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POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

1° BIG

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FIRST PARTIAL

THE HANDOUT IS DIVIDED BY LECTURES

Introductory lecture:

Quote from T. Adorno : “Thinking is not the intellectual reproduction of what already exists anyway. As long as it doesn’t break off, thinking has a secure hold on possibility. Its insatiable aspect, its aversion to being quickly and easily satisfied refuses the foolish wisdom of resignation. The utopian moment in thinking is the stronger the less it - this too a form of relapse - objectifies itself into a utopia and hence sabotages its realization. Open thinking points beyond itself. For its part a comportment, a form of praxis, it is more akin to transformative praxis than a comportment that is compliant for the sake of praxis.”

=> We have something that already exists in the past and that is modified. Everything that is objectified and tailed is in the past. But thinking refuses that. The idea is that thinking is a way of acting, which is always in the future.

Political philosophy : What ?

- One of the subfields of political science
- But in a way, the oldest and most fundamental component: lays bare concepts and categories that other subfields ordinarily take for granted
- Study of a canon: arbitrary, contingent, infuriatingly male-dominated and rather ethnocentric => What is justice? Who should govern? What makes a state legitimate? Why should I obey the law, and are there limits to my obligation to do so? What are our obligations towards others, within and without the boundaries of a community? Is this government good enough to obey? Is any government good enough to command our obedience?

Political philosophy : Why ?

Quote from J. M. Keynes “The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong are more powerful than is commonly understood.

Indeed, the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back”

If you have an opinion on any issues of politics or public policy, you yourself have a political theory so you might as well understand it and refine it, avoid inconsistency, appreciate contingency, positionality, etc. These thinkers have defined the problems and we still largely think in their terms. But they provide no settled answer: profound disagreements among them => freedom/equality, freedom/security, group loyalty/individual freedom, morality/politics, obedience and disobedience, stability and change. We must come up with the answers, standing on their shoulders, as intellectuals, as citizens, and as political communities.

Political Philosophy : How ?

We read closely and critically: we look for an argument, identify assumptions, carefully distinguish between the author's position, and any opposition she may be reconstructing in order to make her own argument. We note how, rhetorically, the author is making her argument. We think through the historical context in which the author is making her argument.

This course is organized around the themes of obedience and disobedience and how the texts we read speak to these questions today.

Danielle Allen, « Aims of Education »

- When politics storm into our lives and we cannot afford to ignore it
- Education and Friendship
- Laughter and friendship : needed while learning to encounter what is novel, alien and unsettling
- Traveling "beyond ourselves and the comfortable scenery of the world we take for granted
- Compatibility of ideas developed w/friendship
- So, make friends beyond fear and competitiveness
- ...and be respectful of others wish to learn
- Among peers
- Education and Democracy
- "Education can ward off the paralysis of mind that is the worst danger for democratic citizens.
- Stasis, inefficiency of motion: the confusion and battling that undo the human ability to analyze, judge, and act
- Education: thinking in the midst of confusion

The Peloponnesian War

- › 431-404 BCE
- › Sparta and Athens had been allies against the Persians, but then the great and growing power of Athens made Sparta nervous: WAR
- › General decadence of all kinds of relationships during the war.
- › What would happen to Athens, the democracy, based on the trust of citizens in one another?
- › Democracy survived in Athens. How did the citizens managed?
- › United States also under threat. Would they manage?
- › "for an hour in Madison we wandered away from ourselves, and yet we also, with our questions about Athens and Sparta, talked for the whole hour about what had just happened to us in the United States"

Essay about how politics can disrupt our lives violently and abruptly. Very often, being able to not think about politics is a privilege, but it also leads us to take it for granted. This essay tells the story of when she learnt about 9/11 and the reaction of her students during class about the Peloponnesian war during such an event. It's the power of education for democracy. She also takes the first pages to talk about the power of friendships, and how to learn from it one has to feel safe in it. If you have a community of people you can trust, that is gonna make things easier.

Athens still managed to keep the trust with its citizens.

She said: "In times of crisis, ordinary citizens, confused and disoriented, settling into paralysis, can come to believe that, as Plato had argued, they are not up to the job of making difficult decisions. In hard times, democratic citizens may become more willing to hand over the business of politics to experts and to abandon the institutional frameworks, the rights and liberties, that secure their position as participants in the political process. The danger of intellectual paralysis in face of chaos is finally that it undermines the first premise of democracy: namely, that ordinary citizens will always be ready to think. To ward off the ill effects of confusion, democratic citizens must know in moments of crisis how to preserve their status as reflective beings. They must also know how to preserve their expertise in democratic conversation and decision-making. Finally, they must also be able to preserve their fellow citizens' commitment to democratic processes of judgment and action."

=> Allen says we have to believe in our power as citizens

What does this have to do with philosophy, politics and disobedience?

Lecture 2:

Antigone, Sophocles

Words that we think are gonna be in the lecture : dominance, defiance, religion, love, submission, brotherhood and **morality-laws**

Learning objectives :

- understand the relevance of Antigone and tragedy in general for the development of political theory,
- know the importance of the play and of theater in general for Athenian democracy
- understand how the play illuminates the theme of:
 - disobedience and political obligation
 - Private and public
 - Power and justice
 - Agency and structure
 - agency puts an emphasis on what a single individual can do (free of constraints)
 - structure: socio-economic, cultural conditions that can influence an individual's choice

Tragedy:

- Mythos and Logos → Ancient Greece where philosophy and art first intertwined, logos and mythos => see Plato (possibility to relate and understand the philosophical meaning better, space for personal interpretation and different points of view, less influenced by the philosopher's idea that inevitably permeates the way he delivers his thoughts)
 - mythos - narration, tales, better captures complexity of life, literature, religion art – recover philosophical meanings
 - logos - pure reason
- Plurality vs unity
- Undecidability: things not clear cut, yet often action must be taken in politics with the imperfect knowledge and the constraints of structures we cannot fully control (sense of inescapable fate constraining the agency of characters, who still can choose)
- Arc of development of political theory from tragedy

Sense of fate vs. sense you have to make decisions and be responsible for them

Tragedy conveys the struggle between fate and free will, responsibility.

Crucial duality between the work of philosophy, which tries to understand and control, and this very keen look at the complexity of the human being.

Greek Theater

The apex of Greek theater is in the 5th century BCE. It had its origins in religious functions enriched with songs and dances. It was developed almost exclusively in Athens. Plays were performed twice a year. The most important event at the time was the Spring festival, in honor of Dionisus, lasting several days. People would vote on the plays and the winner would get prizes.

Scholars were emphasizing the link between philosophy and theater because the goal was to train people to make good decisions (what Allen talks about : the ability to talk, to change your mind, go back on your decisions which was something exercised by watching the plays...). The plays were funded by the State and thus had all something political.

Greek theater - politics

Athens - city-state, all domestic males and not slaves have the same political rights. They also meet in the theater. Theater-democracy - train people to make good decisions.

Dis-boulia - misjudgement - I've made bad decisions. Theater would put on a show about bad decisions, so people could talk about them and avoid them in the future. Crucial to understand that you might be wrong about something. Discuss political and moral issues during Ecclesia.

Chorus

It's a philosophical element, stepping back from the action, which marks Greek drama as distinct from art. It comments and criticizes, reacts emotionally to the actions, sometimes before they take place.

The chorus is an interesting element because it runs a commentary, step back from the action. The chorus' goal is to break the drama, react, often it is the mainstream position. In Antigone it is a character (the elders)

The Setting

Thebes. Eteokles and Polyneikes, sons of self-blinded Oedipus, have been at war. Eteokles refused to alternate the rule of Thebes with his brother. Polyneikes moves war to him from Argos and they both get killed in battle.

Main characters: Antigone (sister of Eteocles and Polyneikes, daughter/sister of Oedipus), Ismene (sister of Antigone, foil for her strength and determination), Creon (uncle of both), Chorus, Haimon (son of Creon, engaged to Antigone)

Antigone vs. Creon

Greece - people would rather vote for Creon, emphasize the importance of polis. Not sympathetic to the plea of Antigone. Notice the mistakes of Creon, still understand his deed.

Creon - view of authority, has to protect it. Stick to one view. Importance of stability of the polis.

Ismene: she appears to us as very conservative and she seems to have a very clear idea of what is doable/impossible (very powerful political tool → if you convince others, it is much easier to keep them under control.). She is the character who doesn't wanna deal with politics and wants to remain apolitical. She believes the authority should be obeyed. Inevitability, What is inevitable? What can we change? "We can't" - inflected the lines of gender

Impossibility: "impossible things should not be tried at all" (76)

Introduction of the notion that authorities must be obeyed. Introduces the question of the public good. Hers is not just weakness.

When summoned by Creon, she accepts responsibility and thus redeems herself.

Laws for public good, disobeying the law comes with certain risks but said law should have presumption of innocence

She comes across as weak, but has appreciation for public good.

Obey the authority → public good

Antigone: her name itself means "born to be against"

She found conspiring at dawn and women were not supposed to be out at that time of the day and she proposed to engage in a burial which was reserved to the males. She doesn't accept male authority and threatens order by disobeying the king.

"There is no guilt in reverence for the dead" (406)

In her opinion, laws of gods are more important than arbitrary laws of the ruler. She appeals to the rules of the Gods (religious concept) : Honors "the immortal unrecorded laws of the God", "operating forever" (361-363)

She stands by her position, does not hide : "I deny nothing" (352)

She breaks the law openly, accepts the punishment

Eternal laws > laws of the nation/of the time

Creon: claim of loyalty vs claim of justice (you shouldn't be concerned by private attachment but rather about the city)

No use for the man who sets private friendship above the public welfare (153-154): "friends made at the risk of wrecking our Ship are not real friends at all" → metaphor of the Ship very important because it is something one cannot do without => if it sinks every one on it drowns
He characterizes the private in a very different way from Antigone: private interest = corruption (269) because you should be focusing on public good.

He wants to portray strength and power (can't show weakness, can't be seen breaking his word(518). He will not deal with the disrespect of power.

What is right is unquestioning obedience and discipline (dialogue with Haimon)

Completely loses it in dialogue w/Haimon .

Hold on power vacillates, yields to the chorus.

Does not yield, even to Teiresias. Accuses him, too, of corruption (824): "whatever you say, you will not change my will".

Finally concedes, but it is too late.

It's not a city when it has one voice.

Chorus: Not that brave or insightful, timid and tendency to yield to power (585), changes opinion at the end

297-300: - when the laws are kept, how proudly his [man's] city stands!
- When the laws are broken, what of his city then?
- Never may the anarchic man find rest at my hear,
- Never be it said that my thoughts are his thoughts

Haimon: Voice of reasonability. He tries to keep together the claims of the public and the claims of the private (figure of compromise). He tries to convince his father that a ship cannot be led by one person, a Ship is a community not a one person

"other men can reason too" (547)

"If you terrorize people they will tell you what you want to hear"

"do not be unchangeable; do not believe that you alone can be right" (564)

"it is no City if it takes order from one voice"

" you have no rights to trample on God's right" (604)

Creon misunderstands what authority is about. Haimon tries to explain, he hears what people say. They want to keep the city united, you put it at risk and it may lead to civil war.

Power, Justice, and Authority

Men and women live together. Some are stronger than others and can make others do what they want. **Either the stronger must continuously exercise force, or they must establish the legitimacy of their rule. They must rule (must be perceived as ruling) with justice.**

Individual and the State

Emergence of individual ethical consciousness. Resistance to the laws of the present rulers. Origin of ideas of Constitution? But the tragedy is precisely that these two claims cannot be easily separated.

Legitimacy depends on the people who are ruled. Any government needs and tries to achieve it. It has to convince the citizens to be recognized as legitimate.

Tragedy shows what happens when authority is constrained by nothing. Power of Creon unconstrained, everybody obeys to not get in trouble. Plea of Antigone against this power. The Constitution aims at minimizing those questions, constraining the ruler.

Civil disobedience to convince others, gain followers.

Other Dilemmas/Issues to Consider: human/divine law, agency and fate, men and women, acquiescence to the status quo/rebellion, private and public

Lecture 3: Democracy Old and New: Thucydides.

Keywords that we think are gonna be appearing in the lecture: law, pride, honor, war, independence, justice, strength, **democracy**

Learning objectives:

- understand why we are reading this, and the contemporary relevance of these texts
- understand the basic functioning of Athenian democracy
- know about Pericles' characterisation of Athens, and how it bears on contemporary discussions of democracy
- marvel at insightfulness of the Melian Dialogue into the current conflict in Ukraine
- apply the insights drawn from these texts to a contemporary analysis/critique of democracy

Why are we reading this ?:

We are looking at the birth of democracy, when statesmen and people were trying to find a new way to govern. Democracy literally means the "rule of the people". What is interesting about Athens is that it was a very participatory form of democracy, a direct democracy but it also had a strong exclusionary component (women, slaves, foreigners): citizens (those able to vote) were around 10% of the total population. But the two are not unrelated because it is easier to have a direct democracy when not a lot of people are voting. Also, it takes an enormous amount of time to be involved in politics. The people who were citizens had wives at home and slaves who would take care of everything. **Maybe a democracy needs slaves ?** Another interesting aspect of Athens is that there was not a lot of concern about the rights of individuals or minorities. There was no constitution determining their rights. (see Benjamin Constant, *Liberty of ancients/moderns* => ancients: ruling themselves, free dimension ; moderns: people understand them as free when they can earn money, more private understanding of the notion. We also read this as **prophylaxis against "stasis"**

Democracy in Athens

→ Roughly between (590-461) and 322 BCE, around 30-40,000 citizens

-Ekklesia (Assembly):

- all male citizens aged 20 and over could participate and speak.
- Met around 40 times a year.
- Sovereign body, unconstrained by constitution and written laws.
- Dominated by demagogues

-Boule (Executive Council)

- 400-500 citizens aged over 30, chosen by lot from a self-selected pool for a 1 year term.
- Met everyday except for holidays
- About 1 in 3 citizens could expect to serve on the council at some point

-Courts

- Juries of several hundred people selected randomly from volunteers
- Decided on lawsuits brought against those believed to have acted against the true interests of the polis
- Held top figures, including generals, accountable.

Being chosen by the Boule by lots is an incredibly important feature of Athenian's

Democracy (it is actually quintessentially democratic → ruling of the people)

If you were too noble/too good, you would be considered a threat to democracy and would be sent into exile for 10 years.

Direct, Participatory Democracy

The citizens are the primary agents for reaching collective decisions.

Popular involvement, deliberation.

Rule by the people, not by electing rulers but by eliminating separation between rulers and ruled. The idea was to remove the barriers between them, most likely during your life you would be both. Athen proved it was an achievable goal.

Many contemporary political theorists think that direct participation is the only way to have a real democracy. Carol Pateman: only a participatory society can enable and sustain truly democratic politics.

→ a system that educates the population by teaching them how the state and democracy works.

Pericles's Funeral Oration - Background:

We are in Greece, 5th century BCE (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Socrates)

Persian Wars (499-449) Sparta and Athens allied

Then... "the growth of power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable" 1.23 (reason as to why a lot of countries are against the expansion of NATO) => deterrence

Peloponnesian War (431-404)

Pericles (492-429): Athenian general and statesman .

Pericles' Funeral Oration happens at the end of the first year of the war.

Analogy after WW2 → US and USSR allies in the war but enter in conflict after.

Athenian Democracy according to Pericles

Do democracies rely on empire expansion to keep them in power ?

Favor the many instead of the few.

When settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law.

We choose those with public responsibility not on the basis of class, but on the basis of ability.

“Our political life is free and open and so in our day to day life in our relations with each another”

This openness constitutes an advantage in military matters.

The law commands our deep respect

Social capital: we obey “those unwritten laws which it is an acknowledged shame to break”
(see Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique* and Putnam, *Making democracies work*)

On security: our city is open to the world. We rely not on secret weapons, but on our own real courage and loyalty

An engaged citizenship

At home: care for public things, interest in politics required; debate before taking action, persuading others ; graceful comportment

And abroad: we have more to lose than others ; no fear to lose wealth in devoting ourselves to fighting ; love of country ; imperialism (Dialogue with Melos)

- imperialism: regime dedicated to freedom and equality at home confronted the temptation to exploit others abroad. For the *semos* to live large at home meant (regularly, perhaps necessarily) the doing of injustice to others abroad (Lane)

Melian Dialogue (416 BCE, middle of the war), Book 5

Foundational text for realism: Bk I: “it was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable”

The stronger sets the terms of discourse (realisms which tend to be skeptical of IO)

“Right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”

“if any maintain their independence it is because they are strong, and that if we do not molest them it is because we are afraid; so that besides extending our empire we should gain in security by your subjection; the fact that you are islanders and weaker than others rendering it all the more important that you should not succeed in baffling the masters of the sea.”

question of the response that the Melians give : if you attack us, it will make any other neutral nations ask for help to their allies (ex: Sweden asking to enter NATO after Ukraine's invasion)

Lecture 4:

Pursuit of the discussion on the Melian Dialogue: Strong similarities with the ongoing war in Ukraine. The Athenians tell the Melians: you're talking about honor, but it is something that works only when you're on equal steps. Another interesting thing is the idea that it's not about the quality of the government but about power differential mostly.

