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MENTOR

JOHN ADAMS ACADEMY FACULTY ACADEMIC JOURNAL

Public and Private Virtue

John Adams
ACADEMY

MENTOR is the faculty journal of John Adams Academy. The purpose of this journal is to uncover the alliance between the enduring pathways of Classical curricula and the timeless guideposts of our Ten Core Values. As educators and members of an intellectual community that inherits and relates a legacy of truth, wisdom, and beauty, we perceive the abundance in each contribution to the Great Conversation.

We take our name from the complementary sources of the Latin word *mens*, *mentis* (mind, thought, intention) and the Homeric character Mentor (Μέντωρ), to whom great Odysseus entrusted care of his home and family, and in the guise of whom the goddess Athena gave counsel to the young Telemachus. The former origin recalls our human tradition of sentience, the latter our divine duties of love and loyalty. Taken together, the essence of mentoring is sharing with others the beauty and truth that has fallen to us.

Each issue, *Mentor* invites all John Adams Academy faculty to examine how particular Core Values, on a rotating basis, are expressed within the very texts, histories, artifacts, mathematics, sciences etc. that we uncover with our scholars. Whether the themes be humble, aimed for the heart of the youngest child, or rich and complex and intended for the minds of the mature and wise, the legacy of the classics and the presence of Ten Core Values offer invaluable insight into life.

John Adams Academy, founded in 2010, is Northern California's only tuition-free, TK-12 classical leadership education charter school. Its main campus, located in Roseville, serves more than 1300 scholars and two more campuses are planned to open in Lincoln and El Dorado Hills in Fall 2017.

John Adams Academy is restoring America's heritage by developing servant-leaders who are keepers and defenders of the principles of freedom for which our Founding Fathers pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor. By combining classical education with servant leadership training and core values, John Adams Academy develops scholars who are leaders in their homes, communities, and country. Through classics, mentoring, and modeling, scholars are inspired to prepare for their unique mission and will naturally hunger for oncoming responsibilities and future contributions in society. They are the change that is needed in the world.

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Message from the Founder

By Dean Forman, Ph.D.

I would like to thank our editors and founding educators for this edition of *Mentor*. A primary purpose of our first issues of *Mentor* is to expand our understanding of our ten core values. This issue focuses on our second core value of public and private virtue.

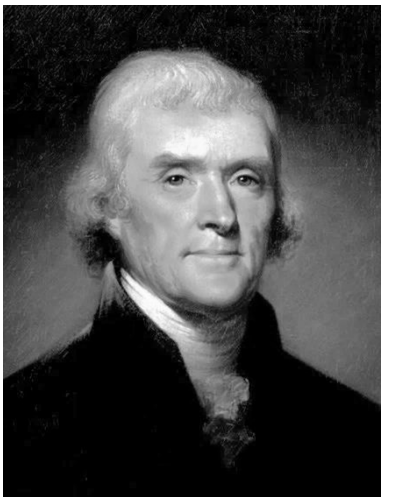
Dean and Linda Forman founded John Adams Academy in 2010 and continue to take an active role as valuable mentors to the staff and scholars at the academy. Dean also currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

The ancient principles of public and private virtue were gestated and brought forward in two early civilizations, the Hebrews and the Greeks. We find evidence of this after the Exodus with these words, "Thou shalt not avenge...but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[1] The Greeks brought Democracy (*demos* meaning people; *cratic* meaning thing) or thing of the people. A democracy suggests all people play a role in their government. Participation in the Greek *polis* (city/state) by voting and regular involvement in managing the affairs of the city was the blessing and obligation of every citizen. But what kind of rulers should then govern?

In the fall of 2010 the founding group at John Adams Academy met to share their academic visions and values. Statements of principles and virtues were shared and synthesized into core declarations which became our core values. Foundational to the conversation that evening was to create a school that encompassed the idea of public and private virtue as informed and implemented by our founding fathers. Their journey was to restore the ancient principle of self-governance by empowering people. It was also to eliminate the British aristocracy of rule by birth, learning, or money. This would be a natural aristocracy of virtue. Natural is a Latin term and is the same root word as nature. It suggests we are born with certain talents or virtues we use for ruling our self first (private), and then our community (public). The question that surfaced often in the decade and a half from 1774-1789 was, would there be enough virtue in the people to be self-governing? Thomas Jefferson in correspondence to Thomas

[1] Leviticus 19:18, *Holy Bible*, KJV.

Law dated July 13, 1814 stated that "virtue [is] moral instinct....and the brightest gem with which the human character is studded, and the want of it as more degrading than the most hideous of the bodily deformities."[2] In a letter to John Adams dated October 14, 1816 he added, "the essence of virtue [is] doing good to others and the end of its effects."[3] This suggests that virtue is natural, yet not hereditary; and must be taught, cultivated and nourished by teachers/mentors. If culturally lost or largely forgotten it must be restored. This is why this core value follows the first of Restoring America's Heritage. Virtue creates the cultural heritage to restore, remember and preserve. It is found in the "Golden Rule" by submerging our wants to the greater good of our neighbor and the community. Absent this voluntary public virtue as exemplified by the Greeks, we are relegated to being saddled, booted and spurred by monarchies, oligarchies and administrative aristocracies.



Rembrandt Peale, "Official Presidential portrait of Thomas Jefferson." 1800. White House.

To assist our scholars, educators and parents we added expanded definitions to each principle and core value.

Public and Private Virtue

> How ought one to act? Philosophers, poets, and religious writers have studied this question for thousands of years and have come to remarkably similar conclusions. Correct or proper action is termed "moral." Moral excellence is called virtue. The foundation of the word, virtue, is strength. Virtue is an inner commitment and a voluntary outward obedience to principles of truth and moral law. Virtue is readily learned, loved, and best nurtured while in our youth. Specific private moral virtues include 1) justice, 2) wisdom, 3) courage, 4) temperance, 5) reverence, 6) prudence, 7) charity, 8) integrity, and 9) honesty. The foundations of our republic are morality and virtue, which when practiced produce unqualified integrity. John Adams said, "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Our scholars embrace these virtues and seek to incorporate them in the John Adams

[2] Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson...*, ed. Andrew Adgate Lipscomb (Washington D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1905), vol. 15, p. 77.
[3] Ibid., vol. 14, p. 138.

Academy community through which these virtues are developed and expressed. Public virtue is the voluntary sacrifice or subjugation of personal wants for the greater good of the community. George Washington exhibited this when he allowed himself to be called out of retirement three separate times to serve our country. Thomas Jefferson referred to such people as a "natural aristocracy." It was a nobility of virtue, talent, honesty, integrity, and patriotism, the absolute opposite of an artificial aristocracy, which most often is built on avarice, power, and birth.

Dean and Linda Forman Founders.

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Frederic Bastiat, the Welfare State, and Governmental Usurpation of Private Virtue

By Timothy Gervais, M.T.S.

"Communism introduced into the world a substitute for true religion. It is a counterfeit of [charity]." – Ezra Taft Benson[1]

Timothy Gervais joined the John Adams Academy team this year as the upper school library and media technician. He has a graduate degree in early Christian thought and has published a number of award-winning articles in academic journals.

The rise of the so-called "politics of kindness," is a disturbing trend in the realm of modern U.S. political discourse.[2] Nearly identical to the mantra of the socialist Labour Party of the U.K. and other neo-socialist movements across the world, this political philosophy asserts that "equality, social justice," and most importantly "*compassion*," should dictate governmental policy and naturally give rise to "the creation and maintenance of an empowering welfare state."[3] While the three tenets (equality, social justice, and compassion) of the "politics of kindness" are noble ideologies that ought to be observed by both government and its constituents, issues invariably arise when these principles function as thinly veiled euphemisms for socialism, and are utilized to promote faulty, and ultimately unjust, economic policy under the guise of altruism. Far from being the epitome of charitable giving, socialistic policies derive from a deep-seated belief that humanity as a whole lacks the independent capacity to be sufficiently charitable, and so must be compelled through legislative action to care for the poor.[4] Socialist Welfare legislation thus constitutes an example of coerced morality, and results in, as noted by nineteenth century French economist Frederic Bastiat, the perpetration

[1] Ezra Taft Benson, "A Witness and a Warning" (October 1979), https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1979/10/a-witness-and-a-warning?lang=eng.
[2] Brandon Ambrosino, "The Politics of Kindness in 2016," *JSTOR Daily*, 31 August 2016, accessed 17 April 2017, https://daily.jstor.org/politics-of-kindness-2016/.
[3] Labour Party. *We Are Labour – The Labour Party*, The Labour Party, 2017, accessed 21 April 2017, http://www.labour.org.uk/index.php/home/.
[4] Frederic Bastiat, *Economic Sophisms*, trans. Arthur Goddard (Foundation for Economic Education, 1996), 147-154.

of "legalized plunder."[5] As the government gradually assumes charitable roles normally filled by individuals, the welfare state comes to embody what might be termed a "governmental usurpation of private virtue," and ultimately bankrupts society of both its monetary and moral capital.

Proponents of the "politics of kindness" unfailingly champion governmental redistribution of wealth as the "humane," "compassionate," or "moral," mechanism by which the conditions of the poor are best ameliorated.[6] At best, these policies function as the proverbial "giving a man a fish," and do little to break the socioeconomically impoverishing cycles of depravity, ignorance, and unstable family units.[7] Indeed, as noted by David Muhlhausen, "only about one percent of federal non-defense discretionary spending is backed by any evidence of effectiveness."[8] Additionally, despite a per capita federal welfare spending increase of 254 percent since 1977, there has been almost no corresponding reduction in poverty within the United States.[9]

At their worst, moreover, these programs and their advocates politicize economic tension and socially stratify society by vilifying free market capitalism and its proponents as oppressors of the poor.[10] "This is the basic premise of every political battle currently being waged in America: Kind liberals want to help X, but mean conservatives don't."[11] The unfortunate byproduct of this politicization is that society is rhetorically bludgeoned into supporting socialist policies, while cathartic feelings that result from supporting "socially compassionate programs" are equated with moral intuition about the ethics and efficacy of those programs.[12] Barbara Oakley, a professor at Oakland University, has termed this reflexive empathetic impulse as "pathological altruism," a condition in which "empathetic feelings for others coupled with a desire to be liked, parochial feelings for our own in-group, emotional contagion, motivated reasoning, selective exposure"—and, it might be added, political pressure—"can lead us into powerful and often irrational illusions of helping" despite the fact that "intended outcomes and actual outcomes…do not mesh."[13] As individuals support socialistic policies to salve their own conscience rather than critically

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[5] Frederic Bastiat. *The Law*, trans. Dean Russell (Foundation for Economic Education, 2007), 5.
[6] John Ballett and Penelope Campling. *Intelligent Kindness* (The Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2011), v.
[7] David Muhlhausen, "Do Federal Social Programs Work?", *The Heritage Foundation,* 19 March 2014, accessed 24 April 2017, http://www.heritage.org/budget-and-spending/report/do-federal-social-programs-work.
[8] David Muhlhausen, "Government social programs: Triumph of hope over evidence," *The Heritage Foundation*, 3 November 2015, accessed 24 April 2017, http://www.heritage.org/welfare/commentary/government-social-programs-triumph-hope-over-evidence.
[9] William Voegeli, "The Case against Liberal Compassion," *Imprimis* 43:10, (October 2014), https://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/the-case-against-liberal-compassion/.
[10] Peter T Bauer, *Equality, the Third World, and Economic Delusion* (Harvard University Press, 1981), 18-19.
[11] Ambrosino, *Politics of Kindness.*
[12] Voegeli, *The Case Against*.
[13] Barbara A. Oakley, "Concepts and implications of altruism bias and pathological altruism," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 110:18, (June 2013).

