

CHAPTER 1

Political Theorists on the Legitimacy of Partisan Politics

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A recent book on local city government by a leading political scientist argues that for the sake of social, economic and political development, partisanship is beneficial (Eldersveld 1995). The party structure ensures the competition necessary for democratic regimes to function and the training necessary for effective political leadership. Partisanship in the city enables the city to meet the needs of its citizens in ways unlikely to occur were parties not part of its political structure. Political theorists, in contrast, are often uncomfortable with partisanship. It assumes conflict rather than harmony; it assumes that debates over policies are decided by power, rhetoric, influence rather than reason; and, by its very name, it assumes that citizens and leaders are motivated by the interests of a part rather than the welfare of the whole, irrespective of a rhetoric that may shade private interest in the language of a common good.

The editors of this volume have challenged us to consider how the political theorist may address the partisanship that lies at the heart of so many of the studies by contemporary political scientists. Have political scientists, accepting partisanship as a core concept for the study of democratic politics, removed themselves from concerns with rationality and/or virtue?¹ Have political theorists, by avoiding considerations of partisanship, in turn removed themselves from politics and the discipline of political science? As political theorists, must we learn to accept partisan politics as inherent in politics and therefore build our theories on it rather than try to transcend it, that is, must we accept differences of interests, understand their legitimacy and not work to destroy those differences? Or, one could ask whether we should

even try to address the political world rationally; whether to argue for or even accept partisan politics denies politics any rationality that might assume truth as a goal and the exercise of reason as the mechanism to achieve that goal? In this latter case, a theoretical grounding for partisan politics asked for by our editors would seem to become either a contradiction in terms or a danger.

Underlying all of these adumbrations on the original questions posed by the editors of this volume is the problem of politics as conflict, disagreements among the different groups or individuals of a particular society about what the community as a whole does and what it values. Conflict is assumed and while, on the one hand, that conflict must be structured and tamed lest it lead to a war of all against all, leaving us with a life solitary, nasty, brutish, and short, or it may also, on the other hand find a theoretical justification that makes it the grounding of our political life.

In this essay, I consider how a number of the classic theorists have addressed the theoretical foundations of what we can call “partisan politics.” I do this in order to explore what assumptions would be required to accept partisanship as a legitimate component of political life, even if this raises questions concerning the ultimate power of rationality and its place in the polity. To begin, though, let us look at a number of theorists who not only have done the opposite and built their political structures on the *illegitimacy* of partisan politics, but also who have structured their constitutions to ensure the absence of partisanship in the political communities they advocate. By understanding the assumptions and goals that underlie the hostility to partisanship, we can better comprehend the significance of accepting partisanship as a necessary part of the political community and not, by definition, hostile to its structure and goals.

POLITICS BEYOND THE PARTISAN: HOBBS, PLATO, AND ROUSSEAU

Here I will consider theorists not usually associated with one another, except often as opposites: Thomas Hobbes, Plato—or rather the Socrates of Plato’s *Republic*—and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These authors provide powerful and distinctive views on the need to eliminate partisan conflict on theoretical grounds: Hobbes argues on the grounds that partisan politics is too dangerous for any political regime to endure, the Socrates of Plato’s *Republic* argues on the epistemological grounds that there exists a uniform and universal Truth accessible to human intellect above partisan claims, and Rousseau argues on the grounds that partisan politics means the death of freedom in the polity. The

editors have asked: “Does the existence of partisan politics, as an alternative to military struggle, depend upon a theoretically grounded set of constitutional rules or priorities?” For the authors considered in this section, who remove the partisan from their political regimes, the question of whether he (or she)² is to be restrained by constitutional forms never arises. Instead, partisanship as such is to be excised and a harmonious unity achieved, though each author offers a significantly different route to and justification for that unity. From their differences we can see the variety of concerns that partisanship raises for those theorizing about the political life.