The *Republic*, Book 1:

Words that struck us: **justice**/injustice, friends/enemies, vice/ignorance, dialogue, good/bad, excellence

Learning Objectives

- understand the importance of the *Republic* in the context of our civilisation
- appreciate the meaning of philosophy done in dialogical form
- learn some of the symbolic characters, and understand their function in the argument
- confront the fundamental challenge posed by Thrasymachus
- revisit the question of legitimacy that we have already encountered in light of Thrasymachus's challenge

Alfred Whitehead (1861-1947):

"The safest general characterisation of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them" => *Process and Reality* (1929)

... and even beyond Europe

Plato's *Republic*, Book 1 (*note that the separation in books is not original*)

Why was this written as a Dialogue?

There is something communicative about the truth. Truth must be discovered anew by each and every one of us, not simply absorbed and read about. So, **philosophy is some kind of activity, a process not a product. We need to follow the arguments, not simply read their conclusions.** Feeling like you are part of the drama, feeling like yourself are called into question and should feel free to interject. We are not sure what Plato himself believed...

Francis Baker: "This celebrated philosophy ended in nothing but disputation. It was neither a vineyard nor, but an intricate wood..."

A few dates:

Peloponnesian War 431

Structure of Book 1

› 1: "the will of the majority"

- "do you see how many we are?"

- Yield to the stronger.

- Is politics a matter of who is stronger, or a matter of persuasion?

- Refusing to listen

› 2: "justice as honesty" (Cephalus)

- Speak the truth and pay your debts

- But what about returning weapons to a friend who is not in his right mind?

› 3: "justice as loyalty" (Polemarchus)

- Do good to a friend and evil to an enemy

- What about times of peace? What use is justice? Series of aporias and confutations

› 4: Thrasymachus

The Meeting with Polemarchus back from the Pireus

"slave boy" catches Socrates's cloak. Polemarchus: "we are more than you. Prove stronger, or do as we tell you". Socrates: "but can I *persuade* you?". Polemarchus: "not if we won't listen".

Cephalus and Polemarchus

Cephalus: Elogium of old age, when one becomes free of passions, image of contentment, businessman

→ embodiment of tradition: **justice is paying your debts and telling the truth**

→ undermined by Socrates: would you return to a friend's weapons when he seems to have lost his mind?

→ Cephalus abandons the argument: maybe traditional people prefer doing sacrifices to living an examined life

Cephalus according to Socrates isn't completely wrong, he is just and happy. Perhaps Cephalus was just to please the gods but not to be just.

Polemarchus (331d): Embodiment of honor and courage, warlike spirit: justice is giving to each what is due to them

- **friends owe to friends what is good for them**
- **enemies owe to what is bad for them**

That view also undermined → There seems to be more to justice than simple loyalty:

- what if we make a mistake about who is our friend and who is our enemy? That would make us unjust.
- better: doing good things to good people and bad things to bad people
- but: does doing bad things to bad people make them better or worse?
- In no case is it just to harm anyone.

Justice seems to be some kind of fundamental *order*.

Once we've established that **being good and being a friend are two different things**, Socrates goes further: usually if you're bad to the bad, they're gonna be worse, and if someone is just they won't injure another part. In challenging the views of Polemarchus and Cephalus, Socrates is telling the view of the time

Thrasymachus: others had tried to restrain him, notice the comportment, dismissed the idea of a dialogue, attempt to effectively do away with justice altogether.

"Justice is the advantage of the stronger" (might is right)

- more a de-legitimation of justice than a definition
- Melian Dialogue
- Thrasymachus assumes that justice is an unnatural restraint of our desire for more

What is right is what the powerful want is a huge part of our reality even nowadays.

For the subject it is just to obey, but what if it isn't in their interest to do so?

Thrasymachus: it is not profitable to be just, a just man always gets less, when a just man rules his affairs suffer.

"The life of the unjust is more advantageous than that of the just"

- the comparative advantage of justice
- *Republic* written at a time when the call to be just in the name of what the gods dictated was losing appeal. Had to find new foundations and new arguments to convince people to be just.

Socrates: **"bad behavior creates an inner disharmony"**, not just within your soul but in the community as well (analogy between the soul and the community). At this point Thrasymachus blushes, and doesn't know what to say.

Lecture 5:

Plato, *Republic* Book 4

Words that we think are gonna be in the lecture: 4 virtues, education, class, moderation, happiness, city

From Book 1 that has to do with this lecture: the idea that "bad behavior creates an inner disharmony". We are starting out by wondering about justice for one person and then look at it in a broader form.

The most important from Book 2 and 3: this idea of the analogy between justice at a personal level and justice at the level of the city. There's also a bit of a tale with this idea of how cities come to be: people come together out of need, certain needs arise (regulation of trade, rules, rulers, military). There is also the assumption that no one will be good at more than one thing. Hence the need for **3 classes: producers, military and rulers**. There is also the idea that you need a different kind of education for each class. Who belongs in which class and what kind of education they should receive is the job of rulers.

Learning objectives

- appreciate the peculiar understanding of happiness and freedom that Plato puts forth in the *Republic* because the elders had a different definition of those. It can help us understand certain cultures that still carry on with those definitions.
- Understand the effect of wealth and poverty on *kallipolis*, according to Plato - draw connections to today. Generally his take on money, wealth and politics can be applied to today (cf. documentary we'll watch at the end of the course)
- know the importance of education and its relationship to politics (Should education be more of an education to disobey or to obey? → Is democracy a place where people have to obey or disobey? It's probably both (cf Haimon "it's not a city if there's only one person deciding). This is the story of politics, there is always a tension between both ideas.) because as Plato said "education is a fundamental way to socialize"
- understand what justice is according to Plato, and the role of the analogy between individual and city in its definition
- reflect on Plato's implicit condemnation of democracy - draw connections to today

Adeimantus describes the city idealed by Socrates. We have a ruling class that doesn't enjoy many of the things that we associate with happiness (can't own wealth and is fully dependent on the city), children are raised by class by the city, no concept of fixed couple. Socrates gives a key answer: **we aren't aiming to make any one group outstandingly happy, but to make the whole city so, as far as possible.**

What might this mean?

- to make that the genuine happiness of the lives of the citizens always exceeds a certain minimum
- to maximize the average genuine happiness of the citizens' lives (dangerous view cause 3 people can be very happy and the rest unhappy)
- to create a community that, considered as a whole, is genuinely happy (for us it seems impossible to achieve but at the time it wasn't)

In many of the passages the community comes first, **the happiness of the community has a fundamental role in the happiness of the city** (very common idea in Ancient Greece). It gives us that analogy of the statue: should look at one detail but as a whole, not at single elements who might be ugly. Brings us to talk about freedom not as pursuing one's project without interference from others but by suggesting that those projects are not valuable if they do not happen in the right community structure. It's not about getting people out of your way but about collaborating in the city. **You have to have a harmonious community and therefore no single part can be overbearing.** We should not give the guardians the kind of happiness that would throw the city off balance (cf. Constant, this is the idea of the Ancients). This is why Karl Popper puts Plato in the category of totalitarian thinkers.

This discussion leads to that of wealth and poverty in the city.

Wealth, Poverty, and Boundaries

To be avoided in the ideal city: wealth makes producers not want to do their job anymore, poverty deprives people of the ability to do their job, of the instruments they need to do it, so both wealth and poverty undermine the excellence of the art, performing a task at its best. So the guardians will have to be very careful and will have to guard the city not only against exterior threats but also wealth and poverty. But wouldn't it be problematic for a city to not have wealth in case of war? Socrates says no, because if you're not wealthy, your city is really one because there isn't the question of a rift between the rich and the poor. *Kallipolis* would fight as one, whereas any opponent would have that rift, would be divided in classes which could be corruptible. Also not being wealthy in war has another advantage: when you're looking for allies, because your allies are not gonna be looking at your city for its wealth, they can accept to get all the wealth of the enemy because they know you don't care about it.

A city should not aspire to be an empire: you need to keep your boundaries so that the city will be self-sufficient but remain homogeneous enough. Ideally, citizens know one another.

The Role of Education, especially for the Guardians

Enormous: means to keep each citizen in the role that will make them happiest, and that role only. Aimed at continuity, innovation is dangerous because it throws the city off balance. Even in things such as music and gymnastics. This is not to be achieved through laws but rather peer pressure (cf Rousseau's *Emile*). The educational environment needs to be perfectly controlled. The more education does its job properly, the less there will be the need for laws and impositions. In fact, in *kallipolis* there are practically none. The idea is that the environment of education is very well thought of such that students don't realize they are being led in a certain way. One interesting issue is that trust is not only for the teachers but also for the rulers. You should trust the rulers, that they know best, even if you don't agree. On the other side you have bad state persons who flatter the citizens and tell them what they want to hear, especially when the election of the rulers is up to the people (critique of the Athenian democracy). This brings us to the question of education and obedience/disobedience. What is more valuable: an education that teaches students to obey or disobey? What would Plato say?

comment: we know what injustice is by setting up what justice is first (Shklar does the opposite)

The characteristics of the good city

Is the happiest city also just? Socrates says the city that we've set up has 4 characteristics: it is wise, brave, moderate and just.

First insight: wisdom, the knowledge possessed by the perfect guardians (few, and much fewer than the others). What makes the city wise is owing to the guardians, by necessity they will be few (those who are wise are few → direct opposition with what Allen was saying that in a democracy everyone should be wise).

Second: bravery, among the guardians. The warriors are trained but they are trained to absorb the rules. They are supposed to think only about the city, always, the rest is a form of corruption.

One of the major skills they've acquired: understanding what you're supposed to fear (your own desires) and what you're not (enemies).

Third: moderation, soberness. Involves both the rulers and the ruled: respect for hierarchy and ordering and mastering of desires and pleasures

→ "The desires of the common many are mastered by the desires and the prudence of the more decent few" 431d

→ Unanimity, "an accord of worse and better" 432a

Edmond Burke also says: some people have been trained to rule since birth and it's best if they do it because they're the best. Moderation is a virtue that is located among all the classes, it's the fundamental aspect of unanimity.

Fourth: justice. It's the idea that, in each class, everyone should be doing the job for which they are best suited and not meddling in others' work. Its overall design is inspired by the construction of Kallipolis. The power by which all the others came into being 433b. There is no problem in this design because the rulers are by definition the best.

Correspondingly, injustice is meddling with the classes and undermining the harmony among them → rulers should not try to make money, nor should money makers try to rule

From City to Soul

The "form" itself of justice should fit both city and soul. But souls have parts? They do! As when you want something you know you should not have. The same entity cannot want different things, so they must be different ones! 436 a

→ Desiring parts at odds with the rational one. Spirited part can go either way depending on the situation. sometimes it sharpens the desire, sometimes it keeps it in line

Justice in the soul consists of the right ordering of these parts: the rational should rule the desiring, aided by the spirited. Injustice in both cases is rebellion against the just order: "a relation of ruling and being ruled contrary to nature" 444d.

Back to the question: **Is injustice more profitable than justice? No: we'd lose our soul even as we gain the whole world.**

Lecture 6:

Machiavelli: *The Prince*

Keywords that we think are gonna be in the lecture: state (1648: characteristics of the sovereign states, birth of the states), fortuna/virtù, cynicism (not the intention of Machiavelli but seen as it by the contemporan reader), authority/violence, coercion.

Learning objectives:

- know some basic facts about Machiavelli's life and the time he lived
- appreciate the novelty of Machiavelli and how he ushers in the modern age in thinking about politics
- understand the ways in which Machiavelli can be said to study politics "scientifically"
- appreciate the ways in which Machiavelli is one of the main points of reference for the doctrine of realism and international relations.

- understand the peculiar meaning of the terms *virtù* and *fortuna*
- appreciate the contrast between Cesare Borgia and Agathocles of Sicily

The Intellectual context

We are more than two thousand years from Plato, during the Renaissance (15th and 16th century Florence). This time is a time of transition between the Middle Ages (relative obscurity with respect to culture, church had a very tight control on the life of people → notion of the Middle Age as a dark period introduced with the Enlightenment, that opposed reason to folklore and religion that permeated the previous centuries) to modernity. The time of Renaissance was identified as a time of rebirth. There is in this time of humanism a recovery of many of the texts of the Ancient Times, many having been lost or hidden, considered dangers. These readings open up a new landscape of values (more so a recovery of classic ones): pride, emphasis on people's ability to create new things. It is coupled with the preparation of many scientific discoveries, which will be made later on (Da Vinci, Galileo). In the study of politics, the transition from the Middle Ages to modernity is marked by Machiavelli's *Prince*.

The Political Context

There were 5 dominant political powers: Milan (duchy), Venice (republic), Florence (republic), the Papal states and Naples (Kingdom)

What about Florence in particular? Florence was ruled by Medicis since 1434; the republic was established in 1494; Medicis reinstated in 1512 by Spaniards. There was a council with all the citizens over 25 that could come together and make decisions.

Niccolò Machiavelli

Florence, Italy (1469-1527). Excellent education. 1498-1512: involved in Florentine republic as diplomatic officer. Machiavelli is trying to convince the Medici to let him return as secretary of State

Letter to Vettori, December 10, 1513

Difference with what you have read so far?

Friedrich Meinecke, German, historian (1862-1954): "Machiavelli's theory was a sword which was plugged in the flank of the body politic of Western humanity, causing it to shriek and rear up. This was bound to happen; for not only had genuine moral feeling been seriously wounded, but death had also been threatened to the Christian views of all churches and sects, and therefore to the strongest bond uniting all men and nations, the highest spiritual powers that reigned over them."

Machiavelli bases his program on real life examples. He cites the actions of well-known historical figures. **What concerns him the most is effectiveness more than justice**: how to power in the most difficult circumstances and gives very direct advice.

Polity has a different set of rules that has to be followed (not only morals and values ... does a ruler need to be a good person or a good ruler?)

What kind of evidence does Machiavelli resort to to support his recommendations?

Historical evidence and his experience as a diplomat: there is a sense that human nature is constant, and therefore we can learn from the past and make predictions for the future (politics as science).

Rather than basing his advice on ethical or philosophical principles, Machiavelli founds his political program on real-life examples. When explaining what a prince should or should not do in pursuit of his ambitions, Machiavelli cites the actions of well-known historical and contemporary leaders, both successful and unsuccessful.

Politics as Art and Science

Human nature is a fairly stable and unchanging thing. But circumstances change, and political virtue consists in knowing human nature, knowing the past, and trying to insert ourselves in different circumstances as best we can.

For example when he observes the eventual demise of King Louis of France in Italy, he states: There is nothing remarkable about what happened: it is entirely natural and predictable.

→ work of political science Chapter I: you draw as if in a diagram the structure of the following chapters

Hereditary principalities are the easiest to hold because people obey you out of a sort of “inertia” (cf. Max Weber). The question of legitimacy is at stake → connected to obedience and disobedience: willingness to obey is by default, stability allows to make less enemies

In new principalities, it is important to have the favor of the public. The prince needs to have the good will of the inhabitants, especially in the early stages: Machiavelli says: “it is easy to annex new territories but it is difficult to hold onto them” (contemporary example: Iraq and the US).

In order to succeed, you need to be extremely skilled and lucky. You have to catch political problems early. When you're early, they're more difficult to see but they're easier to cure.

Wars cannot be avoided, they can only be postponed to the advantage of others. You should always be ready for war.

Military occupation is harder and more expensive to control than colonies (ex: Israel and Palestinian territories)

On the Prince's amorality

The Prince is supposed to have more “political” virtues, such as the virtue of securing order. The ambitions of the Prince and the need of people for order are seen not as alternative, but as complementary.

Virtù: patriotism, public spirit, foresight, citizen soldier (for Machiavelli, citizen soldier are always more reliable and stronger than mercenaries or alliances), heroic willingness to set the common good above one's own or one's family's interest and the pursuit of wealth, “republicanism”

On the Relationship between Virtù and Fortuna

Knowing the passions (regularities) and circumstances, you can make hypotheses. We can capture the tendencies of human actions, like in meteorology. **Virtue allows men to control events.**

→ **what kind of virtue can dominate the unpredictable? Both intellect and action.**
Understand what it will be

→ **ability to see facts in their future implications. Knowledge of past and present events, inferential skill of chaining those events. Practical virtue**

In the chapter about **Cesare Borgia** (chapter 7), he appears to be as close of an example as we could get to virtue. He then fails because his fortuna fails him at the end. He rose to power in the most unfavorable circumstances and yet he was able to do many smart things. He killed and however, according to Machiavelli's definition, he is virtuous.