determining the most effective method of assisting the poor, it results in "spending for spending's sake (i.e. to demonstrate care or concern)" regardless of the merit, effectiveness, or sustainability of such efforts.[14] The danger of the "politics of kindness" comes not then from its intention (to put an end to poverty,) but instead from the social pressure it generates. This pressure discourages reasoned discourse about the viability of government welfare as criticisms of such programs are deemed unkind.[15]

Not only are socialistic policies inefficient and often unable to address the real cause of poverty, they can also very rapidly lead to widespread economic decline. As has been sardonically noted by Thomas Sowell: "Socialism in general has a record of failure so blatant that only an intellectual could ignore or evade it."[16] Indeed, as has occurred in countless socialist states across Europe, Africa, and South America, socialism "not only did not produce prosperity, it produced mass poverty."[17] A more recent and proximal case study for the merits of socialistic policies has been the imminent collapse of the Venezuelan economy, which is "perhaps the starkest modern example of just how quickly socialism can destroy a basically wealthy, democratic nation."[18]

Despite the fact that economic stagnation and collapse are a benefit to no portion of the population, the cry for an increase in socialist welfare spending continues, with the press, popular culture, and a bevy of political figures and factions slandering proponents of minimalist government as soulless, greed mongering, immoral aristocrats.[19] This largely ignores that, unless one engages in significant methodological gymnastics, research suggests "a large...relationship between political conservatism and donation amounts [to charitable organizations,]" with those that tend to oppose government welfare also tending to give a larger percentage of their income to charitable causes.[20] What seems evidential from this data is that economic conservatives often espouse the same ideals of "equality, social justice, and compassion," as their socialist counterparts, but pursue such goals by different means, i.e. charitable giving in the private sphere.[21] This idea is echoed in the iconic words of Frederic Bastiat: "legal justice, private charity."[22] Proponents of the free market are not

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[14] Muhlhausen, *Government social programs*.
[15] Ambrosino, *Politics of Kindness.*
[16] Thomas Sowell, "The Survival of the Left," *Forbes* (8 September 1997), https://www.forbes.com/forbes/1997/0908/6005128a.html.
[17] Tom G. Palmer, "Why Socialism Collapsed in Eastern Europe," *Cato Policy Report* (September/October 1990), https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/why-socialism-collapsed-eastern-europe.
[18] David Keene, "Why Venezuela faces collapse," *The Washington Times* (21 August 2016), http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/aug/21/venezuela-faces-collapse-because-of-socialist-gove/.
[19] Michael Horowitz, *Challenging the Caricature*, http://nebula.wsimg.com/938dda95d96397d4587d736dd3fcea3e?AccessKeyId=9BECAAD60CA7EAF6F4E9&disposition=0&alloworigin=1.
[20] Michele F. Margolis and Michael W. Sances, "Who Really Gives? Partisanship and Charitable Giving in the United States," (9 August 2013), https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.documentcloud.org/documents/1100129/who-gives.pdf, accessed 24 April 2017.
[21] Ibid., 2.
[22] Frederic Bastiat, *Economic Harmonies*, trans. W. Hayden Boyers (Foundation for Economic Education, 1996), 94.

then without compassion, but instead often choose to channel their compassion through the efficiency of private charity and enterprise. The evidence that private enterprise is more efficient than similar federal programs is both anecdotal and empirical. A recent study has found that social services administered through private religious organizations are emphatically more effective than their government counterparts.[23]

While there can be no question that Capitalist societies often encounter issues of economic disparity, these dilemmas arise not from capitalism itself but from the moral failings of individuals.[24] Such failings have given rise to "moral capitalism," a concept articulated by the great economic thinkers Adam Smith and Frederic Bastiat. Contra socialism, moral capitalism believes that humanity possesses the capacity to overcome the vices of greed and avarice, and calls on individuals, families, and religious organizations to engage in voluntary and unconditional care for the poor and the needy.[25] While acknowledging moral critiques of self-interested capitalism, moral capitalism addresses such issues through the instruction of the individual in private virtue, rather than through compulsory charity.[26] Bastiat argues that because capitalism can only properly function when coupled with a moral society, the goal of religion and moral virtue is synonymous with the goal of free market economics: the betterment of society as a whole.[27] "Let us welcome, then, the concurrent action of moral philosophy...and political economy—the one stigmatizing the evil deed in our conscience by exposing it in all its hideousness, and the other discrediting it in our judgment by the description of its effects."[28]

Although increasing numbers of individuals have attempted to portray Christianity as fundamentally opposed to free market capitalism, it can be convincingly argued that the moral capitalism of Frederic Bastiat is "truer to the spirit of [Christianity] and the normative natural law...than is the present-day mainstream of Christian social thought, which takes a more sympathetic view of the legal redistribution of wealth."[29] Indeed, the product of moral capitalism is a society where individuals *voluntarily* embrace the classical Christian virtues of Temperance (*temperentia,*) Charity (*caritas,*) Diligence (*industria,*) and Kindness (*benevolentia,*) while engaging in the capitalist ideals of entrepreneurship, and free enterprise. Any consideration of the plausibility of moral capitalism would be remiss without noting that for much of its history the United States has embodied such an ideal. During its most economically successful periods, the

[23] John J. Dilulio, "The Three Faith Factors," *Public Interest*, 149, (Fall 2002), 57-58, https://www.brookings.edu/ articles/ the-three-faith-factors/.
[24] Bastiat, *Economic Sophism*, 147-154.
[25] Ibid., 100-101.
[26] Ibid., 153.
[27] Ibid., 153.
[28] Ibid., 151.
[29] Christopher Meredith, "Taxation and Legal Plunder in the Thought of Frederic Bastiat," *Journal of Markets & Morality*, 12:2 (Fall 2009), 298.

U.S. has coupled a strong base of Judeo-Christian values with a robust capitalist economy, a union that has resulted in one of the most economically prosperous, generous, and equitable societies in human history. The flagship nation of moral capitalism, the United States, has an unprecedented 95% of its citizens considered Middle Class or higher on the global economic scale, with more than half of its citizens being considered high income.[30] There is a virtual consensus amongst economists that this unprecedented level of prosperity is the direct result of a relatively stable and morally principled capitalist society.[31] Any failings of American capitalism should then be treated as the failings of individuals, not as a fundamental flaw of moral capitalism itself.

Critics of moral capitalism often take a skeptical view of its full actualization by arguing that there will always be immoral individuals who take advantage of a flawed economic system. In response, Bastiat argues that as the majority of any given society determines to pursue virtue and eschew vice, unvirtuous individuals are gradually culled from society by the positive determining force of shared societal values.[32] It should then come as no surprise that moral capitalism has largely begun to unravel in the modern age as a direct result of a corresponding acceptance of the radical individualism promoted in modern media and political discourse. A functional society based on moral capitalism becomes much more difficult to achieve when society lacks a corresponding respect for the traditional purveyors of morality and virtue, the family unit and religious organizations. Indeed, there is a distinct correlation between the dissolution of the family unit, a corresponding drop in overall religiosity, and an inversely proportional rise in government welfare spending. While some would deem this correlation coincidental, the great socialist thinkers Marx, Engels, and Lenin perceived the decline of family solidarity and societal religiosity as a natural outgrowth of socialism, as the family and religion were perceived as vehicles of economic oppression.[33] Marx and Engels went further in their *Communist Manifesto,* by arguing that the abolition of the family unit and religion was not a natural outgrowth of socialism, but instead one of its explicit aims.[34] One should be wary, then, of suggesting that modern socialism, whose governing language and ideologies so closely match those of Marx, will not continue to bring about similar results when instituted in a modern context.

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[30] Rakesh Kochharr, "How Americans compare with the global middle class," *Factank* (9 July 2015), http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/07/09/how-americans-compare-with-the-global-middle-class/.
[31] Michael Tanner, "Capitalism's Triumph," *The National Review* (18 September 2013), http://www.nationalreview.com/article/358771/capitalisms-triumph-michael-tanner.
[32] Bastiat, *Economic Sophisms*, 152.
[33] V.I. Lenin, "Socialism and Religion," *Lenin Collected Works* (Progress Publishers, 1965), https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1905/dec/03.htm.
[34] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. *Marx/Engels Selected Works* (Progress Publishers, 1969), https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf.

The social and moral dangers of socialism do not end with the dissolution of the family unit and a general disdain for religion, although many of its inherent issues are a natural outgrowth of such. As has been noted previously, and is eloquently articulated by Frederic Bastiat, socialism

> ...takes a far gloomier view, [of humanity] than the [moral capitalists] do. The books and newspapers of the socialists are full of such bitterness and hatred toward society that the very word *civilization* has come to be for them synonymous with injustice, civil disorder, and anarchy. So little confidence do they have in the natural capacity of the human race to improve and progress of its own accord that they have even gone so far as to condemn *freedom*, which, as they see it, is every day driving mankind closer to the edge of doom.[35]

By espousing such a negative view of humanity, and by passing laws that are predicated upon such a view, socialistic governments create societies that mirror their negative outlook of humanity. This phenomenon of governmental policy engendering moral proclivities has been described as the morally normalizing force of legislation.[36] While it may be difficult to determine the exact relationship of governmental policy and societal moral norms, it can reasonably be inferred that the relationship is reciprocal, with socialistic policies exacerbating the moral failings of the societies who enact them. As societies become less willing to privately support the poor around them, they pass legislation to address the growing needs that have resulted from a decline in private charity. The cycle continues in an increasingly downward spiral, as individuals become less inclined to care for the poor outside of their governmentally mandated contribution, which results in further legislation to compensate for society becoming less willing, and indeed, less morally capable of private charity. This cycle has carried modern U.S. society to a point that when confronted with a beggar or some other equally unfortunate individual, many will refuse to give because they feel as though care for the poor is primarily a government responsibility.[37]

As increasingly socialist states face a decline in private charitable giving and a corresponding increase in poverty, the divisive ideologies of socialism are fueled, wherein the "wealthy oppressors" of the poor become a scapegoat for a problem that has largely resulted from a decline in private virtue. This gives

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[35] Bastiat, *Economic Sophisms*, 147-148.
[36] Kenworthey Bilz and Janice Nadler, "Law, Moral Attitudes, and Behavioral Change," *The Oxford Handbook of Behavioral Economics and the Law* (2014), 241-242, http://www.law.northwestern.edu/faculty/fulltime/nadler/Bilz-Nadler-LawMoralAttitudesPageProofs.pdf.
[37] Peter Singer, *The Life You Can Save* (2017), https://www.thelifeyoucansave.org/learn-more/common-objections-to-giving.

rise to what Alexis de Tocqueville has termed "the democratic disease of envy."[38] It should come as no surprise that the vice of envy is an outgrowth of socialism, as socialism is "based entirely on the materialist, world-outlook."[39] This pervasive social ill is a vice that, when cultivated and embraced, cripples motivation, fosters hostility, engenders jealousy, and gives painful birth to malice. As society comes to accept envy as a natural human feeling rather than a vice of the soul, it naturally leads to the enacting of unjust forms of taxation wherein individuals are coercively deprived of their legally obtained property by a government originally founded to protect such.[40] The vice of society becomes infinitely more entrenched when its very laws are enlisted as "instrument[s] of plunder," and are leaned upon as replacements for a paucity of private virtue.[41] Illustrative of the moral skewing which occurs when the laws of a nation become corrupt is the desire of many of modern individuals to pass exorbitant taxes on the rich, wherein, by enlisting the law to forcibly reallocate the property of someone they have never met, they feel as though their own moral obligation to the poor is fulfilled. In such a case, the virtue of charity has become entirely extrinsic to the individual, and ceases to hold any efficacy in ennobling the human spirit. Goodness is leached from mankind as charity becomes impersonal, and unjust economic policy causes the poor to be despised instead of pitied.