As Hobbes views it, there is clearly a theoretical grounding for partisan politics in our very natures—a grounding we can recognize if we only look into ourselves, following the ancient injunction, *gnothi seauton*, know thyself. As human beings, we all seek our own interests in survival and in the pursuit of power after power. Thus, conflict based on the pursuit of self-interest simply defined as survival is *the* feature of our natural condition, that condition in which we each pursue power over others for our own individual interests. It is the fear of the deadly consequences of such conflict (whether in the experience of civil war such as the English endured in the mid-seventeenth century or of the bandit on the local roads) that so controls Hobbesian man that he constructs a polity and listens to laws that will make conflict and partisanship disappear. This enables him to move from a world that is dominated by the politics of power to one where he need not be concerned with politics or the pursuit of power. Hobbes’s epistemology, based on an empiricism that denies the existence of an intersubjective truth or morality, and his psychology that asserts the pursuit of continuing motion and the predominance of pride in the panoply of human passions give theoretical grounding to existence of partisanship, but his goal is to remove it from the life of the well-constructed political community. The divisions are so great, the conflicts (as matters of life and death) so serious, that the foundation of partisan politics cannot simply be contained within a set of rules that moderate. The conflicts must be eliminated by a series of mechanisms that reconstitute the divisive many into one.

The Hobbesian solution to the threat of partisan politics is to unify, to create one body where there had been contesting parts through the innovative theory of authorization and representation. As he describes this process:

A multitude of men, are made *one* Person, when they are by one man, or one person, represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of the multitude in particular. For it is the *unity* of the

representer, not the *unity* of the represented that maketh the Person *one*. And it is the representer that bearest the Person, and but one Person: And *unity*, cannot otherwise be understood in Multitude (*Leviathan*, 104).³

This unity is accomplished through the process of authorization whereby all together give up the right of "governing" themselves to a defined individual or body of individuals. "This done, the multitude so united in one person, is called a COMMON-WEALTH" (*Leviathan*, 109). It is from the creation of such a unity that Hobbes moves forward to the metaphor of the body (so elegantly portrayed in the frontispiece to *Leviathan*) to capture the degree of unity accomplished through authorization. The sovereign as one body is the one "person" who "represents" them all, the parts. Thus, towards the end of the second part of *Leviathan*, we find a chapter (24) with the title "Of the Nutrition, and Procreation of a Commonwealth," and another chapter (29) that, in recording "those things that Weaken or tend to the DISSOLUTION of a COMMONWEALTH," discusses the "internal diseases" and "infirmities" which may lead to its "perishing" (210).

The metaphor of the body reaffirms the unity that is created and the dangers of partisan politics. The body that is thus created rhetorically by Hobbes cannot be at war with itself; in an image we find also in Aristotle, the foot does not fight with the hand, nor the tendons with the muscles. The body moves as one. Of course, this is just a metaphor, but it is supported by the peculiar construction of the leviathan which theoretically not only eliminates any divisions through authorization and representation, but also eliminates more practically through the teachings of the laws of nature. The laws, deductions of a reason directed towards self-preservation, encourage a sociability that inclines us to yield partisanship for the comforts of living within a political community. The fifth law of nature in *Leviathan*, for instance, urges "COMPLAISANCE," or "that every man strive to accommodate himselfe to the rest" (*Leviathan*, 95). The laws urge equity in the use of common property, or a willingness to submit to lot when such divisions of the common good are not possible; they urge abstention from judgment where partiality might enter. The gentle souls whom these laws encourage yield to the welfare of the whole rather than pursue their partisan interests. On this, the security of the Hobbesian state is grounded.

In a long chapter (22), Hobbes writes of "systems," by which he understands "any numbers of men joined in one interest, or one business" (146). There are many such systems, regular or irregular, politi-

cal or private, lawful or unlawful. Among these are “factions . . . for government of religion (as of Papists, Protestants, &c.) and of state (as patricians and plebeians of old time in *Rome*, and of aristocratics and democratics of old time in *Greece*)” which he now describes as “unjust” and “contrary to the peace and safety of the people, and a taking a sword out of the hand of the sovereign” (154). Hobbes’s concern with the danger of factions also leads to his dismissal of democracy as a viable political regime. His opposition to the rule of the many is not based on his arrogance about the questionable intellectual qualities of the many (though that is certainly there, too), but on the expectation that democracy legitimates the multitude of diverse opinions that may surface in a world where not everyone has read and digested *Leviathan*. The sovereign assembly, Hobbes warns, will listen to the counsel of those “versed more in the acquisition of wealth than of knowledge” (120). It is a sovereign divided in itself, not a source of action or stability and thus a threat to security. Partisan politics, though based in the theoretical grounding of human nature and descriptive of our natural state, can only lead to self-destruction for the humanly constructed body of the leviathan.