Lecture 7:

Machiavelli, The Prince, chapters 14-26

Learning objectives:

- dig deeper into the question of virtues for the prince
- understand the issue of appearance in mortality.
- understand the role of fortuna in human affairs
- appreciate the contrast between Cesare Borgia and Agathocles of Sicily
- understand what ways Machiavelli thought "the people" mattered
- know about interesting interpretive issues with the *Prince*
- appreciate the ways in which Machiavelli us one of the main points of reference for the doctrine of realism in international relations

Rising to power

7- through the favor of others: Cesare Borgia

8- through wicked means: Agathocles of Sicily

9-through the favor of fellow citizens(people or nobles)

11-14- preeminence of military concerns. The only thing a prince should worry about

Cesare Borgia got to power thanks to his father, the Pope. In a way, it would seem that Machiavelli would be more willing to praise someone who got to power on their own, but Cesare Borgia still did everything he could to keep his power in a glorious way. **He is able to move from a position of precariousness** (characteristic of someone who got helped by others) **to a position of stability, where he controls and is able to prepare himself for what could happen in the future.** There were power struggles in Rome and he managed to play one part against the **other and emerge victorious.** Fortuna gives some certainty. Virtuous leaders make the most of favorable circumstances. He understood that it is needed for any leader to command their own army and not rely on others. **Crucial episode: displaying of blame.** When he arrives in Emilia

Romagna, there is a relatively unstable situation. He thus sends Remirro d'Orco who manages to restore order and hold onto power in his hands on behalf of Borgia.

The citizens saw that it was Remiro who restored peace so they began to become grateful to him. To keep control, Borgia got him decapitated. He made Remirro do the dirty work to secure his power. Borgia also tried to secure his power even if his father were to die. As Machiavelli said, unfortunately, the Pope died unexpectedly. This chapter puts in the forefront the question of virtù being different from what virtue was commonly understood. That gives us the mark of novelty of his work and this idea of amorality and rules that belong to politics and are separated from classic concepts of morality.

In this chapter Machiavelli addresses those who have come to power by wicked means: why is Agathocles not a model to be followed in the way that Cesare Borgia is? Because he kills his fellow citizens in the Parliament which is deemed as immoral for Machiavelli, he kills them indiscriminately (unlike Borgia whose killings were functional to maintain his power) → he had humble beginnings, he led a dissolute life (he wasn't tempered). Most likely, the bloodbath/dissolute life was all to do with the reason for which he tried to gain power. The word cruelty occurs more often when Machiavelli talks about Agathocles: he was not in favor of any maximum cruelty with the objective of maintaining power.

The question that arises is: was this person able to instill the respect of citizens? The more they respect you, the less you actually need to resort to violence.

Machiavelli didn't believe in immortality of being remembered and glorified (he believed this was Cesare's idea of building legitimacy, relying on the subjects and being immortalized).

Chapter 9 is the chapter when Machiavelli talks about **civil principalities**. Where rulers acceded to power with the help of the people or the nobles. Machiavelli thinks that it is better to arrive to power with the help of people because if you accede to power through the nobles, they will see you as your peer, whereas the people will not, also the favor of the people is crucial to retain power

→ **doctrine of populism**, direct relationship between the people and the prince is desirable

→ an intermediate body between the citizens and the prince would constitute an obstacle

The other chapters are very focused on military concerns. What we should remember is that: **the prince should be almost exclusively concerned with military issues**, he should be able to raise his own army → obvious in the 15/16th century as wars were very frequent and boundaries were not set in stone, but also the fact that Machiavelli was surely proud of the work he did to raise an army in Florence (epuration of mercenaries from Florence's troops). series of examples of leaders who beared arms and were concerned with the art of war

Keywords that we think are distinctive of the second part of the book: love/fear (no hate!), beast, honor, generosity

chapter 15: *"it seems to me better to concentrate on what really happens rather than on theories and speculations, For many have imagined republics and principalities that have*

never been seen or known to exist. However, how men live is so different from how they should live that a ruler who does not do what is generally done, but persists in what ought to be one, will undermine his power rather than maintain it. If a ruler who wants always to act honorably is surrounded by many unscrupulous men his downfall is inevitable. Therefore, a ruler who wishes to maintain his power must be prepared to act immorally when this becomes necessary”

Machiavelli is concerned with what happens in fact (**la verità effettuale della cosa**).

Qualities of a good ruler (according to the classroom): adaptable-flexible, seem empathetic, seem charismatic, not be hated, seem able to listen, brave, **effective** → Machiavelli says: “*a ruler who doesn't understand military matters cannot be trusted by his soldiers and highly regarded by them*”

Qualities of an effective leader (today): must be able to implement plans-convincing, good judgements about peace and war-diplomat, resolute.

→ we can see the role of not saying exactly what you mean and of needing to appear a certain way. **These are not qualities we would pin on certain people but they are pretty exclusive to politicians** (cf. chapter 16).

In chapter 16, Machiavelli talks about generosity and recognises it as a virtue to have generally. However, Machiavelli recommends to the prince to be frugal because generosity will cost you, it keeps expectations high and you are not able to maintain unless you tax your people (and thus become rapacious) which will lead them to resent you (cf. today's debate about austerity and public debt). When you are in the run to become a ruler, you're better off being generous, but once you become one, it's better for you to be frugal in your generosity.

The following chapters are on mercifulness and cruelty. Machiavelli talks about Borgia's cruelty. He was thought to be cruel but he restored order in the region and punished a few who disturbed the order without harming everyone and made people happy. Punishing the few can help the many. Sometimes, if you're not cruel you will let states be torn apart (cf. Florence?). Of course new rulers will have to be a little more cruel in order to have any kind of flourishing morality and justice, there needs to be an act of immorality at the beginning, that cannot be justified by any moral standard.

Machiavelli says try to be loved but it is extremely important to be feared. A balance is mandatory: their love is their business, their fear is your business. **Fear is sustained effectively while love is more subjective and is less stable.** In addition, fear is more generalisable, moreover people are more prone to betray if they don't have their security at stake. However **it is absolutely crucial not to be hated.** What will make citizens hate their rulers? To steal their money and their women.

Chapter 18 talks about the keeping of promises. Keeping your promises is important (as is respecting the law), but laws often fail so the ruler needs to be able to use force and act as a beast if necessary (metaphor of the lion and the fox, you should be ready to detect traps and difficult situations like a fox, but ready to react forcefully like a lion). At times it will be necessary to not keep your word. It is useful to seem that you are keeping your word and deliver

an excuse for why you weren't able to keep it at the end. There is an importance to making yourself appear true, faithful and generous.

The goal is to preserve the state, that's the absolute goal. In order to do that, sometimes you have to go against common morality. When this works, it gives you success, and the people care about having a successful leader no matter how he becomes that ("The end justifies the mean" but specific end: preservation of the State).

Human nature: rather pessimistic view of human nature

From chapter 19 until the end, we observe a centrality of the people, particularly visible in chapter 19. This is a tribute to the importance of the people Machiavelli talks about 2 fronts: the external front and the internal front. **In the balance in keeping the people and the nobles happy, there is a third factor: the military.** That is why you always need to keep the military's respect. You should always consider the situation and understand who is the most powerful group in the society and that group is always the people. You should always keep the people happy as a leader (which was one of the main mistakes French President Macron made in early 2023 with the retirement reform).

Chapter 19:

"I conclude, then, that rulers should worry little about being plotted against if their subjects are well disposed towards them, but if their subjects are hostile and hate them, they should be afraid of everything and everyone. Well-ordered states and wise rulers have always been very careful not to exasperate the nobles and also to satisfy the people and keep them contented; this is one of the most important things for a ruler to do"

"rulers should leave unpleasant tasks to others, but themselves do those things that increase their popularity. Again, I would emphasize that a ruler should respect the nobles, but not act in a way that makes the people hate him"

Machiavelli wanted an Italy that was unified. Raise your arms, cultivate your political ability. Only those defenses who are under your control and have to do with your ability are worth worrying about.

Virtù has a chance against fortuna (virtù is exactly the ability to overcome unforeseen problems) → Virtù refers to a leader's personal qualities, such as skill, intelligence, and strength, that enable them to achieve

Chapter 25: Fortuna → presents the situation of Italy as an opportunity

3rd paragraph: "The same happens with fortune, which shows its powers where no one force has been organized to resist it"

Last paragraph: *"I conclude, then, that since circumstances vary and men when acting lack flexibility, they are successful if their methods match the circumstances and unsuccessful if they do not. I certainly think that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman, and if you want to control her, it is necessary to treat her roughly. And it is clear that she is more inclined to yield to men who are impetuous than those who are calculating"*.

The circumstances in Italy were a moment of opportunity to unify it and build an empire, Machiavelli thought Borgia could be the one.

Question of realism and interpretation

Doctrine of balance of power: implicit that you should never work to empower someone who is already powerful → you should balance the power. We make the assumptions that: **change in politics is unlikely and not necessarily desirable, morality will not serve you well and always be ready for war**

Interpretation:

The Prince was written for the Medicis in July 1513 after Machiavelli had being tortured by them in February 1513 → **WEIRD** => unbelievable range of interpretations:

- 1) **realist**: he's the guy who says "I'll just look at reality and adjust to the circumstances", and the Medicis are in power so he might be ready to overlook what they did to him
- 2) **self-serving**
- 3) **republican**:
 - not addressed to the prince according to Rousseau, but rather to the people, to help them understand what the prince is up to → serve the people and make them realize their power and how they might be duped by the prince
 - Mary Dietz, "Training the Prince": the prince is addressed to the prince so that he would do a serie of mistakes that would bring the citizens to take back the power and reestablish a Republic

Lecture 8:

The Leviathan (1651), Thomas Hobbes → his work is accompanied to the birth of sovereignty and the notion of State

Keywords we think are gonna be in the lesson: conflict, state of nature/of law, equality, justice, injustice, laws of nature, wisdom, right, (sovereignty)

Learning objectives:

- Understand the importance and originality of Hobbes in his articulation of notions such as sovereignty and equality
- know the background against which he is writing Leviathan
- appreciate the relevance of Hobbes when it comes to realism in international relations
- know his characterisation of the state of nature as a state of war
- know the difference between laws of nature and right of nature

Why are we reading Hobbes ?

Sovereignty: the most important feature is extensive control over territory

[Bush Speech on Tribal Sovereignty](#) → difficulty of Bush in articulating what sovereignty is.

The intellectual Context

Transition to modernity: the break is the birth of the nation state and the science revolution.

The birth of the modern state appeared at the same time as the birth of the modern state of mind in the essays of Hobbes. **Reformation**: ascertain the power of human beings to access the bible directly on their own without a priest. **Scientific Revolution**: it meant the demotion of human beings from the center of the world → notion that we are part of a much bigger world. In one way human beings are not at the center of the world anymore but now they have access to new knowledge and have a better general understanding of the world.

Accounts of conquest in the “New World”: people tried to discover the world. This clearly brought to the mind of people the fact that political communities existing in Europe weren’t the only way to live as a society.

→ “the savage people in many places of America” (I 3.11) → contrast between european civilization and “state of nature” of native americans, regarded as barbarous and brutish

Political context:

Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648): peace of Westphalia

- fixed territorial
- primacy of political power (not religious)
- territorial integrity
- border inviolability
- non interference in the affairs of other foreign states

This peace fixes boundaries, establishes in a much clearer way the **primacy of political power** rather than religious power. In order to have a stable peace you need to have clear and stable

borders. This was a period of long distraction - the quality of life lowered immensely in the times of war.

English Civil War (1642-1649) which had several aspects: **religious ; social and political cleavages** (with the rise of bourgeoisie) ; conflict between the king **and the parliament** → Henry the VIII had consulted the parliament before the secession from the Roman Church ; giving the impression that the parliament was needed to take important decisions
1649: Charles I killed

Men are equal in the state of nature

“Nature hath made men so equal, in the faculties of their body, and mind; as that though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind than another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can there upon claim to himself any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger with himself” (1 13, 1)

Hobbes is not even saying how it should be but says that it's already like that.

The idea is human beings are equal both in terms of physical strength and mental ability. From this equality comes a problem: because we are equally powerful, we have the same hope to attain certain positions, so we are in competition with each other, but resources are scarce => conflicts

Implications of equality:

→ **Equality of strength**

→ **Equality of wit**

→ **Equality of hope**

It makes sense to, as an individual, make yourself as better as you can so you could face the competition. Hobbes says that it is not that individuals are intrinsically bad, it's the structure that compels them to behave this way.

Contrarily to Machiavelli, who uses historic events to explain his theories, Hobbes is extremely deductive and bases his reasoning on logic.

Striking preemptively

“Also because there be some, that taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires; if others, that otherwise would be glad to beat ease within modest bounds, should not by invasion increase their power, they would not be able, long time, by standing only on their defense, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a man's conservation, it ought to be allowed him”

→ describing the **“natural condition of mankind”** → forced to be belligerent/ready to attack for the sake of their security

Even if you as a state don't want to invest in the military, it is rational to do so when you are confronted with countries who invest in the military.

The State of War:

“... that during that time men live **without a common power to keep them all in awe**, they are in that condition which is called war; and such war, as is of every man, against every man. For WAR, consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known: and therefore **the notion of time is to be considered in the nature of war**; as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather, lieth not in a shower or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so **the nature of war, consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance of the contrary.** All other time is PEACE.” (1 13, 8)

What is it like, in the state of nature/war:

“... the time wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (1 13, 9)

→ no security of possession leads to no incentives to build something, no cultural legacy

→ we don't leave our laptop alone etc and we do this when we live in a state where people are not always punished

Morality and justice in the state of nature

“But neither of us accuse man's nature in it. The desires, and other passions of man, are in themselves no sin. Nomore are the actions, that proceed from those passions, till they know a law that forbids them: which till laws be made they cannot know: nor can any law be made, till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it”

“To this war of every man against every man, this also is consequent; that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law: where no law, no injustice. Force, and fraud, are in war the two cardinal virtues.” (1 13, 10/13)

→ **THERE IS NO JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE IN THE STATE OF NATURE. Justice and injustice cannot be there in isolation, a community needs to be there to establish what is just and unjust.**

Right of nature and laws of nature

“The right of nature, which writers commonly call **jus naturale**, is the liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say,

of his own life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own judgment, and reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto.”

“A law of nature (lex naturalis) is a precept, or general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden todo, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit, that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved.” (I 14)

→ the right is something that gives you liberties, law is a bound.

The fundamental law of nature

“as long as this natural right of every man to everything endureth, there can be no security to any man (how strong or wise soever he be) of living out the time, which nature ordinarily alloweth men to live. And consequently it is a precept, or general rule of reason, that every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of war. The first branch of which rule, containeth the first, and fundamental law of nature; which is, to seek peace, and follow it. The second, the sum of the right of nature; which is, by all means we can, to defend ourselves” (I 14, 4)

Second law of nature

*“From this fundamental law of nature, by which men are commanded to endeavour peace, is derived this second law; that a man be willing, **when others are so too**, as far-forth, as for peace, and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself. For as long as every man holdeth this right, of doing any thing he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of war.” I 14, 5*

Renouncing or transferring the right of nature

“The way by which a man either simply renounceth, or transferreth his right, is a declaration, or signification, by some voluntary and sufficient sign, or signs, that he doth so renounce, or transfer; or hath so renounced, or transferred the same, to him that accepteth it. And these signs are either words only, or actions only; or (as it happeneth most often) both words, and actions. And the same are the BONDS, by which men are bound, and obliged: bonds, that have their strength, not from their own nature, (for nothing is more easily broken than a man's word,) but from fear of some evil consequence upon the rupture” I 14, 7

Hobbes has a different view on the law of nature than the usual one. He identified three primary laws of nature:

The first law of nature is the "right of nature," which is the right to do whatever is necessary to protect one's own life and preserve one's own existence. This includes the right to defend oneself against threats, to acquire the means necessary for survival, and to seek peace when possible.

The second law of nature is the "law of war," which states that people have the right to use whatever means necessary to protect themselves and their property, even if it means using force against others. However, Hobbes believed that the use of force should be limited to situations of self-defense and should not be used to pursue personal gain or revenge.

The third law of nature is the "law of contracts," which states that people should honor their agreements and contracts with others. This law forms the basis of social cooperation and exchange, allowing people to work together to achieve common goals.

Lecture 9: Chapter 13

Contracts, covenants and their validity

Human beings want peace but they know they can't get it unless people get that right of nature. In chapter 14, Hobbes explores the benefit of peace and starts looking at the idea of how people can coordinate. The best way is to come together and agree to something. He starts talking about contracts and covenants. In chapter 14, Hobbes explain to us what he mean about contract and covenant

→ contract is the mutual transferring of right

→ covenant entails one of the parties promising to deliver their part at a later time.

In contracts, you exchange something at the moment. You don't have to have faith in the other, contrary to covenants which promise something in exchange to be given in the future => the intention has to be present or else it is not binding. This is made to solve a coordination problem
"If a covenant be made, where in neither of the parties perform presently, but trust one another; in the condition of mere nature, (which is a condition of war of every man against every man,) upon any reasonable suspicion, it is void: but if there be a common power set over them both, with right and force sufficient to compel performance, it is not void." (1 4.18)

I may engage in a covenant, but if I become concerned about it, it loses its sense.

