (as in this passage) in the voting and judicial decisions

of citizens (*EN* 6.8.1141b29–33). In the Aristotelian vision, politics is not a violent struggle to win power, or a scientifically informed way of controlling a mass society, but rather an activity of citizens whose capacity to deliberate and judge skillfully has been developed in accordance with human nature and human decision. Aristotle refuses to pit citizens against the state and its scientific experts; his conception of political knowledge as a potential attribute of citizens corresponds to his generally egalitarian civic aspirations (on ruling and being ruled in turn, see 1.1.1252a7–16, 1.7.1255b16–20, 1.12.1259b4–6). These aspirations persist even though most human beings are limited in their grasp of *politikê* (cf. *Pol.* 3.7.1279a39–b2, 5.2.1302a 1–2; *EN* 2.9.1109a29–30, 5.9.1137a4–26).

Practical wisdom is an intellectual excellence constituted by skill in making deliberate decisions (*prohaireseis*, sing. *prohairesis*) and in issuing commands about what is to be done (*EN* 6.10.1143a8–9). Practical wisdom gives orders to the desiring parts of our souls, which, if properly cultivated, are capable of obeying reason and seeking what is good and healthy for us. No one who lacks a cultivated set of character traits, with appropriate desires and sensitivities, can be practically wise, because the correct end of action will not appear in the proper light, as intrinsically desirable, to an individual whose desires or perceptions are corrupt (*EN* 6.12.1144a 31–1144b1). These ethical dimensions imply that *phronêsis* is best understood not with reference to its products (as in the case of productive art, or *technê*) or to the theoretical understanding of universal laws, a good in itself (as in the case of metaphysics, physics, or biology), but rather by examining the activities of the good man (*EN* 6.5.1140a24–25). Practical wisdom is the intellectual virtue most closely tied to "action" (*praxis*), and thus to ethical assessment, praise, and blame. These features explain why practical wisdom is highly contextual. Although its province is a certain sort of truth (*EN* 6.2.1139a22–27), it concerns itself above all with the particular facts and features of changeable situations, rather than the unchanging and law-like truths of the natural sciences. Lack of experience is precisely why the young are not proficient at practical reasoning, even if they become brilliant mathematicians: correct practical reasoning requires deep experience of particulars, and in particular a "recognition" or "perception" (*aisthêsis*) of just what particular choices or actions help to fulfill our striving for excellent behavior in each situation (*EN* 6.7.1141b14–23).

Aristotle's presentation of *phronêsis* helps us to pinpoint two differences from Hobbes. First, because it is embedded within the ethical and political context of "action," practical wisdom is not a merely instrumental virtue that aims to satisfy whatever desires happen to emerge. Contrast Hobbes's view that "thoughts are to the desires as scouts and spies, to range abroad and find the way to the things desired" (*Leviathan*, chapter 8). Aristotle distinguishes between *phronêsis* and what he calls "cleverness" (*deinotês*), which is an instrumental capacity for means–end reasoning that is not intrinsically tied to ethical goodness (*EN* 6.12.1144a23–31). By contrast, as

an excellence of the intellect, practical wisdom is intrinsically good for the individual who exercises it. Second, Aristotle avoids the hubris of supposing either that humanity can control the natural or political world through science or that human purposes are the most significant and interesting elements of the universe. Aristotle declares it absurd to believe that "political science or *phronêsis*" is the most serious (*spoudaiotatên*) knowledge, "if human beings are not the best thing in the cosmos" (*EN* 6.7.1141a20–22). Practical wisdom is concerned with human goods—with what is advantageous or disadvantageous to human beings—rather than the unchanging, rationally ordered, and strikingly beautiful celestial bodies and phenomena of natural science. The activities of scientific reason (*theôria*) and wisdom (*sophia*) are, accordingly, superior to the activities of practical wisdom. In order to carry out its task well, practical reason must recognize this superiority and render it visible in the institutions of the city.[7]

IV.   FROM ETHICS TO POLITICS

In the final chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle explains the prospects and limitations of practical philosophy when applied to political life. On the one hand, he emphasizes that his practical philosophy is designed to make people good in action (*praxis*). On the other hand, however, the philosopher expresses doubts about the possibility of transforming individuals purely through reasoned speech (*logos*); instead, he says, most people are governed by their passions and can be reached only by the threat of punishment. The key is whether an individual's passions and desires, his pleasures and pains, have been cultivated properly, so that he takes pleasure in healthy things and wholesome activities, and not the opposite. Aristotle's doubts suggest that ethical philosophy's significance lies not so much in transforming those whose characters have already been formed by long processes of habituation, but rather in two other prospects: first, in clarifying the goodness of those whose activities already correspond to his teleological model of human development, and, second, in proposing certain targets and goals for lawgivers and statesmen who hope to improve their cities by cultivating better habits in subsequent generations. It is the second prospect that most concerns those interested in Aristotle's conception of statesmanship.[8]

Designing appropriate laws is the key to realizing this prospect in practice. For, as Aristotle explains, the healthy education of an individual's emotional and intellectual faculties can be secured through that system of rationally ordered intelligence that is law: "law has the power to compel, being a *logos* derived from *phronêsis* and intelligence (*nous*)" (*EN* 10.9.1180a21–22). Specifically, Aristotle says, it is the lawgiver (*nomothetês*) whose practical wisdom is capable of shaping the citizenry as a whole, because he alone, unlike the *paterfamilias* of a single household, has ascended to a more general, and thus more complete, understanding of education and habituation

in accordance with human nature as such. The lawgiver is well positioned to have a general impact on the next generation of citizens, even if his contemporaries have already been shaped within a regime characterized by neglect or conflicting purposes. His statesmanship is informed by a knowledge both of general principles, which hold for the most part, and of practical experience (*empeiria*), which is, however, limited in its applicability to particular cases and will often mislead when applied to other cases or more generally. Yet, unlike Hobbes, Aristotle is far from dismissive of practical experience as such: to the contrary, the statesman's practical wisdom is necessarily informed by the experienced perceptions that enable him to apply his general ideas with sensitivity to particular cases. Although he is guided by these perceptions and by practical wisdom, the lawgiver's work is motivated by "care" (*epimeleia*) for his fellow citizens; the law is not a coldly abstract monster, but rather a rational and thoughtfully informed way of providing direction to citizens who need it.

The wisdom of the statesman and lawgiver, Aristotle says, requires both practical experience and knowledge of general ideas; but can this wisdom be taught? How (if at all) can it be communicated to others? Hobbes contends that scientific statesmanship can be taught through communicating the principles of metaphysics and practical science in clear and unambiguous language, as in the *Leviathan* itself, which should be taught, as he recommends, in all English universities. Like Hobbes, Aristotle criticizes those among his contemporaries who presumed to teach political science. But Aristotle's discussion is more searching because of his finer-grained understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. With medicine and other such professions, he says, students learn from those who are established practitioners, not from a textbook (with its abstract rules) or from trial and error (with its complete immersion in experience). Through their apprenticeship, they gain not only practical experience, but also a more universal and principled, albeit flexible, knowledge of the subject. In the case of politics, however, practitioners such as statesmen rarely communicate general ideas, if they are even aware of them. Their practical experience may make them successful, at least contingently and in certain situations. More desirable, though, would be the combination of practical experience with general ideas that constitutes full and complete possession of political science.

On the other hand, those self-proclaimed teachers, such as the sophists, who lack experience, tend to be unsuccessful, either because they equate the art of politics with rhetoric (an art that they do not understand in itself, because they pay more attention to rousing the emotions, Aristotle says, than to the deliberative rationality, and the use of enthymeme and example, that lies at the heart of rhetoric, properly understood: *Rhetoric* 1.1), or because they misguidedly believe that legislation is simply a matter of collecting laws that seem popularly to be good. Many of Plato's characters, such as Gorgias and Protagoras, exemplify the former problem, assuming that rhetoric is a rudderless tool of power, a "master craft" useful chiefly

for satisfying appetites. Other Platonic characters, such as Socrates in the dialogue *Protagoras*, propose quasi-scientific, reductive approaches to the human good—for example, a utilitarian calculus of pleasures and pains that is the *reductio ad absurdum* of Hobbes's own utilitarian science. Aristotle's discussion reveals that the sophists take a populist view of the art of legislation, by regarding its success as dependent on persuading popular audiences or choosing laws that have met with popular approval. But legislation and *phronêsis* are not fit to be judged by their popularity; even if Aristotelian political science has an egalitarian bent, as we have seen, these practical sciences are not dependent on popular appraisal, nor do they target the characteristically democratic goals of pleasure or freedom. Rather, they constitute parts of a teleological system that can be understood only by those who have undertaken a more rigorous and systematic inquiry, albeit one that is chastened by an awareness of the inherent imprecision of practical reasoning in general.

Aristotle's ethical and political writings were designed to cover the large spaces left by these deficient educators of aspiring legislators, statesmen, and citizens. He not only helped those individuals become self-conscious about their own activities, but also gave practical advice designed to improve political life. In that sense Aristotle's political science was philanthropic. It was in order to complete his "philosophy of human things" (*hê peri ta anthrôpeia philosophia*: *EN* 10.9.1181b15) that Aristotle turned from the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the *Politics*. As a resident alien of Athens, however, Aristotle himself did not have the practical experience enjoyed by leading statesmen, such as Pericles (*EN* 6.5.1140b7–10). Yet even if he had possessed such experience, his practical philosophy could not communicate practical experience itself. To address this problem, I think, Aristotle referred to his school's collection of 158 *politeiai* ("constitutions," "regimes") from across the Mediterranean world in order to give a certain empirical or experiential texture to his political philosophy. If the *Nicomachean Ethics* turned out to be a work designed primarily to clarify ethical ideas, and if it raised doubts about its own transformative power, though, then the *Politics* was more ambitious with regard to the capacity of statesmen to improve political life.[9] Aristotle's cautious optimism makes sense if legislation unites compulsory force with the practical wisdom that the philosopher intended to uncover.

V. LAWGIVING FOR THE BEST CITY

"It belongs to a serious lawgiver to look at the city and the race of humankind and every other association, and to see how they will have a share of a good life and the flourishing that is possible for them" (*Pol.* 7.2.1325a 7–10). In carrying out this task, the lawgiver should grasp that political rule is not equivalent to mastery or tyranny, because there is nothing dignified or especially meritorious about ruling over a number of slaves. Rather, what

gives meaning to this active life of political rule is the use of authority to enable the city to flourish—which means to enable its citizens to lead lives of freedom, equality, and self-development. Because theoretical philosophy rather than politics is humanity's highest vocation, though the statesman will also have to acknowledge that the city's highest goal is to provide a context for the intellectually active life of the speculative philosopher.

Aristotle's distinction between statesmanship and mastery implies that he does not admire one city's tyranny over other cities or embrace any city's acquisition of lavish material "externalities." These "goods of fortune," as he calls them, are normally provided, he says, by fortune itself; the law-giver's task is to cultivate the city's goodness, which "is not the work of fortune, but rather of knowledge (*epistêmê*) and decision (*prohairesis*)" (*Pol.* 7.13.1332a31–32). In this respect, Aristotle's practical philosophy differs sharply from the modern scientific statesmanship of Hobbes, which dedicates itself to the "relief of man's estate," as his contemporary Francis Bacon put it, through controlling nature and fortune and securing humanity's material condition. By contrast, Aristotle's "scientific" statesmanship is rooted in an openness to the natural world, rather than dedicated to imposing the human will on nature—which is itself a sort of political "mastery" made available through modern technology. Accordingly, Aristotle's scientific statesmanship targets the goals of peace and adequate leisure for cultivating humanity's natural capacities; the statesman will understand that war is for the sake of peace and work for the sake of noble activities such as civic deliberation, education, and philosophy. These hierarchies exist by nature and correspond to the parts of the soul and thus to the natural capacities and activities of human beings (*Pol.* 7.14.1333a37–39). Aristotle's general criticism of legislators and statesman of his own day, in fact, centers precisely on their lack of attention to worthwhile and meritorious action, as opposed to work that is of merely utilitarian importance. Perhaps surprisingly, Aristotle's statesman will pay most attention to ordering the city for the sake of leisure (*scholê, to scholazein*) and peace (*eirênê*) (*Pol.* 7.14.1334a2–5).

Ordering the city with a view to leisure and peace has different meanings for Aristotle and for Hobbes. Hobbes directed his entire political science to the goal of establishing peace, so that citizens could enjoy individual freedom and pleasure as they saw fit. Aristotle recognizes, to be sure, that human beings form associations in order to survive and to support what he calls "mere life" (i.e., the satisfaction of our basic needs), but he is dismissive of the Hobbesian or liberal pursuit of amusements and desire-satisfactions that is thought to be equivalent to "happiness," because it lies within our power, and indeed constitutes our flourishing, to go beyond mere life in order to seek the good life in common with others.

Yet what does this sort of statesmanship—that is, statesmanship with a view to "leisure"—involve in practice? It does not imply any unrealistic neglect of the military virtues or of concerns with security. Even so, although self-defense will always remain an important goal, it is not the noblest goal,

nor is courage, the cardinal military virtue, the most important virtue of all. Many Greek cities have made the mistake, Aristotle says, of elevating courage to the highest rank of the human excellences, even or especially those, such as Sparta, which are renowned for their attention to cultivating virtue (*Pol.* 7.14.1333b11–29). They mistakenly believe, à la Hobbes, that the life of enjoyment provided by material goods is the best life and that this sort of life is achievable through dominating others—which requires a powerful army. The statesman must have wisdom and courage enough to resist this simplistic, and yet characteristically human, response to the permanent question of how best to pursue the good life. In fact, the statesman will devote much of his effort, ideally at least, to preparing an appropriate education for the citizenry, straight from conception through death, all with a view to cultivating reason and to enabling his citizens to appreciate the ways in which their leisured activities are intrinsically good and worthwhile.

Hence, by contrast with the dominant liberal traditions of modernity, Aristotle focuses much of his *Politics*—particularly at the culminating point, the end—on habituating citizens correctly and helping them to develop their practical and (if possible) their theoretical reason. Political science and statesmanship are meaningful because they specify how people can live well and enable them to do so in practice. Education is of cardinal importance to the city, because the city is an association (*koinônia*) of free and equal citizens engaged in the project of living well together. Sparta was at least correct to institute a system of public education (*Pol.* 8.1.1337a29–32); most Greek cities, by contrast, leave education up to individual households, a practice likely to create political tensions and foster individual unhappiness. Aristotle spends more time than many of his students acknowledge on the question of how best to educate citizens, and for what purposes. It is at this stage of the inquiry, above all, that practical wisdom, as opposed to theoretical knowledge, comes particularly into focus, because the question that needs an answer is which types of cultivation will bring about the virtuous intellectual understanding that is necessary for citizens to live together well in a political community.

Here the key turns out to be what Aristotle calls an education in *mousikê*. Although Aristotle explores the different musical modes and rhythms in some detail, it is important in understanding his self-conception, and his conception of *politikê*, that specialized or exact treatment can be left to musical experts; his purpose is only to sketch, in the manner of law or a lawgiver (*nomikôs*), the broad outlines of music's significance within the city. Aristotle means by *mousikê* a wide familiarity with music, poetry, and literature, and he prescribes diverse types of teaching for the young with a view to understanding the role of music in the development of character (*êthos*) and *phronêsis*. Even more interesting is that Aristotle also, in the very final pages of the work, reflects on the role of *mousikê* for audiences of free citizens who have already received a thoughtful education. Aristotle's idea is that, among those whose emotions have been properly habituated

earlier in life, the practical intellect can continue to be developed throughout life through intellectual engagement with dramatic performances that draw attention to complex ethical questions and typically irresolvable dilemmas. Exercising one's reason in order to interpret tragic, comic, dithyrambic, and other dramatic performances is itself not only a source of pleasure and *catharsis*, as Aristotle mentions, but also, in its own right, an activity of the soul in accordance with its rational part. Put differently, it is an end-like activity of practical reason that resembles, and might even provide a "gateway" to, the activities of the fully theoretical reason that characterizes the highest of human vocations.[10]

VI.   *POLITIKÊ* AS SELF-GOVERNMENT

Aristotle's emphasis on the properly end-like activities of reason, whether theoretical or practical, sheds light on his conception of *politikê* as self-government. Aristotle distinguished practical wisdom, and thus *politikê*, from the other activities of the rational soul in the *Nicomachean Ethics*; he began the *Politics*, on the other hand, by distinguishing between *politikê* and other forms of practical skill or rule that might be confused with it. In particular, Aristotle argues, political science differs from mastery over slaves and from household management. Mastery over slaves is a relationship between an owner and his property; the master's unremarkable "knowledge" consists only in the proper use of slaves as instruments or tools designed for action. By contrast, household management, of which the use of slaves is a part, is a more ethically oriented activity that focuses on the development of its members, particularly on the goodness of (within Aristotle's highly conventional outlook) the householder's wife and children. Aristotle is clear that these relationships cannot be fully political, however, because the psychological capacities of the different members are different and unequal: they fit the head of the household to rule permanently, the children to obey him as though he were a monarch, and his wife to obey as a permanently unequal partner.

These activities of the household differ from the intrinsically meritorious activities of politics (not to mention philosophy), because they are unequal, instrumental, and focused on necessary and recurrent needs—particularly those of the body. By contrast with the hierarchies that pertain to relationships within the household, the political relationship is one of free and equal citizens who rule and are ruled in turn (*Pol.* 1.1.1252a7–16, 1.7.1255b 16–20, 1.12.1259b4–6). Its characteristic activities, such as deliberation and judgment, are free and end-like, insofar as they engage the virtues of justice and moderation, along with practical reasoning based on public discourse about what is beneficial to the city.

The political knowledge that underlies these activities is different from "royal knowledge," the expertise of the king, which corresponds to the

parent–child relationship. Aristotle maintains that the male citizen house-holder properly exercises an authority, as a parent, which has the character of royal authority. The child's "virtue is not his own in relation to himself, but in relation to the end and to the one guiding him" (*Pol.* 1.13.1260a32–33); similarly, the most complete kind of kingship, which Aristotle calls "absolute kingship" (*pambasileia*), constitutes the household management of a city, with subjects relating to their king as parts to a whole (*Pol.* 3.17.1288a26–28). What this means is that in certain cases (such as the Heroic Age, when cities were less well developed and lacked a full complement of free and equal citizens) an individual proves to be superior to others in a special way, so that it would make no sense, and be unjustified, to subject him to the same laws as the other citizens. But this type of rule would not amount to statesmanship, because the natural hierarchy involved in it would exclude the possibility of deliberation and judgment among citizens.

If that line of reasoning is correct, however, then has Aristotle left much room for statesmanship after all? Aristotle's discussions focus on the objects of political science, on the nature of political knowledge, and on the ethical ends to be achieved, ideally, within political life. But he does not say much about the statesman as a distinct type of leader, as an outstanding individual who occupies a special place in the political order. The philosopher's thinking on this point shapes up in a surprising way, as we now see, because ultimately Aristotle presents an equation between scientific statesmanship and wise self-governance, mediated by the concepts of ethical virtue and practical wisdom.

How and why does Aristotle draw together the two seemingly opposed notions of scientific statesmanship and political self-governance? After a long and complex discussion in chapter 3.4, Aristotle concludes that in the best city the goodness (*aretê*) of the good man and that of the good citizen are the same; the education and habits productive of the good man will also produce the good statesman or "political man" (*politikos*) (most clearly at *Pol.* 3.18.1288a37–1288b2). This is the individual who either has authority over or is capable of having authority over the supervision of the city's affairs (*Pol.* 3.5.1278a41–1278b5). The latter element of this description is significant: in the best city, even citizens who do not hold office will be in possession of "political science," precisely because they possess the practical wisdom that is characteristic of good men. They will rule and be ruled in turn, in a rotating fashion, because justice requires that all citizens of equal rank be given honors and power in accordance with their excellence of character and intellect. So, although they may not be exercising a ruling function at any particular moment, their possession of political science is integral to the good lives they lead, because through it they explicitly recognize, and realize in practice, the goodness that is alone available in civic relations with others.[11] In this sense, at least, all citizens of the best polis are "statesmen" because of their possession of political knowledge.

How and in what conditions, on the other hand, can the equation between scientific statesmanship and the citizen's self-governance possibly apply to political life as we know it? After all, Books IV–VI of the *Politics* show that Aristotle is not optimistic about the prospects for the contemporary Greek cities that he knew, which had evolved, or rather devolved, into an anarchic mix of oligarchies and democracies, two "defective" types of regime. In more ordinary cities (i.e., virtually all cities that have ever existed), the citizens lack the extremely high levels of excellence that citizens of the best regime possess. Here statesmanship and self-governance diverge sharply, and a reconsideration of Aristotelian statesmanship is in order.

VII. *POLITIKÊ* AND THE HEALTH OF ALL CITIES

Aristotle frequently uses analogies to explain the statesman's practical knowledge, of which the most common are medicine and physical training.[12] These branches of knowledge naturally have an empirical basis: they are rooted in the observation of particular cases, and any general ideas or predictions they offer are based on empirical inquiry. At the same time, they do, for Aristotle, involve explicit norms and standards of evaluation, such as the idea that a certain body is in a healthy physical condition or that a certain bodily organ is carrying out its appropriate function in relation to the human organism as a whole. Hence, these are multifaceted practical disciplines, which involve not only reflection on what the best physique or the healthiest body might be, but also which regimens and treatments will benefit other, deficient bodies, and which can be applied to most people in general. The same type of practical organization and directive orientation also characterizes political science. The statesman must understand the best regime altogether, as well as which regimes suit which sorts of people, which regimes are most practicable, and which regimes are most suitable to cities in general (*Pol.* 4.1). This statesmanlike understanding requires not only knowledge of the different possible types of regime, but also a "local" knowledge of particular groups of citizens and particular ways of life and structures of belief. Yet even so, in the midst of all the political diversity that Aristotle uncovers, Aristotle wishes his statesman and lawgivers to keep in mind the standards he laid bare at the end of the work, where the focus is on the creation and governance of the best regime possible for human beings. In all these ways, Aristotle emphasizes, the statesman fulfills his role successfully only when he proves to be of practical benefit to existing regimes (*Pol.* 4.1.1288b10–1289a25).

Aristotle's inquiry into political "particulars," which occupies Books IV–VI of the *Politics*, makes it clear that even if exercising one's rational soul in explicating and practicing *politikê* is good in itself, Aristotle's own political science is designed to contribute practical improvements to political life, through making suggestions and predictions, through explaining ordinary

political phenomena, and through offering the kinds of evaluation that his normatively informed outlook would lead readers to anticipate. On these various functions of Aristotle's "social science," see Salkever, 1990. Hence, for example, Aristotle points out that both democracies and oligarchies should cultivate among the rich and the poor a respect for the "other"—that is, a willingness to protect the interests of the rich in democracy or the poor in oligarchy, without which the regime is likely to fail (*Pol.* 5.9.1310a2–12). Pretenders to statesmanship in such constitutions will often push the principle of the regime to a destructive limit, for example when demagogues manipulate the system of taxation to oppress the rich (*Pol.* 5.9.1310a 3–6). This type of move is a self-destructive mistake (*Pol.* 6.1.1317a35–38), because what befits an association with diverse types of human beings is a mixed regime in which the "middling types" (*hoi mesoi*) provide stability and in which the rich and poor both find laws and practices with which they can identify and that they find favorable.

Especially in these sections, Aristotle's "scientific statesmanship" straddles the abstract and the particular. An analogy that might be familiar to us—to compare small with great—would be Dr. Spock's writings on child-rearing, in which the doctor explains a certain outlook on raising children that is at once abstract, normative, empirical, and practical. His works are designed to help parents raise their children without descending into the details of any particular case, even were it possible, in order to do the job for them. Aristotle gives clear advice but understands that lawgivers, statesmen, and citizens must act for themselves. "It is necessary," Aristotle says, for example, "in a regime that is mixed well, that it seem to have both democratic and oligarchical elements and neither" (*Pol.* 4.9.1294b34–36). This statement (for example) embodies sound political advice, but the particular combination of these elements, and their "ideological" impact, will necessarily be a matter of local custom and interpretation, about which Aristotle refuses to make a statement in this work. Those judgments must be left up to the practitioners themselves, who are close enough to real-time events to make informed decisions. Ideally, Aristotle expected their decisions to be informed not only by their own practical experience, but also by a knowledge of the history of a wide variety of Greek city-states, such as he offers in Books IV–VI of the *Politics*, and such as he and his school had gathered in assembling their famous collection of "constitutions" (*politeiai*) of 158 Greek cities.

VII.   CONCLUSION

Aristotle was well aware of the technical, precise language that science often adopted and of the resulting, instrumental significance that might be attributed to statesmanship. Early in the *Politics*, he told the story of the philosopher Thales of Miletus. Thales was ridiculed for the uselessness of his scientific knowledge, until he used his meteorological predictions to

generate a lucrative monopoly on olive presses one year. Aristotle explains that philosophers can transform science into a kind of predictive technology, and hence use their knowledge instrumentally, but that such uses and their materialistic profits are not what philosophers genuinely care about (*Pol.* 1.11.1259a16–18). For Aristotle, knowledge—whether of natural science or of human affairs—is intrinsically worthwhile, but the philosophy of human affairs that we have discussed is concerned above all with human action (*praxis*). This kind of philosophy and its active counterpart, statesmanship, does not make or produce goods, but it does use those goods when they are available, in order to help human beings live good lives. It is only through careful attention to practice (rather than production or economic growth) that the philosopher can enable human beings to become good. Such could never be the object of Hobbesian science, nor of the statesmanship (much less citizenship) that derived from it.

NOTES

1. I dedicate this essay to Stephen Salkever, whose influence on both the essay and my work in general will be obvious. In thinking about these problems, I have also been influenced by the work of my former teacher John Cooper, especially by Cooper, 2012.
2. For different views of the relationship between Hobbes's political science and natural science, see Malcolm, 2002, and Strauss, 1952, both of which have influenced my account. In quoting Hobbes, I have used the edition of Curley, 1994.
3. Both Strauss, 1952, and Mansfield, 1971, provide helpful discussions of these themes in Hobbes's text.
4. For an accessible discussion, see Lear, 1988.
5. See especially Salkever, 1990.
6. Translations are my own, informed by Bartlett and Collins, 2011; Barker, 1995; and Rackham, 1994. I have also consulted the standard OCT editions of the relevant Aristotelian texts.
7. On the superiority of the theoretical life, see especially Salkever, 1990.
8. On the different purposes of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, see Garver, 2011.
9. See Garver, 2011.
10. An excellent treatment of Aristotle on leisure and musical education can be found in Depew, 1991, from which I borrow the term "gateway."
11. A well-informed account of practical wisdom and political knowledge, along these lines, can be found in Cooper, 2012.
12. For interesting remarks on the medical analogy and its implications, see Salkever, 1990.

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3 Cicero on Expertise in Governance

Walter Nicgorski

This paper is the fruition of an inquiry into an important ingredient in Cicero's thinking about statesmanship or political leadership. It joins with other inquiries in this volume in wondering about the contribution—in this case that of Cicero—from the history of political philosophy to understanding the task of governance, or what might be called the requisites of successful statesmanship. There are many within academic political science who would deny or be deeply skeptical about any claim that political philosophy, especially that of the ancient vintage, notably contributes to understanding modern governance and its requisites. Our age is, after all, one marked by all forms of empirical studies of political and social life, by data banks and policy studies, by studies of campaign strategies and techniques, by public opinion polling and multiple analyses. It would hardly seem appropriate to call in the philosophical mind, especially the pre-Baconian type, for understanding politics and for guidance for political leaders. Rather, as has been thought in certain circles for some time, we seem to be on the verge of politics and government fading, yielding to the administration of experts. However exaggerated such an expectation seems, there can be little doubt that expertise of every sort abounds, being both the product and the cause of extensive specialization and division of labor.

Not only is expertise of every sort available, but its utility is decisively enhanced by the Internet and the search engines of the modern computer. The latter's capacity for storage and for analytical inquiries into data are critical components of this enhancement. Not just information, but also analyses and the results of theory testing can be readily delivered to the point of political deliberation and decision. Clearly this is a different world, not just different from Cicero's time in the late Roman Republic, but different from ours just two or three generations back.

What is the nature of this difference? And is it as great as it seems? These related questions must be posed if one is to avoid a simplistic caricature of how the past and past thinkers about politics approached relevant "facts" and interpretations of the political sphere and political issues. It is, after all, a matter of common sense, and thus not lost on ancient or modern man, that human practical choices, first made in the sphere of personal and family

life, should be based on reliable knowledge of the surrounding world and of the options available to decision-makers. Cicero even goes beyond such common ground in a kind of kinship with our age of expertise. He not only elevates statesmanship, the active life of informed leadership, over that of simple thought, theorizing, and contemplation, but he also makes experience in such a life the crowning requisite of successful statesmanship. It is in this insistence on experience as well as within the other requisites of statesmanship that one finds the statesman's dependence on reliable and tested knowledge, science, and certain arts. Against this backdrop of what, in Cicero's thinking, is a necessary pull to all the expertise that is critical to attaining excellent political leadership, his differences from anything like the rule of experts and present tendencies to marginalize the importance of political philosophy can be better discerned.

I.   STATESMANSHIP, THE PRIMARY DUTY

Within the ancient canon of political thinkers, Cicero is clearly the most explicit in elevating the role of statesmanship to first rank in importance.[1] It can well be argued that in the entire history of political thought few, if any, give the kind of attention to statesmanship that Cicero does. His entire political philosophy centers on the statesman's critical role in founding as well as in developing or reaching toward, and in maintaining, the best possible regime. This focus is especially clear in Cicero's major writing in political theory, his *Republic* or *De Re Publica*.[2] His major dialogue on the orator, *De Oratore*, written but a few years earlier, reveals an understanding of the true and perfect orator as being equivalent to and seemingly synonymous with the model statesman. This true orator also represents for Cicero a peak to which a leader ought aspire. These dialogues were both written and circulated in the 50s BCE and are the first writings we have of Cicero on moral and political philosophy except for his remarkable youthful treatise on one aspect of the art of rhetoric.[3] In fact, of all his extant philosophical writings, these about politics and rhetoric are the first ones. It is reasonable to conjecture that these writings of the 50s reflect quite directly the priorities of Cicero's own life in his commitment to active political leadership and his embrace of the rhetorical art as critical in establishing and maintaining that leadership. These writings were done in the immediate years after Cicero's exile from Rome in connection with actions he took in the year 63 when he had reached the consulship, the top office in the Roman Republic. Cicero had ascended to that peak of Roman politics through his oratorical and legal abilities; his own expertise in these arts was the result of a conscious choice by himself and his father in order to prepare for political leadership. Now in the 50s, no longer in office and largely fallen from political power, his efforts to serve the republic by educating through his writings begin within those spheres—rhetoric, politics, and law—in which he was practiced and

had excelled. As we will shortly see in noticing his emphasis on experience as a requisite of successful statesmanship, Cicero is writing as a man of experience utilizing the wisdom of men of experience, and the very *personae* and characters of such men appear in his dialogues in order to inform and inspire a rising and less experienced generation.

Cicero's elevation of statesmanship to the first rank of vocational choices for outstanding men of suitable qualifications is without apology and nearly unqualified in these early writings. It is most explicit in his *De Re Publica*. There in the first prologue to Book I, that in Cicero's own direct voice as author, he explains that virtue is not the mere discussion of it in philosophers' quiet corners; instead it is truly present when it is practiced (*usus*), and the greatest of virtues is found in civic leadership (*gubernatio civitatis*).[4] That understanding lays the basis for the often cited culminating remark in this prologue that the virtue of statesmen in founding and maintaining political communities marks the closest human approach to the ways of the gods.[5]

In this prologue Cicero is candid in suggesting how his own experiences have shaped this view and thus the significance of what he has suffered in his service to Rome. With full awareness of such potential suffering, Cicero has resisted the retreats both to the gardens of pleasure and thought invited by Epicureanism and to the satisfying delights of contemplative philosophy. He calls on the ways of the fathers and heroes of Rome to reinforce his message and example for potential statesmen of the future. In the case that emerges for the priority of statesmanship, Cicero is not primarily writing an apology for his own course of life or simply appealing to the Roman sense of practical achievement over Greek talk and theorizing. The opening to that fuller case of the second prologue and beyond can be found in the one qualification or exception that Cicero allows to the clear priority of statesmanship. This qualification occurs when he allows that certain exceptional thinkers have in effect acknowledged the importance, if not the priority, of the political, not through direct participation in politics, but by focusing considerable study and writing on the subject; they were, to a notable extent, political philosophers rather than philosophers at large.[6] These appear to be the major figures in the philosophical tradition of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in which Cicero locates himself. Cicero has thus drawn attention to their work illuminating and teaching about ethics and politics, much as Cicero now finds himself doing in writing his *Republic*.

The second prologue to *De Re Publica* is the preliminary conversation within the dialogue itself, as the discussion, which is Cicero's construct, moves to focus on the question of what is the best constitution.[7] In the course of the preliminary exchanges in the dialogue, a Socratic focus to inquiry is explicitly defended.[8] This means that what is most worth discussing and understanding is how life is to be lived, and it is a matter of simple utility to elevate that question over speculative knowledge of any sort that does not appear more or less directly to bear on guidance to human life.

How one lives is bound up with the question of how *we* ought to live—
or what then should be the form or very constitution of our common life
together. What emerges from the second prologue is the logic, the Socratic
logic, for the priority of statesmanship rooted in the priority of the political
and giving rise to the elevated status of moral and political philosophy over
other branches of philosophy.[9] It is a logic that works from an understand-
ing of human nature and its inclinations and needs. That practical focus,
which Socrates is said to have insisted upon and which is strengthened by
Roman good sense and practice, gives a direction not only to the remain-
der of this dialogue but also to the philosophical work of Cicero that will
continue to his last days. The logic draws out the truth that without others
man cannot realize himself and thus be himself. Security and material self-
sufficiency are inadequate for full realization and true happiness.[10] So it is a
matter of utility (his very needs) that turns man to political community, and
that turn then requires leadership in founding, perpetuating, and develop-
ing political communities throughout the various contingencies of history.
Statesmanship in the service of the communal dimension of human life is a
fundamental need of life. Whatever then are the requisites of a statesman-
ship that could guide well the community would be imperative as needs of
humankind.

Before taking up those requisites and initially the crowning requisite,
experience, it is important to notice that the second prologue with its open-
ing to the great classical tradition of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle deals with
an elevation of statesmanship that speaks much more to the choice posed for
Cicero and for many of the most talented and morally well-tuned persons
in history. The first prologue's argument has primarily held up Roman tra-
dition and heroes against the Epicurean temptation; service over pleasure.
The second prologue raises for consideration the competing claim of the
philosophical life, one that attracted Cicero from his very first years and that
appears to be supported by those philosophers he so respected, Plato and
Aristotle.[11] In this strain of the classical tradition, and in Cicero's thought,
the taste of the significance of understanding large truths and of the great
joy and perhaps peace of this life of theoretical inquiry and contemplation
is supported by a philosophical anthropology that portrays such a life as the
purest exercise of man's divine faculty of reason. It is an exercise upon the
highest and most eternal objects, far from the "dregs of Rome," the political
messiness into which statesmen must step.[12] Cicero has been seen at times as
one who either does not know, due to the distractions of his practical life, or
does not appreciate the philosophical life as the best and happiest of human
lives. As his overall thinking unfolds in his writings, the reader can see that
this is not so. For those so qualified, Cicero recognizes the life of philosophy
as the most divine-like and happiest of choices for a human being. It is not,
however, the first duty for people so equipped; in most circumstances that
duty is to a life of political leadership or statesmanship. These persons enter
but are not to be swallowed up in the messiness of politics; they are to be

persons who regularly self-examine, marked by a Socratic striving for self-understanding and moral improvement.[13]

II.　EXPERIENCE, THE PRIMARY REQUISITE

The same logic drawn from human need that brings statesmanship to the fore as a primary duty compels attention to the requisites of successful statesmanship. For Cicero that general expertise that he and we call experience is the first and the crowning requisite of statesmanship. It is first in the sense that Cicero almost never holds up the need and duty of statesmanship or models of such statesmanship without affixing to the very idea of statesmanship the added dimension of experience, the actual successful practice of that activity. So it is that Cicero offers himself as one who has added experience to whatever learning, training, and dispositions he brought to the pursuit of political office and political service.[14] In addition, the characters of his dialogues who project and discuss the true orator and/or statesman are such successful political leaders as Scipio and Laelius in *De Re Publica* and Crassus and Antonius in *De Oratore*. Within these and other works of Cicero, the examples, opinions, and judgments of other successful statesmen are frequently drawn to our attention. Practice (*usus*), repeated practice producing skill and competence (*peritus*), and thus achievement in such matters as oratory, law, and statesmanship, is the critical Roman additive to Greek theorizing. Experience that is successful is then the generalized expertise that would be desirable not only in guiding present rulers but also in educating and counseling political leaders of the future.[15] Experience then is the first requisite in Cicero's order of presentation, so closely tied to the case for the priority of statesmanship that one could rightly say it is implied in that very statesmanship. When one says statesmen are requisite in the human condition, one means of course true and complete (*perfecti*) statesmen, experienced ones.

In the other sense of finishing or bringing to completion, experience is a primary or crowning requisite. All knowledge, that of arts as well as that of history, can stray from a good purpose in the process of being put to use. So all requisites of that sort do not in themselves make for successful statesmanship just as the knowledge of the virtues is not the realization of them in practice. It seems that it is wide and deep experience, the efforts of practice, of success and failure, that is most likely to yield the power of judgment resulting in the successful use of what has been learned. Experience in this sense is a way of speaking of the expertise of cultivated prudential judgment.[16] Cicero reports that it is the very basis of political prudence (*caput civilis prudentiae*) that he is seeking in his *De Re Publica*.[17] In that sense it is, for Cicero and likely for us, the crowning requisite of true statesmanship. Even with the availability of machines holding quite incredible banks of data and powers to find relationships and test them, the critical test of utility

is in the application of the knowledge at hand to the tasks and decisions of leadership and governance. Perhaps, however, one should back up in the process of seeking to garner expertise from such machines or from staffs and departments full of experts and notice the role judgment does play in guiding one in what to look for, even in the very use and searching power of such capacities. Coming to see *how* experience is a crown or capstone among the requisites of statesmanship allows one to appreciate *how*, in the first sense of its primacy noted above, it is tied to, integrated with, the very concept of statesmanship. Cicero's exemplars of statesmanship are experienced in that calling; were they not, they could not be said to possess the virtue of statesmanship. Statesmanship is not, of course, to be confused with simply holding political power; were it so understood, that would not be statesmanship that is at hand. What is first in the order of appearance, when models of statesmanship are held up, is after analysis the manifestation of experience's capacity to yield prudential judgment, the very crown of experience.

Cicero draws on experience to make the case for experience as a requisite of statesmanship. It seems there is no getting around the fact that there is a kind of circularity here or begging of the question. Yet there must be a ground or axiom and premises for our practical judgments, if not all judgments. Where is that to be found except in human experience, whether generalized human experience or that of a limited sphere, as for example that of politics or of military service. Such experience is the empirical basis for directing our lives or for expert service in spheres like that of politics or the military. Are we reaching back to the ground of common sense with all its possible pitfalls?

Much has and can be said about the fact that common sense often masks what is a defective empiricism, a casual or cursory empiricism, usually beset by the "idols" or limits, especially those of the observer's place and time. So how reliable is experience? How reliable is the very defense of experience on the basis of experience? Much would seem to depend at root on the quality of common sense, specifically how common it really is, and how it is interpreted, or, in other words, how the sense in it is found. It would be a caricature of ancient thinkers and scholars for us, while impressed by the formal methodological rules for systematic and scientific observation of post-Baconian history, to suppose that these thinkers and scholars were oblivious to and thus not attentive to the qualitative dimension of the way we learn from experience. No reader of Aristotle's practical philosophy can miss his experiential basis. Aristotle ever starts from "what observation shows" and returns to observation to correct misperceptions or confused perceptions of what is there before the observer, what generally happens, and/or what is widely thought. In this way he teaches care in observation as well as the importance of extent of sample, and an awareness of various ways to go wrong in analysis of any sample. In the century before him the justly acclaimed Greek historians, Herodotus and Thucydides, taught the importance of getting the facts right, separating fact from fable, and care in

generalizing about one or another aspect of human nature and human communities. Both were aware that history teaches patterns and allows its students generalizations about individual and communal behavior. All might learn from history, yet history does not simply repeat itself. At every point in those classical examples from Greece, judgment appears critical in determining what experience is relevant and how it might be applicable.

Roman ways become even more those of practitioners, systematic practitioners of all arts, especially, it seems, those arts most relevant to security and glory. There is a special national pride in the arts of governance even after the tumultuous fissures of the late Republic and emergence of the Empire. In that period of transition, Rome's greatest poet, Virgil, proclaims Rome's mission "to govern nations with authority . . . employing such arts (*hae artes*) to make the ways of peace prevail, to have consideration for the lowly and to bring down the haughty."[18] His boast above all looks forward, but it is credible because of the political achievements in the Republic. It is into this Roman tradition that Cicero had consciously and explicitly moved. He became in many ways its foremost spokesman, proud of its achievements but so un-Roman-like in being quite openly indebted to and without ire toward the successes of Greek civilization. Cicero not only calls repeatedly for leaders characterized by learning and experience, as well as for endeavors to educate in this way, but he also calls specifically on at least one occasion for such leaders marked by care (*diligentia*).[19] It is the quality he demonstrates in his use of experience. It is care that averts misuse and through prudence, the fashioning of good judgment, that allows the development of expertise, the actual possession of the relevant arts.

III.   EQUIPPING THE STATESMAN: FORMALIZED EXPERIENCE AND THE RELEVANT ARTS

Chief among the specific requisites of statesmanship for Cicero are the arts most relevant to politics and political leadership as well as a broad and rich learning, marked by an emphasis on history.[20] Those relevant arts are primarily the art of rhetoric and the art of the law in which Cicero and his father saw that he was schooled from the earliest possible days. These two arts appear then to be the chief sub-arts to the art of governance or statesmanship itself. Such arts, as all arts, become the carriers of formalized experience or of existing expertise. Cicero gives extensive and close attention to these requisite arts, most notably in seven works often called his rhetorical writings and, in the case of law, most directly in his *De Legibus*.[21]

Compared with the art of law, Cicero is more explicit discussing in what the "art" consists when he treats the art of rhetoric. From his earliest of writings, his *De Inventione*, through his other rhetorical writings of the last fifteen years of his life, he shows himself engaged with and learning from, though clearly not limited by, then existing rhetorical treatises and manuals.

These draw together the rules and maxims of an art moving to maturity in his own time and to which Cicero clearly makes a contribution. For him, an art is an ordered and methodical way of holding one's knowledge about a sector of human experience. To possess knowledge as an art is to have hold of the rational order into which this experience might fall, and to have knowledge in this fashion would necessarily make it, and thus much collective experience, especially accessible, usable, and teachable.[22]

The art of rhetoric has a special importance for Cicero, and surely his training in it and continuing attention to it played an important part in his distinguished achievement as an orator, in other words, in the very using or bringing to fruition of the art. He emphasized repeatedly that all knowledge, hence all the other arts, are inert without the power of rhetoric, this art of appropriate speech and communication.[23] In that respect, rhetoric is the art of arts, although Cicero, with good reason, will ultimately save that accolade for moral and political philosophy, a matter to be considered in the conclusion of this essay. Rhetoric not only plays a critical role in realizing in practice the ordered knowledge of experience that constitute the other arts, but it is also seen by Cicero as having been fundamental in creating and sustaining political community. This achievement is realized especially with the help of the art of law. Insofar as one thinks of rhetoric's role in founding and creating political community, a thought that Cicero raises for his readers more than once,[24] it must be a very primitive art or a pre-artistic state of natural talent with the power of speech.[25] Cicero explicitly follows Aristotle in highlighting the truth that art follows nature, and when the power of speech plays its critical role in the first steps of human community and civility, it is a reminder that art is practiced, experienced as it were, before it is carefully systematized and codified as art. The arts of speech and reason, the humanizing arts for Cicero, are developments in interaction, and thus in tandem, and it would seem that their development makes possible political community, and political community, in turn, is a condition of their continuing development into arts. In the fashioning of the arts and its own self-reflection on its powers and works, reason itself develops.[26] The practice then of these two chief arts raises human beings toward full development while playing the critical role in creating the political conditions not merely for security but also favorable to practices that constitute the full human life. That life is one where all arts might develop in peace and prosperity, the best of Roman aspirations and expectations.

The art of law comes into view in a sense secondary to rhetoric; law follows upon political community rather than being prior to it; although law, constitutional or foundational, is constitutive of political community and would usually be closely entailed with the origins of such communities. Insofar as the law of nature is, as Cicero insists, foundational to the art of law, this law could be the very ground to which oratorically gifted leaders will appeal in founding endeavors. However the matter be with respect to founding and constituting, for most human beings law's work is about

constitutional maintenance and adaptation and about the daily need for order and dispute resolution within communities.

Cicero does treat the wide-ranging practices of law, in effect the accumulated experiences of the law, as an art of law to which he gave a portion of his life from adolescent years to final years as a willing counselor in a *pro bono* manner.[27] In addition to using the term *ars* to describe a knowledge of law and legal matters, Cicero writes of training or learning the law as *disciplina*. Further evoking the sense of an art, he sees that a body of laws might be expected to have some systematic order to them (*ordo legum*).[28] It appears that there are a range of determinations that law must make so that a community is well-ordered; for example, from procedures for elections of leaders to procedures for settling property disputes. Like any art, to possess the art of law, legal expertise, is not only to know rules or generalizations that arise from a body of knowledge, but it is also to have hold of the rationale or order of a sector of experience, the fruit of the classifying and organizing capacities of reason. To be educated in this art, as in any art, is to be led to exercise one's reason in being initiated to the rationale of that sector of experience within the established art. In that way, not only is reason nurtured and potentially developed, but the student of the art is also prepared to go beyond the established art. Reason's power to transcend the given, its reforming capacity, comes to life.

Both of these key sub-arts of statesmanship, like all human arts, are distinctive but sometimes overlapping, and tap into the reservoir of human experiences. Gaining possession of an art is a mastery of a sector of formalized experience; such mastery is the mark of expertise. Within any given art offered for the study and practice of students is this storehouse of experiences filtered through examination and testing of repeated experience into systematic knowledge that might be called science and be the basis for an art possessed. Formalized experience is not just our own experience worked upon by our *careful judgment*, nor is it just the common experience of our time. In fact, the student who undertakes to possess certain arts is in the first instance an inheritor of extended experience, tested and filtered experience of the past. Art then is the carrier of specific historical experiences. This is a vertical experience through time encapsulated in an art handed down.

Art is handed to present students and would-be users, and it becomes subject to their experiences in the present and near-present, what might be called horizontal experience. Thus the arts are always being fashioned anew in ongoing experience. Each user of the art must, like Cicero himself, adapt and adjust what is given in the art to the specific uses called for in his or her time. Expertise is ever being fashioned, and arts are thus developed or reformed. A user must, it appears, act from what can be considered a higher rule than the art in question, or what might be rather and properly understood as the primary norm of the existing art. In the case of each of these key sub-arts, Cicero has explicitly recognized the limits of art, or, as noted earlier, he respected and learned from the arts without being limited by them.

He is not limited by them, first because he has shown an understanding of the nature of art in relation to experience and thus how he and the present are necessarily empowered to adjust and adapt the art in the light of contemporary experience. The result is to know that one can contribute to art's development. The second way of being free of confinement in possessing an art is to know that art's ordinary rules are not exceptionless norms. Art's rules must give way to that higher or primary norm on certain occasions to achieve the end of the art. To speak appropriately in the situation at hand is the primary or higher norm of rhetoric that might overrule usual rules and guidelines about suitable length, a proper introduction, emotional appeal, etc. For law, the higher concern opens the door to considerations of equity in applying any law. The basis for that opening is to teach, as Cicero does, that law is reason; it is essentially the reason of the prudent man and the primary norm for the legal art.[29]

IV.   HISTORY: EXTENDED EXPERIENCE

It is commonplace to recognize the study of history as a way of extending one's own experience and of benefitting from analyses of earlier experiences. It may seem strange for this essay to turn now to a separate section on history when awareness and use of history has been everywhere in evidence in Cicero as he made his case for statesmanship, for the role of experience, and for the requisite arts of leadership. Historical examples, customs, and ways of the fathers (*mos majorum*) and specific historical incidents appear very frequently in his moral and political writings, not to mention their extensive use throughout his orations. Cicero has mentioned historical knowledge as among the requisites of the calling to be an orator and statesman, and he gives rich evidence of having appropriated this advice. Beyond this broad claim for the utility of history and the evidence of such in Cicero's true orator and statesman, there is the fact that the requisite arts for leadership, as all arts, are carriers of history in capturing the experience of the past in their rules and guidelines. A notable Ciceronian of the sixteenth-century Renaissance once drew attention to Cicero's own recognition of the experience implicit in all art. Juan Luis Vives, writing on the importance of experience to education and emphasizing that experience "brings a very great mass of detail to the power of thinking," noted that "we gain experience by the course of time in the pursuit of practical affairs. What has happened to others, we get to know from the memory of past ages which is called history." And then citing Cicero, Vives notes that the "usefulness of history" is "also great for all the arts of life." Not surprisingly Vives immediately mentions Cicero's endorsement of "the great importance of history for the government of the commonwealth, and the administration of public business."[30] Cicero has done more than acknowledge the history implicit in arts handed down; he has chosen, in the case of rhetoric, to write a text, the *Brutus*,

which is essentially a history of orators, and in the case of law, he has understood it as essentially history, the ways or customs of peoples. Thus law is history that is experience or precedent in the ways of life of peoples.

So Cicero's texts are awash in history, and yet it seems that there has been scant attention to Cicero's direct reflection on the very subject matter or art of history and to his decision not to use his talents and time to write history. The question of what is history's role for Cicero's thinking thus warrants attention in making sense of Cicero, especially when exploring the experiences and thus the expertise that might serve governance. Vives has brought to attention a section of the *De Oratore* that coupled with another from *De Legibus*, both writings of the 50s BCE, allows a fuller understanding of Cicero's great appreciation for history and why it did not constitute the highest priority for him.

The topic of history makes an abrupt entrance into the dialogue *On the Laws*.[31] The *personae* of the dialogue are Cicero himself, his very good friend Atticus, and his brother Quintus. This segment on history, which has often seemed puzzling, occurs in the course of an opening discussion on the power of poetry to immortalize an image and perhaps even that reality from which the image arose, in this case a historic tree in Cicero's birth town of Arpinum. When Cicero observes that poetry's standard of success is entertainment or giving delight, whereas that of history is telling the truth, he mentions in the very same sentence that Herodotus, the father of history (*patrem historiae*), makes uses of fables. That fable-making is what poetry also does is illustrated by the brief discussion that precedes the raising here of the topic of history. So it appears almost at once that the gap between poetry and history has been narrowed, and that Herodotus might indeed be a historian, but a poetic historian.

Later in this segment the kinship between history and oratory is stressed, a notion Cicero has developed earlier largely in speeches of Antonius in *De Oratore*, and this kinship might, too, suggest that the truth telling that Cicero is associating with history is far from the annalistic tradition where there might be truth telling but not significant and efficacious truth telling. We are reminded of what Aristotle was claiming in saying that poetry is more philosophical than history.[32] The relationship to oratory arose because Atticus is portrayed posing a question Romans are said to have about Cicero, namely, why has he not taken up the writing of history on the scale of the Greek greats, presumably Herodotus and Thucydides. It is Thucydides who is explicitly mentioned in the segment from *De Oratore*, and he is presented as the kind of historian who, not given to the fables of a Herodotus, sees deeply into the role of human nature in events and invites the observation of patterns in history. He clearly is perceived as something of a philosophical historian, and it is into this outstanding Greek company that apparently many expected Cicero, the master of eloquence, to move and to proclaim there the Roman story, especially that of the struggle for the Republic. Cicero not only had the stylistic excellence but also the philosophical disposition

and background and patriotism to serve the Republic and its ideals in this way. Cicero himself writes of the orator's capacity to immortalize what he treats; he is akin to the poet in this respect.[33] Cicero did not provide us with a clearly developed view of history in *Legibus*, but he is evidently revealing something about his understanding of history, even as he comes to conclude that it is not his first priority. Cicero the author has here created an occasion in his text not just to discuss the nature of history, but also it seems to explain why he has not taken up writing history. It might be truth telling, but as often practiced in the annalistic tradition, it is not the significant truth telling to which both poetry and oratory are called. So Cicero has defended a kind of history, but he is not about to take up its mantle.

The passages to which Vives led us indicate then the type of history Cicero favored and might well have thought worthwhile. It is the history he often can be seen invoking here and there and in historical segments such as Book II of *De Re Publica* and the *Brutus*. It might justly seem to be an idealized history, a patriotic history. Used properly and in the Roman perspective, it can be seen to be telling important truths that are clearly far different from the reports of happenings and successions to power in the annalistic tradition. Every indication is that what Cicero was most interested in was effective history, poetic history graced with the power of the orator.

This kind of history is clearly suitable to what is yet more important, what is in effect the greatest use of history—service toward right living. It is history that would be informed by an understanding of the human good. That is the same need of all the arts called on to equip and to serve effective statesmen. In the *De Legibus*, however, Cicero indicates that rather than giving himself to the writing of history, he has more important things to do with his bits and pieces of time left from the active political life.[34] Immediately here in this text the task that follows is to write a treatise on law that gives special emphasis to the foundation of law in nature. Explicitly, like Plato, he is considering the appropriate laws immediately after and in tandem with his work on the best of constitutions, his *Republic*.[35] That work had seen him celebrate the Socratic turn, the practical turn to consider what is good and just for human beings as the highest priority for his inquiry.[36] That turn becomes the driving center of Cicero's philosophical inquiry through his remaining life and shapes his final philosophical work, the ethical treatise *On Duties*. Cicero has turned from history to pursue the standard that must inform a well-chosen and a well-used history, namely, prudence. Prudence is the good judgment that results from a proper anchoring in an understanding of human nature in the context of the broader nature in which humans participate.[37] He has turned to what he regards as the more important mission in the spaces of life allotted to him.

For Cicero then it is the philosophical statesman who could potentially be the truly complete one. Moral and political philosophy is taken as the mother of the arts, the art of arts, the source for prudence for Cicero. Prudence is that virtuous quality of judgment that guides inquiries into all

experiences, including those of history, and directs the use of all that is learned in history and the arts. It would be hard to claim that this requisite for rendering experience useful and expertise truly expertise is any less critical to political leadership in the present time.

NOTES

1. Cicero found in the Peripatetic tradition more attention to statesmanship and the practical concerns of philosophy than in other schools of philosophy that opened before him. In that tradition, note should be taken of Demetrius of Phalerum, an apparent model statesman for Cicero. See Nicgorski, 2013a: 47–49.

2. How the statesman emerges as the focus of this dialogue, the text of which has been only partially recovered, is recounted in an analysis of the dialogue's internal movement in Nicgorski, 1991. Two other fine essays that focus on the statesman in this dialogue are Barlow, 1987, and Powell, 1994.

3. *De Legibus* (*Leg.*) was apparently largely completed in the 50s, although it was not made public until after Cicero's death. The rhetorical treatise of his adolescent years is *De Inventione* (*Inv.*), named after the portion of the rhetorical art concerned with the finding or invention of specific types of arguments.

4. *De Re Publica* (*Rep.*) 1.2. What is here called the first prologue might well be called Cicero's introduction to the dialogue; it extends from the fractured beginning of this work to *Rep.* 1.14.

5. *Rep.* 1.12; 3.4–5.

6. *Rep.* 1.12.

7. *Rep.* 1.14–33.

8. *Rep.* 1.15, also 1.31–32.

9. Cicero can be seen to take the Socratic turn and focus as a step to the priority of the active life of statesmanship through which one then can see the elevated importance of moral and political philosophy. Socrates himself simply goes to the priority of moral and political philosophy through his turn and subsequent focus, not embracing the active life as exemplified in the life of Pericles; Socrates can be seen as protecting the life of such focused inquiry by not entering the struggles of actual political life, where inquiry and teaching is often shut down, if not by violence, then by the pressures to adapt to public opinion in the pursuit of success in elections.

10. *Rep.* 1.39.

11. Cicero's struggle throughout his life with the competing attractions of the active political life and the philosophical life is closely explored in Lévy, 2012.

12. Cicero's own term from a letter to his friend Atticus (2.1). Later applied to Cicero's own involvement in ordinary politics by detractors and others, Cicero initially used the term in describing the Stoic-inclined Cato, his contemporary, writing that with his lofty and pure views he would be more in place in Plato's republic than among the dregs of Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome.

13. *Rep.* 2.69; Nicgorski, 1991: 242–43.

14. *Rep.* 1.13.

15. See especially *Rep.* 2.51 where Cicero has the statesman most sought described as a guide and protector of the political community (*tutor et procurator rei publicae . . . rector et gubernator civitatis*). He is to be a man

marked by goodness, wisdom, and practiced skill (*peritus*) in serving civic interests (*utilitatis*) and honor (*dignitatis*).

16. Cicero defines prudence as excellence "in the choice of goods and evils," in knowing what is to be sought and what to be avoided. See especially *Inv.* 2.160; *De Officiis* (*Off.*) 3.71 and 1.153 and *De Finibus* 5.67–68. Extended to politics, the tasks of civil prudence entail for Cicero engaging inevitable changes in the social and political context in some appropriate way, knowing the true advantages of political community and being able to draw people into such a community all the while reforming and improving in a timely manner the existing political community.

17. *Rep.* 2.45, 2.67. See Nicgorski, 1991, for how his very response to what is the best possible constitution turns on this foundation.

18. *Aeneid*, 6.851–53.

19. *Leg.* 3.5.

20. The requisites of the model or complete orator (a way of speaking of the true statesman) according to Cicero include a knowledge of all important things, but especially and foremost political knowledge. One might say that the needs of the orator expand to include moral and political philosophy just as for Cicero the needs of the statesman fully understood include the mastery of rhetoric. See especially *De Oratore* (*De Or.*) 1.20f., 1.80–95, particularly 1.85; *Inv.* 1.6; *De Senectute* 12. On the emphasis on history in Cicero and the ambiguity whether one can speak of the writing of it as an art, see Rawson, 1985 (especially, pp. 215–16).

21. Cicero's treatment of these arts and what we can know of his education in them is explored more fully in Nicgorski, 2013b.

22. *De Or.* 1.186–88; *Off.* 1.19.

23. Already in Cicero's rhetorical writings there is an awareness that although the art of rhetoric, as handed down, is primarily an art of the spoken word, it is not strictly so. Other modes of persuasion and teaching do come into view. Thus Cicero's writings, such as the dialogues on politics and law, are part of his rhetorical achievement.

24. *Inv.* 1.2–3; *Rep.* 3.3.

25. *De Or.* 2.356–57.

26. *Leg.* 1.25–27.

27. *Leg.* 1.10.

28. *De Or.* 2.142; *Leg.* 1.17, 3.30.

29. *Leg.* 1.18.

30. Vives, 1913: 230–31. In writing of the experience of "others" as an access to "the memory of past ages," Vives can remind readers of Cicero of the importance of friendship as a way to extended experience; well-based friendship would mean shared standards of what is significant in the past. On the extension of self through friendship, see Nicgorski, 2008.

31. *Leg.* 1.5ff.

32. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451a36–b12. That Herodotus, such a maker of fables, should be mentioned in this context by Aristotle seems baffling, unless, perhaps, one sees even Herodotus as bound by the orientation, if not by the literal procedures, of the annalistic tradition; this would mean that although he writes history more expansively than the annalistic tradition, his reporting is governed by telling what happened in the sequence in which it happened.

33. *De Or.* 2.36.

34. From *Leg.* 1.8, Cicero can be seen as making an excuse that the grand history expected of him could not be accomplished in the bits and pieces of time available to him, as if the work of history required more sustained concentration than that of philosophy (which Cicero will carry on at great lengths in

works such as *Academica* and *De Finibus*). At *Leg.* 1.10, he lets slip that even in the time of retirement there would be more fruitful and more important (*uberioribus atque maioribus*) activities for him than the writing of history. What he turns to in *De Legibus* and earlier in *De Re Publica* indicates his priorities.

35. *Leg.* 1.15, 1.20.
36. A full consideration of the Socratic turn or focus in Cicero is found in Nicgorski, 1992.
37. *Leg.* 1.16, 1.58–59.

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4 Political Wisdom and the City of God
St. Augustine of Hippo

Miles Hollingworth

Within the sweep of any history of political philosophy, St. Augustine of Hippo must bear the burden of a special place. What comes before him must generally be considered pre-Christian; and what comes after him must therefore be considered to have been its Christianization. The next turning point is, of course, Niccolò Machiavelli, who snaps the elastic, and allows us to let go of spiritual imperatives altogether and discover a new set of absolutes in the history and science of human behavior.

Before he is anything else in political philosophy, Augustine is shorthand for a number of important developments. You could put these into a sentence by saying that he met the positive conception of human nature upon which Plato and Aristotle had based their thinking with the negative conception that he was to find in the Christian Scriptures as much as in the example of his own life. In other words, he introduced the Western mind to the Christian anthropology of "fallen man." This "Christian anthropology of fallen man" has, in turn, become shorthand for the doctrine of Original Sin. I need hardly point out that this doctrine has achieved a form of iconic status today. If you don't have a special reason for holding it, then it is said you are tantamount to believing that all humanity has been damned by a crime of impossible antiquity—impossible, if, indeed, it can be proved to have taken place at all. The only written evidence is in the first three books of Genesis; which is why I said that when the elastic snaps it becomes very difficult to feel a reason to reconcile to this hard teaching.

Famously, Augustine did reconcile to it. And in a way that became, through his influence, a good part of the reconciliation of the early and later Middle Ages, and beyond. The intensity and pain by which he felt his own proclivities of volition would become the certainties and urgencies of his mature theology—as well as his mature psychology—of man. "O Lord give me honor and chastity, but not yet," is how most of us remember it today.[1] And once he had given a setting and a set of valences to this drama of will in his doctrine of the Two Cities, in which love of either divides historical humanity into its two predestinated camps, a new and powerful vision would be released into the imagination of political philosophy. For before Augustine, and before the Christian era, this "moral question" had always

been a slightly awkward interloper in political business—exemplified, as that business was, in what is now called "classical realism." Think, for example, of the Melian delegation to the Athenians, and its comparative novelty value in their hands.[2]

Now these things are never immune to qualification, but I think you can fairly talk of religion and politics in the ancient world as forming a single conception. I mean by that the idea of the one not yet capable of rising above the other to become an independent, critical perspective on it, politics over religion. For a community back then, religion and politics were both part of the hallowed way that things had always been done. They were mutually and unabashedly supportive of each other. Nowadays, because we live in the aftermath of what I have called the moral question, and indeed because we live in the aftermath of Machiavelli, we can look back if we want to and see a cynical exercise of power in the whole arrangement. There is that wonderful observation by Alfred North Whitehead that,

> The cult of the [Roman] Empire was the sort of religion which might be constructed to-day by the Law School of a University, laudably impressed by the notion that mere penal repression is not the way to avert a crime wave[!][3]

After Augustine, the moral question became effectively free to give voice and encouragement to a new self-consciousness about politics and the role of the individual within it. This was because the Christian point of view encouraged the human person to be one of the cardinal points of reference for the way things should be ordered. And it soon became a new kind of common sense to say that man had spiritual as well as material needs, and that these should in some way complement each other in the ideal arrangement. Before Christianity, the spiritual side of human life was not really administered in terms of needs at all but in terms of duties—duties to the ancestral gods of the home-hearth, and duties to the gods of one's city. Neglect of these duties might bring about the ruin of one's family fortunes or the sack of one's city: but these calamities were not what Christians would later mean by the personal ruin of one's soul. The new, Christian good and evil would be powers that worked soul by soul and silently; they did not have to correspond to conditions in the world at large.

