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**MARTIAL SPIRITS AND MARITAL RITES: ASSESSING
ROUSSEAU'S CRITIQUE OF COMMERCE'S DEVALUATION
OF THE MILITARY AND THE FAMILY**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Political Science

by
Jacob Harvey
B.A., Mercer University, 2018
M.A., Louisiana State University, 2023
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Abstract

This dissertation will investigate Rousseau's critique of how commercial society devalues soldiers and families and the responses provided by defenders of commerce. I will examine Rousseau's corpus to demonstrate how Rousseau viewed commerce as a threat to both the responsibilities that men in a political community must be willing to fight and die for their country, as commercial societies intensify the hedonistic risk-averse calculations within members of the community. I will also show how Rousseau's concerns towards commerce extended to the family, inhibiting the joys that can come with being part of a family and inhibiting citizens' willingness to have children for the good of the community. Once this critique is developed, the rest of the dissertation will look at several Enlightenment thinkers who defend the importance of commerce as a source of good due to the prosperity it brings and how it incentivizes the rule of law. Looking at the various proponents of commerce will reveal a tension in their thoughts that must be dealt with concerning the urge to push for commerce while recognizing the good of the martial and marital responsibilities a community must possess to function well. I will show that while Rousseau's critique has some substance, the proposed cure of a nationalistic agrarian society is not compelling enough to the average person, demonstrating how proponents of commerce, despite its drawbacks, present a more grounded perception of the human condition. Despite the failure of Rousseau's alternate solution, his diagnosis of the problems inherent in a commercial society is correct, and solutions to these problems remain elusive.

Introduction

I.1. The Price of Commerce

In the 18th century, a spirit was dying in Europe: the spirit of feudalism. The world in which the power vested in aristocrats and knights, bishops, and priests was waning in the face of an intellectual movement known as The Enlightenment. This was not a monolithic movement but a movement spread out over different European countries, each focusing on different critiques of the aristocratic world. Despite the differences, certain commonalities were shared between the several types of enlightenments, such as critiquing hereditary power as a legitimate source of governance, decrying the abuses of the church and its influence over politics and society, and pushing for the rule of law overall as opposed to the arbitrary privileges and customs that belonged to the feudal order. Another consistent concern for Enlightenment thinkers was commerce.

Whether it was usury laws endorsed by different religious bodies or restrictions by guilds or merchant companies, commerce had been restricted throughout most of the Middle Ages. As the Enlightenment progressed, however, a rising middle class pushed for unrestricted commercial activities and increased the production rate of goods and services. Many Enlightenment thinkers thought that commerce should take center stage; then, a commercial society could be formed, which, over time, could provide a level of peace and prosperity that previous generations had never experienced. There was genuine enthusiasm for changing the world to favor the bourgeoisie, the middle classes of Europe that focused on commercial activities to make the world safe and prosperous, where they could benefit and enrich themselves. However, amidst the hope for a better tomorrow through commerce, one thinker in the Enlightenment was prepared to go against the majority opinion on commercial society. That man was Jean Jacques Rousseau.

As a philosopher, playwright, novelist, musician, and poet, and eventually a celebrity in Europe, Rousseau was not only one of the most famous thinkers of the 18th century but also the most controversial. Much like many other thinkers of the Enlightenment, Rousseau foresaw that the monarchies and aristocracies of the past were on the brink of destruction. The Revolution was on the horizon, and the old ways of the world would be swept away. However, where many Enlightenment thinkers viewed commerce as the pathway for the future, Rousseau was one of the few philosophers who resisted the rise of the commercial society. Instead of the bourgeois commercial society, Rousseau saw more significant potential in the republican models of the past, epitomized by Rome and Sparta, as well as more "modern" examples such as the Swiss Cantons and potentially Geneva. Why would Rousseau prefer these regimes compared to a society where commerce predominates?

This dissertation will argue that Rousseau provides a valid critique of commercial society that many proponents of commercial society explicitly or implicitly recognized and grappled with; that critique is that commercial society devalues the obligations of martial and marital responsibilities, responsibilities that are essential to the functioning of any political regime, especially for classical interpretations of Republics. Put another way, Rousseau dislikes commercial society because it can negatively affect the sense of duty that citizens should have in protecting their regime while also negatively impacting the functioning of the family. Rousseau would argue that commercial society is the worst of both worlds as it negatively impacts the public and private responsibilities of the citizens.

Rousseau will provide an alternative form of government, one that is nationalistic, agrarian, and lacking in commerce. I will show that this alternative solution is not tenable because what Rousseau's society offers is less desirable for people than a commercial society. In

addition, Rousseau's form of republicanism will inevitably result in the republic expanding through conflict, which contradicts Rousseau's explicit hopes for the republic. However, while the solution that Rousseau offers is problematic and ineffective, I will show that Rousseau's diagnosis of commercial society is correct. There are problems in a commercial society that are puzzling to defenders of commercial society today, and they are problems that were puzzling as commercial society was developing. This dissertation will examine Rousseau because he was alive when commercial society was emerging in the world, and even as it was emerging, Rousseau could see the dynamics of commercial society and the problems that would emerge from such a society. To elaborate on this topic further, it is essential to analyze the various notions of commercial society to see what it would look like and assess how that version of society has triumphed in various parts of the world today.

I.2. The Nature and Triumph of Commerce

To understand how commercial society has triumphed in much of the world, the first step is to ascertain the nature of a commercial society envisioned by Enlightenment thinkers. While Enlightenment thinkers from many countries covered the importance of commerce, the Scottish Enlightenment would succinctly analyze commercial society. Christopher Berry's work *Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment* covers the primary components of commercial society. As Berry summarizes, "The common good in a commercial society was judged in terms of what promoted the material well-being of the many, not the few, something sumptuary laws, like those in Venice, thwarted and was precluded in Athens and Rome" (Berry 2013, 194). Instead of the throne or the altar, the focal point of the commercial society would be the marketplace, where everyone could have the means to acquire the goods that they desire and, through the division of labor, would be able to pursue a career that was most useful to the

individual and society. However, the commercial society was more than just a pursuit of material goods; it was also a space for justice and rule to take shape.

As Berry explains, markets would need a certain level of constancy and predictability, which could only be provided if the rule of law was administered to everyone equally, eventually corroding the formal and informal hierarchy of the past (Berry 2013, 195). The expansion of the rule of law would come with an expansion of liberty, a modern form of liberty. A liberty where, as Berry argues, one can: "pursue one's interests in one's way. A society that underwrites those diverse pursuits will be pluralistic" (Berry 2013, 195). People could pursue whatever they wished under the safety and security the laws provided. While the idea of commercial society reached its maturest form under the Scottish Enlightenment, other Enlightenment thinkers were also focused on the good of commerce and the connection between commerce and liberty. This vision of society is the one that is the most idealized in parts of the world today, certainly in what could be considered "first-world countries."

The politics of the modern world emphasizes commercial life above all other interests. This may be a bold statement, but it is a simple recognition that nations are focused on aggrandizing their commercial capacities. Today's politicians are not beholden to feudal lords, chivalrous knights, or any other aristocratic arrangement. Even the Popes, for all the respect afforded to them, do not hold the same sway over the political leaders as they had in the past. Instead, it is the merchant, the entrepreneur, the capitalist, the ones who produce wealth, who have the most significant sway over political life. When looking at the Cold War, undoubtedly one of the most consequential conflicts of the twentieth century, the point of tension resolved around what type of economic activity was superior. The proponents of capitalism saw the good of commercial activity in the format of private property, while the Communists sought to remove

private property and establish state control. Upon the fall of the Soviet Union and other associated communist regimes, capitalism would emerge victorious.

In addition, the average citizen often has the economy in mind and usually links the success and failure of the economy to politicians (whether rightfully or wrongly). If the political concerns could be summarized in one expression, it would undoubtedly be James Carville's expression: "It's the economy, stupid." The end of the Twentieth century would bear witness to the final ascent of commercial society. No longer ruled by concepts of virtue and honor, a commercial society allows for the division of labor to operate without inhibition, allowing for the possession and exchange of material goods produced on a scale that humanity could not even begin to imagine a century before. Even critics of modern society would be hard-pressed to deny the good that has emerged through the sheer abundance of goods that the average person in a commercial society can access. The question worth investigating is: what does a commercial society lack? If proponents of a commercial society claim that it can offer abundance, how does one try to locate a deficit?

One could look for criticism of commercial pursuits through various religions that decry the pursuit of accumulation, attributing the pursuit of money to a moral or spiritual failing. Philosophers have also developed critiques against the pursuit of money-making. Aristotle objects to a life of pursuing *chrematike* in Book I of *Politics*, as pursuing money can be a false ideal of living well (Lord 2013, 17). Aristotle recognizes that commerce is distinct from money-making; however, since commerce is not the focal point of political life, it will have a place in society (Lord 2013, 15-17). Commerce has taken priority in political life, at least in much of what would be considered "the West," compromising Europe and its descendants in North America. What if commerce is the primary concern? True, there are critics of money-making and

commerce, but they have existed since before the Enlightenment began to expound on the good of the commercial life. The only way to gauge what a commercial society lacks is to see where there has been a considerable decline in occupations. To focus this question further, what occupations or tasks in the United States, undoubtedly a premier example of a commercial state, have been decreasing over time?

I.3. What a commercial society lacks: Recruits

One of the professions that has seen a decline in the past few decades is the number of citizens enlisted in the military. This potential drawback was noted by proponents of the commercial society as the division of labor in a commercial society would make the military an area where specialization would occur (Berry 2013. 195). However, specialization can reach a point where the number of people who “specialize” in the field decreases. Over the past few decades, the United States has seen a considerable decline in the number of people willing to serve in the United States Armed Forces. According to the *Pew Research Center*, in 1980, around eighteen percent of the population were veterans, a percentage which would decrease to six percent (Schaeffer, “The Changing Face of America’s Veteran Population.”). This decline became more noticeable after conscription ended due to the tensions that came with drafting people for the Vietnam War.

In 1968, the number of active military members reached 3.5 million; by 2020, the number was 1.3 million, less than one percent of the U.S. population (Schaeffer, “The Changing Face of America’s Veteran Population”). In addition to the decline of enlisted members of the army, elected members of the federal government are less and less likely to have served in the military in the past. In the 1960s and the 1970s, a super-majority of the House of Representatives and the Senate had been a part of the military. In the Congress of 2022, only eighteen percent of the House of Representatives and seventeen percent of the Senate have any military experience

(Schaeffer, “The Changing Face of America’s Veteran Population”). Across the board, from the most influential people in government to the average citizen, there is a considerable decrease in the number of people who serve in the armed forces. Part of this can be reflected by a move away from a conscription army to an all-volunteer force. Still, I see this as a problem since the commercial society can make obligations such as joining the military for their country less desirable compared to profitable alternatives.

Why should it matter if there has been a decline in the number of people who have served in the Armed Forces? Couldn't this be a sign of the superiority of commercial life? Instead of signing up for conflict, people are allowed to follow other pursuits. The reasons why these glib dismissals will not suffice are manifold. One, having fewer recruits places a more significant strain on the military to have a smaller number of people perform a more significant number of tasks. In addition, it cannot be said that the decline in people enlisting in the military equates to a decline in conflict. At the time of this dissertation, the United States has engaged in two major wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and potential conflicts could emerge via the Russian-Ukraine Conflict as well as tensions between Iran and Israel. The most critical issue is that the declining number of people in the military reflects a more significant problem of commercial society, which is the inability, or unwillingness, to ensure that citizens receive an equal obligation to provide the defense of their country.

The alienation between civilians and the military is increasing because a super-majority of the population in a commercial society does not serve and has no desire to serve. The smaller the veteran enclave, the smaller the chance their concerns will be addressed. This may offend the average person, who may envision that the veterans are discussed often and with great enthusiasm and praise. However, despite the praise, the host of issues veterans go through is

often unnoticed by the public. One of the issues is the rate of veteran suicides. According to *americanprogress.org*, between 2005 and 2017, nearly 79,000 veterans killed themselves, which is "more than the total number of troops who have died in the wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan combined (about 65,000)" (Korbs and Tofan 2021). The level of suicide is tied to Veteran Affairs not providing healthcare necessary for the mental health of veterans returning home (McGory and Bedi, "How VA fails Veterans on Mental Health"). The mental health of veterans obviously can stem from the effect of their wartime experience, but it is also an issue of assimilating back into a commercial society. While many soldiers can do this, others struggle or fail to accomplish this and, as a result, fall into homelessness.

To the great political thinkers of the past, it was understood that republics, especially those of antiquity, valorized the soldier as a man who would be prepared to give his life to the republic. The idea of having a significant portion of veterans be left on the streets would seem like a slap in the face to the very ideal of the republic. What is the point of attempting to have a sense of patriotic duty for the country if they do not find a way to effectively honor the service that one provides for the good of the country? A "homeless veteran" in a republic should be a contradiction in terms. However, after the Vietnam War, there was a considerable spike in the number of homeless people who had served in the armed forces. During the 1980s, around thirty-eight percent of men in the homeless population were veterans, and many of them were found to be abusing substances (Rosenheck and Chung 1994, 467-468). The issue of substance abuse among veterans has remained a persistent problem (Dunne et. and Al 2015). All of this shows that the military, one of the essential occupations that any country in history must have, is experiencing a decline in recruits. The care and respect that should be afforded to veterans can often be met with indifference and lackluster response. A commercial society can struggle with

finding soldiers and providing the care and consideration they deserve. Another area where commercial societies are lacking is citizens' willingness to come together in marriage and form families.

I.4. What a commercial society lacks: Families

When looking at the marriage rates of the most commercialized countries on the planet, it is easy to see a growing decline in people willing to form families. From 1969 to 1988 in the United States, the marriage rate declined from 149 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women to 91 (Ellman 2007, 455). This decline is in no small part because couples are willing to delay the time they get married, with men and women getting married in 1969 on average at the age of 23 and 21, respectively, which would increase by 2009 to a median marriage age of 28 for men and 26 for women (Lee and Payne 2010, 538). Studies have also found that in many countries in Europe and East Asia, areas where commercialization has been heavily prioritized in the past, there has been a considerable decline in the rates of marriage occurring from the 1960s onward (Lee and Payne 2010, 545). The decline of marriage in many parts of the world has had numerous proposed causes, but no primary overarching reason has been decided. One proposed reason for the decline is that the increasing social inequality and precarity of jobs for young men have resulted in a decreased evaluation of their suitability for marriage (Lee and Payne 2010; Autor, Dorn, and Hanson 2019). If commerce can impact the rates of marriage significantly, then it is also possible to impact the number of children that families have.

In addition to the decline in marriage, there has been an encroaching concern about the population decline. According to researchers, the rate of the population needs to be at 2.1 children to prevent population decline, meaning the average family needed to consist of at least two children to ensure that the population remains stable; by 2011, it was ascertained that most

countries were below the 2.1 standards needed for population stability (Coleman and Rowthorn 2011, 219). According to predictions made by the United Nations, the total fertility rate (TFR), the rate that shows the average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime, will eventually reach 1.85, resulting in a .35 percent decline in population per year (Coleman and Rowthorn 2011, 222). In addition, this population decline is unique because the decline is occurring while the life expectancy is still increasing, which means fewer children are being brought into the world. At the same time, the elderly live longer than expected. Again, much like the concerns about the military, one could ask why this matters to commercial societies. As it turns out, it could significantly impact life in general.

One of the first significant sources of concern that can emerge with the decline of population is the impact it would have on the GDP. A decreasing population decreases the size of labor, which means that higher taxes would be needed to fund new projects or maintain the infrastructure while eventually abandoning some aspects of infrastructure, such as hospitals or schools (Coleman and Rowthorn 2011, 227). Military security can also be impacted as population decline correlates with the decline of recruits available to the government, which would exacerbate the dearth of recruits in general in commercial societies (Coleman and Rowthorn 2011, 228). Ironically, due to the population decline, commercial societies could find that the security and prosperity of a country in the long term are negatively impacted. Overall, commercial societies have not been successful in finding ways to address this issue.

Multiple countries have attempted to provide economic incentives to alleviate the decline of children in families. Countries like Poland and Hungary have made different attempts to raise the population. In 2013, Poland had a 1.29 TFR, while Hungary had a 1.35 TFR (Inglot 2020, 985). Under the center-right to far-right governments, Poland implemented numerous births and

had seen an increase in births by almost twelve percent (Inglist 2020, 988). Poland has had greater success in raising its population than Hungary, though the continued success of Poland is called into question (Inglist 2020, 1000-1001). However, Hungary and Poland are hardly the exemplars of what a commercial society should look like. After all, both countries spent multiple decades under communist rule. A country in Western Europe that fits the mold of a commercial society better would be the United Kingdom and France. The outlook for both countries looks bleak as well.

In the U.K., the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows how the TRF rate in the U.K. was 2.5 in the 1930s and has fallen to around 1.8 TRF (Dunnell 2001, 47-48). In addition to a decline in population, the increasing age of the population will create greater dependency ratios, where more people will need to rely on the state and tremendous strain on the health care system should the situation not change (Dunnell 2001, 49). France is undergoing a similar problem. The TRF rate in France has declined from 2.8 to 1.8 (which is below the replacement level, much like the U.K.), and the age of people over the age of 85 will increase from one million in the mid-2000s to “about 2.5 million in 2030” (Beland and Durandal 2013, 192). It is foreboding for the future of commercial society if the fertility rates cannot be increased. At the same time, right-wing regimes like Poland can find ways to reverse their decline (for now, at least), though the right lost the parliamentary elections in Poland, so it remains to be seen how other parties will handle the issue. The commercial societies' dearth of soldiers and populations reflects a concern that Rousseau had about commerce in general, that it would devalue the common and necessary things that are critical of all regimes and, indeed, of all republics.

I.5. The lack of the necessary things

There has been a significant decline in soldiers and families over the past few decades. In addition to this decline, it is endogenous; it emerges from within the structure of commercial

societies. There is no one else to blame. Monarchists are not forming cabals, and despite cries of communism from certain members of the American right, there are very few genuine communist societies left. True, some regimes have socialistic elements, but often enough, commerce is allowed to flourish if it is regulated. Even, China, which gives lip service to communist, has made concessions for the sake of commerce after the death of Mao Zedong. The Chinese are not immune from population concerns¹ The problems of commercial society are internal. However, despite listing the statistics about the decline in the martial and marital responsibilities, it is a fair question to ask how are soldiers and families related? True, the population decline could impact the size of the military, as mentioned before, but is that all? What is the connection between the two?

