

Middle Voices: F. A. Hayek

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David McIlwain's *Michael Oakeshott and Leo Strauss: The Politics of Renaissance and Enlightenment* is a veritable symphony of voices. It reads as a duet between Oakeshott and Strauss, with thinkers as diverse as Alexandre Kojève, Martin Heidegger, Saint Augustine, and Thomas Hobbes providing additional harmony (or dissonance, as the case may be). The topics range from the age-old tension between philosophy and poetry to conservatism and moderation to antiquity and modernity to nihilism and notions of a world state and much else besides. One almost needs to be Nietzsche's cultured man of well over thirty years of age just in order to appreciate it (p. 23). I fear that by Nietzsche's own estimation I am but a beginner and scarcely talented enough to add much to the picture McIlwain has painted.

But I have not lost courage. And if I am not a painter, I am at least musical enough to accentuate one of the many voices in McIlwain's work, whose counterpoint in the conversation of mankind might reveal a bit more about Oakeshott, Strauss, and conservatism in our time. I refer to Friedrich von Hayek, who makes an appearance in Chapter 2 of McIlwain's book, alongside Oakeshott, Strauss, and Carl Schmitt as the *katechon* (pp. 17-18). The term, of course, is not McIlwain's. He draws on Marxist historian Perry Anderson's grouping of these four arch-conservatives. McIlwain is sensitive to facile efforts to discredit thinkers by associating them with Carl Schmitt, and I can sympathize with him when it comes to similar efforts to denigrate Hayek.

Much as some see Strauss as providing the intellectual backing for neoconservatism, such is Hayek's relation to neoliberalism, where the terms are less significant for their content than for their usefulness in silencing unwanted voices. One has the impression when it comes to these matters that people like Strauss and Hayek are criticized because they are seen as conservatives *tout court* and that this underlying conservatism serves as a pretext for pairing the thinker with whatever ideological current is fashionably disreputable. This goes some way to accounting for how Hayek and the Austrian School of Economics are responsible for the disease of neoliberalism and globalism on the one hand, as well as the opposed disease of right-wing populism on the other (e.g. Wasserman 2019).

Far be it from me to join the chorus of critics. I should like rather to probe a little more deeply Hayek's contribution and see if this duet can be transcribed for a trio. Hayek is interesting because he shares with Oakeshott and Strauss a certain scepticism of democracy and a certain conservatism, but more than the other two Hayek finds himself more firmly ensconced in modernity, albeit not unaware of some

of its pitfalls. Although not rooted in an idea of friendship, Hayek's conservatism too lays "the ground for a politics which refutes, at the one extreme, the violent and existential particularity of Carl Schmitt, and at the other, the brutal and homogenizing universality of Alexandre Kojève" (p. 9).

To begin with, we might consider the aristocratic theme in Oakeshott, Strauss, and Hayek. McIlwain observes that "[t]he merest hint of aristocracy is of course anathema to Anderson and the Left" (p. 21). One can perhaps see why when we read a little later that "Nietzsche had urged his readers to shoulder the greatest of political tasks but had provided them with little guidance beyond the call for a radical aristocracy. It was for Strauss little wonder that Nietzsche's thought had prepared the way for National Socialism" (p. 45). Part of the task of these conservative thinkers might be understood to be how to recover a proper and non-Nietzschean sense of aristocracy in a democratic world (p. 54).

For, indeed, democracy has come to be conflated with socialism or social democracy or anything deemed desirable, such that it increasingly fits the criteria for a weasel word, which is what Hayek had called the term "social" in his day (Hayek would have sympathized with Oakeshott's distaste for the modern terms "social" and "society".) (p. 52; Hayek 1989, pp. 114-119). Scepticism about democracy seems so taboo that it is easy to forget just how widespread this scepticism was amongst some of the greatest thinkers in history. One needn't refer to Karl Marx, "the father of communism," or Friedrich Nietzsche, "the step-grandfather of fascism" (Strauss 1962, p. 24), both of whom were suspicious or even blatantly opposed to democracy, to illustrate the point. Even clear-sighted and honest defenders of democracy have been willing to sound its faults; indeed, McIlwain notes that liberalism and democracy do not necessarily harmonize (p. 41). And as Strauss proclaimed, "[w]e are not permitted to be flatterers of democracy precisely because we are friends and allies of democracy" (Strauss 1962, p. 24). The more liberal critics of democracy tend to fall into this camp as well. Alexis de Tocqueville famously warned of the dangers of the tyranny of the majority. The US Founding Fathers too were wary of democracy. In *Federalist 63*, for example, we find that checks and balances on power apply no less to the people themselves, who,

