

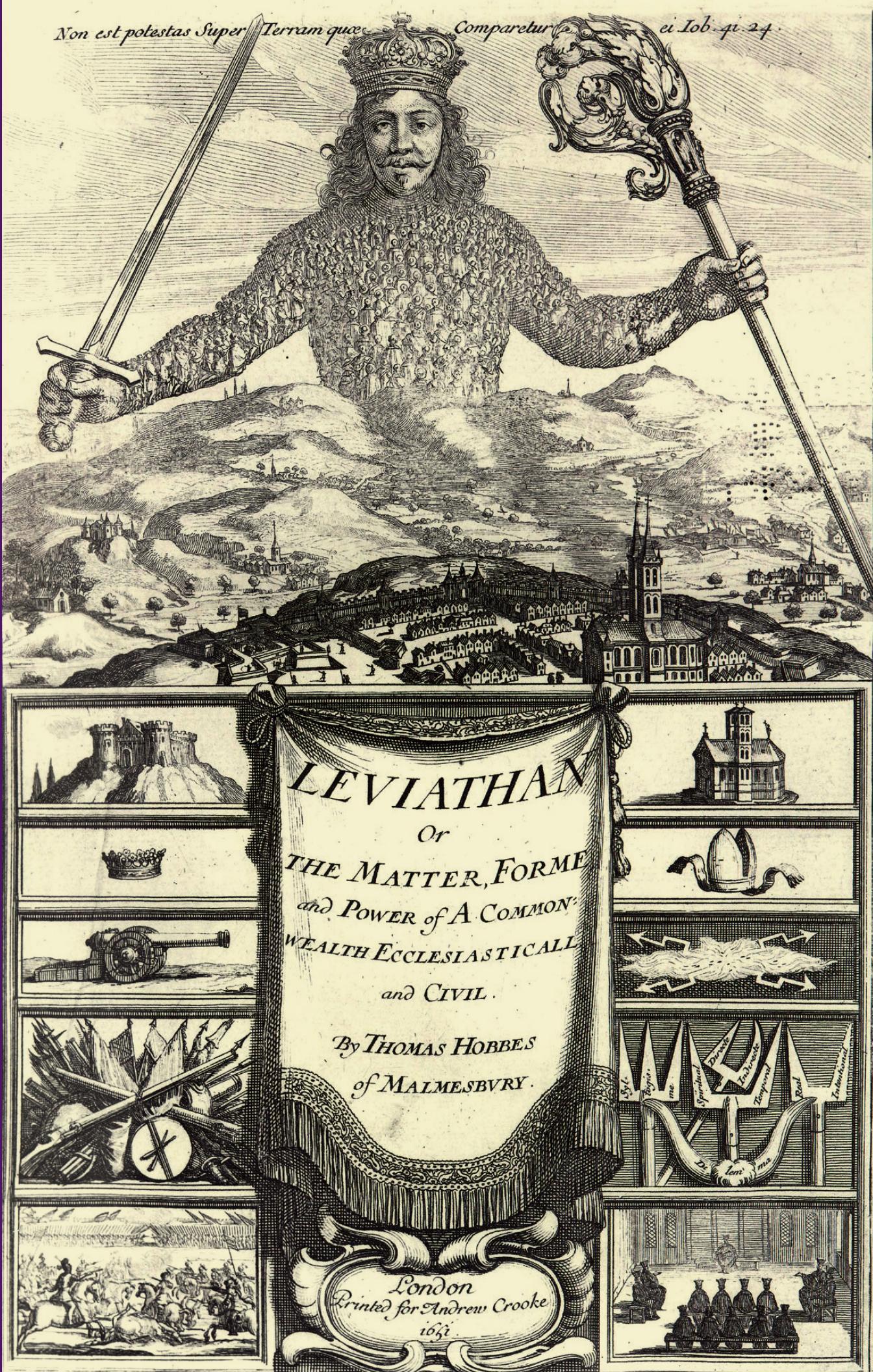
# COSMOS + TAXIS

Studies in Emergent Order and Organization



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# COSMOS + TAXIS

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## COVER ART:

**Frontispiece of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan***  
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# Democracies are Spontaneous Orders, not States, and Why It is Important

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**Abstract:** States are organizations whereas democracies are spontaneous orders. Because successful organizations within spontaneous orders are vulnerable to displacement through competition, one attractive option for protecting themselves is using their resources to change the rules in their favor. This is true for political parties vulnerable electorally and businesses threatened by market competition. They frequently ally to subordinate spontaneous order processes within their respective systems to the most powerful organizations within them. The result is that a democratic spontaneous order can gradually be transformed into a state. This transformation is of more than scholarly interest because, among other things, it increases the likelihood of war.

**Keywords:** democracy, Madison, Hayek, spontaneous order, organization

## I. DEMOCRACIES AS SPONTANEOUS ORDERS

### A puzzling paradox

During World War Two, when the democratic world was fighting Nazi Germany and imperial Japan, their national economies and scientific research were largely devoted to winning the conflict. For most citizens, winning the war took precedence over any other goals. Beyond the need for providing basic necessities, civilian production took a back seat to military needs. The same observation held for scientific research. In the U.S., for example, government had become the single largest purchaser of scientific and economic work, and shaped both in accordance with its priorities. A single buyer had near-monopsonistic clout, subordinating spontaneous order processes to organizational ones. Market processes remained important, but they were subordinated to winning the war.

Freedom of speech, a fundamental component of the democratic world, was limited in wartime. In peacetime, freedom of the press is a central part of a democratic polity. In wartime it is not. In peacetime virtually any political position can be argued for electorally. This is not true in wartime. Political freedoms that inhibited or might potentially inhibit the war effort were proscribed. No Nazis ran for office in the United States. Britain even postponed elections but remained a democracy. Speaking and organizing free-

ly over political matters is acting as a good citizen during peacetime, but it could be acting disloyally during wartime. Many American and Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry were incarcerated in concentration camps, their belongings seized never to be returned. They had committed no crime. It was a classic case of tyranny of the majority.

Government control of the economy, restrictions on civil and political liberties, large scale violation of basic human and citizenship rights, and even, in the case of Britain, postponing elections, all characterized the democratic world's reaction to Nazi and Japanese aggression. It might seem as if the differences between the Allied and Axis powers were more quantitative than qualitative. *The freedoms limited by democracies at war are defining elements in what makes them democratic during peacetime.*

Yet World War Two is correctly described as a war of democratic powers allied with the Soviet Union against other undemocratic powers. It might seem democracy had to be abolished in order to be preserved. However, once the war was over, most of these limitations on traditional democratic freedoms and the vitality of civil society quickly ended.

Understanding this paradox deepens our understanding of democracy. It will also deepen our understanding of other spontaneous orders.

## Defining democracy

Democracy's modern meaning is intimately tied up with the founding of the United States. When writing his contributions to the *Federalist*, James Madison realized the terms used to describe traditional states did not fit the proposed American government, observing "the Gov't of the U.S. being a novelty and a compound, had no technical terms or phrases appropriate to it, and ... *old terms were to be used in new sense, explained by the context or by the facts of the case*" (1831, p. 475, italics added). Famously, Madison picked "republic" as his term of choice for the proposed government, but defined it in a way no one ever had before.

In *Federalist 10* Madison famously distinguished between republics and democracies, and strongly criticized the latter, writing that pure democracies "have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths" (Publius, 1961). Republics, in his sense, would overcome these weaknesses.

Madison explained that "[t]he two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended." Madison's "pure democracy" was direct democracy as had existed in some Greek city states, and was characterized by "majority rule." Its core weakness was its vulnerability to "factions." He defined a faction as

a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community (Publius, 1961).

The cure, Madison argued, was to expand the size of the polity, thereby incorporating too many potential factions for one to rise to dominance, and to rely on elected representatives as better able to decide public issues than the average citizen.

A few years after the constitution was adopted, Thomas Jefferson translated a book describing the new country by the Frenchman Antonine Destutt de Tracy (Destutt de Tracy, 1811). In his translation, Jefferson adopted the term "representative democracy," to describe the new government. The name stuck. Today, Madison's "republic" is what

we normally mean by "representative democracy." Almost no one uses "democracy" to refer only to its original meaning, nor do they advocate it for nations or even cities. To a limited degree direct democracy through voter initiatives exists in American states and cities and some nations such as Switzerland. It also survives in some town meetings, but always within the larger and limiting context of representative democracy.

While in a representative democracy, every vote counts equally at some crucial point in the political process, the term "majority rule" is misleading. Madison's argument rests on the insight that what constitutes a majority depends on context, and different contexts produce different majorities. A representative democracy can incorporate different majorities arising out of different contexts for selecting representatives.

In the American system routine decisions require simple majorities by decision-making bodies. At first take this would seem to open the door to majority tyranny. But Madison opposed requiring super majorities as a means for protecting minorities over most issues, writing in *Federalist 58*:

That some advantages might have resulted from such a precaution cannot be denied... But these considerations are outweighed by the inconveniences in the opposite scale. In all cases where justice or the general good might require new laws to be passed, or active measures to be pursued, the fundamental principle of free government would be reversed. It would be no longer the majority that would rule: the power would be transferred to the minority. Were the defensive privilege limited to particular cases, an interested minority might take advantage of it to screen themselves from equitable sacrifices to the general weal, or, in particular emergencies, to extort unreasonable indulgences. Lastly it would facilitate and foster the baneful practice of secessions (Publius, 1961, p. 361).

The Framers used a different approach to prevent majority tyranny without a minority veto, and its accompanying threat of minority tyranny via political blackmail. The House, the Senate, and the President, were elected by *different majorities at different times*. Electing members of the House of Representatives all at once for two-year terms, each usually depending on a small portion of a state for support, requires a different mix of people and issues than does electing senators representing entire states for six-year terms. Even the opinion of the moment is modified for, un-

like in the House, one third of the Senate is elected every two years. It would take four years to change a majority of Senators.

The President was elected every four years for a four-year term, and until recently, the Electoral College almost always reflected the majority's vote. As the office least connected to the popular vote, a president's veto could be overridden by a two-thirds majority of both houses of Congress, to which the president had no recourse. To pass legislation a majority of the House, elected one way by small majorities, a majority of the Senate, elected another way by entire states, and the President all had to agree. Failing that, a super majority of the two bodies representing different majorities was required.

The intent of this complex structure was to prevent a simple majority from making potentially disastrous decisions, while preserving the principle of political equality among voters. Madison personally opposed the major violation of the majority principle among citizens: unequal representation among states. But if he had gotten what he wanted the principle would not have been compromised.

If the House, Senate, and president, all representing different majorities elected in different ways for different terms, agreed, the resulting legislation was likely to be wiser than it would be if created by a single body. As expressed within the constitution, the Founders' ideal was a *practical* consensus rather than either majority or minority rule.

### Democracy, coercion, rule, and games

As readers of this journal likely understand, the market is what Hayek termed a spontaneous order. By this he meant that order rather than chaos arises within the total network of market transactions even though no one has knowledge of its details. Nonetheless, each individual within it can easily find the information needed to increase the likelihood their particular projects will succeed. In any spontaneous order, coherent system-wide signals arise from the independently chosen interactions of people acting without knowledge of what others are doing (Hayek, 1973, pp. 38-40; Polanyi, 1962; 1998, p. 195) As we shall explore in some depth, a democracy is a spontaneous order whereby the political process selects out measures of value to the community as a whole, even though no one in that community has a grasp of the whole.

But even at this initial stage of our argument, a potential objection arises. All spontaneous orders depend on voluntary relationships. A market depends on willing sellers and buyers. Science, another such order, depends on a scientist

being convinced by another's argument (Polanyi, 1962). Yet democracies make decisions binding on everyone, even those who voted against a proposal or candidate. Doesn't this make them coercive?

I argue that they are not coercive in any usual sense, although specific laws passed by them can be.

The democratic process focuses on serving the interests of the involved population as a whole. In this way it is like science, which seeks agreement among its members as to what constitutes reliable knowledge (Ziman, 1978). Unlike science, in a democracy *not* deciding is a decision, one favoring the *status quo*. Science is in no hurry. Democracies sometimes have to be. But does this need to act rather than wait for a consensus to evolve make democracies coercive?

Spontaneous orders arise out of people following procedural rules that do not tell them what to do, only how to do whatever it is they wish to do. The rules allow for mutually contradictory plans and purposes to be pursued. The bias inherent in these rules is to favor the values inherent in the order itself. The bias of market rules is to facilitate instrumental transactions between willing partners. The values of what we simplify as the "scientific method" is to facilitate agreement among scientists about what counts as the most reliable knowledge of the world that we can find. However, values such as these can manifest in an indefinite number of projects, many of which could contradict one another. They do not "load the dice" to favor specific outcomes.

Hayek describes the market order as a game (1976, pp. 115-20). "Players" compete within the market, with some succeeding and others failing, but all following the same set of rules. In important respects the democratic process is also analogous to a game. Both democracies and games establish rules that strive to be free from bias favoring particular players, and so enabling us to determine fair winners in contests where people pursue incompatible goals.

In spontaneous orders people are not free to pick and choose what rules apply in their field. In science, the rules exist independently of any individual scientist and change only slowly, if at all. Respecting the existing rules is part of being a scientist. Any change in these rules requires the bulk of the relevant scientific sub-community to accept the modification by finding it helpful.

In the market, people can choose what, if anything, to exchange, but the basic rules for legal exchanges are common to them all. Nor is what is called "private property" a matter of individual choice. The same property rights must apply to everyone, including limits to what can be owned. Even voluntary transactions take place within a framework

of rules applying to all. We are not ‘coerced’ in any reasonable sense by being required to have a document notarized or to include specific wording in a contract if we want legal protection.

Democracies share these qualities.

Civil society necessarily rests on a framework of common rules, but people will disagree as to what these rules should be. Democracies exist to discover new or to modify existing rules within civil society. For example, market exchanges require defining what makes an exchange valid, both procedurally and in terms of the property rights exchanged. If legally enforceable exchanges are to be made, a common rule needs to apply to all, and any of a wide range of possible rules are preferable to there being none at all. Yet only one can prevail.

Only one side can win a game, and, like games, politics normally has winners and losers. Importantly, in both a game and in a democracy, the loser plays by rules agreed upon in advance. The requirement for fair procedures is necessary because everyone knows they will not agree on all particular outcomes, yet decisions applying to all are still essential. A football team employs plenty of physical force, but a team does not win by coercing the other side. It wins by outplaying it. Subordinating physical force to universally agreed upon rules is the difference between a football game and a battle.

No one would accord a heavier political weight to another if by doing so they increased their likelihood of losing on future decisions important to them. However, it is easy to imagine a community of people who know that they will sometimes disagree with particular decision outcomes and still *unanimously* adopt rules enabling these decisions to be made. They adopt such rules because on balance they expect to benefit from the process. *So long as the process is fair the losers cannot justly argue they were coerced.* This is why legitimacy is such an important value politically. In its absence, force rules.

Economists, classical liberals, and libertarians generally assume that property rights exist *before* they start their analysis. Economists hide this assumption within the terms “land,” “labor,” and “capital” and thus never confront what it actually means to own land, what counts as contractual labor, or what serves as capital. Classical liberals and libertarians often intone “private property” as a kind of spell, without ever wondering what that term incorporates or excludes. But specific property rights are not self-evident, and a means to define them must exist (diZerega, 2013b).

In democracies votes determine how a community as a whole decides, who should make decisions for them, and what those decisions will be. What, if anything, should Missoula, Montana, do about pollution from wood smoke? What, if anything, should we do about growing human contributions to global warming? What, if anything, should we do about homelessness? What, if anything, should we do to increase home ownership? Here “democracy” refers to the process and not the decision. Whatever the decision, it will be made democratically.

We can all agree the rules for making such a decision can be fair, and yet accept that on occasion, outcomes we oppose will emerge. Fair rules for deciding questions that *must* be decided are not coercive in *any* reasonable sense. This is true, even when we disagree with a particular decision.

There is one more dimension to understanding democracy and coercion. The final vote establishing a decision does not define a democracy. Were that sufficient, every referendum promoted by a dictator would be democratic. In reality, however, a democracy includes the *total process* of discussion, debate, and voting (Kingdon, 1995). To be sure, without a final vote, we do not have a democracy. But free discussion is equally necessary. Equating democracy with the final vote is akin to equating the market with a consumer’s final purchase, or science with the adoption of a new theory. It assumes away the dynamic process leading to that outcome. In politics this error comes from importing habits of thought suitable for understanding undemocratic states—where decision-making is insulated from much of society—to democratic governments in which civil society as a whole plays a crucial part in the political process.

The claim that democratic government is “rule by a tyrannical majority” is *almost* always absurd. In *almost* every case it is akin to saying that the winners of a chess or baseball game have oppressed the losers. When a strongly held unified view arises, as in war, excesses can happen such as the internment and expropriation of Japanese Americans and Canadians during World War II. The tyranny of the majority became possible *because for most, the discovery process had become redundant.*

Democracy is always a balancing act between the desirability of universal agreement and the reality of inevitable disagreement over decisions that must be made. The defining democratic value is a practical consensus, not majority rule (diZerega, 2000). This is not just theory. In practice, democratically structured committees prefer consensus over majority decision-making. Communities such as New

England's famous small-town democracies preferred consensus to majority vote so strongly that if a significant minority disagreed, a decision could be deferred; if the disagreement persisted a town might even ultimately divide into two (Zuckerman, 1978). In larger, more complex societies there may never be a consensus on normal decisions, but there can still be a consensus as to what fair rules for making them would be.

### Democracy, Cosmos and Taxis

In Hayekian terms, a democracy is unique in that in one context it is a spontaneous order and in another it is best understood as an organization with a widely supported goal. "Democracy" describes a political system with no over-arching goal, and with many parties and citizens advocating shifting and contradictory sets of policies. It can also describe a system in which all, or nearly all, citizens are united in attaining an overarching goal, such as winning a war. Both political systems may include the same people, but operating with different rules at different times.

In Hayek's sense an organization can be structured democratically, as with worker or consumer co-operatives, some political parties, and many clubs. Like a democracy at war, a structure of goals exists that for all practical purposes is universally accepted by their members. However, if it is not undergoing a crisis such as war or natural disaster, a political democracy has no hierarchy of goals. It is not an organization. What is done emerges from a political process controlled by no one.

Serious confusions arise from using the same word to describe a spontaneous order and an organization. "Economy" can refer to the market as a whole or to the organized economy of a household (Hayek, 1976, pp. 107-108). Hayek thought the confusion was so fundamental that a new term was needed for the market order: a "catallaxy" (Hayek, 1979, pp. 69-70). "Science" can also refer to the spontaneous order of science (Polanyi, 1962; Hull, 1988). But it is also used to describe an individual scientist "doing science" while pursuing a research project.

These confusions emerge in even greater depth with the term "democracy" because *both are manifestations of the same system*. A democracy at war resembles a firm's economy or a scientist's research project. It can be understood in organizational terms as pursuing a concrete goal with greater or lesser efficiency. At peace, a democracy is more like the network of all scientists or all individual economies, enabling many different and often contradictory po-

litical goals to be independently pursued, with no assurances as to which will succeed.

Like science and the market process, liberal modernity's other two defining institutions, under normal circumstances democracies are spontaneous orders where everyone can pursue whatever goals they wish within a set of procedural rules ideally applying to everyone equally. Markets use prices as signals, science uses agreement among specialists within a community as signals, and democracies use votes as signals. People and parties compete for votes in a way analogous to how businesses compete for dollars. A vote is given when a voter is persuaded by a candidate or party. If sufficient, these votes "purchase" the policies they want. In acting within markets, science, or democracy, we are more or less successful in obtaining systemic resources, such as money, agreement, or votes (diZerega, 1997).

Some readers might object that Hayek never called democracy a spontaneous order, and in fact was often critical of it compared with market processes. However, his criticisms were generally of those who considered democracy in terms of majority rule. In the *Constitution of Liberty*, he came very close to the position I am arguing:

We may admit that democracy does not put power in the hands of the wisest or best informed and that at any given moment the decision of the government of the elite may be more beneficial to the whole; but this need not prevent us from still giving democracy the preference. It is in its dynamic, rather than its static, aspects that the value of democracy proves itself... the benefits of democracy will show itself only in the long run, while its more immediate achievements may well be inferior to those of other forms of government (Hayek, 1960, pp. 108-109).

This argument is identical in logic to one Hayek and others have made for the market. In Hayek's words, the market is "a multi-purpose instrument which at no particular moment may be the one best adapted to the particular circumstances, but which will be the best for the greater variety of circumstances likely to occur" (Hayek, 1976, p. 115; see also Kirzner, 1973, pp. 232-3).

### Democracies as discovery processes

Like the market and science, democratic politics constitute a never-ending process of discovery (Crick, 1964, p. 147). The market, science, and democracy all involve people following common procedural rules, but their rules fa-

vor different kinds of values (diZerega, 2010). The market facilitates individual exchanges by means of money prices. Science seeks what John Ziman calls “reliable knowledge” about the material world through persuading a community of peers (Ziman, 1978). Unlike science and the market, democracies exist to discover values and policies applying to the larger community and encompassing a wider and more contested range of values than either the market or science. Most people consider some entities non-reducible to dollars and cents, such as human beings, policing, prisons, national parks or, in the opinion of many of us, medical care. The same holds for scientific knowledge. Balancing the mix of values in decisions made for a community as a whole is a democratic responsibility that cannot be delegated to either the market or science, however much both may contribute to such decisions.

In retrospect it seems odd that Hayek did not see the systemic similarity between markets and democracies, as he knew science and the market were both spontaneous orders. Indeed, his friend Michael Polanyi used just this term and opened his essay “The Republic of Science: Its Political and Economic Theory” by explaining that

[m]y title is intended to suggest that the community of scientists is organized in a way which resembles certain features of a body politics and works according to economic principles similar to those by which the production of material goods is regulated (Polanyi, 1962).

Apparently, the intellectual climate for grasping these common similarities had to wait, perhaps until the late 1970s, when Ilya Prigogine’s work on dissipative structures (stable patterns far from equilibrium) in chemistry inspired many scientists to explore what he memorably termed “order out of chaos” in their own fields (Prigogine, 1984). Prigogine received a Nobel Prize for his work. At the same time, growing environmental concerns increased interest in the functioning of ecosystems. Ecosystems are also invisible hand phenomena. As research expanded in many fields, terms such as “self-organization,” “far from equilibrium systems” and “organized complexity” emerged, all referring to how persistent patterns could arise whose causes could not be reduced to the behavior of their parts, or to an initial governing intent.

It was at this time of growing sensitivity to the importance of invisible-hand processes that three political scientists quite independently began studying similar patterns

in democracies: R. J. Rummel (1997), John Kingdon (1995), and Gus diZerega (1989). By different routes, these scholars came to the conclusion that democratic countries were distinct from states as systems of political authority. The traditional equation of democracies as simply a variety of state was importantly misleading.

### The nature of states

In his study of the state’s origins, James C. Scott emphasizes that

“stateness” in my view, is an institutional continuum, less an either/or proposition than a judgement of more or less. A polity with a king, specialized administrative staff, social hierarchy, a monumental center, city walls, and tax collection and distribution is certainly a “state” in the strong sense of the term (Scott, 2017, p. 23).

From the beginning the term “state” in the modern sense was associated with rule over others. In *The Prince*, Niccolo Machiavelli’s term *lo stato*, is usually translated as “state.” Hanna Pitkin observed that asking whether Machiavelli meant the nation or the Prince’s position by the term is misleading. For him, “the two form a single concept” (Pitkin, 1972, p. 312). Around 100 years later, Louis XIV became known for his claim “L’etat c’est moi” or “I am the state.” The state was explicitly equated with the will of a single person. Perhaps the classic picture depicting a state in this sense would appear to be Thomas Hobbes’ famous frontispiece to his *Leviathan* (see the cover of this issue).

The king’s head at the top depicts the state as a hierarchy, with a unified will at the top that oversees the rest. The people make up the body, subordinate to the head. A wise head maintains a healthy body, the better to serve its interests, but the body always serves the head.

Hobbes, of course, favored monarchy. But a difference distinguished Hobbes’ view of monarchy from Machiavelli’s, Louis XIV’s, and indeed the prevailing English sense of the divine right of kings. Hobbes argued for monarchy as good for the society as a whole, and ultimately based on its support. This common good was simply preventing people from having to live in constant fear of being killed. It was crucially different from claiming the king was god’s representative or that society was his property.

Hobbes’ argument that the public good was the ultimate justification for monarchy could be applied to justify other elites and other views of the common good. And in fact, if

As we look at English history we see a centuries-long expansion of the rulers from a king to a gradually more inclusive parliament. However, until the United Kingdom became a democracy, suffrage was always limited to classes whose interests were regarded as superior to those of the population as a whole. For much of this time adequate property ownership was needed for full membership in the nation, and in this sense the state was an oligarchy. The common good was thought of in terms of corporate well-being rather than individual flourishing.

Until the rise of democracies wisely ruled states regarded their populations as assets that needed husbanding, the better to facilitate state power. The doctrine of enlightened despotism reflected this view. Absolute rulers could make their realms stronger by encouraging science, education, religious tolerance, and other values, for a healthy and intelligent population served the interests of the ruler.

From this perspective, there was no fundamental discovery problem analogous to that faced in science or the market. Decisions were the prerogative of the king, aided by his advisors, or whoever held a position of rule. The chief calculation required for early successful states was where the line lay where squeezing its resources for its benefit undermined the conditions for its long-term survival (Scott, 2017). Over time measures that improved the lives of the sovereign's subjects also became important because they added to the country's power.

We have, then, two concepts of the common good. The first, rooted in polities as states, is what is necessary to preserve or enhance the power and longevity of the state. The second, individual flourishing, arises out of a viable democratic process. Sometimes there is an overlap, but while both cattle and the wise farmer want healthy conditions for the herd, their ultimate reasons are very different.

### The nature of sovereignty

The defining principle characterizing a state is sovereign power. States *rule* over people. Both states and democracies make rules, and in a narrowly legal sense, both are sovereign. Both are the supreme source of rules for those living in their territories.

But in states different people with very different social and political statuses make the rules for others of lesser status, and the rules ultimately reflect that elite's subordination of society to its particular interests. Whether a state is dominated by a king, a tyrant, a party, an oligarchy, a church, or the military, it has always been an organization of rule with interests distinct from those of society as a whole.