Correspondingly, one of the questions that Augustine had to answer time and again as a public intellectual in the late Roman Empire became the question of why the bad seemed so often to prosper in the world, and the good not. Where was the justice in that? Indeed his *magnum opus*, his *City of God*, was, in part, occasioned by the recent sack of a newly Christian Rome in 410, by Alaric and the Visigoths. It caused many to equate this unthinkable disaster with the abandonment of the old gods of the civic religion. Augustine saw at once that this fear was a relapse of the former, superstitious way of envisaging religion and politics. And so he picked up his pen

and set to work on the task of re-envisaging for them this crucial relationship of human life. Earthly calamities and the rise and fall of empires were not to be feared in the old way. They were not because the most important part of the human being—the part upon which turns eternal salvation or damnation—remains untouched by the outward plays of might and ambition in the world. Even the very threat of persecution and death is useless against this part. For in every case the spiritual aspect of humanity trumps the temporal aspect:

> While this Heavenly City is a pilgrim on earth, she calls citizens from all nations and every tongue, neither discriminating between their customs, laws, or institutions. She does this because these contrivances all tend toward the same end of earthly peace. By thus respecting the merely conventional differences between men she brings together a society of pilgrims. But she does more than respect these differences: she actually preserves and promotes them, provided only that they do not impede the religion by which we are taught that the One supreme and true God is to be worshipped. This is the sense in which we say that the Heavenly City makes use of earthly peace during her pilgrimage, and desires and maintains the co-operation of men's wills in order to furnish the necessities of mortal life. It is also the sense in which we say that she causes earthly peace to bear upon Heavenly peace. For Heavenly peace is of a different kind altogether from earthly peace, and should be estimated exclusively from our design and equipment as rational creatures . . . This peace is correspondingly possessed by the Heavenly City in faith while on its pilgrimage, and by this same faith it lives righteously, also directing towards the attainment of that peace every good act which it performs either for God, or—since the city's life is inevitably a social one—for neighbour.[4]

As I said, the use of the moral question in this way by Christian intellectuals like Augustine was a liberating and inspiring doctrine. In Augustine's case, and in the exhaustive argument of his *City of God*, it was strictly limited to providing the individual human soul with a rigorous and total isolation from the vicissitudes of life around it. This was shown by the ingenious way that Augustine found to talk about the Christian as having a citizenship and conversation with God's City—a citizenship and conversation that is kept in place wholly by love. That is to say: the love that only the human animal can give because it has the capacity to live within its inner places, in a wordless sensation of its past, present, and future. A dog would wag its tail and give itself away, but the rational animal can consider its ultimate interests away from its moving parts. This, too, is why Augustine attaches such negative symbolism to the way in which our sexual members can be moved apart from our will, and embarrassingly, by lust. But that is another story, and not the one I want to tell here.

This way of using love to describe citizenship was definitely an innovation on the old and ancient ways. It was not the citizenship of one's city that one was born into and straddled with. Neither was it the distinction between freeborn and slave. To keep going with this, it was not even the distinction between man and woman. In terms of lived-out-life, or at any rate of life lived politically, it was therefore a daringly apophatic theory. Augustine was wont to talk of a "Pilgrim City," whenever he set his eyes on those Christians walking the life of faith on this earth. The exact composition and coordinates of this unique City were impossible to determine, because they depended upon the invisible infrared of love beamed out from a certain quantity of souls to God:

> Two cities, then, have been created by two loves: that is, the earthly by love of self extending even to contempt of God, and the Heavenly by love of God extending to contempt of self.[5]

Nonetheless, the history of political thought has shown that this singular application of Christian orthodoxy to politics did not survive long in this form once it was cut off from the lifeblood of Augustine's creativity. Within a little over half a century of his death in 430 came Pope Gelasius I's letter of 494 to the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius I. In this, the moral question assumes the form of the infamous "Two Swords" doctrine of complementary but asymmetrical powers for *sacerdotium* and *regnum*, Church and State. Then there was Martin Luther's reaction to this "political Augustinianism" in the sixteenth century. Outraged that the moral question had been commandeered by some in the Church as an argument for world government and the intrinsic superiority of *sacerdotium*, he used Augustine's Two Cities as a way of signifying, not institutional pretensions, spiritual and political, but the irresistible cunning of God in manipulating us according to the *Christperson* and *Weltperson* within us. This heroic countermeasure couldn't, however, have envisaged what was to come in the Enlightenment campaign against invisible grace. Secular humanism sought to replace invisible religion with the religion of the good life: which puts me therefore in broad agreement with Carl L. Becker's thesis for a "heavenly city of the 18th-century philosophers"—the same of which Diderot could say: "Posterity is for the philosopher what the otherworld is for the religious."[6]

Incidentally, the moral question as I am framing it here must not be confused with the "ethical question," which was of course the discovery of classical thought, and therefore preceded the moral question by some time. For the ethical question, think of Plato and Aristotle and the science of living well—the science of the good life. Think of the premise of this volume, if you will; of the concept of a normative and ontological political craft. The moral question is quite different. It effectively supplied Western society with the possibility of a very highest court of appeal, which by definition had to be the sovereign possession of no man, no territory, and no jurisdiction. Its

crimes and its rights were such as to be understood with reference to injustices of cosmic proportions. Its power to unseat and abolish the tyrant and perpetrator brooked no constitutional processes: for it could be invoked by an outrage voiced aloud, a peasant revolt, or a perceived infraction of ethnic or religious freedom. You could call it the genie that can't go back in the bottle. When Frantz Fanon decided to sum up the mood of post-colonialism, he would be able to put himself in the judgment seat of this court and speak of the Western tradition as having abdicated the mighty responsibility that had fallen to it.[7] Whereas this emotional style of argument would have been inconceivable to the tight-laced reasoning of Plato and Aristotle—most especially with the premium they placed on identifying and differentiating between substantial qualities, including those of intellect and race.

In a book which I wrote called *The Pilgrim City*, I tried to argue that the enduring value of Augustine's political ideas will one day prove to have been their very apophatic nature. Or as I can now express it, the way in which they seem to profit in all the spaces we discover between the moral and the ethical questions. It intrigued me; and I remain intrigued; because, on the face of it, I cannot think of anything less helpful to politics down here than a vision so wilfully superior and aloof as Augustine produced. And "apophatic" does appear to be the word for it. For when you look Augustine up on the question of his Heavenly City and how it is to relate to practical affairs, you find that he is in the habit of employing the following outrageous logic. He does not do what we would do when handed a divine exemplar. He does not say, "Good, now that we have agreed that the Heavenly City is the best imaginable City, let us now use it as a model to judge and improve the others we already have." For here is how we would expect to go in these situations. For example: we do not find it efficacious to say that so-and-so is the world's best footballer, and then to go on to conclude that all other footballers must not, then, be true footballers at all. That would be profoundly unfair, if nothing else. And yet this is exactly what Augustine does whenever he relates the Heavenly City to earthly examples of justice, peace, politics, and virtue. He inserts an insurmountable category of difference. He does this because (and I will repeat a portion of his quote above):

> Heavenly peace is of a different kind altogether from earthly peace, and should be estimated exclusively from our design and equipment as rational creatures.[8]

That's right, Augustine recognizes that politics counts people out and estimates them on a *per capita* basis. And this happens to be something that we already know and applaud. We know and applaud it because we accept that whatever we broadly conceive of as good and just politics must be a politics that considers us exclusively in terms of the rights we hold in the *body* of our persons. The common sense behind this says that politics should be impartial, and not the means to elevating or enervating us. Which becomes

the same thing as to say that politics is disqualified from considering us in terms of our souls and spirits; and how these mysteriously make us who we are and special. When earthly politics looks at us, it is only allowed to see an address and a tax code. It mustn't look through our windows. However, to the Heavenly City, which wants only to consider us in terms of our soul and spirit (our "design and equipment as rational creatures"), and which wants to redeem us if it can, or punish us if it should, we are a heartbeat and a will. It wants to look as deep into our windows as it can. And that may be something we want it to do. In other words (and we have come full circle), we are beings capable of choosing intelligently where to place our love:

> Your affections are your steps: your will the way. By loving you ascend, by neglect you descend. Even though you are standing on the earth you are in Heaven if you love God. For the heart is not exalted in the way that the body is exalted: for the latter to be exalted a change of place must occur: for the former, a change of will.[9]

In *The Pilgrim City*, I tried to frame my intrigue by concluding with a summary of what Augustine's thinking on politics seems to show him to have been most sensitive to. On the one hand, he seems content to admit that if we open our eyes to the displays of the human condition, keep neutral, and don't blink, we will be led to the pessimistic conclusions of the ardent realists—and the states of nature that their realisms seem to intimate. Christianity can add to these the language of sin; and with that addition the picture would appear to become even more complete in that direction. Yet on the other hand, the phenomenon of human hope and dreaming really does seem to be sustained by a distant glimmer of perfected reality beyond these realisms. The search for the good life in the form in which it was first postulated by classical Greek political philosophy does still go on. So the puzzle, or the paradox, or the thing to be explained, is how the same human reason that can see such hopelessness and fallenness on this earth can also produce, from those dismal materials, this seeking? If Christian realism is so right in its gloom; and if that gloom is what any rightly-ordered reason would eventually penetrate to in laboratory perfect-conditions, then we are not allowed to go on to pretend that we can also induce from it idealistic and romantic laws of behavior and development. We are not, though, banished from doing this. There is a kind of logic in saying that this is exactly the kind of extreme obverse reaction that the human mind attempts when it is craven—when it is groveling before brute fact and desperate for comforting illusions. And in the end, of course, this is no less than the social-scientific explanation of belief in God.

But if I am right to think that Western political thought would like to talk seriously about *truth*, and that it wants to base its recommendations for human association on the undeniable facts of what is *really* going on at bottom, then here must be two contending truths that can never be reconciled.

For they both claim sovereignty over the same territory called "our best interests." And as is well known in matters of sovereignty, two does not go into one. For the record, here is how I left things in *The Pilgrim City*:

> The citizens of the Pilgrim City are in this world but not of it; their independence consists in their love of God and their corresponding willingness to repeatedly die to their old lives in the actual present. They are, to borrow Heraclitus' expression, "Immortal mortals, mortal immortals; living their death and dying their life." The theological import of this statement is straightforward. But it is the secular advantage of such an independent perspective that Augustine would like us to consider as students of moral and political thought. This, after all, was the message that he repeatedly gave in writing to the political leaders of his day. Christian realism is not exhausted by dogmatic pronouncements on human sinfulness; it is not in that sense unqualified. The skepticism that we customarily associate with the outlook is buttressed by an intellectually distinct answer to the question of human happiness. The languages of perfection, the certainties of virtuous action, come from another place; at any rate, they could not have been composed as reflections upon this world. The Christian citizen, better still the Christian ruler, is not encumbered with the prospect of describing his activities in their terms. The advantage of Christianity for the state is, in Augustine's opinion, an unexpected flexibility and freedom of movement.[10]

In what follows here, I think I am going to allow myself to wonder whether these two contending styles of argument do not perhaps admit of a third style. I am going to allow myself to wonder whether the Christian outlook on human affairs as represented by Augustine does not, in fact, furnish us with a useful thought experiment to add to the distinguished list of those we already have. As with all thought experiments, the point with this one is that you don't have to go along with the Christian presuppositions that make it possible. However, by humoring them and allowing it to run its course, you may be brought out into a place of seeing troubling old conundrums in an interesting new light. But most of all, I hope to show that this thought experiment gets the central question of this volume—the question of "scientific statesmanship"—firmly in its crosshairs. I hope to show that it understands that the relationship between quantifiable political wisdom and effective governance is always going to be difficult to establish because of something like the Coriolis effect in physics. Plato's famous "analogy of the cave" in *The Republic* shows what this effect can be, politically speaking. And before I go on, let me just take a moment to explain what I mean by this.

In an ideal world (or an ideal city) there would be a straight line between the input of elite wisdom and the output of common happiness. However, this never in practice happens. Why this never happens is because the frame

of reference in which the input and output are contained is itself rotating. This rotation, or spin-effect, is the consequence of the countless individual minds through which the wisdom input must pass. These countless minds all have a responsibility to the individuals who possess them to calculate whether the new wisdom is in their best interests—or failing that, their self-interests. Now because the human minds through which wisdom must pass are always rotating in this way (and because all wisdom that concerns human behavior must by definition pass through at least one mind before it can be said to exist at all), there is in every instance a deflection effect relative to the intended output. In the original Coriolis effect of physics, the rotation is provided by the earth's spin. But here we must think with the author of *Ecclesiastes*, who predicated this spin of the human mind against the constant that, "All *things come* alike to all."[11]

For example: in the overall scheme of Plato's political philosophy, perfect political wisdom exists in the World of the Forms: which, in turn, means that as an input, it should travel in a straight line to its output in the perfectly selfless statesmanship of the philosopher kings. However, when this theory is put to the test in the real-time scenario of the prisoners in the cave, it is rapidly discovered that the enlightened prisoners do not act like the automatons that the theory requires for their part. The wisdom does not pass through them to its scripted output but is deflected as their minds turn its value to the immediate and obvious thoughts of their own advantage. Why should they return after their epiphany to the darkness of the cave and suffer for the dimmer prisoners' chance? Why indeed. Plato's answer, that they will simply discount the Coriolis effect and perceive that a greater justice would be served by their return to rule the Republic, has always seemed like a forced conclusion. When everything else in his argument has built so excruciatingly logically upon the premise that the knowledge of how to be the spotless statesman is ready-bottled for us up in the sky, this has to seem like yet another betrayal, of reason, at the hands of the flesh.

My Augustinian thought experiment makes specific use of the very Coriolis effect that causes so much bother. It asks you to imagine, for a moment, a highly counterintuitive situation. In this situation, the normal running order of input to output has been reversed. Instead of historical example being the thing to begin with (à la Machiavelli), we are going to look for our political wisdom by starting with the future, and with what unfathomable plans for the Pilgrim City and its citizens God appears to store up in that future. This is counterintuitive because it is difficult and frightening to point to the future as a thing that has already happened. But I said that we were going to have to let the Christian presuppositions of this experiment run their course, and here is what I meant by that. Augustine is notorious for saying that the future is a place more real and urgent than the past. The past may leave behind its material traces, and these traces may become the empiricisms to which we refer our correspondence theories of truth, but the fact remains that we only conduct this arduous business in the

first place with a view to finding covering laws that will insure us into the future. For while it is in the past that we were born: it is only in the future that we shall surely die, thus the relationship between work and reward, past and future, is something that the human race has always been intent to establish in its favor. This primal instinct predates the Christian era and examples like the Protestant work ethic; it was simply that Christianity, alone of the religions, chose to make it one of its special points of focus and illustration—and of its early intellectuals to do this, none more so than Augustine following Paul.

In a world in which all good sense and behavior is arced around avoiding the realism of the point of a sword (or the damnation of hellfire), Augustine says—and here's the experiment for us—just imagine that this occult information of who goes to what end was forbidden you. Just imagine that instead of having the Coriolis effect deflect and ruin your sightlines into the future, you lived in, and out of, it. Just imagine that all the terror that we have learned to deal to each other for the sake of being ethically right were no longer possible.

Just imagine, in other words, that your political wisdom occupied some middle place between past and future. And I really mean that. I want you to imagine that you are no longer bullied by appeals to aggregated utility, the common good, and even the survival of the species. I want you to imagine that you *are* your own world, and that you *are* the species, to the effect that God deals with you and you alone. I really do mean a kind of one-on-one perfect dictatorship. Of course, the experiment assumes that there continue to be other people besides you, such that normal life goes on. But in relation to God and wisdom, everyone is in the position that you are in. Self-love operates with impunity in the way it does in all "original position" thought experiments. But here it does so with the Augustinian touch. Self-love operates in exact and exquisite coordination with the wisdom of a God, Who makes that self-love possible in the first place. God *is* you before you have spoken, inasmuch as He proves the truth of the wisdom He has put into you afterwards:

> Do not wait upon the moment when God may will such and such a thing to occur: for there is no imaginable way that you could offend Him by—as it were—"willing it before He did." There is none because it is only when He is helping and nursing you that you become minded to make your free act of will.[12]
>
> You are good and all-powerful, caring for each one of us as though the only one in Your care, and yet for all as for each individual.[13]

This is not what Thomas Hobbes meant by shocking Scholastic metaphysics, and theocratic politics, with the *Leviathan*: his argument for how the fact of power in the State shows us to be reluctant humanists, forced into association by as grim a truth as our equal capacity to do each other harm. It is not because Augustine's Christian hedonism is far more extreme again.

It does not look, as Hobbes's did, to offer an empirical explanation of what is already manifest in human society. It is visionary and subversive of that. It uses its hedonism to vector on a Heavenly City, which fact has encouraged the enthusiastic appropriations of its ideas from the political Augustinianism of the Middle Ages onwards. Nor is it Hegel's trick (much replicated in the political rhetorics of today) of claiming that the free externals of modern political economy *are* the same thing as universal rights, freedom, and higher consciousness. Augustine does not need to reach for such a rational way of re-describing an unmediated community of self-lovers as—lo and behold!—a beautifully crafted movement. Humans are not to be analyzed like a colony of ants.

Nor, for that matter, does Augustine's frame of reference appear to be anything as stable as what Hobbes, or Hegel, or any other political theorist would mean by the historical "State." On every occasion he is quite explicit in stating that the final flourishing of individuals is a mysterious and impenetrable matter holding between them and God. This is why he counsels against using the traditional languages of divinity and perfection normatively in theories involving society and politics. Again, it is because he believes in supernatural packets of wisdom handed out *in medias res* to individuals, rather than finely calibrated input and output systems, that Augustine can be so alarmingly secular and freewheeling when, famously, he speaks about justice in this context. It is by banning from public view what goes on in each of our hearts that Augustine can be so streetwise. By saying that he wants you to give the whole of your heart to God, he also says that he doesn't want you to coo and gush and get all romantic over your institutions, flags, and leaders.

But make no mistake: this contribution of his to political thought is best understood in apophatic terms. I have called it a thought experiment. It offers you a conceptual way of taking a time out from something you might normally feel you had to take for granted. This would be that the good life has to be something that you can explain to yourself, and others, like a fixed image taken from a bird's-eye height. To be able to brandish the fully developed picture is what we take for wisdom's contents. To be able to see the tops of our heads in relation to those of others and the organs of the community (*per capita*) is what we take for well-being and belonging. Because the image is fixed, the Coriolis effect has been taken care of, but at the expense of making the input and output amount to the same thing. Augustine is a reminder that no matter how hard you squint at what freedom looks like—no matter how clever your wide-angle lens—you can't see through a fixed picture to what freedom actually *feels* like. This feeling is derived from the Coriolis effect and continuously dependent upon it. Augustine's insistence on final truth being a secret matter, delivered to each pilgrim in a kiss of life "from the mouth of God's truth" (*ex ore veritatis*), is about as extreme a form of this thought experiment as you could wish to imagine.[14]

Augustine is effectively saying that to describe in words on a page what freedom actually feels like, you would have to describe a device that (as I put it earlier) works like a bespoke, perfect dictatorship ("Who will hold the heart of man, that it may stand still?"[15]). This is of course, no more, or less, than the Christian doctrine of predestination that Augustine did so much to promote. To him, it was the answer to the happiness that all the philosophers had all along sighed for. Happiness is what happens when you feel you are at liberty to obey God in the present.[16] Happiness means supernatural instruction. Happiness would be what you could know *now*, but not be able to express to anyone else later.[17] Now all of this may well make happiness out to be an experience reserved for the blessed few: for Old Testament prophets or the most sublime of mystics. And that may seem rather unfair. But Augustine adds at this point that the rest of us have the revealed truths of doctrine to obey (what Thomas Aquinas characterized under "Divine Law"). And that what we have always implied by happiness in ordinary language usage has, in any case, been just such a distant, aspirational state, exemplified for our model in the few.

Unhappiness, by contrast, is that whole spectrum of intellectual endeavor that we put into understanding the past in order to hasten the future. It is a democratic creed. And nothing represents this quite like politics—and the theorizing that tries to link politics, ideologically, to its end in the good life. Augustine says that unhappiness is what happens when men fear men in this manner, rather than God; and make provisions accordingly, and build earthly cities:

> Why, O man, are you so afraid of man?
> Whosoever would do you an injury today, is himself motivated out of fear . . . But this all-powerful enemy, what has he really taken away from you? Only that which a thief or a housebreaker might take from you. In his highest rage, [an Emperor] can take only what a robber can. Even if he threatens you with bodily death, he takes away only what the robber can. Wait a moment, I called him a 'robber,' that was too kind. For whomever the robber may be, he is but a man. Whereas the sorry truth is that [this Emperor] is taking from you what merely a fever, or an adder, or a poisonous mushroom, would just as sooner take. So here lies the whole power of the rage of men: to take from you what a poisonous mushroom would take![18]

You might wonder quite what Augustine, and we, can hope to achieve by imagining what it would be like to stop fretting about looking down on ourselves from those high altitudes of ethics, and simply attend with full force to our relationship to God, and let the rest more or less take care of itself. Is this just pointless and facetious? Certainly I can see all the points of view from which it might appear so; although I take care to remind myself that Augustine never seriously (that is, systematically) engaged with the idea of a

Christian polity from top to bottom. Who knows what he might have come up with then? Yes, he lived in a recently Christianized empire; but essentially, he focused on reproducing what the Apostolic Fathers before him had preached about Christian discipleship being a minority vocation, with tough and alienating demands of otherworldliness. You have to admit, however, that it is hard to dismiss this idea of his that the grammars and provenances of words like "happiness," "goodness," and "justice" are inherently exclusionary rather than inclusionary in the way they figure in talk about politics and wisdom. For a start, it puts Augustine in the good and recent company of no less a thinker than Ludwig Wittgenstein—who once remarked the following:

> "You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed."—That is a grammatical remark.[19]

Let me explain a little. Anyone knows that it is a relatively simple matter to checkmate any doctrine of predestination in a few swift moves. The foreknowledge that it implies is a mockery of human freedom; whilst any all-seeing Being ahead of us must then be prepared to accept full and frank responsibility for every tyranny and unfairness in the world. To a lot of clever people, this last on its own has been good enough for the death of God. But here again I wonder whether Augustine—cheered on by Wittgenstein—wasn't seeing a whole lot more in it than this.

We tend to jump into the doctrine by imagining ourselves in the position of the all-seeing Being; followed quickly by concluding that we wouldn't have buried Pompeii in ash (because who could be so ghastly?). The coup de grace arrives as the inescapable irony of an all-good God who would at the same time do such things. Because "goodness," in terms of the government of the world as much as of the government of a City, can only ever logically be understood by us as that fixed image I have talked of. I mean the good getting what they deserve and the bad getting what's coming to them, and all in neat, uncorrupted lines between inputs and outputs. However, like Wittgenstein, Augustine seems to have been intrigued most by how the designated role of the human being in life seems much more the calling of being that fixed image's depth, color, life, and movement. Then in terms of the eschatological history of the world: its ultimate destruction in Christ:

> Men may speak, may be seen by the operations of their members, may be heard speaking together in conversation. But from out of all this exterior detail, whose thought is truly penetrated, whose heart is truly seen into? What he is inwardly engaged on? What he is inwardly capable of? What he is inwardly doing or what purposing? What he is inwardly wishing to happen, or not to happen? You could watch all the patterns and shapes of the life in front of you and never comprehend these most important things. I think, therefore, that an 'abyss' may

not unreasonably be understood of man, of whom it is said elsewhere, "Man shall come to a deep heart, and God shall be exalted." (See Ps. 64.6–9)[20]

Here I am talking for Augustine rather than Wittgenstein; although I would stress that no one has done more after Augustine than Wittgenstein to try to capture what truth feels like in its holding and saying (rather than what it looks like afterwards). Yes, God resides outside of time, administering everything that takes place within time by His total, prevenient grace. He is that image's prequel *as well as* its sequel. But we exist within time, our minds spinning up the Coriolis effect—each of us apolitical and an anarchist, because we have been created and programmed by God to love Him with all our might before we think or do anything else. We are each of us a city, each of us a country; each of us a problem that only God can solve.

It has long been accepted that the precise functioning of Augustine's Pilgrim City must remain a mystery. We know that it is all about a citizenship born supernaturally through love, but are we then to follow Machiavelli and declare that this is where the matter has to end? I rather hope that my thought experiment has given us something to go on yet. I also think that Augustine's determination to put the psychical euphoria of freedom at loggerheads with the classical, aristocratic ideal of political wisdom is curiously up to the times in which we now live.[21] Obviously the Genesis narrative of the creation and fall of man dropped perfectly for him at the point at which he was working this out, giving him the plotline of sin and redemption and the characters of Adam and Eve. But you could dispense with this Christian framework if it makes you squeamish, and still have something to ponder.

All variations on the idea of scientific statesmanship absolutely require that human beings be the final piece in the puzzle—they demand that when everything else has been arranged, the human animals will tamely and silently play their part for the theory in question. This part is what the arrangement of all the other pieces around them shows it to be in their rational best interests to do. Augustine, on the other hand, uses human beings to sweep all the pieces of these puzzles off the table and onto the floor. The human heart—any human heart—is for him the protestor, the subversive, the fly in the ointment. In his famous phrase, it is *inquietum*, "restless."[22] He also talks of it being homesick, because it really and ontologically has a Heavenly Jerusalem to be homesick for. And this, its inner agitation, makes it want to mess up all those pretty fixed images of the philosophers. Because every one of those images of the good life is, in fact, a reason for it to stay earthbound. How much of a political radical was Augustine? What is his "third style of political argument," as I put it earlier? Well, it appears to be to do with how he learned, in the end, to use human beings as his strongest arguments against empire building and the *libido dominandi*, "lust of ruling." As with Wittgenstein, it all came down to language and reality.

Augustine became convinced that all the words and ideas that politics traditionally makes use of when it is wishing to sound aspirational are not *realistic* (in the sense in which the ideal polis would be their proof), but sparked into life, like magic, with the advent of every human soul. His third style of argument is not, then, against politics per se. He thinks any politics is better than no politics at all: for in a fallen world, politics is a condition of peace and life. But he *does* want to cause us to take a time out and consider the mysterious and mystifying genesis of these words and ideas, because they are an "unlearned language," to the extent that Augustine can conclude that God must be their interior teacher. For if our school were simply what we see repeated around us of power, enviousness, mortal fear, and the domination of the weak, then we should never have empirical prompting to think of them at all.[23] That this is not the case, that there is a Coriolis effect, is, he says, because there is a City of God, more real than any realism of the sword that we can impose or have imposed upon us. It deflects our thoughts inwards—*interior intimo meo*, "more inward than my inmost self"[24]—until we learn to yearn for this City.

Augustine had excelled at the liberal arts, but here was Christianity, articulating itself by sending forward one person after another—simple folk, lit up with the true meaning of high philosophy. The heart teaching the lips: this is what came to engage and fascinate Augustine's political as much as his theological mind.

> How many farms and desert places now come in to us? No one can tell how numerously they come in; and they come in because they would believe. We say to them, "What will you?" They answer, "To know the glory of God." Believe me when I tell you that we wonder and rejoice at such a claim of these rustic people. They come I know not whither, roused up by I know not whom. But I shouldn't truly say, "I know not by whom," because of course I know exactly by whom it is. I know because He says, "No one can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." [John 6.44] They come suddenly from the woods, the desert, the most distant and lofty mountains: all to the Church. And many of them, no, nearly all of them hold this language, so that we see it is true that God teaches them within.[25]

NOTES

1. *Confessiones*, VIII, 7, 17.
2. See Thucydides (tr. Benjamin Jowett), *The Peloponnesian Wars*, Bk. V, 103: "*Athenians*: Hope is a good comforter in the hour of danger, and when men have something else to depend upon, although hurtful, she is not ruinous. But when her spendthrift nature has induced them to stake their all, they see her as she is in the moment of their fall, and not till then. While the knowledge of her might enable them to beware of her, she never fails. You are weak and a single turn of the scale might be your ruin. Do not you be thus deluded; avoid

the error of which so many are guilty, who, although they might still be saved if they would take the natural means, when visible grounds of confidence forsake them, have recourse to the invisible, to prophecies and oracles and the like, which ruin men by the hopes which they inspire in them."

3. Whitehead, 1927: 31.
4. *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, 17.
5. *Ibid.*, XIV, 28 (tr. R.W. Dyson).
6. Quoted in Becker, 1969: 150.
7. As in his *The Wretched of the Earth*: "All the elements of a solution to the great problems of humanity have, at different times, existed in European thought. But Europeans have not carried out in practice the mission which fell to them, which consisted of bringing their whole weight to bear violently upon these elements, of modifying their arrangement and their nature, of changing them and, finally, of bringing the problem of mankind to an infinitely higher plane." (Fanon, 1969: 253).
8. *De civ. Dei*, XIX, 17.
9. *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, LXXXV, 6.
10. Hollingworth, 2010: 208.
11. *Ecclesiastes*, 9.2.
12. *Divjak Letters*, II, 7, 5.
13. *Confess.*, III, 2, 19.
14. *Confess.*, VIII, 1, 2.
15. *En. in Ps.*, XLI, 7.
16. See how Augustine puts it at *De Genesi ad Litteram*, VIII, 6, 12: "It was proper that man, placed in a state of dependence upon the Lord God, should be given some prohibition, so that obedience would be the virtue by which he would please his Lord. I can truthfully say that this is the only virtue of every rational creature who lives life under God's rule, and that the fundamental and greatest vice is the overweening pride by which one wishes to have independence to his own ruin, and the name of the vice is disobedience. There would not, therefore, be any way for a man to realize and feel that he was subject to the Lord unless he was given some command." Cf. *De Libero Arbitrio*, III, 24: "It is one thing to be rational, and another to be wise: for it is by reason that anyone is capable of receiving [and comprehending] a command, but obedience is a matter of faith. Just as it is the nature of reason to comprehend a command, it is wisdom which counsels obedience. This is the same thing as to say that it is in the nature of a rational creature to receive and comprehend commands, but wisdom is a function of something else, namely, the will."
17. See *Sermones*, CXLI, 3: "Before you felt God, you thought you could express *God*. But then you began actually to feel him: and in feeling Him, you felt what you cannot actually express."
18. *Serm.*, LXII, 13–15.
19. Wittgenstein, 1967: Z§717.
20. *En. in Ps.*, XLI, 13.
21. See, for example, *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus*, X, 4: "Love me, says God to you: favour with me is not had by making interest with some other, like with a patron: your love itself makes me present to you."
22. See *Confess.*, I, 1, 1.
23. As illustration, see *En. in Ps.*, IX, 29: "The earth is, in this sense, the end of things; in that it is the last element, in which men labour in a most orderly fashion. And yet, because it is the 'last element,' they cannot actually see the deep order of their labours, which specially belongs to the hidden things of the Son." And *En. in Ps.*, LXIV, 6: "Every man finds himself born into a

place; and he goes on to learn his tongue, and to become habituated to the manners and life of that same land or region or city. What should a boy do, then, if born among Heathens and told to worship a stone, inasmuch as his parents have suggested that worship? From them he has heard the first words of this: that error he has sucked in with his very milk. And here is the real conditioning: because they that spoke were elders, and the boy who was learning to speak an infant, what could he do but follow the authority of them?"

24. *Confess.*, III, 6, 11.
25. *En. in Ps.*, CXXXIV, 22.

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5 Bringing Morality Down to Earth
Machiavelli's Contribution to Scientific Statesmanship

Joseph V. Femia

I. EMPIRICISM

It was once fashionable to claim that Machiavelli's thought attained genuine scientific status. His contribution to statesmanship, on this view, was to submit its rules and principles to the rigors of inductive methodology, where the truth or falsity of knowledge claims is determined by observable evidence. Machiavelli was depicted as "very much an experimental scientist,"[1] as "the Galileo of politics."[2] This interpretation provoked a rather fierce reaction from commentators who denied that Machiavelli ever even aspired to be scientific. To them, he was more of a pragmatist, whose reasoning was neither systematic nor rigorous, and whose approach to evidence was selective and anachronistic.[3] In a similar vein, others placed him in the rhetorical tradition, where persuasive oratory was far more important than logical analysis or factual accuracy.[4] *The Prince*, according to this account, was a rhetorical performance, manipulative and instrumental, designed to free Lorenzo "the Magnificent" from the debilitating restrictions of conventional wisdom.

It seems to me that this debate suffered from false dichotomies. Galileo himself was a formidable rhetorician, thus proving that a fondness for rhetorical conventions need not negate one's scientific credentials.[5] Moreover, it is possible to see Machiavelli as a pioneer of modern scientific thinking about politics even if his own thinking fell below later standards of scientific objectivity. It is true, in any case, that his generalizations were not built upon a cumulative ground of pure inductive reasoning. Indeed, his various analyses were guided by abstract constructs (e.g., the essential sameness of human nature) that might—at least in certain circumstances—be said to distort empirical reality. Yet reductive abstraction is a commonplace of modern science. Galileo, for his part, was happy to introduce simplifying assumptions for reasons of computational and analytical tractability. In formulating the "law of falling bodies," for example, he assumed the non-existence of friction. No scientific theory is strictly empirical or devoid of theoretical constructs.

In order to assess Machiavelli's contribution to scientific statesmanship, we must first locate his thought in the historical context of Renaissance

Italy. The dominant cosmology was still basically medieval.[6] The universe was moralized, drenched in celestial design—and its different components were related not so much causally as symbolically. Like the ancient Greeks, the medieval scholastics drew no distinction between "what is" and "what ought to be." They adopted the Aristotelian method of explaining things teleologically: everything that exists is striving to achieve its "essence" or proper form. The universe was seen as a grand allegory, whose essential secret was its *meaning*. As for human society, its foreordained purpose was to facilitate the salvation of immortal souls in the cosmic struggle between good and evil. Before Machiavelli, the standard approach to political theory—if not to politics itself—was a priori and deductive: human beings and their social structures were understood by reference to first principles, to their essential moral purposes.

Machiavelli was the first political thinker to (almost ostentatiously) ignore this bundle of axioms. And I use the word "ignore" advisedly. For example, he never explicitly challenged the divine origin of the state; he simply ignored it. For him, political power obviously derived from the frailties of human nature, not from God, and there was no need to belabor the irrelevance of the Almighty. Although he never produced a system of rigorously formulated and experimentally verifiable hypotheses, Machiavelli had a definite scientific instinct. Nowhere did he refer to abstract moral principles or "final causes." To his mind, there were no immutable properties that constituted the true essence of things. Such "essences" were normative abstractions, "imaginary things," rather than generalizations based on experience.[7] For experience tells us that all objects, including states and human beings, are unstable and liable to change. Political analysis, as understood by Machiavelli, lost its prescriptive purpose, its desire to "improve" man and society in accordance with universal truths. Of course, he did not totally discard "ought" propositions. His works are full of advice to statesmen, but this advice, he insisted, emerged from an analysis of objective data rather than from observance of universal norms. The facts of political life were, in his estimation, the only valid source of political argument. Formal or deductive logic, contemplation of God's purposes, speculation about the state of human souls—these were no longer the means to truth or wisdom. In the scholastic or medieval outlook, the question "why" (in the sense of "why are we here?") was predominant. In Machiavelli's vision of reality, we should look not for "final" causes but for efficient ones. The main question became "how"—how do principalities or republics grow or maintain themselves?

Still, it would be wrong to picture Machiavelli as a lone voice of innovation in a wilderness of dull convention. The collective mentality in Renaissance Italy was already evolving towards a modern way of seeing the world. Art, for example, stressed truth to nature, leading to an emphasis on mathematical and experimental methods to achieve the correct proportions. The economies of the Italian city-states, especially Florence, were governed by

commercialism and formal calculation, not by strict adherence to Holy Scripture. And *actual* politics, as distinct from the theoretical version, was dominated by overt power struggles and utilitarian scheming, with little more than lip-service being paid to religious priorities. Clearly, a new vision of reality was emerging, and Machiavelli expressed it in the realm of political analysis.

The vibrancy and dynamism of his social setting may help to explain why Machiavelli saw no need to disguise the subversive quality of his ideas. To the contrary, he boasted about his originality. He claimed to have taken a "path as yet untrodden by anyone" and thus to have discovered "new modes and orders."[8] His discovery is epitomized by the principle that one must take one's bearings from how men live as distinguished from how they *ought* to live. Traditional political philosophy, by contrast, was fixated on patterns laid out in heaven, and persisted in dreaming up republics or principalities which "have never in truth been known to exist," except in the imaginations of impractical scribblers. Machiavelli could not have been clearer about his determination to put aside "imaginary things" and instead focus on "things as they are in real truth."[9]

In his elevation of factual evidence as the source of all wisdom, Machiavelli foreshadowed the theory of knowledge developed by the British empiricists—notably John Locke and Francis Bacon—in the seventeenth century.[10] Their defense of causal explanation by way of inductive generalization rested upon two key assumptions: (1) that knowledge can be founded on experience alone, on "facts" immediately available to sense perception (*phenomenalism*) and (2) that a rigid separation between facts and values is possible (*axiological neutrality*). Both assumptions underpin Machiavelli's methodology, and both have been challenged by those who deny the existence of theory-neutral observation, divorced from presumptions about what is desirable or meaningful. It is not my purpose here to discuss the merits of such criticism. Nor do I wish to argue that Machiavelli's *regole generali* are perfect exemplars of inductive corroboration. Rather, it is my intention to tease out the implications of Machiavelli's (no doubt flawed) empiricism for our understanding of statesmanship. By assuming that political knowledge must rely on sense and perception, by insisting that the complexity of the world must be reduced to its external evidence, and by omitting any reference to moral abstractions or absolutes, Machiavelli recognized the role of contingency and circumstance in the determination of right and wrong. Political action must be judged by its observable consequences and not by the dictates of moral or doctrinal purity. Truth in the political sense is relative, dependent on the context, on actual practice. This proposition, a natural corollary of his empirical method, is reflected in his controversial precepts about the appropriate behavior of statesmen, who, in his view, cannot expect to further the interests of either themselves or their people if they rigidly adhere to Christian moral teachings. Let us now

examine this perspective (often identified by the metaphor "dirty hands') in greater detail.

II.   DIRTY HANDS?

While there is a vast literature on "dirty hands," the usual meaning of the term can be stated simply enough. Dirty hands problems arise when morality clashes with some other rational necessity of a profound kind that correctly overrules it. Non-moral "oughts," on this view, can legitimately trump moral ones in circumstances of extremity. This scenario is seen to be especially pertinent to the realm of politics, where conventional moral standards are often deemed to be inapplicable. "Dirty hands" entails a paradox: we have done something wrong, even if what we have done was the best thing to do in the circumstances. For example, "collateral damage" to innocent civilians may be unavoidable in a "just" war, but—assuming your moral code includes absolute prohibitions—it can never be morally "right" to kill or maim innocent people. In other words, a political actor can behave correctly and still be responsible for a grave moral loss—one that should engender guilt and sorrow on his part.

For fairly obvious reasons, Machiavelli is widely considered to be the progenitor of the idea of dirty hands. Particularly in *The Prince,* he jettisoned all the traditional pieties of Renaissance political thought, saying quite explicitly that a prince who wishes to maintain his rule "must learn how not to be good."[11] Cruelty, Machiavelli opines, is in the public interest if it helps to preserve law and order. To support his case, he cites Cesare Borgia, whose bestial rule "reformed the Romagna, brought it unity, and restored order and obedience." Compassionate rulers, on the other hand, "allow disorders which lead to murder and rapine."[12] Neither does Machiavelli set much store by honesty or good faith. If a ruler wishes to be remembered for his achievements, he must be a "great liar and deceiver," pretending to be a man of his word and a compassionate soul, even when his deeds suggest the opposite.[13] Machiavelli was a pessimist, for whom governance always involved choosing the lesser of two evils. In the affairs of men, he tells us in the *Discourses on Livy*, "one finds that close to the good there is always some evil that arises with that good."[14] Supposedly "good" acts can bring harmful consequences, which is why our leaders "should never allow an evil to run loose out of respect for a good."[15] A ruler who prides himself on preaching nothing but peace and good will eventually become "an enemy of both."[16] There is a famous passage in the *Discourses* where Machiavelli sums up his position with great clarity:

> where one deliberates entirely on the safety of his fatherland, there ought not to enter any consideration of either just or unjust, merciful

or cruel, praiseworthy or ignominious; indeed every other concern put aside, one ought to follow entirely the policy that saves its life and maintains its liberty.[17]

According to Benedetto Croce, Machiavelli "discovered the autonomy of politics which is beyond good and bad morals, which has its own laws against which it is futile to rebel." Seeking to dispel traditional caricatures, Croce insisted that Machiavelli was not himself immoral. When speaking about political necessity, the Florentine, we are told, exhibited "an austere and painful moral awareness." He was "divided in spirit and mind" about the "unfortunate necessity" that required even him—a mere functionary—to "dirty his own hands" in the political sewer. Croce's Machiavelli experienced "moral nausea" when recognizing and (reluctantly) recommending the harshness and treachery that are inescapable in the political arena, where moral considerations are conspicuous by their absence.[18] Substantially the same thesis was later advanced by Federico Chabod, for whom Machiavelli's "true and essential contribution to the history of human thought" was his definition of politics as a non-moral game of skill, removed from questions of good and evil. Yet Chabod echoed Croce in saying that Machiavelli never intended to "undermine common morality" or to replace Christian moral ideals with some notion of patriotic necessity. On the contrary, he remained deeply committed to these ideals, and it pained him that they were inapplicable in the public sphere.[19]

The claim that Machiavelli posited a literal divorce between politics and morality is rather odd. If, as Christians believe, the rules of morality are commands of God, designed to regulate human interaction, why would God want to confine their validity to the private sphere? Indeed, "dirty hands" theory need not presuppose any such divorce. To argue that political necessity may trump morality is not to argue that it must always do so. But what I want to demonstrate in this paper is that commentators such as Croce and Chabod have made an even more fundamental error. It is my contention that Machiavelli's defense of cruelty and deception expressed not the suspension of morality (either in certain circumstances or in certain areas of life) but a new and radical understanding of morality. Although he had no desire to launch an explicit attack on Christian moral teachings, and although he had no appetite (or aptitude) for systematic philosophical reasoning, Machiavelli was an incipient utilitarian, for whom the "right" act was the act that produced the best outcome in terms of preference satisfaction or communal happiness—even if this act violated the deepest constraints of traditional morality. The "dirty hands" scenario is thus irrelevant. For a statesman who departs from the conventional ethical script in the name of empirical necessity has, according to this understanding of morality, done nothing wrong or even regrettable, as long as his actions are conducive to the public good. His hands are thus "clean" as opposed to "dirty." It follows from Machiavelli's preference for experience over abstraction that we

should judge public actions and policies not by their conformity to Biblical absolutes, but by their objective and observable consequences.

The most direct challenge to my claim that Machiavelli rejected the Christian moral order comes from those commentators who take special pains to interpret him as a devout, if unorthodox, believer in the Christian faith, whose well-known criticisms of "our religion" were essentially aimed at the prevailing ecclesiastical order rather than at Christianity as such.[20] However, although it's true that he sometimes invoked God and religious symbolism, and although he lauded religious observance as a political necessity, a barrier to social disintegration, his approach to religion was basically instrumental.[21] As Maurizio Viroli has shown, Machiavelli never evinced the slightest concern about the salvation of his immortal soul. In *La Mandragola*, a work of fiction, he poured scorn on the conventional notions of the afterlife, and used his *dramatis personae* to poke fun at pious souls who spend hours in prayer. His published letters indicate that his friends, including Francesco Vettori and Francesco Guicciardini, were exasperated by his indifference to religious needs and ceremonies.[22] Even those who think that he remained attached to Christian ethics must accept that his attitude towards formal religious observance was distant at best.

Machiavelli's apparent lack of piety or serious religious faith paved the way for his realistic approach to political analysis. Before Machiavelli—as we have seen—those who reflected on politics tended to do so from an idealistic and Christian point of view, expressing visions of how things ought to be rather than "representing things as they are in real truth." This type of theory, to him, was merely the elaborate projection of dreams and wishes, couched in vain metaphysical speculation. It's correct to say that he sought to separate politics from *traditional* morality, inasmuch as his descriptions of the world were purportedly based on facts, on evidence, and not upon the demands of a transcendent ethical system. He wanted both politics and ethics to be located in the real world of space and time—to pay heed to the "gulf between how one should live and how one does live."[23] In other words, politics and morality alike must take human nature as their point of departure—not human nature as it might be, but human nature as it is, as it has revealed itself throughout history.

In both classical and Christian political theory, the concept of human nature was normative, embracing the desired "ends" of human existence. As Markus Fischer points out,[24] men were assumed to possess an "intellective soul," a spiritual core, naturally inclining them towards what is just and good. The civic humanists of the Italian Renaissance adopted the Aristotelian premise that our natural potential for virtue would be actuated by participation in the institutional life of the polity. All this presupposes an objective and transcendent notion of human flourishing, a foundation in nature for right and wrong. I find it strange that J. G. A. Pocock[25] and other "contextual" historians attribute this type of teleological thinking to Machiavelli, because he never mentioned, let alone endorsed, natural law

or an intangible human "essence." They are so keen to use the intellectual context as an aid in determining a thinker's meaning that they end up substituting that context for the author's own texts. If we concentrate on Machiavelli's actual utterances, we can see that his starting point was not a vision of "real" human interests, derived from some teleological view of human development, but rather a naturalistic description of human motivation. Historical observation enables him to conclude (like the later utilitarians) that there are no natural human ends beyond material satisfaction or well-being. This conclusion, he insists, is a universal and timeless truth: "in all peoples there are the same desires and the same humors, and there always have been."[26] What is more, the natural impulse to maximize personal utilities makes us inherently licentious and careless of other people's needs. Hence his famous dictum that statesmen should assume "that all men are bad," and that they will display "the malignity of their spirit whenever they have a free opportunity for it."[27] Elsewhere he informs us that men are "ungrateful, fickle, liars, and deceivers."[28] Machiavelli was by preference a republican, but his republicanism presupposed as inescapable the human depravity that the ancient Greeks and Romans thought it possible to transcend. His depiction of human nature, of human appetites, deprives man of the capacity for ascending either to the rational contemplation of the good or to the beatific communion with God.

The basic problem, as Machiavelli saw it, was that human desires were intrinsically insatiable. Our imagination allows us "to desire everything," which means that many of our desires will be unattainable in a world of scarcity. The result is "discontent with what one possesses," and the ubiquity of discontent gives rise to a pervasive sense of insecurity and suspicion—the underlying causes of enmity, civil disorder, and war.[29] This analysis obviously calls to mind Hobbes's "war of all against all"—the idea of individual human beings as isolated atoms, programmed by nature to maximize their private satisfactions, and doing so in conditions of total insecurity. Long before Hobbes, Machiavelli abandoned the Aristotelian conviction that man is a political animal, whose natural propensity towards goodness and cooperation will be facilitated by rational discourse with his fellow citizens. Reason, to Aristotle and his Renaissance followers, gives us access to a unifying moral truth. Machiavelli, on the other hand, understood reason as mere calculation, a means of acquisition or aggrandizement. The polity is therefore not a natural whole prior to its parts but a human artifice, assembled from independently existing individuals anxious for some semblance of order and security. Contradicting the conventional assumption that early men instinctively formed herds, he claimed that our ancestors originally "lived dispersed . . . like beasts" and gathered together only for self-protection.[30] More clearly than his contemporaries, Machiavelli recognized the priority of the individual. Society, to him, was not some "exterior force" determining our behavior; rather, it arose from "the actions of particular men."[31]

By resolving collectives into utility-maximizing individuals, Machiavelli highlights the problematic nature of social order. Although he frequently refers to the "common good," he does not understand it in the sense of common meanings and purposes—a good that is held in common. It is simply the aggregate material interests of the community as a whole. Given the diversity of interests, he thought that a rational consensus—one governed purely by public reason—was impossible. Political reason was reduced to—in the words of Paul Rahe—"multitudinous private calculations of material interest."[32] Society is held together mainly by fear of punishment or fear of the gods, though in a well-ordered republic good customs and good laws can inspire a sense of patriotic responsibility and serve as a functional equivalent of fear. Note an interesting contrast here. In the Aristotelian model, civic engagement allows us to fulfill our essential social nature; in the Machiavellian model, the purpose of political life is not to liberate our natural inclinations, but to control them. This means that social order will always remain precarious, for cooperative habits are contingent, a product of socialization, whereas our licentious nature is rooted in instinct. If society becomes complacent and lazy, if social indiscipline is tolerated, then civic spirit will give way to naked calculation of interest, and the habit of obedience will gradually disappear.

Machiavelli believed that this process of degeneration was, sooner or later, inevitable, because organized society requires constant defiance of human nature. It is impossible, he declares, "to order a perpetual republic, because its ruin is caused through a thousand unexpected ways." He is convinced that "all things of man are in motion and cannot stay steady; they must either rise or fall."[33] The very success of a republic (its "rise") will generate the decadence (an appetite for luxury and idleness) that brings about its "fall." Forestalling such a disaster for as long as possible is crucial, which is why Machiavelli warns us that even a republic must resort to harsh measures that reinforce cooperative habits through fear: exemplary executions of dissidents, encouraging citizens to "inform" on malcontents, and so on.[34] The ever-present danger is slipping back into our natural condition where obedience to rules or authorities becomes a matter not of habit but of continual cost-benefit analysis. At that point, the republic—understood as an alliance for transacting business and protecting us against physical harm—is under severe existential threat.

Machiavelli's conception of human beings as mere bundles of appetites, devoid of an intellective soul or spiritual essence, ultimately explains why he was not a "dirty hands" theorist. The idea of dirty hands relies on a deontological approach to morality, whereby the rightness or wrongness of a kind of action is intrinsic to it, logically essential to it, in the way that three-sidedness is to a triangle. Christian ethics, in its simplest form, bases the validity of the principles it enjoins on the fact that they are commands of God. However, Christian theologians, notably Aquinas, have also claimed that these principles are discoverable by the natural reason of man, thus

implying that they are embedded in our essential nature. By viewing God as a convenient fiction, by denying the existence of an intellective soul that can guide us to the light, and by reducing human reason to a slave of the passions, an instrument of calculation, Machiavelli's view of reality could offer no theoretical underpinnings for a deontological or rationalistic moral code. But this does not mean that Machiavelli was amoral, let alone immoral. In interpreting him as a utilitarian of sorts, I am taking utilitarianism as a view that what is right and wrong should be judged in relation to consequences only—and the consequences Machiavelli thought desirable (in relation to politics) were those that enhanced the security and prosperity of the entire community.

One barrier to attributing even this crude form of utilitarianism to Machiavelli is the well-known fact that he by and large used the terms "good" and "bad" in the conventional moral sense. Indeed, there are passages in *The Prince* where he says, without apparent irony, that it would be "laudable" and "praiseworthy" for a prince to embody traditional virtues.[35] Such evidence is far from conclusive, however. In Machiavelli's day, the idea of separating ethics from the dictates of religion, of basing the former on pure empirical necessity, was unheard of. Machiavelli knew that his deviation from Christian moral teachings could go only so far. And, of course, he was a trained rhetorician, who understood that you could persuade your audience (or readers) only by appealing to their own basic values and linguistic conventions. It is also possible that he did not fully grasp the implications or novelty of his moral outlook. He was not a trained philosopher, accustomed to taking ideas to their logical conclusions. One could say that he was caught between the worlds of antiquity and modernity in a way that generated internal conceptual tensions.

Nevertheless, there is plenty of textual evidence to support the thesis that Machiavelli equated morality with utility. Consider his discussion of Cesare Borgia, who was notoriously barbaric in his campaign to rid the Romagna of the petty tyrants who had reduced the province to penury and servitude. Although "Borgia was accounted cruel . . . this cruelty of his reformed the Romagna, brought it unity, and restored order." In praising Borgia, Machiavelli does not say that his terrifying behavior was a necessary evil. Rather, he implies that the young man's supposed acts of cruelty were actually acts of compassion. The real cruelty is perpetrated by "those who, being too compassionate, allow disorders which lead to murder and rapine." He then reminds us, in true utilitarian fashion, that strategic executions harm only a few individuals, whereas the "compassionate" ruler who tolerates subversion and criminality harms "the whole community."[36]

Reflect, too, on the following passage from *The Prince*:

> In the actions of all men, and especially of princes . . . one judges by the result. So let a prince set about the task of conquering and maintaining his state; his methods will always be judged honourable and will be universally praised.[37]

Machiavelli does not allow for the possibility that this judgment or this praise might be misplaced, nor does he suggest that a prince should feel remorseful if his beneficial actions violate Christian precepts. Machiavelli's meaning is clear: desirable consequences are the only standard by which to judge the moral quality of political decisions. The same point is made in the *Discourses*,[38] where Romulus is defended over the killing of his brother Remus. This act of fratricide was necessary, Machiavelli tells us, so that supreme authority in founding the new state of Rome should be in one person's hands, as was essential for such a venture and thus for the "common good." No wise person, Machiavelli insists, would ever condemn a ruler for such extraordinary actions where they were beneficial to the public. Quite the reverse, for "when the deed accuses him, the effect excuses him, and when the effect is good . . ., it will always excuse the deed." Think about these words. No believer in deontological morality would ever assert that a good effect is "always" sufficient to excuse acts of cruelty or treachery or deceit. And Machiavelli is not simply saying that such acts are excusable. In other sections of the *Discourses*, he makes it clear that, in appropriate situations, so-called "wicked" and brutal deeds on the part of the ruler are both "honourable" and "generous."[39] For Machiavelli, I submit, no political act could be intrinsically right or wrong; his operative conception of morality was circumstantial and consequential. But if no act can be *inherently* dirty, then the idea of dirty hands, as normally understood, makes no sense. As long as politicians or rulers achieve desirable outcomes, no moral transgression has taken place.

III.   CONCLUDING REMARKS

Charles Singleton has argued that "the perspective of art" is the "dominant pattern in Machiavelli's thought."[40] That is to say, for Machiavelli, the statesman is an artist, shaping matter into a particular form. In the case of art, we judge the finished work in terms of its aesthetic qualities, in terms of the pleasure or happiness it brings to those who "consume" it. Most people would regard it as a category mistake to pass judgment on the moral qualities of either the artist or his artifact. This is another way of saying that Machiavelli places the political realm beyond good and evil. On my reading, however, he does indeed issue moral judgments on politics and statesmen, although these might not be judgments that most people would recognize as moral. Nevertheless, Singleton does make an interesting point. Before Machiavelli, politics in the Christian tradition was conceived as an activity concerned with "doing" (deliberating, choosing) rather than "making" (creating an object, such as a painting). The political agent (unlike the artist) was judged on the intrinsic goodness or badness of his actions, which were presumed to shed light on the condition of his soul. Outcomes were not considered to be of moral significance.[41] It's true that Machiavelli reversed this emphasis, but he did not do it by dividing politics from morality. If we

make a distinction between process and outcome, we see that Machiavelli removed the moral significance of the former ("doing") and elevated the moral significance of the latter.

If, as Machiavelli assumed, human behavior is necessarily egoistic, if there is no "soul," then it is pointless to see politics as part of the Christian drama of salvation. A politician's expressed intentions are neither here nor there. The only criterion of judgment is whether or not he assists in the maximization of human satisfaction. Politics—on this account—consists of deeds, not precepts or noble principles. Because of his denial of the intellective soul, Machiavelli could concentrate on "outward things"—"things as they are in real truth."[42] In common with Galileo, he tried to explain the world around us empirically, without reference to God's eternal plan. Machiavelli's secular naturalism not only allowed him to overturn traditional political morality; it also laid the foundations for modern political science, whose guiding premise is that the laws of political life cannot be discovered by an analysis that takes man's words and beliefs at face value. Expressed intentions, metaphysical constructs—these must be understood in terms of actual reality. It is necessary, in other words, to see through the fog of conventional piety ("imaginary things") and to illuminate the repetitive patterns of "real truth." In its Machiavellian mission to distinguish appearance from reality, modern political science is inherently subversive, despite its claims to neutrality.[43] This scientific ambition to see the real connections between variables, as distinct from the connections we might desire, is what motivates statesman to defy traditional morality or expectations in their pursuit of the national interest. Like Machiavelli, such statesmen are usually pessimists, alive to the foibles of human nature and to the often perverse and generally unintended consequences of well-intentioned political actions or policies. Determined to increase public utility, these Machiavellian realists are willing to mold policy in accordance with factual analysis, even if such policies depart from the demands of "virtue" or conventional moral rules. They are governed by—to borrow Max Weber's terminology—"the ethics of responsibility" rather than "the ethics of intention." Again, outcome takes precedence over process. The idealist or moralist, on the other hand, aims "to do the right thing," almost regardless of consequences. Of course, analysis of consequences will always be colored by the value system of the analyst. There is the danger—and Machiavelli recognized this—that a statesman will confuse the public interest with his own personal interest. Doing "wrong" in order to do "right" can become a bad habit. Moreover, statesmen who reflexively choose the path of virtue sometimes argue, as did Cicero, that there can never be a disjunction between what is honorable and what is useful. Nevertheless, their absolutist mind-set invites the conclusion that, for them, virtue is its own reward, notwithstanding any inconveniences it might bring. The division between "hard-headed" realists and "virtuous" idealists is central to modern politics, and possibly more important than the left-right divide (with which it obviously overlaps). We can detect its

manifestation on all kinds of issues, from immigration to welfare reform and security policy. And it's a division that we can trace back to Machiavelli's revolt against the hegemony of traditional Christian precepts—to his attempt to bring morality down to earth.

NOTES

1. Singleton, 1953: 180.
2. Cassirer, 1946: 153–56.
3. Butterfield, 1940; Anglo, 1971.
4. Viroli, 1998; Kahn, 1994.
5. Finocchiaro, 1997: 6–7, 356–72.
6. Burke, 1986: 201–3.
7. *The Prince*, XV.91.
8. Machiavelli, 1531a: 5. Hereafter, references to this work will be by title, book, chapter, and page number (e.g., *Discourses*, I.Preface.5).
9. Machiavelli, 1531b: 90–1. Hereafter, references to this work will be by title, chapter, and page number (e.g., *The Prince,* XV.90–1).
10. Femia, 2004: 96–102.
11. *The Prince*, XV.91. The translation was amended by Joseph Femia.
12. *Ibid*., XVII.95.
13. *Ibid*., XVIII.100–1.
14. *Discourses*, III.37.294.
15. *Ibid*., III.3.215.
16. *The Prince*, XVIII.101–2.
17. *Discourses*, III.41.301.
18. Croce 1925: 59–67.
19. Chabod 1958: 142.
20. See, e.g., Russo, 1949: 222–23; and Alderisio, 1950: 181–200.
21. *Discourses*, II.2.
22. Viroli, 2010: 27–28, 33–34.
23. *The Prince*, XV.91.
24. Fischer, 1997: 794–801.
25. See Pocock, 1975.
26. *Discourses*, I.39.83.
27. *Ibid.,* I.3.15.
28. *The Prince*, XVII.96.
29. *Discourses*, I.37.78.
30. *Ibid.,* I.2.11.
31. *Ibid.,* III.1.212.
32. Rahe, 2000: 297.
33. *Discourses*, III.17.257, I.6.23.
34. *Ibid.,* III.1, I.7.
35. *The Prince*, XV.91, XVIII.99.
36. *Ibid*., XVII.95.
37. *Ibid*., XVIII.101.
38. *Discourses*, I.9.29.
39. *Ibid.,* I.27.63, I.30.68, III.27.274.
40. Singleton, 1953: 179.
41. Singleton, 1953: 169–74.
42. *The Prince*, XV.90.
43. Dahl, 1963.

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6   Hobbes and the Science of Metaphor

Victoria Kahn

More than any other political theorist in the seventeenth century, Hobbes stands for the idea of scientific statesmanship, for the notion that politics can be made into a science. In elaborating this ideal, Hobbes famously declared his independence from the humanist rhetorical and moral tradition that was central to much earlier political theory. Instead, he equated science with what Amos Funkenstein has called an "*ergetic* ideal of knowing"; that is, the notion that we can only know what we construct ourselves.[1] In elaborating this ideal in *Leviathan* Hobbes replaced traditional organic or corporatist metaphors for the body politic with a mechanical model, and in doing so expressed a new conviction: "Society and its institutions ceased to be an *immediate* product or reflection of nature. They became artificial bodies, a product of man's deliberation and labor, not of his alleged 'social instincts.' As such, they were believed to be capable of a thoroughly rational design."[2] But rational design for Hobbes did not presuppose a faculty of reason governed by *a priori* notions of divine or natural law. Instead, in Hobbes's new constructive model of political science, language and the will, rather than nature and reason, took center stage. Thus we can say that, although the later Hobbes voiced a distinct antipathy for humanist rhetoric, his version of the political scientist as *homo faber* recast its deepest insights of humanist rhetoric and poetics into the power of human beings to shape the world around them. Hobbes's science is a science of language, and language is, conversely, the precondition of this science. The turn to science is thus, paradoxically, a turn to language and, in particular, as we will see, to the constructive power of metaphor. In this way, the voluntarism and linguistic turn of Hobbesian science—the science, we could say, that founded political science as we know it—paradoxically also anticipated some of the insights of the eighteenth-century discourse of aesthetics.