stimulated by some irregular passion, or some illicit advantage, or misled by the artful misrepresentations of interested men, may call for measures which they themselves will afterwards be the most ready to lament and condemn. In these critical moments, how salutary will be the interference of some temperate and respectable body of citizens, in order to check the misguided career, and to suspend the blow meditated by the people against themselves, until reason, justice, and truth can regain their authority over the public mind? What bitter anguish would not the people of Athens have often avoided if their government had contained so provident a safeguard against the tyranny of their own passions? Popular liberty might then have escaped the indelible reproach of decreeing to the same citizens the hemlock on one day and statues on the next (Hamilton et al 1788, p. 404).

Publius' reference to the instability of Athenian democracy is interesting when one considers that Strauss advocates returning to the wisdom of the ancient Greeks as an antidote to modernity. Good government and the position of the philosopher can be threatened by the incomprehension and vacillations of *hoi polloi*, but it is also noteworthy that

democracy is the only regime other than the best in which the philosopher can lead his peculiar way of life without being disturbed: it is for this reason that with some exaggeration one can compare democracy to Hesiod's age of the divine race of heroes which comes closer to the golden age than any other (Strauss 1987, p. 63).

Strauss was not a liberal, at least not in the modern sense, but he may have been able to appreciate certain aspects of democracy as well, or at least he may have wrestled with problems that made him more ademocratic or nondemocratic rather than antidemocratic (Gewen 2020, p. 110). As McIlwain reminds us, Strauss

also knew that even our modern democratic regimes contain an element of aristocracy insofar as we are called to vote for whoever we think is best (p. 57).

As for Hayek, he fully subscribed to the potential for conflict between liberal ideals and democratic ideals, particularly when the latter are not limited by the former. In some respects, though, Hayek's proposals could be more democratic than our systems today. For example, in criticizing the politics of his day as catering excessively to interest groups, he suggested that we might get

a more representative sample of true opinion of the people at large if we picked out by drawing lots some five hundred mature adults and let them for twenty years devote themselves to the task of improving the law, guided only by their conscience and the desire to be respected (Hayek 1982, p. 375).

In any case, democracy for Hayek is mainly a means, not an end. But this doesn't mean that Hayek wasn't concerned later in life about what he saw as the precipitous decline of confidence in democracy:

[E]ven a wholly sober and unsentimental consideration which regards democracy as a mere convention making possible a peaceful change of the holders of power should make us understand that it is an ideal worth fighting for to the utmost, because it is our only protection (even if in its present form not a certain one) against tyranny (Hayek 1982, p. 349).

In some respects, democracy is also beneficial as a means for the peaceful transition of power. Finally, it raises the public's general level of understanding of public affairs (Hayek 1960, pp. 172-174). On this last point Hayek may have hit a note of excessive idealism, but his optimism reverberates in Strauss' comment about how the ideal democracy is a universal aristocracy (Strauss 1961, p. 4).

With this being said, what does it mean to preserve aristocracy in a democratic age? For Oakeshott and Strauss it seems closely tied to the need to preserve liberal education, an education pursued for its own sake (p. 54). It also seems linked to the need to defend the individual against the group or the "mass man", as Oakeshott called him (Oakeshott 1961). Hayek was no less attuned to the dangers to individuality posed by mass conformity and the need for individuals to engage in intellectual pursuits for their own sake. It is precisely this honest pursuit of knowledge that allows for the advancement of civilization. This cannot happen if thinkers are beholden to the opinions of the masses:

Advance consists in the few convincing the many. New views must appear somewhere before they can become majority views. There is no experience of society which is not first the experience of a few individuals . . . It is because we normally do not know who knows best that we leave the decision to a process which we do not control. But it is always from a minority acting in ways different from what the majority would prescribe that the majority in the end learns to do better (Hayek 1960, p. 176).