The doctrine of sovereignty in this sense fits awkwardly into democratic theory. Madison wrote that "[m]uch of the erroring expounding the Constitution has its origin in the use made of the species of sovereignty implied in the nature of Government" (Madison, 1819, pp. 361-2). Sovereign implies a sovereign will, and normally there is no such thing in a democratic republic.

"Sovereign" as describing ultimate authority has no clear role in describing a spontaneous order. We are told democracies are characterized by "popular sovereignty." In a democracy, the people who support one successful measure will normally be different from the people who support another successful measure. There is no unified will, no head at the top, and what order exists arises out of a political process controlled by no one rather than being imposed from the top down. *Except in times of war or other major external crises when a unified will temporarily arises, there is no sovereign.*

Comparing a democracy with a totalitarian state helps make this point clear. Most states do not seek to control all of society, and even very authoritarian ones are primarily concerned that no one challenges authority. Beyond that, people are left alone. By contrast, a totalitarian state seeks to penetrate and control all of society, prohibiting any independent initiatives on the part of its subjects. A democracy has a similar interpenetration of government and society, but the power relations are reversed. Any individual or group can seek to influence or change the government. But unlike a state, society has no will. It is as varied and complex as the people and organizations within it. Those influencing one decision will often be different from those influencing another.

The U.S. constitution illustrates how institutions associated with states are subject to civil society. Typical state institutions, such as the administrative bureaucracy, the police and the military, are located in the executive branch. If this were all there were to American government it would be a state reflecting the intentions of its executive. However, liberal democracies subordinate these state institutions to the population, which is free to advocate and implement contradictory policies as a normal and essential part of the political process. When the people, or their representatives, create or amend existing law, executive institutions must obey these changes. The legislature is the supreme constitutional branch, and is most directly tied to the population as a whole. In the United States, Congress can remove any judge or president and no president or judge can ultimately overrule congress. Even a law once ruled to be unconstitu-

tional can be validated through constitutional amendment. Except in times of severe crisis, when a temporary unified will arises, the president's constitutional job is seeing that the laws are administered effectively.

Parliamentary democracies institutionalize the same principles in a different context. Democratic parliaments grew out of the slow accretion of ever more popular power, both in breadth and depth, to check and then guide the actions of kings. Unlike in America, the state pre-existed the democracy, was captured, and then subordinated to it. Superficially, parliamentary democracies resemble traditional states, but the Hobbesian head has been replaced by a popularly elected legislature. If it were a state, it would be one with multiple personality disorder. But, as Hayek observed, democracies generate a long-term pattern preferable to what states create.

Sometimes we hear terms like “consumer sovereignty” and “sovereign individual,” but these terms confuse what should be a clear distinction. In its original political sense, states are sovereign because there is no authority over them. But in spontaneous orders individuals, including in their role as consumers, exist within a network of procedural rules, usually enforced by law. Within this network they are free to act as they choose. In this sense they are free and independent *while immersed within a larger context of rules they did not make*. But they are not sovereign.

### Varieties of states

Many states have not been absolute monarchies or dictatorships, and today the “administrative welfare state” is certainly distinct from this image. I have tried to prevent this misreading, but in case that implication remains for some, I will address it explicitly.

Historically there have been many kinds of states, from traditional or revolutionary despotisms to theocracies to aristocratic states where the ruler ultimately depended on an independent aristocracy, to oligarchies, to military rule to single party rule. And various combinations of these. Very few states are monolithic. What they have in common is that a certain set of interests is elevated above those of other people in society, and that force will be used to maintain that domination.

Consider the transition from state to democracy that occurred in England. This transformation was gradual, but crucially important. Along the way many Englishmen who had the vote lived within a fairly democratic environment where civil society was strong and individual freedom pro-

tected by the rule of law. Yet until universal suffrage was attained, England was not a democracy.

Let me strengthen this point with two examples.

The American constitution guaranteed a “republican” form of government to every state, and a republic was what we today call a representative democracy. Equality of the vote prevailed among those who qualified as citizens, but the states defined citizenship in different ways. A few initially gave women, or at least unmarried women, the vote along with men. But this right did not last, and for well over 100 years women did not have the vote. However, given that women were granted the same rights as men by the constitution, there were limits to how far they could be exploited.

Those states that became increasingly committed to a slave economy offer an important comparison. The antebellum South sought to preserve democratic liberty for its male White citizens while preventing the issue of slavery, so important to Northern politics, from becoming a major internal issue. Some of the measures were indirect but effective. For example, South Carolina required state representatives to have 500 acres of land and ten slaves, or alternatively, to possess land valuable enough that slaves were needed to render it profitable (Anonymous, 1968, p. 21). Beginning in Missouri in 1837 and within a few years throughout the South, antislavery speech was banned. The democratic principles that had justified the American Revolution were explicitly repudiated (Sinha, 2000). Political freedom could exist for members of the ruling order, but even for them it would be limited if deemed necessary to preserve its rule over others.

It is not the existence of all-encompassing policies that defines a state, it is the existence of an apparatus of rule. If, hypothetically, a city existed as a cooperative, and its members elected to have their dues finance public health and education, it would not be a (city) state. But if it were to have the power to incarcerate rather than expel members who broke its rules, and if it uses the threat of violence and punishment to compel obedience, it would be a political body that was either a democracy or a state, depending on how decisions were made.

And this example brings us to another interesting distinction between democracies and organizations.

### The Iron Law of Oligarchy

Robert Michels' study of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century German Social Democrats led to his concluding that an “Iron Law of Oligarchy” inevitably turned formally democratic organizations into undemocratic oligarchies. “It is organi-

zation,” Michels wrote, “which gives birth to the dominion of the elected over the electors, of the mandatories over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organizations says oligarchy.” (Michels, 1961, p. 365)

Insofar as he confined himself to democratic organizations, Michels’ conclusions have held broadly true. However, Michels generalized beyond democratic organizations to all types of large-scale democratic institutions. His arguments were adopted by many right-wing authoritarians after World War I.

Like other instrumental organizations, democratic organizations exist to achieve specifiable ends. Some, such as cooperatives, often maintain democratic procedures as a part of that purpose. Nevertheless, specific tasks also exist alongside the simple maintenance of democratic procedures. For example, in the case of most cooperatives, one such task is successful marketing of products.

Most organizations appear unable to maintain both viable democratic procedures and successful pursuit of their substantive goals. Large organizations tend to provide incumbent leaders with decisive power over challengers, leaving rankandfile members with no influence over their policies. In their study of democracy and American labor unions, Lipset, Trow, and Coleman concluded that “the implications of our analysis for democratic organizational politics are almost as pessimistic as those postulated by Robert Michels” (Lipset et al., 1965, p. 454)

However, a few unions were internally democratic. Michels’ “Iron Law” was more like one made of bronze (Sartori, 1987, p. 149). The authors found that the factors that promoted organizational democracy were more characteristic of political democracy than of instrumental organizations. Three proved particularly important: opportunities for members to acquire political skills; access to independent channels for communication; and sufficient leisure time and money. All three factors increased the likelihood that internal democracy would flourish (Lipset et al., p. 467). Most organizations do not fulfill these three criteria, but they are still fairly widespread in political democracies.

In addition, they argued that “one of the necessary conditions for a sustained democratic political system in an occupational group is that it be so homogeneous that only ideology and not the more potent spur of selfinterest divides its members” (ibid., p. 347). This issue is however more complex.

Great homogeneity is not a characteristic of political democracy and Madison emphasized diversity could be a strength, *if it were complex enough*. Today we are witnessing

how ethnic and cultural divisions within democracies are causing many to endure serious strains. Madison’s emphasis on the threat of faction, and his attempt to create a constitutional structure able to neutralize their threat, gains renewed relevance in the current context.

While the public good necessitates some homogeneity of interests in a liberal democracy, it must be discovered, and is often either fleeting in its specifics, abstract, or both. It cannot be known with confidence in its specifics, except as it manifests itself in the political process. And even then, like equilibrium in the market and agreement in science, its attainment will often be temporary. The complexity characterizing democratic polities usually precludes the conscious homogeneity of specific interests which help hold together the unity of a labor union or cooperative. It must come instead from the process of political decision-making where no single interest rules.

Madison hoped the constitutional structure would create conditions where only policies generally beneficial to the country as a whole would be accepted by differently constituted majorities. However, the unanticipated rise of political parties created means by which destructive factions could organize for their own benefit. When combined with the deeply unstable combination of free and slave states, the stage was set for disaster. Madison’s worries came to fruition when political parties become polarized along issues which cannot be compromised.

### Efficiency and discovery

Concern with “efficiency” is another example of confusing terminology when describing democratic polities. Political parties, bureaucracies, corporations, and research organizations can use their resources more or less efficiently, depending on how well they are employed to pursue their goals. In all these cases the language of efficiency applies, because what counts as efficient is defined in terms of the means to attaining a goal.

This framework contrasts with spontaneous orders. The scientific “goal” of finding reliable knowledge does not tell us anything about which projects scientists should pursue or what the knowledge they produce will look like. Seeking profitable exchanges does not tell us what exchanges will be profitable. Seeking the public good does not tell us what measures among competing proposals will best serve it. There is no hierarchy of projects implied by these “goals” for spontaneous orders. Normally democracies, markets, and science have no goals able to be described concretely enough that the language of efficiency applies. They are *nei-*

ther efficient nor inefficient, except during times of crisis so threatening that a unified goal emerges. People denouncing “democratic inefficiency” are making the same kind of error in a political context as that made by state socialists complaining about “inefficiency” in the market, or those who think a single authority could more “efficiently” direct scientific research.

As in science, democracies exist to find policies that will be regarded as legitimate by the community as a whole. These policies remain perpetually open to challenge, and this openness is partly why democracies have been so successful in the complex modern world, as opposed to dictatorships (Kingdon, 1995).

When facing a war or a natural disaster, democracies can have a unified goal because the nature of the public good is agreed to by nearly everyone. The people as a whole unite in favor of a clear hierarchy of goals, at least at the very top. The war must be won, the epidemic stopped, or damage from the earthquake or hurricane ameliorated, *so that normal life can resume*.

When the public good is obvious to nearly all and the government operates with close to unanimous support, the rules governing the democratic process are abandoned because the rules for discovery within spontaneous orders are antithetical to the rules of accomplishing a goal by an instrumental organization.

### The nature of the democratic peace

Understanding democracies as spontaneous orders rather than states explains the most important distinction between the two. If we define a democracy (rather permissively) as a political system with universal suffrage that elects leaders and where power is passed on peacefully, *there has never been a war between two democracies*. (Rummel, 1997; diZerega, 1995) For comparison’s sake, consider that *every* Leninist state whose party came to power largely on its own, and bordered another such state, waged a war or engaged in a serious border conflict with its neighbor: Russia/China, China/Vietnam, and Vietnam/Kampuchea. The list is not long, but it is all inclusive. There appears to be something in democratic systems that, when present in two nations, prevents armed conflict between them, whereas states lack such a feature. The democratic process is that factor.

The best evidence this process is the cause consists in the counter-examples sometimes given to challenge the democratic peace argument. The United States has a long history of usually covert interventions in democratic countries to replace elected governments with dictatorships. Iran, Guat-

temala, the Dominican Republic, and Chile are the major examples. Significantly, in all these cases the interventions were orchestrated by the President, without ever involving Congress, let alone public discussion (Krasner, 2018, p. 89). There is no evidence presidents are more peaceful than dictators.

Another example illuminating the difference between democracies and states would be comparing the crisis in U.S.-French relations, when Charles de Gaulle pulled France out of NATO, with the rise of the Sino-Soviet rift, both of which happened around the same time. While neither event resulted in actual war, both strongly challenged the dominant power. The Chinese challenge ultimately led to serious border battles, with millions of troops stationed along both sides. Nothing remotely similar occurred between the U.S. and France, where in most respects relations remained unchanged.

In their study of these events, Ole Hosti and John Sullivan emphasize the role of multiple and independent lines of communication between France and the U.S. as important in limiting the conflict. Russia and China, lacking a civil society, and so lacking these independent relations among elites, were not able to contain the conflicts between them, which eventually became military (Hosti and Sullivan, 1969; diZerega, 1995, pp. 297-8). Their failure was in the face of their common knowledge that, even together, they were militarily weaker than NATO.

*It is not democracy as such which creates peace, it is the systemic relationships developing within and between democracies, generated by their self-organizing political processes, which are conducive to lasting peace.*

Refusing to distinguish between democracies and states because both make rules is the equivalent of equating the moon with a grapefruit because both are round.

## II: THE RESURRECTION OF THE STATE

Just as a state can progressively become a democracy by expanding citizen status, a democracy can become a state by the progressive weakening of that status. It is happening today in the United States.

There is an inherent conflict of interests between successful organizations within any spontaneous order, and maintaining the conditions needed for such an order to flourish. The same processes that elevated an organization to success within the market, science, or democracy, can also weaken and dissolve it. For example, business organizations within markets can use their resources to change the rules to

strengthen their position rather than seeking to adapt to new circumstances. When successful, the result is a progressive merging of large businesses with government, obscuring and perhaps erasing the distinctions between them. The market process remains, but is at the same time subordinated to the organizational values of the powerful (diZerega, 2019). The same is true for democracies.

### Political Parties and Plurality Elections

Political parties are not mentioned in the American constitution because they did not exist. But—as people sought political allies with common or compatible goals—political parties arose out of free political debate and the freedom to organize, very much like how new businesses arise in the market. And, as Robert Michels (1961) showed, dominant political parties are no more benevolently inclined to preserving a robust democratic process than powerful businesses are to preserving market competition. Once established, political parties faced the same problem successful businesses face: the freedoms that enabled them to arise and flourish can also cause them to fail. As conditions change, political parties may adapt, fail, or try to manipulate and change the rules in their favor. As with many businesses, political parties often favored the last option.

Once they arose in the U.S., political parties sought to manipulate the rules to make it difficult for third parties to arise. While the U.S. constitution does not require plurality elections (who gets the most votes wins), requiring plurality single-member districts for elections virtually guarantees a two-party system. When who gets the most votes wins, rather than who gets a majority of votes, voting for third parties is usually like voting for the main party you like least. Consequently, even if they prefer them over one of the two main parties, many citizens will not vote for third parties. The first parties institutionalized these rules, and third parties virtually never arise to challenge this type of two-party dominance. This political duopoly only broke down once, just before the Civil War.

### Gerrymandering

In the American context, gerrymandering has been a popular way to bring the democratic process under greater party control by designing political districts to minimize competition. The parties shaped districts to empower supporters and weaken critics. Through gerrymandering, politicians in office choose their voters rather than let voters choose their representatives, a complete reversal of the values Madison and others hoped would prevail.

While long practiced by both Republicans and Democrats alike, at present the Republicans benefit the most egregiously from gerrymandering (Wolf, 2016). Gerrymandered districts help explain why Republicans often dominate all three branches of a state's government, despite their candidates consistently winning fewer votes overall than do their opponents. For example, the Pennsylvania congressional map has been notorious since 2012, when Republicans won (and subsequently held) 13 of the state's 18 House seats despite losing a majority of the popular vote (Kilgore, 2018). The boundaries of its 7th congressional district are an example of an extreme gerrymander.

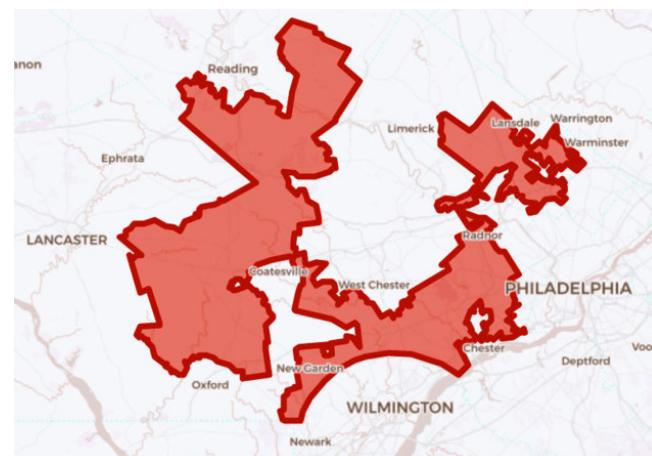


Figure 1: Pennsylvania's 7th Congressional District

These kinds of party manipulation of voting rules in order to safeguard those already successful from serious challenges have been with the nation since the country's founding. In themselves they were never strong enough to seriously weaken the political process as a whole. However, more recent developments are having a very different impact.

### The rise of the capitalist state

Capitalism is a word widely praised or condemned, with little attention paid to a clear definition. The definition I use here is “a market economy where the dominant business form is the joint stock corporation.” Such an economy is founded on and steadily strengthens the integration of the most powerful economic and political organizations, in order that they might enjoy a more predictable and controlled environment. In a previous paper I developed this definition through a careful analysis of three of capitalism’s major defenders: Ludwig von Mises, F. A. Hayek, and Milton Friedman (diZerega, 2019).

The capitalist transformation of a society is straightforward. Businesses and politicians, in alliance, create initial islands of politically derived privilege within the sea of market transactions, islands where profits are increasingly dependent on political connections rather than market processes. These islands grow, and as they grow, the market process is confined to increasingly constrained conditions, not through government planning, but through corporate-government alliances within particular regions of the economy. Small enterprises remain subordinate to the market process, while larger ones become less so. Jeffrey Sachs describes this process as a “corporate feedback loop,” wherein corporate money and personnel influence policies that, in turn, give corporations more money to influence those policies still further (Sachs, 2011, p. 116).

Politicians and political parties both need resources, and absent public funding, businesses are happy to supply them, in return for the resources they provide businesses. In the U.S. this pattern has long existed from Main Street to Wall Street. But whereas Main Street’s narrowly economic interests are closely connected with their broader community as a whole, the same cannot be said for large national or even international corporate organizations.

Symbiotic relationships between corporations and political parties increasingly subordinate the market process to dominant businesses rather than to the more complex values characterizing civil society, which are often shared by local businesses (diZerega, 2019). In the process, democracy is subordinated to dominant political organizations allied with these businesses. It becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between where one ends and the other begins, even as both become increasingly independent of consumers and citizens.

Sachs describes four key sectors of our economy to illustrate this feedback loop: the military industrial complex, the Wall Street-Washington complex which increasingly concentrates control of the financial system in a few Wall Street firms, the big oil-transportation-military complex which has led to endless war in the Middle East, and the health care industry. Each arose relatively independently from the others, taking shape in keeping with capitalism’s *systemic* values as they applied them to their own industries.

Today each sector exercises sufficient political control to override the clear preferences of the American people on issues affecting both. This is not “pluralism” but rather describes a political-corporate oligarchy. The military industrial complex gives us endless defense spending. Big oil encourages many wars in service to its profits while work-

ing tirelessly to prevent alternative energy from replacing petroleum, no matter the harm to the planet. Wall Street and the banks concentrate ever more wealth at the top, and in doing so destroy the American middle class. The health industry increasingly squeezes Americans with the world’s most expensive health care (Sachs, pp. 116-31). This oligarchy, having several foundations of power, is not always in agreement with itself, but competing elites are compatible with serious and sustained exploitation of the unorganized sectors of society for the benefit of them all.

The end result of this process is the progressive emergence of an *oligarchic state* that hollows out democracy while gradually subordinating all of social life to its power, and increasingly other countries as well. While the sectors Sachs described are independent of one another in a number of ways, at least three now share a common incentive to expand military spending and the projection of our power abroad. The resulting wars and open-ended conflicts increase the power of the executive branch relative to the legislative branch. While the constitution gave Congress the sole authority to declare war, over time this power has been ceded to the Executive, first with interventions against small weak states, then through ‘police actions’ such as the Korean conflict, followed by open-ended grants of war-making power, until today the Executive argues it can initiate hostilities even in the face of Congressional opposition (Chesney, 2018).

### Revolving doors

A permanent “revolving door” now exists between the largest banks and corporations and “public service,” uniting business and government, as leading corporate, financial, and political figures shift from government to business and back again. Conflict of interest is institutionalized as a basic principle (Moyers, 2012). Vice President Dick Cheney’s profitable connections with Halliburton were common knowledge. Until the Trump presidency, Obama’s first Attorney General, Eric Holder, retired from “public service” to return to his former law firm Covington & Burling, whose list of clients includes Bank of America, JP Morgan, Wells Fargo and Citigroup, all of whom he failed to prosecute for illegal actions during the financial crisis they helped cause. Matt Taibbi commented “I think this is probably the single biggest example of the revolving door that we have ever had. And we’ve had some whoppers . . .” (Taibbi, 2015). The Trump administration will, in turn, dwarf that of Obama.

In addition, upon leaving office, large numbers of elected officials take up lucrative positions as corporate lobbyists.

Bribery is unnecessary when those in office know they will be rewarded handsomely upon leaving so long as they behave appropriately. Corporate lobbyists are now being appointed to oversee the organizations established at least in part to regulate businesses. Permanent conflict-of-interest is institutionalized, with government and the largest businesses becoming so fused the claim of any clear distinction between them is misleading. This is a defining feature of capitalism. The result is a kind of oligarchy where people move from governmental to private positions, and in the process serve the increasing identification of both with a common system that increasingly replaces the democratic process.

Democratic political theorists have long emphasized how the lure of political power attracts those most interested in wielding it, as well as corrupting many who initially became involved for more benign reasons. Thomas Jefferson (1798) spoke for many when he wrote “[i]n questions of power, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the constitution.”

The same kind of problem exists in economic organizations.

### The Character of CEOs

While researching criminal psychopathy, Jon Ronson came to an unexpected conclusion—that “the way that capitalism is structured really is a physical manifestation of the brain anomaly known as psychopathy” (Bercovici, 2011). The more psychopathic a CEO, the more at peace he or she would be in making the decisions needed to keep or enhance their position. Such people would have the edge over people who have equal talent but less ruthlessness.

Ronson described how about 4% of studied CEOs scored high on psychopathic traits, which is four times the percentage in the population as a whole. While nowhere near a majority of those surveyed, as he emphasized, there is a continuum up to a total absence of empathy which characterizes pure sociopathy. Given the economic incentives to reward successful psychopathic actions, their impact on business culture is almost certainly greater than their numbers.

Three behavioral psychologists studied 203 corporate professionals selected by their companies to participate in management development programs. The psychologists found the “underlying latent structure of psychopathy in our corporate sample was consistent with that model found in community and offender studies. Psychopathy was positively associated with in-house ratings of charisma/presen-

tation style (creativity, good strategic thinking and communication skills) but negatively associated with ratings of responsibility/performance (being a team player, management skills, and overall accomplishments)” (Babiak, 2010).

### Four examples in pharmaceuticals

If any industries could attract well-intentioned management, we would expect pharmaceuticals to be among them. They are not. Considerable attention has been paid to the rising costs of insulin in the U.S., a life-saving drug for many diabetics. Insulin is a 100-year-old drug whose price has tripled in the past 10 years, leaving many sufferers unable to afford it. The pressures have gotten so high many sick Americans take “caravans to Canada,” for affordable medicine. Once they arrive, the same vials of insulin that retail for over \$300 in the United States were being sold for \$30 apiece. Less fortunate Americans have died due to cutting back on insulin, and losing the bet they made with their illness (Shure, 2019; CBS, 2019).

But the insulin example is far from an isolated case.

### Genentech

Genentech discovered Avastin, a powerful drug for fighting colon cancer. Avastin is also very profitable. Later, doctors discovered its cancer-fighting qualities could also be used to combat wet macular degeneration (not the most common form of the condition, but one that afflicts primarily older people).

While it took a lot of Avastin to fight colon cancer, it took very little to fight progressive blindness through wet macular degeneration. Treatment with Avastin for wet macular degeneration was between \$50 and \$150. But Genentech put money profit ahead of everything else, and decided to make a much more expensive substitute, just for the eye. The company received FDA approval and marketed it under the name Lucentis. Unlike Avastin, treatment with Lucentis would cost \$2000.

If everybody with macular degeneration used the hyper-expensive Lucentis it would use up Medicare’s entire eye treatment budget. Consequently, many doctors kept using the much cheaper and, to their minds, just as good, Avastin. However, Genentech *discouraged* testing Avastin’s effectiveness in treating wet macular degeneration, claiming tests were unnecessary because Avastin could not work very well (Brody, 2007). Genentech also threatened in 2007 to cut off supplies of Avastin to anyone who made it available for eye use.

In November, 2007, the American Academy of Ophthalmology protested Genentech's decision as threatening lower income patients and argued they had seen no evidence of safety problems. In the face of doctors' protests Genentech backed down, and said it would continue selling Avastin to physicians, and ship it to destinations of their choosing, including compounding pharmacies (Haddrill, 2017).

In 2011, neutrally conducted tests were released indicating *no significant differences* in effectiveness existed between Avastin and Lucentis (LifeTech, 2011; BioTech Strategy, 2011).

### KV Pharmaceutical

Progesterone helps prevent miscarriages and premature births in high-risk pregnancies, and the treatment has existed since 1956. It had long been made available by compounding pharmacies for around \$20 a dose, administered weekly. Then Progesterone won FDA approval to be marketed in the U.S. for seven years as "Makena," sold exclusively by KV Pharmaceutical of St. Louis. K-V then announced a price hike from \$20 to \$1500 a dose (Hutchison, 2011). The price increase boosted the treatment's total price to the average recipient from \$400 to \$30,000, guaranteeing serious financial sacrifices for many young families, a huge increase in insurance rates for policies covering pregnancies, and almost certainly an increase in miscarriages, because many people would choose to do without the treatment and hope for the best. Sometimes they would lose their bet.

FDA laws prohibit pharmacies from making FDA-approved products. KV also contacted pharmacies threatening them with FDA punishment if they compounded their own version of the treatment. Dr. Kevin Ault, associate professor of gynecology and obstetrics at Emory University School of Medicine, observed, "All the upfront development of the drug was done by the National Institutes of Health. You and I paid for that with our tax dollars, it's not like this pharmaceutical company is trying to recoup its investments in research and development, as is usually the reason for the price of new drugs."

This time K-V miscalculated. While the FDA has the authority to crack down on compounding pharmacies it is not obligated to do so. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) along with medical and patients' groups pushed for a change. In March, 2011, the FDA announced that it "does not intend to take enforcement action against pharmacies that compound [Makena] based on a valid prescription" (Zajac, 2011).

