Virtue and Character: The Liberal Education of the Ordinary Citizen

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requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Political Science
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Virtue and Character: The Liberal Education of the Ordinary Citizen

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the tradition of liberal education, as concerns the ordinary citizen, in the thought of five political philosophers. This thesis examines the question of the education of the ordinary citizen as treated in the philosophy of Plato, Cicero, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith.

In discussing the education of the ordinary citizen this thesis discerns and describes a distinct thread, stretching across all five philosophers, concerning how best to teach civic virtue to the ordinary citizen. This distinct thread consists of a common contention that an education in civic virtue, one that is distinct from a philosophic education, requires the turning and shaping of character towards virtue. The attempt to shape the character of the ordinary citizen represents a three-fold recognition of the nature of education, politics and philosophy. At its most fundamental pedagogical level it acknowledges the inextricable connection between the nature of the student and the education for which he is suited. On the political level this acknowledgement suggests that a specifically civic education is appropriate, indeed essential, to the education of the ordinary citizen and the more general health of the polity in which he resides. In its own terms this civic education is then recognized as the penultimate education, an education in virtue distinct from the ultimate education. This ultimate education consists of an epistemologically superior and distinct civic and philosophic wisdom suited only to the extraordinary philosophic citizen.

This thesis commences and concludes with a discussion of the current debate surrounding liberal education and advocates a reinvigoration of liberal education directed at civic virtue and in the terms described by the five philosophers countenanced.

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Introduction

In recent years there has been a renewed debate, accompanied by an ever expanding literature, concerning the relationship between liberal education and citizenship. Much of this literature has been of a decidedly popular character, clearly written in the hope of engaging a readership beyond the usual demesne of scholarly composition. This popular character points to an already widespread and growing conviction that the decline of liberal education presents a threat to the health of modern political community. This conviction contains an urgency and range of concern that goes far beyond the traditional interests or preferred issues of right or left. Indeed authors as diverse as Allan Bloom, Christopher Lasch and Todd Gitlin have published highly accessible, and more remarkably, mutually sympathetic books addressing liberal education's relationship to politics.

My thesis examines five philosophical treatments of the relationship of liberal education to citizenship and civic virtue, it attempts to fill out the historical

lineage of both liberal civic education and the debate surrounding it. In examining Plato, Cicero, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith I hope to illustrate the existence and essence of a common concern for civic education that connects all five philosophers' discussions of civic virtue and citizenship. Fundamental to this connection my account implies a second more immediate contention: that a full understanding of these earlier philosophers informs both the context and the content of the present debates surrounding liberal education and offers powerful arguments, beyond those found in the present debate, for a reinvigoration of civic virtues and a recovery of civil society through a robust liberal civic education.

I aim to examine liberal education and its relationship to citizenship and civic virtue in one very specific context. From Plato to Smith I seek to describe an overlooked strand of the tradition of liberal education: the education of the non-philosophic citizen. Across the five philosophers herein countenanced there exists a continuous, specific and discrete concern for the civic education of the student for whom such an education constitutes the apex of his intellectual possibility. This countenancing, by obvious implication, suggests that such a tradition and necessary distinction exists within the history of liberal education. To this end Leo Strauss once famously commended liberal education as "the ladder by which we try to ascend from mass democracy to democracy as originally meant. Liberal education is the necessary endeavour to found an aristocracy within democratic mass society."¹ At its core my argument concerns liberal education's concern with democratic mass society. Liberal education is undeniably concerned with founding an aristocracy but it has also

¹ Leo Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, (New York: Basic Books, 1968) 5.

consistently maintained an equal regard for the education of the non-aristocratic; it is as concerned with the non-philosophic as with the philosophic student. Each of the philosophers discussed in this thesis endorses a bicameral (at least) vision of liberal education, each accepts the inextricable connection between the education and the existence of the gifted and the ordinary pupil.

This distinction, between civic and philosophic education, is central to the tradition of liberal education. It is a distinction not only in degree but also in kind and it invariably implies a superordinate status for philosophic education. Philosophic education and its intended pupil enjoy a pedagogically and indeed an epistemologically privileged status. However their privileged education and access to knowledge do not translate into a commensurate primacy of concern in the treatment of education offered by Plato, Cicero, Locke, Rousseau and Smith. Each philosopher seeks to offer a full account of education and therefore each philosopher offers an account not only of the ultimate but also the penultimate education.

Strauss' apt metaphor expresses a dual intentionality, initially it discerns a hierarchy of knowing and characterizes education as an ascent first offered by Plato in different incarnations in both *Symposium* and *Republic*. Furthermore, by necessary implication, the metaphor offers a more subtle but equally essential assessment of the nature of knowledge and its relation to human nature, not only is knowledge distributed vertically but that distribution is reflected across humanity. Liberal education, in recognizing two distinct educations recognizes two distinct pupils definitively divided by the facts of their respective natures. Liberal education cannot be monolithic because those it seeks to educate are not monolithic in nature. A

differentiated conception of liberal education is a necessary consequence of the natural differentiation of ability among students. Sensitivity to this difference, in all of the philosophers this thesis examines, is not an argument for elite education for the few but a nuanced acknowledgement of the necessity of an ontologically appropriate education for all. A complex and multifaceted understanding of liberal education, one that is sensitive to the diverse and multivariate character of its intended is the second common thread connecting these five philosophers as deeply as the recognition of the inextricable character of the civic and philosophic.

That this bicameral and ontologically differentiated understanding of liberal education is in need of recovery is a testament to the success of liberal education's critics and the failure of its supporters to understand and defend its true nature. Regrettably both groups have mistakenly identified the crucial character of liberal education to be its alleged canonicity, often described in tones either laudatory or denunciatory as 'The Western Canon.' To so describe liberal education is to fundamentally confuse means with ends and further to open it up to an otherwise untenable attack. The famous metaphor of the Cave in Plato's *Republic* perhaps best captures the true character of liberal education. In employing the imagery of turning, illumination and ascent in education Plato conspicuously eschews constructive or even metamorphic language. Liberal education is not the acquisition of what one should know but rather the right training of sight. Liberal education does not construct, it re-orient. As Plato's Socrates declares "Rather, this art takes as given

that sight is there, but not rightly turned nor looking at what it ought to look at, and accomplishes this object.” (*Republic* 518d)²

The most pressing consequence of the misapprehension of liberal education as the rote learning of the normative, epistemological and cultural assumptions of the West has been the reinvigoration of two powerful streams of criticism of liberal education. Neither stream is new. Both have been present since the beginnings of liberal education, but both have received new force in recent decades. In place of a liberal education the first stream of criticism advocates an education that is narrowly utilitarian and increasingly technological. This line of argument contends that inasmuch as an education in ‘the canon’ ill equips students for success in the modern marketplace it has become unprofitable and anachronistic. The second stream of criticism is cultural and contends that liberal education, understood as an education in ‘the canon,’ amounts to an assertion of cultural superiority that it is intolerant of difference and harmful to non-Western students. To each of these critiques, from Plato to Smith, the tradition of liberal civic education has provided convincing rejoinders rooted in the close connection between pedagogy and ontology, between civic education and the nature of its intended and between philosophic and political life. In considering these responses my thesis ultimately aims at the restoration of a conception and practice of liberal education that is essential to the maintenance of the civic virtues of liberal citizenship and liberal political community.

There can be little doubt that the definition of citizenship has been transformed dramatically from its origins in the Athenian polis to its modern incarnation. On the surface this transformation is best described as a progression

² Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom, (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

towards ever increasing inclusion in the institutions of citizenship combined with a commensurate impoverishment of the substantive content of those institutions. This decline is tragically self-reinforcing, as it occludes from view the deep connection between liberal education and citizenship the purview and import of the latter diminishes and the perceived necessity of the former, the only possible curative, also disappears from view. Liberal education, an education meant to prepare the student for the meaningful exercise of liberty understood as the informed participation in political life, is both dependent on and generative of robust citizenship.

Liberal education aims at a very particular sort of citizen. A citizen who is fitted for both ruling and being ruled, educated to participate in meaningful deliberation about the good life to the extent the institutions of citizenship and his nature permits and to both implement and abide by the outcome of those deliberations. This definition of the citizen is important because in its essence it has been present since liberal education's beginnings. Central to this understanding is the strong attachment of the education of the pupil to his nature and a commensurate detachment from the accidents of his existence. His deliberations and their results are the consequence of the right education of his character and not the mere expression of the prejudices of his time or place. Such a citizen, so educated, escapes both the cultural critique's derision and the consequences of transforming liberal education along the lines of the utilitarian critique. All of the philosophers discussed below reject the idea that liberal education, in either its civic or its philosophic incarnations, is tantamount to effective and productive socialization or a studied cultural literacy. To the philosophers to be discussed and the tradition I aim to describe genuine liberal

civic education aims at a full realization of citizenship, that unique dual noun, both virtue and institution. Civic education teaches neither praxis nor values, instead from Plato to Smith civic education is an act of genesis and realization. Education does not teach social skills or community values, it brings into being citizens.

This is not to suggest that such an education is or must be explicitly hostile to culture or for that matter to the idea of multiculturalism. Nothing of the philosophers here to be discussed precludes the possibility, indeed the reality that various cultures have over time contributed to our understanding of the world and our place in it. What this conception of education and citizenship rejects is the notion that human nature and the structure of human society is something purely conventional, contingent and specific to each political community. In an undeniably multicultural era this teaching has gained new significance. What this model of education and citizenship offers is an alternative to the parlour Nietzscheanisms of exponents of cultural relativism, a relativism which all too often serves as little more than a festive mask over an empty and vapid nihilism. This vision of the liberal education of citizens, far from being anachronistic, addresses the modern cultural condition wherein the unquestioning acceptance of the truth of a given culture's worldview is effectively ruled out by the ready availability of cultural alternatives. A condition in which, in the absence of a forceful defense of liberal education, crass cultural relativism has won by default. This vision of liberal education and citizenship also offers an alternative to the King Canute approach to diversity which struggles vainly (and all too often vitriolically) to assimilate and sublimate all difference into a highly dubious mono-culture described simply as 'The Western Tradition'. Liberal

education is, for the philosophers discussed herein, an education directed at liberty, in particular liberty that gains its fullest expression in the lived virtues of the institution.

Turning to Plato first I trace the discussion and debate around the possibilities and necessity of a specifically civic education in liberty and virtue through Cicero, Locke, Rousseau and finally Smith. In seeking to understand the education of the ordinary citizen what emerges, in place of a belief in a broad potential for enlightenment, is a belief in a broad potential for virtue. The education of the ordinary citizen is based on a fundamental supposition about his nature beyond its simple ordinariness, it is based on a belief in the common possibility on the part of ordinary individuals, to participate fully in virtue. Virtue, and specifically civic virtue, is the democratic quality of humanity, distributed by nature much more broadly and on much more generous terms than Reason. To posit the suitability of most citizens for a non-philosophic education is to place them in the penultimate position, but for none of the philosophers discussed below does this ordination imply derision.

Chapter One: Plato's Journey from the Cave to the City

Introduction

In the entire Platonic corpus there exists no more famous image than that of the Cave in Book Seven of the *Republic*. The image of the Cave, moving between metaphor and allegory in a fluid chiaroscuro of ascent and illumination and descent and darkening is the starting point for any understanding of Plato's theory of education. The Cave illuminates not only in its imagery but also in the context in which it is found, deep within a discussion of the ideal city. That this philosophic and lyrical account of the ascent to wisdom is found in the center of a philosophic account of politics and the limits of its ascent is obviously no accident. The *Republic* presents a discussion of education that is bracketed, even bounded, by a discussion of politics.

This bounding of the account of education in the *Republic* both in the substance and structure of the account of the Cave is the crucial prelude to the discussion of education and politics in Plato's *Laws*. *Republic* by placing education, the ideal education to be precise, in a context and a conflict with politics bounds the realm of the pedagogically possible. In the *Laws* Plato treats the natural correlate to the philosophic education delimited by politics: the political education delimited by philosophy. Like philosophy and politics these two dialogues complement and imply one another while ever cognizant of the tension between philosophy and politics, philosopher and citizen. Of course this is only a partial explanation of the relationship between Plato's two most expansive and thematically diverse dialogues; it does not even exhaust the educational relationship between the two. In discussing Plato's conceptions of civic education I will address the *Laws* to the *Republic* treating

the latter as a prelude to the former. The dramatic action of the *Laws* more than anything else seems to justify treating the *Republic* as both prelude and postscript to the *Laws*.

In the *Laws* three men, an Athenian Stranger, Kleinias and Megillus set out on a day's journey to a shrine to Zeus, a sacred cave in which they may encounter the divine. On the way they discuss the founding of a new city to be established in Crete, a task charged to Kleinias, a Cretan. They debate laws, discuss education and compare governing institutions and forms. In discussing the rulers and citizens' educations the Athenian outlines the civic education of the latter and hints at the philosophic education of the former. As their journey nears its end they begin to discuss the highest ruling institution, the Nocturnal Council. These councillors, the Athenian asserts, will receive a philosophic education. The Athenian promises to tell Kleinias and Megillos what this education will consist of (*Laws* 965b).³ The Athenian Stranger does not keep his promise, but Plato does. He has taken the civic-minded as far as they can go, to the entrance of the cave. In the Cave of the *Republic* the necessity of educating its denizens is implied but never fully outlined. The philosopher who returns must rule, and by implication, educate the cave dwellers. As Socrates reminds Glaucon

“My friend, you have again forgotten,” I said, “it’s not the concern of law that any one class in the city fare exceptionally well, but it contrives to bring this about in the city as a whole, harmonizing the citizens, by persuasion and compulsion, making them share with one another the benefit that each is able to bring to the commonwealth.” (*Republic* 519e-520a)⁴

³ Plato, *The Laws of Plato*, trans. Thomas Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

⁴ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom, (Basic Books, 1991).

How to effect this harmonization is never adequately explained in the *Republic*. For such an account one must turn to the *Laws*. The *Laws* can thus be read as both prefaced and post-scripted by the *Republic*.⁵ In the *Laws* the relationship of philosophy to politics within the *Republic* is turned inside out, the philosophic now brackets the political.

It is within this relationship that the carefully drawn contour and line of an education in civic virtue is drawn out. In examining the question of civic education in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* I will begin by examining the action and then move on the argument. In so doing I will argue that much of the argument is contained within the action. The portrayal of Socrates as a teacher reveals a great deal about Plato's views on education.⁶ As much as the dramatic character of Socrates reveals about Plato's ideas of civic education those ideas are given further nuance by the nature of the dialogues themselves. The complex interplay of argument, admonition and aporia on the page is constructed to create an equally complex interplay between reader and text. The dialogue, in the act of its careful study, teaches in a way connected but distinct from the teaching presented by Socrates and the Athenian.

In moving on from a discussion of the action to the argument in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* I aim to apply the teaching of the former to the latter. Specifically I will argue that the *Republic* provides the philosophical prelude to the political arguments in the *Laws*. While this is an argument that can be made on a variety of fronts I will pursue it specifically as it concerns education; more precisely still I will

⁵ Glenn Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 507.

⁶ I am convinced by the Aristotelian contention that the Athenian Stranger in the *Laws* is a dramatic rendering of Socrates had he visited Crete instead of remaining in Athens until the events that lead to his trial and execution. For more on this see Aristotle (*Politics* 1265b 18) and Leo Strauss *What is Political Philosophy?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 32-33.

treat the argument as it regards civic education. Unpacking at length the implications of the image of the Cave I will argue that the overarching metaphor contained therein is that of the turning (*periagoge*). How this metaphor ‘plays out’ with regards to the person turned and those who remain within the Cave will form the groundwork for my discussion of the educational program of the *Laws*.

Arriving at the *Laws* I will discuss the detailed and specific content of its recommendations regarding civic education. This is the deep merit of Plato’s *Laws*: it is his political work *par excellence* and provides the most detailed provision for actual education he offers anywhere. Underlying the specific provisions, indeed much more important than their particularities, is a teaching about the intellectual character of the non-philosophic citizen and the implications for education of that character. In discussing the *Laws* in particular I will focus on *how* to educate the non-philosophic for political life rather than *what* they are to be taught.⁷ Platonic civic pedagogy contains a constantly re-appearing dyad of epistemology and ontology of the citizen, how he is taught reflects both what he knows and what he is.

Athenian Education and Politics

Plato’s dialogues appeared in an Athens that was the most politicized community to have ever arisen in the West. They were penned and disseminated to a population that participated in politics to a degree unthinkable today, to a body politic with a keen sense of its self-identity as citizen and a healthy appreciation of the role of the state. To understand Plato’s teaching on civic education in the *Republic* and *Laws* a picture of the context into which they were written and which they describe is

⁷ This is not to suggest that the two can or should be fully separated, indeed any discussion of the one demands some discussion of the other.

critical. Of particular importance is an understanding of the nature of Athenian political identity, the degree to which that identity was shaped by political involvement and the popular perception of the role of the state. This essay is not a classical study of these institutions and so this understanding will by necessity be brief but hopefully adequate to show how the three aspects of politics listed above led to both the increasing presence of ‘teachers for hire’ and of ‘schools’ in fifth and fourth century Athens. This context, an active citizenship and a citizenry eager and available to be ‘schooled,’ forms a dramatic and informative background for so many of Plato’s dialogues not least of all the two to be examined here.⁸

It is difficult for the modern liberal citizen to imagine the degree to which the political institutions of democratic Athens informed the identity of its citizens. From as early as the late sixth century the citizens of Athens had begun to build up a series of laws and prohibitions that eventually evolved into robust institutions of citizenship that entailed a comprehensive civic ethos.⁹ To Athenian citizens it would seem obvious and wholly unproblematic that the term ‘citizenship’ connotes both an institution and a virtue. In the famous Funeral Oration from Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War* Thucydides’ Perikles expresses this sentiment.

Here each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but in the affairs of the state as well: even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well-informed on general politics—this is a peculiarity of ours: we do not say that a man who takes no

⁸ Of course the *Laws* like the *Phaedrus* occurs outside of Athens but in both dialogues the striking absence of the traditional background constitutes a powerful reminder of the force of its existence.

⁹ As early as 510/9 B.C. Athenian citizens were protected against torture and were entitled to some extremely limited protections while traveling to other Greek cities. As Alan L. Boegehold points out, such protection necessarily imply *some definition* of citizenship if only to determine who is and isn’t entitled to them. See Alan L. Boegehold “Perikles Citizenship Law of 451/0 B.C.,” in *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology*, eds. Alan L. Boegehold and Adele C. Scafuro (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1994) 58.

interest in politics is a man who minds his own business, we say that he has no business at all.¹⁰

From Perikles' perspective it is incomprehensible to view citizenship in purely procedural or institutional terms. Greek *politiea* was defined not as liberal citizenship is today, by a list of rights, prohibitions and entitlements, but by active participation. To be an Athenian citizen was "to be someone who *metechei tes poleos*: someone who shares in the polis."¹¹ Of course a citizen of Athens also possessed a list of rights and entitlement, but even here the distinction is key, the foremost right of the Athenian citizen was the right to hold public office, to participate.¹² Ideally at least, this right was not contingent on material concerns but instead rested primarily on the ability of the citizen to prove his legitimate place on the deme register, the *lexiarkhikon grammateion*.¹³ Proof of Athenian ancestry was proof of ability. Thucydides also valorized this principle in Perikles' Funeral Oration. "No one, so long as he has it in him to be of service to the state, is kept in political obscurity because of poverty"¹⁴

The principle of universal participation of citizens (not to be confused with universal suffrage!) was not only a matter of Athenian public ethics, it was a matter of necessity, both military and political. The military experience of Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries played a crucial role in creating a demotic political identity. As Athens' transformed its military from an aristocratic land army of *hoplites* to a naval

¹⁰ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (London: Penguin Books, 1972) 148.

¹¹ Phillip Brook Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 5.

¹² Boegold, "Perikles", 60.

¹³ Frank J. Frost, "Aspects of Early Athenian Citizenship" in *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology*, eds. Alan Boegehold and Adele C. Scafuro (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1994) 45.

¹⁴ Thucydides, *History*, 145.

power dominated by the demotic *thetes* this new class became increasingly aware of its significance to Athens' new power and influence among the Hellenes. As Pseudo-Xenophon writes

My first point is that it is right that the poor and the ordinary people there should have more power than the noble and the rich, because it is the ordinary people who man the fleet and bring the city her power: they provide the helmsman, the boatswains, the junior officers, the look-outs and the shipwrights: it is these people who make the city powerful much more than the hoplites and the noble and respectable citizens.¹⁵

Pseudo-Xenophon's remarks illustrate the development among the thetic class of an increasing awareness of their "share in the polis." This awareness found expression in Greek tragedy as well. Sophocles' *Antigone* presents a protagonist making claims against tyrannical rule and for, to some extent, conscience.¹⁶ This is a claim *against external rule* in favour of self-rule, transferred to the streets and markets of Athens from the stages of the theatre this is the cultural source of the demotic civic ethos. The transformation of the military from an aristocratic to a demotic institution, accompanied by these cultural valorizations of participation, helped create a civic identity replete with a public ethos.

Even with these developments, which were not entirely peculiar to Athens among the Greek city states, the unique institutions of democratic Athens demanded a level of popular participation unprecedented in the ancient world. Beyond the democratic character of Athenian offices their sheer number demanded the

¹⁵ Pseudo-Xenophon, quoted in Kurt Raaflaub "Perceptions of Democracy in Fifth-Century Athens" in *Aspects of Athenian Democracy*, ed. W. Robert Connor (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1990) 36.

¹⁶ Hegel, in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, writes of Antigone's rebellion against Creon "The accomplished deed completely alters its point of view; the very performance of it declares what is ethical must be actual; for the *realization* of the purpose is the purpose of the action." G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomonology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 285.

involvement of every citizen. Indeed the man excoriated by Perikles as “having no business at all” would have had to actively avoid political life.

The combined total of the quorum for the *ekklesia* (6000) annual *boulethai* (500) and the 700 different domestic *archai* mentioned by *Ath. Pol.* 24.3 gives one pause when measured against an adult male population of only about 40,000 in 431 and perhaps half that number in the fourth century.¹⁷

The number of offices and the relatively small number of citizens meant that it was virtually impossible for a citizen to spend less than a year in the service of Athens over the course of his lifetime. The knowledge that the service of Athens was an inevitable consequence of citizenship combined with the experience of that service was a powerful source of the active character of Athenian civic identity.

Not only were citizens involved in the state to an unprecedented degree but the state was increasingly involved in the lives of citizens. The Athenian state, in the structuring of its citizenship and in the innovations of government, both occluded from view family allegiances and increasingly supplanted the family in traditional roles. To return again to Perikles, we can see in Thucydides’ account a shift from speaking of ‘forefathers’ (*hoi pateres*) to the more general and necessarily diffuse ‘ancestors’ (*hoi progenoi*).¹⁸ The talk of ancestry as opposed to parentage indicates two complementary phenomena. The first and most readily apparent is the awareness, at least among the elite, of the fragility of any claim to Attic autochthony. “It was sufficient to know that *all* Athenians were autochthonous; no need, then, to trace one’s ancestry back, either to a hero of the remote past or to a more recent

¹⁷ Manville, “Origins”, 18-19.

¹⁸ Barry S. Strauss, “Oikos and Polis” in *Aspects of Athenian Democracy*, ed. W. Robert Connor (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1990) 120.

immigrant.”¹⁹ On a second track we can see, again in Perikles’ Oration that by the middle of the fifth century the Athenian state is willing to supplant the family in the most critical of roles: the rearing of children.

For the time being our offerings to the dead have been made, and for the future their children will be supported at the public expense of the city, until they come of age. This is the crown and prize she offers, both to the dead and to their children, for the ordeals which they have faced.²⁰

Perikles remarks indicate an openness, indeed in the language of ‘crown and prize’ he offers even a valorization, of the occasions upon which the state replaces the family. For reasons of social solidarity the Athenian state was motivated to speak of familial ties rarely and vaguely, this was combined in the fourth century with a willingness, in some limited cases, to actually supplant the family altogether.

I have attempted to briefly draw together three strands of fourth and fifth century Athenian life to illuminate the context in which education and later Plato’s educational proposals were taking place. These strands, the development of a deep sense of civic identity, the necessity of a high degree of political involvement, and an increasing openness to an expanded role for the state made obvious by Socrates’ lifetime the gravity and import of civic education in the life of the polis.

It is in this context that we find the presence of ‘freelance’ teachers such as the Sophists and eventually Socrates, attempting to teach the young men of Athens. This is the milieu drawn in Aristophanes’ *The Clouds*. The caustic depiction of Socrates in *The Clouds* illustrates Aristophanes’ concerns about education in Athens. The father and son students, Strepsiades and Phidippides, seek education for personal

¹⁹ W. Robert Connor, “The Problem of Civic Identity” in *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology* ed. Alan L. Boegehold and Adele C. Scafuro (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1994) 35.

²⁰ Thucydides, *History*, 151.

advantage, in particular the avoidance of debts. The eccentric teacher Socrates seems interested only in the natural world and even there is unable to distinguish the important from the trivial. *The Clouds* portrays students who are unaware of the ends of education and a teacher who cannot discern what it is important to teach or how to teach it. The conclusion of the play, with the enraged Strepsiades reasserting the traditional family roles and burning down Socrates' Thinkery illustrates the grave consequences of an education gone wrong. Aristophanes' indictment of Socrates is in part at least an indictment of a particular sort of education, Plato's Socrates acknowledges as much in *The Apology* when considering the charges against him he opines of them

I must read out their affidavit, so to speak, as though they were my legal accusers: Socrates is guilty of criminal meddling, in that he inquires into things below the earth and in the sky, and makes the weaker argument defeat the stronger, and teaches other to follow his example. It runs something like that. You have seen it for yourselves in the play by Aristophanes, where Socrates goes whirling round, proclaiming that he is walking on air, and uttering a great deal of nonsense about things of which I know nothing whatsoever. (*Apology*, 19b-c)

The charge against Socrates is the charge against education. It gains its peculiar gravity as a result of the importance Athenian society places on its young men; everything depends on them, on the education of their characters.²¹ Those who would corrupt the young risk setting fire not merely to a school but to the city itself.

Socrates and Plato as Teachers

Any work of philosophy to the extent that it is a work of philosophy contains a teaching on education. Part of that teaching adheres in the truth claims and

²¹ R.L. Nettleship, *The Theory of Education in Plato's Republic*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935) 48.

syllogisms offered by the philosopher, part adheres in the very structure of the work. Nowhere is this more the case than in a Platonic dialogue. Plato's decision to write dialogues (instead of treatises) bespeaks a deep recognition of the volatile nature of youth and the precarious place of the educator in a democracy, this recognition is notable for its absence in the Aristophanic portrayal of Socrates. In contrast a deeply cautious speech and an awareness of the political perils of education are primary qualities of by Plato's Socrates. Farther into the dialogues the relationship between the two reveals a third wrinkle, the triumphant *trompe l'oeil* of Plato's prose inevitably points to the artist's presence²² and raises the question: what is the relationship between the vivid Socrates and the murky figure behind the proscenium known to us only through a handful of letters? Plato offers us an impossibly intricate tapestry, he teaches us with dialogues in which Socrates teaches others all the while reminding us that Socrates was, before all this work, his teacher. Plato and his Socrates tell us what to make of students, but lurking in the background a more sable-coloured return to Aristophanes, what to make of teachers?

While political and philosophical writing may have a variety of purposes, exhortation, admonition and lamentation for example, at the bottom of all truly philosophical works *a case is being made*, something is being taught. Plato admits this but is also acutely aware of the peculiar aspects of the written word that render philosophic and political prose problematic. The dialogues reveal in the person of Socrates an awareness that not every lesson is for every person, not every argument is suited for every occasion. The person of the careful educator is the model for the

²² This will be discussed at greater length below by exploring one of the few moments of explicit Platonic self-reference, see *Laws* 811c-d.

careful writer.²³ Plato points to how the dialogue is meant to teach in the idiosyncratic text of the *Cleitophon* a dialogue which scholarship and its dramatic action appears to place as a prelude to the *Republic*. In the *Cleitophon* Socrates is confronted with a passionate Cleitophon who demands to know why Socrates refuses to teach him about the nature of justice. In an atypical twist for Plato, Socrates speaks only once, at the beginning of the dialogue, to inquire as to whether Cleitophon has become the pupil of the Sophist Thrasymachus. Cleitophon responds angrily, admitting as much and suggesting that it is Socrates fault, to the extent that he has refused to teach him. His intemperate peroration concludes

Cleitophon: I have now given up persisting. I think you are better than anybody else at exhorting people to care about goodness, but one of two things must be true: either you can do only that and nothing that goes any further-which could also happen in the case of any other art; for example without being a steersman one might train oneself in making eulogies about how valuable the steersman's trade is for mankind and likewise for the other arts. The very same complaint might perhaps be lodged against you in the field of justice-people might say that you are none the more expert in justice because you make fine eulogies about it. Mind you that is not what I think, but one of two things must be true: either you know nothing about it, or you don't wish to share it with me. (*Cleitophon* 410b-d)²⁴

As the prelude to the *Republic* this speech is fascinating; Plato portrays a student who accurately appraises Socrates' special genius and who is frustrated by the refusal of that genius to teach him. In the opening pages of the *Republic*, among the young men Socrates finds himself strong-armed into conversing with is Cleitophon. However other than a brief and allegedly innacurate rehash of his new teacher Thrasymachus' views Cleitophon remains silent.(*Republic* 340a-b). But does that mean he is not

²³ Leo Strauss, *The City and Man*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964) 54.

²⁴ Plato, "Cleitophon", trans. Clifford Orwin, in *The Roots of Political Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Pangle (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

party to some education? Of course not, he is in the room, so while he may not be spoken to directly he undoubtedly hears. Socrates' speech is delivered in full cognizance of the spurned students' presence. To the extent that the dialogue is a conversation overheard, a lesson to which we are a silent party, the reader plays the role of Cleitophon. Plato crafts the dialogues in the same spirit, aware of the diversity of his readership. Like the guests of Cephalus, readers vary in character, ability and intelligence, yet any may be 'present'. We may be party to the conversation but what we learn from it is dependent on us. In *The War Lover* Leon Craig captures nicely the heuristic principle at work.

For in saying the same thing to one and all it implicitly acknowledges their common humanity, allowing everyone, without personal prejudice, an equal opportunity to make of the words what they will. And yet in intending different messages for different kinds of people, it treats them differently in due recognition of their unequal talents and efforts and character-in effect employing a sort of "labour theory" of intellectual entitlement.²⁵

This is one of the cardinal virtues of the Platonic dialogue, it is an innovation in writing that allows the written word to speak differently to different readers. The dialogue is a textual simulacra of the ideal relationship between student and teacher, where method and material are informed in structure and substance by the nature of the student.

Education and Diaresis

In all of the Platonic dialogues there exists only a few encounters between Socrates and other philosophers. This may be, as Stanley Rosen pointedly suggests, because "Philosophers educate non-philosophers; they punish philosophers for their

²⁵ Leon Craig, *The War Lover*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) xxxii.

mistakes.”²⁶ Whatever the reason the overwhelming character of Socratic speech is pedagogic. Socrates shapes his speech to ‘fit’ each person with whom he converses, indeed as Cleitophon’s experience indicates, this sometimes means refusing to speak to someone altogether.²⁷ Especially in the case of an education in dialectics Socrates sees the consequence of ill-aimed lessons as catastrophic for both philosophy and the city. In *Republic* Socrates cautions

“At any rate” I said, “the current mistake in philosophy-as a result of which, as we also said before, dishonor has befallen philosophy-is that men who aren’t worthy take it up. Not bastards, but the genuine should have taken it up.”(*Republic* 535c)

The genuine, Socrates makes clear, are those who are ‘capable of an overview’ (*Republic* 537c). When such an education is imparted to those incapable, the frequently aporetic character of Socratic dialectic is transformed from a propaedeutic tool, vanquishing unexamined prejudices and unchallenged assumptions, into a corrosive weapon, destructive of both the reputation of philosophy and the welfare of the city. Socrates cautions that when the particular character of the student is ignored and the rudimentary tools of dialectic are imparted without considerations of age and character, the recklessly schooled will

...misuse them as though it were play, always using them to contradict: and imitating those men by whom they are refuted, they themselves refute others, like puppies enjoying pulling and tearing with argument at those who happen to be near. (*Republic* 539b)

²⁶ Stanley Rosen, *Plato’s Statesman*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 10.

²⁷ See also *Euthydemus* where Socrates discourages his friend Crito from sending his son to study philosophy. Socrates opines “But when I glance at any one of those who profess to educate people, I am horrified: each one I look at seems to me to be quite unsuitable, to tell you the truth, so I don’t see how I am to direct the boy to philosophy.” (*Euthydemus* 306e-307a). Plato, *Euthydemus*, trans. W.H.D. Rouse in *Plato Collected Dialogues*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, 16ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

While this consideration appears at first to be directed at those who learn dialectic to young, there is ample evidence in the preceding passages, that such an education is at least as limited by innate faculties as it is by age and intellectual development (*Republic* 537d-e).

That an education must be tailored carefully to both the capabilities and the temperament of the student is a theme introduced at the very outset of the *Republic*. In short order Socrates is presented not only with three different accounts of the good but three profoundly different *dramatis personae*. The first exchange, with Cephalus the wealthy owner of the home in which the conversation about the nature of the just is to take place, ends with Socrates' interlocutor declaring he must depart and attend to his religious obligations. Socrates allows him to depart their company in a piece of dramatic action structurally similar to the conclusion of the *Euthyphro*. In both cases Socrates converses with someone with a traditional conception of morality and a developed sense of piety and its concomitant duties. In both cases just as the beliefs of Socrates' interlocutors begin to come into question they are allowed to depart relatively unchallenged by Socrates (*Republic* 331d, *Euthyphro* 15e-16a). In each case the message from the incomplete conversation seems to be that Socrates has measured his potential pupil and found, by dint of venerable piety or youthful religious zeal that the interlocutor is ill suited to *any* substantive teaching. The continuation of the dialogue in the case of the *Republic* reveals the extra lesson, that not only are some people ill-suited for some education but their very absence may make possible conversations which their presence would prevent. The dramatic action of the opening passages of the *Republic* suggests that the first task of the

teacher is to sort and determine who is capable of what. More important for civic education the departure of Cephalus implies that some people must be literally sorted *out*, this is the first separation of natures necessary before any proper education can commence.

The departure of Cephalus allows for the gathered men to set aside the custom and propriety owed to a host, especially one who is both host and father to several of the members of the party. To illustrate consider Socrates' treatment of Polemarchus and Thrasymachus. While each, and in particular Thrasymachus, comes in for much rougher treatment than Cephalus, both remain long after Socrates has finished speaking directly to them. They may have gravely misguided conceptions of the nature of the just and their abilities as conversants with the great Socrates are limited but Plato has them stay. That they remaining transforms the character of their exchanges with Socrates. Book I ends with Polemarchus and in particular Thrasymachus not so much silenced as subdued. The obvious result of their exchange is the 'defeat' of the respective positions of Polemarchus and Thrasymachus, the more subtle result is that they have been treated with enough care that they are willing to remain and hear what Socrates has to say. To invoke the imagery of the Cave the two men have had their chains broken, what remains now is for them to be turned. This rupture lies at the heart of Socrates pedagogy, the surface action appears aporetic but the deeper intent and consequence is propaedeutic. W.R. Newell in *Ruling Passion* captures the character of this experience nicely when he writes

His [Socrates] relentless skepticism about his interlocutors' and his own conceptions of the good life provides the forceful rupture, the

pain of parting with our cozy conception and lazy justifications, necessary for turning to face the light. Anyone who has had the good fortune to have a great teacher knows how exasperating their benevolence can be.²⁸

The rupture that Socrates brings about in his students is the starting point for any understanding of how he teaches. It is the crucial step before the *periagoge*, the turning towards the light. Its significance to a discussion of Platonic civic education (as meaningfully and seriously distinct from philosophic education) is that to some extent all of his major interlocutors experience some degree of this ‘rupture’.²⁹ Moreover, by placing side by side at the outset Cephalus, Polemarchus and Thrasymachus each distinct from the others in belief, character and intellect Socrates has highlighted the depth of his craft; to teach the different differently, to sort the teachable from the unteachable and to do so in front of other potential students without seeming vicious, duplicitous or capricious. Of ultimate significance to the Platonic project of civic education we are presented early on with three politically distinct potential pupils, aging oligarch, idealistic democrat and aspiring tyrant.³⁰ From the outset the education of diverse students is an education concerned with their diverse politics, from the beginning education is civic education.

Civic Education of the Non-Philosophic in Plato’s *Republic*

Plato’s explicit discussion of civic education begins in the second book of the *Republic* as a result of Socrates’ claim that the contours of justice can be better discerned when considered in the context of a city (*Republic* 372e). The discussion moves through a detailed account of the education that citizens will receive which

²⁸ W.R. Newell, *Ruling Passion* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000) 85.

²⁹ For a possible exception to this rule see W.R. Newell, “The Problem of Callicles” in *Ruling Passion*.

³⁰ Henry Teloh, *Socratic Education in Plato’s Early Dialogues* (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986) 85.

culminates in Book III with the famous Noble Lie of the Three Metals (*Republic* 414b-415d). Of particular interest, more than the practical prescriptions for education worked out immediately, is the teaching that inheres in the structure of Plato's argument. The full philosophical conception of education or more precisely of the process and nature of teaching and learning is left until Book VII, disconnected from the earlier conversation by the scandal of Book V. In this way Plato conceals from view the implications of the educational message of Book VII for the non-philosophic. The connection between the two discussions is alluded to in the prelude to the Noble Lie. At *Republic* 414e Socrates tells Glaukon how he will persuade the first rulers, the soldiers and then the citizenry of the Callipolis of the veracity of the Noble Lie. The education they first receive, Socrates argues, will be made to seem like a dream. In its place they will learn to recollect a creation myth of their emergence into the light of day.

I shall speak-and yet, I don't know what I'll use for daring or speeches in telling it-and I'll attempt to persuade first the rulers and the soldiers, then the rest of the city, that the rearing and education we gave them were like dreams; they only thought they were undergoing all that was happening to them, while, in truth, at the that time they were *under the earth*, which is their mother within, being fashioned and reared themselves, and their arms and other tools being crafted. When the job had been completely finished, then the earth, which is their mother, *sent them up*. (*Republic* 414d-e my italics)

This passage is traditionally and correctly read in part as a Platonic acknowledgement of the political problem of autochthony³¹ but the subterranean imagery is also undeniably a first pass allusion to Plato's primary pedagogic metaphor. Note that in this initial allusion the education of the philosopher in the city has yet to be even hinted at. The noble lie and its prelude concern only the education of the non-

³¹ Connor, "Civic Identity" 35.

philosophic. Looking back from Book VII this first purely civic ‘lie’ is both politically salutary and in terms of the education of the philosophic absolutely essential.

Jumping forward to Book VII Socrates’ closing statements concerning the image of the Cave contain an explicit claim about the nature of the soul that goes conspicuously unqualified. Socrates eschews constructivist accounts of education and embraces a periagogic account of education one that implies that education, in all its necessarily differentiated forms, nonetheless includes an element of ascent and draws on a common capacity for sight that “indicates that the power is in the soul of each” (*Republic* 518c). Admittedly this is a long way from a claim that every soul must be able to make the full ascent to comprehension of Being. Nothing in the image of the cave precludes the possibility of a partial ascent and an incomplete but nonetheless edificatory or at very least therapeutic Paidia.³²

Politically this argument, the argument for a partial ascent, is re-iterated in the account of the returned philosophers, the men of the best natures who are admonished to “go down, each in his turn, into the common dwellings of the others and get habituated along with them to seeing the dark things” (*Republic* 520c). This return, to have any significance, must be salutary in consequence to the cave dwellers, something of value must be imparted to them by the philosopher. Philosophic rule, Plato makes clear, must be at least a partially altruistic enterprise, informed by the interest of the whole community, opposed to faction and cognizant of the phantasmagoric character of the cave experience.

³² Eric Voegelin, *Plato*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 1966) 129.

It isn't until after a discussion of the periagoge in general that, in the context of his conversation with Glaucon, Socrates turns to the specifics of a philosophic education and its concomitant full periagoge. The structure of the argument first connects the periagogic 'twirling of the shell' (*Republic* 521c), the imagery of ascent and the question of education and politics with the non-philosophic *before the philosophic*. The logographic ordering draws out the connection between civic education and philosophic education, a connection that is critical both politically and pedagogically. These two concerns, education and politics, are inextricably and symbiotically connected by Plato, each in turn shaping and forming the other. This connectivity twice justifies civic education, first in the name of the polis and second in the name of philosophy.

Education and Socialization

This connection, between politics, pedagogy and philosophy, is the inevitable consequence of the Platonic understanding of the place of socialization in the education of young men. Socrates describes the city and its opinions as the most influential sophist (*Republic* 492a-b) the source of much of the education and character formation of young people. Describing the socializing power of the city in sophistic terms Plato distinguishes his own teaching from the sophists' crudely utilitarian and prudential view of education. The valorization of being well adjusted and successful amid prevailing norms, independent of their actual merit, is the hallmark of sophistic education.³³ The starting point of all of Socrates' proposals concerning education is the repudiation of this conception of teaching and an endorsement of education founded on human nature.

³³ Voegelin, *Plato*, 81.

From the education of newborns in rocking and steady motions to the ascent from the Cave by the most perfect philosopher Plato's educational project is shaped by being in the face of becoming. Socrates is not offering an Athenian education in civic virtue but an education that holds true, by dint of its appreciation of the true nature of the student, *sub specie aeternitas*. That the pupil has a true and permanent nature does not mean that this nature is the same for all. The vast majority of potential students are able only to possess 'true opinion,' to only inchoately grasp things in themselves and can never truly apprehend the fullness of their veracity. These people are hinted at in the rule to which the cave dwellers are submitted upon the return of the philosophers, a non-tyrannical rule blending compulsion and persuasion (*Republic* 519e-520a). The combination of compulsion and persuasion is crucial to understanding this passage and it is a pairing which re-appears forcefully in the discussion of civic education in *Laws*. The philosophers who return do not rule through compulsion alone, that they persuade implies that a degree of persuasion is possible, that the citizens of the cave are capable of being, to an admittedly limited degree, *reasoned with*. Indeed to whatever extent the new rulers of the Cave are able to persuade citizens to stop the 'fight over shadows' (*Republic* 520b) they have convinced them that that which they had fought over is mere becoming. This is a long way from revealing to them that they argue over becoming by showing them Being; but suggests that they may at least be 'turned' (ibid) sufficiently to see becoming for what it is, that they may hold true opinion (*dike*) or belief without possessing true knowledge (*gnosis*).