The connection is that every political regime must be able to accomplish at least two things. First, they must be able to cultivate a willingness on the part of its citizens or subjects to fight and die for the regime. The second responsibility of the regime is incentivizing its people to have children who are loyal to the regime and are willing to uphold its customs and ways of life. It would not make sense for the political regime to have people form families only to have them discuss the necessity of overthrowing the regime. Instead, at the very least, parents are expected to raise children willing to obey the law and have some semblance of respect for the regime. This is the thrust of Rousseau's critique of commercial society: that it erodes the obligations necessary for political regimes over time. Rousseau's critique of commercial society is incredibly potent when assessing the marital responsibilities that a commercial society often fails to imprint on the minds of its citizens. While much of the secondary literature on Rousseau focuses on his

¹ See Wang, Lex Rieffel, Xueqing. 2024. "China's Population Could Shrink to Half by 2100." Scientific American. May 1, 2024. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/chinas-population-could-shrink-to-half-by-2100/>. In 1970 the TFR rate in China was 5.8, meaning the average woman in China would have almost six kids. By 1990, the TFR was at 2.1, and in 2022, it was one of the lowest in the world at a TFR of 1.18.

concerns about the oppression of people through unjust regimes and social opinions, concerns which are proper to Rousseau's interests, there is another way of looking at Rousseau's concerns about social opinion. A commercial society induces a risk-averse hedonistic mindset to run rampant, creating a society that devalues the obligations fundamental to society, such as men being willing to serve in the military and women having and rearing children. Rousseau is also concerned about how the division of labor in a commercial society can decrease the equality of a citizen's sense of responsibility to die or give birth for the political regime. However, even if Rousseau is correct about these concerns, is the republican cure worse than the commercial disease?

I.7. Outline of the Dissertation

I will investigate Rousseau's critique of commercial society in the following way. Chapter One will focus on Rousseau's critique of commerce throughout his corpus. The chapter will clarify Rousseau's views about the dangers of commerce and explore how the emergence of a commercial society would create a social opinion that would devalue marital and marital responsibilities. This chapter will repeatedly emphasize Rousseau's attempt to conceptualize a society that differed from other Enlightenment thinkers: an egalitarian agrarian society that valued the internal character of the citizens more than access to external goods and emphasized the liberty to be transformed into something higher than just a lone individual. It would be a society that enriched citizens by giving them duties to the state while allowing families to flourish. If the proponents of the commercial society saw the marketplace as the focal point of political life, Rousseau undoubtedly saw the assembly as the focal point for the political community that could achieve the most significant level of happiness together. In addition, this dissertation will differ from the secondary literature on Rousseau by demonstrating a willingness

to defend the notion that Rousseau believed that there was a real possibility that the changes in the socio-political environment in Europe offered a chance for Rousseau's view of government to come into being in some countries.

This dissertation aims to show that Rousseau's assessment of commercial society's difficulties in making citizens uphold obligations that ensure the perpetuation of the political regime is correct, even if Rousseau's solution is less desirable than that of commercial society. As mentioned, the modern world is a commercial society, not a Rousseauian one. One of the reasons why Rousseau's views were not able to succeed is that his proposed forms of government placed obligations that were not considered by other countries as worth pursuing. In addition to the severity of Rousseau's regimes, the other element of the lack of success of Rousseau's republicanism is the ability of proponents of commercial society to provide external goods and security to its citizens.

Looking at different proponents of commerce who wanted commerce to take a more significant part of political life will reveal a bifurcated tension in many commercial thinkers. On the one hand, proponents of a commercial society were often aware of the value of martial and marital responsibilities. Most were not anti-soldier or anti-family by any means. However, by emphasizing the division of labor and the pursuit of commerce, commercial society risks devaluing the role that the martial and the marital play in society. Specialization can occur when a minuscule number of people are prepared to join the military, often out of sheer financial necessity. Likewise, commercial society can set the conditions where families will have to go into the workforce and hamper the ability of families to enjoy each other's company, which Rousseau considers a great source of pleasure for human beings.

After laying out Rousseau's argument against society's growing desire for commerce, the rest of the chapters will assess different proponents of commercial society, assessing their view of the martial and marital responsibilities and the good commerce can provide to politics. Chapter Two will look at Montesquieu, Chapters Three and Four will look at John Locke, Chapter Five will look at Adam Smith, Chapter Six will look at Abbe Sieyes and Benjamin Constant, and Chapter Seven will investigate the debate between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. All these thinkers expressed great approval of the ability of commerce to improve humanity's condition. Rousseau mentions Montesquieu and Locke in his works, so I will examine them first. Rousseau's persistent interest in Locke will be explored in two chapters. Chapter Three will look at Rousseau's critique of Locke on a political level. In contrast, Chapter Four will look at Locke's notion of the individual and how Rousseau finds the type of individual Locke wishes to mold as untenable and undesirable.

Chapter Five will look at Adam Smith and show the commercial society, given its most total defense, followed by further volleys against Rousseau provided during the French Revolution by Sieyes and Constant. The closing chapter will examine the U.S. fight for a commercial society between Hamilton and Jefferson. While Jefferson would not identify as a Rousseauian, his positions align closely with Rousseau and will serve as a proxy for Rousseau. The sample of these great commercial thinkers will provide different ways of assessing commerce and Rousseau's critique of commerce and show, over time, the commercial society forming and Rousseau's form of republicanism slipping further and further away.

Nevertheless, despite the flaws in Rousseau's solution, the problems Rousseau explored are still endemic to commercial society today. The obligations to serve the country in the military or to raise families are questions that a commercial society still grapples with to find an answer

to the vexing problems proposed by Rousseau. While the radical change Rousseau envisioned may not be the answer, Rousseau's critique requires an answer and commercial societies still require reform to handle these puzzling problems.

Chapter One. Rousseau on the Martial and Marital Obligations

1.1. Why Rousseau?

Why should one focus on Rousseau as the lens concerning the problem of the military and the family in a commercial society? One of the reasons is that Rousseau believed that citizen soldiers represented the height of the moral duty that political societies could achieve, so one of his primary concerns was assessing how commerce could impact the willingness of men to fight and die for their community. Rousseau also held conviction about the joy family can bring and believed a commercial society can tarnish this relationship. Rousseau believed that the commercial societies that numerous Enlightenment thinkers would pontificate on would cause damage to the value of the citizen in the long run. Rousseau's intense interest in the impact of commercial society has led to associating Rousseau with almost every major philosophy opposed to a commercial society. In the twentieth century, Isaiah Berlin and Jacob Talmon linked Rousseau as an advocate of "totalitarian democracy."¹ I disagree with their stance, but others have also noted that Rousseau is often claimed by groups opposed to commercial society, such as socialism, communism, anarchism, and fascism.²

In addition, Rousseau believed that citizens willing to have large families were significant because, for Rousseau, the population is one of the best signs of a healthy government and a

¹ Christopher Brooke does an excellent job at exposing Berlin's intense distaste of Rousseau and what drove him to that position in Brooke, Christopher. "Isaiah Berlin and the Origins of the 'Totalitarian' Rousseau." (2016). For understanding Talmon's perspective I recommend his work *Myth of the nation and vision of revolution: ideological polarization in the twentieth century*. Routledge, 2017. For a critical examination of Talmon's historiography see Brunner, José. "From Rousseau to Totalitarian Democracy: The French Revolution in JL Talmon's Historiography." *History and Memory* 3, no. 1 (1991): 60-85.

² Noland, Aaron. "Proudhon and Rousseau." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28, no. 1 (1967): 33-54. While Noland focuses on Proudhon and Rousseau, he provides a good synopsis figures who claim Rousseau as a part of their genealogy. Despite the contradictions that emerge from so many positions it is clear that Rousseau is seen as a useful figure by thinkers opposed to the principles of commercial society.

bulwark against tyranny. It is a consistent concern of his thought in much of his work, and this chapter will show the consistent value that Rousseau placed on martial prowess and the willingness of citizens to procreate. Rousseau cares about the population and how the government rears each generation to become free and virtuous people. This also requires an analysis of parents and the education children receive since both are important for the development of children.³ A commercial society emphasizes a different education compared to the republics Rousseau admires, so it is essential to see how commercial education impacts the values of the young.

Rousseau's examination of the impact of commerce on martial and marital responsibilities reveals Rousseau's keen insight into how commercial society erodes the necessary obligations of political regimes, which involves corroding men's sense of duty to fight for their country and devaluing a woman's need to have children for the good of the regime. Rousseau believes that men need to accept the role of citizen soldiers and women need to accept the role of being a mother. They are essential for Rousseau because political regimes always need armies and families, so they present a permanent need. There is also a sense of fulfillment people have in obeying these obligations, which a commercial society can devalue or degrade. Of course, given the scope and scale of Rousseau's writings, I must pause and explain which texts I intend to use for this chapter and why I feel justified in choosing these texts.

1.2. Looking at the Texts

To begin the analysis of Rousseau's concerns about martial and marital obligations, I will look at the primary sources to see his thoughts on the matter. The significant texts I will use *are The Discourse on the Arts and the Sciences, The Discourse on Inequality Emile, the Social*

³ See Chapter Four for a deeper analysis of Rousseau's view of education.

*Contract, Constitutional Project for Corsica, and Considerations on the Government of Poland.*⁴

I have chosen these texts for a variety of reasons. One is that they all discuss the problem of marital and marital responsibilities and the sexual desires that exist that give rise to the birthing and rearing of children. These texts are also his most politically focused. This means that the constant reference to the population Rousseau makes in these texts will justify how much citizen soldiers and procreation are an essential part of Rousseau's political thought. This chapter will assess these texts chronologically. The reason for this is to track both the developments that occur in Rousseau's thoughts over time and to prove the consistent concern about the population that will intensify throughout Rousseau's life.

The Discourse on the Arts and the Sciences elaborates on the effects of the rise of commercial, scientific, and artistic activities and the detrimental effects that these can have on the morals of the population, which I will argue can affect the desire to have children as opposed to pursuing other fields of inquiry. This text will also examine how the arts and sciences give rise to luxury, a problem that Rousseau links in other texts to a decrease in martial prowess and population decline. *The Discourse on Inequality* will examine Rousseau's anthropological examination of man as a solitary creature devoid of society and its concepts. This Second Discourse will show how Rousseau explains the family as a historical development that has specific benefits for humans despite the issues that will appear with the rise of civil society. Next, I will examine what Rousseau considered his “magnum opus” *Emile*.

⁴ I will not be discussing Rousseau's *Confessions* despite the fact that his autobiography reveals that he gave his kids to orphanages. This may serve as a personal formal accusation against Rousseau I do not think it qualifies as a theoretical one. Many philosophers' comment on marriage, education and war without serving in the military or having kids. Rousseau's hypocrisy means one must take what he says with a grain or two of salt, not discard his insights entirely.

Extensive analysis will be done on *Emile*, especially in Book I and Book V. Book I explores Rousseau's concerns about population, especially since France's population was perceived as declining. He will also critique the mother and father's neglect in caring for their children. *Emile* will also be of interest because while *The Discourse on Inequality* focused on humans in the state of nature and their corruption upon appearing into society, *Emile* differs in that Rousseau focuses on trying to provide a "natural education" to a young man already in society. Book V is of interest because it concerns the social and sexual dynamics between men and women, according to Rousseau, as well as an explanation of how our sexual drives can be heightened or subdued. Covering *Emile* and *The Discourses* will allow for Rousseau's view of man in non-political settings to slowly give way to developing the duties that being a citizen requires, especially about being a good father. Once I have covered Rousseau's concern for procreation and the family in the private sphere, I will devote the rest of the chapter to analyzing the significance of the military and family for political life.

I will start with *The Social Contract* and show how the population is significant to Rousseau's view of the best form of government. It is a balancing act on Rousseau's part between a population that is large enough to prove the people's happiness while small enough so that the people can feel connected and the General Will can be expressed. *The Social Contract* helps lay out the abstract elements of Rousseau's political philosophy by showing the importance of each citizen's willingness to contribute to the General Will of society. However, there are other sources that I wish to look at to show how Rousseau's principles apply to concrete situations. The works I have chosen for concrete applications of Rousseau's concerns about population will be *The Constitutional Project for Corsica* and *Considerations on the Government of Poland*. Both works express concerns about the populations of both countries and propose different methods

for helping the country grow, usually through shifting focus away from commercial life and towards agricultural pursuits. To fully appreciate Rousseau's critique we must start with his famous essay on the arts and sciences, to see how Rousseau's critique of commercial society begins to take form.

1.3. Discourse on the Arts and the Sciences

When investigating The *Discourse on the Arts and the Sciences*, it may seem that looking for discussions on the military and the family is a fool's errand. Neither topic is in the Discourse, so why bother to mention it? The Discourse is mentioned because some elements of Rousseau's Discourse are of implicit value to Rousseau's concerns about human fulfillment. It may take some digging to find what is under the surface, but in the end, Rousseau's concerns about these different obligations will be shown. The Discourse is in response to a question proposed by The Dijon Academy in 1749: "Has the restoration of the Science and the Arts Contributed to the Purification of Morals?" (Rousseau 1997, xiii). By "arts and sciences," Rousseau is partly focusing on the different innovations that the scientific discoveries and mechanical arts have brought to society morals. While not addressing commerce directly, Rousseau acknowledges that the arts and sciences can allow commerce to expand and take center stage in the minds of the people. Moreover, the answer to the previous question, for Rousseau, is no, and many reasons for this can be found in Part II of the Discourse.

Rousseau links the rise of the arts and scientists to various "evils." The first one is idleness. Rousseau declares, "In politics, as in morals, not to do good is a great evil, and every useless citizen may be looked upon as a pernicious man" (Rousseau 1997, 17). He asks the "illustrious philosophers" that if their knowledge, both natural and supernatural, had not been imparted to humanity, would it have made humanity "less numerous for it, any less well

governed, the less formidable, the less flourishing or the more perverse,” (Rousseau 1997, 17). Instead, what occurs is that the rise of science and the arts can lead to the “undermining of the foundations of faith and the annihilation of virtue” (Rousseau 1997, 17). Terms such as “Fatherland and Religion” will be treated with a disdainful smile (Rousseau 1997, 18). The issue of the rise of science and the arts so far is that they provide distractions at best, and they attack ideas that people have held sacred in the past.⁵

Rousseau argues that the rise of the arts and sciences has certain detrimental effects, as they attack concepts that form the “glue” for a society. The “Fatherland and Religion” represent patriotism and piety, which is fundamental to classical republican thought. They represent ways of thinking about concerns outside of the individual, of looking at the needs. In our day, the family as an idea has been devalued with the rise of the arts and sciences. It could be argued that the “nuclear family” has been treated with greater disdain than in Rousseau's day. Moreover, if the family is devalued in society, procreation, and rearing will be viewed as a less worthwhile goal. Of course, if Rousseau had stopped at idleness, this critique would have admittedly come off as weak. The issue intensified once the rise of science and the arts introduced luxury.

To Rousseau, luxury is a "worse evil" than idleness. When comparing the ancient people to the people of his time, he notes, "The ancient politicians spoke of morals and of virtues; ours only speak of commerce and money” and that modern people “appraise men like cattle. According to them, a man is worth to the state only what he consumes in it. By this token one Sybarite would easily have been worth thirty Lacedaemonians,” (Rousseau 1997, 18). The mindset of those who esteem the arts and sciences places more value on the hedonist than on the

⁵ See Gourevitch, Victor. "Rousseau on the Arts and Sciences." *The Journal of Philosophy* 69, no. 20 (1972): 737-754. for a closer analysis of the issues philosophers bring to political society. Gourevitch provides an excellent analysis showing how Rousseau's concern is how philosophy makes an individual a poor citizen and is prone to mischaracterization (Gourevitch 1972, 746-748).

Spartan, on the ones prepared to fight and die for their community.⁶ In his time, a commercial and hedonistic mindset had taken a route that would impact civic virtues. His concern is about courage as he describes how poorer yet braver nations could defeat larger and richer nations (Rousseau 1997, 18-19).

If this seems ridiculous today, I will remind the reader about how the U.S. has faced quagmires in Vietnam and Afghanistan. Still, the analysis of luxury and commerce can apply to people today as they wish to pursue a career. With family being devalued over the years and the hedonistic mindset a part of modern culture, the idea of raising and rearing children can seem like a painful endeavor to women especially. The pain of pregnancy, of giving birth, of losing time for raising kids compared to all the other things they wish to be doing with their lives can make a person want to either delay having children or not want to have children at all. The studies mentioned in the introduction have also suggested a correlation between the prosperity of a country and the decline in birth rates. This assuredly also applies to the military. Why would someone wish to risk their life when there are more pleasurable routes to take that a commercial lifestyle would be more than willing to accommodate?

The question that Rousseau poses about luxury is whether empires should be "brilliant and short-lived, or virtuous and long-lasting"(Rousseau 1997, 19). The issue is whether pursuing luxury and commerce has created a perfect storm of issues that Rousseau would not find surprising. Climate change, decline in natural resources, increasing infertility. All these issues present many problems that the modern world seems unable to face or acknowledge. But then, what of the past? Indeed, we cannot think human beings are in a better spot than we are now.

⁶ Judith Shklar takes Rousseau's appreciation of Sparta seriously and links his moralism to the radicalism of the early modern period, connecting him to thinkers such as Robespierre. Shklar, Judith N. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Equality." *Daedalus* (1978): p.19.

However, Rousseau argues for this in his *Second Discourse*, praising the natural liberty that human beings had in the past as an age where obligation was non-existent. However, before the rise of civil society and all the ills that would emerge, there would be the rise of the family, which Rousseau considers a genuine good for humans.

1.4. Discourse on Inequality

Rousseau's First Discourse assessed how the arts and sciences worsened people's morals, which, I argue, could impact the willingness of citizens to fulfill their obligations to their political regime. As the *Discourse on Inequality* begins, we examine people before the notions of morality were in their minds. This critical discourse explains Rousseau's conception of human nature and the general development of the family and society. To explore these issues, Rousseau envisions man in the state of nature, removing any form of social convention or concept to envision what humans were originally like in the past. Once Rousseau strips as much as he can, he sees a human being as "...an animal less strong than some, less agile than others, but all in all, the most advantageously organized of them all" (Rousseau 1983, 120). In other words, a person in a state of nature will be like an animal, except that the human can operate as an agent.

Rousseau argues that an animal "chooses or rejects by instinct" while humans choose "by an act of freedom," while explaining that the freedom to turn from our instincts can result in our detriment (Rousseau 1983, 124). In addition to our ability to reject our instincts, Rousseau argues for another capability that separates humans from animals: our faculty of self-perfection. However, this ability of perfectibility has caused more trouble for more humans as it can result in the loss of their instincts, drawing them out of their "tranquil and innocent days" (Rousseau 1983, 125).

Despite these traits that separate humans from other animals, in the state of nature, the needs of humans are limited since they will have a limited sense of fear and desires to fear or desire something; one needs the idea of what the notion or concept is (Rousseau 1983, 126). In the state of nature, the human male will only desire "nourishment, women, and rest" while only fearing "pain and hunger" (Rousseau 1983, 126). Rousseau suggests that the desire to procreate is humans' innate instinct, even in the state of nature. At this point, it is worth cautioning that Rousseau does not declare that humans necessarily want to have children and raise them. This is simply a desire for gratification, but unlike nourishment or rest, there needs to be another human to achieve complete gratification. Obligations toward one another are far from the mind of the natural person, and the family still needs time to develop.

Rousseau thinks other portrayals of the state of nature are flawed when they envision "the family gathered in the same dwelling, with its members maintaining among themselves a union as intimate and permanent as exists among us"(Rousseau 1983, 128). On the contrary, in the state of nature, there were neither huts nor property nor any of the key components for a stationary lifestyle to be possible. In the state of nature, men and women "came together fortuitously because of chance encounters, occasions, or desire, without any great need for words to express what they had to say to one another. They left one another with the same nonchalance" (Rousseau 1983, 128). The mother would take care of the child while pregnant for her own needs, and once the mother had become habituated to taking care of the child, she would raise them for their own needs. (Rousseau 1983, 128) Once the child had gained the strength to look for their food, they would leave the mother, and since there was no way to find their way back, the child and the mother would hardly recognize each other.