In fact, this notion was so crucial for Hayek that he considered it a duty of the political philosopher, who would always stand at a tangent to the prevailing opinion of the time:

There is, in fact, never so much reason for the political philosopher to suspect himself of failing in his task as when he finds that his opinions are very popular. It is by insisting on considerations which the majority do not wish to take into account, by holding up principles which they regard as inconvenient and irksome, that he has to prove his worth. For intellectuals to bow to a belief merely because it is held by the majority is a betrayal not only of their peculiar mission but of the values of democracy itself" (Hayek 1960, p. 181).

Hayek's celebration of the individual thinker who thinks freely and is protected from the pressures of politics and public opinion would find its most interesting formulation in the structural reforms Hayek proposed in *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (Hayek 1982, pp. 441-461). In that late work Hayek traces some of the problems bedeviling modern democracy to the legislative branch, which, in his view, had relegated the actual task of legislating to administrators and bureaucrats while the legislators themselves were trapped in an endless cycle of fishing for votes. Hayek therefore proposed that the vote-catchers make up the Governmental Assembly which would carry out governmental tasks, subject to the control and criticism of an organized opposition prepared to offer an alternative government.

The other body would be the Legislative Assembly, tasked not with pursuing particular ends, but with outlining the principles and laws, applicable to all, by which the common good is secured. Election to this body would be free of restrictions on the basis of sex, property, or class, because the Legislative Assembly's primary task is laying down universal rules of just conduct, which are open to debate by everyone, since they are not based on interests but on opinion, and everyone is capable of forming an opinion on what is just. Hayek does, however, exclude career politicians (e.g. members of the Governmental Assembly) and those who have been unemployed for most of their lives, indicating that eligibility to this office would depend strongly on a candidate's accomplishments outside of politics and who have proved themselves before their peers in the ordinary business of life. This is not just Hayek's preference for the private sector speaking, but also his conviction that only those with experience of life will be in a position to formulate those general rules of conduct. Although he does not phrase it in these terms, Hayek would be inclined to agree with Oakeshott's assertion that politics is not meant for the young, precisely because the virtues of youth tolerate less easily what they view to be abominable and those formalities that appear to lead to error (Oakeshott 1962, p. 436). Thus the Legislative Assembly would be composed of individuals elected at age 45, serving 15-year terms, without any possibility of re-election, with 1/15 of the body replaced every year. After their term the legislator would be given a pension until retirement and the opportunity to take up an honorific but neutral position as a judge—all of which is designed to insulate the legislator from political influence. The legislators would enjoy the leisure necessary to think deeply and debate about all enforceable rules of conduct within their purview, such as private and criminal law, principles of taxation, regulations of safety and health, regulations of production or construction, the framework for a functioning competitive market, the law of corporations, and much else besides.

Hayek's proposal can be understood as an enhancement of the mixed regime and its separation of powers. All three accept that a division between classes within society is not only inevitable, but even desirable. However, the types of division they are willing to accept—not to mention those they are willing to endorse—differ. Oakeshott favoured a hierarchy of culture, but this was not the same thing as advocating for a social hierarchy (pp. 52-53). Similarly, Strauss was not unaware that the oligarchic nature of the mixed regime would and should invite criticism. Yet, as McIlwain writes, “[w]hen translated into the realities of practical politics . . . the *kaloikagathoi* are more those who are found wealthy enough for the exercise of the political virtues” (p. 55). As for Hayek, while he acknowledged the desirability of a cultural elite that advances civilization, he was not particularly fazed by the practical inseparability of a cultural elite and the wealthy (Hayek 1960, pp. 184-196). In fact, for Hayek, a cultural elite required people of independent means who could afford to turn their attention beyond material matters. To be sure, this could produce a great deal of ostentatious waste, but Hayek considered this the price of freedom and progress. Moreover, it was fundamentally no different from the wasteful consumption of the lower classes:

Quantitatively, the wastes involved in the amusements of the rich are indeed insignificant compared with those involved in the similar and equally ‘unnecessary’ amusements of the masses, which divert much more from ends which may seem important on some ethical standards. It is merely the conspicuousness and the unfamiliar character of the wastes in the life of the idle rich that make them appear so particularly reprehensible. It is also true that even when the lavish outlay of some men is most distasteful to the rest, we can scarcely ever be certain that in any particu-

lar instance even the most absurd experimentation in living will not produce generally beneficial results. It is not surprising that living on a new level of possibilities at first leads to much aimless display (Hayek 1960, p. 195).

The task before Hayek, then, was challenging indeed: “It may indeed prove to be the most difficult task of all to persuade the employed masses that in the general interest of their society, and therefore in their own long-term interest, they should preserve such conditions as to enable a few to reach positions which to them appear unattainable or not worth the effort and risk” (Hayek 1960, p. 186). Hayek had to find a way to lock in the successes of liberalism and capitalism without letting them pave the road to socialism—an effort viewed with a dose of scepticism by Schumpeter, who, reviewing Hayek’s famous *Road to Serfdom*, wrote:

The principles of individual initiative and self-reliance are the principles of a very limited class. They mean nothing to the mass of people who—no matter for what reason—are not up to the standard they imply. It is this majority that the economic achievement and the liberal policy of the capitalist age have invested with dominant power. Excepting intellectuals and politicians, nobody has changed his ideas. It is the people whose ideas count politically that have changed. This is why the old road has been abandoned. And in this situation there is no point in appealing to *Cicero* or *Pericles*, whose individualism blossomed in societies whose very basis was slavery, or to Benjamin *Franklin*, who spoke for a small body of hardy pioneers every one of whom cheerfully faced the alternative of getting on or perishing and some of whom did not scorn a profitable deal in slaves (Schumpeter 1946, p. 305).

Schumpeter concludes his review by pointing out that someone who does not even buy into Hayek’s political sociology will fail to be convinced by Hayek’s argument even if he agrees with Hayek’s economics or cultural preferences.

Schumpeter was not the only one to notice that Hayek may share more in common with his intellectual opponents than he cares to admit. This leitmotif resounds in Strauss’s indirect criticism of Hayek and Oakeshott’s direct judgment of Hayek’s *Road to Serfdom*. In *City and Man*, Strauss notes if we exclude the West’s superiority when it comes to civil liberties and political freedoms, “the continuation of the metaphysical crisis would appear in plain view so that [b]eings who look down on us from a star might find that the difference between democracy and communism is not quite as great as it appears to be” (p. 166). As for Oakeshott, he observed that Hayek owed more to the rationalist mindset than he cared to admit—“planning with a minus sign”, as McIlwain says (p. 19; Oakeshott 1962, p. 26).

It is worth probing a bit more these differences between Oakeshott and Hayek, if for no other reason than they *appear* to operate in very much the same intellectual universe. Some of the resemblances are indeed genuine. Both are British, although Hayek leans into his Britishness in a way that only an immigrant can. McIlwain succinctly sums it up by saying that Hayek “allowed these influences and sympathies to form into a creedal summation of ‘English’ moderation which careened toward self-contradiction” (p. 19). Both Oakeshott and Hayek support individual diversity. They find freedom in the preference for slow and steady changes. They both see private property as key to freedom. They do not believe that society has a purpose. And when Oakeshott stoops to speak about “the mundane economic concerns of Hayek” (p. 18), he sounds just like the Austrian himself:

The third object of this economic policy is a stable currency, maintained by the application of fixed and known rules and not by day-to-day administrative tricks. And that this belongs to the political economy of freedom needs no argument: inflation is the mother of servitude (Oakeshott 1949, p. 406).