I.   HOBBES'S TURN TOWARDS SCIENCE

At the time that Hobbes was writing, there were several available models of political theory, all of which he ultimately rejected. From his humanist

education, Hobbes would have been familiar with Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, as well as the Greek and Roman historians. His reading of these texts would have been shaped, at least in part, by the humanist tradition of commentary as well as humanist notions of history and rhetoric as vehicles of moral and political instruction. Second, Hobbes saw the emergence of the reason of state tradition, loosely associated with Tacitus, Machiavelli, Botero, and others. Third, he followed with interest the new natural law theory represented by Grotius. A fourth line of argument, not exactly a tradition, was represented by Jean Bodin and his defense of absolutism. In time, Hobbes came to believe that none of these approaches could match the logical rigor of contemporary science. To the contrary, each was mired in historical particularity, and for most prudential reasoning was the correct response to the contingencies of political action. In John Aubrey's *Life of Hobbes*, we learn that the pivotal moment occurred when Hobbes encountered Euclid:

> He was 40 years old before he looked on Geometry; which happened accidentally. Being in a Gentleman's Library, Euclid's Elements lay open, and 'twas the 47 *El. Libri* I. He read the proposition. *By G—*, sayd he (he would now and then sweare an emphaticall Oath by way of emphasis), *this is impossible!* So he reads the Demonstration of it, which referred him back to such a Proposition; which Proposition he read. That referred him back to another, which he also read. *Et sic deinceps* [and so on] that at last he was demonstratively convinced of that trueth, This made him in love with Geometry.[3]

In evaluating Hobbes's turn toward science, it is important to remember that Hobbes's idea of science was not the experimental science of Boyle or even Galileo, despite Hobbes's admiration for the latter. Instead, as the anecdote about Euclid makes clear, his model of science was geometry. What impressed Hobbes about geometry was the fact that, unlike sciences of empirical investigation, it offered certain knowledge because we construct the objects of investigation ourselves:

> The science of every subject is derived from a precognition of the causes, generation, and construction of the same; and consequently where the causes are known, there is a place for demonstration, but not where the causes are to seek for. Geometry, therefore, is demonstrable, for the lines and figures from which we reason, are drawn and described by ourselves; and civil philosophy is demonstrable because we make the commonwealth ourselves.[4]

By contrast, the physical sciences or sciences of the natural world offer only probable knowledge: "because of natural bodies we know not the construction, but seek it from effects, there lies no demonstration of what the causes

be we seek for, but only of what they may be."[5] Hobbes wanted to produce certain knowledge in the realm of politics of the sort Euclid had produced in geometry. Moreover, Hobbes wanted to exercise power over his reader of the sort that Euclid had exercised over him, and intended his political theory to have the force (although not the exact form) of Euclidean demonstration.[6] As Hobbes made clear in both *The Elements of Law* and *Leviathan*, in the realm of civil philosophy devising clear definitions was the equivalent of "drawing and describing lines and figures" in the realm of geometry. Once clear definitions were posited and accepted, premises could be stated and irrefutable conclusions would inevitably follow.

Hobbes's idea of making did not only depend on establishing definitions. He was also influenced by the resolutive-compositive method of Galileo, according to which one understands an entity by analyzing it into its component parts and then reconstructing it from its basic elements.[7] In a late work that clearly reflected this notion of science, *Elements of Philosophy, the First Section concerning Body* (1656; the English version of *De Corpore*), Hobbes defined philosophy as "such knowledge of effects or appearances, as we acquire by true ratiocination from the knowledge we have first of their causes or generation: And again, of such causes or generation as may be from knowing first their effects."[8] Knowledge here is knowledge of generation. But here, too, the distinction between geometry and natural science is relevant, for, as we have seen, we cannot know for certain the causes or generation of things in nature, but we can know the causes of things we make ourselves. Chief among these manmade things is the Leviathan state, which is constructed out of the linguistic pacts or covenants among its individual members. We see this emphasis on construction in the introduction to *Leviathan*, Hobbes's most eloquent manifesto of the new maker's knowledge approach to politics. In a gloss on the subtitle of *Leviathan*—"or The Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill"— Hobbes tells us he will analyze both "the *Matter*" of the commonwealth "and the *Artificer*, both [of] which is *Man*." Secondly he will discuss "*How*; and by what *Covenants* [the commonwealth] is made." In this new science of politics, man is both matter and maker, and covenants are his art.[9]

Hobbes thus extended the geometric model of knowledge by analogy to the realm of politics, but with a difference: in the realm of politics it is not geometry but language that allows us to construct the commonwealth. Hobbes here seems to return to humanist rhetoric but his preoccupation with linguistic making or construction stands in an ambivalent relationship to his humanist predecessors. On the one hand, he went out of his way to distinguish his new conception of political science from the "inveterate opinions" that had taken root in men's minds, and been confirmed by "the authority of most eloquent writers." "Philosophy," he went on to clarify, "professedly rejects not only the paint and false colours of language, but even the very ornaments and graces of the same; and the first grounds of all science are not only not beautiful, but poor, arid, and, in appearance,

deformed."[10] On the other hand, Hobbes made it clear that his goal was to replace humanist rhetoric with a logic of demonstration that would be more compelling than traditional forms of persuasion. Here we see that Hobbes's goal was not simply to provide new definitions for his political science; his goal was above all to have practical effects in the realm of human action.[11] Thus, although Hobbes's disparaging remark about linguistic ornament seems to ground philosophy in knowledge rather than eloquence, he shared the rhetorician's conviction that language was itself a form of power. Language, which for the humanists was the constructive power par excellence, is also the hook that draws out Leviathan. But it does so, in Hobbes's anti-humanist account, by providing us with general terms, by securing definitions, and by making it possible for us to devise and consent to the political contract.

II.   HOBBES ON METAPHOR

We see the equation of science with the generalizing power of language already in *The Elements of Law* where Hobbes declares that "By the advantage of names it is that we are capable of science."[12] By "names" Hobbes means general terms or concepts that allow us to reason beyond particulars. Hobbes then goes on to explain that all general terms are equivocal, a feature of language that he will then tell us is best characterized by the term metaphor:

> As for example, the word faith sometimes signifieth the same with belief; sometimes it signifieth particularly that belief which maketh a Christian; and sometimes it signifieth the keeping of a promise. Also all metaphors are (by profession) equivocal. And there is scarce any word that is not made equivocal by divers contextures of speech, or by diversity of pronunciation and gesture. (5.37)

The example is not innocent: it is arguable that the goal of Hobbes's entire political theory was to strip the general term "belief" of its religious connotations and make it instead unequivocally synonymous with "the keeping of a promise," or contract. The equivocation of metaphor is thus both a danger and an opportunity, a danger when it leads to misunderstanding, an opportunity when it allows for us to generate new shared meanings that exceed the literal sense of a word. Hobbes goes on to observe that "It is therefore a great ability in a man, out of the words, contexture, and other circumstances of language, to deliver himself from equivocation, and to find out the true meaning of what is said: and this is it we call understanding" (5.37). Hobbes's method for delivering himself and others from the equivocation of language in the realm of political theory was the resolutive-compositive method, which he believed stood in stark contrast to humanist notions of

method. And yet, as we will see, the equivocal power of metaphor remained central to Hobbes's political theory.

Applied to the realm of human interaction, the resolutive-compositive method dictated the analysis of human nature into its component parts and the reconstruction of political order on the basis of that prior analysis. We see this in *Leviathan* where Hobbes resolves human nature into its component parts and reconstitutes it as the basis of the political contract in Books 1 and 2. He then turns the method against ecclesiastical authority in Books 3 and 4, resolving that authority into its component parts (spirit, kingdom of God, prophecy, etc.) and reconstituting it so as to do away with the church's power altogether. Language emerges as central to the resolutive-compositive method not because of any *a priori* conviction that speech is a divine gift or that eloquence is inseparable from moral virtue, as the humanists believed; but rather from a dispassionate analysis of human faculties, beginning with perception, imagination, and especially the will.

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes's account of the generative power of language and its relation to the will is already apparent in the early chapters. In chapter 3 Hobbes describes the essentially practical orientation of human thought:

> The Trayne of regulated Thoughts is of two kinds; One, when of an effect imagined, wee seek the causes or the means that produce it: and this is common to Man and Beast. The other is, when imagining any thing whatsoever, wee seek all the possible effects, that can by it be produced; that is to say, we imagine what we can do with it, when wee have it. (3.21)

This last ability, Hobbes asserts, is found in man only. Hobbes calls this ability "Invention, which the Latines call *Sagacitas*, and *Solertia*." In doing so, he departs from the humanist rhetorical definition of invention as the faculty of finding arguments from one's storehouse of commonplaces. Instead, invention comes to have the connotation of practical know-how, in particular the knowledge of how to produce the desired results. He then draws near to the modern sense of invention as creating something new when he asserts that those faculties that

> seem proper to man only . . . proceed all from the invention of Words, and Speech. For besides Sense, and Thoughts, and the Trayne of thoughts, the mind of man has no other motion; though by the help of Speech and Method, the same Facultyes may be improved to such a height, as to distinguish men from all other living Creatures. (3.23; cf. 4.34 on method as involving the definition of words)

Language, which was first authored by God and then added to by the invention of man (and reinvented after the Tower of Babel [4.25]), is the necessary condition of the development of our faculties. As such, language

is also, Hobbes tells us at the beginning of the next chapter, the precondition of those voluntary arrangements we know as the "Common-wealth," "Society," "Contract," and "Peace" (4.24). How does this happen?

In chapter 4 of *Leviathan* Hobbes describes the role of language in translating perceptions into concepts that, in turn, enable the will. He tells us that "the generall use of Speech, is to transferre our Mentall Discourse into Verbal; or the Trayne of our Thoughts, into a Trayne of Words." We do this for various purposes, including to help us remember our train of thoughts; to signify our ideas of causation and production (which Hobbes calls "the acquiring of Arts"); to communicate our knowledge to others; "to make known to others our wills, and purposes" (4.25). In this chapter Hobbes appears as an empiricist who believes that language is invented to refer to the mental discourse or train of thought that is caused by perception and sensation, and a materialist who believes that understanding occurs when language "causes" conception in the listener (4.30).[13] At the same time, Hobbes holds a conventionalist view of the relationship between language and things, according to which words point to the world but do not represent it mimetically,[14] and according to which the meaning of words is not natural and must instead be willed or mutually agreed upon (4.30: "ordained and constituted"; cf.4.28 on how "men begin at settling the signification of their words").

In describing the conventionalism of language in terms of the "transference" of mental discourse into verbal, Hobbes borrows from the etymology of metaphor (*metapherein*: to transport or carry over), and implicitly suggests the metaphorical relationship of all language to reality. But he also, and more frequently, uses metaphor pejoratively to refer to the skewing of meaning by the individual's will and desires:

> The names of things as affect us, that is, which please, and displease us . . . are in the common discourse of men, of *inconstant* signification. . . . And therefore such names can never be true grounds of any ratiocination. No more can Metaphors, and Tropes of Speech: but these are less dangerous, because they profess their inconstancy. (4.31)

Here and in the following chapter, Hobbes makes it clear that the corollary of language's merely conventional relationship to reality is that it also allows us to produce "Absurdity, or senselesse Speech" (5.33). In a highly charged example, Hobbes writes, "And therefore if a man should talk to me . . . of *A free Subject; A free-will*; or any *Free*, but free from being hindered by opposition, I should not say he were in an Errour, but that his words were without meaning; that is to say, Absurd" (5.34). As in his famous debate with Bishop Bramhall on the freedom of the will, Hobbes argues that voluntarism is completely compatible with determinism, and that the innovations or what we might call the free play of language have no bearing on this position. He goes on to ascribe the notion

of free will to the first cause of absurd conclusions, "the want of Method," that is the absence of a "settled signification of words." A little further on, Hobbes discusses "Metaphors, Tropes and other Rhetorical figures" as the sixth cause of absurdity but, as he proceeds to elaborate his catalogue, it emerges that all instances of absurdity result from the inappropriate transfer of meaning we associate with metaphor, such as the giving of the names of bodies to accidents and vice versa. In this account, metaphor appears as an abuse of the conventional relationship between language and the world.

Metaphor for Hobbes is thus evidence of both the constructive power of language and its abuse. On the one hand, metaphor describes the transference of sensation into language, a process that ideally is a product of agreement and that illustrates his equation of knowledge with construction. On the other hand, metaphor is identified with the non-mimetic relationship of word and thing, and in the worst case with equivocation, catachresis (the figure of "abuse"), and senseless speech. These two elements—the constructive power of metaphor and the non-mimetic relationship between sign and referent—capture the two poles of Hobbes's argument in the rest of *Leviathan*, including his enabling and disabling of the individual will.

III.   HOBBES ON THE WILL

First, language does not simply presuppose the will, it is also the occasion for the vast expansion of the will's powers insofar as it is the site at which new ideas can come into existence and thus be acted upon (4.26–27). As in *The Elements*, Hobbes makes the development of reason and the will dependent on language, for it is language that allows us to conceive of general names or abstract concepts. These in turn allow us to transcend the limitations of sense and produce genuine knowledge. As Hobbes writes in chapter 5 of *Leviathan*, "Reason is not as Sense, and Memory, borne with us; nor gotten by Experience onely, as Prudence is; but attained by Industry; first in apt imposing of Names; and secondly by getting a good and orderly Method in proceeding from the Elements, which are Names, to Assertions made by Connexion of one of them to another" and so to Science or "the knowledge of Consequences" (5.35). It is this reasoning about consequences that yields genuine knowledge, including the knowledge of production: "Because when we see how any thing comes about, upon what causes, and by what manner; when the like causes come into our power, we see how to make it produce the like effects (5.35–36).

This emphasis on production and the will informs some of the central ideas of *Leviathan*, in particular Hobbes's conception of statecraft, which he famously analogized to the divine "Fiat or Let us make man" of Genesis; Hobbes's conception of government as the result of a contract; his equation of sovereignty with absolute power, which he compared to the biblical

Leviathan; and finally Hobbes's conception of his reader, whom he equally famously invited to "know himself" in reading *Leviathan*. It's not by chance that each of these examples is linked to or could be seen as an example of metaphor, understood as the transfer of meaning from one linguistic term to another for language, and specifically metaphor, is the place, according to Hobbes, where new meanings are generated, meanings that exceed the determination (or one might say, determinism) of mere sensation. Language allows the will to manifest itself in unexpected ways, that is, to innovate. As we've seen, this generative capacity of language is sometimes the object of Hobbes's censure, as when he tells us in chapter 5 that the idea of "a free Subject," which is only conceivable in language, is a linguistic absurdity (5.34).[15] But the same capacity that produces nonsense also produces the commonwealth. For only in language, to return to our four examples, does something like the imperative "fiat" exist; only in language is a contract possible (see 4.24); only in language does God threaten Job with Leviathan; and only through language can the reader establish an identity between his own experience and that recounted in the text of *Leviathan*. In all these ways, the constructive power of metaphor is itself an apt vehicle for Hobbes's voluntarist political science.

Here is the place to note that Hobbes's derivation of the power of consent and contract from language goes some way towards addressing what scholars have described as a tension or contradiction in Hobbes's theory—the contradiction between his psychological picture of the will as determined, as "*the last Appetite in Deliberating*" (*Leviathan*, 6.44–45), and his ethical insistence that the will is the source of moral obligation and of legitimacy. Rather than seeing this as a contradiction in Hobbes, we might say instead that Hobbes has identified a central problem that is still with us: how to generate norms from empirical experience, new insights from the building blocks of sensation, meaningful action from a determinist account of the will. For Hobbes, language is the vehicle of this transformation because only in language can new meanings be produced. In this sense, the deviation of metaphor from the literal sense is not simply a problem for Hobbes, but the best possible paradigm for the voluntary construction of the commonwealth.

There is, however, a flipside to this argument, one that is crucial for Hobbes's absolutist political science: the non-mimetic relationship between sensation and language proves to be the paradigm not only for Hobbes's theory of political representation, but also for the eventual disabling of the individual will. We already find a clue to this in Hobbes's account of the way we talk about our passions (5.31, 6.45). Hobbes tells us that language is shaped by our passions and opinions, and so reflects our subjective desires rather than any objective standard of value. But he notes that although language always bears a necessary relation to our desire, our desire may be to deceive. In this case, language is not a dependable sign but rather a vehicle of misrepresentation: "These forms of Speech,

I say, are expressions, or voluntary significations of our Passions; but certain signes they be not; because they may be used arbitrarily, whether they that use them, have such Passions or not" (6.45–46). In a sense, it is precisely this capacity for arbitrary signification, which here unhinges the sign from its necessary relationship to the passions, that enables other more important fictions, such as the artificial person of the commonwealth. Just as language allows us to willfully misrepresent our passions, so language allows us to produce the artificial person of the sovereign, who is not a party to the covenant and so is not bound literally to represent to those he rules.

It may be because Hobbes finally came to an understanding of the positive as well as negative uses of arbitrary signification, and the positive as well as negative uses of metaphor, that he finally felt able to integrate a theory of representation into *Leviathan*. As Richard Tuck has noted, the word "representation" does not appear in Hobbes's work before *Leviathan* (although Samuel Sorbière used it in his French translation of *De cive*), and he hypothesizes that this may be because the term conjured up parliamentary theories of the relationship between sovereign and subject that Hobbes wished to avoid.[16] But in *Leviathan* Hobbes famously devoted a whole chapter—chapter 16 of Book 1—to this topic, and in doing so decisively claimed "representation" for his own absolutist political theory. He did so by showing that representation was—to return to Hobbes's own definition of civil philosophy as the knowledge of production—the means or "art" by which the commonwealth was itself produced: "A Multitude of men, are made *One* Person, when they are by one man, or one Person, represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of that Multitude in particular" (16.114).

Representation was also for Hobbes the means by which the commonwealth was preserved from rebellion or dissent. Central to this aspect of Hobbes's theory of representation is an assertion of the non-mimetic relation of sovereign and subject. Hobbes asserts our responsibility as "authors" for actions done by those "actors" who represent us—an assertion, we could say, that our wills inform the actions of our representatives and that these actions bind us accordingly: "when the Actor maketh a Covenant by Authority, he bindeth thereby the Author, no lesse than if he had made it himselfe; and no lesse subjecteth him to all the consequences of the same" (16.112). At the same time, Hobbes insists that the sovereign actor is not similarly constrained: "when the Authority is evident [that is, when it is clear who the author is], the Covenant obligeth the Author, not the Actor" (16.113). The implication for the commonwealth is that subjects are bound to obey the sovereign who represents them and cannot refuse to accept his actions on their behalf, whereas the sovereign is free (or, we might say, is constructed precisely to be free) to do whatever is necessary to maintain peace. The creative, constructive power that Hobbes locates in figurative language and in the individual will is subsumed and eventually controlled by his non-mimetic theory of political representation.

IV.   HOBBES ON SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION

If we now turn to the rest of *Leviathan*, we can see that the text as a whole both celebrates the metaphorical power of construction and disables that power through delegation and representation. Metaphor, that is, captures Hobbes's sublime ambitions for his voluntarist political theory, at the same time as it signals the necessity of controlling deviant interpretation and the deviant will. It is for this reason that Books 1 and 2, which emphasize the constructive power of metaphor, need to be balanced by Books 3 and 4, which focus on the havoc wrought by the misinterpretation of scripture. Central to these later books is the importance of distinguishing between the literal and metaphorical interpretation of the Bible.

In Books 3 and 4 Hobbes spends much of his time distinguishing between the literal and metaphorical meanings of those words that lie at the foundation of ecclesiastical authority, including "spirit," "inspiration," "church," and "the kingdom of God." Hobbes does not always come down on the same side of the literal/metaphorical divide. His "sifting" is determined by the political consequences of adopting a literal or figurative interpretation of each key word. Hobbes mocks those who believe that spirits are supernatural agents that exist outside of us:

> And as the Gentiles did vulgarly conceive the Imagery of the brain, for things really subsistent without them, and not dependent on the fancy; and out of them framed their opinions of Daemons, Good and Evil . . . so also the Jews upon the same ground, without any thing in the Old Testament that constrained them thereunto, had generally an opinion . . . that those apparitions (which it pleased God sometimes to produce in the fancie of men, for his own service, and therefore called them his Angels) were substances, not dependent on the fancy, but permanent creatures of God; whereof those which they thought would hurt them, they called Evil Angels, or Evil Spirits. (34.275)

"By *Spirit*," he later reminds us laconically, "is understood the *Mind*" (40.327). He argues in a similar fashion that the word inspiration is used in scripture "metaphorically onely" (34.278). By contrast, the phrase "the kingdom of God" appears in the Bible "but seldom metaphorically" (35.280). That is, it does not refer metaphorically to the afterlife, but literally to Christ's actual kingdom on earth after the general resurrection. Through this sifting of literal and metaphor meanings, Hobbes establishes that no one can appeal to the spirit, individual inspiration, or the rewards of the afterlife to justify rebellion in this life.

To the extent that these books perform a critique and demystification of ecclesiastical fictions, they amount to a re-appropriation of human invention or creativity; but it's important to keep in mind that they do so only so that this power can be alienated to the sovereign rather than to any independent

authority. Thus, in chapter 45 Hobbes spells out the close relationship between the poetic or imaginative power of individuals to feign "Centaures, Chimaeras, and other Monsters" on the one hand and the power to set up and believe in idols on the other. Precisely because "there can be no Image of a thing Infinite . . . and therefore there can bee no Image of God," any such material image needs to be condemned as an idol. Hobbes then makes it clear that the imaginative activity of the poet and religious enthusiast can be encompassed and controlled by his theory of representation, according to which an image is not a mimetic figuring forth but simply the "Representation of one thing by another" (45.448). He drives the point home by adding, "So an earthly Soveraign may be called the image of God" (45.448).[17] To be an image in this sense is to be the authorized representative, not a mimetic resemblance; and to show obedience or reverence to the sovereign is accordingly "Civill Worship" but "is not Idolatry" (45.449). Hobbes notes that this is because:

> the Worship which the Soveraign commandeth to bee done unto himself by the terrour of his Laws, is not a sign that he that obeyeth him, does inwardly honour him as a God, but that he is desirous to save himselfe from death, or from a miserable life; and that which is not a sign of internall honor, is no Worship; and therefore no Idolatry. (45.449–50)

In this way, civil "worship" is stripped of its theological connotations, equated with the mere desire for self-preservation, and reduced to a mere figure of speech. The desire for self-preservation, in turn, will induce the individual agent to consent to the political contract and—in a final self-sacrificing act of metaphorical transport—transfer his power to the sovereign. In this way, to recur to the example from the *Elements*, faith is no longer synonymous with "the belief which maketh a Christian" but is instead equated with "the keeping of a promise."

V.   HOBBES AND THE AESTHETIC TURN

In the preceding pages I have sketched what we might call, after Hans Blumenberg, Hobbes's metaphorology, the constellation of Hobbesian figures of thought among which the most powerful metaphor might be the metaphor of political *science*. From a modern perspective, Hobbes's political theory is only metaphorically scientific; to the extent that it is a science, it is a science of metaphor. In conclusion, I want to suggest that Hobbes's political science also helps us look forward to the modern notion of aesthetics. By this I don't mean, as has sometimes been argued, that Hobbes's later work allied him with neoclassical aesthetics.[18] It is true that Hobbes praised the neoclassical virtues of clarity and perspicuousness in his *Answer to Davenant* and in *Leviathan* (8.50) he argued that judgment was the necessary

counterpart to fancy. But Hobbes's anticipation of aesthetics was more profound than remarks such as these might suggest.

Leo Strauss noted the connection between Hobbes's voluntarism and aesthetics many years ago when he suggested that, in breaking with the rationalism of ancient political philosophy (at least as represented by Plato and Aristotle), Hobbes's voluntarism anticipated the relativism and historicism of modern philosophy. "This break with rationalism," Strauss wrote, "is . . . the fundamental presupposition of modern political philosophy in general. The acutest expression of this break which can be found in Hobbes's writings is that he conceives sovereign power not as reason but as will." And he went on to claim that "There is only a step from this to Rousseau's theory that the origin and seat of sovereignty is *la volonté générale*," a notion that signaled not only "the impotence of reason" but also "the emancipation of passion and imagination." To this, Strauss added in a footnote: "It is thus not a matter of chance that *la volonté générale* and aesthetics were launched at approximately the same time."[19] Although Strauss didn't elaborate on this observation, his comment implies that in the eighteenth century aesthetic judgment was predicated on a similar hypothesis of a general will, or at least that aesthetic judgments could refer to no rational standard and in this respect also contributed to relativism and historicism. Strauss's critique was later partially adopted by Carl Schmitt. In *Political Theology*, Schmitt linked Rousseau's general will with a kind of political relativism; and in *The Concept of the Political* and *Political Romanticism* he made the link between Rousseau's social contract and the "sphere of the aesthetic" explicit.[20]

It is not only figures on the political right who have seen the rise of aesthetics as signaling a crisis of epistemological legitimation. In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Jürgen Habermas asserted that "Modernity can and will no longer borrow the criteria by which it takes its orientation from the models supplied by another epoch; *it has to create its normativity out of itself*." And he went on to argue that "The problem of grounding modernity out of itself first comes to consciousness in the realm of aesthetic criticism" in seventeenth-century Europe, when the "moderns" rejected the practice of imitating ancient models: "The party of the moderns rebelled against the self-understanding of French classicism by assimilating the aesthetic concept of perfection to that of progress as it was suggested by modern natural science."[21] Yet, whereas for Strauss and Schmitt the aesthetic heralded the relativism and historicism of modern political theory, for Habermas the aesthetic is the realm in which we first encounter the modern philosophical project of rational self-legitimation, the project of constructing norms of judgment and interaction from within communicative rationality.

It is surprising that Habermas did not adduce Kant in this context. For, as the literary critic Hans Robert Jauss has argued, "What might at first seem a defect in the aesthetic judgment, that it is merely exemplary but not logically necessary, proves to be its special distinction: the dependence of the

aesthetic judgment on the assent of others makes possible participation in a norm as it is being formed, and also constitutes sociability." And he noted that, in section 41 of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant himself seems to trace the "empirical interest in the beautiful" and "the dependence of aesthetic judgment on the assent of others" to Rousseau: "A regard to universal communicability is a thing every one experiences and requires from everyone else, just as if it were part of an original compact dictated by humanity itself."[22] In the absence of universal agreement about matters of taste, the claim to such agreement seems, in Jauss's gloss, to redeem "something of the original social contract." In an argument too dense to explicate here, Kant also saw the aesthetic judgment of the beautiful as a symbol of morality and as evidence of the harmony of the faculties of understanding and the imagination, which, in turn, secured the possibility of empirical knowledge. In Kant's philosophy, then, aesthetics is one answer to the crisis of epistemological legitimation described by Habermas.

And yet, as both Hans Blumenberg and Amos Funkenstein have argued, and as the example of Hobbes shows, this crisis of legitimation began long before. In this essay I have been less concerned to locate the first stirrings of this crisis (Blumenberg and Funkenstein both traced its origins to medieval nominalism) than to explore Hobbes's grounding of political science on the power of art, on maker's knowledge in the realm of civil philosophy. As I've argued, for Hobbes the problem of grounding modernity out of itself first comes to consciousness in adapting the scientific method of geometry to political theory. Hobbes's own equation of knowledge with making emphasizes the centrality of language to the new political science, which, in turn, anticipates the insights of aesthetics through its voluntarist emphasis on constructing the commonwealth. But in contrast to critics such as Strauss for whom voluntarism is incompatible with a robust defense of values, Hobbes suggests that compelling values can only be produced from a process of resolution and composition, or constructed from agreed upon definitions. To return to the example of the equivocal meaning of faith, compelling values are not given to us *a priori* as the object of belief; they are instead created, in the same way as we create new obligations by making promises.

NOTES

1. Funkenstein, 1986: 290–345. In equating knowledge with construction, Hobbes was influenced by the maker's knowledge tradition best represented in his own time by Francis Bacon, his erstwhile employer. In contrast to the *experientia literata* of rhetoric and poetics, Bacon's goal was to produce a *novum organum* that would bring logical rigor to the investigation of nature and make knowledge itself equivalent to power: as he wrote in the *Instauratio Magna*, "And so those twin objects, human knowledge and human power, do really meet in one." A century later, this ideal of maker's knowledge would find a powerful exponent in Giambattista Vico. Bacon is quoted in Blumenberg, 2010: 22 (see also 23–24). See also Perez-Ramos, 1989. Unless otherwise

indicated, all references to works by Hobbes are to the English edition of Sir William Molesworth (1839–1845, hereafter *EW*).

2. Funkenstein, 1986: 342.

3. Dick, 1962: 150.

4. *EW* 7.183–84. See also *De Homine* 10:5 on *a priori* knowledge in ethics and politics, and the definition of knowledge as conditional knowledge of logical consequences. See *EW* 1.387–89 on the difference between arguing from definitions we establish ourselves and arguing from appearances given in nature, i.e. between two kinds of science.

5. *EW* 7.184.

6. See Silver, 1996: esp. 338–39. For a similar argument about how to understand Hobbes's borrowing from Euclid, also Hanson, 1990.

7. See *Elements of Philosophy*, Part 1 (*De Corpore*) in *EW* 1.10. See also 1. 309–10. For a thorough analysis of Hobbes's geometric understanding of resolution and composition, or analysis and synthesis, see Watkins, 1965: 47–74; and Hanson, 1990. There is considerable debate in the secondary literature about how scientific Hobbes's method really is. Leo Strauss famously argued that Hobbes's political views were shaped by his humanist training in rhetoric, and Michael Oakeshott seconded Strauss's view that Hobbes's political theory was not in the first instance scientific and naturalist; instead, these features of Hobbes's thought followed in Oakeshott's view from Hobbes's account of reasoning. Others have maintained that Hobbes distinguished the probable knowledge of empirical research from the certain knowledge of geometry, while mistakenly identifying the logic of discourse with the logic of scientific discovery (Jesseph, Wolin, Garsten). I incline to Silver's view that Hobbes wanted to create in language the effect of Euclidean demonstration, and so, although he thought he was distinguishing between logic (his own work) and rhetoric, he was effectively identifying them.

8. *EW* 1.3.

9. All references to *Leviathan* are to the edition of Richard Tuck (1991), here at p. 10.

10. *EW* 1.2.

11. *EW* 1.7.

12. Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, chap. 5, p. 35. The references to Hobbes's *Elements* are to the edition of J.C.A. Gaskin (1994). Subsequent references to chapter and page number will be given in the text.

13. See Hanson, 1991: 641, 644, 650. For the view that Hobbes insisted on causal view of the relationship between linguistic sign and mental conception, see Watkins, 1965: 142.

14. See Tuck, 1991: 15 on Descartes's influence on Hobbes: words designate the world but do not resemble it; this parallels the relationship between our sense perceptions and the world.

15. Hobbes at times distinguishes between generation and production, the former having to with biology and the latter with mechanics, but his usage is not consistent and he sometimes conflates them. See *EW* 2.xiv.

16. Tuck, 1991: 327. See also Skinner, 1996, who argues that Hobbes's theory of representation actually begins even earlier, in chap. 1.

17. Hobbes's theory of language has been the object of extensive scholarly commentary but such commentary has often given short shrift to Books 3 and 4. See, for example, Skinner, 1996, who discusses metaphor primarily as an example of *ornatus*. See also Pettit, 2008, who has nothing to say about Books 3 and 4 of *Leviathan*.

18. Skinner, 1996: 374–5.

19. See Strauss, 1936: 160, 161, and 161n2. On Hobbes as anticipating the voluntarism of aesthetics, see also Caygill, 1989: 18–31.
20. See Schmitt, 1934: 42, 65; Schmitt, 1932: 72; Schmitt, 1925: 56–57, where, however, Schmitt opposed Rousseau to Hobbes's rationalism.
21. Habermas, 1987: 7, 8.
22. Jauss, 1982: xl, quoting Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §41.

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7 Montesquieu and the Paradoxes of the Art of Statesmanship

Rebecca Kingston

Montesquieu offers a particularly interesting case for the theme of the art of statesmanship ("le grand art de régner").[1] On the one hand, Montesquieu is often acknowledged as an advocate of institutionalized limits on sovereignty and as a theorist who is keenly aware of how politics is firmly embedded in and shaped by things other than itself, be it history, the morals and manners of a community, or its geography. From this perspective, it might appear that Montesquieu's aim is to delineate a smaller sphere for the science of governance and to reduce our expectations about what is achievable in politics apart from developing within us a more profound sense of time and place that frames our public lives.

On the other hand, not only does Montesquieu offer us insightful analysis of some of the most successfully transformative projects in political life, the most iconic being that of Sparta, he appears to be addressing his work in *L'Esprit des lois* (1748) to both rulers and citizens with the idea that the understanding to be gained from the study of laws' relations to a variety of factors has important consequences. This understanding is developed by Montesquieu in order to contribute to a better practice of citizenship and leadership.[2]

How, then, do we come to terms with a thinker who combines an awareness of the possibility of politics as a transformative process (as one thinker who served as an important resource in a longer tradition characterized by an earlier commentator as a "longing for total revolution") with a cautious and almost conservative sensibility surrounding what can or should be done in political life ("lorsque les citoyens suivent les lois, qu'importe qu'ils suivent la même?" or "l'esprit de moderation doit être celui du législateur; le bien politique, comme le bien moral, se trouve toujours entre deux limites")?[3] In order to sort this out, there is at least one key distinction to make, and that is a distinction related to historical timing. Although Montesquieu tends to present his major project in a synchronic light, structuring *L'Esprit des lois* around an analysis of the nature and principle of three types of regime, the content of his remarks reveals that the possibilities of politics have a great deal to do with timing. In particular, knowing what type of regime you are dealing with allows the political actor to more clearly discern

whether that regime is in a state of development or decline. These two different situations offer quite different opportunities and challenges in the practice of statesmanship.

To explore the contours of statesmanship for Montesquieu as reflected in these situations, this chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I discuss the ways in which, for times of relative regime stability, Montesquieu offers his readers a rather muted account of the possibilities and parameters of statesmanship. Here, his discussion of the art of leadership appears to seek to harness the ambition of rulers so as to respect established practices and to not undermine the deeper forces and relations that help to sustain the regime. In the second part, I discuss those moments when leadership appears to matter more in the very decline of a regime, in the building up of a new regime, or more generally in times of challenge and crisis. In particular, I focus my analysis on several key historical moments in Montesquieu's discussions: the founding of republics; the challenge of managing larger territories, as in the case of China; and the challenges of transition, such as the fall of the Roman kings (discussed in Book XI, chapter 12) and Alexander's attempt to consolidate his imperial gains. These examples form a very small set of the examples raised by Montesquieu in his work, but they stand as a general representation of how leadership can matter for Montesquieu.

The factor of timing does help to account in significant ways for the competing emphasis in *L'Esprit des lois* between, on the one hand, an art of statesmanship that is focused on tending to the deeper forces of politics, and, on the other hand, the recognition that the character and more bold personal vision of individual rulers does count for something that can either precipitate decline or lead to political success. Still, the paradoxes in focusing on this theme through Montesquieu's main work are many. They relate not only to the fact that there are times when the art of statesmanship matters more in politics than others; but also, that in discussing statesmanship, Montesquieu, a defender of moderation in politics, nonetheless appears clearly fascinated by what we might call the more extreme of political leaders, such as Alexander the Great, Lycurgus, and the leaders of imperial China, over and above the heroes of national reconciliation of his own day, such as Henri IV.

I.   STATESMANSHIP IN TIMES OF REGIME STABILITY

Good political leadership for Montesquieu in times of relative regime stability requires certain basic awareness about the community one is a part of and the nature and principles of the regime. As a first observation, it is significant that Montesquieu calls his book the *Spirit of the Laws* for it suggests that a primary focus of his work are practices and relations that have a greater permanence in public life than the life and actions of one

individual. Granted, this can be considered to carry certain ambiguity. From the perspective of the laws and the sensitivity this perspective brings to the presence of broad and deep forces in collective life, the possibilities for individual statesmanship appear for the most part to be minimized. However, there is at least one important exception to this, an exception bringing our attention to bear on the founders of regimes.

The logic of a political and legal sense that is deeply embedded in things outside the public sphere carries over into Montesquieu's definition of the basic regime types. As one of the most famous innovations of Montesquieu in the history of ideas, he defines his three regime types through two criteria, that is, the nature and the principle of government, referring to where sovereignty is located, how it is exercised, and the broad emotional tone corresponding to the exercise of power (what I have called elsewhere "public passion").[4] Hence, republics are regimes where either all the people (democracy) or a smaller portion of the people (aristocracy) hold sovereign power and where participants in the regime are motivated by the principle of virtue or love of the republic; monarchies are regimes where one individual governs but according to fixed and established laws and where rulers and subjects are motivated by the principle of honor; finally, despotisms are regimes where one individual rules according to his own whims without established laws and where all in the regime are driven by the emotion of fear.[5] Some laws, such as those regulating voting procedures, the privileges of aristocracy, the status of women, or the nature of education, are deemed to flow directly from the nature and principles of government. Others appear to relate more directly to features that can function more independently of regime type, such as the climate, the religious persuasion of the inhabitants, the quality of the terrain, and the level of economic development, although regime type can sometimes have greater correlation with one over the other or can play a mediating role for these factors.

The notion of leadership is not only affected by the notion that these regimes are generally understood and mediated by other things. As the obverse side of this, the regime of despotism appears as the overdetermined locus of dysfunctional politics—overdetermined because it is the font of negative emotion (fear), the least stable, the regime where character is most corrupt ("un homme a qui ses cinq sens disent sans cesse qu'il est tout, et que les autres ne sont rien, est naturellement paresseux, ignorant, voluptueux") and a regime full of internal contradictions.[6] Despotism is defined in broad terms as the regime where the fantasy of power is at its most extreme, where the despot revels in the idea of power as commanding others to do whatever he wills, but where the fantasy itself undermines its practice, making the regime unsustainable. The very idea of despotism through the lens of Montesquieu further unsettles our presuppositions about political leadership.

If effective political leadership cannot be the commanding of others according to the will of the leader, how should we come to understand it? Although the exact nature and weight of factors in the development of the political life of a community may be disputed among those who seek to interpret Montesquieu's work, the overall general message is clear: political leadership does not take place in vacuum. The implications of this are most obviously that the statesman is constrained both by the ends he might set in the public life for an established regime, as well as by the means used to pursue those ends.[7]

This is particularly evident in the case of monarchy. Although Montesquieu suggests to us that good monarchical subjects are generally disposed to a stance of obedience to the king and to the laws, he also notes that the principle of distinction and honor that animates a monarchy also poses limits on what the king can effectively order. So, for example, the privileges that are enjoyed by the nobility, including the hereditary transfer of land and title, the ability of a noble family to take back ownership of land that had once been in the family (the *retrait lignager*), the rights to exercise justice over one's fief, and the exemption from commerce, all these according to Montesquieu are privileges specific to and indeed help constitute an independent nobility, without which monarchy could not sustain itself (*EL* V, 9, pp. 288–89; XX, 21, p. 598). But monarchical honor is more than just a series of customs and practices protecting subordinate civil orders and intermediate bodies, such as the local *parlements*. As Montesquieu suggests in his discussion of education, honor involves the need for social recognition as well as a feeling that one is living up to the expectations of one's place in the social order, norms that are best developed informally but that pose a limit on what a monarch can reasonably demand of his subjects, as was made evident by the resistance of the Viscount d'Orte in the wake of the Saint Bartholomew massacre (*EL*, IV, 2, p. 264).[8] The principle of honor is partly identified with the felt need for those of particular class or standing in society to be acknowledged in a public setting for their social distinction. Given that this serves as a basic motivating force for the broader social system, the king cannot effectively order his subjects to perform actions that would place them in a dishonorable light, that is, ordering them to do actions that they see as demeaning. This also means, if liberty is to be cultivated, to give public recognition to those who demonstrate good worth and merit and to exercise genuine respect towards the people.[9]

Other features of a monarchy that pose real constraints on what it is appropriate for a leader to do include the need to encourage luxury (*EL*, VII, 4), the need to be relatively moderate in punishment (*EL*, VIII, 7; *EL*, XII, 25), and the need to keep territorial expansion in check (*EL*, VIII, 17). To some degree, good leadership in a monarchy for Montesquieu is one that works by stealth; authority "qui doit se mouvoir aisement et sans bruit" (*EL*, XII, 25, p. 454). To defy these rules is to lead to the undermining of the regime. This view of "silent authority" is at the heart of Montesquieu's

harsh indictment of the policies introduced through the eighteenth-century schemes of John Law:

> M. Law, par une ignorance égale de la constitution républicaine et monarchique, fut un des plus grands promoteurs du despotisme que l'on eût encore vus en Europe. Outre les changements qu'il fit, si brusques, si inusités, il vouloit ôter les rangs intermédiaires, et anéantir les corps politiques: il dissolvoit la monarchie par ses chimériques remboursements, et sembloit vouloir racheter la constitution même. (*EL*, II, 4, p. 248)

Because the principle of honor is integral to the meaning and functioning of monarchy, Montesquieu contests established meanings of sovereignty as purely a juridical concept, for the ruler who acts according to his whim not only acts with a lack of prudence, he ushers in constitutional change.

A similar dynamic holds sway in republics at least in relation to the people who hold power and who are seeking to maintain an already established republic. Montesquieu notes that there are two variants of a republic, depending on whether power is in the hands of all citizens (a democracy) or just a handful (an aristocracy). Like monarchy, the principle of a republic, virtue, or love of the republic, demands particular material and legal conditions, including a generalized practice of frugality, no excessive inequalities of wealth, respect for the old, and strong paternal authority (*EL*, V, 7, pp. 282–83), that judgments follow the letter of the law (*EL*, VI, 3, p. 311), public accusations (*EL*, VI, 8, p. 317), and a relatively small territory and population. These are factors to be respected in ongoing governance.

When considering the general rules by which a moderate democratic people should govern their own affairs, there is a general spirit of rule suggested by Montesquieu in which the focus of legislation is to seek the prevention of crime, rather than punishment (*EL*, VI, 9, p. 318). The general logic of leadership in a moderate republic is not to seek recognition as an outstanding legislator, but to avoid the ignominy of setting in motion a process of corruption:

> Souvent un législateur qui veut corriger un mal ne songe qu'à cette correction; ses yeux sont ouverts sur cet object, et fermés sur les inconvénients. Lorsque le mal est une fois corrigé, on ne voit plus que la dureté du legislateur; mais il reste un vice dans l'Etat, que cette dureté a produit; les esprits sont corrompus, ils se sont accoutumés au despotisme. (*EL*, VI, 12, p. 321)

To provide some degree of quality control on those who make decision in a republic, Montesquieu cites the innovations of Solon who divided Athenians into four classes, assuring that magistrates could only be elected from three (*EL*, II, 2, p. 242).

Nonetheless, the particular features of the principle of virtue mean to a certain degree that the outstanding qualities of courage and a sense of the public good generally associated with statesmanship are spread throughout the whole citizenry. It is what makes the republican ideal for Montesquieu so praiseworthy but also unable to be replicated. As he suggests in his discussion of monarchy in contrast to ancient republics:

> L'Etat subsiste indépendamment de l'amour pour la patrie, du désir de la vraie gloire, du renoncement à soi-même, du sacrifice de ses plus chers intérêts, et de toutes ces vertus héroïques que nous trouvons dans les anciens, et dont nous avons seulement entendu parler. (*EL*, V, 3, p. 255)

It is certainly significant, as many commentators have pointed out, that by Book VI of *L'Esprit des lois* the distinction emphasized by Montesquieu between monarchical and republican government begins to be softened. At this point in the book Montesquieu begins to adopt a more general dichotomy between moderate and despotic governments, with the idea that improper governance is possible in either monarchy or in a republic and that legislators there must first be concerned about preventing the worst (i.e., avoiding excessive corruption and abuse of power that can arise in their circumstances), rather than seeking the best. It is perhaps because the most extreme of republican legislators may be drawn to the most extreme of ideals that Montesquieu tends to dictate a path of caution in everyday politics of a republican regime.

However, the nature of virtue is such that it is in structuring the modes of education, rather than daily decision-making per se, where the greatest republican statesmen reveal their talents for leadership. What this implies is that although monarchical statesmanship is a matter of respecting the demands of the principle of honor in a regime with a lineage back to its feudal origins, republican statesmanship is clearly most manifest in the act of founding.

II.　STATESMANSHIP IN FOUNDING AND IN CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES

i.　The Republican Founders

Who are the most prominent statesmen of republican regimes, and how did they distinguish themselves? Here, in almost a complete inversion of his discussion of monarchy, Montesquieu invokes the work of the founders of Sparta and Crete as manifesting their genius through the institution of laws and practices that were radically new and different, shocking all established customs (*EL*, IV, 6, p. 268). Lycurgus, as he states, mixed practices of theft

in the education of warriors with the spirit of justice, and inhuman senti-
ments with a practice of moderation in ways that ensured the regime did not
rely on any material supports, but only on the character of the people. Mon-
tesquieu's fascination with the founders of republican regimes goes at least as
far back as his drafting of the *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur
des Romains et de leur décadence*. As he famously states there: "Dans la
naissance des sociétés, ce sont les chefs des républiques qui font l'institution;
et c'est ensuite l'institution qui forme les chefs des républiques."[10]

In general, although these leaders demonstrate their great political capac-
ity in instituting practices that shape a whole community's character, they
have tended to invoke similar initiatives, namely a repudiation of wealth
and practices of common ownership, a civil religion, a practice of commu-
nal isolation and the institution of censors to preserve the purity of morals,
and a tight class of citizens for whom commerce is outlawed (*EL*, IV, 6,
p. 269). Furthermore, certain conditions must be maintained for such mea-
sures to be even possible, including a small and relatively homogenous state
(*EL*, IV, 7, p. 270).

The key to the success of these acts of republican founding according to
Montesquieu appears to be fourfold: timing, the audacity and foresight in
the depth of innovation (as one might say a vivid and insightful political
imagination and the capacity to work with others to see those ideas made
real), good judgment concerning the appropriate means to bring about the
changes desired, and the firm conviction in these founders that republican
government could only function properly if the spirit of virtue was incul-
cated in the citizenry.

In terms of timing, Montesquieu suggests that the institution of a more
radical equality is only possible at a time when either a former state is
brought to desperation in its decline, or if a fully new community is being
established (*EL*, V, 5, p. 276). If the morals of the citizens are corrupted then
the attempts to establish a republic will clearly fail, as was proven by the
attempts by Sylla to revive republican institutions, the appeals of Hannibal
during the fall of Carthage, as well as the English republican experiment in
the seventeenth century (*EL*, III, 3, p. 252).

The breadth of innovation involves not just equalizing wealth through a
distribution of land, but also regulating inheritance and all modes of suc-
cession and commerce through which wealth can be transferred in order
to ensure a more longstanding practice of equality. Furthermore, economic
equality and a practice of frugality go hand in hand, most often sustained by
a spirit of commerce, as in ancient Athens, or by a spirit of war, as in Sparta
(*EL*, V, 6, p. 279). Montesquieu acknowledges both the difficulty of main-
taining this equality and the multiple and varying ways in which the ancient
republicans sought to do so. Still, he suggests that it is through the practice
of certain deprivation in material goods and the denial of hope in fulfilling
particular passions that love for the whole, the very definition of virtue,
can be strengthened (*EL*, V, 2, p. 274). In this context, citizens compete to

distinguish themselves through service to the republic rather than through the amassing of wealth (*EL*, V, 3, p. 275).

Still, the good innovator also needs to have a good understanding of the appropriate means through which change is possible. Whereas some measures are introduced through traditional legislation, others may be more a matter of introducing new practices through an appeal to popular morals or through persuasion:

> Ainsi, lorsqu'un prince veut faire de grands changements dans sa nation, il faut qu'il réforme par les lois ce qui est établi par les lois, et qu'il change par les manières ce qui est établi par les manières: et c'est une très mauvaise politique de changer par les lois ce qui doit être change par les manières. (*EL*, XIX, 14, p. 564)

In addition, the good founder must have a thorough understanding of the population that he is working with so that he is aware of what the people are capable of: "On demanda à Solon si les lois qu'il avoit données aux Athéniens étoient les meilleures: 'Je leur ai donné, répondit-il, les meilleures de celles qu'ils pouvoient souffrir.' Belle parole, qui devroit être entendue de tous les législateurs" (*EL*, XIX, 21, p. 571).

The conviction of founders in the importance of virtue as a principle of the regime ensures that love of the republic is instilled consistently and deeply throughout all practices and laws in the regime. This involves consideration and attention to a regulation of a wide range of practices, including the condition of women, marriage, and education and training of the young. Citizens are also trained to keep an eye on each other allowing for an informal policing of the principle at all times. There is nothing that is not a matter of political concern and regulation in the act of constituting a republic.

ii.   Statesmanship in China

China provides a rather unique case for Montesquieu in a number of ways. In terms of discussions of statesmanship he appears to have a particular fascination and respect for the Chinese case. Even if it does fall in broad terms into his category of despotic government, it does so as an exception. Despite the relative arbitrariness exercised by the rulers, there is a fundamental spirit of moderation that infuses the regime and that keeps it more stable than most other regimes of its kind.

China also is unique in Montesquieu's discussion of statesmanship because whereas in other instances he will name particular founders or legislators who are particularly worthy of attention or due praise for their legislative innovations and insight (or vice versa, who are singled out for their bad judgment), there are no particular legislators named by Montesquieu who only refers to the Chinese leadership in the plural by the general label "the legislators of China."

Montesquieu devotes a whole series of chapters to the Chinese example in Book XIX. He makes the case that there are important parallels to be drawn between the Spartan and the Chinese approaches to governance, as both systems involve a blurring of the lines between morals, manners, and laws, meaning that the enforcement of basic norms of governance tended to be internalized. Indeed, in the case of the Chinese this dynamic was further reinforced by the formalities of religious rites and practices that helped to ensure basic civility, respect, and a spirit of accommodation among the people, something that the Spartans lacked.

> . . . chez les peuples chinois, on vit les gens de village observer entre eux des cérémonies comme les gens d'une condition relevée: moyen très propre à inspirer la douceur, à maintenir parmi le peuple la paix et le bon ordre, et à ôter tous les vices qui viennent d'un esprit dur. En effet, s' affranchir des règles de la civilité, n'est-ce pas chercher le moyen de mettre ses défauts plus à l'aise?
>
> La civilité vaut mieux, à cet égard, que la politesse. La politesse flatte les vices des autres, et la civilité nous empêche de mettre les nôtres au jour: c'est une barrière que les hommes mettent entre eux pour s'empêcher de se corrompre.
>
> Lycurgue, dont les institutions étoient dures, n'eut point la civilité pour objet, lorsqu'il forma les manières: il eut en vue cet esprit belliqueux qu'il vouloit donner à son peuple. Des gens toujours corrigeant, ou toujours corrigés, qui instruisoient toujours et étoient toujours instruits, également simples et rigides, exerçoient plutôt entre eux des vertus qu'ils n'avoient des égards. (*EL*, XIX, 16, pp. 566–67)

Of course, the spirit of civility was limited to males, as women in China were kept separate.

Montesquieu suggests that the joining of laws, morals, manners, and religion in the Chinese case centered on the worship of ancestors and respect for parents, making the broader social and political system an ethical extension of the family. It was encouraged, he suggests, to ensure order and peace within the Chinese empire, but the authority of the state has come to depend on it (*EL*, XIX, 19, p. 570). Part of the reason for these innovations in the Chinese case is the often precarious position of the governments. Given the precariousness of a dependence on rice (it is very labor intensive and subject to periodic blight), along with a growing population, governments in China were often under pressure to increase productivity so as to avoid popular rebellion.

This code promoting self-discipline and order among the subjects along with great severity of punishment for crime (e.g., fathers punished for the crimes of their sons) has not eliminated political upheaval in China, as he comments on the succession of twenty-two dynasties. He acknowledges a general pattern whereby the first rulers of a new dynasty tend to be

moderate and virtuous with attentiveness to the condition of their people, but that their successors of a third or fourth generation often become lazy and develop a desire for luxury. In times of shortage popular resentment and lawlessness help to fuel revolution (*EL*, VII, 7, p. 340 and VIII, 21, p. 367). Despite the change in leadership each successive dynasty remains despotic because the severity of the laws and the principle of fear are sustained.

Despite China's despotic form, and the succession of dynasties, it stands in many ways as a model of successful government, in part through its long-standing codes of law, rites, and customs introduced by its early emperors as a means to encourage the agricultural industry of the people. The moderation associated with these ancient codes remains, including the force of religion, helping to keep the now larger empire together and the more tyrannically inclined rulers in check (*EL*, XI, p. 15; XIV, 5, p. 480; XIV, 8, p. 481; XVIII, 6, pp. 534–35).

iii. Statesmanship in Times of Crisis and Change

Apart from the general rules of leadership associated with republican and monarchical regimes (and the broad theme of anti-leadership that dominates Montesquieu's caricature of despotism), and his broad praise of the founders of republics, Montesquieu does engage in some more specific analysis of particular political leaders in order to praise or condemn them for their practice of leadership at crucial times in the development of their state. As one key example, in Book X Montesquieu provides a comparison of Charles XII's campaign of conquest in the early eighteenth century with that of Alexander the Great.

In a comparison reminiscent of both Plutarch and Machiavelli, Montesquieu assesses both the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership of Charles XII of Sweden and Alexander as a means to generate a more general understanding of how or when conquest may be an appropriate ambition for a statesman. Charles XII had the ambition of conquering Russia, but according to Montesquieu lacked basic judgment by assuming that his state had the material and military capacity to sustain such a long war that this conquest would require (*EL*, X, 13, p. 386). To some degree, Montesquieu's assessment of Charles XII's misjudgment stands as a criticism of Machiavellian principles, because despite the fact that Charles XII was deemed to rely solely on his own forces, and despite his strong will and enormous ambition, he was not attentive enough to the characteristics of his enemy, including a capacity and willingness to learn from each instance of combat. Grand ambition, an excellent military sense in the course of battle ("il auroit été le meilleur soldat d'Alexandre"), and favorable fortune are not sufficient for a leader to achieve his goals, as a basic lack of judgment can easily undermine his ambition (*EL*, X, 13, p. 387).

Montesquieu contrasts Charles XII's project with that of Alexander the Great. Alexander, in basic terms, had a better understanding of the

geopolitics of his day and of the character of his foes, and especially of the Persians, whose hubris made them ignorant of their weaknesses, who did not learn from previous mistakes, and who, thus, were vulnerable. In addition, Alexander, despite a fiery temperament, was also a good judge of the means to achieve his goals of subduing Greece and Persia, making sure to complete the first before embarking on the other. He excelled at military matters and judged correctly in striking quickly. He also excelled in consolidating his gains by blurring the line between conquering and conquered peoples through the adoption of Persian customs, encouraging intermarriage between the two peoples, making use of local cults, and sending Greek colonies to Persia while still allowing the Persians to keep their own laws, customs, and even governors. His leadership was so successful that even those conquered by him mourned his death (*EL*, X, 14, p. 389).

In general terms, Montesquieu suggests that one of the keys to Alexander's success was his effort to contribute to the prosperity and strength of those peoples that he conquered, drawing from his own superior judgment, as well as his skill in being parsimonious at home but generous for matters of great state importance (a revision of Machiavelli's famous words on parsimony and generosity in rule offered in chapter 16 of *The Prince*) (*EL*, X, 14, p. 391). He was not without his weaknesses, namely bad decisions to burn Persepolis and to kill Clitus, but even here his public expression of regret highlighted his respect for virtue.

A second example of Montesquieu's analysis of leadership at a time of crisis and change is his commentary on the fall of the early monarchy in Rome and the consequent rise of the Roman republic. This passage is particularly significant because it occurs in Book XI of Montesquieu's work, a book devoted to the theme of political liberty and often cited for its discussion of the English constitution in chapter 6, but indeed a book whose content is more focused on the Romans than it is on contemporary England.

Montesquieu suggests, rather puzzlingly, that in its basic nature the institution of monarchy in ancient Rome was sound, despite its fall due to its inherent vices. The early constitution was one of mixed government, where the senate had most influence in electing a king, but where the people had power to confirm appointment of the king, to veto other appointments, and to consent to new laws, and the king had the power to dispense justice, to command the military, and to assemble the senate and the people. In his earlier work *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* Montesquieu suggested that all the early kings of Rome were remarkable leaders: "Une des causes de sa prosperité, c'est que ses rois furent tous de grands personnages. On ne trouve point ailleurs, dans les histoires, une suite non interrompue de tels hommes d'Etat et de tels capitaines."[11] In *L'Esprit des lois* he singles out only two leaders.

Under the leadership of Servius Tullius, there was a change in the constitution towards a more populist bent, giving the people sole power to

declare a king and bypassing the senate's deliberation of proposed laws. In later commentary, Montesquieu attributes to Servius Tullius some innovative policies, such as graduated taxation (XI, 19, p. 429) based on a division of citizens into six classes according to their wealth, a policy declared to be a central pillar of his regime. Tarquin dealt the final blow to the monarchy of Rome by taking power and seeking to rule without the consent of the senate. Although Montesquieu criticizes the deeds of Tarquin in *L'Esprit des lois* for seeking to combine the three powers of legislating, governing, and judging in his own person, he offers a more positive portrait of his aptitudes in the *Considérations*:

> Le portrait de Tarquin n'a point été flatté; son nom n'a échappé à aucun des orateurs qui ont eu à parler contre la tyrannie. Mais sa conduit avant son malheur, que l'on voit qu'il prévoyoit; sa douceur pour les peoples vaincus; sa libéralité envers les soldats; cet art qu'il eut d'intéresser tant de gens à sa conservation; ses ouvrages publics; son courage à la guerre; sa constance dans son malheur; une guerre de vingt ans, qu'il fit ou qu'il fit faire au people romain, sans royaume et sans biens; ses continuelles ressources, font bien voir que ce n'étoit pas un homme méprisable.[12]

This earlier analysis suggests that for Montesquieu there can be a distinction between a judgment of good qualities of leadership and statesmanship and ultimate political success. As he suggests here, the actual merits of a leader may not always be reflected in the judgment of history:

> Les places que la postérité donne sont sujettes, comme les autres, aux caprices de la fortune. Malheur à la réputation de tout prince qui est opprimé par un parti qui devient le dominant, ou qui a tenté de détruire un préjugé qui lui survit![13]

Tarquin was not able to sustain himself in power, nor reputation. Montesquieu's analysis in the *Considérations* is puzzling because Tarquin's actions appeared to tip the balance of Roman monarchy over to despotism. Yet he suggests to us in *L'Esprit des lois* that the danger of this was less than it appeared to be on the surface. The people of Rome, up until the rule of Tarquin, had increasingly exercised a great deal of power, and given the blows that Servius Tullius and Tarquin had dealt to the patrician class, it was not surprising that the people saw the need to fight back against the usurpation of Tarquin to establish a republic. It may be that the leadership of Tarquin was the impetus necessary for the founding of the republic, so that the timing and character of his rule was important in light of historical development, and that this allowed Montesquieu a more nuanced judgment of his rule.

The lesson implied by this analysis of the leadership of both Servius Tullius and Tarquin is that by trying to undermine the power of the aristocracy

they were inadvertently precipitating regime change in the direction of a popular state. Given that Rome's kings were elected, the preservation of kingship required that they respect the power of the senate. Here, then, we have a case of leaders doing ostensibly ill-advised things in their rule, but who in the broader outcome bring about better long-term results.

III.   CONCLUSION

It is difficult to establish general rules that can be said to characterize Montesquieu's vision of the art of statesmanship. In terms of the politics of a relatively stable established regime, it is clear that good leadership is one that in many ways follows rather than leads, with particular attention to the more narrow parameters in which an effective exercise of power should be considered. We have seen the way in which despotism, as invoking the fantasy of pure power and unconstrained rule, offers the specter of dysfunctional and ultimately ineffective politics. Monarchies and republics are understood as being sustained by certain principles and practices that need to be both understood and respected by those in positions of political power.

Still, as we have noted, alongside various calls for moderation, there stands amidst Montesquieu's analysis evidence of a certain fascination for some of the more extreme examples of political leadership. Yet, for all of these figures, there remains something lacking. The genius of the founders of ancient republican regimes, particularly Lycurgus and Solon, is celebrated, although as largely mythological figures, it is also difficult to assess what exactly we are to take from this praise. The leadership of the ancient Chinese kings and Alexander the Great have more firm grounding in historical fact, but ultimately as visions of political leadership they also are problematic given their link to conquest, despotism, and very unique circumstances of human history. The accounts of the last of the Roman kings demonstrate a successful historical outcome, but only through the failure of their respective political projects. Ultimately, the praise that Montesquieu assigns to these various leaders remains both inspiring and puzzling at the same time.

L'Esprit des lois stands as a repudiation of despotism and thus as a call for an art of statesmanship that is committed to certain moderation and liberty. Yet the rulers that Montesquieu singles out most often in this work for both analysis and praise do not always conform to those ideals. This may in part be due to the dynamic that in times of politics within a relatively stable regime it is the worse forms of leadership rather than the better ones that receive the most attention. In addition, it may say something about the character of the author himself, as someone with both a fascination for but also a keen awareness of the dangers of more extreme forms of political rule.

NOTES

1. Montesquieu refers to the *art* of ruling, rather than the science of ruling, in Book XII, chapter 27 of *L'Esprit des lois* (Montesquieu, 1949–1951: II.230). All further references to *L'Esprit des lois* will be taken from the edition noted here and will be cited in the following format: *EL*, followed by the book number in capital Roman numerals and the chapter number in small Arabic numerals, and finally the page number from this edition.

2. As he states in the preface, "Si je pouvois faire en sorte que ceux qui commandent augmentassent leurs connoissances sur ce qu'ils doivent prescrire, et que ceux qui obéissent trouvassent un nouveau plaisir à obéir, je me croirois le plus heureux des mortels."

3. For Bernard Yack, Montesquieu was not directly identifiable with this tradition of what he calls "total revolution" leading to Marx, but his depiction of the transformative possibilities in especially Spartan politics served as an important imaginative step in ushering in this tradition. See Yack, 1992.

   This first quote from *EL*, XXIX, 18, p. 882 is taken from a chapter suggesting that there is no need for legal uniformity, nor uniformity of custom and practice in a context of legal diversity. Although directly a defense of legal pluralism, it can also be construed as an invocation against legal change. The second quote is taken from *EL*, XXIX, 1, p. 865, where Montesquieu is articulating what he affirms is the main lesson of his work.

4. See Kingston, 2011. In this volume I develop a modified version of Montesquieu's notion of the principle of government to serve as a basis for normative analysis in contemporary political theory.

5. See *EL*, II and III.

6. See *EL* II, 5, pp. 249–50 and III, 9, pp. 258–59.

7. It also appears to suggest on the surface that there is nothing that can be established to be an ideal regime, a remark used not only to undermine the political theory of Filmer, but indeed all political reflection that would seek to build a singular political model based on a homogeneous conception of nature: "Il vaut mieux dire que le gouvernement le plus conforme à la nature est celui dont la disposition particulière se rapporte mieux à la disposition du people pour lequel il est établi" (*EL*, I, 3, p. 237).