This partial turning, the apprehension of true opinion as opposed to true knowledge, seems implausible read in the context and the aftermath of the image of the Cave. In the pages of Book VII that follow the discussion of the Cave we are presented with the perfect education and an able (though how able is a question for Socrates later) student, this presentation might lead us, were it not for repeated reminders, to forget the civic education which preceded it in Books II & III. The provisions of these preliminary books lay out the groundwork not for the education of the philosopher but the halfway turning, the therapeutic paideia of the ordinary citizens.³⁴ A paideia capable of possessing not only *nomoi* that reflect natural justice but of creating citizens who are capable of understanding them as such. It is this understanding which connects the citizens “partisan commitment to community and an openness to the universal truth that transcends partisanship.”³⁵

Plato’s *Republic* is not primarily a work on civic education, indeed in important ways its teaching on education is decidedly ambivalent regarding the civic education of its favoured student the young philosophic soul(*Republic* 596b). As I argued earlier the lion’s share of Plato’s positive teaching in civic virtue is found in the *Laws*.³⁶ A specifically and singularly civic education is the necessary condition in the *Republic* for the philosophic education and life. Civic education, Plato asserts, serves the dual function of sorting the citizenry into intellectual types and protecting the interests and even the very possibility of a cohort of specifically philosophic students.

³⁴ Newell, *Ruling Passions*, 115.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Of course it has to be admitted that much of what Plato recommends regarding the withholding of the philosophic education from those who are ill-suited to it and of the consequences of a degraded philosophic education amount to a political and philosophic *caveat emptor*.

The most striking feature of the educational proposals of *Republic* is the universal character of the education. In contrast to *Laws* the Callipolis is absent any practice of slavery. The implication of this absence is that a universal ability to be ruled by means beyond mere force and compulsion is possible. Further from this implication is a rejection of the idea that education is private and contingent on birth, which before the arrival of the Sophists and the concurrent expansion of Athens had been the overwhelming Athenian practice.³⁷ Plato no longer sees parents as the source of education instead they are its opponents, exiled to prevent them passing on any of their 'learning' to their offspring (*Republic 541a*). In the Callipolis the most striking aspect of early education is its inclusivity. This universality is first justified by the nature of young pupils and second deemed politically necessary by the strictures of the noble lie. The contention that some children will be passed down or up based on ability as opposed to ancestry demands an initial universality, such a sorting is only possible in the context of an initial equality of pedagogic opportunity (*Republic 415a-d*).

Throughout the *Republic* Plato's discussion of education is always deeply informed by his conception of the development of reason. From infancy through to middle age Plato prescribes a staggered education that opens up new subjects of study to students as they become 'ready' for them. This staggered education occurs concurrently with a winnowing out of students as they reveal themselves to have reached their respective limits of learning. This winnowing is important because as it occurs all but the philosophic student get 'forgotten' in the final education in dialectic and philosophy. Turning back to the early and intermediate levels of

³⁷ Samuel Scolnicov, *Plato's Metaphysics of Education* (London: Routledge, 1988) 5.

education, those afforded to the non-philosophic as a necessary condition of an informed act of diáresis, this process nonetheless ends in the generation of a politically virtuous non-philosophic class in the Callipolis.

A degree of education for all of the citizens of the *Republic* is rendered essential by the character of an education in reason. Plato times his education on the complementary contentions of a pre-rational period of development and a harsh ‘window of opportunity’ conception of character education. In explicitly rejecting parentage as a legitimate indicator of intelligence or character Plato is forced to consider the merit of children, and more importantly their tutelage, long before they can indicate by their own actions their worth as pupils. The primarily musical education, Plato argues, is specifically pre-rational in character, it teaches by imbuing fondness for the fine (*kaloí*) and the appreciation of rhythm and scale (*harmonia*), the pre-rational pupil embraces these without being able to render an account of why.

He would blame and hate the ugly in the right way while he’s still young, before he’s able to *grasp reasonable speech*. And when *reasonable speech* comes, the man who’s reared this way would take most delight in it, recognizing it on account of its being akin. (*Republic* 402a my italics)

On this account reasonable speech emerges in a manner that goes unqualified. Plato does not say that reasonable speech comes to some and not others. But even if reasonable speech did not come to all citizens, during this early period of education it would be impossible to tell who it would and would not come to, therefore the only prudent course, having rejected ancestry as an indicator, is to educate everyone. Admitting the more generous possibility, after this education a degree of reason, at least in speech, would be the potential inheritance of every citizen of the Callipolis.

The negative possibility of either mistakenly postponing learning or, on a set of wrong assumptions, incorrectly educating also demands that a wide net of pre-philosophic education occur. In Book VII Socrates lists the dishonors that can and do befall philosophy as a result of its study by those ill suited to its pursuit. In contrast in Books II and III Socrates' educational counsel primarily concerns political consequences. Socrates warns that undue caution or an attempt to wait until the student 'shows his stripes' is an approach precluded by the character of rational development in the individual. Time is the single most compelling stricture on selective education of children. Socrates asserts in unqualified language that by the age of 10 if education has not been rightly begun it cannot be remedied.

Don't you know that the beginning is the most important part of every work and that this is especially so with anything young and tender? For at that stage it's most plastic, and each thing assimilates itself to the model whose stamp anyone wishes to give it (*Republic* 377a-b)

The necessity of a right education in the pre-rational stages is doubly justified by the plasticity of youth. It is justified first by the impossibility of discerning the philosophic from the non-philosophic in infancy and also by the necessity to protect the philosophic from the hostile 'stamp' of the sophist or popular prejudice. The stamp that is placed on the souls of the young cannot be philosophic in nature, they are too young for that, but it must be one that is open to philosophy and encourages the virtues of the philosophers. For those ultimately unfit for philosophy the ideal 'stamp' still renders them more suitably disposed to both civic virtue and to the externally originating dictates of reason than the education offered by the sophists. In the *Republic* this second tier education is a *sine qua non* for the education of the

philosopher, but it is also the *sine qua non* for a citizenry open to rule by a reason it cannot fully participate in.

True Opinion and Civic Education

The great problem with the discussion of civic education in the *Republic* is that the actual practical pedagogy of the solely civic education goes largely un-discussed. The *Republic* doesn't explicitly describe the relationship of the things learned to the learner in the case of the non-philosophic citizen. We are told in great detail how the pupil educated in dialectic will be trained to evaluate beliefs, how dialectic will draw the soul out of the "barbaric bog, dialectic gently draws it forth and leads it up above" (*Republic* 533a). We know that in the end the philosophic student comes to a relationship of unmediated knowing of the truth. However relatively little is said about how the non-philosophic citizen relates to the things taught. How the non-philosophic citizen *knows what he knows*. At first glance it is only by implication that his knowledge is epistemologically second tier. Yet this relationship is crucial to the Callipolis, the vast majority of its citizens will relate to the truths of the city in this second (or even third) tier manner. To not understand how they learn and know is to ultimately leave unexamined what the role of education and reason is in the life of the polis as opposed to the academy.

The nature of purely civic knowledge³⁸ and how it is known by the citizen is implied at several different junctures in the *Republic*. That knowledge, Plato makes clear, takes the form of true opinion which unlike the knowledge of the philosopher is

³⁸ I use the word knowledge here aware of its inaccuracy, a consequence of the limitations of the English language. We lack a specific word for the knowing that is not really knowing that I seek to describe.

not so much known as possessed. Late in Book III Socrates alludes to the epistemological status of the civic beliefs of the Guardians.

Now then, as I said a while ago, we must look for some men who are the best guardians of their conviction that they must do what on each occasion seems best for the city. So we must watch them straight from childhood by setting them at tasks in which a man would most likely forget and be deceived out of such a conviction. And the man who has a memory and is hard to deceive must be chosen and the one who's not must be rejected mustn't he? (*Republic* 413c-d)

In the character of the Guardians the crucial intellectual role is played by memory. The Guardian will possess the ability to retain true opinion and simultaneously be resistant to being enchanted or charmed into holding wrong opinion. Absent from Socrates' remark is the ability to *discover for themselves* what is and is not true. This absence explains the proprietary as opposed to revelatory language employed by Socrates in discussing knowledge. Truth is something that the guardians may come to possess, it is something that may arrive or depart, something that they may have or be deprived of (*Republic* 413a). Their merit as Guardians is determined by their ability to retain true opinion.

In the accompanying interpretative essay to his translation of the *Republic* Allan Bloom suggests that the exile provisions that mark the completion of the Callipolis are evidence of its impossibility, proof positive of the ironical character of the dialogue.³⁹ It is the peculiar character of the dialogue that after this supreme moment it continues on, specifically it continues on to outline the collapse of the city and in that collapse it offers a concrete teaching about not rule by philosophers but rather neglect of citizen virtue. More precisely still the decline of the Callipolis

³⁹ Allan Bloom, "Interpretative Essay" in *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (United States: Basic Books, 1991) 409.

concludes with Socrates reminding his readers of remarks made before the discussion took its *grand virage* into the education of women, communism of the family and the end of private property. The mirror image of the critique offered at the end of Book VII the second best Socratic teaching is a condemnation of the neglect of the non-philosophic citizenry. The fall away from perfect rule is for the most part, save its point of origin, a non-philosophic fall. Save its first moment it is a decline consequent on the education of the non-philosophic. The dialogue returns to Cephalus, Polemarchus and Thrasymachus in theme if not in explicit speech.

It is in Book IV that the distinction between the philosophic and non-philosophic among the citizen class is first drawn. To that end Socrates opines that the philosophic class will be the smallest, that “this class, which properly has a share in that knowledge which alone among the various kinds of knowledge ought to be called wisdom, has, as it seems, the fewest members by nature.”(*Republic* 428e-429a) Directly below this class are the ordinary citizens, a group whose defining virtue, the quintessential civic virtue, is courage. Of this group and virtue Socrates asserts

So a city is also courageous by a part of itself, thanks to that part's having in it a power that through everything will preserve the opinion about which things are terrible-that they are the same ones and of the same sort as those the lawgiver transmitted in the education. Or don't you call that courage? (*Republic* 429 b-c)

This class, as Plato describes in Book VII, will share in almost all the education of the philosophic however their nature prevents them attaining the highest level of learning. Moreover, while they are party to the same early education as the philosophic their nature not only delimits it differently but in its earlier conclusion it fundamentally transforms its effect. What on the surface appears to be an educational difference

only of degree, in its completion for the philosophic becomes an educational difference in kind.

The soldiers of the Callipolis, educated in music and gymnastic are educated to take upon themselves, even into themselves, the laws (*Republic* 430a). Whereas in Book VIII the discussion of civic education and learning is proprietary in terminology in Book IV Socrates employs the dyeing of cloth to illustrate how the citizen possesses true opinion. The metaphor is particularly important because as Socrates expands upon it it becomes clear that he is presenting a second best education structurally, if not substantively, similar to the education in dialectic reserved for the philosophic. In discussing the process of dyeing Socrates remarks

“Don’t you know” I said, “that the dyers, when they want to dye wool purple, first choose from all the colours the single nature belonging to white things: then they prepare it beforehand and care for it with no little preparation so that it will most receive the colour: and it is only then that they dye. And if a thing is dyed in this way, it becomes colorfast, and washing either without lyes or with lyes can’t take away its colour. (*Republic* 429d-e)

Education for the courageous involves stripping them of taints or imperfections in their ‘fabric’ a necessary step before impressing upon them the true colour that they will then go on to bear faithfully. Even for the non-philosophic education involves a rupture, it is not the turning into the light of the cave but it does entail a break with traditional and parochial prejudices. The ‘second-best’ status of this education is made all the more clear by a comparison to Socrates’ description of the foundations of philosophic knowing in dialectic.

[Soc.] “When the beginning is what one doesn’t know, and the end and what comes in between are woven out of what isn’t known, what contrivance is there for ever turning such an agreement into knowledge?”

“None” he said.

“Then,” I said, “only the dialectical way of inquiry proceeds in this direction, destroying the hypotheses, to the beginning itself in order to make it secure; and when the eye of the soul is really buried in a barbaric bog, dialectic gently draws it forth and leads it up above, using the arts we describes as assistants and helpers in the turning around.”(*Republic* 533a)

The process by which one is educated dialectically appears to involve, albeit on a different order of knowing, a similar process of bleaching out the impurities and starting from white. Indeed the connection between the two forms of knowing is even hinted at in the image of weaving invoked in the description of non-dialectical knowledge, an image that will recur both throughout the *Statesman*⁴⁰ and significantly in the *Laws*.⁴¹

A crucial difference between the two kinds of knowing, one that is drawn out by the imagery employed to described the knowledge of true opinion is the element of internal reflection. In dialectic the particular hypothesis being examined can be held out, separate from the examiner, and treated as distinct. The subject of inquiry is distinct and distinguishable from the inquirer. The image of dyeing entails that the cloth is dyed clear through, no part of the fabric is held distinct, it is all of a colour. True opinion, unlike true knowledge, becomes not so much a thing that is known but an aspect of the person. Civic education teaches not how to know but trains in what to be, true opinions function not as knowledge but as trait, true opinion acts as the governing principle in place of the fully realized logos the non-philosophic lack.

One of the strangest ironies of the *Republic* and the strongest evidence for its status as a non-philosophic propaedeutic to the *Laws* is Plato’s unwillingness to

⁴⁰ For an exhaustive treatment of the metaphor of weaving and cloth manufacture in *Statesman* see Stanley Rosen *Plato’s Statesman The Web of Politics*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

⁴¹ Plato, *Laws*, 734e.

discuss civic life except in terms of its decline away from philosophic rule. While the virtues of the philosopher and the merits of that life are detailed at great length only half the promise is met as regards the civic. We are told that the primary civic virtue is courage, moreover it is made clear that a civic education will involve a second best pedagogy that cleans and prepares the soul for the holding of true opinion, for the ability to be ruled from without by truth. This truth, Socrates suggests, will originate for the non-philosophic in the person of the lawgiver. However while the founding of the city, the grand context in which it operates (eugenics, communism, gender equity etc.) is presented at length, the details of how the Callipoloi are to live together are left unaddressed. Raising this concern the pious Adeimantus opines

“It isn’t worthwhile,” he said “to dictate to gentlemen. Most of these things that need legislation they will, no doubt, easily find for themselves.” (*Republic* 425e)

Adeimantus is not interested in how the city should be run, he is concerned rather with *de naturum deorum*, his brother the ambitious Glaukon is equally uninterested in the civic life, his fascination is not with how to rule and be ruled but with how to acquire rule. It may or may not be true that gentlemen will work out these questions with ease, what is certain is that Adeimantus and Glaukon have not yet become gentlemen. The *Republic* prepares them to find this legislation, it bleaches out their souls so that they make take the dye of Plato’s *Laws*.

In the *Republic* civic education for the non-philosophic aims at the capacity to retain and have one’s actions informed by true opinion. Book VII concludes with the establishment of the rule by philosophers, in the concluding passages of Book IX we have the explanation of what citizenship in such a city would entail. The civic virtue

of the non-philosophic, Socrates makes clear, will amount to a willingness to be ruled by true opinion which emanates from above. It is in this openness in a sense to a truth separated by a single degree that civic virtue is expressed and that comity is established between the rulers and the ruled.

In order that such a man also be ruled by something similar to what rules the best man, don't we say that he must be the slave of that best man who has the divine rule in himself? It's not that we suppose that the slave must be ruled to his own detriment, as Thrasymachus supposed about the ruled; but that it's better for all to be ruled by what is divine and prudent, especially when one has it as his own within himself; but, if not, set over one from outside, so that insofar as possible all will be alike and friends, piloted by the same thing.
(*Republic* 590c-d)

The reminder of the presence of Thrasymachus at this moment is crucial. It is not that Thrasymachus' conception of rule is finally destroyed, that happened long ago, rather the significance is found in the reminder of his continued presence in the discussion albeit now as a silent, even passive, observer. The discussion between Adeimantus, Glaucon and Socrates has not transformed Thrasymachus into a man capable of walking in the Platonic 'light of truth' but it has rendered him willing and able to hear and possess the true opinions being offered. He is ruled in a way that allows him to replicate at a reduced level the virtues of the philosopher, that reduced level is the civic. Book IX ends with Socrates musing that all that they have laid out may make it possible for the truly wise to found the Callipolis within themselves, the invocation of Thrasymachus name, the reminder of his continuing presence opens the possibility that such a founding may move later to the colonization of other minds who practice virtues founded and imported from without.⁴² Plato established civic virtue as second to the philosophic, when he mandated fifteen years of service to the

⁴² Scolnicov, *Metaphysics*, 105.

Callipolis as a precondition but not a guarantee of the ascent to philosophy. The discussion concludes with a treatment of rule by true opinion formed without and received within by the strictly civic pupil. Socrates implies that this reception develops qualities that approximate those of the philosophic student but remains a secondary sort of knowing, lived as fully as their degree of removal permits. The institutions of education in the Callipolis provide for this education but the provision is more meaningfully provided for in the dramatic action of the dialogue. The most noticeable example being Thrasymachus who bursts onto the scene ‘like a wild beast’ (*Republic 336b*) and by the end of the dialogue sits in the manner of one *qui tacet consentire*. He has been rendered capable of rule from without by compulsion first but eventually his continued presence signals his ability to be ruled by persuasion. Thrasymachus, over the course of the evening, has ascended from slave to subject.

Read on its own the *Republic* stands as a stark caution against utopian thought. The educational program established within its pages culminates in the destruction of the family, the emptying of all blood and zest from dramatic poetry and music and most memorably the scandalous *mise en scene* of the gymnasium. The program’s end result is that at every stage of learning in the Callipolis fewer students are permitted to proceed, ultimately those who have been found worthy of the highest teaching reward the city that has made such learning possible with a universal exile of all those over the age of 10. Interestingly it is not made clear what the rule of such enlightened men will do to education.⁴³ To the contrary no sooner has the education

⁴³ In fact to say that Plato doesn’t make clear the innovations in education that the philosopher kings would either maintain or expand upon is an understatement. In the opening of Book VIII Socrates

of the philosopher-kings culminated in their ascension to rule than the account switches to the sources of decay within the city.

The philosophic education has now been fully countenanced and the general contour of the politically virtuous but non-philosophic citizen has been established as has his necessity. However the immediate shift in the discussion of the city, from its culmination in Book VII with the rule of the philosopher kings, to the account of its decline in Book VIII points undeniably to the necessity of a specifically civic education. The philosopher kings may be able to generate further philosophers but such generation depends on a non-philosophic citizenry capable of being ruled. The *Republic* provides both for the education of rulers and the deep realization of the necessity of an education for the ruled. But the necessity doesn't equal, within the pages of the *Republic*, its full adumbration. As such, for the purposes of politics and education *Republic* is a prelude to *Laws* the transformation of Thrasymachus from a belief in his own right to rule into a degree of gentleness (*proates*) prepares him not for a full education, a reprise of the *Republic* but for the reception of law. The *Republic*, by outlining the ultimate education both clears it out of the way and points to such a clearing as necessary to a discussion of the penultimate education. The striking educational character of the *Republic*, its pedagogical double irony, is that those who are taught are all ultimately found to be ill-suited for the education it alludes to. Furthermore the education for which they have been found suited, a full civic education, is ultimately never delivered. The politico-pedagogic structure of the

recounts what has been agreed upon and among the arrangements for women, communism of the family, and the quartering of the guardians among others the educational provisions are conspicuously absent (*Rep.* 543a-c).

Republic mirrors the undisclosed philosophic education at the end of the *Laws*. This mirroring renders each dialogue both a propaedeutic and an invitation to the other.

The Laws

It is an article of faith in much of the literature on Plato's *Laws* that within its pages is outlined a prescription for what is affectionately known as Plato's "second best city."⁴⁴ This distinction between the Cretan city of the *Laws* and the *Republic's* Callipolis is a heuristic which has served to both distort and diminish the importance of this, not insignificantly the lengthiest, of Plato's dialogues. The suggestion, implied by the distinction, is that the idealism and utopian element of the *Republic* has somehow been cropped off the top leaving only a more 'realistic' picture of a good constitution. What (among other things) this crude but ubiquitous assertion misses is the deep difference *in kind* between the projects of *Republic* and *Laws*. The latter is Plato's most singularly political work, to the extent that politics is 'second best' to philosophy the relationship holds, however more importantly, the concentration explicitly on the political import of legislation, education, crime and punishment render the dialogue not secondary but complementary, beginning where the *Republic* ends and ultimately, as I have argued earlier, ending where the *Republic* begins. Plato's *Laws*, unlike the *Republic*, offers no description of a philosophic education. Indeed the promise of such a description, made by the Athenian Stranger to Klenias and Megillos, is striking by its absence in the dialogues concluding passages. Of the philosophic education, Leo Strauss observes, "Naturally, the

⁴⁴ The Athenian Stranger draws this distinction and employs this phrase in Book V, 739a. Its employment in Book V of *Laws* is far from co-incidental, the Athenian continues on to discuss why the city is second-best and refers immediately to commonality of property and the family in Book V of *Republic*. Considering the ironic political import of the *Republic's* provisions in Book V we must necessarily take care not to treat the designation of second-best uncritically.

philosopher remains silent.”⁴⁵ The significance of the Athenian Stranger’s silence, like his novel moniker and the extra-Athenian context of the dialogue, point to the differing terrain to be treated, an education in civic virtue cannot speak to philosophy, its pupils will never know the landscape of the Cave. Across the Sea of Crete, the conversations of *Republic* and *Laws* are worlds apart.

In the *Republic* civic education is treated as a *sine qua non*, necessary for the life of the philosopher, thrice justified as political necessity, propaedeutic and diaresis. In *Laws* the education of the non-philosophic citizen moves to the forefront, meanwhile the education of the philosophic, not a *sine qua non* by any means, exists primarily as an implication of Plato’s argument and an undefined aspect of the mysterious Nocturnal Council. In discussing civic education I will focus on two aspects of it, both of which are lightly drawn in the *Republic* but receive their fullest expression in *Laws*. In the *Republic* Plato began to draw out the elements of pre-rational education via habituation, in that dialogue this education is a precursor to a philosophic education and is treated in those terms, in *Laws* we see the importance of habituation for the life of the citizen and by extension the city. The *Laws* fills out the picture, only briefly outlined in *Republic*, of how true opinion dwells within the rightly educated citizen. The dwelling of true opinion in the non-philosophic citizen, Plato argues, is a second-best epistemological state. It is the best possible for the non-philosophic citizen, and one characterized by consonance (*sumphonia*) with the knowledge of the philosopher. The two components of a completed civic education,

⁴⁵ Leo Strauss, *The Argument and the Action of Plato’s Laws* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975):185

habituation directed at consonance and the possession of true opinion, are the core of the *Laws* vision of civic education.

Education & Habituation

The significance of dance and gymnastic in the *Laws* differs subtly but significantly from the discussion of the same topic in the *Republic*. In the *Republic* gymnastic education serves the two-fold purpose of indicating the crucial connection between the body and soul's virtues and pointing up the risks of utopian political thought in terms of radical gender equality (*Republic* 452a).⁴⁶ In the *Laws* with its very different concern the description of education in music and gymnastic is more unified in purpose. The inculcation of the civic virtues in the citizenry is more singularly the focus of the *Laws*' treatment of civic education. The Athenian offers several different definitions of education in the *Laws* but they all share the common characteristic of promoting a harmony between the passions and virtue within the citizen soul. This harmony, the Athenian makes clear, must begin long before any reasonable expectation of education by rational persuasion or illustration. Indeed as in the *Republic* (522a) not only must it begin before reason it also forms the core of the non-philosophic education. The purpose of gymnastic and dance is not to

⁴⁶ Leo Strauss, *The City and Man*, 116-118. Pangle makes a similar argument regarding ambidexterity and gender in *Laws*: "One might go so far as to say that the cultivation of ambidexterity is analogous to the best regime by nature, while the cultivation of right handedness is analagous to natural law (cf. 636b and *Ethics* 1134 b 30ff.) We see that reflection on our commonsense doubts about the simpler project of making all citizens ambidextrous is meant to illuminate the grounds for resistance to the idea of making men and women share the same military training." "Interpretive Essay" in *The Laws of Plato*, trans. T. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1979) 481. The case for irony is not as strong in these passages as in the companion passages in *Republic*. While perfect ambidexterity is impossible a *degree* of ambidexterity is not only possible it seems reasonable. The stark and impossibly de-eroticized example of *Rep. V.* is absent in *Laws*, instead through accommodations for separate meals, lodging etc. the Stranger seems to suggest that gender difference is ultimately intractable but amenable to *some* amelioration.

promote a knowledge of the virtues *qua* virtues, but to promote an attachment to them.

Playing upon the dual meaning of *nomos*, as both song and law, the stranger suggests that an educated man is one who has knowledge of the musical.

Athenian Stranger: So the uneducated man will in our view be the one untrained in choral performances, and the educated ought to be set down as the one sufficiently trained in choral performances?

Kleinias: But of course. (*Laws* 645a-b)

Plato is not suggesting that knowledge and ability in the choral is the substance and total of education in the Cretan city. Instead, the argument contends that the way that attachment to the substance and form of the choral comes to be in the citizen is structurally similar to the way in which the civic virtues are to be learnt. The learning occurs not as an explicit lesson but as a slow and steady enchantment by way of rhythm and tone.⁴⁷ It is aimed not at knowledge but at a an attachment based on a pleasing familiarity.

This education has two key elements that operate at different times in the civic education of the child. From the very first moments of life the child is rocked and caressed by its mother in order to introduce it, by way of rhythm, to the idea of order. As the Athenian argues

When someone brings a rocking motion from the outside to such passions, the motion brought from without overpowers the fear and the mad motion within, and, having overpowered it, makes a calm stillness appear in the soul that replaces the harsh fluttering of the heart in each case (*Laws* 791a).

The steady rhythmic rocking of the child, is the post-partum enchantment of the infant otherwise struck by the chaos of being in the world. The rocking teaches even

⁴⁷ Glenn R. Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 309.

a newborn that calm and mastery of fear find their source in participation in order.⁴⁸

This passage points to a deep difference, intimated earlier, between the *Laws* and the *Republic*. In the *Republic* art, dance, gymnastic, and rhythm worked in the service of philosophy, that is in the early stages of the comprehension of order; in the *Laws* these selfsame work primarily in the service of order.

This difference in the substance of education between the *Republic* and the *Laws* is further hinted at in Plato's re-visitation of the naval motif in *Laws*. In the *Republic* the nautical imagery concerns piloting (especially *Republic* 342d-e) and navigation by the stars (*Republic* 488e-489a). In the *Laws* the employed analogy is the shipwright, and the citizen far from being the shipwright occupies the place of ship itself. The Athenian suggests

I'm trying to distinguish the outline of ways of life as they accord with characteristics of souls, and thus really "laying down their keels"-investigating, in the correct way, what device we should use and what characteristics we should at any time incorporate if we are going to be carried through this voyage of existence on the best way of life. (*Laws* 803a-b)

The words that follow "laying down their keels" hint at its deeper significance. As Thomas Pangle notes "The Athenian here plays on the greek words 'keel' (tropideion) and 'characteristic' (tropos)."⁴⁹ The difference between the education offered by the *Republic* and the *Laws* is striking. The keel of a boat, the lowest and centre timber in its construction, is key to its stability but does not participate in navigation. Pushing the analogy a little and bringing it into the context of the *Republic*, the keel has no knowledge of the stars, invisible from its submarine position. The characteristics that are inculcated through habituation share this aspect,

⁴⁸ Morrow, *Cretan City*, 328.

⁴⁹ Pangle, *The Laws*, 531, n27.

the Athenian uses the verb “carry” to describe what occurs, the characteristics bear the citizen through life, they do not navigate like the star-gazer of the *Republic*.

Indeed the idea of being born through existence by qualities that the citizens were habituated to as children goes a step further when the Stranger begins to talk of the educated citizen in terms of puppetry.

This is the way our nurslings should consider things: they should believe that what’s been said has been adequately spoken, but that the demon and god will suggest things to them regarding sacrifices and choral performances, thus indicating those whom they should offer games and propitiate, and when they should play each game for each, so as to live out their lives in accordance with the way of nature, being puppets, for the most part, but sharing in small portions of the truth.
(*Laws* 804a-b)

This description of education and by extension of ordinary human life angers the Athenian’s Spartan interlocutor Megillos. Megillos is right to be angered by the playfulness with which the Athenian takes political life, it is the sum total of the Spartan’s horizon, its diminishment is his diminishment. As Strauss remarks “The dissension between Megillos and the Athenian is the dissension between the political man who necessarily takes the human things very seriously, and the philosopher.”⁵⁰ But this is only part of the equation, Megillos takes umbrage with the imagery while missing the qualification “sharing in small portions of the truth.” Like the keel of a ship, the characteristics of the soul carry it and by dint of that they participate in the journey even if the submarine timber senses little. The keel is steered by the stargazer and so is in a sense borne along by him but the relationship is equivocal for the stargazer is also borne upon the keel. So it is also in the virtuously ruled city. Like Megillos the citizen’s education and ability preclude him from speaking lightly of

⁵⁰ Strauss, *Argument*, 106.

human affairs, from having the necessary philosophical freedom (*parrhessia*) to chart a course but without the fundamental timber of men like Megillos no city, no voyage, is possible. That timber, the Athenian's remarks hint, not only shares in the truth in however small a portion, it must be at least inchoately aware of its portion to continue to serve its purpose. It must recognize the true even if this recognition is experienced as an epistemologically secondary *doxa*.

Reason and Calculation, Logos and Logismos

The invocation of puppetry in Book VII deliberately hearkens back to the discussion, at the dialogue's outset, of the different types of cord within the human soul. Indeed the first book of the *Laws* functions similarly to the first book of the *Republic*, it draws out all of the themes and implies all the tropes that will be explored in the remainder of the text. First among these, in precedence and priority, the discussions of both the cords and the symposion make clear, is education.⁵¹ The puppetry image of Book VII hearkens back to the beginning of the dialogue and that hearkens back even further to the discussion of education in Book VII of *Republic*. In that discussion education is described both as a turning (*periagoge*) and in terms of compulsion, more specifically a compelled 'pulling' towards the light (*Republic* 515e-516a). Setting the discussion of the two cords near the beginning of the *Laws* the Athenian signals the civic nature of both pedagogy and pupil. This nature leaves room for an education both by persuasion and compulsion with a stronger element of the latter than is possible on the periagogic and optical analogy of the *Republic*.

⁵¹ Strauss, *Argument*, 17.

The status of the civic pupil is illuminated, in stark contrast to the tripartite soul of *Republic*, when the Athenian depicts the soul as informed by a severe dualism. The Athenian contends that within a single person we find “two opposed and imprudent counselors, which we call pleasure and pain” (*Laws 644c*). These two imprudent counselors are then de-anthropomorphized into divine cords of gold and iron.

Now the argument asserts that each person should follow one of the cords, never letting go of it and pulling with it against the others; this cord is the golden and sacred pull of calculation, and is called the common law of the city; the other cords are hard and iron, while this one is soft, inasmuch as it is golden; the others resemble a multitude of different forms. (*Laws 644e-645a*)

This passage reveals first and foremost a subtle shift of argument regarding the two ‘imprudent counselors’. The two has now been divided into the one and the many. The gold is singular and expresses unity, like the substance of the civic education of the city’s body politic. It implies in its singularity that all who cling to it, and are simultaneously pulled by it, will participate in the unity of its purpose and essence. Contrary to the golden cord is the diversity of purpose of the hard iron cord; its multiplicity is the diversity of selfish interests within the city.

The dichotomy of gold and iron, civic versus selfish, in the imagery of the cords is complemented by a deeper hierarchy of reason and calculation. In describing the two cords the Athenian describes the image as a salutary civic myth, in this sense it is similar to the myth of the three metals in *Republic*. The Athenian however draws

out the difference between the two myths by referring to the two cords as an argument, one that is directed at encouraging a civilly virtuous calculation.

It is necessary always to assist this most noble pull of law because calculation, while noble, is gentle rather than violent, and its pull is in need of helpers if the race of gold is to be victorious for us over the other races. (*Laws* 645a-b)

The etymological connection between calculation (*logismos*) and argument (*logos*)⁵² hints at the absence from this first outlining of the soul in the *Laws* as compared to the *Republic*. In the tripartite vision of the soul described in the *Republic* the rational and ruling portion is attributed to *logos*, in this discussion it comes from the outside. *Logos* understood as argument aims at assisting the soul that clings to the second best faculty of calculation, *logismos*. The difference between *logos* and *logismos* is further illuminated when, as in the *Republic*, its relation to the citizen's soul is expressed in proprietary language and not the language of ontology or native faculty. The citizen should acquire the argument and then live according to its precepts (*Laws* 645b). Calculation is something taught, a civic calculus that allows the citizen to derive consistent and valid answers to civic dilemmas.⁵³ Of particular civic import is the common nature of this calculus among the citizenry. The calculus is a 'true reasoning' that by dint of its truth will generate consistent and valid answers over time and across the body politic. Unlike the varied and particular iron cords that represent the private and idiosyncratic desires of citizens and generate division and

⁵² Pangle, *Laws*, 517 n53.

⁵³ Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, "Plato's Counsel on Education", *Philosophy* 73 (1998): 165.

faction the true reasoning of calculation is common and creates correct answers and of equal importance, community.

Ultimately the myth of the cords serves a function similar to that of the three metals in *Republic* but unlike the Noble lie it provides a fuller existence for the non-philosophic than that offered in the Callipolis. Citizens participate in a political arithmetic that has first principles to which they are deeply attached in contrast to the philosopher's principles that have been independently arrived at. The starting point is not found through dialectics but founded on habituation. The city's first principles are held to not by reason's determination but by the sentiment's enchantment.⁵⁴ These first civic principles, the Athenian makes clear will be the laws of the city, which the city should acquire "either from one of the gods or from this knower of these things, and then set up the reasoning as the law for itself and for its relations with other cities" (*Laws* 645b-c). The Athenian is the 'knower of these things' and he intends, in discussion with Kleinias and Megillos, to impart the principles of a civic calculus to which the citizens are to become deeply attached and through which they may calculate about politics.

Consonance

The education of the citizen in the Cretan City is not an education aimed at wisdom (*sophia*) it is a civic education built on consonance (*sumphonia*). In contrast to the *Republic* the purpose of habituation in *Laws* is ultimately not a diarsis and propaedeutic culminating in true knowledge (admittedly for a extremely select few)

⁵⁴ Morrow, *Cretan City*, 309.

but rather an epistemologically secondary true opinion. The two dialogues part ways dramatically when the Athenian's description of education stops abruptly right at the moment in the *Republic* where the education in dialectic is introduced (*Laws* 823b).⁵⁵ The three old men break off their speech at true opinion; this true opinion lives in the souls of citizen's as a form of calculation, a secondary ability to reason, that operates in consonance/harmony with true knowledge. Citizenship in the Cretan City is defined by the presence of this consonance.

The citizen's deeply held opinion described by Plato is not a mind-numbing orthodoxy. This is clarified by the Athenian in his description of its existence and creative role in the life it actualizes. The citizen's obedience to true opinion is expressed in his civic existence, not subservience but a life lived in harmony with the city is the aim of education. This is why the city requires not merely laws, which act as prohibitions or permissions, but also a series of admonitions and encouragements. These serve to delineate not only the bare minimums of civic expectation but to express the full panoply of virtues that comprise the ideal citizen. They aim at a totalizing vision of the citizen, one that demands of the founders of the Cretan city "that he write not only laws, but, in addition to laws, things interwoven with the laws, writings that reveal what seem noble and ignoble to him" (*Laws* 823a).

Pupils who are correctly habituated feel pleasure and pain in a way that is consonant with civic virtue. In turn this consonance prepares the pupil for the second-best reason, calculation, which generates outcomes that are consistently

⁵⁵ Strauss, *Argument*, 114.

consonant with the true good of the city.⁵⁶ This second-best reason creates a particular kind of active obedience, its possession by citizens and its description as a virtue necessitates that obedience to law is a matter of preparing citizen's to be ruled in a way that is distinct from simple use of force.⁵⁷ Rule in the *Laws* entails an admixture of compulsion and persuasion, compulsion in the process of habituation followed by persuasion that the pupil has been educated to an amenability for. The Athenian draws out the form that this persuasion will take in his discussion of the two different types of doctor, the one appropriate for slaves the other for free men. The Athenian argues that in a city populated by both slaves and free men the physicians that treat each group behave differently. The slaves, for the most part treated by other slaves, are attended by a physician who offers the patient a roughshod bedside manner.

None of these latter doctors gives or receives any account of each malady afflicting each domestic slave. Instead, he gives him orders on the basis of the opinions he has derived from experience. Claiming to know with precision, he gives his commands just like a headstrong tyrant and hurries off to some other sick domestic slave. (*Laws* 720c-d)

The behavior of the physician is explained by the Athenian in terms of both the education of the physician to the slaves and the nature of the slaves themselves. The slave's physician acquires his art through a rote memorization of the commands of his master (*Laws* 720b), commands he then arbitrarily applies with some apparent brutality to the slaves in a manner seemingly independent of their actual ailment. The Athenian further highlights the physician's lack of knowledge by pointing out that

⁵⁶ Seth Benardete, *Plato's Laws*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 55.

⁵⁷ For a similar interpretation of *Republic* see George Klosko "Demotike Arete in the Republic", *History of Political Thought* 3 (1982): 363-381.

while he has learnt 'from experience' no sooner has he prescribed a cure than he 'hurries off to some other slave'. This moving along indubitably impairs his ability to learn from experience: any cure that doesn't result in immediate remedy (or mortality) will have its effect go unobserved by the physician. The physician the Athenian describes resembles the 'citizen' of the tyrannical regime. The 'laws' of the Tyrant are obeyed uncomprehendingly and civic actions that are informed by them are as capricious as the orders themselves.

Of the enslaved patient himself little need be said. The slave doctor doesn't listen to his complaints because the slave, so uneducated, unhabituated, in his soul so utterly savage, can neither explain meaningfully what ails him nor if he could would his words be deemed worthy of consideration by the physician. Ultimately the uneducated doctor and his patient remain completely isolated from each other. Their relation resembles that of citizen's in a poorly educated polis. The absence of common education entails an absence of common language, the words and actions of each are mutually incomprehensible, they each speak and live a selfish and idiosyncrasy pulled by their own particular and narrow iron cord.

The Athenian contrasts this with a different type of doctor and patient and a fundamentally different relationship between the two. The Athenian describes the free doctor in terms that place him in the long lineage of Platonic comparisons between physicians and philosophers.⁵⁸

The free doctor mostly cares for and looks after the maladies of free men. He investigates these from their beginning and according to

⁵⁸ See especially *Gorgias* 479-481.

nature, communing with the patient himself and his friends, and he both learns something himself from the invalids and, as much as he can, teaches the one who is sick. (*Laws* 720d)

The doctor in this passage stands in for the philosophic lawgivers. In order to recommend a remedy the doctor must first assess the nature of the citizen, interestingly this is the starting point and not the actual malady itself. The doctor who treats free men is also presented with an individual whose nature and malady are both comprehensible to the doctor, by implication the patient's testimony, his "it hurts here", must be comprehensible to the doctor. The distance between the knowledge of the doctor and the patient is undeniably great but it is not prohibitive, they may converse. Indeed the Athenian makes clear that the cure to the free man's malady lies in such conversing.

He doesn't give orders until he has in some sense persuaded; when he has on each occasion tamed the sick person with persuasion, he attempts to succeed in leading him back to health. (*Laws* 720d-e)

The pedagogic import of this passage is obvious. That the doctor aims to persuade the patient suggests that the patient is amenable to more than mere compulsion, furthermore it implies that the patient can be a party to his own remedy, that he can learn to live in such a manner as to promote his health.⁵⁹

What form does this persuasion take? The Athenian by employing the term persuasion as opposed to argument draws the important distinction between a conversation between two doctors and a doctor/patient conversation. The doctor speaks to the patient in a language comprehensible to the patient and provides him

⁵⁹ C. Bobonovich, "Persuasion, Compulsion and Freedom in Plato's *Laws*" *Classical Quarterly* 41 (1991): 373

with the rationale for his prescription. Unpacking the analogy between patient and pupil reveals the secondary nature of civic education in the *Laws* to the education in philosophy and dialectics in *Republic*. The education in dialectic would be on this analogy equivalent to teaching the patient to become a doctor. The philosophic patient would not merely be told what the prescription was, he would participate in the diagnosis, beginning with the first symptoms and an understanding of the idea of health. He would start at the very beginning and arrive by correct reasoning at true knowledge of his ailment (*Republic* 533d). The end product of this analogy, grafted onto the pedagogical project of *Republic* would be not an educated patient and doctor but two doctors. Passed down from doctor to patient, the patient in Plato's *Laws* is told the rationale for his course of treatment and possessing it he endeavors to live a life informed by it. The patient is lead back to health; in contrast the philosophic doctor spends his life attempting to discover not how to get healthy but the nature of health itself.