Socrates in the *Republic* likewise tries to exclude any form of partisanship in his construction of the just city; such conflict can only lead to the victory of and support for ignorance in its battle with philosophy. Partisan conflict occurs because we lack knowledge and because our actions are based on uncertain opinions concerning what is best for us. Such uncertain opinions lead to actions that harm rather than benefit us and a political community that allows for the flourishing of a multitude of opinions about the best life allows for lives not well lived. Politics here is not a compromise between various versions of the good life, but the assurance of the best life.

Perhaps the most vivid portrait of the consequences of partisanship for the political community as Socrates views it appears in Socrates’ parable of the boat in Book 6 of the *Republic*. On this boat there are sailors who are eager to control the direction of the boat in the pursuit of their own self-interest; they attempt to seduce the tall, slightly deaf shipowner with mandrake, while the one who knows how to guide the boat, who can read the stars, stands aft staring upward and is considered useless. Likewise, Socrates evokes the image of the meeting of the Athenian assemblies where the orators debate and the young watch those skilled in speaking earn the praise of the city. The eloquence of the orators’ speeches draws forth enthusiastic applause that is echoed in the surrounding hills. The brilliance of the speech, not its relationship to any truth, earns renown. Thus, the self-interested

speaker, opposing other self-interested speakers, presents the model of the partisan who corrupts the young men who come to listen and who hear the applause enhanced by the echoing hills.

Socrates' worry about the sailors on the figurative boat and the speakers at the actual assembly is not the same as Hobbes's concern with the threat of violent death, but rather the assertion that this partisanship undermines the respect for and particularly the search for a Truth that may exist. The conflicts which he observes around him as partisans pursue political power arise because of ignorance of that truth. Thus, rhetoric able to sway ungrounded opinion controls the decisions of the community without reference to good of the whole or even the individual citizens within that community. Were we to have access to a Truth, and especially to be able to communicate what we had discovered, there would be no conflict, the stargazer would guide the ship, and the many, recognizing the wisdom of the wise, would gladly submit. Xenophon in his *Reminiscences of Socrates* describes conversations in which Socrates asserts that the one who knows is the one who rules—whether it be in sports, or medicine, or farming, or piloting a ship. To ignore the one who knows is to harm oneself, so it is in one's self-interest to obey the one who has the Truth. Xenophon records that when someone used say to Socrates that a tyrant could refuse to obey good counselors, Socrates would reply: "How could he refuse to obey when there is a penalty imposed on the man who disregards good counsel? For if a man disregards good counsel in some matters he will surely make a mistake; and when he makes a mistake he will be punished" (3.9).

A consequence of this view of knowledge, though, is the creation of a community that, like Hobbes's leviathan, strives towards becoming one body where the differences between individual bodies, male and female in particular, but more generally all bodies are elided. Socrates takes the epistemological assertion of a Truth and in translating that to the political world eliminates partisanship and divisions of any sort.⁴ The fear of divisions and the assertion of unity leads to a number of truly ludicrous statements, such as when Socrates suggests: "Whichever city is closest to one human being [is it not governed best]? Such that whenever the finger of any of us is harmed, the whole community suffers the pain as a whole while the part is suffering" (*Republic*, 462c–d). To deny the boundaries between people, to eliminate differences whether of gender or otherwise, Socrates must in effect diminish the role of the body, ignore the physical needs of the human being, who is situated in a world of multiplicity, and create a uniformity and unity that in the end is sterile and (so far as I can tell) cannot

