

JOHN LOCKE AND THE PRESERVATION OF LIBERTY: A PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF CIVIC EDUCATION

Early in his much acclaimed account of *The Creation of the American Republic*¹ Professor Gordon Wood draws our attention to one of the most vexed and inadequately explored issues of the American founding. The issue is this. What kind of citizenry was thought by our Founders to be requisite for the preservation and development of the American Republic, a Republic which, above all, was designed to insure *liberty*. Wood reports two sharply divergent positions among those American political thinkers and statesmen who addressed themselves to the question of civic education and the preservation of *liberty*.

The first view which Wood reports as having been especially significant during the revolutionary decade of the 1770s, is tellingly summarized in Samuel Adam's poignant phrase, "the Christian Sparta." From the fiery crucible of revolution there was to emerge, phoenix-like, a revived citizenry modeled after the sternest pattern of antiquity. The rationale for such a return to antiquity, so ran the argument, was that it was "the character and spirit of their people" that made the ancient republics splendid: "Frugality, industry, temperance, and simplicity—the rustic traits of the sturdy yeoman—were the stuff that made a society strong. The virile martial qualities—the scorn of ease, the contempt of danger, the love of valor—were what made a nation great."²

It would seem to follow from this that founders who seek to build strong republics would take every precaution to prevent the rise of commerce, as Lycurgus did in ancient times, and Rousseau sought to do in modernity. In their view, the notion of a "commercial republic" would have been a contradiction in terms, for commerce was seen to undermine the manly virtues without which a republic could not survive. It was commerce that was thought to spur the development of those petty urban crafts that weaken and demean the citizenry. Commerce opens the polis or nation to alien and corrupting influences. It widens the gap between the rich and the poor, degrading the latter, while producing luxuries that enervate the former.

1 Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 118.

² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

This position was brilliantly explicated in the decade preceding the American Revolution by Rousseau in the "Dedication to the Republic of Geneva" of his famous *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*.³ It may have been more familiar to colonial readers through their reading of Montesquieu. Rousseau had taken great care to insure that the citizenry of a genuine republic would find it possible to realize "the general will," or, to put it in other terms, to work unfailingly and consistently for the common good. The requisite homogeneity of the populace with respect to wealth, education, and status—reinforced by the bonds of a common, national religion—would give rise to the same hopes in the hearts of all the citizens, while their heads would be filled with virtually identical opinions. A salutary form of patriotism would develop and grow stronger with each generation. Under such conditions, it would be difficult to distinguish between public and private concerns, and the inherent tension between them would be reduced to the minimum—despite the fact that, in Rousseau's view man is not by nature "a social animal."

That the creation and preservation of such a community would require a curtailment of liberty was understood by at least some of the advocates of "a Christian Sparta." Wood tells us that "Some Whigs were even willing to go so far as to advocate agrarian legislation limiting the amount of property an individual could hold" and to recommend "sumptuary laws against luxury, plays, etc. and extravagant expenses in dress, diet, and the like."⁴

The crux of this argument was that "Every state in which the people participated needed a degree of virtue; but a republic which rested solely on the people absolutely required it." Indeed, "only with a public-spirited, self-sacrificing people could the authority of a popularly elected ruler be obeyed, but 'more by the virtue of the people, than by the terror of his power' . . . virtue was truly the life-blood of the republic. . . ."⁵ Furthermore, "public virtue, the willingness of the people to surrender all, even their lives, for the good of the state, was primarily the consequence of men's individual private virtues."

According to Charles Lee, the goal of the American polity, as

³ Note especially the seven or so criteria specifically set forth by Rousseau for a sound republic in the opening pages of this dedication.

⁴ Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁵ p. 68.

p. 69.

shaped by this perspective should be "a spartan egalitarian society where every man was a soldier and master of his own soul and land, the kind of society, like that of ancient Rome, where the people `instructed from early infancy to deem themselves the property of the State . . . were ever ready to. sacrifice their concerns to her interests.' "7

It is not easy to see how a Christian Sparta can be reconciled with inalienable natural rights, an issue with which Wood is little concerned. Perhaps this difficulty helps to explain the decline, and more particularly, the dilution of the idea of a Christian Sparta. Its real significance is not so much as an *alternative* to a polity dedicated to the security of rights, but rather as one *means* for the securing of rights.

Whatever may have been the views of some, it seems clear that for the Anti-Federalists, the *objective* was not some form of classical or Christian virtue, but individual liberty. Nevertheless most of them agreed with Sam Adams that "neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt." An essential and oft-reiterated concern of the Anti-Federalists was with the formation of a citizenry that would be conducive to the maintenance of a healthy, stable, and free polity. Many Anti-Federalists contended that such a citizenry could be formed only within relatively small republics (though not necessarily *poleis*), whose populace would be essentially homogeneous. Civic education could then be effectively utilized to shape the citizenry. Among the instruments of such education would be religion, and included among the goals would be sound character development and the creation of patriotism in the interests of protecting *freedom*.⁹

Several forces conspired to insure the defeat of the Anti-Federalists and their vision of small republics in which liberty would be fostered and guarded by the development of a virtuous citizenry. It is hardly surprising that the former colonists, having freed themselves from the bonds of an allegedly tyrannical monarch, and an indisputably interfering parliament, were reluctant to sur-

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 53.

⁸ A. J. Beitzinger, *A History of American Political Thought* (New York: 1972), p. 139.

⁹ I am indebted to Professor Herbert Storing for permitting me to read the text of *The Complete Anti-Federalist* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

render any significant part of their precious liberty to the stern demands of civic virtue. Such unity as had been achieved within the American states during the Revolutionary War deteriorated rather rapidly. Renewed political struggle and turmoil ensued as Americans turned to their chosen pursuits. Wood reports John Adams sad lament: " 'God forbid,' . . . that the people of Boston 'should so soon forget their generous Feelings for the Publick and for each other as to set private Interests in Competition with that of the great Community.' " ¹⁰ That great patriot, Patrick Henry, diagnosed the body politic as dangerously sick, for he observed the citizenry returning to the avid pursuit of personal interests. Political tensions, even violent discord of the sort illustrated by Shays' Rebellion, increased apace, with the interests of small farmers pitted against those of large farmers, advocates of soft money with those of hard money, debtors versus creditors.

The Federalists were hardly surprised by this discord. It lent weight to their argument that neither the "classical model" of republicanism, the ultimate object of which was a virtuous citizenry, nor the Anti-Federalist modification, which maintained that liberty must be safeguarded by virtue, was practical. The Federalists sought a radically different solution to the political problem confronting Americans. Pushing the question of virtue aside, they sought to develop political arrangements and institutions that would ensure " 'the existence and security of the government, *even in the absence of political virtue.*' " ¹¹ From this perspective, "men could now argue that '*virtue*, patriotism, or love of country, never was nor never will be till men's natures are changed, a fixed, permanent principle and support of government.' " ¹² For the first time, a system of republican government was to be framed "so as to give 'fair play' to the actions of human nature, however unvirtuous." No attempt was to be made to "pervert, suppress, or ignore the evil propensities of all men." ¹³

To judge from the overall character of *The Federalist*, it is evident that what Madison was pointing to here was the creation of a large commercial republic, one within which the widest possible range of interests would be fostered. No attempt would be made to restrain what Machiavelli bluntly described as "man's natural

¹⁰ Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 421.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 429, emphasis supplied.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 610, emphasis in the original.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 611.

desire to acquire." On the contrary, acquisitiveness would be encouraged, and the citizenry given free scope in developing the abundant resources of a new country. Every form of agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial enterprise would be encouraged. The guiding and energizing principle of the community would be the vigorous pursuit of individual self-interest.