Inflation enables governments to lower their debt burden and has the same addictive properties as a drug: once we rely on its stimulating effect, we are committed either to more inflation or to pay for it with a recession (Hayek 1960, pp. 455, 465).

Where they differ is perhaps where they might at first glance appear to be most similar, namely, in their qualms with rationalism in politics. Their differences on rationalism are what place Hayek firmly within “the political revolution which appeared in full force in eighteenth-century Europe under the banner of ‘Enlightenment,’” which is to be distinguished from the “deeper and more permanent” cultural high points that characterize the conservatism of Oakeshott and Strauss (p. 17). As a highly educated man himself, Hayek was certainly not unaware of the cultural high points of Western civilization. Indeed, it was precisely in the interest of defending such high points that he endorsed people of independent means (Hayek 1960, p. 192). He is reputed to have said only half in jest that “a minimal government was one that provided three things: national defence, law and order, and a state opera” (Gray 2015). And, in a late unpublished interview, he said that it was in reading Schiller, Goethe, and the other great German poets that he came to his liberalism (Hayek 2010, n. 4, p. 2).

Where Oakeshott and Strauss might identify the beginning of the modernistic hubris with the Enlightenment, Hayek draws the line within the Enlightenment tradition itself, and particularly with the later generations of the 19th century who enthusiastically carried the Enlightenment’s optimism and methods beyond their limits. If Strauss places the transitional point at Machiavelli or Hobbes, Hayek places it at Saint-Simon or Comte, with Hegel—so important to Strauss and Oakeshott—relegated to a footnote to Comte (Hayek 2010, pp. 285-304). Because some of Strauss’ interlocutors are Nietzsche, Hegel, and Heidegger, he identifies the crisis of his time in metaphysics (pp. 153-171). Hayek’s interlocutors are not from the German historicist tradition, but rather scientists gone wild, and hence he espies the crisis of his time in scientism. Hayek’s understanding of scientism encompasses many dimensions. It refers to the “slavish imitation of the method and language of Science,” involving “a mechanical and uncritical application of habits of thought to fields different from those in which they have been formed” (Hayek 2010, p. 80). Hayek’s gripe is with the application of the methods and enthusiasm of the natural sciences to the social sciences. For Hayek, the social sciences “are concerned with man’s actions, and their aim is to explain the unintended or undesigned results of the actions of many men” (Hayek 2010, p. 88). These explanations are aided with recourse to what acting people think they are doing. Hayek almost sounds a phenomenological note when he says that tools, for example, “cannot be interpreted to refer to ‘objective facts’, that is, to things irrespective of what people think about them” (Hayek 2010, pp. 89-90). Explaining social phenomena in purely physical terms would confine us to less than we know about the situation; ironically, by avoiding subjective elements and confining oneself to “objective facts”, a scientific researcher makes the mistake he wishes to avoid—namely, he treats “objective” and whole phenomena as facts, when they might be no more than “vague popular theories” (Hayek 2010, p. 118). Scientism, then, is quite *unscientific*. This objectivist tendency in scientism leads to other errors, such as an emphasis on quantitative phenomena over qualitative, the conception of the objective possibilities of production (i.e. if all knowledge dispersed among people could be mastered by a single mind, and if this mastermind could make all people act as he wished, then certain results could be achieved), and the habit of thinking in terms of the objective needs of people, which typically amounts to someone else’s views about what people ought to want (Hayek 2010, pp. 114-116).

This sort of perspective encourages people to view social problems as engineering problems (Hayek 2010, p. 156). All that is required to sweep aside the free individual is a strong state to engineer society to its liking. But where Hayek would differ from Oakeshott, for example, is on the question of technology’s role. McIlwain writes:

The technological state subjects its citizens to the utilitarianism of the anti-individual. In dismissing individual autonomy it abandons the essential aspect of morality in treating a mass of individuals as a single rationally directed whole (p. 191).

Allergic as Hayek is to a single rationally directed whole, he would maintain that individuals remain free to choose how they respond to an increasingly technological society.