preserve itself. The elimination of difference and thus any source of conflict from at least the ruling class creates a monstrosity which is against the bodily nature of the human being in its denial of even bodily difference and boundaries among its members. But that elimination is grounded on the rhetorical assertion that the city must direct itself towards the unified Truth that is accessible to the mind of the philosopher, that divisions and disagreements cannot surface in a world of certainty, that difference (not a static sterility) is the greatest threat to the city.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau offers yet another understanding of the dangers of partisanship and the grounds for its illegitimacy in the political world. Underlying Rousseau's proposals in the *Social Contract* is the basic concern with freedom; slavery, though very much the condition of modern man, is never legitimate and partisanship can only be understood as the attempt to enslave another, to impose one's own or a particular group's corporate will on another. We are all slaves now because we are ruled by those whose will is other than our own, because laws have come from the victory of some over the others, victories defined by the good of a part rather than the whole. The enslavement of modern man and woman comes from the divisions in modern society which were not there when men were citizens and attended to the whole and not to the part, when they enjoyed the glory and success of the state as a whole and did not pursue private pleasures and vanities. In his *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* Rousseau imagines Fabricius, the hero of the Roman wars against Pyrrhus in the third century B.C., speaking to the Romans of a later age: The citizens of his Rome conquered the world, those of a later day became slaves of those they conquered, distracted from citizenship by the vain arts. The unity of early Rome (at least in Rousseau's fantasy of that time), directed toward the common goal of military expansion, yielded over time to the divisions and partisanship that came with attention to the Roman citizens' private lives of wealth and pleasure. The *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* is a call to recognize how the modern world, enamored of its arts and sciences, has been tainted by the partisanship that these arts and sciences, by their very nature, encourage. By their questioning of political truths, by their focus on the happiness of the individual, they foster divisions that undermine the potential for greatness that, for example, the Romans early achieved—at least in the retelling of their history.

We may say that partisanship, according to Rousseau is, in the words of the editors of this volume, "theoretically grounded"; Rousseau recognizes only too vividly the psychological power of the particular

will as against the general will: "Each individual can, as a man, have a private will contrary to or different from the general will he has as a citizen" (*Discourse*, 1.7). It is the strength of this private will (sometimes expanded to the corporate will of a group), focusing on the welfare of a part, that requires that the citizen "be forced to be free." The government, that administrative body which mediates between the citizen as sovereign and the citizen as subject, has a corporate will which, as it strengthens, threatens the survival of the legitimate state: "Just as the private will acts incessantly against the general will, so the government makes a continual effort against sovereignty" (*Discourse*, 3.10). On the other hand, Rousseau recognizes that it is the challenge of politics to overcome the particular will and the divisions among the peoples in a state and to bring about the discovery of and imposition of the general will. As he points out in a footnote: "If there were no different interests, the common interest, which would never encounter any obstacle, would scarcely be felt. Everything would run smoothly by itself and politics would cease to be an art" (*Discourse*, 2.3). Or put another way, politics is the art of overcoming partisanship. Were there no partisanship, Rousseau would not be warning us about the slavery of humankind, presenting us with the means to overcome it and urging us to cast off our chains.

Included, then, in the challenge of the political art is the removal and prevention of partisanship: "In order for the general will to be well expressed, it is therefore important that there be no partial society in the state, and that each citizen give his own opinion" (2.3). In a footnote to precisely this passage, Rousseau reminds us that Machiavelli had likewise worried in his *History of Florence* about how "divisions" through cabal and factions injure a republic; therefore, the quote from Machiavelli continues, "the legislator of a republic, since it is impossible to prevent the existence of dissensions, must at least take care to prevent the growth of factions" [II.3n, 61 (translation of the Italian, 139)]. Rousseau quotes Machiavelli's comment that "divisions" sometimes harm, but he curiously also cites Machiavelli's point that they also sometimes aid a republic. Rousseau comments only on the harm that Machiavelli identifies, not the benefit (in particular, the liberty) that such divisions may give to a republic.

Rousseau's abhorrence of partial communities, of partisan activities, dominates his *Social Contract*. While each individual may have his or her own will, the social contract makes that private person part of a "moral and collective body" and a "common self" (*Social Contract*, 1.6). The private will will always be fighting against the general will and Rousseau accepts that as the condition of human nature and of

the political state (as Socrates does not), but for Rousseau the danger emerges when “factions, partial associations at the expense of the whole, are formed, [and] the will of each of these associations becomes general with reference to its members and particular with reference to the State. The differences become less numerous and produce a result less general” (*Social Contract*, 2.3).