### Turing Pharmaceutical

Daraprim is the dominant means for treating toxoplasmosis, a parasitical infection that can be fatal to fetuses in pregnant women. It is also used in treating some secondary AIDS symptoms. Martin Shkreli, a hedge fund manager who started Turing Pharmaceuticals obtained ownership of this 62-year-old drug. Daraprim had cost \$13.50 per capsule, and Shkreli raised the price to \$750 (Kuns, 2015). This indifference to human health and suffering was not out of character for Shkreli: while a hedge fund manager he had urged the Food and Drug Administration not to approve drugs made by companies whose stock he was shorting (Pollack, 2015).

Shkreli is no longer CEO of Turing and, as of this writing in 2019, he is currently residing in federal prison. Turing has however not lowered the price (Boboltz, 2018). The company blamed financial pressures, even though a month after raising the price it gave three top executives \$685,000 in raises (Merrelli, 2016).

### Fraud as a corporate value

Over five years, at least 5,300 Wells Fargo employees opened approximately 1.5 million fake bank accounts and applied for 565,000 credit cards that may not have been authorized by their customers. Customers accumulated late fees on accounts they did not know they had, and sometimes these bills were sent to debt collectors. With so many employees involved for so long, it is clear these crimes were not the actions of a few dishonest people, although the bank refused to say how many higher managers were involved (Corkery, 2015).

The actual financial damage done to customers was relatively small: \$2.6 million in surprise fees for many thousands of customers collected over 5 years (Peck, 2016b). Wells Fargo's tellers earn about 3 percent in incentive pay for sales and customer service, while personal bankers make about 15 percent to 20 percent of their total earnings from these payments. The fraud by lower-level employees arose from perverse incentives imposed by higher management. Tellers had daily quotas to fill, and threatened with being fired if they didn't meet them (Brown, 2016).

Once the scandal was uncovered, lower-level people were fired. However, it took sustained political pressure from Senator Elizabeth Warren and others for Wells Fargo's higher-ups to pay any price at all for their behavior (Warren, 2016; Peck, 2015). The Consumer Finance Protection Board concluded that the executives in charge of this division in the bank should have known what was happening

(Kaufman, 2016). But initially Carrie Tolstedt, the executive whose division perpetuated these crimes for over 5 years, retired with a large severance package. The issue did not die down, and ultimately she was fired “for cause,” costing her 54% of her shares in Wells Fargo. She left the bank with “only” \$52 million (Wieczner, 2017).

Its CEO and Chairman, John Stumpf, was finally forced to retire and forgo \$41 million in unvested stock awards. Without pressure from Warren and other senators, he would still have received about \$120 million in stock and retirement benefits. As with Tolstedt, political pressure reduced his take to only a little more than \$100 million.

The same “ethic” apparently prevailed at other major banks. CNN Money reported that “[o]ne former banker at a regional bank told [us] he witnessed the practice at his company. ‘The customers wouldn’t even know,’ said the banker, who insisted his name not be used. ‘Wells Fargo isn’t the only one. This is an industry-wide problem’” (Egan, 2016).

CNN Money reported everyone they spoke to had to pursue similar sales goals demanded by senior management. Bank of America, Citi Bank, JP Morgan and Chase, and US Bank, the four largest U.S banks, refused to say whether they use the same kinds of sales tactics that were employed at Wells Fargo (Peck, 2016a). As Beatrice Edwards writes, “[n]o single bank could opt out of [fraudulent behavior]. If, say, one bank went straight, it would show lower returns, capital would flee, the CEO would be terminated, and another one who could get it right would be appointed” (Edwards, 2014, p. 78). The problem is not a few “bad apples.” The whole basket is bad.

### Killing people as collateral damage

Today some very large businesses deliberately pursue practices that eventually kill people, as the tobacco industry famously demonstrated (Herbert, 1997, p. 19). Lead, whose presence in children is strongly linked with lower IQs and a greater predilection for violence, was eliminated from paint and gasoline only after a long period of industry seeking to belittle and undermine scientists’ findings. Once the debate became public this effort even included placing cartoons in National Geographic and Saturday Evening Post celebrating how children benefited from lead paint. Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner (2013) write that “[a]dvertisements for Dutch Boy paint—which contained enough lead in one coat of a two-by-two-inch square to kill a child—depicted their two-headed mascot-painting toys with Father Christmas smiling over his shoulder.”

Auto manufacturers did not report design flaws that, if left unaddressed, would kill people (Durbin, 2014). The Ford Motor Company had information that, if implemented at a cost of \$11 per vehicle, would have decreased the possibility of the Ford Pinto from exploding. The company chose not to implement the design, even though it had done an analysis showing it would result in 180 fewer deaths (Leggett, 1999).

I could list many more examples, but I hope the point is clear. This is not what most of us would call normal behavior, and it describes the behavior of top people in many of America’s largest enterprises. Capitalism *as a system* selects for people who are comfortable with such behavior, if it is profitable. When combined with political power, this kind of system can lead to an integration of criminal, economic, and political behavior, and in fact it has.

### ‘Mafia Capitalism’

Journalist Chris Hedges coined the term “mafia capitalism” to describe the contemporary American political and economic system (Hedges, 2016). It’s a good call. Studies of the mafia in Italy indicate there has always been a connection between the mafia and commercial elites. As two contemporary researchers put it, “the mafia was and had always been considerably more institutionalized, modern, commercially engaged, and entwined with national as well as regional powerholders than we had previously imagined” (Schneider and Schneider, 2011, p. 3). While initially focusing on providing protection for illegal businesses, and then extorting money from legal ones as protection, there is no reason why the lines between legal and illegal economic activity would not be blurred.

From its very beginnings, trade has often been integrated with banditry and worse. The advent of modern economic organizations did not change things. The world’s first joint stock corporation, the Dutch East India Company, committed large scale genocide against the inhabitants of the Banda Islands, from which they obtained nutmeg. When some Bandanese objected to the company’s actions, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the company’s head, ordered the quartering and beheading of every male over 15. When the company arrived the island supported about 15,000 people. Fifteen years later about 600 had survived (Thring, 2010).

Corporate capitalism is often said to be characterized by wage labor, but this is not so. In the United States, slavery had long been an important part of industrial production for the market, and played a key role in its industrial development (Beckert, 2018). The South’s economy was large-

ly agricultural because on balance cotton production was profitable. But, as with nonhuman tools today, slavery was employed wherever it was profitable, in private industry as well as in agriculture (Starobin 1970a, 1970b). Given this history, Hedges' term is not obviously an exaggeration.

We do not need to examine the Trump presidency for illustrations. The examples I use here almost entirely preceded him, and were characteristic of policies pursued by both parties. For example, Wikileaks' claim to possess documents proving Bank of America acted illegally may or may not have been truthful (Taylor, 2011). However, Bank of America's management reacted with considerable alarm to the possibility they did, and began working with three military contractors, Berico, HB Gary, and Palantir, to devise some means of discrediting Wikileaks. This occurred with and through the cooperation of the US Justice Department, whose General Counsel recommended the law firm Hunton and Williams to Bank of America to handle the crisis. This firm is a major player in Washington's lobbying and other politics and employs over 1000 attorneys. Hunton and Williams served as the intermediary between Bank of America and Berico, HB Gary, and Palantir.

These plans included fraudulently attacking not just people with whom they disagreed, but otherwise uninvolved family members. Research sent by Aaron Barr, HB Gary's chief executive, reported of one target, "[t]hey go to a Jewish church in DC," and "[t]hey have 2 kids, son and daughter" (Lipton and Savage, 2011). These reports read more like a stakeout by the mafia, even though it was perpetrated by corporations and the government.

These other contractors proposed spying on families, threatening people's careers, using malware computer viruses to steal private information, using fake documents to embarrass critics, and creating fake identities to infiltrate their targets (Lipton and Savage, 2011). An unjustly accused innocent party does not usually act this way, though a guilty one often does. That the U.S. Department of Justice *aided* a major corporation in defending itself against a threatened exposure of illegal behavior is evidence the distinction between the private and government sectors has ceased to exist under capitalism.

The United States Chamber of Commerce was deeply involved in plans to attack progressive groups such as ThinkProgress, the SEIU, MoveOn.org, and other progressive groups. The Chamber of Commerce's attorneys worked with the same three military contractors—Berico, HB Gary, and Palantir—to devise a way of discrediting their critics (Keyes, 2011b). The tactics proposed also included

spying on families (Keyes, 2011a), stealing private information through malware computer viruses (Fang, 2011b), using fake documents to embarrass critics, and using fake identities to infiltrate their targets.

Referring to the Chamber of Commerce's activities, Richard Clarke, who had served in high level positions under both Democratic and Republican presidents (including as George W. Bush's "cyber security czar") remarked that "I think it's a felony, and I think they should go to jail." (Fang, 2011a). They did not.

In their *New York Times* account of these scandals Eric Lipton and Charlie Savage report:

Jonathan E. Turner, who runs a Tennessee-based business that gathers intelligence for corporate clients, said that companies nationwide relied on investigators to gather potentially damaging information on possible business partners or rivals. "Information is power," said Mr. Turner, former chairman of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. He estimated that the "competitive intelligence" industry had 9,700 companies offering these services, with an annual market of more than \$2 billion (Lipton and Savage, 2011).

Many CEOs engaging in legally suspect activities would have few moral problems cooperating with organized crime for mutual benefit. Or, for that matter, with a despotic state as many tech firms do when aiding China to control its population through perpetual surveillance (Schmidt and Feng, 2019).

Nor might the distinction between the corporate and financial elite and the mafia be all that great. The level of cooperation between the biggest banks and organized crime is often very high, and when they are caught at it, no significant sanctions are applied (Vulliamy, 2011).

### The consolidation of the state

Organizations can take on a life of their own, redefining their purposes to fit their interests (diZerega, 2015). When it is in the interest of political organizations to bring society under their control, people motivated by fear and unreasoning patriotism willingly subordinate all their interests to governmental power, as America's Founders well knew.

Alexander Hamilton wrote in *Federalist 8* that when war is frequent, popular governments must "strengthen the executive arm of government, in doing which their constitutions would acquire a progressive direction towards monarchy. It is of the nature of war to increase the executive at

the expense of the legislative authority.” If these conditions were prolonged, “we should, in a little time, see established in every part of this country the same engines of despotism which have been the scourge of the old world” (Publius, 1961). Randolph Bourne put the matter more succinctly in 1918: “War is the health of the state” (Bourne, 1964). Other than natural disasters, war is the crisis that most quickly creates a unified will able to override democratic procedures. And unlike such disasters, war can be deliberately planned.

Almost 200 years after Hamilton’s words, in 1961, during his final speech as president to the American people, Dwight D. Eisenhower stated that

[u]ntil the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations.

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications (Eisenhower, 1961).

The military-industrial complex Eisenhower warned of has two major dimensions. First it strengthens *and hides* how much corporations and the government have entered into a mutually symbiotic relationship. Second, it enables an increasing escalation of violence against others, free from constitutional restraints.

As to the first, not only is the military budget by far the largest single element in government spending, it is often invisible, even in its most basic accounting practices. The Pentagon has *never* completed an audit. When Congress finally demanded an account of spending, the Pentagon admitted in 2016 it could not account for *\$6.5 trillion* worth of year-end adjustments to Army general fund transactions

and data. Further, the *Fiscal Times* reports no one admitted to knowing what happened to thousands of documents that should have been on file, but weren’t. The Inspector General’s study found that Defense Finance and Accounting Service “did not document or support why the Defense Departmental Reporting System . . . removed at least 16,513 of 1.3 million records during Q3 FY 2015. As a result, the data used to prepare the FY 2015 AGF [Army General Fund] third quarter and year-end financial statements were unreliable and lacked an adequate audit trail” (Pianin, 2016).

Weapons sales are an important part of our export economy. In 2011 overseas American weapons sales totaled \$66.3 billion out of a global market of \$85.3 billion. Russia was in a distant second place, at \$4.8 billion (Shanker, 2012). The military-industrial complex Eisenhower warned us about has cemented the alliance of government and corporations and with it massively strengthened the rise of capitalism, and, as Trump’s reaction to the Saudi murder of a journalist living in the U.S. revealed, arms sales rank as far more important than democratic liberties.

But not all such killing was by customers.

### More killing for dollars

Even before World War II and the subsequent Cold War, corporations had been making extensive use of our military to serve their own purposes. The scale was smaller, afflicting the Caribbean and Central America for the most part, though the Philippines and China were also on the receiving end of American bayonets serving corporate interests. However, compared to today, the body count and corporate profits were smaller. Today, both deaths and profits are bigger.

Smedley Butler was the highest-ranking Marine Corps general in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the most highly decorated Marine of all time. Butler was also one of the very few two-time Medal of Honor recipients. Upon his retirement, Butler had the opportunity to look back on a career that, by military standards, remains unexcelled. He did not like what he saw.

In the journal *Common Sense* Butler summed up his military career:

I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. . . . Looking back on it, I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he

could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents (Butler, 1935b).

In 1935 Butler wrote *War is a Racket*, exposing its use to make money for the powerful. He recommended

taking the profit out of war. The only way to smash this racket is to conscript capital and industry and labour before the nation's manhood can be conscripted. [...] Let the officers and the directors and the high-powered executives of our armament factories and our steel companies and our munitions makers and our ship-builders and our airplane builders and the manufacturers of all other things that provide profit in war time as well as the bankers and the speculators, be conscripted — to get \$30 a month, the same wage as the lads in the trenches get (Butler, 1935a).

Someone might object that Butler exaggerated, or that things are different now. Admiral Gene Larocque brings us to the present, and nothing has changed except the scale, which has gotten larger:

We've always gone somewhere else to fight our wars, so we've not really learned about its horror. Seventy percent of our military budget is to fight somewhere else . . . We've institutionalized militarism . . . In 1947, we passed the National Security Act. You can't find that term—national security—in any literature before that year. It created the Department of Defense. Up till that time, when you appropriated money for the War Department, you knew it was for war and you could see it clearly. Now it's for the Department of Defense. Everybody's for defense. Otherwise you're considered unpatriotic. So there's absolutely no limit to the money you must give to it (Larocque, 1997).

#### ***“Divide et impera”—divide and conquer***

Societies only appear to be homogenous from the outside. Inside them many distinctions exist that are potential points of division. Preserving a larger framework that minimizes these potential fractures is a feature of a successful democracy. This is why democracy's domestic enemies and those whose political agenda cannot survive extensive public discussion *always* promote a sense of crisis and peril, so as to delegitimize opposition.

A key moment in the rise of the American state came during the Nixon administration when dividing the public became a matter of policy. Following advisor Pat Buchanan's advice, Richard Nixon deliberately sought to split the country, the better to exercise more power over it. The reason for this policy, as Buchanan explained, was to "cut the Democratic Party and country in half; my view is that we would have far the larger half" (Packer, 2008). By seeking to blur people's common identities as Americans while emphasizing and exaggerating existing divisions, the Nixon administration deliberately undermined the broad consensual foundation that made the U.S. constitution workable, verifying Madison's argument that factions would destroy democracies by seeking to divide the nation. The Romans had a famous phrase for this approach to acquiring and maintaining power: "*Divide et impera*"—divide and conquer.

The Nixon administration's "War on Drugs" is an example of this tactic. Years after the Nixon administration was no more, Nixon's chief domestic advisor, John Ehrlichman, told investigative reporter Dan Baum about the real motivation behind the war on drugs:

The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did (Baum, 2016).

The war on drugs led directly to the militarization of police departments, the routine use of SWAT teams for normal law enforcement, the killing of innocent people in drug raids, and the incarceration of enormous numbers of Americans for nonviolent offenses. In a six-month period, police in Pasco, Washington, with a population of less than 60,000 people, killed more people, including unarmed ones, than the police in the U.K., with 64 million citizens, killed in a year (King, 2015). Pasco is not unusual. Killings by police in America dwarf that by other police forces in the democratic world (Lartey, 2015). In addition, 20 percent of the 2.3 million people incarcerated in the United States are im-

prisoned for nonviolent drug offenses (Wagner and Rabuy, 2016). With 5 percent of the world's population, the United States now has over 20 percent of the world's prison population. From 1978 to 2014, America's prison population increased 408%, laying the groundwork for the expanding role of slavery by another name in this country (Starr, 2015).

From families to nations, every group contains forces making for cohesion and for division. In the United States, two major divisions exist, one division being the cultures of the North and the South, and the other between a rural agrarian society emphasizing hierarchies, boundaries, and relatively rigid social roles and status, and a newer, industrialized, more egalitarian urban society reflecting expanding equal relations between different racial, cultural, and religious groups (diZerega, 2013a). Buchanan and Nixon's strategy to divide required emphasizing these existing cultural distinctions between different groups of Americans while denying what we shared anything in common.

The civil rights era demonstrated that under any circumstances, these cultural divisions would make for internally stressful relationships. However, when continually emphasized, the divisions can grow to threaten society itself. The Nixon administration first made exploiting these divisions a political tool. Because this tactic served Republican electoral interests, every Republican presidential and many other campaigns since Nixon have done the same. In the process the Republican Party increasingly became dominated by the forces it originally sought to manipulate. Democracy as government by rough consensus became transformed into the rule of one part of society over another.

Dividing "real Americans" and the "silent majority" from blacks and hippies was an opening strategy to which Hispanics, Muslims, LGBTQ Americans, liberals, teachers, and even 'urban Americans' as a whole, have been added. There is always a new internal group to attack. A citizenry holding one another in deep distrust is a citizenry easily manipulated by those holding political office. Focusing on these distinctions diverts the public's attention from the ongoing military and economic unification of the economic and political spheres as the capitalist state strengthens its domination. A great many Democratic leaders facilitate this practice even if not actively seeking to exacerbate our internal divisions, for many are more beholden to Wall Street than Main Street.

In the 2016 election, for the first time in American history, a presidential candidate threatened to jail his opponent if he won, some of his advisers threatened to kill her, and he refused to say he would honor the outcome if he lost

because the elections would have been "rigged." In addition, Trump campaigned primarily as a strong leader who needn't describe his policies because he should be trusted. He has gone so far as to say "I have the right to do whatever I want as president." Such a statement is politically possible only in a deeply divided nation (Brice-Saddler, 2019). His appeal to many was linked not to what he was for but due to other Americans he attacked. No greater repudiation of the democratic ethos had ever publicly taken place in this country.

Once in office Trump has continued to undermine the legitimacy of elections, the press, and the judiciary. In addition, his policy of unrelieved lying has eroded any sense of a shared political world among the American people, attacking civil society at its core. Hannah Arendt (1951) wrote in her study of 20th century totalitarianism of the politics of the lie:

The result of a consistent and total substitution of lies for factual truth is not that the lie will now be accepted as truth and truth be defamed as a lie, but that the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world—and the category of truth versus falsehood is among the mental means to this end—is being destroyed.

Vaclav Havel made a similar point about these movements decades later:

Individuals need not believe all these mystifications, but they must behave as though they did, or they must at least tolerate them in silence, or get along well with those who work with them. For this reason, however, they must live within a lie. They need not accept the lie. It is enough for them to have accepted their life with it and in it. For by this very fact, individuals confirm the system, fulfill the system, make the system, ARE the system (Havel, 1985, p. 31).

Trump has built on a long series of actions and policies that have led in the same direction.

### The Warfare State

There was no peace dividend after the Cold War. America's military budget continued to grow even in the absence of any credible enemy. The attack on Iraq was in the name of non-existent "weapons of mass destruction" accompanied by a call for "regime change." The weapons did not exist, but

less remarked on, this reasoning was irrelevant to those using it to justify attacking Iraq. North Korea told the U.S. in 2002 that it was developing nuclear weapons in violation of its 1994 agreement, and the Bush administration did nothing. But unlike Iraq, North Korea has no oil and did not interest big corporations.

“Of course it’s about oil; we can’t really deny that,” said General John Abizaid, former head of U.S. Central Command and Military Operations in Iraq, in 2007 (Corley, 2007). Alan Greenspan, former chair of the Federal Reserve, declared that “...the Iraq war is largely about oil” (Woodward, 2007). “People say we’re not fighting for oil. Of course we are,” Chuck Hagel said in 2007. Hagel was Obama’s Secretary of Defense, and when he spoke these words, he was also a Republican Senator from Nebraska. We know now that five months *before* 9-11 the U.S. government was seriously considering attacking Iraq for its oil (Mackay, 2002). These plans had nothing to do with making the oil available. Saddam Hussein never failed to sell Iraqi oil to the West because the money it brought in was the source of his power. But this was money that did not go to capitalist corporations. There have been at least 251,000 Iraqi deaths from the American invasion of Iraq, including between 165,368 and 184,184 documented civilian deaths. Capitalism is the reason.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, former Chief of Staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, echoes Smedley Butler, objecting to “the corporate interests that we go abroad to slay monsters for.” While Americans are assured our military seeks to “defend freedom” Wilkerson emphasized our corporations cultivate close and profitable relations with some of the world’s most repressive regimes. The physical safety of the American people takes a back seat. Wilkerson asked rhetorically, “Was Bill Clinton’s expansion of NATO—after George Bush and [his Secretary of State] James Baker had assured Gorbachev and then Yeltsin that we wouldn’t go an inch further east—was this for Lockheed Martin, and Raytheon, and Boeing, and others, to increase their network of potential weapons sales?” He answered, “[y]ou bet it was,” adding that “[t]hose who deny this are just being utterly naïve, or they are complicit too” (Norton, 2016).

For those skeptical of claims by men such as Butler and Wilkerson, reflect that major American journalists such as Wolf Blitzer and Thomas Friedman agreed, but *praised* what these men condemned. In 1999, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman made the same point, except Friedman *praised* what Butler and Larocque condemned:

The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist. McDonald’s cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the US Air Force F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley’s technologies to flourish is called the US Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps (Friedman, 1999).

Thomas Friedman was not alone. While questioning Rand Paul’s opposition to major arms sales to Saudi Arabia, one of the most repressive nations on earth, another mainstream media figure, Wolf Blitzer, asked “[s]o for you this is a moral issue, . . . you know, there’s a lot of jobs at stake. Certainly if a lot of these defense contractors stop selling war planes, other sophisticated equipment to Saudi Arabia, there’s going to be a significant loss of jobs, of revenue here in the United States. That’s secondary from your stand-point?” (Horton, 2018).

Today we are in incessant conflicts for vague and even inexpressible goals. Daily we are warned of enemies that 50 years ago would have been regarded as pipsqueaks. These conflicts justify increasing surveillance domestically as well as the militarization of the police. As in the old aristocracies, one set of laws exists for the powerful, another for the people. Like a zombie compared to a human, American ‘democracy’ still retains some of its outward appearances while its inner core is being transformed. Capitalism has integrated the market and the state into a new manifestation of power and subordination that would have horrified not only America’s Founders, but any president at least through Eisenhower’s time.

Permanent war establishes a state on the corpse of democracy, and it does not matter which party is in power. The parties may still compete, but do so over issues that divert attention from their common allegiance to capitalism and the warfare state. The political appropriation of the “culture war” is an example, as is the current obsession with immigration issues to the neglect of all others. And as we are seeing, once such divisions reach a certain degree of intensity, they take on a life of their own.

At the top, those breaking laws, whether by committing war crimes or economic crimes, are immune from serious prosecution. No efforts have been made to bring men to justice for committing crimes of torture Americans once executed others for committing. Instead Donald Trump campaigned on increasing its use. As for economic crimes, much was made of JP Morgan being fined \$13 billion in 2013 for fraudulent sales of mortgages before the meltdown

that ruined so many lives. Its stock prices were unaffected. Bank of America was fined even more: \$16.65 billion, and when the fine was made public, its shares *increased* in value. Much of these fines were tax deductible and their totals, enormous as they were to human beings, was paltry compared to the size of these corporations. They are simply a cost of doing business rather than a deterrent to breaking the law. Robert Reich describes these cases and many more in his *Saving Capitalism* (Reich, 2015, pp. 74-5).

John Perkins served many years overseas as, in his words, “an economic hit man” for the financial industry in its activities. Perkins defines the job he did for years, and which continues to be done by others, thusly:

Economic hit men (EHMs) are highly paid professionals who cheat countries around the globe out of trillions of dollars. They funnel money from the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other foreign “aid” organizations into the coffers of huge corporations and the pockets of a few wealthy families who control the planet’s natural resources. Their tools include fraudulent financial reports, rigged elections, payoffs, extortion, sex, and murder. They play a game as old as empire, but one that has taken on new and terrifying dimensions during this time of globalization. I should know; I was an EHM (Perkins, 2004, p. xi).

These warnings by Alexander Hamilton, Randolph Bourne, Smedley Butler, Dwight Eisenhower, Lawrence Wilkerson, and John Perkins extend across over 200 years, and repeat the same message. The alliance of government, corporations, finance, and the military is fatal to the values on which the United States was founded and to the civil society that sustains them. James C. Scott’s comparison of the early state as a “stable protection racket” appears to be as true today for the capitalist state as it was thousands of years ago in early agricultural city states (Scott, 2017, p. 241).

## CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that the traditional identification of democracies with states is an error on the level of that equating organizational economies, such as corporations, with economies in the more all-inclusive sense. States are organizations and democracies are in almost every case spontaneous orders. They only resemble states in those periods of crisis where a national emergency creates a temporary unity of will that departs when the crisis is resolved.

Organizations in democracies, like organizations in any spontaneous order, stand in a complex relation to them because the very coordination and discovery processes that can bring an organization to success can also destroy it if it fails to adapt to changes it cannot control. Consequently, organizations in spontaneous orders, if they can, will sometimes seek to exert greater control over them, reducing uncertainty.

In the case of democracies this tension exists at two dimensions. First, political parties will often seek to change electoral rules to weaken opponents and strengthen themselves. Second, organizations seeking political aid to strengthen them within their own spontaneous orders will seek political allies to change the rules in their favor. The most important such organizations are the corporations that characterize capitalism.

When parties and corporations are in close alliance, as is the case in the United States today, the sphere of free political activity is gradually diminished, with the potential, and at this point more than potential, creation of an oligarchic state seeking to bring the rest of the democratic process under its control.

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## Student Essay Competition Winner

# Henry Adams' Philosophy of History: The Study of Force, Motion, and Modernity

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**Abstract:** The American thinker, Henry Adams, is a writer and historian whose thought has contributed to studies in modernity. I discuss Adams' scientific philosophy of history as it was recorded in his work, "A Letter to American Teachers of History" (1910), which proposed to render the field practical for education by aligning it with the scientific developments of his age. I also analyze what Adams considered to be the problem of modernity, outlined in his two major works, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* (1904) and *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907): The contrast between an age of "unity," understood through the Christian philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century; and an age of "multiplicity," best displayed by the contrasting scientific theories of physics and biology in the twentieth century. I analyze how Adams reinterpreted the field of history to mimic the thirteenth century's unified worldview and how he demonstrated the social and political problems that could arise from a science-based worldview.