Plato's Civic Prescription

What will comprise the political prescription in the Cretan City? In discussing the merits of literary education for the young the Athenian provides a startling answer. He begins by outlining a variety of techniques for teaching the young in the written tradition of the poets. The Athenian then suggests that the morally ambiguous nature of much of this poetry renders its dangerous to the civic welfare of students. However in contrast to the careful censorship of *Republic* the Athenian offers not a philosophically reduced and revised canon but an altogether new canon. In a moment of striking Platonic literary innovation the Athenian remarks:

Inasmuch as I'm not altogether at a loss for a model. As I looked now to the speeches we've been going through since dawn until the present-and it appears to me that we have not been speaking without some inspiration from gods-they seemed to me to have been spoken in a way that resembles in very respect a kind of poetry. It's probably not surprising for me to have had such a feeling, to have been very pleased at the sight of my own speeches, brought together, as it were; for in poems, or poured out in prose like what's been said, these appeared to me to be both well-measured, at any rate, of all, and especially appropriate for the young to hear. (*Laws* 811c-d)

With these words Plato writes himself into the dialogue, Plato's place resembles in prose the self-portrait of Raphael in *The School of Athens*. Plato implicates himself here as surely as Raphael, at no point in the dialogue has mention been made of the conversation being recorded, nor has a fourth participant capable of stenography been implied. The recorder must be Plato.⁶⁰ The significance of this move for the education of the citizen cannot be overstated. The *Laws* in a single moment is transformed from a diagnosis to a prescription. The dialogue remains an investigation but it is now also an artifact subject to that investigation. A critical aspect of the sudden inclusion of the author in the action is the sudden honing into view of the author as artist/craftsman and therefore the conversation as the product of that art. With the appearance of the author we are explicitly invited to wonder what Plato aims in the dialogue to produce and further what it is that law is meant to produce.⁶¹ The *Laws* itself is, by the Athenian's order, to be given to the Supervisor of Education

⁶⁰ Of incidental importance this passage seems to me to be the strongest argument against the Athenian being considered a stand-in for Plato as opposed to Socrates. In this passage Plato's presence *over and beyond* the three interlocutors prevents such a conclusion. He is recorder and craftsman he cannot therefore be character.

⁶¹ Production has in fact been on the table since at least Book IV where the governing art is equated with a series of other arts, as Curtis Johnson observes "It is noteworthy that where Plato does explicitly refer to rules as 'craftsmen' (*technitai*) as in the *Laws* (709a-d) he is also clear that these rulers (unlike the philosopher-rulers of the *Republic*) are 'lawmakers-that is, exercise a function that issues in an unmistakable product; separate from the makers themselves'" Curtis Johnson "The 'Craft' of Plato's Philosopher-Rulers" in *Politikos* ed. Leslie G. Rubin (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1992) 216n17.

who may supplement it also with such poetry and prose that is deemed to be in spirit and substance ‘brother’ (*Laws 811e*) to the dialogue.

The *Laws* reconceived of as not only concerning the Cretan city but also *of* the city becomes the prescription of the philosophic doctor for the civic patient. Here what seems most striking for citizenship in the Cretan city is the transparency of the founding, the arguments which culminate in the laws of the new city are to be available to the entirety of the political class. The availability of the principles of the founding stands, on the surface at least, in stark contrast to the hidden nature of the founding principles of the Callipolis.⁶² However this stark contrast holds only if the purposes of the two dialogues are simplistically understood of in terms of best and second best. The *Laws* does not aim to teach the philosopher but the citizen, this teaching is not simply second best it is profoundly different.

The terms of the dialogue, as well as its dramatic action, through there study provide the substance of the civic teaching to follow. In terms of their substantive dictums (commonality of meals, the division of neighbourhoods, admission of new citizens etc.) but also in the nature of having a dialogue as the founding *nomos* a certain kind of citizen is encouraged. Contrasting the literary legacy of the poet with that of the lawgiver, and thus by implication himself, Kleinias and Megillos, the Athenian argues

How do we conceive writing about laws in the cities should be: should the writings appear in the shapes of a father and mother, caring dearly and possessing intelligence, or like a tyrant and despot, should they

⁶² Bobonovich, *Compulsion*, 377.

command and threaten, post writings on the walls and go away? (*Laws* 859a)

The dialogue, as opposed to the mere writing of laws on the walls of the city, brings the student of the city's laws into a conversation with them. It encourages within him not merely a sort of behavior, namely compliance with their principles, but a sort of character, namely that of a person fit to comprehend and utilize the laws, able to learn their calculus and employ it in civic life.

The status of the *Laws* as the basis of the Cretan City's education in laws is buttressed by a three fold justification: the nature of law, the nature of the philosopher, and the nature of the citizen. These justifications, respectfully, speak to the fundamental nature of even the best of laws: incompleteness, scarcity and spirited tension. The *Laws* is justified as the foundation of civic education and law first of all because of its arch-tectonic character. At the conclusion of the Athenian's claim that the *Laws* will serve as both education and constitution Kleinias cautions that this is a claim that can only be analyzed once the discussion has reached its conclusions (*Laws* 812a).⁶³ Kleinias' desire for conclusions indicates a twofold misunderstanding of the nature of dialogue and of law. By writing a dialogue Plato admits that all law is incomplete, all constitution writing partial. The breadth of the political prohibits its encompassment by the written word, no matter how well crafted. It is by dint of this that Kleinias concerns will never be fully answered in the form he expresses them in. The purpose of the education is to provide an argument out of which the citizen's and their educators may generate in conversation with the dialogue innovations that address situations unforeseen and unforeseeable.

⁶³ Benardete *Laws*, 216

The laws and educational program of the city are also tied to the dialogue as a result of a deep awareness on the part of the philosopher of the uncommon nature not only of his lesson but also of his type. The Athenian is an extraordinary person a type that appears rarely in human affairs. Employing the dialogue as both textbook and law allows the philosopher to provide a framework of action and counsel that continues on after his death or departure.⁶⁴ The necessity of providing for a future without the philosopher is drawn out most clearly by the age of the interlocutors and the dramatic action in which they participate. Old men they journey through the day into night. They, more than young men, are aware that a founding document must inevitably stand in for the deceased founders. Their conversation, their education, their positions, will be reexamined, reaffirmed and newly applied by subsequent generations who learn by listening to them converse. In this way the exceptional nature of the true philosopher and the wise lawgiver is ameliorated if not perfectly resolved.⁶⁵

The explicit discussion of the ends of education and the limits of its possibility in terms of the Cretan city is made clear by Plato in the concluding section of Book VII of the *Laws*. Having established the necessity of the *Laws* itself to the future well being of the citizens and city the conversation, seemingly inexplicably, turns to hunting. The justification of this sudden switch is twofold: it addresses both the limits of the education dictated by the nature of the *Laws*, and the limits of education dictated by the nature of men. The *Laws* is concerned with political education, more

⁶⁴ Strauss, *Argument*, 92

⁶⁵ For an interesting further discussion of the written word and its relationship to wisdom see Benardete's remarks on the *Laws* and the *Phaedrus* in Benardete, *Plato's Laws*, 353.

specifically political education as opposed to philosophic education. In the *Republic* an education in the political was a step on the ladder of learning which ultimately, for a select few, culminated in a philosophic education and the prerogatives of rule. From its outset the *Laws* focuses on a lower rung of the ladder. Its concern is not to adumbrate philosophic education but rather to fill out the political education existent primarily as *sine qua non* in *Republic*.⁶⁶ The sudden switch to hunting in the *Laws* Book VII sets it off in stark contrast to the discussion in Book VII of the *Republic*. In the *Laws*, at the moment in the argument where the student should stand, pedagogically, at the mouth of the cave his instructor takes him into the fields and streams in search of prey.⁶⁷ The same message is contained in the dramatic action that concludes the dialogue. At the end of the day the old men approach the shrine of Zeus and the dialogue ends with the silence of the philosopher. Kleinias and Megillos implore the Athenian to remain and assist in the Cretan City's founding. In his silence the Athenian points to the tension between philosopher and city, between politics and wisdom and ultimately the unwillingness of the philosopher to rule.⁶⁸ The explicitly pedagogical import of the dramatic action complements this hypotheses and is buttressed by the parameters of the discussion laid out in the opening of the dialogue.

I expect it would not be unpleasant for you to pass the present time discussing the political regime and laws, talking and listening as we go on our way. The road from Knossos to the cave and temple of Zeus is altogether long enough, (*Laws* 625a-b)

⁶⁶ This is not to suggest that the education of the philosopher-ruler in the Callipolis doesn't receive an education in politics, but rather to suggest that inasmuch as that education is presented it is a lesson for the philosopher and *not* for the citizen.

⁶⁷ Strauss, *Argument*, 114.

⁶⁸ Pangle, "Interpretive Essay", 509. See also Strauss, *Argument* 114.

The conversation *must end* where it does, to continue further would be to explore beyond the political regime and laws, more explicitly to venture into the cave and into a discussion of matters treated elsewhere. As I argued at the outset of the chapter, the dramatic action points to the *Republic*, the philosopher remains silent not only because of the tension between philosopher and politics but because the philosopher has already spoken of these things. Kleinias and Megillos wish to found a city, for them the conversation has ended, for the reader who wishes to complete the conversation the dialogue ends not with silence but with a pregnant pause.

The discussion of education in Book VII of the *Laws* ends with a discussion of hunting for a second reason, oddly juxtaposed with the first. The discussion of hunting points first to the end of education and then as the discussion continues it points increasingly to the unending nature of education. It points to the presence of spirit in politics and the impossibility of completely ‘training’ spirit. The incompleteness that is an aspect of both thumos and eros, its longing to be expressed, demands that education also never be completed. By turning the conversation to hunting the Athenian draws out the limits of an education of the sentiments in terms of the training of the passions. Hunting points to the extension of the passions outside the walls of the city, outside of the civic. It points to conquest, the hunting of animals is rooted in the same passion that compels men to hunt one another both in warfare⁶⁹ and friendship (*Laws* 823b). The teaching of types of hunting and fishing, first of game and then inevitably of men is intended by the Athenian to imbue in the passions of citizens a law of war, a pleasure in the just and a pain in the unjust as it pertains to

⁶⁹ Plato, *Sophist*, trans. F.M. Cornford, in *Plato Collected Dialogues*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, 16ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) 219c.

affairs between cities. Hunting, like warfare, is by definition extra-mural. Outside of the city walls the true mettle of an education in the noble and ignoble comes to fore in the absence of effective sanction, it is the purest case of a law that cannot simply be written on the wall. The teaching of hunting is the training of the martial soul, the Athenian remarks

Having said these things as preliminary, what would come next is a measured praise and blame as regards hunting; there should be praise for the sort that makes the souls of the young better and blame for the opposite sorts. (*Laws* 823d)

The sorts of sport that will be encouraged are the one's that encourage the martial virtues of stamina, courage and resourcefulness⁷⁰ those condemned, like hunting at night and fishing with traps encourage the politically corrosive passionate capacity for guile, deception and laziness. The distinctions drawn for instance between hunting on water and bird-hunting versus hunting on land and with dogs seems at first and second glance to be vague and ambiguous. The further nuance that sacred hunters are to be permitted a degree of these behaviors further muddies the waters. This confusion indicates the ambiguities that exist and define the law as it exists outside the city walls. Piracy, prohibited by the Athenian (*Laws* 823e), bears a striking resemblance to naval battle, it is not always clear which is which. The consequences of this ambiguity for the characters of the soldiers are equally ambiguous.⁷¹ This partially explains the hunting of men for friendship. Friendship pulls the passions away from the beastly aspect of war, and sustains the civic spirit through the passion for association against the wildness of war. The city must

⁷⁰ Morrow, *Cretan City*, 335.

⁷¹ Benardete, *Plato's Laws*, 230.

encourage friendship in war, it must teach a virtuous camaraderie that anchors the rightly educated passions and true opinions learned within the city walls. This is an education that cannot end without the impossible end of conflict. As long as there is war this sort of salutary and restorative education must always be available to the citizen-soldier, lest following war he return to the city he defended unfit to live within its walls. At this point in the *Laws* the formal discussion of education comes to an end (*Laws* 824c), the discussion of hunting amounts to the admonishment that in the life of the citizen the discussion and experience that *is* education ends only in death.

Conclusion

In discussing civic education in both the *Republic* and the *Laws* I have not spoken of what specific virtues each dialogue aims to inculcate. Instead I have focused on the grounding of those virtues, the soul that is crafted to bear them, the framework on which they hang. Both dialogues in describing civic and non-philosophic education seek to establish a habit of soul that prepares and makes gentle the pupil so that he may bear the civic virtues. I have sought in this chapter not to explain the civic virtues but rather how they are to be taught, not what a good citizen is, but how they are crafted. The one task inevitably entails the other to some extent, but the tasks are not synonymous.

The explicitly civic virtues of the *Laws*, moderation, courage and piety are the foundational elements of a civic algorithm. The dialogue as a read and experienced artifact aims not at the understanding of these foundational elements but at their adoption. To understand Platonic civic education is to get behind these foundational elements and examine how the algorithm itself is taught. Eventually such an

enterprise points at the incompleteness of the algorithm, it points to the bounds, the calculative and inquisitive limitations of the political. It points back to the *Republic*. However the *Laws* even in its conclusion recalls its peculiar status as inquiry into law and law itself, inquiry into education and education in itself. Plato knows that the *Laws* lives beyond him, that the dialogue and not merely the Athenian must remain silent to some. In its length, its difficult and dry prose, the speechifying of the later books and the relative absence of dramatic action, it serves the purpose outlined in the *Republic* of diarsis. The *Laws* in its structure and substance sorts the non-philosophic from the philosophic. Reading the dialogue most of the future Cretan's will greet the Athenian's final silence with relief and turn back to the affairs of the city. A few readers, arriving at the Cave of Zeus will see in the darkness and silence an invitation.

Chapter Two: Cicero's Civic Education at the Dawn of Empire

Introduction

Cicero's thought, both in his philosophical and his more explicitly political writings, is profoundly informed in both structure and substance by Plato.⁷² As a philosopher and prose stylist Cicero followed Plato in writing both dialogues and letters on questions philosophical, ethical and political. More closely, and tragically in common with Plato's mentor Socrates, Cicero found himself an outspoken philosopher at the mercy of and eventually murdered by forces politic. Despite sympathies political, philosophical and biographical Cicero's discussion of the role of the philosopher in public life and in citizen education reveals a deep tension between Plato's Athens and his own Rome. Vastly indebted to Classical Athens Cicero's thought is ultimately informed and engaged with the Rome of the late Republic. Cicero's educational thought is ultimately dominated by the politics of his time and not the philosophy of Plato with which the philosopher was so conspicuously and fatally linked.

The attempt to understand Cicero's conception of civic education is most seriously hindered by the fragmentary nature of what may have been the two most critical Ciceronian dialogues on the subject, *De Re Publica* and *De Legibus*. Most regrettable of all is the almost complete loss of Book Four of *De Re Publica* that apparently contained Cicero's clearest and most succinct account of civic education. However this loss, lamentable though it is, does not present the same challenges as say the loss of Book Seven of Plato's *Republic* would to a similar enquiry into Plato's

⁷² This influence is direct but it also read through the Neo-Platonic tradition and in particular Polybius and Panaetius (The latter's thought is known to us primarily through Cicero's writing).

views on education. Beyond the fact that more of Cicero's writing⁷³ has survived from antiquity than that of any other ancient philosopher, the unique structure and profound immediacy of Cicero's surviving writing reveals a great deal about his views on civic education.

It is a relatively banal truism that any philosopher's prose, the style and verbiage he employs to convey his ideas, reveals an aspect of how he believes the reader (always an implied student) should be taught⁷⁴. A dialogue, a book, even a learned letter is implicitly pedagogic, in how it teaches it reveals a theory of teaching. This is more desperately true for Cicero than most, living through the decline of the Roman Republic and struggling to preserve it Cicero's implied pedagogy loses its banality. Politics was at the forefront of Cicero's mind as, during two periods of political exile, he wrote almost all of his important philosophical works. Cicero intended these works to be read into a failing Republican culture and politics to serve as a Republican tonic restorative of the fortunes of the Senate and the Twelve Tablets. Both Cicero's dialogues and his epistolary prose are explicitly intended to serve as an immediate and curative civic paideia. Their craft and contents thus speak volumes about Cicero's conception of civic education.

The introduction of a transformed Greek political philosophy into the Roman political milieu is the first and most conspicuous element of Cicero's project; in treating Cicero it must constitute the beginning of any examination. Moving forward

⁷³ This fact alone should (but consistently does not) silence those who argue for the relative philosophic insignificance of Cicero, if he has so little original to say why is his literary and philosophic corpus so assiduously guarded over the millennia?

⁷⁴ Like many supposed banalities this observation contains depths, these are beyond the scope of my purposes here, for the classic modern exploration see Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Chapter 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

from this point Cicero reveals himself to the careful reader to be including innovations and novel ideas, especially as concerns the capacity to reason and therefore the status of the student, that mark a concerted and conscious break with Plato. The significance of this break is heightened and informed by an equally novel innovation concerning the relation of politics to philosophy, of the Orator to the Statesman. This chapter will follow Cicero's thought on philosophy and civic education from introduction and adaptation to innovation and reconstitution, the path of enquiry laid out by the philosopher himself.

The Introduction of Greek Philosophy

The Roman poet Horace perfectly captures the complex and often ambivalent character of the encounter and dialogue between Rome and the Pelopennese: "Captive Greece made her savage victor captive and brought the arts to rustic Latium."⁷⁵ Writing little more than a generation after the murder of Cicero Horace finds Rome still wrestling with the multiple tensions, philosophic, political and cultural that Rome's victory had enveloped within its every expanding suzerainty. It is these tensions which pre-occupy, inform and provoke Cicero's philosophic writing above all else, indeed late in life the encounter with Greece not only informed Cicero's ideas it offered him comfort in exile and personal loss, in *Tusculan Disputations* he concludes of philosophy "at any rate in my cruel sorrows and the various troubles which beset me from all sides no other consolation could have been found." (*Tusculan Disputations* V.xli.121)⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Horace, *Epistolae* II, 156. quoted in H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956) 242. (My own translation)

⁷⁶ Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J.E. King, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943)

Understanding the significance of Cicero's philosophical writing and in particular his vision of Roman civic education begins with understanding his place in the encounter between Greece and Rome. Too often characterized as an unoriginal thinker, a mere popularizer (and by logical extension *bastardizer*) of Greek political thought⁷⁷ Cicero is engaged in much more than simply an act of cultural enrichment, an infusion of hellenic flavors into the Latin *metier*. Cicero's late philosophical writing constitutes an attempt at synthesis, nothing less than the hybridization of two distinct political and philosophical traditions, those of oratory and philosophy, into a single civic culture and intellectual practice. This effort can be no more plainly laid out than in the opening paragraph of Cicero's single most important political work: *De Officiis*. Addressing his son Marcus, at the time studying philosophy in Athens, Cicero encourages him to remember and *apply* what he has learned in Rome to his studies in Greece. Of his own education and encounter with things Greek he writes

I myself have always found it beneficial to combine things Latin with things Greek (something I have done not only in philosophy but also in the practice of rhetoric), I think you should do the same that you may be equally capable in either language. (*De Officiis* I.1)⁷⁸

A careful reading of this crucial exhortation reveals no clear cultural hierarchy concerning Rome and Greece. The initial precedence of Latin over Greek is inverted in the description of the things studied, which is first and which second, Roman or Greek? Philosophy or Rhetoric? The closing sentence leaves them equally recommended; they are to be combined in a manner that leaves both practices

⁷⁷ Perhaps the single most troubling proponent of this view is Elizabeth Rawson, who in an otherwise brilliant biography of Cicero begins by suggesting "Cicero's greatness resides, indeed, less in his creative originality than in the form and life that he could give to the Latin tradition, enriched by a wide knowledge of Greek civilization." Elizabeth Rawson, *Cicero A Portrait*, (London: Penguin Books, 1975) 3.

⁷⁸ Cicero, *De Officiis*, translated and edited by M. Griffin and E.M. Atkins. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

informed by the other. The nature of that relationship, its apparent ambiguity and equivalency, constitutes the first step in Cicero's political project of civic education.

The presence of equally significant poles, both in terms of culture and intellectual enterprise is central to understanding the Ciceronian project. Indeed the significance of intellectual tradition, culture and history sets Ciceronian political philosophy off in a decidedly non-Platonic direction from the very outset. As a young man Cicero had studied and traveled throughout the Hellenic world and had seen its ruination at its own hands and those of its new Roman masters. He lamented the reduction of Sparta and Spartan ritual to a mere tourist attraction, the enslavement of the Greeks and the utter destruction of Corinth.⁷⁹ At the same time he applied the experience of the decline of the Greeks with a political awareness of the deep cultural significance of the idea of the 'rise' of Rome, to push his philosophy in the direction of historical development. Early in the *De Re Publica* Cicero recognizes that this movement constitutes a clear break with Greek tradition and in particular with Plato and the dialogue upon which his work is at least exoterically modeled.

I will have an easier time in completing my task if I show you our commonwealth as it is born, grows up, and comes of age, and as strong and well-established state, than if I make up some state as Socrates does in Plato (*De Re Publica*. II.3)⁸⁰

The difference in task does not lead Cicero to abandon Plato altogether. Rather, following his advice to the younger Marcus, Cicero pursues in Plato what his Roman wisdom recognizes to be of importance in his own time, ever approaching Greece from the vantage point of Rome. In so approaching Cicero introduces a profound

⁷⁹ Manfred Fuhrmann, *Cicero and the Roman Republic*, trans. W.E. Yuill (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990) 30.

⁸⁰ Cicero, *On the Commonwealth and On the Laws*, trans. James Zetzel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Latin element into the encounter with Plato. Cicero concludes that not only is there an acknowledged development of philosophy over history but the hermeneutic encounter with philosophy is also critically affected by historical development. Authorial intent becomes secondary to the question of relevance to Rome, consequently when Cicero turns to Plato's *Republic* he pursues not the significance of the Callipolis but the lessons of its decline, not the best city but the nature of regime change (*De Re Publica* II.21).⁸¹

Cicero's transformation of Greek philosophy is in part an act of filtering and changing of the order of emphasis and significance, this 'mining' of Greek philosophy is accompanied by constant reminders that the extraction is an act prompted by Roman wisdom and equally by Roman necessity (*ibid*). Turning again to what appears at first to be the most Platonic of Cicero's dialogues, *De Re Publica*, we see that the encounter between Cicero and Plato is informed from its very outset by the earthy wisdom of 'rustic Latium' and achieved by the frequent allusion to and even quotation from the Roman political pantheon. Drawing on the authority of Cato Cicero writes

He [Cato] said that there never was a genius so great that he could miss nothing, nor could all the geniuses in the world brought together in one place at one time foresee all contingencies without the practical experience afforded by the passage of time. (*De Re Publica* I.2)

This passage restates the intent spoken of with equal primacy at the commencement of *De Officiis*. Roman wisdom, acquired through its long and glorious history, stands combined with Greek wisdom not displaced by it. Indeed Cicero implies more:

⁸¹ Dorothea Frede, "Constitution and Citizenship: Peripatetic Influences on Cicero's Political Conception in the *De Re Publica*", *Cicero's Knowledge of the Peripatos*, eds. William W. Fortenbaugh and Peter Steinmetz (New York: Brunswick Transaction Books, 1989) 79.

Greek philosophical wisdom and learning are secondary in perspicacity to Roman historical experience. A repeated theme in Cicero, the introduction of Greek wisdom must be informed by Roman experience, to the extent that it has already occurred 'experience afforded by the passage of time' has led Rome to wiser employment of wisdom than the political hubris of constitution making.⁸²

The Roman understanding of historical development is not *historicist*. Change and progress are forever tied to continuity and connection with the past. The most important expression of continuity, of permanence in the face of history, is the continuity of Roman virtue. Continuity of virtue over generations is a central feature of Roman civic life in the late Republic. Cicero's politics is defined by this tension between the wish to retain the Republic unchanged and the recognition that change and development is a defining characteristic of Roman politics. Politically and institutionally this tension was best expressed in the tension between Oratory and Jurisprudence, between the ever changing Roman law and the Roman 'constitution' the Twelve Tables which were by Cicero's time primarily honoured in the breach.⁸³

Culturally the tension between an ahistorical conception of virtue and a profoundly historical conception of civic life resolved itself around the idea of embodiment. In the popular tradition of Rome specific families, over generations, continuously embodied specific virtues. For example the Claudii embodied pride, the Quinctii austerity, the Cassii democratic sensibilities.⁸⁴ Cicero embraces

⁸² Jean-Louis Ferrary, "The Statesman and the Law in the Political Philosophy of Cicero" in *Justice and Generosity*, ed. Andre Laks (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 55.

⁸³ Rawson, *Cicero*, 323-4. In his life as a lawyer Cicero often boasted of his childhood memorization of the Twelve Tables and yet as an adult he acknowledged both the tenuous connection between the practice of Roman law and the Tables and the practical superiority of Oratory over Jurisprudence.

⁸⁴ H.I. Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 236.

embodiment and recognizes it as the resolution of the tension between development and permanence. Cicero embraces this resolution and conceives of history as teaching not only, or even primarily, of what it was to be a Roman but of what it *is* to be a Roman.⁸⁵ In Cicero's famous epistle to Brutus, *Orator*, he describes this as the central lesson of Rome's history.

To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history? (*Orator* 120)⁸⁶

The Roman past manifests itself in the present in the lived virtues of Rome's citizens as such while Rome's borders and fortunes may change the Roman *vir* remains constant.

The choice of the imagery of weaving, present in Plato's *Laws* and *Statesman* indicates a further element in the relationship of Roman virtue to Roman history. New generations like new additions to a tapestry or carpet are indeed additions, they are new but they must also be made to fit, they must connect and they must match. Rome extends itself over time and increasingly by Cicero's age, over space, despite these changes the fabric must not only be connected but rendered similar in tone and texture to the original. As such Roman history not only perdures as virtue into the present but it extends demands into the present, it is present both as lived ideals and as an incompleteness that impresses itself upon the future.

No passage in Cicero more perfectly captures the relationship between history and virtue than Scipio's dream at the conclusion of *De Re Publica*.⁸⁷ The

⁸⁵ This can be seen most clearly in the personification of virtue qua virtue as *Virtus* portrayed both as male and female but always bearing the sword and shield of victory. *Virtus* appears in Roman statuary but is most ubiquitous on the back of imperial coinage.

⁸⁶ Cicero, *Orator*, trans. H.M. Hubbell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

conversation, between the spirit of the elder Africanus and the slumbering P.

Cornelius Scipio, is fundamentally exhortative in character. The elder Africanus has returned not to converse but to remind Scipio of his place in the Scipionic and ultimately Roman fabric of virtue.

Scipio, you should be like your grandfather here and like me your father in cultivating justice and piety: it is important in relation to your parents and family but most important in relation to your fatherland.
(*De Re Publica* VI.16)

Both Grandfather and grandson were awarded with the honorific cognomen 'Africanus' for separate victories over Carthage. Bringing them into conversation Cicero establishes that the original connection, drawn to Scipionic Rome through the use of Laelius and P. Cornelius Scipio goes back even farther, that even great men of the likes of Scipio act as embodiments of virtues that exist over generations of Romans. In the Republic's decline Cicero sees the emphasis of permanence over change, especially the change represented by Caesarism, as crucial. Revolution, to the extent that it constitutes a break with the past shatters the careful balance between history and continuity, between Rome's development and its virtues. Cicero recognizes that the end of the Republic must necessarily herald the end of the unchanging ideal of the Roman citizen.

Cicero, perhaps more than any other Roman thinker, understood the deep significance of the rustic past of Rome and the historical context to an ever expanding and increasingly insatiable Rome whose only check was the claim of continuity on its civic character. Recognition of the cultural and political significance of embodiment and its claim of continuity informs the structure of Cicero's writing at least as much

⁸⁷ This is but one aspect of the Dream's significance, an equally important element will be discussed below.

as his careful study of the place of dramatic action and argument in Greek thought. Cicero's characters often speak Greek philosophy, but the words are placed in the mouths, language and virtues of the Romans.⁸⁸ By employing embodiment and vernacular Cicero creates an effect neither of mimicry nor novelty but of continuity with the past. In embodying Greek thought in figures of Rome's illustrious past, the Scipii, Crassus and others, Cicero weaves it into the context of Roman history, like the victory over Carthage, Greek thought becomes not novel innovation but honorific cognomen. Cicero's careful prose equates the legitimacy of Scipio *Africanus* with a new *Romani Graeci*.

It is an odd and ironic consequence of the deftness of Cicero's intellect and prose that his most significant political and cultural accomplishment is held against him by modern scholars. Cicero, deeply cognizant and for that matter supportive of traditionalist Republican sensibilities, introduces both Greek philosophy and his own original thought into the Roman context without ever appearing to innovate or transform. He is a profound and innovative thinker who appears to his contemporaries and to later readers as a conservative and above all a defender of the Roman tradition.

The Romans, like the Athenians before them, wrestled with the problem of autochthony and its place in their political life and public history. In introducing his own ideas and those of the Greeks to the Roman tradition Cicero begins by 'back-writing' Roman pre-history in order to graft onto Roman public history a legitimate tradition of adapting to and incorporating Greek ideas and individuals. In Book 2 of *De Re Publica* the 'marriage' of the Sabine women to the first generation of Roman

⁸⁸ In contrast in Cicero's letters to his friends and in his political speeches he often employed Greek.

men provides Cicero with his first example of Roman cultural plurality and incorporation of difference. Cicero's Scipio highlights the specifically political character and consequence of the 'marriage': a treaty with the Sabine king, sanctioned by Romulus, that "admitted the Sabines to citizenship and joint religious rituals" (*De Re Publica* II.13). Later Scipio recounts the first major encounter of the Romans with the Greeks, an encounter which was "no mere trickle from Greece that flowed into the city, but a full river of education and learning" (*De Re Publica* II.34). The significance of Scipio's description is two-fold. First it establishes a tradition not only of Roman cultural incorporation, second and more importantly, the presence of Scipio as historical narrator suggests that such incorporation hasn't hindered the generation of Roman virtues in their highest human embodiment. Scipio continues by recounting how later one of the Greeks who had flowed in on this river, Lucius Tarquinius, a longtime friend of King Ancus, upon the monarch's death, was elected king.

And so at the death of Marcius [Ancus] the people unanimously elected him king under the name of Lucius Tarquinius: that was how he had changed his name from what it had been in Greek, so as to be seen to follow the customs of this people in all respects. (Ibid.)

Cicero, in recounting this story and the story of the Sabine women establishes a dual legitimacy both for the idea of a broad even pluralistic conception of Latin autochthony and for a well established pattern of popularly vindicated contact and co-penetration of Greek and Roman society. Scipio's recounting of these moments in Roman history the introduction of new foreign things, and in particular Greek things, becomes not an innovation but part of a consistent pattern, a Roman tradition.

Returning to the historical dictum of Cicero's *Orator* if a Roman wishes not to remain ever a child he must embrace the Greek.

Cicero's revisions of the Roman tradition also express themselves in the character and dramatic action of his dialogues. In several of the most important philosophic dialogues the voices of Cicero's new ideas and in particular those gleaned from the Greeks are placed in the characters of illustrious figures from the Roman past. Famously as I have already discussed, the two Scipios in *De Re Publica* but equally important especially for understanding Cicero's educational project is the use of the famous Consul and Censor Crassus in his *De Oratore*. By employing these characters Cicero achieves two goals, he makes the foreign familiar and he invests the new with the imprimatur of the illustrious dead who speak it.⁸⁹

In the centuries immediately following Cicero's murder his eloquence and mastery of Latin grammar rendered his letters, speeches and dialogues sources of authority concerning correct speech rivaled only, and not coincidentally, by Virgil.⁹⁰ Quintilian went so far as to suggest Cicero to students as "an incomparable model of oratory and oratorical theory".⁹¹ That later Roman readers saw Cicero's prose as standard in its usage is, perhaps above all else, a testament to his gift for innovations that were amenable to deeply traditionalist Roman sensibilities.

Cicero had a deep familiarity and profound grasp of the Greek language and spoke and wrote in it often, however in his works of political philosophy he refrained almost completely from Greek usage. Buried deep in his introduction of Greek

⁸⁹ R.F. Hathaway, "Cicero's Socratic View of History", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 29, 1968, 6.

⁹⁰ Aubrey Gwynn, *Roman Education from Cicero to Quintilian*, 2ed. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964) 155.

⁹¹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratorio* III.i.20, quoted in Gwynn, *Roman Education*, 187.

thought to the Roman context his linguistic and terminological efforts to introduce Greek thought to Roman civic education are as significant and essential to his project as his more apparent literary and dramatic devices he employed. Cicero pushed the meaning of Greek words into Latin by subtly changing the meaning of both. On the surface Cicero's treatment of Greek terminology appears trans-literal in character but a closer examination reveals a dramatic catachresis. Cicero's most critical and deliberate catachresis is the forced packing of the transliterated *philosophy* and *philosopher* into the Latin *prudentia* and *prudens* or *sapientes*.⁹² The first philosophers, indeed all those up to Pythagoras, are specifically set apart from philosophy and deliberately described with the more general and therefore less alien *Sapientes*, wise men. Cicero writes

And those we see that philosophy is a fact of great antiquity, yet its name is, we admit, of recent origin. For who can deny that wisdom itself at any rate is not only ancient in fact but in name as well.
(*Tusculan Disputations* V.iii.7)

By catechretically forcing philosophy and its practitioners into *prudentia* and *sapientes* Cicero deracinates political thought placing it in the context of general human history as opposed to a particular and foreign artifact and consequence of Rome's expansion. Cicero renders philosophy only nominally native to Greece and in particular to Socrates and after⁹³. By introducing the philosophic terminology in Latin and subtly transforming wisdom into a stand-in for philosophy Cicero at the most fundamental level renders Latin the Greek legacy. Cicero created and

⁹² Seth Benardete, *Plato's Laws* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) n358.

⁹³ The distinction between 'original philosophy' and Socrates and after is of particular importance to Cicero and will be discussed further below.

popularized through the process of catachresis a Latin language⁹⁴ for a Greek practice while denying all the time that such a creation was necessary, that to the contrary Latin was always up to the task, going farther and arguing “the Latin language, so far from having a poor vocabulary, as is commonly supposed, is actually richer than the Greeks” (*De Finibus*. I.iii.10).⁹⁵

Indeed Cicero, in an act of uncharacteristic (and disingenuous) humility, claims that to the extent that he does cite Aristotle and Plato it is little different than when Ennius “borrows from Homer, and Afranius and Menander” (*Fin*. I.iii.7). Cicero both endorses and conceals his innovation by associating it with Ennius. On the one hand he describes his enterprise as merely the bringing in of exotic elements for their aesthetic appeal, a question of style and flourish at best. At the same time Cicero invests his work, by associating it with Ennius (and also Terence and Caecilius) with the status of an established Roman practice. Finally by creating a philosophical terminology in Latin he enabled his own philosophical work immeasurably. To an extent bested only by Plato Cicero milled and manufactured the linguistic material and apparatus necessary to construct his political philosophy.⁹⁶

A full understanding of Cicero’s political philosophy and its relationship to civic education must begin with the dual recognition of the centrality of education to Cicero’s thought and his connected awareness of the Roman context into which he was writing. The process of rendering Greek into Latin and the simultaneous sly exhorting of wisdom and civic virtue in a language and with imagery familiar to

⁹⁴ Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 253.

⁹⁵ Cicero, *De Finibus*, trans.H. Rackham, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

⁹⁶ Furhmann, *Cicero and the Roman Republic*, 160.

Romans was a lesson Cicero learned at Plato's knee. In *De Legibus* Cicero explicitly invokes this lesson from its eponymous predecessor declaring

But I think I must do as Plato did, the most learned of men and also the most serious of philosophers, who first wrote about the commonwealth and also wrote a separate work about its laws, namely speak in praise of the law before I recite it. (*De Legibus* II.14)⁹⁷

The process of rendering in Latin the Greek tradition undertaken by Cicero is the necessary first step. Each of his main works of philosophy, by placing the Greek tradition within the Latin and changing its timber and rhythm to suit Latin ears, forms a prelude: a prelude not to laws so much as to a new and novel type of learning and teaching civic virtue. The prelude, a Greek innovation, is typically married to a Roman pedagogic practice. Cicero's treatment of Greek political thought invokes also a specifically Roman pedagogic practice, the *praelectio*. In the Roman schoolroom the introduction of a new text always commenced with the *grammaticus*' reading of the text through aloud with explanatory but purely exegetical comments on its content.⁹⁸ The *praelectio* was the first encounter with the new text, it was meant to familiarize the ear with the surface of the material, to ameliorate its novelty, to prepare the student for his own deeper engagement with the text. Cicero's transformation of Greek thought is the necessary first social and political *praelectio* to any deeper Roman engagement with political philosophy and with civic education.

Innovation and Transformation

The first step in Cicero's program to reclaim and reconstitute Roman civic education was the attempt to tune the Roman ear to the philosophical and political

⁹⁷ That Cicero's description of the relationship between *Laws* and *Republic* is inaccurate is not significant to my purposes here but will be returned to below.

⁹⁸ Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 279.

timbre and rhythm of Greek material. The second task was the transformation of that thought to better suit the demands of the Roman world. While Cicero recognized enduring similarities between political life in the Greek polis and the challenge of the late Republic he also acknowledged the profound differences between the Socratic introduction of political philosophy into Athens and the same enterprise undertaken in the imperial milieu of Rome. Cicero writes poetically of the tenuous place of philosophy and philosopher in Rome when he has his old mentor L. Licinius Crassus lament

However, the streams of learning flowing from the common watershed of wisdom, as rivers do from the Appenines, divided in two, the philosophers flowing down into the entirely Greek waters of the Eastern Mediterranean with its plentiful supply of harbors, while the orators glided into the rocky and inhospitable Western seas of our outlandish Tuscany where even Ulysses lost himself. (De Oratore, I.xix.69)⁹⁹

Aside from the careful *praelectio* that is characteristic of all of Cicero's dialogues in their treatment of Greek thought Cicero also engages in a careful and culturally informed selection from Attic sources that is informed more by Cicero's sense of *officia* than his undeniable *sapientia*. To the extent that Cicero mines Greek thought for ideas and anecdotes that seem apt in the Roman context he fits within the established manuscript culture of late Republican Rome.¹⁰⁰ However the profound philosophical and political elements of Cicero's method shape and transform Greek material far beyond the crude efforts of Terence's *Medea* or much later Seneca's *Phaedra* and *Oedipus*.

⁹⁹ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2 vols., trans. E. W. Sutton (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942).

¹⁰⁰ David Burchell, "MacIntyre, Cicero and Moral Personality" *History of Political Thought* 19 (1998): 105.

The connection with Greece is never lost in Cicero. This is why his innovation and transformation of Greek thought into the Roman milieu is often mistakenly equated with the leaden efforts of Seneca and Terence. Indeed such a misconstrual is at least part of Cicero's intention. However a close reading of Cicero's dialogues in particular shows a profound awareness of the meaning and importance of action and setting in Plato, a significance Cicero as the preeminent Latin stylist does not hesitate to employ in his own writing. Indeed it is in using things Greek within a Roman setting and dramatic action that Cicero both mimics Plato and sets off his own thought from Plato's. A close look at the setting of *De Oratore* illustrates Cicero's technique nicely.

Then Cotta went on to say how on the morrow, when those older men had rested sufficiently and everyone had come into the garden-walk, Scaevola, after taking two or three turns, observed, "Crassus, why do we not imitate Socrates as he appears in the *Phaedrus* of Plato? For your plane-tree has suggested to my mind, casting as it does, with its spreading branches, as deep a shade over this spot as that one cast whose shelter Socrates sought-which to me seems to owe its eminence less to 'the little rivulet' described by Plato than to the language of his dialogue-and what Socrates did, whose feet were thoroughly hardened, when he threw himself down on the grass and so began the talk which philosophers say was divine, -such ease surely may more reasonably be conceded to my own feet" "Nay," answered Crassus, "but we will make things more comfortable still," whereupon, according to Cotta, he called for cushions, and they all sat down together on the benches that were under the plane-tree (*De Oratore* I.vii.28-29).

On the surface the invocation of the *Phaedrus* here makes obvious sense. In Plato's dialogue the subject, ostensibly at least, is writing and by extension speechmaking and as such the comparison seems apt. A closer look reveals within the context much deeper differences, differences that highlight the profound philosophical distance between Rome and Athens. The *dramatis personae* are the first and most powerful

hint. Cicero begins the third and final book of *De Oratore* by recounting how of Crassus' interlocutors M. Antonius, Q. Lutatius Catulus, and C. Julius Caesar Stabo Vopiscus all fall victim to Marius. On the other side of the conflict between Marius and Sulla P. Sulpicius Rufus, a Marian, is proscribed and then murdered by Sulla's forces. To any Roman reader acquainted with the Platonic corpus the list of victims of the collapsing politics of the late Republic would hearken their attention not to the *Phaedrus* but to the *Republic*, not to the styles of rhetoric but the state of politics. Each dialogue is peopled with victims of leaders who seize the opportunities for tyranny peculiar to declining republics. The *dramatis personae* are Cicero's first sign that his ideal orator¹⁰¹ is someone acquainted not only with rhythm and eloquence but with wisdom, politics and a sense of consequence.

The contrast in setting of the two dialogues achieves a similar purpose. In the *Phaedrus* the interlocutors seek shade outside the city walls, in *De Oratore* we find them outside the walls of Rome but hardly in repose in a pleasant field. Indeed as they approach the plane-tree we discover that it already has benches underneath it, people have not only been to this spot before, they have come often and they have made it comfortable, they have civilized it. The significance of the benches, accentuated by the ease with which Crassus orders cushions to be provided, marks the impossibility in Cicero's time of ever truly being outside the walls of Rome. Rome's boundaries have encompassed the whole world. Crassus' order that cushions be brought for the group to sit upon reminds the reader that not only has the empire engulfed the known world but that empire is characterized by luxury. Cicero's *De*

¹⁰¹ I use the term orator here interchangeably with politician and in its ideal case statesman. For Cicero the distinction between the three is of less significance than the distinction between orator and rhetorician.

Oratore from its very opening reminds us of the Ciceronian teaching on civic education that appears throughout his political writing, the wisdom of the Greeks must always be read, discussed and understood in the new Roman context.