From this analysis, we can note that humans in the state of nature have procreative desires, but they have still not shifted over into the society of the family. People have enough self-sufficiency to survive on their own, and they lack the concepts of family that would entice them to stay together. Moreover, the child has no attachments to the other. Instincts and opportunities provide the impetus for procreation, but it still is not enough to form familial ties. For Rousseau, such times come later. To understand the development of the family, Rousseau wants to analyze the passion of pity, which Rousseau believes human beings have, as well as the different components that Rousseau believes are a part of love.

There is another quality that a human has in the state of nature besides our freedom and the faculty for perfectibility. Man can also pity or have "an innate repugnance to seeing his fellow men suffer" (Rousseau 133, 28). Rousseau believes this trait is universal in humans and needs little justification. For instance, Rousseau looks at how animals nurse their young or how different animals are disturbed whenever they pass a dead animal of their species (Rousseau 133, 28). Even Bernard Mandeville, the Dutch philosopher, economist, and author of *The Fable of the Bees*, has to drop what Rousseau refers to as his "cold and subtle style" of writing when he must acknowledge that human beings are compassionate and sensitive human beings, even if it does not serve their interest (Rousseau 1983, 134). It is important to explain how pity makes up a part of the human condition for me to explain part of the reason the mother, in the state of nature, does not decide to abandon the child upon giving birth to it. The other reason I was alluding to before was about the components of love.

Rousseau argues that there are two components of love, the physical and the moral, with the physical relating to sexual desire and the moral aspect "determines this desire and fixes it exclusively on one single object, or which at least gives it a greater degree of energy for this

preferred object (Rousseau 1983, 136). The moral part is a social phenomenon, described as “an artificial sentiment born of social custom and extolled by women” so that they can set up hegemony over men (Rousseau 1983, 136).⁷ While this may seem like an intense statement, the issue Rousseau is addressing is how love and procreative desires can be manipulated into quarrels between those who vie for the beloved’s attention. In the state of nature, this issue would not occur since physical love is the only type of love that occurs. In addition, the human imagination was not developed enough to provoke these kinds of quarrels, ensuring that people in the state of nature had greater tranquility than they have now (Rousseau 1983, 136-137). Of course, the person in a state of nature would eventually break out of it, and in Part II, we see how man develops toward the notion of the family.

As for how humans would develop the family, there is admittedly a slight vagueness about how exactly it forms. Rousseau tries to create a plausible account by noting that people would come together as a “herd” to help each other catch larger animals, but this was still based on self-interest. As they began to work together, language and reason developed, and eventually, the nomadic tendencies of humans shifted to having permanent shelter in huts and lodgings (Rousseau 1983, 141-142). As a stationary lifestyle began to appear, the family started to form. Rousseau describes the joining of spouses and children to parents as “the first developments of the heart” (Rousseau 1983, 142). It was in this new situation that “the sweetest sentiments known to men: conjugal love and paternal love” would begin to develop, a situation where a little society could be formed forged by “mutual attachments and liberty (Rousseau 1983, 142-143). In this situation, certain roles would develop where the mother would be more sedentary and take

⁷ Rousseau’s perspective of women have been contentious, but the secondary literature has helped provide nuance to Rousseau’s perspective on women in general. Trouille, Mary Seidman. *Sexual politics in the Enlightenment: Women writers read Rousseau*. SUNY Press, 1997.

care of the children while the father would “seek their common subsistence” (Rousseau 1983, 143). From the family, there would be other families who would congregate together due to utility and sentiments. Issues would appear as the proximity between humans would create comparisons between them, which would create preferences that would create “vanity and contempt on the one hand, and shame and envy on the other (Rousseau 1983, 144). Despite these issues, humans in what could be considered a “hut state” were in what could be considered the best position.

Rousseau’s touching description of the family’s development highlights how Rousseau thinks that the obligation to love precedes the obligation to fight. Unlike a civil or political society, where the martial and marital responsibilities can be separated and examined. In a family, the obligation to the family is tied to a willingness to fight against any threats to the family. While the father was expected to find everyday subsistence for the family, there was probably an implicit agreement that if a large predatory animal was near the family, the father would be the one to confront the animal. At the same time, the mother would take the children to safety. This “hut” stage in society has clear obligations, but once the obligations for the family are met, the individual has liberty and is free from oppression from other people. This will change with the development of human society and will intensify conflict with humans amongst themselves.

According to Rousseau, the state's progress in human development before metallurgy and agriculture had many advantages and disadvantages. The "hut stage" was a sort of middle position between the "indolence of our primitive state and the petulant activity of our egocentrism” and could be described as “the happiest and most durable epoch” (Rousseau 1983, 145). One reason for the tranquility is that people at this time had not specialized in their labor

yet and were not dependent on each other for their needs (Rousseau 1983, 145). This lack of the division of labor is what separates commercial societies from non-commercial societies. Once the division of labor is fully employed, as a commercial society wants to do, numerous problems will emerge.

However, there is another reason for the happiness of this age besides a lack of division of labor. At this point in the social development of humans, the major social group is the family, the social unit that produces the "sweetest sentiments," as mentioned before. At the same time, other social relations will begin to emerge and fall prey to *the amour propre*, the love that is derived from the reputation of others.⁸ The family is not discussed as an area where *amour propre* will be as much of an issue compared to tensions outside of the family. In addition, the nature of paternal authority is granted a positive perspective compared to political power that had manifested for centuries on end.

Before the formation of civil societies, Rousseau considered the primary source of authority, besides political authority, to be paternal. During Rousseau's time, many absolutist governments would try to justify their rule by comparing their authority to that of the Father. For Rousseau, this comparison could not be more inaccurate. He agrees with Locke and Sydney that the authority of the paternal concerns "the advantage of the one who obeys than to the utility of one who commands" (Rousseau 1983, 153). Rousseau is adamant that the father only has authority if the child needs him. The child, in turn, offers respect and gratitude as a duty but not as a right (Rousseau 1983, 153). The father's role is considered more noble and less despotic than political authority in general, highlighting the goodness of the family and what it offers human life. If anything, the despotic tendencies that can and do appear in families come from the power

⁸ Frederick Neuhouser provides a rich account of *amour propre* in his book *Rousseau's critique of inequality: Reconstructing the second discourse*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

that civil society adds to the family. Laws of inheritance, for example, could be used to keep children subservient to their fathers with the hopes of goods they may receive from them at a certain age or when the father dies (Rousseau 1983, 153). Abuses can begin to occur, but what can be worse than the abuse of a family is the negligence of the father and mother towards their children. This concern is of grave importance to Rousseau, as seen in his magnum opus *Emile*.

1.5. Emile Book I

Book I of *Emile* begins with the following: "Everything is as good as it leaves the hand of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man...He turns everything upside down; he disfigures everything" (Rousseau 1979, 37). According to Rousseau, man cannot effectively manage nature, whether it involves plants, animals, or people. If a person tries not to interact with nature, a person in society will become disfigured by the machinations of other people with their customs and prejudices (Rousseau 1979, 37). To ensure that the children who come into this world do not either abuse nature or become abused by society, Rousseau appeals to the "tender and foresighted mothers" to guide children on an even path and to "form an enclosure" around the children's soul (Rousseau 1979, 37-38).

In a footnote, Rousseau explains, "The first education is the most important, and the first education belongs to the mother" (Rousseau 1979, 37). The reasons for this are varied, such as the child is usually closer by the mother than by the father, and the mothers are usually "at the mercy of their children," which makes the mother aware of the success and failure (Rousseau 1979, 37). The footnote continues that while mothers may need to be enlightened concerning their tenderness, the father's "ambition, avarice, tyranny, and false foresight, their negligence, their harsh insensitivity are a hundred times worse" (Rousseau 1979, 38). Note that while the father is described as problematic in society, the major area where they falter is their fixation on

their jobs, as Rousseau notes that fathers will always be concerned with their “business” over the obligation to raise their sons into good citizens (Rousseau 1979, 39). Given the issues that come from the father, the mother’s mistakes are more manageable. The question is, what should a child be raised to be?

Rousseau clarifies that *Emile* is the “true study of the human condition” (Rousseau 1979, 42). In a sense, Emile is an abstraction of a person, of the best way they can be raised while still being a part of society. Rousseau argues that abstraction is necessary because “ given the mobility of human things, given the unsettled and restless spirit of this age which upsets everything in each generation," it does not make sense to imagine that the child will "never have to leave their room, as though he were going to be constantly surrounded by servants,” (Rousseau 1979, 42). Most people recognize that children today often do not have servants, which should not necessarily diminish Rousseau’s point that life is tumultuous. The customs can change dramatically over time. If this was true for Rousseau, writing this work in the 1760s, it is especially true for people of the 21st century. Rousseau is adamant that the raising of children needs to acknowledge ways to bear suffering, a training that Rousseau feels that many parents need to be adequately providing such training.

The first mistake that he thinks parents make is focusing on "preserving one's child" (Rousseau 1979, 42). In Rousseau's mind, this is good but not enough because while a parent can take precautions against the child dying, the child will one day die. It teaches a child how to live long and how to live (Rousseau 1979, 42). The fear of death, of the death of a child, can cause parents to obsess over their health and not allow them to take risks or grow. It can serve as a reason to control children and potentially not have children at all. Thinking of our age, with issues of climate change, war, and disease, one should not be surprised at all hesitancy of

procreating. Fear is its own contraceptive and historically one of the most powerful. Parents in commercial society are more likely interested in coddling their child over finding ways that the child develops into a good citizen. This is one issue that can emerge when raising children, though another issue that a child must deal with growing up is neglect.

The fear of a child dying influences its development. The other issue that can emerge is that the parent can neglect the child's rearing. Rousseau describes how, in his time, swaddling was the fashion of the day, which he took issue with because he felt that it could cause pain to the children by inhibiting their urge to move about (Rousseau 1979, 43-44). What was worse was that this habit was overseen not by the mother but by the wet nurse, allowing the mothers to "devote themselves gaily to the entertainments of the city" (Rousseau 1979,44).

Rousseau also argues that not only have women given up on rearing children, but they have also given up on having them, noting that "As soon as the condition of motherhood becomes burdensome, the means to deliver oneself from it completely is soon found... This practice, added to the other causes of depopulation, presages the impending fate of Europe. The sciences, the arts, the philosophy, and the morals this practice engenders will not be long in making a desert of it" (Rousseau 1979, 44-45). This is intense and, as history has plainly shown, population decline has not occurred globally (though, as I have suggested in the introduction, the critique may have more substance in our day than in his). When comparing Rousseau and Montesquieu in the next chapter, I will show that Rousseau's views have some precedent in Montesquieu. For now, I will assess the issue of mothers and children in greater depth.

While Rousseau is harsh on mothers, it is essential to reiterate the importance of mothers in raising children. As mentioned previously, Rousseau mentions in a footnote that mothers are the most essential element of raising a child. If parents make a mistake in rearing children

initially, it could have a tremendous negative impact overall. In addition, one should not think that the discussion about wetnurses and the dalliances of the mothers is about the dalliances of the mother. In Rousseau's own words, something is at stake, which is the mother "...seeing her child love another woman as much as more than her, or of feeling that the tenderness that he prefers for his mother is a favor and that the tenderness he has for his adopted mother is a duty," (Rousseau 1979, 45). Disconnections and alienation between the mother and the child can create issues with familial structures. It is not just the mother that is to blame. According to Rousseau, the father is much to blame for his failures as a preceptor.

Rousseau is adamant about the father bearing the blame for the failure to effectively rear children as well, as the attention of fathers towards children in France is superfluous at best. In a mocking passage from Book I, Rousseau notes the many excuses fathers must not be around their children: "But business, offices, duties...Ah duties! Doubtless the least is that of the father?" (Rousseau 1979, 48-49). If mothers are having difficulty nursing the child, the fathers are providing excuses for not involving themselves in the raising of their children. Whatever interest the father may have in the son, it is certainly not to instill the virtues that are needed for a political community and certainly spends no time about the necessity of being a soldier should the need arise.

Instead, the father is content to ship their child off to the "boarding schools, convents, and colleges," intensifying this alienation from the family to the point that "Brothers and Sisters and hardly any another" (Rousseau 1979, 49). Rousseau also notes that if intimacy is not found in the "society of the family," then they will turn to "bad morals" to find a substitute (Rousseau 1979, 49). Finally, Rousseau shows that the failure of fathers to educate their children does not simply harm the family. However, society at large, declaring: "A father, when he engenders and

feeds children, does with that only a third of his task. He owes to his species men; he owes to society sociable men; he owed to the state citizens," (Rousseau 1979, 49). The father's inaction is not simply a private risk for Rousseau, but it will also be a public one. The state will not have a citizen who can follow the obligations that are necessary for the political regime to flourish. The child will instead become craven and selfish, harming the political body.

Before analyzing Book V of *Emile*, it is vital to draw out the significance of Rousseau's observations about the family in his time. As mentioned before, the families that Rousseau describes may need to be more relatable to the average family of the modern era. It is not likely that many mothers and fathers have the luxury of wet nurses and boarding schools that they can use to rear children. Moreover, this emphasizes a critical point that Rousseau is trying to make. Commerce is not essential for the stability of the family or political society.

On the contrary, commerce breeds luxury, which can serve as a considerable detriment to family, whether it is the mother pursuing dalliances or the father invested in the business; luxury can create a distance between parents and children, making the society of family, which Rousseau considers in his *Discourse on Inequality* to be the birthplace of sweet sentiments, is now a cold and ceremonial society. Furthermore, while the father may busy himself with all the duties that a life of commerce can offer, the political and marital duties of the father are devalued if not given to others to deal with. This will cause children to find comfort elsewhere and not pursue the good of the family or the state. The other implication that Rousseau is drawing from his assessment of this privileged family is that the luxurious lifestyle may cause the child to wonder why they should have a family or serve the community.

In Rousseau's time, people could answer why they had children in many ways. One could answer that it was customary for the children's peers to get married, and it would be valuable and

desirable to have a spouse and children around. None of these answers require that the child has a genuine desire or want for family or that it would provide them with any satisfaction emotionally or existentially. However, customs can change, peer groups may make different decisions, and the family's utility can be reduced. As Rousseau has said, parents need to raise children only to a certain point. It is then up to the young adults to decide whether they want to be a part of the family. Moreover, if their experiences with family are cold and ceremonial, they will be less inclined to have families. This means they will be less inclined to have kids, and the state will have fewer citizens. Rousseau argues that mothers and fathers in his day are too connected to the emerging commercial society, and there needs to be an educational change. In Chapter Three, I will return to *Emile* and focus on Books II-IV to show how they conflict with Locke's thoughts on developing the citizen and the family. Until then, having seen the family issues in Book I, Book V offers the creation of an improved family and a real citizen.

1.6. *Emile* Book V

Rousseau begins Book V with his discussion of women. Rousseau's comparison between men and women begins with acknowledging that they are the same species but differ in "sex" (Rousseau 1979, 357-358). From this sexual diversity, Rousseau assigns moral differences to both men and women in which men ought to be "active or strong" while women ought to be "passive and weak" and that the woman is made to please men (Rousseau 1979, 358). Rousseau nuances the claim by saying that this is not the "law of love" but that of nature and that the ways of nature precede love (Rousseau 1979, 358). What Rousseau is suggesting is that prior to love and social expectations surrounding love, an anatomical man in the state of nature could overpower an anatomical woman in the state of nature. Due to physical issues, the woman must find ways to overcome this issue. Rousseau argues that the way they do this is by inflaming the

passions of men. This negative assessment of women serves as a justification for Rousseau's belief in the need for a patriarch to have the final say over the family. The good of the family has too much at stake for both the family and the state.

Rousseau, despite arguing that man in the state of nature lacks concepts, endows men and women with different faculties given to them by God or "The Supreme Being" (Rousseau 1979, 359). Men have reason linked to their passions, while women have modesty attached to their desires (Rousseau 1979, 359). While this insertion of The Supreme Being may seem random, it is also a part of the argument in Book IV (Rousseau 1979). More than that, Rousseau points out that a voluntary sexual act is the "freest and sweetest of all acts" and does not admit to actual violence because rape can either result in some harm towards the male and makes it harder for the family to form (Rousseau 1979, 359). Therefore, to have voluntary sex, the man needs the consent of the woman and must tend to their wishes. Men must demonstrate themselves worthy of physical union through "gallantry" or signs that they would be good protectors (Rousseau 1979, 360-361). Again, to establish marital obligations, some semblance of martial capability must be demonstrated on the part of men to show they have what it takes to defend themselves and the women they love.

This psychological impact women have on men gives women an "empire" over men, one that they should not abuse in the family as infidelity can be destructive to the life of a family (Rousseau 1979, 361). Concerning the family in general, Rousseau declares: "Women, you say, do not always produce children? No, but their proper purpose is to produce them. What! Because there are a hundred big cities in the universe where women living in license produce few children, you claim that it is proper to woman's status to produce few children?" (Rousseau 1979, 362). In addition to the "purpose" women have, Rousseau draws an interesting observation

that rural women, women who live “simply and chastely” are the ones who make up for the “sterility of the city ladies,” (Rousseau 1979,362). Rousseau clearly states that urban life, brimming with commerce, is associated with lower fertility than rural settings. This can become problematic if they cannot keep up with the replacement rate, which Rousseau says is having four children since two of the four children will probably die, so two children need to make it to adulthood (Rousseau 1979, 362). With these assessments of women and their role out of the way, what type of education does Rousseau think women should receive?

As mentioned in Book I of *Emile*, the education of children is dependent on mothers; Rousseau goes on to say that the first education of men depends on “the care of women” and that men’s “morals, their passions, their tastes, their pleasures, their very happiness also depend on women (Rousseau 1979, 365). Therefore, according to Rousseau, women should focus on being educated to be useful and pleasing to men (Rousseau 1979, 365). Rousseau makes it clear that there is a difference between pleasing a man of “merit” and pleasing “those little flatterers who dishonor both their sex and the one they imitate” (Rousseau 1979, 365). From there, Rousseau argues for a domestic education involving sewing and lacemaking activities (Rousseau 1979, 368). Regarding teaching, Rousseau warns against sending young women to convents, as when they leave convents, they seem drawn to high society and its luxury (Rousseau 1979, 388). While acknowledging that he could be taking a prejudice as an observation, Rousseau also tentatively suggests that protestant countries have better families and produce better wives and mothers because they lack a convent education (Rousseau 1979, 388). While one can take issue with Rousseau’s prejudice, the point that Rousseau insists on is that a proper education for women can be found in the home.