The Federalist position prevailed, and the Republic founded substantially on its principles has grown and prospered for the better part of two centuries. This extraordinary political success does not however necessarily validate all of their views on government. In particular, it leaves open the question of the necessity of some form of civic virtue, an issue on which the Federalists and Anti-Federalists clashed so strongly.

More concretely, how can a republic based solely on the principle of individual self-interest continue to defend itself against its external enemies if its citizenry has not an iota of patriotism, public spirit, or any element of that sense of duty that leads men to make sacrifices in defense of their country? Domestically, would not such a people be subject to such fierce factionalism as to succumb ultimately to the imposition of despotic rule by powerful individuals or groups intent on exploiting others? Would not society become ever more fragmented and men ever more estranged from one another? Tocqueville discerned this atomizing tendency in the young American republic, and he warned of a "virtuous materialism: which could inexorably "ennervate the soul and noiselessly unbend its springs of actions."

The thesis of this essay is that the dangers of which Tocqueville and others warned have progressively, perhaps inevitably, materialized, for neither the Federalists nor the Anti-Federalists provided an adequate analysis of the character and place of civic virtue in the American Republic and the need for some form of civic education. A better grasp of this issue and of a possible solution can be secured by returning to one of the most influential political philosophers from whom both Federalists and Anti-Federalists alike sought guidance, viz., John Locke. In what follows, I shall begin to sketch an interpretation of what I take to be this critically important but insufficiently understood aspect of Locke's work. I shall try to demonstrate the manner in which a republic based essentially on the pursuit of private interest can yet develop those virtues that are ultimately indispensable to the maintenance of liberty. The virtues

of which Locke speaks are fully compatible with the type of polity brought into being by the Federalists. We shall see, however, that they cannot properly be understood as either Christian or classical virtues.¹⁴

Locke's Education for Civic Virtue

It is no longer generally realized that, shortly after publishing his *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke published a seminal work on education, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (hereafter cited simply as the *Education*.) This work was so well received that its author was afforded the opportunity of revising it through five editions.

In the discussion of the *Education* that follows, I shall pursue two major lines of argument. First, it was Locke's intention in this work to provide among other things, an understanding of civic virtue. Locke believed that this kind of virtue was compatible with—even indispensable for—the maintenance and well being of legitimate republics or commonwealths. The political principles underlying such commonwealths are set forth in Locke's "Second Treatise," the more pertinent title of which for our purposes is *An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government*. Second, I shall argue that Locke believed that a stratum of especially bred and educated men and women was required for the preservation and well being of civil or legitimate commonwealths in order to cope with the political-educational problems to which we have drawn attention and which are inherent in them. There are two additional (and very pertinent) problems which cannot be confronted here, chiefly because of a lack of data. We do not presently possess the resources to speculate meaningfully on the question of the degree to which the American Founders were directly influenced by Locke's *Education*. But this we do know: some fifteen editions of the work appeared in English, French, and other languages between 1693 and 1779, together with many reprintings. The *Education* was also included in the editions of Locke's *Collected Works*. It was therefore readily available and widely read. Jefferson purchased the

¹⁴ For some especially interesting and provocative reflections on this question, see Irving Kristol, "Republican Virtue vs. Servile Institutions," (*The Alternative*, February, 1975, Vol. 8, No. 5, pp. 5-9). Kristol emphasizes that "'republican virtue,' in the American meaning of that phrase, is a very different kind of virtue from, say, Christian virtue or classical virtue as the ancient Greeks understood it . . . it is a political conception rather than a religious one," p. 6.

Education for his personal library, but evidence of a different sort is required to establish the extent of its influence.¹⁵ Perhaps it had very little. For, unlike Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, it may have been little read by our Founders, inadequately understood, or both. Also, whatever the influence of Locke's *Education* on the Founders, it is a separate question whether its political—educational principles are directly applicable to our situation today. In any event, I suggest that thoughtful consideration of Locke's educational teaching should be instructive to us in understanding the roots of pressing difficulties presently confronting our citizenry and our country.

Locke constantly draws our attention to the inherent weaknesses of civil societies. He observes, for example, that "the variety of opinions and contrariety of interests which unavoidably happen in all collections of men . . . would make the *mighty leviathan* of a shorter duration than the feeblest creatures, and not let it outlast the day it was born in. . . ."¹⁶

What can be done to protect the "mighty leviathan" from this defect? If we answer this question on the basis of Locke's strictly political teaching, the answer would have to be *nothing*. Locke reinforces this observation by telling us bluntly that "however strange it may seem, the *law-maker* hath nothing to do with moral virtues and vices. . . ."¹⁷ One infers from this that Locke draws a sharp line between politics and morality, including (one may reasonably suppose) any form of civic morality or civic education designed to foster morality.

But before confronting this problem directly, we must be clear that this is a moral issue within the framework of Locke's thought, and we must establish it as such. One recalls from reading Locke's

¹⁵ When Mrs. Charles Carroll of Carrollton posed for her portrait by Charles Willson Peale, that influential lady held in her hands Locke's *Education*, the title of which Peale made clearly identifiable in the picture. Mrs. Carroll thought, as did her husband, I am told, that Locke's work was most appropriate for one in her position. I am indebted to Professor Ann Diamond for bringing this fact to my attention and to Ms. Ann Van Devanter, Guest Curator of The Baltimore Museum of Art for background information on both the picture and Mrs. Carroll.

¹⁶ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. References to this work are from the Hafner Library of Classics edition, edited by Thomas I. Cook, 1956. All references include the designation of the *Treatise*, I or II, Locke's section number for the convenience of those using other editions, and the page number in the Hafner edition, II, 98, page 170, emphasis supplied.

¹⁷ J. W. Gough, *John Locke's Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 190.

Essay Concerning Civil Government that men escape from the penury, misery, yea, the overwhelming dangers of the state of nature by voluntarily contracting with others to form civil society. Men thereby vastly improve their chances for comfortable self-preservation in a world that is naturally cold, hostile, and exceedingly dangerous. Mankind in the state of nature was said to be governed by the law of nature, but Locke quietly, though surely, reveals to his readers that this law is of virtually no use in protecting men from one another.¹⁸ It is simply ineffective, human nature being what it is. It is only within *civil society* that man's lot can be effectively improved. It is in civil society that man can be secured in the enjoyment of his liberty, be made relatively safe from the risk of suffering violence at the hands of others, and accumulate almost limitless amounts of property. Civil society makes possible the enactment and enforcement of moral and legal codes.