Hobbes, the Socrates of the *Republic*, and Rousseau are, then, theorists for whom partisanship can have no place in the well-structured polity. For them it brings dreaded conflict and fractures the delicate political unity created through the process of authorization, it allows us to replace the pursuit of Truth with the manipulation of opinion, and it means no less than certain slavery to the will of others. Hobbes transforms the many into a body that moves as one, Rousseau’s general will unites the many likewise into a common self, and Socrates destroys differences so that all say “ouch” when the finger of one is cut. For these thinkers no constitutional rules can adequately restrain the deleterious effects that come from allowing divisions or partisanship to emerge in society *nor* do they find value in the divisions themselves. Rousseau’s cryptic footnote to Machiavelli with his half quote make us aware that there may be benefits to divisions in society, benefits to which he alludes, but does not develop in his *Social Contract*. Perhaps, he does this precisely because for Machiavelli those divisions lie at the heart of a republic’s liberty as captured by the battles between factions comprised of the people and of the nobles. A consideration of the perspective of some other authors gives us insight into what these “aids to a republic” might be.

PARTISAN AS POLITICAL ACTOR:
ARENDR, ARISTOTLE AND MADISON

Sheldon Wolin in an essay entitled “*E Pluribus Unum: The Representation of Difference and the Reconstruction of Collectivity*” (Wolin 1989, 120–136) concludes that in American political thought, at least, *plures* never managed to achieve a theory. He looks to the history of the universalizing constitution as opposed to the *plures* of a theoretical feudalism that expressed the force and virtue of political localism. Wolin sees the issue here, as did the Anti-Federalists over two-hundred years ago, as a problem of place and individual, both of which become subsumed in the *unum* of the newly adopted constitution. While Wolin’s analysis of the theoretical-historical conditions of the American founding may leave us without a sense of the justifications for divisions as opposed to the universalizing we find in an author

such as Hobbes or even in Wolin's reading of Madison (though I am sure there would be debate here), there are authors who defend the *plures* and give the theoretical grounding for it. Wolin sees in the victory of the universalizing aspects of the constitution the overriding of the original democratic principles of the earlier articles of union and thus the defeat of a democratic grounding of a theory that recognizes divisions and multiplicities rather than the *unum* of an undivided sovereignty. Let us look at a few authors who exalt the multiple over the uniform and see if they give us some basis for a flourishing of democratic partisanship.

Hannah Arendt, who without question romanticizes the life of the ancient polis, nevertheless creates a model of political action that exalts the partisan, or at least the one who articulates well through debate with others' views that address the broad issues of communal life. This is the political actor who may seek glory for himself, but does so through engagement in controversies in the open about public decisions. It is conflict on this level of thought and will that transforms us from the mindless pursuers of the material necessities of our lives to the human beings who can act. Such divisions, then, which come to the fore in the public space, are necessary for our humanity. Partisanship in this sense is not to be avoided, but exercised skillfully with a focus beyond the petty concerns of everyday life to a concern with choices that polities make in their confrontations with barbarism. To enter into this debate is to demonstrate the courage of the human being to lift himself out of the struggle for mere survival. In writing of the world of the ancient polis, she notes:

Whoever entered the political realm had first to be ready to risk his life, and too great a love for life obstructed freedom, was a sure sign of slavishness. Courage therefore became the political virtue par excellence, and only those men who possessed it could be admitted to a fellowship that was political in content and purpose and thereby transcended the mere togetherness imposed on all—slaves, barbarians, and Greeks alike—through the urgencies of life . . . by overcoming the innate urge of all living creatures for their own survival, it [the good life] was no longer bound to the biological life process (Arendt 1958, 36–37).

In a way that is similar to Wolin's criticism of the universalizing science of the American founders, Arendt criticizes the statistical methods that likewise assimilate individuals to one another and thus have the effect of "leveling out fluctuation." Arguing that "statistical uniformity is by no means a harmless scientific ideal," she worries

about the immersion of the self in society and thus the failure to distinguish oneself in the arena of public action. To so distinguish oneself entails the engagement in debate and conflict, to rise out of the biological life processes. "Human plurality," she says, is "the basic condition of both action and speech" (Arendt 1958, 175). And it is this plurality that allows for the initiation of the new, the transformation of what appears to be. Without an attachment to the self, the pursuit of a public identity which earns immortality is lost. "Partisanship" here appears at its highest level, as the basis for our humanity and only a political regime that can accommodate this sort of partisanship is worthy of praise.