Rousseau is emphatic about the value of familial education: "In order to love the peaceful and domestic life, we must know it...It is only in the paternal home that one gets the taste for one's own home, and any woman whose mother has not raised her will not like raising her children" (Rousseau 1979, 388). Rousseau bemoans the fact that there is a lack of private education in the cities as the lack of private education serves to alienate families from each other and teach provincial girls to despise the simple morals that they grew up with (Rousseau 1979, 388-389). For these reasons, Rousseau constructs a situation where his two main characters, Emile and Sophie, pursue their relationship outside the city and in a rural setting (Rousseau 1979, 430-432). There, Emile and Sophie are removed from the city's distractions and can focus on each other, putting them in a situation where they can appreciate each other's character instead of the activities around each other. Eventually, through different encounters, including a humorous foot race, Emile and Sophie decide to marry (Rousseau 1979, 441). Rousseau, Emile's "mentor," congratulates Emile but tells him that he cannot marry Sophie just yet.

The first reason Sophie and Emile cannot marry yet is because of their age, as Sophie is not yet eighteen, and Emile has just turned twenty-two (Rousseau 1979, 448). Rousseau asks Emile if he has any idea "how many young persons there are who have had their constitutions weakened, their health ruined, and their lives shortened by enduring fatigues of pregnancy before the proper age?" (Rousseau 1979, 448). In addition to the harm that can occur at becoming pregnant at an early age, Rousseau advises Emile against Sophie because Emile is not knowledgeable about the duties that come with being a father. Rousseau questions whether Emile knows anything about "being a member of the state" because once Emile becomes head of the family, he will become a member of the state, a member who knows little about the notions of "government, law, and fatherland," (Rousseau 1979, 448). Rousseau clearly states that forming a

family has private and political implications and that Emile needs training in civil order.⁹ To develop this knowledge of political traveling and ensure that his feelings for Sophie are genuine and not only a mere infatuation, but Rousseau also takes Emile traveling for two years.

The traveling that Rousseau is not the strolls across the continent that so many aristocrats of his day enjoyed. Nor is it traveling to gather experiences in various places. Instead, Rousseau argues that travel can be helpful as it will introduce Emile to different people and get a sense of their political structures and virtues as vices (Rousseau 1979, 454-456). Rousseau also shows Emile's thoughts about which career he wants to pursue once he returns to Sophie. Emile rejects the life of finance but pursues a life in agriculture (Rousseau 1979, 456-457). If at the end of their travels, Emile is not "versed in the matter of government, in public morals, and maxims of state of every kind, either he or I must be quite poorly endowed-he with intellect and I with judgment" (Rousseau 1979, 458). Rousseau then elaborates on his political philosophy; many points have been analyzed in *the Discourse on Inequality* and will be elaborated on in *The Social Contract*.

Rousseau also describes some thinkers of his day in a negative light towards the end of *Emile*. Grotius is considered "a child of bad faith" and is equated with Hobbes as having similar principles but only differing in expression and method, with Hobbes using "sophisms" and Grotius using "poets" to establish principles (Rousseau 1979, 458). Neither thinker nor anyone has established the science of political rights, and the only one who could work on the "great and useless science" would have been the "illustrious Montesquieu," but he was careful only to

⁹ Some commentators have also argued that Rousseau's goal in *Emile* is to show Emile becoming totally alienated from all his desires in order to become the perfect citizen. Eliyahu Rosenow suggests that Rousseau is not trying to show how Emile can become a "natural man" but a citizen who believes himself independent while being subject to the desires of his tutor and community. See Rosenow, Eliyahu. "Rousseau's emile, an anti-utopia." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 28, no. 3 (1980): 220.

discuss "the positive rights of established governments" (Rousseau 1979, 458). Eventually, after traveling much of the world and learning about different institutions and people, Emile can return home to Sophie where can finally engage in the romantic bliss that he so desperately craved.

The return of Emile to Sophie is a sentimental reunion; Rousseau, as mentor, has given Emile over to Sophie. They can be together as a married couple (Rousseau 1979, 479-480). In the final paragraph of the final chapter, we see the importance of procreation reiterated when Emile announces that he "hopes soon to have the honor of being a father" (Rousseau 1979, 480). Now that Emile has entered full adulthood, he will raise his son, but he asks Rousseau to be his guide and offer advice on how to raise his next child (Rousseau 1979, 480). Thus, Rousseau's magnum opus ends with a consummated relationship and the expectation of a future child¹⁰.

Emile emphasizes the importance of procreation. Emile has become a fully educated citizen, with training that allows him to be a good citizen and husband. Emile is not bellicose and will not pick fights, but he is not a coward or a hedonist, and with his understanding of what it means to be a citizen, Emile will fight should the cause arise for the political regime that is worthy of him.¹¹ Emile's journey is not simply about the development of the individual, but of the citizen as well. However, Rousseau's interest in martial and marital concerns will expand, as seen in the remaining political works of Rousseau's corpus, beginning with *The Social Contract*.

¹⁰ Mary Trouille observes that in Rousseau's literary work, marriage is the result and the desired outcome for women, considering it "the surest path to domestic harmony, social order, and personal happiness" Trouille, Mary Seidman. *Sexual politics in the Enlightenment: Women writers read Rousseau*. SUNY Press, 1997, page 21.

¹¹ Sophie, on the other hand, will focus on raising the children. As Trouille points out: "In the ideal world imagined by Rousseau, women would be so immersed in their maternal and domestic responsibilities that they would have neither the time, nor the energy, nor even the desire, to participate in activities outside the home" (Trouille 1997, 28-29).

1.7. The Social Contract

The Social Contract is Rousseau's premier political text, in which the issues of war and procreation are crucial in assessing whether a regime is good. It set up the importance of family early, noting in Chapter II that "The most ancient of all societies and the only one, is that of the family" (Rousseau 1983, 18). However, the child and the father are connected naturally until the child comes of age. From there, they can leave or support themselves voluntarily (Rousseau 1983, 18). Rousseau goes on to describe the family as a "prototype of political societies," but while a father is repaid with love by his children, the leader of a political society is rewarded the "pleasure of commanding" (Rousseau 1983, 18). The family shows uniqueness and a superiority over political society for a variety of reasons. The family is a hybrid of nature and convention, where the children are vulnerable and need the father's protection. This can stem from convention or habit if the children wish to stay. Alternatively, it can stem from the passion, love, and affection the children can feel toward their parents, even as adults. What separates the family from political society is the incentives of the different authority figures. A father will accept love, while a political leader has the pleasure of commanding power. It is also worth mentioning that while the father's authority is, for a time, natural, Rousseau makes it clear that power is not arbitrary.

In Chapter III, "On Slavery," Rousseau argues that alienating oneself means giving or selling, and people do not give themselves for free but for their subsistence. Likewise, a child cannot have their liberty alienated. A father can stipulate conditions for their maintenance and well-being, but this cannot be permanent as it "goes contrary to the ends of nature and goes beyond all the rights of paternity" (Rousseau 1983, 20). A parent cannot use their power despotically. However, if Rousseau was right in Chapter II in saying that a father receives

payment in love, why even tell the father their powers cannot be arbitrary? Is there a contradiction? I do not think so, as it is usually arbitrary governments that make parallels to the family and usually not vice versa. However, it could be an implicit admission from Rousseau that the procreative process may be used to produce children as slaves. This problem about progeny may be personal, but Rousseau's more significant concerns about population and procreation are found in Book III of the *Social Contract*. Before going further on to the topic of procreation, I would be remiss if the civil state was not discussed in this section.

The Social Contract will be covered in greater depth in Chapter 3 when compared to John Locke's social contract. However, the importance of what the civil state provides can't be overestimated. While Rousseau offers high praise for what humans have in the state of nature, Rousseau speaks positively of the trade-offs that a person makes when they enter the civil state. In Book I, Chapter VIII, Rousseau argues that when people enter the social contract, they substitute their instincts for justice and provide them with a morality that they did not have in the state of nature (Rousseau 2018, 55). Rousseau further praises the transition from the state of nature, because it creates a situation for man where "his faculties are exercised and developed, his ideas enlarged, his sentiments ennobled," (Rousseau 2018, 55). Rousseau insists that if the civil state did not so often abuse man compared to the state of nature, "he should ceaselessly bless the happy moment that wrested him from it forever, and from a stupid and limited animal made an intelligent being and a man (Rousseau 2018, 55). The transformation that man undergoes is both moral and intellectual and if certain issues could be alleviated, the civil state would be a source of happiness that a man in the state of nature could literally never dream of before.

With the transition towards a civil state comes a new series of obligations, one of the most important being for men the willingness to fight and die for the political regime. This is because of what the social contract offers the citizen compared to the state of nature. In Book II, Chapter IV, Rousseau explains how people under a social contract have made an “advantageous exchange of an uncertain and precarious way of being for a more secure and better one of natural independence for freedom, of the power to harm others for their own security,” (Rousseau 2018, 65). In the state of nature, an individual's force could be decisively defeated, while under the social contract, their right was made “invincible by the social union” (Rousseau 2018, 65).

Rousseau does point out that these benefits are not without obligations. Rousseau argues that the life the citizen has “constantly protected” by the state results in an obligation to fight for the state because they are returning the obligation of protection that the state has provided the citizen (Rousseau 2018, 65). In another way, Rousseau declares, “It is true that all have to fight for the fatherland, when necessary, but then no one ever has to fight for himself” (Rousseau 2018, 66). The state provides greater security than what was had in the state of nature, and the state can enforce an obligation on its citizens to fight and die for the state.¹²

In Book II, Chapter V, Rousseau emphasizes how when the “social treaty” is made, specific means will be employed to preserve the society, and these means are “inseparable from certain risks and certain losses” (Rousseau 2018, 66). By accepting the social contract, the citizen is “no longer the judge of the danger the law wills him to risk,” and when “the Prince” or whoever the sovereign is says to the citizen, “it is expedient to the State that you die, he ought to die,” (Rousseau 2018, 66). The reason for a man to be willing to die for his country is that “it is

¹² For more on Rousseau’s notion of political obligations see Hasan, Rafeeq. “Rousseau on the ground of obligation: Reconsidering the Social Autonomy interpretation.” *European Journal of Political Theory* 17, no. 2 (2018): 233-243. Hasan argues that in addition to the reciprocity between the state and citizen, citizens will feel compelled to perform their obligations out of *amour propre* (Hasan 2018, 9-10).

only on this condition that he has lived in security until then, and his life is no longer just a bounty of nature but a conditional gift of the State,” (Rousseau 2018, 66). Men under Rousseau’s social contract are obligated to die for the state and its citizens just as women are obligated to raise the next generation of citizens. Because of the protection and freedom a citizen receives, they are obliged to return the favor should the state require it. Having laid out the martial obligation of the citizen, it is essential to see the value Rousseau places on the population as a quantitative phenomenon.

Chapter X of Book III is of value since Rousseau explains the importance of the population in this chapter. Rousseau thinks there are two ways to measure a "body politic," which are the size of the territory and the number of its people (Rousseau 1983, 44). The balance can be precarious as too much land makes a defensive war more likely, while too little land requires that one rely on the neighboring nations. Rousseau considers this position to be undesirable since it puts the country between war and overreliance on commerce (Rousseau 1983, 44). Concerning the exact population a country should have, Rousseau admits that there is no exact mathematical equation between the size of a country and the population of the people. This is because there are many factors, such as the “characteristic of the terrain, its degrees of fertility, the nature of its crops, the influence of its climates," while also looking at the people who inhabit the area as some can rely on little. In contrast, others attempt to consume much food in a barren land (Rousseau 1983, 45). A great legislator must look for fertility and the factors that allow fertility to flourish.

When a legislator wants to create institutions for the people, they need to consider fertility, as well as whether the area they wish to inhabit is “favorable to the population” and must look to “the number of people the legislator can hope to bring together through the

institutions,” (Rousseau 1983, 45). Rousseau insists that the legislator must not base their judgment on what they see but on what they foresee. Some terrains are better for women to be fertile as woods and pastures offer areas for food and shelter, while the plains lack vegetation (Rousseau 1983, 45). While people can survive in different environments, thriving depends on women's fertility. A large population does not simply have quantitative significance for Rousseau but a qualitative one.

Rousseau argues in Chapter IX of Book III that the issue of the best government has often been indeterminate. When looking at it from the perspective of the subjects, it is the government that protects property, punishes criminals, and wants to be feared by neighboring countries; from the citizen's perspective, the best form of government protects the liberties of private individuals is mild, prevents crime, and wants other nations not to take notice of the country (Rousseau 1983, 67). This split in views baffles Rousseau, as the best government would protect property and people.

As Rousseau argues, "And what is the surest sign that they are preserved and prospering? It is their number and their population. Therefore, do not go looking elsewhere for this much-disputed sign. All other things being equal, the government under which, without external means, without naturalizations, without colonies, the citizens become populous and multiply the most, is infallibly the best government" (Rousseau 1983, 67). The citizens who engage in the most procreation and exclude naturalization (immigration) and colonies (emigration) are under the best government. Rousseau clarifies that a government that can make its citizens feel confident

that they can raise families is the best.¹³¹⁴ It is also undoubtedly the case that Rousseau envisions the best type of society will be able to valorize procreation, granting a high enough status that will further incentivize men and women to have children together for the good of the community. In addition, footnote nine in Book III clarifies what not to look for as a factor for the best government.

In footnote nine in Book III of *The Social Contract*, there is a long discussion about how the arts and sciences have long been used as a reference for what made a good government, an idea that has been "...admired too much, without penetrating the secret object of their cultivation, and without considering it is devastating effects," (Rousseau 1983, 67). Rousseau is also firm in declaring how nations that go through depopulation, despite any brilliance in the arts and sciences, will not end well and that leaders should look to the "wellbeing of whole nations and especially the most populous states" (Rousseau 1983, 67). Rousseau manages the issue of overpopulation as a source of social unrest or civil war in an engaging manner. A sporadic riot or civil war may cause problems for the leaders but not for the people. When there is a permanent condition or even permanent stability, the people can be oppressed as the leader can target people more easily. Rousseau goes on to note how even when the Kingdom of France or the Greek city-states were amid conflict, the people were able to multiply and even thrive, citing Machiavelli, who said that amid wars and murders, republics can remain powerful provided that the people

¹³ Rousseau also emphasizes that the population cannot become too large or else the affection the people have for the government will decrease. See Tomaselli, Sylvana. "Moral philosophy and population questions in eighteenth century Europe." *Population and Development Review* 14 (1988): p. 21.

¹⁴ Rousseau's exclusion of naturalization as a consideration sets him against numerous classical republican thinkers. David Resnick does an excellent job at exploring how thinkers like Machiavelli, Harrington, and Sydney valued naturalization as it would help with expansion Resnick, David. "John Locke and the problem of naturalization." *The Review of Politics* 49, no. 3 (1987): 369-372. Rousseau's stance against naturalization serves to emphasize Rousseau's preference for a republic's stability over its expansion.

are free (Rousseau 1988, 68). Moreover, the best way they can remain free is by having enough martial prowess to fight against any oppressors that may emerge. While population is a sign of the best government, Rousseau does not go out of his way to point to a government in his day. However, he did express interest in one country that had potential.

When looking for a person that the legislator can use to bring laws, Rousseau explains in Book II the type of country suitable for laws. The people would not have felt the “true yoke of laws,” would not have deeply rooted customs, and would not be able to squabble with neighbors easily but could still repel them. (Rousseau 1983, 45-46). The people would also be in a location where they would be able to know one another, would be neither rich nor poor, and would have “the stability of an ancient people and the docility of a new people” (Rousseau 1983, 460). There was such a country like this that could receive legislation: The island of Corsica. Having explained his general principles of good governance in *The Social Contract*, Rousseau can now take concrete steps in examining how places like Corsica could ensure the stability and fertility of their people.

1.8. Constitutional Project for Corsica

As mentioned in *The Social Contract*, Rousseau believed that the island of Corsica could be a country that could adopt a social contract that aligns with the general will.¹⁵ His short piece to the people of Corsica lays out how the people could achieve happiness and become one of the best governments. He argues that the people in Corsica are "in the fortunate condition that makes a good foundation possible" and that they are "Full of vigor and health it can devote itself to the government that keeps it vigorous and healthy" (Rousseau 2005, 123). Still, time is of the

¹⁵ The importance of Corsica for Rousseau cannot be underestimated. See Hill, Mark J. "Enlightened 'Savages': Rousseau's social contract and the 'Brave people 'of Corsica." *History of Political Thought* 38, no. 3 (2017): 462-493. While other nations saw Corsicans as “savages” this savageness excited Rousseau because it suggested a youthfulness that could allow for the nation to be molded by new laws and institutions (Hill 2017, 12).

essence, as Rousseau notes that while Corsica has not adopted the vices of neighboring countries, the prejudices are beginning to emerge, so they will need to find a way to contain and combat them (Rousseau 2005, 123-124). The principles that Rousseau offers as the basis of their legislation are: “to make use of their people and their country as much as possible; to cultivate and gather together their forces, to depend upon them alone, and to think about foreign powers no more than one would if none of them existed,” (Rousseau 2005, 125). Rousseau appeals to the people of Corsica to develop their martial prowess and to not interact with other powers in any sense, a call to isolation that will reduce the chances of corruption via commerce. In addition, they can use their people by having more of them.

For several reasons, Rousseau points out that Corsica should not focus on commercial activity. They have been at continuous war for years, leading them to be in a "state of depopulation and devastation" while also having limited control of the sea due to the Genoese and Barbary pirates, which would make commerce difficult (Rousseau 2005, 124). This is not a slight against their martial prowess, as it helped them achieve their freedom, but a recognition that the people of Corsica have exhausted themselves. Instead of trying to enrich themselves through commerce, Rousseau advises that the people of Corsica “ought to try to get richer in men” because “The power that comes from the population is more real than the one that comes from finances and produces its effect more certainly,” (Rousseau 2005, 125).

One of the problems of money is that it can be used for different things besides what it is set aside for, and it tends to slip to "private destinations" while the arms of the people are easier to use and manage (Rousseau 2005, 125-126). In order to multiply men, Rousseau argues that Corsica should multiply it is meant to existence via agriculture, not through establishing texts or academies but by creating a constitution which causes “ people to spread itself out over the

whole surface of its territory, to settle there, to cultivate all its places, to love the country life,” (Rousseau 2005, 126). Agriculture does not just serve to feed and sustain a population but to develop temperament and morals.¹⁶

Rousseau argues that people in the countryside multiply more than in cities either due to physical reasons because their bodies develop better or because the country has fewer vices and luxuries to distract the population (Rousseau 2005, 126). Concerning women, Rousseau believes that the rustic life will have the effect of making them more chaste since they will not be “habituated to pleasure” and will have more children while the men in the city “enervated by debauchery, the certain fruit of idleness, are less fit for generation than those whom a laborious condition makes more temperate,” (Rousseau 2005, 126). In addition to the difficulty people face when farming, they can serve as soldiers more readily should the situation require it. Here, we can see Rousseau hearkening back to his first Discourse on the issue of idleness and its impact on the fertility of a population.