Attached to this insight about how the Greeks should be read Cicero includes a critique of Greek philosophy and in particular of Platonic political philosophy and its neo-Platonic descendants. These descendants, Cicero argues, have neglected the critical connection between philosophy and politics, between the philosopher and the orator. In Cicero's assessment this neglect of politics is not only politically deleterious it constitutes a fundamental breaking of faith with philosophy's origins in questions of the good life within the city.¹⁰² Indeed a recurring theme in Cicero's thought is the decline in philosophy, beginning with the Academy, which has allowed it to slip into empty dogmatism and the ivory tower study of subjects utterly without value to the functioning of the city. Equal in gravity to the charge that philosophy has lost its political engagement is the charge that consequently philosophy has lost its ability to defend itself against the un-philosophic city. In so accusing philosophy Cicero very much echoes the charge of Callicles in the *Gorgias*.¹⁰³ However the difference between the two charges again illustrates the unique character of Cicero's attempts to transform Greek philosophy into a complement to Roman teaching. According to Cicero the failure of the true philosopher to defend himself is not a personal or philosophical but a political failure. Cicero's charge is much graver than Callicles' ad hominem impugning of a Socrates "unable to help himself or save

¹⁰² Barlow, "The Education of Statemen in *De Republica*" *Polity*, (1987): 358.

¹⁰³ *Gorgias* 484c-e trans. W.C. Helmbold, (Indianapolis: Library of the Liberal Arts, 1952).

himself from the gravest dangers”¹⁰⁴ To Cicero the failure to render unto Rome the wisdom it requires is a form of passive injustice¹⁰⁵ a failure to provide the city with protection from the gravest dangers. The philosopher who is unable to prevent his execution or exile because of willful neglect of political virtues and in particular oratory, is not merely weak but also negligent in his civic duty.

Cicero’s limited indictment of Socrates and of Greek philosophy can be outlined roughly but adequately in the simple assertion that things that belonged together, wisdom and eloquence, the two essentials for wise rule, had been unwisely separated by Socrates and his intellectual descendents (*De Oratore* III.xvi.60).

Raymond DiLorenzo captures Cicero’s charge nicely writing

Unlike many Greeks before him, he[Socrates] thereby severed the heart (*cor*) from the tongue (*lingua*), the life of political service from the pursuit of knowledge, the teachers of speech from those of thought.¹⁰⁶

The heart and soul of Cicero’s civic education project entails the reconnection of philosophy to oratory, of tongue to heart, of the pursuit of knowledge to civic duty.

Cicero’s project of reconnection involves more than a reappraisal of the Platonic separation of eloquence from wisdom, a separation that he was interested in from his earliest writing and acknowledged even then was more complex than a simple repudiation of eloquence.¹⁰⁷ It also involves a fundamental reordering of the relationship between the political and the philosophic. This is the second theme that

¹⁰⁴ *Gorgias* 486b

¹⁰⁵ Martha Nussbaum, “Duties of Justice, Duties of Material Aid: Cicero’s Problematic Legacy”, *Journal of Political Philosophy* 8 (2000): 194-196.

¹⁰⁶ Raymond DiLorenzo “The Critique of Socrates in Cicero’s *De Oratore: Ornatus* and the Nature of Wisdom” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 11, (1978): 248.

¹⁰⁷ See Book 1 of *De Inventione*, undeniably part of Cicero’s juvenalia and a work about which Cicero’s feelings in later life were highly mixed, it clearly indicates an interest from his youth onward in the relation of oratory to philosophy.

informs all of Cicero's most important writing in political philosophy. Indeed in both *De Officiis* and in *De Re Publica* the idea that philosophy must serve the city appears early on not only as an abstract principle but in the very expression and form that Cicero's own inquiries take. Writing in his own voice at the beginning of *De Re Publica* Cicero argues

Furthermore, virtue is not some kind of knowledge to be possessed without using it: even if the intellectual possession of knowledge can be maintained without use, virtue consists entirely in its employment, moreover, its most important employment is the governance of states and the accomplishment in deeds rather than words or the things that philosophers talk about in their corners. (*De Re Publica* I.2)

The reference to philosophers 'in their corners' makes clear two things. Cicero is fully aware of the public/private division in Greek philosophy and Cicero is cognizant of the ambivalence between the good of the philosopher and the good of the city in Greek political philosophy. In the Roman milieu this ambiguity is condemned by Cicero not as innately false but as luxurious, something the declining Republic can ill-afford.

Consequently let us dismiss the master in questions, without any derogatory comment, as they are excellent fellows and happy in their belief in their own happiness, and only let us warn them to keep to themselves as a holy secret, though it may be extremely true, their doctrine that it is not the business of a wise man to take part in politics-for if they convince us and all our best men of the truth of this they themselves will not be able to live the life of leisure which is their ideal. (*De Oratore* I.xvii.64)¹⁰⁸

Cicero rejects the philosophical ambiguity concerning the relationship between philosophic wisdom and politics. In referring to philosophy's 'holy secret' he

¹⁰⁸ Of course this phrase contains a typically Platonic ambiguity inasmuch as it seems to say that the philosophical wise men may stay 'in their corners' as long as they do not recruit anymore 'wise men' to their cause, that if they remain silent while their way of life is passively unjust (see. *De Officiis* I.71) it may be acceptable. Cicero hints at the same ambiguity in the concluding pages of his epistle to Brutus *Orator*, when he refers to a kind of wise speechlessness, (*plerumque prudentes*). *Orator* 236.

suggests that the esoteric moment has passed or at least that its return may yet still be prevented. The tensions within and the challenges without simply preclude the kind of philosophic practice Cicero sees embodied in Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy.

While pragmatic political concerns, often of an immediate and pressing nature, are indubitably a substantial component of Cicero's political writing it would be a mistake to suggest that his rejection of the supremacy of philosophy over politics is purely pragmatic and/or contingent on the peculiar demands of Roman society. At the very heart of the critique is a deeply held conviction that in fact it is right and proper that politics and philosophy be re-ordered to give politics the place of primacy and render philosophy its handmaiden. According to Cicero duty must supersede inquiry.¹⁰⁹ This principle is made clear not only in terms of the modes of speech (public/private) in which philosophers speak but also the subjects to which they turn their attention. Duty not only supersedes inquiry it delineates the boundaries of that which is to be inquired into. Duty demands that inquiry concern itself with questions of human nature and political life, consequently Cicero finds real and significant fault in "some men [who] bestow excessive devotion and effort upon matters that are both abstruse and difficult, and unnecessary" (*De Officiis*, I.19). Here the relationship of the political to the philosophic, first adumbrated in Plato's *Laws* and *Republic* in complementary if not truly reciprocal terms, is reconsidered in terms of univocal authority. Cicero assigns the political not only sole power to bound the philosophic but furthermore to rule over it within those bounds.

¹⁰⁹ Walter Nicgorski, "Cicero's Focus: From the Best Regime to the Model Statesman" *Political Theory* 19 (1991): 233.

In reversing the order of the political and the philosophical Cicero makes a claim similar to the characterization of philosophy he offers in introducing Greek thought into the Roman context. The supersession of philosophical inquiry by civic duty, Cicero contends, is in fact the true and original intention of the pre-Socratic Attic thinkers.

But just as the old pontiffs owing to the vast number of sacrifices decided to have a Banquet Committee of three members, though they had themselves been appointed by Numa for the purpose among others of holding the great Sacrificial Banquet of the Games, so the followers of Socrates cut connexion with the practicing lawyers and detached these from the common title of philosophy, although the old masters had intended there to be a marvelous and close alliance between oratory and philosophy. (*De Oratore*, III.xix.73)

The passage above has two important elements. The first, as already indicated, is the idea that Cicero, in reconnecting political life to the philosophic declares himself engaged in a restorative act. Cicero's re-ordering is thus conceptualized as both historically justified and validated by the original intent of philosophy's founders.

The second element of Cicero's position is more subtly implied by his reference to the 'old pontiffs'. The 'old pontiffs' appointed by Numa to oversee sacrificial banquets had also violated the original intent, in this case Numean, by appointing a committee to oversee the banquets which by Cicero's account had become vast in number. On the surface the example of the old pontiffs is akin to the condition of philosophy to the extent that they both violated founding intent. On a more significant level the two stand akin in that over time both have engaged in surrender. The old pontiffs by delegating their authority to the Banquet Committee of three took an authority which once resided in their person, and placed it outside, lessening themselves and becoming dependent. In the same way, the separation of

lawyers from philosophy leaves them without the source of their original authority and makes them dependent on others. This is a recurring theme in Cicero's critique, the philosopher, unarmed with political savvy is unable to defend himself, the orator without philosophical learning is unable to ground his positions, to speak not only eloquently but prudently.¹¹⁰ The citizen grounded in both the law and its source in human nature and its study, philosophy (*De Legibus* I.17), is the only citizen truly politically competent and independent.

The final important element of the analogy between the founding of philosophy and the ancient Roman pontificate is the strong contention that virtue is inextricably connected with action. The pontificate in turning over their responsibilities had reduced their capacity to act virtuously. In similar fashion the disconnect between philosophy Cicero attributes to Socrates removes a way of being virtuous from possibility for the philosopher. According to Cicero virtues, and especially virtues of the mind primarily prudence, temperance, courage and justice, are fundamentally characterized by volition (*De Finibus* V.xiii.36). Dependent on volition these virtues succumb to an intellectual voluntarist principle. To the extent that the philosopher is unschooled in the political he cannot exercise these virtues or will their exercise in their most important incarnations. As such, the philosopher disconnected from the political stands morally diminished in much the same way the old pontiffs no longer able to perform their duties stand politically diminished. The orator, in the political realm, unschooled in the virtues of the philosopher stands equally diminished. Both the unphilosophic orator and the apolitical philosopher thus reduce their ability to contribute to the virtue of the city.

¹¹⁰ G.M.A Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) 170.

In the opening dramatic action of *De Re Publica* we see on the philosophical side how Cicero conceives of such a reconnection between philosophy and politics and of the necessity to turn those engaged in non-civic studies in philosophy out of their corners and into public life. The dialogue commences with Tubero, a young Roman citizen asking Scipio if he has witnessed the solar phenomena of the ‘two suns’,¹¹¹ (*De Re Publica* I.15). That the great general would be questioned not about military affairs, his African campaign or Roman politics is curious to say the least. Indeed more than curious young Tubero’s chosen path of inquiry reveals that his education, while clearly significant in the area of natural philosophy is profoundly wanting in the appropriate intellectual and civic virtues. His schooling has left him either in ignorance or in apathy towards the affairs of the city. His inquiry and therefore in all likelihood his conduct is uninformed by duty. Tubero asks this question “before the others arrive” (ibid) eventually Philus and then Laelius arrive. Laelius is the oldest among the interlocutors, Scipio’s friend and counsel, and the representative of the city.¹¹² Upon hearing the question Laelius demands “Are we so well informed about the things that concern our homes and the commonwealth that we are asking questions about what is going on in the sky?” (*De Re Publica* I.19) Laelius’ phrasing makes the admonishing tone of his question unmistakable. Laelius’ admonishment marks the beginning of the serious discussion of *De Re Publica* and from the perspective of civic education it captures the tone and temper of Cicero’s project at least as far as it concerns philosophy.

The Decline of Roman Education

¹¹¹ A sun dog or parhelion.

¹¹² Barlow, “The Education of Statesmen”, 363.

The necessary starting point for understanding Cicero's civic paideia is the introduction and transformation of Greek political thought. The second and equally important component of Cicero's project is the application of the substance of his new teaching to the structure of Roman education. In the application Cicero's argument is ever informed by the undeniable decline in the quality of Roman education and the obvious and dire consequences for the Republic such a decline heralded. Indeed it is very much amidst these consequences, both personal and political, that Cicero writes.

Perhaps the most obvious of these, the ostensible purpose of his writing *De Officiis*, is the education of his son Marcus. Marcus, along with his nephew Quintus, had been the special students and even the educational project of Cicero since they were young boys.¹¹³ Cicero had initially taken on the education of the boys as a result of his dissatisfaction with the quality of Roman schooling. However as the boys grew older their education inevitably involved professional teachers. Away from Cicero's tutelage first Quintus and then (albeit to a lesser extent) young Marcus turned against Cicero and towards Caesar. In the case of Quintus the turn was so complete as to lead him to side with Caesar against Pompey and possibly even to conspire against his uncle.¹¹⁴ For Cicero the corruption of his son and nephew painfully illustrated the moral and civic decline in both the Roman *iuvenes* and in their education. For a son to ponder turning against his father was outrage enough to the *mos maiorum*¹¹⁵ but to turn against Cicero in particular, who had done so much to

¹¹³ Gwynn, *Roman Education*, 80.

¹¹⁴ Fuhrmann, *Cicero and the Roman Republic*, 156.

¹¹⁵ Rawson, *Cicero*, 251.

protect and preserve the Republic must have added immeasurably to the father's fears concerning the decline of Roman schooling.

According to Cicero the decline in the appreciation of the *iuvenes* for the *mos maiorum*, as a result of their education, was of such grave political consequence because the old customs were the foundation on which Rome had been built.

Beginning Book V of *De Re Publica* Cicero quotes Ennius "The Roman state stands upon the morals and men of old" (*De Re Publica* V.1). To the extent that the teachers of Quintus and Marcus, of the Roman *iuvenes* in general, failed to pass on the lessons and narratives of the past they were undermining the very foundation of Republican government. Indeed Cicero concludes that this has already come to pass, the structures of the Republic remain but the morals and the history which filled and supported them have been allowed to bleed away leaving only the empty husk of the old Republic.

What remains of the morals of antiquity, upon which Ennius said that the Roman state stood? We see that they are so outworn in oblivion that they are not only not cherished but are now unknown. What am I to say about the men? The morals themselves have passed away through a shortage of men; and we must defend ourselves like people being tried for a capital crime. It is because of our own vices, not because of some bad luck, that we preserve the commonwealth in name alone but have long ago lost its substance. (*De Re Publica* V.2)

Cicero laments the passing of the morals of antiquity at the same time he hints at the means by which they may be recovered. The connection drawn between men and morals in this passage closely resembles the relationship between virtue and action that first appeared in Cicero's criticism of philosophy. The decline of Roman morals derives from the failure of those morals to be lived by men, they have passed away not because they were fatally flawed themselves but because they were inadequately

lived, they perished of a 'shortage of men.' As a result what is most needed is civic education, Roman restoration depends on the education of men back into the ways of life that nourish and sustain Republican government.

In light of Cicero's comments about the sources of Rome's decline his proposal is all the more audacious. Cicero essentially simultaneously advocates a return to the *mos maiorum* while introducing Greek innovation. Writing into new life representations of Cato the Elder, Crassus and Scipio alongside his first person and epistolary prose Cicero's project aims at refilling the frame of the Republic. His writing is not meant to be read and experienced by students as a new teaching but rather a new memorial or history.

I myself, whatever assistance I have given the republic, if I have indeed given any, came to public life trained and equipped by my teachers and their teachings. Not only when they are alive and present do such men educate and instruct their assiduous students; they continue the same task after death by means of their writings, which they leave as memorials. (*De Officiis*, I.155-156)

Cicero's writings, at their most public level, by portraying in conversation Scipio, Crassus, Scaevola and even Cicero himself seek to rectify the shortage of great men needed to teach the young. Scipio's voice is, by Cicero's efforts, heard again in the Forum. In his dialogues Cicero consciously builds memorials and constructs out of his imagination a community of men for the *iuvenes* to look to and from whom to draw a knowledge of duty and virtue.

The apparent novelty and peculiarity of Cicero's endeavor makes more sense once it is placed within the context of Roman education in the late Republic. In the early and middle periods of Roman antiquity most education, if not quite all, was acquired in the home, for sons it meant that their education was primarily a duty, a

deeply respected and serious duty, of the *paterfamilias*.¹¹⁶ However by the time of Cicero's own education teaching had moved almost entirely out of the home. The early stages of education, performed at the primary level by the *ludi magister* and the secondary education in reading and writing by the *grammaticus* were considered basic and relatively non-controversial elements in a boy's upbringing. Indeed the primary and secondary school teachers were held to perform a task so rudimentary that they earned little and were held in general contempt, regretfully a circumstance little changed by the ensuing millenia. The civic education of a young Roman man began simultaneously with his initiation into adulthood, the removal of his juvenile *toga praetexta* and its replacement with the *toga virilis* of manhood. This was followed by his formal presentation into the forum where he was to receive his formal training in law and public life, the *tirocinium fori*.¹¹⁷ It was at this stage of learning that Cicero believed the rot had truly set in.

Education in the Forum had been the crucible in which all the great leaders of the past had been formed, of his own schooling in the Forum Cicero asserts that

In fact public life was my education, and practical experience of the laws and institutions of the state and the custom of the country was my schoolmaster. (*De Oratore*, III.xx.74-75)¹¹⁸

Cicero looked upon the Forum of his adulthood and saw a much narrower and socially destructive form of education that had displaced the rounded education he had received from Crassus and Scaevola. In place of their broad learning the *tirocinium fori* increasingly consisted of showmanship and displays of clever

¹¹⁶ Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 232

¹¹⁷ Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 236

¹¹⁸ Of course Cicero typically overstates the case, compare his remarks in *Orator* 12 "I confess that whatever ability I possess as an orator comes, not from the workshops of the rhetoricians, but from the spacious grounds of the Academy."

language and flourish.¹¹⁹ The teachers of the past who had been educators but also lawyers and orators in their own right had been replaced by teachers trained solely in elegant and persuasive speech. Such teachers, utterly unschooled in the moral and political traditions of Rome, the *mos maiorum*, offered only the simulacra of a true education in oratory and therefore also only a simulacra of an education in civic virtue. Of them Cicero laments

My reason for dwelling on these points is because the whole of this department has been abandoned by the orators, who are the players that act real life, and has been taken over by the actors who only mimic reality. (*De Oratore* III.lvi.241)

For Cicero the consequences of such a teaching are dramatic and immediate. A narrow rhetorical training transforms the already deeply agonistic character of politics and law. What becomes explicitly valued is no longer the search for the best answer to a given problem or the correct verdict in a given proceeding but simple victory or even more narrowly domination, even if that success runs against the interest of the Republic. Recalling that Cicero placed politics, by duty's criteria, above philosophy we can see in his distress at the decline of the teaching of rhetoric echoes of both Socrates' critique of Gorgias' reckless rhetorical teaching (*Gorgias* 459b-461b) and the more serious charge against the irresponsible teaching of dialectic in the *Republic* (*Republic* 539a-b). Cicero cautions that like Plato's imprudent young dialecticians, ambitious young men armed with rhetoric absent proper schooling will likewise tear "with argument at those who happen to be near" (ibid). As Cicero cautions

If we bestow fluency of speech on persons devoid of those virtues, we shall not have made orators of them but shall have put weapons into the hands of madmen. (*De Oratore* III.xiv.55)

¹¹⁹ Stanley F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (London: Methuen & Co, 1977) 332.

Furthermore, the structure of Roman education means that this weapon is of a particularly dangerous and self-replicating sort. The education in public life in the Forum involved learning and practicing oratory in front of crowds of other young men. Here in institutionalized form Cicero finds a situation catastrophically close to that warned of by Plato (*Republic* 491e-492b) except now rather than being excoriated it has become praised and assessed as a crucial element of Roman civic education. Cicero himself admits in *Brutus* “the orator who inflames the court accomplishes far more than the one who merely instructs it” (*Brutus* 89).¹²⁰ This volatile mix could only deteriorate, and deteriorate dangerously, with the increased specialization and showmanship, at the expense of a broader civic education, of the teachers and practitioners of rhetoric.

Cicero condemns the teachers of rhetoric not only for the reckless and mercenary way in which they teach but also for the non-technical ‘social curriculum’ they offer. In place of an education in civic virtue, the *mos maiorum*, and the *artes liberales* Cicero accuses the Roman rhetoricians of teaching a politically and morally corrosive love of luxury and valorization of greed. This valorization Cicero describes as wholly indigenous to Roman society. Moving from war to a period of Imperial luxury the Romans had, in his estimation, succumbed to their own success.¹²¹ Granting this Cicero disagrees with those who believe that Rome’s virtues were predicated on constant military readiness.¹²² Instead Cicero believes that luxurious living and the legitimation of greed corrodes civil society in times of war *or* peace. Describing the situation Cicero quotes Themistocles.

¹²⁰ Cicero, *Brutus*, 89 quoted in Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome*, 85.

¹²¹ T.N. Mitchell, “Cicero on the moral crisis of the late Republic” *Hermathena* 136 (1984): 27.

¹²² Mitchell, “Cicero on the Moral Crisis,” 26.

‘I myself’, he replied, ‘prefer a man that lacks money to money that lacks a man.’ And yet, conduct has been corrupted and depraved by admiration for riches. What does someone else’s great wealth concern any one of us? It may perhaps help him who has it. It does not always even do that; but grant that it does. He may, it is true, be better provided; but how will he be more honorable? (*De Officiis* II.71)

Cicero’s intent is not merely to lament the corrosive consequences for Roman society of a social system that values luxury over industry and indulgence over duty. The graver consequences arise out of the structure of Roman education. The heart of Roman education involved the pairing of a young man with an older and established mentor, a person of stature. Much of a student’s learning consisted of emulation of his mentor and others in the Forum who the pupil came to admire. In essence the lives and lifestyles of those who were admired and valued formed a critical component of the ‘social curriculum’. As a result to some extent the teachers of rhetoric were in fact running behind the curve, they taught how to praise and become that which had already become praiseworthy in the eyes of the Roman citizenry. Cicero fears and acknowledges that students increasingly seek to emulate not the wise and the just, not those who best embody civic virtues, but the ostentation and opulence of the wealthy. This is the immanent side of the critique that young Tubero represents the transcendent aspect of. Tubero fails to honor the city and perform his duty because his gaze has been turned inappropriately skyward by philosophy, students of the decadent *tirocinim fori* suffered the opposite vice: they could no longer lift their gaze from the base and earthly pleasures. The emulation of wealth and luxury, like the pursuit of abstruse philosophy, precludes the emulation of true Roman custom and duty.

The Status of the Student

The single most significant difference between Cicero and Plato concerns the status of the student. In stark contrast to Plato Cicero posits what, on the surface at least, appears to be a fundamentally and even radically egalitarian account of the person.

If distorted habits and false opinions did not twist weak minds and bend them in any direction no one would be so like himself as all people would be like all others. Thus, whatever definition of a human being one adopts is equally valid for all human beings. (*De Legibus* I.30)

The equality Cicero is positing in this passage is peculiar for a number of reasons. First and most obvious to the modern reader is the language and imagery of what Christianity would describe as ‘fallenness’. This partially explains the importance of Cicero to the early Latin Church and in particular St. Augustine. To understand Cicero’s education proposals it is important to recognize that he is offering only a definitional and original equality. According to Cicero individuals are originally equal in some respects but that equality does not endure as they grow and mature. This is born out further by the definitional character of Cicero’s description. He repeatedly describes the qualities and faculties that human beings possess however he does not commit to these qualities and faculties being identical in proportion and expression across humanity. For Cicero man has most in common with man but that does not entail that the relevant shared characteristics are shared equally amongst men.¹²³

Cicero does not posit a deep and fundamental equality among individuals. Nevertheless he does contend that all human beings share certain key characteristics. First and foremost among these characteristics is a capacity for reason, a capacity that

¹²³ Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 1953) 135.

all human beings participate in. More importantly humans participate in them to an extent that is both morally and politically relevant. Again returning to *De Legibus* Cicero writes

All the same things are grasped by the senses; and the things that are impressed upon the mind, the rudiments of understanding which I mentioned before, are impressed similarly on all humans, and language, the interpreter of the mind, may differ in words but is identical in ideas. There is no person of any nation who cannot reach virtue with the aid of a guide. (*De Legibus* I.30)

A careful reading of this passage reveals a couple of key tenets of Cicero's theory of education and his conception of the person/pupil. First and foremost among these is the idea that every person contains the rudiments of understanding. This is a recurring theme in Cicero concerning not merely intellection but also virtue, describing Nature's gift of virtue to human's he writes "But of virtue itself she merely gave the germ and no more" (*De Finibus* V.xxi.60) Cicero's description of rudiment and seed fundamentally transform the task of the civic educator. By Cicero's account it appears as though all humans possess a basic substance or essence, out of which virtue and intellect are 'grown' by the educator.¹²⁴ Civic education continues to possess the element of discernment and discrimination present in Plato but it now gains a new role as much creative as revelatory. To bruise the allegory somewhat if Socrates was a midwife Cicero is a gardener. Cicero's civic education entails recognizing the seeds of ability and then growing them into a virtuous citizen and perhaps statesman.

At the same time discernment even discrimination remains key to civic education for Cicero. While he posits broad commonalities across the species he also

¹²⁴ Marianne C. Horowitz, "The Stoic Synthesis of Natural Law in Man: Four Themes" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35 (1974):14.

argues explicitly that within the species differences of ability especially as they concern politics are politically relevant.

For just as there are enormous bodily differences (for some, as we see, their strength is the speed that they can run, for others the might with which they wrestle: again, some have figures that are dignified, others that are graceful) similarly there are still greater differences in men's spirits. (*De Officiis* I.107)

According to Cicero each human being possesses a dual *persona*, on one hand they are deeply similar to all other human beings; the degree to which they share qualities make them more like each other than like any other animal, this is their species *persona*. On the other within the species there are tremendous differences, morally and politically relevant differences, these differences create the second mask or *persona* that of the individual (ibid). Unlike the noble lie concerning the three metals in Plato's *Republic*¹²⁵ Cicero places two things in tension commonality and difference, equality and hierarchy. Instead of different metals that connote profound differences across the citizenry Cicero describes a citizenry possessing the same metals distinguished only by the ratio of their personal admixture.

Statesmen and Teachers

As Rome expands the task of the Roman educator becomes ever more distant from that described by Plato in either *Republic* or *Laws*. The civic educator must increasingly divert his focus from those great in spirit, the statesman, and more and more towards the continually swelling ranks of those who are destined to be ruled. This concern, more than the degree of human difference or the nature of equality, defines the difference between Cicero and Plato. Cicero's educational goal in the

¹²⁵ *Republic* 415a-d. What this comparison admittedly overlooks is the different context and propositional status of Cicero's ontological claims compared to the place and status of the Noble Lie in *Republic*.

face of the collapsing Republic is to manage and transform a populace that is hostile not only to philosophy but to politics. As such Cicero's goal is educating the populace to be ruled as opposed to tyrannized.¹²⁶

Cicero acknowledges as much when his Scipio stands in favour of a mixed polity in the *De Re Publica*. The contrast between the republicanism of Africanus and the ambitions of Caesar could not be more starkly drawn. Scipio does not advocate a simple or crude equality, rather he suggests that republican virtue resides in the citizen's choosing to entrust themselves to the best men.

But if a free people chooses the men to whom to entrust itself (and it will choose the best people if it wants to be safe), then surely the safety of the citizens is found in the deliberations of the best men. That is particularly true because nature has made sure not only that men outstanding for virtue and courage rule over weaker people, but that the weaker people willingly obey the best. (*De Re Publica* I.51)

Scipio further contends that republics succeed or fail not on the judgments of the best men, for surely the judgments of best men must almost invariably be correct, but on the judgment of the populations who choose to entrust themselves to the great. Scipio implies that Republican government is inextricably predicated on the civic education of the ordinary citizen. If the popular character of the citizenry is incapable of discerning the best then the best will be unable to rule on their behalf. This fundamental Republican dilemma brings to mind the plight of the true doctor in the *Gorgias* and the stargazer in the *Republic*. However important differences, rooted in the status of the student/citizen, permit Cicero a degree of optimism absent in Plato. This optimism finds its source in Cicero's contention that all citizens possess the

¹²⁶ As a result to some extent Cicero's specifically political education is closer to Aristotle than to Plato, see *Politics* 1259.

rudiments of reason, an *inchoata intelligentia*.¹²⁷ Cicero genuinely believes that the citizenry can be taught a basic civic virtue which permits discernment of the best men and the entrusting of same with rule (*De Re Publica* V.8).

Cicero claims that he has learned all he knows from great men. Ciceronian civic paideia essentially offers the same advice. When the Republic thrived, when the frame was filled with a robust sense of Rome's history and a profound attachment to the *mos maiorum* emulation meant living and honoring the Roman virtues and in the case of the patriciate the particular virtues embodied in previous illustrious generations. Roman education, predicated on embodiment and emulation, sees in the absence of a Scipio or Crassus a lack of not only a leader but the politically salutary example crucial to education.

In Cicero's civic paideia the statesman is the captivating and illuminating example that draws the people upwards towards virtue. Cicero conceived of the ideal statesman's role in educating the citizenry as essentially straddling the two-fold *persona* of common faculties that differ only by degree between individuals. This is why in political oratory "the very cardinal sin is to depart from the language of everyday life, and the usage approved by the sense of the community" (*De Oratore* I.iii.8). Speaking in ordinary language allows statesman to communicate what he shares with the citizenry and convey their share in virtues that he more perfectly embodies.¹²⁸ By acting and speaking in a manner that conveys both commonality and superiority the statesman by Cicero's lights encourages emulation among the citizens similar to that first practiced when they don the *toga virilis* in the Forum.

¹²⁷ Horowitz "The Stoic Synthesis," 7.

¹²⁸ Gary Remer, "Political Oratory and Conversation" *Political Theory* 27(1999): 54.

Cicero places justice at the center of the nascent virtues that citizens are born with. For Cicero all humans are both born for justice and by nature “made to receive the knowledge of justice” (*De Legibus* I.33). For the ordinary citizen that reception of justice is a direct consequence of reflecting on the character and conduct of statesman.

If you view the course of past history, you can see that the state has been of the same character as its greatest men; and whatever moral alteration takes place in the leaders soon follows among the people. That is quite a lot closer to the truth than Plato’s opinion. He says that when musicians change their tunes the condition of states also changes; but I think that the character of states changes when there are changes in the life and habits of the nobles. (*De Legibus* III.31-32)

The significance of the leader to the character of the state and citizenry in Cicero cannot be overstated. Cicero presents much more than the prosaic assertion that wicked behavior invariably harms the state and just behavior usually benefits it. According to Cicero there is a politically salutary and even divine character to the life and actions of the just ruler. The character of these actions, resulting from both greatness of spirit and a full education attains to nothing less than. “the development of an incredible, divine, virtue” (*De Re Publica* III.5). In terms of the education of the ordinary citizen the development of this divine virtue in the statesman informs and illuminates their own (admittedly lesser) participation in virtue, that even within them their remains “a divine spark of genius and of mental capacity” (*De Re Publica* III.1) which duty demands they exercise in the interest of the city.¹²⁹

On the highest level this illuminative characteristic is the crucial pedagogic element in the encounter between the two Scipios. Throughout his nocturnal encounter with the his illustrious grandfather the younger Africanus continually turns

¹²⁹ Ferrary, “The Statesman and the Law” 65.

his face to the earth, to the quotidian concerns of his daily existence, and repeatedly Scipio who stands above it all chides him “I wonder how long will your mind will be fixed on the ground?” (*De Re Publica* VI.17) The older Scipio, in his personage as much as the context, draws the younger Africanus to the divine in himself, draws him upward.

Therefore look on high if you wish; contemplate this dwelling and eternal home; and do not give yourself to the words of the mob, and do not place your hope in human rewards: virtue itself by its own allurements should draw you towards true honor. (*De Re Publica* VI.25)

Scipio contemplating the divine in his ancestor is drawn towards it and away from the base. At first Scipio is dazzled by the apparition, he is dumbfounded and even frightened but eventually his gaze steadies upwards in contemplation of his divine ancestor. As he steadies the conversation turns to virtue, embodied in Scipio virtue itself draws the younger Africanus upwards. In Scipio this upwards is not towards the heavens, not yet at least (*De Re Publica* VI.26), but towards recognition of his divine spark. In the city the just ruler stands in the same position as the elder Scipio. Virtue, shining brightly in the statesman, is dimly shared however by the general citizenry like a common moral cognomen, it draws them towards duty and civic virtue.

A Shortage of Men

Cicero’s understanding of the education of the ordinary citizen seems on the surface to be relatively undemanding.¹³⁰ For the individual and ordinary citizens this may be a fair account of Cicero’s position. However returning attention to Cicero’s

¹³⁰ For an interpretation that sees citizen education as almost *completely* undemanding see Cary J. Nederman, “War, Peace and Republican Virtue: Patriotism and the Neglected Legacy of Cicero” in *Instilling Ethics* ed. Norma Thompson, (Lanham, Massachusetts: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).

initial diagnosis of the cause of the decline of civic virtue in Rome, ‘the shortage of men’, reveals necessary conditions for civic education that are actually quite demanding. Cicero’s contention that the civic virtue of the wider citizenry is dependent on men of stature whose conduct, comportment and character they seek to emulate necessarily implies that the state that lacks them will lack civic virtue. The generation of such men explains the peculiar exhortative character of Cicero’s epistolary prose, a character most apparent in his letters to the younger M. Cicero but also present in his letters to Brutus. The *De Officiis* in particular reads like an instruction manual for *both* civic virtue and political success. Indeed more than a millennia after his murder Cicero’s *De Officiis* was the most influential political text of Renaissance humanism, regarded as essential reading for leaders and more important perhaps, the ambitious who aspired to leadership. Its influence and import was further evidenced in 1465 when it became the first philosophic text of classical antiquity to be introduced to the printing press.¹³¹ More philosophically significant Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, while corrupting its message of duty and honour almost absolutely, employs the structure and style of *De Officiis*.¹³²

De Officiis like *The Prince* takes for granted the presence of young and ambitious men,¹³³ it begins with the assumption that the young Marcus and Quintus and their confreres are drawn to politics and assumes as the most urgent task drawing them to Republican politics and virtue and away from the thrall of Caesar and later Antony. The aim of Cicero’s writing is more than the simple vitiation of the reckless

¹³¹ A.A. Long “Cicero’s Politics” 214.

¹³² J. Jackson Barlow, “The Fox and the Lion: Machiavelli relies to Cicero,” *History of Political Thought* 20 (1999) 629.

¹³³ Ibid.

appeal of Caesarism, it aims at bringing up men who stand equal to Caesar in political stature and tower above him in virtue.

Cicero introduces the *artes liberales*,¹³⁴ history, literature, rhetoric, law and philosophy to young Marcus and others as being essential not to the character of their soul but rather to their political ambitions. The orator schooled in all these, Cicero contends, will stand above all others in the forum. The genuine orator must have knowledge of the “whole of the contents of the life of mankind” (*De Oratore* III.xvi.54-55). Cicero contends, notably in the early pages of *De Oratore*, that learned discourse, speech accompanied by education is the very source of political community.

To come, however, at length to the highest achievements of eloquence, what other power could have been strong enough either to gather scattered humanity into one place, or to lead it out of its brutish existence in the wilderness up to our present condition of civilization as men and as citizens, or after the establishment of social communities, to give shape to laws, tribunals and civic rights? (*De Oratore* I.viii.33-34)

To argue this position alone would not leave Cicero in a position significantly different from that of the rhetoricians he castigates as putting weapons into the hands of madmen. Oratory’s initial appeal to the young is rooted in ambition but the experience of an ideal oratorical education begins in the political but ends up transforming the entire person.¹³⁵

Cicero employs a unique brand of political and moral cognitivism, he contends that the study of the *artes liberales* and philosophy in particular is an

¹³⁴ Gwynn,, *Roman Education*, 118.

¹³⁵ The transformational character of the education of the Oratory is perhaps the single most striking difference between *De Officiis* and *Il Principe*. If anything Lorenzo unreconstructed passions are given opportunity for increase.

inherently salutary and civilizing¹³⁶ enterprise. To illustrate it is useful to quote in full a passage cited briefly above. In *De Re Publica* Scipio exhorts the young and intellectually apolitical and irresponsible Tubero to study politics.

Therefore we should consider those who have discussed the proper conduct of human life to be great men (as indeed they are); let them be considered learned men, masters of truth and virtue. But this too should be something deserving of considerable respect (as in fact it is): the study of civil society and the organization of peoples-whether it was discovered by men who had experience in the range and forms of commonwealth, or was the object of study in the leisure time of philosophers-a study which brings about in good minds now, as often in the past, the development of an incredible, divine virtue. (*De Re Publica* III.4)

Cicero contends here that the study of whole societies and forms of rule involves the intellect in a revelatory experience of a virtue already present, political philosophy is the sun towards which the nascent state of their virtue, the *elementia virtutis*,¹³⁷ grows. An education in political philosophy draws the ambitious pupil up to the vantage point shown to the younger Scipio in his dream encounter with the elder Africanus (*De Re Publica* VI.12). Being able to behold whole societies and contemplate their rise and fall inevitably places the student in a similar position to Scipio's. Education renders the student cognizant of immediate affairs but equally aware of eternity and the place of virtue and duty within the realm of permanence. In political life the student so elevated, standing in divine virtue halfway between the street and the transcendent becomes in his person an education in civic virtue for the ordinary citizen.

¹³⁶ By 'civilizing' is intended not banalities of comportment but the rendering of the pupil fit to live in the city, the *cives*.

¹³⁷ *De Finibus* V.xxi.59 quoted Horowitz, "The Stoic Synthesis," 14.

Cicero's introduction of Greek thought into the Roman context was not intended to restore the *mos maiorum* to their original state. Cicero knew that much of Rome's rustic founding ideals had either disappeared or ceased to appeal to ambitious young men. The introduction of Greek thought, carefully transformed and rendered into Latin, was meant to appeal to young men after the type of Tubero or his own son Marcus. Cicero appeals initially to their shared enthusiasm both for novelty and things Greek hoping and believing that ultimately it will turn them towards civic virtue and duty and raise some select few to the stature of the Scipii.

As I have argued above this hope and teaching for the few was intended by Cicero to generate a similarly salutary civic paidiea 'once removed' for the ordinary Roman citizen. The instructional nature of Cicero's writing is intended to serve a two-fold purpose reflective of his dual *personae* conception of the person. For the individuals who are distinct in their greatness of spirit Cicero's political thought draws them upwards and aims to create in them a new class of great men, equal in stature to those who formerly peopled the Republic living and thereby sustaining its virtues. To those who share the common personae, distinguished not from one another, a whole containing spirit but not in great quantity, possessing lesser amounts of both *inchoata intelligentia* and *elementia virtutis* the new class of Republican men of stature that Cicero's 'textbooks' seek to generate will provide the sun towards which they are to grow and aspire. In the Dream of Scipio this is the secondary civic import of the younger Africanus' location. As Scipio stands above the expanse of the Roman world (*De Re Publica* VI.21) he not only looks down, others implicitly look up. In the Roman street men of Scipio's stature draw up the citizenry as surely as

Scipio is drawn up by his distinguished grandfather. Scipio aspires to his share in the honorific *Africanus*, Cicero hopes the young Marcus and others, in following his teaching and rescuing the Republic, will encourage the citizenry to equally aspire to their share in the Republican honorific *Romanus*.

Chapter Three: Locke's Education for Ordinary Life and Liberal Citizenship

Introduction

In tracing the course of a specific incarnation of civic education from the ancients through to modernity as much must inevitably be overlooked as emphasized. As such any rejoining of the debate at a point defined as the beginning of a distinctly modern approach to civic education invariably has a tinge of the arbitrary to it. Even so there are compelling reasons to mark Locke's contribution as the first conspicuously modern theory of civic education, nothing less than a "Lockean Revolution in Education."¹³⁸

The revolutionary nature of Locke's educational writings reveals itself as much in its contrast with Locke's contemporaries as with the classical tradition. The former points most persuasively to Locke's revolutionary primacy. Of these contemporaries the most prominent and explicitly educational writing is inarguably Milton's pamphlet *Of Education*. A mere fifty years before the publication of Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*¹³⁹ Milton's pamphlet embraced key and defining elements of the classical vision of education both in structure and substance. In particular a formal institution and a scrupulous attention to curriculum stand out in *Of Education* as the twin fundamentals of education.¹⁴⁰ Of particular import to Milton and connecting him to the classical tradition is the public nature of the university, to be located "in every city throughout the land."¹⁴¹ By placing the

¹³⁸ Lorraine Pangle and Thomas Pangle, *The Learning of Liberty* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993) 54.

¹³⁹ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* in *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. James Axtell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

¹⁴⁰ John Milton, "Of Education" in *Areopagitica and Of Education*, ed. George H. Sabine, (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1951).

¹⁴¹ Milton, "Of Education" 63.

concern for and location of civic education in the public sphere Milton conspicuously connects himself to the ancient tradition of co-locating institution and subject. On the other hand Locke, whose *Some Thoughts* shares Milton's epistolary structure, commences his discussion by removing civic education from the city.

The well education of their children is so much the duty and concern of parents, and the welfare and prosperity of the nation so much depends on it, that I would have everyone lay it seriously to heart and, after having well examined and distinguished what fancy, custom, or reason advises in the case, set his helping hand to promote everywhere that way of training up youth with regard to their several conditions which is the easiest, shortest, and likeliest to produce virtuous, useful, and able men in their distinct callings.¹⁴²

What precipitates this change? Without attempting a historical discussion far beyond the modest means of this chapter I will simply assert that what occurred was a fundamental re-orientation of the state facilitated in significant part by Hobbes and Machiavelli.¹⁴³ This re-orientation of the state moved it away from a common seeking after communal forms of the good in political life and transformed it into an institution for the management of conflict and the protection of private interest or 'commodious living.'¹⁴⁴ The shift from ancient to modern in political thought can thus be characterized, at least, in terms of the ends of political community, as a profound lowering of horizons.¹⁴⁵ For Locke the clearest expression of this transformation of the ends of the state is found in his *Two Treatises of Government*.

The great and *chief end* therefore, of Mens [sic] uniting into Commonwealths, and putting themselves under Government, *is the preservation of their Property*.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Locke, *Some Thoughts*, p. 9

¹⁴³ Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 189.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ The divide between ancient and modern in educational theory, as this chapter will assert, is much more ambiguous.

¹⁴⁶ John Locke *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994) II.124.

This conception of the fundamental sources of political community twice prohibits a system of public education in civic virtue. First and foremost the constraints of limited government that Locke's definition entails permit little room for a common educational system. More importantly a state whose *raison d'être* is so diminished is not merely ill suited to provide for public institutions, its constitution and intention render it incapable of generating a genuinely salutary teaching on civic virtue.

How far traveled from the classical tradition Locke's vision of the pedagogic element in law, and in particular how far traveled from Plato and Cicero, is starkly displayed in *A Letter Concerning Toleration*.