Arendt builds her analysis of the *plures* of human interaction on a somewhat idiosyncratic reading of Aristotle. Despite the idiosyncrasies, she does draw attention to the ways in which Aristotle is perhaps the most powerful exponent of a theory of *plures*, of a theory that enables us to conceptualize the partisan as a key player in the construction of the polity and not as the destroyer of a beautiful unity. Aristotle is known for his quotable assertion that by nature man is a political animal. By this he means that man, as the only creature who possesses speech and reason (*logos*) and can thus debate the advantageous and disadvantageous, the just and unjust, must have a realm in which that capacity can be exercised. The polis provides that realm where man exercises his rationality in the process of making choices for the collective community of the polis. Other actions, such as those that go on within the family are usually governed by inclination and lack the generality of the larger community of the polis.

This perspective leads to his comparably famous definition of the citizen as an actor—as one who engages in the offices and the judgments of the city. The citizen is a participant in the communal choices that the city makes. The definitions that Aristotle offers indicate how different his epistemological stance for the city is from Socrates'. If there were the possibility of epistemological certainty, we would be left with the Socratic philosopher king who knows the good and can benefit the polis through the exercise of that knowledge. Indeed, there are parts of Aristotle's *Politics* (e.g., 3.14–17) that suggest that Aristotle may even be encouraging such a political regime and debates among scholars concerning the *pambasileus* (king of all) and his potential role in the city certainly abound.⁵ But in his discussions of the political man by nature and in his definitions of the citizen, Aristotle focuses on political knowledge as practical knowledge where the precision characteristic of theoretical knowledge is absent. Instead, we rely on *phronesis* (or judgment) rather than a certain truth. Since political choices

are not determined by the scientific precision of the theoretical arts, there will need to be judgments and there will be debate about the adequacy or inadequacy of those judgments. To engage in debates is part of the political process and it derives from the different perspectives that the citizens bring to the assembly.

Aristotle readily recognized the diversity out of which the city is made, the multiplicity of members who will be part of that city, and the interests of the members of those groups (especially of the rich and the poor, but also the farmers, the fishermen, the craftsmen) that divide the city and regularly threaten its survival. He understood that the study of politics is the study of parts always in potential conflict about who should exercise power within the city and who is to be defined as the citizen who actively pursues his (or her) humanity through the exercise of reason in the assembly and the offices of the city. These divisions in society are at the core of political life, and a polity always faces the threat that those divisions can lead to such disruptions that the city undergoes a revolution and dissolves.⁶

The city is divided and therefore its security is tenuous. Even the efforts to provide constitutional safeguards are inadequate protection against the potential conflicts that arise from these necessary divisions. Much of Book 5 of the *Politics* describes the civil wars or revolutions that arise because of the divisions within the city, and much of the earlier Books, especially 3 and 4, are devoted to constructing a polity that tries to balance the partisan interests of the wealthy and the poor so that those tensions between the rich and the needy do not readily lead to factions that destroy rather than sustain the political system.

Here, where Aristotle plays the moderator between factions we see him responding to the question raised by the editors. There are constitutional arrangements that can moderate the conflicts that emerge in any political community. Aristotle is the first theorist who articulates proposals for accommodating conflict rather than excising it, as Socrates, for instance, tries to do in the founding of Callipolis in the *Republic*. Aristotle argues that arrangements like fines for the rich who do not attend the assembly and pay for the poor who do will bring both sectors of the society into the political activities of the community and thus provide a stability. He is not searching here for harmony, but a balancing. "Parts" are part of the political process; the danger is not that they exist and have influence on the direction of the polity as a whole, but that their existence leads to warfare and revolution rather than debate. Instead of trying to eliminate those differences which can become the grounds for partisanship, Aristotle can build the structure

of the polity on it. He recognizes the political arena as a realm of conflict⁷ and, according to him, it has to incorporate conflict in part because political knowledge is always contingent knowledge and because the active citizen, who Aristotle envisions as fulfilling human nature only when he acts by choice rather than necessity, would otherwise find no home.