Socialism further cripples individuals by making them dependent upon the government that they are supposed to direct. The poor are placed in a morally compromising situation, wherein their mode of caring for themselves and their families is at odds with sound governmental policy for which they should be voting.

> There are two interrelated problems to consider here. First, there is the general problem of the 'mature' or 'late' welfare state with its high levels of taxation, rigid labor markets, and a large percentage of the labor force (voters) dependent on government-administered and taxpayer-funded transfer payments. Public-choice theory tells us why the vested interests that benefit from the bloated welfare-warfare state will not just walk away from the many dollar bills lying on the political pavement that they can pick up and pocket. It also explains why politicians can't

[38] Alexis De Tocqueville, *Recollections: The French Revolution of 1848* (Transaction Publishers, 1987), 54.
[39] Lenin, *Socialism and Religion*.
[40] Bastiat, *The Law, 2*.
[41] Ibid., *7*.

> help falling over themselves trying to satisfy the political and financial needs of these groups if they want to be reelected.[42]

"We should not be paying close to two billions in taxes if we did not delegate the power of voting them to those that consume them."[43]

John Adams has said, "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." As has been shown throughout history, legislation cannot replace private virtue. Socialist governments which attempt to do so ultimately fail because the moral capital of the society is squandered in ineffective and morally damaging public welfare programs. Socialism enables the problematic distinction of "other," and fosters the vices of hate, envy, and coercive force. To cure society we must cease to demonize the Capitalist, and instead seek private virtue, which is the only foundation upon which a truly equitable society may be founded. We must rekindle the public flame of faith, faith in humanity, faith in virtue, and faith in God. "Faith gives meaning to community service and good will, forging a spiritual connection between individual impulses and great public issues. That is, Religion helps people to internalize an orientation to the public good. Because faith has such power to transform lives, faith-based programs can enjoy success where secular programs have failed."[44]

[42] David M. Hart, "Broken Windows and House-Owning Dogs: The French Connection and the Popularization of Economics from Bastiat to Jasay," *The Independent Review* 20:1 (Summer 2015).
[43] Frederic Bastiat, *Economic Sophisms*, 151.
[44] Robert D. Putnam, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* (Simon and Schuster, 2003).

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Virtue, Friendship, and *Charlotte's Web*

By Zeta Cammarota

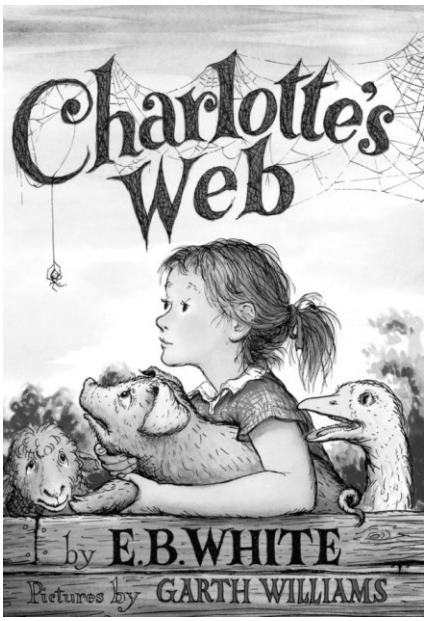
"Wilbur didn't want food, he wanted love."

Zeta Cammarota has been a teacher at John Adams Academy since 2013. She has taught a wide range of subjects both in public schools and home-schooling. She recently accepted the position of Director of Curriculum at the academy.

Charlotte's Web, the best-selling children's paperback of all time, is a beautiful story of friendship. It is romantically ideal and yet heartbreakingly real. And it is filled, above all, with overwhelming love. Love for the farm, love for the sheep, the geese, the cows, the rain, the sun, the smell of hay, the warmth of manure, the beauty of the spider web, love for the entire world.

We meet our main character, a piglet, who has the misfortune to be the runt of the litter. His own death is imminent when an 8 year old girl named Fern asks, "Where's Papa going with that ax?"[2] Fern saves this "small and weak"[3] piglet from slaughter, names him Wilbur, and raises him until he is ready to move to her uncle's farm. Fern is Wilbur's first friend. Even after he moves away, she visits him every day and spends long hours in the barn taking pleasure at the conversation of the animals. She is true to him from his birth in the spring to the end of summer when she meets Henry Fussy. All of a sudden, Wilbur is not her focus anymore. Even at his proudest moment at the Fair, as he is waiting to be rewarded with a "handsome bronze medal,"[4] Fern is pestering her parents for money so she can ride the Ferris Wheel with her new friend. The reader is quite disappointed in her at this point. Can't she see that the piglet she saved from death, the runt her mother said would "never amount to anything,"[5] has achieved the impossible? She should be so happy for him. However, she has moved on.

[1] E. B. White, *Charlotte's Web* (New York: Harper Collins, 2012), 27.
[2] Ibid., 1.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., 158.
[5] Ibid., 1.



Charlotte's Web by E.B. White.
1st edition cover, 1952.

Aristotle would call Fern's feelings for Wilbur the friendship of pleasure. We find our friends lovable because they give us pleasure. We do not love them for their own sake. We only love them for the pleasure they give us. The Philosopher teaches that this type of friendship is particularly prevalent among the young since they guide themselves by emotion and pursue what is pleasant to themselves. They love to pass the time in their friends' company, form attachments quickly, and give them up just as quickly.[6] Fern has progressed from sitting with her barnyard friends to "sitting with Henry Fussy and going higher and higher into the air."[7]

Another key character in the novel is the barn rat, Templeton, who "had no morals, no conscience, no scruples, no consideration, no decency, no milk of rodent kindness, no compunctions, no higher feeling, no friendliness, no anything."[8] The barnyard animals do not trust Templeton. However, he is very useful. In fact, he tells us himself all he has done for the others. "So it's old Templeton to the rescue again, is it? Templeton do this, Templeton do that...And what thanks do I ever get for these services, I would like to know?"[9] In his eyes, he has done plenty for the others without reward. What he is not taking into account is the fact that the others know the way to get him to help them: "appeal to his baser instincts."[10] They know that whenever they ask Templeton for help, they must offer him something in return, usually in the form of food. When asked to carry Charlotte's egg sac back to the barn, Wilbur must bribe him. Templeton does not care that Charlotte is about to die. He mocks Wilbur and his breaking heart. But he is happy to oblige Wilbur's request once the offer of first pickings at the trough is made.

This is the friendship of utility. Like the friendship of pleasure, we do not love these friends for their own sake. We only find these sorts of friends loveable as long as they are useful to us. Once the usefulness is gone, so is the friendship. Templeton is useful to Wilbur insofar as he can travel places and obtain items the others cannot. And Wilbur is useful to Templeton as his source of food via the trough. No Wilbur, no trough.

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[6] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941).
[7] White, *Charlotte's Web*, 139.
[8] Ibid., 46.
[9] Ibid., 167.
[10] Ibid., 90.

Neither of these friendships is the sort Wilbur longs for when he first meets Charlotte. Wilbur longs for a true friend. The third and final type of friendship enumerated by Aristotle is the highest sort and the most rare, for it only exists among the virtuous. In this friendship, the friends love the other for their own sake, not simply for any pleasure or utility they get from them. They truly want the good for their friend.[11] Charlotte, a barn spider, at first disgusts Wilbur. But we are told, "In good time he was to discover that he was mistaken about Charlotte. Underneath her rather bold and cruel exterior, she had a kind heart, and she was to prove loyal and true to the very end."[12] We all know the story. Charlotte weaves words into her web to save Wilbur from becoming Christmas dinner. He is "Some Pig", "Terrific", "Radiant", and finally "Humble". Although the miracle of the web reflects more on the spider than the pig, as Mrs. Zuckerman notes, it is enough to ensure Wilbur a long life followed by a natural death.

The life of a barn spider is short, but Charlotte chose to use it to serve another. She did nothing out of gain for herself, but her actions gained the love of all that read this precious book. While it is not necessarily suitable to break down in philosophical terms the types of friendship with 2nd graders, it certainly is appropriate that our young scholars are being given examples such as these to furnish their imaginations for when they are ready to do so. This is why quality literature is so important. Seven year olds can certainly think about what kind of friend they would like to have. But the more important choice for them is what kind of friend they would like to be. If we would like our scholars to choose the narrow path of virtue, then placing before their impressionable minds literature that excites a longing for nobility will hopefully help them on their way. The embodiment of the virtues of charity and self-sacrifice have rarely been better expressed to the young child than through the example of the little grey barn spider, Charlotte. "No pig had truer friends, and he realized that friendship is one of the most satisfying things in the world."[13]

[11] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*.
[12] White, *Charlotte's Web*, 41.
[13] Ibid., 115.

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The Four Causes of Virtue

By Martin O'Hara

Martin O'Hara joined the faculty at John Adams Academy in 2015. He currently teaches high school honors math and trains the faculty in classical education.

This issue of *Mentor* highlights the Academy's second Core Value, Public and Private Virtue. Providing an atmosphere where scholars may grow in virtue is at the very heart of the Classical Leadership Education offered by the Academy. This article considers that age old question, with which Socrates struggled in *The Meno,*[1] "What is virtue?" I will turn to the Classical authors, Aristotle, St. Augustine of Hippo, and St. Thomas Aquinas as Mentors to shed light on this question.

So, what is virtue? Aristotle explains in his *Physics* that we "do not think we know a thing till we have grasped the 'why' of it, which is to grasp its primary causes."[2] The inquisitive child always wishes to know the 'why.' Why is the ski blue? Why do stars twinkle? This childlike wonder is what leads every scholar to knowledge. The answers to the question 'why?' are an account of a thing's causes. The sky is blue be*cause*... The stars twinkle be*cause*... Accordingly, we will know what virtue is when we have correctly identified the primary causes of virtue, when we have established those things upon which virtue depends.

Continuing in the *Physics*, Aristotle identifies four primary causes of a thing: the **material cause**, the **formal cause**, the **agent cause** and the **final cause**. Let us take a moment to familiarize ourselves with the four causes so that we may identify the causes of virtue.

Concerning the **material cause**, the Philosopher explains "that out of which a thing comes to be and which persists, is a cause, e.g. the bronze of the statue or the silver of the bowl." The material cause is that from which or in which a thing is generated. The bronze is the material cause of the statue; the statue is made in bronze. The dish is made in silver. Seeing the material cause of the lifeless bowl, we may begin to wonder, "In what is virtue generated?" What is the subject or material cause of virtue?

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[1] Plato, *Meno*.
[2] Aristotle, *Physics*, Book II, ch 3.

Plato and Aristotle.
Detail from Raphael, "School of Athens." Circa 1510. Vatican.