Laws provide, as much as is possible, that the Goods and Health of Subjects be not injured by the Fraud or Violence of others; they do not guard them from the Negligence or Ill husbandry of the Possessors themselves. No man can be forced to be Rich or Healthful, whether he will or no. Nay God himself will not save men against their wills.¹⁴⁷

The assertion here is two-fold, it speaks both to the nature of the student and the efficacy of law. Breaking with the ancient tradition in both the sole power and legitimacy of the latter and the seeming weakness of the former Locke can easily be misread in his explicitly political works as being unconcerned with education aimed at civic virtue.¹⁴⁸ The breadth of the divide between Locke and the classical tradition in the political works does conceal some deep (albeit partial) sympathies in his educational writings. In particular Locke's pedagogy, with its subtly adumbrated and

¹⁴⁷ John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1983) 35.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas Pangle observes the ease with which Locke facilitates this misreading in *Two Treatises of Government* wherein the terms morality, morals, moral virtue and ethics never appear. Thomas Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 204.

carefully dispersed emphasis on the nature of the student, sits closer to Cicero and Plato than the more crudely and obviously sympathetic Milton.¹⁴⁹

Locke denies education is within the legitimate purview of government because all education, he rightly reasons, is to some degree moral education and therefore the sole legitimate concern of parents.¹⁵⁰ This prohibition does not mean that education and even moral education does not directly affect or concern the political. The concerns raised by Locke in *A Letter Concerning Toleration* regarding the citizenship status of atheists point powerfully towards the legitimate concern, if not authority, that the public sphere has with virtue.¹⁵¹ The transfer of legitimate authority from the public to private in education differs materially from the transformation of politics that liberalism demands. The shift in location in education, unlike the reduction in the legitimate purview of politics, implies no diminution in the social or political significance of education.

Turning from the first and *prima facie* most revolutionary aspect of Locke's educational theory to an uncovering of the deep sympathies and deeper divisions between Locke and the classical tradition presents unique challenges to the reader. Locke's teaching on education is deliberately and carefully dispersed across several key works. To come to terms with Locke's vision of education the first task is to recognize its breadth. Locke's philosophy of education, like his political thought, discourages by its breadth,¹⁵² comprehending epistemology, ontology, pedagogy and

¹⁴⁹ Contrast Milton's casual description of the pupil's nature and lesson in *Of Education* 62 with the prudent discrimination of Plato *Republic* 535c and Cicero *De Oratore* III.xiv.55.

¹⁵⁰ Pangle and Pangle, *Learning of Liberty*, 55.

¹⁵¹ Locke, *Letter*, 51.

¹⁵² John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 203.

political philosophy. Further as the first philosopher to write a lengthy text whose sole subject is education Locke tempts us to forget that all of his major works allude to education, that in concord with the classical tradition he sees education and politics as equiprimordial. Acknowledging Locke's method and breadth this modest treatment of Locke's conception of civic education begins with ontology and epistemology, with the *tabula rasa*. It moves from the character of human being and knowing to the scope of reason and rationality and ends with the education of the citizen.

The Teaching of the Tabula Rasa

Locke is as concerned with education in virtue and in civic virtue as the ancients.¹⁵³ Locke most visibly departs from the classical tradition in the assignation of responsibility for this education to the private sphere and in particular to parents. On the surface this difference, explained handily by Locke's liberal commitments, pales in comparison to the profound differences between ancient and modern concerning the nature of the student and consequently the potential of education. The common concern for virtue hints at a basic (albeit somewhat limited) agreement about the nature of education, the divergence concerns the means of education. Concerning the nature of the pupil the opposite condition inheres. Locke quietly accepts the cornerstone of ancient civic pedagogy: education must be suited to the nature of the student; at the same time Locke rejects almost completely the ancient account of that nature.

¹⁵³ This is not to suggest that the specific teaching regarding virtue is the same, merely that both teachings are concerned with the question of virtue.

Locke begins *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* with what appears to be a propitious declaration.

I may say that of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education. 'Tis that which makes the great difference in mankind.¹⁵⁴

This passage, despite its clear recollection of Cicero,¹⁵⁵ was taken to mean that education held out the possibility of overcoming what had previously been perceived to be the pupil's intractable if not wholly irremediable nature. Locke's assertion about education took on this character when it was placed in clumsy conjunction with his description of the person as initially a *tabula rasa*. This depiction, famously offered in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*,¹⁵⁶ appeared to imply that to the extent that humans were uniformly 'blank' at the outset our ability to take characters through education must be similarly uniform. The simple equation, offered by many English writers in the Eighteenth Century,¹⁵⁷ posited both fundamental equality and perfectibility to be the consequence of Locke's *tabula rasa*. Enthusiasm for this view expressed itself most hysterically in Lord Chesterfield's declaration that

A drayman is probably born with as good organs as Milton, Locke, or Newton; but by culture, they are much more above him than he is above his horse.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec.1.

¹⁵⁵ Cicero's declaration differs not in the account of the pupil but in the pessimistic tone only. "If distorted habits and false opinions did not twist weak minds and bend them in any direction no would be so like himself as all people would be like all others. Thus, whatever definition of a human being one adopts is equally valid for all human beings." (*De Legibus* I.30).

¹⁵⁶ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) II.i.2.

¹⁵⁷ This simplistic reading of the *tabula rasa* is not limited to the past, see David M. Post, "Jeffersonian Revisions of Locke" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 47, (1986): 149.

¹⁵⁸ *Letters Written by Lord Chesterfield to his Son*, quoted in W.M. Spellman, *John Locke and the Problem of Depravity*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 3.

Of course exponents of this view faced the daunting question of authorial intent, Locke never explicitly connects his declaration, or for that matter any other proposition or portion of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* with *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.¹⁵⁹ This is not to suggest that no connection exists, indeed a profound connection undeniably exists, it is not however the connection that a simplistic combination of Locke's recognition of the import of education to character and the *tabula rasa* might imply. This is most apparent in Locke's *Some Thoughts*, wherein his pedagogical counsel is not directed at the population as a whole, and most certainly not to draymen, rather it aims to teach gentlemen, or rather the sons of gentlemen.¹⁶⁰ If the enthusiasms of the Eighteenth century represented an accurate appraisal of the *Essay* and its relation to *Some Thoughts* then at the very least Locke could be accused of failing to follow through his thought to its logical, and apparently obvious, conclusion. However, a closer reading of both the relevant passages in the *Essay* and their true correlates in *Some Thoughts* reveals Locke's modest estimation of the potential of education and his equally restrained belief in the malleability of the person.

The central element of Locke's account of the person as *tabula rasa* is his critique of innate ideas. Locke rejects the claim that any of our beliefs about justice or the good indeed that any ideas at all are present prior to education or experience. In so contending Locke breaks immediately and definitively with Cicero, remarkable considering the singular prevalence of Cicero in Locke's considerations of education. Cicero contends that man is that unique being possessed of reason, and "born for

¹⁵⁹ J.J. Chambliss, "Reason, Conduct, and Revelation in the Educational Theory of Locke, Watts, and Burgh," *Educational Theory* 26 (Fall 1976): 376.

¹⁶⁰ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 6.

Justice.”¹⁶¹ Ciceronian civic education aims to draw out of the pupil the full potential for justice lying nascent within. Locke’s *tabula rasa* further rejects, with equal zeal, the Christian salvific conception of education. Broadly put Christian thinkers located the role of education in salvation and in mitigating, as much as our fallen nature allowed, the tendency to sin. Milton’s poignant phrase in *Of Education* captures this account of the relation of an innate nature to education.

The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him to be like Him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection.¹⁶²

Of course Locke’s hostility to any Adamic legacy, positive or negative, political or educational is well documented. Locke’s central concern, in education if not in politics, is the nature of the subject and not the nature of rule. Investigating the nature of the subject Locke describes no tendency towards good or evil. In the absence of a justice directed or a fallen nature Locke also fails to discern within the person any genuinely innate ideas concerning fundamental questions of good and evil. In place of innate nature and notion Locke finds only experience. Experience, including education, prints itself upon the blank page of the person. The mistaken belief in innate ideas is Locke’s first nod in the *Essay* to the import of education for character. Close examination, Locke contends, reveals innate ideas as in fact our first lessons, lessons learned so early their teaching precedes the age of recollection. Locke concludes that the forgotten first lessons and not any innate nature is the true source

¹⁶¹ Cicero, *De Legibus* I.x.28.

¹⁶² Milton, *Of Education*, 59.

of our first beliefs “come by these means, to have the reputation of unquestionable, self-evident and innate Truths.”¹⁶³

The *tabula rasa* unravels the clean borders of education; it opens up and unframes education presenting a range of possibility previously unrecognized. Locke’s contention simply obliterates the notion that education is meant either to counter or draw out the fundamental character of the pupil and by extension the citizen.¹⁶⁴ In terms of civic education the argument against innate ideas in the *Essay* replicates for the citizen’s conception of place and relation to authority the argument against divine right offered in the first of the *Two Treatises*. The ruler is no more naturally endowed with a patriarchal nature and entitlement than the subject is endowed with a nature innately inclined to accept and succumb to that rule. In place of an innate citizen identity there is a citizen identity founded on custom and education.¹⁶⁵ Locke takes his new understanding of the sources of personal identity and expands it to countenance its civic counterpart. Citizen identity, founded on education and custom, serves Locke as both public foil and private foundation for his civic pedagogy.

The Reintroduction of Nature & the Philosophic Student

Locke’s contention that human beings possess a common original status as *tabulae rasa* opens up the possibilities both for education and for understanding the differences between individuals within society. At first glance Locke appears to suggest that the obvious differences between people are to be attributed primarily to

¹⁶³ Locke, *Essay*, I.iii.22

¹⁶⁴ James Tully, “Governing Conduct” in *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Edmund Leites (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 21.

¹⁶⁵ Locke, *Two Treatises*, II.101

education and custom as opposed to reflecting differences in character of ability. This reading injects a near fatal dose of contingency into structures of social difference and rank and their reflection in the structure and substance of education. Primordial blankness, the universal experience of the world as completely and perfectly new to each new life,¹⁶⁶ seems to entail fundamental and original equality amongst humans. However this position is tenable only on the crude equation of innate ideas with innate ability, an equation absent in Locke. Indeed within Locke's *Essay, Some Thoughts Concerning Education, On the Conduct of the Understanding* and the *Two Treatises* there are repeated references not merely to the differences emerging out of education and custom but also differences attributed to nature and regarded as independent of, indeed to some extent even unaffected by, education. At the high end of ability Locke subtly alludes in the final pages of *Some Thoughts* to the existence of a class of students apart from the ordinary gentlemen, the student born with a nature and inclination open to philosophy. At the bottom end Locke coarsely acknowledges in the *Two Treatises* the existence of those whose nature defeats even the most basic and salutary effects of education, the "*lunaticks and ideots*."¹⁶⁷

Locke's contention does not necessarily entail a fundamental equality among human beings, however it does entail more than the simple eliding of equality into sociality, the *simile simili gaudet* attributed to Cicero.¹⁶⁸ Between these two positions Locke concludes that the character of human equality is understood best in comparison with other species. Human beings resemble each other to a degree far

¹⁶⁶ Peter Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatises of Government*, by John Locke, ed. Peter Laslett, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 84.

¹⁶⁷ Locke, *Two Treatises*, II.60.

¹⁶⁸ Strauss, *Natural Right*, 135.

beyond any cross-species comparison. Nonetheless Locke contends that a general conspecificity need not entail uniformity of ability, to the contrary in discussing the extent of our similarity Locke admits of a diversity of ability within the species great enough to bring into question its very boundaries.

And yet, I think, I may say, that the certain Boundaries of that *Species*, are so far from being determined, and the precise number of simple *Ideas*, which make the nominal Essence, so far from being settled, and perfectly known, that very material doubts may still arise about it: And I imagine none of the Definitions of the word *Man*, which we yet have, nor Descriptions of that sort of Animal, are so perfect and exact, as to satisfie a considerate inquisitive Person;¹⁶⁹

According to Locke the breadth of difference between individuals is so great even at birth, the moment of most perfect ‘blankness’, that controversies about whom to baptize are not uncommon.¹⁷⁰ Locke’s inclusion of such controversies indicates an assertion that the simple commonality of qualities across the species is accompanied by a vast diversity in degree and extent to which individuals possess these qualities. Indeed the degree of difference is so great that religious and therefore moral and potentially political decisions are affected.

Locke’s description of the differences across the human species and the inadequacy of any single and simple definition to comprehend humanity strikes an immediate and jarring note when compared with his declaration of just such a definition in the *Two Treatises*. Far from interrogating the relatively fine points surrounding the boundaries of the species Locke writes of the political characteristics of the species with a bluntness, surety and resolute simplicity of precisely the sort eschewed in the *Essay*.

¹⁶⁹ Locke, *Essay*, III.vi.27.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

The *state of nature* has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all *equal and independent*, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.¹⁷¹

The problems for education with this passage are two-fold. First and foremost, the passage indicates that any person “who will but consult it” appears to have reason adequate enough to discern the law of nature. The radical egalitarianism of Locke’s phrasing could be disqualified by the practical limitations in the distribution of education and the enduring power of both custom and prejudice save that the law of nature is knowable in the state of nature and therefore *independently* of education. Given Locke’s assessment of natural reason it is hard to imagine how the species boundaries of creatures endowed with such a degree of reason could ever be contentious. Set alone it presents real barriers, perhaps insuperable, to offering a coherent account of Lockean pedagogy. However, placed in the larger context of Locke’s writing on both the law of nature and education the apparent simplicity and inter-textual contradiction of the declarations in the *Two Treatises* and the *Essay* points to the stratified complexity of Locke’s conception of the character of reason, the range of human knowing and the discriminating character of education.¹⁷²

The apparent conflict between the two texts is resolved by considering the *Essay* and the *Two Treatises* not in isolation but as parts of a larger whole. The difficulty of bringing into agreement the various positions within the Lockean corpus, when each is considered in isolation, reveals the deeper sympathies in pedagogy and literary method between Locke and the ancients that his break with them over the

¹⁷¹ John Locke, *Two Treatises*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) II. 6.

¹⁷² Leo Strauss, “Locke’s Doctrine of Natural Law,” in *What is Political Philosophy?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 206.

tabula rasa conceals. Reading Locke's work in close combination the specific and surface intentions of each particular text drop into the background and a more complex and broader vision emerges, it is the very presence of this emergent perspective that first reveals Locke's deeper sympathies with the classical tradition in education. The distribution of ideas across Locke's writing, the necessity of encountering all of them in order to get a clearer picture of each, amounts to a Lockean intellectual 'labour theory of value'¹⁷³ consonant with the same literary and pedagogic practices in the dialogues of Plato and Cicero.

To illustrate this consonance even a peremptory inter-textual examination of the law of nature, knowledge of which was considered readily available to almost all according to the *Two Treatises*, provides a conspicuous path mark. Turning to the *Essay* Locke's explicitly epistemological and profoundly skeptical declarations concerning knowledge of natural law and his further rejection of any but the weakest conception of moral cognitivism leave little room for the claims of the *Two Treatises*.¹⁷⁴ In even greater contrast Locke fails even to mention the question of a law of nature anywhere in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*.¹⁷⁵ However while a law of nature is conspicuously absent the *Thoughts* does point out, for the potential Lockean pedagogue, the ideally careful and intended reader, an alternative understanding of his declaration in *Two Treatises*. Instead of a claim for natural moral cognitivism Locke's declaration, read through the *Thoughts*, is transformed from independent political and philosophic declaration into pedagogic artifact. It is not a claim about human nature but an example of how to teach it.

¹⁷³ Leon Craig, *The War Lover*, xxxii.

¹⁷⁴ Locke, *Essay*, I.iii.6, I.iii.13, and II.xxvii.6.

¹⁷⁵ Nathan Tarcov, *Locke's Education for Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 93.

I grant that good and evil, *reward and punishment*, are the only motives to a rational creature; these are the spur and reins whereby all mankind are set on work and guided, and therefore they are to be made use of to children too. For I advise their parents and governors always to carry this in their minds, that children are to be treated as rational creatures.¹⁷⁶

This passage, when read in conjunction with the *Essay* and the *Two Treatises*, locates a reconciliation of the surface incompatibility. Locke's declaration in the *Second Treatise* is informed as a political lesson by the need to treat the pupil *as rational*, the opening remarks concerning reward and punishment, and the remarkable equine imagery inform the teacher of the true substance of that teaching.¹⁷⁷ The very structure of Locke's writing presents a tacit rejection of a universal and identical education for all. Instead the dispersed and layered nature of Locke's educational thought provides ample evidence in its intricate structure that Locke fashioned the teaching in his writings to educate different people differently. Locke's method simultaneously reveals reciprocal claims about human nature and education: The degree to which education is differentiated among pupils conforms to the presence of difference among pupils.

Beyond the perhaps 'too esoteric by half' inter-textual justification for an approach to education that recognized gradations of intellect Locke's own explicit declarations in both the *Two Treatises* and *Some Thoughts* acknowledge the existence of remarkable individuals who by the force of their intellect escape the pedagogical

¹⁷⁶ Locke, *Thoughts*, sec. 54.

¹⁷⁷ There is an awkward and poignant contrariety in seeing the equine imagery unwittingly echoed in the words of Thomas Jefferson arguably Locke's greatest political pupil. Writing on the impending 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, "The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favoured few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the Grace of God." Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Peter Weightman" quoted in Michael Zuckert, *The Natural Rights Republic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996) 41.

reductio of identifying the teacher of the first teacher. Such individuals, not only escape this dilemma but provide a further justification for considering Locke's pedagogy as prudently discriminating between students concerning both the structure and substance of education.

And therefore, though perhaps at first, (as shall be shewed more at large hereafter in the following part of this discourse) some one good and excellent man having got a prehemineny amongst the rest, had this deference paid to his goodness and virtue, as to a kind of natural authority, that the chief rule, with arbitration of their differences devolved into his hands, without any other caution but the assurance they had of his uprightness and wisdom;¹⁷⁸

Locke clearly rejects the idea, first stated at the outset of the second of the *Two Treatises*, that almost all can know and be governed by the law of nature. Indeed he suggests that quite to the contrary the very possibility of civil society rests on the initial emergence of the gifted few able to discern it on behalf of those who cannot possess his superior wisdom.¹⁷⁹

The distinction that Locke adumbrates politically concerning the founding of civil society in the *Two Treatises* could potentially be ignored if the recognition of such profound differences in intellect were restricted to great men and the rarified and mostly historic world of foundational politics. However in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* Locke explicitly provides room for the education of the philosophic nature, for the teaching of the student capable of superior wisdom. Late in *Some Thoughts*, hinting at both the appropriate timing of the education and the necessary care needed to discern the philosophic student, Locke begins to account for this teaching of a nature set apart. Neither custom nor education, rather the nature of

¹⁷⁸ Locke, *Two Treatises*, II. 94.

¹⁷⁹ Hans Aarslef, "The State of Nature and the Nature of Man in Locke" in *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives*, ed. John Yolton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 136.

the student alone determines whether or not he is suited to a philosophic education. Dividing students by dividing subjects Locke distinguishes philosophy from history, and in so doing separates philosophic from civic education.

In history the order of time should govern, in philosophical inquiries that of nature, which in all progression is to go from the place one is then in to that which joins and lies next to it; and so it is in the mind, from the knowledge it stands possessed of already, to that which lies next and is coherent to it, and so on to what it aims at, by the simplest and most uncompounded parts it can divide matter into.¹⁸⁰

The passage is telling beyond the clear indication that philosophical study is explicitly contingent on nature. Locke characterizes education as a linear process. The pupil progresses through stages of interconnected learning, a progress halted at the moment when each pupil, respectively, reaches their intellectual limits. Such a limit is reached when the matter inquired into ceases to be ‘coherent’ to them. Locke phrases it in *Concerning Reading and Study* as a hard law of intellection “The extent of our knowledge cannot exceed the extent of our ideas.”¹⁸¹ Earlier in the same section of *Some Thoughts* Locke presents this conception of learning, and in particular of philosophical learning, in a discussion of the education of young gentlemen in Greek. The Greek language, Locke opines, is the language of the scholar and not therefore his concern in a work ostensibly about the education of young gentlemen. Nonetheless Locke continues on to describe the unique qualities of both the subject and its student, in more than passing he admits

When he comes to be a man, if he has a mind to carry his studies farther and look into the *Greek* learning, he will then easily get that tongue himself; and if he has not that inclination, his learning of it under a tutor will be but lost labour, and much of his time and pains

¹⁸⁰ Locke, *Thoughts*, sec. 195

¹⁸¹ John Locke, “Concerning Reading and Study” in *Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. James Axtell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968) 399.

spent in that which will be neglected and thrown away as soon as he is at liberty.¹⁸²

Locke began the section with a discussion dedicated simply to the learning of the Greek language but slips almost unnoticeably into a discussion of the ‘Greek learning.’ Locke further hints at the true nature of the intended pupil of *Some Thoughts* and the difference between pupils when he remarks that Greek learning is best begun in manhood. Greek learning, philosophy, is thus set chronologically outside the bounds of the text, which famously ends when the young student, gets ‘within the view of matrimony.’¹⁸³

The discussion of philosophic education in *Some Thoughts* is peculiar in its lack of substance and rigor. Locke dedicates multiple paragraphs to the salutary quality of break of day bowel movements but the highest education is spoken of only in passing or by inference. Philosophic education is education *after* the education Locke is primarily concerned with in *Some Thoughts* is concluded. Philosophic education, for whomever it is suited, is not to be found in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. For the philosophic young gentleman Locke’s education is only incompletely and perhaps propaedeutically suited. For the philosophic nature Locke’s *Thoughts* is incomplete, an invitation elsewhere, to the *Essay* and a later return to the *Two Treatises* perhaps. For the non-philosophic however *Some Thoughts* is the civic education suited to their nature, it is a second order education, participating incompletely in reason but fully in civic virtue. Its character further confirms that

¹⁸² Locke, *Thoughts*, sec. 195.

¹⁸³ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, 215.

education is predicated on inclination and nature and that its absence renders any attempt to teach 'against the grain' futile.¹⁸⁴

Civic Education and the Non-Philosophic Citizen

By tracing in outline Locke's philosophic education the discrete existence of a non-philosophic education emerges in relief. This education, a specifically and solely civic education, is as determined in its content as the philosophic education by the nature of the pupil. However it is at this point that the similarities between the education of the two types of pupils ends. Locke's civic education is marked in its methodology by three key elements, a full recognition of the role of habit and experience in civic education, a rejection of abstract learning and an acknowledgement of a range of aptitude among students. From this tripartite foundation Locke shapes a conception of civic education aimed at constructing a citizen who is well fitted for civic life.

The necessary starting point in a discussion of the education of the non-philosophic citizen is Locke's terrible declaration at the end of *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. The working classes, Locke appears to contend, are the polar opposite of the philosophic citizen, incapable of reason they may not arrive at true knowledge, gained through careful deduction.

And you may as soon hope to have all the day-labourers and tradesmen, spinsters and dairymaids, perfect mathematicians, as to have them perfect in ethics this way: hearing plain commands, is the

¹⁸⁴ Of course Locke differs dramatically from Cicero and Plato in arguing that such an education may be futile and pointless but not explicitly concluding that it is dangerous, barefaced and unremitting ignorance and not an incomplete and imperfect schooling is for Locke a much greater threat to civil society.

sure and only course to bring them to obedience and practice. The greatest part cannot know, and therefore they must believe.¹⁸⁵

Locke's declaration loses a great deal of its acidity once the outlines of the education of the philosophic pupil have been discovered. However in *The Theory of Possessive Individualism* C.B. Macpherson seizes upon this passage to conclude that Locke endorses a two-tiered and class based conception of human reason. Macpherson contends that Locke held the labouring classes as a specific caste apart.

But whether by their own fault or not, members of the labouring class did not have, could not be expected to have, and were not entitled to have, full membership in political society: they did not and could not live a fully rational life.

There are ample citations within Locke to support this view of the labouring class's ability¹⁸⁶ however in order for Macpherson's assertion to be correct there must be a corresponding assertion that the gentlemanly class can be, *as a class*, credited with a fully rational life. More precisely still, beyond an assumed class-wide rationality Locke must contend that full rationality is a *sine qua non* of civic life. This is a much more difficult case to make. Macpherson's argument makes clear the need to discover precisely whose education Locke is describing in *Some Thoughts*. The discussion above concerning the philosophic student hopefully served to illustrate that the primary division between students, between the philosophic and the civic nature, even occurring within the pages of a text on the education of the gentlemanly classes, precludes at least the primacy of the class division that Macpherson maintains. Instead the division is not between rich and poor but between philosophic and simply

¹⁸⁵ John Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, ed. L.T. Ramsey (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958) 67.

¹⁸⁶ For instance, Locke, *Essay* IV.xx.2

civic natures. Turning now to the education of the non-philosophic character two complementary elements emerge. First the new centrality of character and difference within the civic educational cohort and second Locke's subtle and intricate assessment of the limited role of reason in civic life.

There is a clear division in the intellectual capacity of the philosophic versus non-philosophic student, a corresponding distinction *within* the non-philosophic civic cohort is much more difficult to locate. This is not to argue that nature ceases to play any role in education among this cohort, rather it is simply to suggest that differences in education are less profound than those between the two natures. Amongst the intramural distinctions in pedagogy within the cohort of civic students much less is at stake. The differences are differences not in type but in degree. This is hinted at most strongly in the opening sections of Locke's *Some Thoughts* when in discussing the ideal education of the children of gentlemen the first laudatory comparison he makes among ways of educating is to the methods of child-rearing practiced by "honest farmers and substantial yeoman."¹⁸⁷

Within civic education much more room is made for education and for environment to draw out distinctions than that implied in Locke's division of the civic and the philosophic. Within the former the possibility for minimizing, if not altogether removing the differences among people through education seems much more plausible to Locke. In the *Essay* the same differences of condition as opposed to kind are hinted at.

¹⁸⁷ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 3. Of interest for the discussion of Rousseau below is the early placement of a near identical sentiment in *Emile*. "Let us, then, choose a rich man. We will at least be sure we have made one more man, while a poor person can become a man by himself." J.J. Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: HarperCollins, 1979) 53.

And had the *Virginia King, Apochancana*, been educated in *England*, he had, perhaps, been as knowing as a Divine, and as good a Mathematician, as any in it. The difference between him, and a more improved *English-man*, lying barely in this, That the exercise of his Faculties was bounded with the ways, Modes and notions of his own Country, and never directed to any other, or farther Enquiries.¹⁸⁸

The difference in status between *Apochancana* and the English-man is a direct consequence of the conditions in his country, including his education. The relative economic impoverishment of the American king in *Two Treatises* is twinned with a similar intellectual impoverishment in the *Essay*. Of central importance the impoverishment is contingent on condition not fundamental nature. The Virginia chief can just as easily become a prosperous property holder as an educated citizen, nothing fundamental to him rules it out. At the same time it is clear that he is not the pre-eminent man of the *Two Treatises*¹⁸⁹ who needs no teacher and whose nature allows him to rise above mere rule and become a lawgiver. In this sense, while much less may be intellectually at stake in the education of citizens much more is at risk in their schooling in terms of their character and its social and political consequences. The intellectual development of the philosophic student seems to emerge inevitably out of his nature; for the ordinary student much more depends on his receiving the right education. In civic education Locke reveals a subtle contrapuntal movement: the range and potential for education contracts as the consequences of a bad education expand. More precisely, within the limited purview of civic education the range of consequence is much more dependent on education. This contraction of potential combined with expansion of consequence explains Locke's suspicion of 'book-

¹⁸⁸ Locke, *Essay*, I.iv.12.

¹⁸⁹ Locke, *Two Treatises*, II.94.

learning,' his emphasis on habit and custom as the primary method of education, and ultimately the recalibrating of the goals of education to focus on character and virtue.

The Non-Philosophic Student and the Uniform Pedagogy

The peculiar contrapuntal movement of the scope of education and the significance of that education in the teaching of the two natures must dictate a profoundly different pedagogy for each. Locke remains prudently silent on what exactly the preferred pedagogy is for the philosophic student. Within the pages of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* at least, Locke hints that the education commences in adulthood and entails the discernment of a philosophic nature. Further it may follow and expand on a civic education but such an education is not ontogenetically essential to the philosophic nature.¹⁹⁰ In contrast to Locke's taciturn treatment of the philosophic student *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* is a remarkably detailed working out of the ideal pedagogy and curriculum for the non-philosophic student who is also a member of the gentlemanly class.

It is the peculiar and specific character of Locke's *Some Thoughts* and the absence of matching works of similar singular dedication and equal significance for the lower classes that can lead to the mistaken conclusion that the method of education in *Some Thoughts*, as opposed to the specific curriculum, is distinct from that offered the lower classes. Close examination of Locke's admittedly briefer treatments of education of the lower classes reveals this not to be the case. Indeed the differences in education between the classes consist only in the material covered, the similarity in *means* is striking. Locke insinuates through the common pedagogy a common nature if not a common destiny. Unlike the difference between the

¹⁹⁰ Recall the 'men of pre-heminency' *Two Treatises*, II.94.

philosophic and the non-philosophic the intramural distinctions amongst the non-philosophic arise not out of nature but habit.

As it is in the body, so it is in the mind; practice makes it what it is, and most even of those excellences which are looked on as natural endowments will be found, when examined into more narrowly, to be the product of exercise and to be raised to that pitch only by repeated actions.¹⁹¹

Locke's remarks here implicitly address the differences amongst the non-philosophic. In the handful of allusions within Locke to the teaching of the philosophic nature the description consistently alludes to nature, inclination and development, to philosophic education involving an interconnected ascent through ideas. For the education of the non-philosophic the emphasis is not on linear development but on repetition and practice, not on discovery of the unknown but on mastery of the readily attainable. The pedagogical claim implies an equally significant ontological claim about the non-philosophic cohort. Locke's deliberate connection of physical education and mental education (with the important caveat 'most') increases the plausibility that intellectually, as is certainly and observably true physically, most difference is based on practice and habit not nature. Further by drawing in the physical and employing in illustration ploughmen, country hedgers, rope dancers and tumblers¹⁹² Locke further confirms that he is describing the ordinary, those who live primarily in and by their physicality, and not the intellectually exceptional. Practice, the settling of habit and custom, is the heart of education for the non-philosophic regardless of the task they are called to.

¹⁹¹ John Locke, *On the Conduct of Understanding*, ed. Francis W. Garforth (New York: Teachers College Press 1966) 42.

¹⁹² Ibid.

Nobody is made anything by hearing of rules or laying them up in his memory; practice must settle the habit of doing without reflecting on the rule, and you may as well hope to make a good painter or musician extempore by a lecture and instruction in the arts of music and painting as a coherent thinker or strict reasoner by a set of rules showing him wherein right reasoning consists.¹⁹³

Locke attributes the same method to the learning of right reasoning, painting and music as he does earlier to rope dancing and country hedging.¹⁹⁴ I will return again to the importance of habit and custom below my aim here is merely to indicate the presence of a uniform pedagogy across both trade and class.

The necessity, as opposed to merely the prudence, of a uniform pedagogy across the social strata is forcefully illustrated by Locke in his account of the sources of decline in the character of the poor, the working classes and the object of *Some Thoughts*, young gentlemen. At the miserable bottom of the social ladder Locke's oft quoted and admittedly brutal depiction conceals within its brutality an understanding of the fundamental nature of the decline of the character of the poor that is structurally similar to the sources of decline for the other classes. In his study of the poor laws, part of his professional *Board of Trade Papers*, he attributes the growing numbers of poor wholly to the circumstances in which their children are raised. Locke locates the source of adult poverty in the failures of child-rearing and education amongst the poor.

The growth of the poor must therefore have some other cause, and it can be nothing else but the relaxation of discipline and corruption of

¹⁹³ Ibid., 44.

¹⁹⁴ Right reasoning I take here to mean not true reason but a prudential calculus. Locke acknowledges as much when he suggests that such an ability can be 'made' and simultaneously rejects the idea that any benefit can be gained from 'reflecting on a rule' which is surely the very heart of a full and complete reason.

manners; virtue and industry being as constant companions on the one side as vice and idleness are on the other.¹⁹⁵

Moving past the admittedly callous tone and some of the brutal provisions advocated the crucial element is the absence of an essential argument either for the sources of poverty or its growth. Locke's report on the poor laws continues on to suggest that by bringing children into charity schools and exposing them to both religion and industry they could be elevated in much the same way that the absence of the experience of religion and industry corrupted them.¹⁹⁶ Locke thus attributes both the source and the remedy of poverty to the profound influence of habit and custom on character.

The significance of habit and custom upon character is indeed so great both politically and intellectually that Locke argues in the *Essay* that the kind of impoverishment that their upbringing has condemned the children of the poor to, could just as easily be visited upon an entire society, England included, if critical cultural sources of salutary custom were suddenly lost. Speaking only (and somewhat bizarrely) of metallurgy, leaving out more obviously and potentially formative social forces as religion, Locke considers a hypothetical post-metallurgic England. In this England, in but a few generations, civilization is all but lost.

I suppose, it will appear past doubt, that were the use of *Iron* lost among us, we should in a few Ages be unavoidably reduced to the Wants and Ignorance of the ancient and savage *Americans*, whose natural Endowments and Provisions come in no way short of those of the most flourishing and polite Nations.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Locke, "Board of Trade Papers," in Fox Bourne, *The Life of John Locke*, vol. II (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1876) 378.

¹⁹⁶ Locke, "Trade Papers," 385.

¹⁹⁷ Locke, *Essay*, IV.xii.11.

Locke makes the same assessment of all of English society that he attributes in the *Board of Trade Papers* to the increase in poor children. The salutary effects on character of an emerging industrial and commercial society, with the habits and customs it engenders, explains the lion's share of England's lack of both wants and ignorance.

Returning to individual classes Locke baldly states in *Reasonableness of Christianity* that the conditions of their existence confine the character and intellect of the working classes to one roughly bounded and "cooped in close by the laws of their country."¹⁹⁸ In similar fashion, if not to the same extent as the poor, the American and the imagined post-metallurgic Briton, the labouring classes suffer from the absence of access to salutary habits and customs. However for the labouring classes the absence is less dire, it is not an absence of industry or virtue but rather of the necessary habits of temperament and intellect for full citizenship. This is an accident not of nature but of condition. The difference in the intellectual condition and civic character between the poor and labouring, as Locke will argue between the labouring and the gentlemanly classes, is rooted in habit and custom not nature.¹⁹⁹

Scaling the social ladder improves the intellectual condition and civic character by broadening the boundaries of experience and improving the access to education. Nonetheless for the gentlemanly classes as for all save the philosophic and men of pre-eminence the powerful educative effects of negative and positive habit and custom continue to define character. This explains Locke's concerns in *Some Thoughts* with boarding schools.

¹⁹⁸ Locke, *Essay*, IV.xx.4. Recall here the absence of reflection on rules described in *Of the Conduct of Understanding*, 44.

¹⁹⁹ Locke, *Essay* IV.xx.4.

But till you can find a school wherein it is possible for the master to look after the manners of his scholars and can show as great effects of his care of forming their minds to virtue and their carriage to good breeding as of forming their tongues to the learned languages, you must confess that you have a strange value for words, when preferring the languages of the ancient Greeks and Romans to that which made them such brave men, you think it worthwhile to hazard your son's innocence and virtue for a little Greek and Latin.²⁰⁰

The pedagogic explanation for Locke's rejection of boarding schools, complementary to his liberal political obligations, is that such an education, in the company of boys, servants and perhaps unscrupulous tutors provides a potential corrupting experience. The settling of custom and habit early, so central to character, is education's central concern. Questions of curriculum are secondary to habit and custom, they may be complementary indeed even taught through habit and custom but the damage done by bad habit and custom can never be remedied by an allegedly civilizing curriculum. A corrupting habit and custom, for rich or poor, learned from fourth form school chums or Fagan & Co., functions the same way on character. The pedagogical position that brings the children of the poor off the streets keeps the children of the wealthy out of boarding schools.

In the relative paucity of advice regarding literary education Locke offers his strongest hint that he places little faith in the allegedly civilizing qualities of a literary education. Locke implicitly acknowledges that the education of gentleman, suited to their nature, remains one of habit, practice and custom. The lack of a significantly broad literary education in *Some Thoughts* suggests not only that erudition is unimportant to civic virtue but furthermore that gentlemen are unlikely to be meaningfully educated through reading. This places Locke in striking contrast with

²⁰⁰ Locke, *Thoughts*, sec. 70.

his immediate contemporary Milton. Returning to *Of Education* is useful in highlighting the commonality of nature across the non-philosophic classes that Locke maintains. For Milton it simply follows from a literary education that the lessons learned through study will manifest, by means unknown, in the character and conduct of the erudite gentleman.

By this time years and good general precepts will have furnished them more distinctly with that at of reason which in ethics is called proairesis, that they may with some judgment contemplate upon moral good and evil.²⁰¹

The education Locke offers the non-philosophic nature rejects Milton's crude moral cognitivism. Locke is deeply suspicious of the independent force of moral ideas. Indeed a careful examination of the education even of the gentlemanly classes calls into question whether moral ideas on their own, as for instance when offered as simple curricular lessons, can inform action. The condition of the greatest part of humanity, Locke makes clear in *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, must be persuaded by fear and longing for reward and not the simple justice and truth of a given proposition.²⁰² Reading for Locke is secondary because of its inability to shape conduct.²⁰³ Reading must be taught to gentlemen, Locke admits this explicitly, and yet within the remarkably limited range of literary education Locke's consistent approach aims to convince the student rather than inform him.²⁰⁴ Nowhere is this more evident than in Locke's highly circumscribed approach to Bible study. Indeed rather than a study of the Bible Locke recommends the memorization of a short

²⁰¹ Milton, *Of Education*, 66.

²⁰² Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, sec. 243.

²⁰³ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, 147.

²⁰⁴ Michael Zuckert, "Fools and Knaves: Reflections on Locke's Theory of Philosophical Discourse," *Review of Politics* 36 (1974): 560.

catechism of biblical questions *and answers*. The effort is directed at encouraging a habit of belief rather than a comprehending faith let alone a robust theological curiosity. Literary education and erudition for the gentleman differ little from the habits and practices of the labouring classes, they provide in the memory useful habits and lessons for application, like the means of country-hedging or animal husbandry they serve not to develop the range of understanding but to furnish the intellect with the habits necessary for life.

Habit and Custom: The Civic Education of the Gentleman

Habit and custom are the central forces that determine the character of the non-philosophic, either through positive education or negative influence. Admitting this Locke doesn't suggest that because all non-philosophic students may be taught the same way that they should be taught the same things. *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* concerns the education of young gentlemen and that education has both peculiar demands and a unique set of civic obligations however what it does not appear to have is the same implied intellectual superiority over the education of the lower classes that the education of the philosophic citizen has over all others. The education of gentlemen is not structurally unique what is unique is its peculiarly civic character. Locke offers a specifically and solely civic education to gentlemen in recognition of their social location and not, as Macpherson would have it, out of a misguided belief in their broad propensity for reason. As a result of their social location the education, uniform in its pedagogy, focuses first and foremost on civic virtue. The civic virtue to be learned, ironically considering Locke's admonition to

parents in the final sentence of *Some Thoughts*,²⁰⁵ is founded on habit and custom.

Closing out Locke's treatment of the civic education of gentlemen is a turn towards the larger significance of that education. Complementing his concern for their civic virtue is a recognition of the place within the society his pupilage occupy and the extent to which their public character and conduct constitutes in itself a broader form of social education.

The central element of Locke's program of civic education is the teaching of virtue. Indeed the goal of civic education simply *is* virtue, all other ends of education are secondary. Virtue's primacy reveals a great deal about the character of Lockean civic virtue but also about the ideal educated character of the citizen Locke aims at.

Tis' virtue then, direct virtue, which is the hard and valuable part to be aimed at in education, and not a forward pertness or any little arts of shifting. All other considerations and accomplishments should give way and be postponed to this. This is the solid and substantial good which tutors should not only read lectures and talk of, but the labour and art of education should furnish the mind with and fasten there, and never cease till the young man had a true relish of it and placed his strength, his glory, and his pleasure in it.²⁰⁶

The pupil for whom virtue is the central aim of their schooling is, as has been illustrated above, the student both suited and socially placed to receive an education in civic virtue. Locke's education in virtue is constructed on a tripartite foundation of countervailing passion, deep ingrained habit of character and ethical hedonism. Each facet of Locke's program for teaching buttresses the others. Together these educate a citizen whose passions, rooted in habit lead him to desire a reputation for reason and a concomitant belief that reason's object is happiness. However Locke subtly implies that such a reputation is guaranteed not by the presence of reason but the deep seated

²⁰⁵ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 216.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, sec. 70.

visceral virtue of fortitude, a virtue occasionally emboldened by hope of reward or chastened by fear of punishment.

Indeed the ambiguity surrounding reason is one of the central elements of Locke's civic education. Early in *Some Thoughts* Locke suggests the virtue his education aims at is such that it creates a character able and inclined to act upon the dictates of reason.

As the strength of the body lies chiefly in being able to endure hardships, so also does that of the mind. And the great principle and foundation of all virtue and worth is placed in this, that a man is able to *deny himself* his own desires, cross his own inclinations, and purely follow what reason directs as best though the appetite lean the other way.²⁰⁷

Locke's ordering of the process of virtuous deliberation is telling. The presence of reason indubitably plays a role in right conduct however most of the difficult work occurs before reason has gained the field. Rather than reason Locke suggests that the 'great principle and foundation' of virtue is the strength of character that allows hostile inclinations to be checked. Interestingly save reason, all the stages in the deliberative process are spoken of in the possessive: It is the self explicitly that is denied, it is *his* desire that is checked, *his* inclinations crossed. Reason on the other hand is to be *followed*, wherein reason dwells and the precise character of its leadership and relationship to the person is left deliberately vague.

Locke is remarkably obscure, *even for Locke*, about the precise relationship of reason to virtue. He employs phrases such as 'true gaurantor' (sec. 115) 'true principle' (sec. 56) and 'true principles of morality' (sec. 200) to describe the well spring of virtue, in each case reason is either a secondary mover or is ignored

²⁰⁷Ibid., sec. 33.

altogether. The elusive relationship between reason and virtue is fundamental to understanding the role of education in civic virtue. While at one point in *Some Thoughts* reason is described as the fullest perfection of man the range, number and likelihood of its realization is left conspicuously undeclared.²⁰⁸ The ambiguity concerning reason's role, scope and possibility explains Locke's democratizing claim that fortitude and not reason is virtue's true guarantor.