In this respect, Oakeshott, who is poetic and has his sights set higher than Hayek's, is more pessimistic than the Austrian economist. McIlwain writes that:

[w]hile Oakeshott was swift in dismantling the view that the appearance of individuality is inextricable from the context of bourgeois market society, he was aware that a part of the renaissance of Western civilization had been squandered in the less elevated centuries which followed the *Quattrocento*; even to the point of expressing the concern that we may have entered 'a dark age devoted to barbaric affluence' (p. 181).

Hayek was obviously not so harsh on the market order and affluence. He could draw a line from Comte straight through to Marx and Freud, who, in his view, were the primary purveyors of superstition in the 20th century. Where Oakeshott's civilization was partially depreciated by "barbaric affluence", for Hayek this affluence was the happy result of a society that had disciplined itself to adhere to "the special kind of spontaneous order by the market through people acting within the rules of the law of property, tort and contract" (Hayek 1982, p. 269), or what Hayek would call "catallaxy". By contrast, Hayek's civilization was threatened by the ideas

of a planned economy with a just distribution, a freeing ourselves from repressions and conventional morals, of permissive education as a way to freedom, and the replacement of the market by a rational arrangement of a body with coercive powers (Hayek 1982, p. 507).

Interestingly, these ideas correspond to Raymond Aron's three myths of the Left (Aron 1955, pp. 43-44).

One way to preserve civilization is through liberal education. Hayek sees the humanities as responsible for teaching people to understand

the individual as part of a process in which his contribution is not directed but spontaneous, and where he assists in the creation of something greater than he or any other single mind can ever plan for (Hayek 2010, p. 165).

And although he doesn't often dwell on the theme, Hayek is as aware as Oakeshott of the dangers inherent to an overly pragmatic mindset in education and politics. He bemoans the change in the early 19th century where Greek and Latin were sacrificed on the altar of mathematics and the natural sciences:

Thus a whole generation grew up to whom that great storehouse of social wisdom, the only form indeed in which an understanding of the social processes achieved by the greatest minds is transmitted, the great literature of all ages, was a closed book. For the first time in history that new type appeared which as the product of the German *Realschule* and of similar institutions was to become so important and influential in the later nineteenth and the twentieth century: the technical specialist who was regarded as educated because he had passed through difficult schools but who had little or no knowledge of society, its life, growth, problems, and values, which only the study of history, literature, and languages can give (Hayek 2010, p. 176).

Most of the time, however, Hayek ends up viewing civilization less frequently in terms of its inexhaustible artistic achievements, and more often in terms of its securing individual and economic freedom through rule of law, respect for tradition, and advances in material prosperity. And with this lowering of our sights, it is perhaps no surprise that later in life Hayek's defence of capitalism as the foundation of our civilization is ultimately based on an evolutionary view of man. Without outlining Hayek's ideas pertain-

ing to the evolution of our morals, which he sees as between instinct and reason, it is enough to cite Hayek's conclusion regarding the relation between the extended order and our evolved morality:

The extended order depends on this morality in the sense that it came into being through the fact that those groups following its underlying rules increased in numbers and in wealth relative to other groups. The paradox of our extended order, and of the market—and a stumbling block for socialists and constructivists—is that, through this process, we are able to sustain more from discoverable resources (and indeed in that very process discover more resources) than would be possible by a personally directed process. And although this morality is not 'justified' by the fact that it enables us to do these things, and thereby to survive, *it does enable us to survive, and there is something perhaps to be said for that* (Hayek 1989, p. 70, italics in original).