8. The case of the Viscount d'Orte is central to the discussion of the nature of honor developed by Sharon Krause, 2008.

9. "Les moeurs du prince contribuent autant à la liberté que les lois; il peut, comme elles, faire des hommes des bêtes, et des bêtes faire des hommes. S'il aime les âmes libres, il aura des sujets; s'il aime les âmes basses, il aura des esclaves. Veut-il savoir le grand art de régner: qu'il approche de lui l'honneur et la vertu, qu'il appelle le mérite personnel. Il peut même jeter quelquefois les yeux sur les talents. Qu'il ne craigne point ces rivaux, qu'on appelle les hommes de mérite; il est leur égal, dès qu'il les aime. Qu'il gagne le coeur, mais qu'il ne captive point l'esprit. Qu'il se rende populaire. Il doit être flatté de l'amour du moindre de ses sujets; ce sont toujours des hommes. Le peuple demande si peu d'égards, qu'il est juste de les lui accorder: l'infinie distance qui est entre le souverain et lui, empêche bien qu'il ne le gêne. Qu'exorable à la prière, il soit ferme contre les demandes; et qu'il sache que son people jouit de ses refus, et ses courtisans de ses grâces."

10. *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence*, in Montesquieu, 1949–1951: II.70 (hereafter cited as *Considérations*).

11. *Considérations*, p. 70.

12. *Considérations*, p. 71.

13. *Considérations*, pp. 71–72.

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8 Kant and the Moral Politicians

Paul Guyer

I. INTRODUCTION

Kant certainly admired Plato in some regards. He thought that Plato should
be credited with first distinguishing pure reason from merely empirical
understanding, thus with introducing a "power of cognition" that serves
"a far higher need than that of merely spelling out appearances according
to a synthetic unity in order to be able to read them as experience," and he
further held that Plato set philosophy on its proper path when he "found
his ideas preeminently in everything that is practical, i.e., in what rests on
freedom, which for its part stands under cognitions that are a proper prod-
uct of reason."[1] Further, he specifically defended Plato's attempt to conceive
of an ideal republic, rejecting the criticism that "The *Platonic republic*" is "a
supposedly striking example of a dream of perfection that can have its place
only in an idle thinker's brain" and the scorn of those who find it "ridicu-
lous to assert that a prince will never govern well unless he participates in
the ideas." To be sure, his own view that "A constitution providing for the
greatest human freedom according to laws that permit *the freedom of each
to exist together with that of others* (not one providing the greatest happi-
ness, since that would follow of itself) is at least a necessary idea, which one
must make the ground not merely of the primary plan of a state's constitution
but of all the laws too"[2] seems remote if not indeed diametrically opposed
to Plato's conception of a just state as one in which carefully selected and
educated leaders ensure that the rest of the population properly fulfill their
assigned roles as soldiers, farmers, merchants, artisans, and so on, a model
that seems to leave very little room for the maximal freedom of each as long
as that is compatible with the freedom of all, and which seems to have a
certain conception of happiness as its chief aim rather than a by-product
of universal freedom. But apart from this far from trivial difference in sub-
stance, Kant seems radically opposed to any Platonic conception of state-
craft as a science that can and must be taught to future leaders for a reason
hinted in the very statement by which he has just expressed some sympathy
for Plato, namely his thought that there is a "necessary idea" of the perfect
constitution, or, as he interprets this thought in his chief work on political

philosophy, the *Metaphysical Foundations of the Doctrine of Right* published in the *Metaphysics of Morals* a decade-and-a-half after the *Critique of Pure Reason*, that there is an *a priori* idea of the "original contract . . . in terms of which alone we can think of the legitimacy of a state" and of its particular laws.[3] In Kant's view, such an *a priori* idea is accessible to any ordinary person, and the statesman needs no specialized scientific training to grasp it or its implications, only the normal process of education that all developing children need in order for the *a priori* ideas that are latent in them to be brought to clear consciousness. Indeed, the would-be or future statesman or stateswoman needs nothing other than ordinary moral education precisely because the leading ideas of justice and natural right are so firmly grounded in the basic ideas—in fact, the basic idea—of morality itself. But since, at least as Kant also came to recognize in his final decade of work, above all in Part One of *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, published five years before the *Metaphysics of Morals*, although at some level we all always know what morality requires of us, it is also always a free decision whether or not we will be moral, or, in Kant's terms, make the moral law our fundamental maxim and subordinate all forms of self-love to it or vice versa,[4] what politicians need is precisely not any special scientific knowledge but rather a moral will, the will to be moral, to do freely what they know to be right. This need is especially compelling because although those in political power may be able to compel those they rule to follow the law without much choice, thus to be just if the laws themselves and their administration are just, there is nobody to compel those in power to be just, nothing to do so except their own freedom of conscience. Kant puts this point in an appendix to his essay *Toward Perpetual Peace*, published in the interval between the *Religion* and the *Metaphysics of Morals*, where he says that the realization of (for example) perpetual international peace is not a "technical problem," but a "*moral problem*" for the "*moral politician*" who must freely recognize it "not only as a natural good but also as a condition arising from acknowledgment of duty."[5] Thus, in the end it seems hard to imagine a position more fundamentally opposed to a Platonic position that proper statesmanship is the subject of a science than Kant's, for whom the ideal of a just state is known to all and what is required of statesmen is not special knowledge but the free choice to govern in accord with morality.

Even if Kant supposes that the idea of a just state as a criterion for just legislation is known *a priori*, however, and that this is, as he says in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, a "necessary idea" or necessary condition for the creation and administration of a just state, he hardly supposes that this *a priori* knowledge is a *sufficient* condition, especially for the administration of a just state. Rather, he clearly recognizes that at least two additional kinds of knowledge are required for this purpose. One is knowledge of facts on the ground, and in particular of the grievances of the governed, especially grievances about the administration of the laws at all those levels of administration between the top, the ruler, and the bottom, the ordinary subjects,

and Kant emphasizes the right of the people to express their grievances and the need for rulers to listen to them as the alternative to the people taking the law into their own hands, that is, rebelling. Such knowledge cannot be called a science, however, for it is just ordinary knowledge of facts to be communicated to rulers through petitions and especially through a free press, although not particularly through scientific publications in any professional sense. The other form of knowledge that rulers require, however, might be considered closer to a science. This is the knowledge that progress towards justice, and thus the reform of their states in the direction of greater justice, is really possible, knowledge that can only be delivered by what Kant calls the "idea of a universal history" that shows justice to be not yet fully actual but at least really possible. This might seem a strange sort of science, neither fully empirical like geology, for example, nor fully *a priori* like, say, number theory, but more of a regulative ideal, like a teleological view of natural organisms, but what it requires is the interpretation of historical events as evidence of the possibility of progress in light of the *a priori* idea of justice and of progress toward it. Or at least let us hope that this can be considered a sort of science, for it is surely the only candidate for a scientific basis for statesmanship in Kant's conception of just governance.

In what follows I will expand on the several steps in the argument that has just been outlined.

II. THE *A PRIORI* IDEA OF JUSTICE

The first step of the argument I have outlined is that statesmen or rulers need no special science of statecraft because the idea of justice or, as Kant calls it, right (*Recht*) that is to serve as the criterion of just laws and their administration is *a priori* like the fundamental principle of morality, indeed it is *a priori* because it is directly derived from the fundamental idea of morality itself, and on Kant's account that is known *a priori* to every normal human being. This interpretation of Kant is not uncontroversial, so I will take a moment to defend it, although I can hardly go into the details of the debate that has raged about it in recent years. A number of interpreters have recently argued that Kant's idea of justice, and thus his political philosophy, is independent of his moral philosophy. Actually, the chief arguments for this view are not new; they go back to Fichte, who thought of himself as a Kantian and thought that his own political philosophy, published a year before Kant's, would meet with Kant's approval. But the arguments of both Fichte and the more recent independence-theorists mistake Kant's distinction between duties of *right*, or political justice, and duties of *virtue*, or ethics, narrowly construed for a general distinction between right and *morality*, which it is not meant to be; rather, right and ethics are for Kant two species of the genus morality, although perhaps even that way of putting the distinction is a simplification, because Kant makes it clear that although the

fulfillment of duties of virtue proper can never be compelled by the coercive means available to the state for the administration of justice, juridical duties such as respect for property or marriage rights can be fulfilled out of the motive that is proper to virtue, namely sheer respect for the moral law, although they also allow for and indeed call for external incentives, and the state need not and cannot require that its laws be complied with for the sake of morality alone, but must make sure that its laws are complied with out of some motive or other—*precisely because its laws are grounded in morality.*

Two key arguments of both Fichte and more recent independence-theorists are, first, that the fundamental principle of right, as we have seen already stated by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as well as more particular laws, must be independent of morality because they need not be complied with out of respect for morality itself, and, second, that right must be independent of morality because right is indifferent to the ends of subjects whereas morality is very much concerned with ends, with humanity itself as an end and with one's own perfection and the happiness of others as ends that are also duties. Fichte makes the first of these points by arguing that although the "rule of right" can "receive a new sanction for conscience through the law of absolute agreement with oneself (the moral law)," because agents can comply and be compelled to comply with the rule of right through other incentives, the "philosophical doctrine of right . . . ought to be a separate science standing on its own" from morality.[6] Thomas Pogge, who has been one of the foremost recent defenders of the independence theory, suggests the second point when he argues that in his derivation of the principle of right Kant does not "insist that persons have certain moral powers and matching higher-order interests in their development and exercise," that is, he does not appeal to any end of self-perfection, "nor does he seek to identify all-purpose means needed for realizing the conceptions of the good that citizens of a society like his own are likely to have," that is, he evinces no concern for the happiness of others (or oneself).[7] But both of these arguments are deeply problematic. In general, as I said, they depend on confusing morality as a whole with ethics or the duties of virtue as a part of morality: the duties of virtue may be duties to strive to realize the particular ends of one's own perfection and the happiness of others and may be able to be compelled only out of each agent's own respect for the moral law or, in Fichte's terms, conscience, but that does not mean that they are not grounded in the general foundation of morality as a whole, namely the necessity of always treating humanity as an end, never merely as a means, what Kant calls the "ground of a possible categorical imperative,"[8] or in the status of "rational being" (in its instantiation as humanity) as an "*independently existing* end . . . as that which must never be acted against and which must therefore in every volition be estimated never merely as a means but always at the same time as an end."[9]

In more detail, and taking the two objections in reverse order: First, let us define *humanity* simply as "the capacity to set oneself an end—any end

whatsoever," as Kant does in the introduction to the Doctrine of Virtue;[10] the general requirement always to treat humanity as an end and never merely as a means can then entail a duty not to interfere with anyone's freedom to set their own ends, regardless of what those ends are, except insofar as is necessary to secure the equal freedom of all to set their own ends, in other words, the negative duty that is the foundation of right, as well as the positive duties to perfect oneself, that is, one's own capacity to set and pursue ends, as well as to promote the happiness of others, that is, the realization of their ends. As long as the distinction between the general end of humanity and the more particular ends of self-perfection and the happiness of others is recognized, duties of right can flow from the former even if only duties of virtue flow from the latter. Second, that compliance with the duties of right can be enforced by motives other than sheer respect for the moral law itself does not mean that they are not founded in morality itself. Kant introduces the motive of respect for the moral law itself as the condition of *esteem* and *moral worth* in section I of the *Groundwork* in an argument intended to identify the fundamental principle of morality; his argument is that actions have no special moral worth and agents merit no special esteem when they are motivated by inclination, even generous inclinations such as those of a natural born philanthropist, but only when they are motivated by respect for the moral law itself. This in turn means that the fundamental principle of morality can have nothing to do with mere inclination, and from that Kant infers that it must be purely formal, in the first instance requiring only the universalizability of maxims of actions (the requirement that Kant, in turn, grounds in the status of humanity as an end in itself). But once the moral principle is discovered by this route, its demands must be complied with, however we can get ourselves to do that and whether we can earn any esteem for our moral worth in so doing. To take a simple example, if the moral law turns out to prohibit homicide except say in cases of self-defense, then we must refrain from homicide, however we get ourselves to do that, and whether we will earn esteem for so doing or just avoid opprobrium and punishment. Indeed, as Kant makes clear in the general introduction to the *Metaphysics of Morals*, we may earn esteem for our moral worth in fulfilling positive duties or duties of commission, but we earn demerit and opprobrium for violating our negative duties or duties of omission but no merit for fulfilling them: "If someone does *more* in the way of duty than he can be constrained by law to do, what he does is *meritorious* (*meritum*) . . . if what he does is *less* than the law requires, it is morally *culpable* (*demeritum*)."[11] Yet negative duties are just as much part of morality as positive duties, flowing from the fundamental principle of morality, even though one earns demerit for violating them but no esteem for complying with them, and even though all that one has to do to avoid demerit or opprobrium is to refrain from violating them, however one gets oneself to do that. And in fact, for Kant the duties of right are nothing but a subset of the negative duties of morality, namely those to which it is morally permissible and even

morally necessary to enforce by coercion if or when the motive of respect for the moral law as such cannot be counted upon to ensure their satisfaction.

Kant makes the moral foundation of the principle and duties of right manifest in all sorts of ways. Because my main point is the so to speak epistemological point that the Universal Principle of Right that serves as the criterion of just laws, in turn, flows from the principle of morality that everyone has *a priori* and for that reason is itself known *a priori* and need not be the subject of a special "science," as for Plato or, for example, Fichte would have it, I will not go into great detail on the underlying derivation of the universal principle of right from that of morality, but will characterize Kant's strategies for this derivation in general terms. Sometimes Kant suggests that the Universal Principle of Right follows from the Formula of Universal Law, the first and we might say commonsense version of the categorical imperative that requires that we act only on maxims that we can also will to be universal laws.[12] Sometimes he suggests that it follows from the Formula of Humanity as an End in Itself, that is, from the requirement that we always treat humanity, whether in our own person or that of any other, as an end and never merely as a means—although in the case of right only how we treat humanity in the case of persons other than ourselves is at issue, because duties of right are those duties that are coercively enforceable, and for Kant it is apparently so self-evident that no one has a right to coerce any other to fulfill his duties to himself, if this could even be done, that he does not even bother to argue it. And sometimes Kant suggests that the Universal Principle of Right follows directly from the concept of freedom.

Let us consider the last suggestion first. A nice passage is a note written on a letter dated April 6, 1793, thus at the outset of the period of Kant's main writing on political philosophy, in which he explains that "Every member of a people has a threefold quality in relation to the government," the first of which is

> *Freedom* as a *human being* according to the innate right not to be subordinated merely as a means for the choice of another, instead it must be assumed that he himself authorizes the government to treat him as if he acts in his own interest and only mediately for another's interest. For right is really an authorization to coerce in so far as it follows from the concept of the freedom of everyone. *Against hereditary subjection*.

(The two further relations to the government are "*Equality* with other members as *subjects* in relation to acquired rights," or the equal right of all to acquire property, which is contrasted to hereditary privileges, and "*Independence* as *citizen*," that is, the right of everyone not dependent on another to "be considered as standing under laws that he himself has a part in creating," which is "*Against despotic government*.")[13] In this passage, Kant suggests that the connection between right and the authorization to coerce is analytic insofar as it follows from a "concept," and he makes a similar

suggestion in the text of the Doctrine of Right itself when he says that "Right is Connected with an Authorization to Use Coercion" by the "principle of contradiction," as a hindrance to a hindrance of freedom, and further that "in effect, . . . right need not be conceived as made up of two elements, namely an obligation in accordance with a law and an authorization of him who by his choice puts another under obligation to coerce him to fulfill it. Instead, one can locate the concept of right directly in the possibility of connecting universal reciprocal coercion with the freedom of everyone," by means of the inference in accordance with the law of non-contradiction that a hindrance to a hindrance to freedom is equivalent to the establishment of freedom itself. Because Kant asserts this analytical connection between freedom and the title to use coercion to hinder hindrances to freedom, while he subsequently maintains that the connection between duties of virtue and ends, specifically the ends that are also duties, self-perfection and the happiness of others, is synthetic, some have inferred that the universal principle of right is itself analytic, flowing directly from the concept of freedom and not needing any foundation in the fundamental principle of morality.[14] But this is a mistake, for a reason lying at the foundation of Kant's philosophy as a whole, namely that no existential statement, including no statement that any or all have any rights, can ever follow from a *concept* alone, but only from a synthetic proposition affirming the instantiation of the relevant concept. Kant states this in the case of mathematical propositions when he argues that it is an error to think they are analytic even if they can be formally derived from concepts by means of "the principle of contradiction, . . . for a synthetic proposition can of course be comprehended in accordance with the principle of contradiction, but only insofar as another synthetic proposition is presupposed from which it can be deduced, never in itself."[15] The connection between right and the authorization to use coercion may be analytic, following by Kant's hindrance to a hindrance argument from the concept of freedom, but it does not follow that any of us have any obligation to extend any rights to anyone except from the fact that we are obliged to realize freedom for one and all, or, as Kant puts it in his *Lectures on Ethics*, from the fact that "The conditions under which alone the greatest use of freedom is possible, and under which it can be self-consistent, are the essential ends of mankind. With these, freedom must agree. The *principium* of all duties is thus the conformity of the use of freedom with the essential ends of mankind."[16] The *principle* that the self-consistent and maximal exercise of freedom is itself the essential ends or better end of mankind is the synthetic *a priori* principle at the foundation of morality, from which the obligatory force or as we now like to say the normativity of anything that follows from the *concept* of freedom itself depends.

Why Kant thinks that the maximally consistent extension of freedom to all is the essential end of mankind and our fundamental moral obligation is a difficult question. He could, as his opening arguments in the *Groundwork* might suggest, take the starting-point of morality to be the requirement that

we act only on universalizable maxims, then assume that we each have a natural interest in maximal freedom for ourselves, and then draw the inference that we can morally claim maximal freedom for ourselves only if we are willing to extend it to all others as well, which in turn requires that we limit our own claims to freedom as well as everyone else's to the maximally *compossible* exercise of freedom. This would apply the moral requirement of universalizability to the natural good of freedom.[17] Alternatively, Kant could take it to be (somehow) self-evident that freedom for all is the morally necessary end for mankind, and then to argue that acting only on universalizable maxims is the means to assuring that all are equally free to act in the way one chooses for oneself. A passage in the introduction to the *Naturrecht Feyerabend*, the only surviving record of Kant's lectures on natural right, suggests this approach; there Kant says that "If rational beings alone are capable of being ends in themselves it cannot be because they have reason but because they have freedom. Reason is merely a means."[18] Universalization is the essential activity of reason; that reason is the means to freedom would mean that acting only on universalizable maxims is the means to realizing freedom for all.

Perhaps Kant could so easily suggest these two different approaches in his two sets of lectures because he did not clearly distinguish them; be that as it may, we find in Kant's writings derivations of the fundamental principle of right from both the Formula of Universal Law and the Formula of Humanity as an End in Itself—which, as we already saw from the definition of humanity from the introduction to the Doctrine of Virtue, is an alternative way of stating that freedom itself is the essential end of mankind. Kant has already hinted at how the latter form of derivation would go when he said in the note previously quoted that every individual must have freedom according "to the innate right not to be subordinated merely as a means for the choice of another": our innate right to freedom is equivalent to the right to be treated always as an end and never merely as a means, or better it follows from our innate obligation always to treat others (and ourselves) as ends and never merely as means. Several of Kant's notes offer even clearer statements of the derivation of the principle of right from the Formula of Humanity. In one, Kant defines "right itself" as nothing but the limitation of the freedom of human beings (in its outer use) "on the condition that it harmonizes with the freedom of everyone,"[19] which makes it clear that the principle of right is just the application of the general obligatoriness of "The conditions under which alone the greatest use of freedom is possible, and under which it can be self-consistent,"[20] to "outer actions," those of our actions that can physically interfere with the actions of and thus the exercise of freedom by others, and he then continues that

> the universal freedom of each and every member of the commonwealth (not ethical, not just juridical, but political freedom) . . . consists in each being able to pursue his welfare as he conceives it, and also that he

can never be used as a means for the end of his own happiness in con-
formity with others' concept of happiness but only in conformity with
his own.[21]

The last clause mentions only a special case, namely the case of paternalism,
which was always of interest to Kant, of what should be more general: the
necessity of conceding juridical and political freedom to all follows from the
necessity of treating everyone as an end and never merely as a means; using
another straightforwardly as a means to one's own happiness is a violation
of this obligation, but so is imposing your own conception of happiness
upon him rather than letting him pursue his own, for that too is really just
a way of trying to make yourself happy by having others confirm your own
conceptions rather than really trying to make the other happy. Only letting
others set and pursue their own ends can make them happy, although of
course you can try to help others successfully pursue their own freely set
ends. In another note, Kant reaffirms this argument, stating that "Outer
freedom is the independence of a human being from others' power of choice
so that he is permitted to act not in accordance with their but rather also in
accordance with his own ends, i.e., so that is not *permitted* to serve *merely*
as a means to any end of someone else (to be able to be compelled to do
so)."[22] Not being compelled merely to serve as means to the end of others is
a necessary condition of outer freedom or the freedom to pursue one's own
ends, whatever they are, in the external world.

Alternatively, Kant suggests that the Universal Principle of Right follows
from the requirement to act only on universalizable maxims, namely by
requiring one to act on maxims concerning other-affecting actions only
when those maxims could be universalized, and thus freely accepted by all.
Perhaps Kant's statement of the Universal Principle of Right in the published
Doctrine of Virtue is as good evidence as any for this approach. Here Kant
says that "Any action is *right* if it can coexist with everyone's freedom in
accordance with a universal law, or if on its maxims the freedom of choice
of each can coexist with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal
law."[23] There are no doubt various ways to scan this statement, but one way
to do so would be to read it as saying that one's use of one's choice—one's
external use of choice, or use of choice in actions that affect others, the
special subject of right—must be universalizable, or consistent with a similar
use of others. This would be the derivation of the principle of right from the
principle of universalizability. An alternative reading of the passage would
be that one's (external) exercise of one's faculty of choice must be consistent
with a universal law of freedom, i.e., with the law that freedom be universal.
This would bring us back toward the first way of deriving the Universal
Principle of Right from the fundamental principle of morality.

However the details are to go, it should be clear by know that Kant
thinks that the Universal Principle of Right follows from the fundamental
principle of morality in the several ways in which that can present itself to

us—as a "concept" of freedom, as the "principle" that freedom is the essential end of mankind, and in the formulations of the categorical imperative—and if the latter is known *a priori*, as Kant surely thinks it is, then so is the former. For that reason the statesman or legislator needs no special science to know the idea by which the legitimacy of legislation and administration is to be tested—the Universal Principle of Right and the "necessary idea" of the social contract, which is just the idea that everyone affected by it ought to be able to freely agree to legislation, are also known *a priori*. Instead, what the statesman, and now especially the ruler or administrator, need, is a moral will, the freely chosen commitment to fulfill the moral law. That is a matter of choice, not knowledge.

III. MORAL POLITICIANS

Now of course there is a considerable distance between the Universal Principle of Right and the particular laws and their application and enforcement in any actual polity, a distance comprising disagreement to the extent that an actual polity is less than just (as every one is to some degree or other), but also an unavoidable difference in particularity among abstract principles, actual laws, and particular applications even in the most just society. That there is a difference between the Universal Principle of Right and more concrete levels of right, such as innate right, acquired private right (property), and public right (the enforcement of the first two classes of right through government), is implied by Kant's conception of a metaphysics of morals, which concerns "principles of application" that take as their "object the particular *nature*" and circumstances "of human beings, which is cognized only by experience, in order to *show* in it what can be inferred from universal moral principles" without "detract[ing] from the purity of these principles or cast[ing] doubt on their *a priori* source."[24] But that there is a further distance from these categories of right and their principles on the one hand and the actual legislation in an actual polity and its application and enforcement, what Kant calls the level of "positive right,"[25] is also obvious. Actual governments have the task of transforming the Universal Principle of Right and the general categories of right into actual legislation and then applying and enforcing such legislation, all of which comprises the level of positive right. Kant starts the Doctrine of Right with the recognition that this takes jurists "experienced in the law," who have "legal expertise" (*Iurisprudentia*) that can also be called "juridical science" (*Iurisscientia*), but adds that "one versed in this must supply the immutable principles for any giving of positive law." The fundamental principle of the latter, as we have seen, is known *a priori*, and thus can be known to anyone, and what must be added to them to reach the level of positive laws are, first, the empirical but extremely general facts that are added to them at the level of metaphysics of morals, such as that human beings need control of some external objects in

order to survive and live on the naturally undivided surface of a sphere on the division of which they must agree or form a united will, and, second, more detailed empirical knowledge of the circumstances (natural and historical) of their particular polity. In Kantian terms, the only real science in any of this is the *a priori* element, but that is not anything in which statesmen need specialized training; it is the common possession of mankind.

Yet positive laws must typically be legislated and then applied and enforced by a specialized set of persons or a subset of the whole population living in a polity, because Kant does not fantasize that most of us live in Athenian or Genevan city-states where everything can be decided by an assembly of all the citizens (and even in those cases, of course, not all of the residents were citizens, far from it). As Kant puts this point in the most general of terms,

> Public right is the totality of public laws (i.e., such that can be declared by an empowered legislator to all those obliged by a duty)—Now should these laws be cognizable *a priori* by reason then they can proceed from nothing other than the idea of a common will ascribed to the highest legislator (to the idea thereof), except that the declared will must be ascribed to an actual person. Without this ascription the concept of right has no determinate source of execution, namely the actual connection of the will of all to a will of the whole. . . . Without public right there is the *status naturalis* and a mere idea of the possibility of an administration of right.[26]

In other words, without an actual government, right remains a mere idea and possibility. More particularly, Kant follows eighteenth-century tradition in assuming that the functions of government must be divided among three "authorities," the legislative, executive, and judicial, the first of which makes positive laws; the second of which commands behavior in accordance with those laws, which must involve some interpretation of how they are to be applied to particular cases; and the third of which renders verdicts, which must concern whether the executive commands to follow the laws stemming from the legislator have been violated or not.[27] Kant is explicit that "The legislative authority can belong only to the united will of the people,"[28] although he assumes without argument that the people does not legislate as a whole but through representatives who are to be guided in their legislation by the *a priori* idea rather than historical fact of an "original contract . . . in terms of which alone we can think of the legitimacy of a state."[29] He has little to say about the judiciary. But he is very clear that although the executive must have a monopoly on coercive power in a state, and thus is entitled to be called the "ruler" (*Beherrscher*), and that for this reason even the actual "sovereign" (*Souverän*), namely the legislature that represents the people as a whole, can "take the ruler's authority away from him, depose him, or reform his administration," it cannot actually "*punish* him," because that

would undermine the monopoly of coercion within the state and lead to chaos, the executive is nevertheless only an "*agent*" of the legislature and, in turn, the actual sovereign, the people, charged with carrying out their legislative will.[30] Yet because of the monopoly of coercive power that the executive ruler enjoys, he (whether a natural person or an artificial person, as Hobbes would say, composed of multiple natural persons) bears a special burden in making sure that actual positive right in a real polity continually approaches the ideal of natural right. And in practice, although the theoretician Kant argues that the only morally ideal form of government is republican, characterized as much by the distinct separation of powers as by the equality of all citizens before the laws legislated, applied, and enforced by those powers, the historical Kant recognized the obvious fact that his own government and almost all of those around him were still autocratic, with no clear separation between legislative and executive powers and a clear subordination of the judiciary to the executive, and thus for this concrete reason the chief burden of moving laws and governments in the direction of greater justice could only fall onto those theoretically designated as executives, but in practice typically autocratic and often hereditary princes. And what they need is not a science of statesmanship, but the moral will to transform their governments into republics. Further, even were that to happen, then the human beings occupying the nicely divided roles of republican government would also need the moral will to do their jobs properly and maintain their just governments.

Kant makes this point both early and late in his publications on political philosophy. In the 1784 essay "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim," his first publication with substantial political content, Kant argues that like trees, which in the open, "in freedom and separated from one another, . . . put forth their branches as they like, grow stunted, crooked and awry," but "in a forest, precisely because each of them seeks to take air and sun from the other, are constrained to look for them above themselves, and thereby achieve a beautiful straight growth," so, too, human beings who left on their own may commit all sorts of injustice if constrained by laws may behave correctly, regardless of or even because of their self-interested inclinations: "given that their own inclinations make it so that they cannot long subsist next to one another in wild freedom[, y]et in such a precinct as civil union is, these same inclinations have afterward their best effect."[31] That is, laws can compel people to behave one way through the threat of sanction by means of the very same self-interest that would lead them to behave quite differently in the absence of those laws. But of course, to have the effect of compelling subjects to behave justly the laws need to be just and to be administered justly, and that requires a moral will on the part of those who legislate the laws and even more so on the part of those who administer the laws, whether those parties are distinct, as they should be, or not, as they often are, for the simple reason that the power that lies in the hands of those who administer the laws can offer a great temptation

to misuse the laws for their own self-interest and there is no one to coerce *them* into behaving justly when their self-interest would motivate them otherwise—as it so often can. As Kant puts it, "the human being is an *animal which*, when it lives among others of its species, *has need of a master*. . . . But then this master is exactly as much an animal who has need of a master" as his subjects are, and every such master is naturally under a strong temptation to "misuse his freedom when he has no one to exercise authority over him in accordance with the laws." The only alternative is that "The highest supreme authority ought to be just *in itself* and yet a *human being*," in other words, even though subjects can be coerced through their own self-interest to behave justly, masters can be compelled to be moral only by their own moral will, or their own decision to be moral. Thus justice requires on the part of rulers "correct concepts of the nature of a possible constitution, great experience practiced through many courses of life and beyond this a good will that is prepared to accept it."[32] The first of these requirements, as we have seen, is readily accessible to all *a priori*, and does not require a special science; the second can be acquired only through experience, and is again not the subject of a special science; and the third, without which the first two are worthless, is not a matter of knowledge at all, but of will.[33]

A decade later, Kant put the same point in different terms in his essay *Toward Perpetual Peace*. This essay, cast in the form of a mock treaty, perhaps to cast some cover on the fact that it is a presumptuous piece of advice to princes and potentates that neither sheer power nor mere balance-of-power politics can ever bring enduring stability to their own regimes, let alone world peace and enduring stability for all, saves its most important point for an appendix. As is well known, the mock treaty begins with a series of "preliminary articles," which are constraints on ways war may be waged prior to the institution of an enduring peace that are necessary to make such a peace at least possible, and then lists three "definitive articles for perpetual peace": that every nation adopt a "*republican* constitution," because when war must be approved by a populace that would bear its cost rather than a monarch who would not, "nothing is more natural than that they will be very hesitant to begin such a bad game";[34] that all such free republics join in a federation or "league of nations" to provide a forum for the non-violent resolution of the disputes that can arise even between pacifically minded republics;[35] and a very limited form of "cosmopolitan right," that nations receive foreign visitors without hostility.[36] Kant initially makes it sound as if these conditions will inevitably be brought about or "guaranteed" by "the great artist *nature* (*natura daedala rerum*) from whose mechanical course purposiveness shines forth visibly, letting concord arise by means of the discord of human beings even against their will";[37] but such a view of inexorable historical progress is incompatible with the radical freedom of human beings to will either good *or evil* no matter what their prior history would appear to entail that Kant had asserted just two years earlier in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Kant's view

can only be that natural mechanisms may make the institution of perpetual peace *possible* by putting human beings in a position where it will seem the most rational course of action, but that even so, precisely because in reality political leaders do not necessarily, or at least do not yet, fully represent the will of their subjects and such leaders can still convince themselves that war is in their own self-interest, they still need to make the free decision to honor the moral rather than merely prudential demand to make peace rather than war. As Kant puts it in the first appendix to *Perpetual Peace*, peace will come about only if each nation is led by "a *moral politician*, that is, one who takes the principles of political prudence in such a way that they can coexist with morals, but not [by] a *political moralist*, who frames a morals to suit the statesman's advantage." He explains that

> A moral politician will make it his principle that, once defects that could not have been prevented are found within the constitution of a state or in the relations of states, it is a duty, especially for heads of state, to be concerned about how they can be improved as soon as possible and brought into conformity with natural right, which stands before us as a model in the idea of reason, even at the cost of sacrifices to their self-seeking.[38]

Again, a special burden falls on "heads of state"—Kant's term, *Staatsoberhäupter*, suggests executives rather than legislatures—because even if subjects can be kept in line with right by the threat of sanctions, those who apply the sanctions but have no one to apply sanctions to them must freely choose to adhere to right. The apparent tension in Kant's argument, between the suggestion that nature can actually guarantee perpetual peace and the insistence that only the free choice of rulers can bring it about, might be reconciled by taking him to be arguing that rulers must freely choose to transform their states into genuine republics and that even once such republics have been achieved their politicians must freely choose to maintain them as such, but that once all states have become and remain genuine republics, then peace is inevitable. But however this tension is resolved, the important point for my argument is just that the knowledge of the necessary conditions for peace is readily accessible, not the subject of a special science, but also not sufficient for peace, always requiring in addition the free choice of those with their hands on the levers of power to honor rather than subvert the principles of right and morality.[39]

IV. TWO NEEDS FOR KNOWLEDGE AFTER ALL

In spite of needing a moral will rather than a special science of statesmanship, statesmen, here meaning both legislators and executives, certainly do need knowledge. (Judges of course need jurisprudence, knowledge of the laws.)

Most obviously, they need empirical knowledge, both objective knowledge about conditions in their states but also what we might call subjective knowledge about what their citizens think and feel about conditions in their states, what they even if not the statesmen themselves perceive as wrongs that need to be righted. I put it this way because Kant is insistent that the function of the state is not to provide *happiness* for its citizens, but right or justice. Kant famously asserts that "a *paternalistic government* . . . is the greatest *despotism* thinkable," not just because it would substitute its own conception of what would make its citizens happy for theirs, but because in trying to impose any conception of happiness upon them it would amount to "a constitution that abrogates all the freedom of the subject, who in that case have no rights at all."[40] But even when focused on justice rather than happiness, rulers must be fully informed about the state of freedom in their domains and about their subjects' views of their own freedom, because conditions can compromise the freedom of subjects through the subjects' beliefs about those conditions. Denying subjects the right to remedy (what they perceive to be) wrongs or injustices in their states by rebellion for reasons that will not be examined here,[41] Kant asserts that subjects must have the right to express their views about the state of justice in their countries and that rulers must grant them this right, and presumably also thinks that rulers have the obligation not merely to let the subjects vent their views but also to take those views into account and either remedy the wrongs that their subjects correctly perceive or help them come to see that those are not wrongs and unnecessary constraints on their freedom after all. Kant's explicit assertions are found in a famous passage in the 1793 essay on "Theory and Practice":

> A nonrecalcitrant subject must be able to assume that his ruler does not *want* to do him any wrong. Accordingly, since every human being still has his inalienable rights, which he can never give up even if he wanted to and about which he is authorized to judge for himself, while, on that assumption, the wrong that in his opinion is done to him occurs only from the supreme power's error or ignorance of certain consequences of his laws, a citizen must have, with the approval of the ruler himself, the authorization to make known publicly his opinions about what it is in the ruler's arrangements that seems to him to be a wrong against the commonwealth. For, to assume that the head of state could never err or be ignorant of something would be to represent him as favored with divine inspiration and raised above humanity. Thus *freedom of the pen*—kept within the limits of esteem and love for the constitution within which one lives by the subjects' liberal way of thinking . . .—is the sole palladium of the people's rights.[42]

This passage is very carefully worded, in at least two ways. For one, by its use of terms such as "opinion" and "seems," it makes it clear that the

subjects' opinions about injustices in their society are not always necessarily correct, and that those in power need to hear them and credit them, but their responsibilities will ultimately also include judging whether they are in fact correct. For another, Kant's remark that the supreme ruler may be ignorant about the *consequences* of his laws preserves Kant's view that there really is not much room for error about the basic form of just legislation, because that follows so directly from the fundamental principle of morality itself and can be known *a priori*, and that injustice is instead most likely to arise in the transition from basic principles to concrete legislation and even more so in the application of legislation, or the administration of justice. Getting the latter right requires detailed, empirical knowledge of the actual conditions in a state, and ruling authorities, both legislatures and executives, have the obligation to acquire such knowledge.[43]

So that is one kind of knowledge that statesmen must acquire, although it might still be argued that such knowledge is not to be acquired by a special science, but above all, as Kant puts it, through freedom of the pen, or freedom of the press. In contemporary terms, no doubt, statesmen might avail themselves of the results of the social sciences, but because from the Kantian point of view the statesmen are to be concerned with the normative question of justice rather than any descriptive question about levels of or means to happiness, empirical social science cannot be dispositive for them, and in any case they need not be social scientists themselves, but must consider the results of the social sciences as one more kind of empirical evidence to which, as such, they must apply their critical judgment informed by the *a priori* idea of right, which is to determine the distribution of freedom rather than happiness in a state.

But there is another kind of knowledge that statesmen might also be thought to need. This is nothing less than the knowledge that progress toward justice is in fact possible, the political analogue of the knowledge that progress toward a systematic science of nature is possible that Kant elevates to the position of a regulative principle in the introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Kant is far from crystal-clear about what the function of regulative principles really is, but his comments suggest at the very least that knowledge of the possibility of a system of scientific concepts guides the investigations of researchers and prevents them from becoming discouraged in the face of obstacles to their research.[44] That assurance about the possibility of progress toward justice as well as guidance in seeking it can be offered by a proper view of history seems to be Kant's reason for linking history and politics in "Idea for a Universal History." The essay begins, as we saw, with an examination of the conditions for the possibility of justice, in its terms, of how the crooked timber of humanity can be made to grow straight when its rulers, too, are made from crooked timber, this part of its argument culminating with an anticipation of Kant's account of the conditions of international peace in its Seventh Proposition.[45] Only then does Kant actually turn to history, defending as his Eighth Proposition that "One

can regard the history of the human species in the large as the completion of a hidden plan of nature to bring about an inwardly, and, *to this end*, also an externally perfect state constitution, as the only condition in which it can fully develop all its predispositions in humanity."[46] Because Kant will argue both in the *Groundwork* of the following year and in the ultimate *Metaphysics of Morals* that the perfection of our natural predisposition to both physical skills and moral capacities is itself a duty following from the status of humanity as an end rather than a mere means and here treats a just civil constitution as a necessary condition of that perfection, it could be argued that this passage is further evidence for the derivability of the principle of right from the formula of humanity as an end in itself as the ground of a possible categorical imperative. But the present point is that Kant seems to be arguing that such a view of history is itself a factor in the realization of the political and at least in part through that the moral progress of mankind. In the Ninth and concluding Proposition of "Idea for a Universal History," Kant goes on to argue that "A philosophical attempt to work out universal world history according to a plan of nature that aims at the perfect civil union of the human species, must be regarded as possible and *even as furthering this aim of nature*."[47] Because the responsibility of achieving "the perfect civil union of the human species" both intra- and then internationally falls primarily upon politicians or statesman, as we have seen Kant argue in the appendix to *Perpetual Peace*, the highlighted final clause of this statement suggests that a philosophical world history will further nature's aim at such a union through its reception by statesmen. The question is how this is supposed to work.

In the explication of this proposition, Kant goes on to suggest that such a philosophical world history will serve as a "guiding thread," perhaps by making more concrete the *a priori* idea of right that statesmen must strive to implement, but also that by its means

> there will be opened a consoling prospect into the future (which without a plan of nature one cannot hope for with any ground), in which the human species is represented in the remote distance as finally working itself upward toward the condition in which all germs nature has placed in it can be fully developed and its vocation here on earth can be fulfilled. Such a *justification* of nature . . . is no unimportant motive for choosing a particular viewpoint for considering the world.[48]

Kant's use of the term "motive" (*Bewegungsgrund*) in the final clause of this quotation has to be interpreted carefully. Because as he has already suggested in the Sixth Proposition of the "Idea for a Universal History" and, as we saw, will again assert in the appendix on "moral politicians" in *Perpetual Peace*, that intra- and international peace cannot come about without the free choice to be moral on the part of statesmen, and because the ultimate motive for a free choice to be moral can only be, in Kant's view,

respect for the moral law itself, he cannot mean that a view of nature as itself progressing or at least offering the means to progress to justice can itself be a *sufficient* motive for the moral choice of statesmen. On the contrary, moved by self-interest rather than respect for the moral law, statesmen could always freely choose to subvert even the most progressive mechanisms in nature. So Kant must mean that a view of nature as making progress towards universal right possible is a *necessary* condition for the morally motivated statesman. And this is perfectly plausible, for because it is rational to will an end only if one believes that one disposes of an adequate means to it,[49] it would be irrational for one to attempt to do what morality commands if one did not think that it was actually or as Kant typically says really possible. Thus it would be irrational to attempt to bring about intra- and international right if one did not think that nature makes this possible and affords the means or instruments by which it can be done. The moral politician must therefore believe universal right to be possible, indeed not just in order not to become discouraged when progress seems to flag, but to make his efforts rational at all. And, Kant's suggestion is, a philosophical view of history is necessary to ground this belief.

Thus, just statesmen do not need a special science of statesmanship; they have the *a priori* idea of justice or universal principle of right and necessary idea of the social contract to guide them, as indeed do we all. But they do need empirical knowledge of the state of freedom in their countries and of their citizens' beliefs about that, which can only be acquired by allowing their subjects freedom of the pen and press and taking what they write and publish into account, if with the necessary critical judgment, and they also need conviction of the real possibility of progress toward justice, which, at least in Kant's view, they can ground only on a philosophical view of history. Neither of these are equivalent to a science of statesmanship in any traditional sense. But both seem entirely plausible necessary conditions for justice, although only the moral will of those in power can transform them into sufficient conditions.

NOTES

1. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*: A 314–15/B 370–71.
2. *Ibid*., A 316/B 372–73.
3. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Right, §47, 6: 315 (Kant, 1996a: 459).
4. See Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Part One, 6: 36 (Kant, 1996b: 83).
5. Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8: 377 (Kant, 1996a: 344).
6. Fichte, 2000: 11.
7. Pogge, 2002: 149. For other versions of the independence theory, Wood, 2002: especially 5–10; Willaschek, 2002. Willaschek's argument perhaps comes closest to Fichte's further claim that the subjection of oneself to the principle of right and any local laws through which it is applied is voluntary, dependent on

a "free, voluntary decision to live in a community with others" that one can evade by choosing not to live in community with those or any others (Fichte, 2000: 11–12).

8. Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4: 428 (Kant, 1996a: 78).
9. Kant, *Groundwork*, 4: 437 (Kant, 1996a: 86–87).
10. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Virtue, Introduction, section VIII, 6: 392 (Kant, 1996a: 522).
11. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Introduction, section III, 6: 227 (Kant, 1996a: 382).
12. The first section of the *Groundwork* is entitled "Transition from Common Rational to Philosophic Moral Cognition" and can be regarded as deriving the categorical imperative from commonsense conceptions of the good will and duty. It reaches the first formulation of the categorical imperative, the Formula of Universal Law. In the second section, this formula is reached through an analysis on the very concept of a categorical imperative, a philosophical concept that plays no role in the first section, but is then "grounded" in the concept of humanity as end in itself, a philosophical rather than commonsense concept.
13. All quotations from Kant, 1900–: 23.136 (trans. F. Rauscher from Kant, *forthcoming*). This passage may be compared to *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Right, Introduction, Division, 6: 237 (Kant, 1996a: 393–94), where Kant does spells out the content of the innate right to freedom more fully, but does not explicitly say that it follows "from the concept of the freedom of everyone."
14. Especially Wood, 2002. Robert Pippin (2006) tries to split the difference between independence-theorists and dependence-theorists like myself by arguing that Kant's philosophy of right depends upon his concept of freedom but not on the categorical imperative as the fundamental principle of morality. For the reason stated here I do not think that approach can work.
15. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 14.
16. Kant, *Moral Philosophy Collins*, 27: 346 (Kant, 1997: 127).
17. Kant certainly makes a similar argument for the duty of virtue to promote the happiness of all, by applying the moral requirement of universalizability to one's natural interest in happiness, at *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Virtue, §27, 6: 450–51 (Kant, 1996a: 570).
18. Kant, *Natural Right Lecture Notes by Feyerabend*, 27: 1321 (trans. F. Rauscher from Kant, *forthcoming*).
19. Kant, *Loses Blatt C 15*, 23: 129 (trans. F. Rauscher from Kant, *forthcoming*).
20. Kant, *Moral Philosophy Collins*, 27: 346 (Kant, 1997: 127).
21. Kant, *Loses Blatt C 15*, 23: 129 (trans. F. Rauscher from Kant, *forthcoming*).
22. Kant, *Loses Blatt E 47*, second page, 23: 341 (Kant, *forthcoming*: 396).
23. Kant, *Doctrine of Right*, Introduction, section C, 6: 230 (Kant, 1996a: 387).
24. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Introduction, Section I, 6: 217 (Kant, 1996a: 372).
25. See Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Right, Introduction, Section A, 6: 229 (Kant, 1996a: 386).
26. Kant, *Loses Blatt F 4*, on a letter dated June 12, 1795, second page, 23: 347 (Kant, *forthcoming*: 402).
27. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Right, §45, 6: 313 (Kant, 1996a: 457).
28. *Ibid*.
29. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Right, §47, 6: 313 (Kant, 1996a: 459).

30. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Right, §49, 6: 3116–17 (Kant, 1996a: 460).
31. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim," Fifth Proposition, 8: 22 (trans. A. Wood from Kant, 2007).
32. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History," Sixth Proposition, 8: 23 (Kant, 2007: 113–14).
33. I have presented this interpretation of "Idea for a Universal History" more fully in Guyer, 2009.
34. Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8: 350 (Kant, 1996a: 322–23).
35. *Ibid*., 8: 354–57 (Kant, 1996a: 325–8).
36. *Ibid*., 8: 357 (Kant, 1996a: 328).
37. *Ibid*., 8: 360 (Kant, 1996a: 331).
38. *Ibid*., 8: 372 (Kant, 1996a: 340).
39. I have presented the argument of this paragraph more fully, although without the suggestion for reconciling the apparent tension in Kant's account, in Guyer, 2006 and 2008.
40. Kant, "On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, but it is of No Use in Practice," 8: 290–91 (Kant, 1996a: 291).
41. Of course a great deal has been written about Kant's argument(s) against a right to rebellion. For a brief discussion, see Guyer, 2014: 329–40.
42. Kant, "Theory and Practice," 8: 304 (Kant, 1996a: 302).
43. It might be argued that the judiciary, or at least the first-level trial court, has the obligation to acquire accurate knowledge of the laws and of the facts of the cases brought before it, in some systems through the work of juries as fact-finders; appellate or supreme courts might be thought to have an obligation to inform themselves about conditions of justice more generally, although some might argue that risks blurring the boundary between the judiciary and the legislature.
44. For the former, see Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment, §66, and the First Introduction, Section V, 20: 214; for the latter, see the First Introduction, Section V, 20: 212.
45. See Kant, "Idea for a Universal History," Seventh Proposition, 8: 24–26 (Kant, 2007: 114–16).
46. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History," Eighth Proposition, 8: 27 (Kant, 2007: 116).
47. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History," Ninth Proposition," 8: 29 (Kant, 2007: 118, italics added).
48. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History," Ninth Proposition, 8: 30 (Kant, 2007: 119).
49. See Kant, *Groundwork*, Section II, 4: 417 (Kant, 1996a: 70).

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9   Adam Ferguson on Human Nature and Enlightened Governance

Alexander Broadie

I.   INTRODUCTION

The phrase "the science of man" encapsulates well the intellectual project at the heart of the Scottish Enlightenment. The project, a systematic, scientific study of human nature, was to be based on observation and experiment, or, in Hume's phrase, was to be "an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects,"[1] where the term "moral subjects" refers especially to our cognitive powers, our passions, the principles of formation of fundamental beliefs, and of our moral, political, aesthetic, religious, and other values. Amongst Scottish Enlightenment treatises that take forward the project, Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) is no doubt the best known, but many of his Scottish contemporaries wrote works within the scope of the project, such as Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and Thomas Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764). To this list should be added Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767),[2] one of the greatest works of the Scottish Enlightenment, and particularly notable for present purposes in view of the fact that it contains a rich account of human nature as contracted to the nature of the citizen and then to the nature of the statesman, the political leader.

Ferguson's account both defines the goals of the enlightened political leader and also hints at routes to the achievement of those goals. Admittedly the hints are thin, one reason being that Ferguson believes political leaders to have less power than they (and most others) realize; but thin advice is nevertheless advice and therefore on the side of practice and not just theory.

Because knowledge of the historical context of Ferguson's *Essay* enriches understanding of the book in respect both of the scientific approach that Ferguson adopts and also of the conclusions he reaches, I shall note here certain aspects of his life that illuminate the story I wish to tell regarding his views on statesmanship, and shall then turn to the question of the role of science, and especially of scientific methodology in the *Essay*.

Ferguson was a native of Logierait, a village on Scotland's Highland-Lowland line, and consequently grew up speaking Gaelic and English. His

familiarity with Gaelic was matched by his familiarity with Highland culture more generally, including its clan culture with its attendant clan loyalties, systems of mutual support, and high regard for military virtue. Through his father, a Church of Scotland minister, Ferguson absorbed not only Calvinist Presbyterianism, but also Latin and Greek, whose literatures he later studied at St Andrews University. He became a minister of the Kirk and chaplain to the 43rd Regiment of Highlanders, the Black Watch, a post he occupied for nine years. He subsequently became Keeper of the Advocates Library in Edinburgh, and was also for many years professor of pneumatics and moral philosophy at Edinburgh University, during which time he wrote, among other works, the *Essay* and *The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic* (1783), two works that secured for him an international reputation.[3] His background as a Gaelic speaker and member of the British army meant that he was an unusual member of the literati, the leading figures of the Scottish Enlightenment. We shall see shortly some of the ways in which his unusual qualities impacted on his thought.

II. FERGUSON'S SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO HUMAN NATURE

Hume's description of his *Treatise of Human Nature* as "an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects" suggests that his model is Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, and indeed in places the language Hume uses in the *Treatise* is an invitation to the reader to see the *Treatise* as a *Principia Moralia*, accomplishing in respect of human nature what the *Principia Mathematica* had accomplished in respect of the order of the material world. The approach is grounded in sensory observation and in experimentation on the sensorily observed. Hypotheses, understood in the Newtonian sense, are to be eschewed.[4] To this it should be added that, to speak generally, a larger data base is better than a smaller one. As applied to the scientific study of human nature this means that the more the philosopher of human nature knows about human beings from many different places, including distant ones, and from different times, including distantly past ones, the better placed he will be to construct a rich and scientifically well-grounded account of human nature. This scientific methodology, used to spectacular effect by Hume, Smith, and Reid, among others, is no less at the heart of the work of Ferguson.

Ferguson's scientific intentions are on display from the opening pages of the *Essay*, when he discusses the scientific credentials of the doctrine that in the historical order of things human beings lived in a state of nature before living in a social state. He had read, for example, the Enlightenment explorers Cadwallader Colden (1727), Pierre-François Xavier de Charlevoix (1744), and probably also Joseph-François Lafitau (1724), all of whom had written large books on the basis of their extensive observations of the

indigenous peoples of North America; Ferguson also knew his Bible, and was well-read in the histories, and more generally the literatures, of Greece and Rome, and nothing in all this great mass of material suggested to him that humans had lived in a pre-social state.

Ferguson is not denying that there is such a thing as a state of nature. Quite the contrary, all the scientific evidence points to the conclusion that there is such a state, for it is according to human nature that we live in a social state. In short, for human beings the social state is what the state of nature is, and Ferguson's investigation proceeds on the basis that social states differ in that some are less and others are more civilized, or, also in his terms, that societies can be placed on a spectrum from the more rude to the more polite. These terms work hard in Enlightenment narratives on social progress or improvement, and they prompt a question concerning the role of enlightened political leadership in the change from rudeness to politeness, and, in particular, for our purposes, concerning the extent of an enlightened political leader's power to deliver and secure a high level of politeness or civility in society. We shall see that Ferguson's optimism on this matter was heavily qualified.

III.   LIMITS TO KNOWLEDGE AND TO POWER

Ferguson accepted one version of the doctrine of the primacy of practical reason: "Men are to be estimated, not from what they know, but from what they are able to perform; from their skill in adapting materials to the several purposes of life; from their vigour and conduct in pursuing the objects of policy, and in finding the expedients of war and national defence."[5] Knowledge is not thereby decried, of course; the question is whether a person's knowledge has contributed to his performance of a worthwhile act, hence Ferguson's scornful remark: "we read of societies, but do not propose to act with men; we repeat the language of politics, but feel not the spirit of nations; we attend to the formalities of a military discipline, but know not how to employ numbers of men to obtain any purpose by stratagem or force."[6]

I shall return shortly to the fact that in this pair of citations Ferguson especially has in mind knowledge of military matters, and is skeptical about the likelihood that such knowledge will have a worthwhile outcome. But I shall first note that he is also interested in sorts of case in which the problem is not the person's failure to progress from knowledge to action, but his failure to acquire the knowledge that he needs if he is to act well, and he is particularly interested in the kind of case where the agent is a political leader or statesman, someone who could improve many lives if only he had the knowledge, and if only he was motivated towards virtue. In relation to the craft of statesmanship the point here at issue concerns the fact that the statesman needs to be aware of the cognitive limits under which he operates.

One of Ferguson's examples concerns the question of the populousness of ancient nations, a matter widely discussed during the Enlightenment. At issue is the fact that for communities both small and large the size of population was a factor in the preservation of the community. Especially where the society was under threat from other groups, increase in population was perceived by the society to be a desirable goal. But how is it to be achieved?

Ferguson approaches the matter in a scientific spirit, as, in his view, the statesman also should. Ferguson asks in effect what a statesman in such a society ought to know about population growth, and in offering an answer he accumulates evidence from historical, social anthropological, and other sources, including evidence from ancient Rome, North America, Formosa and China: from ancient Rome, where the rape of the Sabine women was the outcome of a policy regarding population size, and where Octavius introduced laws designed to increase population; from North America, where a woman's decision concerning when to conceive was in part a function of the hardship she believed she and the child would undergo in consequence; and from China and Formosa, where there were laws concerning the age at which marriage was permissible and concerning the parental right to kill a child, all this as part of a policy on population. Ferguson's conclusion, in face of the mass of empirical evidence, is that:

> A people intent on freedom, find for themselves a condition in which they may follow the propensities of nature with a more signal effect, than any which the councils of state could devise. When sovereigns, or projectors, are the supposed masters of this subject, the best they can do, is to be cautious of hurting an interest they cannot greatly promote, and of making breaches they cannot repair.[7]

Ferguson notes that many of the decisions taken by statesmen to increase population have proved failures and that, where populations have indeed increased, this has been due not to decisions taken by statesmen but to the ordinary activities of an industrious people allowed to pursue their activities relatively free from the interference of politicians who do not know nearly enough to be helpful. This is not to say that the statesman can do nothing to help a population to grow; he can plant colonies and strive to repair the occasional wastes of pestilence or war, but other than such things, in Ferguson's phrase, the statesman "can do little more than avoid doing mischief."[8] Success comes principally from the autonomous activities of many people seeing what is best for themselves given their precise circumstances, and acting on the basis of their well-founded knowledge; success does not come from statesmen's "visionary plans."[9] Certain areas—national defense, the distribution of justice, and the preservation and internal prosperity of the state—are declared to "furnish an employment for statesmen," but those areas also "lead the apprehensions and the reasonings of mankind in every

society."[10] We all play, or should play, a part in the realization of these targets, and a statesman's wisdom is measured by extent of his insight into how little good, and how much harm, he can do, and by the consequent extent of his self-imposed restraint in his legislative activity. As regards what the statesman can do that positively helps his nation towards what Ferguson terms "political felicity," this seems at first sight to be covered by his reference to the time "when every individual is protected in his place, and left to pursue the suggestion of his wants,"[11] but in the following pages I should like to suggest a rather different and more substantive Fergusonian narrative regarding the interesting phrase "political felicity." My route to the narrative will be via a discussion of the familiar principle of the division of labor.

IV. THE DIVISION OF LABOR

The principle of the division of labor, a principle with a history stretching back at least to Plato, was widely accepted during the Age of Enlightenment as defining a means to economic progress. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) contains the Scottish Enlightenment's classic statement of the principle, but nine years earlier that same principle is at work in Ferguson's *Essay*, where it is accepted as a general principle of economic progress:

> The artist finds, that the more he can confine his attention to a particular part of any work, his productions are the more perfect, and grow under his hands in the greater quantities. Every undertaker in manufacture finds, that the more he can subdivide the tasks of his workmen, and the more hands he can employ on separate articles, the more are his expenses diminished, and his profits increased.[12]

But the claim that the principle is valid in respect of all roles is an empirical one, and therefore empirically checkable, and Ferguson believes there to be at least two counterexamples, the two being of a similar nature, mutually supportive and, within Ferguson's narrative, inseparable. The roles in question, those of the politician and the soldier, are, for several reasons, pertinent to the topic of Ferguson's account of the enlightened statesman. One concerns the educative power of war. In his discussion of war, Ferguson declares that "he who has never struggled with his fellow-creatures, is a stranger to half the sentiments of mankind."[13] Because he believes that the statesman should be well-informed about human nature, and especially human passions, he must believe also that the statesman's education is seriously deficient if he has not fought in battle. (I add in parenthesis that he must also believe that one who, unlike himself, has not lived a military life, is thereby ill-placed to write a scientifically well-founded treatise of human nature.)

As regards the role of the soldier vis-à-vis the principle of the division of labor, the question at issue is whether there should be people whose

speciality is soldiering, a question equivalent, for Ferguson, to the question whether a country should be served by a standing army. There are obvious reasons why a standing army must be the best defense option for a nation. The soldiers will be fit, well-armed and efficient in the use of arms, and they will be well-disciplined. The officers will be well-informed on matters of strategy and tactics. Of course, Ferguson sees nothing wrong with the idea that soldiers should have all these virtues. But he sees several things wrong with the idea of a standing army. His most extended discussion is in his pamphlet *Reflections Previous to the Establishment of a Militia* (1756), written at a time when what would come to be known as the Seven Years War loomed and Britain faced the prospect of a French invasion.

Ferguson's chief concern was that Britain's standing army may not be appropriately motivated, this at least in part because the army was composed of professionals; the soldiers were full time, therefore did not, for the most part, have the time needed to do other work for which they could be paid, and hence they had to be paid a living wage for soldiering. In a thoroughly Machiavellian vein[14] Ferguson argues that if they are paid to fight, then perhaps many of them will fight for the sake of the pay, not for the sake of the society that paid for their services; in which case those fighters will not be motivated by the spirit of society, for they will be fighting for themselves, not for others. Such a state of affairs raises the possibility that the standing army, seeking to do the best it could for itself, would see its paymasters as possible prey. And if the army turns on the society that is paying it for protection, who will protect the society from its army? The society cannot protect itself, for it is not itself composed of fighters—had it been it would not have needed to employ others to fight its battles for it. As Ferguson states the point:

> Times may come, when every proprietor must defend his own possessions, and every free people maintain their own independence. We may imagine, that against such an extremity, an army of hired troops is a sufficient precaution; but their own troops are the very enemy against which a people are sometimes obliged to fight. . . . [Then] the multitude of a cowardly and undisciplined people must, on such an emergence, receive a foreign or a domestic enemy, as they would a plague or an earthquake, with hopeless amazement and terror, and by their numbers, only swell the triumphs, and enrich the spoil of a conqueror.[15]

Ferguson's response to these arguments is to say that a society should be defended by militias, that is, by citizen armies, and not by standing armies; for citizen armies, formed by "zeal for their own community, and courage to maintain its rights,"[16] will be motivated by the spirit of society and not by the spirit of self or of class. In 1776, when the American Revolution succeeded, partly by means of the militias, Ferguson gently chided Adam Smith who had previously expressed a belief in the superiority of standing armies over militias.[17] Adam Smith replied that a militia

must always be much inferior to a well disciplined and well exercised standing army . . . A militia of any kind, it must be observed, however, which has served for several successive campaigns in the field, becomes in every respect a standing army . . . Should the war in America drag out through another campaign, the American militia may become in every respect a match for the [British] standing army.[18]

Ferguson would no doubt have replied that as well as the experience gained on the battlefield, the American militias, motivated by the spirit of society, had the special advantage of militias, that is, that they were fighting from within an endlessly sympathetic and supportive community enthusiastic for the work of the militias, whereas the British standing army was, to speak generally, fighting several thousand miles from sympathetic, supportive populations, as well as from its principal sources of supplies.

V.   THE VIRTUES OF CITIZENSHIP

Having noted the problems attaching to a standing army and the Fergusonian response to them, I turn now to the precisely matching problems attaching to a professional political class. As we shall see, the latter set of problems calls forth from Ferguson a formally identical response. To anticipate the main ideas at issue, it should be said that, from the perspective of this paper, four points inseparably link Ferguson's discussions of militias and of statesmen: First, a wise statesman will have sufficient insight into human nature to know that society should be defended by a militia, not by a standing army; secondly, a wise statesman will have military experience, for without it he will lack a sufficiently deep understanding of human nature; thirdly, a wise statesman and a militia will be motivated by the spirit of society, not by the spirit of self or the spirit of class; and fourthly, the principle of division of labor is limited to the extent that a statesman should be not only a statesman but also have experience of other roles in society, particularly military roles; and soldiers, in so far as they belong to a militia, are not professional soldiers, and therefore need to have another job as well—that is what it is to belong to a citizen army.

There are many sentences in the *Essay* in which Ferguson mentions together the roles of statesman and soldier; far from seeing the two roles as mutually incompatible, he holds them to be mutually supportive, and indeed he might fairly be interpreted as promoting the idea that society should be led by a warrior-statesman, somewhat corresponding to Plato's idea of a philosopher-king, a position that plainly implies a Fergusonian limit of sorts to the principle of the division of labor. A moral sort of limit to the principle is visible in the affirmation:

By having separated the arts of the clothier and the tanner, we are the better supplied with shoes and with cloth. But to separate the arts which

form the citizen and the statesman, the arts of policy and war, is an attempt to dismember the human character, and to destroy those very arts we mean to improve.[19]

Ferguson is here considering the chief source of threat to a well-functioning commercial society, and I shall now offer an account of his view.

In a famous passage Adam Smith writes: "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages."[20] The kind of self-interested behavior here described is to be found, according to Smith, throughout the operations of the commercial stage of society. Far from deploring the universal exercise of self-interest, Smith proceeds to demonstrate that, as an unintended consequence of such behavior, public utility is well-served. On these matters, there is no difference between Smith and Ferguson. Nor is there one as regards the question of the moral assessment of our self-interest in matters economic. Smith's *homo economicus* is not any the less a human being for engaging in economic activity. He remains *homo moralis*, taking moral elements, including moral rules and his propensity to sympathy, with him into his economic activity. In a word, economic activity must occur within a moral framework; and if an economic act is morally unacceptable, then it is unacceptable *tout court*, and therefore unacceptable no matter what economic benefit it might produce.