Rousseau believes agriculture is a significant means of raising fertility rates in the country, but the people of Corsica will also need a good form of government. Rousseau argues that given the poverty of Corsica, the least costly form of government will be the republican form, especially one that is democratic because agriculture is not concentrated in one place but spreads out over a variety of locations (Rousseau 2005, 127). Rousseau argues that the conflict with the Genoese has created a situation where the nobility has been degraded and destroyed throughout the war. Rousseau encourages the people of Corsica to finish what they started but with a different purpose in mind. As Rousseau says: “Only the goal is very different, for the goal

¹⁶ Michael McLendon presents an argument that Rousseau prefers rural life because it can also help tame *amour propre*. See McLendon, Michael Locke. "Rousseau and the minimal self: A solution to the problem of amour-propre." *European Journal of Political Theory* 13, no. 3 (2014): 341-361.

of the Genoese was in the thing itself and yours is in its effect. They wanted only to debase the nobility, and you want to ennoble the nation" (Rousseau 2005, 129). The nobility must be removed, and the urban centers must play the most minor role necessary for Corsica.¹⁷ This is because the city life and the bourgeoisie mentality so often attached to cities "does nothing but debase and discourage the plowman. Given over to softness, to the passions it excites, they plunge into debauchery and sell themselves to satisfy it," (Rousseau 2005, 131). The life of the plowman must take center stage, and each citizen must be as equal as possible to each other, with only the law and the magistrates being superior (Rousseau 2005, 131). These are radical proposals from Rousseau. It would strip away the old feudal elements of Corsica, and in turn, Rousseau argues that they are necessary for the good of Corsica and its population. Rousseau further justifies his plan by describing Switzerland's descent into commercial life and the consequences it created.

Rousseau describes how Switzerland was an area where the environment produced a group of hardy people who had to fend for themselves and not rely on others; it helped prevent certain vices from spreading among the people and allowed them to multiply over time (Rousseau 2005, 134). Over time, the Swiss became known for their courage and ferocity, becoming so renowned that other nations would begin to employ them as mercenaries, creating situations where instead of fighting for the fatherland, they would oppress others and desire more money (Rousseau 2005, 135). From there, Rousseau describes the decline of the ferocity of the Swiss in the following way (Rousseau 2005, 136):

"Establishments of commerce and manufacturing multiplied. The arts took multitudes of hands away from agriculture. While distributing themselves unevenly, men multiplied, and they spread out into countries more favorably situated and where resources were even easier to come by. Some deserted their fatherland; others became useless to it by consuming while not producing

¹⁷ The clergy would also have to be handled as well, as Roman Catholicism could impact the obedience citizens would have to their political community (Hill 2017, 26).

anything. The multitude of children became burdensome. Population growth sensibly diminished, and while they multiplied in the cities since the cultivation of the lands was more neglected and the necessities of life more costly, which made foreign commodities more necessary, they made the country more dependent on its neighbors. The idle life introduced corruption and multiplied pensioners of the powers; love of the fatherland, extinguished in all hearts, gave way there to love of money alone; all the feelings that give resiliency to the soul being stifled, one no longer saw either firmness in conduct or vigor in resolutions. Previously poor Switzerland gave the law to France, now rich Switzerland trembles at the knit brow of a French minister" (Rousseau 2005)

An important takeaway from this lengthy passage is that with commerce, the martial prowess of the Swiss people declined, children became a burden, and the population declined overall but increased in cities. Idleness increased and martial and marital obligations slipped away. This potential fate could await the people of Corsica should they fall into the embrace of commerce. If money becomes a core part of Corsica for the population, the children will often leave the countryside depopulated (Rousseau 2005, 139). As Rousseau emphasizes, "Everyone must live, and no one gets rich. This is the fundamental principle of the nation's prosperity, and for its part, the public order that I am proposing moves toward this goal as directly as possible" (Rousseau 2005, 142).

Rousseau is also adamant throughout his *Plan for Corsica* that commerce will introduce many vices, resulting in a population decline, which will make the country more dependent on other countries. Rousseau advises that Corsica should not emphasize exportation too much as that would show "commerce is becoming too easy, that the lucrative arts are being extended on the Island at the expense of agriculture and consequently that simplicity and all the virtues attached to it are beginning to degenerate," (Rousseau 2005, 153).¹⁸ Monitoring exports and sumptuary laws on the well can restrict commerce and emphasize an agricultural lifestyle

¹⁸ This anxiety concerning for commerce stems from the reality that Corsica already had exposure to commerce. Rousseau is attempting to mitigate this problem as much as possible (Hill 2017, 24).

(Rousseau 2005, 154). From these methods, Rousseau suggests Corsica will be able to be rich in people.

The Constitutional Project for Corsica is an ardent attempt by Rousseau to help the people of Corsica not fall prey to commerce or their surrounding neighbors. The goal was to create a population that was fierce in character and rich in the number of people. Once again, we see the high value that Rousseau places on the fertility of a people for a good government. Unfortunately for Rousseau, the French took over Corsica, resulting in him not publishing his work. There was, however, another work of his that needs to be explored. While Corsica may not have had the opportunity to hear Rousseau's advice, another country could potentially find aid in Rousseau's advice: The Kingdom of Poland.

1.9. Considerations on the Government of Poland

The full title of Rousseau's work concerning Poland is *Considerations on the Government of Poland and Its Planned Reformation*. This differs from the Corsica project Rousseau envisioned because of how long Poland had been an independent country and the need for a more extensive scale change in society. Despite the enormous scope of Rousseau's plan, there are some similarities between Rousseau's ideas for Corsica and Poland. For instance, Poland had gone through intense struggles with different nations over the years, resulting in the depopulation of Poland and eventual partition from Russia, Prussia, and Austria (Rousseau 2005, 174). Despite these similarities, it becomes clear to the reader that Rousseau believes Poland's problems differed from Corsica's and needed different solutions.

Rousseau is baffled by the government of Poland. When looking at its history, he describes it as a "Large body formed of a large number of dead limbs, and of a small number of disunited limbs, with all of its movements almost independent of each other, far from having a

common end,” (Rousseau 2005, 169). Anything resembling a general will is absent from how Poland works. However, Rousseau continues his analysis with the following: "Poland, that region depopulated, devastated, oppressed, open to its aggressors, at the height of its misfortunes and its anarchy, still shows all the fire of youth; and it dares to ask for a government and laws as if it had just been born. It is in irons and discusses how to preserve itself in freedom!" (Rousseau 2005, 170). Despite the age, the incompetence of the government, and the population decline, the people of Poland managed their situation with a "Roman tranquility" that Rousseau found remarkable and admirable (Rousseau 2005, 170). In his eyes, the Polish have a clear love for their freedom, and Rousseau wants to provide them aid by not just raising their population again but also giving them laws that can maintain their liberty. However, unlike his project for Corsica, there is a greater hesitancy about the success of giving Poland new laws. Before assessing Rousseau's solutions to Poland's woes, diving deeper into its problems is essential.

As mentioned before, some of the issues stem from the structure and age of Poland. Unlike Corsica, which had much of its political structures leveled by the Genovese, Poland's structures remain intact, thereby making the dismantling of specific structures trickier and potentially painful for Poland overall. In addition, the age of Poland as an independent country seems problematic to Rousseau, as specific laws have been so engrained that undoing them seems doubtful. In addition, Rousseau believes that the desires of the Polish people contradict each other. Rousseau frames the issue succinctly: "They would like to combine the peace of despotism with the sweetness of freedom. I am afraid that they might want contradictory things. Repose and freedom appear incompatible; choosing is necessary" (Rousseau 2005, 170). The Polish people, while woken by the war with different nations, want to find a way to have peace, a

peace that Rousseau suggests would make the people of Poland susceptible to giving up liberty for tranquility.

Now, Rousseau is confident that he can give the people of Poland better laws, but having these laws rule their "hearts" or their passions seems quite difficult for him (Rousseau 2005, 171). In Rousseau's own words: "To put law over man is a problem in politics which I compared to squaring the circle in geometry. Solve this problem well, and the government based on this solution will be good and without abuses" (Rousseau 2005, 170). Given that squaring the circle is impossible, is Rousseau suggesting his political project is futile? On the contrary, Rousseau insists that while laws *over* men are primarily an exercise in futility, there have been methods employed by other legislators, such as fear "material recompense," and they have not been able to work; not even justice can help people internalize the laws within themselves because "like health justice is a good which one enjoys without feeling it, which inspires no enthusiasm at all, and whose worth one feels only after one has lost it," (Rousseau 2005, 171). The only way that Rousseau believes the law can take effect internally is through "children's games" (Rousseau 2005, 171). Rousseau acknowledges that he sounds like he is "spouting nonsense," but as Rousseau elaborates further in the text, people internalize the laws through how children are raised in the community. The hope for the future will depend on the young.

A new education for rearing children needs to be provided to incentivize the population to both have children and be willing to defend themselves. Not only children but every person in children needs to be cultivated to have a love for the "fatherland."¹⁹ As Rousseau explains: "National institutions are what form the genius, character, tastes, and morals of a people, what

¹⁹ The education envisioned for the people is nationalistic in character. See Wiborg, Susanne. "Political and cultural nationalism in education. The ideas of Rousseau and Herder concerning national education." *Comparative Education* 36, no. 2 (2000): 235-243.

makes it and not another, what inspires in it that ardent love of the fatherland founded on habits impossible to uproot" (Rousseau 2005, 174). If the Polish people develop intense patriotic feelings for their homeland, they will not only be able to defend their land but also find a desire to bring children into the world (Rousseau 2005, 175). His ideas of nationalism are intriguing because he believes that most of Europe has no distinct national identities. The Spanish, English, and French are European. According to Rousseau, they have the same morals and passions throughout the continent because their national institutions have not been effectively formed (Rousseau 2005, 175). In Rousseau's own words: "... all will say they are disinterested and be scoundrels; all will speak about the public good and think only about themselves; all will praise mediocrity and want to be Croesus; they are ambitious only for luxury, they have no passion except the one for gold," (Rousseau 2005, 175). This claim seems slightly dubious upon reflection. Indeed, much of European History after Rousseau involved the issue of nationalism. Even today, a resurgence in much of the world has given food for thought. I would suggest that Rousseau's expression of nationalism emphasizes a love for the country over hatred of others. Nevertheless, the question remains: How is this nationalism supposed to develop then?

Rousseau clearly states that the government must educate the population to have a sense of pride in the fatherland. On the one hand, Rousseau argues that certain activities will need to be abolished as they isolate people and make men "effeminate" such as "gambling, theaters, comedies, opera" while also fostering "games, festivals, solemnities" that will bring the people together (Rousseau 2005, 176). The amphitheaters for the young should be re-opened to allow them to exercise and develop physically while also having games that will allow them to be honored by their compatriots (Rousseau 2005, 177). Rousseau also clearly states that a child's education needs to be physical, as physical exercise can remove effeminate pleasures and the

"luxury of the mind" (Rousseau 2005, 177). The reduction of luxury is paramount for Rousseau (as it has been for much of his work). Instead, the festivals and ceremonies need a sense of gravity and decency (Rousseau 2005, 178).²⁰ This is easier said than done for Rousseau because the Polish have a level of luxury that the people of Corsica did not have. To remove luxury in a place Rousseau considers luxurious to be a difficult job. (Rousseau 2005, 178). Furthermore, unlike Corsica, sumptuary laws would not be effective since in a location where luxury is already set up, sumptuary laws "irritate desire using constraint rather than extinguishing it by means of punishment" (Rousseau 2005, 179). Ultimately, it cannot be laws that will serve to create a less decadent (and more fertile people) but the education that can be created for the people (Rousseau 2005, 179).

In section IV of the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, we see Rousseau shift to a fuller elaboration on what education for the population entails. A child should be reared from an early age to love his homeland, or as Rousseau phrases it: "This love makes up his whole existence; he sees only the fatherland, he lives only for it; as soon as he is alone, he is nothing: as soon as he has no more fatherland, he no longer is, and if he is not dead, he is worse than dead," (Rousseau 2005, 179). By age ten, a Polish child should know their history, and by age 16, they should know their laws, history, products, and even roads (Rousseau 2005, 179). Schools and universities must ensure that the young can fully love their country and be willing to do anything for it, including rearing families (Rousseau 2005, 180-181). As mentioned before, there will be a need to ensure that the young will be physically fit, as Rousseau's own words say: "'It is always to keep the children on alert, not using boring studies of which they understand nothing and for

²⁰ As Wilborg points out: "Rousseau argued for a political culture to sustain citizenship, as it required constant care and nurturing. Neither education nor religion, games, festivals, or military training could be left to look after themselves," (Wilborg 2000, 237).

which they acquire a hatred by the sole fact that they are forced to stay put, but utilizing exercises that please them by satisfying their body's need to act while it is growing,” (Rousseau 2005, 181). Rousseau thinks that while education is primarily oriented towards physical education, he also wants to elaborate on how education will be managed and if the state or the family will educate the children.

While Rousseau insists that physical education should be communal, the education that belongs to parents is still supported. Rousseau is fine with parents preferring domestic education and wanting to have the children brought up under their eyes. However, physical exercise should be done together with everyone (Rousseau 2005, 181). Rousseau argues that education can be "domestic and private,” but it is vital that physical exercises and games are to be done together. Why is this? According to Rousseau, communal games work not only for the body but also to “accustom them early to regulation, to equality, to fraternity, to competition, to living under the eyes of their fellow citizens and to desiring public approval” (Rousseau 2005, 181). Rousseau respects the family's desire to educate and instruct their children. However, physical exercise offers a chance to socialize with other children and develop communal feelings. Getting to know other children is a critical component whereby children can figure out who they like, dislike, and are attracted to. Having strong boys who can work well with each other can be useful for training them to be soldiers as well. These educational components are important for Rousseau's attempt to reform Poland, but the population issue is a significant part of Rousseau's thought.

In Chapter XI, Concerning the Economy of Poland, Rousseau reiterates his stance on the value of population as a sign of good governance. Like other works previously discussed, Rousseau lays out two paths that Poland could take and the resulting consequences that could ensue from it. On the one hand, if the people of Poland want to be “noisy, brilliant, formidable,

and to influence the other peoples of Europe," then they will need to imitate the surrounding countries by cultivating "the sciences, the arts, commerce, industry, have regular troops, fortified places, Academies, above all a good system of finances which makes money circulate well, which thereby multiplies it, which procures you a lot of it," (Rousseau 2005, 209). Once you have enough money people will be dependent on it and cultivate "material luxury and luxury of mind" which will create a people who are "scheming, fervent, greedy, ambitious, servile and knavish like the others, always at one of the two extremes of misery or opulence, of license or slavery with no middle ground," (Rousseau 2005, 209). This path will have international consequences as well, as a nation that becomes great this way will be sought by other nations and will have to form treaties with them so they can get sucked into any war that occurs (Rousseau 2005, 2009). If, however, the people of Poland want to form "a free, peaceful, and wise nation which neither fears nor needs anyone," then they will need to reject a commercial life and turn to agriculture while maintaining a "martial spirit without ambition" (Rousseau 2005, 2009-2010). There will be consequences to pursuing this second possibility, as the world will not praise or admire the country that pursues this path (Rousseau 2005, 2010). However, Rousseau insists that they would ultimately be a free and virtuous nation. Rousseau argues:

"The infallible and natural effect of a free and just Government is population. Thus, the more you perfect your government, the more you will increase your people without thinking about it. This way, you will have neither beggars nor millionaires. Luxury and indigence will disappear together insensibly, and the Citizens, cured of the frivolous tastes that opulence gives and of the vices attached to poverty, will put their efforts and their glory into serving the fatherland well and will find their happiness in their duties" (Rousseau 2005, 214).

Once again, Rousseau links the rise of commerce as a source of conflict for marital obligations. The agricultural lifestyle is best suited to fighting this tendency, which will increase pregnancies. As Rousseau recognizes, some commercial activity will be in Poland (Rousseau 2005, 211-212). The crucial point for Rousseau is how money will not be a major factor.

Naturally, this invites a host of questions. What will be the replacement for money? How will that help the population or rearing children in general? To answer the first question, Rousseau points out how the officials and workers of Switzerland have “tithes, wine, wood, useful or honorific rights. All public service is done by statutory labor” (Rousseau 2005, 211). Rousseau acknowledges that this method has certain inconveniences and that the accounting and transfer of different goods can be complex. The issue for Rousseau with money is two-fold. First, money has an issue of hidden circulation. One of the issues Rousseau has with money is that people can say the money will go to the public good when the money is siphoned or moved away. (Rousseau 2005, 211). The second reason is more about the effects of money on people. Rousseau argues that money “makes venal souls, and as soon as all one wants is to gain, one always gains more by being a knave than by being an honest man” (Rousseau 2005, 211).

Rousseau acknowledges that human beings are self-interested, so this is not some hopeful appeal to altruism for him; what he suggests is that the pursuit of money or the “pecuniary interest” is not only the vilest interest, but it saps away at all the natural passions that human beings have till they are weak and enervated (Rousseau 2005, 211). The point is that Rousseau believes that the focus on commerce and the luxury that will inevitably result will diminish the passions, which can include the desire for family or procreation. The ability to resist the call for luxury correlates with a government that can cause a rise in their population to ward off threats from other countries and raise children who can develop a love for their homeland.

1.10. Conclusion

The problem of citizen soldiers and families is of paramount concern for Rousseau. By presenting Rousseau's core political work in chronological order, I have presented both the persistent concern that Rousseau has about martial and marital responsibilities and the value that

it has in his political thought. In the first half of this chapter, the luxury problem was explored in the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, and its implications for martial prowess and family ties were discussed. Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* looked at human anthropology before the arrival of civil and political society, how the family would begin to form, and the value it had for Rousseau. *Emile* emphasizes the failure of mothers and fathers pursuing a commercial lifestyle and the destructive impact it could have on their sense of obligation to their family and country. Rousseau's *Emile* also explored the desires of men and women, how an improved family could be formed, and how procreative responsibilities could be effectively maintained.

After *Emile*, Rousseau's thoughts about procreation took an increasingly political turn. The Social Contract relays the importance of population as the sign of the best government. Meanwhile, Rousseau's works on Corsica and Poland provide examples of Rousseau's thoughts applied to concrete situations. They demonstrate Rousseau's desire to construct nationalistic agrarian societies that focus as little as possible on commerce, cultivating familial life while the men are disciplined into citizen soldiers. The running theme is finding ways to combat the commercial problem and how the lack of it can be good for the population in the long term. By looking at the texts chronologically, the concern for the population's ferocity and fecundity becomes stronger in Rousseau's texts over the years. This reveals not only Rousseau's disdain for commerce but also his view that the necessities of political life and commerce could not operate harmoniously. Rousseau believes it is true that the rise in commerce and prosperity can cause a rise in luxury, which will be detrimental to citizens' sense of obligation towards family and country in the long term. By allowing Rousseau to have the first word, I can compare Rousseau's views on commerce and population to those of other thinkers.

Choosing thinkers from the Enlightenment that Rousseau would disagree with is not a problem. Throughout Rousseau's extensive career, there were many thinkers that he would find fault. The first thinker I will examine is Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, otherwise known as Montesquieu. Like Rousseau, Montesquieu had concerns about the family and the military. His concern also involved underpopulation, even though his critique had certain playful elements (Tomaselli 1988).²¹ Rousseau also took some aspects of Montesquieu and incorporated them into his thought.

When comparing the two thinkers, Montesquieu is much more appreciative of commerce than Rousseau. Montesquieu does not necessarily believe that the rise of commerce could potentially cause issues with procreation. However, he recognizes the tension commerce can have on the martial prowess of a people. Despite this concern, the state could remediate the problems of martial and marital obligations. Moreover, while Montesquieu clearly states that commerce could soften nations' warlike dispositions, that does not mean it will eradicate the martial spirit. I will use the second chapter to assess the different forms of government both thinkers may have preferred and how their options could affect a citizen's sense of obligation to the regime.