**Keywords:** Henry Adams, Modernity, philosophy of history, Historiography, Darwinism, Virgin Mary, Positivism, Thomas Aquinas

"I see motion," said Thomas:—"I infer a motor!" This reasoning, which may be fifty thousand years old, is as strong as ever it was; stronger than some more modern inferences of science; but the average mechanic stated it differently. "I see motion...I infer energy...everywhere." Saint Thomas barred this door to materialism by adding:—"I see motion; I cannot infer an infinite series of motors: I can only infer somewhere at the end of the series, an intelligent, fixed motor"...We can conduct our works...on any other theory...but, if you offer it as proof, we can only say that we have not yet reduced all motion to one source or all energies to one law, much less to one act of creation, although we have tried our best"

—Henry Adams (1983, p. 667)

The meaning of the epigraph above, Henry Adams' critique of modernity, will become clear by the conclusion of this paper. In this excerpt, he narrates Saint Thomas Aquinas' justification for the existence of God—the primary cause theory of the unmoved mover—as it was upheld by Aristotle in his *Physics* and *Metaphysics*.<sup>1</sup> When Adams wrote

this statement in 1904 he was already convinced that the "ancient reasoning" in Catholic theology was stronger than the "modern inferences of science." From this conviction stemmed the rest of Adams' writings on history: *Something* about ancient reasoning could not be replicated by the positivist proofs of his time. He dedicated the rest of his life to understanding that something—and how to replace it—in the twentieth century. To do so, he needed to go back in time to understand the key elements of ancient reasoning rooted in that foreign concept for the modern man: Faith. This essay will be concerned with Adams' theory of history that proposed to render the field scientific and practical so as to mimic the appeal of ancient reasoning; that is, a unified worldview that sprung from "one source."

Adams' awareness of the intellectual, artistic, and spiritual shifts of his time has made him an influential writer on the topic we know today as modernity. An under-appreciated thinker, Henry Adams has been allotted a spot in literature courses more than in philosophy or history. In the introduction to his book, *Henry Adams and the Making of America*, for example, author Gary Wills explains that contemporary use of Adams ignores the profundity of

his thought. Adams' most famous book, *The Education of Henry Adams*, Wills argues, "has become a wholly owned subsidiary of English departments, while he is neglected in history departments" (Wills 2005, p. 6). With so much literary popularity, one could be forgiven for thinking that Adams' renown should be for his historical and philosophical insight. His academic training was as a historian, after all. He completed the nine-volume series, *History of the United States During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison* (1889). This time-consuming task, according to Wills, made Adams into a formidable historian; one who trained a new generation of academics at Harvard, no less. The problem with reading Adams' *Education* through a literary lens, without fully understanding his essential philosophical and historical insights, is that one might "dwell on its stylistic ironies and eschatological fallacies" too much and miss the most important elements of his writings (*ibid.*). Several of these indispensable elements—Adams' thoughts on historiography, Christianity, science, and politics—need to be discussed because they all bear significance for his theory of history.

As this paper treats the subject of philosophy (or theory) of history, it serves to define the term at the beginning. A philosophy of history attempts to posit an underlying sequence of historical development. In a philosophy of history the thinker may derive his view from philosophical premises but he looks for historical evidence to corroborate his theories instead of metaphysical and abstract principles. Adams' studies led him to assume that natural history was governed by the same laws as human history (Kariel 1956, p. 1078). His historical development is synonymous with human development. Adams believed it was the historian's duty to concern himself with the leading theories of the day and apply them to his own observations. From this belief, he was able to use advancing theories in the physical sciences to analyze the "intensity and potency of the forces composing the respective equilibriums" in society by taking into account "the intensity of force, assigning values to it" and engaging in comparative analysis to "possibly make predictions" (Kariel 1956, p. 1079). It is helpful to bear in mind that Adams' theory of history is replete with mechanical terms, which he devised to integrate the field of history with the scientific revolution of his time. Adams developed, through his studies and travels, a nuanced way of looking at the world that measured everything by its "force" and "motion" (the meaning of these terms will later be explained). Adams' idiosyncratic use of words like "force," "motion," and "motor" are paramount in order to understand the the-

ory of history that he presented in his work, "A Letter to American Teachers of History" (1910). But apart from these mechanical terms, it is also important to note that Adams perceived the world with an artistic sensibility as much as a rational mind. His two books, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* (1904) and *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907) are the strongest testaments to Adams' multifaceted approach to history. The former is a travel memoir that recounts his time in Europe, while the latter is his autobiography. These descriptions of his works, however, are as general as they are cursory. Taken together, the various elements discussed in the books outline Adams' initial attempts to define his philosophy of history before he dedicated his Letter to that sole task. In these first two books, Adams used the mechanical language that was typically reserved for writings about physics to discuss artistic elements such as medieval iconography and architecture. He intentionally described the artistic and intellectual world of the thirteenth century in mechanistic terms to convey its significance to modern readers who would not connect to his message through mere emotional appeals. Adams' amalgamation of sensibility and rationalism is indicative of the two contrasting elements that fascinated him throughout his life: The medieval worldview of the thirteenth century and the scientific worldview of the twentieth century. Both worldviews provided Adams with two fundamentally different theories about human development since they produced two fundamentally different interpretations of history. Henry Cabot Lodge, a senator, historian, and, in his college days, Adams' student, wrote a telling preface to Adams' autobiography, reminding readers to consider the full titles of each of Adams' books (Adams 1918, pp. vii-viii). The extended titles read *Mont Saint Michel & Chartres: A Study of 13th Century Unity* and *The Education of Henry Adams: A Study of 20th Century Multi-plicity*. It is with the additional clauses to both of these titles that this paper is concerned insofar as they convey two central themes in Adams' thought on historical development and on modernity: Thirteenth-century "unity" and twentieth-century "multiplicity."

But why did he need a theory of history in the first place? Adams understood history as the discipline through which men could understand their place in the world. Civilizations need histories to understand themselves. Between unity and multiplicity, Adams believed, unity was always the better way to sustain a civilization, and a big part of sustaining a unified civilization, in turn, required education in history. History, after all, is the way in which we explain our existence to ourselves through analysis of the past. It

is the collection of stories we tell ourselves about who we are and the actions we have taken to preserve, or change, such narratives. But Adams believed that there was a fundamental problem with history education during his time that had left him unprepared and unable to understand the century into which he was born. He encountered a vastly different world when he studied the thirteenth century, and he could not understand what had brought about an age of multiplicity. He wanted to reconcile the two distinct narratives of these times—faith and science—so, Adams sought to adapt the field of history to fit the new positivist methods that were becoming the standard for truth. If history could become a science of sorts, it would be able to definitively explain the shift from unity to multiplicity and, hence, the course of human development. Before expanding Adams' theory of history, it will help to first elaborate on his criticism of the field of history.

### I. HISTORY'S PROBLEM, SCIENCE'S ALTERNATIVE, ADAMS' ANSWER

Adams worked in historical circles during a time when the field of historiography was gaining consciousness. History was becoming more evidence-based; even Adams himself implemented an empirical method of historical research when he studied an impressive number of archives to write his *History of the United States*, something novel for the field during this time (Wills 2005, p. 33). Adams was friendly and even related to most of the prominent American historians from New England, all of whom were excited about the new possibilities for their discipline that could come from the influence of the scientific revolution (Wills 2005, pp. 33-34). Perhaps, they thought, the historian could rise to the ranks of the scientist who discovers laws about nature: He would discover laws about mankind.

History for the modern historian was an entirely new discipline. Across the pond in England, Lord Acton hailed “a generation of writers who dug so deep between history as known to our grandfathers and as it appears to us” (Wills 2005, p. 34). The nineteenth century, after all, had centuries of intellectual work on its hands from which the modern-day historian could deduce ideas about the genealogies of human development. History, thus, started to become more “scientific” in its research methodology, distinct from the philosophical or conjectural history of the previous centuries that was based on “authority, myth, and forgeries” (*ibid.*). Just as Renaissance scholars, “with their sophisticated philological tools” (*ibid.*) had been able to unmask

the forgeries of the past, followed by Enlightenment scholars who had tirelessly worked to debunk myths, the modern historian could take his place in this intellectual timeline by placing the last nail on the coffin, interring authority for good.

Adams respected the premises of positivist research, for he felt that history as an academic subject in the twentieth century was pointless. The discipline had eschewed any theory that could provide a coherent narrative of human existence because it had succumbed to relativism. For that reason, some scholars are quick to place Adams on the list of historians who welcomed a historical field devoid of emotion, literature, and reflection.<sup>2</sup> They assume that Adams, too, viewed myth and authority as logically erred and intellectually oppressive. He wrote an essay, after all, which, at a surface level, seems to be advocating to turn history into a branch of empirical science because it was bending uncomfortably towards subjectivity. In his Letter, Adams wrote that the academic aversion to philosophies of history such as those crafted by Hegel, Compte, and Marx, solidified the fact that history could never be a science because of their varied and contrasting theories, which weakened history's social applicability against theories of human development like those presented by Charles Darwin and William Thomson (Adams 1910, p. 14). Adams posited that scientists won the world over at the turn of the twentieth century because they had to “consent to test their result by the facts of experience,” while the same could not “fairly be asked of historians” (Adams 1910, pp. v-vi). Instead, historians only accumulated multiple events in the form of “inert facts,” without asserting what parts “turned out to be useful, and what not” (Adams 1918, p. ix; p. 379).

It can certainly be said that Adams believed that history education needed to be useful, but in a very different sense of “use” than we might initially conceive from his writings. Adams rejected the notion of history as the collection of knowledge for knowledge's sake. His goal with *The Education*, which became clear after exploring the concept of unity in *Mont Saint Michel*, was to unify the scattered form of history that he was taught during his life and model it after the clarity of the scientific method. This does not mean, however, that Adams viewed science as the ultimate solution. Adams' scientific theory of history, moreover, shows signs of having a double intention. In one sense, it manages to criticize the subjective and relativistic turn which history was taking. But in another sense, he is demonstrating that the alternative (science) is insufficient. Adams “seized upon the Second Law [of thermodynamics]” in order to “expose

the fallacy of the determinism and materialism which dominated the nineteenth century and which Adams had captured in his powerful image of the Dynamo" (Burich 1987, p. 479).

Adams' answer to history's problem and science's alternative, therefore, was his "dynamic theory of history" as he first introduced it in the 33rd chapter of *The Education*. Because Adams' concern with forming a philosophy of history was closely tied with his desire to create a unified system of knowledge with which to educate men, the stability of this system rested on his ability to find a common denominator to history that could be traced, measured, and studied during various moments in time. Adams wanted to find the necessary sequence of human movement—that is, the element (or elements) that inspire men to develop—by studying this sequence within pivotal moments in history that produced "motion" in society. Motion, as Adams defined it, could be described as any physical production in man motivated by an overarching worldview: Art, architecture, music, vehicles, technology, and medicine, for example, are all the physical productions of human motion, indicative of a worldview that reveals how we perceive society and our role within it (Adams 1918, p. 382).

How much motion existed during a period of time depended on the strength of the worldview. "Force" was the measurable term that Adams used to describe the strength of that which generated motion. Adams rooted his theory of history in force because it could be measured by motion. Force, moreover, proved the existence of a "motor," that which generates motion. The order, then, is as follows: A motor generates motion; the amount of motion indicates the force of that motor. By understanding force as the measure of a motor, and motion as the demonstrable output of man's intellectual and physical production, Adams posited that one could use history to study force at various points in time, thus rooting the field in evidence. These new, more measurable elements of motion and force were preferable over the "chaos" of mere thought and the "artificiality" of time that were found in abstract philosophies of history (*ibid.*).

So far so good. Adams' critique of the field of history led him to seek an alternate research methodology for the field rooted in science, namely the mechanical sciences that measure output in force and motion. We should consider him, then, an advocate of the scientific worldview. Interestingly enough, this is not the way we read Adams, since *Mont Saint Michel* and *The Education* provide excerpts, like our epigraph, that seem so clearly against positiv-

ism. Even scholars sympathetic to his interest with science criticize his theory of history as an "irrational" obsession with finding an "inclusive, indeterminate, absolutist, and simple scheme for history..." (Jordy 1952, p. 218). Relativism and subjectivity were bad in Adams' mind, surely, but was science the logical alternative? If it is not, why did Adams write a theory of history that wants to uphold the scientific method? For one, Adams knew that science's ability to convince through proof was pressuring other fields into submission, and the humanities could either join in or be left behind. His colleagues, too, were distancing themselves from a field of history that originated from literature—that is, from myth—to perpetuate false stories about mankind. He knew that science was the dogma of the century: That which did not uphold scientific facts would become merely decorative, obsolete. In "A Letter to American Teachers of History", Adams is doing something much more astute than we initially perceive. He presents a scientific theory of history, using to his advantage the intellectual step that society was taking towards a scientific worldview, to demonstrate the problems that come from reducing everything down to a science, while also explaining history through a scientific theory to appeal to his educated audience.

History education in the nineteenth century had a problem because its departure from a unified worldview to one dominated by positivism had left it vulnerable, without facts to assert its alleged myths and forgeries about human development. Science had provided an alternative—an ultimatum, really: fact or fiction. Adams realized that even if science had persuaded most intellectuals in the nineteenth century, arguably himself, there had to be a trade-off to the previous narrative of history. A society without faith, myth, or authority had to lose *something* in exchange. In several parts of his Letter, Adams mentions the problems that came from the dominant worldview of his time: "Granting that the intended effect of intellectual education is,—as Bacon, Descartes and Kant began by insisting,—a habit of doubt," meant that "it is only in a very secondary sense a habit of timidity or despair" (Adams 1910, p. 81). Intellectual education inculcated the habit of doubting; it also inculcated something much more serious: Doubt, championed by the founders of modern philosophy, opens us up to timidity or despair. Timidity, for Adams, does not mean shyness as we use it in our common language, but rather a lack of courage or confidence to believe in something and to assert anything. It is the privation of faith. What then, is the point of historical education—a form of intellectual education—if it only teaches such dismay?

This question is the true problem that Adams raises in *The Education of Henry Adams* and “A Letter to American Teachers of History”: What is the use of historical education? For this question, he needed to develop a theory of history. Adams’ response to this problem, which will be explored in depth, is that history cannot teach such dismay whether it be true or not because of the visible effects it will have on society. Adams’ theory of history is scientific in its description and terminology; in reality, it demonstrates the need for rescuing a form of faith, even if not whole. He began exploring this theory in his first book.

## II. MONT SAINT MICHEL AND CHARTRES: THE ORIGIN OF ADAMS’ CONCEPT OF FORCE

The earlier traces of what would later become Adams’ study of force within his philosophy of history were first visible in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*. Adams’s understanding of force was adapted from the traditional definition in physics as something which causes a change in motion in an object and he applied it to collective human action and thought. Adams defined force as “anything that does, or helps to do work” (Adams 1918, pp. 474-475). But for a man to “do work” there needed to be something to generate both the mental disposition for work and the physical execution of that work, so when Adams stated that force “does” or “helps” the process of work, he included the need for an external force that acted upon man. This point echoes the opening epigraph of this paper, where Adams discussed the concept of a motor. Adams’ themes of unity and multiplicity became the categories that explained why Christianity in the thirteenth century, as St. Thomas explained it, was a stronger motor (had a greater force) than science in the twentieth century.

To Adams, the most complete example of a motor throughout history had been Christianity. Christianity offered a shared belief in an ideal that was capable of generating a unified force by converging all facets of human life from the “social and the intellectual” to the “secular and religious” (Hochfield 1962, pp. 104-106). In *Mont Saint Michel*, Adams identified three main generators of motion: The Archangel Michael, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Thomas Aquinas. All three symbols represented one worldview but manifested it through different mediums. Adams’ proof for Christianity’s force was the architecture of cathedrals in France and the vast amount of artwork that featured Mary and the Archangel Michael; his intellectual proof was me-

dieval Scholasticism, exemplified by the theology of Saint Thomas. Christianity was such a strong force that it generated motion through a physical manifestation, with beauty as a direct outcome of its unified culture. Adams called the visible world of the thirteenth century a “work of art” that expressed unity through the culture it produced (Hochfield 1962, pp. 101-102). Christian art went above intellect towards a much more powerful element—emotion—that was capable of captivating an entire civilization for hundreds of generations. The iconography of the time became a motor that rendered Christianity universal through the emotion it produced in society, compelling people to continue expressing its story. Art *moves* us, so the expression goes.

Adams viewed the thirteenth century as a better example of force and unity in human action and production for two reasons. On an aesthetic level, the unity of its worldview produced uniformity in music, art, architecture, and philosophy, as various mediums of expression fell into place with each other despite having their own creative differences. On a metaphysical level, unity was intrinsically appealing to mankind and it was closer to his human nature. According to Adams, the idea of unity was one that “survives the idea of God or of Universe” because it is “innate and intuitive”; “thought floats much more easily towards than against it...” (Adams 1910, p. 82). Thirteenth-century Christian culture conveyed this unity.

But it was not only in art and faith that Christianity unified an entire culture. Adams wrote in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* that “the great Cathedrals of the middle-ages” and “a shrine, such as Lourdes” turned itself into a market and created valuable industries (Adams 1983, p. 439). Cathedrals were more than architectural marvels for Adams: While they displayed through their design the spiritual understanding of the world at the time, they also had a material impact that helped to generate an entrepreneurial civilization that dominated commerce for centuries. Through his economic analysis of the lure of medieval art, Adams arrived at the image of the Virgin and deemed her the strongest generator of force within Christianity. Adams cites the six volumes of the *Dictionnaire du Mobilier Français*, published in 1873, to explain the extent to which the Virgin generated an industry in art, arguing that “the whole world of the Virgin’s art...made a market such as artists never knew before or since” (Adams 1983, p. 440).

It was the coalescence of economic, artistic, intellectual, philosophical, architectural, and theological factors visible in the thirteenth century that made Adams consider thirteenth-century Christianity the most palpable example of

unity in Western history.<sup>3</sup> As this worldview diverged in multiple, irreconcilable paths in the twentieth century, Adams sought to explain the shift through his theory of history, first introduced in his autobiography.

### III. THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS AND HIS "DYNAMIC THEORY OF HISTORY"

With Adams' understanding of force and motion explained, the next step is to analyze what Adams understood to be his role as a historian living in modernity. He explained this best in his autobiography when he wrote that the historian's job was to "undertake to arrange sequences—called stories, or histories—assuming in silence a relation of cause and effect" (Adams 1918, p. 382). In seeking a necessary sequence of human motion during his time, Adams needed, then, the twentieth-century reincarnation of the motor he had observed in the thirteenth century. Christianity as it was felt in the thirteenth century—as it had moved people—was gone and lost, so Adams was constantly searching for signs of motors in his generation. He found them, though not as whole, in Darwin's scientific theories and William Thomson's laws of thermodynamics.

*The Education* features several chapters where Adams describes the signs of the radical shift that occurred in society, a large part of which were the mechanical inventions displayed in the Gallery of Machines at the Great Exposition of 1900. In his famous metaphor, history's neck had been broken by this inconceivably rapid advancement (*ibid.*). Adams' brace for history became what he called a "dynamic theory of history," which adopted the principles of physiochemical processes in a form of historical research methodology that studied man's self-proclaimed progress, his dynamism.

Because Adams believed that history should play an active role in society as a field of study through which people obtained practical knowledge of the world, he set out to re-explain history as a field that unified physiochemical principles with the elements of force and motion that he first observed in the thirteenth century. The thirteenth century, as Adams first saw it in *Mont Saint Michel*, became the "fixed element of the equation" for Adams' philosophy of history, as the point of comparison for later centuries (Hochfield 1962, p.101). The physical phenomenon of force, moreover, allowed him to turn history into a quantifiable science that would measure motors through their output of human thought, action, and production during any given period. Force, then, was a form of "occult attraction" that

manifested itself in different ways, either through "love of God" prior to 1500, or through a *vis a tergo* in mechanics that emerged after Christianity (Adams 1918, p. 427).

Adams wanted to converge human action throughout the ages with physiochemical laws because he believed that the modern historian's predicament was his inability to reduce the "energy with which history had to deal" into a "mechanical or physiochemical process," as he later admitted in his Letter (Adams 1910, p. 12). Otherwise ignoring this important task would mean trouble for the historian, for he would either have to deny that "social energy" was a form of physical energy or assert that it was an energy that operated independent of physical laws, deeming itself impervious to the so-called universal laws of physics, and thus discredit itself from serious academic inquiry (Adams 1910, pp. 11-12). Admitting that social energy was not a form of physical energy ceded to science the intellectual limits of history because the historian revealed himself as a meagre observer of human action, incapable of applying his observations to anything of practical use. Adams' Letter took his dynamic theory of history and turned it into something applicable and relevant for academic inquiry.

### IV. ADAMS' "LETTER," A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY TO EXPLAIN MODERNITY

Adams affirmed that a theory of human development needed to account for man's intellectual shifts. Only a comprehensive theory that explained history's trajectory could achieve this task. Physics was the new motor that replaced Christianity in the twentieth century; the Dynamo had replaced the Virgin, but the implications of this shift still needed to be weeded out. The theological scheme of the universe that existed in the thirteenth century had now been succeeded by a mechanical theory of the universe that dominated the twentieth century as "scientific dogma" (Adams 1910, p. 1). Accordingly, in "A Letter to American Teachers of History", Adams presented the laws of thermodynamics as a potential explanation for the consequences that would arise from this new worldview. The first law, the conservation of energy, and the second law, the dissipation of energy, were two laws that explained humanity and its development over the ages. As per the premise in the Law of the Conservation of Energy, since nothing can be added to or removed from nature, man needed to "shift the constituents of the never-varying total," and "out of one of them form another" (Adams 1910, pp. 8-10). Thirteenth-century God was an old constituent of that "never-varying total," who,

under Adams' theory of history, could now be understood as a historical example of mechanical "force" or "energy."

Historicizing the intellectual development of force would build a bridge between the past and the present. Adams' philosophy of history could explain the motors that generated motion in societies of previous generations in a measurable way, proving that they were still following the laws of thermodynamics before man put a name to them. The physical phenomenon of force, as it followed the Second Law of Dissipation of Energy, demonstrated to Adams the social and intellectual shifts that took place over the years. He revealed his philosophy of history to be the study of force and motion through the following analogy:

Few things are more difficult than to judge how far a society is looking one way and working in another, for the points are shifting and the rate of speed is uncertain. The acceleration of movement seems rapid, but the inertia, or resistance to deflection, may increase with the rapidity, so that society might pass through phase after phase of speed, like a comet, without noting deflection in its thought. (Adams 1910, pp. 30-31)

The excerpt above demonstrates how Adams described the law of entropy for human development. To place his philosophy of history within a scientific framework, Adams is careful to make the point that force should not be confused with forward motion: Although society might believe that it is progressing in one direction, this motion might be slower than it can sense—the "rate of speed is uncertain." Just as acceleration of movement might appear rapid to us, the laws of physics can also exchange that motion in another, opposite force, resulting in "inertia." Society, in other words, could be at an intellectual and developmental standstill, compared to its previous centuries, without even noticing it because the laws of motion and thermodynamics make it so. The faster we try to move, the more we increase the rapidity; the likelier we are to pass through phases of speed without noting a "deflection" in our collective thought.

Adams called inertia "the law of the mind as well as of matter" and considered it "a form of instinct" that explained human history (Adams 1910, pp. 31-32). It is a form of "resistance to deflection" that increases with speed: The faster we move, the less able we are to diverge from our course, but that also means that all other forms of deflection—intellectual or spiritual, for example—may pass by unnoticed until it is too late. We are highly susceptible, in a modern, scientific society that only focuses on "progress," to becom-

ing obtuse to any deflection of thought as we pass from one phase of development to another: We might feel that we are moving forward, but, by necessity, something else needs to be moving against us.

We think in terms of motion, which is why history is often described in directional terms as being either "progressive" or "stagnant" (ibid.). But Adams warned his readers that inertia is a physical law that is constant (Adams 1910, p. v). It is more dangerous, then, to try to move faster against inertia (against the established course of motion) than to try to alter it subtly. In his Letter, he wrote "For myself, the preference for movement of inertia is decided. The risk of error in changing a long-established course seems always greater to me than the chance of correction..." (ibid.). This was modernity's problem: The rate of speed at which it was trying to implement change. Adams warned that our modern society was so preoccupied with progress, that it did not notice the deflection in worldviews that came about as a result of scientific advancement (this is another iteration of his "broken neck" observation of history).

The problem for Adams was that society had been told to accept these modern forms of worldviews (Darwinism, Positivism) without taking the time to look back at what had come before them. We simply "abandoned" one form of world view for another when we were told to do so—a dangerous form of complacence, and an early trace of the timidity that would become our habit. Adams provided a "simpler" figure for this claim in his Letter:

If a simpler figure is needed, society may be likened to an island surrounded by a rising ocean which silently floods its defenses. One after another, the defenses have been abandoned, and society climbed to higher ground supposed to be out of danger. So the classic gods were abandoned for monotheism, and scholastic philosophy was dropped in favor of the Newtonian; but the classic Gods and the scholastic philosophy were always popular. And the newer philosophies won their victories by developing compulsory force. (Adams 1910, pp. 30-31)

Adams described society as being on an island surrounded by a rising ocean that is flooding our defences "silently," that is, without us noticing. In this analogy, we must determine what the rising ocean is, and what our defences are. Adams writes that society has gradually abandoned its defences, which parallels his previous statement about our "deflections in knowing." Our defences are our forms of

knowing: Our worldviews, philosophies, or gods. We abandoned the classic gods for monotheism and scholastic philosophy for Newtonian philosophy. Interestingly enough, the classic gods and scholastic philosophy we left behind endured the swell; so, the defences that we left down below were not so weak after all. History, then, is not a ladder leading towards better defences.