But although all this is, as I say, no less Ferguson's doctrine than it is Smith's, they differ in respect of the focus of their concern about the moral impact of the economic activity characteristic of life in the commercial stage of society. Smith focuses on the potentially destructive aspect of the systematic application of the division of labor, arguing that if that potential is not counteracted, then the workforce will become diminished in spirit, morale, and intellectual competence. Because this would be a morally unacceptable outcome of the principle of division of labor, then either the application of the principle has to be curbed or a positive solution compatible with its continued application has to be found.[21]

By contrast with Smith, Ferguson focuses on the "sanguine affection" that every Greek bore to his country and the "devoted patriotism" of the early Romans, and injects a note of concern about modern society, a concern that constitutes an agenda for action by an enlightened statesman. This requires exploration.[22]

Although, even in earlier stages of society, human beings who are engaged in barter look at their fellows as sources of profit, Ferguson believes that in the commercial stage there is a particular danger that this attitude to other people may become our primary response to them, trumping friendliness, affection, and in general the agreeable feelings that constitute the affective bonds of society. The general feature of the commercial stage of a society

that delivers this lamentable outcome is the society's success at producing prosperity, and the more particular feature is the role of the merchant or trader as contributor to that prosperity. The purpose of the merchant is to make a financial profit for himself by trade, a purpose that defines society at the fourth, the commercial, stage. We should bear in mind that the stadial theory has a value dimension, with each stage having a distinct value related to the productivity of the stage. In this sense the person successful at delivering profit by trade is the hero of a commercial society, and what he is good at, namely financially profiting from other people, defines the age.

The merchant's skill is in a sense a principle of social unity to the extent that its exercise is predicated upon a relationship of negotiation between buyer and seller. But even if the parties are bound to each other in a bond of companionship, nevertheless qua negotiators they are not companions but competitors, whose relationship does not include in its definition love, friendliness, hostility, or anger, or any other affection, whether agreeable or disagreeable. Qua negotiators the parties' wishes are solely for profit, and as such the relation between the parties is but barely human. It is with this thought in mind that Ferguson affirms: "It is here indeed, if ever, that man is sometimes found a detached and a solitary being: he has found an object which sets him in competition with his fellow-creatures, and he deals with them as he does with his cattle and his soil, for the sake of the profits they bring."[23] The competitive nature of the relation is essential; the buyer wishes the asking price lowered while the seller wishes the buyer's offer raised. The relation is therefore essentially conflictual, where the conflict is distinctive in that the parties regard each other first and foremost as a source of profit. The fact that the commercial society is characterized by its population of detached and solitary beings is further implied in a telling assertion that Ferguson makes in his discussion of the consequences of advancement of civil and commercial arts: "Nations of tradesmen come to consist of members who, beyond their own particular trade, are ignorant of all human affairs, and who may contribute to the enlargement of their commonwealth, without making its interest an object of their regard or attention."[24] In short, the fact that merchants financially enrich their community, and perhaps also benefit it in other ways, does not imply either that they are motivated in any way to confer these benefits or that they are in some way less isolated in their community than they would be if they were not in fact conferring benefits on it.

Of particular importance for Ferguson is the fact that in a society at the commercial stage of development the profit motive is especially likely to favor self-interested behavior. Nevertheless, there is no suggestion in this that all or even most people in a commercial society are motivated first and foremost, and perhaps solely, by self-interest. In an important passage he notes that human self-interestedness has its limits:

> in the best there is an alloy of evil; in the worst a mixture of good.
> Without any establishments to preserve their manners, besides penal

laws, and the restraints of police, they derive, from instinctive feelings, a love of integrity and candour, and, from the very contagion of society itself, an esteem for what is honourable and praise-worthy. They derive, from their union, and joint opposition to foreign enemies, a zeal for their own community, and courage to maintain its rights. If the frequent neglect of virtue as a political object, tend to discredit the understandings of men, its lustre, and its frequency, as a spontaneous offspring of the heart, will restore the honours of our nature.[25]

All stages of society are witness to self-interested acts, and the commercial life of the fourth stage is especially noteworthy for the intensity of its promotion of self-interest; but in any society, and in any circumstance, morally admirable behavior might prevail in a struggle with self-interested motives.

Although Ferguson believes there to be grounds for pessimism about where, morally speaking, we are heading as our society proceeds along the spectrum from the rude to the polite, nevertheless he is not bereft of hope that things can be turned round. The turnaround is expressed by him in terms of a movement of the spirit, and it is noteworthy that the term "spirit" is hard at work throughout the *Essay*. His phraseology is varied; he writes of the animated spirit of society, public spirit, the upright and generous spirit, incentives of a national spirit, the spirit of national independence, a public spirit, the democratical spirit, the spirit of equality, and so on. Although noting the morally significant bonds of family and friendship, the spirit on which he focuses in contrast to the morally inadequate spirit of the self, or even the spirit of class, is the spirit of the nation or of society, the public spirit; and the preeminent task of the enlightened statesman is to foster this wider spirit. The phrase "enlightened statesman" is not one that Ferguson himself uses, but it well expresses a concept that is to be extrapolated with ease from his *Essay*, and for the remainder of this paper, and on the basis of his teaching, I shall seek to offer an exposition of the phrase.

VI. FERGUSON AND THE SPARTAN CONSTITUTION

It is appropriate here to note the remarkable extent to which two aspects of Ferguson's life, already mentioned, are at work in the *Essay*. First, as regards his early life as a native Gaelic speaker in a village on the southern edge of the Scottish Highlands, he is in consequence familiar with the Highland clan system, with its focus on the virtue of commitment to the clan, a commitment understood in terms of loyalty, fortitude, and willingness personally to defend the object of one's loyalty. Such commitment, measured in terms of loyalty, fortitude, and willingness personally to fight

for what one stands for, was no less prominent in the Black Watch Regiment that was Ferguson's home for nine years. Secondly, as regards the fact that Ferguson was a cradle Presbyterian and minister of the Kirk, he was familiar with, and must have felt utterly at home in, a church whose form of governance is bottom-up, in that Kirk sessions, the lowest rung, composed of ministers and lay persons, confer authority on presbyteries, which are also composed of ministers and lay persons, and these, in turn, confer authority on the General Assembly, also composed of ministers and lay persons, which is the highest governing body of the Kirk. The lay members play both an essential and a highly prominent role, and are indeed eligible for the moderatorship, the annually renewed post of chair of the General Assembly.

In this picture of Kirk governance there are significant elements of classical republicanism, which have a bearing on Ferguson's interest in the Roman Republic. He was also, as noted earlier, familiar with classical Greek history and was much more kindly disposed to Spartan governance than were his friends David Hume and Adam Smith. In his judgment he writes of the Spartans:

> Every institution of this singular people gave a lesson of obedience, of fortitude, and of zeal for the public: but it is remarkable that they chose to obtain, by their virtues alone, what other nations are fain to buy with their treasure; and it is well known, that, in the course of their history, they came to regard their discipline merely on account of its moral effects.[26]

Two points emerge immediately from this passage. First, because Ferguson believes the three great virtues of the soldier to be obedience, fortitude, and zeal for the public, and because he believes these virtues to have been taught by all Spartan institutions, he is by implication saying that it is not possible to distinguish between Spartan society and its army; on his analysis, Sparta did not merely have an army, it was one.

Secondly, the concept of a standing army, a professional army, made up in effect therefore of mercenaries, is wholly incompatible with the Spartan way of life. Sparta's soldiers were militiamen, animated not by thoughts of pay, but by the spirit of society. An insightful statesman, motived by a zeal for the public and therefore seeking above all to secure the defense of their country, would recognize the greater strength of militias relative to that of standing armies, and so would be motivated by the spirit of society to learn how the citizens could be educated into a "zeal for the public," a "spirit of society," if they do not already have such a spirit. Granted the statesman's insight into human nature, he would know that there was already in place a foundation of virtue on which to build. We should recall that Ferguson was struck by the fact that, for the Spartans,

virtue was an object of their social disciplines; the institutions of Spartan society gave lessons in obedience, fortitude, and zeal for the public, and it was these citizenly virtues, not conquest, at which the institutions aimed. But the fact that what was taught by the institutions of Sparta was the enhancement of something already present in the citizens is indicated by Ferguson when, in speaking about virtue, he affirms that: "its lustre, and its frequency, as a spontaneous offspring of the heart, will restore the honours of our nature," and when he affirms also that mankind "derive, from instinctive feelings, a love of integrity and candour, and, from the very contagion of society itself, an esteem for what is honourable and praise-worthy."[27]

The problem of course is how to build on this foundation of natural virtue. Ferguson responds with a two-stage analysis. At the first stage, and here I recapitulate, he makes three observations: (1) that defense by a militia, which is a better form of defense than a standing army, is a form of participatory citizenship, for a militia *is* a citizen army; (2) that in principle a militia is incompatible with the unconstrained application of the doctrine of division of labor, for, in the manner of the Spartan constitution, all citizens are in principle eligible for service in a militia no matter what their regular form of employment may be; and (3) that while application of the principle of division of labor is an essential tool in economic progress, the principle of participatory citizenship trumps that of unconstrained division of labor. The second stage of Ferguson's response is to note that what is true of national defense is no less true of politics. That is to say, participatory citizenship, is essential for a morally sound politics. This two-stage analysis is based upon a scientifically slanted reading of human nature and leads, at the last, to the conclusion that an enlightened statesman would use his powers to promote and to reinforce the principle of participatory citizenship, where that last phrase is understood in a full-blooded sense of the term. I turn now, therefore, to note a central feature of the kind of relation that an enlightened statesman would seek to foster between a citizenry and their politicians.

VII.   THE CITIZENS AND THEIR POLITICIANS

For Ferguson participatory citizenship involves, above all, a willingness by the citizens, not just a few, but the generality of the citizens, both to be well-informed about the intentions and acts of those exercising political leadership and also to engage in robust public debate on the basis of their information about political matters. In the absence of resolute participatory activity, and especially of unremitting scrutiny of the political leaders, civil liberties will be withdrawn and despotism will be enabled to thrive. A "refractory and turbulent zeal"[28] by the citizens is thus needed as a basic line of defense of a free society. It is therefore not surprising that Ferguson

should be suspicious of unanimity. Some think unanimity a good thing, as a sign of peace, but Ferguson writes to the contrary:

> our very praise of unanimity, therefore, is to be considered as a danger to liberty. We wish for it at the hazard of taking in its place, the remissness of men grown indifferent to the public; the venality of those who have sold the rights of their country; or the servility of others, who give implicit obedience to a leader by whom their minds are subdued.[29]

The form of participatory citizenship in modern Western democracies falls short, as regards both *mentalité* and behavior, of what an enlightened statesman would seek to promote. He would promote far more than the citizen's right to vote every few years, and far more than the sense of obligation that one should vote. The point is to diminish or erase the class distinction between politicians and the rest. On Ferguson's account, all citizens should regard themselves as politicians, motivated by the values of liberty and justice, and willing therefore to scrutinize and to hold to account the state's political leaders and its magistrates, and to demonstrate a "refractory and turbulent zeal" in defense of those values. The real hero of Ferguson's *Essay* is the *citoyen engagé*, understanding that concept in the terms I have just deployed. Within a state that operates in the way described, there could be many political parties, but there would be only one political class, that consisting of all the citizens; the reason being that everyone, whatever else they did, would also be a politician, imbued with the spirit of society. Nothing more demonstrates the enlightened nature of the enlightened political leader than his policy not only to tolerate but even to promote the citizens' zeal, refractory and turbulent when necessary, on behalf of liberty and justice, even, and perhaps especially, where that zeal leads to citizenly scrutiny and critique of the enlightened political leader himself.

As well as the enlightened leader's promotion of the citizens' zeal on behalf of liberty and justice, there is another sort of promotion inseparable from the *Essay*'s narrative, and I shall end by commenting on this latter sort. Ferguson deploys his grasp of the "science of man" not only to develop the concept of the enlightened political leader but also to promote the kind of leadership at issue. Famously David Hume distinguishes between two kinds of moral philosopher: the anatomist, who discovers the mind's secret springs and principles and endeavors to inform his readers of these, and on the other hand the painter, who represents virtue in the most amiable colors, and describes it in a manner "best fitted to please the imagination, and engage the affections."[30] Hume, when accused by Francis Hutcheson of lacking "warmth in the cause of virtue," responded by describing himself as an anatomist rather than a painter.[31] It should be said, therefore, that Hutcheson's criticism of Hume's *Treatise* could not fairly be directed at Ferguson's *Essay*, which is not only a scientific masterpiece as regards the *Essay*'s account of the springs and principles of human action,

but is also a masterly exercise of rhetoric in respect of the warm and agreeable colors in which it paints civic virtue and the darker, more sinister hues deployed for the portrayal of civic vice. It is as *citoyen engagé* that Ferguson writes, seeking not only to inform but also, and thereby, to change people's behavior by persuading them of his vision of an enlightened civil society.

NOTES

1. The subtitle of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* (Hume, 1978).
2. I shall be citing Ferguson, 1995 (hereinafter *Essay*, followed by page number).
3. For detailed biographical information see Oz-Salzberger, 2004; Fagg, 1995.
4. "I have not as yet been able to discover the reason for these properties of gravity from phenomena, and I do not feign hypotheses. For whatever is not deduced from the phenomena must be called a hypothesis; and hypotheses, whether metaphysical or physical, or based on occult qualities, or mechanical, have no place in experimental philosophy. In this philosophy particular propositions are inferred from the phenomena, and afterwards rendered general by induction." See, Newton, 1726: 943.
5. *Essay*, 33.
6. *Ibid.*, 34.
7. *Ibid.*, 136.
8. *Ibid.*, 138.
9. *Ibid.*, 136.
10. *Ibid.*, 131.
11. *Ibid.*, 163.
12. *Ibid.*, 172–73.
13. *Ibid.*, 28.
14. Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs.12–13.
15. *Essay*, 215–16.
16. *Ibid.*, 208.
17. Smith, 1987: Letter 154, p. 194.
18. Smith, 1981: 700, 701. Smith was a member of the Poker Club, which had been founded by Ferguson with the aim of stirring up support for a Scottish militia; England and Wales were legally allowed to have militia, but Scotland, distrusted after the Jacobite uprising of 1745–1746, was not. Although Smith nowhere expresses warmth for the idea that a militia could ever be a match for a well-regulated and well-disciplined standing army, he does not disapprove of militias entirely. See Smith, 1987: Letter 208, p. 251.
19. *Essay*, 218.
20. Smith, 1981: 26–27.
21. *Ibid.*, 785–88. Smith's solution is a system of state schools, which are to be paid for out of taxation, and for which Smith provides a sketch of the syllabus.
22. *Essay*, 24.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, 173.
25. *Ibid.*, 156.
26. *Ibid.*, 142.
27. *Ibid.*, 156.
28. *Ibid.*, 160.

29. *Ibid.*, 252.
30. Hume, 1999: 87–88.
31. Hume, 1932: 32.

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10 The American Founders' New Science of Politics

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> *Il faut une science politique nouvelle*
> *a un monde tout nouveau.*
>
> De Tocqueville, *De la Democratie en Amerique*

The "new science" to which my title refers is neither the *scienza nuova* of Vico in the sixteenth century nor *The New Science of Politics* bemoaned and bewailed by Eric Voegelin in the late 1950s. It is, rather, a new and distinctly American science of institutional and constitutional design embraced by the American Founders in the late eighteenth century. The singular and perhaps startling upshot is that Americans have for more than two centuries lived in the first scientifically designed polity.[1]

It is of course true that the idea of a science of politics—that is, of subjecting political phenomena to systematic scientific study—is as old as Aristotle, and as recent as Robert Dahl and other "behavioral revolutionaries" of the 1950s and up to the present. My purpose here is to focus on a single era and episode in this long history. The American founding era of the late eighteenth century is rich in references to a "new science" of politics, as Tocqueville was by no means the first to recognize. "A new political science," he wrote, "is needed for a world itself quite new."[2] The sheer size, the scale, the laws and institutions of "the first new nation"[3] were unprecedented and seemed to require new concepts and categories to capture, describe, and explain their existence, extent, and operation. Even the new nation's inhabitants seemed to some to spring from nowhere, like Adam in the Garden of Eden. "Who then is this American, this new man?" asked Hector St. John de Crevecoeur.[4] My aim here, however, is not to focus on the psyche or identity of the "new American man," as I have attempted to do elsewhere,[5] but to look at several Founders' conceptions of science and of scientific reasoning generally, and their idea of a science of politics more particularly.

Hannah Arendt has written of "the Founding Fathers' enthusiastic and sometimes slightly comical erudition in political theory."[6] She is of course quite correct in taking note of the Founders' enthusiasm and erudition, risible or no, but mistaken in claiming that these are closely connected to

political theory—a term none of the Founders ever employ. They speak always and invariably of "the science of politics" (or government) and never of political theory (or philosophy). For the Founders this was, as we shall see, a distinction with a difference.

I propose to proceed in the following way. I begin by briefly describing the first of America's two founding documents—the Declaration of Independence—and its allegedly scientific, or more specifically, its Newtonian provenance. I next recount, at greater length, "the science of politics" that informed the drafting and subsequent justification of the Constitution of the United States. My contention is that the Founders' science of politics is not only identifiably and distinctly Humean—as is now generally acknowledged[7]—but that the character of this new science has been misunderstood. What John Adams called "the divine science of politics" is, I argue, an applied science, more closely akin to engineering than to abstract and ahistorical political theory.

I.   THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In the early 1770s tensions between Britain and her American colonies grew ever more intractable, and on June 7, 1775, the Second Continental Congress issued a resolution stating "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." The resolution followed the fact, because the first shots had already been fired at Lexington and Concord. The Congress knew that it must follow this by issuing a document declaring American independence. This was to be both a justification and an appeal addressed not only to Americans but to Britons and, they hoped, to future French allies.

Congress appointed a five-man drafting committee whose members included John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and its youngest member, Thomas Jefferson. Adams successfully lobbied the other members to appoint Jefferson to draft the Declaration, noting that "Mr. Jefferson came into Congress, in June, 1775, and brought with him a reputation for literature, science, and a happy talent of composition."[8] Over his objections, real or feigned, Jefferson was appointed.

Remembered today mainly as the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson was an American *philosophe* and man of ideas—scientific ideas, he believed—for whom "my trinity of the three greatest men the world had ever produced" were Newton, Locke, and Bacon.[9] He kept their portraits in his study and proudly showed them to all visitors. It is surely significant that all three were distinctly modern thinkers and that two of the three—Newton and Bacon—were natural scientists, and the third an "under-laborer" dedicated to clearing a path for the advancement of

science. In his "Epistle to the Reader" in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) Locke wrote:

> The commonwealth of learning is not at this time without master-builders, whose mighty designs, in advancing the sciences, will leave lasting monuments to the admiration of posterity; but every one must not hope to be a Boyle or a Sydenham; and in an age that produces such masters as the great Huygenius and the incomparable Mr. Newton, with some others of that strain, it is ambition enough to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge.

In Jefferson's view, the modest "under-laborer" was on a par with "the incomparable Mr. Newton." And, as I shall argue, Jefferson's Declaration—contrary to the claims of several influential interpreters—is much less a Newtonian than a Lockean document.

Garry Wills contends that Jefferson's Declaration was not only a moral and political document but a "scientific paper" as well.[10] This becomes apparent if we look at the language of the Declaration. In its opening paragraph it speaks of causation and necessity:

> When, in the *course* of human events, it becomes *necessary* for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which *the laws of nature* and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the *causes* which *impel* them to the separation.[11]

In eighteenth-century parlance a "course" was a determinate path, chute or waterway which channeled and propelled all before it in an irresistible or "necessary" way. Just as rivers run their courses, so, too, do human beings, whose actions exhibit a law-like regularity that renders predictability possible. As Hume put it, "There is a general course of nature in human actions, as well as in the operations of the sun and the climate."[12] "The laws of nature" were likewise laws of necessity that even "nature's God" cannot resist.[13] The American colonists are "impelled" by "causes" not of their own making and over which they have little, if any, control. This has appeared to some scholarly commentators as nothing short of a politicized Newtonianism put to revolutionary use.

Among the most influential interpretations of the Declaration as a "Newtonian" document are those offered by Carl Becker, Garry Wills, and Bernard Cohen.[14] Wills writes that the "Declaration's opening is Newtonian."[15] And so it might be. But the attributions of Newtonian influence are very vague indeed. There are allusions to or "echoes" of Newton,[16] especially in Jefferson's invocation of "the laws of nature"—a phrase that appears in

Newton's *Opticks* but not in his *Principia*;[17] but that same phrase is also to be found in works by Grotius, Puffendorf, Hobbes, and other authors Jefferson had read—including Locke (by my count at least eleven times in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the *Two Treatises of Government*, and other books in Jefferson's library). And, more significantly still, a fact noted by none of these commentators, is that even though the Declaration differs markedly from Jefferson's "The Rights of British America," written only two years earlier (July 1774), that document also includes the phrase "the laws of nature" but includes none of the language of causation, necessity, and the like.[18] Thus to term this and other phrases and words "Newtonian" requires something of a single-minded leap of faith. The first paragraph is, moreover, the one and only "Newtonian"-sounding passage; all the rest is pure Locke, from the *Second Treatise*.[19] Add to this the brute numerical fact that the famous opening paragraph is less than 1/20th the length of the whole, and claims for the Declaration's allegedly Newtonian provenance seem less credible.

There is also another, non-Newtonian way of reading the opening paragraphs of the Declaration, and that is as a legal or at least a quasi-legal document. The concept of cause is indispensable in legal discourse (as in "showing cause" or a "cause of action") and is used for, among other things, assigning responsibility and determining culpability or guilt.[20] All legal proceedings are alike in having judge and/or jury consider evidence, some of which is too obvious to dispute—that is, its validity or truth is "self-evident." The Declaration, one might almost say, comes under the purview of the law of torts, inasmuch as it recommends revolution as a way to right a series of wrongs committed by the Crown and Commons. Not for nothing does the greater part of the Declaration consist of a long list of specific grievances. Thus "the causes which impel them to the separation" are not Newtonian natural causes but are the legal and moral harms visited upon the American colonists by their British masters. That Jefferson was an amateur scientist but a professional lawyer surely cannot be discounted or overlooked in tracing the intellectual provenance of the Declaration of Independence.

One's faith in a Newtonian interpretation is further undermined if one looks at Jefferson's original draft of the Declaration, as distinguished from the version edited and amended by the Congress. One of the most striking expressions—"We hold these truths to be self-evident"—appears, in Jefferson's draft, as, "We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable." Thus commentators who contend that Jefferson meant in saying "self-evident," something like "axiomatic"—after the fashion of Euclid and/or Newton[21]—are, I believe, grasping at straws. For it was, after all, Congress that changed "sacred and undeniable" to "self-evident."[22]

For many—too many—commentators the adjective "Newtonian" vaguely connotes mechanism, determinism, and the like. (Many other adjectives, e.g. Hobbesian, could serve the same purpose.) In any event, most commentators

(Cohen being a notable exception)[23] who bandy about the adjective "Newtonian" appear to have little or no understanding of Newton's theory and what it does or does not entail. What is most original and distinctive about Newtonian theory, as expounded in his *Principia Mathematica*, are the intricate and elaborate mathematical formulae and proofs. And there is absolutely no equivalent in the allegedly Newtonian theorizing about politics by Jefferson or anyone else.

Although Newton's influence might well have been present, and perhaps even palpable in the opening paragraph, Jefferson himself never claimed as much. As late as 1825—a year before his and Adams's death on July 4, 1826, exactly fifty years to the day after the Declaration was signed— Jefferson wrote that "the object of the Declaration of Independence" was

> not to find out new principles, or new arguments, never before thought of, not merely to say things which had never been said before; but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independent stand we are compelled to take. Neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind, and to give to that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion. All its authority rests then on the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, &c.[24]

Is it significant that there is mention of Locke but not of Newton? My own guess—educated, but a guess nevertheless—is that Newton's influence *might* have been present during the drafting of the Declaration's opening statement, but not thereafter or in great measure either as to theory or to political practice.

Turning from Newton to other possible provenances, we might nominate David Hume and other leading lights of the Scottish Enlightenment, who had attempted to turn the study of politics into a science.[25] But Hume seems an unlikely source of inspiration. Although Jefferson had high praise for "Hume's political essays"[26] his hatred of Hume's *History of England* was almost visceral. Hume he described—not entirely accurately—as "the great apostle of Toryism"[27] and "this degenerate son of science."[28] Jefferson feared that "the fine style of Hume"[29] could seduce young men's minds, turning forward-looking republicans into backward-looking Tories. In retrospect it seems scarcely surprising that Jefferson believed Hume's *History* to have been greatly improved by John Baxter's bowdlerized edition that resulted in "Hume's history republicanized."[30] Jefferson saw to it that Baxter's was the only version allowed and available in the library at Jefferson's University of Virginia.

Newton and Hume aside, the Declaration is most clearly, in the main, a Lockean document as regards both argument and structure. Richard Henry Lee was more accurate than arch when he said that Jefferson had merely "copied [the Declaration] from Locke's treatise on government."[31]

II.   THE CONSTITUTION

Here I take my text from Tocqueville, who wrote that

> This Constitution, which at first sight one is tempted to confuse with previous federal constitutions, in fact rests on an entirely new theory, a theory that should be hailed as one of the great discoveries of political science in our age.[32]

Tocqueville, however, does not specify what that theory is or what its sources are or what is original about it. This I intend to do, at least in brief compass, in this section. But first some background.

The thirteen colonies-turned-states were at first governed under the terms set forth in the Articles of Confederation. Suspicious of concentrated power—especially of centralized legislative and extensive executive power—the Articles granted very little power to the central or federal government, leaving the thirteen states sovereign republics superior to the central government. Agreeing to govern themselves more or less along recognizably "republican" lines, Americans would rely on the virtue of the citizenry and the good will of the several states that comprised the Union. The Articles of Confederation had been drafted and ratified during the Revolution, when the Americans (and their French allies) faced a common enemy. Although it was a time of often-strained solidarity, unreliable mutual support, and limited good will, the Articles reflect the aspiration, if not the on-the-ground reality, of a single nation undivided by faction or rancor. In tone, tenor, and content the Articles read more like an informal agreement among friends than a constitution channeling and controlling the actions and interactions of citizens and states. In the Articles of Confederation feelings of friendship and fraternity abound: the "states hereby severally enter into a firm league of friendship with each other. . . ."[33] After the Revolution the fabric of civility had begun to fray, and it soon became clear that the Articles of Confederation could not long survive that conflict. The United States, it appeared, were quickly becoming the quarrelsome and contentious Disunited States. Reliance on patriotism, civic friendship, fraternity, good will—virtue, in short—was not working well, if indeed it was working at all. By the mid-1780s it became clear that self-government under the Articles of Confederation was unwieldy and well-nigh unworkable.

Delegates to the 1786 Annapolis Convention decided that the Articles were in dire need of revising. The Congress agreed and accordingly called

for a meeting in Philadelphia to undertake the task. Once assembled, however, most delegates agreed that the Articles were too unwieldy to merit revision and, in a highly controversial move, they decided to draft an entirely new constitution. To lessen the controversy and to lend legitimacy to the proposed constitution, that document specifies (Article VII) that conventions be called in every state to decide whether to ratify or to reject the newly drafted document. Thus began the first of the two most important debates ever conducted in the United States (the second, over slavery and secession, ended violently, in civil war).

The debate over whether to ratify the newly proposed American constitution (1787–1788) was, to be sure, a *political* debate, and a heated and hard-fought one at that;[34] but what often goes unnoticed is the extent to which that debate was couched and conducted in "scientific" terms. Both Federalist friends and Antifederalist foes of the new constitution regularly invoked "the science of politics," the "science of government," and the like. As a rough albeit accurate generalization, Federalist writers tended to rely on the newer science of David Hume, and Anti-Federalists on the older (but still distinctly modern) science of Montesquieu.

Let us look briefly at the competing conceptions of science employed by Montesquieu and Hume. Despite their differences, both were concerned to eschew non- or pre-scientific modes of explanation and to provide in their place causal explanations of social and political phenomena. This is explicit in the title of Montesquieu's *Considerations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (1734), in which he offers by way of explaining "the grandeur and decadence of the Romans" several social, cultural, and other "causes." But it was Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois* (1748) that loomed largest in the thinking of the founding generation, and in the thought of various Anti-Federalists in particular.[35] Federalist friends of the proposed constitution, by contrast, tended to be highly critical of Montesquieu and to rely on the reasoning of David Hume, whom they rarely cited by name, for reasons to be considered shortly.

Although there are a number of notable differences between Montesquieu and Hume—and which track those between Anti-Federalists and Federalists, respectively—the two most significant ones are concerned with the questions of virtue and size. Montesquieu contends that virtue is absolutely indispensable in a republic and is indeed the guiding principle of any republic worthy of the name. Hume, by contrast, insists that—given what we now know about human nature and moral psychology—it is unrealistic for founders to rely on the weak reed of virtue and much more realistic to rely on self-interest (or self-love[36]). And whereas Montesquieu asserts that a republic can encompass only a small territory, Hume contends that a well-constituted republic can not only take in a large territory but that a large republic is likely to be safer, more stable, and more long-lived than a small one. Let us consider each of these differences in turn.

i.   A Science of Self-Interest

Following the lead of Montesquieu, most Anti-Federalist authors insisted on the indispensability of individual virtue in a republic, for Montesquieu virtue was the fundamental principle or "spring" of a republic. Virtue is the antithesis of the vices of "ambition" and "the thirst for [financial] gain."[37] It is "a form of self-renunciation" that "requires a constant preference of public to private interest."[38] Almost always citing the French sage, Anti-Federalists charged that the proposed constitution makes no mention of virtue, much less does anything to instill or promote it.

Publius's answer to such objections is that individual virtue is not to be relied upon for very long, if at all. Here he follows Hume's advice to anyone who would draft a constitution:

> in contriving any system of government, and fixing the several checks and controuls of the constitution, every man ought to be supposed a *knave*, and to have no other end, in all his actions, than private interest. By this interest we must govern him, and, by means of it, make him, notwithstanding his insatiable avarice and ambition, co-operate to public good . . . It is therefore a just *political* maxim, *that every man must be supposed a knave*.[39]

Note that Hume does not say that every man *is* a knave, only that each "must be *supposed* a knave" by anyone who undertakes the task of constructing a constitution. Hume goes on to say that this maxim, although factually false, is a constitutionally necessary fiction. To put Hume's (and Publius's) point in a more modern idiom: when constructing a constitution it is wise to imagine a "worst-case scenario." Begin by assuming that men are not Montesquieu's virtuous and public-spirited citizens but are, on the contrary, corrupt, ambitious, avaricious, and self-interested individuals; then design a system that will pit the interests of individuals, factions, and government departments against one another. "This policy of supplying by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives [i.e., republican or civic virtue]" informs and undergirds the new constitution:

> Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place [i.e., office or department]. It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to controul the abuses of government. But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controuls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to controul the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to controul itself.[40]

Here and elsewhere the contrast between Publius and Montesquieu is both sharp and clear. For Montesquieu had contended that "virtue is necessary in a republic"[41] and that "Ambition is pernicious in a republic."[42] Not so Madison (and his co-author Hamilton). The government to be created by the new constitution would not, indeed could not, run on the high-octane fuel of civic virtue but on low-octane factional and individual interest.[43] If we imagine the Preamble to the Constitution having been couched in the language of the Declaration's opening paragraph it might read like this: We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created selfish and are endowed by their Creator with wit and cunning.

Hume, Madison, and Hamilton were hardly alone or even original in relying on interest instead of virtue. As Albert Hirschman has shown, many prominent seventeenth- and eighteenth-century thinkers came to rely on "interest," including self-interest or self-love, as the calmest and steadiest— and therefore the most reliable—of all the "passions." The other passions, sexual and otherwise, are violent, episodic, and unpredictable. And of the various passions none is more irrational and potentially violent than religious zeal or "enthusiasm." An interest-oriented science of politics could curb enthusiasm and dampen zeal.[44] "Science," says Adam Smith, "is the great antidote to the poison of enthusiasm and superstition."[45] A science that enlists the interests—especially economic interests—could counteract and control the passions thus make society safer, saner, and more stable.[46] This idea—which gained great currency in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the writings of Holbach, Helvetius, and others—is especially evident in the writings of Hume and the American Founders.

We must be careful not to misunderstand what Hume meant when he wrote, "Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."[47] By this he meant that reason is purely instrumental; it cannot tell us what to desire, only how we might most efficiently satisfy our desires. Of these desires or passions self-interest is the steadiest and most reliable. It therefore comes as no surprise that the authors of *The Federalist* speak of the other passions as violent and unpredictable. Here, I hope, a small sampling might suffice to illustrate this point: "A torrent of angry and malignant passions" (No. 1); in all previous polities "momentary passions . . . have a more active and imperious controul over human conduct than [have] general or remote considerations of policy, utility or justice" (No. 6); demagogues "alarm the apprehensions [and] inflame the passions" of men (No. 16); one's failure to see where one's true interests lie "is much oftener in the passions and prejudices of the reasoner than in the subject" (No. 31); anything "which touches the springs of so many passions" will set men against one another as enemies (No. 37); the unruly "passions ought to be controuled and regulated by the government" (No. 49). The most explicit statement of what Hirschman calls "the theory of countervailing passions"[48] can be found in *Federalist* paper No. 10 and, in a slightly different version, in No. 51. Very

briefly, Madison in No. 10 argues that the problem of faction is resolved, or rather dissolved, not by the elimination but by the *proliferation* of factions, which thereby prevents the formation of the most feared faction of all—a majority that will ride roughshod over the rights and interests of smaller factions. And in No. 51 he contends that the ambition and self-interest of one person, group, or governmental branch or department will "counteract" those of others.

What had happened, in short, is that steady self-interest had replaced unreliable individual virtue. But—contrary to a recurring Anti-Federalist complaint—virtue is not discarded completely under the new constitution, but is instead *relocated* to the system itself: virtue is a property not of individuals, but of the entire political system created by the constitution. The scientifically engineered republic was to be "a machine that would go of itself" and requiring not that individuals be virtuous but merely self-interested seekers of their own advantage.[49]

Self-interested individuals will seek out others who share their interests and thus form factions (or what we today call "interest groups"). Republican thinkers from Aristotle through Montesquieu believed that factions were boils on the body politic, bound to bring about the death of any republic so afflicted. In diagnosing this ailment the science most often invoked by classical and Renaissance thinkers is not physics but medicine—the practical or applied science par excellence. Guicciardini, for one, had earlier sought the *medicina appropriata* for the political affliction of faction. And, in a similar spirit, so did Madison look for "methods [for] curing the mischiefs of faction." But the cure he proposed was not a medical but a geographic one—a spatial cure, so to speak.

ii.   A Science of Space

Questions about the optimal size or spatial extent of a polity, be it a democracy or a republic, go all the way back to Aristotle. As he famously observes in Book III.3 of the *Politics*, "One could build a wall around the entire Peloponnese but that would not make the Peloponnese into a polis." From Aristotle up to and including Montesquieu the science of politics held as an incontrovertible truth that popular government can exist and flourish only in the restricted space of a small polity; a large or extended republic is a contradiction in terms; the larger the territory and population, the more it resembled an empire; and empires require rulers who are either legitimate monarchs or tyrants.

The new Humean science of the American Founders challenged this piece of ostensibly scientific wisdom. This became especially evident during the debate over whether to ratify or to reject the newly proposed constitution (1787–1788). As a rough and ready generalization, Anti-Federalist opponents of the new constitution relied upon and frequently cited Montesquieu in support of their view that the United States to be established under the

constitution was clearly and simply too large to qualify as a republic. Federalist friends of the constitution, by contrast, defended the new design as being fully in "conformity . . . to the true principles of republican government" (No. 1) as well as "republican in spirit" (No. 39) and "wholly and purely republican" (No. 73). But here was the rub: Publius and his fellow Federalists were defending a design for a new *kind* of republic, the likes of which had never previously existed—an "enlarged" or "extended republic."

The question of size—how large can a republic be without ceasing to be a republic?—was raised early and often during the ratification debate. The American republic to be created by the new constitution was to be an extended republic, taking in a large, indeed empire-sized, territory and an ever-increasing population, with the prospect of further expansion to the west and south, which were then still under French and Spanish control.

Anti-Federalists were quick to point out what they regarded as a rank contradiction. An "extended republic," they argued, is an oxymoron and not really a *republic* at all. One of the ablest authors among the Anti-Federalists, New York's "Brutus" (probably Robert Yates), contended that if we consult "the greatest and wisest men who have ever thought or wrote on the science of government" we can only conclude that "a free republic cannot succeed over a country of such immense extent, containing such a number of inhabitants, and these encreasing in such rapid progression as that of the whole United States." If you doubt it you need only turn to the past. "History," he says, "furnishes no example of a free republic, anything like the extent of the United States. The Grecian republics were of small extent; so also was that of the Romans." And when they "extended their conquests over large territories of country" they ceased to be republics, "their governments [having] changed from that of free governments to those of the most tyrannical that ever existed in the world."[50] Brutus's fellow Anti-Federalist "Agrippa" agreed:

> no extensive empire can be governed upon republican principles, and such a government will degenerate to a despotism, unless it be made up of a confederacy of smaller states, each having the full powers of internal regulation. This is precisely the principle which has hitherto preserved our freedom [under the Articles of Confederation]. No instance can be found of any free government of considerable extent which has been supported upon any other plan. Large and consolidated empires . . . have always been despotick.[51]

This, Brutus, Agrippa, and most Anti-Federalists believed, is the fate awaiting the American states if the proposed constitution were to be ratified.

The most prominent of "the many illustrious authorities" cited by Brutus, Agrippa, and other Anti-Federalists is Montesquieu, who had observed that "It is natural to a republic to have only a small territory, otherwise it cannot long subsist."[52] Large territories, taking in a variety of climates, heterogeneous populations, widely differing interests, and immoderate men

of large fortunes, are inherently incapable of self-government. They are, therefore, more naturally governed either by monarchs or despots. Brutus contends "that a consolidation of this extensive continent, under one government, for internal, as well as external purposes . . . cannot succeed without a sacrifice of your liberties." Hence "the attempt [to create an extended republic] is not only preposterous, but extremely dangerous."[53]

Brutus's and other Anti-Federalists' objections to a large or extended republic were also concerned with representation—specifically, with the conditions under which representative government can be said to be truly representative. They charged that the new constitution created two representative bodies that were so in name only. Brutus's harshest words were reserved for the House of Representatives, which he thought misnamed. "The more I reflect on this subject, the more firmly am I persuaded, that the representation is merely nominal—a mere burlesque."[54] Too few representatives will be expected to represent too many people. If an elective body is to truly represent the people in all their variety and diversity, it must be both large and diverse in its composition.[55] It must include farmers, mechanics, and artisans as well as lawyers and merchants. But, Brutus charges, the mode of election and system of representation prescribed by the new constitution are designed not only to thwart the representation of the various orders or ranks, but to exclude them entirely.

Thus "in reality there will be no part of the people represented, but the rich, even in that branch of the legislature, which is called democratic." The Federalists' claim that those elected will disinterestedly serve all the people, including the "democratical part," is a bald-faced lie. "The well born, and highest orders in life, as they term themselves," warns Brutus, "will be ignorant of the sentiments of the midling class of citizens, strangers to their abilities, wants, and difficulties, and void of sympathy, and fellow feeling." Theirs "will literally be a government in the hands of the few to oppress and plunder the many."[56] And if the "democratical" House of Representatives be distant from the people, the "aristocratic" Senate is even more so.[57]

Brutus's and other Anti-Federalists' charges that the new constitution was a design for disenfranchisement, oppression, and tyranny, struck deeply resonant republican chords. They therefore had to be met and countered as quickly as possible. Brutus's Letter III (November 15) was quickly countered in *Federalist* papers 9 and 10, a kind of one-two punch published on successive days (November 21 and 22, respectively). Not to be outdone by Brutus's reference to Montesquieu's allegedly authoritative "science of government," the Federalist author "Publius" (Hamilton) in No. 9 contends that Brutus's so-called science is woefully out-of-date. It relies on the experience and the authority of the ancients. But since the glory days of Greece and Rome, Hamilton retorts,

> the science of politics, like most other sciences, has received great improvement. The efficacy of various principles is now well understood,

which were either not known at all, or imperfectly known to the ancients. The regular distribution of power into distinct departments—the introduction of legislative ballances and checks—the institution of courts composed of judges, holding their offices during good behaviour—the representation of the people in the legislature by deputies of their own election—these are either wholly new discoveries or have made their principal progress toward perfection in modern times. They are . . . powerful means, by which the excellencies of republican government may be retained and its imperfections lessened or avoided.[58]

Hamilton then confronts Brutus's criticism directly and blatantly by "ventur[ing], however novel it may appear to some, to add one more" truth to an ever-expanding body of scientific knowledge. Employing the language of astronomy, Hamilton explains: "I mean the ENLARGEMENT of the ORBIT within which such systems are to revolve. . . ."[59] Taking a larger and less localized view of the American political universe, Publius tries to undercut the force of any appeal to antiquity or to arguments from authority, including that of the illustrious (and decidedly modern) Montesquieu. "The opponents of the PLAN proposed have with great assiduity cited and circulated the observations of Montesquieu on the necessity of a contracted territory for a republican government," Hamilton asserts. But Brutus and other Anti-Federalists cannot legitimately employ Montesquieu's arguments about the restricted size of republics because Montesquieu's very scale or standard of measurement is, in America, already exceeded. "When Montesquieu recommends a small extent for republics," writes Hamilton, "the standards he had in view were of dimensions, far short of the limits of almost every one of these States. Neither Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, North Carolina, nor Georgia, can by any means be compared with the models, from which he reasoned and to which the terms of his description apply."[60] Thus the size and scale that Montesquieu recommends for republics is inapplicable in America, not only under the proposed constitution as regards the federal government, but even under the Articles of Confederation as regards the thirteen American states. A new standard and a new scale are therefore required for the modern republic envisioned in the proposed constitution. Hamilton's rebuttal of the restricted-size argument in Federalist No. 9 prepares the way for Madison's redefinition of republic in No. 10—easily the most famous of all the *Federalist* essays and arguably the most "Humean" one, to boot.

Let us revert for a moment to what Hume had written. He begins the essay "Of Parties in General" by following Francis Bacon ("Of Honour and Reputation") in lauding the founders of free states. "Of all men, that distinguish themselves by memorable achievements," Hume writes, "the first place of honour seems due to LEGISLATORS and founders of states, who transmit a system of laws and institutions to secure the peace, happiness,

and liberty of future generations."[61] In such states factions and those who foment them have no legitimate place:

> As much as legislators and founders of states ought to be honoured and respected among men, as much ought the founders of sects and factions to be detested and hated; because the influence of faction is directly contrary to that of laws. Factions subvert government, render laws impotent, and beget the fiercest animosities among men of the same nation.

Factions or parties—Hume uses the terms interchangeably—are "odious . . . weeds, [which] when once they have taken root in any state" destroy that state from within.[62] Hume goes on to distinguish between two types of factions, "personal" and "real." The former is a faction that attaches to a particular person or persons; the latter, upon shared interests. "Personal factions," Hume writes, "arise most easily in small republics. Every domestic quarrel, there, becomes an affair of state."[63] "*Real* factions" he further subdivides into three sub-types: "from *interest*, from *principle*, and from *affection*. Of all factions, the first are the most reasonable, and the most excusable."[64] Now let us see what Madison makes of this.

Like Hume, Madison begins, conventionally enough, by decrying the evils of "faction" which can be avoided in either of two ways. The first is to eliminate their causes, the second, to control their effects. The first would require the equal division of property—because envy is a primary source of faction—and the elimination of "liberty, [which] is to faction what air is to fire, an aliment [i.e., nutrient] without which it instantly expires." But this, says Madison, would be "folly," for the "remedy [would be] worse than the disease."[65] The only reliable cure is to control the *effects* of faction. This is a remedy that only an *extended* republic can offer. Recall that, for Hume, "personal factions arise most easily in small republics." Therefore, Madison reasons, the larger a republic, the less likely it is that personal factions will arise. Following Hume, Madison holds that "factions from interest" are not only the most acceptable type; they may also be unavoidable if a republic is to be truly free.

A republic, as Madison redefines it, is characterized by two key features. The first is its system of delegation or representation; the second, its enlarged extent (or "orbit" in No. 9). A large republic would take in a wide variety of interests, thus encouraging the proliferation of factions and reducing the likelihood that any single faction—and most especially a large majoritarian faction—will predominate. It would also enlarge the pool of "fit characters" from which representatives are to be chosen. And, by distancing representatives from direct influence by their constituents, a large republic would encourage representatives to develop an enlarged sensibility and—adverting to the science of chemistry—to "distill" and "refine" their view of what is in the public interest is, and how best to achieve and serve that interest.[66]

Whereas Publius's Anti-Federalist archfoe Brutus decries the actions of un-representative representatives, Madison decries the stratagems of "unworthy candidates" who are likely to triumph in a popular free-for-all. Bribery, bombast, demagoguery, and the various "vicious arts" would be their stock-in-trade. In other words, whereas Brutus and the Anti-Federalists focused on what representatives are likely to do after they are elected, Madison and his fellow Federalists focused largely on what candidates might do in order to be elected in the first place, and secondarily upon what "wicked or improper project[s]" they might pursue after their election.[67]

This highlights a pervasive ambivalence among Federalists. On the one hand, they favored popular sovereignty and majority rule; on the other, they feared majority tyranny. The new constitution represented their ingenious—and allegedly scientific—attempt to secure the former while precluding the latter. The Anti-Federalists, by contrast, saw a simple dichotomy: either majority rule or minority tyranny. Hence their hostility to the proposed constitution's provisions for frustrating the will of the majority, even a potentially tyrannical one.

These, then, are the new "Humean" science of politics' conceptions of virtue and space. To these is added a third feature of that new science—its "experimental" character.

iii.   An Experimental Science

When today we think of experiments we are apt to think of scientific experiments like those of Lavoisier in his laboratory or of Benjamin Franklin flying his kite in a thunderstorm. The eighteenth century meaning of the term "experiment" included this narrower sense of the word but was wider still. Like many terms in eighteenth-century English, "experiment" was closer to its Latin root *experentia* which is also the root of "experience." In the eighteenth century the two terms were virtually interchangeable.[68] Scientific knowledge, of both the natural and the social world, is gained through experience, whether it be the controlled experience of the laboratory experiment or the eons-long history of humankind. It is this second and broader sense that Hume employs in the subtitle of his *A Treatise of Human Nature: An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*. As we shall see, this is the sense of "experience" and "experiment" employed by the American Founders.

In the discourse of the Founders—at the Constitutional Convention as well as in the pamphlet literature, including *The Federalist*—no word appears more frequently than "experience." At the Constitutional Convention John Dickinson said, "Experience must be our only guide. Reason may mislead us."[69] This has often been taken—or rather mistaken—for a kind of crude empiricism that eschews theory, including scientific theory, in favor of firsthand experience.[70] Nothing could be further from the truth. The "experience" of which Dickinson and other Founders spoke was that

of nations and ages, as entered into the historical record for our examination and use.

All actions—including, preeminently, the act of legislating—are experiments. As John Adams observed in the Preface to his *Defence of the Constitutions of the United States* (1787), "The systems of legislators are experiments made on human life, and manners, society, and government." And although laws and legislation cannot change human nature, a scientific knowledge of human nature can enable legislators and founders to channel human behavior. Hume had already said as much:

> Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange, in this particular. *Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature*, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behavior. These records . . . are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician and moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science, in the same manner as the physician or natural philosopher becomes acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments which he forms concerning them.[71]

The language of "laws" and "experiments" and analogies drawn from the natural sciences has led—or perhaps misled—some scholars to suggest that the Constitution has a distinctly Newtonian provenance. But was the American Constitution really a recognizably Newtonian document, as Woodrow Wilson[72] and others have claimed? Perhaps, and only at a stretch, and if Hume was indeed the "Newton of the Moral Sciences."[73] With the notable exception of Jefferson, most of the Founders had never read Newton and knew him by reputation and through the paeans of Locke and others as "the incomparable Mr. Newton." Most of them had only the vaguest idea of what Newton's theory was and what it entailed. Moreover, and more importantly, Newton never wrote, as Hume did, on topics "moral, political, and literary."[74] Thanks to the scholarly labors of Adair and others we now know how intellectually indebted the Founders were to Hume.[75]

I would like to add another consideration to the accounts offered by Adair and others, and to do so by adverting to a single passage from Hume. Note, in the following famous and oft-quoted paragraph from Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, an apparent disjuncture. The first two sentences seem to point in the direction of a natural-scientific or even Newtonian science of man, whereas the sentences that follow suggest something very different indeed:

> there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and

operations. The same motives always produce the same actions; the same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit; these passions . . . have from the beginning of the world, and still are the source of all the actions and enterprizes, which have ever been observed among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper and actions of the French and English.[76]

Two things are significant about this passage. The first is that the moral and political sciences are sciences different—*qualitatively and in kind*—from physics and the other natural sciences. The subject matter of Newton's science—physical bodies at rest or in motion—knows nothing of the fickle and partial "passions" of "ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, [or] public spirit." In designing and constructing a dam or a bridge an engineer need not consider the psychological properties and propensities of stone and steel. By contrast, the task facing a founder must include taking into account the passions and interests of its human, all-too-human, subject matter.

A second significant feature of this passage is its implicit repudiation of Montesquieu's climatological determinism. Montesquieu held that human behavior and institutions vary with, and because of, different climates. By contrast, Hume held that human nature is fixed and invariable; whatever the climate, "there is a great uniformity among the actions of men." Once again, this difference is reflected in the ratification debate. Brutus—unlike Publius—has recourse to Montesquieu's climatological theory in making his case against the proposed constitution. "The United States," he writes, "includes a variety of climates. The productions of the different parts of the union are very variant, and their interests, of consequence, diverse. Their manners and habits differ as much as their climates. . . ."[77] Because their climates vary, the manners, mores, customs, laws, and institutions of (say) South Carolina differ markedly from those of Massachusetts, those states and others cannot be consolidated into a single unified republic. Publius, following Hume, denies this inasmuch as "the constitution of human nature" is fixed and uniform.[78] It is indeed human nature that necessitates government: after all, "what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature?"[79]

III.   CONCLUSION

I have attempted to explicate several key features of the American Founders' new science of politics, and to do so by examining the premises and the arguments advanced in support of America's two founding documents. I argued that neither the Declaration of Independence nor the Constitution are in any meaningful sense documents with a "Newtonian" provenance.

Rather, the first is recognizably Lockean, and the second Humean in inspiration and origin. But one troubling question remains unanswered.

During the debate on ratification Montesquieu was often cited by name but Hume hardly ever.[80] If Hume was so central to Madison and Hamilton's "scientific" defense of the new constitution, why was his name almost never mentioned? I believe this to be an instance of a "conspicuous exclusion,"[81] due to two considerations: Hume had well-known Tory sympathies and—worse still—was a notorious atheist whose posthumously published *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779) was widely reviled and condemned. Had Hume's name been explicitly and publicly invoked during the debate, it would reflect badly on the Federalist cause.

All this is by way of saying that, "scientific" or not, these two founding documents were first and foremost *political* creations intended to achieve identifiable political ends. And the American Founder's political science was just that: a *political* science employed to influence and shape the thought and conduct of citizens. At the outset of the American Revolution and some seventeen years before the Constitutional Convention, John Adams wrote:

> [A]s the Divine Science of Politicks is the Science of Social Happiness, and the blessings of Society depend entirely on the Constitutions of Government, which are generally institutions that last for many Generations, there can be no employment more agreeable to a benevolent mind than a research after the best.[82]

The American Founders were acutely, even painfully, aware that they were attempting to create a *Novus ordo seclorum*—a new order of the ages—with the guidance of a science that was itself quite new. Again, John Adams:

> The Science of Government it is my Duty to study, more than all other Sciences; the Arts of Legislation and Administration and Negotiation ought to take [the] Place [of] all other Arts. I must study Politicks and War, that our sons have liberty to study Mathematicks and Philosophy.[83]

And study they did.[84]

NOTES

1. A second, but shorter-lived, attempt to base an entire political and economic system—and on a radically different "scientific" theory—was the Soviet Union. That theory replaced the axiom of self-interest with that of self-sacrifice. See, further, Ball, 1983.
2. Tocqueville, 1969: 12.
3. Lipset, 1979.
4. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, 1963 [1782]: 63.

5. Ball, 1995: ch. 12.
6. Arendt, 1963: 117.
7. See Adair, 1974; McDonald, 1985; Wills, 1981; Fleishacker, 2003.
8. J. Adams to T. Pickering, August 6, 1822, in Jefferson, 1999: 609.
9. T. Jefferson to B. Rush, January 16, 1811, in Jefferson, 1999: 427.
10. Wills, 1978: Part II.
11. Italics added.
12. Hume, 2007: 402.
13. This complicated and controversial passage has occasioned a great deal of scholarly debate. Jefferson believed that even if the laws of nature are God's commands, He is powerless to rescind or suspend them. This is Jefferson's version of, and variation on, Hume on miracles; and is attested to by Jefferson's heavily scissored edition of the New Testament, which eliminates all references to Jesus's alleged miracles.
14. Becker, 1922: 40–51, 75–79; Wills, 1978: Part II; Cohen, 1995: ch. 2.
15. Wills, 1978: 93.
16. Becker, 1922: 40–51, 75–79.
17. Cohen, 1995: 115–16.
18. Jefferson, 1999: 79.
19. For a detailed comparison see Sheldon, 1991: 46–49.
20. Hart and Honoré, 1985.
21. Cohen, 1995: 122–29.
22. On this and other changes the Congress made to Jefferson's draft, see Maier, 1997.
23. See Cohen, 1995: ch. 5.
24. Jefferson 1999: 147–48.
25. Wills, 1978; Fleischacker, 2003.
26. Jefferson, 1999: 262.
27. *Ibid.*, 383.
28. *Ibid.*, 384.
29. *Ibid.*, 283.
30. *Ibid.*, 274.
31. *Ibid.*, 146.
32. Tocqueville, 1966: 156.
33. For further details, see Jacobson, 1963. Unlike the tone and tenor of the Articles of Confederation, the language of the newly drafted constitution reduces the rhetorical temperature almost to zero (White, 1984: 244–47).
34. See Maier, 2010.
35. Once excoriated as "men of little faith," the Anti-Federalists are now more often accorded the title of "the other Founders." See, respectively, Kenyon, 1966, and Cornell, 1999.
36. See Force, 2003.
37. Montesquieu, 1989: Bk. III, ch. 3.
38. *Ibid.*, Bk. IV, ch. 5.
39. Hume, 1985: 42.
40. See *Federalist* no. 51, in Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, 2003: 252 (hereafter cited by No. followed by page number). Compare Adair, 1974: 144–48.
41. Montesquieu, 1989: Bk. III, ch. 9.
42. *Ibid.*, ch. 7.
43. In later life Madison modified this view, believing that some measure of virtue was indispensable if a republic is to flourish or even to survive. See Banning, 1988.
44. Farr, 1988.

45. Smith, 1979: II.796. For Hume's variation on this theme, see his "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm" in Hume, 1985: ch. 10.
46. Hirschman, 1977; Gunn, 1968; Force, 2003.
47. Hume, 1978: 415 (2.3.3).
48. See Hirschman, 1977.
49. Kammen, 1986.
50. Brutus, *Letter I*: 443 (references are to Ball, 2003).
51. Storing, 1981: 235, 252 (responding to *Federalist* No. 10).
52. Montesquieu, 1989, Bk. VIII, ch. 16; quoted in Brutus, *Letter I*: 443.
53. Brutus, *Letter III*: 453.
54. *Ibid*., 458.
55. *Ibid*., 456–58.
56. Ibid., 458.
57. Brutus, *Letter XVI*.
58. No. 9: 51.
59. *Ibid*., 52.
60. *Ibid*. For further discussion of Hamilton's Humean science of politics, see Fatovic, 2013.
61. Hume, 1985: 54.
62. *Ibid*., 55.
63. *Ibid*., 56.
64. *Ibid*., 59. For a more detailed account of Hume's analysis of parties and factions see Ball, 1988: ch. 2, esp. 39–40.
65. No. 10: 58.
66. Hume, 1985: Essay XVI; Adair, 1977: 138–51.
67. No. 10: 65.
68. Adair, 1974: 156–59.
69. *Ibid*., 155.
70. See, e.g., Schuyler, 1923; Boorstin, 1953.
71. Hume, 1748: 60–61.
72. See Wilson, 1908.
73. McIntyre, 1994.
74. Hume, 1985. Recent scholarship has shown that Hume was hardly conversant with Newtonian theory, with which he had at best only a nodding acquaintance. See Jones, 1982; and, for a partial corrective, Force, 1987.
75. Adair, 1974. See also, e.g., Wills, 1981.
76. Hume, 2007: 60 (Sec. III, "Of Liberty and Necessity").
77. Brutus, *Letter I*: 444.
78. No. 15: 70.
79. No. 51: 252.
80. The lone exception in *The Federalist* being No. 85—the final paper—in which Hamilton cites Hume's essay, "The Rise of the Arts and Sciences" (No. 85: 431).
81. Berger, 1972.
82. Adams, 1979: IV.86. According to Adams (and others) the science of politics was "divine," not in the sense that it was God-given or divinely inspired, but because (to paraphrase Rousseau) anyone who undertakes to construct a constitution bears the responsibility of a god.
83. J. Adams to A. Adams, post May 12, 1780 (in Adams, 1973).
84. For comments, criticisms, and suggestions I am grateful to Stephen Ball, Mary Dietz, James Farr, Antis Loizides, R. W. T. Martin, Jeffrie Murphy, Daniel O'Neill, James Read, Quentin Taylor, and John Wallach.

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11 Edmund Burke, the "Science of Man," and Statesmanship

Daniel I. O'Neill

I. INTRODUCTION

For over half a century, the study of Edmund Burke as a statesman has been dominated by the devotees of Leo Strauss.[1] Straussian scholarship on Burke's statesmanship has, in turn, made two basic claims. The first is that although Burke was indeed an important statesman, he in fact abhorred science, and therefore any notion that he might be a "scientific statesman" in the mode imagined by this volume would be entirely misbegotten. The second fundamental Straussian claim is that classical natural law, rather than science, provides the basis for the theoretical coherence to be found in Burke's political thought and by extension in his approach to statesmanship.[2]

Elsewhere, I have criticized extensively the second of these claims. Despite much bold and often strident assertion to the contrary, there is in fact a relative paucity of evidence for Burke's invocation of natural law beyond the rhetorical level. Moreover, I have argued that Burke's entire set of epistemological presuppositions cuts against the use of Scholastic "Right Reason," which Peter Stanlis, Francis Canavan, and a later generation of Straussian fellow-travelers have seen as the crucial component of his adherence to the doctrine of classical natural law in the vein of Aristotle, Cicero, and Aquinas. This is because the epistemology at the heart of Burke's moral and political philosophy was most heavily influenced not by these thinkers, the last of whom still preceded him by more than half a millennium, but rather by his friends and acquaintances in the Scottish Enlightenment, most notably Adam Smith and James Beattie. Crucially, these thinkers all seriously downplayed the capacities of human reason in favor of arguments that relied on affect or feeling as the principal determinant of moral behavior, whether in the form of natural moral sentiments, "common sense," or "sensibility."[3]

In this essay, I want to focus instead on the first component of the Straussians' claim—that Burke was indeed a statesman, but emphatically *not* a scientific one. In fact, the Straussian argument is that to *be* a "statesman" is actually to be the opposite of "scientist," at least on Burke's account. This view is succinctly articulated by Stanlis, who insists that Burke "had allied himself firmly to the ancient Classical and Christian view of man and

society, and had declared war on both the scientific rationalism and the Romantic sensibility of the Enlightenment philosophy of man and society." On Stanlis's view, "For Burke, political philosophy was the practical art of governing man as a moral agent in civil society. It was not and could not be a speculative science dealing with abstract truth."[4] As such, Stanlis argues that the guiding virtue of the statesman, who Burke famously describes as the "philosopher in action"[5] was prudence, under the overarching guidance of natural law. "As a philosopher, Burke drew his absolute ethical principles from the Natural Law; as a politician, he applied his principles in the concrete, with a full regard to historical circumstances, through his principle of prudence." Stanlis admits that this means Burke's "actions as a practicing statesman" in fact "are much more evident than his basic ethical principles."[6] Nevertheless, Stanlis's argument highlights the fundamental Straussian claim about Burke as a statesman. Stanlis claims that Burke's rejection of science and embrace of prudential leadership under the auspices of natural law demonstrates how his whole "political career is profoundly instructive in the moral wisdom of Christian statesmanship."[7] For Stanlis and the Straussians, Burke is thus an *unscientific statesman* adhering to prudence, one who defends "a Christian and Natural Law conception of civil society against the rationalism and the *a priori*, speculative, anti-historical ideology and doctrinaire spirit underlying the [French] Revolution."[8]

In what follows, I wish to challenge the Straussian notion that Burke is best understood as an "unscientific" statesman. Such a view inappropriately reduces "the Enlightenment" to a monolithic entity centered on the worship of abstract reason. It further exacerbates this problem by conflating "the Enlightenment" approach to science with *a priori* rationalism. This is not only historically false, in Burke's case it also misses the great extent to which he was *himself* a child of the Enlightenment and a kindred spirit in the attempt to develop a "science of man" applicable to moral philosophy and history. Furthermore, I shall argue that Burke's unique understanding of this science of man as applied to history—rather than natural law—became the guiding thread of his intellectually coherent approach to statesmanship, as can be seen across all of the principal issues that concerned him during his long political career.

II.   BURKE, THE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT, AND THE "SCIENCE OF MAN"

The first difficulty with reducing "the Enlightenment" to the worship of abstract *a priori* reason as a mode of scientific understanding—then setting up Burke as "anti-scientific" because he critiques this position[9]—is that it fundamentally mistakes the whole thrust of Enlightenment science, especially in the eighteenth century. As Peter Gay showed definitively more than forty years ago, eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers were actually

empiricist "Newtons of the mind" attempting to construct a "science of man" inductively, from the bottom up. As such, they were largely engaged in a "revolt against rationalism" of the sort practiced by seventeenth-century deductive thinkers like Descartes.[10] Hence it is quite bizarre that the natural law Burkeans should conflate Burke's critique of abstract reason with his critique of science, because the Enlightenment was an intellectual movement in which the former was seen as an insufficient basis for the latter. Furthermore, a whole generation of scholarship has shown beyond question that attempts to construct some intellectually monolithic "Enlightenment project" whose contours can be mapped irrespective of national variation is a thoroughly mistaken enterprise.[11] What this means is that any thinker's relationship to the phenomenon of Enlightenment, and hence to the role of reason in Enlightenment thinking, is itself further inflected by deep national variation.