Very good. But Locke also tells us that men are neither naturally nor adequately grateful for the blessings that they enjoy, nor yet generally blessed with much foresight. Thus, once secured by civil society from imminent danger of loss of life, liberty, and property, they have an unfortunate propensity to cheat or chisel a bit on the social contract they have made with their fellow citizens. We are all more or less familiar with the sort of short-sighted calculation anticipated by Locke. For example, we are painfully reminded by mid-April every year that it is very important for the fiscal soundness of the country that everyone pay his full income taxes, i.e., everyone but me. Now, unless there is some reasonably effective check on this sort of selfish calculation and the consequent action (or inaction), it is obvious that civil society cannot be maintained. Civil society makes possible civil law and provides the framework within which the moral questions that concern us as citizens must be dealt with.

But in order to understand Locke's treatment of such moral questions, one must identify the foundations of morality in his thought. We are assisted in this quest by an extremely interesting passage in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* where he speaks of "the great variety of opinions concerning moral rules which are to be found among men." He relates this observation to his subsequent discussion of the bases on which or by which men

¹⁸ For a penetrating discussion of Locke's treatment of this issue, see Richard H. Cox, *Locke on War and Peace* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), especially Ch. II.

can be expected to keep their compacts, a condition on which the very possibility of civil society depends.

That men should keep their compacts is certainly a great and undeniable rule in morality. But yet, if a Christian, who has the view of happiness and misery in another life, be asked why a man must keep his word, he will give this as a reason:—Because God, who has the power of eternal life and death, requires it of us. But if a Hobbist be asked why? he will answer:—Because the public requires it, and the Leviathan will punish you if you do not. And if one of the old philosophers had been asked, he would have answered:—Because it was dishonest, below the dignity of a man, and opposite to virtue, the highest perfection of human nature to do otherwise.¹⁹

We must afford some consideration to each of these three bases of morality and thereby for the performance of contracts. Each is understood by Locke to play some part, though rather different and unequal parts, in the preservation of civil society.

As regards the first of these foundations of morality, Locke observes that religious faith is said to be positively supported by the greatest reward available to man, *viz.*, salvation of his soul and its ensuing eternal felicity. Negatively, the spur to virtuous conduct based on religious faith is the awful fear of eternal damnation of the soul and the prospect of indescribable punishment. Still, we must briefly consider Locke's observations regarding religion as a sound and adequate foundation for virtue. Experience tells us, says he, that while "self-interest, and the convenience of this life, make many men own an outward profession and approbation . . ." of religion, their "actions sufficiently prove that they very little consider the Lawgiver that prescribed these rules; nor the hell that he has ordained for the punishment of those that transgress them."²⁰ This observation finds support in Locke's famous observation that the *actions* of men are the best "interpreters of their thoughts." However fervent their professions of religious faith, Locke concludes that most men do not have such assured "internal veneration for those rules, nor so full a persuasion of their certainty and obligation" as

¹⁹ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (hereafter cited as the *Essay*). References to this work are from the Dover Publications editions, which is reprinted from the Alexander C. Fraser edition of 1894. The work is reprinted in full in two volumes, 1959. All references include the number of the volume, Locke's book and chapter number, his section number within the chapter, and the page number in the Dover edition, Vol. I, Book I, Ch. II, 5, p. 69.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

to make religious faith a sufficient foundation for the keeping of contracts.

Locke had many good reasons for wanting to *appear* to be a devout Christian. His writings are replete with statements that he and others could advance in defense of his piety, if it were questioned. He went so far as to write a substantial work entitled *The Reasonableness of Christianity*.²¹ One may infer that he did not want to discourage sound moral conduct based on religious belief, though we shall see more clearly that he was far from counting decisively on the efficacy of such belief to ensure good conduct, especially on the part those people whom he intended as the subjects of his educational program. Nor should one overlook Locke's misgivings regarding religious fervor, for he had long observed that fervent religious belief was a source of ferocious civil strife in England and elsewhere.

Turning to a more tangible and worldly foundation for morality, Locke speaks of the civil law. "This law nobody overlooks," says he, "the rewards and punishments that enforce it being ready at hand, and suitable to the power that makes it: which is the force of the Commonwealth, engaged to protect the lives, liberties, and possessions of those who live according to its laws, and has power to take away life, liberty, or goods, from him who disobeys; which is the punishment of offenses committed against his law."²²

These are no small sanctions, and it is surely true that hardly any sane adult "overlooks" the civil law. Still, as Locke observes in another context, the temptation "to escape the knowledge or power of the law-maker, or the like, may make men give way to present appetite." It seems that, while such men may not "overlook" the civil law, they do not therefore necessarily *obey* it. Overflowing prisons in all ages bear ample testimony to the fact that numerous men have thought it possible to "get away" with disobeying the civil law.

Fear of the law can, of course, be heightened in ferocious tyrannies, where powerful organizations of secret police, brutal penalties, and bestial prison conditons doubtless serve to deter violations of

²¹ This work should be compared to *A Disclosure of Miracles*, which appears to undermine the possibility of establishing the d6gmas of any religion by reason. Under the terms of his will, Locke left the question of posthumous publication of this discourse to the discretion of certain "judicious friends."

²² *Essay*, op. cit., Vol. I, Book II, Ch. XXVIII, 9 p. 476.

the legal code. The force of law must be taken into account, but it is by no means a sufficient foundation for morality.

We must then turn to the most important basis for morality in Locke's thought. This basis or standard is said by Locke to have been the emphatic concern of "the old philosophers," i.e., the pre-modern philosophers. Locke terms this standard variously as "the philosophical law," the "law of opinion or reputation," or occasionally (and rather curiously) as the "law of fashion." He helps us understand the character of this law in an unusually interesting passage in the *Essay*:

Virtue and vice are names pretended and supposed everywhere to stand for actions in their own nature right and wrong: and as far as they really are so applied, they so far are coincident with the divine law above mentioned. But yet, whatever is pretended, this is visible, that these names, virtue and vice, in the particular instances of their application, through the several nations and societies of men in the world are constantly attributed only to such actions as in each country and society are in reputation or discredit.²³

This "law of opinion" is established slowly but conclusively "by a secret and tacit consent . . . in the several societies, tribes, and clubs of men in the world: whereby several actions come to find credit or disgrace amongst them, according to the judgment, maxims, or fashion of that place."²⁴ Its operation depends on the desire of men for credit and reputation, or from their fear of shame and disgrace. This is nothing less than "the principal spring from which the acting of men take their rise, the rule they conduct them by, and the end to which they direct them. . . ." This is the law that is decisive in determining, for example, the choice of preferred occupations among men. It "makes merchants in one country and soldiers in another. This puts men upon school divinity in one country, and physics or mathematics in another." It even "cuts out the dresses for the women, and makes the fashions for the men and makes them endure the inconvenience of all. . . ." ²⁵

²³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Book II, Ch. XXVIII, 10, p. 476. In the first edition of the *Essay* Locke remarks that he terms this "the *philosophical* law—not because philosophers make it, but because they have most busied themselves to inquire after it, and talk about it . . ." Vol. I, Book II, Ch. XXVIII, 9, p. 476, nf. 1.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 477.

²⁵ James L. Axtell, *The Educational Writings of John Locke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), hereafter cited as the *Education*. All references to this work include Locke's section number, and the page number in Axtell's edition, p. 153, fn. 1. Axtell discovered this significant quotation in a

Paradoxically, the effectiveness of this law is linked to the fact that the members of a given community accept its standards as absolutely true. At the same time, Locke reveals to us that this law of opinion is characterized by what today we would term its "relativity." We must return to this point, but first it is necessary to learn more from Locke about the effective functioning of this law and the way in which it is inculcated into a community.