²¹ See Tomaselli, Sylvana. "Moral philosophy and population questions in eighteenth century Europe." *Population and Development Review* 14 (1988): 7-29.

Chapter Two. Montesquieu contra Rousseau on the Martial and Marital Obligations

2.1. Turning to Montesquieu

Having provided an extensive analysis of Rousseau's thoughts concerning marital and marital responsibilities, the next part of this dissertation will examine Montesquieu's position on the family and the military. I have chosen Montesquieu as the first philosopher to compare Rousseau for various reasons. First, Rousseau, despite the problems that he may have with Montesquieu, problems that I will examine closely in this chapter, holds Montesquieu in higher regard than other political thinkers of the social contract tradition. As mentioned in *Emile*, Rousseau considers Montesquieu one of the most illustrious political thinkers. However, he chose to write on positive rights instead of political rights. In addition, both thinkers were deeply concerned about the problems relating to the family, the military, and political regimes.

To analyze Montesquieu's thoughts, I will rely on three of Montesquieu's most famous works: *The Persian Letters*, *Reflections on the Causes of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and *The Spirits of the Laws*. The analysis of *The Persian Letters* will show how Montesquieu thinks familial obligations can be destroyed under a despotic regime. Montesquieu's analysis of the Roman Republic and Roman Empire will show how the Romans, a people who loved their liberty and had great martial prowess, could lose their sense of obligation to their political community and lose their martial prowess due to the corrosive effects of luxury. From there, I will examine Montesquieu's thoughts on commerce and their political philosophy as Montesquieu attempts to find the best regime that accepts commerce but does not dissolve a

citizen's obligations towards the state.¹ This will also allow me to dive deeper into Rousseau's political thought as it relates to the political regimes Rousseau favored.

This chapter will attempt to answer whether Montesquieu's political philosophy can overcome Rousseau's critique of commercial society. Montesquieu does not fully envision a commercial society that thinkers like Adam Smith imagine, but Montesquieu defends the value of commerce for the modern world. I argue that Montesquieu pushes back against Rousseau's preferred type of republic by showing how a martial republic contains the seeds of its destruction, as seen with the Romans. However, I will insist that Rousseau's critique of commerce still prevails against Montesquieu because Montesquieu has an ambivalent view of which political regime is preferable for population growth and because Montesquieu's view of commerce suggests that Montesquieu acknowledges that commerce can soften the martial spirit of a people. Montesquieu makes significant observations that frustrate Rousseau's plan, but Montesquieu is still puzzled about balancing commerce and a citizen's martial and marital obligations in the long run.

2.2. The Persian Letters

The Persian Letters presents a difficulty that needs clarification. The work is a delightful tale about two Persian men, Usbek and Rica, who travel to Europe and record their thoughts about the politics and customs of European society.² At the same time, the harem of Uzbek, one of the main characters in the letters, falls apart into disorder and chaos (Montesquieu 1964). The

¹ Attempting to identify Montesquieu's preferred regime is easier said than done. Granted, Montesquieu prefers England as a type of regime, but whether Montesquieu is liberal or not, a monarchist or republican is a contentious discussion.

² Evidence also suggests that *The Persian Letters* had great political significance for Montesquieu. See Swaine, Lucas A. "The secret chain: justice and self-interest in Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*." *History of Political Thought* 22, no. 1 (2001): 84-105. Swaine wants to make sense of Usbek's moralizing despite his terrible nature to show the political significance of *The Persian Letters* (Swaine 2001,93).

novel's epistolary style has multiple characters, though Usbek and Rica form most letters. One of the core issues that *The Persian Letters* explores is how the family is perceived in different societies. Despite the issues in how Persian society treats women, the examination of Montesquieu's work will reveal that much of the critique about the treatment of women is directed at the French.³ The persistent issue of the treatment of women is a constant in the novel, as the impact that the degradation of women has on the family and the procreative tendencies in general.

The issue of power dynamics between man and wife is an explicit concern at the novel's start. In letter II, Usbek sends a letter to his chief about maintaining order in his home and caring for his multiple wives. In his letter, Usbek lavishes praise on the chief eunuch as the one who is the "scourge of vice and the pillar of fidelity," ensuring the women in his house do not "stray from their duty" (Montesquieu 1964, 10). Usbek entrusts the chief eunuch to serve the paradoxical role as both enslaved person and master, asking the chief eunuch to serve them as the "slave of their slaves" but to command "imperiously whenever you fear the relaxation of the laws of decency and modesty" (Montesquieu 1964, 10). Any form of pleasure can be provided for them, but should they desire to go out into the country, he wants any man approaching them to be put to the sword (Montesquieu 1964,10). Usbek insists that his wives must maintain cleanliness and purity until he returns, and yet, despite the instructions provided, one question needs to be addressed: where are the children?

Amidst all his instructions for maintaining his harem, Usbek is silent on the topic of children. The issue of children is not a concern for any of the wives and Uzbek harem. Two of

³ See Kra, Pauline. "Montesquieu and women." *French women and the age of enlightenment* (1984): 272-84. Kra elaborates on the satirical nature of Montesquieu's novel while also providing examples of Montesquieu's belief in female equality in contrast to Rousseau's domestic agenda for women (Kra 1984,282-284).

his wives, Zachi and Zephis, recount the absence of Usbek as an issue due to the love they have, which is unfulfilled now that Usbek is gone, or the issue of abuse that emerges from the chief eunuch (Montesquieu 1964, 11-13). Neither one brings up children. When Zachi and Zephis quarrel, it is eventually resolved by Letter XLVII, where Zachi has a banquet for Zephi; Zachi invites Usbek's mother, wives, and concubines, and his aunts and cousins come to the banquet as well (Montesquieu 1964, 76-77). Repeatedly, the harem is bereft of children.

The only exception is in letter LXX, where Zelis's daughter is mentioned, only for Usbek in the following letter to suggest that he will send her away to a different harem (Montesquieu 1964, 123-124). What is so striking about *The Persian Letters* is Usbek's general lack of connection to men in his private life. Usbek only has eunuchs and women in his court, which again invites the question of what happens to the male children. Given that contraceptive technology was not advanced, pregnancy has ensued at one point or another. From there, the options are grim. Either they are removed from the womb, killed after appearing from the womb, or sending them away.⁴ The text does not directly state this, but Usbek is ruthless enough to consider such an option.

To reinforce this position, one could turn to letter VI, where Usbek admits to his friend Nessir that he misses his wives, but he also says, "It is not that I love them, Nessir; in that respect, I find myself insensitive to desire. In the crowded seraglio where I have lived, I have been destroyed by the acts of loving the very love I anticipated" (Montesquieu 1964, 14-15).⁵

⁴ This position is countered by Kra, who rightly points out areas where Montesquieu condemns abortion as wasteful (Kra 1984, 284). However, while Montesquieu may believe differently, Usbek, the character, may believe otherwise. Regardless, the general lack of children highlights Usbek's contempt for the idea of marital obligations. The women exist for his pleasure alone

⁵ For a deeper analysis of Usbek's despotic tendencies see Hundert, E. J. "Sexual Politics And The Allegory Of Identity In Montesquieu's "Persian Letters"." *The Eighteenth Century* 31, no. 2 (1990): 101-115. Hundert examines Usbek's obsession with veiling his wives and how his attempts to control things cause Usbek to have the least amount of freedom (Hundert 1990, 108-110).

Despite this, Usbek is consumed by a secret jealousy that consumes him, as his wives are all alone, and he has limited confidence in his guards to have his wives remain faithful (Montesquieu 1964, 14-15). The letters are unclear about what Usbek would do to a child. However, given Usbek's desire to keep men out of his harem and his admitted lack of love for his wives, it can be a reasonable inference that some drastic action is taken to remove the child before being brought into this world or afterward. Why would Usbek remove male children? One reason could be that other women would worry about their position if another wife became pregnant by Usbek, which could result in jealousy. However, given the admissions from Usbek, the reason might be that Usbek would feel jealous if attention were given to any other male besides himself. This jealous concern for his wives is juxtaposed to letter IX, where the chief eunuch muses on the pains and joy he has found in his role.

Letter IX offers the thoughts of the chief eunuch and his view about his tasks. It is an interesting perspective as the eunuch has had his reproductive capacities removed and is set to "protect" Usbek's treasures, who seem to exist for Usbek's recreation and not procreation. Usbek has no obligations to the political regime. Usbek does not owe his society children and can maximize his pleasure. Meanwhile, the chief eunuch lives a life of misery, lamenting: "In the course of a long life, I cannot remember one serene day or one tranquil moment" (Montesquieu 1964, 18). When the chief eunuch's first master ordered the chief eunuch to be castrated, the chief eunuch had hope that with the loss of his "manhood," he would spend a life free from the passions and would live in "repose and wealth" (Montesquieu 1964, 18). However, despite being free from the "effects of passion," the chief eunuch found himself surrounded by women, which still caused specific passions to develop in his mind. In addition, the chief eunuch must always watch his masters become happy while he wallows in anger and sorrow (Montesquieu 1964, 19).

Despite the chief eunuch's impotence to engage in his passions, he finds a silver lining in his power over the harem.

From the chief eunuch's perspective, he was "born to command them, and when I do command, I seem to become a man again," and "When I deprive them of anything, the order is entirely mine, and it always produces indirect satisfaction," (Montesquieu 1964, 19). Despite this power, the chief eunuch is in constant battle with the wives, as while he may be able to deny the wives, he is still obligated to follow their commands, continuing the conflicting role of both master and slave while also uncertain at times if Usbek indeed favors him or not (Montesquieu 1964, 20-21). The chief eunuch's tirade against his lot in life proves the issues with polygamy in general while revealing Montesquieu's position on relationships and the issue of procreation.

While there will be further issues that will develop in the harem, it is essential to take a moment and reflect on the issues that have appeared as far as they relate to the dynamics between men and women. Before the main characters arrive in Europe, Montesquieu shows how dynamics between men and women can go wrong. Usbek, wanting his wives to adore and love him, cannot reciprocate this. Women in his harem are little more than objects that serve to either gratify Usbek's desires or to keep themselves "pure" until he arrives back. The harem is an arena of power, with multiple actors trying to find ways to have their will enforced. Usbek wants one thing, the wives want another, and the eunuchs work to both fulfill and deny the wives. Power, or lack thereof, connects the various characters, and love is not a significant factor. In addition to the lack of love, there is a lack of procreation. Now, this may be unfair to Usbek as he is an old man, but based on the letters, there seems to be an implicit desire to remove fertility from the harem. The devaluing of women to objects will have consequences while Usbek travels in Europe. However, while the early letters reveal the issues that may appear with a polygamous

society, this does not entail that the Kingdom of France is without blame. Montesquieu used many letters to critique the French mores towards women and family.

Upon arriving in Tuscany, Usbek writes to a friend about how women enjoy “great liberty” in Europe. He describes the “free” dynamics between men and women in the following way: “They can look at men through a kind of window, called a *jalousie*; they can go out every day accompanied by some old women; they wear only one veil. Their brothers-in-law, uncles, and nephews can see them, and their husbands hardly ever object.” (Montesquieu 1964, 41). The freedoms offered by women in European society highlight how little freedom they genuinely have. True, the husband in European society does not take as much offense as a Persian nobility, for whatever it is worth. Familiar issues occur in both parts of the world, and jealousy is perennial. In Letter LV, Rica writes to Ibben that the French have fewer jealous husbands than Persia, but this is not because they have confidence in the fidelity of their wives but “on the poor opinion they have of them” (Montesquieu 1964, 93). The jealous husband is treated with contempt and scorn and will more likely keep their peace out of prudence.⁶

Rica goes on to say that there are, in fact, virtuous women, but “they were all so ugly that one would have to be a saint to not hate virtue” (Montesquieu 1964, 94). As a result, constancy is not esteemed, and the love husbands and wives feel towards each other takes on a protean form, changing based on the situation (Montesquieu 1964, 94-95). From Rica’s observation, one can see that monogamy in France or polygamy in Persia has issues with creating truly loving relationships between the sexes. The despotic and feudal societies struggle with fulfilling marital obligations. This can impact the family dynamics and frustrate procreative tendencies within the

⁶ Even with the relatively greater amount of equality in France compared to Persia, true love safely forming between men and women is still difficult. David Kettler suggests that Montesquieu is pessimistic about true love forming in general due to life’s intense social restraints. Kettler, David. “Montesquieu on Love: Notes on the Persian Letters.” *American Political Science Review* 58, no. 3 (1964): 658-661.

family. The issue concerning procreation is not just a potential issue that can emerge in the family but is a primary social concern.

From letter CXII to letter CXXII, a significant point of discussion is about the population. Usbek's philosopher friend Rhedi writes in a letter concerning population, wishing for an explanation as to why the population is lower in modern times than it is in ancient times. Rhedi is so despondent on this issue that he calls it "the greatest catastrophe the world has ever known. But it is hardly perceived because it has happened gradually and over many centuries; it is the symptom of an internal defect, a secret and hidden poison, a corrupting disease afflicting human nature itself" (Montesquieu 1964, 188). Usbek responds in an admittedly thoughtful manner throughout the letters concerning this topic. Usbek begins by noting that nothing is incorruptible, and human beings are subject to causes that can destroy and diminish them over time. Usbek points out that physical causes, such as diseases like the Black Plague, can severely decrease the population (Montesquieu 1964, 190). However, not all causes for population decline are physical, such as war or disease. There are specific "moral causes" that can result in a population decline, especially causes that emerge from religion and political systems.

Usbek argues that one of the reasons why the earth is less populated is because religions like Islam and Christianity have established customs that encourage population decline, such as polygamy and strict divorce laws (Montesquieu 1964, 191). The issue of polygamy is linked to exhaustion, where too many women and concubines tax the man physically and psychologically. Usbek describes how the seraglios can have a vast number of women but a small number of children, and the children are usually in bad health (Montesquieu 1964, 191). In addition, the seraglio needs many eunuchs to combat any man from approaching, a practice which makes more men unable to procreate while the female slaves are consecrated to virginity (Montesquieu

1964, 192). In contrast, Usbek highlights the Romans as a people who made tremendous use of their slaves. Unlike the Muslims, the Romans had their slaves perform various tasks, some becoming bankers, shipping goods, retailing, learning the mechanical arts, or farming (Montesquieu 1964, 193). This gave them a more comfortable existence and hope for the future, incentivizing them to engage with the Roman way of life. Some became so wealthy they could buy their freedom and have their own families (Montesquieu 1964, 193). While Islam's use of polygamy has resulted in problems of depopulation, the Christian practice of divorce has also resulted in a population decline.

While the Muslim world allows a husband to have too many wives, the Christian (or to be more specific, the Catholic) is not allowed to have enough wives due to the strict rules of divorce (Montesquieu 1964, 194). The issues with the Catholic strict divorce policy are manifold. Usbek notes that limited access to divorce takes away the sweetness of marriage and forces people to live together even if they do not like each other (Montesquieu 1964, 194). With easy divorce available, the husband and wife deal with their domestic trouble with more extraordinary patience because they both know that they can end the marriage, and they are restrained from divorcing "by the single thought that they were free to do so" (Montesquieu 1964, 194-195). Because the marriage is "eternal," the love between the two people will dissolve, and in "scarcely three years of marriage," the partners will not work on having children.

Instead of having children, they will spend the next thirty years in a sexless marriage, and the husband will turn to prostitution, which also does not fulfill the aim of marriage (Montesquieu 1964, 195). Usbek summarizes the issue quite succinctly: "Divorce is abolished; bad marriages cannot be rectified; women no longer successively pass, as they did among the Romans, into the hands of several husbands, who consecutively made the best possible use of

them,” (Montesquieu 1964, 195). Usbek argues that marriage is a convention for having children, but to Christians, it is something else that Usbek does not understand (Montesquieu 1964, 196). While the issue of divorce is an issue for Usbek (and potentially for Montesquieu, but that will be explored later), the other issue that has resulted in depopulation in Europe is the clergy.

To Usbek, Christian theology is an enigma as they are in contradiction where marriage is held to be the most sacred only to say then that celibacy, the complete opposite, is the most sacred (Montesquieu 1964, 196). With the rise of celibate orders, the vocation of chastity “has annihilated more men than plagues and the bloodiest wars,” and the religious houses served as places where future generations would be buried (Montesquieu 1964, 196). The Romans again serve as a counterpoint to the modern world since Usbek explains how they would establish penalties against those who refused to marry (Montesquieu 1964, 197).

Usbek also describes how the Protestants, by relaxing the standards of marriage and making it a universal good, allowed the Protestants to rise and be a threat to Catholic countries to the point that they became “richer and more powerful” (Montesquieu 1964, 197). Because Protestant countries have a larger population, their income from taxation is higher; their lands are better cultivated, and commerce flourishes at a greater rate; Catholic countries, on the other hand, by being filled with monasteries that cripple the different professions and induce others to a life of tranquility instead of working and toiling (Montesquieu 1964, 197-198). Usbek's confidence in commerce is so strong that he declares: "Commerce vitalized everything in the one society; monasticism spreads death in the other" (Montesquieu 1964, 198). However, while commerce is linked to being useful for an increasing populace, colonization harms a country's population.

As Usbek turns from the countries in Europe to the world at large, he says different elements of the colonial projects underway create issues for populations to flourish. The first is that parts of Africa and South America had to perform slave labor in dangerous conditions for silver and gold, and often died in the new colonies, which negatively changed the population (Montesquieu 1964, 198-199). When looking at those who are colonized, Usbek finds that their population rates are often low due to a lack of work and an unwillingness to till the soil, creating villages that often number two to three thousand at best and are unable to grow further because they lack what mutual accord and the willingness to help each other (Montesquieu 1964, 201). In addition, the "savages," as Usbek calls them, also engage in the "cruel habit" of abortion so that pregnancy will not make women "disagreeable to their husbands" (Montesquieu 1964, 201). On the other hand, Usbek argues that countries like France have gone too far in the opposite direction, where they create laws against abortion that are "so dreadful they approach madness" to the point that an unmarried girl who does not tell a magistrate she is pregnant will die if the child dies before birth (Montesquieu 1964, 201). In addition, the countries that colonize often their population suffer because of migrating to different parts of the world.

Usbek insists that colonization is terrible for the slaves who get sent to colonies, the colonized areas, and even for the people who initiate colonization, as it can result in the country that colonizes losing people in the home country while not effectively populating the colony (Montesquieu 1964, 202). This is because some areas that get colonized are not hospitable for large movements of people, or the people that move there are not prepared to adapt to the new conditions they find themselves in. Looking to history, Usbek highlights how the expulsion of the moors and the fighting in South America created a population decline that was not effectively managed (Montesquieu 1964, 203). Usbek acknowledges that, in some instances, colonization

can work, but overall, they do not. When looking at two of the largest empires at the time, Spain and Portugal, both empires attempted methods to control population growth. The Spanish exterminated the natives and sent colonists to South America, which was not able to increase the size, and the Portuguese used little cruelty and, in some areas, lost their land (Montesquieu 1964, 204-205). Looking for solutions abroad cannot fix the issues of population. Nor can the practices of religion, which try to reach the above, work to increase population. Examining the laws and customs within a country to rectify population issues and how they can raise the population is essential.