"For he that performeth first, has no assurance the other will perform after; because the bonds of words are too weak to bridle men's ambition, avarice, anger, and other passions, without the fear of some coercive power; which in the condition of mere nature, where all men are equal, and judges of the justness of their own fear, cannot possibly be supposed"

"But in a civil state, where there is a power set up to constrain those that would otherwise violate their faith, that fear is no more reasonable; and for that cause, which by the covenant is to perform first, is obliged to do so."

We need to have a common power to adjudicate this feeling of fear and to punish us if we wanna get out. Hobbes cannot say that a covenant which is entered by fear is void, or else his whole argument loses sense.

Third law of nature is that you have to be truthful to your covenant.

"And in this law of nature, consisteth the fountain and original of JUSTICE. For where no covenant hath preceded, there hath no right been transferred, and every man has right to everything; and consequently, no action can be unjust. But when a covenant is made, then to break it is unjust: and the definition of INJUSTICE, is no other than the not performance of covenant. And whatsoever is not unjust, is just."

Our brain is beginning to wish for peace, which is reasonable as long as everyone else does.

With the covenant, you have the possibility of birth of justice. (first mentioning of something unjust, i.e. not performing a covenant)

These laws of nature are laws that govern these transitions from state of war to state of justice. But we need an enforcer.

“Therefore, before the names of just, and unjust can have place, there must be some coercive power, to compel men equally to the performance of their covenants, by the terror of some punishment, greater than the benefit they expect by the breach of their covenant; and to make good that propriety, which by mutual contract men acquire, in recompense of the universal right they abandon: and such power there is none before the erection of a commonwealth”

You have back all kinds of things that weren't in the state of nature, like property, because you have an enforcer. However, you abandon your jus naturale.

!! the creation of a sovereign power makes it much more costly to break a law

Without a sovereign power it's irrational to follow the principle “do to others what you would want them to do to you”.

There are a couple of laws of nature that are interesting: **complaisance** (you want to be a stone that fits nicely with the others), you shouldn't want more than what is your share: you mustn't acquire so much that others wouldn't get/ be greedy.

Hobbes returns to the question of equality (9th law of nature), not exact equality but to an extent where one won't be able to overrule the others.

He explains why it is so important by quoting Aristotle:

(9th law of nature): *“The question who is the better man, has no place in the condition of mere nature; where (as has been shewn before,) all men are equal. The inequality that now is, has been introduced by the civil laws. I know that Aristotle in the first book of his Politics, for a foundation of his doctrine, maketh men by nature, some more worthy to command, meaning the wiser sort (such as he thought himself to be for his philosophy;) others to serve, (meaning those that had strong bodies, but were not philosophers as he;) as if master and servant were not introduced by consent of men, but by difference of wit: which is not only against reason; but also against experience.”*

Anything that is introduced as unequal is introduced by civil law. It is not conceivable to say that by nature someone is destined to rule and others to serve

Why is it empirical that we are equal? Because we wouldn't even enter covenants if we weren't equal.

“on this law, dependeth another, that at the entrance into conditions of peace, no man require to reserve to himself any right, which he is not content should be reserved to every one of the rest. As it is necessary for all men that seek peace, to lay down certain rights of nature; that is to say, not to have liberty to do all they list: so is it necessary for man's life, to retain some; as right to govern their own bodies; enjoy air, water, motion, ways to go from place to place; and all things else, without which a man cannot live, or not live well. If in this case, at the making of peace, men require for themselves, that which they would not have to be granted to others,

they do contrary to the precedent law, that commandeth the acknowledgment of natural equality, and therefore also against the law of nature”

We lay down our rights but we still retain some. There are certain liberties that should not be taken away, otherwise it would not be attractive for men to enter peace/covenants

Laws of nature:

“The laws of nature oblige in foro interno; that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place: but in foro externo; that is, to the putting them in act, not always. For he that should be modest, and tractable, and perform all the promises, in such time, and place, where no man else should do so, should but make himself a prey to others, and procure his own certain ruin, contrary to the ground of all laws of nature, which tend to nature’s preservation. And again, he that having sufficient security, that others shall observe the same laws towards him, observes them not himself, seeketh not peace, but war; and consequently the destruction of his nature by violence”

The laws of nature are improper laws because they are not binding in **foro interno**

Within your soul you want these laws to be there and rule society so that we can live our lives, they are binding (as a wish) within themselves (it only makes sense if everyone else respects them).

Leviathan - Frontispiece (different part of the Leviathan basically)

What do we see: war instruments, people turning their faces to the sovereign

Whereas before the rulers could just be kings who use traditional power, now it is rational that the power is founded on people

In chapter 17, Hobbes starts talking about commonwealth. We are starting to see what kind of system might solve the coordination problem (laws not binding in foro externo)

Keywords (by order of importance): commonwealth, sovereignty, fear, rules/civil laws, religion

A sovereign (person or assembly) restrains men and it has to move with one will. This is what will give us security.

A commonwealth

“One person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves everyone the author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defense” (17.13)

“He that carries this person is called SOVEREIGN, and said to have SOVEREIGN POWER” (17.14)

It has to be long lasting, it cannot depend on one person (at least heir necessary) otherwise we risk falling back in the state of war

We need that because we’re not sociable beings by nature.

The covenant is not between the people and the sovereign, it is among the people. It is the people who lay down their rights, but they know they need a leader to enforce them. But the sovereign doesn’t have a relationship of covenants with the people.

Commonwealth by institution vs by acquisition

Rights and prerogatives and rights of the sovereign

- The subjects cannot change the form of government (18.3)
- Rebellious subjects can be punished (they punish themselves)
- The sovereign cannot break the covenant, because he is not part of one. No “people” before the sovereign.
- Cannot depose of a sovereign because you would be deposing yourself
- Tacit consent (if you’re benefiting from the peace that having a sovereign brings, you are consenting to it)
- Sovereign cannot be punished
- Justification of censorship (sovereign must have the control of opinions), peace > truth
- Legislative, judicial, and of course executive power, including the setting up of a bureaucracy

Lecture 10:

Learning objectives:

- understand the difference between Locke and Hobbes: different time period, different understanding of the state of nature, different understandings of the Commonwealth
- understand the importance of Locke's discussion of property.

The Sovereign and the Liberty of Subjects

Liberty for Hobbes: absence of physical restraints. This definition of liberty is functional to support the sovereign's prerogatives

"The liberty of a subject, lieth therefore only in those things, which in regulating their actions, the sovereign hath permitted: such as is the liberty to buy and sell and otherwise contract with one another to choose their own abode, their own diet, their own trade of life, and institute their children as they themselves think fit; and the like"

These are other things that are fine for the subjects to decide.

"Nevertheless we are not to understand that, by such liberty, the sovereign power of life... We are the author of the actions the sovereign does, even if he goes against us. As long as the sovereign says you have to be put to death, you have to be put to death. Here Hobbes is saying that the sovereign is bound by the laws of nature, but that is not true because these laws are not binding unless there is a sovereign. Thus the sovereign is above the law of nature."

Hobbes is saying that it is the sovereign who can decide what will put forward the laws of nature.

The liberty he talks about is not the liberty of every individual, it is the liberty of the common world which is the liberty the sovereign gives you in the commonworld.

Not a birthright, it is a public right made possible by the order established by the sovereign

In a way there are echoes of the Greek understanding of liberty. In Greece as well the citizens looked at their polis's freedom as a condition of their own.

In Greece, this meant that you felt the need to participate in politics. Here it is different because we are all part of the polity but let the ruling matters to the sovereign.

we don't even have much of our identity. the hands of Leviathan are the sovereign's own.

very modern conception of liberty => letting people do what they want because the leader will take care of other matters.

When can the Subject disobey

"If the sovereign command a man (though justly condemned,) to kill, wound, or maim himself; or to abstain from the use of food, air, medicine, or any other thing, without which he cannot live; yet hath that man the liberty to disobey"

"If a man be interrogated by the sovereign, or his authority, concerning a crime done by himself, he is not bound (without assurance of pardon) to confess it; because no man can be obliged by covenant to accuse himself."

“Again, the consent of a subject to sovereign power, is contained in these words, I authorize, or take upon me, all his actions; in which there is no restriction at all, of his own former natural liberty: for by allowing him to kill me, I am not bound to kill myself when he commands me.”

We cannot be asked to harm ourselves, because we need to be in a better position than that of the state of nature. The sovereign has the power of life or death on the subject but it is different to say “kill me if you please” and “i will kill myself”. It makes sense in the latter case for you to rebel. In a trial you have the right to not confess if you don’t want to.

Dissolution?

“The obligation of subjects to the sovereign is understood to last as long, and no longer, than the powerlasteth by which he is able to protect them.”

“The sovereignty is the soul of the commonwealth; which once departed from the body, the members do no more receive their motion from it. The end of obedience is protection”

If the common world has a sovereign the citizens have no right to rebel against him. The only thing that there is is the dissolution of the sovereign because the return to chaos causes problems of succession.

Locke

Keywords: property-labor, state of nature, authority, money, political power

Key definition: What does it mean to consent?: Simply by walking along the highways of a country a person gives tacit consent to the government and agrees to obey it while living in its territory

We read him because he gives to the state the form that we’re the most familiar with. All the things we didn’t know with Hobbes, he’s addressing here.

The basics are that legitimate government is by consent and is limited and separation of power is necessary. And when the government becomes abusive, the people have a right to rebel. He gives us a more liberal constitution: a theory of state.

The Political Context (Locke 1632-1704)

We look at the context in which the author writes: Hobbes’s work is very linked to the civil war. (1561) Locke writes during a period where the parliament had taken steps to limit the power of Charles the First.

› 1648: Charles I King of England beheaded, monarchy abolished.

› 1660: Restoration of his son, Charles II, to the monarchy.

› 1668: Charles's brother, James, converts to Catholicism.

› 1685: James II becomes king upon Charles II's death (no heirs).

› 1688: "Glorious Revolution" William of Orange and Mary.

the daughter of James II return to England virtuallyunopposed.

→ they have to accept the authority of Parliament and England becomes a constitutional monarchy. King or Queen no longer above the law.

The first treatise Locke wrote against another book which was a defense of the sovereign’s right.

Locke argues that Adam did not get authority over his children from God. It is not clear whether that power would be transferred to his children and to which one. And by now we're not able to trace back to whom

Second Treaty: where does power come from? → understand where does political authority comes from, independently from God. He doesn't want people to think that the base of power is force. This much like the Prince and some work of Marx isn't addressed to philosophers but to citizens, English men.

Second Treatise on Government - Chapter 1

"I take political power to be a right to make laws - with the death penalty and consequently all lesser penalties - for regulating and preserving property, and to employ the force of the community in the enforcing of such laws and defending the commonwealth from external attacks ; all this being only for the public good"

He gives the definition of political power. It is important to understand why in the quest of legitimacy both Hobbes and Locke start with the state of nature. Both authors make an assumption of equality. Which leads to the question: "what justifies that one has political power and others don't". It assumes freedom: "how does it come to be that we give up that as well?"

Locke's state of nature - Ch. 2 (compare to Hobbes's)

Chapter two gives us the vision of Locke's on State of Nature.

Perfect freedom (not license. No liberty to destroy). It is also a state of Equality. But from this equality, for Hobbes the result is war. From this equality comes the wish and ability to love one another. Instead for Locke, from this equality what comes is knowing what makes us happy and wanting to make others happy: "because we are all equal and independent, no-one ought to harm anyone else in his life, health, liberty, or possessions".

Why these radical understandings: for Hobbes when the state is not there, you will have war, for Locke you will have people getting along because the law of nature is binding in the state of nature as well.

Several crucial differences in the state of nature: you have god for locke as a much substantial presence, he has no political power over men but he is there. For Locke, the reason why we don't wanna kill each other is God.

The law of nature creates obligations for everyone. We have to obey, because we are creatures of God. There is an enforcer of the laws of nature and that is all of us who care about peace. For Locke, the state of war is brought by the people who call themselves out of the state of peace and so they become fair game of retribution. The criminal is the exception of the state of nature.

There is such a thing as the *legitimate* power of one over the other, derived from the right of everyone to protect everyone else.

Why do we have these right? Locke's official answer is that we're all equal. But when you dig deeper, the image of god appears: we are all equal because we are all creatures of god. Do we have to have a god to maintain these kinds of God: Dunn says if you take god out of the equation, you lose those rights, according to Locke.

OBJECTION that Locke makes to his hypothesis of the state of nature

The idea that everyone is a judge in their own case leads to bias and excessive punishment. Sure, but then we can't remedy this by allowing one man to be judge in his own case and be above the laws: *"government where one man - and remember absolute monarchs are only men! - commands a multitude, is free to be judge in his own case, and can do what he likes to all his subjects, with no-one being allowed to question or control those who carry out his wishes, and everyone having to put up with whatever he does, whether he is led by reason, mistake or passion"*. Otherwise, the state of nature would be better.

The state of war is a state in which someone has intentions to move against someone's right of life. That person becomes an unjust aggressor.

The state of war only comes about when someone violates the state of nature, and that happens when someone wants to hold absolute power. We can rightfully kill someone that moves war to us, tries to subjugate us in a similar way.

Natural liberty vs. liberty of man in society

Natural liberty:

- to be free from any superior power on earth
- not under will or legislative authority of man
- only law of nature as rule (different from license)

Liberty of man:

- to be under no legislative power other than the one you consent to
- not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown arbitrary will of another man

Liberty for Hobbes looks like slavery to Locke because if you are subjected to those things you are considered as a slave. In his attempt to separate the function of Leviathan from the physical man he would be, he ignores who the Leviathan is (is he a jerk?). Hobbes doesn't care but for Locke it is important. In the state of nature, we don't have the power to take our own lives, because we are creatures of god.

Locke on Property (chapter 5)

Reason and scriptures both suggest that the earth was given to men in common (right to self preservation).

Whence, hence property? How does it come to be that some people own something that others don't? How is property justified? Locke says property is not justified by covenants, from people consenting to that property being yours. What is spontaneously produced in nature belongs to all in common, but every man has property in their own body. The labor of his body and the work of his hand are properly his: *"whatsoever he removes out of the state of nature (...) he hath mixed his labor with, and joined it to something of his own"*. *"... at least where there is enough and as good left in common for others"*.

He seems to be grounding property in labor, at least when there is enough and there's good left for others.

Locke: transition to property (Chapter 5)

"Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man, has property in his own person. This nobody has any right but himself. The labor of his own body, and the

work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state that nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labor with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property”

“...at least where there is enough and as good left in common for others”

Locke on property and consent: an interesting slip of the tongue (Chapter 5)

“Thus the grass my horse has bit, the turfs my servant has cut, the ore I have digged in any place where I have a right to them in common with others become my property, without the assignation or consent of anybody. The labor that was mine , removing them out of that common that they were on, hath fixed my property in them”.

It's labor that grounds property but now we have a servant who has cut the grass and that makes it mine...

Lecture 11:

Learning objectives

- understand how the introduction of money alters the constraints on the accumulation of wealth and allows for great inequality, to which anyone consenting to the use of money is assumed to consent
- Know that Locke's view on the introduction of money has been interpreted very differently.
- the paramount role consent in Locke's system
- have a clear understanding of the goal of government for Locke, and how that goal is to be achieved (separation of powers)
- understand the difference between Locke and Hobbes when it comes to the right to rebel

Locke on property accumulation → What justifies property is labor

Are there limits to the property one can thus acquire?

"It will perhaps be objected to this that if gathering the acorns, or other fruits of the earth, etc., makes a right to them, then anyone may engross as much as he will. To which I answer: Not so. The same law of nature that does by this means give us property, does also bound that property too. 'God has given us all things richly' is the voice of reason confirmed by inspiration. But how far has he given it to us? To enjoy. As much as anyone can make use of too many advantages of life before it spoils, so much he may by his labor fix a property in. Whatever is beyond this, is more than his share, and belongs to others."

Yes, there are limits: We can take only as much as we can enjoy before it spoils. Whatever is in excess of this belongs to others. As far as land is concerned, we can have only as much land "as man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of". Even the land is enclosed by labor as long as there is enough for others (element of equality still present). Such land is effectively enclosed by labor (as long as there is as much land for others to enclose). This became an **argument for colonialism** because in the American continent, a lot of land was not cultivated and colonists had more advanced technology

But limits to labor, too: Now all land that is common in England is common by compact, by the law of the land: "by compact and agreement they settled the property rights that labor and industry had begun." V. 45

Ambiguity: very radical as only property with labor and as much land as you can consume, but also very conservative as compact by common cannot be taken

Progressive view: He wants to establish the bourgeoisie. For nobles, he argues that the land wasn't used much and shouldn't be considered as the noble's property. But in the case of bourgeoisie, as they were able to make a profit out of that land, they were entitled to it (although they used servants to make this profit = some kind of ambiguity), therefore any land the nobles couldn't control could be claimed.