In Hayek there is a tension between his Enlightenment love of progress and his acknowledgment of the importance of tradition. His ideas can be seen as a response to what McIlwain describes as the "crisis created by a global technological culture [which] suggests that modern 'audacity' and progressivism must be forced to confront and debate once more with ancient 'moderation' and conservatism" (p. 129). Hayek's answer, not unlike that of the US Founding Fathers, is to ground his ideas in constitutionalism, individual liberty, and economic prudence. On the other hand, one wonders whether his defence of tradition is not played in too rationalistic or scientific a key. Unhinged from Burke's providentialism, Hayek's reverence for tradition for its own sake has little in it to distinguish good from bad traditions. Ironically, he is open to criticism from Austrian School founder Carl Menger, who observed that institutions may contain as much inherited foolishness as inherited wisdom (Menger 1883, p. 12). Or, as the philosopher John Gray has noted:

In Hayek this whiggish interpretation of history has been secularized in a pseudo-Darwinian idiom. Hayek contends that the patrimony of traditions that a society inherits is a precious repository of knowledge because it consists of practices that have survived natural selection. He postulates an ongoing competition among traditions, customs and beliefs, such that those survive which have maximal utility. Indeed Hayek argues that the history of religion should be understood in terms of the natural selection of faiths and moralities" (Gray 1998, p. 147).

Here we are far from Oakeshott's "religion as both the poetic escape from practice and the reconciler to human finitude" (p. 148).

This tension echoes in some of Hayek's more radical proposals, such as the denationalization of money. (I should add parenthetically that in bringing out this tension I am not questioning the soundness of the proposal itself; indeed, monetary stability may well be better served by transitioning to Hayek's denationalization of money. It is to Hayek's credit that he so painstakingly worked out reforms to the problems of his time, all the while doing as best he could to keep to his principles and avoid succumbing to the pretence of knowledge.) In a revealing footnote at the end of his proposal, he notes:

It has been said that my suggestion to 'construct' wholly new monetary institutions is in conflict with my general philosophical attitude. But nothing is further from my thoughts than any wish to design new institutions. What I propose is simply to remove the existing obstacles which for ages have prevented the evolution of desirable institutions in money (Hayek 1976, n. 98, p. 228).

What is left unanswered is at what point the institutions presently in place become such a part of our organic evolution that their removal would be artificial and harm our order?

With his evolutionary morality emphasizing survival, the importance accorded to science, and what Oakeshott would consider his rationalist-esque scheme to end planning, does Hayek not share a little something in common with (Strauss's) Hobbes—the one thinker in the "British tradition" of liberty with whom

Hayek found fault (Hayek 1960, p. 111)? McIlwain writes that Strauss's "Hobbes was the progenitor of a bourgeois and technological anthropology" (p. 95), and one cannot help but hear variations of this theme played *sotto voce* in Hayek as well. So too when McIlwain writes that "Strauss understood him [Hobbes] to be engaged in a project of universal enlightenment resting on this artifice of human scientific culture, the progress of which would gradually consign religion to a prescientific epoch" (p. 104). In another sense too Hayek shares in common with Hobbes a certain unwillingness to acknowledge noble and "irrational" motives in man. For this reason Aron was able to point out that Hayek's idea of liberty as individual and constituting non-coercion was not the only type of liberty. Written in response to Hayek's 1960 work *The Constitution of Liberty*, Aron's comment was made against the backdrop of the Algerian War, fought by the Algerians to secure a *national* liberty, even if it meant sacrificing economic advantages (Aron 1961, pp. 639-640). And yet, there is also something of Oakeshott's Hobbes in Hayek, who seems to want to preserve "the magnanimous courage of men who were too 'proudly careless' to require the mere security of their bodies and too profoundly and permanently skeptical to expect the security of a world to come" (p. 109). This is all transposed into a bourgeois idiom of course, but it is an accurate depiction of the entrepreneurial, risk-taking spirit on which the capitalist order depends.

At the end of the day, with a background more strongly influenced by economic concerns, Hayek's pursuits, not to mention some of his conclusions, would differ from some of those of Oakeshott and Strauss. However, Hayek also enjoyed pointing out that "nobody can be a great economist who is only an economist", and that he and his fellow economists had to be "not only devotees of a specialized science but also, in some measure at least, philosophers" (Hayek 1956, p. 123; Hayek 1963, p. 443). As we have seen above, for Hayek, part of the duty of the philosopher was to think freely about those matters that may one day be picked up by the majority. Whether this is indeed the duty of the philosopher or not, I cannot say, but by this standard Hayek was probably more successful than many at speaking to both the prince and the people.