Usbek notes how two of the worst countries in Europe, in terms of their terrain, are heavily populated, a fact that Usbek attributes to the “benign government” they possess (Montesquieu 1964, 205). When people find land to increase their material comfort, they will also grow as a population. Not only is material comfort a part of the procreation process, but the governments that allow for political equality can find ways of increasing their prosperity and abundance. This distinguishes arbitrary powers because the “prince, the courtiers, and a few other individuals possess all the wealth, while all the rest groan under a crushing poverty” (Montesquieu 1964, 206). From poverty, it can easily be foreseen that procreation will not be a significant focus of the populace, and even if they can have children, the quality of life is dubious at best. Now, Usbek does admit that the rustic people, the peasants, will produce children whatever their economic status because the father can leave his inheritance to his children, namely the plow (Montesquieu 1964, 206). However, Usbek is also clear that having the peasants reproduce would not suit the state. For starters, Usbek claims that they die at the same rate they are born. Furthermore, they are often not prosperous and can die from a thousand different causes, such as misery and malnutrition (Montesquieu 1964, 206). Rousseau would

heavily dispute this claim of fragility, as we will discuss later, but for now, the point must be to analyze how serious Montesquieu is when he has Usbek write these letters.

Overall, the secondary literature suggests Montesquieu is serious when writing his analysis in these sections. Partly, this is because much of the analysis of procreation found in *The Persian Letters* can also be found in *The Spirits of the Law*. However, it is worth mentioning that what Usbek is saying can also serve as irony. Ironically, someone as far-sighted about governments and the way that women should be treated is unable to come to grips with the way he operates in his own life. The lifestyle that Usbek has will lead to great sorrow in the end (though perhaps Usbek is foresighted enough to realize this in the end). However, the question remains: if Usbek is serving as a "mouthpiece" to Montesquieu's thoughts, what is Montesquieu trying to critique?

Some have suggested that Montesquieu's population analysis does not reflect the modern world's issues with population but the Kingdom of France's issues of population when Montesquieu was writing. David Young notes that the Kingdom of France had undergone a series of events such as "A series of bitter winters followed by poor harvests, notably in the years 1691-94 and again in 1709-10; a crushing burden of taxation, military recruitment, and stifled commerce occasioned by the wars of the late years of the Great Reign,".⁷ Young notes that linking despotism to depopulation could have also critiqued Louis XIV's reign. Under Louis XIV's reign, Louis centralized his power in an absolutist form, brought religious uniformity, and curtailed the power of parliament, which the nobles and Louis's opponents criticized Louis for

⁷ Young, David B. "Libertarian Demography: Montesquieu's Essay on Depopulation in the *Lettres Persanes*." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 4 (1975): 671.

action.⁸⁹ While France's political situation may have been under Montesquieu's satirical gaze, a more pressing issue that much of the secondary scholarship has looked at is Montesquieu's critique of the religious practices of his day.

David Young acknowledges that Montesquieu is tackling religious practices. However, he argues that Montesquieu is focused more on commerce, as the ability to provide abundance to a country can help incentivize people to be committed to the place they find themselves and feel comfortable enough to procreate.¹⁰ Others, in contrast, have argued that Montesquieu is intensely focused on the marriage practices of the French and is trying to push for a change in birthing practices. Jacqueline Hecht, who was the Directeur de Recherche at the Institut National d'Etudes Demographiques (INED) in 1999, wrote an article detailing the progression of French intellectual thought from a Biblical orientation towards marriage to a family planning style perspective.

Hecht notes that during the *Ancien Regime*, France could have an equilibrium towards its population even when specific issues emerged, such as war or disease.¹¹ The reason for this homeostasis for Hecht is not necessarily in the natality but the nuptiality of France, as it was customary to marry later and practice celibacy until marriage.¹² With the beginning of French prosperity as well as the decline of disease and malnutrition, the French people now not only wanted to have children but also ensure they could socially ascend, resulting in French couples in the upper classes practicing ways to limit the number of children they had (Hecht 1999, 538-

⁸ Young 1975, 678-679.

⁹ Other commentators have suggested that the Persian Letter attacks French Absolutism. See Ranum, Orest. "Personality and politics in the Persian letters." In *Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu*, pp. 3-25. Routledge, 2017.

¹⁰ Young 1975, 679-680.

¹¹ See Hecht, Jacqueline. "From" Be Fruitful and Multiply" to Family Planning: The Enlightenment Transition." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no. 4 (1999): 537

¹² Hecht 1999, 538.

539).¹³ The Church criticized this emerging push to interrupt coitus, and Hecht argues that one of Montesquieu's goals was to push back.

Hecht also argues that the arguments Montesquieu makes about the depopulation of the earth were based on a mistake. However, the mistake was useful in incentivizing economic and demographic analysis of the population (Hecht 1999, 541).¹⁴ Hecht also acknowledges that while Montesquieu is focused on propagation, his linking of material needs as a component of a good existence would become a common theme in Enlightenment thought in trying to figure out how to have a suitably large population while ensuring that it was not crushed by crippling poverty (Hecht 1999, 541).¹⁵ Hecht's analysis ties into Young's perspective quite nicely by linking the change in demographic thought to France's emerging prosperity. However, Hecht's analysis attempts to analyze the French Enlightenment. There needs to be more room to analyze Montesquieu's view of population in *The Persian Letters*, though others have provided further analysis.

While some have overvalued the role religion played in Montesquieu's critique¹⁶ or undervalued it,¹⁷ others have attempted to provide a holistic assessment of Montesquieu's critiques. Sylvana Tomaselli provides such an assessment, arguing that one of the goals Montesquieu has by making Usbek describe the ways that population can decrease is to show the contingency of the human condition and even pessimism about the fate of human beings.¹⁸

¹³ Hecht 1999, 539

¹⁴ Hecht 1999, 541

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Hecht 1999

¹⁷ Young 1975

¹⁸ Tomaselli 1988, 9-10.

Tomaselli highlights this pessimism about the human condition to show how the Enlightenment obsession with a population was not some light, optimistic contemplation but a sobering realization that things could go wrong for humans if the government did not implement steps to make things right.¹⁹ Tomaselli also notes that any form of cosmic providentialism is not factored as a reason for the potential destruction of humans; it is purely physical or moral causes that could be attributed to population decline.

Now, Tomaselli does suggest that Montesquieu intended *The Persian Letters* in part as a critique of Catholicism, primarily the practices of divorce and celibacy.²⁰ However, the issue goes far deeper than one type of religion, as Tomaselli notes how the "savages" who lacked formal religions had tiny populations, and other peoples, like the Jews and the Chinese, were able to maintain large and persistent families due to their religious convictions and ideas.²¹ In contrast, countries like Spain, which engaged in excessive cruelty and intolerance, are a significant part of Montesquieu's critique. Tomaselli argues that critiquing Spain was a veiled critique of France and Catholicism.²² What is of value in Tomaselli is that she takes what Montesquieu is saying seriously. Unlike Hecht, who argued that Montesquieu's analysis was ultimately mistaken because demographics were not so dire as he portrayed it, Tomaselli emphasizes that not only was Montesquieu as well informed on population issues as anyone could have been, but that the concern Montesquieu about population is not stemming from animosity towards Catholicism.²³ Instead, the importance of Montesquieu's analysis in the

¹⁹ Ibid, 10.

²⁰ Ibid, 11.

²¹ Ibid, 12.

²² Ibid, 12.

²³ Ibid, 13.

Persian Letters is to emphasize that not only is the issue of population “not a variable that could be taken in isolation from social and political institutions...It was part and parcel of a complete and highly complex causal process, all aspects of which had to be attended to when implementing policies seeking to affect it”.²⁴ Moreover, the dynamics between men and women could not be arbitrarily trifled with, as seen with the tragic ending of *The Persian Letters*.

As Usbek and Rica continued their journey and analysis of Europe, the tensions beneath the surface in Usbek's seraglio were coming to the surface with greater intensity. By the time the reader reaches letter CXLVII, we see the Chief Eunuch writing to Montesquieu about the disintegrating conditions at the seraglio. The Chief Eunuch writes of the atrocities occurring in the seraglio, such as Zelis not wearing the veil at the mosque and revealing her face, Zachi is found in bed with one of her slaves, and, worst of all, a young man was found in the seraglio. However, he could escape in time (Montesquieu 1964, 261). The chief eunuch ends the letter imploring Usbek to give him the power to bring order to the wives, a request that Usbek gives in the following letter, ordering the chief eunuch to "Purify this infamous place and restore its banished virtue (Montesquieu 1964, 262). General bedlam ensues from this point until the end of the letters.

First, the chief eunuch dies and is replaced by the eunuch Narsit, who takes charge and ignores the instructions of Usbek and continues to allow greater freedom to Usbek's wives (Montesquieu 1964, 263-265). One of Usbek's servants, Solim, reports the general issues at the seraglio and how Narsit is an imbecile, and the wives are taking on lovers in Usbek's absence (Montesquieu 1964, 265). Usbek gives Solim the power of the sword and complete arbitrary power within the seraglio while also sending a letter to his wives that they will be placed under a

²⁴ Ibid, 13.

"yoke so rigorous that you will regret your liberty, even if you do not regret your virtue," (Montesquieu 1964, 266). However, despite the threats and tirades, Usbek acknowledges that there is not much he can do to resolve the situation. In letter CLV, Usbek writes to his friend Nessir that he has fallen into the grips of profound sadness, saying: "It seems I am annihilating myself, and I recover only when dark jealousies come to kindle and nurture fear, suspicion, hate and regrets in my soul" (Montesquieu 1964, 267). Usbek is torn between wanting to leave Europe, an endeavor he cannot achieve since Rica wants to stay, and not wanting to go back to Persia since he is confident that returning will cause him to "submit his head to enemies" (Montesquieu 1964, 267). Usbek's fears are well founded because the arbitrary power given to Solim by Usbek makes the situation in the seraglio from bad to worse.

Roxana, one of Usbek's wives, and from Usbek's perspective, the role model of a perfect submissive wife, reports the terrible things that are occurring in the seraglio, such as two white eunuchs being tortured, most of the slaves being sold, and the wives are veiled day and night even when they are in their rooms (Montesquieu 1964, 268-269). Zachi and Zelis decry the tyrannical abuses they suffered and renounce a feeling of love towards Usbek (Montesquieu 1964, 269-270). Solim pours salt on Usbek's wound by revealing that much of the turmoil within the seraglio was instigated by Roxana, and Solim intends to kill her to set the seraglio right. In the final letter, Roxana writes to Usbek, gloating about how she could deceive Usbek while changing the seraglio to allow greater freedom to the women (Montesquieu 1964, 272). She chastises Usbek for his attempts to control her life. When rhetorically asking herself if Usbek had a right to this, she responds: "No: I have lived in slavery, but I have always been free. I reformed your laws by those of nature, and my spirit has always held to its independence," (Montesquieu 1964, 272). Having defied Usbek, Roxana takes poison and ends her life; while it is not

described in detail, it is also implied that much of the harem has been killed (Montesquieu 1964, 271-272). Usbek's harem is decimated, and the overall sense of death and impotence leaves a gloom that Usbek will never be able to recover from.²⁵

The analysis of *The Persian Letters* makes it clear that Montesquieu's population issue is of immense concern. Not only is procreation a crucial part of marriage for Montesquieu, but various factors can also negatively impact the population rate. A significant reason for the decline for Montesquieu is religious practices, whether polygamy in Persia or divorce and monasteries in Europe. Montesquieu also holds that the imperial processes in his time were unsuitable for the colonized or colonizers to raise their population. The solution lies in benign governments that allow freedom to flourish.

To investigate this question thoroughly, I will turn to Montesquieu's lesser-known work, *Considerations on the Causes of The Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline* (referred to from here on in the dissertation as *The Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline*). This exhilarating work describes the rise and fall of one of the greatest republics and empires Western civilization has ever produced. Examining this text demonstrates Montesquieu's appreciation of the martial spirit and how it could be controlled. The Romans intensely loved their laws and the glory attached to victory. Furthermore, Montesquieu's work on the Romans shows his views on why they declined as a people and the role commerce may have played in their decline. Their virtues would inspire the Romans' aggressive expansion, ultimately serving as their downfall in the long run.

²⁵ Swaine notes the irony that despite Usbek's insights abroad, he could not apply it at home, suggesting that even reason can fall prey to despotism (Swaine 2001, 95). If despotism is allowed to surface the erosion of the marital obligations will occur.

2.3. The Greatness of the Romans and their Decline

Montesquieu's work on the Romans was written in 1734 and assesses the Romans's rise to power.²⁶ By assessing the Roman Republic and Roman Empire, Montesquieu can show why the Romans could reach such great heights only to fall to such low depths eventually.

Montesquieu's work on the Romans shows how much the martial spirit mattered to the Romans and how it was corrupted over time. Montesquieu also reveals the strengths of the Roman republican form of government while acknowledging how their laws led to their destruction. To fully understand the Romans, Montesquieu looks at the beginning of the Roman people by looking at their Mythological founder, Romulus.

Romulus was the mythological founder of Rome. Romulus was a great warrior and leader who attracted brigands to swell the city's ranks. Montesquieu notes that from the beginning, Rome was driven by conquest and cultivated a solid martial spirit within the society, as the only way they could acquire "citizens, wives and lands" was through war with neighboring cities (Montesquieu 1999, 24). Montesquieu notes that this warlike spirit might not have always remained since leaders like Numa were able to tamper the warrior spirit of the Romans into what Montesquieu considers "a state of mediocrity" (Montesquieu 1999, 25). It was only the suicide of Lucretia that led to the revolution against the Tarquin, the kings who ruled prior to the republic, and the establishment of the republic (Montesquieu 1999, 25). Had they not overthrown the Tarquin's it is possible the Romans would have subsided into mediocrity overtime.²⁷ The

²⁶ There is also reason to believe that the book was envisioned to serve a larger role in Montesquieu's critique of France, a plan that never materialized. See Rahe, Paul. "The book that never was: Montesquieu's Considerations on the Romans in historical context." *History of Political Thought* 26, no. 1 (2005): 43-89.

²⁷ See Myers, Richard. "Montesquieu on the causes of Roman greatness." *History of Political Thought* 16, no. 1 (1995): 37-47. Myers pays close attention to Montesquieu's keen observation that the Romans could only excel at war because they constantly practiced it (Myers 1995, 44). This will be a thorny issue for Rousseau, who desires martial prowess from citizens but wants to avoid expansionistic tendencies.

importance of Montesquieu's overthrowing of the Tarquins is that it solidified the martial spirit of the Romans.

The Romans demonstrated their martial spirit, not just through war but by pillaging neighbors. Montesquieu explains that “war was always agreeable to the people because” by the wise distribution of booty, the means had been found of making it useful to them” (Montesquieu 1999, 27). This equality of distribution is essential for Montesquieu as equality in the republic will serve as a source of strength. Once this equality fades, the corruption of the Romans will set in. The notion of pillage is important for Montesquieu because it gave the Romans a drive for victory while pillaging also “let them remain poor” (Montesquieu 1999, 28). This is an exciting problem that Montesquieu provides and Rousseau must answer. On the one hand, commerce can weaken the martial prowess of a people (a fact that Montesquieu would agree with). On the other hand, the poverty of the Romans incentivized a level of belligerence that Rousseau did not approve of in his work. Given Rousseau’s fondness for Roman structures now, the Romans were a people bereft of commerce, which contrasted with some of the cities and people subdued by the Romans. Montesquieu acknowledges that the martial spirit was not consistent in Italy, describing how the Tuscans had “grown soft from their affluence and luxury” while all the cities of Campania and Magna Graecia “languished in idleness and pleasures” (Montesquieu 1999, 29). Because of the soft lifestyle, other cities fell before the Romans. However, when taking a closer look at the Romans, the reasons for the superiority of the Romans over their enemies become clearer.

In Chapter III of *The Greatness of the Romans and their Decline*, “How the Romans were able to Expand,” Montesquieu makes an interesting observation about the differences between the government of antiquity and of Montesquieu’s own time. In Montesquieu’s own time, a

Prince or Ruler who had “a million subjects cannot maintain more than ten thousand troops without ruining themselves,” and in Montesquieu’s day, the proportion of soldiers to the people was “one in a hundred.” At the same time, in the ancient republics, it was closer to “one to eight” (Montesquieu 1999, 39). Even before the full emergence of the commercial society, a sizable gap existed between the soldiers and the people in general. The ancient republics, especially the Romans, had a citizenry closer to the martial class.

One reason for the greater likelihood of a Roman citizen serving in the military is that the founders of the republic “made equal partitions of the land,” which created people and an army who were strong and disciplined because everyone had a piece of land and, by extension, “interest in defending his country” (Montesquieu 1999, 39). Montesquieu describes how the Roman Republic became corrupt, first citing the loose observance of the law as the first significant step in the road to the Roman’s corruption. Once the laws were not strictly observed, the “avarice of some individuals and the prodigality of others caused landed property to pass into the hands of the few” (Montesquieu 1999, 40). The creation of a landed gentry was followed by the introduction of the “arts,” creating a situation where “almost no citizens or soldiers were left” with the income of the state moving away from the soldiers and farmers and towards the rich who gave it to the “slaves and artisans.” Elements of Montesquieu’s analysis of Roman corruption bear striking similarities to Rousseau’s description of the corruption of humans in *The Discourse on Inequality*. Both envision groups of people with relative equality that descend into elite land ownership over time. One could argue that Rousseau took Montesquieu’s account and applied it to humans before the state of nature.

Another similarity both Rousseau and Montesquieu could have been the derision for the artisan. I emphasize that it could have been because Montesquieu may have only had issues with

the artisans of the Roman Republic, linking them in conjunction with slaves repeatedly (Montesquieu 1999, 40). In addition, Montesquieu describes how men of the artisan trade were cowards who were “scarcely fit for war,” and they were also “cowardly, and already corrupted by the luxury of the cities, and often by their craft itself” (Montesquieu 1999, 40). The artisan’s commitment to their trade allowed them to move about, untethered to the land, and as a result, felt less of a compulsion to commit themselves to fight because the artisan had little “to lose or to preserve” (Montesquieu 1999, 40). The equality of the land meant that each citizen had something at stake and would be prepared to lay down their life for their home. A citizen had a portion of the republic under their control and, as a result, felt that something was at stake.

While Montesquieu lays critiques on the artisan class, Montesquieu had other critiques concerning the role that commerce could play in a republic. This can be seen when Montesquieu analyzes the differences between Rome and Carthage in Chapter IV of *The Greatness of the Romans and their Decline*. It should be noted that proponents of commercial society would not look at Carthage as a beacon of a commercial society, partly because Carthage was by all accounts an oligarchic republic. Despite this, Montesquieu clearly states that Carthaginians were commercially minded and more affluent than the Romans. The fact that Carthage was richer sooner than the Romans meant that Carthage became corrupt sooner. In contrast, the Romans could receive public office “only through honor.” In Carthage, every office “was for sale, and all service rendered by individuals was paid for by the public” (Montesquieu 1999, 44). Carthage was a commercial republic that had removed any sense of worthiness to their offices, except for what money could buy. Put another way, the issue for Carthage was that it abandoned the common good.