About the **formal cause**, Aristotle says "the form or archetype, the statement of a thing's essence is called 'cause'." The form is that which makes the matter to be that which is generated. That which makes the bronze to be a statue, its shape, is the form of the statue. That which makes silver to be a bowl is the form the bowl. What makes a human quality to be a virtue? What is the formal cause or essence of virtue? How is virtue similar to other qualities and what makes virtue unique?

The Philosopher explains the **agent cause** as "the primary source of the change or coming to rest, e.g. the man who gave advice is a cause or the father is cause of the child." The artist is the agent cause of the statue, the source responsible for the generation of the statue. What is the primary source by which virtue is generated in us? What is the agent cause of virtue?

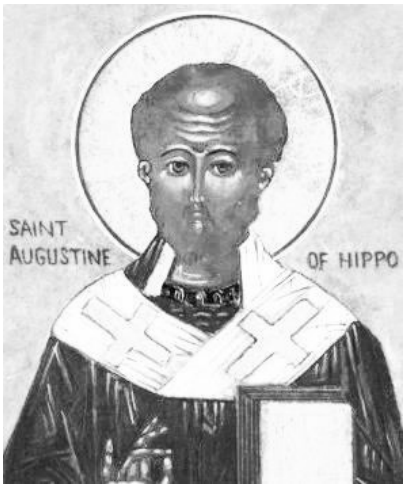
Finally, Aristotle teaches that the **final cause** is a cause "in the sense of an end or 'that for the sake of which' a thing is done, e.g. health is the cause of walking about. (Why is he walking about? 'To be healthy' and having said that we think we have assigned a cause." The final cause or end is 'why' a thing is generated. Accordingly, holding food or liquid is the final *cause* of the silver bowl. So, what is the final cause of virtue? Why does one become virtuous?

The task at hand is to investigate the four causes of virtue so that we may have a complete account of what virtue is. When St. Thomas Aquinas considered what virtue is in his *Summa Theologica,*[3] he identified the four causes of virtue present in St. Augustine's definition. St. Thomas looked to St. Augustine as his Mentor. So, let us begin with St. Augustine's definition:

> *Virtue is a good habit of the soul by which we live rightly of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us. (St. Augustine of Hippo)*

At a most intuitive level, virtue is what makes a thing good and what makes its actions good. The virtue of an athlete, for example, is what makes them a good athlete and what makes them able to compete

[3] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Pt. I-II Q.55.



St. Augustine of Hippo

well; things like endurance, strength and agility are virtues of an athlete. We are seeking the causes of human virtue. What is it that makes us good? What makes our actions good?

In St. Augustine's definition, St. Thomas[4] identifies *good habit* as the formal cause or essence of virtue. We are good and our actions are good when we possess good habits. We are bad and we act badly when we have bad habits. Qualities, born of intention and practice, like prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance are good habits or virtues. Habitual carelessness, larceny, cowardice, gluttony and the like are a bad habits or vices.

Breaking the formal cause *good habit* into its parts sheds further light on the essence of virtue. Often the greatest light is shed through contrasts. When we contrast virtue and vice, the wondrous thing is that they are in some way alike. In part, virtue and vice are essentially the same. How is virtue like vice?

As Aristotle discusses in *The Categories,*[5] virtue and vice are habits. Virtue and vice are both acquired qualities that are firmly established in us. Courage and cowardice, for example, are qualities we must work at to acquire which, once developed, are not easily lost. The permanence of habit is most evident with the vices. The various addictions, for example, are not easily lost. The same is true, however, of virtue. If we are truly courageous, our courage remains steady and has permanence. A just person has a sincere and habitual desire to give to each person what they ought to have. Someone who is truly just will not suddenly steal from his neighbor or do harm to a stranger. Sporadic behavior is generally a sign that virtue is not really established, or possibly it is a sign that the person is unhinged. Since acquired qualities that are firmly established in us are called habits, virtue is a habit.

Habit signifies how virtue and vice are alike. The difference between them is that vices, as habits, make it difficult for us to do the good and achieve excellence. Virtue on the other hand, makes doing the good and achieving excellence possible. Adding *good* to the notion of habit distinguishes virtue from vice. Hence, the form of virtue is *good habit.* A quality is a virtue if it is a good habit.

Note that we are truly free when we are able to pursue excellence. Accordingly, it is through virtue that one becomes truly free. Vice, on the other hand, only enslaves.

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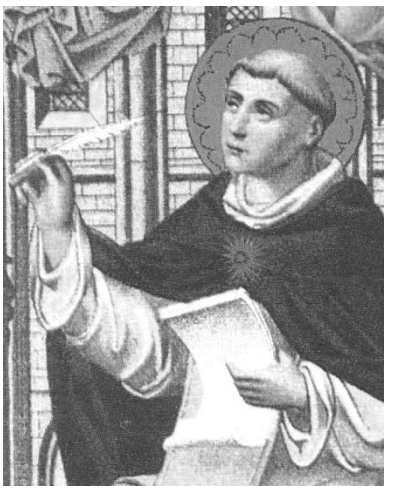
[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Pt. I-II Q.55, Art. 4.
[5] Aristotle, *Categories*, Ch 8.

We discover the **material cause** of virtue by inquiring what it is that is perfected by virtue. Looking again at St. Augustine's definition, St. Thomas notes that the genitive phrase 'of the soul' identifies the material cause of virtue. The soul is the subject or matter perfected by virtue. St. Thomas explains that specific virtues perfect the various abilities or powers of the soul. Science and prudence, for example, perfect the intellect, justice perfects the will, fortitude perfects our irascible power, temperance perfects concupiscence and so on with the rest. The soul is the subject or material cause of virtue; the powers of the soul are subjects of specific virtues. Accordingly the formal and material causes of virtue are contained in the phrase *good habit of the soul.*

Next St. Thomas looks at the phrase *by which we live rightly, of which no one can make bad use.* He sees the **final cause** of virtue in this phrase. Now, some of the qualities we acquire aim exclusively at the good; such are the virtues. Other qualities aim exclusively at evil; such are the vices. Yet there is a third group of qualities which may be either good or bad — there is a vast gray area in human qualities and dispositions. So, for example, since our opinions are sometimes true and sometimes false, opinion is neither a virtue nor a vice. The same is true of our suspicions and the vast array of partially formed habits. None of them aim exclusively one way or the other. St. Thomas explains that the phrase *by which we live rightly* affirms the end of virtue and excludes the final cause of the vices. *Of which no one can make bad use* is added to exclude the aim of all those dispositions which can aim at either the good or the evil. Simply put, the end or final cause of virtue is to live rightly or to live a righteous life.



St. Thomas Aquinas

The last of the causes is the **agent cause**. Here St. Thomas examines the phrase *which God works in us, without us.* St. Thomas notes that St. Augustine is here giving the agent cause of theological and infused virtue. Since the primary source of these virtues is God, God is their primary agent cause. St. Thomas notes that human virtue and human excellence has a source that is in us. We are agents of the human excellence present in the natural virtues. Specifically, it is by our intelligence and will that we understand the good to be done and intentionally do all the actions by which good habits are formed. As God is the primary agent cause of infused virtue, the human mind, including intellect and will, is the primary agent cause of human virtue. We become virtuous by intentionally choosing to do what we understand to be good.

Natural virtue is developed by following or perfecting the natural light of reason which each one of us possesses. Just as a doctor can heal others as well as himself, so can the intellect direct its own actions as well as the actions of the various human powers. Natural virtue is a good habit produced in the powers of the soul under the direction of the natural light of reason.

To assist reason there are secondary and instrumental agents of virtue. Our culture, our parents, our teachers, our Mentors are all instrumental agents of virtue. While it is only through intentional choice that virtue is developed, intellectual virtues such as understanding, science and even wisdom are increased by instruction. St. Thomas explains in his work *The Teacher*[6] that just as the natural healing process of the body is assisted by the medical art, natural growth in intellectual virtue is assisted by the art of teaching. We are also inspired to grow in virtue by the acts of great people. How many people have been inspired to cultivate authentic concern for others by the works of Mother Theresa with the poor?

It is the Mentor that both instructs us and inspires us to virtue. As humans, we come into the world undeveloped intellectually and morally, yet full of potential. We grow and develop by imitating those who enter our lives. We depend upon our Mentors, our parents first and then others in the greater community, to lead us on the path to human excellence.

With St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas as our Mentors we have begun to see the four causes of virtue. Virtue is formally and essentially *a good habit.* Since virtue perfects the soul, the material cause of virtue is the soul. The final cause is to live righteously. The agent cause of human virtue is the natural light of reason under the guidance of our Mentors.

> *Virtue is a good habit of the soul by which we live rightly of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us. (St. Augustine of Hippo)*

I offer the following division as a general outline of human virtue as consider first by Aristotle[7] and then by St. Thomas Aquinas.[8] The division is given here only in outline, yet it gives us a sense of the task at the feet of our Mentors.

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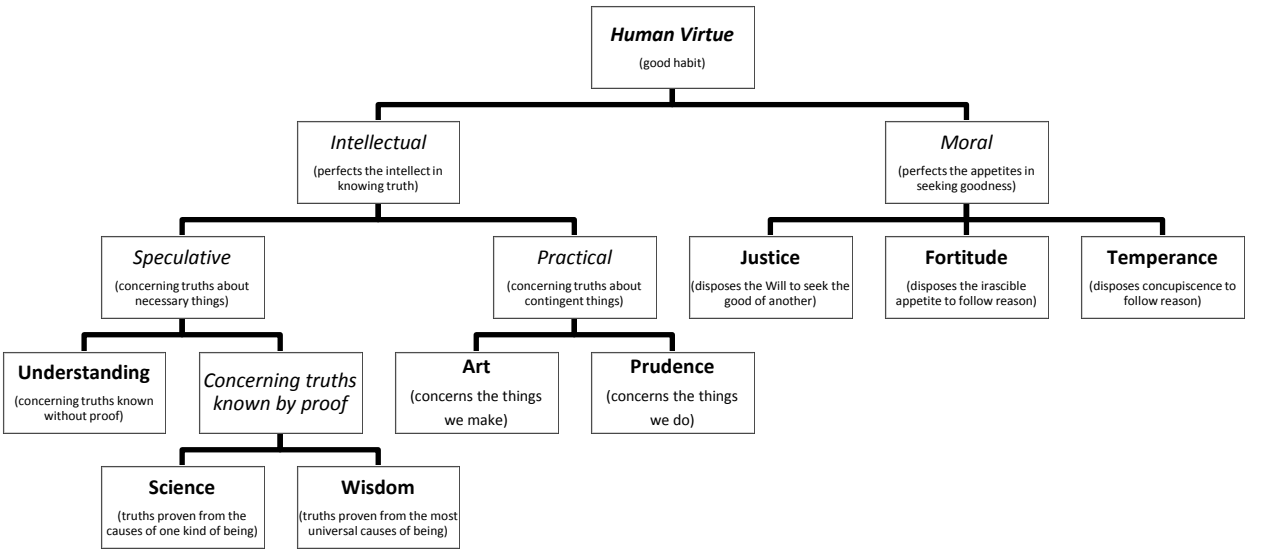
[6] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Magistro*.
[7] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*.
[8] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Virtue*.