Perhaps we are now on higher ground, “supposed to be out of danger,” Adams notes, but we are by no means safer from whatever the rising ocean may be. The rising ocean, then, might be Adams’ renewed metaphor for that age-old antagonist in our history, the ripened fruit that tempted even the first man: Knowledge. Our pride and desire to be like God necessitates all-encompassing knowledge. But the forms of knowing that we developed throughout history (our defences) are not the same as the knowledge promised to Eve in Genesis 3: One helps us know and accept our limitations, the other to deny them in a self-destructive form. In the latter, it is only the illusion of knowledge that we seem to find. Adams writes that, for whatever reason, we have been unable to fully overcome the lasting popularity of classic gods and scholastic philosophy. Maybe there was something to those ancient defences, whose forces lie in philosophy, literature, art, and “ancient reasoning,” that better taught us to interpret the world, not know it. Science is convincing, but it is not moving.

These anecdotes from Adams’ Letter reveal an element lying beneath all the mentions of force and motion. They hint at Adams’ conception of modernity. Beyond the study of force and motion, his philosophy of history is also the study of modernity understood as the moment in time when the search of knowledge transitioned from being noble to being proud. The problem that Adams saw in modernity was that it was a moment of multiplicity that ripped the social fabric of had been meticulously weaved through generations, arrogantly claiming that everything that came before it was a lie. As Adams stated, it was preferable to form, through history, a long-established course of “knowing” that changed subtly (inertia), than to change knowledge dramatically. The paradox of Adams’ time, so he believed, was that society was heading nowhere despite thinking that it was progressing in an upwards direction. He phrased this concept in his Letter as “immutability in the midst of change” to recognize that, even if there isn’t any “final gain nor loss” in human action at times, the law of energy dissipation still holds (Adams 1910, pp. 8-10). For him, man’s self-defeating search for all-encompassing knowledge was proof of the physiochemical law of entropy.

But the way that Adams interpreted man’s quest for knowledge as the proof for the law of entropy was different than how society’s scientists understood their mission. Since they believed they were progressing in a forward motion aimed towards boundless improvement, they began to have an influence in society that Adams deemed dangerous. A particular point of disruption came with the rise of Darwinism in the nineteenth century. As a result, Adams dedicated a great portion of *The Education of Henry Adams* and “A Letter to American Teachers” to discuss the problematic philosophical and social implications of Darwinism.

## V. THE PROBLEM OF DARWINISM

Darwinism, characterized by an emphasis on the theory of evolution, represented a pivotal moment for Adams because it was an intellectual movement that destabilized the unity of scientific knowledge in the nineteenth century. In *The Education*, Adams titled the years 1867-1868 “Darwinism,” and argued that the emergence of various new scientific laws based on evolution imposed a blind faith that man “had to take on trust” that became the modern equivalent of medieval Christianity (Adams 1918, p. 224). Adams believed that Darwin’s discoveries problematized the laws of thermodynamics because the law of evolution claimed that vital energy could be added and raised indefinitely in potential, denying what physicists claimed that the law of entropy applied to all vital processes even more rigidly than to mechanical processes (Adams 1910, p. 25). This teleological division between the biological and the physical sciences left historians with a choice to make between the two, and most were taking the progressive view of human development.

Adams noticed this contradiction between two scientific worldviews: One tending towards evolution and perfectibility and the other towards dissipation and decay. Adams favoured the latter narrative because it was closer to his personal view of history, but he also recognized that the concept of evolution won people over during his time and dictated modern culture for the years to come. Evolutionists, however, were unable to reconcile their concept of human perfectibility with the law of dissipation, so Adams viewed Darwin’s influence as something that disrupted the unified theory of force and motion that he had found in physical laws. He described evolutionists as “battalions... like an army, the energies of government, society, democracy, socialism, nearly all literature and art, as well as hope

and whatever was left of instinct, all striving to illustrate not the descent but the ascent of man" (Adams 1910, p. 29).

To prove that he was not the only one who saw this incongruity between physics and biology, in his Letter, Adams included the opinion of geophysicist, Bernard Brunhes, to explain the problem of Darwinism. Brunhes wrote that physical science presented a world that was "unceasingly wearing itself out," and any philosophy that used biology as support for its worldview needed to adopt a progressive view of society as "steadily improving," accepting that "physiological life goes on always growing perfect to the point of reaching full consciousness of itself in man" (Adams 1910, p. 195). Darwinism proved Adams' point about modernity being incapable of reproducing the unity of the "fixed motor" of Christianity that society had left behind in the thirteenth century because it promoted another scientific theory that produced its own cult following. Darwinism, then, was just another feature of twentieth-century multiplicity that, in its quest for knowledge, failed to provide man with a meaning of his existence. From this conclusion it serves to treat Adams' conception of unity to explain why it is preferable to multiplicity.

## VI. UNITY AS A MOMENT IN HISTORY

Adams identified unity and uniformity as "the whole motive of philosophy" that inspired thinkers through the ages (Adams 1918, p. 226). He began his foray into studies of modernity with the thirteenth century because he considered it the point in time "when man held the highest idea of himself as a unity in a unified universe" (Adams 1918, pp. 434-435). Although Adams adapted his philosophy of history to the laws of energy of his time, he admitted, nonetheless, that scientific worldviews could never live up to the theological unity that had been visible in the thirteenth century because they would always conflict with each other as to who had the right answer based on their evidence. Now that the discords of twentieth-century scientific theories had become evident, they left Adams with the conclusion that modernity was an irreparable sequence of multiplicity.

But history, Adams wrote, "had no use for multiplicity; it needed unity; it could study only motion, direction, attraction, relation. Everything must be made to move together" (Adams 1918, p. 377). Disillusioned in his hope that science would be the new force that would replace Christianity, what was left for Adams was to present his findings to his audience. In a chapter of *The Education*, titled, "The Abyss of Ignorance," Adams expressed a similar sentiment

to what he wrote in his Letter regarding the inevitable timidity and despair of his time, worth quoting in full:

Rid of man and his mind, the universe of Thomas Aquinas seemed rather more scientific than that of Haeckel or Ernst Mach. Contradiction for contradiction, Attraction for attraction, Energy for energy, St. Thomas's idea of God had merits. Modern science offered not a vestige of proof, or a theory of connection between its forces, or any scheme of reconciliation between thought and mechanics; while St. Thomas at least linked together the joints of his machine. As far as a superficial student could follow, the thirteenth century supposed mind to be a mode of force directly derived from the intelligent prime motor, and the cause of all form and sequence in the universe—therefore the only proof of unity. Without thought in the unit, there could be no unity; without unity no orderly sequence or ordered society. Thought alone was Form. Mind and Unity flourished or perished together. (Adams 1918, pp. 428-430)

The problem with the multiplicity of science was its lack of a central point of convergence—of a Deity. Indeed, he wrote that "the old habit of centralising strain at one point" for the sake of society had disappeared; modern attempts at unity were only creating greater "complexity" and "friction" (Adams 1918, p. 398).

His conclusion that mankind will never again find the unity that society in the thirteenth century found in Christianity might seem cynical, even exaggerated. But it should be mentioned that Adams himself was hardly religious.<sup>4</sup> Still, despite his rather temperate and detached analysis of religion, Adams' works have been criticized as "a revelation of values in historical garb," nothing more than nostalgic, existential, and romantic reflections from a man seeking "compensation" for his time (Hochfield 1962, p. 114). Less critically, he has been called the "helpless child of historical circumstance rather than a willful pessimist" (Nicols 1935, p. 168). Scholars argue that the law of entropy was attractive to Adams because he would never amount to the most illustrious members of his distinguished family, his grandfather and great-grandfather, who had been presidents of the United States, and even his father, a renowned minister to Great Britain: Adams, in the fourth generation, "was never to have the satisfaction of receiving even a minor post...Here was a dissipation of energy" (*ibid.*). It is true that Adams felt a sense of pressure from the legacy of his name, even admit-

ting in a letter that he wished to be “less Adamsy” (Wills 2005, p. 11), but whether this sentiment came from resentment towards never amounting to the same celebrity as his ancestors is debatable. Adams was a private person, who would have preferred to be distant from the world in anonymity rather than immersed in it in fame. Adams’ conception of himself, of his time, of history, and of “unity” is far more nuanced than mere self-pity, and his books should not be reduced to cathartic venues through which he vented his existential anxiety.

The claim that Adams took on a maudlin attitude towards the changing of times would have been anathema to someone who dedicated his life to seeking the proper education to form himself into a man who understood history and accepted the inevitable changing of the times. It wasn’t for religious reasons that Adams upheld the unity of Christianity over the multiplicity of modernity. He saw, socially and culturally, the unintended consequences that multiplicity would have on the future ordering of society. In a culture of multiplicity that engendered hyper-individualism, relativism, and subjectivism,—combined with a mass sense of timidity and inertia—it was only a matter of time before something came along to persuade man to relinquish his autonomy to a new god. The “higher defense” of our current day: The State.

## VII. THE SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF OUR LOSS OF UNITY

In a letter to the American Historical Association, of which he was president from 1893-1894, that served as his “annual address of the president,” Adams raised the possibility of “a new Darwin” who would demonstrate “the law of the laws of historical evolution,” which would overpower the influence of “a mere theorist like Rousseau...a reasoner like Adam Smith...and a philosopher...like Darwin”(Adams, 1894). Adams curiously refers to Darwin as a philosopher, which was likely an intentional remark that contained a share of criticism of his theories of evolution. Adams refutes Darwinian evolution, moreover, on metaphysical grounds rather than scientific because he noticed from the beginning that evolutionists were rejecting abstract inquiry about existence, claiming only that natural explanations were valid in society. Of course, evolutionists themselves couldn’t help but extend their discoveries to the wider teleological implications about man and society. To that, Adams raises another point: What will be the attitude of government or of society toward any conceivable science of his-

tory? Rousseau, Smith, and Darwin were met with their fair share of “industrial and political struggles,” “revolution,” and “vehement opposition,” so Adams asked in his address to the country’s top historians, “can we imagine any science of history that would not be vastly more violent in its effects than the dissensions roused by anyone or by all three of these great men?”

The answer for Adams was clearly no. In fact, this address has been considered by some scholars as a deliberate rhetorical argument to emphasize the impossibility for a definitive, scientific theory of history because of the political problems it can cause. Science claims a universal authority that leads to a loss of autonomy, and Adams knew this fact all too well because he himself endeavored in the “dangerous game of applying the scientific method” to history—a task that, ironically, rendered him a “doyen of the historical profession” (Munford 1959, p. 79). Adams never truly believed that science could be applied to history and produce salutary results, but his students and colleagues did not understand the rhetorical element of his writings on the science of history. In turn, he sought to “redeem himself” by “playing the scientific game through to its revealing conclusion,” which was utilizing the “claims of science to universal authority” by remorselessly elaborating them to show where these claims were leading: He could apply the scientist’s own generalizations “so brutally and cynically that he could shock his readers into an awareness of what could happen and perhaps actually was happening” (Munford 1959, pp. 79-80).

Still, there is no reason to doubt that Adams’ essays are “a serious effort to convert history into science” (Munford 1959, p. 80). But science was important to Adams only to the extent that it allowed him to personally discover its shortcomings. To truly see what science was missing, Adams had to honestly believe, for some time, that it was the unifying theory of human development and all of its complexities. Adams’ studies in history and his personal encounter with the medieval art and culture of the thirteenth century proved to him that the science of the twentieth century was not as moving as he thought: Its motor could not reach the hearts of men, only their minds. From this conclusion, Adams had no valid proof to refute the ailment of his time as the “continuing enfeeblement of man’s mental powers as reflected in the deterioration of his noblest instincts—religion, law, manners, morality and art” (Burich 1987, p. 470). The affirmation of this fact explains why, when Adams attempted to subsume history under science, “all that was aesthetic and humane in his personality protested

the result" (Munford 1959, p. 80).<sup>5</sup> And so, by letting "the physicist-historians illustrate their own degradation," Adams' "Letter to American Teachers of History," "has every appearance of being a devastating indictment of those who persist in reducing man and society to units of energy to be measured and predicted by mathematical formulae" (Munford 1959, pp. 86-87).

Although Adams' understanding of scientific laws of energy was criticized when his theories were first published, later scholars commend his formulation of their socio-political implications for its prescience (Kariel 1956, p. 1074). Adams wrote pieces that were "so consistent, elaborate, and thoroughgoing—and yet so free from the burden of technical jargon—that intentions and goals unclear or concealed in modern science may be illuminated by a retracing of his search for genuine knowledge of society..." (Kariel 1956, p. 1074). It appears that Adams' use of science and his lacking use of scientific jargon, then, was intentional: It was meant to reveal the political implications of science before scientists themselves had an opportunity to infiltrate all areas of valid social knowledge.

It is an open question whether Adams himself truly believed to the end of his life that science could replace religion in framing a coherent worldview of past, present, and future. That he was aware of science's limits and inferiority to the medieval, theological worldview of the universe is clear; but then why attempt to argue for a scientific philosophy of history, instead of simply writing as an advocate for religious or cultural revival? Adams certainly preferred indirect argumentation, one that allowed the individual, be it his readers or his students, to arrive at the problems of their own conclusions. More importantly, however, is that both alternatives to Adams' theory of history—that it was an intentional attempt to restore unity through science but fell short to theology, and that it was an intentional rhetorical hoax meant to demonstrate the dangerous implications of scientific hegemony—arrive at the same conclusion: Science cannot replace or replicate Christianity and the world it created.

Adams noted the problem of his day as "the conflict between such a science," (one that wanted to force society into attaining utopic ideals) "and those who would defend their freedom" (Kariel 1956, p. 1092). The world of the twentieth century was "wholly free of imperatives, devoid of meaning, lawless in its very essence," so Adams realized that social scientists could experience "an exhilarating sense of liberation...from restrictive theory," and, thus, be "free to impute norms, standards, or values" (Kariel 1956, p. 1090).

The goal of the social empiricist, with science to back up his ideals, was "to incarnate the trans-historical theory it posits, to translate, as Marx had envisaged, abstract philosophy into concrete action, to make the real blend with the ideal" (*ibid.*).

Blending the real with the ideal defied our intellectual limitations, and Adams foresaw the political problems that could arise from this blindness. Adams' "Letter to American Teachers of History," thus, serves a more noble purpose than presenting a scientific theory of history. Adams observed that modern society had a tendency toward a "suffocating uniformity," whether it be through "socialism or corporate capitalism" (Burich 1987, p. 481). But uniformity is not unity. Adams predicted the dangerous direction that a science-based worldview—one that wanted to impose its own norms on society—was taking, and the problematic implications it would have for man's freedom. In a private letter to a colleague, he wrote that it was an appeal to the "classical historian, with his intuition of free-will and art," to persuade him to join the lists against the "socialist frame of mind which we are already floundering in" (Burich 1987, p. 481).<sup>6</sup> He included a "cryptic comment" in another note to a colleague, regarding his "Letter to American Teachers of History," saying that the true motivation behind the essay-letter, where he presented his theory of history was to indirectly ask American teachers of history "what they are going to do about socialism" (Kariel 1956, p. 1092).<sup>7</sup>

If Adams' contemporaries truly failed to understand what he was setting out to do with his theory of history—that is, to warn against the "suffocating uniformity" that was the political product of the social sciences—then the relevance of Adams' writings for our current day becomes all the more evident: What is the use of reading Henry Adams? What is the use of his theory of history? These two lingering questions will take up the final two sections of this paper.

## VIII: THE USE OF READING HENRY ADAMS

Adams' doubt about science or history's ability to explain the world came from a concern about the ambitions that this action could produce among social scientists: "Any presumption of necessity to the course of history" would only strengthen "the forces of 'collectivism' at the expense of those pockets of resistance to society; increasing demands for uniformity" (Burich 1987, pp. 481-482). To be sure, the problem of modernity and of multiplicity was for Adams a philosophical problem, perhaps even a spiritual one. It ap-

peared, however, that scientism kept inserting itself in the debate, claiming that science was indifferent to philosophy. To Adams, nothing could be further from the truth: In modernity, science sought to destroy philosophy and all forms of inquiry that were not rational by its standards; whereas before, science had a metaphysically humble role beneath philosophy. In his time, Adams was seeing the rebellion against that hierarchy in its true form, so he included his thoughts about the social and political consequences of a world dominated by science in most of his writings. During his final paragraphs in his Letter, Adams quoted an excerpt from the French sociologist Gustave Le Bon's 1895 book, *Physiologie des Foules (Psychology of Crowds)* to explain the social consequences that came from a shift from unity to multiplicity:

That which formed a people, a unity, a block, ends by becoming an agglomeration of individuals without cohesion, still held together for a time by its traditions and institutions. This is the phase when men, divided by their interests and aspirations, but no longer knowing how to govern themselves, ask to be directed in their smallest acts; and when the State exercises its absorbing influence. With the definitive loss of the old ideal, the race ends by entirely losing its soul; it becomes nothing more than a dust of isolated individuals, and returns to what it was at the start, a crowd. (Adams 1910, p. 193)

Adams saw a connection between metaphysical unity and political order in society. Once unity faded, men were nothing but scattered individuals who no longer knew how to govern themselves, and so they sought uniformity. In contrast, unity provided man with an ability to rule himself because he was governed by his overarching worldview of Christianity that granted him freedom, albeit in a different sense from the modern, liberated version of the twentieth century. As the thirteenth-century worldview came to a close, people, lost and without knowledge of what it means to live in modernity, asked to be “directed in their smallest acts.” This direction came through the form of a stronger, centralized government. Le Bon wrote that it was through this newfound freedom without cohesion that the State was able to exercise its “absorbing influence.” The end result of this new, State-controlled society is that it ends by society “entirely losing its soul.”

Adams believed that society had indeed lost its soul and that individualism and uniformity was becoming more per-

vasive in society. Uniformity had a deleterious effect on freedom because man “became increasingly dependent upon forces beyond his control” (Burich 1987, p. 479). Agreeing with Le Bon, Adams warned how something as abstract as a shift in worldview eventually crept its way into human institutions like the state, because men needed a new governing edifice on which to depend. Individuals no longer formed “a people” unified by a coherent history, but what they were before organized society: “a crowd.” Such a clear stance against collectivism and uniformity portray Adams as an opinionated and outright political writer, but this was also not the case. Adams’ studies had proven to him that it was impossible to ascertain any truths. “...He rejected the Nietzschean view that the artist-historian should impose on his material and simply fabricate his myth no less than the Hegelian one that History is permeated by Spirit moving in a determinable way” (Kariel 1956, p. 1086).

In fact, Adams’ political contribution through his historicism was that “he institutionalized no insight, translated no transcendental truth into secular reality, imposed no law of science,” distinguishing himself from historians like Marx and Engels (ibid). Intellectual humility was a weapon for this trained historian, instead of a source of discredit. Adams echoed the concerns and sentiments of other thinkers who were wary of the shift in worldview that came in the twentieth century as a result of individualism and positivism, but he reserved himself only to academic speculation about the end results. Adams’ flaw, if we should consider it one, was intellectual integrity in the form of self-admittance of failure to develop a theory of history that explained the world through science. In fact, Adams describes his “personal battle...his peculiar pains, trials, and failures” constantly in *The Education* (Kariel 1956, p. 1074). According to Adams, neither his upbringing as a wealthy patrician in Massachusetts, nor his college years as a student at Harvard, nor his later appointment as a professor of medieval history at that same university, nor his professional years as a U.S. diplomat living in London, had been enough to prepare him for the changed world of multiplicity that he encountered in the twentieth century.

In the article, “The Limits of Social Science, Henry Adams’ Quest for Order,” Henry S. Kariel argued that Adams established a scientific order to history to entertain multiple possibilities: In one sense, he made the case for irrationalism as he advocated for the “conversion of theory into action;” in another sense, he made the case for conservatism as he “supported the reduction of discords by a manipulative science of means;” and he even made the case for elit-

ism as he “permitted the practitioners of empirical science to settle the social conflicts left open to debate by the traditional methods of politics and philosophy” (*ibid.*). But Adams was unable to reconcile all of these alternatives upon discovering that the laws of nature and history were chaotic and, worse yet for the politically-minded social scientist, unknowable. Adams admitted: “Chaos was the law of nature; Order was the dream of man” (Adams 1918, p. 415). Adams’ critique of modernity and of progress came from his conclusion that “progress was the result of man’s willful disobedience of the laws of nature and society” (Burich 1987, p. 481).

Adams’ problem was that “he never kept himself from pushing his theories to conclusions,” even if those conclusions admitted error and exposed “the limits of their science” (Kariel 1956, p. 1074). But it is exactly the fact that Adams failed at connecting all the pieces of history and science that reveals the most applicable lesson from his writings. Kariel correctly pointed out in his analysis of Adams’ theory of history that the narrative of Adams as becoming severely existentialist upon his discovery of a universe without order mischaracterizes Adams:

If Adams mystically sought self-annihilation, spontaneous activism, or total quietism—if indeed he approached the mystic’s conclusive solution of a conflict which, unresolved, drives man to despair—he always stopped short of actually embracing it. It is fascinating, in fact, to watch Adams move toward the mystic’s final coordination—and to see him shrink back. (Kariel 1956, p. 1085)

Adams wrote and engaged with the issues that had plagued the history of thought for centuries, never despairing: Thus, “Adams’ life and works contradict precisely such anti-humanism” that is often misattributed to him (*ibid.*). Adams understood the importance of having belief and faith in something. If God had been forgotten, Adams could at least uphold a humanism that preserved “all expression, all discourse, fabrication, and art,” lest it be forgotten (*ibid.*). Adams, therefore, most poignantly provides an answer to the unresolved question in studies of modernity: Whether to engage or disengage with a disenchanted world.

Adams “undeniably” acted on the premise that “although the world is black, although all is pointless, one can yet want to go on, keep talking, cultivate interests, react, and take note” (Kariel 1956, pp. 1085-1086). This perseverance

in a world that promotes nihilism is what Adams described as a “failure” in his autobiography, but Kariel emphasizes placing the word in quotes because he was “successfully sustained not by his scientific conclusions, but by his artistic commitment (Kariel 1956, p. 1088). Kariel argues that Adams presented two ways to understand historical events, either as a scientist or as an artist: “Either by those who master the forces of society or those for whom every view, every conclusion, is too provincial, too specific, too narrow” (Kariel 1956, p. 1089). Adams masqueraded himself as a scientist but was persuaded by the artist, for his studies in history proved to him that art was more intuitive and more meaningful to man. He wrote in a letter,

My idea is that the world outside—the so-called modern world—can only pervert and degrade the conceptions of the primitive instinct of art and feeling, and that our only chance is to accept the limited number—the one-in-a-thousand born artists and poets—and to intensify the energy of feeling within that radiant center. (Adams to Albert Stanborough Cook, August 6, 1910)<sup>8</sup>

Adams gradually realized the importance of preserving the “primitive” instincts of art and feeling because they are closer to our nature, like unity. There is, then, a choice to be made by those who study history as a way to understand their place in the world. The paradox of what to do in a world that seems bleak is nothing new, neither for the Christian nor for the modern: “Since compromise of principle seems to be out of the question,” Adams wrote, the choice confronting modern civilization is the “same old dilemma of Saint Augustine and Descartes—the deadlock of free-will” (Adams 1910, p. 160). Adams understood the conflict of free will as a conflict in freedom: We are free to choose what is good and evil; we are free to choose our worldview; we are free to act upon that worldview. Should we choose wrong, we must live with that mistake. Adams’ thought comes full circle upon this conclusion that the modern intellectual’s problem is wrestling with the collective good and bad decisions of all the previous ages and from them trying to explain the purpose of existence. While the world outside is chaotic, he concludes, we can appease it with our internal understanding of the world.

## IX: THE USE OF ADAMS' THEORY OF HISTORY

In his preface to *The Education*, Adams explained the purpose of his book by drawing an analogy to tailoring: Much like the tailor's goal is to adapt clothes to his patron's wants, so Adams' intention was now "to fit young men with the proper garments in universities or elsewhere to be men of the world" (Adams 1918, p. ix). Adams' writings teach readers to be aware of their individual and collective roles along the trajectory of history. It is the job of the history teacher, after all, to inculcate this ability for introspection and social analysis in his students. Adams' theory of history, in other words, did not need to contain either objective truth for philosophy or testable validity for science: It needed only to successfully pass on that inherited sense of importance of the past so as to engage men and motivate them to study and understand the world and all its changes moving forward. His audience, the educated modern man, has a greater challenge living in a world of multiplicity: How to reconcile our times with the vestiges of a previous world that revealed a time of faith and unity? With a sound historical education that demonstrates the strengths of one worldview over another.

Reading his theory of history literally, the lesson that Adams had for historians was that unity could be measured through examples in time exhibiting force and motion, but this task requires more than the detached analysis of a scientist. To successfully measure a century's strength (or force), one has to absorb that century's intellectual and artistic products as Adams had while studying the world of medieval Europe. The witness must feel the objects he is seeing "as they had been felt; as convertible, reversible, interchangeable attractions on thought" (Adams 1918, p. 383). This is the methodology to Adams' theory of history: Force and motion allow us to understand an age, a worldview, an epoch, etc., but only when the historian or history-minded student immerses himself in that timeframe as if he were living in it. He cannot distance himself from the object he studies: He must love it. When we are truly able to feel something "as it had been felt," we become aware of what is good about a particular society or civilization, whether it be artistic, scientific, philosophical, or theological. The historian or student is, thus, compelled to preserve the good.

Secondary and auxiliary to Adams' theory of history is his astute refute to the socio-political implications of scientism, evolutionism, and positivism against the greater importance of philosophy. But apart from the pedagog-

ic lesson to how we must study history, there is one very normative statement in Adams' theory of history which he also poses as a solution to the problems of modernity. That the thirteenth century left so many palpable traces of force through its art was enough proof for Adams that there was something valuable about this period that went beyond its role as a mere variable in his equation of historical motion and force. Its unity was moving because it was true; it was true because it was moving. Adams wrote that the mystery of the Virgin Mary's fecundity was as strong as the dynamo's ability to create electricity from steam and coal, but the Virgin had something more: "Her fecundity was not only responsible for the underlying continuity between successive generations, it was also the wellspring of mankind's wonderful diversity and consequent resistance to order and uniformity" (Burich 1987, p. 480). She symbolized, thus, "both unity and multiplicity, order and anarchy, the basic antinomies of history; and there was no doubt in Adams' mind that her sympathies lay with man's constant rebellion against the laws of science, society, or religion" (Burich 1987, p. 480). Adams noticed that Christianity does not demand perfection: we may choose wrong at times in our search for knowledge—the apple does not fall far from the tree—but the Virgin knows this and is compassionate. Moved, Adams concluded that Christian philosophy indeed grasped the essence of existence best and assisted man with the necessary solace to live in a chaotic world.