Strange as it may sound, he's not entirely unlike Oakeshott's Machiavelli in this sense. Oakeshott writes, "[t]he project of Machiavelli was, then, to provide a crib to politics, a political training in default of a political education, a technique for the ruler who had no tradition" (Oakeshott 1962, p. 30). In Hayek's case, this technique is not just for the ruler but also for the masses themselves. We might say that this "crib" has something utopian about it. In *Law, Legislation and Liberty* Hayek writes:

Utopia, like ideology, is a bad word today; and it is true that most utopias aim at radically redesigning society and suffer from internal contradictions which make their realization impossible. But an ideal picture of a society which may not be wholly achievable, or a guiding conception of the overall order to be aimed at, is nevertheless not only the indispensable precondition of any rational policy, but also the chief contribution that science can make to the solution of the problems of practical policy (Hayek 1982, p. 62).

A prudent captain and people still need to know where to sail. And if Hayek's ideas focus less on metaphysics than on legal structures, if they represent a lowering of our sights, they are nevertheless in the interest of securing an order that is most conducive to individual liberty and material wealth and prosperity, which, base as some may think these aspirations to be, are considered desirable by peoples all over the world, whose aesthetic or moral strivings, one might add, we can share in thanks only to the economic nexus (Hayek 1982, pp. 272-273). The liberal's frequent recapitulation that hundreds of millions have been lifted out of poverty, that child mortality, famines, and plagues have all fallen while food production and living standards have risen tremendously (e.g. Gissurarson 2020, pp. 174-175)—all of these might strike the philosopher rightly concerned with the metaphysical problems of our time as missing the forest for the trees, but these advances are nevertheless important to the millions of people who benefit from them and to those who wish to benefit from them, even if in so doing they will be no closer to resolving their metaphysical plight.

Hayek's intense focus on the legal dimension may mean he pays insufficient attention to the political. It is true that some liberals place far too much faith in the power of human reason, science, free trade, etc. to end human antagonisms. Hayek speaks at the end of *Law, Legislation and Liberty* of the "dethronement of politics" (Hayek 1982, pp. 481-485). When one considers how politicized so many matters have become in our own time it is not so undesirable to long for an order that is free from politics. Of course, such an order requires constant tweaking and care; for politics, like the market, is constantly in flux. Hayek's catallaxy is intended to be such an order. And Hayek has no illusions about the fragility of such an order—"the discipline of civilization which is at the same time the discipline of freedom" (Hayek 1982, p. 496). Knowing that nothing, not even Hayek's catallaxy, is free from the threat of politicization does not negate such an order's desirability; for civilization is about moving beyond Schmitt's friend-foe principle (Huizinga 1949, p. 209). As we live in much larger and more complex societies than ever before, it is likely impossible and undesirable to comport ourselves beyond our intimate circle of family and friends according to the same moral sentiments that defined our interaction in tribal communities (Hayek 1982, pp. 291-309).

The dissonance we hear within Hayek's own ideas and in their contrast to those of Oakeshott and Strauss is indicative of a thinker who stands in the middle between progress and tradition, antiquity and modernity. In his conclusion McIlwain suggests that Oakeshott and Strauss provide a coherent philosophical defence of moderation as moderation (p. 200), and I would submit that Hayek does so as well, defending civilization from the excesses of the Enlightenment tradition while retaining what is best in that tradition. The musicologist Charles Rosen praised the chorus finale in the *St. Matthew Passion* by J. S. Bach—a composer equally caught between two worlds (see, e.g., Gaines 2005)—for its (daring and innovative, I might add) use of dissonant middle voices, indispensable to the majesty and richness of the piece as a whole (Rosen 1997). Hayek's voice is a bit like a Bach middle voice, at times dissonant but essential to the harmony of the piece. Not that Hayek would necessarily agree—he preferred Beethoven and Mozart (Johnson 1975, as quoted in Ebenstein 2001, p. 281).

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