Locke has told us that adherence to the law of opinion (which we may now, without being misleading, term the law of public opinion), enables man to endure inconveniences and even much more. It can persuade men to give up their most precious possessions under certain circumstances, even life itself. It enables some men silently to bear the most terrible torture: "this makes the Hurons and other people of Canada with such constancy endure torments.

. . .²⁶ The Huron Indians spoken of in this passage were warriors whose moral code, or "law of public opinion," commanded them, if captured, to die in silence, no matter how terrible their torture. One may begin to perceive in Locke's line of reasoning here a route through which a teaching about civic virtue may be understood.

Before proceeding on this path, one must ask how the "law of public opinion" could "condition" men voluntarily to suffer pain, especially since one learns elsewhere in Locke's *Essay* that the chief positive good men naturally seek is pleasure, or, put negatively, the avoidance of pain.²⁷

Locke's answer is that the standards of the community, via the law of public opinion, can in varying degrees be inculcated into the young. Those who seek "to principle children" can "instill into the unwary, and as yet unprejudiced, understanding, (for white paper receives any characters), those doctrines they would have them retain and profess."²⁸ These doctrines generally remain unchallenged as people grow older, for they will not be able to "find anything more ancient there than those opinions, which were taught them before their memory began to keep a register of their actions. . . ." More significantly, these doctrines or opinions will seem to be "natural," to those who hold them, for virtually all members of a community will "make no scruple to conclude, that these proposi-

diary entry of Locke's dated December 12, 1678. It was made while Locke was traveling in France.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Essay*, op. cit., Vol. I, Book II, Ch. XXI, 43-44, pp. 341-42.

²⁸ *Essay*, Vol. I, Book I, Ch. II, 22, p. 87.

tions of whose knowledge they can find in themselves no original, were certainly the impress of God and nature upon their minds, and not taught them by any one else."²⁹

It is precisely this self-enforcing or internalized aspect of the law of public opinion that renders its operation most certain and its enforcement far easier, less complex, and infinitely more economical than is the case with the civil law. It is noteworthy, incidentally, that, according to Locke, the power of the conscience can become effective in helping to enforce the law of public opinion rather than the religious law. Locke may here be providing us with a tacit indication of the part religion *should* play in civil society. Locke has earlier observed that the actions of innumerable people testify to their belief that they can break the religious law with impunity and risk violations of the civil law, but he tells us in no uncertain terms that "no man escapes the punishment of their censure and dislike, who offends against the fashion and opinion of the company he keeps, and would recommend himself to." He contends further that there is not "one of ten thousand, who is stiff and insensible enough to bear up under the constant dislike and condemnation of his own club. He must be of a strange and unusual constitution, who can content himself to live in constant disgrace and disrepute with his own particular society. . . . This is a burden too heavy for human sufferance. . . ." ³⁰

Given the critical importance of the law of public opinion, it follows that governments, even though they be legitimately constituted, will be ineffective unless they rest on a foundation of sound opinion. That in turn can be accomplished only if the content of public opinion is established through the sound education of those citizens on whom the proper functioning of the commonwealth depends. This is the ultimate concern of civic education for Locke in its most comprehensive and far-reaching sense.

Locke's Intention in Some Thoughts Concerning Education

Our hypothesis regarding Locke's view of the relationship between the law of public opinion and the overall character of the regimes within which it exists is fully consistent with his statement

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., Vol. I, Book II, Ch. XXVIII, 12, p. 479, Cf. Essay, Vol. I, Book I, Ch. II, pp. 88-89, where Locke describes the power of custom as "a greater power than nature" which seldom fails to make men "worship for divine what she hath inured them to bow their minds and submit their understanding to. . . ."

of intention in the Epistle Dedicatory of the *Education*.³¹ His concern in that work transcends the sphere of the strictly political, which is the specific concern of his *Two Treatises of Government*. Thus we observe that in the Preface to the *Two Treatises* Locke declares that he will "make good" the ruler's "title in the consent of the people," while counteracting the "greatest mischief to prince and people" that can occur, *viz.*, "the propagating wrong notions concerning government." In the Epistle Dedicatory to the *Education* Locke tells us that "this Subject is of so great Concernment, and a right way of Education is of so general Advantage . . ." that "Errors in Education should be less indulged than any. . . ."

The well Educating of their Children is so much the Duty and Concern of Parents, and the *Welfare and Prosperity of the Nation so much depends on it*, that I would have *every one* lay it seriously to Heart; and after having well examined and distinguished what Fancy, Custom or Reason advises in the Case, set his Helping Hand to promote every where that Way of training up Youth, with regard to their several Conditions, which is the easiest, shortest, and likeliest to produce *vertuous*, useful, and able Men in their distinct Callings: ³²

Locke includes himself in the injunction that "every one," whether parents or not, should be concerned with this educational task. He presents himself in this context as one who is carrying out *his* civic duty: "for I think it every Man's indispensable Duty, to do all the Service he can to his country: and I see not what

³¹ Unfortunately, Locke's extremely important Epistle Dedicatory does not appear in the two editions of the *Education* most widely used in the United States and in Britain. Peter Gay's inexpensive and popular edition (New York: Teachers College, Columbia, 1964) drops the Epistle Dedicatory without informing the reader of its existence, although the editor does admit to having "made a number of cuts . . ." (p. 19). The precedent for this inexcusable and unnecessary abridgement of Locke's rather short book was firmly established by a British editor, John W. Adamson, in *The Educational Writings of John Locke* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1922). The editor used the very imperfect first edition of the *Education* as the basal text "supplemented by passages from later editions which are historically interesting . . ." (p. 21). But the ultimate excesses in mutilation of the *Education* have been perpetrated by F. W. Garforth (London: Heinemann, 1964). He seeks to provide the reader with an improved version of the *Education*, first by sharply abridging Locke's work and then through reordering such material as in his wisdom he has thought fit to retain. Included in this literary monstrosity are two paragraphs from the Epistle Dedicatory smuggled into the context of a synthetic "Introduction." The only unabridged edition of the *Education* currently available is in *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, edited by James L. Axtell (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1968).

³² *Education*, Epistle Dedicatory, pp. 112-113, emphasis supplied.

Difference he puts between himself and his Cattel, who lives without that Thought."33

We must emphasize that it is not Locke's intention in the *Education* to deal with the education of the entire citizenry but only with that part which he regards as indispensable for the preservation of the commonwealth and of those standards requisite for the maintenance of its political legitimacy. These people provide the standards of behavior and opinion by which others are guided. It is this stratum of the populace that plays the most significant part in shaping the law of public opinion. It also carries a very significant part of the everyday political responsibilities within the commonwealth. This stratum of the populace is termed "gentlemen" by Locke. Of them he says that "if those of that Rank are by their Education once set right, they will quickly bring all the rest into Order."³⁴ We shall refer to these people hereafter as "the gentry."