Adams wrote that man concentrated in Mary "the whole rebellion of man against fate; the whole protest against divine law; the contempt for human law as its outcome; the whole unutterable fury of human nature beating itself against the walls of its prison house" (Adams 1983, pp. 276-277). Man, in his despair, was "suddenly seized by the hope that in the Virgin man had found a door to escape" (ibid.). And it seems that Adams believes that this sentiment has not been restricted to the thirteenth century only. He wrote that "the convulsive hold which Mary to this day maintains over human imagination was due... to her sympathy with people who suffered under law, divine or human" (ibid.).

The Christian worldview, then, is not a mere anecdote of history for Adams: It has a palpable force that goes beyond it. Adams used the Virgin Mary to push back on Francis Bacon's epistemological edifice that wanted to chain the imagination and ground it on evidence. Adams' theory of history is an effort to prove that the use of intellectual education should not come from premises of doubt because the use of intellectual education, of which history is a part, is not to "discover" anything or to find any "proof." It is meant

to develop our imagination to its most whole potential, so that we may understand freedom. Adams blamed Bacon's rejection of the imagination for "man's slavish worship of the machine," while he was convinced that Mary's compassion "had liberated man's imagination" (Burich 1987, p. 480). The quality of art, for Adams—the messages it conveys, the principles it teaches, the worldview it sustains—is more than mere expression: Its intellectual depth is a visible sign of whether a society is truly free from its self-consuming tendencies. How much society (and an individual) is able to overcome dependence on the world indicates how it uses free will; a society's politics, philosophy, and culture, in turn, demonstrate its dependence on the world. Modernity, for Adams, proved that no one was truly free. Our habits of doubt, despair, and timidity restrict our freedom to achieve and create excellence and beauty.

Adams' philosophy of history is indeed a pedagogical method to teach people the value of history by studying the moments in time that represented the greatest force and unity. These elements are displayed through the permanent things that a society creates, namely in its highest arts. His normative claim, embedded in his philosophy of history, was that Christianity in the thirteenth century achieved this goal best. Not in spite of, but because of his deliberate efforts to unify his theory of history with science, Adams came to the conclusion that the alternative to modernity is not the multiplicity of science, but the unity of the Christian worldview. Faith or not, we can discern the "goodness" of a worldview intuitively, naturally, from how its products speak to our emotions: Unity will always be more persuasive than multiplicity. In Adams' own words, "Truth, indeed, may not exist; science avers it to be only a relation; but what men took for truth stares one everywhere in the eye and begs for sympathy" (Adams 1983, p. 694).

## NOTES

1. Aristotle discusses his concept of the unmoved mover in Book 12 of the *Metaphysics*, and Book 8 of the *Physics*.
2. Cf. Comments by George Hochfield, William Jordy, Roy F. Nicols, cited in this paper.
3. Adams rarely discussed history and philosophy outside of the western canon. It is plausible that he viewed Christianity as the best example of unity in "world" history, but he never used that term and the claim would be academically dubious given his limited scholarship and commentary on non-western history and philosophy.
4. Most of *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* demonstrates Adams's perception of Catholicism, and he mentions in his autobiography, *The Education of Henry Adams*, that religion was never inculcated by his family.
5. Munford is quoting from William Jordy's book, *Henry Adams, Scientific Historian* p. 6, 219 (New Haven: 1952).
6. Burich is citing a letter to Charles Milnes Gaskell, 14 March 1910, *The Letters of Henry Adams* (1892-1918), p. 537.
7. Kariel cites Adams' letter to Waldo G. Leland, quoted in Cater, p. xcv, as well as Letters II, p. 537.
8. Excerpt from letter originally quoted in Burich's article, "Henry Adams, The Second Law of Thermodynamics, and the Course of History" (1987).

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## REVIEW

*The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt*

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“Carl Schmitt is too important to be left to the Schmitt specialists.” (612). Thus begins the chapter “Demystifying Schmitt” in *The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt*. This chapter was written by two law professors who are not Schmitt specialists: Eric A. Posner and Adrian Vermeule. Their claim could very well be taken as one of the general claims of this remarkable book because the contributors try to understand Carl Schmitt’s life and thought much more than they seek to evaluate him or his writings. In this, the contributors thread a judicious path between Schmitt’s defenders and Schmitt’s critics. The handbook contains 30 essays in five parts and while some may not seem to be as rewarding to read as others, all contribute to a fuller understanding of Schmitt as a person and as a thinker.

## PART I: INTRODUCTION

Part I which is entitled “Introduction” is not a typical one, but is an almost 70 page monograph on Carl Schmitt’s place in the history of German “greats” along with Kant, Hegel, Schiller, and Goethe. The editors of the book, Meierhenrich and Simons, note that Schmitt was “a theorist, a protagonist, and, above all, an antagonist” and they confess that he was “revered by some and reviled by others” (3). But, they remind us that Schmitt left his mark during four major periods of German history: Wilhelmine, Weimar, Nazi, and the Federal Republic periods of Germany. And he did so as a person, a political thinker, a jurist, and as a philosopher of culture.

Furthermore, Part I has a dominate theme: that of “order”, and the joint authors (Meierhenrich and Simons) argue that it is a theme that is present throughout Schmitt’s writings. Because “order” is also the focus of Meierhenrich’s own chapter, citations will be to both Chapter 1 (“Introduction”) and to Chapter 6 (“Fearing the Disorder of Things”).

Without intending to minimize Simon’s contribution to Chapter 1, for simplicity’s sake, references for both chapters will be to Meierhenrich.

The title of Chapter 1 is a quotation from the well-regarded German historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler who described Carl Schmitt as “a fanatic of order in an epoch of confusing turmoil” and indeed the Weimar period was one of continuous turmoil and perpetual crises (3, 13, 174). As such, it is readily understandable that Carl Schmitt would have been searching for a means to instill order. But, as Meierhenrich points out, Schmitt’s private life was filled with turmoil and crises: before, during, and after the Weimar period. Meierhenrich notes that Schmitt’s diaries from “between 1912 and 1934 are replete with descriptions of despair and disillusionment, of a life lacking an orderly form.” (175). And, Schmitt sought order in the form of institutions, although he disliked the term. Because “institution” was a foreign word, Schmitt coined the term “concrete-order thinking” (“konkretes Ordnungsdenken”) but Meierhenrich reminds us that it is simply Schmitt’s term for “institution.” (13, 35, 179). Meierhenrich also reminds us that like Hobbes, Schmitt believed that “man needed to be put on a leash” and he refers to his comment in *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* that man is “a cowardly rebel in need of a master”. (181). Meierhenrich discusses Schmitt’s lengthy search for the type of institution which could best introduce order. In the beginning, he thought it was the Catholic Church, followed by the dictator, and then by the sovereign state (21-23, 183-198). Meierhenrich claims that Schmitt “was grasping for two things in particular: insight and impact.” That is, he not only wanted to understand how “order worked”, but he also wanted to “make order work” (27). Much of the remainder of the Introduction is devoted to Schmitt’s search for order in political thought, legal thought, and cultural thought, which are the subjects of Part III, Part IV,

and Part V respectively. But, as Meierhenrich notes, the three types of thoughts overlap (53-55). Meierhenrich (and Simons) conclude by suggesting that they intended their handbook to be a “critical introduction to Carl Schmitt” and they note that “critique” in Greek (“κρίνω”) means “to separate,” “to distinguish,” and “to pass judgment” but that it can also mean “to order” and “to arrange.” They make it clear that the authors of the chapters in the handbook do not intend to judge Carl Schmitt. Instead, they believe their “mission was to engage in the critical ordering of Schmitt’s writings” by providing the “proper context of his challenging thoughts.” (57).

## PART II: THE LIVES OF CARL SCHMITT

Richard Mehring introduces this Part by focusing on Schmitt’s Catholicism. Mehring is a noted specialist on Schmitt, having written about him for some twenty-five years and having authored one of the most definitive biographies of Carl Schmitt as well as a major biographical work on Schmitt’s judicial life and thought. Mehring concentrates on Schmitt’s Catholicism but he places it within a larger historical context. What is perhaps most interesting is Schmitt’s shifting relationship to Catholicism. Although raised within a Catholic family, he did not seem particularly Catholic. His first wife, Cari was a Protestant and he often defended Protestantism (77-78). Yet, during the 1930s he regarded himself as a Catholic intellectual; yet he did not believe in natural law and rejected neo-Thomism. And, after the war he no longer thought of himself as a “true ‘Catholic’ thinker” (79, 90).

Raphael Gross takes up the issue of Schmitt and anti-Semitism and he notes that many of Schmitt’s defenders believed that he could not have been an anti-Semite because of his numerous Jewish friends while others admit that he was anti-Semitic but only between 1933 and 1945 to curry favor with the Nazis. Gross demolishes both defenses and convincingly demonstrates that Schmitt was an anti-Semite throughout his life and that it was one of his “deepest convictions” (110). Gross concludes his chapter with a warning: that we perpetuate his hatred of the Jews when we assimilate his ideas and he counsels us to make it clear that we need to clearly denounce Schmitt’s anti-Semitism (111). For almost all of Schmitt’s life, the Jews were the “true enemy” (96).

Gross relied on Schmitt’s diaries for his discussion of anti-Semitism; Joseph W. Bendersky makes them the central focus for his chapter. Bendersky also emphasizes Schmitt’s

anti-Semitism as it is revealed in his diaries (118-119, 143). However, his larger concern is to investigate to what degree the diaries confirm or reject our conceptions of Schmitt as a person. Bendersky notes that we do not have access to the thousands of pages of Schmitt’s diaries and he fears that we may never be able to see all of them. Nonetheless, he maintains that what we have is a “biographer’s dream” and they have made an “unprecedented contribution” to our understanding of Schmitt (119-120). He traces Schmitt’s infatuation with Cari Dorotić, his future wife but he emphasizes his insecurities and his angst (121). Like Mehring, Bendersky discusses Schmitt’s Catholicism. He not only began to doubt his faith in Catholicism, but his marriage was collapsing. His wife turned out not to be from a noble family but from a rather poor one. She was physically unwell and psychological unbalanced. Bendersky mentions that Schmitt contemplated suicide on several occasions (127). The diaries from 1930 through 1934 are crucial because they reveal that he had lost his earlier idealism and continued to suffer psychologically (130). However, the entries for 1933 do not reveal much about his political thinking or his personal response to the Nazi regime. But, they do show a constant battle with depression and a continuing apprehension about the future. The diaries from 1939-1945 have not been published but his *Glossarium*, which covers 1947-1945, gives us an indication of his attitude and thinking. Published in 1991, they indicate his conviction that he was being unjustly persecuted and unfairly treated (139-140). Bendersky notes that in the diaries, Schmitt often refrained from comments on current affairs and that they are very personal. Nonetheless, he states that “Their value cannot be overstated” and that he is convinced they will be used by biographers, historians, philosophy, and politics for years to come (120, 144).

Christian Linder offers one of the most nuanced accounts of Carl Schmitt’s life in his chapter. He reminds us that although Schmitt had defended Hitler publicly in 1936, the SS attacked him for his Catholicism, his opportunism, and his Jewish connections (147). While he was not prosecuted, he was effectively banned from participating in the Nazi movement for the duration of the war. In 1945, he was interrogated for several months by the Russians and then held by the Americans until October 1946. He was arrested again five weeks later by the Americans and held in solitary confinement. He was released from solitary confinement on May 6, 1947 but was confined to the grounds until finally being freed several weeks later. After being attacked by the Germans, held by the Russians, and then the Americans, he returned to Plettenberg, his birthplace (149). He was forced

to sell some of the paintings that he had collected and he regretted the “enemy seizure” of his 3,000 volume library by the Americans in October of 1945. He lived with his second wife Dutschka and their daughter Anima in the attic apartment of the house that his parents had built in 1937 while his two sisters, Augusta and Anna Margarete lived on the main floor. In 1970 he moved to Pasel, a town outside of Plettenberg. The number of people who had the courage to visit him grew larger with his move. Linder suggests that Schmitt had regarded Plettenberg as his “San Casciano” in reference to the town that Machiavelli had lived in after fleeing Florence. But, in Pasel, it was only his house that he called “San Casciano” (160). Linder paints Schmitt’s life after the war as one of poverty and relative isolation. But, he also shows that the “monster” was helped by some and respected by others; an indication of the “dialectic opposition that dominated all of his thought” (153, 155, 167).

Taken together, the four chapters in Part II reveal Carl Schmitt as a brilliant but troubled individual. He believed that he was often misunderstood but never accepted that his ideas, his style, and his disregard for facts contributed to these misunderstandings. He never stopped believing that he, the great State jurist, was regarded as an outsider, an “alienated intellectual loner” (143). And, he was convinced that he was often defenseless and that it was always he who was the real victim (101, 105).

### PART III: THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF CARL SCHMITT

Duncan Kelly addresses the thorny topic of Schmitt’s political theory of dictatorship. Kelly notes that scholars have recognized that Schmitt’s interest in constitutions was based upon two concerns: his general belief in the weakness of modern liberalism and his specific objections to Article 48 of the Weimar constitution. Since this Article figures prominently in Schmitt’s writings and in this handbook, it is worth discussing it here. Article 48 was devoted to the emergency powers that the Reich President can invoke in cases in which a subsidiary government either cannot, or will not, fulfill its legal obligations. This entails the possible use of all measures, including force.<sup>1</sup> However, Kelly wishes to focus on a third concern, one which he contends has been especially “underappreciated in Anglophone scholarship”. This was Schmitt’s concern “to rewrite the history of modern political thought” (217). Kelly traces Schmitt’s early academic positions and he discusses his early responses to Romanticism. But, his main focus is on Schmitt’s evolving

ideas about the dictator and how he addressed the dictatorial powers that a military leader must have in order to deal with crises. Kelly then places Schmitt’s later concept of the dictator in its historical context by discussing it in conjunction with some of the writings of Friedrich Meinecke, Karl Kautsky, and the French Revolution. For Kelly, the concept of the dictator was the “heart” of Schmitt’s attempt to write a new history of modern political thinking (237).

The focus of Miguel Vatter’s chapter is on “political theology” which he suggests was the most controversial of all of Schmitt’s political concepts. In the first part of his chapter Vatter examines Schmitt’s early conception of political theology and notes how he is responding to Kelsen’s claim that there are two types of juridical fictions (245-247). He then moves to discuss Schmitt’s argument against Hobbes’ theory of representation—the “sovereign is not simply an impersonator or a fiction” but is a real belief in the true leader. The second part of Vatter’s chapter addresses Schmitt’s later thinking and is devoted to *Political Theology II*. Schmitt’s book is a “belated” response to Peterson’s *Monotheism as a Political Problem*. Contrary to Peterson’s claim that Christianity is peaceful, Schmitt contends that “enemy” in Scripture differs from enemy in politics (259).

Thomas Hobbes also plays a central role in John P. McCormick’s chapter. McCormick notes that Schmitt took issue with Hobbes, particularly in his mechanistic philosophy (276). And, he notes that Schmitt complained that Hobbes had not developed a philosophy that would have prevented liberalism from distorting and undermining his political thinking. However, he suggests that Schmitt and Hobbes shared a similar pessimistic opinion of human nature and that they both believed that a sovereign was necessary to prevent violence. And, they shared the belief that the notion of an enemy plays an enormous role in political thought (274). McCormick further suggests that Schmitt was convinced that the turmoil in Weimar Germany was similar to the warring factions in Stuart England. Schmitt was further convinced that Hobbes had been misunderstood for centuries, and only Carl Schmitt really understood him. McCormick concludes with the observation that Schmitt should have read Locke more carefully, because then he would have recognized that the actual state of war is not the state of nature. Rather, the state of war is due to a lack of a participating democracy; thus, a dictatorial “unaccountable rule” (287).

The notions of democracy and liberalism are central to William Rasch’s chapter. He contrasts the Athenian notion that all citizens were to participate in politics with

the modern belief that the personal is preferable to politics (316-317). But, in both cases there is a belief in equality. Schmitt raised the question “What is democratic equality?” (320). Rasch suggests that for Schmitt, equality is difficult to achieve and that it requires a certain degree of homogeneity. Furthermore, this political unity expresses the people’s will which makes governing possible (329-331). Rasch claims that Schmitt was defending democracy against the “massive dysfunction of liberal governance” but his claim seems to go against McCormick’s argument.

“Can a political thinker be both intellectual friend and political enemy?” That is the question that drives Matthew G. Specter’s chapter (427). He offers a history of the Left’s reception of Schmitt beginning with Habermas’ critique and appropriation. He points to Habermas’ simultaneous distancing himself from Schmitt’s students while utilizing the Schmittian critique of the welfare state. However, Specter argues that Habermas’ opinion of Schmitt became more positive between 1961 and 1992 largely because of Reinhart Koselleck’s influence. Specter spends much of the remainder of his chapter discussing three Leftist thinkers who appear to have built upon Habermas’ adoption of certain aspects of Schmitt’s political philosophy in their own thinking.

As Habermas played a central role in Specter’s chapter, Emmanuel Levinas figures prominently in Aryeh Botwinick’s chapter. Beginning with Plato, Botwinick sets out the same/other distinction and demonstrates how Levinas employs a similar one. But, Botwinick also considers Schmitt’s friend/enemy distinction and does so by way of Machiavelli and Hobbes. Botwinick emphasizes the fact that “the category of *enemy* clearly dominates over that of *friend*” (350). However, Botwinick does not appear to be sympathetic to Schmitt’s critique of liberalism and indicates that his “analytical framework is skewed and distorted” and that “he misconstrues the role of the state of nature in Hobbes’ thought” (357-358). Botwinick concludes that Schmitt’s friend/enemy distinction functions only in a theoretical frame work and not in the real multicultural one (364).

Part III contains four chapters on concepts. Matthias Lievens concentrates on Schmitt’s concept of history. He begins by acknowledging the importance that political conflicts play in Schmitt’s thinking but insists that he has a larger “metapolitical struggle” or “hyperpolitical level” (401-403). In other words, everything is political, even history. Schmitt takes issue with the idea that history repeats itself and argues instead that it is singular. But, there is one thing that appears in history and that is the idea of the “*kat-echon*.” Lievens believes that Schmitt adapts St. Paul’s no-

tion for use in politics; it manifests itself in history in order to warn of dangers. Lievens concludes it is a political weapon to be used in “Schmitt’s fundamental endeavor: to fight for the political.” (420).

It is the concept of war that preoccupies Benno Teschke’s chapter. He believes that Schmitt’s concern with war develops from his friend/enemy distinction (394). That made it surprising that Schmittian scholars have mostly neglected this concept and only recently began to investigate it. Scholars have done so largely because of the war on terror; unfortunately, they have concluded that Schmitt was a “prophetic genius”. Teschke believes this “celebration” needs “reconsideration” (367-369). Teschke indicates that during the Middle Ages there were no wars but there were feuds, and feuds were the “execution of justice.” (373). War began later when it became public with states having armies. The third stage was with the introduction of liberal war and Schmitt was thinking specifically about how the Monroe Doctrine could justify a doctrine that by international law was unjustifiable (374-376). Teschke suggests that by concentrating on liberal imperialistic wars, Schmitt avoided dealing with the Nazi’s radicalized conception of the enemy (394).

Samuel Moyn concentrates on Schmitt’s concept of the political and he suggests it was one of Schmitt’s “major and lasting bequests” but it was significantly altered during his life. Some of these changes were authored by Schmitt himself, but Moyn contends it was not so much Leo Strauss’ criticisms which prompted him to make changes, but Hans Morgenthau (298-299). Moyn also notes with interest that many of Schmitt’s Weimar critics were fundamental in developing the discipline of international relations (305). They were prompted to do so largely in response to the friend/enemy distinction which Schmitt had formulated in *The Concept of the Political*. However, Moyn points out that as central this distinction is, Schmitt never seemed to think that there could be “quarrels among friends” (296). If Schmitt’s concept of the political helped some German thinkers to develop international relations, Moyn argues that it also aided some French thinkers as well. Moyn suggests that it was Raymond Aron and his student Claude Lefort who focused on the differences in political and politics. It was Lefort who credited Schmitt for underscoring the importance of placing the political first. Moyn concludes by observing that Schmitt introduced his concept of politics but he could not control its legacy (307).

## PART IV: THE LEGAL THOUGHT OF CARL SCHMITT

Martin Loughlin's chapter is on "polity" which for some of us is an unfamiliar term. Loughlin suggests that Schmitt recognized that when political economy was developed as a discipline at the end of the eighteenth century, the founders retained its association with the household. Thus, the term was "economy" whereas a more correct term would be "polity" because it has more to do with the state than it does the household (570). It is Loughlin's intention to discuss Schmitt's particular contribution to "polity" and he does so by stressing Schmitt's juridical background. Although he was trained in the traditional German approach to legal theory, Schmitt departed from it when he began to stress the political. Loughlin is less concerned with that shift than he is with Schmitt's later focus on "nomos." And, he points out that in Schmitt's opinion the Greek term "nemein" has "three main meanings in German": "to appropriate", "to divide", and "to pasture." For Schmitt, the political is revealed in these three ways: appropriation, division, and production (581). Schmitt's contribution to "polity" was to emphasize the importance of "nomos"; that is, that law is not something abstract but it is bound up with space (582).

Martti Koskenniemi also concentrates on *The Nomos of the Earth* but his focus is on international law. Koskenniemi contends that Schmitt began to be genuinely interested in international law beginning in the late nineteen thirties and that it was not intended as a diversion of the attention of the Nazi authorities (594). Schmitt regarded the period between the sixteenth and late nineteenth centuries as a period that had established order based upon "sovereign equality and limited warfare" (603). It was America's imperialism as promoted by the Monroe doctrine which upset this relative tranquility and unleashed new types of warfare. Koskenniemi admits that for many scholars of international law, Schmitt is problematic. Schmitt's criticism of American liberalism and his endorsement of the friend/enemy distinction are obstacles to his acceptance by international relationists. However, Schmitt should be welcomed into this discipline because he was a realist who considers "law as a concrete order", just like most international relations scholars (607).

There are four chapters on Schmitt's constitutional opinions all written by constitutional experts and are exceptionally rich and somewhat difficult to comprehend. All four

warrant careful study and deserve more commentary than can be given here. Ulrich K. Preuss provides a type of overview of Schmitt's problems with the Weimar constitution and begins by noting that the new constitution was intended not just to establish a new political order but would provide a framework for most every part of society (471). Like many others, Schmitt was skeptical of the Weimar constitution and he found it fundamentally flawed. It failed to represent the unity of the people and it failed in dealing with the ongoing crises. In his opinion a democratic dictator can solve both issues (475-478, 484-485).

David Dyzhenhaus addresses Schmitt's attacks on liberalism and his critique of the rule of law. Liberalism fails during times of crisis and the rule of law fails in its "guarantee against absolutism of all kinds" (490, 495-496). Furthermore, liberal rule of the law fails to recognize the "primacy of the political" and Dyzhenhaus illustrates this failure by focusing on Schmitt's constitutional position. This is partially found in Schmitt's response before the court regarding the failure of the Prussian government to fulfill its obligations and in defense of the German government take-over under Article 48. He claimed that Prussia had failed to deal with its enemies and could not guarantee security. This only serves to stress Schmitt's preference for a dictator (500-501). In Dyzhenhaus' opinion, the fundamental basis for Schmitt's thinking did not really change, it only became more radical (502).

William E. Scheuermann's chapter can be read as a companion piece to the one by Dyzhenhaus because he provides a biographical account of Schmitt's views on the state of emergency. Schmitt was stationed in Bavaria during much of the First World War and part of his duty in Munich was to provide a justification of the extra-juridical proceedings by the military. Not only was he supposed to justify legal matters but he was required to provide a basis for economic measures (548-549). Scheuermann examines two of Schmitt's writings from 1917 but he places more emphasis on the second one because it is largely neglected but is more interesting. In it, Schmitt "sheds the legalistic contours" and contrasts the differences between the state of siege and the state of a dictator. In the first, there is a continuation of the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches whereas in the second both branches become fused (550-551). Scheuermann suggests that Schmitt wished to banish the naïve Enlightenment legalism because it was incapable of dealing with the unpredictable future. This was also Schmitt's justification for his later attack on Article 48

(556-557). Scheuermann spends the final pages of his chapter on Schmitt's thinking as it applies after 9/11 (560-565).

Stanley Paulson's chapter is on the feud between Schmitt and Kelsen and its culmination in the “Guardian” Controversy of 1931.” The reference is to the question of who is the “guardian of the constitution”—Kelsen maintained that it was the constitutional court while Schmitt insisted that it was the president. Before Paulson sets out that controversy, he notes four areas of disagreements between Schmitt and Kelsen.

1. Schmitt believed that the sphere of the political was much larger than did Kelsen; whereas Kelsen drew a strong separation between “is” (“Sein”) and “ought” (“Sollen”), Schmitt replaced it with one between “being” (“Sein”) and “not being” (“Nicht-Sein”).
2. Kelsen believed that the sovereign is limited by laws, but Schmitt insists that the sovereign must have decisionist powers.
3. Kelsen defended democracy; Schmitt subjected it to a “savage critique”.
4. Both Schmitt and Kelsen believed in the need for political unity, but they disagreed on how much it should be and on what measures needed to be taken in order to maintain it (510-511).

Paulson addresses the “Guardian” controversy later in his chapter and he examines Schmitt's 1931 book *The Guardian of the Constitution*. Schmitt's claim is that constitutional review is “impossible or unworkable” (524-525). Paulson's account is detailed but he makes several points:

1. Schmitt does not believe some of his own points,
2. that he has a narrow reading of some facts, and
3. Kelsen does not believe Schmitt's claims.

Paulson concludes by saying that Kelsen's assumption that the Weimar constitution was in danger of being blown apart” was tragically proven to be correct (525-531).

The title of Giorgio Agamben's chapter is somewhat perplexing: “A Jurist Confronting Himself” but the subtitle clarifies that the chapter dwells on “Carl Schmitt's Juridical Thought.” Agamben's points of departure are the texts and interviews that Schmitt gave and he suggests that Schmitt spoke of himself with “unprecedented” directness. However, Agamben cautions that this picture is not like a mug shot, but more like a picture with figures hidden within it (457). Agamben attempts to discern Schmitt

within these hidden figures and he does so by way of several comments that Schmitt made. One was Schmitt's admiration for Kafka and his notion of law. Another was Schmitt comparing himself to Benito Cereno, the captain who is forced to do his sailors' bidding in Melville's story (458-460). Both Kafka's *The Trial* and Melville's *Benito Cereno* reveal the protagonist who is at the mercy of forces beyond his control. Agamben directs our attention to the end of “State, Movement, People” where Schmitt has the “image of a dangerous sea voyage” and the need to steer cautiously between the “mythical sea monsters” of “sovereignty of law” (legalism) and the “sovereignty over law” (the state of exception) (466-467). Agamben concludes with the observation that the true “Führer” of the ship (of state) is finally death and he warns that Schmitt recognized that but played one “mythographic mask against the other” (468-469).