Theoretically, partisanship is the key to Aristotle's vision of the city, but he also worries that as it weaves itself into the fabric of the city, it can lead to disruptions that unravel the tentative unity created by the city's *politeia*, constitution or regime. This tension is perhaps most vivid in the chapter (3.11) of the *Politics* where Aristotle explores the claims to rule of the many as opposed to the "best." Here he considers the claims that the many might have, that is, the ways in which a multiplicity of perspectives, talents, interests, can create a whole greater than the unity achieved by the one who is best. The argument is intricate and it can be read as ultimately finding the claims for the rule of the many rather than the best as uncertain (See Saxonhouse 1992, 222–24). Nevertheless, in his attempt to address this problem, Aristotle demonstrates that theoreticians must confront the divisions that comprise any political community and not abstract from those divisions, as Hobbes, Socrates, and Rousseau had tried to do. Aristotle is willing to explore the benefits of division and diverse interests and skills as he imagines the advantages, for example, of the artistic judgments of the many or of a potluck dinner which draws on the skills and interests of many rather than the meal which is "orchestrated" by the expenditure of one individual (1281b2–3).

For Aristotle there are many levels beyond wisdom and riches that divide peoples in a city. There are lifestyles, modes of economic activity, and so forth. Aristotle, as one fascinated by the many, is also fascinated by the construction of the city out of the many. The threat of a many limbed monster always is there in Aristotle's work as is the threat of *stasis* or armed revolution, but Aristotle recognizes that the complexity of the political world demands an acknowledgment of the many, of differing interests, and of the public space of the polity as the arena in which to express those interests. This makes Aristotle a theorist who places the incorporation of the diversity of human interests into the core of his political studies. His goal is never to rise above or eliminate the partisan; rather, it is to explore how best to incorporate him into the political structure so the city benefits rather than falls because of his presence. Thus, in his proposals for the best practical regime, he imagines constitutional mechanisms to draw in participation from those without resources and those with them. He does not try to dampen

participation as do the theorists of stability and unity like Socrates and Hobbes, nor to make participation abstract from the private concerns of the citizen, as does Rousseau.

Finally, it is, of course, in the famous *Federalist* 10 that the strongest theoretical case for allowing partisanship to flourish in the polity is made. Despite Sheldon Wolin's criticism of James Madison as expressing "the fear of being overwhelmed by differences" and describing it as "Madison's transformation of difference so that certain forms of it became privileged" (Wolin 1989, 126), Madison does not eliminate the role of factions or difference in the political community, but rather turns to the constitutional structure that accepts and works with the differences that emerge from an epistemological rejection of a Platonic Truth and an acknowledgment of the differences in skill that mark the human race.

Madison agrees that factions built upon these inherent differences and upon the absence of certain truths are a vice and incur the "mortal diseases under which popular governments have everywhere perished." He does not deny that factions lead to "unsteadiness" and to "injustice," to the disregard of the "public good," but maintains that these factions are grounded in human nature and in the limits of human intelligence. "The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man," Madison asserts and unlike Hobbes, Socrates, or Rousseau, he does not try to root those causes out of man or restructure a state so that they are effaced. The "latent causes," as he calls them, cannot be excised for fear of losing that for which the government is instituted—liberty. Unlike Rousseau, for example, whose response to the powerful pull of the particular will and the consequent threat of slavery is to try to change human nature, Madison asks for no such changes, only the opportunity to mitigate "the effects," to protect against slavery institutionally rather than through the transformation of human psychology.

Whereas Rousseau can turn to civil religion for a unifying dogma (*On the Social Contract* 4.8) or the banning of theaters in Geneva to preserve the unity of the state (*Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theater*), Madison abhors the creation of states where all have "the same opinions." Whereas the Socrates of the *Republic* can turn to the philosopher kings to rule a unified city, Madison responds that it is "in vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests and render them all subservient to the public good." Whereas Hobbes could unify the commonwealth by urging that all acknowledge that to survive they must yield the never ending pursuit of power after power and allow one to represent them, that they themselves

must withdraw from political engagement, give up the claims to knowledge of the truth, and enjoy the private life, Madison never assumes that reason in the form of laws of nature could so guide human passions to seek such a peace nor that the requisite withdrawal from public engagement on the part of citizens would ensure the preservation of the liberty or stability at the base of his political system. Thus, institutional structures such as representative bodies and the expansion “of the sphere” will moderate the effects of faction.