Human virtue is divided into the intellectual and the moral. The principle intellectual virtues are Understanding, Science, Wisdom, Art and Prudence. The principle moral virtues are Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. You may recognize Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance as the Four Cardinal Virtues, or hinges, upon which the moral life depends. It is interesting to note that Prudence is an intellectual virtue while the remaining three are moral virtues.

Our task, then, at John Adams Academy, is to assist the scholar's growth in all eight of these human virtues so that they might live rightly and transform the culture in which they live. As the medical art assists the natural process of healing, our task is to assist our scholars in their pursuit of public and private virtue.

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Jean Valjean, Man of Virtue in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*

By Greg Blankenbehler, M.A. Mus.

There was nothing about Jean Valjean's background or early life that would cause one to expect from him great or even virtuous actions. Born into the squalor of poverty, Valjean's life had always been a struggle just to ensure that he and his family did not starve. It was only a matter of time before he was caught in the act of stealing bread to feed his sister's children, and the unsympathetic judge threw the book at him. By the time he completed his disproportionate nineteen years sentence on the chain-gang for his crime, Valjean had turned into the heartless criminal that his life had destined him to be.[1] As he exclaims in the celebrated musical adaptation of the famous 19th century French novel:

> For I had come to hate the world,
> this world that always hated me.
> Take an eye for an eye! Turn your heart into stone!
> This is all I have lived for; this is all I have known.[2]

Greg Blankenbehler joined the faculty at John Adams Academy in 2011. He currently teaches 7th-12th grade core music and directs five choir ensembles.

[1] The author of *Les Misérables* makes it clear in a short preface to the work that he believes the negative social realities of poverty, starvation, and lack of education doom many to a hell on earth:

> So long as there shall exist, by virtue of law and custom, decrees of damnation pronounced by society, artificially creating hells amid the civilization of earth, and adding the element of human fate to divine destiny; so long as the three great problems of the century—the degradation of man through pauperism, the corruption of woman through hunger, the crippling of children through lack of light—are unsolved; so long as social asphyxia is possible in any part of the world;—in other words, and with a still wider significance, so long as ignorance and poverty exist on earth, books of the nature of *Les Misérables* cannot fail to be of use. [Preface to Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, trans. Isabel Hapgood (New York: Crowell, 1887), n.p.]

[2] "What Have I Done? (Valjean's Soliloquy)," Schonberg, et al., *Les Misérables,* Original Broadway Cast (Decca Broadway, 1987).

Valjean would have doubtless led a life of heartless misery had one outstandingly virtuous individual not interceded in the most improbable of ways and changed the entire course of his life. His encounter with this man's act of pure charity awakened a lasting determination in Valjean to be an unfailingly virtuous agent amid the destructive poverty and depravity of post-revolutionary France. The subsequent life of Jean Valjean was rarely easy and frequently called for great self-sacrifice, but it allowed him to accomplish many great and virtuous things that improved many lives of many people. It is one of the most memorable examples of selfless living in the entire western canon of literature.

Early in the novel *Les Misérables*, the freshly-paroled Jean Valjean finds it impossible to secure work or even a place to sleep. The townspeople consider him no different than the most dangerous criminal behind bars.

> Now every door is closed to me; another jail, another key, another chain.
> For when I come to any town, they check my papers and they find the mark of Cain.
> In their eyes I see their fear: 'We do not want you here.'[3]

However, just as Valjean grimly begins to accept his new fate, the elderly Bishop of Digne approaches and does the unthinkable: he greets the dangerous convict warmly as a brother and offers him a place at his own table—set with the expensive diocesan silverware—and lodging in his own house for the night. To a pauper accustomed to a lifetime of rough treatment this generosity is incomprehensible. Why would a rich and influential man put himself and his household at such a risk for a wretched criminal? Valjean cannot make heads or tails of it. But before morning has broken, he ends up doing what his whole life seemed to have destined him to do: desperately stealing the precious silver from the good bishop and slipping away into the night.

Soon the police spot Valjean with the silver that obviously isn't his and drag him before the bishop in chains. Once again the saintly man surprises everyone. Instead of publically condemning the ungrateful convict's despicable crime and discharging him to suffer its just punishment in a hellish prison, the bishop instead dismisses the police and says that he is glad Valjean has returned because he had also wanted to give him a pair of costly silver candlesticks. To the bewildered convict, the bishop solemnly explains:

[3] "Prologue: Work Song," ibid.

The Bishop of Digne and Jean Valjean.
From the 1935 film adaptation *Les Misérables*,
directed by Richard Boleslawski, 20th Cent. Pictures.

> Do not forget, never forget, that you have promised to use this money in becoming an honest man. . . . Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I buy from you; I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God.[4]

This incredible absolution from guilt (both justly and unjustly deserved) and significant financial gift from a man who acted at great personal risk to save a stranger in dire need strikes Valjean deeply at the core of his being. Years of desperation and rebellion melt away and Valjean comes to see himself for the moral vacuum that he has become.

> Sweet Jesus, what have I done? Become a thief in the night, become a dog on the run? And have I fallen so far, and is the hour so late that nothing remains but the cry of my hate? . . . I feel my shame inside me like a knife. . . . I am reaching, but I fall, and the night is closing in, as I stare into the void to the whirlpool of my sin. I'll escape now from that world, from the world of Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean is nothing now, another story must begin![5]

With the greatest horror and humility, he renounces his former life and uses the precious endowment to become a new man. From this point on in the story, Jean Valjean never thinks of his own benefit and security first but strives to do what he thinks his benefactors—the saintly bishop and God himself—would want.

As Victor Hugo accurately shows in *Les Misérables*, exceptionally virtuous individuals are few and far between because they must live a life that is not only selfless, but also open to great injury from others. While the Bishop of Digne was following the exhortation of his God to "turn the other check" and to leave

[4] Hugo, *Les Misérables,* vol I, bk 1, ch 12.
[5] "What Have I Done? (Valjean's Soliloquy)," Schonberg, et al., *Les Misérables* [Broadway musical].

himself open for others to abuse him in the hope that it would do good for them,[6] how many other Christians around him were instead choosing the safer way of avoiding the risk of hurt altogether? It is at the same time exciting and sobering to realize that there are great opportunities to better the lives of others when we take the significant risk of letting down our guard and opening ourselves up to others. Though the virtuous may be few, and though they may surrender rather than raise their defenses in the face of great dangers, the effects of their actions can be surprisingly powerful. Through their continual courageous self-sacrifice many great and noble works come to pass.

As Jean Valjean sought to live a life of virtue he was presented with a series of difficult choices that tested his moral mettle. At every step of the way, the ghost of his past depravity and mistakes—personified in the novel by the police inspector Javert—haunted and hunted him, refusing to allow Valjean to change or be anything other than what his circumstances had destined him:

> Men like you can never change.[7] . . . Once a thief, forever a thief. What you want you always steal![8]

> A fugitive running, fallen from God. . . . I never shall yield till we come face to face. . . . It is written on the doorway to paradise that those who falter and those who fall must pay the price! Lord let me find him that I may see him safe behind bars. I will never rest![9]

Eight years after assuming a new name and a new life, Valjean rises to great wealth and prominence. He becomes the mayor of a town and the owner of a prosperous factory that provides jobs to the poor. For a while, it seems that the nightmare of his former life has completely disappeared. In time, however, he learns of a man who has been caught by Javert, a man whom the relentless inspector has mistaken for Jean Valjean himself and who is soon to be sent back to the chain-gang for breaking his parole. Valjean struggles for a while to make the difficult choice: Should he sacrifice all the good he has achieved for himself as well as all the poor of the town just so he can spare this one convicted criminal an unjust sentence he knows all too well to be a living hell?

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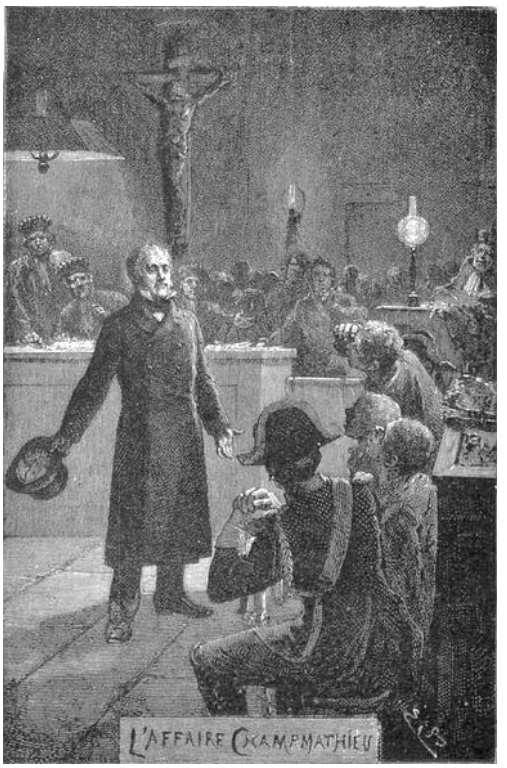
[6] See Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in the Matthew 5:38-48, *Holy Bible*.
[7] "The Confrontation," Schonberg, et al., *Les Misérables* [Broadway musical].
[8] "The First Attack," ibid.
[9] "Stars," ibid.

> Why should I right this wrong, when I have come so far and suffered for so long? If I speak, I am condemned. If I stay silent, I am damned.[10]

It does not take Valjean long, however, to remember that all he has achieved in town is really due to one great man who did not value expensive silverware over the life of another wretched convict. Grasping onto the principles of virtue and self-sacrifice that he learned from the good bishop, he resolves to give everything up so that the poor man can go free.

> Who am I? Can I condemn this man to slavery, pretend I do not see his agony? . . . How can I ever face myself again? My soul belongs to God I know, I made that bargain long ago. He gave me hope when hope was gone. . . . Who am I? I'm Jean Valjean![11]

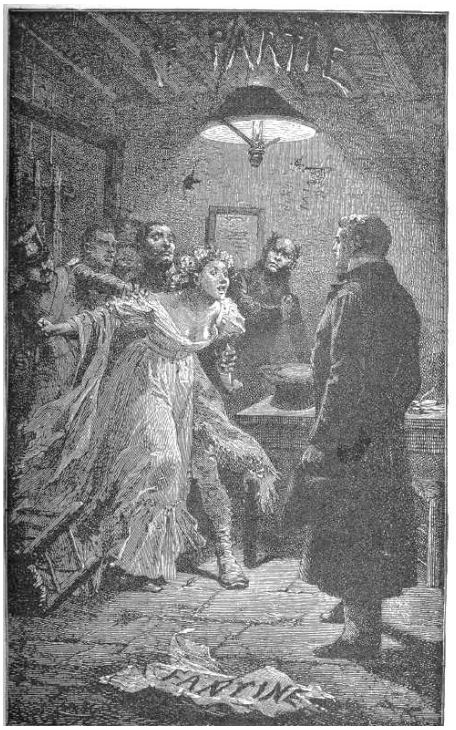


"I am Jean Valjean."
Illustration from *Les Misérables*, 1st ed., 1862.

Summoning up all his moral courage, Jean Valjean reveals his true identity to the court and then escapes into the night. In doing so, he gives up every tangible thing he has accomplished so he can do the right thing.

Valjean continues to demonstrate his exceptional virtue by acting selflessly when he sees others in need. Ignoring the threatenings of Javert, he rescues a young woman, Fantine, who had been forced into prostitution by a string of heartless betrayals and brings her to a hospital. Then, as she lies dying, he promises to rescue her young daughter Cosette from a cruel couple that has been extorting the mother and abusing her child. Valjean takes on Cosette as his own daughter and does everything he can to ensure she has the security and education to prevent her from ever falling into the kind of miserable life he and her mother had endured. When

[10] "Who Am I?" ibid.
[11] Ibid.