Posner and Vermeule focus much of their chapter on Schmitt's *Legality and Legitimacy* and they observe that it contains a critique of Max Weber's concept of legitimacy. Weber had argued that the state was the sole legitimate force and he claimed that there were three types of legitimacy: traditional, bureaucratic, and charismatic. Schmitt argued that the modern state was based upon Weber's second type and that this was not only insufficient but that legality is opposed to legitimacy. Legality is merely formal and the opposite of what is legitimate, something may be legal but not legitimate (614-615, 617). The two also discuss Schmitt's relationship to rules. They suggest that in law and in economics anyone who wishes to “enact a sensible rule” needs to have an adequate prediction of the future. Yet, they note that Schmitt insisted that the “sovereign is he who decides on the exception” (618). Posner and Vermeule suggest that the Anglo-American emphasis on rule and standards makes it difficult to comprehend Schmitt's legal thinking. But, they maintain that Anglo-American scholars would be well-advised to make the effort to understand Schmitt's thinking. They acknowledge that his writings tend to be tailored to his times but insist that his thinking can apply to different times. And, they insist that Schmitt offers “two major insights”: his distinction between norm and the exception and his distinction between legality and legitimacy (623). Posner and Vermeule are not the only ones who point to Schmitt's importance; so do all of the other authors in this handbook.

## PART V: THE CULTURAL THOUGHT OF CARL SCHMITT

Part V may be the weakest and the least informative part, but it also must have been the most challenging one for its authors. These seven scholars are forced to confront the stylistic defects and the excessive claims that Schmitt was prone to make. Oliver Simons addresses Schmitt's use of spatial rhetoric from his use of the term space ("Raum") at the end of the 1930s to his later thinking about it in *Land and Sea* and *The "Nomos" of the Earth*. But, his task is challenging both because of Schmitt's substance and style in these works. Simons notes that Schmitt engaged in "peculiar etymological speculations" like his attempts to link "space" ("Raum") and "Rome" ("Rom"), "farmer" ("Bauer") and "building" ("Bau"), and "order" ("Ordnung") and "location" ("Ortung") (784-786). Furthermore, these works "lack" "methodological rigor" and are more a "form of a narrative"; they have been referred to as "poetic texts" and as "a romantic fairy tale" (788, 781, 778). Many of Schmitt's writings lack conceptual clarity and often he stretches conceptual borders, but the ones on space suffer even more from these deficiencies.

Johannes Türk briefly alludes to *Land and Sea* and *The "Nomos" of the Earth* but only to point out the importance of understanding Schmitt's "grand rhetoric." Türk identifies the early Roman Catholic Church and specifically in Augustine as the source for Schmitt's realization of the power of rhetoric (765, 754). Schmitt correctly understood that "language is an instrument of power" and he justifiably recognized that literature plays a "crucial role." (753, 760). He also realized words could be both "polemical and playful" (762). He focuses on two of Schmitt's most literary works, an early one and a later one. Türk examines Schmitt's study *Theodor Däubler's Northern Lights* and notes that *Northern Lights* represents "a synthesis of European culture." Written in 1916, Schmitt's work can be viewed as an expression of his early idealism and comfort with cosmopolitanism. (763-764). But, he also recognized that Däubler does violence to language by going beyond its conventional bounds (766). Türk also investigates *Hamlet or Hecuba* which Schmitt wrote in 1956. He claims that in this work Schmitt recognizes that "literary experience of identification" is connected with a "political decision" and he bases that on Hamlet's viewing of *Hecuba* (769).

A co-translator of *Hamlet or Hecuba*, David Pan makes it the center of his chapter and argues that it represents

Schmitt's view that myth legitimates politics. But, as much as Schmitt had recognized that "literature is inseparable from politics", it was not until *Hamlet or Hecuba* that he spelled out this connection so clearly (732). Pan explains Schmitt's contention that the exception is linked to tragedy and the connection between the normal and play (733-734). He also defines the state of exception as the "conflict between mythic orders"; that is, the struggle between them in the quest for authority (736-737). In doing so, Pan contrasts Schmitt's belief with that of Hannah Arendt. Arendt sought to ground authority on tradition and looked to the Greeks and the Romans for that political tradition, but Schmitt sought to ground authority on the "general will." In his early thinking that meant locating the "general will" within the religious institution of the Catholic Church but later it was to be found in the unified voice of democracy (738-739). In thinking everything is political Schmitt argued that to regard literature and theater as merely aesthetic pleasures would eliminate much of their importance. Pan closes by referring to Schmitt's reaction to Walter Benjamin, the subject of Horst Bredekamp's chapter.

If Carl Schmitt took issue with Walter Benjamin's aesthetics, Bredekamp explores Benjamin's "esteem" for Schmitt. Bredekamp states that "Benjamin's esteem for Carl Schmitt is one of the most perplexing cases of the Weimar Republic" and he cites Benjamin's 1930 letter in which he explains that he has arranged for his publisher to send his book on the "Trauerspiel" to Schmitt and that it will indicate his indebtedness to his thinking. (679). Bredekamp explains that Benjamin was not the only person who would seem to find Schmitt's writings objectionable but nevertheless, was impressed by him. He then delves into the letter's history and how decades later, it finally aroused Schmitt's interest. Bredekamp then discusses Benjamin's concern with Schmitt's literary work in the teens and twenties and that Schmitt's influence was not just limited to the "Trauerspiel" book. Schmitt's *Political Romanticism* also inspired Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Bredekamp's conclusion is two-fold; while Benjamin and Schmitt agree on the importance of the political, they differ on the nature of the state of exception (685). Bredekamp concludes with a reference to Benjamin's discussion with Bertolt Brecht after listening to Schmitt's lecture in Berlin in 1930: "Schmitt/Agreement Hate Suspicion" (695).

Alexander Schmitz contends that Schmitt did not advance positions and standpoints but "relations" and "forms of differentiation." Accordingly, there is movement throughout Schmitt's thinking that corresponds to his life.

And, while his private life revealed a fundamental tension between what he approved of and what he rejected, it also showed that his views were often closer to those that he rejected so emphatically (705). Schmitz uses Schmitt's late attacks on Hans Blumenberg as an example. He details how Schmitt's attacks in *Political Theology II* on Blumenberg's conception of legitimacy in the modern age show that the two thinkers were not as fundamentally at odds as it seems. The question whether Schmitz is correct about this specific example must be decided by specialists. However, there is no question regarding his point about how Schmitt becomes more aggressive in his attacks on notions when they are closer to his own sentiments. That helps explain, but not minimize, some of Schmitt's anti-Semitism. However, Schmitz' discussion of Schmitt's returning to his ideas in *Political Theology (I)* suggests that perhaps Schmitt was less interested in process than he was in positions. The subtitle of Rüdiger Campe's chapter should alert the reader to the real focus of his work: "Novalis' *Faith and Love or the King and Queen* with Reference to Carl Schmitt." Campe's chapter is a fascinating account of the lack of understanding that the Prussian King, Prussian military, and the Prussian church had of Novalis' Romantic work (667-668). Yet, Schmitt is only referred to along with the legal historian Ernst Kantorowicz. Campe argues that both Schmitt and Kantorowicz have notions of political theology and emphasize pre-Enlightenment theories but that Schmitt considers the basis to be a "baroque origin of sovereignty" whereas Kantorowicz relies on a medieval foundation (664). While both Schmitt and Kantorowicz appreciate Novalis' emphasis on the monarch's visibility, the latter would not have approved of Novalis' claim "Every true law is my law" (675). Nor would one expect that Schmitt, "the fiercest critic of political Romanticism", would have approved of Campe's suggestion that Novalis was an inspiration for his thinking during in "1920s and 1930s" (660, 657).

Friedrich Balde suggests that maybe Schmitt was not just the fiercest critic of Romanticism but had actually appropriated some of its key tenets. One is the Romantics' belief in the "untenability of classical concepts" and another is their use of irony (630). And Balde hints that Schmitt approved of the Romantics' negativity (635). Balde shifts his attention to Schmitt's political thinking and he notes Schmitt's belief that the state of exception allows the ruler to act without constraints (637). He concludes by indicating that Schmitt, like Hannah Arendt, "cannot withhold his admiration for the classical image of the 'great state'", but he admired the

Roman notion of the supreme leader in contrast to Arendt who extolled the Greek interplay of speech and action (652).

The chapters in this Part contribute to the picture of Schmitt as a confusing, and sometimes a confused, thinker who grappled with the many complexities and various disorders which plague the modern age. And, he was one who sought to do so by utilizing literature, history, and even myth, if he thought it could help him.

## FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF CARL SCHMITT

The authors of Part 2 often portray Schmitt as a depressed individual who was frequently opportunistic. The authors of Parts 3 and 4 set out in detail Schmitt's conviction of the primacy of the political and his belief in the fundamental weaknesses of liberal democracy and parliament. The authors of Part 5 clearly believe that Schmitt used rhetoric to further beliefs that he could not argue for and that his fondness for a romanticized past made him blind to the progress of the present. And, many of the authors have pointed to his support for the Nazi regime. Given all of this, it is fair to ask as Dyzenhaus does: "Why Read Schmitt." Except that Dyzenhaus does not place a question mark at the end of this question and that is because he, like virtually every scholar in this book, is convinced that Schmitt has much to teach us today. If they are being honest, even Schmitt's detractors have to admit that he was a brilliant thinker and one of the most influential jurists of the twentieth century. For those who are not detractors, his analyses of modern democracy are instructive and they prompt us to reflect on liberalism's shortcomings. The scholars here have provided ample reasons not only to why people should read Carl Schmitt, but why *more* people should. And, this leads to a final point. Some of these chapters were written by specialists in law as well as in other fields and while many others were written by Schmitt specialists. But, this *Handbook of Carl Schmitt* clearly and fully demonstrates, Carl Schmitt is too important to be left only to the Carl Schmitt specialists.<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. Paulson writes "The key provision is section 2." (529).
2. Regarding the length of this review essay: some readers no doubt would have preferred a much shorter one and some others may have wished for even more information.

*The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt*. Edited by Jens Meierhenrich and Oliver Simons. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

## REVIEW

*Learning from Franz L. Neumann. Law, Theory and the Brute Facts of Political Life*

Edited by David Kettler and Thomas Wheatland

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The name Franz L. Neumann is not particularly well known, at least not in most of the English-speaking world. If his name is at all familiar it is likely because of Neumann's book *Behemoth*. It was published in 1942 and was his critical account of Nazism. However, as David Kettler and Thomas Wheatland have argued in *Learning from Franz L. Neumann*, Neumann wrote far more than just one book. They have set out to make Neumann's name more familiar and they have largely been successful. They have demonstrated that Neumann was a first-rate legal scholar and political thinker; one who consistently believed in the need to combine theory with practice.

After a very brief Chapter One which sets out the challenges of Franz L. Neumann, Kettler and Wheatland discuss Neumann's intellectual life during the 1920s Weimar Germany. They make the case that Neumann understood Marx's philosophy without fully endorsing it and they explain Neumann's role as an advocate for strengthening labor rights. They also helpfully place Neumann's early writings within the context of the ongoing conflict between the labor movement and the capitalists and they explicate his continuous complaint that the conservative government tended to side with the property owners. He particularly objected to how the government failed to "control cartels and monopolies" (170). During his time in Germany, Neumann not only explained the problems confronting Germany's workers but he offered concrete proposals on how to address the imbalance between labor and the capitalist state.

Neumann fully recognized the danger of the Nazi regime and he knew that he could not safely remain in Germany and so he left for England in 1933. He settled in London and began work on a second dissertation. He had received his

first doctorate in 1923 from Frankfurt with a dissertation on law and punishment (18), but his second dissertation focused on governance in political theory of law (18, 96). The second dissertation was written at the London School of Economics under the direction of Harold Laski with input from Karl Mannheim (122). In many respects it is a defense of the need for law—a theme that would appear again in Neumann's *Behemoth*.

Neumann left England to go to the United States in 1936 and while he had hoped to obtain a position teaching at a university, he was hired as a researcher by Horkheimer for the Institute for Social Research in New York. Kettler and Wheatland document Neumann's successes and failures during this time and they explain his unhappiness with his work in New York and with the time he had to spend in Argentina on behalf of the Institute. They refer to this period in the United States as Neumann's second exile (the first exile was his years in England). In the late nineteen-thirties into 1940, Neumann was working on the Institute's "Germany project" which was devoted to explaining what caused the collapse of democracy and the rise of Germany, themes that would be a part of *Behemoth*. Unfortunately, by 1942, Horkheimer was downsizing the Institute which prompted Neumann to go to Washington in search of employment (204-205, 208).

Kettler and Wheatland note that Neumann not only borrowed the title *Behemoth* from Thomas Hobbes, but that Hobbes played a number of roles in Neumann's earlier thinking (152, 249). One of these concepts was Hobbes' notion of sovereignty—one that Hobbes had defended in *Leviathan* and bemoaned the loss in *Behemoth*. This may be why Neumann decided to call his book after that by Hobbes because in Nazi Germany, the state was relegated to a lesser

status in favor of the leader and the party (255-256, 317). Neumann's *Behemoth* is partially historical and partially analytical—he faulted the Weimar politicians for neglecting the needs of the ordinary people, thus paving the way for the rise of Hitler (251-252). Neumann suggested that the West was suffering because of the economic disparity between capitalists and workers but he insisted that there were "additional reasons" for Germany's failed democratic planning. These include the "bankruptcy" of the Social Democratic Party and the "cowardice" of the leaders of the labor unions (292). Much of *Behemoth* is devoted to the role of law in Nazi Germany. There was a tension between the Party which wanted to manipulate the law for its own purposes or minimize its effectiveness and the jurists who were conscious of their obligation to uphold the law and further its sense of impartiality (300-312). Kettler and Wheatland observe that Neumann agreed with Hegel who had denounced the political theories of the Restoration period in Germany as being fanatical and hypocritical, but they also point out that those theories contained some theory of society while National Socialists did not (317). Neumann defended philosophy from the charge that it was somehow responsible for the rise of Nazi ideology and he insisted that its adherents were opportunistic and nihilistic. In his view, Germany was not a state because it not only lacked a (Weberian) rational foundation but was solely concerned with maintaining power (319-321). Kettler and Wheatland conclude the chapter on *Behemoth* with the observation that the book "is a bitter memorial to the defeat of the Social Democratic—and his own—project for Weimar." And, that Neumann had to start anew (323). Kettler and Wheatland argue that *Behemoth* is not just important because of its historical worth but because "the question of the displacing the state is once again alive among political thinkers" (250).

*Behemoth* drew the attention of many people and among them Walter Dorn who hired Neumann to work for him at the Office of Strategic Studies in February 1943 (329). Kettler and Wheatland admit that it is difficult to determine which reports Neumann authored because they were jointly written and rewritten. However, they are convinced that his influence was considerable because he was a sophisticated student of central Europe (340-341, 347). They conclude the chapter on "Franz Neumann in Washington" with a brief account of Neumann's considerable involvement in preparations for the Nuremberg trials (358-363).

Chapter Ten is about Neumann's move from working for the US government to teaching at Columbia University. Kettler and Wheatland note that Neumann and Her-

bert Marcuse shared the same view regarding the importance of their wartime experience in determining post-war America's position regarding both Germany and the Soviet Union. However, they also note that Neumann would not have approved of the manner that Marcuse chose (369). For Neumann, politics was a "separate discipline requiring its own faculty and institutes." And, he insists that politics is more than the "struggle for power"; it revolves around the tensions between freedom and governance, that is between "freedom and security" (393, 395, 421). These are topics which are again addressed in Chapter Eleven. However, Chapter Ten is among the finest in the book because here Neumann is not simply the subject of the book, but is presented as a real human being. Kettler was close to graduating when he met Neumann and he ended up participating in a number of Neumann's seminars at Columbia. Kettler provides a two- and a half page account of his connection with his professor and he recounts his last meeting with Neumann. Kettler was intending to write a dissertation on Karl Popper's critique of historicism but Neumann directed him to write on Adam Ferguson. Unfortunately, Neumann was killed in 1954 in a car accident in Switzerland, so Kettler had to write his dissertation under the direction of another Columbia professor. Kettler described Neumann as "an uncompromising but inspiring classroom teacher" and it is clear from this book that Kettler continues to be influenced by the memory of Neumann (388-390). However, this is not a biography of the man but an account of his ideas. Those seeking times and places will have some difficulty finding them; those wanting to learn about Neumann's ideas and principles will have little trouble locating them. Kettler and Wheatland set out Neumann's accounts of democracy and sovereignty and they explain the defense of law and his criticism of cynical politics.

The final chapter (Eleven) contains an account of Neumann's thinking in the years just before his death. He argued that neither power nor law was sufficient for humans. Against those who insist that power is an individual force, he maintained that "Power is a social phenomenon." Against those who believed that liberalism could subsume the power of the state to the rule of law, he suggests that history shows this to be unwarranted optimism (432-434). He also takes up the liberal conception that freedom is the "absence of restraint" and he credits Hobbes and others for this conception; however, it is "one-sided" (440, 460). For Neumann, freedom involves both will and intellect: one chooses based upon knowledge. Freedom includes self-determination which in turn presumes that one knows how

to “unfold” one’s potential. Unfortunately, the link between freedom and knowledge has been given over to utilitarian calculations (447, 460). Neumann insisted that “scientific discussion” was an absolute requirement and Kettler and Wheatland conclude this chapter by calling attention to Weber’s influence and by insisting that Neumann provided an exhortation for the intellectual life (464).

Neumann apparently always had a high regard for Max Weber’s social and political thinking, but he was often of conflicting opinions about Laski, Mannheim, and others. Carl Schmitt was an entirely different matter. Kettler and Wheatland note that in 1931 Neumann published an article on the concept of an “economic constitution” which had a number of positive references to Carl Schmitt. They explain that Neumann presented this as a paper in Schmitt’s university seminar and that many of the favorable comments are on Schmitt’s references. However, they maintain that Neumann rejected Schmitt’s claim for the need for presidential dictatorship (56-67, 252). Later Neumann will take issue with Schmitt’s reading of Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution which granted the government the right to employ any and all measures, including dissolving a lower government, to secure order and security. Schmitt claimed that the Weimar government was fully authorized by Article 48 to disband the Prussian government because it failed to contain the public displays of unrest (135). On the one hand, Neumann fiercely rejected Schmitt’s arguments but on the other hand, he was “consistently fascinated” by Schmitt’s “machinations” (176, 256). Kettler and Wheatland conclude that Neumann had had “complex intellectual relations” with Schmitt as well as with Otto Kirchheimer (103). However, Neumann always rejected Schmitt’s “clear authoritarian, anti-parliamentary design” (194).

The book is not without a few flaws but most of them are minor. First, the lack of a bibliography means that it is harder for a reader to determine which book is being referenced. It would have been helpful if there was even a bibliography of just Neumann’s works. Second, the chapter lengths vary considerably: Chapter One has eight pages and Chapter Four has eleven; whereas Chapter Ten has 61 and Chapter Five has 107. Finally, some readers may find that the book is not very easy to read. However, that is not really the authors’ fault, but is mostly due to the complexity of the material. Neumann’s legal and political thinking are not easy to understand but the authors have tried to provide sufficient historical context to make them easier to grasp. Kettler and Wheatland have provided a detailed and informative account of Franz L. Neumann’s works and intellectual life and

have given us ample reason to examine one of the most interesting legal scholars and dedicated political activists of the twentieth century. Kettler ends with a brief but personal recollection of Neumann—unlike Hannah Arendt or Leo Strauss, Neumann never founded a school. Kettler suggests that that unlike Arendt and Strauss, thinkers like Neumann are not to be accepted or rejected; rather, “they are intellectuals to be reckoned with, even some generations later.” Kettler (and Wheatland) have convincingly shown that Neumann is an intellectual and an activist who still worthy of being “reckoned with”. This book confirms how much Kettler and Wheatland have learned from him and is a remarkable call for us to try to learn from Franz L. Neumann.

## REVIEW

*John Ruskin's Politics of Natural Law: An Intellectual Biography*  
by Graham MacDonald

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The Middle Ages have long occupied a problematic place in modern self-consciousness. If to the Renaissance humanists the fault of the Middle Ages was that they were too barbarous, to the Protestant Reformers it was that they were too Catholic, and to the Enlightenment *philosophes* they were rather too Christian altogether. We might even say that the Middle Ages were to some degree “invented” as a foil against which these successive historical phases of modernity could define themselves with ever more radical repudiations. The very concept of a “middle age” arose in the Renaissance (with the Italian humanists like Petrarch) to describe an ostensible “Dark Age” between Classical Antiquity and the great movement of revival in classical Greek and Latin arts and letters they saw in their own time (Mommsen 1942). To this day, as if the foe could never be too securely banished, our vernacular employs the term “Medieval” as a pejorative to describe all that is religiously fanatical, cruel, backwards, and in general incompatible with our notions of “modern progress.” Even the mainstream conservatism of the English-speaking world is most typically a rather “Whiggish” affair. Our conservative optimists positively celebrate the post-Medieval rise of liberal individualism, free markets, and the commercial society as the great engine of wealth creation and unprecedented technological achievement.

There is however an important dissident strain of thought which defends an alternative narrative. This kind of romantic traditionalism looks upon the Middle Ages with a certain nostalgia as the very model of an integrated Christian culture. Here was the age of chivalry and knighthood, the Gothic Cathedrals and Gregorian chant, the guilds of artisans, and the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas. In short, it was an age in which all cultural activities—art, architecture, literature, music, politics, economics, and intellectual life—were unified and consecrated by a great spiritual aim. Something very fundamental changed in Western civili-

zation when the organizing principle shifted from *religion* to *economics*. If Whig history saw in those mighty modern powers harnessed and unleashed by the industrial revolution a great upward march of human progress, the “High Tory”<sup>1</sup> saw in them the “dark satanic mills” of which William Blake wrote. Industrialization and mass urbanization were associated in the minds of traditionalists and romantics with the spread of a soulless and crass materialism, the disruption of ancient bonds of family and community, and the callous destruction of rural landscapes. If such traditionalism affirms the old forms of social hierarchy, it also insists on a *noblesse oblige* of the privileged classes toward the poor, and more generally on the virtues of social solidarity. Above all, it laments the replacement of religious faith with economic materialism, the exchange of rootedness for anomie, and the replacement of a culture of craft with mechanized mass production. To find in general culture an example of this sensibility we need look no further than J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* with its neo-Medieval romance of monarchy, nature, rural village life, and an enchanted world filled with the warring spiritual powers of good and evil.

To anyone who shares or merely wishes to understand this sensibility, that great Victorian *homo universalis*, John Ruskin is a crucial reference point. And now in Graham A. MacDonald’s intellectual biography *John Ruskin’s Politics of Natural Law* comes a work that articulately explains Ruskin’s fundamental ideas, the inter-connections between them, and the relation of the course of their development to his personal life. Ruskin has perhaps been thought of most of all for his work as an art critic (mentioned for instance in Sir Kenneth Clark’s famous *Civilization* series for the BBC). He was the figure who championed the work of William Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites and, inspired the Victorian era’s Gothic revival. Macdonald rounds out our picture of

Ruskin by treating all aspects of his thought as an integral whole, while giving special attention to its religious, political, and social dimensions.

In some ways, Ruskin's personal background made him an unlikely champion of *via media* Anglicanism and Medieval constitutionalism, and an equally unlikely opponent of the rising commercial-industrial society of Victorian Britain. Born in 1818 as the son of a successful wine merchant, Ruskin was raised in the devout Bible-centered atmosphere of evangelical Protestantism. It seems to have been in connection with his time at Oxford that his religious stance began to shift. Ruskin formed a close friendship with his tutor Osborne Gordon, who strongly encouraged Ruskin away from Evangelicalism (30-31). Oxford at this time was the center of the Tractarian movement (Edward Pusey, John Henry Newman, John Keble, et al.). After three centuries in which Protestant zeal sought to repudiate England's medieval Catholic inheritance, came this Victorian religious movement which sought to recover a sense of Anglicanism as a *via media* between Roman Catholicism and magisterial Protestantism. Tractarians in particular restored the sense of historical continuity between Anglicanism and patristic and Medieval traditions, and they had a deep affection for the majestic "High Church" styles of liturgy. In this, they turned to earlier precedents from the English Reformation itself. One of the first intellectual pillars of the case for continuity between Anglicanism and Medieval thought was the great Elizabethan theologian Richard Hooker.<sup>2</sup> In 1845 Gordon encouraged Ruskin to take up reading Hooker in the new edition produced by the Tractarian John Keble. Hooker turned out to be a transformative influence on Ruskin's own thought as something all-encompassing:

Richard Hooker's elaborate hierarchy of law, derived from St. Thomas Aquinas, was put to good use in the second volume of *Modern Painters* (1846.) Law informed all visible nature, art, science, religion, economics, history, and politics. Natural law is used in his work like a moral sledgehammer, driving home veritable truths (7).