Fortitude is the guard and support of the other virtues; and without courage a man will scarce keep steady to his duty and fill up the character of a truly worthy man.²⁰⁹

Fortitude is the unique virtue of the civic minded citizen, especially the liberal civic minded citizen of *Some Thoughts*. Fortitude is Locke's modern stand in both for the heroic reason of the philosopher that is only hinted at and the heroic valour of the soldier that is never mentioned.²¹⁰ It is the parallel modern motion in the person to the political settlement Locke presents in *Two Treatises*. Fortitude does more than simply ensure the other virtues it shapes their very character; it engages civic virtue and infuses it with a civil constancy. More importantly the centrality of fortitude to virtue further implies the negligible force of reason in civic life. To know the right is not a sufficient guarantor of its pursuance, facts known to the intellect cannot inform or sustain action.

Imbued with constancy by fortitude reason fails even to meaningfully settle upon an object, the object instead avails itself of reason's ability to strategically

²⁰⁸ Ibid., sec. 122.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., sec. 115.

²¹⁰ Pangle and Pangle, *Learning*, 59.

navigate under the steam of fortitude.²¹¹ Reason, in its limited and inchoate civic incarnation, serves as a strategic calculative faculty. Reason's lack of motive force is further confirmed by Locke's description of the role of desire and aversion in conduct. As mentioned earlier Locke embraces a sort of ethical hedonism that conceives of human conduct as profoundly informed by the desire for reward and the concomitant fear of punishment.²¹² However in an important distinction from the surface coarseness of Hobbes pairing of appetite and aversion Locke suggests a particular set of desires and fears that are of use to a specifically civic education. Central to Locke's understanding of civic education is the pleasure that children take in esteem and the distress they experience when shamed. The careful application and impression of these two, Locke contends, allows for the conduct of children to be shaped into a salutary civic form.

If you can once get into children a love of credit and an apprehension of shame and disgrace, you have put into them the true principle, which will constantly work and incline them to the right.²¹³

What is interesting here is that shame and disgrace and not reason incline them towards the right, indeed reason remains pulled and pushed by desire and aversion, shorn up by fortitude reduced to little more than a strategic and calculative tool for scouting the route through peril and towards happiness, as always born on by fortitude. Locke repeatedly suggests that as the pupil nears the age of discretion this diminished reason will develop and take a more dominant role. Despite such claims

²¹¹ Tarcov, *Locke's Education*, 173.

²¹² Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 54.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 56.

Locke never delivers the promised account of reason's transformation and completion of man's perfection in reason.²¹⁴

This ambiguity between reason, education and civic virtue for the Lockean gentleman explains the importance of habit and custom in his conception of civic virtue. As noted above, Locke pointedly asserts in *The Conduct of Understanding* that lessons and lectures even lessons which forcefully convey precepts of civil conduct, cannot guarantee just action. This contention when combined with the ambiguity surrounding reason leaves Locke with only one strong resource for founding civic virtue: habit.

The great thing to be minded in education is what *habits* you settle: and therefore in this, as all other things, do not begin to make anything *customary* the practice whereof you would not have continue and increase.²¹⁵

This 'great thing' explains the relative absence of questions of curriculum from the education Locke describes. Rather than focusing on rules, precepts and principles acquired in the classroom Locke's civic education is carefully founded on a shaping of temper, sentiment and inclination through practice and repetition.²¹⁶ Indeed the pre-rational even non-rational character of education is the consistent pedagogic theme of *Some Thoughts*. Locke's educative aim is to settle patterns and principles of conduct so deeply and subtly in the character that they function independently of reason.

But pray remember, children are *not* to be *taught by rules*, which will be always slipping out of their memories. What you think necessary for them to do, settle in them by an indispensable practice as often as the occasion returns; and if it be possible, make occasions. This will

²¹⁴ Tarcov, *Locke's Education*, 107.

²¹⁵ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 18.

²¹⁶ John Yolton, *John Locke and Education*, (New York: Random House, 1971) 69.

beget habits in them, which, being once established, operate of themselves easily and naturally without the assistance of the memory.²¹⁷

Locke's education via habituation is most remarkable in and to the extent that it functions tacitly, it guides the character without necessarily informing the intellect. This vision of education recalls powerfully Locke's description of innate ideas in *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, therein the mistaken belief in innate ideas is held to be a consequence of their being taught those ideas before the age of recollection.²¹⁸ That the habits taught dictate conduct without the aid of memory is critical, even more critical is the way in which they are experienced and held by pupils, first lessons and habits learned early "*grow up to the dignity of Principles.*"²¹⁹ Those lessons acquire the dignity of innate principles without actually being innate; importantly for Locke's civic education these habits of civility and citizenship take on this character in the experience of them by the citizen despite their true nature. Moreover such principles more than simply subsisting in the character fundamentally inform action with a force and to an extent not possible through the simple teaching of rules.

"Innate" principles carefully woven into the character of the civic pupil simulate the experience of principled conduct and to the extent that the habits are wisely instilled may indeed act in consonance with true principles of reason even though the civic pupil never completely discerns those principles with his own limited rationality. Here Locke again finds himself in deep agreement with the classical tradition in conceiving of a second order education that is taught to act in a manner

²¹⁷ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 66.

²¹⁸ Locke, *Essay*, I.ii.12.

²¹⁹ Locke, *Essay*, I.iii.22.

consonant with reason's dictates even though such teaching, the weaving of principles into the soul, is achieved independent of the pupil's reason.²²⁰

Conclusion: Breeding, Example and Imitation

Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* begins with the conflicted, if not contradictory, admonition and advice to parents of young gentlemen that the responsibility for their education is a specifically private duty and at the same time of profound public consequence.²²¹ In the private sphere education's inextricable engagement with morality splits its nature, the citizen's schooling for life in the public must occur in the private. The social significance of their education is similarly bifurcated. The civic consequences of the gentlemen's education rest first and foremost with the pupil and they are only fully realized in the company of others. Furthermore the social position of the gentleman imbues his education, and in consequence his character, with a particular and pressing broader civic import. Harkening back to Cicero's Scipionic imagery, Locke's pupil's education is in important ways *for* others.²²² As Locke says in the dedication to *Some Thoughts* "for if those of that rank are by their education once set right, they will quickly bring all the rest into order."²²³ *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* is double in its intent, it beholds young gentlemen and considers them as both subjects and objects of education, both to be taught and in turn to teach by example.

It is natural that Locke's educational writings concern gentlemen. Lockean society, as opposed to its feudal and aristocratic precursors, is founded on and for the

²²⁰ See Plato, *Laws* 653b-c, from Pangle, *Locke* n265.

²²¹ Locke, Epistle Dedicatory to *Some Thoughts*, 8.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

protection of property²²⁴ and therefore the central and most politically directed education must have as its object the propertied class.²²⁵ The import and significance of the class is not so singular as to occlude from view others, quite the contrary the unique status and location of the gentlemanly class renders its relations with others of first order importance. Locke emphasizes the importance, for any parent of a young gentleman, of educating their son in much more than the careful possession and retention of his estate. In particular and beyond an education in inward and personal virtue Locke seeks to encourage the socially correlative virtue of good breeding. Good breeding serves the external and social function that fortitude provides internally, it shapes and reinforces virtue in dealings with others. This is of particular importance for the gentleman placed in a class conspicuously above some and below others. Breeding, necessary for the civil co-existence of disparate citizens and classes teaches respect and civility for others.

For the very end and business of *good breeding* is to supply the natural stiffness and so soften men's tempers that they may bend to a compliance and accommodate themselves to those they have to do with.²²⁶

This is an explicitly civic education of character in Lockean terms. Note that the well-bred gentleman is disposed by the softening of his temper, and not by a consultation of his reason, to the restrained and peaceable existence of Locke's state of nature. This is precisely the habituation of civic character necessary for the limited government of the *Two Treatises*.²²⁷

²²⁴ Locke *Two Treatises*, II.94.

²²⁵ Robert Horwitz, "John Locke and the Preservation of Liberty," *American Political Science Reviewer* 6, 340.

²²⁶ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 142.

²²⁷ Pangle and Pangle, *Learning of Liberty*, 72.

The social and educational significance of good breeding is almost as great for the classes that the gentleman deals with as it is for the gentleman himself. More than neighbourliness the importance of breeding arises out of the profound import of example as a pedagogic tool. Locke suggests that among the young example is perhaps second only to habituation as a means of teaching conduct. However unlike habituation example works on the student both before and after the age of recollection with a depth and a degree of subtlety that renders its lessons often imperceptible to the student in their administration at any age.

Nay, I know not whether it be not the best way to be used by a father as long as he shall think fit, on any occasion, to reform anything he wishes mended in his son: nothing sinking so gently and so deep into men's minds as *example*.²²⁸

Locke makes it clear that while the subtle influence of example is best, and perhaps most deliberately used by a father in the teaching of his son. The pedagogic power of example stretches far beyond intimate relationships. Indeed throughout life and across classes learning by example seems to Locke a hallmark of humanity; “We are all a sort of chameleons that still take a tincture from things near us.”²²⁹ As result good-breeding provides in the conduct of gentlemen a model and lesson for the lower classes. Indeed in all the gentlemen's conduct that has a public aspect there is pedagogic possibility.

Broad social example and imitation add a third level to the educational superstructure of *Some Thoughts*. At the highest level the nature of the philosophic student, and by scattered implication the structure of his education is hinted at. In the middle the education in civic virtue that Locke describes at such length trains and

²²⁸ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 81.

²²⁹ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 67.

shapes the character through habit, custom and example towards a conduct that embodies civic virtue. This education, instantiated in the public dealings and comportment of the gentleman, is then translated downwards to those to whom civic life is closed by the powerful human inclination to imitation. Shuttered near as fully, though by circumstance rather than nature, as the life of the philosopher is to the non-philosophic gentleman. Positioned like the dreaming Scipio Locke's civic education is a median point between mimesis and wisdom, it focuses above all on virtue while subtly acknowledging the distinction between a nature capable of its embodiment and one suited to the comprehension of that embodied. A life shaped by Locke's civic paidia is guided by rules deeply held but only incompletely comprehended.

Chapter Four: Rousseau and the Redefinition of Nature and Education

Introduction

John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* revolutionized educational philosophy. Unsatisfied, Jean-Jacques Rousseau revolutionized human nature. Rousseau set out to challenge not only the popular assumptions concerning education but the popular prejudices concerning the pupil himself. So far I have attempted to trace a deep connection across Plato, Cicero and Locke between the individual nature of the pupil and the education to which such a nature is suited. This deep connection is challenged, amended, reformed and restored at different moments but the core contention that a pupil's distinct nature should inform his education endures. By exploding the idea of a knowable, distinct and discrete human nature specific to the pupil, Rousseau renders permanently problematic the connection between nature and education.

Rousseau's revolution in education and human nature commences with an assessment of the relationship of education to human nature. This assessment begins, as it must, with an epistemological survey. Rousseau concedes that principles of education may legitimately be informed by facts about human nature. However he notes that this concession fails to establish the veracity of the traditional conception of human nature upon which such principles may be founded. More radically still Rousseau questions whether a pedagogically foundational knowledge of human nature is even possible. The question of education, like the question of inequality's origins, suffers from a profound evidentiary deficit. To inquire into either is to confront the obscured and elusive character of our true nature. The modern student,

as much as the modern citizen riddled with *amour-propre*, resembles the marine Glaucus.

Like the statue of Glaucus, which time, sea and storms had disfigured to such an extent that it looked less like a god than a wild beast, the human soul, altered in the midst of society by a thousand constantly recurring causes, by the acquisition of a multitude of bits of knowledge and of errors, by changes that took place in the constitution of bodies, by the constant impact of the passions, has, as it were, changed its appearance to the point of being nearly unrecognizable.²³⁰

Reflections on the marine Glaucus present Rousseau with grounds for both hope and despair. To whatever degree human nature is transformed by life in society, a degree so great that the subject becomes unrecognizable, to that degree it may also be positively shaped by education. Society's vast potential to corrupt encourages Rousseau; it shows the dramatic extent of human malleability. It remains only for education to take up this force and construct the moral citizen or to neutralize its acidity and in so doing retain the natural goodness of man.

The profound malleability of man explains why Rousseau's star pupil, the eponymous hero of his philosophic Bildungsroman *Emile*, is repeatedly described as by nature ordinary. In order to emphasize the power and potential of education rightly conducted Emile must be typical. Emile's ordinariness is Rousseau's most powerful claim for the force of education, a force so powerful that it may triumph completely over both social rank and fortune. Whenever Rousseau describes this triumph he testifies to both the force of right education and the corruption of traditional schooling, a schooling which is only fit for, and the further the well spring of, men "only vain, rascally, and false: they do not even have enough courage to be

²³⁰ Jean Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality" in *The Basic Political Writings*, trans. Donald A. Cress, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987) 33

illustrious criminals”.²³¹ The vital and natural Emile stands in marked contrast to the enervated subject of traditional education. This difference, born of schooling not of nature, testifies to the power of the former over the latter, a power Rousseau envisages as equally triumphant as pedagogic principle and social fact.

No matter how little birth and fortune had done for Emile, he would be that man if he wanted to be. But he would despise these young men too much to deign to enslave them.²³²

Passages such as these have encouraged a reading of Rousseau’s educational thought, at least as represented in *Emile*, that claims a total triumph of nurture over nature. As Allan Bloom writes

So much power does Rousseau attribute to nurture or education over nature that this ordinary man, properly educated, can be seen as a harbinger of Nietzsche’s Superman. Here one also finds the roots of the Marxists great expectations for socialist man.²³³

While Rousseau may be the unwitting harbinger of both Marx and Nietzsche it is important to recall that Emile’s potential supremacy is a consequence of the forces countenanced in *Emile* and *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. Emile stands out because he is healthy, ordinarily healthy, against a background of men who have institutionalized and normalized illness, he is no Superman he is only natural man living amongst social man.

What is radically different about Rousseau, where the true break exists between the classical tradition in particular and his own, is the potential that education presents to overcome human social nature. If Emile’s supremacy is at least partly premised on the mis-education of others that doesn’t preclude the wider

²³¹ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Harper Collins, 1979) 335.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Allan Bloom, *Love and Friendship* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993) 93.

education of other ordinary citizens an education that could potentially either ameliorate or displace altogether social differentiation. Such differentiation was previously assumed to be natural and both pedagogically and politically intractable. Rousseau offers the possibility of a society made up of Emiles.²³⁴ Obstacles exist, but these obstacles concern practicalities of delivery and not the irremediable facts of nature. Rousseau makes explicit his rejection of nature as principle of pedagogic and political differentiation as early as the preface to the *Emile*. Presaging his rejection of careful discrimination among students, previously a hallmark of educational philosophy, Rousseau opens the *Emile* to all comers.

It is enough for me that wherever men are born, what I propose can be done with them; and that, having done with them what I propose, what is best both for themselves and for others will have been done.²³⁵

This is a long way from the Socratic silence of the Cleitophon. Both Rousseau's prose and his proposals are open to readers and pupils independent of time, place or ability. The warnings of Plato about the teaching of dialectic through Cicero's complementary concerns about oratory to the carefully crafted balance between innate ideas and different natures of Locke's *Essay* stand as the first foes of Rousseau's revolution.

Despite this break Rousseau praises Plato's *Republic* as "the most beautiful educational treatise ever written."²³⁶ But Rousseau makes clear that beautiful though it is, Plato's *Republic* lacks pedagogic courage and imagination and most of all confidence. Rousseau is an ambitious and self-assured teacher; he is the uncommon

²³⁴ Of course this leaves open the question of Sophie and of the potential for female education and emancipation, a question regrettably beyond the modest ambit of this chapter.

²³⁵ Rousseau, *Emile*, 35.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

tutor able to transform the common pupil. Unlike Socrates' pupils Rousseau's intended need not be the gifted, politically placed and potentially philosophic. Rousseau's pupils are ordinary men and his self-described pedagogy is defined by its predicted efficacy.²³⁷ Rousseau's confidence banishes the careful and discriminating speech of Socrates, hallmark of Platonic pedagogy, a legacy carried forward, as argued above, in the educational thought of both Cicero and Locke.

This chapter seeks to explain the sources of Rousseau's tremendous confidence in education's potential. Central to this endeavor, alongside a discussion of Rousseau's lack of faith in the claims to nature made by rank and difference, is a radical re-assessment of nature itself. Rejecting completely nature's previous role as a pedagogically and politically relevant principle of differentiation Rousseau radically recasts nature's role. No longer a principle, Nature becomes *the* principle. Nature for Rousseau becomes source and benchmark. Most importantly nature ceases to be understood as the unique and individual aspect of each individual, Rousseau transforms it into a universal principle, common in character and degree across humanity. An education founded either on its retrieval or rejection, the two educational options Rousseau describes,²³⁸ must therefore also have at its heart a similar commonality. Such an education for "men wherever they are born"²³⁹ has

²³⁷ Joseph Cropsey, *Political Philosophy and the Issues of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977) 316.

²³⁸ I differ with much of the literature on Rousseau here in suggesting that his teaching is fully expressed only in two ways, the radically denatured citizen of *The Government of Poland* and *Discourse on Political Economy* and the natural education of the ordinary man in and towards nature described in *Emile*. Of a potential education of the philosophic and natural man I would suggest Rousseau offers observations but no program. I take seriously his claim in *Emile*, "All rare cases are outside the rules." Rousseau, *Emile*, 245.

²³⁹ Rousseau, *Emile*, 35.

political consequences whose revolutionary nature is hard to fully measure, save by a survey of history from 1789 to the present.

Duty and Inclination: Nature at the Crossroads

Nature, as both source and benchmark, is Rousseau's defining educational principle. The precise character of this principle is what makes Rousseau's educational philosophy truly remarkable. Having discerned nature in human beings Rousseau draws out of this universal source two diametrically opposed possibilities for education. Education can nurture and retrieve nature educating the pupil to be a natural man within an unnatural society or education can seek to radically denature the pupil, creating a citizen wholly defined by his duties and removed completely from nature. No middle ground exists. Education must serve one of two masters, inclination or duty.²⁴⁰

The necessity of choice speaks to the heart of Rousseau's critique of both modern political life and education. Rousseau considers division and its concomitant sense of incompleteness as the defining characteristics of modern civic identity. Torn between duty and inclination, turned ever inward in desire and outward for its satisfaction the modern citizen is both divided and disorientated,²⁴¹ he can neither tell what or where he is. Nowhere is this enfeebling inner division more completely realized than in the bourgeois, of whom Rousseau offers an account early in *Emile*.

He who in civil order wants to preserve the primacy of the sentiments of nature does not know what he wants. Always in contradiction with himself, always floating between his inclinations and his duties, he will never be either man or citizen. He will be good neither for

²⁴⁰ Strauss, *Natural Right*, 253.

²⁴¹ Judith Shklar, *Men and Citizens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 5.

himself nor for others. He will be one of these men of our days: a Frenchman, and Englishman, a bourgeois. He will be nothing.²⁴²

The bourgeois is as much nowhere as nothing, as much lost as empty. In response Rousseau offers two educations, one seeks to place the student, the other seeks to preserve him, both seek to end the division within him. This over-arching goal explains the apparent contradiction between the radically collectivist education of *The Government of Poland* and *Discourse on Political Economy* and the individualist (though not equally radically) education of *Emile*. The ultimate educational goal in both cases is a curative teaching that removes men from the disorientating tensional existence of selfish selflessness, of living for oneself through others that Rousseau captures so powerfully in the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. A complete education, either in duty or nature is the only cure for men who only “know how to be happy and content with themselves on the testimony of others rather than their own”.²⁴³ Moreover an education in completeness, an education aimed not at drawing the soul upward but rather at division, sits outside the traditional ordinal understanding of education and wisdom.

The obvious and radical differences between the education of the moral citizen and *Emile* tempt the reader to conclude that *Emile*’s education is superior to that of the moral citizen, that the collective is inferior to the individual pupil. The temptation to rank the two educations leads to an equally erroneous conclusion that the collective education of the moral citizen is Rousseau’s vision of a specifically civic education whereas *Emile* is a singularly natural education. However the desire for completeness provides only for a horizontal appraisal, unlike his predecessors

²⁴² Rousseau, *Emile*, 40.

²⁴³ Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, 80.

Rousseau conceives of nature as a broad principle not a specific quality, something to be either protected or rejected. For Rousseau nature is not a ladder but a fork in the road.²⁴⁴ The education of the moral citizen is the education of the man *of* society (albeit a society defined by duty not *amour-propre*). Emile's education also possesses a strong civic element but he is nature's citizen, schooled in its lessons and living amongst but not of society.

In this chapter I will focus primarily on the educational project described in Rousseau's *Emile*. It is the most fully realized of Rousseau's educational writings and Rousseau possesses a faith in its practicality largely absent from the discussion of the moral citizen. Nonetheless this duality makes Rousseau unique, his presentation of two distinct but not philosophically discrete accounts of civic education appears on first pass to provide the reader with a contradiction and a choice. But Rousseau responds that he is a systematic thinker, the writings are an intended unity.²⁴⁵ Taking him at his word suggests that a full understanding of one education can reasonably be supposed to rest at least partially on an understanding of the other. The other in question is the radically denaturing education of the citizen that Rousseau offers most explicitly in *The Government of Poland* and *The Discourse on Political Economy*. Rousseau offers in these two loci a totalizing vision of education that is total in its effort to displace nature and its inclinations with a love of the state and to re-found individual identity on the artificial ground civil and moral duty. The totalizing character of this education makes itself most apparent in the breadth of its intention and the early age in which it commences.

²⁴⁴ Arthur Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 103.

²⁴⁵ Melzer, *Natural Goodness of Man*, 9.

The newly-born infant, upon first opening his eyes, must gaze upon the fatherland, and until his dying day should behold nothing else. Your true republican is a man who imbibed love of the fatherland, which is love of the liberty, with his mother's milk.²⁴⁶

The conjunction of politically paternal and domestically maternal imagery points to the ultimate displacement of the latter by the former. While the initial period of complete neo-natal dependence must necessarily come to an end no such political weaning is necessary or even desirable for the education of the denatured citizen. Indeed the pairing of these two at the outset points to a key element of education both for duty and inclination, that element is the careful nurturing and guiding of instinct and inclination. In the case of instinctual filial affection that instinct is, for the moral citizen, carefully shepherded away from the ground of nature and towards the new country of duty.²⁴⁷ It is utterly transformed, all that is retained of the original is its locus and force, its expression and object are wholly artificial and introduced by education.

This is not to suggest that the de-natured citizen is somehow free of individual drive and identity. The moral citizen still feels his existence as occurring within him, but in important ways it is not his to own, nor is it primarily about him. It is his concern but it concerns only others. The most powerful example of this transformation of sentiment's character and object for Rousseau is the transformation of *amour-propre*. This previously anti-social passion for distinction is now transformed into a patriotism that seeks the conspicuous distinction not of the

²⁴⁶ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*, trans. Willmoore Kendall (Indianapolis: Library of the Library of the Liberal Arts, 1972) 19.

²⁴⁷ Allan Bloom, "Rousseau's Critique of Liberal Constitutionalism," in *The Legacy of Rousseau*, eds. Clifford Orwin and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 148.

individual identity but of the collective identity.²⁴⁸ Rousseau describes this transformation of sentiment most succinctly in *The Social Contract*, which in many ways is the working out of the institutional arrangements best suited to the denatured citizen.

This passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces quite a remarkable change in man, for it substitutes justice for instinct in his behavior and gives his actions a moral quality they previously lacked. Only then, when the voice of duty replaces physical impulse and right replaces appetite, does man, who had hitherto taken only himself into account, find himself forced to act from other principles and to consult his reason before listening to his inclinations.²⁴⁹

This passage first strikes the reader in its remarkable influence and anticipation of Kant. In the interaction between the inclinations and the sense of duty we begin to see the outlines of the hero of the *Grundlegung*. Rousseau's ideal is freedom from selfishness, the freedom to choose rightly. The moral citizen counters selfishness at every opportunity and is defined by an education premised on such countering of nature. This education, effectively independent of the citizen's nature, by rendering it operationally ineffective erases natural difference. In suppressing nature Rousseau institutes a denatured equality. The moral citizen's education is the mirror image of the education of Emile to be discussed below, Emile's education is for everyone because it is premised on the development sentiments shared by all and not the more meagerly apportioned reason.²⁵⁰ The moral citizen's education is equally for all by dint of the common ability to educate and sublimate those same common sentiments.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Jean Jacques Rousseau, "On the Social Contract or Principles of Political Right" in *The Basic Political Writings*, ed. Donald Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987) 150-151.

²⁵⁰ Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968) 93

The lingering presence of inclination is Rousseau's concession to the intractability of nature. Nature can be transformed, sublimated and redirected but it may not be wholly removed. The citizen may never be wholly denatured but his lingering idiosyncratic inclinations can be rendered irrelevant to his considerations. Nature endures, like the faint recollections of the moral citizen's neotany. It endures as echoes of the vacated grounds of his initial existence no longer informing of his actions or possessing the vitality to divide his self.²⁵¹ In this regard too Rousseau's moral citizen is Emile's opposite number. As we will discuss below, Emile is the natural man who lives among and unmoved by society and its prejudices. The moral citizen is the converse, wholly a creature of society he lives among his vestigial inclinations but remains unmoved by them.

A Savage for the City: The Education of Emile

The perdurability of inclinations in the moral citizen of *The Government of Poland* and *On the Social Contract* implies the need to transform that which cannot be excised. For the moral citizen certain aspects of his individuality fit this description; in *Emile* the education is civic to the extent that Rousseau recognizes a similar intractability of social fact. Emile must live among men, but Emile may be prepared in his nature for that experience, tempered in such a way that when he inevitably moves into society its corrosive Glaucusian effects can be checked. Indeed in this regard Emile is the romantic hero of Rousseau's Bildungsroman as the noble savage is the tragic hero of the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*.

To the extent that the education of the moral citizen involved dissolving nature Emile's education contains an equally powerful element of prophylaxis, the

²⁵¹ Melzer, *Natural Goodness*, 103

protection of his nature is as fundamental as its displacement in the moral citizen. Preserving nature, and its role as the guiding principle, is ever present in Rousseau's mind as he educates Emile. He hones to it as surely as he placed it at his back in *The Government of Poland*. Rousseau draws in his tragic discourse and its hero when he resigns himself to the necessity of Emile living in society.

But consider, in the first place, that although I want to form the man of nature, the object is not, for all that, to make him a savage and to relegate him to the depths of the woods. It suffices that, enclosed in a social whirlpool, he not let himself get carried away by either the passions or the opinions of men, that he see with his eyes, that he feel with his heart, that no authority govern him beyond his own reason.²⁵²

This passage is critical to understanding the education Rousseau presents in *Emile*. First and foremost by acknowledging that Emile's education prepares him for life amongst men Rousseau makes evident the practical intent and immediacy of the work. This is set against Rousseau's pessimistic acknowledgement early in the *Emile* that the alternative education, that of the moral citizen, is fatally dependent on broad social and institutional transformations no longer possible. Rousseau laments that the very words *fatherland* and *citizen* no longer contain plausible meanings, the triumph of Christianity and the advent of mass society has proscribed both such a conception of the state and of the citizen.²⁵³ These factors constitute the most immediate and critical difference between Rousseau's two educations. Emile's education does not require societal transformation as a necessary condition or consequence. Emile may be formed in nature's image despite society; he requires only a good teacher, not a good society.²⁵⁴

²⁵² Rousseau, *Emile*, 255

²⁵³ Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 225, *Emile* 40, n. 8

²⁵⁴ Roger Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, 93.

Rousseau's assertion that Emile's education may occur within and despite a corrupting social order serves to do more than simply increase the chances of such an education's successful execution. Emile's education is aimed at fitting him to live in society but not *of* society. As a result Emile's education takes on an almost Augustinian tone, Rousseau's student moves among men and alongside politics while remaining unaffected by the corrosive affects of either. At first glance Emile seems to occupy a position in relation to his fellow citizen's not unlike that of the philosophic student and indeed the philosopher as described by Plato, Cicero and Locke. Indeed there are profound structural similarities between the position of Plato's ideal student and Rousseau's Emile. However Emile is not, as Rousseau continually reminds the reader, an ideal student. Emile's privileged position is solely a result of education. Emile is not intellectually elevated, his education is not contingent as much on nature as teacher; instead Emile is morally elevated, an elevation consequent on common nature's contact with uncommon education.²⁵⁵

What is truly remarkable about Emile's education, what makes Rousseau's revolution in education every bit as dramatic as Locke's, is the remarkable consequences of the conjunction of uncommon teacher with common student. Such a conjunction and outcome is premised on a single and central assertion, an assertion upon which all of Emile's education is premised. Rousseau asserts simply and unambiguously: "Everything is good as it leaves the hand of nature."²⁵⁶ The preservation of natural goodness is the object of education. More fully the translation

²⁵⁵ John Plamenatz, "Rousseau: The Education of Emile," *The Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain*, (July 1972): 179.

²⁵⁶ Rousseau, *Emile*, 37.

of natural goodness, by means of its carefully guided development, into an authentic sociality and a natural citizenship is the central pillar of Emile's civic education.

It is by no means obvious to Rousseau how this latter goal, the preparation of the naturally good student for life in society, is to be achieved. Indeed Rousseau's second discourse is in part an account of how easily and almost inevitably such a project fails. This failure starkly illuminates the educational structure of the *Emile*. In the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* Rousseau gives account of the various moments in the history of man in which his nature has accreted new social corruptions, moving from a being almost devoid of ego, through *amour de soi* and into *amour propre*. The *Emile* charts a converse course, that of nature carefully shepherded, running its intended course, from a simple new born, through sentience and sensitivity, to reason, sociality, and finally full humanity defined by love for both individual and species.²⁵⁷

It is critical to establish the similarity between the Rousseau's second discourse and the *Emile* because the structural similarity testifies to the all too often ignored civic component of the 'natural education' of *Emile*. Further testimony to the deep similarity between the two educations is indicated, more than a little ironically, by the similarity in the means by which Emile is educated and the noble savage is corrupted. It is in society that the savage learns *amour-propre* and it is in a wholly manufactured and stage-managed artificial society that Emile receives his natural education.²⁵⁸ Both men experience their education as a series of experiences and

²⁵⁷ David Owen, "History and Curriculum in Rousseau's *Emile*," *Educational Theory* 32, (1982): 129.

²⁵⁸ Judith Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, 148.

sensations and not as a set of lessons and maxims. Both learn in spite of themselves, both are shaped gradually and almost imperceptibly.

The root of Emile's natural education is the recognition that as much as the moral citizen must be estranged from his nature, Emile must ever be drawn back into it. To preserve Emile's natural and original goodness it is essential to affirm first and foremost its boundaries and to teach him to be content within them. As Rousseau more broadly implores:

O man, draw your existence up within yourself, and you will no longer be miserable. Remain in the place which nature assigns to you in the chain of being. Nothing will be able to make you leave it.²⁵⁹

This is Rousseau's cardinal injunction and Emile is forever drawn back to it. In contrast the bourgeois man is the rejection of the principle in corruption. Defined by *amour-propre* he is the fullest incarnation of man living outside his existence, he is lost to the grounds of his existence. Pedagogically the moral citizen of the *Government of Poland* and the *Discourse on Political Economy* represents the salutary transformation of *amour-propre* nonetheless it too is a form of living outside of oneself. Emile's education, hinged to nature, seeks instead a virtuous resignation. Such an education allows Emile to retain his nature and thus his completeness, it aims at creating a decent citizen who is primarily at home in nature, that is in himself.

After Locke: Rousseau's Education in Sense and Experience

The significance of retrieval and prophylaxis can obscure the extent to which Rousseau seeks to educate, to nurture and to develop Emile. Nonetheless the importance of preserving the pupil's natural and original goodness does not suggest to

²⁵⁹ Rousseau, *Emile*, 83

Rousseau an education meant to freeze the pupil in an Edenesque innocence.

Rousseau founds Emile's education on the natural rather than against it, in so doing he seeks to encourage rather than stifle instinct, inclination and sentiment.

Rousseau's pedagogy balances the forces of nature and man, of Emile's natural progress and his tutor's careful and constant attention. Ultimately this leads Rousseau to take on Locke's conclusions regarding childhood and the centrality of experience and sensation to education but to reject the mechanism of habituation as the means to the good citizen.

In introducing the question of education in the preface to *Emile* Rousseau observes that countless books have been written on the subject with, in his estimation, very little useful being said. Those who have written on education before remain unnamed with one exception.

In spite of so many writings having as their end, it is said, only what is useful for the public, the first of all useful things, the art of forming men, is still forgotten. After Locke's book *my subject was still entirely fresh*, and I am very much afraid that the same will be the case after mine.²⁶⁰ (my italics)

Rousseau's thinly veiled contempt for Locke conceals the deep sympathies between the two authors on the question of education. Indeed Rousseau engages with Locke, in *Emile* at least, on a level and with an intensity matched perhaps only by Plato.

Despite Rousseau's initial dismissal this engagement is more complex than it first appears, colored by both dismissal and concurrence. Central to this engagement, and still remarkably novel at the time of *Emile's* composition, is a belief in the principle and idea of childhood that owes a conceptual if not an ontological debt to Locke.

Both philosophers are committed to childhood as an ontologically distinct period in a

²⁶⁰Ibid., 33.

human life, one whose distinctiveness and transitive essence is of unparalleled import to the conduct of education. Nonetheless later in the same passage, so dismissive of Locke, Rousseau suggests: "Childhood is unknown."²⁶¹ Implicitly Rousseau is charging that even after Locke's efforts childhood *remains unknown*. Rousseau both affirms and condemns Locke. Along with Locke he acknowledges the centrality of childhood to teaching while denying that Locke understood the true nature of that acknowledged. In this opening salvo Rousseau restates the critique of Locke's conception of man offered in the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. Locke, Rousseau charges, no more correctly identifies the natural in man in the *Two Treatises* than he identifies the true nature of childhood in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*.

Nonetheless Rousseau's initial and profound difference concerning the specific nature of childhood does not preclude a later identification with several of Locke's primordial and central assertions. Indeed early in Book I of *Emile* Rousseau clearly echoes Locke's critique of both innate ideas and the role they play in education. Rousseau adopts Locke's strong sensationalist position and as such is equally concerned with even the most minor details of neo-natal care regarding these as nothing less than first lessons.

I repeat: the education of man begins at his birth; before speaking, before understanding, he is already learning. Experience anticipates lessons. The moment he knows his nurse, he has already acquired a great deal. One would be surprised at the knowledge of the coarsest man if one followed his progress from the moment of his birth to where he is now.²⁶²

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid., 62.

Rousseau goes so far as to calculate a rough estimate of the amount of our learning so characterized. Roughly half of all human learning, Rousseau contends, occurs either before the age of recollection or after in the form of imperceptible ‘lessons’ of sense experience never formally propounded as lessons.²⁶³ Humans, as sentient beings, are constantly learning, importantly it is our sentience and not our reason which provides for this constant education. So Rousseau’s apparent obsession with swaddling, like Locke’s fascination with the movements of the human digestive tract, more than oddities are inevitably lessons, the only question is of what they shall consist.

The consensus between the two philosophers concerning the role of the senses as the constant teacher of childhood is perhaps the point of their deepest concurrence. This agreement leads Rousseau to concern himself, very much as Locke does, with controlling and even fabricating the experiences of childhood. The sensationalist tutor must recognize in each experience a potential lesson. This recognition, along with others, leads Locke to recommend against boarding schools and towards the careful supervision of childhood experience. Rousseau takes the principle even further moving from carefully constructed lessons and the restriction of certain sorts of activities and relations into a thoroughly controlled and almost theatrical existence for *Emile*.²⁶⁴ *Emile* lives in a sort of pedagogic bubble, the most quotidian encounters, as apparently trivial as a dispute over beans and melon seeds, invariably turn out to have been wholly contrived for his education.²⁶⁵ Rousseau, playing the role of tutor in *Emile*, is extremely reluctant to offer explicit lessons. Instead the role of tutor seems

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, “Rousseau’s Educational Experiments” in *Philosophers on Education* ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (London: Routledge, 1998) 250.

²⁶⁵ Rousseau, *Emile*, 99.

to require a careful attention and tracking of his charge's natural curiosity and the careful construction of experiences that are then placed in the path of that curiosity.²⁶⁶

In terms reminiscent of Locke Rousseau characterizes the course of learning as entailing the construction of a cognitive chain of learning, drawn into conjunction one rung at a time by the pupil's natural curiosity.

There is a chain of general truths by which all the sciences are connected with common principles out of which they develop successively. This chain is the method of philosophers. We are not dealing with it here. There is another entirely different chain by which each particular object attracts another and always shows the one that follows. This order, which fosters by means of constant curiosity the attention that they all demand is the one most men follow and, in particular is the one required for children.²⁶⁷

The role of Emile's tutor is to ever orient his gaze a little farther up the ladder from Emile and make sure that the appropriate experience is at hand for Emile when his curiosity naturally leads him there. Of course it may be fairly charged of such an education that it possesses a dubious naturalness.²⁶⁸ If natural curiosity has as its experiential substance only the unrecognized simulacra of nature how does such an education create a natural pupil? In part the answer, as we will discuss below, is that Emile's experiential education is primarily propaedeutic, it prepares him for and initially protects him from the full and necessarily less manageable experiences of love, desire, and even philosophy or geometry. Speaking carefully only of the last while implying the full range of childhood experience directed at adult character Rousseau contends

²⁶⁶ Julia Simon, "Natural Freedom and Moral Autonomy: Emile as Parent, Teacher and Citizen", *History of Political Thought* 36, (1995): 24.

²⁶⁷ Rousseau, *Emile*, 172.

²⁶⁸ Simon, "Natural Freedom and Moral Autonomy," 24 n9.

To bound from one end of the room to the other, to judge a ball's bounce while still in the air, to return it with a hand strong and sure—such games are less suitable for a grown man than useful for forming him.²⁶⁹

The lessons may be simulacra but inevitably they draw the pupil towards nature's truth, whatever the motions in question. Always however Rousseau attends the pupil's progression, aware that a sudden leap forward can scupper the tenuous chain of natural knowing drawn from experience.

Implicit in Rousseau's pedagogic vision of a carefully shepherded and ever developing curiosity is a strong conception, again in common with Locke, of age appropriate teaching. The chain of learning is not merely an epistemic account it is also an ontological account. Each step taken by curiosity is facilitated not only by education but the progression of nature. Locke, by Rousseau's lights, may not have comprehended the true nature of childhood but he nonetheless recognized the principle that a child's education must always be informed by his development.²⁷⁰

The attempt to teach children beyond their age does not, according to Rousseau, produce prodigies and precocious intellects rather it results in studied mimicry and distorted natures.²⁷¹ However there is more to Rousseau's educational principle than the simple and modern educational idea of age appropriateness or 'readiness'.²⁷² Rousseau sees in the limits of development itself a critical lesson. Emile is to learn at the pace dictated not only by the chain of his curiosity but also by the dictates of nature's necessity. Rousseau, Emile's constant tutor, ensures that the boy's curiosity is never allowed to chase past what it is possible at his age to know.

²⁶⁹ Rousseau, *Emile*, 147.

²⁷⁰ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 195

²⁷¹ Rousseau, *Emile*, 89-90.

²⁷² R.S. Peters, *Essays on Educators* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981) 19

More importantly Emile's curiosity is restrained from knowing that which it is impossible at his age to attain experientially. Emile's experiences are carefully constructed to appeal to both his natural curiosity and to necessity. Emile is educated to be curious only about that which is within the boundaries of his existence.

A child knows that he is made to become a man; all the ideas he can have of man's estate are opportunities of instruction for him; but he must remain in absolute ignorance of ideas of that estate which are not within his reach. My whole book is only a constant proof of this principle of education.²⁷³

This principle is justified above all else by Rousseau's assertion that the ground of Emile's education is an undivided existence. Preventing Emile's curiosity from leaping too early into adulthood, the fatal move outside of himself that creates within a sense of incompleteness, violates Rousseau's fundamental injunction: "O man, draw your existence up within yourself, and you will no longer be miserable"²⁷⁴ As such Emile's curiosity is not merely guided it is deliberately restricted, curiosity is never allowed to turn to fancy and imagination, to move beyond the realms of the possible.

Rousseau's debt to Locke, concerning the primacy of experience and the unique transitive status of childhood patently defies his initial assertion that Locke had contributed nothing of use to the understanding of education. However, granting this there remain profound, central and irresolvable differences between the two concerning education. Rousseau differs as profoundly with Locke in the substance and object of the pedagogy he recommends as he does in his assessment of the character and relevance of human nature. The paradigmatic element of Rousseau's critique of Locke, the aspect that informs all others, is the contention that Locke

²⁷³ Rousseau, *Emile*, 178.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

proposes a crude pedagogical alchemy. Locke, Rousseau contends, vainly imagines that out of a mechanistic education he can form a rational subject.²⁷⁵ Rousseau accuses Locke of misconstruing the developmental nature of childhood and of ignoring reason's place in that development. Reasoning with children, Rousseau contends, confuses the end of education with its means. To reason with a child is merely to teach it the phrases and affectations of reason without inculcating the faculty itself, it is to misconstrue the nature of reason as a mere habit acquired and not the realization at education's completion of a distinct faculty.²⁷⁶

Rousseau's critique of Locke attacks both the perceived attempt to prematurely teach rationality and Locke's reliance on habit as the central pillar of his pedagogy. Indeed on the question of habit more than any other Rousseau differs completely with Locke. Rousseau goes so far as to suggest that "The only habit that a child should be allowed is to contract none"²⁷⁷ Rousseau's rejection of habit rests on the belief that habit inevitability transforms itself into dependence. Habituation, he contends, first constructs and then reifies the needs of the student within an artificial framework of expectation. The pupil's identity becomes inextricably sewn up with a pattern of actions, as such he begins to demand that the world comply with his pattern and when, as it must, the world fails the pupil experiences this failure as privation. For Rousseau habit is inextricably bound up with expectation and as such with living beyond the boundaries of one's own existence.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Cropsey, *Political Philosophy and the Issues*, 323.