All of this matters a great deal because, as I have argued, Burke is best understood as closely allied both intellectually and personally with the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment.[12] And the goal of these thinkers was in fact nothing short of self-consciously establishing what one of its leading lights, David Hume, described as a "science of man" applicable to the increasingly complex commercial societies of Europe. Scottish Enlightenment thinkers aimed to provide an empirical account of individual human mental processes, the inner workings of the societies those individuals were embedded in, and the ways those societies changed over time. Their approach therefore required a focus on how human beings make moral judgments in social interactions across time, for which reason it has often been described as the study of "man and society," "human nature and society," or "social man."[13] Their basic conclusions were that human behavior was largely driven by affect and feeling rather than reason, but that it nonetheless could be "scientifically" described at the levels of individual moral psychology, social interaction, and historical development.

Burke was himself deeply committed to the Scots' intellectual goals, as well as being a personal friend, acquaintance, and correspondent to many of the leading Scottish Enlightenment figures (including Adam Smith, Hume, James Beattie, and the historian William Robertson). His goal, like theirs, was to achieve an empirical "science of man" built on the twin pillars of moral philosophy and history. The former commitment can be seen clearly in Burke's early *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757/1759), which shares a great deal in common with Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), a book lauded by Burke both in private correspondence and in a published review in the *Annual Register*.[14] As regards the latter, Burke was on very good terms not only with Smith, one of the leading articulators of the Scottish Enlightenment's distinctive four-stages historical thesis, but also Robertson, whose conjectural *History of America* (1777) Burke wrote of glowingly in correspondence with its author.

However, although Burke was deeply influenced by Scottish Enlightenment ideas, he would also transform the Scots' views, especially of history, in fundamentally important ways. The Scottish Enlightenment narrative of history was one which imagined progress from "savagery" through "barbarism," to "civilization" across four stages of economic development (hunting, herding, farming, and commerce). Although Burke envisioned the same historical arc from savagery to civilization, he rejected the Scots' notion that it was changes in the underlying mode of production that drove the progressive transformation of social manners across historical time. Instead, Burke focused on organized religion and the landed aristocracy, institutionalized in the church and the nobility, as the two central drivers of the civilizing process. For Burke, these two institutions served as the material embodiments of his aesthetic principles of the "sublime" and the "beautiful," rooted in fear and love, respectively.

In making this move, Burke synthesized his early philosophical and historical work with that of the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment to develop a unique understanding of history as a civilizing process. On Burke's view, the nobility and the church jointly inculcated what he referred to as the requisite degree of "habitual social discipline" necessary for "a people," proper, to emerge and be governed by a "natural aristocracy" sitting atop an ordered hierarchy of social ranks in which the masses appropriately subordinated themselves to the wiser, wealthier, and more cultivated. For Burke, the nobility did this by helping the masses to love their superiors, while the church led them to fear their betters. Only where such a system flourished did Burke recognize "civilization," as opposed to "savagery," or "barbarism."

It is this understanding of civilization and its antitheses, I wish to argue, that constituted Burke's "science of man." As such, it also provided the basis for his unique view of "scientific statesmanship," a view that he applied in a theoretically consistent fashion as a means of analyzing both domestic politics as well as the monumental political events that confronted him in America, India, France, and Ireland over the course of his career. In what follows, I will consider Burke's particular approach to "scientific statesmanship" briefly across each of these areas of concern.

i.   Domestic British Politics[15]

For Burke, Britain was appropriately understood as a civilized society. What marked it as such for him was the existence of an established church and a titled landed nobility, which enabled rule by those he called the "natural aristocracy." Conversely, Burke argued that democracy stands "in defiance of every political principle."[16] This is because, at a fundamental level, Burke regarded egalitarianism as antithetical to human nature. As he would write in the *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, "The levelers therefore only change and pervert the natural order of things." Thus, whereas members

of the more "servile" professions "ought not to suffer oppression from the state," Burke tells his readers, "the state suffers oppression, if such as they, either individually or collectively, are permitted to rule. In this you think you are combating prejudice, but you are at war with nature" (*W&S*, VIII.100–101). Indeed, Burke defines "a people," proper, as existing only when "the multitude" are in a state of "habitual social discipline" governed by the "the wiser, the more expert, and the more opulent" (*Works,* III.85). It is this "natural aristocracy's" role in such a system to keep in place the intergenerational social contract, to specify the appropriate boundaries of necessarily conventional individual rights, and to knit together in harmony "those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born" (*W&S*, VIII.147). Because this is so, Burke writes, "when you separate the common sort of men from their proper chieftains," then the "venerable object called the People" collapses into a "disbanded race of deserters and vagabonds" (*Works*, III.85). Such a view, derived from his understanding of moral theory and history, does much to help explain Burke's particular approach to statesmanship concerning domestic British politics, going all the way back to his earliest pamphlets and speeches outlining the theoretical principles animating the Rockingham Whig faction.

For example, Burke's notion of the proper role of elected representatives has been widely cited as one of the most cogent defenses of the "trustee" as opposed to the "delegate" model of representation. As Burke explained to his constituents at Bristol in 1774, on his view the role of the representative, or statesman—as a member of the natural aristocracy—was not simply to aggregate their individual opinions and act according to what the majority wished. Rather, it was to render one's judgments about matters that concerned the whole community, judgments that might sometimes contradict the explicit wishes of the majority (*W&S*, III.64–70).

Underpinning Burke's view of representation was a belief that politics was a specialized art that only some people, the natural aristocracy, were capable of undertaking. Although not closed off to men of extraordinary merit (although it was closed off to all women), on Burke's account this group of political leaders had "to be bred in a place of estimation" and needed to stand on "elevated ground." Members of the natural aristocracy required sufficient wealth and the leisure necessary for cultivation, education, and reflection, and also required the opportunity to act as judges, lawyers, high military officers, businessman, and the like (*Works*, III.85–6). In short, Burke's political representatives were an aristocratic body constituted by nurture as well as nature. "Statesmen" were a group appropriately limited, in his view, to those with the economic means to cultivate their native talents.

Burke deployed these conceptions about statesmanship as the appropriate task of a narrow "natural aristocracy" of representatives to articulate public policy and legislative positions over the long course of his time in office, the vast majority of which was spent in political opposition—quarrelling with

other Whig factions, Tories, and King George III and his men. With respect to domestic British politics, Burke fought a two-front battle. On one flank he defended what he saw as the rightful claims of Parliament against the overreaching powers of the Crown, thereby aiming to preserve the "mixed" balance of powers among the King, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. On the second flank he resisted all attempts to undermine what he saw as the rightful place of the natural aristocracy by making the British electoral system more democratic.

For example, Burke spoke passionately against shortening the duration of Parliaments, to prevent political representatives—or statesmen—from having to face their voting public more often. Such a move, which would have marked a significant deepening of public sphere democracy, was anathema to Burke precisely because he regarded large sections of the public as incapable of understanding what was truly in their interest; therefore, as a statesman he believed the suffrage should be exercised only very infrequently. Similarly, throughout his career Burke argued against increasing the number of "actual" representatives in Parliament, because he believed that the natural aristocracy of true statesmen would "virtually" represent all interests by taking their views into account in decisions, even without their direct representation. Likewise, Burke steadfastly resisted any expansion of the suffrage, or even any reform of Britain's corrupt electoral system of "rotten boroughs." On Burke's view, the British institutional system, or constitution, although necessarily imperfect as all human institutions were, had nevertheless "existed time out of mind." It was a "prescriptive constitution," an inheritance whose long historical duration was proof enough that it had satisfied basic human needs well. Burke believed that under such circumstances there should always be "a presumption in favor of any settled scheme of government against any untried project." People should be favorably disposed toward their historical inheritance, because while the individual and the temporary multitude are quite limited in their rationality and often foolish, over the long haul "the species is wise." Burke therefore saw long-surviving institutions as the best concrete expression of accumulated human wisdom, necessarily limited though it was.[17]

In his *Observations on a Late State of the Nation* (1769), a response to William Knox's attack on the Rockingham Whig party, Burke also made clear what sort of approach to democratization in Britain should be taken by a true statesman, given a proper understanding of moral philosophy and history from the standpoint of the "science of man." He asked of Knox, "What other reason can he have for suggesting, that we are not happy enough to enjoy a sufficient number of voters in England?" That is, notwithstanding the large number of people in Britain without any capacity to vote, Burke argued that there were nevertheless still far *too many* with that capability, and that the number actually ought to be *reduced* rather than increased. He maintained that, owing to the "venality," "corruption," and especially "the idleness and profligacy of the lower sort of voters, no

prudent man would propose to increase such an evil." To the contrary, Burke argued, "I believe that most sober thinkers on this subject are rather of opinion, that our fault is on the other side; and that it would be more in the spirit of our constitution, and more agreeable to the pattern of our best laws, *by lessening the number*, to add to the weight and independency of our voters" (*W&S*, II.177). On Burke's view, true statesmanship based on the "science of man" thus necessitated a diminution of democracy under-stood in the most elemental sense—as the capacity to vote—-rather than an expansion of it.

ii. America and the New World

One of the most important issues Burke addressed in his capacity as a states-man was that of colonial America. America was at the forefront of Burke's thinking from 1765, when he first came into Parliament, through colonial independence and the war that followed, both of which he greatly lamented. The question to be addressed here, albeit in skeletal form, is that of the con-nection between Burke's particular version of the "science of man," outlined above, and the specific policies he argued for as a statesman with respect to the American colonies and the British Empire in the New World more broadly.

Burke consistently described the American colonists as a civilized "peo-ple" descended from the English, and thus as an offshoot of British civiliza-tion planted in the New World, one built (as all civilized peoples were, for Burke) on the pillars of organized religion and a kind of landed aristocracy. However, in his famous *Speech on Conciliation with America* (1775), Burke pointed to a number of peculiar features of the colonial Americans as a people that created in them a propensity for rebellion; these were the "Form of Government; of Religion in the Northern Provinces; [and] of Manners in the Southern" (*W&S*, III.125).

With respect to religion, Burke pointed to the nature of Protestantism in the Northern colonies, which he memorably described as "a refinement on the principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent; and the protes-tantism of the protestant religion" (*W&S*, III.121–22). Thus, whereas the sublime power of organized religion ordinarily helped to create the kind of discipline and social order that were inhospitable to rebellion, in New England it worked much in the opposite direction, against the *metropole*, and served as a chief cause of the spirit of "disobedience in the Colonies" (*W&S*, III.124). In terms of government, Burke likewise pointed out that the colonial legislatures had strayed from the true principles of natural aris-tocracy and virtual representation: "Their governments are popular in an high degree; some are merely popular; in all, the popular representative is the most weighty," and this imbued them with a "fierce Spirit of Liberty" (*W&S*, III.121, 125).

As concerned the "manners" of the Southern colonies, Burke declared that the peculiar nature of the landed aristocracy—that second great stabilizing

force within the civilizing process—ironically made that region even more prone to rebellion. The Southern aristocracy was built on slavery, and this made Virginia and the Carolinas even more given to resistance than the North, for deeply psychological reasons. Burke contended that whenever there were large numbers of slaves in any society, "those who are free, are by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege." Hence, in slaveholding societies, "the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible" (*W&S*, III.122–23). The up close and personal juxtaposition of freedom with its lived antipode made those in possession of liberty all the more zealous to guard it.

Given this understanding of factors on the ground in America, a view which he derived from his particular understanding and application of the "science of man," as a statesman Burke argued for a gentle policy of conciliation and the de facto ceding of large aspects of rule (such as matters of internal taxation) to the colonies, themselves, as the best means of keeping the British Empire together.

This policy, in turn, was ultimately built on the moral psychology of mutual "sympathy" he endorsed, along with Adam Smith, as part of the "science of man." As Burke put it, "My hold of the Colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties, which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron." It is these commonalities that Burke believed would keep "the chosen race and sons of England" firmly attached to the mother country (*W&S*, III.164–65). Burke's was an approach that stressed the importance of civilizational solidarity between Britain and colonial America built on their underlying similarity, and looked to the resultant deep affective ties between these two peoples as the chief means of keeping the transatlantic empire together.

Conversely, after war between Britain and the American colonies began, as a statesman Burke adamantly rejected the use of Native American "savages"—devoid of organized religion and landed aristocracy—as allies against the colonists in battle. Instead, he urged the British to make common cause with their colonial brethren to push westward into the American continent with the aim of conquest and conversion of the savages, or in short of "civilizing" the Native Americans, while also thereby tightening the affective bonds between Britain and the American colonies. In fact, throughout the conflict Burke sought to forge a tight bond between the British and the American colonists, one centered on the shared goal of expanding the civilizing blessings of empire into new lands. To this end, once the war began, he implored the colonists:

> You will not, we trust, believe, that born in a civilized country, formed to gentle manners, trained in a merciful religion . . . we could have thought of letting loose upon you, our late beloved Brethren, these fierce

tribes of Savages and Cannibals, in whom the traces of human nature are effaced by ignorance and barbarity. We rather wished to have joined with you, in bringing gradually that unhappy part of mankind into civility, order, piety, and virtuous discipline, than to have confirmed their evil habits, and increased their natural ferocity, by fleshing them in the slaughter of you, whom our wiser and better ancestors had sent into the Wilderness, with the express view of introducing, along with our holy religion, its humane and charitable manners. (*W&S*, III.281–82)

While thus reiterating the longstanding distinction he had drawn as far back as his *Account of the European Settlements in America* (1757) between British and colonial "civilization" and Native American "savagery," Burke actually went much further during the American War of Independence. In fact, he took the remarkable step of arguing that the two branches of Britain should refrain from fighting each other, and instead join forces in a civilizing mission aimed at *expanding* the British Empire westward, into the lands of the Native Americans not subdued by the colonists, well beyond the outer boundaries of colonial territory set by the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

One could go on at great length in this vein. For example, as concerns the African slaves, Burke likewise argued against any proposals to offer them freedom if they would fight on the British side in the American conflict. Rather, Burke defended the institution of slavery throughout the American crisis, just as he had at length before it, and did so as a statesman who built his policy prescriptions on a particular understanding of the "science of man" that cast the African slaves, like the Amerindians, as "savages" in need of civilization by Britain's colonial brethren in the new world. Indeed, Burke's long submerged arguments about Native Americans and Africans demonstrate his willingness to deploy his understanding of civilization to create a zone of absolute alterity as a means of keeping the colonial empire in the New World together. Ultimately, what I want to call Burke's "logic of empire" led to a consistent set of "statesmanship" principles built on a particular understanding of the "science of man" as applied to the New World.

These principles would later intersect clearly with his views on the French Revolution in the 1790s, when Burke took up the issue of the slave revolts in the Caribbean. In that case, Burke argued that that such events as the Haitian revolution, led by former slaves, were dangerous and horrifying proof that the French doctrine of the "rights of man" was an egalitarian disease that acted like a solvent on empire, precisely by leading the savages to revolt against the civilized colonists in dreadful fashion. The rights of man, in short, were a statesman's worst nightmare.

iii. India[18]

Traditionally, Burke's views on India have been at the heart of the mistaken "anti-imperial" interpretation of his thought. However, from the beginning

to the end of his voluminous output of writings and speeches about the subcontinent, Burke remained a lifelong defender of the British Empire in India. Less than a year before he died he could therefore still speak approvingly of "the dominion of the glorious Empire given by an incomprehensible dispensation of the Divine providence into our hands."[19] Thus the real question becomes: What was the basis for Burke's long and laborious crusade as a statesman to impeach and convict Warren Hastings, the former governor general of Bengal, for his crimes while in office? Further, what did Burke believe Hastings's crimes truly were? In India, I wish to argue, Burke's "science of man" led to very different conclusions than those applicable to the Native Americans in the New World. This was because Burke did not see in India a sterling example of difference—or "otherness"—worthy of conquest, as in America, but rather a mirror image of Western European civilization because, like Europe, it exhibited the definitional markers of all truly civilized societies.

One of the clearest examples of Burke's analogizing European and Indian civilization is to be found in his famous *Speech on Fox's India Bill* (1783), a piece of legislation masterminded by Burke and introduced by his (then) close friend and Whig ally, Charles James Fox. It was a speech whose purpose Burke described as "intended to form the *Magna Charta* of Hindostan." By this time, after his service on the Select Committee, Burke had been fully won over to the idea that parliamentary sovereignty had to be invoked in the strongest terms, and the Company brought to heel. To this end, the purpose of the ill-fated bill, which ultimately brought down the Fox-North Coalition due to the King's opposition, was to set up two commissions under parliamentary control to tightly oversee the East India Company's administration and all of its commercial dealings in India. In order to make the case that such oversight was necessary to rein in the Company, Burke's speech drew a mental map of India, a map sketched in the unmistakable colors which he used to identify European civilization—and all civilization—in contrast to the lesser, alien worlds of savagery and barbarism in the New World. With regard to India, Burke argued:

> This multitude of men does not consist of an abject and barbarous populace; much less of gangs of savages, like the Guaranies and Chiquitos, who wander on the waste borders of the river of Amazons, or the Plate; but a people for ages civilized and cultivated; cultivated by all the arts of polished life, whilst we were yet in the woods. There, have been (and still the skeletons remain) princes once of great dignity, authority, and opulence. There, are to be found the chiefs of tribes and nations. There is to be found an ancient and venerable priesthood, the depository of their laws, learning, and history, the guides of the people whilst living, and their consolation in death; a nobility of great antiquity and renown; a multitude of cities, not exceeded in population and trade by those of the first class in Europe; merchants and bankers,

individual houses of whom have once vied in capital with the Bank of England . . . millions of ingenious manufacturers and mechanics; millions of the most diligent, and not the least intelligent, tillers of the earth. Here are to be found almost all the religions professed by men, the Braminical, the Mussulmen, the Eastern and the Western Christians. (*W&S*, V.389–90)

In India, as in Europe, Burke thus saw the essential components definitional of all civilization: a landed aristocracy and hierarchy of ranks including princes and nobles, and ranging downward to merchants, mechanics and farmers; an ancient religion (actually several) described as having a powerful and highly influential institutional infrastructure; and great cities and a flourishing economy which were the result of this steeply demarcated social tapestry. At the same time, in this passage Burke explicitly and unmistakably juxtaposes India's possession of these markers of civilization with the "savage" New World Amerindians in South America; in terms that are identical to his depiction of them going all the way back to his *Account of the European Settlements in America*.

At a general level Burke also stresses the functional similarity of organized religion and the landed nobility in both India and Europe. On Burke's account, these institutions worked to create a cultural, commercial, and even material world that was remarkably similar in both Britain and India. For this reason, Burke would laud Hinduism and the Hindu caste system, as he understood it, as the quintessential expression of authentic Indian religion, and stress its role in linking the worldly and divine to create a deeply stratified social hierarchy even more effectively than was the case in Europe. Indeed, Burke's remarkable narrowing of the conceptual distance between Europe and the subcontinent can even be seen in his rendering of Muslim India, and specifically in his rejection of the tradition of "Oriental despotism" and his concomitant insistence on the importance of the Mughal version of the British "ancient constitution." Taken together, these modes of tightly analogizing India and Europe would prove central to Burke's strategy of affectively linking these two great civilizations together.

This last strategy can be seen in Burke's extended recourse to the moral psychology of "sympathy," which is central to his political theory writ large, as well as in his specific critique of British imperial practice in India and his attempt to punish Hastings for it. Furthermore, because Burke saw Indian civilization as a mirror image of European civilization, his critique of empire in India therefore also closely resembled and indeed prefigured his critique of the French Revolution. Burke's analysis of the failings of empire in India was tightly tied to his critique of revolution in France because he saw both events as analogous assaults on the *ancien régimes* of two similar civilizations. This can be seen in three areas in particular, all of which were vital to Burke's prosecution of Hastings. The first was in his detailed description of the assault on the Indian nobility and landed aristocracy. The second concerned his lengthy

depictions of the downfall of aristocratic women in India, which are every bit as central to Burke's narrative of events in India as in France. The third relates to Burke's attempt directly to conjoin the animating spirit of illegitimate imperial excess and illegitimate revolutionary resistance, or "tyranny" and "rebellion," and thus to argue that "Indianism" and "Jacobinism" were essentially flipsides of the same theoretical coin—one a despotic revolution from above, the other a democratic revolution from below manipulated by the ingeniously wicked *philosophes*. Taken together, these phenomena demonstrated incontrovertibly for Burke the true nature of Hastings's crime, and the necessity of his impeachment: he had assaulted a great civilization that was analogous and equivalent to Europe, and it was the duty of all true statesmen to punish the former governor general for his transgressions.

iv. France[20]

Burke's understanding of the "science of man" was clearly the driving force in his interpretation of the French Revolution, and his response to it as a practicing statesman, as can clearly be seen by way of a brief discussion of his most famous work, the *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, and the themes of subsequent works from the 1790s. To understand how this is so, one has merely to consider two of the Revolutionaries' most important early moves: their formal abolition of feudalism and titles of nobility on the night of August 4, 1789, and their nationalization of the Catholic Church's lands, which were subsequently used as collateral to back the issuance of the new paper currency known as the *assignats*. From the standpoint of Burke's "science of man," these moves were nothing short of disastrous.

On the one hand, Burke considered an established religion tightly connected to the state as the vital source of the sublime necessary to create "habitual social discipline." In the *Reflections*, he insisted that an established church effectively "consecrated the commonwealth," by making sure that the state was "infused" with "such sublime principles" as exert a "wholesome awe upon free citizens." This was necessary, he argued, "because, in order to secure their freedom, they must enjoy some determinant portion of power" (*W&S*, VIII.143). By learning to treat the state's representatives as if they were sanctified by God, whom Burke argued as far back as the *Enquiry* was the ultimate power and therefore the supremely fearsome being, the common people would learn to willingly subordinate themselves to the natural aristocracy and gingerly "approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude" (*W&S*, VIII.146).

On the other hand, the most famous passages from the *Reflections*, in which Burke celebrates chivalry and nobility and laments the downfall of Marie Antoinette, directly invoke his aesthetic principle of the beautiful. Burke declared that it was chivalry which had "made power gentle, and obedience liberal" and "incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society." It did so by inculcating "a system of manners"

in which beauty was literally "embodied" in sentient national symbols in order for people to learn to love the polity: "To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely" (*W&S*, VIII.128–29). Burke believed that chivalry and beautiful female nobility like Marie thereby created the other dimension of habitual social discipline, by facilitating the masses' voluntary submission to inequality and rule by the natural (male) aristocracy. Burke's extraordinary narrative depiction of the beautiful Marie's demise is therefore also meant to play irresistibly on the natural moral sentiment of love in his readers, urging them to her defense, and thus to the defense of European civilization itself.

In the *Reflections*, Burke memorably declared that: "Nothing is more certain, than that our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners, and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages on two principles; and where indeed the result of both combined; I mean the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion" (*W&S*, VIII.129–30). Alas, he looked on in horror during the last years of his life as Marie's rescuers failed to materialize, and he watched European civilization devolve into what he consistently described as the "savage" behavior of the "swinish multitude" (*W&S*, VIII.130–31).

Specifically, Burke's later work on the French Revolution depicts democracy as a political, social, sexual, and cultural revolution aimed at obliterating human beings' natural moral sentiments, and destroying all natural hierarchies and distinctions. He was shocked to see the floodgates of political participation in France opened to the lower orders, and to women as well as men. The collapse of civilization with the French Revolution was signified in part for Burke by the rise of a politically engaged *hoi polloi*, ranging from tavern keepers, clerks, and hair dressers to liberated women of all descriptions. However, Burke also argued that the revolutionaries were attempting systematically to break down natural authority relations within the "little platoon" of the family, which served as a microcosm for broader political society (*W&S*, VIII.97–98). On his account, as depicted at length in some of the most stunning prose in the history of Western political thought, the revolutionaries attempted to foster adultery and sexual promiscuity, a skyrocketing divorce rate, the legal equality of non-traditional families and their offspring, and an explosive growth in popular entertainment of all sorts, especially via the print medium. Burke consistently maintained that the French Revolutionaries were introducing a new system of democratic manners specifically to accommodate and support their new scheme of democratic politics. His was an onrushing vision of democracy as savagery, a world in which the masses had torn themselves free from their fealty to the natural aristocracy and lost all habitual social discipline. It was a nightmare vision of political equality undergirded by willful social, sexual, and cultural leveling in the private sphere which signaled the literal end of Western civilization. As he put it in his last public letter, with the French Revolution

he believed that he was sadly witnessing the "death dance of Democratic Revolution" (*W&S*, IX.152).

It was for these reasons that Burke understood his duty as a statesman to be that of furiously resisting any proposed "regicide peace" after 1793 between Britain and the French Revolutionaries who had executed Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and other members of the royal family. As a matter of statesmanship based on his understanding of the "science of man," Burke argued that the "jacobinized" French had ceased to be a "people" in any proper sense of the term; in fact, they were "ferocious savages" who could not "cohere together for any purposes of civilized society." For this reason, Burke informed official Britain, "there must be a means not only of breaking their strength within themselves, but of *civilizing* them; and these two things must go together, before we can possible treat with them, not only as a nation, but with any division of them." Hence, the necessary invasion of France had to be led by the French émigré nobility and clergy, backed by British military might. The French first and second estates would serve as "an immense body of physicians and magistrates of the mind," preserved "from the contagion of the horrid practices, sentiments, and language of the Jacobins." Together these groups formed a "corps of instruments of civilization" capable of "re-establishing order in France, and for thus securing its civilization to Europe" (*W&S*, VIII.465, 468–69). On Burke's view, any true statesman therefore had to advocate total war against the French Revolution as a means of preventing the decline of the Western world from civilization into savagery.

v. Ireland

The final topic on which to consider the contours of Burke's "scientific statesmanship" relates to the policies he proposed regarding his homeland, Ireland. Burke always considered Ireland an essential component of the British Empire, a sentiment captured succinctly in 1785 when he noted that, "Ireland could not be separated from England; she could not exist without her; she must for ever remain under the protection of England, her guardian angel" (*W&S*, IX.591). Nevertheless, Ireland's ambiguous historical status as a quasi-independent "sister kingdom" within the framework of a "multiple monarchy," and as a colony subordinate to England, gave rise to a series of commercial and political debates in the 1770s and 1780s with which Burke was deeply engaged. The most important of these were the question of an absentee tax on the owners of Irish land; the advisability of granting Ireland the ability to trade freely with the rest of the empire; and the fraught issue of the Protestant "Patriot" party and Irish Volunteers' push for "legislative independence" from the British Parliament. On these issues, Burke's strident opposition to any form of absentee tax, his full-throated support of free trade for Ireland as a means of preventing the Irish from breaking away from Britain as the Americans had, and his longstanding dislike for

the Patriot "Revolution of 1782" and Ireland's "legislative independence" strongly demonstrate Burke's willingness as a statesman to prioritize the British Empire's survival above all other considerations related to his native land.

However, Burke also combined this unwavering commitment to empire with an equally passionate desire to alleviate the draconian penal laws imposed by the Protestant Ascendancy on four-fifths of Ireland's people, the Catholics, and to provide a small portion of the Catholic population with the ability to vote and hold some political offices. In order to understand this portion of Burke's argument, one which combined in equal measure the goals of keeping Ireland as a subordinate part of the empire and alleviating the plight of Irish Catholics, one must understand Burke's view of Irish history from the standpoint of his understanding of civilization, and thus the "science of man." On Burke's account, the history of England's conquests and confiscations of Irish land, when combined with the systematic discrimination of the penal laws, had warped and transmogrified its "natural aristocracy" into something else entirely. The Protestant minority in Ireland constituted instead what Burke called a "plebeian oligarchy" (*W&S*, IX.600) that was far too numerous to play its role in the civilizing process, yet simultaneously locked out the Catholic nobility who should appropriately have been a part of any rightly constituted ruling elite. Because this was so, Burke argued, the penal laws had to be revoked entirely, and the Catholic elite had to be allowed to vote and hold some political offices, in order to recreate something like a proper ruling class in Ireland.

However, Burke looked on in horror during the 1790s at what he saw as the Protestant Ascendancy's reckless pursuit of exactly the wrong strategy regarding the Catholics, one of delaying the total renunciation of the Penal Laws, and resolutely resisting the enfranchisement of Catholic elites. The danger of such an approach, Burke believed, was that the Protestant Ascendancy would strengthen the hand of the United Irishmen, a group led by the Protestant republican Theobald Wolfe Tone, which sought a non-sectarian Ireland base on the democratic principles of universal suffrage and Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*.

Lurking beneath this, as becomes especially evident in his work of the 1790s, was Burke's greatest fear: That the Ascendancy was leading the Irish lower and middling orders of both Catholics and Protestant Dissenters to coalesce in support of the United Irishmen, a group which ultimately blamed Ireland's problems on the imperial connection with England and sought to sever that link in favor of an independent Ireland. Burke rejected such arguments out of hand, because he believed that after the granting of "legislative independence" in 1782 all of Ireland's problems were attributable solely to the Protestant Ascendancy—and thus to Ireland alone—and not England. Nevertheless, he spent his last years warning at length that the Ascendancy's policies were inevitably forging an alliance between Ireland's masses and the French Revolution.

From the perspective of Burke's understanding of the "science of man" and the civilizing process, this was disastrous. He believed that by systematically discriminating against the Catholics and Dissenters the Ascendancy was waging war on the wrong enemy, their fellow Christians. In doing so, they failed to perceive the rise of wholly new dangers posed by what Burke referred to by the single term "Jacobinism": atheism, secularism, and a brand of egalitarianism underpinned by universal rights claims that together threatened to swamp civilization under a wave of democratic fervor. For Burke, the Protestant Ascendancy's policies of discrimination were alienating the Catholic majority, whose "habitual social discipline" and corresponding commitment to hierarchy and order would ordinarily lead them to defend a justly constituted *ancien régime*. As a statesman, Burke regarded this as a disastrous blindness on the part of the Ascendancy, one which missed the new brand of atheistic, secular "enthusiasm" represented by the French Revolution.

Against this the "Christian Statesman" had to fight with every fiber. As Burke told his friend, the Irish MP William Smith, in 1795:

> The first, last, and middle Object of their Hostility is Religion. With that they are at inexpiable war. They make no distinction of Sects. A Christian, as such, is to them an Enemy. What then is left to a real Christian, (a Christian as a believer and as a Statesman) but to make a league between all the grand divisions of that name, to protect and to cherish them all; and by no means to proscribe in any manner, more or less, any member of our common party. The divisions which formerly prevailed in the Church, with all their overdone Zeal, only purified and ventilated, our common faith; because there was no common Enemy arrayed and embattled to take advantage of their dissensions. But now nothing but inevitable ruin will be the consequence of our Quarrels . . . Depend upon it, they must all be supported; or they must all fall in the crash of a common Ruin. (*Corr.*, VIII.130)

Burke in fact admitted that the French Revolutionaries' strategy, which targeted the two essential institutions of the civilizing process simultaneously, was meeting with broad support in Ireland. The results, he feared, would be an alliance of the French Revolutionaries with the United Irishmen in an endeavor to break the imperial connection with Britain, instill atheistic democracy, and ultimately end civilization in Ireland and England, as he believed had already been done in France. For these reasons, had he lived long enough there could be little doubt that Edmund Burke's last act of "scientific statesmanship" would have been to favor the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, which in fact occurred only a few short years after his death, in the wake of a failed invasion of Ireland by French forces allied with the United Irishmen. Such a policy of union would have been the culmination of a consistent and coherent logic of empire built on a view of "scientific

statesmanship" that animated Edmund Burke's political theory from beginning to end.

III.   CONCLUSION

I would argue that Burke's defense of statesmanship from the standpoint of his particular understanding of the "science of man" is thoroughly conservative, though not due to any commitment to classical natural law and neo-Scholastic "right reason." Rather, Burke's approach to statesmanship, whether domestically, or in America, India, France, or Ireland is "conservative" in the most basic meaning of that term: he fought consistently throughout his entire political career to preserve a long-standing vision of domestic British politics as a form of aristocratic rule, together with preserving the British Empire in its three central preexisting locales. Whether arguing for longer Parliaments and fewer elections, reducing the number of eligible voters, or the "trustee model" and "virtual representation," this was abundantly clear of Burke's approach to domestic British politics. However, it was likewise true of his approach to empire, whether that necessitated conciliation and concession of the American colonies, the impeachment of Warren Hastings, or the repeal of the penal laws and the enfranchisement of the Catholic nobility in Ireland, Burke's overarching aim as a statesman in all these places remained the same: to preserve the British Empire.

Yet this did not mean that Burke ever imagined that scientific statesmanship could be built on the same set of policies in places as different as Britain, America, India, France, and Ireland. Rather, he argued that the practice of governing had to be conducted with a deep understanding of the civilizational realities on the ground. This refusal to take a simplistic, one-size-fits-all approach to complex theoretical problems, in favor of privileging attention to local conditions and traditions, is something that conservatives from Burke forward have prided themselves on defending. Indeed, the emphasis on localism and regionalism attuned to circumstance is often hailed by conservatives themselves as a hallmark of their worldview.

Third, and most importantly, I would insist that Burke's thinking on empire, like his thinking on domestic politics, evinces a profound commitment to a still more substantive set of conservative principles. Burke's understanding of statesmanship, like his commitment to the Old Regime in Europe, was underwritten by the same belief in government by a "natural" aristocracy situated at the apex of a stratified hierarchy of ranks, one whose power was given still higher sanction by forms of organized religion. Together, Burke believed that these two institutions created the necessary level of "habitual social discipline" required for civilization to flourish. In the end, Burke's was a world in which the "few" aristocrats, aided by the power of organized religion, ought always to rule in any civilized society regardless of time and place. In this respect, Burke's defense of empire is indistinguishable from his defense of the European *ancien régime* during

the French Revolution. This is a view that most conspicuously pervades his writings on Ireland and India, but is abundantly evident throughout his work on Britain and America as well.

NOTES

1. The scholars discussed in this essay in fact all acknowledge the fundamental importance of Leo Strauss's views on Burke as expressed in Strauss (1953) for the development of their own interpretations of Burke.
2. Both of these themes are expressed most vociferously by the dean of the natural law school of Burke interpretation, Peter J. Stanlis; see especially Stanlis, 1958 and 1991. They are also influentially, albeit less dogmatically, asserted in Father Francis Canavan's work; see especially Canavan 1960 and 1987. As the provenance of this last work suggests, it was published for inclusion in the *Studies in Statesmanship* series edited by the well-known Straussian Harry V. Jaffa, who wrote a glowing forward to the volume. A somewhat attenuated thesis about Burke as a natural law statesman is offered by Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. in Mansfield, Jr., 1965. Mansfield, Jr. agrees that Burke is no scientific statesman, but is circumspect about the ease with which Stanlis, Canavan, and others place him in the classical natural law tradition, tending to see him as sharing more in common with the tradition of modern natural law.
3. For these arguments, see O'Neill, 2007; esp. Chapters 1 and 2.
4. See Burke, 1963: 20–21, 33.
5. Cited in Burke, 1981–: Vol. II, p. 317; hereafter, cited parenthetically as *W&S*.
6. Stanlis, 1963: 37, 39.
7. Stanlis, 1958: 247.
8. Stanlis, 1963: 26.
9. This is Stanlis's approach in Stanlis, 1991: 115–58.
10. See Gay, 1969; especially volume 2, *The Science of Freedom*, in which Gay's chapter 4 ("The Science of Man") contains sections with the titles given in quotation marks in the two sentences immediately preceding this footnote.
11. As but one example of this scholarship, see Porter and Teich, 1981.
12. This is one of the central claims of O'Neill, 2007.
13. See O'Neill, 2007: chapter 1, for a discussion of the Scottish Enlightenment's major themes and the scholarship pertaining to them.
14. See Burke, 1958–1978: I.129–30; and Burke, 1759.
15. This section draws on and amplifies O'Neill (forthcoming).
16. Burke, 1872: Vol. III, p. 85 (hereafter cited parenthetically as *Works*).
17. Burke, 1999: 176–77.
18. This section draws on O'Neill, 2009.
19. See Burke, 1958–1978: Vol. IX, p. 62 (hereafter cited parenthetically as *Corr.*).
20. This section draws on O'Neill, 2007, and O'Neill, *forthcoming*.

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12 Scientific Socialism
The Case of Robert Owen

David Leopold

I.

Robert Owen is rightly acknowledged as "[t]he central figure of British Socialism in the first half of the nineteenth century," a writer and reformer who was well-known and respected in both establishment and radical circles.[1] Few contemporaries would have predicted the comparative obscurity and neglect that is his current fate. In what follows, I briefly introduce Owen's life and work, before turning to consider the place of science and government in his communitarian socialism. By "communitarian socialism" I mean a socialism that views a network of intentional communities—small voluntary settlements of individuals living and working together for some common purpose—as both the means of transition to, and the final institutional form of, a socialist society.

Born in Newtown, in Wales, in 1771, Owen left home at the age of ten. He worked first as a draper's assistant, and then—with considerable entrepreneurial success—in the expanding cotton industry. His move, as manager and part-owner, to the New Lanark Mill in Scotland, provided him with a large and self-contained (therefore controllable) environment to implement improvements based on his evolving views about the formation of human character. In *A New View of Society* (1813–1816), Owen emphasized the transformation in the character of the workforce that resulted from his policies of improving working (and living) conditions, moderating child labor, and providing infant education. At this time, he wrote as a "manufacturer for pecuniary profit" distinctive mainly in advising his peers to take as much care of their "vital machines" as they did of their "inanimate machines," ensuring that both were kept clean, kindly-treated, and well-supplied.[2] Owen's views subsequently evolved in a more radical direction, but he would always portray New Lanark as confirming both the veracity of his views about human character, and the accuracy of his self-image as a successful practical reformer, and emphatically *not* a speculative armchair theorist.

Owen retained these views about the social formation of character, and a certain innocence about the nature of power, but began to develop a more critical understanding of the contemporary social world, and a

more ambitious account of the remedies that might be required to avoid its failings. After his much-heralded success at New Lanark—much-heralded, not least, by himself (he was a skilled self-publicist)—Owen sought a larger public role, initially as an authoritative voice on factory legislation and the alleviation of poverty, but increasingly as a radical critic of contemporary society.

After 1817, Owen came to identify existing forms of religion, marriage, and property as preventing the emergence of a more rational and humane society. He attacked existing religions for their sectarian and superstitious attitudes, and for being based on ideas about character formation destructive of human well-being and happiness. Owen also rejected existing marriage arrangements for compelling men and women who did not love each other to live together, for their social results (crime and prostitution), and again for their impact on character (generating selfishness, cunning, and deceitfulness). Finally, he criticized the existing economic system—based on competition and the idea of buying cheap and selling dear—primarily for its impact on character (competition encouraged the "most inferior feelings, the meanest faculties, the worse passions, and the most injurious vices"), but also variously, for being inefficient and wasteful, for creating unhealthy and unpleasant employment, for overproducing commodities with little or no intrinsic worth, and for encouraging injurious inequalities.[3]

Alongside this critique of existing society—which alienated some of the establishment figures who had supported his earlier philanthropic endeavors—Owen began to advocate small intentional communities as a way of meeting the current economic crisis and alleviating the condition of the poor. However, the more that Owen considered the advantages of communitarian life, the more he became convinced that *everyone* would be better off living inside intentional communities of the right kind. In a "Further Development of the Plan" (1817), he envisaged communal settlements as providing the basis of a new kind of society based on cooperation.

The benefits of communitarian life would be many. Domestic duplication would be avoided, for instance, with better food being prepared at a fraction of the effort and cost of individual family arrangements. However, the main advantage of these rational social arrangements would be their transforming effect on the physical, intellectual, and moral character of humankind. The ignorant, irrational, and miserable population of the old world, would be replaced by "intelligent, rational, and happy" persons.[4] Indeed, Owen seems to have found it hard to imagine any disadvantages of communal living, except perhaps the danger of too many of those living under the old order rushing precipitately into the new arrangements.[5] Communal settlements would usher us into, and form the social framework of, what Owen would come to call the "new moral world." That millenarian language was not a slip. Whereas Christian prophecy predicted that a "period of universal virtue and happiness" would emerge at some unspecified and distant point in the future (and last for a thousand years), Owen now identified a

"Millennium state of existence" (which would last forever) as near at hand, awaiting only the social changes that he recommended.[6]

Communitarian concerns would occupy much of Owen's remaining life. After the false start of the British and Foreign Philanthropic Society (which failed to fund a trial settlement), he took matters into his own hands, purchasing a township in 20,000 acres, in Indiana, as the basis for the New Harmony settlement (1825–1827). Owen would spend five years (1824–1829) in America, promoting his ideas to distinguished audiences (including congressmen and the president), and losing four-fifths of the fortune he had acquired from New Lanark. The New Harmony settlement fell apart before it was really established, yet Owen's confidence in his communitarian views remained undiminished. Returning to Britain, he subsequently turned his attentions to a settlement called Harmony, in Hampshire (1839–1845). Like its American counterpart, Harmony had a complicated and short-lived existence. In both cases, the proximate causes of communal collapse include inadequate preparation, undercapitalization, inappropriate skills of membership, poor internal accounting, and disputes about property arrangements and governance.

Between these transatlantic communal experiments came the brief period when (parts of) the growing Owenite movement coalesced with two mass working-class movements. Owenites took part in the first wave of the cooperative movement; most famously in the period (1832–1833) when Owenite "labor exchanges" issued labor notes as an alternative to currency. Owen portrayed rational economic arrangements as balancing production and consumption (thereby avoiding crises of overproduction), and replacing money with labor notes (thereby avoiding the circulation problems of an "artificial" standard of value such as gold). In addition, Owenites were involved in the period of dramatic trade union growth, especially in the building trades, culminating in the short-lived Grand National Consolidated Trades Union (which collapsed in 1834).

Owen was never entirely comfortable with this close proximity to working-class struggles. He maintained that rich and poor have but one interest, and encouraged the latter to view the former as potential friends and active collaborators. After 1835, Owen guided the movement into its so-called "sectarian" phase. "The Rational Society" built halls of science, providing a base for "social missionaries," and cultural and leisure activities for members (typically drawn from the best paid strata of the working class). By 1840 there were over sixty branches, with weekly events—including dances, concerts, lectures, and debates (all with a whiff of teetotalism)—"instituted to improve the habits and manners of the working classes, and more generally to cultivate kindly feeling and social fellowship among all classes."[7] Owenite events sometimes shadowed the Christian calendar, with branches providing Owenite sermons and hymns on Sundays, and even Owenite rites for baptisms, marriages, and funerals.[8] The Society's best-known newspaper, the weekly *New Moral World*, ran for nearly eleven years (1834–45), and

had a peak circulation of some 40,000. The relationship between the Rational Society and Owenite communitarian ambitions was complex, but the organization was eventually bankrupted by its, sometimes reluctant, financial involvement in Owen's communal experiment at Harmony.

Even after the effective collapse of the Owenite movement, Owen (now in his late seventies) remained an indefatigable reformer. He made several proselytizing visits to America, and in 1846 mediated in a border dispute in Oregon.[9] In 1848, he spent five months in revolutionary Paris, promoting Owenite ideas—as best as an English-speaking monoglot might—and offering his services to the provisional government of the February Revolution.[10]

Owen's final years were dominated by his (1853) conversion to Spiritualism, and the publication of *The Life of Robert Owen Written by Himself* (1857–1858). That conversion embarrassed some of Owen's subsequent admirers, but he would always insist on the links between socialism and spiritualism; for instance, a spiritual communication to Owen from the former Duke of Kent confirmed that there were no titles in the afterlife; and an American follower provided him with architectural plans for a new settlement purportedly sent from the spirit world. Owen himself passed beyond the veil in 1858.

II.

There is something approaching a broad consensus among traditional commentators about the political dimension of Owen's life and work. His political views, we are variously told, are "undemocratic," "aristocratic," "conservative," "paternalistic," and so on. It seems that Owen is to be placed squarely in the tradition of what has been called "socialism from above," combining some collectivist ideas with a commitment to elite rule.[11] W.L. Sargent, his (Owenite) first biographer concedes that Owen's "notions of government generally were anything but democratic, and had rather a paternal leaning."[12] Max Beer, the distinguished historian of socialism, insists that Owen "was no democrat"; he could be the "self-sacrificing father and teacher" of the masses "their authoritative adviser and leader, but never the *primus inter pares*."[13] Frank Podmore, the Fabian biographer of Owen, describes him as "aristocratic in his methods and the whole cast of his mind. He appears always to have conceived of reform as something imposed upon the mass of the people from above."[14] Arthur Bestor, the great historian of American communitarianism, suggests that "a certain distrust of popular control marked all his proposals for reform."[15] And the Marxist writer Ralph Miliband characterizes Owen's approach to politics as "cautious and conservative."[16]

These labels—"undemocratic," "aristocratic," and so on—are not identical, nor is their precise meaning always clear. Moreover, the relation between these adjacent but distinct characterizations is uncertain, and individually

they seem ill-equipped to capture the complexities of Owen's views about politics and government. Nonetheless, this traditional consensus is seemingly supported by a wide range of evidence from Owen's life and writings.[17]

Examples of a lack of democratic sensibility on Owen's part are easily found. In 1817, for instance, he expressed surprise that ordinary members of the public attending a recent meeting had raised objections to his reform plans; surely the "gentlemen" in question could not have imagined that he "wished to have the opinions of the ill-trained and uninformed on any of the measures intended for their relief and amelioration."[18] Yet more than the lack of a democratic sensibility is at issue here. Both the structure of the wider Owenite movement and Owen's behavior within it are also relevant. Early incarnations of the Rational Society, for instance, had a "patriarchal" rather than "democratic" structure, with Owen, of course, as "father." And within Owenite institutions, Owen typically resisted any restrictions on his authority. When the annual congress of the Rational Society proposed some modest constraints on his powers, Owen resigned as the governor of Harmony—a key stage in its evolving collapse—explaining that "he could not accept of office in connection with the Society, unless he could have full authority to act as circumstances rendered it necessary, without reference to previous resolutions."[19]

Owen's attitude towards political change might also support these traditional characterizations. Owen's socialism of "all classes of all nations" pitched him against, both those reformers who sought purely political changes, and those who had a social program but sought to advance it through conflict. Addressing the first group, which included some Chartists, he insisted that "[i]t is not Universal Suffrage, Vote by Ballot, and Annual Parliaments that can effect that which is now required for the people of all countries."[20] Disputes over "despotism, aristocracy, and democracy" were, either irrelevant (insofar as the real cause of social problems was neither the number of rulers, nor the process by which they were selected, but rather their ignorance), or part of the problem (insofar as they reflected a kind of "desolating conflict between parties whose real interests are the same").[21] Addressing the second group, which included certain "red republicans, communists, and socialists of Europe," he criticized their anger and ill-will towards their opponents as, either "irrational" (because it presupposes what is—on the Owenite account—false, namely that the "higher classes" are responsible for the misery of the "lower classes"), or "useless" (because it encourages, misplaced but nonetheless real, resistance to change on the part of the "higher classes"). In addition, Owen rejected class struggle for broadly prefigurative reasons; he insisted that a rational and humane society could never "be effected by violence, or through feelings of anger and ill-will to any portion of mankind," but only though means that embodied "the spirit of peace, kindness, and charity" that characterized its goals.[22] A crucial advantage of the communitarian strategy, for Owen, was that it accommodated his distinctive ambition of a "peaceful revolution,"

combining dramatic social transformation with the absence of injury to any part of existing society.[23] Settlements would spread gradually by the power of example, peacefully expanding from community to community, country to continent, until the whole world was organized according to cooperative principles.

The traditional consensus about Owen's political views perhaps also draws support from his concessive attitude towards the existing establishment. Owen was not merely convinced that his proposed social arrangements were in the interests of all, but was also persuaded of the good will and openness to reason of contemporary political elites. That confidence extended well beyond the circle of wealthy philanthropists and politicians who had, for example, joined him in lobbying for the 1819 Factory Act. Writing as "Your Majesty's Faithful Friend," Owen happily appealed to William IV to use his authority to help "reconstitute society upon a new and solid basis";[24] and subsequently petitioned Queen Victoria to use the power of the British Empire for good, by adopting his policy recommendations.[25]

Owen's governmental preferences within transitional communities might also lend support to this traditional consensus. By "transitional" communities, I mean those in which at least some settlement members have characters partly formed under the irrational social arrangements of the old world. Owen accepted that private property, class divisions, and inequality of condition, might all continue for a time in transitional communities; for instance, settlements might house individuals of independent wealth who availed themselves of the superior domestic and social arrangements but were not required to contribute to production.[26] More importantly, in the present context, the governing minority in transitional communities would be selected only from full members—rather than the (numerically superior) groups of candidate members and wage laborers that also made up the community—and those chosen would be those already "in the practice of directing extensive operations in old society."[27] The social origins of this group are clear; for the time being, at least, Owen insists that "the middle class is the only efficient directing class in society."[28]

Owen maintains that governing a transitional settlement is "*the most difficult task* that man will ever have to perform."[29] It is analogous to superintending "a great lunatic asylum," except that in the communitarian case (unlike the asylum) the "patients" (i.e., the members of the settlements) are "armed"—they have the "power of life and death" in a thousand different ways—and the "physicians" (i.e., the communal governors) have no weapon aside from reason, truth, and kindness.[30] This remarkable and revealing image confirms both Owen's view of government as a paternalistic activity requiring specialist expertise and the personal impact of his own difficulties in exercising authority within the movements that he helped to found.

This survey confirms the variety of evidence supporting the traditional characterizations of Owen's politics as "undemocratic," "aristocratic," "conservative," and so on. Indeed, whatever their limitations, it is hard to

deny that these labels have some purchase on their target. However, this evidence concerns, either Owen's own character and behavior (rather than his theoretical views), or it refers only to his theoretical views about transitional communities. In what follows, I discuss the somewhat neglected topic of governmental arrangements in *non*-transitional communities (in which all members have been born and educated within rational circumstances). Owen's non-transitional preferences complicate, or so I will argue, this consensus about his political views.

III.

I introduce these issues somewhat obliquely, by first considering the importance of science, and scientific governance, in Owen's political thought. Agrarian threads in Owenism can obscure its forward-looking character, and its embrace of science and technology. Crucially, Owen insists that the new moral world is only accessible—that is, reachable from where humankind is currently situated—because of three recent scientific breakthroughs.

First, the new moral world is accessible because of recent historical developments in technology and natural science. Owenite socialism is only feasible because of material abundance, which, in turn, depends on the increased productivity that would result from the utilization of recent scientific breakthroughs within a new and more rational social environment. Owen welcomed the "new inventions and discoveries" of the last hundred or so years, especially developments in "mechanics, chemistry, and other sciences" that had increased the ability of humankind to satisfy their material wants.[31] In present society, Owen allows that scientific and technological progress has generated unwelcome results, including "poverty, destitution, crime, and consequent extreme suffering."[32] However, in suitably altered social conditions, this "new scientific power" would create abundance beyond "the imagination of ordinary minds" without harmful effects.[33] Owenite enthusiasm for science and technology is also apparent in the lectures and entertainments of the Rational Society. One breathless branch report merits quotation:

On Friday last . . . the philosophical experiments . . . were of a superior description. Amongst some of the experiments were the oxy-hydrogen and Bude lights, the last new invention of Mr. Gurney for light-houses; decomposition of various chemical compounds, as sugar, potassa, &c.; and with a good electrical machine we were enabled to electrify nearly all present at one time. Besides other experiments, a model of a Montgolfier balloon ascended in the hall twice during the evening, and at the close was committed *ad nubes*. The nitrous oxide, or laughing gas, exerted its full powers on this occasion, delighting all by its singular effects. Between the leading experiments, the lively dance was indulged in, thus at once blending the acme of mental and physical enjoyments.[34]

Second, the new moral world is accessible because Owen had discovered and refined "the science of human nature." Its two central claims are: that individuals do not form their own character (their character is rather *wholly* formed for them by natural and social circumstances) and, seemingly as a consequence, that individuals are not accountable for their own sentiments and behavior (the practice of punishment and reward purportedly embodies a fundamental and pernicious error). There are material constraints here; human nature is not a blank sheet of paper, on which "educators" can write anything they want. However, human nature is sufficiently malleable that, with the appropriate means, any "general character" from the "best" to the "worst" can be created in a community. In *A New View of Society*, Owen contrasts a "good" character that is intelligent, rational and happy, with a "bad" character that is ignorant, irrational, and miserable.[35] In his communitarian writings, the environmental transformation of character is even more dramatic, effectively resulting in "a new race," physically, intellectually, and morally, far superior to any who have previously lived upon the earth.[36]

Third, the new moral world is only accessible because of breakthroughs in "the science of society."[37] (The Owenite William Thompson has been credited with the earliest English use of the term "social science," which retained Owenite associations into the 1840s.)[38] This science is concerned with "the architectural materials with which to build up a new state of human existence," designing the institutional and other arrangements embodying the principle of union governing the new moral world (replacing the principle of individualism which governed the old immoral one), and forming the best of human character.[39] The detail of these social arrangements varies from text to text, but the broad outlines of a representative *non*-transitional Owenite community—that is, a settlement in which all have been "trained from birth to become rational men and women"—are easily sketched.[40]

The non-transitional community would be small, accommodating perhaps two thousand five hundred persons, living and working together, on an estate some three thousand acres in extent. The main communal buildings would form a closed "parallelogram"—on the model, commentators often say, of an oversized Oxford or Cambridge college—with living quarters on its sides, and public rooms (such as lecture rooms, libraries, concert halls, and infirmaries) at the corners. A great communal dining hall would be located alongside botanic gardens inside the huge quadrangle. And many of the working parts of the building—brewery, kitchens, and so on—would be found on the extensive basement level. The result would be nothing less than "a magnificent palace, containing within itself the advantages of a metropolis, an university, and a country residence, without any of their disadvantages, and situated within a beautiful park."[41] There would be hot and cold running water, gas lighting throughout, and the latest labor-saving devices where appropriate. Many familiar occupations would have disappeared (lawyers, bankers, and priests are predictable early casualties), but idleness would be unknown. Mechanism and science would have got rid of

"all severe, unhealthy, or, even unpleasant human labour," and only labor consisting in the healthy and pleasurable exercise of our physical and mental powers would remain.[42] To facilitate this, agricultural work would predominate over manufacturing. Communities would be largely autarchic, with only limited external "trade." Owen's conviction that labor was the source of all wealth, and that competition bred an undesirable character, led him to endorse common property and equality of condition in non-transitional circumstances. The community would have a shared ethos, emphasizing "a family affection," and individuals would possess "a lively interest" in the well-being and happiness of others.[43] Childcare would be partly collectivized, and education in the narrow sense (i.e., schooling) would play a crucial formative role. Owen was sensitive to the charge that he was an enemy of family feeling, and maintained that his modest collectivization would result in less separation of parents from their children than occurred at present (he had in mind the contemporary separations resulting from the privations of the poor, the work demands of the middle classes, and the use of boarding schools by the wealthy).

All three of these sciences are necessary in order to bring about the new moral world, but the relationship between the two Owenite sciences is especially close. The science of human nature is concerned with the abstract principles of character formation; embracing, for instance, the claim that the individual "will" is just another part of character formed by circumstances.[44] The science of society is a practical science of social design that presupposes, and makes use of, those abstract principles, in generating concrete institutional and other recommendations. These two sciences have to be "united and formed into a practical system" if they are to benefit the human race fully.[45] Previous thinkers, "from the time of Plato to the present," had typically fallen into one of two camps: either "men of words" who knew little of practical measures; or men engaged in the "practical operations of society" who "seldom, knew or troubled themselves" about the principles regulating the formation of human character.[46] In contrast, Owen presents himself as understanding both "practical measures," and the "principles which should direct them."[47] Given recent innovation in natural science and technology, the unification of the sciences of human nature and society promised dramatic historical consequences. Simply put, these three scientific breakthroughs would enable the world to be transformed into "a terrestrial paradise," and its inhabitants to become "rational and superior beings."[48]

IV.

The science of society, drawing on the science of human nature, includes a knowledge of "the principles and practice by which to *govern* man."[49] Owenite government is educative in the broad sense, concerned with the social environment in which all individuals are circumstanced. Its purpose

is to "devise and execute the arrangements by which the conditions essential to human happiness shall be fully and permanently obtained for all the governed."[50]

Even in non-transitional circumstances, government is still required. It constitutes one of the four "general departments of life" in settlements (alongside production, distribution, and education in the narrow sense). Communal flourishing still requires government because there remains some opacity or disagreement about the best arrangements, and, Owen insists, the "final decision upon every doubtful point of practice must rest somewhere."[51] As well as a clear distinction between government and governed, minority rule would also remain. Yet, in comparison with transitional circumstances: there would be less governing; it would no longer be coercive; and it would be easy to conduct.

First, Owen suggests that in non-transitional circumstances, there might be rather little for government to do. Laws are still needed but, given rational people in rationally arranged circumstances, "these laws are few," they are universal (applying across the rationally organized world), and they have already been discovered (requiring execution not legislation).[52] Owen explains that once we are beyond transitional circumstances "there will be no necessity for any other laws than the twenty-five now enumerated and explained" in the *Book of the New Moral World* (1836–1844).[53]

Second, government in non-transitional communities is not backed by coercive force. Government proceeds "without force or fraud, and solely by reason and kindness"; the power of reason replaces Lenin's bodies of armed men, and ideology (in the pejorative Marxian sense) and individual punishment (or reward) are redundant.[54] Owen assumes that reason and experience will produce clear and determinate decisions, and that those decisions will typically be accepted happily by the governed.

Third, given the rational social arrangements and the resulting character of community members, "there will be no difficulty in the government of such a population."[55] By comparison with governing in transitional circumstances—a task akin, recall, to running an asylum where the inmates are armed, and the only resources available to the governors are reason and kindness—this looks like a sinecure. In non-transitional circumstances, Owen suggests that to "govern the world . . . will become, not only easy, but a constant source of pleasure, a pastime" to those whose task it is "assisted as they will be, cordially and heartily, by those of every age and qualification."[56]

There is much that is puzzling and problematic about these claims. There are some obvious reasons for skepticism; for instance, about whether coercion is so easily made redundant. There is also some need for elaboration; for instance, about the nature of law. Contemporary legal codes function as a monument to "the barbarism which yet covers the earth"; their biggest flaw is predictably their commitment to false ideas of responsibility and punishment, but their component laws are also "innumerable"; "opposed

to nature"; "inconsistent," and "too complicated."[57] The form, content, and function of non-transitional laws will be very different.

First, these laws are "fundamental laws of nature, not of man's invention."[58] "Human laws" are needed in transitional circumstances, but once "all shall be trained from their birth within rational circumstances, and of course made rational in their feelings, thoughts, and actions, no human laws will be required."[59] At this point "nature's laws, well understood and consistently applied to practice, will be sufficient to secure the well-being, well-doing, and the permanent happiness of the race, and then will all human laws be for ever abolished."[60] Properly understood, these natural laws are both laws of reason and "*divine* laws" proceeding from a cause unknown and mysterious to us (Owen's hostility to existing religions did not make him doubt the potential of natural religion to benefit humankind).[61] The role of individuals is simply to discover these laws (which Owen claims to have already done), and then live according to them (which he is trying to arrange).

Second, the content of these "twenty-five substantive laws, all deduced from, and in unison with, the ascertained *laws of nature*" is striking.[62] They are sufficient for the government of humankind partly because they have the form of basic, or constitutional, law (rather than of ordinary statutes). They include: that "all will have liberty to express the truth, not only as respects their natural thoughts and feelings, but upon all subjects, civil and religious" (first law);[63] that "[b]oth sexes shall have equal education, rights, privileges, and personal liberty" (eleventh law);[64] and that "there shall be no individual reward or punishment" (thirteenth law).[65] In short, these laws look like broad statements of Owenite principle—grounded, of course, in the sciences of human nature and society—which are to be applied in particular cases by the communal governments in question.

Third, and reinforcing this impression of their quasi-constitutional form, these laws function to constrain government. Owen's commitment to something like "the rule of law" might be surprising (given his obsession with the formation of character), but it is consistent with the natural and divine character of the relevant laws. As the twenty-second law states: the home and foreign councils "shall have full power of government, *in all things under their direction*, as long as they shall govern in accordance with the divine laws of nature, which will be their sole guide."[66] In non-transitional circumstances, it is "scarcely possible" that they won't do this, yet the twenty-fifth *and final* law does provide for a situation where the general councils "have acted, or attempted to act, in opposition to these divine laws."[67] These emergency procedures involve an investigation initiated by those who have previously held office, conducted "calmly and patiently," and ultimately judged by a majority of non-governing members of the community over the age of sixteen (exclusion from office being the result for those found to have acted, or attempted to act, against natural law).[68]

Thus far, I have described Owen as endorsing minority rule, but said nothing about how that minority is to be selected. Having rejected all

standard forms of government—"despotism, limited monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy, republicanism or democracy" all fail to produce a superior character or happiness for those governed—Owen recommends a kind of gerontocracy as the only rational form of government.[69] He doesn't use that term himself, but "gerontocracy" seems an appropriate label for government involving the rule of a natural aristocracy of "age and experience."[70] (In what follows, "gerontocracy" denotes only Owen's distinctive variant of rule by age and experience.) The form that this gerontocracy takes, its main justification, and its many advantages, are all of interest.

First, Owen's endorsement of gerontocracy forms part of a wider account of age as the only "natural and rational" social division (unlike the artificial and irrational contemporary divisions of "class and station").[71] Apart from the distinctions of age, individuals will have "a perfect equality in their education, condition, occupations, and enjoyments."[72] Owen recommends "precise, permanent, divisions of human life" (revisable in the light of experience) that identify age groups (and corresponding social roles).[73] The precise divisions vary between texts, but a representative account gives us: from birth to five years old (rational training at nursing and infant schools); five to ten years (education increasingly integrated into light work); ten to fifteen (training in the scientific principles of the arts of life and productive activity); fifteen to twenty (productive activity, instructing the young, and exposure to new and superior marriage arrangements); twenty to twenty-five (senior roles in production and instruction); and twenty-five to thirty (ensuring efficient distribution and consumption). Only with the seventh and eighth group do we get to the two groups who will govern domestic and external affairs, respectively. Thirty- to forty-year-olds form a general council governing domestic affairs—its various committees directing production, distribution, and education. Forty- to sixty-year-olds govern external affairs: receiving visitors; arranging transfers of surplus produce; communicating new inventions and discoveries; assisting with the creation of new communities; and so on. They might be viewed as "sovereigns of the world" travelling widely, enjoying the best the new civilization can offer, and ensuring that none remain "in an ignorant or barbarous state," that local prejudice is eroded and rational arrangements spread universally.[74] Finally, there is the ninth group of those effectively retired from governmental duties that, we can assume, are less pleasurable and effective given waning "physical and mental vigour."[75] At one point, Owen speculates that, in rational circumstances, adults will typically die in the same proportions between a hundred and a hundred-and-forty years old, as they currently die between sixty and one hundred years old.[76]

Second, gerontocracy is seemingly the best kind of rule because it embodies "nature's genuine and unopposed aristocracy."[77] On Owen's account, governing is a science which requires a considerable level of competence, the acquisition of which is a function of human development, learning and experience (for which age, I take it, is an appropriate marker). It takes some

thirty years to form "the physical, mental, moral, and practical character of each man and woman" so as to ensure they are "well prepared" in the knowledge and spirit of governing justly.[78] Prior participation in the areas of communal activity that require direction (production, distribution, and education) is a vital part of this preparation; "it is known," Owen writes, "that no one can *govern* well unless he has previously served well, and has made himself master of those things respecting which he has to give instructions to govern."[79] In the old immoral world very few had anything like the relevant skills, and those few typically came from privileged social backgrounds. However, in more rational circumstances, all individuals "will gradually, as the necessary experience to accomplish all well shall be acquired, become . . . local or home governor, and general or foreign governor."[80] Indeed, in rational circumstances, all individuals at the ages stated "will be far more than competent to the easy task which they will have to perform."[81]

Third, gerontocracy has several additional advantages. It is compatible with equality, which is crucial because "all, by nature, have equal rights."[82] Owen's insistence that "male and female" should both govern is especially striking, because in other contexts he endorses a gendered division of labor.[83] In addition, gerontocracy promotes happiness. Where age and experience match social duties, we are likely to discharge those duties "in a superior manner, willingly, cheerfully, and with high gratification to every one."[84] Gerontocracy will also promote subjective legitimacy, ensuring that "the whole business and affairs of each association will be governed without jealousy."[85] People accept the rule of their elders because, from the earliest age, everyone will understand that "at the proper period of life" they themselves will hold the same office.[86] Moreover, gerontocracy avoids the permanent rule of particular minorities; people understand that governors "possess this precedence for a short time only" and that incumbents will change soon enough.[87] In addition, gerontocracy provides conflict-free succession. Age is sufficient qualification to govern directly, and "there shall be no selection or election of any individuals to office."[88] Lastly, Owen maintains that gerontocracy minimizes abuses of office. Education in the science of government seems crucial here; the relevant classes "will all be well trained, and properly prepared," ensuring that they enjoy the responsibility "without making abuse of any part of it."[89]

V.