Natural law has, of course, a venerable history of course in Western thought going back at least to Aristotle, the Stoics, and Cicero but reaching an apogee in the great Medieval synthesis of faith and reason achieved by St. Thomas Aquinas. The account of natural law Hooker inherits from Medieval scholasticism presupposes a teleological conception of

nature, in which natural human inclinations point to purposes which are also goods. As Aquinas framed the matter:

Since, however, good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law.<sup>3</sup>

Thus advertence to human nature and the hierarchy of ends to which its inclinations are ordered (when properly and rationally directed), thus affords insight into the fundamental nature of the good across all times, polities, and cultures. Hooker's work was to adapt this Medieval Thomism to the particular circumstances of Elizabethan England. Hooker argued for a mixed or constitutional monarchy based both on the limitations on the king imposed by natural law, and from the inherited institutions of England's particular customs such as parliament and common law. Ruskin's interest in Hooker's natural law theory, views on church/state polity, and constitutionalism would long continue into his tenure as Slade Professor of art at Oxford in the 1870s. Traditional natural law faced, however, a number of challengers from Hooker's time to Ruskin's. The nascent Puritans of England with which Hooker contended drew upon the Calvinist conviction that what remains in man after the fall is "so corrupted, that anything which remains is fearful deformity."<sup>4</sup> The Puritans doubting the broad competence and benignity of human rational powers traditional natural law theory attributed to them, argued for a radical reliance on grace and scripture. However traditional classical and Christian natural law would face a far more enduring and expansive threat than the radical Reformation. The philosophical progenitors of the scientific revolution like Sir. Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes tried to supplant the ancient and Medieval view of nature as teleological, in favor of a mechanistic nature upon which *human* purposes might be imposed. If nature traditionally was understood as a source of *moral knowledge* of the good, the nature of the new science of Bacon and Descartes was an inert and aimless mechanism for man to understand in order to conquer. Increasingly as the modern scientific-technological society advanced, nature became understood above all as *resources* for human exploitation. The impact of the new view of nature on philosophical ethics came quite quickly.<sup>5</sup> Moral phi-

losophy and natural philosophy (now called science) began to take separate paths in Western thought. Thomas Hobbes for instance, dismisses teleology and reduces “natural law” to the brute urge for survival and what follows from it. By the Victorian era, the search for non-natural law foundation for ethics culminated in the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill who saw this foundation in a kind of hedonistic calculus.

This whole trend in modern moral philosophy was utterly anathema for Ruskin. Ruskin was by no means hostile to modern science. Indeed, he was something of a naturalist himself pursuing geology and botany among his many interests. What he could not accept is the fashionable tendency to radically separate the moral and natural realms:

In considering Ruskin as a practical proponent of natural law, somewhat in the style of Burke, we shall encounter a man who never entertained the possibility that the ‘moral’ could ever be usefully separated from ‘the natural’ in any sphere of human endeavour, including scientific study (7).

Ruskin’s pivotal role as art critic then cannot in Macdonald’s account be divorced from his general reappraisal of the Middle Ages. Enriched by his trips to Italy, in *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53) Ruskin virtually inverts the inherited exaltation of Renaissance art and depreciation of Medieval art. In a well-known chapter “The Nature of the Gothic”, Ruskin exalts the sacred architecture of the Middle Ages. Ruskin is thus a key figure in the Gothic revival with its idealized Middle Ages. At the same time and quite astonishingly, the long-lauded Renaissance masters come under Ruskin’s critique as forerunners of modern decadence:

The painter Raphael, with his interest in perspective, was identified by Ruskin as the great harbinger of a decline in European painting in as much he allegedly foreshadowed the rise of scientific rationalism, and its concomitant, atheism. Michelangelo was a grand fellow but the ruin of art (68).

Ruskin’s view of the Renaissance as an early movement of secularization is still perhaps common enough. However, later Renaissance scholarship has increasingly corrected this view and emphasized many of its piously Catholic aspirations—which in any event should be obvious enough in the cases of Michelangelo and Raphael.<sup>6</sup> What he seemed to loathe in the Renaissance was what Jacob Burkhardt argued was its distinctive contribution—individualism. Ruskin’s aversion to radical individualism perhaps can be best un-

derstood in light of his own traditionalist aversions toward the industrialization processes of his own age.

The privatizing of the commons, the uprooting of the old rural communities, the mass migration of rural workers into the gritty factory towns, all seemed to herald a new type of mobile worker. This modern type was “individualized” in the morbid sense of being cut off from roots, and isolated from any familiar network of human connections. The new political economy was justified by a *doctrine* - economic liberalism - which treated the idea of human community as chimerical or at best a mere aggregation of such atomic individuals. We may think of Margaret Thatcher’s famous comment “...who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women...”<sup>7</sup> To be sure it is debatable whether the urban poverty of the Victorian era was actually in any quantifiable sense worse than the rural poverty of pre-Industrial times. Nonetheless, the paupers who inhabited the urban slums, the ugly stacks of smoke, and working-class social problems like prostitution and child labor became enduring symbols to their critics of the evils brought on by the industrial and urban revolutions (we might think of the image of the Victorian era drawn by Charles Dickens.) Some sought to redress the perceived ills of industrial capitalism either through expanding state regulations or outright revolution (most famously or infamously Karl Marx). Ruskin’s approach characteristically was mostly to *look back* to the Middle Ages in hopes of finding practical solutions for them. This approach involved at least two major prongs. As MacDonald outlines in chapter 5, Ruskin became intensely interested in the social problem. In his work *Time and Tide* (1866-1867) he does argue for a number of measures the state could take including job training schools and poor houses. But as MacDonald discusses he seemed to be most interested in the non-statist approach of Medieval poor laws he learned about through the study of Gratian’s 12<sup>th</sup> century compendium of canon *Decretum*. This emphasized the role of the local parochial church in the alleviation of poverty through things like tithing (134).

The other prong was his deepening interest in the Medieval guild system which suggested an entirely different form of political economy. The assumption of the new economics of British liberalism was that the *competitive* mechanisms of the free market would ultimately redound to the benefit of all producing better or cheaper goods. For Ruskin, the liberal-industrial political economy represented a complete overturning of the virtues he found in the Medieval guild system whose economic mechanisms were *cooperative* rather

er than competitive. Unlike for instance the sense of a zero-sum competitive game between workers and against factory owners over wages, or the competition of industrialists against each other, the old guilds united everyone within a craft from the apprentice to the master in a common, albeit hierarchical enterprise. Importantly, the guilds produced the humanizing beauty and art of handcrafts, rather than standardized machine productions. Ruskin made it part of his life's work to try to reanimate both a lively sense of social responsibility toward the poor and the whole idea of the Medieval guild. As Macdonald discusses in chapter 8, This latter idea bore fruit in one of Ruskin's most important legacies, the Guild of St. George—a proposal outlined in his *Fors Clavigera* which survives to this day. The Guild of St. George is dedicated to the culture of craft, the defense of rural values, works of charity, and education in the arts.

What are we to make of Ruskin's broad neo-Medieval critique of the impacts of the industrial revolution and the ideologies which legitimized it? Classical liberals will no doubt point out—and with considerable justice—that Ruskin dramatically undersells the positive gains produced by the rise of industrial capitalism. Ludwig von Mises argued that the industrial revolution was actually the instrumentality that ultimately raised the broad masses of Western humanity out of poverty.<sup>8</sup> The liberal capitalist order has on this analysis proved demonstrably proved better at creating and distributing more wealth to more people than either its predecessor—the agrarian and guild system—or proposed successors like communism which produced little more than the very worst kind of abject horrors of the 20th century which have scarcely if ever been equaled by any previous age. At the same time, Ruskin's critique of industrial capitalism and modern individualism is only partially about economics and the problems of material poverty. What Ruskin seemed to lament in this in the coal and iron economy was also the loss of inherited place and human solidarity. What Ruskin most valued in the Middle Ages was the presence of *non-economic* values—religion, community, sense of place, beauty, connection to nature, the culture of craft. While the form capitalism takes in the contemporary consumer society has furnished a wealthy middle-class life for vastly more people than either the medieval economy or the nascent capitalism of Ruskin's day were able to produce, one may question whether the spiritual and cultural problems he raised have been comparably resolved. To take one example, Christian piety has arguably withered more amid the comforts, pleasures, and entertainments offered by contemporary consumerism than in many times and places of

want, hardship and persecution. Ruskin taps into some of the deep motivations of the conservative tradition which without necessarily dismissing the positive role of markets in certain spheres is focused on defending non-market values. As perhaps the greatest traditional conservative of our age Roger Scruton (no enemy of the free market) put it:

Conservative thinkers have on the whole praised the free market, but they do not think that market values are the only values there are. Their primary concern is with the aspects of society in which markets have little or no part to play: education, culture, religion, marriage and the family.<sup>9</sup>

Another critique that may be launched against "Ruskinism" is its hyper-romanticism. Even granting validity to his critiques of modernity, are not the Middle Ages well and truly gone forever? Is it not fruitless to pine for them, rather than making the best of the live possibilities which are still available to us? To some degree there is a palpable absurdity to the idea of somehow "overturning" the great industrial and technological transformations of the last three centuries. But it is fruitless to deny as well that there were losses as well as gains involved in these transformations. It is here where nostalgia may have some value. As Mark Henrie (2004) has argued the sense of nostalgia *illuminates* and makes it possible to recognize evanescent goods. The question for Ruskin would surely not be something absurd like "how can we turn back the clock to the Middle Ages?" Rather it is about how positive elements in the Medieval inheritance—religiosity, a sense of beauty in art and architecture, rural culture and the life of the countryside, community life, and artisanship—be conserved in a modern era that accents acquisitive materialism. Such threatened values are what Edmund Burke called in his *Reflections*, "the unbought grace of life" upon which no price can be set. While the key answers to this question are surely cultural, we should not ignore the ironic possibility that further developments in capitalist economics and technology may help pave the way to reversing some of the negatives of the industrial era. In our time, is not the digital revolution rapidly *de-industrializing* the whole Western world? As Arthur C. Clarke noted<sup>10</sup> in the 1970s computers would eventually make it possible for people to decide where they wished to live and work by de-localizing the workspace. In principle then the new technologies produced by free market capitalism have made possible not only a post-industrial era, but the possibility of de-urbanization if people so choose.

Could the future not portend some great movement of return to the land?

There are other reasons for which Macdonald's work is topical. Ruskin seemed prophetic in that the green movement and environmentalism and consequent misgivings about the urban and industrial turns have obvious panache in today's culture. Moreover, even specifically *conservative* critiques of motifs like individualism, consumerism, and in general economic liberalism are enjoying something of a renaissance. We might think of the discussions of works like Patrick Deneen's *Why Liberalism Failed*, the "Benedict Option" of Rod Dreher, or at the level of populist politics the pro-protectionist, anti-globalization nationalist conservatives who seem ascendant in much of the Western world in our historical moment. Classical liberal defenders of modern free market economics stand to benefit then from familiarizing themselves with thoughtful critics like Ruskin who in many ways prefigured these contemporary concerns. Whether interest in Ruskin is sparked by sympathy for his traditionalist sensibilities, a desire to better understand an opposing perspective, or simply to round out understanding of a crucial if eccentric figure in the intellectual history of the Victorian age, Graham Macdonald's work should serve as a rich resource.

## NOTES

- 1 The old Tory-Whig Debate has gotten some more recent traction. See for example Graham McAleer's introduction to Kolnai 2008. It begins with the question "Tory or Whig?"
- 2 For more on Richard Hooker you can see my own Rosenthal 2008 which is included in Macdonald's bibliography.
- 3 St. Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica*-I-II.94, Dominican Fathers translation. <https://dhspriority.org/thomas/summa/FS/FS094.html#FSQ94A2THEP1> (Accessed 6/6/2019).
- 4 John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. I.15 . Beveridge Translation. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes> (Accessed 6/6/2019).
- 5 One of the key thinkers to explore this connection between the modern anti-teleological science and the collapse of traditional natural law would be Leo Strauss.
- 6 To take just one example we can look at Dawson's (2009) remarks in chapter III.
- 7 Margaret Thatcher. Interview in *Woman's Own*. Quoted in <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-thatcher-quotes/margaret-thatcher-in-her-own-words-idUKBRE9370LG20130408> (Accessed 11/12/2018).

- 8 Ludwig von Mises. "Popular and Wrong Interpretation of 'The Industrial Revolution'" <https://mises.org/library/popular-and-wrong-interpretation-industrial-revolution> (Accessed 6/13/2019).
- 9 Roger Scruton. "What Trump Doesn't Get about Conservatism." <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/04/opinion/what-trump-doesnt-get-about-conservatism.html> (Accessed 2/13/2019).
- 10 A Clip from his 1974 with ABC interview explains his futurology on this point: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIRZebE8O84> (Assessed 6/13/2019).

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## REVIEW

### Right Turns on the Pathway of Life

#### *Walk Away: When the Political Left Turns Right*

by Lee Trepanier and Grant Havers

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In 2018 a social media campaign #WalkAway was launched to encourage people to “walk away” from the political Left and the Democratic Party in the United States. The authenticity and effectiveness of this campaign have been disputed.

What cannot be disputed, however, is that since the mid-twentieth century, a number of prominent leftists have turned away from their original political commitments and embraced right-wing ideas, in whole or in part. This book, *Walk Away: When the Political Left Turns Right*, edited by Lee Trepanier of Saginaw Valley State University and Grant Havers of Trinity Western University, is a collection of brief biographical accounts of a number of prominent converts to conservative ideas.

The thinkers covered in this collection could be broadly categorized into three groups: 1) those who unmistakably shifted from the Left to the Right; 2) those who shifted in a rightward direction to become centrists or ideologically ambiguous; and 3) those who essentially remained on the Left but who revised their perspectives in a conservative direction. All three groups share the experience of abandoning left-wing ideas, but some became wholesale conservative converts whereas others simply became modified liberals or moderated socialists.

The first group includes James Burnham, Willmore Kendall, and the Neoconservatives. The second group includes George Grant, Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Benedict Ashley. And the third group includes Christopher Lasch, Jürgen Habermas, Kai Nielsen, and G. A. Cohen.

The stories of each of these individuals is, of course, unique. Nevertheless, a somewhat repetitive pattern emerges. Each one began on the Far Left and then shifted rightward over time, some very dramatically, others less so. But

the pattern is always there. Thankfully, for some of us at least, ideological movement to the Right by intellectuals is always a “good news” story.

#### OUTRIGHT CONSERVATIVE CONVERTS

The experiences of James Burnham and Willmore Kendall share much in common. Before World War II, they were both Marxists. After the war, they both became important conservative thinkers and writers. They were both involved in *National Review* magazine from its inception, and contributed to it for many years.

Paul Gottfried notes that “Burnham went from being perhaps the brightest advocate of Trotskyist political policy in the US (and an intimate of the exiled, former Soviet leader) to a hardened anti-communist” (2). Similarly, Christopher H. Owen writes of Willmore Kendall that “As a young scholar in the interwar period, Kendall saw himself as a Marxist and advocated collectivist economic principles. Thereafter, Kendall proclaimed himself a conservative and for more than two decades actively promoted a ferocious brand of anti-communism” (15). Clearly, these two scholars made a clean break from the Left and came to fully embrace conservative ideals.

The “neoconservatives” may have taken a longer journey but they went in the same direction. Most of this group consisted of Jewish intellectuals in New York. Among the better known were Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Nathan Glazer.

Originally they were leftists who opposed Stalinism, but during the course of the 1960s they became repelled by the anti-American extremism of the New Left. As the New Left expanded its influence within the Democratic Party, this

group of intellectuals felt pushed out. Lee Trepanier writes, “Having been ‘mugged by reality,’ neoconservatives started a robust defense of American values, culture, and institutions and aligned themselves with the conservative movement and Republican Party” (42).

Trepanier provides a brief summary of neoconservative thinking as follows:

In spite of the evolution and diversity of their ideas and policies, neoconservatives have four fundamental principles in their ideology: 1) a distrust of social engineering projects, such as the Johnson administration’s Great Society programs; 2) a defense of cultural and educational standards informed by Western civilization and traditional social values; 3) a skepticism of international law and institutions to achieve security and justice; and 4) a belief that the United States should be the hegemonic power in international politics (35).

The fourth point became especially controversial in conservative circles. The administration of President George W. Bush adopted neoconservative foreign policy ideals after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This led to an aggressive use of American military power, culminating in the pre-emptive invasion of Iraq, perhaps the worst foreign policy decision in American history.

## FROM LEFT TO CENTRE

Canadian political philosopher George Parkin Grant has been notoriously difficult to categorize on an ideological spectrum. Nevertheless, there is a general consensus that his work was more compatible with the Left in the 1960s and more compatible with the Right by the 1980s. This perception may be partly a function of the issues he addressed at different periods in his career.

During the 1960s, Grant strongly defended the historical conception of Canada as a British-influenced garrison in North America. That was the theme of his most famous book *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*. Canadian nationalism was closely identified with the Left in those days, and Grant was counted as one of its proponents. His seemingly leftist stance was magnified by his outspoken opposition to the Vietnam War.

However, Grant’s focus began to change in the 1970s. His 1974 book *English-Speaking Justice* contained a powerful critique of the US Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision

and abortion in general. His 1986 book, *Technology and Justice*, continued his critique of abortion and euthanasia. Dart succinctly summarizes the situation as follows:

Many within the New Left in Canada continued to hold Grant high until his work in the 1980s on abortion and euthanasia made them see his classical vision could not be co-opted by the Right or Left (interestingly yet predictably so the political Right held him high in the 1980s) (70).

Charles Taylor was an unambiguous leftist in the first decades of his career. He ran as a candidate for the socialist New Democratic Party (NDP) in the four Canadian federal elections of the 1960s. However, during the 1970s, Dart writes that Taylor was moving increasingly away “from his more committed (in thought, word, and deed) leftist Hegelianism to a more centrist and less ideological leftist political stance” (74).

By the early twenty-first century, Taylor was writing sympathetically about religion and the challenge of secularism. As Dart notes, “Taylor’s deeper Roman Catholic commitments (and his approval and support of religion and spirituality through a deeper delving in [William] James) was suspected by the Left which once held him near and dear” (76).

Taylor, then, did not become a conservative as such. However, in recent decades his thinking moved towards the Right from his earlier unambiguous leftist stance.

Internationally-renowned moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre in some ways parallels Charles Taylor. MacIntyre began unambiguously on the Left, even embracing Marxism. But he later abandoned Marx for Aristotle and is now widely known as a prominent Aristotelian. That was a clear rightward shift, but without going as far as outright conservatism.

As Kelvin Knight writes, MacIntyre became “disillusioned by the institutionalized practice of actually existing socialist states and parties.” In abandoning his previous leftist sentiments, “It was also Marxism as a tradition of reasoning that he abandoned. What he did not at all abandon was the questioning of contemporary capitalist social order that he had previously conducted from within that tradition” (94).

The final thinker in this second category, Benedict Ashley, is probably less known outside of Catholic circles. However, following a path much like the others recounted here, Ashley changed from being a committed Marxist and

Trotskyite to joining the Catholic Church where he made major contributions to Thomist philosophy.

One statement by Christopher S. Morrissey points to the decisive change in Ashley's life: "after Ashley was baptized on Palm Sunday, April 10, 1938, the momentous event very quickly led to his being expelled from the Socialist Workers Party" (109). Expelled from the Socialist Workers Party, but joined to the Catholic Church.

## NOT QUITE RIGHT

Christopher Lasch, like the others, began on the Left and moved rightward. However, despite becoming a cultural conservative, he was not conservative in other respects. Jeremy Beer summarizes Lasch's experience as follows:

Lasch had once been closely associated with the political Left, and part of what made, and continues to make, his analysis so arresting is that he never entirely disavowed such influences as progressivism, Marx, Freud, and the Frankfurt School. Unlike the Left's other postwar exiles, he never underwent a Damascus ideological conversion, but rather gradually and reluctantly came to shed certain leftist presuppositions and preoccupations (122).

Importantly, however, "Lasch also kept the postwar conservative movement at arm's length because of its hard-line anti-communism" (134).

Pedro Blas Gonzalez writes that Jürgen Habermas belatedly revised some of his views and now recognizes the value of religious sentiments for societies. This is a welcome development but does not in any way approach a complete change of perspective. As Gonzalez writes, "In the last two hundred years Marxism has failed to disprove the claim that philosophical materialism paralyses human aspiration and atrophies free will. Jürgen Habermas's thought appears to be a late-comer to this historical reality" (146).

Finally, Grant Havers addresses the careers of Kai Nielsen and G. A. Cohen, two noted analytical Marxists. He summarizes their experience this way:

Although neither Nielsen nor Cohen abandoned his leftist politics in a categorical manner, both of these philosophers later in life embraced positions that fit more comfortably into the opposite side of the political spectrum. In the case of Nielsen, a new openness to the importance of the nation-state emerged. In

the case of Cohen, a deep appreciation of the Christian tradition's influence on morality became evident" (153).

Nielsen and Cohen earn a spot in this collection due to their rightward shift, although they did not change enough to become conservatives. As Havers summarizes, "Cohen and Nielsen have taken on positions that are to *the right* of the socialist politics that they embraced in an earlier time of life" (162).

## CONCLUSION

The pattern of ideological change is not the only thing that these stories share. In the Introduction to *Walk Away*, Havers highlights a common influence that prodded many of these thinkers to re-evaluate their political commitments: "The most important reason that explains why most of these gentlemen moved from Left to Right lay in the abysmal failure of the Soviet Union to create a free, prosperous, and humane political order" (viii).

Thankfully, the Soviet Union is long gone. But on the other hand, it is no longer available as a living, horrifying example of socialist errors to spark a re-evaluation of leftist beliefs. This leads Havers to note, "The fact that these thinkers broke away from the Left because of disillusionment with orthodox communism suggests that their distinct versions of the walk away will probably not be repeated in our own time" (xvi).

Under current circumstances, therefore, "the prospect of prominent leftist intellectuals walking away from their ideological home towards [the conservative] side of the political spectrum is unlikely" (xvii).

Despite that depressing conclusion, the overall message of the book is quite positive, i.e., some committed leftists are willing to re-evaluate their beliefs when faced with the obvious deficiencies of Marxism, and then revise their views along conservative lines. As mentioned, the pattern is somewhat repetitive. But that is not a bad thing when each account is a "good news" story. Can there ever be too much good news in one book?

## REVIEW

*Complex Adaptive Systems: Views from the Physical, Natural, and Social Sciences*

Edited by Ted Carmichael, Andrew Collins and Mirsad Hadzikadic

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This monograph is part of the Springer Complexity series “Understanding Complex Systems” focusing on the various applications of complexity. It consists of eleven chapters ranging from basic definitions, agent-based models, diffusion, Markov models of tipping points, simulation of suspicious activity in a security setting, simulation of ridesharing, stigmergy in spatial modeling, swarms, and teaching complexity. The topics are wide-ranging and unrelated to one another. As one might expect from a collection of unrelated papers, there is considerable duplication of definitions and fore matter.

The title, *Complex Adaptive Systems*, is too generic and does not say much about the content. Google returns 44 million items under “Complex Adaptive Systems” and Amazon.com lists a number of books with Complex Adaptive Systems in their titles. Perhaps a better title would be: *Some Applications of Agent-based Models*. Agent-based models generally incorporate properties of complexity such as emergence, self-organization, evolution, critical or tipping points, and flocking behavior.

Chapter one defines agents, adaptation, feedback, emergence, and self-organization and claims they are fundamental to complex adaptive systems. I would add diffusion, stigmergy, and decentralized control to the list. The knowledgeable reader may skip this chapter.

Chapters two, three, and four describe agent-based simulations that exhibit emergence. A Cognitive-Consistency Based Model of Population Wide Attitude Change describes a model of attitude diffusion across people that includes social and cognitive factors—how long does it take for attitudes to change and what do they change to? In An Application of Agent Based Social Modeling in the DoD, a geospatial social agent-based simulation, capable of examining the interactions of more than 60,000 agents, mod-

els adverse agents which have harmful intent and goals to spread negative sentiment and acquire intelligence. Will adverse agents emerge from the crowd by simulating person-to-person interactions? Finally, Agent-Based Behavior Precursor Model of Insider IT Sabotage describes a model and simulation of the use of information technology to cause harm to an organization or an individual. The specific behavioral precursors include the individual’s predisposition, disgruntlement, stress levels, technical skill levels and the level of access to the computer systems. The simulation provides a framework for exploring the emergence and development of insider IT sabotage within organizations for different turnover rates.

The topic turns away from security oriented simulations to a general model of robustness, sustainability, and tipping points in Formal Measures of Dynamical Properties: Tipping Point, Robustness, and Sustainability. The idea is simple—use Markov models to describe the complex system and then analyse that Markov model to determine concepts such as robustness, etc. For each concept derive a probabilistic definition based on a Markov model generated from time-series data. Using reachability and other properties of the Markov model one can define robustness and sustainability, etc.

The topic veers off again with Simulating the Ridesharing Economy: The Individual Agent Metro-Washington Area Ridesharing Model. The model proposes an interesting application of Voronoi polygons to optimization of drivers profit. Given driver’s locations, a Voronoi polygon encloses all points closest to the driver, and not other drivers. The Voronoi model improves profitability under certain conditions versus a random model.

Stigmergy for Biological Spatial Modeling describe computer simulations collaboration within a predator-prey system, and angiogenesis in cancer growth. The author says:

For predator-prey, we create a cellular automata model to study the use of emotions in prey collaboration. To study cancer cell growth we create an agent-based model of tumors with angiogenesis, to enhance our understanding of the role angiogenesis plays in tumor growth. Although they seem initially different, both utilize stigmergy for self-organization, although they utilize stigmergy in different ways (172).

Strategic Group Formation in the El Farol Bar Problem is a simulation of multiple decision-making agents trying to outwit each other and only attend the bar when it is not overcrowded. Agents strategically form groups to give them access to a larger strategy pool. However, too large a group will be undesirable because the group's attendance to the bar might cause it to become overcrowded. The conclusion from this work is that individuals should not form groups when wishing to be in the minority.

Another application of stigmergy is found in SwarmF-STaxis: Borrowing a Swarm Communication Mechanism from Fireflies and Slime Mold. The authors present an algorithm to move a group of robots from a starting point to a predefined goal. Flocking behavior results from a combination or “attract” and “repel”.

The final chapter, Teaching Complexity as Transdisciplinarity, will be of interest to educators. The authors argue that teaching complexity gets students out of their single-discipline rut:

This essay argues that teaching complexity provides a unique opportunity for showing undergraduates the value of interdisciplinarity but also of transdisciplinarity, where disciplinary perspectives are applied in new ways to help answer questions traditionally pursued in other disciplines. Complexity can be defined as the study of the emergence and self-organization of networks of interacting agents. It has led to the development of concepts that together create a new perspective on such things as art, music, communication, governance, markets, language, consciousness, life, and the evolution of the universe. We urge professors and administrators to consider adopting complexity studies as a central topic of study for undergraduate students (224).

The monograph does not have an index or glossary. It is 250 pages of diverse content with plenty of references at the end of each chapter.

# Editorial Information

## AIMS AND SCOPE

COSMOS + TAXIS takes its name and inspiration from the Greek terms that F. A. Hayek famously invoked to connote the distinction between *spontaneous orders* and *consciously planned orders*.

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COSMOS + TAXIS is a joint initiative run under the auspices of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at The University of British Columbia and the Political Science Department at Simon Fraser University. All content is made freely available.

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# LEVIATHAN

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