Locke contends that a relatively small stratum of the populace of a commonwealth can, should, and must carry extraordinary responsibilities in shaping the life of the entire community. The violently antagonistic reactions that will be evoked in some by such an "elitist" doctrine may, perhaps, be somewhat softened by our invocation of the testimony of that eminent social scientist, Max Weber, who can at least help us to understand historically the origins of the gentry. In his famous lecture, "Politics as a Vocation," Weber says of these people that "The English gentry represents a stratum that the prince originally attracted in order to counter the barons. The prince placed the stratum in possession of the offices of 'self-government,' and later he himself became increasingly dependent upon them." But this was not all, for "The gentry maintained the possession of all offices of local administration by taking them over without compensation in the interest of their own social power."³⁵ Weber provides us with further, helpful information about the make-up of this stratum of the populace, which included

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113. See Professor Wood's discussion of "The Democratization of Mind in the American Revolution" in Robert Horwitz (ed.), *The Moral Foundations of the American Republic* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977, forthcoming), Ch. 6. Wood provides a most helpful description of the American counterpart of the "gentlemen" described by Locke. Of them it was said "if only the educated and enlightened, if only gentlemen, could be convinced, then the rest would follow naturally." This is precisely Locke's point.

³⁵ Gerth and Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 93.

"clergymen, teachers, professors, lawyers, doctors, apothecaries, prosperous farmers, manufacturers—in England the whole stratum that considered itself as belonging to the class of gentlemen...".³⁶ Such political organization as they had consisted at first of "occasional associations at most local political clubs."³⁷

If we are to understand Locke's *Education* aright, it is imperative that we do not confuse the gentry with the titled nobility, which possessed great hereditary wealth and position. While the gentry consisted largely of families of varying degrees of wealth, within its ranks were always to be found men of modest means but of exceptional intelligence, industry, and foresight who possessed the capacity for improving their circumstances. It is important to understand that Locke did not write his *Education* as a form of apologetics for the existing gentry, to say nothing of the hereditary nobility, as is often suggested in the abysmally bad introductions to most editions of the *Education*. Quite the contrary. He berates the contemporary English gentry which, in its rural manifestations, is characterized by Locke as having the "Cup often at [its] Nose," while wasting much of its remaining time in the chase. Its urban counterpart is seen to be squandering its time at cards and its substance in gambling. It is no small part Locke's concern over the widespread decay of the gentry that requires him to address himself to the problem of its re-education. "Vice . . . ripens so fast now adays, and runs up to Seed so early in young people, that it is impossible to keep a Lad from spreading Contagion: if you will venture him abroad in the Herd.. .".³⁸ It is no exaggeration to say that Locke felt that the future of the commonwealth was threatened unless his program of educational reform was successful, for if the "Innocence, Sobriety, and Industry," of those who are coming up, be not taken care of and preserved, "twill be ridiculous to expect, that those who are to succeed next on the Stage, should abound in that Vertue, Ability, and Learning, which has hitherto made *England* considerable in the World."³⁹

Implicit in Locke's warning is a suggestion amplified through the *Education*, viz., the decay of the young gentry cannot be rectified by the existing English schools and universities. Why not? Because, Locke tells us, as for the substance of what is imparted by the exist-

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Education*, 70, pp. 169-170.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, emphasis in the original.

ing educational institution, he would rather not have the students' "Heads stuff'd with a deal of trash. . . ." ⁴⁰ As for the pedagogical techniques by which this "trash" is implanted, Locke finds them stupid and self-defeating. They are based on a misunderstanding of the nature of children, misdirected teaching techniques, and improper goals.

Given his evaluation of the existing educational institutions, it should not surprise us that Locke demands far more than mere reform. He does something far more radical, recommending to parents in no uncertain terms that they avoid the corruption of public education altogether. He insists that parents assume full responsibility for the education of their children, a program that must be undertaken privately—far removed from the influence of state and church alike. Locke's educational program differed so radically from existing educational theory and practice that he delayed publication of his *Education* for many years. Even then he first published it anonymously, explaining that "I am not in my nature a lover of novelty, nor contradiction; but my notions in this treatise, have run me so far out of the common road and practice, that I would have been glad to have had them . . . stopped, if they had appeared impracticable, or extravagant, from going any farther."⁴¹

An adequate account of Locke's rich and complex educational thought cannot be presented here, so I shall address myself as much as possible to the central concern of the relationship between liberty and virtue as the problem presents itself within the *Education*. I will also attempt to provide something of an overview of the substance and technique of Locke's educational teaching. This discussion is guided by the hypothesis that a basic goal of this educational enterprise is that of developing youngsters fitted to become suitable members of a class of citizens indispensable for the creation or preservation of a Lockian civil society.

For our purposes, we may consider that the subject matter of the *Education* consists of three major categories: (1) training of the body, (2) the redirecting or rechanneling of basic human passions through a somewhat unique process of habituation, and (3) the carefully charted activation of the mind. Before considering these aspects of Locke's educational project, we must take account of

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 94, p. 200.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13, quoted from a letter dated March 28, 1693 to his friend, William Molyneux of Dublin. See *Works III*, p. 491.

the raw materials with which the educator must work, i.e., human nature. Locke provides a thorough, though *artfully* presented, account of human nature in his *Two Treatises of Government*. In the *Education* he seems to suggest that we can confirm this understanding by discovering anew—at the beginning of every human life—the same essential traits that characterize human nature. Locke's accounts of the nature of infants, children, and young men and women are not simply speculative. He had spent a considerable part of his early manhood as a tutor at Oxford, and subsequently he served as a tutor (among other things) in the households of some of England's greatest statesmen. He was a physician of no mean capacity, who in the process of supervising the delivery of some of his future charges, was able to observe newborn infants at first hand. Let us listen for a moment to the observations of this philosopher, educator, and physician as he bends over the cradle to observe the tender infants within.

"I have told you" throughout the *Education*, says Locke, "that *Children* love *Liberty* . . ." ⁴² but "I now tell you they love something more; and that is *Dominion*: And this is the first Original of most vicious Habits, that are ordinary and natural. This Love of *Power* and *Dominion* shews itself very early. . . ." ⁴³ We further observe, says Locke, that "Children as soon almost as they are born . . . cry, grow peevish, sullen and out of humour, for nothing but to have their wills." ⁴⁴ They naturally want to dominate others, and, no less naturally, demand "*Property* and *Possession*" over whatever inanimate objects about them happen to catch their fancy.

Nor are these the only natural passions that Locke observes in children. "They often *torment* and treat very roughly young Birds, Butterflies, and such other poor Animals, which fall into their Hands, and that with a seeming kind of Pleasure." ⁴⁵ This natural cruelty is contrasted by Locke to the "unnatural Cruelty" subsequently "planted in us" through the medium of custom. Essential for Locke's understanding of human nature is his conclusion that "we are all, even from our Cradles, vain and proud Creatures.

: ⁴⁶ The significance of these natural characteristics and propensities is heightened by the fact that children "quickly learn the

⁴² *ibid.*, 103, p. 207.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 104, p. 207.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 116, pp. 225-26, emphasis in the original.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 119, p. 229.

Trick" or art of "Dissimulation, and Falsehood, which they observe others to make Use of."⁴⁷

One might easily—and rightly—conclude that these new-born infants and young children described by Locke possess natures better suited for existence in either the state of nature or Hobbian despotisms than for an education designed to prepare them for citizenship within civil society. I have stated the problem in harsh terms, for the task of the Lockian educator cannot properly be described as anything less than formidable.