²⁷⁶ Rousseau, *Emile*, 89. It is important to point out that Rousseau's interpretation of Locke's pedagogic position on education is controversial to say the least. For an alternate interpretation of the role of rationality in Lockean pedagogy see the previous chapter.

²⁷⁷ Rousseau, *Emile*, 63.

²⁷⁸ Tracy Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Politics of the Ordinary* (London: Sage Publications, 1994) 115.

Rousseau eschews habituation for a second pedagogic and more significantly a moral reason. To the extent that regularity inculcates in the pupil a routine based sense of self it convinces the pupil of the permanence of his place. Routine and habit encourage a mistaken belief in fortune's predictability. Such a lesson encourages both a temporally expansive imprudence and a concomitant constriction of empathy's purview. Politically and pedagogically Rousseau rejects habituation on grounds that echo and reaffirm his rejection of Plato. Rousseau discerns in habituation a substitute principle of social differentiation intended to replace the now disqualified nature. Rousseau charges Lockean education, education through habituation, with preparing men for one thing, one job, one rank just as surely as Plato's twinned conceptions of nature and the noble lie.²⁷⁹

On a moral level habituation, to the degree that it defines the horizons of one's experience, constrains what Rousseau considers to be the central moral sentiment: empathy. Empathy, Rousseau contends, is most fully characterized as the moral sentiment that allows us to have concern for others through an identification with their suffering.

Why are kings without pity for their subjects? Because they count on never being mere men. Why are the rich so hard toward the poor? It is because they have no fear of becoming poor. Why does the nobility have so great a contempt for the people? It is because a noble will never be a commoner.²⁸⁰

In Lockean terms, Rousseau maintains, to be a king, to be a rich person, a noble, is to practice a series of habits, to grow accustomed to a specific set of ways of being in the world and to give them a status and permanence beyond the temporal bounds of

²⁷⁹ Cropsey, *Political Philosophy and the Issues*, 329.

²⁸⁰ Rousseau, *Emile*, 224.

one's existence. Each of the groups Rousseau identifies possess identities hinged on future expectations to which are attached assessments both about themselves and others. Somewhat counter-intuitively Rousseau draws the opposite conclusion about those who live under tyrannical, arbitrary or unstable forms of rule. Such individuals, by dint of the precarious nature of their existence, are more readily able to identify with the misfortune of others because they cannot rule out such misfortune for themselves. Precariousness encourages empathy, furthermore it encourages the central tenet of Rousseau's education of Emile, an informed attention to necessity. The awareness of future risk discourages both a lack of charity and the thoughtless assumptions of permanence that encourage unconscious forms of dependence.

To contract no habits is both a pedagogic and a moral imperative for Rousseau. The only habit Emile may acquire is versatility, in essence the habit of having no habit at all. The absence of habit trains him for the vicissitudes of fortune and teaches him to empathize with others, to identify with humanity in all its variety rather than with the narrow ways shared in common within a given class.

The Lesson of Necessity

The ability to recognize the capriciousness of fortune and the strength to reject the temptations of routine prepare Emile for the full encounter with the defining external fact of his education: Nature as necessity. Nature plays a dual role in the education of Emile. First and foremost nature appears as an aspect of Emile's person, indeed the original and good aspect of his person. However nature also appears as an external fact or facet of his existence, nature *is* the primary world that Emile inhabits and the apparent source of his experience. Central to these experiences of nature for

Emile is the experience of necessity and limitation. In portraying nature to Emile in these terms Rousseau offers an almost perfect inversion of the previous tradition in education, surveyed above through Plato, Cicero and Locke. While previously the student's unique nature provided the limits to teaching now nature as a fact about the world provides the limits and potential of his education. It is not the facts of Emile's nature which constrain his education but rather the facts of the world he finds himself in. This informative principle of Rousseau's pedagogy appears early in Emile's education, in the distinction drawn between dependence on others and dependence on things.

Keep the child in dependence only on things. You will have followed the order of nature in the progress of his education. Never present to his indiscriminating will anything but physical obstacles or punishments which stem from the actions themselves and which he will recall on the proper occasion. Without forbidding him to do harm, it suffices to prevent him from doing it. Experience or impotence alone ought to take the place of law for him.²⁸¹

Following the order of nature, Rousseau makes clear, is both an admonition to right pedagogical technique and a distinct lesson in itself. Following the order of nature not only allows for a natural education but it provides Emile with the daily reaffirmation of the limits of his existence. Allowing nature and natural causes to both restrain and punish Emile teaches both an appreciation of and a healthy resignation towards nature's multivariate inevitabilities.²⁸² By presenting this lesson early and often to Emile Rousseau highlights again both the potential civic content and the undeniably sympathy between the structure of Emile's education and the education of the moral citizen. Where the moral citizen is from birth nourished with

²⁸¹ Ibid., 85.

²⁸² Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, 18.

and raised to gaze upon the fatherland and its laws, Emile is similarly raised nourished by nature, and taught early its laws.

The fundamental 'law' of nature that Emile is taught by being so exposed to both necessity and natural consequence is the law of resignation. Rousseau argues that in nature human beings, like animals, are naturally inclined towards resignation.

²⁸³ In nature, Rousseau contends, we are constantly reminded of our finitude; as there is no apparent remedy at hand for this condition we learn early to accept it. Rousseau commends the careful translation of this belief into educational practice advising that children, especially young children, should never have things beyond their reach retrieved for them. On the crudest of levels the lesson of necessity, that man may not have that which is beyond his reach, is thereby founded.²⁸⁴

Reach is both a central instructional tool and a central metaphor for Rousseau, it first appears in the education of young children but the lesson once learned appears later as a principle of Emile's life in society.

The only one who does his own will is he who, in order to do it, has no need to put another's arms at the end of his own: from which follows that the first of all goods is not authority but freedom. The truly free man wants only what he can do and does what he pleases.²⁸⁵

Emile's civic education aims at this principle above all others, external nature, necessity, puts things beyond his grasp, his education teaches him to accept this. The young child is ever taught that there is no more so that as an adult he may only want that which there is.²⁸⁶ This unity of intention, the resignation of Emile to the existentially defining force of nature echoes a similar resignation of the citizen in the

²⁸³ Rousseau, *Emile*, 82.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 66.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 84.

²⁸⁶ Mary Nichols, "Rousseau's Novel Education in the *Emile*", *Political Theory* 13, (1985): 538

face of the people, laws and force of the General Will Rousseau describes so dramatically in *On the Social Contract*.²⁸⁷

Self-sufficiency's centrality to Emile's education explains the unique, and to no small extent ironic, hostility that Rousseau repeatedly directs towards books and book learning. (Lest his point be missed by the inattentive reader Rousseau proclaims unequivocally "I hate books.")²⁸⁸ Text based education, Rousseau contends, is the unhealthy alternative to his experiential pedagogy. His animosity originates in the relatively uncontroversial connection he describes between the reading of books and the expansion of the imagination. Rousseau contends that every such expansion is inevitably accompanied by an attendant expansion of desires and expectations, and with it a potential increase in the distance between desire and his nature, an increase which inevitably weighs on contentment and completion.²⁸⁹ Considering the young Emile Rousseau concludes that he will appear less well read than some but that "Reading is the plague of childhood and almost the only occupation we know how to give it."²⁹⁰ What Emile lacks in erudition he more than compensates for in vitality and versatility.

Rousseau first, and perhaps least effectively, condemns books for what he sees as their dubious moral content. Children's stories and in particular fables, Rousseau argues, teach children crude, simplistic and often downright immoral lessons, and that even when the lessons appear moral the diminished comprehension

²⁸⁷ Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 161, 163.

²⁸⁸ Rousseau, *Emile*, 184.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

of childhood often leads to their unwitting subversion.²⁹¹ *Prima Facie* Rousseau's first critique appears most amenable to remedy. However Rousseau's attack deepens to condemn not merely the content of reading but the lesson taught by reading *qua* reading especially in comparison to that taught through the experience of nature and necessity. Rousseau's first critique is developmental, he suggests that teaching reading to children too early provides them with a corrupting lesson far beyond the tedium of mastering one's ABC's. Reading, Rousseau argues, is forced on children before they could have any possible need of it and before their developing intellects are ready for it.²⁹² In forcing them the tutor inculcates a notion of learning's advantage beyond that useful from the vantage of their experience. What students have 'learned' through reading possesses no real meaning as lesson in itself, instead learning becomes merely a way to dazzle the salon and please the tutor.²⁹³ Beyond this Rousseau implies a profound civil lesson, reading beyond the limits of experientially possible education encourages appeal to authority. The pupil so educated comes to rely first for his beliefs but inevitably later for his desires on a will other than his own, innocuously delivered by the written word, such learning leads to dependence on others.

Of course the absence of reading, or rather by his adulthood the absence in Emile of excessive reading, profoundly informs his character but also his intellect.

The sphere of his knowledge does not extend farther than what is profitable. His route is narrow and well marked. He is not tempted to leave it, and so he remains indistinguishable from those who follow it. He wants neither to stray from his path nor to shine. Emile is a man of

²⁹¹ Ibid., 115.

²⁹² John Darling, "Rousseau as Progressive Instrumentalist" *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 27, (1993): 28.

²⁹³ Rousseau, *Emile*, 119.

good sense, and he does not want to be anything else. One may very well try to insult him by this title; he will stick to it and always feel honored by it.²⁹⁴

This passage is of two-fold significance. Rousseau's linked imagery of the man of common sense and the possibility of insult place Emile firmly within society.

Rousseau both bounds Emile's intellect and locates him socially. However within society Emile's education acts in a way remarkably different from the education in refinement and ornamental erudition Rousseau so obviously loathes. Emile's education teaches him both to be content within the limits of his existence and more importantly it provides no opportunity for artificial distinctions that might incline Emile towards pride and ostentation.

Rousseau's education focuses on ordinary experience and sensation rather than erudition because he recognizes in conventional students a studied culture that quickly transforms into a principle of social differentiation. Education transforms itself into little more than the willing costumer for the all-encompassing masquerade of social existence. Education as ornament and erudition, instead of countering, ends up aggravating and deepening the effects of *amour propre*.

The man of the world is whole in his mask. Almost never being himself, he is always alien and ill at ease when forced to go back there. What he is, is nothing; what he appears to be is everything for him.²⁹⁵

The intellectual modesty of Emile's education not only holds his inclinations close to nature it encourages equality by leaving unrealized the artificial differences brought out by higher learning.²⁹⁶ Emile need not, indeed cannot, attain rank by appeal either to his education or to learned authority. Nature's law of necessity, as

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 339.

²⁹⁵ Rousseau, *Emile*, 230

²⁹⁶ Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, 45.

expressed in Emile's experiential curriculum, completes its transformation from an agent of differentiation into the common principle of humanity.

Politics, Citizenship and Philo-Sophie

By now the core contention of this chapter has hopefully been rendered manifest: The education of Emile is explicitly and implicitly an education that prepares him to live in society and in particular within political society. At the very heart of *Emile* Rousseau rejects the mistaken equation of the inevitable incompatibility between inclination and duty with the relation between a solitary existence and life in society. However Rousseau unfortunately muddies the waters of the *Discourse on Inequality* in the *Emile* by providing for the possibility of two sorts of natural man. He contends that Emile and the Noble Savage are both equally, though differently, men of nature.

There is a great difference between the natural man living in the state of nature and the natural man living in the state of society. Emile is not a savage to be relegated to the desert. He is a savage made to inhabit cities. He has to know how to find his necessities in them, to take advantage of their inhabitants, and to live, if not like them, at least with them.²⁹⁷

Rousseau reveals here the explicitly, though of course not solely, civic intention of Emile's education, and restates the first justification of all education in necessity. Rousseau's intention is informed by three distinct but interconnected, mutually reinforcing imperatives. These are simple necessity, internal natural necessity and external natural necessity. Further Emile's education must countenance his growing desire for intimacy with one other, an irresistible desire that is inextricably connected to both internal and external necessity and connects the natural to the conventional.

²⁹⁷ Rousseau, *Emile*, 205.

Increasingly Rousseau reveals a deeper more fully realized portrait of the natural man in society than that drawn of the noble savage; he is as complete as his sylvan counterpart but hued in colors beyond bucolic earth tones. He is colored by and stands against a more complex horizon. Emile's social education is explained and informed by the essential inextricability of the roles of owner, husband, father and citizen. In this inextricability Rousseau reveals that these final lessons prepare Emile for an explicitly civic education, for the education of an intellect already well shaped by the sentiments.

These connections Rousseau grants are fundamentally qualified. It is important to note that the sort of civic life and the sort of city that Rousseau conceives of Emile dwelling in is most definitely not the decadent and cosmopolitan city of *ancien regime* Paris. It is closer rather to the Calvinist Geneva or perhaps better still Clarens, the outlying mountain village of *Nouvelle Heloise*. For the modern metropolis Rousseau's contempt was complete. Arthur Melzer captures this contempt so perfectly in *The Natural Goodness of Man* that his description bears quoting in its entirety.

He [Rousseau] is suspicious of liberal cosmopolitanism, wary of the arts and sciences, opposed to pluralism, against technology and industrialism, appalled by commercialism, disgusted by urbanization, revolted by the bourgeoisie, and dead set against "extending the sphere."²⁹⁸

Rousseau's contempt for modern living within the city and indeed within politics itself does not lead him, or rather lead him to lead Emile, into the mountains and into the life of a solitary wanderer. Instead Rousseau resigns himself to the necessity of living among wicked men, men of government, church, court and marketplace, who

²⁹⁸ Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man*, 109-110.

will seek to take advantage of Emile. Emile's frankest civic education, if not his first or most profound, will be in the arts of defending both his status and his property against such interlopers.²⁹⁹ Of particular importance for Emile's civic education is the peculiar ontological status of what he learns to this end. Unlike all the natural and experiential education he received in childhood and early adolescence Rousseau makes it clear to Emile that in learning the defense of his property he is first learning the ways of convention and artifice essential to social existence. Emile is carefully schooled to understand that the laws and systems he uses are mere shadows of true law, he is taught to live justly engaging them only defensively but even this requires a degree of worldly education.³⁰⁰

In any event, he [Emile] has lived tranquilly under a government and the simulacra of laws. What difference does it make that the social contract has not been observed, individual interest protected him as the general will would have done, if public violence guaranteed him as the general will would have done, if public violence guaranteed him against individual violence, if the evil he saw done made him love what is good and if our institutions themselves have made him know and hate their iniquities? O Emile, where is the good man who owes nothing to his country?³⁰¹

Rousseau sounds almost Augustinian³⁰² in his admonishment to Emile. Emile is to live a virtuous life and perhaps if necessity calls to offer his services to his country but his primary duty is to himself and later to his own. The institutions and affectations of the state that possesses only the 'simulacra of laws' affect Emile only

²⁹⁹ Rousseau, *Emile*, 457.

³⁰⁰ Geraint Parry, "Emile: Learning to be Men, Women and Citizens," in *Cambridge Companion to Rousseau*, ed. Patrick Riley, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 260.

³⁰¹ Rousseau, *Emile*, 473.

³⁰² "Hence, even the heavenly city uses the earthly peace on its journey, and it is concerned about and desires the orderly arrangement of human wills concerning the things pertaining to mortal human nature, insofar as it is agreeable to sound piety and religion" St. Augustine, *City of God*. Book XIX, Chapter 17 in *Political Writings*, trans. M.W. Tkacz and D. Kries, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994)

in a supervening manner, only on occasions when they are coincident with necessity.

The only laws that truly and invariably bind Emile are those of nature and necessity.³⁰³

The simple necessity that Emile must learn the laws, or at least their simulacra, is perhaps the least significant of the reasons that Emile is to be taught the conventions of civic virtue and city life. Of much greater importance for Rousseau is the inextricable connection between civic virtue and social virtue and Emile's search for a mate. Moreover Rousseau reveals that even here the carefully shepherding of Emile's natural passion provides a prophylaxis against the corrosive *amour-propre*. The fundamental principle of Emile's education has been self-sufficiency, at every turn to assiduously eschew dependence on persons, to accept the limits only of nature. However inevitably, even if postponed as long as possible, Emile comes to long for another. This is perhaps the moment when the incredible influence of his tutor is most obvious. Rousseau has carefully removed all longing for things beyond himself from Emile and ultimately, even appropriately, it is the tutor who introduces Emile to longing, to Sophie. Rousseau introduces Emile to romantic attachment and then founds civic virtue upon it. The final stage of his education is to extend his concern for himself to concern for another, to in essence draw another up into his existence. What is truly remarkable is not the inevitability of Emile's desire for Sophie but the transformation of that singular, often selfish desire, through Jean-Jacques careful tutelage, into a concern for all others and a form of civic virtue.³⁰⁴ As Rousseau remarks "Observe how the physical leads us unawares to the moral, and how the

³⁰³ Rousseau, *Emile*, 472.

³⁰⁴ Bloom, *Love and Friendship*, 127.

sweetest laws of love are born little by little from the coarse union of the sexes.”³⁰⁵

This is perhaps the single most remarkable pedagogic ‘rope trick’ of Emile’s education. In providing Emile with an object for his affections Rousseau appears to teach his charge the ways of a good husband while actually teaching him the ways of the just citizen. In learning to love Emile discovers first himself, then the conventions of civic life, and finally the grounds of justice and the social contract.

Rousseau carefully introduces Emile to the idea, truly the ideal, of Sophie in terms that make it clear that the unknown Sophie is to be for Emile a woman like no other. The extraordinary role she must play in Emile’s education demands nothing less. Rousseau implies as much when he describes his delicate first conversation concerning love with Emile.

I shall begin by moving his imagination. I shall choose the time, the place and the objects most favourable to the impression I want to make. I shall, so to speak, call all of nature as a witness to our conversations.³⁰⁶

In this first exposition of erotic passion to Emile the central verb is *witness*. It is in the role of witness to his conduct that the actual Sophie most profoundly informs Emile’s education. Carefully trained, his education in nature has prepared him finally to live in the eyes of another, he is ready to be witnessed. However this living in the eyes of another is not that of *amour propre*, rather it is the final developmental step of Emile’s intellect and sentiment. Through the desire to be seen as just in Sophie’s eyes Emile completes his own development, he becomes self-conscious.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵ Rousseau, *Emile*, 360.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 323.

³⁰⁷ Bloom, *Love and Friendship*, 133.

The content of Emile's self-consciousness, the demands it will make on his conduct, are also implied in the very first conversation about love that Emile has with his tutor. From the first discussion of erotic passion Emile recognizes a singular object but a multiplicity of witnesses. First in priority of these witnesses is Rousseau himself.

I shall press him [Emile] to my breast and shed tears of tenderness on him, I shall say to him, "You are my property, my child, my work. It is from your happiness that I expect my own. If you frustrate my hopes, you are robbing me of twenty years of my life and your are causing the unhappiness of my old age."³⁰⁸

The combination of Sophie and Jean-Jacques weaves a powerful skein around Emile's conduct, it informs it in a way structurally similar to *amour propre* but in substance of a nature diametrically opposed. The expectations of Sophie and the beloved tutor lead the newly self-conscious Emile to consider his actions from their perspective. This is not the living in the eyes of another of the *Discourse on Inequality*; instead when Emile acts he considers not what he desires in recognition but what he owes in duty and obligation. Rather than the hopelessly divided conduct of *amour-propre*, the selfish selflessness, Emile's love of both teacher and wife leads to a self-consciously selfless selflessness. Importantly Emile's selflessness is not born of an ascetic nature or an autonomous reason that concludes on the good independent of sentiment, quite the contrary, it is out of inclination that Emile is drawn to a selfless duty. It is from his love both for tutor and beloved that Emile inclines towards virtue, because they are worthy he must be worthy. This worthiness quickly takes on broader proportions than the trivial challenges of courtship. Inevitably if Emile is to remain worthy of the worthy it must. When Emile stops

³⁰⁸ Rousseau, *Emile*, 323.

overnight to attend to a pregnant woman and wounded man and thus misses an appointment with Sophie she is at first piqued upon his arrival at her home a day late.

After explanations are offered Emile implores his beloved:

Sophie you are the arbiter of my fate. You know it well, You can make me die of pain. But do not hope to make me forget the rights of humanity, They are more sacred to me than yours. I will never give them up for you.³⁰⁹

However Sophie does not ask Emile to so forget. Instead she finally succumbs fully to his courting and agrees to marry him. His conduct has been worthy of her and she of it. Emile cannot forget the rights of humanity and remain worthy of Sophie.

Unlike the love, duty and obligation that Emile feels for his tutor, his love for Sophie possesses a further unique element (beyond the obvious) important to Emile's civic education. Emile, in courting Sophie, is made to walk two leagues from where he stays to her home to see her. In walking this great distance Emile is tempted to stay over but his tutor refuses, reminding Emile of the importance of safeguarding Sophie's reputation. Reputation, Rousseau argues, is central to women's existence in a way wholly different from men. "Opinion is the grave of virtue among men and its throne among women."³¹⁰ Setting aside the fairness of Rousseau's contention,³¹¹ the undeniable importance of reputation to Sophie, and of Sophie to Emile, brings to the young pupil an acceptance of and an attention to convention.³¹² Emile develops social acumen in order to safeguard Sophie's reputation not to expand his own. Sophie, through a careful education of Emile to her interests, provides Rousseau a way to teach Emile to attend to the ways of society without succumbing to them, to

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 441

³¹⁰ Ibid., 365.

³¹¹ Allan Bloom, *Love and Friendship*, 99.

³¹² Joseph Cropsey, *Political Philosophy and the Issues*, 328.

recognize and be sensitive to the effects of *amour propre* at a safe degree of removal from their influence.

The final civic lessons to be drawn from Emile's encounter with Sophie is drawn, somewhat ironically, from his forced absence from his beloved. This absence provides in both the sharpness of its initial realization and the education offered by travel, the explicitly civic curriculum of Emile's education. Emile's departure, demanded by his tutor, tests his ability to abide by his word, an abiding that is first understood not in terms of the moral citizen's laws of duty but under the maxim of self-sufficiency. Rousseau establishes as much when as a prelude to enforcing his contract with Emile, a contract in which Emile consented to be guided without question or objection by Jean-Jacques, he tells the young man that his beloved Sophie has perished. Emile's impassioned reaction, his uncontrolled dismay and then anger at being deceived, convince Rousseau that in teaching Emile to love he has failed to fully enshrine the maxim of self-sufficiency. Protecting Sophie from death is beyond Emile's reach, taught to always accept his own necessities and finitude he has forgotten all in the case of Sophie. Rousseau rebukes Emile in the harshest terms for forgetting his first lesson. "Nature had enslaved you only to a single death. You are enslaving yourself to a second. Now you are in the position of dying twice."³¹³ Rousseau demands that Emile learn to love Sophie without being enslaved to her; Sophie is worthy of a free man and not a slave, even one enslaved to her. Emile must go, complete his education, and in his absence prove his fidelity, that she may give herself to him "not as an act of grace but as a recompense."³¹⁴ To truly love Sophie

³¹³ Rousseau, *Emile*, 444.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 448.

he must not utterly depend upon her, she cannot be the *sine qua non* of his existence if he is to be free.

You must be able to tell Sophie that you are leaving her in spite of yourself. Very well be content; and since you do not obey reason, recognize another master. You have not forgotten the promise you made to me. Emile, you have to leave Sophie, I wish it.³¹⁵

Rousseau has both shown that Emile is ready to learn and how much he has already learned. Emile has shown that he has learned the importance of keeping his word, of honoring the obligation he has to his tutor, he has learned to contract.³¹⁶ Having shown he is able to contract Emile is ready to learn about the social contract. Emile's tutor hints that this will be Emile's final lesson, "You believe you have learned everything, and you still know nothing. Before taking a place in the civil order, learn to know it and to know what rank in it suits you."³¹⁷ Emile does not assent in his reason but in his sentiment, in his newly acquired self-consciousness. But he has in assenting opened up the final ground for his reason, he can discern between his inclinations, for Sophie and for his tutor. He can weigh and evaluate his inclinations, in so discerning sentiment has borne him to the threshold of reason.

That the social contract is Emile's final lesson is made clear from the outset of his travels with his tutor. From the outset Emile's travels aim at studies of comparative government and not mere sightseeing. Rousseau soon reveals that to this end Emile's travel guides will not be *Baedeker* or *Fodor's* but *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* and *On the Social Contract*. Emile experiences types of rule: monarchies, aristocracies, mixed rule and democracy, all are countenanced and

³¹⁵ Ibid., 449 Compare with the reasoning process of the moral citizen in *On The Social Contract*, 151.

³¹⁶ Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 137.

³¹⁷ Rousseau, *Emile*, 448.

evaluated. Eventually Emile's travels bring him to the original context of his departure. The lesson of his departure, imperceptibly drawn out of his character by experience of tutor and beloved, is carefully translated and brought before his intellect in the explicit language of Rousseau's political philosophy.

Inasmuch as the essence of sovereignty consists in the general will, it is also hard to see how one can be certain that a particular will always will agree with this general will. One ought rather to presume that the particular will will often be contrary to the general will, for private interest always tends to preferences, and the public interest always tends to equality.³¹⁸

Emile learns the political philosophy of his tutor while traveling. Rousseau's pedagogy demands that these lessons be taught to Emile through travel, his knowledge must always be tied to his experience, to debate questions of government and sovereignty he must experience them. Emile draws his political principles only from the experience of them in fact. The origins of states, the nature of inequality, the nature of man even the elusive state of nature are taught to Emile only in the context of experiences of the forms of rule generated by institutional appeals to political right.³¹⁹

When Emile returns to Sophie his education appears complete. Unlike the moral citizen he does not return to a fatherland but merely to a country, one he lives in but not for.³²⁰ His inclinations have been so formed that politically this is enough. His civic education begins when his sentiments are ready for it, his experience of government is the final lesson, appropriate to a grown man rightly educated. Returning to Sophie his education is complete, he understands where he stands and

³¹⁸ Rousseau, *Emile*, 462-462 compare with *Social Contract* 203.

³¹⁹ Rousseau, *Emile*, 458.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 473.

has drawn up into his existence, husband, citizen, owner and soon father. He returns to the countryside, virtuously, even joyfully, resigned to the life his nature demands of him. He has no more ambitions, he is satisfied in politics as in all else, that there is no more. Moreover, Rousseau concedes, in the world of *amour propre* men who are educated both in their nature and in resignation to the finitude of nature are unlikely to either have cause or opportunity for political adventure. “As long as there are men who belong to the present age, you are not the man who will be sought out to serve the state.”³²¹

Conclusion

Rousseau explodes the traditional connection between the nature of the student and the potential for his education. This distinction expresses itself in Plato, Cicero and Locke in the careful discrimination drawn between the philosophic education and the civic education, each suited to a specific nature. This distinction further implies an epistemologically privileged status of the philosophic student's education. This privilege obviously need not translate into a concurrent political privilege, indeed for different reasons each philosopher suspects that perhaps it is best if it doesn't. Nonetheless the idiosyncratic character of student's natures demands this distinction and each philosopher embraces it as a fact both intractable and ordinal with the philosophic always superordinate. Rejecting this Rousseau transforms nature from a principle of distinction to a principle of unification. Instead of focusing on nature's variety he emphasizes its commonality. The double movement of natural goodness and natural necessity, of common facts internal and external about

³²¹ Ibid., 475.

humanity and the world leads Rousseau to reject the ladder of learning to which Plato, Cicero and Locke cling. He appears to be the first modern advocate of a democratic and radically egalitarian pedagogy, whether it is the common education of the radically denatured moral citizen, or the natural education, founded on sentiments common to all men of the *Emile*, there seems little room for a naturally superordinate education. But there is a wrinkle, one Rousseau saves for the final page of *Emile*. Emile, married now to Sophie, attends to his still present tutor with news of Sophie's pregnancy. Assuring him that he need not fear that now he must raise his progeny, Emile strangely implores his tutor to stay, and more importantly to stay as his tutor.

But remain the master of the young masters. Advise us and govern us. We shall be docile. As long as I live, I shall need you. I need you more than ever now that my functions as man begin. You have fulfilled yours. Guide me so that I can imitate you. And take your rest. It is time.³²²

In this singular and final passage Rousseau reasserts the hierarchy between the philosophic and the civic that he appeared to eschew in dividing the healthy pedagogic possibilities for human nature in terms either of duty or inclination. In a very real sense Rousseau returns the status of the philosopher, in relation to his civic student, to the pre-Lockean. Recall that, as Rousseau himself reminds, Locke leaves his pupil when it is time for him to marry, "But the young gentleman being got within view of matrimony, 'tis time to leave him to his mistress."³²³ Rousseau, the philosopher tutor, never leaves his Emile. Moreover he stays on in the role of governor, and governor to a citizenry self-described as docile. He is needed not only to found Emile's character but to keep founding it, forever. Rousseau implies the

³²² Ibid., 480.

³²³ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, sec. 215.

permanent (if not established as natural) superordinate status of the tutor not only in the use of the language of governance but in the final verb that Emile uses to describe his future relation to his tutor. Emile will *imitate* Jean-Jacques, here the language resembles nothing so strongly as the mimetic language of the *Republic*.³²⁴ Emile appears to be happily reconciled to inherit the true opinions of his tutor, who suddenly reveals himself as not only indispensable but epistemologically privileged. In so doing Rousseau dramatically reinstates the division, discerned in the other philosophers discussed above. Jean-Jacques takes on the role of Athenian stranger and lawgiver; Emile and Sophie simply keep “keep the wheel rolling.”³²⁵

Rousseau waits till the final page of *Emile* to confess that his education is truly for the ordinary, and that it retains the privileged place of the naturally extraordinary. Concealed at the heart of the *Emile* Rousseau warns the reader as much, both explaining his silence on the superordinate status of the philosopher and dismissing attempts to criticize his silence, “All rare cases are outside the rules.”³²⁶

Rousseau’s civic education, at least as it concerns Emile, embodies the tragic double movement across the Western tradition from Plato to the present. Every moment in which civic education and citizenship is extended its content is diminished. In both civic education and civic virtue depth seems invariably to be sacrificed to breadth. The education of Emile admits as much when it identifies as its object both an affirmation of nature and a resignation to it. Striving beyond what may appear possible, even striving in the fashion of the Polish Cavalry of 1939, no matter how noble, to the extent it rejects necessity and inevitability appears to Rousseau a

³²⁴ Plato, *Republic*, 590c-d.

³²⁵ Bloom, *Love and Friendship*, 140.

³²⁶ Rousseau, *Emile*, 245.

form of dependence and incompleteness. Emile's education prevents him from becoming the bourgeois *nothing* ever seeking after material goods that Rousseau so detests but Emile is also prevented from being the hero striving after honour or the saint seeking God.³²⁷ He stands out only against the relative decline of his fellow man. Emile is ordinary, his education is predicated on and completed in that ordinariness "he is a man of common sense."³²⁸ Rousseau's civic education is the education of the naturally ordinary citizen in the broadest sense.

³²⁷ Nichols, *Rousseau's Emile*, 555.

³²⁸ Rousseau, *Emile*, 339.

Chapter Five: Adam Smith's Sentimental Education

Introduction

Adam Smith, pre-eminent moral philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment, is rarely regarded seriously as a political philosopher, more rarely still is his contribution to the philosophy of education recognized. When Smith is taken seriously as a philosopher it is usually in regards to his first text, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and not his vastly more influential and more widely read *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. This is, or at least should be, striking. Even a perfunctory examination of Smith's classic reveals a deep engagement with political philosophy and education in particular. A careful reading of Smith's text reveals a work that constantly alludes to the presence of the political in all aspects of economic development, indeed *Wealth* doesn't so much conclude as *culminate* in a discussion of politics and the role of government; note that for the purposes of this investigation a full third of that discussion is dedicated to the question of education. Indeed the significance of Smith's contribution to educational theory in *Wealth of Nations* warranted fellow economist John Maynard Keynes, a careful reader of Smith, to comment that it "contains passages which ought to be prefixed to the statutes of every University and College."³²⁹

To fully appreciate Smith's contribution it is essential to discern the philosophical relationship between Smith's two major works, *Wealth* and *Moral Sentiments*. Much has been made of the *Adam Smith problem*,³³⁰ of the surface

³²⁹ John Maynard Keynes, *Economic History* IV, cf. C.E. Dankert "Adam Smith, Educator," *Dalhousie Review* 47, (1967): 13.

³³⁰ Glenn Morrow, *The Ethical and Economic Theories of Adam Smith* (New York:Augustus Kelley Publishers, 1969) 7-8.

incoherence between the self-interest of *Wealth* and the sympathy and imagination of *Moral Sentiments*. To descry such a problem is to fundamentally misapprehend the relationship between the two texts. In discussing Smith's thoughts on education the structure of this chapter attempts to reflect the super structure of Smith's philosophy; *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is at the center, it renders an account of human beings as passionate creatures who long both for the society and the sympathy of others. *The Wealth of Nations* describes how these passionate beings live together and how they are educated and socialized into a society and an economy that shows a dangerous predilection to reduce and mutilate their deeper desire for sympathy and society into a crude and dominating self-interest. It is often argued that *Moral Sentiments* is a work of ethics and *Wealth of Nations* a work of economics, when read on the question of education what is quickly revealed is that at the core both are quintessentially works of political philosophy offering a full account of the sources of both civic character and corruption in the citizen's passions.

Smith and the *Wealth* are of particular immediate and political import to the question of education for two pressing reasons. The first and perhaps most singularly politic reason is the particular place Smith holds in the history of political economy. Smith is invoked knowingly by the exponents of not only liberal capitalism but also by the proponents of an almost uniquely modern critique of education. In brief this critique, the technological or utilitarian critique, argues that as a result of liberal education's failure to conspicuously prepare the pupil for economic life under liberal capitalism it is ill-suited to the pedagogical needs of the citizenry and ought therefore to be replaced by vocational and specifically technical training. It is of particular

political import today then to show that such a position is in fact completely incompatible with Smith's teaching not only in *Theory of Moral Sentiments* but in the supposedly purely economic thought of *The Wealth of Nations*. To rebut this claim not only recovers Adam Smith for liberal education, an important symbolic act, but also brings back into view Smith's deep insight and profound misgivings about the relationship of commerce to liberty and citizenship. Ultimately in the larger context of the development of political philosophy it is of unqualified and independent merit simply to read Smith as he intended, to grasp the full import and intention of *Wealth of Nations*.

All of this is not to say that there is nothing at all to the appropriation of Smith by the technological critique both of education and of politics. There is no doubt that the commonly held contention that Smith and the other key figures of the Scottish Enlightenment began the process whereby political economy eclipsed political philosophy bears a great deal of truth.³³¹ While this is a phenomena in which Smith participated it is far from obvious that this result represents the author's full intention. This chapter will argue that while Smith may have been the herald of the new political economy he was far from its unambiguous champion. Instead throughout *Wealth of Nations* we find Smith trying to bring politics, virtue and moral philosophy back in, not to buttress but to temper the enthusiasm for both the new social science and the new economy. Nowhere is Smith's characteristic philosophical temperance more keenly felt than in his treatment of education and character in the emerging market economy and liberal polity.

³³¹ Joseph Cropsey, "Adam Smith and Political Philosophy," in *Essays on Adam Smith*, eds. A.S. Skinner and T. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) 132.

The Case for a Civic Reading of *Wealth of Nations*

Smith was a meticulous author and editor. He wrote and published with a prudence and reserve without doubt learned from the example of John Locke whose influence on both the structure and substance of *Wealth of Nations* is conspicuous throughout. Biographically nothing testifies to Smith's Lockean prudence more than his destruction of hundreds of pages of manuscripts before his death. In his two key works Smith also followed Locke's example in constantly editing new editions throughout his life; at his death he had just completed no less than the sixth revision of *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.³³² In the case of the *Wealth of Nations* the first edition alone was the product of twelve years work.³³³ Smith writes with tremendous care and attention, none more than to the architecture of the text, an architecture whose meaning is as full as the words themselves. Smith places a hint to this architecture at the center of *The Wealth of Nations*: the brisk definition of statesmanship and its relation to political economy conspicuously placed at the beginning of Book IV contains the central tension of the work.

Political Economy, considered as a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator, proposes two distinct objects: first, to provide a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people, or more properly to enable them to provide such a revenue of subsistence for themselves; and secondly, to supply the state or commonwealth with a revenue sufficient for the publick services. It proposes to enrich both the people and the sovereign.³³⁴

Of singular import is the status of Political Economy as only a 'branch' of the science of the legislator. Setting aside the clearly stated dependence of political economy on

³³² Of course a great deal can also be drawn from the fact that it was *Sentiments* and not *Wealth* which occupied Smith's last years.

³³³ Dankert, *Adam Smith*, 18.

³³⁴ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 275.

the science of statesmanship the structure of the definition itself reflects and reveals the larger structure of *Wealth of Nations*. By listing the individual and independent subsistence of the citizenry as the first task of government Smith positions *Wealth* in the liberal and specifically Lockean camp. The state is no longer directly concerned with ensuring the virtue of either citizen or state it is concerned instead with, as Locke famously defines it, “liberty, health and indolency of the body; and the possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like.”³³⁵ Political society is instituted in the name of preservation and not of virtue.³³⁶ The provision of services, including education, is secondary to this task. The structure of Smith’s entire text mirrors the ordering present in his definition. It commences with a lengthy description of the sources of wealth, primarily the division of labour. Only after having established these does the definition go on to explain which services this wealth will be drawn upon to provide for.

The text as a whole seems to follow this pattern but within the definition and within the text a contradiction lurks. In the definition of Political Economy the science of the legislator is presented as prior to its means, the legislator is first to govern in a way that provides for revenue and then *secondly* to receive revenue with which to govern. It appears then that the economic originates in the political which is dependent for its existence on the economic. It thus is unclear which brings which into existence. The same ontogenetic contradiction appears in Smith’s account of economic development and in the super-structure of the text itself. *Wealth of Nations* begins with a relatively unambiguous celebration of the division of labour and

³³⁵ John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 18.

³³⁶ Joseph Cropsey, *Polity and Economy: An Interpretation of the Principles of Adam Smith* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1957) 40.

concludes with a condemnation of that division's impact on the character of the citizenry and the nature of liberal capitalist polities. As a result the careful reader discovers a work bracketed by contradictory (but not incompatible) assessments of the division of labour, a discovery that leaves the reader with an almost tragic sense of liberal capitalism. What a careful reading cannot sustain is a triumphant sense of liberal capitalism's unambiguous goodness.

The title entails Smith's consciousness of the ultimate character of his investigation. In choosing to characterize *Wealth* as an *Inquiry* as opposed to his earlier work in moral philosophy, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith alludes to the incompleteness and unresolved character of politics and its study. Inquiries may be ambiguous, they may contain contradictions even incompatibilities; theories on the other hand live and die by their consistency.³³⁷ This ambivalence, about the relation and priority of the economic and the political is a recurring theme in Smith, one that is most present in his discussion of character and civic education, more grandly it is perhaps the core hermeneutic principle for understanding his text.

The Division of Labour

As much as Smith's text is ambiguous it is also clear that while he is perhaps not originator of the concept he is the philosophical herald of the division of labour. Smith repeatedly marvels at the dynamism and productive potential of the specialization of labour. In almost breathless prose he begins the first chapter of Book I by declaring

The greatest improvement in the productive powers of labour, and the greater part of the skill, dexterity, and judgment with which it is any

³³⁷ A.D. Megill, "Theory and Experience in Adam Smith" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, (1975): 90

where directed, or applied, seem to have been the effects of the division of labour.³³⁸

From the very outset this division is understood by Smith to possess significance far beyond the walls of the new and growing manufactures. It is the singular engine that is transforming the rank and status of the common people.³³⁹ Moreover Smith believes that it is, materially at least, profoundly improving their lot.³⁴⁰ In broader economic terms the division of labour tends to improve even the productive character and the total number of the labouring classes. In tying the division of labour to its material benefits Smith contends that “The liberal reward of labour, as it encourages the propagation, so it increases the industry of the common people.”³⁴¹ By Smith’s own account there remains little doubt he holds to the contention that the division of labour is salutary for the economic character of the citizenry, however so holding never implies that economic character is the total or even primary characteristic of the person.³⁴²

It is clear from the outset of Smith’s discussion that the division of labour is much more than an economic phenomena. The deeper significance lies in its impact on the structure of society and the status of this new and industrious common people.

³³⁸ Smith, *Wealth*, 11.

³³⁹ Smith uses the terms ‘inferior ranks’, ‘common people’ and ‘labouring classes’ loosely and almost interchangeably to imply what would now be understood as the non-professional working class.

³⁴⁰ Smith, *Wealth*, 78

³⁴¹ Smith, *Wealth*, 81

³⁴² The importance of this distinction is critical to understanding Smith. The economic character is never described as more than one of the ‘original principles’ or ‘whether, as seems more probable, it be the necessary consequence of the faculties of reason and speech.’ (*Wealth* I.ii.21) Economic Man, as a totalizing definition cannot be construed from Smith’s account in *Wealth* setting aside the fuller account offered in combination with *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. This assertion is perhaps the single most serious error in Karl Polanyi’s otherwise brilliant study *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944). See chapter four.

This import is implied in Smith's closing remarks to the chapter that introduces the concept. As he describes their condition

Compared, indeed, with the more extravagant luxury of the great, his accommodation must no doubt appear extremely simple and easy: and yet it may be true, perhaps, that the accommodation of an European prince does not always so much exceed that of an industrious and frugal peasant, as the accommodation of the latter exceeds that of many an African king, the absolute master of the lives and liberty of ten thousand naked savages.³⁴³

The import of this passage is two-fold. First and foremost it clearly attaches the transformation of market and production relations to political relations. The common people working in industry are not merely materially better off than the 'naked savages'. It is clear that the degree to which they materially exceed them is matched by a consonant degree of civil liberty.³⁴⁴ A European prince is not only less distant materially from the common people he is also politically less distant, he more closely resembles a wealthy employer than a master.

Smith's remarks reveal the true foundational significance of the return of an economic argument to its origins in the political. More specifically in this case Smith the economist is returning consciously to political philosophy and in particular to John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*. Smith's account of the increased productive capacities of labour consequent on its division and the resulting improvement in the condition of the common people is profoundly Lockean. The improvement in condition Locke describes as a result of the move away from

³⁴³ Smith, *Wealth*, 20.