For Madison, then, partisan politics clearly has a theoretical grounding—in the very nature of the human being and in what we can claim to know; the question is not, for Madison, the legitimacy or illegitimacy of faction within the political community, but how we adjust the political regime so as to mitigate the harmful consequences of this basic fact of human nature. The other authors considered in this section, in contrast to Madison, see a positive role for differences among humans in the political regime. The perspective that Madison takes with his focus on liberty as the goal rather than human virtue or glory perhaps suggests some of the reasons that partisanship has acquired negative connotations in modern political discourse and for political theorists. For Madison it is an evil, theoretically grounded in who and what we are, ambitious and self-serving, a nature that cannot be erased nor understood as motivation for positive growth.

CONCLUSION

It is Madison who most powerfully still controls the language of the American political landscape and it is Madison who leaves us with the recognition that since men are not angels, we need the countervailing forces of ambition against ambition. Under these conditions, differences are controlled but not employed to aid in a noble endeavor as in Arendt or Aristotle. Madison gives us neither virtue nor a common good—only constitutional mechanisms in the pursuit of the liberty that allows for differences. In this, most modern political scientists appear his heirs, accepting partisanship as a necessary evil because men are not angels, rather than recognizing the potential benefits that might accrue to individuals themselves and to cities from the very clashing of the interests of the individual citizens. Unlike the authors considered in the first section, Madison cannot dismiss the partisan, but unlike the others considered in the second section, neither does he extol him.

We political theorists viewing the contemporary political world tend to view partisanship as a necessary evil.⁸ Partisanship is neces-

sary because human nature does not appear susceptible to the sort of transformations that Rousseau romantically envisaged as possible, if only his god-like legislator would appear (*On the Social Contract* 2.7), necessary because we have not had access (yet) to a Platonic Truth, and necessary because we are unwilling to take seriously Hobbes's advice that we must give up rule over ourselves. Arendt and Aristotle teach us that the theoretical grounding of the partisan need not reveal only the inefficacy of reason. For them, the uncertainty of a political Truth does not diminish the potential for human virtue and nobility through partisan engagement in the political world. Currently, the most powerful source for understanding the nature of partisanship in the American political world comes from *Federalist* 10 which sees no virtue in partisanship as such, but only an evil to be controlled, since it cannot be eliminated, through political institutions. The political scientists, who view partisanship as necessary for democratic institutions because of their concern for liberty, might, in turn, benefit from a consideration of how Arendt and Aristotle point to a theoretical support for partisanship that goes beyond the particularities of specific regimes. Both Arendt and Aristotle identify participation in the political regime as the source of our humanity, what raises us above the animals with whom we share proclivities to self-preservation and reproduction. Participation engages the mind, forces us to make judgments, sets us as actors before others, defending and defining our positions, and immerses us, as Arendt argues, in the competition for immortality. The Aristotelian and Arendtian lessons point to the positive role of conflict deriving from partisanship. Madison and his heirs leave us weakly enduring the partisan tamed by constitutional safeguards. It is Arendt and Aristotle who celebrate what partisanship may mean for human dignity.

NOTES

1. Hardly an issue of any major contemporary political science journal fails to include at least one article with "partisanship" in its title.
2. Although the current convention is to include the phrase "he or she" in our writing about politics, it is clear that for the authors under consideration in this section "he" is the appropriate pronoun. My use of the male pronoun here is not to condone the exclusionary language, but only to be faithful to the texts that I am considering.
3. Page numbers refer to Edwin Curely's edition of *Leviathan*. I also follow his punctuation and spelling.
4. For a fuller discussion of how Socrates achieves this translation see Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity*, 1992: chap. 6.

5. For an argument that Aristotle is not serious in his proposals for kingship, see Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen*, 1992: 73–81.

6. For a fuller discussion of Aristotle's treatment of divisions within the city see Saxonhouse, *Fear Diversity*, 1992: chap. 9.

7. On the importance of recognizing Aristotle's acknowledgment that politics is the engagement of citizens in conflict see Yack, "Community and Conflict," 1985.

8. I have in this discussion tended to conflate the individual and the group. This may not be legitimate, but what is important about the question under consideration is whether communities can accept the existence of differences among their citizens, whether or not those differences are aggregated. The partisan as individual or as part of a faction forces the polity to address difference. This is the issue that the authors discussed above help us to address.

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