Owen's account of gerontocracy confirms the importance of science in his communitarian writings and casts some doubt on the adequacy of traditional characterizations of his political thought. The entry of humankind into the new moral world is only possible because of recent breakthroughs in the natural sciences, in the science of human nature, and in the science of

society. The importance of science to the Owenite project is confirmed by Owen's discussion of government. Communal governors need social scientific knowledge of how to build and operate the kind of environment that can produce a highly intelligent, moral, and happy population. That much applies to both transitional and non-transitional communities. What differs is the distribution of this architectonic political knowledge among the population.

If we restrict our attention to transitional circumstances, Owen's enthusiastic embrace of scientific governance lends plausibility to the traditional characterizations of his political thought as "undemocratic," "aristocratic," and so on. He maintains that governing a community is a very particular kind of skill, that only a few will have competence in it, and that this minority will typically be found in the ranks of the already socially privileged. (Those traditional characterizations also have plausibility because of Owen's lack of a democratic sensibility, the patriarchal structure of Owenite movements, his occasionally imperious behavior within them, his rejection of political change and class struggle, and his concessive attitude towards existing elites.)

However, in non-transitional circumstances matters look very different. Scientific governance is still crucial, but Owen allows that these competences have now become universal, albeit that it takes age and experience to develop the relevant skills (we only get to govern "at a proper period of life").[90] In the new moral world, the requirement of equality is no longer in such tension with the distribution of the skills needed to govern. Provided we reach the age of thirty, public office will become just another social role that we are all called upon to perform; everyone enjoying, without contest, their "fair full share of the government of society."[91] In this way, Owen's distinctive form of gerontocracy reminds us that some kind of political equality can be realized outside of more conventional democratic arrangements. Indeed, his model allows all individuals (male and female) to govern, and they do so directly and without any form of representation. There remains the strict age constraints on government, but these reflect Owen's understanding of the lengthy experience and training required to become skilled in the science of government, together with his desire to avoid the burdens of office in old age. They do not reflect a rejection of political equality as such.

At the very least, Owen's account of the science of government in non-transitional circumstances complicates the traditional characterizations of his political thought. It looks counterintuitive to characterize as "undemocratic" without qualification, a thinker whose political ideal requires all members of a community (without exception) to undertake directly "their fair share in governing" at the appropriate time.[92] My intention is not to replace that traditional picture with an equally one-sided "democratic" reading, but rather to acknowledge the complexity here, and suggest that

the context of Owen's remarks helps us make sense of it. In particular, whether we are in transitional or non-transitional circumstances makes a significant difference to Owen's recommendations about the form that scientific governance should take.

NOTES

1. Beer, 1929: 160.
2. Owen, 1813–1816: 27–28. Hereafter, references to Owen's works are with title and page number.
3. Owen, "From the Manifesto of Robert Owen," 358.
4. Owen, "A New View of Society," 62.
5. Owen, "Further Development of the Plan," 219.
6. Owen, "A Development of the Principles and Plans," 347–48.
7. Advert in *New Moral World*, December 27, 1834, 72.
8. See Yeo, 1971.
9. See Tsuzuki, 1971: 20–21.
10. See Rubel, 1960.
11. See Draper, 1966.
12. Sargent, 1860: 37–38.
13. Beer, 1929: 162.
14. Podmore, 1923: 427.
15. Bestor, 1950: 64.
16. Miliband, 1954: 233.
17. Valuable exceptions to this consensus include Claeys, 1989, and Taylor, 1982.
18. Owen, "Further Development of the Plan," 214.
19. Owen, *New Moral World*, June 8, 1844, 402.
20. Owen, "Letter" to *The Poor Man's Guardian*, March 14, 1835.
21. Owen, *The Revolution in the Mind*, xix.
22. *Ibid.,* vii.
23. Owen, *New Moral World*, October 14, 1842, 133.
24. Owen, "Book of the New Moral World," 4.
25. Owen, *The Revolution in the Mind*, Preface.
26. Owen, "A Development of the Principles and Plans," 378.
27. Owen, *New Moral World*, July 11, 1838, 595.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Owen, "Book of the New Moral World," 341.
30. *Ibid.*, 341.
31. Owen, "Development of the Principles," 347 and 390.
32. *Ibid.*, 356.
33. *Ibid.*, 347.
34. Owen, *New Moral World*, April 13, 1839, 394.
35. Owen, "A New View of Society," 62.
36. Owen, "Six Lectures at Manchester," 349.
37. Owen, "Development of the Principles," 348.
38. See Claeys, 1986.
39. Owen, "Book of the New Moral World," 86.
40. *Ibid.*, 340.
41. Owen, "Development of the Principles," 377.

42. *Ibid.*, 351.
43. *Ibid.*, 362.
44. *Ibid.*, 57.
45. *Ibid.*, 122.
46. *Ibid.*, 121–22.
47. *Ibid.*, 121.
48. *Ibid.*, 188.
49. *Ibid.*, 85.
50. *Ibid.*, 301.
51. *Ibid.*, 294.
52. *Ibid.*, 348.
53. *Ibid.*, 358–59.
54. *Ibid.*, 188.
55. *Ibid.*, 338.
56. *Ibid.*, 308.
57. *Ibid.*, 355.
58. *Ibid.*, 25.
59. *Ibid.*, 308.
60. *Ibid.*, 308.
61. *Ibid.*, 348.
62. *Ibid.*, 354.
63. *Ibid.*, 309.
64. *Ibid.*, 325.
65. *Ibid.*, 329.
66. *Ibid.*, 348.
67. *Ibid.*, 354.
68. *Ibid.*, 354.
69. *Ibid.*, 371.
70. *Ibid.*, 347.
71. *Ibid.*, 286.
72. *Ibid.*, 293.
73. *Ibid.*, 287.
74. *Ibid*, 295.
75. *Ibid.*, 34.
76. Owen, "The Future New Rational and Happy State of Society," 18.
77. Owen, "Book of the New Moral World," 342.
78. *Ibid.*, 339.
79. *Ibid.*, 338.
80. *Ibid.*, 306.
81. *Ibid.*, 347.
82. *Ibid.*, 286.
83. Compare *ibid.*, 347, with, for example, Owen, "Report to the Committee for the Relief of the Manufacturing Poor," 163.
84. Owen, "Book of the New Moral World," 287.
85. *Ibid.*, 294.
86. *Ibid.*, 296.
87. *Ibid.*, 294.
88. *Ibid.*, 341.
89. *Ibid.*, 295.
90. *Ibid.*, 61.
91. Owen, "Six Lectures at Manchester," 355.
92. Owen, "Book of the New Moral World," 342.

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13 Alexis De Tocqueville on Science, Statesmanship, and Political Philosophy

Aristide Tessitore

The French political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859) is famous for beginning his now-classic study of American democracy by calling for a new political science for an altogether new world (*DA*, Introduction, 6).[1] Like many of his most intriguing statements, this one is riddled with paradox. Whereas this clarion call appears in the opening pages of *Democracy in America*, nowhere in the rich and sprawling study that follows does Tocqueville offer an explicit explanation of what he means by it. There is neither a systematic critique of the current practice of political science, nor an explicit articulation of the underlying principles or methodology that ought to characterize the needed new version. Indeed, Jon Elster has gone so far as to maintain that the books that Tocqueville published during his lifetime (*Democracy in America* and *The Old Regime and the Revolution*) are profound works of "historical sociology," but that it is a mistake to consider them works of political theory or even to regard Tocqueville as an important or great political theorist.[2] Elster is far from the first to consider Tocqueville to be a great sociologist; in fact, Tocqueville's growing popularity after World War II increasingly touted his attention to civic society rather than politics.[3] Given the absence of any clearly articulated scientific method in his two most important and influential books, and the prominence that he assigns to sociological explanation (especially in *Democracy in America*), Tocqueville might seem a poor choice for a book devoted to science, statesmanship, and political philosophy.

Some indication that this is not the whole story is suggested by the fact that every American President since Dwight Eisenhower has referred to Tocqueville with approval, and that this same post–World War II period has seen a burgeoning interest in Tocqueville as a political thinker—one that has spawned a debate about his stature as a political philosopher on both sides of the Atlantic.[4] Even Elster begrudgingly concedes that most scholars consider Tocqueville to be a great political theorist.

Although contemporary disputes about Tocqueville can and often do cast new light on his writing as a whole, we are on firmer ground when we turn to what Tocqueville has to say on his own behalf, both in his published books as well as his meticulously preserved notes, revisions, and extensive

correspondence. Although it is certainly true that historical and sociological explanations are prominently featured in his written work, it is also the case that Tocqueville includes a very different kind of causal explanation in his books, one that suggests that important historical and sociological phenomena are themselves indebted to the principles, discoveries, and arguments of important religious and philosophic thinkers.

It is possible to provide an initial indication of the importance of this contrast between "sociological" causality and what I will refer to as "a causality of ideas" by comparing the way in which Tocqueville begins each of the two volumes that comprise *Democracy in America*. Whereas Volume I opens with a sweeping assertion of the enormous influence of equality of conditions on American society (sociological causality) (*DA*, I.i.3, 45–53), Volume II begins with the suggestion that the social condition of equality was itself influenced by the religious, scientific and philosophic *ideas* of reformers such as Luther, Bacon, Descartes, and Voltaire (*DA*, II.i.1, 404–5). Although Tocqueville intermittently gives evidence for the priority of one or the other of these causes, he consistently shows the influence of both in a way that suggests the reciprocal influence of religious and philosophic "ideas" (*idées*) on the one hand, and the sociological (including economic) causes of "social state" (*état social*) on the other. Indeed, notes attached to the 1840 volume of *Democracy in America* explicitly preserve an unanswered question as to whether a "social state" is the product of "ideas," or "ideas" are the product of a "social state" (*DA* 2010, III.i.5, 749, note F).

Although the exact relationship between these two kinds of causality is not rendered entirely clear in *Democracy in America*, there is good evidence to think that for Tocqueville sociological forms of causality are often embedded within a larger architectonic framework furnished by religious and philosophic ideas. The evidence is provided in an important speech (only recently receiving some of the attention it deserves) that Tocqueville delivered to his colleagues in the *Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques* in 1852. Not only does this speech contain Tocqueville's most systematic statement about the nature of political science, it also addresses in an explicit way his understanding of the relationship between science, statesmanship, and political philosophy.

This essay is divided into two parts. The first offers an account of the parameters of political science and its relationship to statesmanship and political philosophy, as they are outlined in Tocqueville's 1852 speech. The second part draws upon his published writings to develop this understanding. Although Tocqueville does not explain what he means by the "new political science" in either of the books published in his lifetime, my working assumption is that both are intended to exhibit it. The second part of the essay begins by developing the *practical* character of Tocqueville's new science, especially as it pertains to statesmanship, and it concludes by indicating the novel *theoretical* foundation upon which it rests, one that comes to light as a critique of his philosophic predecessors.

I.   TOCQUEVILLE'S SPEECH ON THE NATURE
   OF POLITICAL SCIENCE[5]

The context for Tocqueville's speech to the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences was not without its drama; indeed, so much drama that Tocqueville decided to withhold a portion of the speech he had prepared for this occasion. The speech was given between the publication of his two major books and at a pivotal moment in his political career; that is, shortly after he felt compelled to withdraw from direct political involvement after almost twelve years of public service. Tocqueville's speech (April 3, 1852) was delivered four months after the violent coup d'état of Louis-Napoleon, during the politically tense year in which the Second Republic was being consolidated into the Second Empire, and its former president was transforming himself into Napoleon III.

As president of the Academy, Tocqueville used the occasion of an annual speech to remind his colleagues of their mission and the dangers that imperiled it by addressing the relationship between theory and practice in politics. He found himself in the difficult position of having to balance advocacy for the freedom of discussion necessary to advance science, while at the same time avoiding the wrath of an increasingly aggressive authoritarian power.

i.   Skepticism and the Possibility of a Science of Politics

Tocqueville begins his speech by acknowledging the existence of widespread skepticism concerning even the possibility of a science of politics. In the course of his speech, he indicates and addresses three distinct reasons for this skepticism: (1) the undeniable variability and volatility that characterize political facts and actions, (2) a widespread conviction among those with the greatest political experience that there is no particular art or technique that can teach one to govern, and (3) the seemingly unlimited reach of politics itself.

Tocqueville begins by addressing the first and third causes of this skepticism by explaining that politics is divided into two parts—one that is fixed and another that is in constant motion. The failure to make this seemingly simple distinction in a clear and consistent way on the part of writers and practitioners of politics alike, contributes in a powerful way to a misdirected skepticism concerning the possibility of a science of politics. The fixed part of politics finds its foundation in human nature itself, something that includes the various interests, faculties, needs, and instincts that are revealed by history and analyzed by political philosophy. While the particular objects sought change in accord with the times, the underlying nature of human beings does not. This, according to Tocqueville, furnishes the needed foundation for a "science of politics," one that makes possible the discovery of laws best suited to "the general and permanent condition of humanity" (*O*, 1216). In sharp contrast, the part of politics characterized by constant motion is

described by Tocqueville as that which struggles against an innumerable range of particular obstacles, adapts to changing circumstances, provides for urgent and typically passing needs, and often makes use of ephemeral passions to accomplish these goals. These variable and volatile aspects of politics pertain to the sphere of political practice, and are addressed by what Tocqueville calls the "art of government."

Not only does Tocqueville acknowledge that the *art* differs from the *science,* he also indicates that those who excel in one realm do not typically excel in the other. In fact, the very faculties needed for and developed by science or theory have a tendency to become liabilities when applied directly to political practice. Great political writers are often captivated by the logic of ideas and develop a taste for the subtle and ingenious, whereas the political world (especially in a democratic age) is moved by passions rather than ideas, and takes its bearings from simplified and widely accepted opinions rather than from subtle inducements or carefully qualified arguments. Although Tocqueville insists that political science and the art of governing are two very distinct things, they are not unrelated and in the best cases each part exerts an influence on the other, as we shall see.

The third reason provided by Tocqueville for doubting the existence of a science of politics concerns its seemingly unlimited reach. Insofar as politics appears to include every kind of knowledge in some way connected with human beings (e.g., psychology, metaphysics, or epistemology), the possibility of a distinct science of politics is necessarily obscured. However, Tocqueville contends that if one removes everything that merely touches political science without adhering to it, it is possible to dispel this confusion and trace in outline a single far-reaching science, one that extends from the general to the particular and from pure theory to written laws and facts.

At the top of the pyramid, Tocqueville places political philosophers (here referred to as "publicists") and cites Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, and Rousseau as his representatives for this brilliant cohort. The greatest political philosophers base their theories of political and individual right, law, and systems of government on a fixed understanding of human nature, as well as an awareness of the varying conditions, places, and times in which human nature manifests itself. In his discussion of science in *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville describes this first and highest level of scientific inquiry as one that gives expression to the most theoretical and abstract principles that govern any particular science. These principles are typically the result of serious and sustained study; indeed, Tocqueville writes that "[n]othing is more necessary to the cultivation of the advanced sciences or of the elevated portion of sciences than meditation." He notes that it is also the case that at times these discoveries stand at a considerable distance from actual practice (*DA*, II.i.10, 433–34).

A second group of contributors to the science of politics focuses especially on the relations between nations. Tocqueville mentions Grotius and

Pufendorf, both of whom attempted to articulate the nature and limits of those laws governing the interactions between independent states. Still others, while preserving the general and theoretical character of political science, specialize in a particular part of a larger whole. Tocqueville gives as examples Beccaria's attempt to articulate what ought to be the rules of criminal justice for all people (one part of domestic political justice) and Adam Smith's attempt to discover the foundation of wealth among nations (one part of economics). Even more limited in scope is the work of jurists, great commentators, and all those who interpret or clarify existing institutions, treaties, constitutions, and laws.

Although the field of political science becomes narrower and is more closely tied to specific historical facts with this last group in Tocqueville's movement from the general to the particular, he insists that "it is always the same science," and as a consequence that each area or part is necessarily linked to the others. Tocqueville points to the fact that an author who seeks to interpret or clarify a specific law, or even apply a particular law to a specific set of facts, is drawing upon the work of those who have contributed to the other parts of political science. Those writing about constitutional law, for example, invariably support themselves, either explicitly or implicitly, by appealing to abstract truths originally discovered or articulated by political philosophers (O, 1218). One might think of James Madison (an author read and admired by Tocqueville), who in defending the proposed Constitution of the United States, explicitly observes that "government itself [is] the greatest of all reflections on human nature" (*Federalist* No. 51). Madison was in this instance referring to the realistic understanding of human nature that undergirds the Constitution—a view of human nature vigorously and fruitfully debated by Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau (among others). It was in fact this debate that gave rise to the discovery and development of the most distinctive features of modern politics. Conversely, Tocqueville points out that political philosophers should, in turn, ground their theories in an understanding of the particular facts and institutions generated by historical experience and interpreted or clarified by those falling into the last group in his morphology of political science (O, 1218–19).

ii. Statesmanship and Political Philosophy

Tocqueville's sketch delimits a single science of politics that can be divided into distinct parts reaching from the most general and theoretical to the most particular and concrete, one in which each part is inextricably connected with the others. However, we are still left with the second reason Tocqueville had provided to account for the skeptical denial of a science of politics; namely, the insistence of those with the greatest political experience that there is no particular art or technique that can teach one to govern. This viewpoint raises a question about the ways in which the science of politics is or should be related to the part of politics that is in constant motion—what

Tocqueville has described as the art of governing. Put another way, how or to what extent are the theory and practice of politics connected with each other?

At the most general level, Tocqueville robustly affirms two propositions. First, political science and the art of governing are two distinct and separate aspects of politics, and danger lurks in the attempt to collapse the difference between them. The desire to subsume this distinction under a single, general understanding of politics is implicit in the very skepticism Tocqueville is taking issue with in his speech. The most pervasive contemporary version of this view was one that Tocqueville maintained would be especially attractive in a democratic age. It attributes the various forms given to politics (and, in its radical version, to human "nature") to the arbitrary and impersonal forces or conditions that drive human history (*DA*, II.i.20, 469–72). Alternatively, the desired unity can express itself in the effort to replace the often idiosyncratic and irrational political forms thrown up by history or tradition with a single consistent theoretical understanding or design generated by human reason.[6] This view underlies the notion of an "autonomous self" who freely chooses a "life plan" that was originally advocated by J.S. Mill and remains attractive to many in modern liberal democracies. In fact, the consequences of these two widely divergent understandings of politics—there is no inherent basis for a science of politics on one hand, and, on the other, that a scientific understanding of politics can be generated by reason—prove to be mutually reinforcing. Insofar as politics is considered to be essentially formless, the desire to impose a humanly-made order becomes increasingly compelling. The appeal of this way of looking at politics has grown with the success of modern science and emergence of modern liberalism,[7] something that has led many students of politics to approach political phenomena in the way in which a physicist looks upon matter—as temporary and often imperfect arrangements of atoms that can be taken apart and rearranged so as to become more responsive to human needs, desires, and aspirations. The advent of biotechnology brings with it the allure and dangers of applying this same approach to the redesign of individual human beings, who constitute the primary "matter" with which politics is preoccupied. Tocqueville consistently resists either of these extreme views of politics, insisting that the proper ground for a science of politics is anchored in an unchanging human nature, notwithstanding the different ways it has been understood across the centuries.

Tocqueville's second proposition insists upon the inescapable influence that each of these two parts of politics exerts on the other. After chiding members of the Academy for their skepticism about political science, he points to its direct influence on the French Revolution—an event that "has changed the face of the world." Tocqueville observes that "the great artisans of this fearsome revolution" were not, as one might expect, the princes, ministers, or great lords of the eighteenth century, but rather individuals entirely devoid of political experience. It was rather a small group of well-known

authors, "writing in the political sciences, often at the most abstract level, who planted the seeds of new ideas which suddenly sprouted into the many novel political institutions and civil laws." Tocqueville maintains that the influence of these authors was so great that those living two generations earlier would recognize "neither the laws, nor the mores, nor the ideas, nor the customs, nor the usages they once knew, and hardly even the language" (*O*, 1219). Tocqueville here provides his immediate audience with the most relevant example of the power of "ideas" to shape in a fundamental way not only the specific institutions of political, civic, and social life, but also on an individual basis, the most characteristic habits of the mind and heart (which is what he means by "mores," cf. *DA*, II.ii.9, 275).

This phenomenon is not, however, limited to extraordinary political events like the French Revolution of 1789. Tocqueville goes on to say that what happened in France "with such irresistible power and such marvelous brilliance," political science does "everywhere and always, though more secretly and slowly." His explanation is intriguing:

> [T]he political sciences give birth, or at least form, to those general ideas from which then emerge the particular facts in whose midst men of politics occupy themselves, and the laws they believe they invent; these [general] ideas form around each society something like a sort of intellectual atmosphere breathed by the spirit of both governed and governors, and from which the former as well as the latter draw, often without knowing it, sometimes without wanting it, the principles of their conduct. (*O*, 1219–20)

The practitioners of political science at the highest or most abstract level create or shape "general ideas" that settle over political societies and imbue them with a distinct "spirit," such that the first principles of action for both rulers and ruled are often unwittingly derived from them. We should also note the range of influence attributed to the architects of political science by Tocqueville. The hierarchy of influence that Tocqueville establishes begins with those political philosophers who discover the most theoretical and sometimes abstract principles of political science. These ideas help to shape a political culture, giving it a certain characteristic way of speaking, thinking, and understanding fundamental issues concerning justice (what Tocqueville refers to in his speech as "political and individual right"). Statesmen, whether or not they are aware of it, create or modify laws, practices, and institutions under the influence of these same ideas, which, in turn, affect the governed, who, consciously or unconsciously, draw the first principles of their conduct from these ideas that are now mediated by the distinctive political, civic, and social forms characteristic of any given political culture. Although carefully distinguishing the science of politics from the art of governing, Tocqueville's speech is unambiguous about the powerful and seemingly inescapable influence of political science on those who

attempt to navigate the ship of state through a sea of constantly changing political facts, conditions, and situations.

Although Tocqueville traces a top down influence when he is speaking about the influence and dissemination of *scientific* discoveries—political or otherwise—he is acutely aware of the fact that the influence runs both ways when it comes to the *practice* of politics, particularly in a democracy. He sharply expresses the point in *Democracy in America*: "The people reign over the American political world as does God over the universe. They are the cause and the end of all things." Indeed, Tocqueville's greatest criticism of democratic government does not stem from its weakness, but the "irresistible force" of the majority and consequent "lack of guarantee against tyranny" (*DA*, I.i.4, 55; I.ii.7, 241–42).

Immediately after describing the potent influence of political science on the practice of politics, Tocqueville insists on the importance of a clear separation between the science of politics and the art of governing. Although he acknowledges that the line of demarcation between theory and practice is easier to maintain in principle than it is to keep in practice, Tocqueville reminds members of the Academy that their mission is to provide a "home and rules" for the moral and political sciences, and that it is only by resisting the temptation to allow themselves to become a partisan political body that they will be able to preserve both their "dignity" and their "security" (*O*, 1220, 1657).

Not only would the politicization of the Academy jeopardize its very existence at a time when Louis-Napoleon was systematically destroying potential sources of resistance, but it greatly impedes the quest for knowledge itself—the *raison d'être* for the Academy and source of its dignity. Failure to subordinate political differences to a more disinterested desire for truth necessarily skews findings so as to align them with preexisting opinions, inflames partisan passions to the detriment of rational inquiry, and in subtle ways (both conscious and unconscious) keeps a variety of questions and inquiries from ever being raised. As Tocqueville wrote in the withheld portion of the speech, the existence of an Academy dedicated to advancing the moral and political sciences is almost only appropriate "to free countries and places where the discussion of *everything* is permitted" (emphasis added, *O*, 1655).

What is of note here, is that Tocqueville acknowledges both the ever-present tendency of an essentially political animal to view differences in partisan terms, while at the same time affirming the possibility that at least some human beings are sometimes capable of subordinating those differences to the shared and also natural human desire to know. Tocqueville's insistence upon and assurance about the possibility of a science of politics at a time when he is speaking prudentially as an advocate for intellectual freedom in a dangerous and increasingly authoritarian political regime reflects a deeper conviction about the foundational principles that give rise to and sustain both the art of governing and a science of politics—namely, human beings

are by nature political animals and beings who naturally desire knowledge. Tocqueville, like classical political philosophers before him, refuses to collapse these two attributes of human nature into a simpler but illusory unity (cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1.2.1253a1–3 and *Metaphysics* 1.980a23).[8] Moreover, for Tocqueville the tension between the inherently perspectival character of politics and an uncompromising desire to understand "that which truly is" (to use a classical formulation) guarantees the enduring need for prudence in politics, and begins to suggest why Tocqueville considers it the preeminent virtue of those who undertake the art of governing.

II.   PRACTICE AND THEORY IN TOCQUEVILLE'S NEW SCIENCE OF POLITICS

The second part of this essay briefly develops the practical character of Tocqueville's new science of politics and limns the theoretical basis upon which it rests by drawing from his published writing. Tocqueville explicitly announces the practical character of his political science at the outset of *Democracy in America*: he intends to provide a much-needed understanding of the nature and consequences of the great, ongoing, and irresistible democratic revolution that is currently transforming the Christian world, with a view to guiding democracy to its most constructive potential and by averting its natural propensity to devolve into some form of democratic tyranny.[9] Whereas this section emphasizes the constructive lessons about statesmanship drawn from the American experience, Tocqueville's distinctive theoretical understanding emerges as part of an implicit critique of the adequacy of the philosophic principles upon which both the American and French legislators relied. This inadequacy leads Tocqueville to articulate an alternative understanding of human nature, one he believes better captures the truth about the human soul and provides the underlying theoretical foundation for his new science of politics.

i.   The Practical Character of Tocqueville's New Science of Politics

We have already noted both that Tocqueville's 1852 speech gives great weight to the influence of the political sciences, and especially to political philosophy, in shaping the character of political practice. We have also noted that the momentum generated by religious and philosophic thinkers beginning in the sixteenth century and eventually subsumed under the rubric of eighteenth-century political philosophy had powerfully "changed the face of the world." In the *Old Regime and the Revolution* Tocqueville develops and broadens his earlier claim about the direct influence of political philosophy on the French Revolution, maintaining that it was especially in the eighteenth century that men of letters began to take the lead in politics

(*OR*, 3.1, 195–202).[10] Although this book focuses especially on France, he also makes clear that both the American and French revolutions drew their inspiration from ideas generated by the Enlightenment. In fact, Tocqueville maintains that in political matters, "there was not a country in the world where the boldest doctrines of the *philosophes* of the eighteenth-century were more applied than in America" (*OR*, 3.2, 206). Whereas both France and America drew in a fundamental way upon Enlightenment rationalism, their manner of doing so differed in important ways and led as well to very different consequences.

Tocqueville distinguishes two distinct and separable features in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. The first consisted in new or reinvigorated opinions regarding human nature and political jurisprudence discovered and defended by the light of "reason alone" (*OR*, 1.2, 96, 196–97). The second was the deeply anti-religious character of this thought (*OR*, 1.2, 96–97; cf. 3.2, 202–9). I address the first of these points in the current section, and the second in the concluding section which follows it.

In the European and above all French case, politically *in*experienced *philosophes* took the lead in politics. Frustrated by the tangle of existing laws drawn from a web of traditional and often irrational customs, they sought to rationalize politics by laying down clear general principles drawn from the authority of reason alone (*OR*, esp.3.1, 195–202). Tocqueville is sharply critical of the abstract and literary character of Enlightenment politics in France, which is in his view an underlying cause of the violent excesses of the French Revolution. In stark contrast, the relatively young but politically experienced architects of the American experiment were able both to draw upon and temper the principles of Enlightenment rationalism precisely because of their own considerable collective political experience. This was preeminently true of the deliberate manner with which Americans set about the task of giving themselves a new Constitution once their initial effort at union proved dangerously inadequate.

In his first book Tocqueville had expressed admiration for the work of the American founders, and was especially impressed by the "long and mature deliberation" that produced the Constitution. He recognized, moreover, that this crucial document rested "on an entirely new theory that will be marked as a great discovery in the political science of our day" (*DA*, I.i.8, 147; cf. 106–7). For Tocqueville, it was, however, the way in which those who produced the Constitution applied the new discoveries of Enlightenment rationalism to the particular circumstances of American life that reveals the kind of prudence characteristic of statesmanship at its best. The "whole art of the legislator," Tocqueville writes, "consists in discerning well and in advance" the "natural inclinations of human societies," so as to know when to "aid the efforts of citizens and when . . . to slow them down" (*DA*, II.ii.15, 518). He also notes that "each government brings with it a natural vice that seems attached to the very principle of its life," and that "the genius of

the legislator consists in discerning it well" (*DA*, I.i.8, 129). Whereas the ruin of monarchy lies in the unlimited and unreasonable extension of royal power, the danger in democratic countries comes from laws that make the action of the people increasingly prompt and irresistible. The "greatest merit of the American legislators" was to have discerned this potentially fatal danger, and to have created powers that, although they are not completely independent of the people, provide "a rather large degree of freedom in their own sphere" (*ibid*.). The admirable result of the foresight of the American founders was that while they were "forced to obey the permanent direction of the majority, they could nevertheless struggle against its caprices and refuse its dangerous demands" (*DA*, I.i.8, 129; cf. II.ii.4, 486–87).

The kind of prudence exhibited by the American founders was the result of their firsthand experience with the inescapable idiosyncrasies of political practice as well as their understanding of new and enduring developments in political science. Tocqueville is confident that the need for prudence among those who aspire to the art of governing will never be superseded by increasingly precise and sophisticated paradigms of analysis. Not only is every regime characterized by "a natural vice attached to the very principle of its life," but the comparative evaluations of both the virtues and vices embedded in both aristocracy and democracy that frame Tocqueville's study of *Democracy in America*, suggest that every regime involves some kind of trade-off and that none is ever perfectly just.[11] The misguided effort to render a regime (or a social state) perfectly consistent with its own underlying principles invariably favors its most sovereign element—whether it is comprised by one, a few, or many—to the neglect of a genuinely common good.[12] As Tocqueville laconically expresses the point in his Introduction, "there is almost never any absolute good in the laws" (*DA*, Introduction, 13).

ii.   The Theoretical Foundation for Tocqueville's New Science of Politics

Although the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers on the relationship between religion and politics profoundly shaped the thinking of America's founding generation, the virulently anti-religious dimension of this thought in France failed to make the same kind of headway in the new world. This is not to say, however, that American religion remained unscathed or, at the very least, unchanged. Rather than attack religion head-on, the political philosophers most influential in the American case typically praised the shared morality of Biblical religion (rather than taking up disputes about doctrinal orthodoxy); advocated religious tolerance (rather than denominational or doctrinal purity); and emphasized the advantages of material well-being in this life (rather than preoccupation with the next).[13] Not only did these "general principles" impart a distinct "spirit" to the architects of

the American regime, it was also "breathed" in by those who lived under its influence and increasingly drew the first principles of their conduct from them.

At a more fundamental level, Tocqueville's Enlightenment predecessors had applied themselves to solving the problems of religious extremism and sectarian warfare by redirecting religious passions from the otherworldly goal of orthodox Christianity to the more immediately gratifying prospect of a comfortable life here and now. Tocqueville's study of America attests to the powerful influence of this current of Enlightenment rationalism on American life. What began as a Baconian project directed to "the relief of man's estate" (*Advancement of Learning*, 1.v.11), Hobbes's concern with "commodious living" (*Leviathan*, xiii.14), Locke's justification of unlimited acquisition (*Second Treatise*, chap.5), and Montesquieu's praise for the civilizing propensies of commerce (*The Spirit of the Laws*, 4.20–23), had by the time of Tocqueville's visit to America become "the national and dominant taste," bearing "the great current of human passions from this direction," and carrying "everything along its course" (*DA*, II.ii.10, 507–8).

My allusion to some of the philosophic contributions to the powerful and longstanding American preoccupation with commerce is not meant to minimize the importance of other factors—historical, geographic, or sociological—that Tocqueville also takes into account. Rather, my intent is to stress what is typically overlooked by contemporary readers, even (and perhaps especially) those who appreciate Tocqueville for his contribution to social science. As we have now seen, Tocqueville is fully aware of the power of religious or philosophic ideas to shape thought so as to dispose a people to either recognize or resist the particular opportunities that surround them. In this case, it was with the assistance of several modern political philosophers that the love of lucre underwent a remarkable transformation from "the root of all evil" to a positive sign of God's grace.

The love of material well-being had in fact become "the salient and indelible feature" of American democracy, so much so that Tocqueville writes: "One may believe that a religion that undertook to destroy this mother passion would in the end be destroyed by it" (*DA*, II.i.5, 422). It is in this context that Tocqueville notes with seeming approval that American clergy have learned to tone down the most radical Biblical critiques of both material and temporal well-being so as to preserve the possibility that religion might continue to exercise some influence in regulating or restraining "the mother passion" of commerce that was then, as now, the animating force in American life.

If Tocqueville calls our attention to powerful and pervasive success of the "general principles" bequeathed to America by his Enlightenment predecessors, it is precisely at this point that his own new science of politics comes most clearly into view as a critique of the adequacy of earlier versions of Enlightenment rationalism.[14] To put it simply, Tocqueville observes that Americans are not happy midst their abundance; rather, they

are agitated, anxious, and appear to carry within them a deep melancholy despite their unprecedented prosperity (*DA*, II.ii.13, 511–14). The cause to which he traces their dissatisfaction reveals his distinctive understanding of the human soul. According to Tocqueville, human nature is characterized by a natural longing for immortality that expresses itself in the paradoxical desire to both forget and affirm oneself. Here is part of his provocative statement:

> Alone among all the beings, man shows a natural disgust for existence and an immense desire to exist: he scorns life and fears nothingness. These different instincts constantly drive his soul toward contemplation of another world and it is religion which guides it there. Religion is therefore only a particular form of hope, and it is as natural to the human heart as hope itself. (*DA*, I.ii.9, 283–84)

At the center of his understanding of the human soul, Tocqueville places a natural and paradoxical tension which is both self-denying and self-affirming. Americans remain melancholy midst their prosperity because the human soul possesses a natural taste for the infinite and a natural love for what is immortal (*DA*, II.ii.12, 510). As a result, the attempt to find happiness in any "merely" material or temporal good, invariably leads to a "disgust for existence," which is simultaneously accompanied by an "immense desire" to affirm oneself as something more than the temporal and material conditions that make human existence possible. This tension draws some to heroic acts of self-sacrifice in the hope of precipitating a more robust experience of life, one that willingly puts those material and temporal conditions at risk.

In the measure that Tocqueville's philosophic predecessors attempt to redirect human beings to an emphatically this-worldly happiness, they effectively deny the existence of those natural religious hopes that Tocqueville has put forward as "one of the constituent principles of human nature" (*DA*, I.ii.9, 283–84).[15] If Tocqueville is right to maintain that human beings are by nature religious, the effort to deny or distract oneself from this fact cannot eradicate the natural tension that gives rise to religious hopes. Rather, it is far more likely that these hopes will attach themselves to less appropriate objects, and do so with vehement and often extreme force (cf. *DA*, II.ii.12, 511). Whereas Tocqueville writes about the restless and melancholy efforts of Americans to find happiness midst their unprecedented bounty, the more radical form of Enlightenment rationalism that captured France attached those hopes to revolutionary politics. Tocqueville explains that souls previously directed by faith, were rendered susceptible "to fanaticism and the spirit of propaganda," such that the Revolution itself "became a new kind of religion . . . [one that] . . . flooded the earth with its soldiers, apostles, and martyrs" (*OR* 3.2, 203; 1.3, 101). In both cases, Tocqueville insists that the powerful and misunderstood human longing for eternity will never be sated

or adequately moderated by emphatically temporal goods such as material abundance or radical political reform.

Tocqueville's new science of politics is intended to provide a corrective to the deficient understanding of his Enlightenment predecessors in both their moderate American and radical French versions. In it, he emphasizes the place of mores, and especially the direct and indirect ways in which political philosophers, statesmen, institutions, laws, and policies shape the minds, sentiments, ideas, and characters—in a word, the souls—of those who live under their influence. Notwithstanding his appreciation for several of the new institutional designs devised by the legislators of the American republic, Tocqueville's theoretical critique of his philosophic predecessors concerns their failure to appreciate the essentially religious character of the human soul. For Tocqueville, the effort to regulate politics in accordance with abstract principles drawn from reason alone is especially prone to misunderstand not only the necessity, possibilities, and limitations of political practice, but also the character of the human soul itself. The attempt to redress these misunderstandings reveals the most ambitious philosophic aim of Tocqueville's new science of politics.

NOTES

1. References to *Democracy in America* are to the English Mansfield-Winthrop edition (Tocqueville, 2000) except where I refer to the additional treasure trove of notes preserved in the splendid bilingual edition produced by Eduardo Nolla and translated into English by James Schleifer (Tocqueville, 2010). For in-text citations, I use *DA* to refer to the former and *DA* 2010 to the latter.
2. Elster's (2009) demotion of Tocqueville is "suggested" rather than argued; his main task is to establish Tocqueville as a great, indeed the first, social scientist.
3. Consider Aron, 1965; Bellah et al., 1985; and Putnam, 2000.
4. For an overview of the debate about the philosophic status of Tocqueville, see Zuckert, 1991; Lawler, 1990 and 1993: 92, 107–108; Kessler, 1994: 38–41; Manent, 1996 and 2006; and Hancock, 2011.
5. Tocqueville's speech (1991) is found in *Oeuvres* vol. 1, 1215–26, 1655–59; for in-text citations I will use *O*. I have also utilized and benefitted from the translations Mayer, 1971, and Hebert, 2011.
6. Tocqueville explicitly addresses this alternative in his discussion of the French revolution below.
7. Saxonhouse, 2014: 88–89, identifies "the escape from form"—the freedom to make and remake ourselves according to our own choices—as a treasured attribute of democratic liberalism. It is an issue that was anticipated by Tocqueville in *DA*, II.i.1, 403; II.iv.7, 669; cf. II.1.5, 421–22.
8. Perhaps Tocqueville's most revealing indication of the essentially political character of human beings is found in his influential analysis of the democratic phenomenon of "individualism," which suggests the unsustainable, short-sighted, and eventually corrupting tendencies attaching to otherwise decent human beings who attempt to live entirely within a private sphere constituted by family and friends (*DA*, II.ii.2, 482–84). His published writings in general and desire to provide a new science of politics in particular would seem to furnish the most relevant evidence for the natural human desire for knowledge.

9. Whereas the omnipotence of the majority was the greatest danger raised in the 1835 volume of *Democracy in America*, the 1840 volume focuses on the new danger of a "mild despotism" resulting from the natural tendency of democracy to centralize power and the problem of "individualism."
10. Tocqueville, 1998: 195–202. Alexis de Tocqueville's *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* is hereafter cited in-text as *OR*.
11. Tocqueville considers aristocracy (understood as rule by the few based on the principle of inequality) and democracy (understood as rule by the majority based on the principle of equality) to constitute the two most enduring configurations in politics.
12. Tocqueville may have learned this from reading Aristotle's *Politics*, where it provides an organizing principle for the book as a whole (see esp. Bk III.6–8).
13. One thinks of Montesquieu's admonition that "a more certain way to attack religion is by favor, by the comforts of life, by the hope of fortune, not by what reminds one of it," that is, fear of death (*The Spirit of the Laws*, 5.25.12); or John Locke's influential argument for a religion of tolerance (*Letter Concerning Toleration*). At a greater remove, one might include the influence of Thomas Hobbes, Benedict Spinoza, or Adam Smith.
14. The following formulation has been influenced by an excellent manuscript, written by Aaron L. Herold, which is currently being considered for publication.
15. It is of course possible for human beings to live without faith. Indeed, Tocqueville described himself as an unbeliever—although not an easy-going one, because his personal correspondence suggests a lifelong struggle with the claims of Christian faith. Nevertheless, Tocqueville considered unbelief an exception to the general rule, one that in some cases requires the exercise of "a kind of moral violence" with respect to one's own nature (*DA*, I.ii.9, 284).

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14 The Rule of Sociological Method

Auguste Comte's Positive Politics Before the *Système de Politique Positive*

Vincent Guillin

As Michel Bourdeau aptly remarks, "although positivism is indeed a philosophy of the sciences, it is not only that and perhaps not primarily that. The success of positivism as a philosophy of the sciences and its failure as a political philosophy have lastingly eclipsed the fact that politics was both where it started and where it was supposed to end."[1] It was indeed the ambition to provide a comprehensive scheme for the government of modern societies that drove Comte all along, from his early writings of the 1820s to his most mature achievements in the mid-1850s, from his *Plan des travaux nécessaires pour réorganiser la société* (1822) to his *Système de Politique positive* (1851–1854). Yet, the idiosyncratic course taken by his later speculations (his call for the creation of a "Religion of Humanity" of which he declared himself the "Great Pontiff," his romantic exaltation of feelings over reason, the primacy he granted to the general welfare at the expense of individual freedom, and his obsessive regulation of all aspects of human activity) quickly alienated many of those who shared in the belief in the superiority of the positive method, leading to a sharp contrast being drawn between positivism as a rational, empirically based philosophy of science and positivism as an oppressive, ideologically biased political program.

The problem with such an attempt at "splitting" positivism into a sound and legitimate epistemological inquiry and a dangerous and unwarranted political enterprise is that it prevents one from grasping the very distinctiveness of Comte's philosophical project, namely its emphasis on the key role scientific knowledge had to play in the reorganization of society, most notably through the elaboration of a scientific understanding of social phenomena—what Comte christened "sociology" in the *Cours de philosophie positive* (1830–1842). Inspired by the examples of the natural sciences, Comte conceived sociology as a systematic inquiry that would lead to the discovery of the laws governing the structural coexistence of the various social elements and those of their historical development. Thanks to this knowledge, Comte argued, it would be possible to ascertain the goal aimed at by modern societies and to provide them with the adequate means of achieving it. In other words, a positive conception of government called for the "scientificization of politics."

In what follows, I would like to elucidate how Comte articulated, primarily in the *Plan* and the *Cours*, the theoretical and practical elements of his own "positive philosophy," conceived as a "scientific polity," through an appraisal of his reflections on the various sorts of guidance a deterministic knowledge of society formulated by way of social laws can offer political rulers. For it is not exactly clear what would be the proper scope and import of political interventions in a world governed by laws such as those described in Comte's sociology. By doing so, I hope to shed light on the "sociological rule" advocated by Comte.[2]

I. POLITICS FIRST? THE SOCIOLOGICAL DETOUR

The post-revolutionary period was rife with proposals that aspired to reform the extant political order. Comte's intent, in the *Plan des travaux scientifiques nécessaires pour réorganiser la société*,[3] was no different: he, too, aimed at the "formation of the new social system" (*PT*, 87) that would best respond to the needs of modern societies. His originality lay elsewhere, namely in the means he advocated to achieve such a result.

A comparison might help to better apprehend the specificity of Comte's project. Consider the character of Grégoire Gérard, Comte's almost perfect literary doppelganger,[4] in Balzac's *Le Curé de village* (1841). Like the young Comte, Gérard, a civil engineer with Saint-Simonian leanings trained at the prestigious École polytechnique, aspired to serve his country by contributing to its material development but soon realized that the state favored mediocrity over excellence and stagnation over improvement. Both men, who helplessly witnessed the unfortunate succession of failed constitutional attempts at ending the French Revolution, were driven by the same feeling of urgency that called for the establishment of a new type of regime able to reconcile the need for order with the demands of progress. They also concurred in the belief that such a task should be entrusted to a certain class of individuals animated by a sense of mission and fully dedicated to providing the greatest number with the greatest happiness possible. Finally, they both agreed on the idea that science would be a key component in a successful reorganization of society. Yet, they differed radically in the way they conceived of that reorganization: for, whereas Gérard remained true to the "industrialist" dimension of the Saint-Simonian creed by primarily furthering material growth while submitting to obsolete ideals to remedy the ongoing "spiritual" anarchy (relying on the pastoral work of the Abbé Bonnet, the village rector, to tame the people), Comte located the sources of the social unrest in an intellectual crisis, diagnosed the inability of both "retrograde" and "revolutionary" politics to cope with it and ascribed a much more ambitious role to science in its resolution than the mere improvement of living conditions.

In the *Plan des travaux*, Comte traced back the succession of political upheavals that had been shaking Europe since the French Revolution to an

ideological source: the outdated theological underpinnings of the *ancien régime* (the doctrine of the divine right of kings; the belief in the perennial nature of the feudal system) were out of tune with the present stage of the development of mankind, whereas the metaphysical principles that fueled the revolutionary movement (unlimited freedom of conscience, popular sovereignty), because of their mere critical destination, failed to capture the organic nature of the social order to come. What was needed, Comte argued, was a clear understanding of the emerging social structure and of its path of evolution, a proper knowledge of which could only be secured if one started "to treat politics in a positive manner" (*PT*, 86), that is, applied to social phenomena the objective outlook already adopted for the study of the natural world.

According to Comte, such a methodological conversion called for the abandonment of the "absolute search for the best possible government" (*ibid*., 89) in favor of the careful observation of actual social facts and the discovery of the various laws governing them. It would only be after the "theoretical" operation of identifying "the new principle according to which social relations must be coordinated" had been completed that the "practical" task of "determin[ing] the mode of distribution of power and the system of administrative institutions" (*ibid*., 65) best fitted to the existing social order could be carried out. In other words, there would be no sound and efficient government in the absence of a prior positive knowledge—understood as the search for empirical laws[5]—of social phenomena. Hence Comte's call, in the *Plan des travaux*, to "raise politics to the ranks of the sciences of observation" (*ibid*., 81), which later provided the *Cours* with its "first and special object," the "foundation of social physics" (*CPP*, 1, 13–14) or "sociology" (*ibid*., 47, 126), thereby turning "positive philosophy" in "the only solid basis of the social reorganization that must terminate the crisis in which the most civilized nations have found themselves for so long" (*CPP*, 1, 28).

II.   THE THEORETICAL FUNCTIONS OF POSITIVE POLITICAL SCIENCE

Eager to demonstrate the usefulness of the new political science he vouched for, Comte could not wait for a fully elaborated sociology to be established. Hence the presence, in the *Plan des travaux*, of many lines of argument that foreshadowed the fuller positive treatment of social phenomena later delivered in the properly sociological lessons of the *Cours* (*CPP*, 46–57), some of which were clearly intended as illustrations of the various ways a positive study of social phenomena could contribute to the resolution of the ongoing crisis diagnosed by Comte.

In this last respect, the first and most obvious function of sociology was teleological, namely "the clear and precise determination of the goal of

[human] activity . . ., since it fixes the direction in which the whole system is to be conceived" (*PT*, 66). Drawing on the theoretical assumption according to which "[a]ny system of society . . . has as its final object to direct all individual powers towards a general goal of activity" (*ibid.*), Comte argued that even a cursory overview of the historical record testified to the fact that production—"the action on nature to modify it to the advantage of man"— has taken over conquest—the "violent action on the rest of the human race"—as the "new goal" of human activity (*ibid.*, 66–67). The specific twist of Comte's analysis resided in his contention that the industrial destination of mankind required the instauration a new "spiritual" power able to regulate the present "temporal" situation, because, in line with another key Comtean sociological principle, no society could ever survive without an instance that coordinates and propagates the various beliefs on which its concrete activity depends. The conclusion of such a sociological investigation, however sketchy, clearly indicated that, for Comte, "the first series of efforts to close the revolutionary era must have the object of reorganizing the spiritual power" (*ibid.*, 72; see also *CPS*, 192–96) consistent with our industrial destiny, institutional or constitutional reforms being deemed either worthless or premature. This also singled out "positive politics" as a thoroughly intellectualistic enterprise: first, as a sociology that proclaimed "that the world is governed and overturned by ideas, or, in other words, that the whole social mechanism rests finally on opinions" (*CPP*, 1, 28); second, as a form of government that would always favor the use of argument and persuasion over that of force and repression, as we will see later.[6]

Comte also used that very same principle of the "great division between the spiritual power and the temporal power" (*PT*, 67), complemented with the historical observation that the proper development of any activity demanded that a distinction between "theory" and "practice" be made (*ibid.*, 69–71), as the premises from which to deduce that the theoretical work involved by the reorganization of society be devolved not to "theologians," "legists," or "publicists," but to a specific class of scientists. Those men, "who, without devoting their lives to the special cultivation of any science of observation, possess an aptitude for science, and have made a sufficiently close study of the general shape of positive knowledge to be penetrated by its spirit, and to have become familiar with the principal laws of natural phenomena" (*ibid.*, 75), would produce the positive knowledge of social phenomena on which concrete political actions would depend. "In the system to be constituted," as Comte summed it up, "spiritual power will be in the hands of the scientists, and temporal power will belong to the heads of industrial works" (*ibid.*, 76). To be sure, Comte quickly realized that very few scientists were up to the task[7] and ended up, in the *Système*, putting his hopes in the formation of a positive priesthood that would balance its theoretical knowledge by a heightened sense of the common good and a fully developed emotional personality.[8] But the line of argument elaborated in the *Plan* perfectly illustrated the "sociological" function the

new positive political science could serve, namely that of identifying the "social forces" on which to rely for the "organization of the new social system" (*ibid.*, 72).[9] Statesmen now knew whom to call on to guide their actions and support their efforts.

Finally, and in addition to its teleological and sociological functions, the positive study of social phenomena had one last crucial methodological role to play: for it clearly defined the kind of theory to which the new positive political science would belong. As previously noted, Comte's sociology was unmistakably intellectualistic: it was indeed rooted in the belief that the primary factor of social progress was the development of the human mind. Hence the key importance in Comte's explanatory scheme of the famous "law of the three states," according to which "each of our principal conceptions, each branch of our knowledge, passes in succession through three different theoretical states" (*CPP*, 1, 21), namely the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. Because such a necessary law bore on all intellectual productions, Comte argued, it also applied to politics considered as a science. Accordingly, the new political science would have to give up the modes of explanation characteristic of the theological and metaphysical mindsets (the former conceiving "social relations as based on the supernatural idea of the divine" and "the successive political transformations of the human race by reference to an immediate supernatural direction," whereas the latter was founded "on the abstract and metaphysical assumption of an original social contract" and the idea of "rights, viewed as natural and common to all men to the same degree, which it guarantees by this contract" [*PT*, 82–83]) and adopt a positive approach aiming at discovering, by way of observation and deduction, the various laws determining social phenomena and their historical evolution. But if so, one was left wondering what would be the exact scope and import of political interventions in a social world governed by necessary laws, that is, by "invariable relations of succession and likeness" (*CPP*, 1, 2). Was not the historical determinism on which Comte's views seemed to be based antithetic to the very idea of government, understood as the deliberate attempt to control and modify the course of human actions?

Comte was not bothered by such a tension, quite the contrary: he welcomed the argumentative bootstrapping upon which his demonstration was built—the law of the three states predicting the ineluctable advent of positive politics, and the advent of positive politics corroborating the law of the three states—because it made positive philosophy the one and only way out from the deadlock in which mankind found itself. As he somewhat pompously put it, "there has . . . never been a moral revolution at once more inevitable, more mature and more urgent than that which is now to elevate politics to the ranks of the sciences of observation in the hands of the combined scientists of Europe" (*PT*, 85). What is striking in this statement is that it revealed the conflation of facts (the "revolution" is "inevitable" in the sense that *it will necessarily take place*) and values (the "revolution" is

"urgent" in the sense that *it is what we need* to solve the crisis) that was at the heart of positive philosophy. As Comte explicitly maintained in the *Cours*, "the new political philosophy will spontaneously tend, by drawing closer together the two meanings of the word *necessary*, at least with regard to the most important social dispositions, to conceive as inevitable that which first presents itself as indispensable, and the converse" (*CPP*, 49, 221–22). Of course, such a conceptual equivocation, which might be viewed—depending on one's existential temperament—either as mere wishful thinking or as sheer fatalism, might not be the most widespread philosophical conception of modality. But it surely served Comte's goal of imposing positive politics as the only remedy to the current social crisis. The very title of the 46th Lesson of the *Cours*, which elaborated and expanded on what had been sketched in the *Plan*, clearly evidenced such a two-pronged rhetoric, in as much as it was designed to present the "Preliminary Political Considerations on the Necessity and Opportuneness of Social Physics, in light of the Fundamental Analysis of the Present Social State" (*ibid.*, 46, 27). In a positivist anticipation of Marx, Comte indeed believed that mankind was inevitably faced with the problems it could solve. Sociology was the solution to the modern predicament.

III. THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF POSITIVE POLITICAL SCIENCE

Unavoidable and welcomed, the constitution of the new political science—revolutionary to the extent that it drastically altered the received conception of politics—was derivative on the necessity that characterized the laws swaying over social phenomena. But, for Comte, sociological determinism was no mere epistemological matter, for it indirectly shaped the way modern societies ought to (or ought not to) be governed. First the *Plan*, and then the *Cours* (especially Lessons 46 to 51, which dealt with the methodological aspects of sociological inquiry) explored these intricate relations between sociological theory and political practice.

First of all, the very idea that "the progressive development of civilization is subject to a natural and irrevocable course, derived from the laws of human organization, which in turn becomes the supreme law of all political phenomena" (*PT*, 93) irremediably exposed what might be called the "myth of the legislator" characteristic of theological and metaphysical politics, "the essential knot of the philosophical difficulty involved in the radical regeneration of political science" (*CPP*, 48, 151). Although they disagreed as to the source of the power of rulers (as ministers of supernatural entities for the former, and as representatives of the general will for the latter), both these schemes, privileging imagination over observation and favoring the use of absolute notions, concurred in "conceiving social phenomena as indefinitely and arbitrarily modifiable, assuming all along that the human

species is deprived of any spontaneous impulsion, and always ready to sub-
mit to any influence of the legislator" (*ibid.*, 149). Abandoned to the uncon-
ditional rule of leaders engaged in the "vain absolute search for the best
government" (*ibid.*, 150), mankind has long seen its "primary tendencies"
ignored and its "dignity" (*ibid.*, 151) trampled upon, being thereby reduced
"to some sort of social automatism, passively controlled by the absolute and
arbitrary supremacy of either Providence or the human legislator" (*ibid.*).
On the contrary, positive philosophy, because it offered a political theory
that stood the test of experience and therefore provided an objective knowl-
edge of mankind upon which everybody would agree, would be able to
cater for the needs and prospects of humanity. Forgoing the futile quest for
an ideal constitution intended to reign over an abstract man existing only
in the figments of the golden age and the state of nature, positive politics,
because it held the laws of human evolution as the only basis for any "ratio-
nal legislation" (*ibid.*), could truly guarantee the spontaneous development
of mankind against "theological arbitrariness, or the divine rights of kings,
and metaphysical arbitrariness, or the sovereignty of the people" (*PT*, 108).
In a very specific sense, one might therefore say that positive politics indeed
aimed at promoting liberty as autonomy, understood as the "rational sub-
mission to the exclusive preponderance, appropriately ascertained, of the
fundamental laws of [human] nature, protected from any arbitrary personal
command" (*CPP*, 46, 104).

But positive politics did not only strive to protect mankind from the arbi-
trariness of rulers, for it also aspired to foster among the ruled a sense of
order, one key notion of Comtean sociology.[10] As Comte noted, steeped in
the prevalent intellectual anarchy, European populations have constantly
oscillated between irreconcilable opinions and have ended up been contami-
nated by the idea that societies could be modified at will. Hence the popu-
lar tendency to embrace the "revolutionary spirit" (*ibid.*, 99) and support
radical—and sometimes violent—attempts at transforming society. Now,
Comte argued, because the use of the positive method has disciplined minds
into the acceptance of objective laws governing natural phenomena, how
come "the basic sense of the existence, for any phenomenon whatsoever, of
invariable natural laws, the primitive foundation of the very idea of order,
could not have the same philosophical efficacy, as soon as, fully generalized,
it will also apply to social phenomena, from then on reduced to such laws?"
(*ibid.*). Accordingly, one might confidently hope that the constitution of
a positive science of social phenomena, by putting an end to the state of
intellectual crisis characteristic of modern societies, would also appease and
eventually terminate the political unrest it has caused, by way of the public
diffusion of a set of warranted beliefs that would consolidate the consensus
around the fundamentals of collective life. Furthermore, Comte slyly sug-
gested to statesmen in place that positive politics would be their best ally
because it spontaneously tended, an unlikely consequence of its intellectu-
alistic bias, to "divert from the various existing powers, and, even the more

so, from those who hold them, the excessive attention general opinion still pay them, focusing instead on the main efforts dedicated to a wise fundamental renovation of social ideas, and then of public mores" (*ibid.*, 100), thereby defusing the risks of rebellion or revolution, so that "temporary powers . . . will see their actual security improve notably thanks to the influence of positive politics" (*ibid.*) and the primacy it granted to spiritual regeneration over temporal reform. Finally, Comte also underlined—in an almost Stoic manner—that the nomological foundation of positive politics would favor the development, with regard to "incurable political evils" he left unspecified, of a "wise resignation," that is, a "permanent disposition to endure, steadily, and with no hope of any compensation whatsoever, the inevitable evils" (*ibid.*, 101) associated with social existence. For those fatalities that no human intervention could alleviate, sociology would act as a moral balm, relieving "the pains they produce by the constant conviction that it is natural laws that make them insuperable" (*ibid.*), and as a reminder that there existed, even among social phenomena, an objective order of things nobody could alter.

Yet, Comte was also wary that his insistence on the capacity of positive politics to "spontaneously develop . . . the fundamental sense of order" (*ibid.*, 103) and the priority he ascribed to theoretical works over practical reorganization conveyed the false impression that the sociological "rule of law" he advocated was adverse to any kind of transformation and abetted the status quo in the temporal domain. After all, the "law of the three states" distinctly indicated that positive philosophy was founded on the belief that progress—understood as change for the better—was possible, and the relation of dependence it established between knowledge and power—as the Second Lesson of the *Cours* famously put it, "from science comes prevision; from prevision comes action" (*ibid.*, 2, 38)—testified to its Promethean bent. Hence Comte's clarification that "such a philosophy only requires that one submits to necessity when fully demonstrated and prescribes, on the contrary, the noble direct exercise of human activity whenever the analysis of the issue at hand allows the prospect of some kind of efficacy" (*ibid.*, 46, 102). Acknowledging that not all "political evils" (*ibid.*, 101) were incurable, Comte refused to turn his sociology into a "sociodicy" that would deny the harmful character of certain social arrangements. Furthermore, and for all his emphasis on the necessary precedence of intellectual and moral renovation, Comte refused to "condemn all political modifications" attempted before "the final epoch during which the political system will have to be regenerated," as long as these modifications were "guided by a first philosophical elaboration of the social issue as a whole" (*ibid.*, 87). In other words, interventionism was licensed because, even though positive sociology and its political applications had not yet been fully fleshed out (even by the *Cours*), there already existed theoretical indications as to how the existing social state of affairs could be improved.

Comte's willingness to avoid that "the scientific sense of the necessary subordination of social events to invariable natural laws ever degenerates into a systematic disposition towards either fatalism or optimism" (*ibid.*, 47, 129) was not merely a rhetorical ploy intended to lure the supporters of "revolutionary politics" into rallying the cause of positive philosophy, for it indeed shed light on a genuine danger threatening any attempt at studying positively social phenomena. The example of political economy clearly illustrated such a threat.[11] According to Comte, although it "vaguely anticipated" the "positive theory of the spontaneous order of human societies" (*ibid.*, 48, 162) with its notion of a self-regulated market (Adam Smith's "invisible hand"), and partially acknowledged, through its theory of the division of labor, the "principle of cooperation"—"separation of works and cooperation of efforts"—that is "the condition of any human development" (*ibid.*, 50, 263–64), political economy, because it remained mired into an absolute and metaphysical conception of society, unduly elevated "as an universal dogma the necessary absence of any regulating intervention as embodying, by the very nature of the subject, the most appropriate means of assisting the spontaneous advancement of society" (*ibid.*, 47, 135). By so doing, it betrayed "its own social impotence," because by proclaiming the need to "laissez-faire, laissez-passer," "the sterile aphorism of absolute industrial liberty," it exhibited that "vain and irrational disposition to admit only that degree of order that establishes itself on its own," which amounted, from a practical point of view, to "some sort of solemn renunciation by that alleged science to address any serious difficulty that industrial expansion might come to produce" (*ibid.*, 136). For instance, Comte argued, to the "just and urgent complaints" raised by "the more or less serious and durable perturbation of the present mode of existence of the working class" caused by the mechanization of production, political economists, with "ruthless pedantry," "dare reply . . . that, in the long run, the mass of our species, and even the class that had been the first to be injured, must end up experiencing, after these temporary perturbations, a real and permanent improvement of its lot" (*ibid.*). But, Comte ironically wondered, "would the many copyists that once suffered from the industrial revolution produced by the use of printing have been sufficiently relieved by the perspective . . . that, in the next generation, there would exist as many workers making a living out of typography, and, after a few centuries, that there would be many more?" (*ibid.*). Of course, Comte suggested in a Keynesian vein, even if the economists were right in their anticipations, they merely offered to the legitimate grievances of the working class a "pathetic answer, in which one might seem to have forgotten that human life if far from comprising an indefinite duration" (*ibid.*). For these evils that were amenable to human intervention, Comte claimed, there surely was something to do. The challenge was to find a positive way of proceeding that would avoid both the "dangerous optimism" (*ibid.*, 48, 163) characteristic of political economists and the "fundamental aberration" (*ibid.*, 148) theological and

metaphysical legislators were victims of. As the *Plan* already clearly stated, to achieve such a task, one first had to "specify the limits within which all real political action is confined" (*PT*, 97).