In view of this understanding of the raw materials with which the Lockian educator must work, he has to make a critically portant choice between two ways of proceeding. The traditional mode of education was that of imposing a harsh and very restrictive regimen on the child. Discipline of the body was guided by a simple maxim: "spare the rod and spoil the child." The child's mental "faculties" were supposed to be developed by endless, repetitive drill and memorization. Above all, every aspect of education was shaped by a pervasive concern with the salvation of the soul. Locke enumerates a few of the materials used for this religious education, "the Horn—Book, Primer, Psalter, Testament, and Bible."⁴⁸ Schools and universities, it must be remembered, rested on religious foundations, were staffed largely from the ranks of the clergy, and held their most important function to be the preparation of young men for religious orders.⁴⁹

Locke castigates the contemporary "educational establishment," its activities, approach, and methods throughout his *Education*. He demonstrates that it is misdirected and self-defeating. Self-defeating because its victims, as Locke views those children subjected to it, call into play all of their enormous energy in order to negate the educational program imposed upon them. At best, the brutality of the educators might secure an outward show of conformity on the part of students in order to minimize beatings. But childrens' objective, the real game of their lives, and their chief sport then becomes that of outwitting parents and educators. While the latter believe themselves to be concerned with the child's welfare and development, all that the youngsters see in these efforts of their elders is an attempt to dominate them—a cruel effort to

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 131, pp. 239-240.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 157, p. 260.

⁴⁹ See Maurice Cranston, *John Locke, A Biography* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1957), p. 74 for a discussion of some aspects of this point.

deprive them of their cherished liberty. Such "students" long for the day when they can escape these toils and pursue their happiness.

All this is not to say that the traditional mode of education had *no* effect. Locke observes that the application of sufficient force, beatings, and heavy-handed subjugation sometimes succeeds in breaking childrens' spirits. But such youngsters he regards as virtually destroyed. They would never be of use to themselves or to others. Subdued and submissive wretches are suitable subjects for despotisms, but are in no way fitted for productive lives—to say nothing of active citizenship—in *civil* society.⁵⁰

It comes as no surprise then to discover that Locke's approach to education is diametrically opposed in every significant respect to the contemporary approach. Instead of attempting to stifle the natural vigor of children, he contends that we must employ it positively in behalf of our educational endeavor. He would harness the spontaneous vitality of children rather than oppose it. It is folly, he argues, to entomb youngsters in bleak study halls or chambers. They will learn nothing of use, and probably nothing at all. You will only manage to enfeeble their bodies and fill them with a loathing for school. Youngsters should spend most of their time out of doors, in fair weather or foul. Your objective should be to foster sound bodily growth, to toughen their physiques. Locke's blunt advice to the gentry on this point is simple. They "should use their Children, as the honest Farmers and substantial Yeomen do theirs."⁵¹ The children of the gentry should be made as little dependent as possible on the comforts by which the wealthy generally corrupt and enervate their children. Their food should be plain and simple; their meals should be somewhat irregular. They should learn to sleep on uncomfortable beds and to make—do with whatever rough expedients may be made available for the bare satisfaction of their bodily desires. Such youngsters will become ever more rugged and able to withstand not only the ever-present illnesses and perils of childhood, but also—and more significantly—their tough, hearty bodies will be well-fitted to bear up under the inevitable vicissitudes of later years.

The natural passions reported by Locke as he observed the

⁵⁰ *Education*, 50, p. 150. Locke castigates that severe and "slavish discipline" that may break a child's spirit and thereby produce a "*low spirited moap'd*" being, who will prove to be a "useless thing to himself and others" throughout his life.

⁵¹ *Education*, 4, pp. 115-116.

infant in his cradle should not, indeed, cannot, be suppressed or simply eliminated. What is wanted is not suppression, but *redirection*: "For where there is no Desire there will be no industry."⁵² The powerful, relentless, and urgent drives of the passions supply the motive power by which the youngster's activities are impelled and fueled. The art of the educator is to harness this abundant power and to channel or direct it toward objectives beneficial to the child and the community. Locke furnishes us with a number of "keys" or "secrets" to this art throughout the *Education*. The first of these is familiar to contemporary Americans as the "Tom Sawyer technique." Try to force a youngster to do a task, e.g., whitewash a fence, and the battle is on! If the job is done at all, it will be at a snail's pace, and the child will likely manage to establish that your efforts were not worth the meager results. Locke's suggestion: keep the brushes and whitewash inaccessible, but arrange that one day the child will "happen" to see an esteemed adult whitewash a few boards with apparent relish and satisfaction. The child will be consumed with a desire to enjoy the privilege of participating in this activity of grown-ups. You will hardly be able to keep him from this good "sport."

It is in such a fashion that Locke did in fact successfully tempt youngsters under his supervision to learn the letters of the alphabet at a very early age. He designed what we might term "alphabetical dice,"⁵³ which he initially made inaccessible to the children of the household. The youngsters watched with wonder and envy as adults rolled the dice, identified the mysterious symbols, and composed words from them. The dice were kept under lock and key, thereby making them all the more desirable. With seeming reluctance the adults granted the children the privilege of participating in this grand sport, the successful pursuit of which of course required them to learn the alphabet. We all know from experience how quickly children can learn something that *they* consider of pressing importance and in which they find delight. They devote themselves wholeheartedly to such pursuits and master difficulties in short order. Locke was not unaware that the game we have described would also heighten natural competitiveness, nor would he have objected to this—as perhaps many, contemporary American educators might.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 126, p. 234.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 150-52, pp. 256-258.

The example of "alphabetical dice" points to the second of Locke's "keys" to sound education, for whatever activity children are engaged in presents perceptive, adult spectators opportunities to bestow *praise* or *blame* on the participants. Let the child who quickly learns the alphabet, or who recognizes complex words from the roll of the dice, be praised for his keenness; an additional warm satisfaction is thereby added to the pleasure and rewards of the pastime that he is avidly pursuing. Well-timed, sincere, and carefully directed praise enable parents and other educators to make good use of the child's "natural pride," even as one works to socialize its effects by increasing his desire for a good reputation among those peers whom he likes and those adults whom he respects and to whom he looks up throughout his childhood.

Rechanneling Human Vices

Each of the natural vices of "the Sons of *Adam*," to use Locke's term, must be redirected into socially sound and useful channels, if it cannot be transformed. For example, Locke has told us that children are naturally possessive and quick to seize upon whatever strikes their fancy. The educator must therefore try to redirect this vice into a form of virtue, *viz.*, "the contrary quality of a Readiness to impart to others . . ."