Valjean rescues Fantine
Illustration from *Les Misérables*, 1st ed., 1862.

Cosette grows up and falls in love, Valjean inserts himself into a bloody street battle[12] to rescue her fiancée from being killed. Finally, when he feels that his true identity as a hunted parole-breaker endangers Cosette's future safety, he goes into a self-imposed exile to live out the rest of his life in loneliness.

The example of Jean Valjean in this great novel is so moving because it illustrates the difficulty of living a virtuous life, as well as the great things that an otherwise unfortunate person can accomplish. Had Valjean acted in his own self-interest he would have remained a respected and wealthy man, a mayor and factory owner. The wrongly-accused convict would have suffered in jail on his behalf with no one the wiser, and the miserable young woman and her daughter would have not been his problem to deal with. He would have continued to live in material comfort, but his soul would have been racked with guilt and regret. Valjean realized that he could not remain virtuous while neglecting his duty to help those around him. Instead, he took to heart the admonition of Jesus, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life . . . shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"[13] Valjean walked away from his position and possessions to save the convict, he comforted the dying prostitute, and he used his remaining money to care for the abused child. He gave up all worldly honors and security so that the young Cosette could be happily ignorant of the nightmarish life that would have been hers. And in doing all of this, he died a happy, fulfilled man.

Today, as members of a "post-Christian,"[14] "post-enlightenment" world, we find ourselves under the influence of two moral systems. The so-called "traditional," altruistic worldview originates with the Christian doctrine that all mankind are brothers and urges that we ought to treat others how we would like to be treated ourselves. The "newer" (though actually older[15]) system encourages us to seize what is good for

[12] The June Rebellion of 1832 in Paris, France.
[13] Matthew 16: 25-26, *Holy Bible*, KJV.
[14] While Christianity still enjoys a strong following in America and many other nations, the undeniable decline of the influence of Christian teachings in the face of rising secularism and scientism has caused many philosophers (both Christian and non-Christian) to label the current global milieu as "post-Christian."
[15] In the cases of both the progression of human evolution and the timeline of child development, the "animal instinct" to preserve and promote self at the expense of others occurs prior to the development of the moral reasoning that typifies

ourselves and fight our way to the top. Really, these two moral systems simply describe the innately human sense, on the one hand, of natural moral law—the distinct tendency that each healthy human has of being abhorred at atrocities and moved at witnessing altruism—and the animal instinct, on the other hand, that drives us to preserve and promote ourselves at the expense of others. Learning to bridle the selfish animal drive and cultivate a good moral sense has been perhaps the most important object of education since classical times. There could not be a more important task in raising happy and successful children that are good for the rest of society. To aid in developing this sense of right and wrong, countless stories and novels have been created that demonstrate good and bad actions in imitation of real life. Through reading the greatest of these stories, we develop a strong sensitivity to the kind of virtuous actions that are good for the individual, as well as the society.

Cosette as a frightened little girl
Illustration from *Les Misérables*,
1st ed., 1862.

Valjean in *Les Misérables* serves as a poignant model of the virtue I personally aspire toward, but continue to fall short of. And yet, this fictional character's virtue is not unobtainable. There are many wonderful, saintly people who make the more difficult, right choices every day. I am acquainted with several couples who have adopted neglected or abused children into their families, knowing full well the challenge it would be to rehabilitate them. Another man I know takes a couple hours every week out of his professional life to volunteer his services both as a medical practitioner and as a friend to the homeless. The ways in which people can act with extraordinary virtue are as variable as the flora and fauna of creation, but they each share the common factor of placing others' needs before one's own, especially when it seems a sacrifice to do so. As Hugo demonstrates in *Les Misérables*, living a life of charity or altruism is joyous and fulfilling to the individual because it brings the peace of conscience found only in living in harmony with others and with the natural moral law. He further shows that altruism is also the most effective way to help the ever-present needy (Hugo's "miserables") because it unleashes the private virtue of citizens and raises the humanity of the society as a whole, encouraging each of its members to treat every person as valuable and dignified. An elderly bishop that

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mature adults. Therefore, selfish actions are not an advancement of mankind, but rather a regression to infantile, animalistic character traits.

cares more for a miserable convict than fine silverware can change that man's fate forever. A factory owner who cares for the miserable poor in the town can raise their quality of life along with his own as he employs them in meaningful, respectable labor. And a convict, rejected by all because of his past mistakes, can find his new, treasured family among the slums by raising up a couple miserable, abused souls to a safe and dignified life. If all of this can be accomplished by an elderly bishop and a convict, imagine what you can do.

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Sine Qua Non: Public and Private Virtue in Cicero's *de Officiis*

By Michael Boal

Michael Boal joined the faculty at John Adams Academy in 2015. He currently teaches Latin 1-3 to 8th-12th grade scholars and is an advisor to scholar counsel.

The *de Officiis* ("On Duties") of Marcus Tullius Cicero is one of the most prominent surveys of the moral responsibilities of man. One commentator, summarising many, has called it "part of the blood of western culture."[1] Yet, for all its later accolades, the book almost never was. For nearly the length of his sixty-one years its troubled author had made few serious pursuits of philosophy, and were it not for the ruin of his true love, the Roman Republic, it is dubious he would have stayed his famous energy long enough to compose a reflective word. Romans were far more practical than their Greek predecessors, with Cicero no exception. The man lived and died for the republic as a lion for his pride. Only the arrival of stronger animals—the Caesars and Marc Antony—in greater and more sinister numbers was sufficient to fatally wound his eminence in Roman political fields. Once a foremost consul, orator, and lawyer—in each career almost without rival, in the latter surely without peer—Cicero simply did not have the muscle to outmaneuver the cunning allure and awful violence of his republican rivals. By 46 B.C. Rome's civility had devolved so utterly that he was effectively barred from every meaningful office ("the Senate had been abolished; the courts had been closed,"[2]) and so he chose to direct his time to writing. The *de Officiis* is the last of this final flurry of his brilliant mind; in 43 B.C. a raving Antony and reluctant Octavian signed a bounty on his life; shortly after he was hunted down by assassins.

[1] Andrew R. Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero, de Officiis* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Mich. Press, 1996), 43.
[2] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Cicero: on Duties [de Officiis],* trans. Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library vol. 30 (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1913), xi.

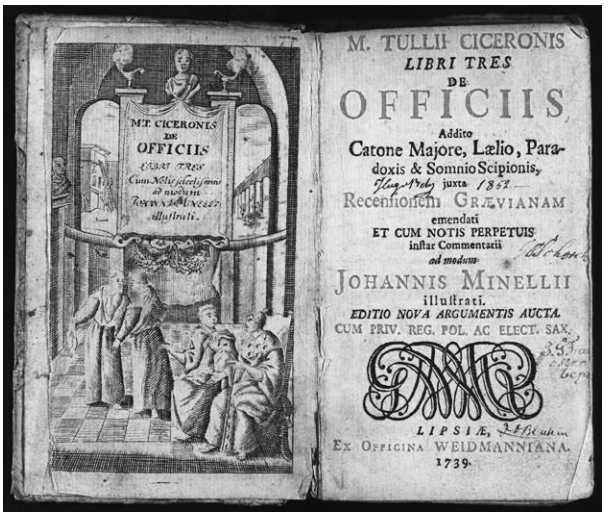
On the surface, the three thick books of the *de Officiis* are a personal letter for the encouragement of the author's son Marcus, who at the time was away in Athens having a go at philosophy and rhetoric, and making less progress in either than his famous *pater* would have hoped. At its core, however, the personal frame chosen for the *de Officiis* was useful not only to the immediate art of helping Marcus, but for its intimate guidance to other Romans and later generations of humanity.

> There is no part of life, in fact, that is able to be free from duty, neither in private, nor in public, nor in domestic affairs, neither if you should do something for yourself, nor when you contract with others, and in cultivating it there is every right, but in neglecting it every disgrace.[3]

John Adams Academy's second core value of *Public and Private Virtue,* like Cicero's observation, lends light to the truth that moral obligations are present at all times. Virtue is not incidental, like a salt or fragrant spice--nice for certain recipes and grim for certain others; it is the essence of our human condition. Duty also—as Cicero's term *officium* is often rendered—which is the molten state of our concrete virtue, is a *sine qua non* of every strain of civilization. Virtue is the final result of duty's execution. At minimum, duty can be seen in our daily blessings. In exchanges we trade gratitude more often than insults; in a terrible rush we will still pause at red lights or hold the door on the elevator; often, even before the morning's first sip of coffee has restored the universe we grunt our acknowledgment to one another. This diverse and instinctual performance of social virtue is unique to humans; it is not observed among the other created beings:

> It is no mean manifestation of Nature and Reason that man is the only animal that has a feeling for order, for propriety, for moderation in word and deed. And no other animal has a sense of beauty, loveliness, harmony in the visible world; and Nature and Reason, extending the analogy of this from the world of sense to the world of spirit, find that beauty, consistency, order, are far more to be preserved in thought and deed.[4]

[3] *de Officiis*, 1.4, translation my own.
[4] d*e Officiis,* 1.14, from *Cicero: On Duties*, p. 15-16.



18th century German illustrated edition of Cicero's *de Officiis*. Latvian University.

Endowed with transcendent insight, humans share the unique ability, as both Cicero and our second core value adduce, to transfer virtue *ab oculis ad animum* (from the eyes to the soul), and in the process to encounter, or to fashion, as it were, both an aesthetic fondness for the natural world and a spiritual desire to magnify her through service to man and God. Man also peers through time. The wolf and the antelope roam the grasslands and the saw-toothed mountains, but are prisoners of their individual hour, striving in a desperate now for health and safety, while man, Cicero notices, "endowed with reason...connects and associates the present and the future [and] easily surveys the course of his whole life and makes necessary preparations for its conduct."[5]

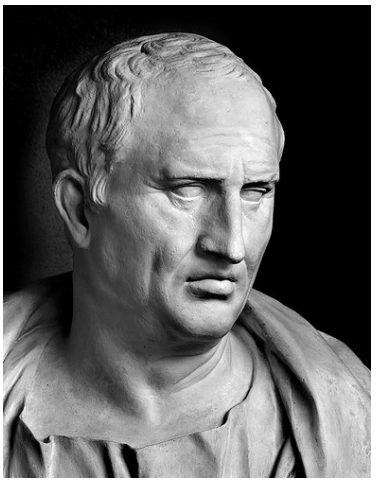
Since the duties of life are many, and can include the quotidian kindnesses exampled above, as well as the higher callings of the virtuous soul, *de Officiis* is quite encyclopedic in its scope and attention to detail. Even a rudimentary review of its contents is beyond the grasp of this small article. In the main however, the work examines the duties of man under four main heads—the well-known "cardinal" (pivotal) virtues of justice, prudence, courage, and temperance. For each division, Cicero highlights myriad examples of public and private virtue, and consistently demonstrates how they are inseparable. Specifically, he takes pains to show that there is no difference between that which is publicly useful and what is morally good. Despite the alluring promises of sin and deceit, there is no gain, ultimately, in feigning virtue and producing evil:

> Is there...any object of such value or any advantage worth the winning, that, to gain it, one should sacrifice the name of a good man and the lustre of his reputation? What is there that your so-called expediency can bring you that it will compensate for what it takes away, if it steals from you the name of a good man and causes you to lose your sense of honor and justice? What difference does it

[5] Cicero, *de Officiis*, 1.11, from *Cicero: On Duties*, p. 13.