³⁴⁴ Smith's precise conception of civil liberty is beyond the scope of this chapter, it appears to range from negative liberty and non-interference to full political participation. However the definition is not absolutely central to an argument (I would and do contend this is Smith's position) that posits that the conditions which give rise to this new liberty simultaneously undermine its full expression.

subsistence and towards market agriculture³⁴⁵ is mirrored in Smith's account of the transformation of labour. The critical connection resides in the character of material improvement: fundamentally unequal in degree but universal in dispersal. Every member of society is, according to both philosophers, materially improved at the same time that society becomes increasingly less equal. The common people essentially consent to the presence of material inequality, to borrow a hackneyed phrase, 'as long as all boats are lifted'. Where Smith will come to disagree with Locke is in the suspicion that the compromise has non-economic consequences on the character of the common people that may fatally mitigate the material benefits of the bargain.

Civic Character and the Division of Labour

Smith's primary disagreement with Locke concerns the compromise at the very heart of liberal capitalism. Smith's break with Locke is primarily a result of evidence not available to Locke, indeed not yet in existence, evidence concerning the consequence of that compromise for the character of the common people. The recognition of this consequence is philosophically predicated on a central tenet of liberalism's understanding of education. Smith shares with Locke and the majority of the liberal tradition in education, indeed the majority of the Western tradition dating back at least to Cicero,³⁴⁶ the belief that education is the decisive element in civic character. Arguing to this effect in *Theory of Moral Sentiments* Smith contends

There is scarce any man, however, who by discipline, education, and example, may not be so impressed with a regard to general rules, as to

³⁴⁵ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, sec. 41.

³⁴⁶ Cicero, *De Legibus* I.30.

act upon almost every occasion with tolerably decency, and through the whole of his life to avoid any considerable degree of blame.³⁴⁷

Drawing deeply on the stoic tradition, on the assertion of an *inchoata intelligentia*,³⁴⁸ a seed within each person which education can cultivate into a sense of justice, Smith consciously echoes Cicero's assertion that human beings are "born for justice."³⁴⁹

Smith observes in Book V of *Wealth of Nations* that the division of labour has consequences far beyond the economic and political. The division of labour is an educating and socializing force, it constitutes an unconscious pedagogy that fundamentally transforms the character of citizenry. It undermines and displaces the conditions of 'discipline, education and example' necessary for at least 'tolerable decency'. To illustrate one needs to refer to Book I wherein Smith champions the industrial marvel of pin making where the division of labour ran ahead of most other emerging industries in Britain. In pin manufacture a complex task had been broken down into as many as eighteen discrete steps. A single worker was responsible for drawing the wire, another for pointing, another for grinding and so on. The resulting exponential explosion in production was a modern marvel.³⁵⁰ In Book V Smith turns his critical attention to the self-same division of labour from the perspective of education and discerns not productive dynamism but enervating simplicity. The deleterious intellectual consequences of stultifying labour are further exacerbated by the growing rate of child labour.

As soon as they [child labourers] are able to work, they must apply to some trade by which they can earn their subsistence. That trade too is

³⁴⁷ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, (New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1966) 229

³⁴⁸ ³⁴⁸ Maryanne C. Horowitz, "The Stoic Synthesis," 14.

³⁴⁹ Cicero, *De Legibus* I.x.28.

³⁵⁰ Smith, *Wealth*, 12.

generally so simple and uniform as to give little exercises to the understanding; while at the same time, their labour is both so constant and so severe, that it leaves them little leisure and less inclination to apply to, or even to think of any thing else.³⁵¹

Smith presages Blake by more than half a century: A dark satanic mill is not a schoolhouse. Furthermore Smith's description throws into doubt the fundamental viability of the compromise of liberal capitalism, he suggests that inequality may not be tolerable if the universal improvement is solely material. Indeed Smith makes this explicit, reading his account of the common industrial labourer one wonders if *any* amount of material improvement would justify the reduction in character and merit the division of labour entails.

A man, without the proper use of the intellectual faculties of a man, is, if possible, more contemptible than even a coward, and seems to be mutilated and deformed in a still more essential part of the character of human nature.³⁵²

It is important to note here that Smith's observation in no way precludes the possibility that the 'contemptible coward' is not better off materially, indeed references to material condition are conspicuous by their absence. What is present by implication is a robust account of the person that explicitly eschews wealth as the sole measure of merit. Smith appears to be hearkening back to the tradition of civic humanism, to Cicero's preference in *On Duties* for "a man that lacks money to money that lacks a man."³⁵³

The Theory of Moral Sentiments: Sympathy as the 'Essential Part'

Smith's account of civic character and the division of labour in *Wealth of Nations* offers an almost singularly negative account of character formation. Smith

³⁵¹ Smith, *Wealth*, 432.

³⁵² Smith, *Wealth*, 436.

³⁵³ Cicero, *De Officiis*, II.71.

begins the discussion of education's import early in the work when he suggests that the main differences in people, even in people as diverse as the philosopher and the street porter, "arise not so much from nature, as from habit, custom, and education",³⁵⁴ Once this principle has been asserted the consequences for civic character in Book V constitute the logical consequence. The habit, custom and education of industrial capitalism and the accompanying division of labour, for the labouring classes at least, appears to be wholly corrosive of character and incompatible with full citizenship. Reading *Wealth* we can only discern darkly the contour of a positive vision of character education based on habit, custom and education. For its explicit exposition we must look elsewhere, to Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. It is within the pages of *Moral Sentiments* that we find Smith's full exposition of the 'essential part' that the division of labour so deforms.

The Theory of Moral Sentiments is unique in its discussion of civic character and virtue in the extent to which its focus is on the character and virtue of the ordinary citizen to the almost complete exclusion of the philosopher or statesman. This exclusion is founded on a distinction Smith draws between virtue *qua* virtue, a quality of exceptional individuals, and propriety the universally dispersed second order social and political virtue.

There is, in this respect, a considerable difference between virtue and mere propriety, between those qualities and actions which deserve to be admired and celebrated, and those which simply deserve to be approved of.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Smith, *Wealth*, 23-24.

³⁵⁵ Smith, *Theory*, 28.

Smith reserves the category of virtue and the virtuous for the truly exceptional both in deed and person, those who have a degree of wisdom, self-command and prudence far greater than that of the bulk of mankind.³⁵⁶

No sooner has Smith acknowledged the innate superiority of virtue to ‘mere propriety’ than he turns his full attention to the second order, away from the sublime to the prosaic. The justification for *Theory*’s conspicuous focus on the ordinary is found in *Wealth of Nations*, Smith recognizes that the emerging democratic politics will be defined in large part by the character and judgment of the masses, prudence dictates that the philosopher and statesman cast their gaze downward on those whose estimation they increasingly depend on.³⁵⁷ Politically *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is the inquiry into the ordinary that *Wealth of Nations* counsels.

In passages that strongly echo his great contemporary Rousseau, Smith accounts for propriety in terms eerily similar to the account of the move from *amour de soi-meme* to *amour-propre* in the *Second Discourse*. In *Moral Sentiments* Smith imagines a solitary man brought suddenly into society, no sooner is he surrounded by others than the method by which he estimates his actions is fundamentally transformed.

Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror he wanted before. It is placed in the countenance and behavior of those who he lives with, which always mark when they enter into, and they disapprove of his sentiments; and it is here that he first views the propriety and impropriety of his own passions, the beauty and deformity of his own mind.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ Norbert Waczek, “Two Concepts of Morality: A Distinction of Adam Smith’s Ethics and its Stoic Origin”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45 (1984): 593

³⁵⁷ Smith, *Wealth*, 436.

³⁵⁸ Smith, *Theory*, 162.

A close examination of Smith's account of his own Robinson Crusoe reveals two interesting facets to his notion of propriety. The first is the obvious social nature of propriety: the solitary man's actions only manifest propriety or its opposite within society. This is central to the second order justice that the ordinary citizen is capable of. The true virtues are, by Smith's lights, wholly independent of others dwelling independently within the great. The 'virtue' of propriety is realized in the approval and consonance of others, it is civic virtue deliberately diminished by Smith into harmonious living and narrowly defined limits of just conduct.³⁵⁹ On the deeper level the reactions of others to his conduct and expressed sentiment reveal to the formerly solitary man aspects of his personhood previously concealed by his solitude, the "beauty and deformity of his own mind".³⁶⁰ The society of others not only permits an inward estimation of outward conduct it also creates the conditions of interiority necessary for any inquiry into one's own motives, sentiments and conduct alongside the study of how one is esteemed by others.

Smith's account of the introduction of a solitary man into society obviously possesses strong pedagogic overtones. Smith makes the connection explicit when he describes the experience of children new to the schoolroom. Prior to contact with others, save understandably partial parents and caregivers, the child's experience of its passions and interests is defined by egocentricity. The classroom, the first encounter with true peers, offers a rough tonic to the infant's ego and its overwhelming partiality in its own cause.

³⁵⁹ Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, "Needs and Justice in the *Wealth of Nations*: An Introductory Essay" in *Wealth and Virtue*, eds. Hont and Ignatieff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 44

³⁶⁰ Smith, *Theory*, 162.

When it is old enough to go to school, or to mix with its equals, it soon finds that they have no such indulgent partiality. It naturally wishes to gain their favour, and to avoid their hatred or contempt. Regard even to its own safety teaches it to do so; and it soon finds that it can do so in no other way than moderating not only its anger, but all other passions, to the degree which its playfellows and companions are likely to be pleased with.³⁶¹

The single most important social lesson that the child learns originates not with the teacher but from his peers. Like the previously solitary man the child learns to gage the merit or demerit of his actions and sentiments by their reception among his equals. This is a fundamentally political lesson, a lesson in the conduct of life in the society of others.

The fundamentally civic character of education eventually develops beyond the lessons of the schoolyard and moves into the public square. Nonetheless Smith makes clear that even the more subtle and explicitly political lessons given to young men, and in particular ambitious young men, retain a common core of truth with the first rough lessons of the schoolroom. By way of illustration Smith describes the eternal political problem of youth who espouse licentiousness, court scandal and proudly extol that which should be eschewed “sometimes from corruption, but more frequently from the vanity of their own hearts.”³⁶² Such young men, Smith argues, consequent their passionate, proud and partial characters, are rarely open to a moral education in the error of their ways. Failing this, Smith returns to the substance of their first lessons in temperance, lessons learned through the hard knocks of their classmates, with these older students however the lesson is transported from the

³⁶¹ Ibid., 204.

³⁶² Ibid., 128-129.

classroom into the polity at large. This new incarnation of an old lesson is expressed as a civic imperative that is substantially proto-Kantian in nature.

Upon this account we generally cast about for other arguments, and the consideration which first occurs to us, is the disorder and confusion of society which would result from the universal prevalence of such practices.³⁶³

The lesson is again, as in its first incarnation in the classroom, not expressed in terms of political or moral philosophy, appeals are made not to verities but to civic practicalities. This is not merely a choice rooted in the low estimation of the intellectual capacities of students, a deliberate effort at ‘dumbing down.’ Instead it reveals in Smith a deep suspicion of the ability of higher education and greater erudition to teach civic virtue. Smith’s reliance on childhood experience to ground adult dispositions towards civic life suggests that civic character is both best taught and best practiced as a habit of mind and a quality of character as opposed to a grasp of argument and a sophistication of intellect.

If we examine the different shades and gradations of weakness and self-command, as we meet with them in common life, we shall very easily satisfy ourselves that this control of our passive feelings must be acquired, not from the abstruse syllogisms of a quibbling dialectic, but from that great discipline which Nature has established for the acquisition of this and every other virtue; a regard to the sentiments of the real or supposed spectator of our conduct.³⁶⁴

Smith’s description of education reveals a process that begins, but only begins, with socialization. The ordinary citizen, first as a child then as a young man, is forced to consider the reactions of actual others to his actions. If this were the sum total of Smith’s account it would appear that civic education amounts to scarcely more than socialization, merely a heightened sensitivity to the impressions of others. Quite to

³⁶³ Ibid., 129.

³⁶⁴ Smith, *Theory*, 203.

the contrary Smith sees this purely prudential civic virtue (if such a term is not oxymoronic) as only the first step in the development of civic character. This first step creates the conditions for an internalization of the experience of actual others, which is followed upon by an act of ethical imagination whereby the self posits an ideal other, who evaluates his conduct.

This ideal other, the impartial spectator, is the imaginative extension of the perceived impartiality of the multitude of mankind in its evaluation of the agent's conduct and sentiments³⁶⁵. The abstract 'mankind' and its impartial perspective is distilled in the imagination into a single impartial spectator, who dwells within the agent and with whom he consults to receive an impartial estimate of his conduct. He consults this impartial spectator, according to Smith, in much the same way that he imagines himself in a third, ideal position and perspective when he assesses the size of objects at varying distances.³⁶⁶ At this point the citizen has, through an act of imagination, moved beyond mere strategic considerations of conduct and towards a coherent ethical and civic faculty of judgment. Of particular interest is that this development of the citizen is not accomplished through explicit instruction nor is it comprehended even in its new found possession in explicitly civic or ethical terms. Instead like the ability to discern magnitude at varying distances it exists almost in spite of attempts to render it explicit. Smith writes of the latter ability but the connection to the former ethical and civic faculty remains fresh with the reader.

³⁶⁵ Indeed Smith's early lectures on jurisprudence and the early drafts of *Moral Sentiments* appear themselves to follow this development moving from the language of mankind to that of the impartial spectator. See D.D. Raphael "The Impartial Spectator," in *Essays on Adam Smith*, eds. A.S Skinner and T. Wilson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) 88.

³⁶⁶ Smith, *Theory*, 192.

Habit and experience have taught me to do this so easily and so readily, that I am scarce sensible that I do it: and a man must be, in some measure, acquainted with the philosophy of vision before he can be thoroughly convinced how little those distant objects would appear to the eye, if the imagination, from a knowledge of their real magnitudes, did not swell and dilate them.³⁶⁷

The rules of conduct within society are learned in the same way as the rules of proportion, almost insensibly, and yet Smith leaves no doubt that they are learned not only as rules but (unlike proportion) as a very specific mode of reasoning about those rules.

Smith makes clear that while the acquisition of the rules of conduct within society may be inculcated within the person almost insensibly their active practice, unlike simple vision, is explicit and sensible to the person. The move from contemplation of the perspective of actual others, to the abstraction of mankind and ultimately to the imaginative impartial spectator instills within the person not only a set of social rules but an operative principle which allows the individual to apply the learned ethical and civic rules. This operative principle is the impartial spectator understood as the ‘man within the breast’.

When I endeavour to examine my own conduct, when I endeavour to pass sentence upon it, and either approve or condemn it, it is evident that, in all such cases, I divide myself, as it were, into two persons; and that I the examiner and judge, represent a different character from that other I, the person whose conduct is examined into and judged of.³⁶⁸

In essence the impartial spectator within tries the case of the considered conduct or expressed sentiment. In what from the perspective of philosophy and ethics may seem a counter-intuitive move Smith has captured the experience and essence of impartial reasoning by personifying it, rendering impartiality as a perspective. This is

³⁶⁷ Smith, *Theory*, 191-192.

³⁶⁸ Smith, *Theory*, 164.

possible because Smith does not equate impartiality with perfect knowledge (or, as with Rawls, the converse).³⁶⁹ Instead Smith suggests that the impartiality of the interior judge is based upon the judge having access to the same knowledge available to the agent.³⁷⁰

The impartial spectator as an operative principle is meant to inform not only the course of future actions but also our reactions to the reception our past actions have received from actual others. To the extent that this is so Smith protects himself from the charge that his moral philosophy is a solely social construct and further that to the extent that propriety is sought as a pleasure that its ultimate criteria are hedonistic. Smith asserts that the experience of being praised by other for actions is pleasureable only if that praise is consonant with our own internal estimation of those action's praiseworthiness. He states emphatically and unequivocally "The most sincere praise can give little pleasure when it cannot be considered as some sort of proof of praiseworthiness"³⁷¹ The impartial spectator is the guarantee that Smith's theory is not reducible to hedonism, pleasure at approbation can *only* arise when that approbation is common between actual spectators, with partial knowledge of our actions, sentiments and intentions, and the impartial spectator who possesses full knowledge of all the elements of our conduct.

The impact of the ethical principle of the impartial spectator on the civic character of the citizen is profound. Its political import arises out of its functioning both as an evaluative mechanism for our own conduct and sentiment and similarly as an evaluative gage for our responses to the actions and sentiments of others. It

³⁶⁹ Raphael, "The Impartial Spectator" 96.

³⁷⁰ V.M. Hope, *Virtue By Consensus*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 102.

³⁷¹ Smith, *Theory*, 167.

functions in this way primarily as a result of two aspects of our single most important sentiment. Smith observes in human beings a fundamental longing to have others share in our passions and a concomitant propensity to participate in theirs. This dual sentiment Smith defines as sympathy. Sympathy with the suffering of another is of such a fundamental nature to human beings that Smith suggests that while the great may be defined by their surfeit of this sensibility even the criminal and villainous, the “most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it.”³⁷² The universal nature of sympathy creates and is complemented by a reciprocal desire among humans to be the object of sympathy. As a result the longing for sympathy is accompanied by a sense of outrage and injustice when the expected sympathy or fellow-feeling is not proffered.³⁷³

Sympathy, as the pre-eminent social faculty, is in important ways the mirror image of the impartial spectator. Sympathy, in Smith’s account, entails a division of self similar to that attributed to the impartial spectator but with two crucial differences. First the imaginative act of division is directed outward rather than inward. We imagine ourselves as if we were, to adopt Smith’s language, within the breast of the person with whom we sympathize. Through an act of imagination we place ourselves not at a third impartial point within but outside in the actual position of the other. Sympathetic fellow-feeling on Smith’s account is vicariousness transformed into ethical and civic virtue.

When we see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we shrink and draw back our own leg or our own

³⁷² Smith, *Theory*, 3.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 10.

arm: and when it does fall, we feel it in some measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer.³⁷⁴

It is this imaginative act that allows for our estimation of other people's conduct to be evaluated as we evaluate our own. The extent to which our sympathetic participation leads us to commiserate or conversely to remain unmoved or even repudiate the conduct and experience of another is the foundation of our moral and political judgment.³⁷⁵

The ability to see oneself in others is beyond question central to political life.³⁷⁶ Smith conceives of this centrality its two distinct ways, the first and most obvious is the moral and political faculty of evaluating both the claims and responses of others through acts of sympathetic imagination. This learned ability to evaluate the legitimacy or lack thereof of another's perspective is obviously a key element of political life and decision-making. However Smith places this utilitarian benefit on the surface, the core significance of sympathy is its status as a fundamental social demand, a *sine qua non* of communication and social existence.

But if you have either no fellow-feeling for the misfortunes I have met with, or none that bears any proportion to the grief which distracts me; or if you have either no indignation at the injuries I have suffered, or none that bears any proportion to the resentment which transports men, we can no longer converse upon these subjects. *We become intolerable to one another.* (my italics)³⁷⁷

More than an expectation, fellow-feeling for Smith is a necessary condition for communication³⁷⁸. As Smith's carefully worded description indicates the absence of fellow-feeling first deprives us of a common language of experience and example

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 4

³⁷⁵ Morrow, *Adam Smith*, 32.

³⁷⁶ Compare with Rousseau, *Emile*, 224.

³⁷⁷ Smith, *Theory*, 22.

³⁷⁸ Morrow, *Adam Smith*, 28.

through which to talk. As a consequence it renders us not merely mutually incoherent but intolerable, any society but especially civil society becomes impossible between parties that lack all fellow-feeling.

If the failure of mutual sympathy has its most dire consequence in the failure of communication between individuals Smith tempers this grim outlook by arguing that the experience of repeated failure of mutual sympathy shapes the character in a way that is profoundly salutary for social cooperation and civic character. The failure of mutual sympathy with our passions, our experience of misfortune, while initially rendering us 'intolerable' to one another eventually shapes, moderates and informs those passions. The experience of the failure of sympathetic communication and fellow feeling transforms our passions bringing them down to a tenor and degree suitable to both social and explicitly political existence. The desire to have another person, one who is not invested in our cause, an actual impartial spectator, enter into and affirm our sentiments leads us to moderate them to a degree such a spectator would be comfortable participating in. Smith describes the situation in terms that reveal it again to be the mirror image of the first internal lessons of the schoolroom.

If he would act so as that the impartial spectator may enter into the principles of his conduct, which is what of all things he has the greatest desire to do, he must upon this, as upon all other occasions, humble the arrogance of his self-love, and bring it down to something other men can go along with.³⁷⁹

The natural desire for sympathy is thus essential to social existence and 'getting it right' has positive consequences for social and political cooperation.³⁸⁰ We are led to moderate our individual passions and our partial estimation of events as a result of a

³⁷⁹ Smith, *Theory*, 120.

³⁸⁰ Douglas J. Den Uyl and Charles Griswold Jr., "Adam Smith on Friendship and Love," *Review of Metaphysics* 49, (1996): 617

deeper passion: The desire for fellow-feeling. In our single most primary cause and desire we are transformed from tyrants of self-love into creatures of compromise, from anti-social partisanship into potential citizens adept at tempering our passions to render them fit for social existence.

Adam Smith's account of the development and training of the passions through human interaction rests heavily on a conception of social intercourse as the primary source of meaningful social and civic lesson. By internalizing and embodying impartiality and combining it with the sentimental primacy of consonance between inwardly recognized truth and outward reality Smith's account of the development of both faculties of moral and ethical judgement and a genuinely civic character avoids being reduced to simple socialization. Instead the experience of formal education and the society of others educates and orders the passions, first among them being an overwhelming self-love and partiality in our own cause. Smith does not doubt that human passions need such education more importantly he rejects the belief that its provision occurs inevitably in all and any society. Turning from *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* back to *The Wealth of Nations* we find Smith rendering an account of how the division of labour serves to corrupt, disorder and mutilate the passions.

Sympathy, Variety of Experience and Civic Character

To understand why the consequences of the division of labour are so grave for the character of the citizenry it is necessary to recall one final aspect of sympathy. The combination of sympathy and imagination gives rise to the central social passion

of fellow feeling. Defining the social role of sympathy and imagination at the very outset of *Moral Sentiments* Smith writes

As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation. Though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations.³⁸¹

Smith has described at length in *Moral Sentiments* how our senses develop ‘from their ease’ into a faculty of ethical and political judgment rooted in internal impartiality and external fellow-feeling. *Wealth of Nations* describes how this process, essential to social and civic life, can be stunted or thwarted altogether.

Enervating labour, a labour that smothers the imagination by denying it experience of others, of social contact, and of mental exercise renders the labourer unable to identify with the causes, complaints and rights of his fellow citizens. He cannot imagine himself into the place of his neighbour or identify his own good with another’s. The ‘contemptible coward’ is more than simply pathetic, he poses tremendous risk to democratic societies, where “the safety of government depends very much upon the favourable judgment which the people may form of its conduct.”³⁸² Smith’s makes clear that certain types of labour, types increasing every day in number and range as a result of labour’s division, are rendering whole segments of society unable not only to render favourable judgment but to render judgment at all.

³⁸¹ Smith *Theory*, 3-4.

³⁸² Smith, *Wealth*, 436.

His condition leaves him no time to receive the necessary information, and his education and habits are commonly such as to render him unfit to judge even though he was fully informed. In the publick deliberations, therefore, his voice is little heard and less regarded,³⁸³

As Nicholas Phillipson poignantly remarks, such people were “lost to the world of sympathy and could look forward to lives which were governed by the principles of empathy and dependence.”³⁸⁴ The labourer is not only unable to sympathize with others, others upon contemplating the strange crudeness of his character cannot sympathize with him. To others he becomes at best politically irrelevant and at worst an object of pity tempered by suspicion. The labourer’s internal passions have not been moderated and made social, his outward action’s and reactions express this and as a result his fellow citizens are unable to sympathetically imagine themselves in his predicament. He remains utterly alien, and as Smith warns, inevitably both soon become intolerable to one another.

Smith, as we will see below, offers some rudimentary proposals for public education for the common people and further for education for those who wish to hold public office. These efforts however seem wholly unfit to match the corrosive effects on character that he goes to such length to describe. Their sheer inadequacy points to the possibility that Smith favours a reform not of education in schools but of the education offered outside of schools, of the economic order that creates a rank of contemptible cowards, whose voices are simultaneously incoherent and threatening in public affairs.

³⁸³ Smith, *Wealth*, 156.

³⁸⁴ Nicholas Phillipson, “Adam Smith as Civic Moralist” in *Wealth and Virtue*, eds. Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 193.

A careful reading of Smith reveals only one class of people as unequivocally praised: the yeomanry. Discussing agrarian capitalism Smith often speaks in a tenor made famous in his own time by Thomas Jefferson.³⁸⁵ Smith contends that country people, farmers and gentleman, are exempt from both the worst instincts of the merchant class, the complementary urges to domination and monopoly³⁸⁶ and the worst deprivations of industrial labour. Their apparent immunity, Smith makes clear, is a consequence of the salutary effects of rural labour on character. Such labour, Smith maintains, provides a wealth of opportunity for the exercise of sympathetic imagination and the development of the 'man within the breast.' In a passage that provides another of the many sympathies between Smith and Jean Jacques Rousseau he writes

The common ploughman, though generally regarded as the pattern of stupidity and ignorance, is seldom defective in this judgment and discretion. He is less accustomed, indeed, to social intercourse than the mechanick who lives in town. His voice and language are more uncouth and more difficult to understood by those who are not used to them. His understanding, however, being accustomed to consider a greater variety of objects is generally much superior to that of the other, whose whole attention from morning till night is commonly occupied in performing one or two very simple operations³⁸⁷.

Smith is remarking, in a manner similar to Rousseau but also to Locke and the republican tradition, that working the soil and husbandry is more generally generative of those of the temper of the Cincinnati than of the stereotypical country bumpkin.³⁸⁸ Indeed civic character is most corrupted in the common people not in its expression in the public square but in just those martial virtues that Cincinnatus embodied.

³⁸⁵ See Garry Wills, *Inventing America*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978).

³⁸⁶ J. Robertson, "Scottish Political Economy Beyond the Civic Tradition: Government and Economic Development in the *Wealth of Nations*" *History of Political Thought* 4 (1983): 462.

³⁸⁷ Smith, *Wealth*, 127 Compare with Rousseau, *Emile*, 339.

³⁸⁸ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, sec. 205.

If the nature of their work provides the common labourer with few opportunities to develop civic faculties the nature of mass government under liberal capitalism further exacerbates the condition. Recalling the second element of Smith's 'science of the legislator', the provision of services, the 'service' most singularly responsible for civic character in the ancient world is found to be almost completely absent from liberal capitalism. This most crucial 'service' is the maintenance of a popular militia with its consequent inculcation within the citizenry of a martial spirit. Describing the citizenry lacking both militia and martial spirit Smith gloomily opines

Even though the martial spirit of the people were of no use towards the defense of the society, yet to prevent that sort of mental mutilation, deformity and wretchedness, which cowardice necessarily involves in it, from spreading themselves through the great body of the people, would still deserve the most serious attention of government; in the same manner as it would deserve its most serious attention to prevent a leprosy or any other loathsome and offensive disease,³⁸⁹

Note that Smith advocates the creation of a militia *independent* of the presence of a specific threat or enemy to justify it. The expense of a militia is justified primarily by the salutary influence on the citizenry before it is ever justified or even if it is *never* justified on the battlefield. A militia is justified because it provides opportunities to tune and temper our passions to a greater degree than the mundane bustle and business of commercial society, it offers educational opportunities to the passions, to the impartial spectator, to our capacity for fellow feeling far beyond those of the market square or even the best of classrooms. In a tone more closely associated with Romanticism than the Scottish Enlightenment Smith pines for martial glory's impact on civic character.

³⁸⁹ Smith, *Wealth*, 435.

Under the boisterous and stormy sky of war and faction, of public tumult and confusion, the sturdy severity of self-command prospers the most, and can be most successfully cultivated.³⁹⁰

The educational rationale for a militia, for the experience of conflict, is utterly devoid of an economic element indeed it is to a great degree inimical to it. From an economic point of view the great virtue of liberal capitalism, the ever-increasing prosperity and dimension of the free market, provide it with adequate resources to provide for a standing and professional army. This is not an accident but an archetypal expression of liberal capitalist politics, a standing army provides for preservation, a militia provides for the martial virtues.³⁹¹ By implication greater economic development seems paired with ever-decreasing development and education of character.

The suspicion of economic justification is also a defining characteristic of Smith's more specific recommendations in education. Smith proposes a system of primary education that the state should supply even if the state "was to derive no advantage from the instruction of the inferior ranks of people"³⁹² which of course he contends it does. As with the maintenance of a militia the benefits of education paid out of the public purse are justified independently of economic rationale. The order of Political Economy's priority as defined in Book IV is turned in on itself in Book V. The sovereign should provide services to the people for their improvement beyond mere preservation. Economic benefit, preservation, is of course important but

³⁹⁰ Smith, *Theory*, 215.

³⁹¹ Donald Winch, *Adam Smith's Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978): 113.

³⁹² Smith, *Wealth*, 436.

ultimately a secondary consideration. Increasingly Smith's sovereign seems intent on providing conditions for citizenship through prosperity and not the converse.³⁹³

Smith's multiple enthusiasms for projects to aid civic character independent of economic justification place him at the headwaters of a discussion almost unique to modernity concerning liberal education, the argument from utility. This is the true marvel of *The Wealth of Nations*. In his discussion of the yeomanry and even of the highly educated among whose number he counted himself, economic considerations and calculations of crude utility are not only irrelevant they may even run counter to such calculations. In discussing the moral and intellectual character of the yeomanry Smith describes in detail how the mental habits demanded by husbandry are second only to a few liberal professions in their demands on the intellect. Agricultural science, Smith contends, "has never been regarded as a matter very easily understood."³⁹⁴ In contrast industrial trades are almost singularly defined by the ease with which they are learned. Smith opines that hardly a single trade requires more than a simple pamphlet of a few pages with illustrations to explain it fully.³⁹⁵ Yet, Smith observes, rarely do the wages of the yeomanry surpass those of the industrial labourer. Worse even is the case of the 'men of letters' whose swelling number is so great "as commonly to reduce the price of their labour to a very paltry recompence."³⁹⁶ Smith posits a radical disconnect between the inherent difficulty and the implicit merit of a task and its economic reward. Smith places himself in the position, poignantly contrary considering his place in the pantheon of liberal

³⁹³ For disparate interpretations of this element in Smith see Winch, *Smith's Politics* 118-120 and Cropsey, *Polity*, 98-101.

³⁹⁴ Smith, *Wealth*, 126.

³⁹⁵ *ibid.*,

³⁹⁶ Smith, *Wealth*, 133.

economics, of arguing for civic virtue and its requisite education not only independent of economic rationale but in spite of it.

Conclusion

When Smith does criticize the lack of education and the absence of martial spirit he criticizes it almost exclusively in terms of civic virtue, fellow feeling and ethical conduct. The economic consequences of the absence of moral and civic education and martial spirit seem negligible or perhaps even salutary. Indeed Smith leaves conspicuously open the possibility that the material improvement of the common people is connected, perhaps inextricably, to their moral corruption.³⁹⁷ In so doing Smith becomes one of the first modern philosophers to respond to the economic and technological critique of liberal education by suggesting simply that they are asking the wrong question. In the debate between character and economy Smith provides clues, to the careful reader of *Wealth of Nations* in particular, that his sympathies might ultimately reside with virtue over preservation. Nowhere is this clearer than in his deep reliance on classical and primarily republican sources of metaphor, parable and example.³⁹⁸ A particularly illuminating ancient source for Smith is Cicero's *De Officiis*. The use Smith puts *De Officiis* to in one instance in particular appears to equate Cicero's position with his own and further suggests that their shared position endorses simple self-interest. Invoking the last great Roman republican Smith writes

To feed well, old Cato said, as we are told by Cicero, was the first and most profitable thing in the management of a private estate; to feed

³⁹⁷ John Salter, "Adam Smith on Feudalism, Commerce and Slavery" *History of Political Thought* 13 (1992): 234.

³⁹⁸ Of Roman sources alone Smith refers to or quotes directly Cicero, Columella, Cato, Livy, Seneca, Plutarch, Varro and Virgil among others.

tolerably well, the second; and to feed ill, the third. To plough, he ranked only in the fourth place of profit and advantage.³⁹⁹

What Smith has left out, which in his own time and now the educated reader would have recognized as absent in this famous passage from Cicero's masterpiece is that the passage does not conclude with the fourth interrogation of Cato. To the contrary it reads radically different when read in full.

Externals are compared, on the other hand, when glory is preferred to riches, or urban income to rural. The words of the Elder Cato belong to this class of comparison. Someone asked him what was the most profitable activity for a family estate. He replied, "To grace herds well" "And what next" "To graze them adequately" And what third? "To graze them, though poorly" and what fourth? "To plough" Then when the question was asked, "What about money lending?" Cato's reply was "What about killing someone?"⁴⁰⁰

Smith stands in a position similar to Cicero's, witness to a fundamental change in the social, economic and political order of his world. Smith's discussion in *The Wealth of Nations*, upon careful reading, reveals a philosopher convinced that the economic goods derived from the division of labour are never completely justified in their own terms. Even more importantly the social and political consequences of the division of labour, especially in regards to civic character and education, simply cannot be justified in those terms. Instead the opposite appears to be the case, economic benefit must be appraised in political, moral and ethical terms. To the extent that the division of labour diminishes the civic and ethical character of the citizenry it stands condemned. Smith's treatment of character in both *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *Wealth of Nations* demands the opposite of the technological critique, a genuinely liberal education must not be judged in economic terms, instead an economic system

³⁹⁹ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*. ed. Edwin Cannan, (New York: Modern Library, 1965) 150.

⁴⁰⁰ Cicero, *De Officiis* II.89.

must be justified by the degree to which it is compatible with liberal education and civic virtue.

Conclusion: The Reinvigoration of Liberal Education

The most important task for defenders of liberal and civic education today is recovery. The tradition of civic education, the continuing conversation across time and between philosophers that I have attempted to countenance in and of itself is what is needed. The frame of liberal education, like the frame of any important civic institution, must be filled with meaning, significance and substance if it is to endure. To the extent that liberal education has lost ground to its contemporary critics I would suggest that loss is a consequence not of the strength of those critiques but the shallow understanding, the emptying out of the traditional complexity of liberal education, of the historical and philosophical understanding of the enterprise and its intended.

In part this tendency is a consequence of the deep rejection of history that is a regrettable characteristic of late liberal modernity. It is a peculiar condition of late liberal modernity, farthest advanced among ‘educationalists,’ that holds that the latest word is invariably the last. In the philosophy of education this malady emerges in part as a consequence of a regrettable confluence of a crudely egalitarian misreading of Rousseau’s naturalism combined with an equally crude quasi-Lockean sensationalism. These are transformed by, and following, their conjunction into a political as well as a pedagogic principle. In teaching the teacher suddenly, and perversely, finds himself as forbidden as ever was Emile⁴⁰¹ to refer to authority to justify pedagogy. Eric Voegelin captures this phenomena nicely as it concerns the

⁴⁰¹ Rousseau, *Emile*, 119

classical heritage but his remarks are surely as valid for Smith, Rousseau and Locke today.

Liberals speak of free research in the sense of liberation from ‘authorities’, that is, not only from revelation and dogmatism, but also from classical philosophy, the rejection of which becomes a point of honour.⁴⁰²

Modern liberal defenders have failed to distinguish between empty appeals to authority and the presence of a compelling account of both the means and necessity of liberal education. In rejecting the tradition of liberal education they equally reject the tradition of liberal citizenship. Initially this willful amnesia renders modern defenders of liberal education ill-prepared to meet the utilitarian and cultural critiques of education, more ominously they are making way for future generations of students equally ill-prepared to defend the institutions of liberal citizenship.

The single most regrettable characteristic of such defenses in recent years has been the lamentable tendency to cede to their critics the fundamental ground of liberal education.⁴⁰³ Forgetting the fundamental relationship between liberal civic education, character and citizenship they are forced to defend liberal education on the grounds and terms of its opponents. Nowhere is this more pervasively or pathetically practiced than in the attempts to justify liberal education in terms of its economic benefits. In so arguing these ersatz defenders of liberal education claim what is manifestly false, that a technological education and a liberal education aim at the same goal: a productive and prosperous economy and an advantageous location

⁴⁰² Eric Voegelin, “Liberalism and its History,” *The Review of Politics* 36 (1974): 515.

⁴⁰³ Of course there is also, as mentioned in the introduction, a growing list of excellent defenses of liberal education on its own terms, most prominent among these being Allan Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind* and Christopher Lasch’s *The Culture of Narcissus*.

within it for the pupil.⁴⁰⁴ This concession necessitates the even less plausible argument that a liberal education, as contrasted with say an actuarial education, is equally liable to generate economic success. Having ceded the high ground without a struggle liberal education then fights a losing and implausible battle for the low. The response of the five philosophers discussed above to such critiques is clear: the fact of prosperity is an equally poor indicator for both quality of character and quality of education.

The situation is equally bleak for those who would defend liberal education against the cultural critique by offering a civilizational ‘pearl of great price’ argument. This argument defends liberal education as simply an education in the Western Tradition, as if such an entity could be definitively known and rendered defensible within a lifetime let alone within the years of schooling howsoever defined. Moreover this approach invariably forces the proponent of this shallow definition of liberal education to engage in a debate, ultimately irresolvable, in comparative cultural analysis. Sadly the tradition traced in the chapters above is relevant to this debate, especially in its current and virulent campus incarnations, only to the extent that its emergence establishes the decline of liberal education. By confusing the particularities of curriculum with the purpose of liberal education, confusing erudition with education, these proponents unwittingly conflate the necessary curricular choices with firm principles of pedagogy and estimates of cultural worth. Every student of liberal education completes his tutelage knowing less than all there is to know, either across modes of human thought and expression or across cultures. Civic education must always fail if we believe only deep cultural

⁴⁰⁴ Consider my *alma mater* Concordia University’s latest slogan ‘Real Education for the Real World.’

familiarity breeds tolerance amongst a multicultural citizenry. Liberal education's true object is liberality, no civic virtue better promotes tolerance or protects diversity. No pupil can be taught all of human culture and difference, but he can be taught an openness to his fellow citizen, a willingness to hear him and weigh fairly his opinions. This is the peculiar civic genius of the division drawn between the philosophic and the civic pupil and education. Citizenship does not demand that we be philosophers, it demands that we be virtuous, an eminently more possible goal.

Both the utilitarian and the multicultural critiques and ill prepared liberal opponents share in common a fundamental misapprehension of the twin foundational premises of liberal education in both its civic and philosophic incarnations. Liberal education is premised on a profound connection between education and human nature and a concomitant belief in the intractable and ahistorical character of that nature. This contention is as definitive for education as it is for politics and it is the fundamental source of the connection between both. Both the technological and the cultural critique of liberal education fail to recognize this connection and as such they fail to recognize the necessity of educating character. To educate for citizenship is to educate a particular kind of beings, humanity, for the fundamental fact of their existence: political life.

In important ways the displacement of an effective and robust liberal education with an ineffective multicultural or technological education presents the greatest challenge to civic virtue, citizenship and political community. This transformation is particularly perilous in our time as a result of the tragic double movement in citizenship. This movement, wherein citizenship is expanded at the

same time as its significance is impoverished, appears at first to leave less at stake in the education of citizens. The temptation to consider the impoverishment of citizenship as similarly diminishing the consequences of its mis-education implies a fundamental forgetting of human nature, education and their respective relations to the political. It rests on a mistaken belief, rejected by each of member of my philosophic quintet, that the philosophic component of liberal education can be separated and protected from the civic element. That the education of a natural intellectual aristocracy can somehow continue in the absence of the parallel education of the ordinary citizen. Alisdair MacIntyre succumbs to this regrettable confusion and temptation at the end of his famous and otherwise compelling polemic *After Virtue*.

What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us.⁴⁰⁵

MacIntyre and others erroneously conclude that such philosophic communities can be constructed without simultaneously constructing their civic components. The deep connection between the civic and philosophic in education is a reflection of the deep and equally inextricably connection between the two in politics. The recovery and continued survival of one depends upon the recovery and continued survival of the other. From Plato through Cicero, to Locke, Rousseau and Smith, the concern for the civic education of the ordinary was based neither on simple beneficence nor on cold-blooded assessments of advantage, it was based on a full understanding of the impossibility of separating the one education from the other, the one community from the other.

⁴⁰⁵ Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1981) 263.

The ascent to the philosophic begins in the civic, as Plato first recognized, to eventually consider justice one must initially consider the city. Civic education is further philosophically justified by the necessity of a certain kind of citizen and polity to the possibility of philosophy, rather more bluntly civic education guarantees the peaceable pursuit of philosophy. There is a third critical justification for the education of the non-philosophic, civic education is an education offered in place of another and not as an alternative to no education at all. Civic education is meant as an education to displace, or prevent another more corrosive education. An argument from hard necessity and genuine concern for virtue is present in all the philosophers studied. Plato repeatedly refers to both the danger of an imprudent education in dialectic and the more subtly and therefore more effectively corrosive education of the sophistical city. Plato's concern is echoed by Cicero. More than the negligent education in empty rhetoric of the forum Cicero fears the education in luxury and ostentation that Rome's growing opulence constantly teaches. In John Locke the terrors of boarding school are easily telescoped out to include the corrupting influence of public prejudice. Rousseau offers, in his description of the decline of the Noble Savage and in his indictment of the comfortable nihilism of the Bourgeois, a similar account of the corrupting education offered by polite society. Finally Smith offers a compelling account of the brutalizing effects on intellect and character of work and life in the new Blakean cities. In briefly canvassing these already adumbrated positions I seek to draw out the element of necessity that first and most obviously appeared, between education and politics, in Classical Athens. The liberal and civic education I have attempted to describe is not merely aimed at realizing the ascent to

citizenship but at preventing the descent into degraded forms of human existence. Finally liberal civic education is premised on the belief that the fullest realization of citizenship, in its dual meaning as virtue and institution, is both what is required and what is intended for the civic student. With increasing conviction across the quintet, liberal civic education becomes a *concern* and like citizenship it takes on dual significance. It is both a felt engagement and an institution advocated.

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