Conservative view: the workers that were now working in that property didn't have any claim on it, as the distribution of property is already settled → however if new land was to be found

(e.g. America colonies) anyone could have a right on that land so long as they were able to keep it productive

The Invention of Money:

Something we value by agreement. It has introduced by consent (because people consent to the value/use of money) the possibility to acquire larger possessions and a right to them. By consent, also fixing property of the land by way of a construction of cities and states: no longer just ambiguously “as much as you can work on” Changes things quite a bit: sidesteps the constraints of spoiling: **agreement to money = agreement to inequality**

Money according to Locke is something that we all come to agree on.

Think about the constraint of spoilage. With money this constraint disappears because you can now exchange currency that will remain in this.

Money makes it so that one can acquire more than you would by accumulating spoiling resources because money doesn't spoil → no bound.

If you agree to money, you also agree to the inequality it generates.

CB Macpherson and James Tully interpret this chapter as Locke seeming happy about it, he seems to say that money is a good thing and thus inequality is not that bad. CB Macpherson senses a sort of nostalgia and the reading as the creation of money as a form of human downfall.

Chapter 8:

Keywords: legislative/division of power, dissolution - tyranny, consent

Man, being naturally free, cannot be subjected to the power of another without his consent

Fundamental role of consent: body exists only because individuals consented to it (8.99).

Political body moved by the majority.

Obj: “That’s not how it happened historically!”

→ Response: “says who?” → Here he disputes this question because we couldn't know and give some examples such as Rome and Venice. But even if the historical evidence were against that it wouldn't matter because it is the way it should be.

Obj: “People are just born into a state and can't change!”

→ Response: “says who?” → For Locke nothing prevents some people in a commonwealth to leave and find another commonwealth. So it isn't true that if you are born in a government you are obligated to stay.

Important thing that distinguishes Locke from Hobbes: the state of nature is inconvenient rather than essentially threatening. Men are by nature free and equal so no one can be subjected to political power to which they don't consent. How is it that we are constituting the state? We're coming together, those willing to consent to this state, to form a political body. Locke wants to give it a unity, a permanence. It is moving similarly as the drawing of the leviathan but with people in his head. Locke says the best way to make a decision is for the body to move in the direction the majority of the people want it to move in.

But that would mean that the body hardly ever moves. Because it's hard to obtain a majority.

We are consenting (keyword), **we are coming together**. He says this is what has happened in history as well and addresses a couple of objections.

Chapter 9:

Why abandon the state of nature? (section 123)

The state of nature lacks:

→ “an established, settled, known law, received and accepted by common consent” (section 124) = **lacks legislative power**

→ “a known and impartial judge, with authority to settle all differences according to the established law” (section 125) = **lacks judicial power**

→ “a power to back up and support a correct sentence, and to enforce it properly” (section 12) = **lacks executive power**

“Now that he is in a new state, in which he will enjoy many advantages from the labor, assistance, and society of others in the same community, as well as protection from the strength of the community as a whole, he must also give up something. For he will have to part with as much of his natural freedom to provide for himself as is required for the welfare, prosperity, and safety of the society. As well as being necessary, this is fair, because the other members of the society are doing the same thing” (section 130)

BUT: we only do this to better protect ourselves, our community, and our property, so limited power! (section 131)

We give up some measure of liberty to get some measure of security (but we give less of freedom than we receive of liberty)

3 main things we get from the civil state: legislative power , judicial power = a judge who will interpret that law and will adjudicate that law, **and executive power** = someone who enforces those laws. Those are the “ reasons to leave the state of nature and they are good enough for Locke, **but that power has to be limited.**

Chapter 11:

Legislative power is supreme, as the one that embodies the consent of the citizens

→ Set up so that it preserves society and every one in it

But there are **four things the legislature cannot do:**

1. **Go against the law of nature**
2. **Exercise arbitrary power. No one has absolute power over themselves, so they cannot transfer absolute power to the legislature. That would be worse than the state of nature. Just make laws!**
3. **Can't take property without consent, unless it's according to the laws of the community**
4. **Cannot transfer power to anyone else**

Legislative, Executive, and Federative:

Legislative power is discontinuous: make laws and be subjected to them. (= when a problem arises the legislative body legislates, then is “suspended”)

Executive power is always in existence.

Federative power: *power that has to do with the relationship of the commonwealth with other commonwealths.*

Executive and Federative powers are distinct, but best kept in the hands of the same entity. Both require the force of society for their exercise (section 148)

Primacy of legislature: also means primacy of the laws . **All powers are bound by the law and no one is above it.**

This tells us that for Locke there is a people within this system: consequence of the state of nature being different from the one of Hobbes

Chapter 18 and 19

tyranny: exercise of power beyond your own rights, any ruler substituting their own will for the laws (which was not a pb for Hobbes).

Resisting tyrants is a right and, unlike in Hobbes's system, doesn't mean anarchy, because there is still a people, a system etc because what keeps the kingdom together are the laws. So it is lawful to resist unlawful exercise of power.

Dissolution of Government does not mean that it is the end of society. Locke says that the government can also be dissolved from within: when the legislative power is dissolved (happens most likely at the hands of the executive) it is the end of commonwealth, when the laws are made without the consent of the people (essence of civil war which isn't that worrisome for Locke as it was for Hobbes). Any threat by the executive is problematic.

Difference from Hobbes that are very important: we are consenting and entering a government to be protected, if we can't have protection we might as well challenge it and establish a more fit government

→ process of consultation and grievances to avoid constant revolutions

Locke is concerned that the citizens will dissolve the government for frivolous reasons. In the end of chapter 19 he makes sure to specify that it shouldn't be made for trivial matters.

SECOND PARTIAL

Lecture 12:

Keywords: nature, natural and moral inequality, unjust society, civilisation, human interaction

Learning objectives:

- know some historical background, and crucial elements of Rousseau's life
- understand his conception of nature, of the state of nature, and of the natural
- appreciate how he saw the questions of inequality, dependence, and private property
- understand what kind of project he was engaged in
- find him a place among other authors we have read who discussed equality/inequality

Why are we reading this?

This is one of the most damning indictments of contemporary civilization (**from the point of view of Rousseau we have gotten worse in time**). Quite dramatic prompt to take some distance from the way we live. This is politics too. What are alternatives to the way things are? → essence of politics.

In Hobbes you have a social contract in order to legitimize the political power, in Rousseau you have a deceitful contract to justify the political power.

Interesting critique to Hobbes and Locke: what you see is not what man is naturally like!

Staunch environmentalist, take inspiration? "how dearly nature makes us pay for the scorn we have shown for her lessons"

Very different take on equality, private property, and the birth of government. "Bogus contract". More on this next lesson

Rousseau (1712-1778): the political, social and intellectual context:

- absolutism, especially in France → rulers were trying to subjugate the powers of other classes (nobles) to have absolute power over the country
- creation of state bureaucracy
- by Rousseau's age, **the justification for absolutist rule shifted from "divine right" to "service to the State"**
- spike in consumer goods
- **French enlightenment** (Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert) → **intellectual proclaim, faith in reason, resentful of religion of any kind, human intelligence superior** (Rousseau participated to the writing of the Encyclopédie but had some **reservations on the power of reason** → reason is what engenders homocentrism, cause of unhappiness)
- his reliance on report of travelers → "The Good Savage"

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

He had a life of dependance which he resented enormously. He always found it very difficult to depend on others. He never went along fully with everyone. He had an unstable temperament

and eventually was paranoid. He was born in Switzerland from a watchmaker father who was very hostile towards him. He was self taught to a large extent. Under the recommendation of a priest, he was put in the care of Mme de Varennes. In Paris, he entered into relationships with intellectuals. *The conflict between individual and society was no theoretical problem for him but a tragic personal experience.*

The “Second” Discourse

It was **an answer to** a question of the academy of Dijon (**whether inequality that now exists among men is justified by nature**), focusing on the origins of inequality. The book wasn't too popular but he didn't care. It is a defense of the state of nature against Hobbes and Locke. It is abandoned because of perfectibility and contingent events. He was however vastly admired by Kant, Marx and Hegel. This discourse starts in a very solemn way. The preface is important because he talks about his project as a **project of recuperation rather than creation. He is trying to recuperate human nature and uses an analogy for this process: the statue of Glaucus. We think we look at human nature but what we're actually looking at is human nature defigured.** The whole point of this text is to indict current society.

Two fundamental natural principles

- 1) **self preservation:** naturally we want to preserve ourselves
- 2) **innate repugnance at seeing a fellow creature suffer compassion** (shared with other animals)
 - “emotion of nature, prior to all kinds of reflection”
 - identification with the sufferer is much stronger in a state of nature than in a state of reason
 - It is philosophy that isolates man “and bids him say, at sight of the misfortune of others: ‘Perish if you will, I am secure’” (vs women at the market)
 - no need for a principle of sociability

⇒ **The implication is that we have fallen. Each new stage in social progress brings us misery.** Philosophers are not likely to feel bad when they see somebody suffer. Those principles no longer govern our actions. **No need for a principle of sociability, not natural sociable, we want to preserve ourselves, we dislike to see somebody suffering**

Natural and social inequality

What are they? What is the relationship between them? vs Hobbes and Locke

He wonders if they have managed to see men in a state of nature. What they have done is to project contemporary men on the state of nature. **He defends the state of nature against Hobbes and Locke. The result is that it is a much better place for humans to stay in than everything they have achieved in contemporary society.**

The State of nature and its function in Rousseau's argument

“O man, whatever country you may come from, whatever your opinions may be, listen: here is your history as I believed it to read, not in the books of your fellow-men, which are liars, but in nature, which never lies. Everything that comes from nature will be true; there will be

nothing false except what I have intentionally added. The times about which I am going to speak are quite remote: how much you have changed from what you were! It is, as it were, the life of your species that I am about to describe to you according to the qualities you have received, which our education and your habits have been able to corrupt by have been able to destroy”

The idea here is that both Hobbes and Locke give a characterization of the state of nature as something people are bound to leave, good and rational to do so. **The goal is to criticize the current society not necessarily back to the state of nature, but realizing how things are.**

Natural Man (Critique of Civilisation)

Continuity with the animal species → **vigorousness and resilience** as men didn't have tools to help them, radically different from man as we know him

Respect for nature, no intensive exploitation of its resources → man has to be a lot stronger now because they doesn't have weapons or powerful lances

History of civil society as history of sickness: most of the ills that plague us are of our own making, and we could avoid them by following the simpler lifestyle that nature prescribes to us

“We must take care not to confuse savage man with the man we have before our eyes. Nature treats all animals left to its care with a tenderness that seems to show how jealous it is of that right”

Metaphysical and moral man in the state of nature

What distinguishes man from animals in the state of nature?

- **Human beings are free agents** so even if they are in the state of nature they have the freedom to heed or resist the call of nature, they can **choose to not follow their own instincts.**
-
- **Perfectibility**, aka the faculty of self improvement. This is what, in time, “draws man out of his original state”... and eventually **makes him see advantage in another's misfortune. This is the most important feature.** This is what ushers in a general state of unhappiness because it brings men to compare themselves to others.
- In the state of nature there is **no idea of honor or outrage.** Mental afflictions and violent passions strike much more civilized man than man in the state of nature

Fear of pain and hunger, not of death.

No sense of the future

[on the origin of languages: length of the time it took these things to develop, transition from the state of nature was not necessary, it could've been avoided and improved well being. There are not many problems with a state of nature, you don't have to to move away from it. There was no obvious progression, it was by chance, people could have remained under their own tree without the need to communicate with one another. **The creation of languages and people coming together is actually the beginning of the end.** Rousseau denies that there were stable families in the state of nature, chance and encounters among people, women were self-sufficient and didn't need a man, language was born to answer the needs of children to communicate with adults].

Man in the state of nature

Human beings were vigorous, happy, not sociable, not virtuous or vicious, not likely to clash with others in quest for self-preservation, not exploiting natural differences to oppress the weak, compassionate, natural inequality of mankind is “next to nothing”, but is greatly increased by the inequality of social institutions.

important: the distinction he introduces between “amour de soi” (rational quest of self survival tempered by compassion => work of nature) and “amour propre” (egocentrism, civil state of wanting to be more than others, constantly comparing yourself to others => work of reason).

There is a strong pessimism about history in Rousseau but there is an anthropological optimism. Inequality does exist in the state of nature but it is natural inequality and it is completely painless ≠ from social inequality.

How does inequality come about?

“After having proved that inequality is hardly observable in the state of nature, and that its influence there is almost nonexistent, it remains for me to show its origin and progress in the successive developments of the human mind. After having shown that perfectibility, social virtues, and the other faculties that natural man had received in a state of potentiality could never develop by themselves, that to achieve this development they required the chance coming together of several unconnected causes that might never have come into being and without which he would have remained eternally in his primitive constitution, it remains for me to consider and to bring together the various chance happenings that were able to perfect human reason while deteriorating the species, make a being evil while rendering it habituated to the ways of society, and, from so distant a beginning, finally bring man and the world to the point where we see them now”

Lecture 13:

Mary Wollstonecraft: A vindication on the rights of women: obeying nature/disobeying society?

Keywords: inequality and where it comes from, dependence => relationships of power are also relationships of dependency

“Independence I have long considered as the grand blessing of life, the basis of every virtue - and independence I will ever secure by contracting my wants, though I were to leave on a barren heath”

M W always has a double agenda: she wants to change the way philosophy is conceived to allow women to participate and she wants to change the way society works => theoretical AND practical approach

Independence is the most important word in her thought. **For her, to be independent is to have the possibility to reach virtues** (act politically)

Mary Wollstonecraft

Born in 1759 in a middle class family and died 1797. She is mostly known to be the mother of Mary Shelly. She didn't receive any formal education. Her father was an alcoholic and was very violent. She is a very interesting author that was presented during her life as non coherent, but she changed her mind whenever her life changed, which for V. Wolf is very valuable. Her mother dies and she decides to leave her family, because the only reason she stayed was to protect her mother. She then establishes a school for girls (education is for her a means to change society so very important) but the school doesn't succeed. She went to Ireland and became a nanny/servant there. She then discovers her hatred for the aristocracy. She was fired and she gets paid to write, to translate books, mostly on “women things”. She wrote her first book on how to educate daughters. This is an attempt to provide a tool for families to highlight the necessity to think about female education. **For her, we have to educate women very differently from how we do it in our society.** She writes her first novel (why novels? because contrary to essays they are read mostly by women so a more sympathetic audience). She defends the french revolution, highlighting that when inequalities are really high in a society there is a high risk of revolution, and decided to go (alone!!!) to Paris to see the revolution. She also criticizes mercantile society (aka capitalism today). She tries during her whole life to be independent which doesn't mean for her that you are alone but that you have power over yourself.

Vindication of the rights of woman (singular because she wants to present woman as a political concept)

Dedicated to Talleyrand: in 1791, Talleyrand presents to the Constituent Assembly a public report on education for women, but he changes it up to distorting it: women need to be educated, but the family has to deal with it to safeguard the exclusion of women from the public sphere, which, for the public benefit, they must remain in the domestic sphere.

Wollstonecraft invites him to “reconsider the subject” (agrees much more with Condorcet).

From this dedication we understand two things:

- 1) education is the main thing Wollstonecraft wants to highlight by criticizing what previous philosophers have said and giving a solution
- 2) the rights of women is not the rights as we intend it (as in voting and all that) but rather the right to be considered a political subject, the right to have rights

According to Wollstonecraft, **women's inferiority is cultural, not natural**. Women are **educated to love their subordination** (they are convinced that being inferior is something good, she's very against gallantry). Subordination, thus, is not natural, **subordination and submission are presented as a sign of privilege and attractive** (fragility as something seductive, for example). Women are educated just to be dependent on men. Materially, **women cannot work or have private property which implies that you have no rights on your body** → Wollstonecraft analyzes the life and education of "middle class" women, because she talks about what she knows and because we can see the oppression in its purest way (poor women suffer gender and class oppression). Symbolically, they are dependent on the male gaze and on judgment.

Controversy with Rousseau: he describes how to educate a child to become a citizen of the ideal city, and there's only one chapter on girls (who are supposed to be the companions of boys). She also **criticizes Rousseau's view on the origin of inequality because he doesn't really explain how, with no difference in the state of nature, women are inferior and have to take care of the baby** => why can't fathers give affection?

Education to be independent and to exercise one's own reason → Rousseau defined so education of men but "have contributed to render women more artificial, weak characters, than they would otherwise have been; and, consequently, more useless members of society" (p. 14)

Education of women as education to be pleasant → **Contradictions in Rousseau's analysis** (why, if women are naturally inferior and fulfilled in the private sphere, we have to educate them to depend against their instincts?), and Rousseau invert causes and effects talking about young girls.