This should be encouraged by great Commendation and Credit, and constantly taking care, that he loses nothing by his *Liberality*. Let all the Instances he gives to such Freeness, be always repaid, and with Interest; and let him sensibly perceive, that the Kindness he shews to others is no ill Husbandry for himself; but that it brings a Return of Kindness both from those that receive it, and those who look on. Make this a Contest among Children, who shall out-do one another this way: And by this Means, by a constant Practice, Children having made it easier to themselves to part with what they have, good Nature may be settled in them into a Habit, and they may take Pleasure, and pique themselves to being *Kind, Liberal* and *Civil* to others.⁵⁴

We must observe that in this illustration the child acts freely. He is not compelled to give to others, but he learns through his rewarding experiences that "generosity is the best policy." To be sure, this is a utilitarian understanding of "Liberality," but it is one that is perfectly compatible with a Lockian commonwealth, a political order whose legitimacy is based on the freely given consent

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 110, pp. 214-215.

of the governed and whose watchword is *liberty*. Locke's *Education* makes it abundantly clear to the careful reader that the goal of the educator within such a polity cannot and should not be the development of a citizenry shaped by the classical virtues as they were understood by "the old philosophers," for they left virtue "unendowed" or unrewarded. The most we can expect of the Lockian counterpart of these virtues is some reasonable facsimile thereof—but even this is by no means inconsequential for the political order.

Locke's citizenry is not significantly shaped by the Christian virtues, at least as they were understood by his religious contemporaries. We observed earlier that Locke took pains to remove his prospective students from the hands of the clergy through the simple expedient of educating them at home.⁵⁵ What kind of religious training does Locke then recommend to their parents and tutors? The answer to this question can be succinctly stated: Surprisingly little, simple, and rather curious.

Locke tells us that there ought "to be imprinted" on the child's "Mind a true Notion of *God*, as of the independent Supreme Being, Author and Maker of all Things. . . ."⁵⁶ In the same paragraph he goes on to add that it "would be better if Men generally" accepted "such an Idea of *God*, without being too Curious in their Notions about a Being, which all must acknowledge incomprehensible. . . ." Locke would not have children, or even adults for that matter, "distract their Thoughts with curious Enquiries into his inscrutable Essence and Being."⁵⁷ Locke firmly warns us that the "tender Mind" of the young especially must be protected "from all Impressions and Notions of Spirits and Goblins," from "Bug-bear" Thoughts, "from what we would today call "Ghost stories," e.g., tales of "*Raw-Head* and *Bloody Bones*"⁵⁸ and especially from any mention of "Evil Spirits."⁶⁰ This would surely preclude any reference to the devil or his minions. Locke observed that such pernicious notions are all too commonly spread by uneducated and superstitious folk, especially servants, who commonly try to cow their young charges into obedience by frightening them with tales of the supernatural.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 136, p. 241.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 138, pp. 242-43.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 138, p. 244.

Locke never tires of warning parents that they must take the greatest pains to protect children against this particularly pernicious source of corruption.

Still, how could such protection be afforded within a devoutly Christian household in view of the innumerable references in the New Testament to spirits, both good and evil, the devil, the endless torments of hell that await the wicked, and all such things? Locke's answer is blunt and to the point. Protecting the children against superstitious servants will not suffice; they must also be protected from the Bible itself. The "Good Book" is to be kept strictly out of their hands.

As for the *Bible*, which Children are usually employ'd in, to exercise and improve their Talent *in Reading*, I think, the promiscuous reading of it through, by Chapters, as they lye in order, is so far from being of any Advantage to Children, either for the perfecting their *Reading*, or principling their Religion, that perhaps a worse could not be found . . . what an odd jumble of Thoughts must a Child have in his Head, if he have any at all, such as he should have concerning Religion, who in his tender Age, reads all the Parts of the *Bible* indifferently as the Word of God without any other distinction.⁶¹

Locke goes on to suggest that in place of Holy Scripture the child might be provided with a brief "history of the Bible," a work designed to avoid what Locke tantalizing terms the "inconvenient" notions of Scripture." Editors of these improved Histories of the Bible were charged with taking care to arrange that their contents were "laid down in . . . due order of Time," with "several things omitted . . ." from Scripture. Readers would thus be spared the "Confusion which is usually produced by promiscuous reading of the Scriptures . . ." A good case in point, Locke seems to suggest, is the Biblical account of "*Noah's Flood*," for he offers an alternative explanatory "hypothesis" designed to take account of the "Phaenomena of the Deluge as deliver'd by *Moses*, at an easier rate that those many hard Biblical Suppositions that are made use of to explain it."⁶² Such negative suggestions aside, Locke goes on positively and reassuringly to tell us "that there are some Parts of the Scripture, which may be proper to be put into the Hands of a Child, to ingage him to read: such as are the Story of *Joseph*, and

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 158, p. 261.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 191, pp. 302-303.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 192, pp. 303-304.

his Brethren, of *David* and *Goliath*, of *David* and *Jonathan*," and so on. Locke adds that there are other "Stories" that the child "should be made to read for his Instruction, as That, *What you would have others do unto you, do you the same unto them*; . . ." It is worth observing that all of the Biblical "stories" recommended by Locke in this passage are from the Old Testament, and also that his negative statement of the "Golden Rule" follows Hobbes rather than Jesus.⁶⁴

There is, however, a more significant observation to be made about Locke's references to the Bible in his *Education*. Almost every time that he speaks of the possible use of the Bible for educational purposes, he refers to a strikingly different source of moral instruction, *viz.*, *Aesop's Fables*. The Bible, as we have seen, is to be kept strictly out of the hands of children, but *Aesop* is to be made ever so readily available to the child as soon as he has learned to read. Locke pointedly describes *Aesop* as a book that will not fill the child's head "with perfectly useless trumpery, or lay the principles of Vice and Folly . . . I think *Æsop's Fables* the best, which being Stories apt to delight and entertain a Child, may yet afford useful Reflections to a grown Man."⁶⁵ Given the importance that Locke placed on *Aesop*, it is not surprising that he invested considerable time and effort in the preparation and publication of a unique, interlinear, Latin/English edition of the fables.⁶⁶

We must now quickly summarize Locke's overall educational method. Taking human nature as it is, Locke shows how one may rechannel or redirect the natural passions and propensities of children through effective application of "Good and Evil, Reward and Punishment," which "are the only Motives to a rational Creature. . . ."⁶⁷ But Locke makes a radical departure from traditional educational theory and practice. The fatal mistake made by parents and other educators in the past has been in their "ill-choice" of rewards and punishments. They have foolishly con-

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 159, p. 261. Cf. Locke's paraphrase of the Golden Rule, "*What you would have others do unto you, do you the same unto them . . .*" with that of Hobbes': "whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them . . ." *Leviathan*, Ch. 14.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 155, p. 259.

⁶⁶ For a more extended account of the content and character of Locke's edition of *Aesop*, see Horwitz and Finn, "Locke's *Aesop's Fables*," *The Locke Newsletter*, No. 6, Summer, 1975, pp. 71-88.

⁶⁷ *Education*, 54 p. 152.

nected rewards and punishments with "the Pains and Pleasures of the Body." Locke demonstrates that the infliction of pain as a punishment defeats the major goal of education. Such actions serve to "increase and strengthen those Inclinations which 'tis our Business to subdue and Master."⁶⁸ The use of mere force to punish or control children can at best teach them only to fear and yield to it while they must. Nothing in this process, says Locke, leads the child to genuine acceptance of those sound standards, the violation of which requires that he be punished. In terms of our earlier discussion, those standards, a law of public opinion with sound content, have not been "internalized." For the same reason that Locke rejects the discipline of the rod or stock, he rejects the converse, but related, practice of securing good conduct from children by offering them tempting "carrots." He would not secure good behavior from children by bribing them with the promise of bodily gratification, since this again serves only to establish an improper identification in the child's mind. In short, Locke is not training mere animals.