> make whether a man is actually transformed into a beast or whether, keeping the outward appearance of a man, he has the savage nature of a beast within?[6]

One great obstacle to the virtue of Justice is man's selfishness. Some men feign virtue, like the false prophets of Matthew, publicly showing virtue, while inwardly they are ravenous wolves. Cicero especially chastise those whose ambition, like Julius Caesar's, ultimately devours their reason, until, as in the tyrant's case, they "trod underfoot all laws of god and man."[7] Censured too are the milder types who veil their hate and greed behind a thin veneer of reasonable excuses, claiming to hurt no-one, refusing to contribute to the common weal on the grounds that they are privately occupied. In Christian terms, theirs is the sin of omission. The noble Roman notes that "while they steer clear of the one kind of injustice, they fall into the other; they are traitors to [public] life, for they contribute to it none of their interest, none of their effort, none of their means."[8]



Bust of Marcus Tullius Cicero.
1st cent. B.C., Musei Capitolini.

On the topic of the virtue of Prudence, the *de Officiis* concedes, on the one hand, that it "touches human nature most closely", but that, on the other hand, it should not be clutched too dear to the breast. While Cicero praises Plato for recognizing that "we are not born for ourselves alone,"[9] he seems to openly fault the Greeks in general when he claims that it is an error to "devote too much industry and too deep study to matters that are obscure and difficult and useless as well."[10] Ever pragmatic, and not a little mindful of his own legacy in the Athenian shadow, Cicero asserts that the highest expression of prudence is serving the public good. He writes, "The whole glory of virtue is in activity; activity however, may often be interrupted, and many opportunities for study are opened."[11] When the need of others has receded, public virtue gives place to private. His distinction here is hardly mere posturing—the city of Athens, like his cherished Rome, had proven too idle, too immersed in something, or too immersed in everything to defend their liberty from tyranny. Study in its proper time is decorous indeed, but not when others need you, and not when the house, so to speak, is completely on fire.

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[6] Ibid., 3.82, p. 355.
[7] Ibid., 1.26, p. 27.
[8] Cicero, *de Officiis*, 1.29, from *Cicero: On Duties*, p. 31.
[9] Ibid., 1.22, p. 23.
[10] Ibid., 1.19, p. 21.
[11] Ibid.

The virtue of Courage, in Cicero's mind, is a good only insofar it benefits all. The crimes of Caesar's courage were fresh on his mind. He writes, "If the exaltation of spirit seen in times of danger and toil is devoid of justice and fights for selfish ends instead of for the common good, it is a vice; for not only has it no element of virtue, but its nature is barbarous and revolting to all our finer feelings."[12] Even more damaging than an offense to taste of course had been the destruction of life, the silencing of the courts and the closing of the Senate doors. The private virtue of courage, however noble it begins to flame, must makes its object the public advantage or it is simply appetite run wild. A torch in the hand of Liberty is nothing like a wildfire. For Cicero, the soul that is courageous and great is always distinguished by two characteristics: first, a "conviction that nothing but moral goodness and propriety deserves to be either admired or wished for," and second, it must not "be subject to any man or any passion or any accident of fortune."[13]

The last of the four goods treated in *de Officiis* is the virtue of Temperance. Cicero notes that this duty actually takes its source from decorum, or propriety, and that "the first road on which it conducts us leads to harmony with Nature and the observance of her laws."[14] Following the Greeks, and teaching on their terms, Cicero explains that the activity of the spirit is dual: one force is appetite, *ὁρμη* (cf. hormones), and the other is *ratio*, reason. The former compels, the latter governs. It is the property of temperance to moderate the one with the other. In Cicero's fine phrase, "every action ought to be free from undue haste or carelessness; neither ought we to do anything for which we cannot assign a reasonable motive; for in these words we have practically a definition of duty."[15] Once again, and conclusively, the private forms of virtue must be the sacred substance of its public silhouette. With Plato's affirmation that we are not created for ourselves alone, Cicero knew that, "indifference to public opinion implies not merely [arrogance], but even total lack of principal."[16]

[12] Ibid., 1.62, p. 65.
[13] Ibid., 1.66, p. 69.
[14] Cicero, *de Officiis*, 1.100, from *Cicero: On Duties*, p. 103.
[15] Ibid., 1.101, p. 103.
[16] Ibid., 1.99, p. 101.

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The Insolubility of Public and Private Virtue: The Negation of Machiavelli

By Joshua Biedel

"Virtue is persecuted more by the wicked than loved by the good." -- Buddha

Joshua Biedel joined the faculty at John Adams Academy in 2015. He currently teaches Western Civilization to 9th and 10th graders.

Popular current queries → Does one's public life and private life really have that much of an effect on each other? Doesn't what one decides to do on one's own behind closed doors have nothing to do with who they are or how they function in public, or how it effects me personally?

Pertinent classical rejoinders → Assuredly, what one does in both their public life and private life has colossal effects on each other. If virtue reigns supreme in both spheres, the person and the public benefit immensely because one's public life and private life are irrevocably intertwined.

Indeed, the above current questions posed have been perpetually popular since the turn of Modernity in the16th century. And yet many rebuttals to these genuine inquiries can be easily mined from the ancients of old. Is this not a bizarre predicament? Why would such recent questions as these arise when robust answers are already available? Perhaps a humble and worthy investigation into our 2nd Core Value—Public and Private Virtue—would illuminate fruitful explanations, and perhaps show us why the classical admonitions above are altogether true, noble, sacred, and still unanswerable and still undefeated, Modern posturing notwithstanding. We will first define the 2nd Core Value of Public and Private Virtue, then delve into theoretical considerations of such, then move on to Machiavelli's Prince, and lastly to real-life scenarios.

Any worthwhile investigation into such a dynamic Core Value as this merits an invitation of proper definitions. Accordingly, there are myriad definitions of "public", "private" and "virtue" according to Websters. For the cohesion of this paper, the educational mission here at JAA, and to our service of our community and humanity at large, let us arrive at these via Websters[1]:

- **Public**: relating to, or affecting all the people or the whole area of a nation or state; relating to or being in the service of the community.
- **Private**: belonging to or concerning an individual person.
- **Virtue**: moral excellence or a commendable quality or trait.

With these in mind, let us submit that the 2nd Core Value of Public and Private Virtue at John Adams Academy may thusly be fleshed out into sentence form as such:

> *"We value moral excellence both in one's Public life and Private life because what one's actions does affects not only themselves but one's community as well."*

As imperfect as the aforementioned sentence definition of JAA's 2nd Core Value may be, we will harness it for the focus of this paper.

Firstly, our theoretical consideration of this question topic. Why are Public and Private Virtue permanent partners, you may be wondering? Because virtue denotes character, and character must be consistent. If one portrays a standard of character in one realm—the Public—different from another realm—the Private—then that would qualify as an inconsistency. Surely it is one thing to be inconsistent in trivial matters, say, the contrasting genres of music we play in the car, or the number of apples we eat each month; it is drastically different to be inconsistent in how we act, speak, or live out our lives. Toleration of minute inconsistencies can suffice, but when it comes to character—that which represents who we are, all that we do, and an out-working of the moral/ethical/principal tenets that govern us—there is no such thing as an inconsistency. You are who you are at all times, in all places. One cannot be kind to their spouse (Private), but pernicious to their co-workers (Public), and be considered altogether kind. One cannot be truthful to their neighbors (Public) but lie towards their grandmother (Private) and be regarded as ultimately honest. One cannot refrain from taking money from their spouse's purse (Private) and yet take from the cash

[1] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online*, accessed 4/15/17, https://www.merriam-webster.com/.

register at work (Public) and be counted as absolutely trustworthy. A shortcoming in one aspect of our life affects all other aspects of our live, for as John Donne illustrates, *"No man is an island to himself."* The Private aspect of our lives forms the foundation of who we are, and the Public component is built on top of that foundation; first the Private, then the Public, so virtue should stay prevalent throughout. Our Public life is duly our Private life turned inside out. Since we all live coupled Public and Private lives, a symbiotic relationship exists between the two. Henceforth consistency is quintessential between the Public and Private; thus possessing virtue in both spheres is paramount.

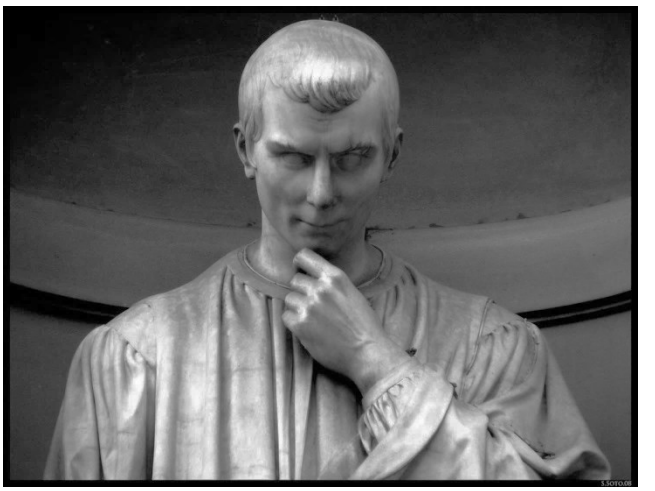
Let us be frank and cut to the heart of this momentous matter: would you trust someone to be a teacher at your school (Public) if they abused their own daughters at home (Private)? Or would you be comfortable letting a four-time divorced person (Private) lead a marriage ministry at your church or synagogue or mosque (Public)? Would you hire someone to be your accountant (Public) if you knew they stole money from their child's piggy bank (Private)? If you self-consciously answered in the negative to the above Public and Private scenarios, then you must concede—whether gladly or reluctantly—that the Public and Private remarkably influence each other. First the Private, then the Public, so virtue must be prominent throughout. A Jewish Rabbi from Nazareth 2,000 years ago wisely observed that if you are faithful in little matters, you will be faithful in large matters.[2]

In my Western Civilization 2 class—delectably covering Europe in the Middle Ages—our studious sophomores engage with simultaneously the most popular and infamous text of the exquisite Renaissance period: Niccolo Machiavelli's The Prince. This political philosophy treatise was forged in the midst of tumultuous civil wars and upheaval in 16th century Italy. And the author was no professor writing in his ivory tower in Italy, for in addition to being a man of letters, Machiavelli was also a battlefield general, an exile, was imprisoned falsely, and severely tortured during his lifetime. Respectfully, it must be noted that the bold Florentine lived out his writings and harbored immense guts, grit, and gall.

Machiavelli's acclaimed work instructs a would-be Prince what he must do to maintain power, and after looking to Antiquity onward for guidance, he prescribes: it is better to be feared than loved, the vitality of knowing history, the pros and cons of a standing army vs. a mercenary army, and the role of fortune and luck. Perhaps most remembered is his maxim that the end always justifies the means; in other words, a Prince must do whatever it takes (the means) in order to maintain power (the end).

[2] Matthew 25:23, *Holy Bible*.