Women inequality is based on the fact that their body is more fragile, they have less strength. **Wollstonecraft argues that bodily differences are reinforced by education.**

"If you accept that woman was not created merely to gratify the appetite of man, to be the upper servant who provides his meals and takes care of his linen, then you ought to grant also that mothers or fathers who are serious about the education of females should have their first concern: if not to strengthen the body at least not to destroy the girl's physical constitution by mistaken notions of beauty and female excellence" (p. 28)

"Men have superior strength of body; but if it weren't for mistaken notions of beauty, women would become strong enough to be able to earn enough to live on, which is the true definition of 'independent'; and to bear the bodily inconveniences and exertion that are needed to strengthen the mind" (p. 58)

How are educated women in this society ?

Virtues as a foundation of citizenship. Women have just negative virtues (obedience, modesty, chastity) or substitute of virtues (good manners, have the same “virtues” as soldiers or sailors) → link between freedom and virtues: women are not free, so they cannot be virtuous

How to exit inequality?

Inequality is produced in a vicious circle between the personal education and the material condition: women cannot work without being considered prostitutes, so they cannot be independent, so they have to find a husband who maintains them and therefore they must be pleasant, but also vice versa: they are educated only to the lightness, so do not know that they can be independent or are not capable of being and thus to them remain only marriage.

To exit this circle, Wollstonecraft proposes to rethink the distinction between public and private sphere.

“Women, I allow, may have different duties to fulfill; but they are human duties, and the principles that should regulate the discharge of them, I sudrdily maintain, must be the same”
(p. 35)

Different bodies, different duties, but same reasons and virtues. Public and private duties are political duties → they have to produce the same rights.

To ask independence for women, thus, is to imagine the possibility of self-government through reason and thanks to economic possibilities, expressed through political actions

She proposes to change the education of both men and women and introduces the idea of a mixed school.

→ *“I do not wish women to have power over men; but over themselves”*

Lecture 14:

Keywords: bourgeoisie/proletariat, capitalism/communism, revolution, alienation, means of production, exploitation

Things we think/thought of Marx before reading the essay: eliminate differences, philosopher, communism as end state, continuous development

Learning objectives:

- understand the context in which Marx writes and its importance in his work
- understand the different dimensions of the concept of alienation
- grasp the relationship between estranged labor and private property
- know the basic arguments of the Manifesto, the classes it discusses, and its understanding of the revolution
- in general, appreciate the importance and depth of Marx's Insights and complicate simplistic understandings you may have developed of his work
- notice similarities and differences with other authors

The Social Context

We are a full century after Rousseau so a lot has changed => the industrial revolution (social and economic changes marked by the transition from agricultural and commercial society to industrial society) is fully underway: with heights in Britain during the mid 18th-mid 19th century. Why Britain in particular? colonial power and discovery of precious material => large influx of precious metals that were quite important which led to rising prices and stimulation of innovation. The driving industries were the textile (raw materials coming from the work of slaves). Large scale machine production and build up of infrastructures => **urbanization**. You have a transition from a way of life that followed the rhythm of agriculture, where the pace of work is largely dictated by yourself, the rhythm was much more natural, to a way of life, where workers have the same pace as the machines with a much higher relation of dependence which you suffer from => exploitation took on forms previously uncommon. You have arguably a loss of independence and also a need to live very close to the factories.

Marx: Estranged Labor (1844)

Same assumption as classical political economy. Results: worker sinks to the level of the most wretched commodity. Political economy does not explain private property:

→ “Do not let us go back to a fictitious primordial condition as the political economist does, when he tries to explain”

The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size. Becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates:

→ **World of things increasingly valued, world of men increasingly devalued**

Political economy tries to understand what private property is but in this process there are many dark spots which Marx wants to illuminate. His idea is that capital is concentrated in less and less tanks. The bourgeois must systematically pay the worker less than the worker produces for

him. This brings to **higher and higher contraction of economic power**. And Marx says that it isn't an anomaly, it is precisely how the system works. You have a progressive thinning out of the middle class and you have a progress of the division of the world in 2 classes: prolétariat and bourgeoisie. In the end the revolution might not spill that much blood because there will be a lot of workers and few capitalists.

At the beginning he **dismisses the idea of social contract**: there is no fictional contract through which private property came to existence. Property is born out of the ability to control labor. **The more wealth the worker produces the poorer he becomes**. This process turns him into an ever cheaper commodity. The wealthier the capitalist becomes the more power he has on the workers → **the workers work to give power to the capitalist**. In this process, what is produced by the worker, its value increases, but their value decreases. **This process leads to alienation**

Alienation → not as deeply divided.

1. **from the object produced**:

Under capitalism the worker experiences alienation from the object he produces.

→ vs. freely confronting his product under conditions different from capitalism, and allowing the worker to see himself in the work created)

2. **from labor itself**, from that capacity to fulfill yourself in nature:

Labor is not something regarded as something that belongs to the workers but as a resistance, a threatening phenomenon. He becomes mere means to subsistence. **Work is not valued in itself but just as a means of survival**. The worker doesn't find any pleasure during the work but rather outside of it. **We lose every type of leisure**: only the functions that we share with animals remain (procreating, eating,...)

→ vs. work being his active species-life.

3. **from one's species being**:

The human being is the only species that can go beyond individual aims however in capitalism, he acts alone, produces for himself, for his survival.

man is a "species-being".

→ *"To say that man is a species being, is, therefore, to say that man raises himself above his own subjective individuality, that he recognizes in himself the objective universal, and thereby transcends himself as a finite being."*

→ **Estranged labor makes individual life the purpose of the life of the species.**

Labor means simply a means to satisfy a need.

→ In contrast with life activity, which is free, conscious activity that is man's species-character

Alienation in this form really tears humans apart, from their relationships notably. Natural cooperation becomes competition under capitalism

4. **from other human beings**:

Fellow workers are seen as a threat, as well as the bourgeois. **We start looking at human beings not as such but as the places they occupy in the hierarchy**. What's crazy is that all of this process is set in motion by the worker himself who gives the

bourgeois such power, creates his profit, and conforms to the stranger's activity. **The private property that the bourgeois owns is the product of this alienated labor.**

Private Property, for Marx

“the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of alienated labor, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself”

“political economy starts from labor as the real soul of production; yet to labor it gives nothing, and to private property everything.”

Increasing wages is not the answer, nor equalizing them because society would become an abstract capitalist. You have to dismantle the system and get to a point where truly human property becomes more important than private property (private property, everything reduced to “having”). Under a capitalist system, **your concept of the world is always linked to the concept of “owning” it.**

The Communist Manifesto (1848)

Written on behalf of the Communist League. *“The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it”*. Deep concern with strategies and tactics of revolution. Marx has the bourgeoisie in great esteem because it has managed to build great things. The state is a bourgeois creation. It prioritizes the bourgeois over other classes. **The bourgeoisie is the most revolutionary class.**

The Bourgeoisie

Class that brought feudalism to an end. Beneficiary of all the political conquests following the fall of feudalism (class legislation). Bourgeoisie and globalization. **Will bring about its own demise because it has a constant need to expand markets:** overproduction, increasing concentration of capital, creates and constantly increases (angry) proletariat.

Globalization

“The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common

property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.”

The Proletariat

Stages of the rise of the Proletariat:

1. Attacks directed not at the bourgeois conditions of production, but at the instruments of production
2. With the development of industry, the proletariat increases in number. Trade Unions.
3. Organization of the proletariat into a class.
4. Small section of the ruling class joins the proletariat.

“You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society”

The Interest of the people in power but also of the state and democracy is to pay the workers just what they need to survive, not more. **The workers are a commodity.** Marx mentions that work under the industrial revolution has lost all individual character, independent creativity. The worker has become pretty much a slave of the bourgeois class. The proletariat at this stage of capitalism is bound to increase, because the middle class is gonna be bought out because it doesn't have enough capital. Their skills are overtaken by capitalists. The proletariat is gonna increase and gonna be more concentrated in one space and become more conscious of their potential strength. In the very early state, the proletariat is angry at the machines, resents them, but it's still very much a personal and individual resentment. Because the individual dimension is all that capitalism teaches to the worker. The worker conceives himself as an individual, and alone he cannot win. **With the development of industries the proletariat increases and becomes more concentrated and starts talking to one another => Trade Unions.** Class struggles are beginning to be perceived as such and it becomes a class problem → the workers start conceiving themselves as a group, as a class. **The bourgeoisie, at this stage, tries to corrupt the proletariat, which is fatal according to Marx, because they are teaching the proletariat to be politically active.** The proletariat will be strengthened by certain intellectuals and members of the bourgeoisie who decided to join it. Marx was convinced that communism was the best system for everyone. First the proletariat will settle the score with its own bourgeoisie and then globally. One of the things Marx says is that **personal property doesn't exist.** **There is no pb in owning the fruit of your own labor.** The problem is that kind of property that makes people work for you and leads to exploiting people.

Revolution - Communism

Only way to abolish bourgeois relations of production.

First step: win the battle of democracy

Then, centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State

“despotic inroads on the rights of property”

Abolition of property of land, progressive taxes, abolition of inheritance, equal liability of all to labor, free education for all children in public schools, abolition of children's factory labor in its current form

Reforms would not change the relationship of capital to labor.

Communist ends "can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions".

Proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains.

Questions for Discussion

1. Have your views of communism changed after reading Marx ?
2. How could a Marxist respond to the remark that the communist experiment has failed, historically ?
3. What do you think of Marx's take on globalization ?
4. Democracy, Equality, Freedom: How would a communist define them ?

John Stuart Mill on Freedom:

Keywords: society/oppression/community/individual power, liberty/authority, conformity, censorship

What is Freedom?

A 17th century definition:

"Liberty, or freedom, signifieth properly the absence of opposition (by opposition, I mean external impediments of motion); and may be applied no less to irrational and inanimate creatures than to rational. For whatsoever is so tied, or environed, as it cannot move but within a certain space, which space is determined by the opposition of some external body, we say it hath not liberty to go further. And so of all living creatures, whilst they are imprisoned, or restrained with walls or chains; and of the water whilst it is kept in by banks or vessels that otherwise would spread itself into a larger space; we use to say they are not at liberty to move in such manner as without those external impediments they would. But when the impediment of motion is in the constitution of the thing itself, we use not to say it wants the liberty, but the power, to move; as when a stone lieth still, or a man is fastened to his bed by sickness."

The Political and Intellectual Context

British Empire.

Victorian age

Industrial revolution.

Considerable extension of suffrage

State of subjection for women.

Utilitarianism (Bentham):

People naturally pursue happiness and flee pain

Morality: doing things which are useful or pleasurable to oneself or others

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

Son of James Stuart Mill, philosopher of utilitarianism.

1823-1858: Employed in the East India Company.

1865: Elected to the House of Commons.

System of Logic; The Principles of Political Economy; On Liberty; Utilitarianism; Considerations On Representative Government; Subjugation of Women

On Liberty - Dedication

“To the beloved and deplored memory of her who was the inspirer, and in part the author, of all that is best in my writings- the friend and wife whose exalted sense of truth and right was my strongest incitement, and whose approbation was my chief reward—I dedicate this volume. Like all that I have written for many years, it belongs as much to her as to me; but the work as it stands has had, in a very insufficient degree, the inestimable advantage of her revision; some of the most important portions having been reserved for a more careful-examination, which they are now never destined to receive. Were I but capable of interpreting to the world one half the great thoughts and noble feelings which are buried in her grave, I should be the medium of a greater benefit to it, than is ever likely to arise from anything that I can write, unprompted and unassisted by her all but unrivaled wisdom.”

On Liberty (1859)

Chapter I:

“Civil, or Social liberty: the nature and limits of the power which can legitimately be exercised by society over the individual”

It's not just the tyranny of the government we have to worry about, but the tyranny of society.

“Harm principle”:

- *“the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection”*

- *“The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others”*

- *“His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant”*

Hideous exemption for children and the colonized:

- *“backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered in its nonage”*

- *“despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement”*

Freedom and Utility

No reliance on abstract rights, but only on utility “in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being”

The subjection of individual spontaneity to external control authorized only when the interests of others are at stake

“This, then, is the appropriate region of human liberty. It comprises, first, the inward domain of consciousness; demanding liberty of conscience, in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological”

Liberty of what?

Conscience

Thought, feeling, opinion, expression, publishing

Of taste and pursuit

“framing the plan of our life to suit our own character” even if others think we are being foolish, perverse, or wrong

To unite for any purpose not involving harm to others

“The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, or mental and spiritual”

Lecture 15:

Keywords: expression, discussion/opinion, truth, history, falsifiable, freedom

Mills conceptualisation of freedom: private sphere, invisible space that the public should not interfere with: What is protected in this space ? Pursuits of the good in our own way, without anyone telling us what’s best for us. The good life is the life you choose for yourself: not a good life in absolute terms. Unless you are choosing for yourself, good life doesn’t exist.

Learning objectives:

- understand Stuart Mill’s notion of liberty as protected space
- understand the formulation and implications of his “Harm Principle”
- understand the connection between individual freedom and utility
- reconstruct Mill’s argument in favor of freedom of thought and discussion

What kind of “space” does Mill’s freedom require?

Quite a bit! There should be a space surrounding all of us, which neither the government nor society can touch: What exactly is protected in this space? Why is it important that each one of us make use of this protected space to develop our own individuality? How are the conflicting projects of individuals to be managed?

The “Harm Principle”

“Harm principle”:

→ “the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection”

→ “The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others”

→ “His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant”

Freedom and Utility

No reliance on abstract rights, but only on utility “in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being”

The subjection of individual spontaneity to external control authorized only when the interests of others are at stake

Liberty of Thought and Discussion (Ch. II)

He doesn't think that there's anymore a need for a defense of speech of the press etc. In the 2nd chapter, he seems to be more focused on the power of society to constraint the freedom of press. We have this idea here too that the damage done by silencing an opinion, the evil, is done certainly to the person in question but most importantly to society in general. Mill gives several arguments why we ought to allow the expression of all opinions: because the doctrine that we accept (the mainstream one) may actually not be true: *“To call any proposition certain, while there is any one would deny its certainty if permitted, but who is not permitted, is to assume that we ourselves, and those who agree with us, are the judges of certainty, and judges without hearing the other side”*. Suppressing opposing ideas may deprive us of the possibility of correcting our mistakes. He thinks that you should take precautions against your own fallibility. He responds to the potential objections to his argument that could be made: Lack of conviction? Utility? Persecution needed?. **I am sure enough of my opinion that I can act on it because I have already entertained alternative opinions.** People also think that it's useful to not have certain positions articulated. We are fallible and we might think an opinion is useless for society when it's not. But you cannot decide for another person. The third objection is about persecution which is needed. Truth is resilient and always survives but Mills disagrees. So many people have paid with their lives for just expressing their opinion (ex: trusting atheists)..

“truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think”

Even if the opinion is false, it presents an opportunity to appreciate the truth more: “clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error”. Both the old and the new opinion may be partly truth and partly false, but may supply to each other the remainder of truth missing from the competing opinion (ex: radical religions).

Lecture 16:

Rawls

Keywords: egalitarian/equality, justice as fairness, cooperation, ignorance, utilitarianism

Learning Objectives:

- appreciate the centrality of Rawls for political philosophy between the 20th and 21st century
- understand how his original position receives the legacy of the social contract, and the function it has in Rawls system.
- understand the function of the veil of ignorance
- Appreciate how the two principles of justice articulate justice as fairness

John Rawls (1921-2002)

He wrote another book, Political liberalism, which is an adjustment of the Theory of Justice (1971), which was the most important thing he wrote.

If you think about the 19th century, you think of all the great things western people had down, and then it ends up crashing in the second half of the 20th century. And then in the second half: is political philosophy dead ?!!!

Rawls completely overalls the political philosophy. He gives philosophy something to think and talk about → rebirth of political theory in the Anglo-Saxon world. His main problem is the question of distribution of goods in our current society. He articulates the concept of justice as fairness, two principles of justice:

→ strong utilitarianism of contractarianism

→ modified utilitarianism: improvement of the condition of the worst off, but: “each person possesses an inviolability founded on the justice that even welfare of society as a whole cannot override”, “justice that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others”.

Which justice?

He proposes a notion of justice:

Subject of the book is the justice of the basic structure of society: “the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages through social cooperation”

Specifically, we need to come up with principles of justice that will address the fact that institutions in society tend to favor certain start places over others.

→ excludes global expansion of his theory of justice. It applies to the basic structure of society as a “closed system isolated from other societies”

→ Ideal theory: starts with justice, theory of injustice will follow

The basic structure of society, as we know it, contains many social positions. The institutions of society favor certain social positions as opposed to others. **Rawls wants to isolate what is our own doing and what is derived from the social position we occupy.**

For institutions to be just, they need to be fair and, in order to be fair, these institutions need to be built under a veil of ignorance (prevents people who are building them to know what their

social condition will be after they have built it because the parties have to be mutually disinterested). This process takes place before the writing of a constitution.

This design has to be broad as anyone needs to cooperate. Anytime we can step back and think: How would we build this society?