He is educating men, and we "must never forget that Children are to be treated as rational Creatures." The rewards and punishments utilized by Locke are the use of "Esteem and Disgrace," which are, he tells us, "of all others, the most powerful Incentives to the Mind, when once it is brought to relish them. If you can once get into Children a Love of Credit, and an Apprehension of Shame and Disgrace, you have put into them the true Principle... ."⁶⁹ This, Locke proclaims, is "the great Secret of Education."

The political implications of the foregoing teaching for a commonwealth based on Lockian political principles are substantial. A concern with *reputation* would be the distinguishing characteristic of children bred and educated according to the principles of Locke's educational teaching. People raised in this fashion would look with disdain on the punishments and rewards designed to ensure law abiding conduct on the part of ordinary people. Their sense of shame would generally preclude violation of the civil law, for among other things the prospect of being seen in the prisoner's dock with common criminals would be utterly humiliating to them.

Nor would the rewards and punishments promised by religion be likely to play any significant part in ensuring good conduct on

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 55, p. 152.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 55, p. 152-153.

the part of these people. They would conform to the established religious observances of the community, but more for appearances, for the sake of their reputations, than from deep, inner conviction. The law that would guide their lives would be the law of public opinion.

By way of concluding, let us once again state the central issue and then comment briefly on the question of whether Locke's creation of a stratum of especially educated citizens moves us in the direction of its resolution. We turned to Locke's political–educational writings in the expectation that they might prove useful in providing a perspective from which we might best be able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of what we have roughly characterized as the Federalist and Anti–Federalist positions on the place and character of civic education in the American regime. Locke's *Education* makes it abundantly clear that he would not accept as adequate the position that a strong political order could be maintained simply on the basis of individual pursuit of self–interest. A healthy Lockian regime requires vigorous and solid leadership, leadership of a type that would best be furnished in his view by the development of that stratum of the population that he terms the gentry. Without the vision and vigor provided by such leadership, the rest of the populace would lack the requisite standards of a decent law of public opinion, and the political order would inevitably deteriorate.

We saw earlier that the Anti–Federalists shared some of this concern, as did Tocqueville and many others, and today we are faced with mounting evidence that they were not wrong. But Locke would have argued vigorously against major aspects of the Anti–Federalist prescription for curing these ills. Unlike the Anti–Federalists, he sought to provide the principles for the large and expansive commercial republic.

Locke provides in his *Education*, I believe, a position that incorporates some elements of both the Federalist and Anti–Federalist views on civic education, but his position transcends and transforms them. For example, Lockian commonwealths would be activated by the powerful and reliable force of individual self–interest. At the same time this pursuit of self–interest, as it was manifested by Locke's specially educated stratum of gentry, would be neither narrow nor shortsighted. This gentry would possess a form of virtue, as we have seen, but neither in the classical nor

Christian forms. From this stratum would come people equipped to provide the leadership required for the vigorous development of the commonwealth in times of peace and for its defense in times of crisis.

Let us cast a final glance, then, at the character of the men and women who would be produced by Locke's program of education. These people would be physically robust, well bred, and equipped with the skills required for the conduct of business and political affairs. They would be habituated to withstand the rigor of very active lives, including the perils of travel and residence abroad. They would be characterized by an insatiable curiosity about most aspects of the world in which they live. The major thrust of their activities would be toward the acquisition of property, whether through the careful management of land or through trade, commerce, or such professions as law, medicine, or the like. Their Lockian education would have afforded them considerable scope for the application of their carefully nurtured, native intelligence to the broadest possible variety of practical affairs. They would be "men of business," in the broad, seventeenth-century meaning of that term.

While one might rightly say of such people that they were pursuing their self-interest properly understood, one could not simply leave it at that. The concern of these people with *reputation*, their ambition and even pride, not only within their own class, but also within the wider community, would provide an important motivation for engaging in public service. They would be courageous and patriotic and quite capable of performing military service, if called upon to do so. Still, they would not be swashbuckling cavaliers, rash or daring, and would not be tempted to such dangerous folly as dueling,⁷⁰ even in the unlikely event that such a mode of settling personal grievances were permitted by the civil law within a Lockian community. Nor would such men be tempted by visions of becoming war-like conquerors, for they would have learned from the study of history, as Locke presents it to them, to hold conquerors in abhorrence.⁷¹ They would have learned that the

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 199, pp. 312-313. In discussing the question of whether young men should receive instruction in fencing, Locke acknowledges that it is "a good Exercise for Health, but dangerous to the Life," p. 312.

⁷¹ Locke characterizes the contemporary study of history in strong terms: "All the Entertainment and talk of History is of nothing almost but Fighting and Killing: And the Honour and Renown, that is bestowed on Conquerours (who for the most part are but the great Butchers of Mankind) farther mislead growing Youth, who by this means come to think Slaughter the laudable Business of

development of sound commercial relations with other countries is a far more profitable, long lasting, and stable relationship than the despotic rule of subject people."

Such men would not generally pursue the highest political honors and offices, but they would understand that their long-term self-interest was inextricably bound up with the welfare of the commonwealth. By virtue of their education they would be fitted for service in public office, and would be ready to serve in whatever capacity was demanded when they were needed. Such calls would necessarily be received from time to time. Locke tells us that they would have been prepared for public service in part by the study of "*Civil-law and History*," for these "are Studies which a Gentleman should not barely touch at, but constantly dwell upon, and never have done with." Given the broad range of public offices in which he might serve, such a man must not "be ignorant of the *Law* of his Country," for this is requisite "whatever station he is in . . . from a Justice of the Peace, to a Minister of State."⁷⁴

We conclude with two questions: First, if Locke's teaching on education for civic virtue and its relationship to the stability of the regime is sound, then must we not wonder what its implications are for our quasi-Lockian political order in the United States. Second, is such an educational program possible today, and, if so, by whom would it be developed and who would be its proper recipients?

ROBERT H. HORWITZ

Kenyon College

Mankind, and the most Heroick of Vertues. By these steps *unnatural Cruelty* is planted in us; and that Humanity abhors, Custom reconciles and recommends to us, by laying it in the way to Honour." *Ibid.*, 116, pp. 226-227, emphasis supplied.

⁷² On this score, contrast the incredible growth of Japan's gross national product in the thirty years since 1945 with her development during her half-century of military conquest, 1895-1945. Under the terms of the Potsdam Declaration the Lockian elements in the Japanese regime was greatly extended. The results of this transformation have not of course all been positive and point to some of the considerations raised in this essay.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 186, p. 295. Locke distinguishes the study of history in the sense of constitutional history from the history of bloody and unnecessary conquest. It is significant that his many recommendations of classic literature do not include works dealing with conquest, but rather with examples of morality and customs of ancient peoples.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* I want to express my appreciation to the Earhart Foundation for making it possible for me to pursue a program of research as a Visiting Scholar in Residence at St. John's College, and at the Folger Library in Washington, D. C. on Locke's *Education*.

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