Harboring a strong disdain for humanity because "men are a sorry breed,"[3] Machiavelli would certainly be no admirer of JAA's 2nd Core Value of Public and Private Virtue. Writing at the cusp of Modernity, Machiavelli spurned what the heralded conversations of the classics have showcased to be true: that one's Virtue must be consistent in both Public and Private, especially that of a ruling Prince who influences others.



Statue of Niccolo Machiavelli.
Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

To Machiavelli, it was a foregone conclusion that since mankind is "dishonest and do not keep the faith with you, you, in return, need not keep faith with them."[4] In chapter 18 of his treatise, entitled "Should Princes Keep Faith," he posits a most blunt pronouncement: a Prince not only need not worry about the consistency between their Public and Private lives, but that Virtue itself is unimportant. Interestingly, Machiavelli admits that Virtue is indeed preeminent, but it's far easier to *appear* Virtuous than to actually *possess* Virtue! After listing multifarious traits of Virtue, the philosopher opines:

> It is not essential, then, that a Prince should have all the good qualities which I have enumerated above, but it is most essential that he should seem to have them; I will even venture to affirm that if he has and invariably practices them all, they are hurtful, whereas the appearance of having them is useful. Thus, it is well to seem merciful, faithful, humane, religious, and upright, and also to be so; but the mind should remain so balanced that were it needful not to be so, you should be able to know how to change to the contrary . . . He must therefore keep his mind ready to shift as the winds and tides of Fortune turn, and, as I have already said, he ought not to quit good courses if he can help it, but should know how to follow evil courses if he must. [5]

[3] Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1992), 44.
[4] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 46.
[5] Ibid.

Be honest: is it any wonder that Machiavelli holds this position, when for him, the end always justifies the means, no matter what? And is it of any wonder that the term "Machiavellian" is now used as a pejorative term and is uttered only in scathing instances? And is it also of any wonder that the only book Joseph Stalin reportedly kept by his bedside was Machiavelli's The Prince?

Towards the end of our Machiavelli study, a clever scholar asked aloud in a moment of confusion, "Why are we learning about Machiavelli and The Prince if his lessons are so wrong?!" A salient question indeed, to which I replied (paraphrased): "Good question! Basically, we can teach you by negation. Meaning, 'don't do X,Y, and Z' can be just as invaluable as 'do A, B, and C.' So scholars, please don't do what Machiavelli is advocating for, because he's pitifully wrong." This application of teaching and informing by negation holds true not just in the classroom, but in life. Consider this in society (virtually all laws in all lands of all times are laws of negation), in marriage (*e.g.,* "don't leave the toilet seat up"), in sports (*e.g.,* "don't swing/kick/tackle/rebound like that"), in friendship (*e.g.,* "don't ever play a Taylor Swift song in my car again"), and in religion (*e.g.*, 8 out the revered 10 Commandments contain "thou shalt not _____"). Better yet, talk to any parent and they'll definitively tell you that the word they necessarily utilize more than any other in their child's life is "NO!" In short, we study Machiavelli in order to show our scholars what *not* to do, because as our 2nd Core Value sentence definition entails, your actions must be consistent in your Public and Private lives since what appears to be two are actually one. Truly, Public and Private Virtue are intrinsically interconnected.

After addressing the theoretical aspects of Public and Private Virtue, then what Machiavelli (in)famously had to say about such in his treatise, we lastly will study some real-life considerations. In 2014, the U.S. Army disqualified 588 soldiers after sexual assault reviews because soldiers violated their "positions of trust."[6] Such reasoning rings true, for as John Donne intimated above, don't all humans retain "positions of trust" towards all of our fellow human beings in how we relate to them? Yet Machiavelli and the Moderns would say that only what a soldier does concerning his military duties is what truly counts towards his performance. They say that what they do behind closed doors or on their own time is irrelevant. In that same Machiavellian and Modern vein, some think the comedian Bill Cosby should be supported as a comedian even though the several dozen sordid personal lawsuits against him cast a dubious shadow over the man; for after all, his personal life has nothing to do with his public act, they say. If you're recognizing

[6] Tom Brooke, "Army disqualifies 588 soldiers after sexual assault review," *USA Today,* February 26, 2014, accessed online February 26, 2014, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/02/26/military-sexual-assault-sen-claire-mccaskill-sen-kirsten-gillibrand-rep-jackie-speier-defense-secretary-chuck-hagel/5820007/.

the illogical consistency in these Modern beliefs, your conscience indeed blares a clarion call. Public + Private = Insoluble.

For a more recent example in America, we cast a glance towards the Presidential Office. I rhetorically ask: if we can't trust our 42nd and 45th elected Presidents to honor the most sacred of vows at the altar of marriage to their spouse, how can we trust them to honor their Presidential vow to our country of 300+ million citizens? Do the gross ethical lapses in their private lives give you confidence that their public lives as leaders of the free world will magically turn virtuous? A Washington Post survey[7] of its readers asked, immediately following the intern scandal and affair of the 42nd President in 1998, "What should we expect from a political leader?", and 49% said it is "performance alone that counts in a president" and that "as long as he/she does a good job running the country, whatever he/she does in their personal life is not important." But 51% disagreed, saying that the president "has a greater responsibility to set an example with his/her personal life." And the poll also found that 1 in 4 Americans are "value voters", which are those who vote mainly based on the basis of a candidate's personal morals and values, as opposed to their ideology, issues or experience. Basically, 3 out of 4 citizens in the United States in 1998 said that Public and Private Virtue do not matter, aligning clearly with Machiavellian thought.

Yet, how can one's Private acts not effect or overshadow one's Public acts? Are they somehow hidden, secretive, swept under the rug and forgotten, and disconnected? A carpenter named Jesus once stated: "*For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.*" [8] Undoubtedly, there is no separation between Public and Private lives—in spite of what virtually half of Americans believe—so virtue in both realms is not convenience but necessity; they are two sides of the same coin.

Maybe you're not entirely convinced yet of the insolubility of Public and Private Virtue? Former University of Oregon football coach Chip Kelly once suspended a star player from his top 3 nationally-ranked team for improper behavior off the field. Although questioned by many who believed such personal faulty actions of the player should have no bearing on the player's on-field playing time, Kelly duly upheld the essence of the 2nd Core Value sentence definition and responded poignantly: "If I can't trust a player on Friday night with a few friends, how can I trust them on Saturday night in front of 80,000 people?" Again, first the Private, then the Public, so virtue must be consistent throughout.

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[7] Kenneth W. Starr, *The Starr Report: The Findings of Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr on President Clinton and The Lewinsky Affair* (New York: Public Affairs, 1998), L.
[8] Luke 8:17, *Holy Bible*, KJV.

Perhaps the stout validity of our 2nd Core Value can be further exemplified via a short leadership lesson my pastor and mentor told me regarding Personal character and its invariable Public effects:

> If you are in charge of the time on your wristwatch, and you happen to set it 10 minutes late, who ends up being late everywhere they go?—you. If you are in charge of the time on the family clock, and it is 10 minutes late, who ends up being late everywhere they go?—the entire family. And if you are in charge of the city clock, and it is 10 minutes late, who ends up being late everywhere they go?—the entire city.

In closing, the fact that we at JAA have to unapologetically assert that both Public and Private Virtue are co-joined in our 2nd Core Value is because our Modern society has unapologetically disjointed the two. For the confines of this article I have only addressed the inconsistency of Modernity and Machiavelli's intentional divorce of the two, but have left aside their motivation behind it; such motivational considerations remain outside the purview of this paper. But maybe they have done so—as humanity has done in times past—in order to give allowance to lives of double standards; in order to grant permission of lifestyles of inconsistency and that of hypocrites (the definition of a hypocrite being one who says one thing and does another; this flies in the face of Machiavelli's proposition above). So what now? Our Modern world and Machiavelli has severed Public and Private Virtue from another, so we must now earnestly proclaim them a band of brothers. What has been a truth for most of humanity for millennia, even back to the ancient question posed by Socrates in Plato's Republic—*What is a virtuous citizen?*—must again be proffered as something newfound. Such is the mission of classical schools in reviving noble truths long forgotten.

In reality, this concept of the unanimity of both Public and Private Virtue that JAA passionately contends for is akin to re-stating the obvious, though it is sadly not obvious any more. Due to Modern mankind's neglect, we seek to rectify, re-claim, and dare I say revolutionize once again this sacred truth. For as G.K. Chesterton said:

> If you leave a thing alone you leave it to a torrent of change. If you leave a white post alone it will soon be a black post. If you particularly want it to be white you must be

> always painting it again; that is, you must be always having a revolution. Briefly, if you want the old white post you must have a new white post.[9]

And lest we think white to be a most mundane color—as I admittedly do—, again Chesterton illumines:

> White is not a mere absence of color; it is a shining and affirmative thing, as fierce as red, as definite as black. God paints in many colors; but He never paints so gorgeously, I had almost said so gaudily, as when He paints in white.[10]

May we always consider the righteousness of Public and Private Virtue as the magnanimous paint we try to affirmatively re-apply to ourselves and humanity, and apply freshly to our entrusted scholars here at JAA.

And may Public and Private Virtue be crystallized in your conscience as justly insoluble, and may Machiavelli forever teach us how *not* to live.

[9] G.K. Chesteron, *Orthodoxy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1908), 122.
[10] Chesteron, *Orthodoxy*, 122.

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Call for Submissions

The editors of *Mentor* would like to graciously invite all John Adams Academy faculty to contribute submissions to this journal. As educators, we have secretly appreciated how your actions and words contribute to our academic community; as writers we have jealously admired how you see the good in things beyond our view. Whether your main vantage point is a Kindergarten classroom, an administrative office, or places beyond or between, you have valuable perspectives on the ways our Core Values intersect with the curricula of our Academy.

On a rotating basis, Mentor will focus on a particular Core Value. The substance of this second volume has been our 2nd Core value, Public and Private Virtue. In the upcoming Fall issue, the theme will rotate to our 3rd Core Value, Emphasis on Mentors and Classics.

All articles within the journal aim simply to connect the thematic Core Value with a classic written text, song, or artifact that is presently studied at school. Whether you have found an emphasis on mentors and classics in Homer's *Odyssey* or D'Aulaires' *Book of Greek Myths*, we invite you to submit an essay for consideration. Do not hide your light—you are wise and observant and we would love to hear from you!

Article prompt:

> Having selected a written text, artefact, or artistic work from the Academy's curricula, discuss and persuade in an essay of 1000 to 2,500 words how John Adams Academy's 3rd Core Value Emphasis on Mentors and Classics is evident in (your chosen) musical score, artefact, or written text. Cite and credit all sources according to Chicago style formatting, including a Bibliography. If citing and sourcing is not your strength, assistance is available.

Review/Publication Process:

1. Submission Deadline: **Friday, November 3rd**
2. Saturday, November 4th—Friday, November 10th: Submissions will be read and reviewed by active John Adams School Board, who will select essays for publication.
3. Saturday, November 11th—Friday, November 17th: Editing and proof-reading of nominated essays by *Mentor* editors Greg Blankenbehler and Michael Boal.
4. Distribution: Monday, December 4th through Friday, December 8th.

Nota Bene: during the week of 11/11 through 11/17 submitted essays may be returned to their authors for suggested revision. As editors, we will make every effort to maintain the integrity of all original essays in their entirety, but given the need for timely printing and distribution, we must reserve the right to make all final revisions.

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Public & Private Virtue

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Fostering Creativity & Entrepreneurial Spirit

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Modeling what we Teach

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