The original position:

The goal is to carry to a higher level of abstraction the theory of the social contract

We agree not to enter a particular society or set up a form of government, but two principles of justice in “one joint act”, decided once and for all. **“Original position” of equality** rather than a “state of nature”. **No one knows:** place in society, class position or social status, own fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, own conception of the good or psychological propensities, generation (public debt and natural resources). Principles are chosen behind a veil of ignorance

Who is behind the veil?

Mutually disinterested (no envy)

Rational (most effective means to reach an end)

Interested in fruitful cooperation

The two principles of justice

- 1) Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.
- 2) Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both
 - a) reasonably expected to be to everyone’s advantage, and
 - b) attached to positions and offices open to all

Distribution doesn’t have to be equal but needs to be to the advantage of everyone

You cannot sacrifice someone’s liberty because this would be socially or economically interested

What is unjust in this framework: inequalities that are not in the best interest of all. Social goods (authority, government...) can be unequal but need to be improved in the general state. Everyone is rational in the same way

Lecture 17:

Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*

This book is now a classic in political philosophy, though it is pretty recent. It is very relevant also because she addresses a lot of political philosophers that we have studied in this class.

Pateman has worked in many different countries and has written a lot of books. She started in the 70s thinking and talking about the pb of democracy with *Participation and democratic theory* and *The problem of political obligation: a critical analysis of liberal theory*. One of her main interests is how we participate in political life and why we obey the law.

The 2 problems she addresses in the sexual contract are why are women excluded from political participation and why do women respect these rules. For her it is very relevant to consider women as a group to understand how our society works. She is very critical of the work of contractarianism and liberalism.

Sexual Contract

Criticizes:

- Idea of Freedom
- Idea of Equality
- Property as Property of One's own Person

Highlights :

- Fraternal Patriarchy
- Division between Public and Private Spheres
- The role of actual contracts (i.e. Marriage, Prostitution, Surrogacy)
- Sexual Difference as Political Difference

She criticizes the idea of freedom as a sense of constriction. For her freedom is something more. She criticizes the idea of equality, because you cannot erase differences and when, for example, laws are being drafted we always think of men. How can we ask for more rights without denying our differences? Then she strongly criticizes private property because it shouldn't be the extension of the property over our body. What she proposes is a shift from a classical patriarchy to a fraternal one. Men created a horizontal reaction among them and not a vertical one with just one king among everyone. In fraternal patriarchy, we have a pact between men.

She presents 3 contracts: marriage, prostitution and surrogacy.

For her sexual difference is not a fact, something that happens, but something that is politically created and has a political effect.

Previous authors

-Margaret Cavendish (1623-1673): Why if in the state of nature we're all equal, why do women participate in a society where we don't have rights? It's because men subjugated women

-Mary Astell (1666-1731): If human beings are born free, how is it that women are born slaves?

-Harriet Taylor (wife of JSM, 1807-1858): there is no inherent reason or necessity that all women should choose to devote their life to one animal function (reproductivity) and its consequences.

=> **strong critiques of contractarian theory because of the contradiction: if every man is born free in a state of nature, why should we create a society in which only one group is protected and why should women agree to a pact where they have less rights.**

She contends that in the 21st century *“an alternative discourse of freedom is badly needed”* and *“we hear a great deal about freedom from proponents of the official view of democracy but for too long the market has been cornered by a contractual conception”*.

She is very critical of the idea of contracts. **Pateman contends that contracts do not constitute consent.** *“Unlike consent, the practice of contract brings something new into being. The original agreement is a contract of creation; it is not consent”*. **A contract is something that looks forward in the future and that tries to create something new and for Pateman this is not a sign of consent because we are consenting to an hypothesis. It is something that we are betting on without having full knowledge of it. That’s why for her it is very risky to imagine societies on the basis of contracts forever.**

“The social contract is a story of freedom; the sexual contract is a story of subjection”.

Patriarchal power

If we compare the **natural rights of a father** with those of a **king**, we find them all one, without any difference at all but only in the latitude or extent of them: as the father over one family, so the king, as father over many families, extends his care to preserve, feed, clothe, instruct, and defend the whole commonwealth. His war, his peace, his courts of justice, and all his acts of sovereignty, tend only to preserve and distribute to every subordinate and inferior father, and to their children, their rights and privileges, so that all the duties of a king are summed up in an universal fatherly care of his people.

“Private bodies regular and lawful are those that are constituted without letters, or other written authority, saving the laws common to all other subjects. And because they be united in one person representative, they are held for regular; such as are all families, in which the father or master ordereth the whole family. For he obligeth his children, and servants, as far as the law permitteth, though not further, because none of them are bound to obedience in those actions which the law hath forbidden to be done. In all other actions, during the time they are under domestic government, they are subject to their fathers and masters, as to their immediate sovereigns. For The father and master being before the institution of Commonwealth Absolute sovereigns in their own families, they lose afterward no more of their authority than the law of the Commonwealth taketh from them.”

“Dominion is acquired two ways: by generation and by conquest. *The right of dominion by generation is that which the parent hath over his children, and is called paternal. And is not derived from the generation, as if therefore the parent had dominion over his child because he begat him, but from the child's consent, either express or by other sufficient arguments declared.*

If there be no contract, the dominion is in the mother. *For in the condition of mere nature, where there are no matrimonial laws, it cannot be known who is the father unless it be*

declared by the mother; and therefore the right of dominion over the child dependeth on her will, and is consequently hers. Again, seeing the infant is first in the power of the mother, so as she may either nourish or expose it; if she nourish it, it oweth its life to the mother, and is therefore obliged to obey her rather than any other; and by consequence the dominion over it is hers. But if she exposes it, and another finds and nourishes it, dominion is in him that nourishes it. For it ought to obey him by whom it is preserved, because preservation of life being the end for which one man becomes subject to another, every man is supposed to promise obedience to him in whose power it is to save or destroy him.”

“But the husband and wife, though they have but one common concern, yet having different understandings, will unavoidably sometimes have different wills too; it therefore being necessary that the last determination, i. e. the rule, should be placed somewhere; it naturally falls to the man's share, as the abler and the stronger.

Let us therefore consider a master of a family with all these subordinate relations of wife, children, servants, and slaves, united under the domestic rule of a family; which, what resemblance soever it may have in its order, offices, and number too, with a little commonwealth, yet is very far from it, both in its constitution, power and end: or if it must be thought a monarchy, and the paterfamilias the absolute monarch in it, [...] But how a family, or any other society of men, differs from that which is properly political society, we shall best see, by considering wherein political society itself consists.”

“One day the expelled brothers joined forces, slew and ate the father, and thus put an end to the father horde. Together they dared and accomplished what would have remained impossible for them singly. [...] They hated the father who stood so powerfully in the way of their sexual demands and their desire for power, but they also loved and admired him. After they had satisfied their hate by his removal and had carried out their wish for identification with him, the suppressed tender impulses had to assert themselves. [...] They undid their deed by declaring that the killing of the father substitute, the totem, was not allowed, and renounced the fruits of their deed by denying themselves the liberated women. Thus they created the two fundamental taboos of totemism out of the sense of guilt of the son. [...] the incest prohibition had, besides, a strong practical foundation. Sexual need does not unite men, it separates them. Though the brothers had joined forces in order to overcome the father, each was the other's rival among the women. Each one wanted to have them all to himself like the father, and in the fight of each against the other the new organization would have perished. For there was no longer anyone stronger than all the rest who could have successfully assumed the role of the father. Thus there was nothing left for the brothers, if they wanted to live together, but to erect the incest prohibition—perhaps after many difficult experiences—through which they all equally renounced the women whom they desired, and on account of whom they had removed the father in the first place. Thus they saved the organization which had made them strong and which could be based upon the homosexual feelings and activities which probably manifested themselves among them during the time of their banishment.”

To state that the social contract and the sexual contract – the original contract – creates the two spheres, can be seriously misleading insofar as such a formulation suggests that patriarchal right governs only marriage or the private sphere. In the classic tales the sexual contract is displaced into the marriage contract, but this does not mean that the law of male sex-right is confined to marital relations. **Marriage is extremely important, not least because the private**

sphere is constituted through marriage, but the natural power of men as 'individuals' extends to all aspects of civil life. **Civil society (as a whole) is patriarchal. Women are subject to men in both the private and public spheres; indeed, men's patriarchal right is the major structural support binding the two spheres into a social whole.** Men's right of access to women's bodies is exercised in the public market as well as in private marriage, and patriarchal right is exercised over women and their bodies in ways other than direct sexual access.

Women are incorporated into a sphere that both is and is not in civil society. **The private sphere is part of civil society but is separated from the 'civil' sphere. This has ensured that "the antinomy private/public is another expression of natural/civil and women/men".**

The public realm cannot be fully understood in the absence of the private sphere, and, similarly, the meaning of the original contract is misinterpreted without both, mutually dependent, halves of the story. **Civil freedom depends on patriarchal rights.**

To tell the story of the sexual contract is to show how sexual difference, what it is to be a 'man' or 'woman', and the construction of sexual difference as political difference; is central to civil society.

Lecture 18:

Keywords: migration, freedom of movement, state, citizenship,

Learning Objectives

- Confront (and position yourself with) an argument for (more) open borders
- Learn about other positions reconstructed, and distinguish between those arguments and Carens's Arguments based on
 - Libertarian principles
 - Rawlsian principles
 - Utilitarian principles
 - Communitarian principles

This article is really old but its significance has only grown with the years.

He starts by saying that borders are often invisible for us, because it is simple for us to travel, even when having to ask for visas. **But borders are not invisible at all for most people in the world**, for whom traveling for tourism, studies etc is very hard. Carens takes the perspective of these people. Most of them are welcomed with guns and violence. Carens's question is what is it that justifies those guns ?

Are Immigration Restrictions Morally Justified?

And if so, what justifies them? Sovereignty (exclusive control over a certain type of territory)? Carens argues against the moral justification of immigration restrictions: citizenship in Western liberal democracies is the modern equivalent of **feudal privilege**: something inherited that significantly affects your life prospects but doesn't withstand moral scrutiny (question of luck). He says that thus there is **very little moral justification for forbidding some people to enter certain territories**. In order to build his argument, he draws on **three different traditions of moral/political argumentation: libertarian, rawlsian, utilitarian**.

He suggests that under none of these can we find a moral justification for the restriction of the right to immigrate.

Aliens and Property Rights (Libertarian view)

"It's our state and we decide whom to allow in"

Libertarian view (Nozick): **minimalistic view of the state only legitimated by the need to enforce the property rights of individuals**. Carens's inference on borders based on Nozick's principles: **citizenship is not a form of property. In fact, the state is obliged to protect the property rights of both citizens and non-citizens. And the right to exclude (from property) accrues to individuals, not to states. And libertarians would never endorse an argument that looks at the state as collective property because that may open the door to redistributive policies, which libertarians oppose. No right to restrict immigration under the libertarian framework**.

The state is there to protect private property, so one cannot use it as collective property.

If someone in the US wants to hire a worker from Mexico, in the libertarian view, the State shouldn't stand in their way.

The Rawlsian Argument

More activist role for the state. **Rawls assumes a closed society**, in which issues of immigration would not arise. But Carens says that we can apply Rawls's model more broadly, to cover justice across different societies. Aren't people beyond our societies also free and equal? The contingency of being born in a state or another is not morally relevant: a global, rather than national view of the original position. Same principles would be chosen. **States might exist, but they are created and justified only on the basis of the principles chosen behind this global veil of ignorance.** International difference principle. Freedom of movement would likely be included among basic liberties (with threat to public order proviso). Unless there could be a significant threat of public borders.

Utilitarian Argument

Utilitarianism's aim is to **maximize utility**, and in the count of global utility each counts for one, and only one. It does assume the moral equality of individuals, each individual counts for one. The utility of certain citizens to not be adversely affected by immigration would count, but so would count the utility of citizens beneficially affected by it. And the utility of non-citizens would count as well. Economists tell us that overall utility will increase with open circulation of goods and people. The balance would likely fall on the side of less immigration restrictions.

Liberalism and the State

Carens pushes the boundaries of both liberalism and the state. **If liberalism as a political doctrine can be conceived of in abstraction from the state and from the notion of sovereignty**, Carens's argument stands, if not then things got a little bit complicated. However, he still concludes ultimately that everyone should be able to sign the social contract, if they wish to do so. Contingent, historical connection, not a normative one.

The Communitarian Challenge

Michael Walzer (wrote a book in reaction to Theory of Justice): **states are free and should be free to take in whoever they want. Membership is central to the question of justice. Questions of distributive justice should NOT be addressed from behind a veil of ignorance, but from the perspective of people who share a common culture. Exclusion is justified by the right of communities to self-determination. Though 3 constraints :**

1. People in dire need if we can help without significant costs to ourselves
2. Those admitted must be entitled to citizenship
3. No right to expel existing inhabitants by new states

Though, Carens points out that it is not true that distinctiveness depends on formal closure (ex US citizens consider themselves more as citizens of their states than of the US). We can not make an analogy between states and private and public clubs: right to equal treatment must be present at the level of the state, which leads by force to more open borders.

In Carens view his argument stands, that borders protect unjust privilege.

Lecture 19:

Keywords: justice/injustice, radicalism, non-violence/direct action, religion, (de)segregation

Learning objectives:

- understand the Political/Historical Context for Civil Rights Struggles
- learn a bit about the authors' background
- understand what MLK means by Civil Disobedience
- understand the goals of disobedience for Malcolm X

Political/Historical Context (USA)

Civil Rights Struggles of African Americans in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. Slavery: First Africans seized and sold in the Colonies in the early 17th century, which was legal in all 13th original states at the time of Independence (1776). (<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>) 3/5 in the Constitution 1787 (calculus of representatives) abolished in the Northern States as of 1804 (NJ). Civil war 1861-1865 (Emancipation proclamation by Pres. Lincoln in 1863). Reconstruction (W. E. B. DuBois) Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)/Brown v. Board of Education (1954) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xERXusiEszs>. Several amendments were passed in the aftermath: 13th amendment abolished slavery, the 14th defined citizenship and contained clauses still important nowadays, the 15th prohibited the denial to vote. The debates are still ongoing today.

Authors' background

MLK: 1929-1968 Baptist minister Led the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott, founded Southern Christian Leadership Conference 1963 March on Washington (I have a dream...) Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964

Malcolm X: 1925-1965 Nation of Islam, Black nationalism

MLK – Letter from a Birmingham Jail

Birmingham campaign at the beginning of April 1963, written to a white clergyman. Against racism and segregation: civil disobedience MLK roughly arrested on April 12 Response to a Call for Unity by 8 white clergymen <http://okra.stanford.edu/media/audio/630416001.mp3> “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny”

4 basic steps in any nonviolent campaign: ascertaining the fact about injustice, negotiation, self purification (bear the violence of the authority without reacting), direct action

Civil Disobedience

The rationale in breaking certain laws and not others: “There are just and unjust laws – ‘an unjust law is no law at all’”. A just law must square with moral law or the law of God. There is an appeal to a higher law – above the positive law of the state. The unjust law must be broken openly, lovingly, and one must be willing to pay the consequences and accept the penalty. This

actually amounts to respect for the law. Civil disobedience is the disobedience of an unjust law, but you break it openly.

Problem with the white moderate who puts a higher premium on order than on justice “I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negrocommunity” (on extremism) black nationalists who advocate for violence and rich black advantaged by segregation.

Malcolm X Ballot or Bullet

Cleveland, OH/Detroit MI April 1964 Malcom X had just announced separation from Nation of Islam (advocating separatism and forbidding the vote)

Willing to cooperate with the Civil Rights Movement, but new interpretation.

The political and economic philosophies of Black Nationalism

Assumption of a perfectly segregated world: the white liberals have failed us, the government has failed us, enough sit-ins. Stand up and fight. (hook to anti-colonial rhetoric), possibility of war <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIDgDFvyeS8>, human rights (as you may have not heard of before) => almost recommends segregation

Lecture 20:

Black feminism: Audre Lorde and Angela Davis

Feminism is plural.

Angela Davis: Women, Race and Class

First published in 1981, highlights legacy of slavery, uses historical lens to show how race, gender and class affect inequality, critiques white privilege in Feminist Movement, emphasis on oppression of black women through work, discusses possibility of sisterhood between white and black sisters, talks about impact of racism on black women's reproductive rights.

She studied philosophy with Marcuse (considered the father of the Sexual Revolution) and thus she studied continental philosophy (because he was from the Frankfurter school). She is also a political activist, as well as a teacher, she went to jail for 2 years because she was accused of having held a gun to kidnap a judge, she was part of the Black Panther Party. In some sense, she did both theory and practice.

Her book was pretty much a bomb for its time. She criticizes both feminism and the black movements because she doesn't feel accepted and recognised in both movements. She highlights that being a woman is really intertwined with the race and the class we are a part of. She tries to understand how things ended up this way. But she doesn't claim that we have to separate black and white women.