IV. COMPLEXITY, MODIFIABILITY, AND THE LIMITS OF POLITICAL ACTION

As underlined previously, Comte did not wait the *Système de politique positive* to articulate his political philosophy.[12] This was particularly true of his theorization of political action, which was first sketched in the *Plan*[13] and further elaborated in the 48th Lesson of the *Cours*, especially through what Comte labeled "the principle of the limits of political action."[14] What was striking in Comte's way of tackling that issue was his eagerness to root his conception of political action in the understanding of natural phenomena characteristic of the positive philosophy he was vindicating.

The *Plan* clearly identified the nomological framework that circumscribed the sphere of political intervention: the "law of the three states" necessarily determined the evolution of the human mind, which, in turn, controlled the social development of mankind. Yet, Comte contended, although "essentially unalterable as far as the substance is concerned" (*PT*, 97), the "course of civilization" was "modifiable, to a greater or lesser extent, in its speed, within certain limits, by several physical and moral causes . . . Among these causes are political combinations. This is," Comte concluded, "the only sense in which it is given to man to influence the course of his own civilization" (*ibid*.; 97–98).[15] Comte especially emphasized that, as long as mankind ignored the law of its own evolution, it might resist—willingly or not—the natural changes required by its progressive transformation, thereby "producing in society harmful upheavals which are more or less serious according to the nature and importance of these changes" (*ibid*., 100). Accordingly, Comte conceived that "the essential goal of practical politics" was "to avoid the violent revolutions which arise from poorly understood shackles placed on the course of civilization, and to reduce them as promptly as possible to a simple moral movement as regular as, though livelier than, that which gently stirs society in ordinary times" (*ibid*., 101).

Besides shedding light on the kind of "historical inevitability"[16] Comte subscribed to—the course of mankind being necessarily fixed towards a given end but with the possibility that some obstacles temporarily hinder or slow its attainment by inducing "strains of all kinds" in the "social body" (*ibid*.), and demonstrating once more the logical and scientific dependence of political action on sociological knowledge—without the prior "determination of the tendency of civilization," there was no hope "to bring political action into conforming with it" (*ibid*., 97–98), such a view evidenced the original and somewhat paradoxical conception Comte had of scientific governance: "true politics, positive politics, he argued, must no more pretend

to govern its phenomena than the other sciences govern their respective phenomena" (*ibid.*, 100), in the sense of attempting to impose extraneous ends to their course, but rather, thanks to a knowledge of their laws of development, must try to "render as peaceful and as short as possible the inevitable crises to which the human race is subject as it passes in turn through the different stages of civilization" (*ibid.*, 103).[17]

Although relying extensively on the ideas already staked out there, the *Cours* improved on the *Plan* by offering an explanation of the ontological leeway that made political action possible. According to Comte, positive philosophy, by giving up the dogma of "final causes" (which considered the existing state of affairs as the "best of all possible worlds" and as proof of the existence of a supernatural providence), acknowledged that there existed "some necessary order" among phenomena," but "without ever pretending that this order does not manifest . . . serious and numerous defects, modifiable, to a certain extent, by a wise human intervention" (*CPP*, 48, 163). Such a modifiability, in turn, drew on the characteristic property of phenomena identified by Comte in the Second Lesson of the *Cours*, which had established the encyclopedic scale of the sciences, of becoming, as they grew more complex, more variable,[18] and therefore both more prone to imperfection but also more amenable to modification. As Comte put it, testifying to the axiology-laden nature of positive philosophy previously underlined, "the more phenomena become complex by specializing themselves further, the more defects unavoidably worsen and multiply; so that biological phenomena are, in this respect, inferior to the phenomena of inorganic nature. By virtue of their greater complexity, social phenomena must also necessarily be the most disordered, as well as the most modifiable" (*ibid.*). In other words, one had to balance the "notion of natural laws" and the "correlative idea of some sort of spontaneous order" with the "consideration of the increasing complexity of phenomena" and the "inevitable imperfection" in which it resulted. This was why positive politics, Comte concluded, "far from rejecting . . . human intervention," commended "its wise and active application, to a greater degree than for any other kind of phenomena possible, by directly representing social phenomena as being, by their nature both the most modifiable and those most in need of being profitably modified" (*ibid.*, 164). Such was, Comte argued, "the primary scientific foundation of the rational hopes in a systematic reformation of mankind" (*ibid.*, 183).[19]

Yet, the greater modifiability of social phenomena was in no way a positive corroboration of the "myth of the legislator." As Comte made clear, "although modifications, whatever their causes, are necessarily greater in the realm of political phenomena than with regard to simpler and less varied phenomena, they would never become . . . more than pure modifications, i.e. they always remain radically subordinated to the fundamental laws . . . that regulate the constant harmony of the various social elements and the continuous succession of their successive variations" (*ibid.*). Expanding what the *Plan* had briefly outlined, Comte invoked what he called the

"principle of the general limits of political action" (*ibid.*, 181) to temper the hubristic ambitions of rulers and the unwarranted aspirations of their subjects, clearly delineating the scope of social intervention: "in all orders of phenomena, modifications always bear exclusively on their intensity and their secondary mode of realization, without ever being able to affect neither their very nature nor their main succession" (*ibid.*, 183). In other words, one could only influence either "the more or less pronounced intensity of the various tendencies spontaneously characteristic of every social situation" (for instance, by transferring the budget allotted to military expenses to industrial undertakings) or the "mere speed" of mankind's evolution (for instance, by setting up a positive system of education that would hasten the passage of modern populations from the theological to the positive state by shortening the metaphysical transition), without ever being able to either "inhibit or produce these respective tendencies" or to operate "a reversal in the fundamental order of that continuous development" (*ibid.*, 184). Drawing on a preformationist scheme according to which the intellectual evolution of mankind had to be understood as "the simple spontaneous growth, gradually supported by an appropriate culture, of the preexisting fundamental faculties that constitute our whole nature, without any intro-duction of new faculties whatsoever" (*ibid.*, 180),[20] Comte transposed such a view to the social world by regarding "the artificial and voluntary order" promoted by statesmen as "the simple general extension of that natural and involuntary order towards which the various human societies will continu-ally tend . . . . In a word, it is essentially a matter of contemplating order, so as to improve it, and in no way an attempt at creating it, which would be impossible" (*ibid.*, 165). In that last regard, one might be tempted to con-sider that positive politics, far from endorsing any kind of radical "social constructivism,"[21] in fact went for a very mild form of political Promethe-ism in which, as the *Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme* would later put it, "human progress may always been considered as the mere development of the fundamental order, which necessarily contains within itself the germ of all possible improvements" (*SPP*, I, 2, 105).

V.   THE "GOLDILOCKS APPROACH" AND POSITIVE STATESMANSHIP

Neither too quick nor too slow, neither too strong nor too soft, the positive statesman had to fine-tune his interventions in the light of his knowledge of the course of civilization and of its present stage of advancement, in order to ease its development. Going with a flow it did not create but whose direction it had discovered, "[s]ound politics cannot have as its object to propel the human race, since this moves by its own momentum. . . . But it has as its goal to facilitate this movement by illuminating it" (*PT*, 100). Besides stating clearly the agenda of positive politics, such a view set the standard

according to which statesmen were to be judged. Those who acted, like Julian the Apostate, Philip II of Spain, or Bonaparte, "against the general movement of contemporary civilization" (*CPP*, 48, 186) deserved to be publicly smeared for their retrograde tendencies.[22] Faring a little better, but still not up to par, were those legislators, like Joseph II of Austria, who failed to achieve anything lasting because they undertook "improvements which, though with the grain of the natural progress of civilization, [were] too far beyond its present state" (*PT*, 100). Yet, the very mark of positivity in a politician, Comte concluded, was his ability to perceive "in each era, what were the changes which were tending to take place, in accordance with the state of civilization, and [to proclaim] them, at the same time suggesting corresponding doctrines and institutions to their contemporaries" (*ibid.*, 98).

In line with such a conception, the specific enlightenment to be expected from positive politics could operate in two complementary ways. On the one hand, guided by the "positive knowledge of the course of civilization," the "ascendant classes, seeing clearly the goal they are called to achieve, will be able to head there directly, instead of wearying themselves with trial and error and detours" (*PT*, 102), thereby merely accelerating what was bound to happen, namely that "the preponderant social forces necessarily end up in control" (*ibid.*, 92). On the other hand, the "classes whose prejudices and interests would lead them to struggle against the course of civilization" (*ibid.*, 101) could be convinced by the very same knowledge of the natural laws of change not to oppose that progressive movement, because "[n]o one is too insane as to set himself up, knowingly, in revolt against the nature of things" (*ibid.*).

Of course, Comte knew full well that the "influence of intelligence on men's conduct" should not be exaggerated; but neither should "the over-whelming power that results from proofs" be discounted. As he put it in a burst of rationalistic optimism, "[o]nce proofs appear, aberrations will soon cease" (*ibid.*, 101–2). The "violent and anarchical attacks" launched against "the fundamental institution of property" (*CPP*, 46, 87) by social-ists and communists provided a good example of the kind of intervention he had in mind. Comte indeed agreed that the "undeniable reality" of the various shortcomings of private property as it existed warranted that "one takes care of remedying them, as much as the essential nature of the mod-ern social state allows" (*ibid.*). But one also had to acknowledge that, in that instance, "the main remedies lie with opinions and mores, political regulations as such being deprived of any fundamental efficacy whatso-ever" (*ibid.*). Once workers would have understood, thanks to a positive exposition of the real workings of the economy, that the concentration of capital in a few competent hands was one of the essential conditions of production, and hence of their well-being, just as capitalists would have to realize that their wealth was dependent on the active cooperation of work-ers and that they therefore had a civic duty of assistance and protection to discharge towards them, the "fundamental improvement of the social

condition of the inferior classes" would have been greatly advanced, "without having degraded in any way . . . the immense majority" and "without having disturbed the necessary general economy" (*ibid.*, 106).[23] By suggesting to solve in such a manner "the most serious difficulty of contemporary politics" (*ibid.*), positive philosophy demonstrated its ability to follow on its own diagnostic: having identified "intellectual anarchy" as the "main cause of our social disease" (*ibid.*, 89), it naturally prescribed a "spiritual" remedy.

VI.   CONCLUSION

As I hope to have shown, the attempt at "splitting" Comtean positivism into a sound and legitimate epistemological inquiry (mainly contained in the *Cours de philosophie positive*) and a dangerous and unwarranted political enterprise (idiosyncratically illustrated by the *Système de politique positive*) fails to capture what lay at the heart of Comte's philosophical project, namely the ambition to provide a comprehensive scheme for the government of modern societies. As a careful reading of his early writings—most notably the *Plan des travaux*—and the *Cours* suggests, Comte's first try at the problem consisted in an attempt at articulating the proper relation of dependence that ought to exist between political action and scientific knowledge. This, in turn, gave rise to a distinctive theoretical scheme within which the positive study of social phenomena, or sociology, would both circumscribe the actions of statesmen (while also tempering the demands of their subjects) and identify the *loci* of potentially beneficial interventions, with the hope that such actions would lessen the crises and perturbations characteristic of the spontaneous development of mankind. Drawing on an intellectualistic interpretation of the course of civilization, such a view resulted in a conception of statesmanship that gave pride of place to "spiritual" means in the government of modern societies. It was undoubtedly with regard to the definition of this last "spiritual" component that the *Système de politique positive*, with its promotion of religion as the privileged means of social control, the paramount importance it ascribed to the cultivation of feelings, and its dogmatic elevation of altruism as the overarching positive moral virtue, significantly altered the center of gravity of Comte's thought, turning the "mind" into the "servant of the heart."[24] What still remains to be determined is the extent to which such an evolution really transformed Comte's conception of positive statesmanship.

NOTES

1. Bourdeau, 2013: 27.
2. In this paper, the following reference system has been adopted: the first two lessons of the *Cours de philosophie positive* are quoted from Comte, 1988, whereas other references are to Comte, 2012 (both abbreviated *CPP*, followed

by lesson and page numbers); the *Système de politique positive* is quoted from Comte, 1929 (abbreviated as *SPP*, followed by volume, chapter, and page numbers); the early opuscules are quoted from Comte, 1998, abbreviated as follows: *Plan de travaux scientifiques nécessaires pour réorganiser la société* [1822] as *PT*, *Considérations philosophiques sur les sciences et les savants* [1825] as *CPSS*, and *Considérations sur le pouvoir spirituel* [1825–1826] as *CPS*.

3. Comte always considered this "fundamental Essay" (*SPP*, vol. I, Preface, 1) as his first truly original contribution as a positive philosopher.
4. On Comte's life, see Pickering, 1993–2009.
5. As Comte put it in the opening lesson of the *Cours*, "the fundamental character of the positive philosophy is to consider all phenomena as subject to invariable natural laws. The exact discovery of these laws and their reduction to the least possible number constitute the goal of all our efforts" (*CPP*, 1, 8).
6. Comte's final religious turn, in the *Système*, with the primacy granted to feelings over reason, did not alter such an orientation: although he ascribed a greater role to emotions in the management of human affairs, Comte remained persuaded that convincing would always be preferable to constraining.
7. See *CPP*, 46, 109–13.
8. Such a view was already present in *CPS*, 217–18.
9. Comte would use a similar kind of reasoning, for instance in the *Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme* (1848), to single out women and workers as the affective and active auxiliaries of the spiritual power (*SPP*, I, 3 & 4).
10. See *CPP*, 46, 99–103; 48, 153–166.
11. For Comte's complex relations with political economy, see Mauduit, 1929, and Arnaud, 1973: Part I, Chap. 1.
12. See *CPP*, 50, 268–73, for his views on government, and *CPP*, 57, 635–97, for his theory of spiritual power.
13. *PT*, 97–103.
14. *CPP*, 48, 181–89.
15. Besides "political combinations," Comte identified race, climate, life expectancy, demographic density, and the influences the various civilizations have on one another as the main "*modificateurs*" of human development (see *CPP*, 48, 185; and *SPP*, II, 7, 447–55).
16. To use Berlin's famous expression (Berlin, 1954).
17. See also *CPSS*, 159–60.
18. *CPP*, 2, 52–57.
19. Bourdeau, 2009, 446–47; and Bourdeau, 2013, 38–41, rightly emphasize the importance of the theory of modifiability in Comte.
20. See Guillin, 2012.
21. Bourdeau, 2013, 44–47, duly challenges Hayek's reading of Comte as an advocate of "social constructivism" (see Hayek, 1952).
22. In the first versions of the *Positivist Calendar*, one day was dedicated to the reprobation of these retrograde figures (see *SPP*, I, 103; and IV, 404).
23. Comte would develop such a line of argument in *SPP*, I, 3; and II, 2.
24. *SPP*, I, 1, 20.

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15 Science and Partisanship in Max Weber

A Problematic Distinction or a Means of Restraining Professorial Authority?

Peter Breiner

Weber's famous lecture, "Science as a Vocation" can be and has been read in many ways. The most well-known readings treat it as an examination of what science means as a form of social organization for the pursuit of knowledge, as a cultural phenomenon, and as a life calling. But the lecture is also a distinctive argument for the authority of science broadly conceived ("Wissenschaft") over political practice. For Weber, science may inform our choice of political commitments precisely because it claims to be distant from them.[1] This argument seems to be at once an argument for how far science can (and should) intervene in informing an individual's fundamental political commitments and life choices and an argument about the difference between the commitments of the scholar (the practitioner of science) and those of the political partisan.

On the face of it, it would seem that these are two different aspects of the same argument. And this is indeed how it was taken both by Weber's defenders and critics alike. But this unity of meaning dissolves if we view it not just as a general argument about the role of science in enlightening political agents on their political choices, although it surely is that, but also as an argument about the authority and political and moral commitments of the lecturer-teacher over his student audience. What I will argue here is that despite the many valid criticisms of Weber's claim that accounts of politics based on "science" or "scholarship" should be seen as analytically distinct from partisan political arguments, there is a crucial sociological sense in which Weber may be right—all the more so paradoxically to the extent that there may be serious analytical problems with this distinction when applied to understanding the relation of political sociology to political practice. For in drawing his distinction between science and partisanship, Weber may be responding to a problem of authority and power between teacher and student. Moreover, he may be also responding to a form of political understanding achievable in a classroom not achievable in ordinary life or in political struggle. Viewed in this context, his distinction may have force even if we maintain that partisan political commitments often inform "scientific" interpretation and explanation of a political problem or a political ideology and that we

cannot avoid using political science and political sociology for polemical purposes.

I. THE MULTIPLE MEANINGS OF "WISSENSCHAFT" AND THEIR EFFECT ON POLITICAL CRITICISM

It is well known that in both his methodological writings and in his lecture "Science as a Vocation" Weber is using the word "science," "Wissenschaft," in the broader German meaning. As such, "Wissenschaft" means three different but related things. First, it refers to scholarship in general; that is, to any form of disciplined pursuit of knowledge or inquiry, including that of the human sciences that seek interpretive understanding as a prelude to providing causal explanations.[2] Second, it refers to the specific nomological sciences, in particular the physical sciences, such as physics or mathematics, over and against non-nomological forms of knowledge dealing with interpretation or understanding.[3] Third, it refers to scholarship as carried on in the university. Indeed, it refers to the organization of specialized inquiry typical of a modern research university.[4] What commentators on "Science as a Vocation" have often neglected to note is that Weber uses these different meanings rather flexibly depending on his polemical purposes. Thus at times he will speak of the demands of science as knowledge gained through disciplined scholarship as opposed to that acquired through life experience; at other times he will draw a sharp distinction between the "sciences," which provide objective causal laws allowing us to predict probable outcomes, and partisan political worldviews that are meant to move us to action but lack the detachment of science; and yet at other times, he will speak of the demands of the scholar who must be a specialist within a research university as opposed to the political actor whose job is to combine convictions with the struggle for power in the state.

Reading "Science as a Vocation" very broadly one gets the impression that these meanings are complementary, but I will argue that these meanings do not always line up. So for example the law-like nature of the sciences takes away all meaningful answers to how we should act, and yet a looser understanding of sciences as scholarship and as systematic inquiry in the social sciences might give us some guidance on what will happen if we *do* act according to our partisan convictions. This lack of complementarity will mean that later generations reacting to his account of the differences between "Wissenschaft" and partisan political knowledge derived from an ideology or worldview will arrive at different conclusions depending on which of these meanings they take to be central. By the same token, we might defend, as I will do here, his use of one set of meanings of "Wissenschaft," even while finding serious flaws in his other uses of the word.

II. THE PARTISANSHIP–SCIENCE DISTINCTION AND THE AUTHORITY OF "WISSENSCHAFT" OVER POLITICS

From his earliest to his latest writings on methodology Weber never wavered in claiming that social science, or more accurately the nascent field of sociology, which didn't quite yet have a name, was concerned with "the training of *judgment* in respect of *practical problems* [die Schuling des *Urteils* über *praktische Probleme*] arising from these social circumstances."[5] In arguing this, especially in using the well-known language of practical judgment, he was explicitly offering sociology as a replacement for philosophy, especially moral philosophy, as a guide to the conduct of life. But Weber also claims most explicitly in "Science as a Vocation" (as well as in his essay on "Value Freedom") that "science" and partisanship are distinct and the academic should not push partisan positions from the lectern. The distinction he is drawing here refers to two different aspects of his triadic account of science: first, his claim that science as the interpretive and explanatory use of ideal type analytical concepts can provide something akin to an impartial clarification of partisan positions by giving special attention to long-range developments in the political world and how these values may fare in light of them; second, his claim that impartiality with regard to partisanship must govern the relationship of the university teacher to his students. Here I would like to focus on the first of these meanings and its problems. Later I will take up the second one as the most defensible version of the distinction.

Turning to the first way the distinction may be read, Weber wants to argue that both "science" and partisanship broadly conceived employ different kinds of analysis and aim at different ends. Weber assumes that we are all located in the political world, and to the degree we are, our political positions are characterized by "partisanship," "rhetorical persuasion," and above all "struggle" (Kampf):

> If in a public meeting one talks of democracy, then one makes no secret of one's personal attitudes; indeed to take sides clearly is one's damned duty and obligation in this context. The words used are not means of scientific analysis but means of winning over the attitudes of others politically. They are not ploughshares for loosening the soil of contemplative thought; they are swords against opponents, instruments of struggle (Kampfmittel).[6]

Weber here is not assuming the partisan is lacking an account of political developments favorable or unfavorable to one's goals. However, in seeking to convince others to support one's cause or engage in political action, the partisan uses and often reshapes sociological theories of political developments, as a means of prevailing over others in struggle. And to this end the partisan does not seek to understand perspicaciously the position of the opponent, present uncomfortable facts, or provide detached accounts of

various developmental tendencies and political forms distinguished through analytical (ideal type) concepts. On the contrary, political analysis is a direct means of persuasion, convincing the as of yet unconverted to one's partisan stance, and above all, preparing one's audience for a struggle against opposing positions. In playing one's role as a partisan political actor, one is in effect morally bound to advance one's cause, using whatever political arguments one has at one's disposal. Curiously, this characterization of partisanship as the use of concepts for the sake of political struggle already assumes Weber's analytical concept of politics as authoritative: that politics is always a striving for "a share of power or for influence in the distribution of power" quite apart from its ends with power defined as imposing one's will over the resistance of others and conflict an irrevocable condition of all social life.[7] Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere, his view of politics within his general sociology is distinguished by a dialectic of conflict, and selection in which conflict and selection in politics lead to routinization, which produces exclusion leading to a new round of (political) conflict and selection.[8] Thus Weber's general characterization of political partisanship is already drawn from the "scientific" side of the ledger.

It would appear then that "science" is distinct in its function and approach from that of the political partisan. But, as we shall see shortly, Weber's account of science is dependent on the existence of political partisanship for its raw material much as his definition of partisanship seems to be shaped by his definition of science. But, if this is so, the understanding of partisanship ultimately depends on laying out the ways in which science—in this case sociology—can clarify political action that mere partisan understanding cannot. Weber addresses this problem in much the same way in virtually all of his methodological essays, but he gives his most succinct answer in "Science as a Vocation":

> we can make clear to you that one can in practice take up this or that position with regard to the problem of values—for the sake of simplicity, please take social phenomena as an example. *If* one takes up such-and-such a position, then according to scientific experience, one must apply such-and-such *means* in order to carry out one's belief in practice. These means are perhaps in themselves of a sort that you believe you must reject. In that case, you have to choose between the end and the unavoidable means. Does the end (Zweck) "justify" ("heiligt") the means or not? The teacher can demonstrate to you the necessity of the choice. More than that he cannot do . . . Of course, he can go further and tell you if you want such-and-such an end, then you must accept such-and-such secondary results, which experience shows to occur.[9]

To this Weber adds an additional form of practical clarification, namely that the scholar/scientist can demonstrate what it would mean to derive a given "practical standpoint"—here he seems to mean a partisan commitment

or stance toward political action—from a given "Weltanschaung." And at times this may mean that the same political commitment may be consistent with different worldviews or political ideologies.[10]

Although Weber invokes here the traditional vocabulary of political prudence—"examples," "experience," ends and means—he clearly believes that "science [Wissenschaft]," at once law-like and interpretive, can provide a more reliable form of political knowledge than mere "experience." At this point, we must turn to his account in the "Objectivity" essay and his late essay on "Value Freedom," as they both lay out more precisely than "Science as a Vocation" the force and the limits of "Wissenschaft," in particular sociology, in providing both clarification and prognostication for partisan actors. First off, Weber famously argues, quite apart from any instrumental understanding of means, ends, and consequences that science may provide, social scientific clarification relying on ideal type constructs may assess an agent's ultimate values for logical consistency between his ultimate ends and the subsidiary goals that follow from it—what Weber calls axiomatic reasoning.[11] Furthermore, given any number of ultimate ends among the conflicting ones that we might pursue in politics, it can give an account of the necessary means to achieve them, if such means are available. Even more significantly it can determine "the factual consequences" of using a particular means to a proposed end. Certain means will produce certain foreseeable consequences directly compatible with the end being pursued, and these consequences will, in turn, be accompanied by subsidiary consequences that are frequently both unforeseen and unwanted. This determination of consequences, both intended and unintended, enables the agent to weigh different possible means against each other according to whether the consequences of deploying them achieve or undermine the end.[12] Such weighing may be decisive in deciding whether a particularly intrinsically bad means—for example, the use of force or the reliance on a bureaucratic political party machine that dulls the following—is still compatible with the end aimed for.

But the clarification of consequences may have even a more profound effect on practical decisions. For the result of determining both the desirable and undesirable consequences of applying certain means to a given end, as well as the necessary means to do so, may very well compel the individual agent to revise his ultimate value axioms in the most fundamental of ways. The political agent may discover there are no means available to achieve the political end—even if the end is consistent with the agent's highest values or his commitment to a particular worldview. Or the means may simply conflict with values held equally dear. Or even if the consequences of pursuing the end using political means—for example power backed by force—are consistent with one's ultimate end, the subsidiary consequences may undermine its achievement or simply be too costly to other values held to be equally significant. Considerations of this kind, Weber argues, impose on the potential political agent a kind of dialectical form of deliberation.[13] By pursuing his ultimate ends through politics, an agent may discover

logical or factual consequences resulting from the use of political means that are inconsistent with the political commitments that he originally derived from his highest values. The agent may then be compelled to revise his subsidiary goals or reformulate his ultimate goals, or abandon them entirely for new ones. But having revised his original position in any number of these ways, the agent must then subject his new political commitments to similar social scientific clarification until he finds a satisfactory stopping point.

Where this stopping point is to be found rests entirely with the agent.[14] However, there is a clear implication in this account (though not logically entailed by it) that the dialectical movement of social scientific clarification between ultimate values, subsidiary goals, political means, and foreseeable consequences and back to the choice of ultimate values will compel an agent to become conscious of the political limits on the realization of his political commitments. Thus ideal political commitments typically collide with what Weber calls "developmental tendencies"[15]—for example, his claim that both revolutions and successful party competition all further rational legal domination through bureaucracy; his political sociology of the rise of the modern state and the inability of any party to reverse the political expropriation process by which the state monopolizes all political means; his argument that there is no necessary convergence of class, status, and party and when they do converge this is a mere matter of historical chance; his claim that forms of traditional authority based on patrimonial provision of privileges such as tax farming and public offices are never overcome but are merely internalized in the modern political party that has to pay off followers with patronage and with revenge against enemies; and his claim that collective action always tends to dissipate unless directed by a charismatic leader with an organized staff, to name just a few from Weber's work. Even this limited catalogue of developmental tendencies should indicate that the scholar-scientist for Weber always is providing developmental tendencies that limit what is possible while the partisan on Weber's account is always pressing to expand the range of political possibility—though there is nothing in Weber's argument that requires that the scientific clarification of partisan politics should be deflationary.

Indeed Weber's polarization in "Science as a Vocation" between the conceptual clarification of the scholar-scientist and concepts employed by the political partisan does not have to assume the former reveals limits on the aspirations of the latter. Rather, Weber seems merely to offer a different mode of inquiry, which he has already demonstrated, may have benefits for the political actor and partisan. Specifically, the scientist as scholar focuses on different types of social and political relations and conceptualizes them in typologies of ideal types. From these ideal types the scholar "scientist" develops different developmental tendencies and the political forms they produce.

Famously, Weber offers the concept of "democracy" as the paradigmatic example of the distinction he wants to draw. Thus he claims that in a public

meeting in which democracy is discussed, one is expected to reveal one's attitude toward this political form and its ancillary principles and take sides for or against it or for or against a particular definition of it. On the other hand, the scholar qua scientist (in the broad German sense) is obligated by his role to lay out the different forms democracy might take through carefully constructed ideal types, discuss how each functions, and impartially present "the consequences" for one's way of life were one to embrace one regime form or another.[16] But as we already have seen this seemingly impartial account has a distinctive authority in clarifying the partisan commitments of lay political actors.[17]

The question arises, however: why should partisanship not have authority over scholarly interpretation and law-like explanation in social science—that is, clarify the meaning of science—instead of the other way around? Or, to put the question another way, what is the basis for the unique authority that science has over partisanship for Weber even if we agree they treat the same political principles differently? Weber's answer is both cultural and analytic—each of which will provide entry points for his critics.

III. CULTURAL REASONS FOR THE AUTHORITY OF "WISSENSCHAFT" OVER PARTISANSHIP

Famously, Weber argues that we must distinguish science from partisanship because we now live in a culture shaped by science, indeed shaped so thoroughly that it affects the very meaning of the way we have chosen to conduct our lives (Lebensführung).[18] Interestingly in laying out the cultural reasons for the authority of science over partisanship, he employs the narrowest definition of science, the nomological definition that assumes if we employ the right methods we will be able to explain causally any phenomenon we make as the object of our inquiries. But this narrow usage of "Wissenschaft" is expanded to encompass all of modern culture under the well-known concept of "intellectual rationalization" according to which we have in modernity all subscribed to the belief that we confidently know that "*if one only wanted to*, one could find out any time" the cause of any phenomenon that puzzles us, and thus "one could in principle master everything through *calculation*" [Weber's emphasis].[19] It further spawns both the belief and the practice that because of the availability of causal knowledge, all of life can be controlled technically.[20] But precisely because we have unavoidably bought into this belief and been shaped by its division of labor of specialized knowledge, science has once again uncovered what Weber simply posits as an existential fact about all values: that ultimate values are antinomic, that is, in relentless conflict with one another such that the choice of one necessarily excludes the other; that worldviews of which these values are component parts are relative to one another so that although we can understand their subjective meaning, that is, why someone

might subscribe to them, we cannot find prior reasons for embracing one worldview over another; and finally, that we live in a culture whose distinctive unifying feature is that it is divided into autonomous "orders" of life conduct—the political, ethical, aesthetic, scientific, economic, and religious, among others—and the logic of action and its demands in each life order are at odds with those of the other orders.[21] In this culture, Weber argues, although this is often misunderstood, it is not that an individual can find no meaning for his partisan commitments or life choices, although when he speaks of the disenchantment of the world resulting from science as systematic inquiry and as revealing the cause of all things he seems to be implying this. Rather, given conflicting values, worldviews, and life orders the agent is faced with too many meaningful choices all providing differing internal reason for taking one road or the other. And so the agent, Weber argues, must simply decide which worldview to embrace, which set of values under a worldview to follow, and under which order of life to organize his life plan. And this choice becomes all the more difficult in politics, because the order of politics intensifies and draws in all of these conflicts as part of the relentless struggle for power in the state. It is to this problem of decision and choice within one life order—politics—to which Weber argues his account of science as a kind of sociological political prudence is uniquely adapted.

But we should note here that Weber's first definition of science in the broad sense of scholarly inquiry involving interpretation and explanation of social phenomena is here deployed to understand the "effect" of the narrower nomological notion of science on modern culture. Thus Weber's historical sociology of the effects of science on culture provides the grounds for why he claims his sociology of politics—in its claim to provide both a comprehensive understanding of conflicting worldviews and possible historical outcomes of the agent's political choices under such worldviews—can serve as the authoritative approach to clarify the meaning of partisan political commitments.[22] His three-part approach to demonstrating the coherence of one's commitments, the means necessary to achieve them, and the consequences, direct and subsidiary, that follow becomes the approach most sensitive to the problem of clarifying the variety of partisan stances one might take given the historical and sociological developments of modern culture in which the illusion of an overarching justification for selecting one's life commitments has been stripped away by science in its claims to causally explain reality.

However, this claim that Weberian scientific clarification of political commitments is a unique response to the problem of political choice in the "disenchanted" culture of modernity does not explain why it can be impartial relative to all contending political worldviews and values, especially those that are critical of the Weberian account of this culture or seek to change it.[23] The answer is to be found in Weber's second reason for claiming an impartial authority: his well-known analytical defense of the ideal

type and its usefulness in understanding the worldviews of political agents and predicting political developments. Obviously to lay out the variety of arguments for the validity of the ideal type as a means of understanding and explanation in Weber would send us far afield from the question at hand.[24] So what I would like to do here is focus more specifically on how Weber uses the ideal type to attain the authority of scientific political clarification that would be problematic where he to rely on the cultural-adaptation argument alone. Weber again invokes a concept of "science" in its broader meaning of systematic inquiry that includes the interpretive approaches of the human sciences but claims it can also provide a limited predictive power more typical of the second notion of science. Specifically, discovering the coherence of positions and the means and consequences of seeking to realize them depends on ideal type constructions leading to typologies in which different social and political relations are analytically distinct but causally connected. But as is well-known, Weber argues, the vantage point for the construction of these types consists of a selection from the range of cultural values in which the researcher is already embedded that, in turn, are chosen from the researcher's ultimate value standpoint.[25] But this ultimate value standpoint or commitment is chosen not embedded for Weber. And therefore all typologies and ideal types represent merely a perspective on a social and historical reality that cannot be encompassed by any one conceptual system because it is already pre-interpreted. The researcher by selecting the features of an ideal type, the range of causes and effects to be focused upon, and the problem ultimately to be solved, whether it be the motives to be understood or the reasons for a particular historical outcome, will for Weber only provide a perspective on the problem. Thus when the researcher as scholar links a series of ideal types with one another to demonstrate how a particular causal stream might occur given certain antecedent conditions, he is providing a hypothetical possibility for a certain outcome or set of outcomes, but a set of ideal types from another value standpoint, even within the same culture, might uncover another set of causal outcomes, or as Weber puts it "all knowledge of cultural reality is always a knowledge from *a specific point of view.*"[26]

So the problem for Weber is how it is possible for our ideal type constructions to gain the impartiality that, for example, he imputes to the scholar who carefully lays out different types of democracy for a partisan audience. We gain impartiality, Weber argues, in three ways: first to the degree we are transparent in the construction of the ideal types and their relations to one another; second, by comparing the meaningful activity encompassed by these types to a general theory of action such that we act either because the actions taken are valuable for their own sake (traditional or value rational action) or because they are means to other ends (purposively rational action); and, lastly. for the paradoxical reason that they are purely hypothetical accounts ("Deutungs Hypothese") of constellations of social action. That is, by showing how one ideal type gives way to another, we can make general law-like

statements of cause and effect from antecedent conditions. But Weber insists these generalizations are probable rather than invariant, for they are constructed from hypothetical premises based on judgments and designate possible not empirically certain outcomes of social action. In sum, the distance we get by creating causal relations between ideal types that focus only on certain distinctive but subjectively chosen features of the reality under investigation is the basis for Weber's paradoxical argument regarding the distinction between "science" and political "partisanship." Science has authority in informing politics due to its impartiality in its construction of causal sequences and motives for action through ideal types, its employment of a general distinction between intrinsic and instrumentally purposive action, and its ability to generate possible causal sequences based on antecedent conditions arising from the judgment of the scholar-Wissenschaftler.

This, however, leads to a paradox at the heart of Weber's claim to provide scientific clarification in a way that is not exclusively dependent on the culture of intellectual rationalization: namely, the scholar is able to achieve impartial scientific clarification precisely because the ideal typical constructions used by social science are *not* coextensive with the reality the scholar is trying to understand and explain but instead achieve a conceptual distance from it—that is in the case of sociological political clarification they turn out to be fictional constructions that gain superior knowledge over the very (political) reality in which the partisans find themselves. Yet behind this claim stands an even greater paradox: the vantage point from which these concepts are constructed by the scholar researcher *shares in the same reality* as the partisan. And so the authority of the scholar-scientist assessing the meaning of different principles and how partisans with different worldviews will fare on the political stage in light of hypothetically constructed accounts of political forms and political probabilities depends on keeping the value perspectives of the "Wissenschaftler" and the value perspectives of the partisan apart. Otherwise the knowledge of the partisan about the political field comes to inform the knowledge of the scholar scientist providing ostensibly superior and distant clarification of that self-same field. It is precisely this problem of keeping the separation between the "scientific" political sociology of the scholar and that of the worldview and values of the political partisan that has been and continues to be the entry point for the many critics of Weber's partisan-science distinction.

IV. CRITICISM OF WEBER'S PARTISAN–SCIENCE DIVIDE

When Weber delivered his lecture "Science as a Vocation" in 1917 there were few defenders and many critics. However, both defenders and critics alike agreed on two features of his account of science in its various forms. On the one hand, they all agreed that Weber was offering his version of science in the form of sociology as a replacement for philosophy. For a portion of

the listeners to and readers of his lecture this move set a new agenda for the study and guidance of life conduct and political commitments. They agreed with Weber that "Wissenschaft" as interpretive sociology built on the ideal type could inform political action and test political commitments.[27] On the other hand, some of these same listeners and readers saw Weber as seeking to disillusion them with his claim that science will determine all aspects of culture and make it predictable while turning all ultimate ways of life, including political commitments, into a matter of existential choice. They particularly questioned whether he was using the claim of "science" both in its scholarly and in its nomological sense to demonstrate that the most deeply held political commitments were not achievable when in fact science as political sociology might uncover unforeseen political possibilities for the realization of these self-same commitments.[28] Karl Mannheim summed up this response by calling Weber's project of deploying science for clarification a form of "disillusioned realism."[29]

To follow out the many strands of criticism leveled against Weber's claim that social science in general and political sociology in particular could provide a form of clarification superior to the self-understanding of the political partisan would require a paper in its own right. Here I would like to focus on just one strand of criticism whose central question was whether in fact Weber's "scientific" account of coherence, means, and consequences was as distant from the different partisan commitments it was addressing and evaluating as it claimed.

Perhaps the most direct attack on the partisan–science distinction is that of Carl Schmitt. As is all too well-known, Schmitt shifts the Weberian agenda of testing political commitments by their adaptation to the demands of political power struggle and legitimate domination within the "business" of modern party politics in the modern bureaucratic state to testing them according to an existential notion of politics beneath all political institutions; to wit he argues that the meaning of all partisan attachments, whether socialist, liberal, nationalist, or conservative are clarified in the crucible of politics defined by the struggle between friend and enemy, partisan and outsider.[30] We thus define what we politically stand for and the viability of our commitment only in the concrete situation in which we find ourselves: "Only the actual participants can correctly recognize, understand, and judge the concrete situation and settle the extreme case of conflict."[31] If this existential account of politics is accepted then the distinction between the concepts of political science or political sociology and those of the committed partisan collapses. As Schmitt argues, implicitly against Weber, there are no neutral or privileged political concepts: "All political concepts have a polemical meaning."[32] So the terms of the political sociologist who claims to define the meaning and reveal the consequences of the socialist, the conservative or the liberal's political commitment or worldview is merely deploying his own concept of politics as part of a struggle against an enemy much as the agent whose political stance he is clarifying. There thus are no impartial terms

to speak of partial political goals or worldviews for Schmitt. Rather, all political terms are implicated in the struggle of defining who is a partisan by defining who the implacable opponent is. If Schmitt is right that the conflict between the partisan and his enemies is a kind of discovery process of the political forces, situations, and institutions determining how one will fare, then all putatively "scientific" accounts of politics such as Weber's ideal-typical constructions of political values and political developments will have a partisan edge to them. Whatever their claims to neutrality, they are all part of a polemic against opponents.

Now a serious problem with this notion of clarification through partisanship is that one might be mistaken as to who one's opponent actually is, or worse yet, find oneself overlooking political sociological developments beneath the struggle of partisans against enemies that may render even that struggle self-defeating. Yet, even if we don't buy into Schmitt's claim that only in conflict do we discover our political fate and identity, we may still agree that given that the conceptual schemes of a political sociology derive from a value choice of the inquirer, as Weber argued, the political-sociological accounts of the scholar qua social scientist will inevitably have a polemical component.

In *Ideology and Utopia*, Karl Mannheim accepts this claim, but following Weber ties it to the need for sociological clarification in addition to clarification through political choice of partisan commitments. Against Schmitt, he treats the very notion of discovering concrete political situations through intense partisanship against another as one of the many worldviews that are in need of political sociological understanding and explanation. At the same time, in a direct challenge to Weber's distinction between scientific impartiality and partisanship (through a radicalization of Weber through Marx), Mannheim claims that there is *no* political style or vocabulary or, for that matter, logic of social inquiry that transcends our locatedness in particular partisan political conflict of worldviews: "even the categories in which experiences are subsumed, collected, and ordered vary according to the social position of the observer."[33] Every worldview has its own mode of interpreting history and society and makes its own claim to have discovered a logic that renders intelligible the dynamic movement of history and society toward desired political forms of society. In effect, every worldview has its own political sociology and interprets both the positions of its partisans and those of its opponents differently.[34] Moreover, Mannheim argues, although Weber may be fundamentally right that all politics has a willful irrational element and a routine methodical side through which aims are realized, it is also true that every worldview locates the "irrational element" of political will in a different place. Thus the socialist may place the moment of political will in class conflict inside and outside of political institutions, the liberal my find it in party competition in representative institutions, and the conservative may find it in the cultivation of inherited prudential experience. If the worldviews of different political standpoints each find a different economy

of the irrational to the routine, they also conceptualize this economy under differing theories, some resting on convention, others on rational progress, and others on productive relations and class conflict, and yet others, like Schmitt, on the pure exercise of political will against all routine, and still others on the insistence upon rational routine against all political will. In sum, all partisan positions at any historical moment have their own style of thought that "penetrates in the very "logic" of their political thought.[35] Thus any attempt to produce a science of politics that can inform the conflicts of worldviews must start from its own entwinement in the conflict of political ideologies.

If each political ideology or worldview has a different account of how we should go about assessing political partisanship and yet is itself a sophisticated form of political partisanship, the question Mannheim poses is whether a science of politics on the Weberian model is possible above and beyond the viewpoints of the political ideologies or political parties or movements at a given moment? Or, putting the question another way, is there some more synoptic form of political clarification possible that takes into account the perspectivism at the root of all political ideologies as well as at the root of the forms of "science" or political sociologies claiming to test those ideologies against reality with the aim of clarifying what is at stake in embracing them? Mannheim's answer is to suggest a workaround through his controversial notion of "synthesis" as the foundation for a new "science" of politics. A political science based on "synthesis" combines political ideologies of a particular period or conjuncture using their respective, although partial, insights into the relation of political will to routine and their likewise partial accounts of political development and the moment at which political initiative can be exercised—for example, the weight of tradition, the dynamics of class conflict and economic development, and the need for party compromise—to gain a comprehensive, although tentative, account of the political field.[36] To this it adds the sociology of knowledge to explain how each worldview or political ideology might be a response to a given social structure. In doing this it redefines Weber's partisanship–science distinction and his clarification of political ideologies by making us aware of the sociology of knowledge behind our political commitments, that is, the social location constituting our political stance in relation to the political field as a whole. And lastly this new political science as synthesis combines an account of long-range historical developments with the durable features of political conflict as the backdrop for a conflict of political wills of different kinds. Insight into this backdrop comes from combining the insights into the dynamic political reality from each of the partial ideologies themselves.

The benefits of this new political science based on synthesis over that proposed by Weber in "Science as a Vocation" is twofold: it gives us an expanded horizon of potential areas for (irrational) political action and its (rational) limits beyond that of each political ideology singly; and, it provides us with judgments as to whether a particular partisan position happens to be an

ideology out of touch with historical possibility or an ideology attached to a utopia demanding too much of reality. In the end though, Mannheim argues that providing such comprehensive pictures of the political field of competing ideologies is ultimately a matter of sensibility and judgment–"a distinctive alertness to the historical present" and a case-by-case sense for "what is no longer necessary and what is not yet possible."[37] At the core of such judgments regarding the dynamics spawned by conflicting political ideologies is the capacity to empathize with the views of each side and project oneself into the struggle from different ideological points of view.[38] The distance Weber sought to achieve between "Wissenschaft" and partisanship is not attainable. There is no outside to politics as a science. In effect, viewed as a political science of political ideologies, the former is a part of the thing it is studying.

Nonetheless, Mannheim offers this new political science as providing for its audience something akin to Weber's notion of clarification, as its account of the political field at the end of the day still requires each member of the audience to make a "decision" as to whether his/her adherence to a particular political ideology is meaningful and achievable in relation to the whole political field of ideologies, although s/he is now aware of the standpoints from which his/her commitment arises, and gains a broader map of political development and political will than his/her original commitment provided.[39] But this claim, unlike Weber's, comes with the proviso that every synthesis over and against the partial view of the adherent of a political ideology is itself tentative and is in need of constant reformulation.

In sum, Schmitt suggests that there is a polemical underside to claims to provide a "science" of politics that can judge the passionately held views of partisans. Acknowledging this insight but finding it insufficient, Mannheim offers a political science based on a synthesis of competing worldviews and political ideologies constituting a series of momentary maps of an ever-changing political field. And this political science relies on the various perspectives on political reality that these worldviews and ideologies provide along with an account of their sociological roots so as to gain a tentative but comprehensive insight into whether these ideologies are congruent or in tension with a dynamic political reality. Radicalizing Weber's perspectivism against itself, Mannheim shows that a political science that claims to inform partisanship and political choice will always be caught in a circle in which the construction of the political field will inform the construction of political reality and one's account of political reality will always inform the construction of the political field of competing ideologies. The sociology of the business side of politics and the terrain of political conflict will emerge from *within* this circle.

Moreover, Mannheim answers Weber's prior claim in "Science as a Vocation" that the impartial ideal-typical form of political clarification is uniquely adapted to a culture shaped by modern science and based on intellectual rationalization by arguing that his own suggestion for political science is

adapted to a different aspect of this cultural development: the increasing differentiation in modernity of *Weltanschauungen* and the resultant clash of intensely felt but sophisticated political ideologies often attached to political parties.[40] Thus Mannheim's criticism of Weber's notion of the authority of "Wissenschaft" over the committed political partisan and his new political science would seem to have revealed fundamental deficiencies in Weber's claim that science in both its scholarly and nomological sense will be able to inform partisans of their choices in ways distinctly superior to the political understanding of the partisans themselves.

V.   A DEFENSE OF WEBER: "WISSENSCHAFT" DEFINED AS THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY

However these sociological and analytical problems in Weber's partisanship–science distinction—in particular the oft-criticized claim to impartiality on the science side of the ledger—seem to dissolve when we put it in the context of Weber's third account of "Wissenschaft": the organization of research through the specialized division of labor in the modern university and the moral commitments of the teacher to his students. Read this way, the argument turns on not abusing the power relation between professor and student, between the lecturer and his audience, or put more positively, enabling a detached form of analysis that can speak to political engagement in a way no other setting allows. To be sure, Weber's account of "science" was addressed to a highly politicized and partisan audience. One need merely recall that the audience for Weber's lecture in 1917 as for the political vocation lecture of 1920 consisted of pacifists, anarchists, followers of Stefan George's cult of aesthetic self-creation through direct experience, and partisans of the left of various stripes while nationalists protested outside the doors. Moreover, in German universities at this time, professors freely pressed their political views from the lectern—most often nationalistic ones in support of German power politics—while ignoring opposing views.[41] And Weber's struggle to impose impartiality in the lecture hall was also not innocent. After all, in "Politics as a Vocation," devotion to the nation emerges unscathed under his ostensibly impartial ethic of responsibility while all other positions are rendered utopian or hopelessly self-defeating. Viewed in both its specific context and the debate over an impartial political science we have just discussed, it would seem that to claim that Weber's demand that the lecturer remain neutral merely "affirmed a sociological reality principle" that required "a research oriented (value free) sociology"[42] overlooks the fact that his demand for impartiality was itself part of a polemical battle over substantive politics.

Nevertheless, when we view the academic in the dual roles of specialist as part of the division of labor in the modern research university and teacher in the lecture hall, Weber's claim in "Science as a Vocation" that "the true

teacher will guard against *imposing* any attitude on the student from the lectern whether explicitly or through suggestion" [my emphasis] would still seem to be valid (even though Weber endorses testing partisan commitments of the audience using an ideal typical political sociology that in Charles Taylor's language always has a "value slope").[43] And the reason why we might argue with Weber that the classroom is not the place to "impose" political values—as opposed to examining them with admittedly scholarly means that even Weber admits are value inflected—has to do with the power relations within the university, the limited authority of the specialist, as well as the peculiar possibilities and limits of the classroom.

First off and most obvious, students are a captive audience. And Weber is on firm ground in arguing it is an abuse of the authority relation of professors to students to force them to respond favorably to the political position of the professor when their own futures may be at stake.[44] In this sense it is perfectly reasonable to distinguish the practical commitments of the scholar from those of the partisan political actor: "Party politics . . . does not belong in the lecture-room as far as the lecturer is concerned and it belongs least of all when he is scientifically concerned with politics. For opinions on practical political issues and the scientific analysis of political structures and party positions are two different things."[45] They are "two different things" for Weber in the sense that the duty of the scholar is not to avoid addressing practical political issues but to provide an analysis that will enable the members of his captive audience to evaluate their own individual political commitments from an impartial vantage point, even if we can dispute with Weber what the components of this impartiality consist in. The scholar's job is to provide, as it were, a political sociology and a generic account of political responsibility that all members of the audience would find plausible apart from their substantive political goals. To press one's own political position on the audience is to exploit it. This is not the case in a political forum.

Second, and closely related, it is a violation of the student's autonomy and capacity to clarify for themselves their partisan political positions for the lecturer to press a particular political position from the lectern separate from an academic inquiry into supportable and unsupportable political, social, and economic developments intervening on the realization of that position. Here indeed Weber's claim that one might limit oneself to presenting a coherent version of a position, lay out the different ways it might be understood, and examine the means and consequences of realizing it seems apposite. This follows from the well-known principle of treating others with equal dignity precisely because the relationship here is unequal.

Third, in order to treat the students as reflective autonomous agents and treat them as worthy of respect, it becomes the duty of the teacher "to teach his students to acknowledge inconvenient 'facts'" that unsettle their partisan opinions.[46] On the face of it, this would imply simply bringing empirical facts to bear that are causally connected to or simply count against the

principles of a particular partisan stance. So one might show as Weber does that we might want to equalize political resources but we would have to capture the state and deploy its monopoly of political resources including coercion to do so. Or we might show that a majority of a population does not support our egalitarian principles. But given that Weber understands "facts" not just as empirical or historical data, but as relations and causal sequences of ideal types, as well as conclusions regarding the logic of adopting certain ultimate values, I would suggest that he has something else in mind here that can go on in a classroom and rarely anywhere else. More specifically, an academic approach can provide students with a kind of political clarification they cannot achieve in partisan political argument, precisely because in a classroom one can set certain ground rules for rigorous argument or analysis that in ordinary life or in political forums have no special authority. Thus in one's role as academic one can insist that students take the logic of a particular partisan position (and its subsidiary goals) to its conclusion whether they like it or not. For example, a student may claim that immigrants should not have the same rights or protections as citizens in a democratic polity. In a classroom a professor may ask, if democracy requires full political equality for all affected by a polity's decisions, would this not logically require maximum inclusion in the full rights of citizenship for immigrants as well as official citizens or risk creating first-, second-, and, even third-class citizens? And if a student were to argue that illegal immigrants have no such claims, one could ask whether this position would lead to the claim that democracy and political inequality are compatible. That is, do the objections lead to logically untenable claims? And then from this conceptual argument one can ask what would the political means and consequences be if we introduced full inclusion in a democracy. Likewise, in a classroom, we can ask the degree to which the principle of unconditional political equality should be the basis for an unconditional right to welfare or basic income. And one can examine what means would be necessary or feasible and what consequences might follow were one to accept this extension of the principle or reject it. But needless to say, we would then find ourselves at the problem of deciding what our account of the political field should be and the various notions of political means and consequences we should adopt or take into account, and so the partisan influence on our theories of political sociology enter through the backdoor.

By contrast, in ordinary life or in ordinary political discussion, a person may take a position they find appealing from their social standpoint, for example, the fear of immigrants or the belief that a guaranteed income will allow for free riders on their best efforts. There is no rule in this sociological setting demanding they follow out the logic of their position or face uncomfortable facts that undermine their political standpoint—such as the fact that immigrants do jobs that the indigenous population will not do or that all citizens are at various times free riders on the efforts of other citizens to the degree other citizens contribute, say through taxes, to services

that a person may make more use of than the contributors, as in the case of school taxes paid by people whose children are grown or older individuals using health services paid by younger, healthier individuals. In a classroom a professor can say, "I do not care whether you like the argument or not but you have to follow out its logic to the end, and if you cannot come up with a good alternative one, you may have to entertain the possibility you might be mistaken." Now one may hear the same claims about immigrants in a social gathering or a political meeting, but only in a classroom can you lay down ground rules that force people to clarify the coherence and consequences of views that in social life are immune from analysis and criticism.

If this sort of inquiry is possible in a classroom in a way that is not possible either in political debate or in ordinary life, Weber can claim that the "scientific approach"—now understood as an interpretive approach to explanation in the social sciences—provides a discovery process for what members of the individual audience genuinely stand for, what their political commitments genuinely consist in. By forcing an audience to think through what the consequences and byproducts of trying to realize their political commitments and the means they may have to employ given both developmental tendencies in the historical situation and certain recurrent features of politics such as power struggle, selection, and political rule over and against the possibilities for organized collective action, Weber's "scientific" approach, so to speak, can actually "force" individuals to clarify their partisan commitments in a way that cannot be done in the setting of a party or in a public gathering. Thus were one committed to founding a mass organization seeking to diminish inequality of wealth, one would have to take into account whether the political system is more patrimonial or more state centered, whether one finds oneself in a situation in which status identifications conflict with class inequalities and parties that organize them or whether they line up together, and whether the politics one is opposing is one of parties built on clientage and patronage or bureaucratic mobilization of a following or both. All the more so, it would force one to face the problem of whether one should engage in collective action to make the state respond to the demand to equalize assets using its power and its monopoly of coercive apparatus against financial and corporate organization. Or, would this simultaneously require a democratization of the state as well, so that one would find oneself fighting its coercive apparatus while paradoxically demanding it be used for redistribution. More generally, one would have to take into account the inescapability of politics as power struggle, selection, and political rule, the coercive powers of the state, the way all three of these features shape the possibilities for organized collective action, and how all this might affect the means one has available. Weber of course saw such considerations to be deflationary of fundamental political principles and political ideologies, especially on the left. But merely setting up the conjuncture of forces can just as well display what an organized political will would

look like given the relation of state, civil society, economy, and existing political organizations. It could uncover possibility as well as limitations. This may be merely one map of political life. And here the questions raised by Schmitt's partisan struggle and Mannheim's political science of synthesis enter the picture as an alternative to Weber's own political sociology. And it is possible that Weber's account of political "science" or sociology would be in conflict with a political science that emphasized a primordial political struggle behind all political structures or a political science in which the clarification for partisans also includes the self-same partisan positions as the components of the political field and the data of political life.

Lastly, given the fact that the university is an organization of specialized knowledge, one might want to argue Weber's science–partisan distinction is right precisely because of the very tension between the classroom and the political sphere of partisan political action with regard to specialized vocabulary: namely, certain academic (scientific) theories that are correct are not easily translated into the language of political partisanship. For example, the argument that macroeconomic government spending, especially if it provides public services, increases employment even if it requires government take out debt during downturns, cannot, for political purposes, be made convincing because the opponents always draw a false analogy between individual household budgets and government budgets, and so political actors have to argue for these policies under the rubric of rectifying unfair inequality or responding to a state of emergency or engaging in public spending by stealth. In the academic setting, it is not just reasonable but required that the social scientific theory be presented in its complexity and disputes over its logic, the interpretive force of its concepts, and its predictions be joined. In this sense, it is the very distance from partisan vocabulary even though the same question may be debated in the partisan realm of political conflict and political ideology that may vindicate Weber's claim to support a distance between science as part of the business of the university and political partisanship of lay actors.[47]

VI. CONCLUSION: THE PARADOX OF SCHOLARSHIP AND PARTISANSHIP

Given the authority relation between professors and students, given the possibility of holding both professors and students to rules of argument that cannot, and should not, be imposed on political life, and given the discrepancy between the specialized vocabulary of the research university and the political ideologies of partisan politics such that the former is not easily translatable into the latter, there may indeed be a defense of Weber's distinction between academic scholarship and political partisanship based on his account of the sociology of the university and its norms. And this

may be so even if Weber's account of the science–partisanship distinction is problematic as philosophy of social science and as a description of the relationship between a science of politics and partisan political ideology. That is, I would argue Weber's distinction between science and political partisanship has validity in the sociological setting in which scholarship is transmitted—in the classroom—even if analytically his notion of "impartiality" and "objectivity" is full of problems, as the critics have claimed, and his own account of a clarifying political sociology is merely one perspective within a more comprehensive political field of conflicting ideas and alternative notions of political science.

NOTES

1. Gunnell, 1993: 148–52.
2. Weber, 1989: 19; 2004: 374.
3. Weber, 1989: 16–17, 25.
4. Weber, 1989: 5–6; 2004: 374.
5. Weber, 2004: 359.
6. Weber, 1989: 20.
7. Weber, 1978: 53, 38–40; 1994b: 311.
8. Breiner, 2004b.
9. Weber, 1989: 25–26.
10. Weber, 1989: 26.
11. See Bruun, 2012: 185–86. Bruun argues Weber's demand that scientific clarification should proceed through deduction of one's chosen value commitment from its axiomatic first principles and his teleological clarification of means, ends, and consequences are complementary and give it its force. By contrast, Turner and Factor (1984: 36–7) view the deductive model of scientific clarification in Weber as an overly restrictive application of reason to moral justification given the wide variety of candidates for justifying first principles.
12. Weber, 1947: 20, 35; 2004: 361–62.
13. Weber, 2004: 361–62.
14. Weber, 1947: 23.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Weber, 1989: 20.
17. Despite the obvious impartiality of Weber's distinction here, the choice of democracy as an example was not coincidental. What Weber had in mind in the context of his lecture was the fact that the partisans in his audience were preoccupied with the problem of defining democracy as full political equality with regard to voting and direct influence on decision-making in a republic and the debate over whether democracy required a republican model versus direct forms such as work. Much of Weber's political sociology rotates around the limits on democracy produced by the modern political expropriation process in the state, party, and parliaments and its effect on the professionalization of politics. It also rotates around the variety of forms modern politics has developed—the American model with its party machine and patronage-driven politics, the German model with its parliament subservient to the administrative state, and the British model with what he stylized

as plebiscitary democracy with its focus on the "leading politician" as leader of party in parliament and prime minister in the state.

18. See Hennis, 1988a; 1988b.
19. Weber, 1989: 13.
20. Weber, 1989: 19.
21. Weber, 1989: 27; see Turner and Factor, 1984: 38–41; Weber, 1994b: 362–63.
22. See Lassman, Velody, and Martins, 1989: 196.
23. Kahler, 1989; Lukács, 1971 This was Erich Kalher's criticism from the vantage point of a new science forged out of a hybrid of aesthetic intuition and Platonic dialectic. Lukács, in turn, criticized this concept of the culture of science as treating a society created by human praxis as a reified object and offered a new science based on the expanding consciousness of the proletariat who produce and reproduce this society.
24. For a discussion of the uses of the ideal type to solve the problems of explanatory understanding and its problems, see Albrow, 1990; Bruun, 2012; Burger, 1976; Hekman, 1983; and Oakes, 1988. Bruun is especially acute in demonstrating that for all of Weber's many formulations of the concept the core notions informing the construction of the ideal type is that it is "fictional" and that its features are subjectively selected according to what the scholar deems to be significant in the culture he is studying (Bruun, 2012: 41).
25. Weber, 2004: 377.
26. *Ibid.*, 381.
27. For a discussion of the way Weber's scientific approach to clarifying and testing partisan views was viewed by a new generation as setting the agenda for a new form of political science see Breiner, 2004a; Kettler, 2008: 7–8.
28. Turner and Factor, 1984: 42–43.
29. Mannheim, 1986: 176.
30. Schmitt, 2007: 26.
31. *Ibid.*, 27.
32. Schmitt, 2007: 30–31.
33. Mannheim, 1985: 147.
34. *Ibid.*, 148.
35. *Ibid.*, 117.
36. *Ibid.*, 148–49.
37. *Ibid.*, 154.
38. *Ibid.*, 157.
39. *Ibid.*, 189, 163.
40. *Ibid.*, 148.
41. Turner and Factor, 1984: 56.
42. Bendix and Roth, 1971: 33.
43. Weber, 1989: 20; see Taylor, 1957: 25.
44. Weber, 1989: 21.
45. Weber, 1989: 20; 2004: 366.
46. Weber, 1989: 22.
47. Even this distinction may involve more crossover than is implied here such that the very debates over science understood in the first two senses leap over into the public arena of partisan struggle. An excellent example is the recent debate on the *New York Times* website—clearly a public not an academic forum—between economists Paul Krugman and Gregory Mankiw about the consequences of the accumulation of generational wealth for the society at large. Mankiw argues that the accumulation of generational wealth is in the public interest because it increases the stock of capital available for investment, and once invested creates jobs, increased wages, and increased productivity. Now although his blog is a public forum, Krugman

answers Mankiw's ostensibly academic argument in favor of a cumulative inequality of wealth with the academic argument that Mankiw fails to assess the "opportunity cost" of encouraging inherited wealth; that is, it fails to compare the costs and benefits of inherited wealth as against alternative uses of these resources to pay for public goods. Once we introduce the concept of "opportunity cost," Krugman argues, it becomes clear that were the government to tax away inherited wealth, the benefits to the public at large would be greater than allowing wealth to be transferred generationally. Thus, Krugman's introduction of opportunity cost—clearly a term of economic science—demonstrates that Mankiw's argument is wrong both for not using the proper academic criteria for judging costs and benefits of a policy and for essentially arguing in a circular manner, namely assuming that the government would not put tax revenue from inherited wealth to good use when this needs to be demonstrated. He then employs an argument from political science that concentrated wealth in "family dynasties undermines democracy" because wealth can be converted into political influence (Krugman, n.d.; Mankiw, 2014). The question this dispute raises is whether in Weber's terms a "scientific" academic argument has wrongly crossed into the sphere of partisan political debate and used to move people to action. Or, by leaving out the technical term of opportunity cost, was Mankiw simply employing partisan language to justify a partisan support of economic inequality. Or, alternatively, was Krugman bringing it back into discussion so as to use scientific arguments from economics and political science to discredit Mankiw's partisan position. Here the partisan struggle becomes the reason for introducing an academic argument into the public sphere of partisan struggle. And in the case of Krugman discrediting the academic argument becomes also a way of discrediting the partisan one informing that of his opponent. We are back at the critique of Schmitt and Mannheim. In any event, Weber engaged in precisely such crossovers throughout his career (see Weber, 1994a).

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