Soujourner truth: *"That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have plowed, and planted, and have gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much, and eat as much as man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?"*

(1851 - Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio)

*"The advocacy of women's rights could not be forbidden. Not yet acceptable to the makers of public opinion, the issue of women's equality, now embodied in an embryonic movement, supported by Black people who were fighting for their own freedom, established itself as an indelible element of public life in the United States. But what was it all about? **How was the question of women's equality defined other than by the suffrage issue which had prompted the derogatory publicity about the Seneca Falls Convention? [...]***

*However, as a rigorous consummation of the consciousness of white middle-class women's dilemma, the Declaration all but ignored the predicament of white working-class women, as it ignored the condition of Black women in the South and North alike. **In other words, the Seneca Falls Declaration proposed an analysis of the female condition which disregarded the circumstances of women outside the social class of the document's framers.**"*

She goes back to the Seneca Falls Convention and she highlights how the birth of the feminist movement in the US was strongly affected by the race and class of those who created it (mostly middle class and white).

Working women did not raise the banner of suffrage en masse until the early 20th century, when their own struggles forged special reasons for demanding the right to vote. When women struck the New York garment industry in the renowned “Uprising of the 20,000” during the winter of 1909-1910, the ballot began to acquire a special relevance to working women’s struggles. As women labor leaders began to argue, working women could use the vote to demand better wages and improved conditions on the job. Woman suffrage could serve as a powerful weapon of class struggle. After the tragic fire at the New York Triangle Shirtwaist Company claimed the lives of 146 women, the need for legislation prohibiting the hazardous conditions of women’s work became dramatically obvious. **In other words, working women needed the ballot in order to guarantee their very survival.**

Women ask for a write to vote as a tool to ask for equal pay and other requests. The right to vote was given first to black men in the US and then to women. For the first years, the abolitionist movement and the feminist one walked together. But when black men won the right to vote, the feminist movement split: on one side, the people who thought it was a good news that the right to vote was expanding, and on the other, the people who thought it was terrible to add more men who could control our bodies, and then the third part, the people who considered white women superior to black men. Amongst black women there were also 2 groups : the good news one and the one that thought that black men wouldn’t have fought for them as they had done.

This episode in the birth control movement confirmed the ideological victory of the racism associated with eugenic ideas. **It had been robbed of its progressive potential, advocating for people of color not the individual right to birth control, but rather the racist strategy of population control.** The birth control campaign would be called upon to serve in an essential capacity in the execution of the U.S. government’s imperialist and racist population policy.

The abortion rights activists of the early 1970s should have examined the history of their movement. Had they done so, they might have understood why so many of their Black sisters adopted a posture of suspicion toward their cause.

What is reproductive right ? **White women: right to not reproduce, black women: right to reproduce => the meaning of a right depends on race and class.**

Her main goal is to shift our perspective and that when we talk about politics we gotta think of several factors that impact people in different ways. We have to avoid imagining a subject, as a woman, as a universal subject (women should be plural). It doesn’t mean that we have to give up the unity, just consider that it’s plural.

Audre Lorde: The uses of Erotic, the erotic as power

1978, what does it count as political?, erotic as a form of power - as a source of joy, erotic and not just sexual, erotic as a form of knowledge.

When we look away from the importance of the erotic in the development and sustenance of our power, or when we look away from ourselves as we satisfy our erotic needs in concert with others, **we use each other as objects of satisfaction** rather than share our joy in the satisfying, rather than make connection with our similarities and our differences. [...]

Only now, I find more and more **women-identified women** brave enough to risk sharing the erotic's electrical charge without having to look away, and without distorting the enormously powerful and creative nature of that exchange. **Recognizing the power of the erotic within our lives can give us the energy to pursue genuine change within our world**, rather than merely settling for a shift of characters in the same weary drama.

Learning from the Past

There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives. Malcolm knew this. Martin Luther King, Jr. knew this. Our struggles are particular, but we are not alone. We are not perfect, but we are stronger and wiser than the sum of our errors. Black people have been here before us and survived. We can read their lives like signposts on the road and find, as Bernice Reagon says so poignantly, that each one of us is here because somebody before us did something to make it possible. To learn from their mistakes is not to lessen our debt to them, nor to the hard work of becoming ourselves, and effective.

Whiteness

«Or, to put it another way, as long as white Americans take refuge in their whiteness—for so long as **they are unable to walk out of this most monstrous of traps**—they will allow millions of people to be slaughtered in their name, and will be manipulated into and surrender themselves to what they will think of—and justify—as a racial war. They will never, **so long as their whiteness puts so sinister distance between themselves and their own experience and the experience of others**, feel themselves sufficiently human, sufficiently worthwhile, to become responsible for themselves, their leaders, their country, their children, or their fate. They will perish (as we once put it in our black church) in their sins—that is, in their delusions. And this is happening, needless to say, already, all around us»

She deceived herself as a mother, black, lesbian, warrior, poet. She spent time in Mexico, she was mostly a poet but also a political activist. In all her texts she underlines the celebration of differences.

Suggest us to think politics is something that affects our lives. She focused on something that is considered private (erotics) but that she understands as politic. In the history of political theory is considered to be a danger for politics, we have to repress it, when sexual energy enters the political sphere it is dangerous because it is irrational. **We as women are always considered impolitical due to our sexual instinct.** Rousseau used to say that women were dangerous because they have erotic power. For her, the erotic is erotic power, politics has to deal with power, **erotic is a form of power (and so it is political) because it is a form of joy.** At the very end we do politics because we want to be joyful. Erotic is not just sexual, we experience erotic power. There is something erotic in knowledge, studying something new

gives the idea of joy. For her there is a very big difference between sexual (satisfied if you use someone's body) and erotic (joy i experience through positive connection). Find the strength to fight in the things they suffered, erotic power makes us feel happy and fulfilled. Way of changing our perspective.

People come together because they want to make a revolution (coming from a different situation), it is relevant that black women have space bringing another point of view (not to defend their state).

Lecture 21:

Documentary “What is democracy”: [Qu'est-ce que la démocratie?](#)

Movie is divided in 3 main settings, which represent the recurring themes in the discourse:

- 1) the scenes from Siena with Silvia Federici and the **Allegory of Good and Bad Government** by Lorenzetti at Palazzo Pubblico
- 2) the scenes filmed on the **Athenian ruins** of the very birthplace of democracy
- 3) the scenes of the interview by Astra Taylor with **Cornel West** speaking about the concept of Democracy today.

And some interviews

- Democracy

Democracy invites us all together and asks the Socratic question: how should we live? Interesting question which brings us to the following question: what is happiness? What does it mean to live a happy life? To that Socrates and Plato would respond with “A happy life is the life in the good city (*kallipolis*); and a good city is a just city”... Many thinkers were skeptical about our ability (our= the people) to rule ourselves. We will see in the end of the documentary if it's better for the people to rule or to be ruled (go to the last page).

Especially when it comes to Cornel West's cultural and ethnic heritage, he says that when the Declaration of Emancipation of Abraham Lincoln was “dictatorial” not democratic. The decision came from a countermajoritarian institution called the Supreme Court. In fact if America, abiding by the principles of democracy, were to vote for Emancipation in the 19th century, it would never pass. West's tradition interestingly held on to notions of democracy, but they were only democratic critiques of a so-called-democratic system with warped and sick democratic practices.

Their point of view of the oppressed allowed them to foresee the true democracy.

- Henry “Mickey” Michaux, Member of the General Assembly of California

He says how curious and outrageous that all Republican representativeness in the Chamber members are white as snow. He says you hear perfect classism there. Black folks are just as slaves as they were once upon a not-so-distant-time.

He was a fellow to Martin Luther King, and he said to Mickey “no change can be brought unless we make our people sit at the seats of power where the laws are made. We (black people) need power (both economical and political) more desperately than any other class in this country. In order to get that, we have to get *involved politically*”

- Trump

We are shown interviews during the US Presidential Electoral Campaigns

In his campaign, D. Trump said he'd put americans first (this theme of immigration will continue sporadically throughout the whole documentary, with the subtle reminder to the question of closed borders — Carens)

People interviewed are allegedly Republicans arguing about immigrants coming to america to pursue the American Dream

Astra Taylor poses this question “What is democracy?”

To most of the Karens interviewed this question is answered with “The American Dream” , after giving dubiously stupid opinions about immigrants and supporting Trump's wall.

Cornel West (ironically just in time) storms in and speaks about ignorance of the people and the impact of ignorance on the difference between political class rule of the people / of the majority. To him the demos mustto be not ignorant regardless of the circumstances. Otherwise we'd fall into a distortion of democracy. He adds that Plato's challenge never goes away: what if the demos are ignorant? Democracy is not sustainable,... or not?

- Protests for Black Lives Matter

A black girl took part in a protest in America, advocating together with her people for the rights of african-american community; She tells how the police pushed everyone back violently and, at a certain point, a madman got out of his car with a pistol. He pointed at everyone with his weapon but without doing anything or shooting a single bullet he got back in the car.

That type of violence for a protest against the police killing black people was an overwhelming experience

In asking for a right, the girl felt like she'd upset some citizens so much they'd take her life for that.

It is a fight with the State to her (she perceives her struggle, i.e. systematic racism, to be against the State or the System, that currently succeeds in failing all of them)

- Angela Davis speaking at the audience

She says that abolishing a system is preferable to changing it, because it cannot be fully changed.

Many problems we are facing are direct consequences of the fact that slavery was never de facto abolished.

The challenge of the end of the 19th century continued in the 20th century and remains in the 21st century.

- Latin-American chaps working in their factory

There's a man and a woman in this part, both being natives of Southern America, who escaped wars and violence.

He works in the cooperative and he has (with great fatigue) become the master of his work and live, not survive.

He created opportunities for everybody in the community through his activity, which saw many immigrants employed and receiving a salary. They all followed the ideal of America as a land of opportunities.

The lady confesses how she felt very contented that the President of the United States cared about immigrants too (Obama)

And now (in the Trump era)? She bursts into tears to the question, and expresses her deep sorrow in the uncertainty of her and her children's future... They are reminded constantly even by the community they helped that they are not welcome anymore and should "Go back to where you came from"

- Athenian Former Prime Minister George Papandreou

"Who rules?" Well, to him in a democracy certainly not the people

The markets have destroyed democracy because we allowed society to transfer power to the economy, forgetting democracy's principles. He takes the perspective of the Greek crisis he had to face first hand. He had to choose either to go bankrupt or decide to ask for loans in the EU and IMF. The common misconception was that Greek Government had overspent and lived beyond its means.... which is a lie

Aside on the Bailout Programme: The lenders pretend to lend money to Greece but they never directly come to Greece. (92% of the money lended returns back in the lender's pockets). They are not saving Greek society, they are saving themselves. This is a very indicative sign of how economic crisis affects the society and its ideals

The referendum was a hallmark in contemporary greek history = democracy proved to be strong once again in his hometown

62% of the people voted no to the referendum, this was a sovereign democratic decision nobody had the right to violate

Yet the country's creditor and the government reached an agreement to implement the measures rejected by the people

It was a betrayal. People were mad at the Government, they needed to fight this subtle tyranny

- Random embarrassing dudes interviewed in groups at Miami's beach: delivering ultra-based opinions

"Do you live in a democracy?"

"yes absolutely" says the bald gigachad; the young Karen doesn't even know what is democracy, the elder lady says *"yes, but I don't trust the government"*

"Do you vote?"

so many reply *"No"*. To them the thing that undermines democracy is immigration, aid from the government to lower classes, no regards to white + wealthy + "true citizens" whatsoever (wtf Karen?!)

(What is wrong with these people?)

- Lunch with afro-american multi-ethnic family

All family members are reunited after a long time, they get asked questions like “*do you believe in democracy?*”

They respond that they would if it weren't the case that they are in a “*bourgeois democracy*”, a democracy of the ruling class. They have real democracy but we (minorities) do not stand a chance to participate.

“*What is democracy?*” is a question that defeats the purpose of asking. We know what democracy is, but it's a white's experiment. We have come at the expense of this experiment. There has never been a democracy good for us. Once we all agree that we are truly all equal we can stretch the concept of democracy. By entrenching the society and by narrowing our perspectives (“If I'm Nicaraguan, what the fuck do I need to know about Cubans? “) we cannot put the pieces of the puzzle of democracy together. We need to open our minds and welcome our differences in the name of equality among men

- The Miami Nurse and Doctors

The chapter begins with a Plato quote: “The city is divided in the *city of the rich* and the *city of the poor*”

She says that in Miami there's so much violence that military medics come here to train themselves for warzone

Trauma is a political disease: why is homicide the number one cause of death for young african-american men and women?

If you have no way to support yourself you have nothing to lose and you do everything you can to survive == the city of the poor

The extent of extreme richness next to extreme poverty is the evident proof of inequality. That same inequality generates homicides, violence, ... it's worse for everyone!

A doctor adds: the shift of economy that made such inequality is not accidental

That's the result of the idea that democratic government being co-opted by corporations and not the people

Capitalism works until it keeps a balance of things. As of right now everything is out of balance.

Everything is too polarized: the economy first, then (consequently) the society, which is suffering

To the question: “What would you do?” They all answer they'd **spend more on education** and less on guns and prisons (link to Danielle Allen and her “Aims of Education”)

- School Kids Assembly

They are asked directly by Astra Taylor whether they believe that they have a say in the school setting, and whether their opinion matters or not. They reply “nah, not really bruv”. Whatever rules “they” establish, you as a student have to follow, full stop. Is democracy a theme of discussions in school? Yes, actually! However the kids feel like what they learnt (at least in the school setting) cannot possibly reach them, because everything is controlled by a bigger system, too big for their voice to be heard. Students are not heard. They feel like their voice is not going to change anything.

What they keep underlining is the lower you are in terms of occupation, financial situation, class, (and even) race, the least likely it is that functionaries of the system will ever hear you speak.

- The Barber

He was in prison, where he learnt to cut hair (he even received a very low wage for it). He used it to distract himself from his reality during his stay in jail (9 years).

He says *“It’s crazy the things they subjugate us to”*

He highlights how after prison he was victim of a reality that did not let him acclimate to the society he was released to, not only because due to racial hate the society does not want him to live comfortably his life, but just to survive.

It’s ironic to him how so much hatred and social stigma can come into someone’s (presumably black person’s) life because someone messed up 10 years ago, and permanently alters the condition of that same person.

He says that he cannot even vote (he was deprived of voting right), thus he cannot do anything to actively change his situation

To him democracy is flawed because then people have to act it out

“Like Machiavelli said, men are selfish and greedy and they’re like parasites. You have 10 people in a room deciding things but their egos are flaring” They are controlling us, we sit in a cage. The funny thing is that if we tried to fight their system with democracy we do it with their weapons... Combatting fire with fire.

He also makes an aside on education:

It was illegal for his heritage (african-american) to read.

Likewise, today they are cutting everyone’s power and potential, subjugating us under their yoke

- Refugees

Syrian Woman:

The interviewees left Aleppo and their families there, their fate is unknown to them at the time of the interview

To the question “What is freedom to you?”, the woman responds “to get all the **human rights**, such as right to work, right to a good living or establishing a family, to be educated, to be paid for our work... that is freedom”. “If you had to fight for freedom, what would you do?” and she responds: getting these people out of the camps, open borders and let people pass. She also adds that what matters in the world we live in is luck plays an important role: she could as well be born German, American or Italian. Her citizenship has played a very important role in defining her misfortune, common to most men

Afghan Man:

He grew up in Pakistan, and found it very difficult for obvious reasons. The Pakistani kept insisting that Afghans had no right to live there and that they’d have to kill them all. He was forced to go away by his mother after experiencing killings of his people.

“What does democracy mean to you?”, he responds in one word: **Justice**. No matter whether you pertain to the rich caste or to the poorer class, you should have the right to have justice and take part in the life of the state. However, to him we have no justice or just rule. Most people

would respond to that question with freedom, he says that in an unjust setting, freedom is not a right (like freedom of speech), freedom is synonymous to license: license to kill, license to steal,...

- Cornel West's last words in the Documentary

He takes up the Platonic challenge to Democracy he casted in the beginning, acting as a silent presence through the whole documentary

Astra says "It seems to me that real democracy demands a certain intellectual engagement to work and wrestle with ideas... but do you think people want to rule themselves or they would rather be ruled?" Cornel West responds that it comes really to the dilemma of people fearing freedom / wanting to follow authority. How many people really want to be free? Plato says very few, the burden is too heavy. We never provide a theoretical response that is persuasive because there is so much historical evidence of failed experiments in this field due to ignorance, unruly passions and narrow conceptions of piety (misplaced devotion to authority)... That's what we are fighting against when we attempt to reach democracy. **Everyone who goes against the dominant tendencies of their time might look foolish** in seeking perhaps revenge, insubordination to domination or hatred and suppression... Though **it is precisely in those that appear as foolish individuals to the majority that we can find hope for democracy**, for they embody the fight against those failed experiments in history even today.

Cornel West says with a crafty grin "In fact, I'd raise my hand and say 'count me in' the crowd of the holy fools"