Montesquieu acknowledges that the republic or the “free state” has certain advantages, such as better management of the revenues and a lack of favorites within the regime (Montesquieu 1965, 44). However, when the common good is lost, and mismanagement of the revenue and favoritism is rampant, “all is lost” (Montesquieu 1999, 44). Montesquieu then goes on to demonstrate the superiority of the Romans over the Carthaginians, describing how when the Romans governed through the laws, “the people allowed the Senate to direct public affairs,” while Carthage would govern by abuses of the law, allowing a situation where “the people wanted to do everything themselves” (Montesquieu 1999, 45). Carthage made war with the Romans using its wealth, but Montesquieu points out that this was not sufficient since gold and silver can be exhausted, “but virtue, constancy, strength, and poverty never are” (Montesquieu 1999, 45).

The Romans also had an incredible sense of pride and drive for glory that the Carthaginians could not match, meaning that Carthage would accept even the harshest terms of peace while the Romans would never surrender (Montesquieu 1999, 45). This passion the Romans possessed, their tremendous pride, was their greatest strength and their greatest undoing in the long term. However, despite the future issues, Montesquieu insists that the most powerful republics are those where laws are observed through passion, “which was the case with Rome and Lacedaemon” (Montesquieu 1999, 45-46). Rome and Lacedaemon (Sparta) are the two regimes that Rousseau returns to in his work, demonstrating another link between Rousseau and Montesquieu. Montesquieu’s formal accusation against Carthage is that it did not esteem political life highly enough as a republic. This lack of consideration can also be observed through Carthage’s overreliance on mercenaries

The Carthaginian reliance on mercenaries seems to follow from their commercial mindset. Given that political offices could be bought, why couldn't commerce provide armies to fight for Carthage? Montesquieu notes that Carthage could always employ greater forces to attack while the Romans could muster more to defend the republic (Montesquieu 1999, 46). The Romans could produce defenders because the citizens had a stake in the republic due to the equality of the land distribution, while mercenaries would flock to attack anyone for the right amount of coin. Despite this, Montesquieu is clear that the Romans had a superior military system, able to always field armies despite any loss and have soldiers who would remain constant, unlike mercenaries who would revolt at any loss (Montesquieu 1999, 47).

Despite whatever obstacle, the tenacity of the Romans allowed them to triumph over Carthage despite its abundance of wealth. Montesquieu is clear that despite Carthage's wealth, its political and military inefficiencies relegated it to mediocrity. According to Montesquieu, that is the fate of "Commercial powers" in general. Commercial powers "can continue in a state of mediocrity a long time, but their greatness is of short duration" (Montesquieu 1999, 47). The lack of obligation among the citizens of Carthage resulted in their downfall. The Romans would triumph over Carthage because of Roman ambition, a trait that would turn the Roman Republic into incredible expansion. An expansion, it would turn out, would result in the death knell of the republic.

Chapter IX of *The Greatness of the Romans and their Decline* describes how the Roman Republic would, over time, fall into ruin. The first major issue was that they expanded their territory as the Roman Republic achieved victories. While the Roman Republic was limited to Italy, the expansion was not an issue because a soldier was still a citizen because soldiers were "people who had enough property to have an interest in preserving the city" (Montesquieu 1999,

91). Once the legions “crossed the Alps and the sea,” the soldiers would lose their “citizen spirit” and would rely on their generals, valuing leaders like Pompey and Caesar over the Roman Republic (Montesquieu 1999, 92). While the senate could combat the passions of the people’s tribunes, as soon as the people aligned themselves with the military, the “republic was lost” (Montesquieu 1965, 91-92). The expansion of the Roman Republic complicated the relationship between the military and citizens and the Roman notion of citizenship.

As the Romans expanded their republic, the population increase allowed for people in different cities and nations to have a say about the republic. According to Montesquieu, the problem that this expansion created was that Rome “was no longer a city whose people had but a single spirit, a single love of liberty, a single hatred of tyranny” because more people brought Rome different interests and the need for “some great protector” to look after particular interests (Montesquieu 1999, 92-93). Because different people made up the Roman Republic, the people “no longer saw Rome with the same eyes, no longer had the same love of country and Roman sentiments were no more.” (Montesquieu 1999, 93). Montesquieu suggests that one should not be surprised by this outcome. The Romans had a perpetual drive for greatness, creating the seeds of their destruction. The increase in the size of the Republic would weaken the political ties and institutions, creating an opportunity for corruption to set in.

In Chapter X, “The Corruption of the Romans,” Montesquieu notes that the rise of the “sect of Epicurus,” which Montesquieu describes as a doctrine of hedonism, contributed to “tainting the heart and mind of the Romans” (Montesquieu 1999, 97). Montesquieu goes on to describe how the increase of power increased luxury. With the increase of possessions that went well past necessity, the Romans increasingly found it difficult to “be good citizens” (Montesquieu 1999, 98). Despite the increasing love of affluence and luxury amongst the

Romans, Montesquieu acknowledges that the Romans were able to preserve their “heroic valor and all its applications to war in the midst of riches” (Montesquieu 1999, 98). This martial prowess would be maintained well after the fall of the Roman Republic and would continue during the Roman Empire. Having laid out the strengths and weaknesses of the Roman Republic, I want to take a moment to compare Montesquieu’s thoughts on the Republic to Rousseau’s.

While Montesquieu is aware of other types of republics, both Rousseau and Montesquieu consider the Roman Republic an exemplary example of a republic. Both thinkers identify commerce as problematic for republics as it can corrupt the people and devalue political life. This can be seen in Carthage’s willingness to sell public offices to the highest bidder and use mercenaries to fight for the republic instead of using their citizens. Both thinkers look down on Carthage as an example of how a commercial republic can fail to maintain the martial prowess of its citizens. There is, however, a critique of republics from Montesquieu that Rousseau must address. While Carthage fell because of its lack of martial prowess, because of its softness and willingness to surrender, the Roman Republic would come to ruin due to the opposite problem. Its military might become too much and eventually devoured and destroyed the institutions and customs that gave life to such an incredible martial spirit. The laws of the Roman Republic sowed the seeds of Rome’s downfall. The question Rousseau must answer is how his version of the Republic maintained resistance to commerce while not falling prey to expansion, like the Roman Republic.

The response Rousseau could make to the concern about aggressive expansion is acknowledging the reality that all regimes come to an end and reach a point of corruption. In Rousseau’s writings on Corsica and Poland, Rousseau expresses a sensitive awareness about the ways that regimes can fall apart, primarily through attempting to pursue glory. Despite

Rousseau's appreciation of Rome's political structures and adherence to the law, Rousseau undoubtedly would place the Romans' intense pride and their lust for glory as the center of all their problems. The *amour propre* of the Romans was so great that it allowed them to expand to incredible heights but also opened them up to corruption in the long run. The other issue that the Romans had was that they were divided into different classes of people.

Despite the equal distribution of land among the Roman citizens, an element of Roman rule that Rousseau approves, the issues of the Roman Republic were endemic because even though Rome was expanding, class tensions were occurring within the city throughout the Roman Republic's existence. Montesquieu also acknowledges this problem, discussing how, at the founding of the Roman Republic, patrician families "obtained all the magistracies, all the dignities, and consequently all the military and civil honors" (Montesquieu 1999, 83). Over time, the plebians, the non-aristocratic families, gained more power, but this resulted in a different struggle, that of the common people versus "the nobles" (Montesquieu 1999, 85). This hereditary class difference was a perpetual ulcer within the Roman Republic, and Rousseau was clear that republics needed to remove inequalities based on birth while also ensuring that the property distributions were reasonable in the republic. Only then could a sense of equality form.

Montesquieu agrees that the expansion of the Roman Republic was problematic because it exposed the Romans to fortune, which could ruin free states (Montesquieu 1999, 92). In fact, Montesquieu argues: "A wise republic should hazard nothing that exposes it to either good or bad fortune. The only good to which it should aspire is the perpetuation of its condition" (Montesquieu 1999, 92). However, while the Romans may have acted unwisely in the end, Montesquieu still insists that the Roman Republic's decline followed a natural course from the laws they had. Montesquieu insists that trying to have a free state filled with men "who are bold

in war and timid in peace is to wish the impossible” (Montesquieu 1999, 93). On the other hand, Rousseau stated that republics can maintain military discipline while not always wishing to expand. Rousseau could justify this sentiment with the example of Sparta.

Sparta is another republic to which Rousseau frequently alludes. For most of its history, it had strong martial traditions and a more restrained foreign policy. Contrary to Rome, Sparta sometimes had the opposite problem of stagnating, especially as a population. Despite this issue, Sparta repeatedly found ways to adhere to its laws and increase its population and military prowess. Montesquieu recognizes Sparta’s ability to restore itself by describing how kings Agis and Cleomenes were able to restore their numbers through a rigorous adherence to law so that Sparta “regained it’s power it once had and again became formidable to all the Greeks” (Montesquieu 1999, 41). Sparta did expand eventually and eventually went into decline, much like Montesquieu predicted. However, the generally reserved foreign policy of the Spartans suggests that free states can exist without expanding. This may result in a type of “mediocrity” in the republic. This would not be a problem for Rousseau, provided that the republic achieved liberty and happiness for its citizens.

Having covered both major early works of Montesquieu's career, it is paramount to turn to Montesquieu’s magnum opus, *The Spirit of the Laws*.²⁸ This text is exemplary in its eloquence and its insights. By looking through the text, I will show Montesquieu’s full position on population and commerce and what types of regimes Montesquieu considers the best. Overall, despite specific critiques Montesquieu lays against commercial republics in Antiquity, commerce has a more significant role in the modern era, and Montesquieu has a greater appreciation of it.

²⁸ The analysis for Montesquieu’s thoughts on the Romans focused on the republican era as opposed to the imperial era. Since Rousseau is a republican it made sense to focus on Montesquieu’s thoughts on the Roman Republic over the Roman empire.

2.4. Spirit of the Laws: Population Concerns Yet Again

Before turning to the issues of virtue and commerce in Montesquieu's thought, this section will briefly cover the population issue in *The Spirit of the Laws*. While the issue of population has been covered extensively in *The Persian Letters* and has support from secondary literature that the views expressed by Usbek are Montesquieu's confirmation of this idea, can be readily found in *The Spirit of the Laws*, where Montesquieu speaks in his voice. To investigate Montesquieu's views on population, the place to start is Part 4, Book 23. This chapter will focus on populations, though a deeper dive into the *Spirit of the Laws* will be performed to learn about Montesquieu's thoughts on commerce and regimes. When looking at Book 23, the unique elements of Montesquieu's thoughts emerge.

In Book 23, Montesquieu suggests that the psychology of women can have an impact on the population as "the manner of thinking, the character, the passions, the humor, the caprice, the idea of preserving beauty, the pain of childbearing, and the fatigue of a too numerous family" serve to reduce propagation (Montesquieu 1989, 427). Montesquieu's suggestion emphasizes the decisive role that women can play in whether or not they want to have children, which contradicts the more simplistic accounts of those like John Locke, who suggest that human beings are hardwired to want to reproduce.²⁹ However, Montesquieu acknowledges in Chapter 3 of Book 23 that while other animals may have a more accessible time rearing children, since human children only "partake of reason in degrees," children also need nourishment and guidance, which is why the father and mother need to take care of the children until they are old enough (Montesquieu 1988, 428).

²⁹ This simplistic account will be examined in Chapter Three.

While Montesquieu places value on marriage for its ability to rear children, while “conjunctions” outside of marriage make the desire to raise children less likely (Montesquieu 1989, 428), in Chapter 4 of Book 23, Montesquieu makes some interesting observations about the nature of families in general. Montesquieu says that the family “is a sort of property; a man who has children of the sex that does not perpetuate it is never content until he has those of a sex who does” (Montesquieu 1989, 429). Montesquieu is clear that whatever the “first motives” for forming a family are, the family’s vital role is the continuation of the species.³⁰ What is of particular interest while reading Book 23 is that time and again, despite the concessions Montesquieu makes toward women, the father ultimately has the final decision-making power in the family. An example can be seen in Chapter 7 of Book 23, where Montesquieu says that the father can provide consent or not to their younger children getting married because, in part, the children are his property and because the father has a love for the children and does not want them to be overwhelmed by the passions of youth (Montesquieu 1989, 431). Despite the power of the father, there are still certain things that a family needs to thrive, and that is a comfortable life.

Montesquieu is adamant that marriage will only work if there is commodious living between the two, as economic difficulties can present issues for rearing or even having children (Montesquieu 1989, 433). Montesquieu acknowledges that the poor produce more children, but the quality of life for these children tends to be worse (Montesquieu 1989, 433). Is too much wealth making people less likely to want to have children? Montesquieu does not think this is the case. Chapter 15 of Book 23 details how the crafts can serve to grow the population. He begins

³⁰ Despite Montesquieu’s focus on the biological differences between men and women, Kra points out that Montesquieu does not use biological arguments to suggest inferiority or the need for complete submission (Kra 1984, 278).

by acknowledging how ancient republics in the past could be agrarian and heavily populated because the land was divided equally, and the people had enough to eat and thrive (Montesquieu 1986, 436). This aspiration seems idyllic, though Montesquieu points out that the land is not evenly divided in his day. Those who cultivate the land have leftover fruit, and the idle do not have the money to pay for the food. Hence, they need jobs in the crafts industry to receive money to buy food (Montesquieu 1989, 436). Commerce serves as a means of exchanging the necessary for the superfluous, as the cultivators are made to want things that Montesquieu acknowledges as superfluous (Montesquieu 1989, 436). Now, Rousseau might question why not just divide the land to have a greater proportionality or not have the cultivators give the idle food out of pity, but Montesquieu does not consider this.

Montesquieu then says, "Those machines whose purpose is to simplify the craft are not always useful," as some machines could reduce the number of workers (Montesquieu 1989, 436). Montesquieu even went on to complain about the water mills that were being created, as they "put an infinity of hands to rest, they have deprived many of people of the use of water, and they have made many lands lose their fertility" (Montesquieu 1989, 436-437). It seems then that Montesquieu wants to find a middle spot between returning to ancient republics and having machines take over much of the labor process. Montesquieu insists that machines can often be helpful, but if they reach a point where they start making more people idle, then it can be problematic. Has there been any civilization that has been able to navigate this tightrope? Montesquieu thinks the Romans, as usual, had the right idea about how to manage the population.

Montesquieu's analysis of the Romans from *The Spirit of the Laws* is about how the Romans tried to push for the propagation of children in their Republic and Empire only to run

into issues continuously. This is partly because the Romans were their own worst enemy. They would constantly engage in war and destroy numerous peoples, creating situations where “they wore themselves out” (Montesquieu 1989, 440). The censors were used to punish the unmarried and reward marriage, but the "corruption of manners" in Roman society resulted in the censors losing their power and marriages falling in reputation (Montesquieu 1989, 441). As the civil wars in Rome intensified, Caesar and Augustus tried to develop further methods that could be used to increase marriage and birth rates. Caesar would reward those with more children and give jewelry and other trinkets to mothers of large families. Augustus would penalize the unmarried and further reward the married, creating a system of laws known as Julian Laws, named after his daughter Julia (which is ironic considering she was unmarried) (Montesquieu 1989, 443-445). While this created tension between the married and the unmarried, the Julian Laws, or Lex Julia, would serve as part of the Roman civil law for centuries to come. From here, we can see that Montesquieu supports the use of the state to entice and punish people into marriage and having children. While France during his time may have had issues, the need for the government to help resolve the issue is beyond dispute.

2.5. The Issue of Commerce in the Spirit of the Laws

Now that much, if not most, of Montesquieu's thoughts on population have been laid out in the two primary texts, *The Persian Letters* and *The Spirit of the Laws*, the latter half of this chapter will gauge whether Montesquieu's solutions to the issue of population can withstand Rousseau's critique of commerce. To reiterate from the previous chapter, the luxury problem for Rousseau is that it hurts people's virtues, predisposing them to vice and shun responsibilities to the state, including having children. While it has been shown that both Rousseau and Montesquieu have apparent concerns about population, their solutions are in radical opposition.

Rousseau favors an agrarian republican state that emphasizes equal land and power distribution. Montesquieu, on the other hand, as will be shown, has much greater faith in the power of commerce and good governance to lift the population while maintaining a people willing to fight for their liberty. The question will not just be whether Montesquieu's plans can make citizens richer but can also make them virtuous in private and public settings. To answer these questions, this section will analyze Montesquieu's views of commerce in greater detail and determine whether his views fall under Rousseau's critique of commerce.

Throughout Montesquieu's significant works, he discusses commerce as an alleviation of the population issue. In Chapter 1, Part 4 of *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu speaks highly of commerce as it "cures destructive prejudices" and can form "gentler mores" (Montesquieu 1989, 338). However, Montesquieu does acknowledge that commerce "corrupts pure mores," though this unfortunate side effect is countered by its ability to soften "barbarous mores" because one of the natural effects of commerce is to lead to peace and to cultivate within individuals a love for exact justice as opposed to a type of banditry that can be found in other countries (Montesquieu 1989, 338-339). When looking at distinct types of governments, Montesquieu argues that monarchies engage in commerce for more luxurious results.

While this pursuit of luxury is suitable for monarchies, in the long run, it can cause ruin as well, as some commentators have noted Montesquieu's concerns about commerce.³¹ In contrast, governments, by the many, engage in commerce more frequently and with great enterprises in mind (Montesquieu 1989, 340-341). Despite the peaceable nature of commerce, Montesquieu admits that the interaction between politics and commerce is complicated, noting

³¹ See Boesche, Roger. "Fearing Monarchs and Merchants: Montesquieu's Two Theories of Despotism." *The Western Political Quarterly* (1990): 741-761. Boesche will note Montesquieu's ambivalence about commerce in other regimes and how commerce can cause a corruption of a people's political obligations as commerce rises in the Kingdom of France (Boesche 1990, 756-758).

how the conquests of Alexander the Great offered an exceptional pathway for commerce to blossom despite the brutality of the conquests (Montesquieu 1989, 364-366). In addition, Montesquieu notes how the prejudices and animosity of the Romans and Parthians severely hampered commerce between East and West (Montesquieu 1989, 385). How does one reconcile the peaceful nature of commerce while violence can often be linked to its expansion?

From the University of Michigan Law School, Robert Howse provides an interpretation to reconcile these conflicting tendencies. First, Howse emphasizes the two types of commerce, that of monarchy and the commerce of the many. Montesquieu prefers the commerce of the many because it focuses on the welfare of the many. In contrast, luxurious commerce only focuses on the few.³² However, wars of conquest, such as those initiated by Alexander the Great, increased the chance that “economic commerce” could take shape and allow for the softening of mores and the removal of “dangerous prejudices.”³³ Economic commerce may be helpful for many, but neither Montesquieu nor Howse suggests that commerce should be wholly unfettered and the merchants should reign supreme. As Montesquieu argues, “It is in countries of liberty that the trader finds innumerable obstacles; the laws never thwart him less than in countries of servitude” (Montesquieu 1989, 345). This passage demonstrates that while Montesquieu is prepared to bestow high praise on commerce, limitations on commerce are not an obstacle. One of the critical values that Montesquieu places on commerce is that it offers an outlet for the arts and an outlet for work and industry. The value of work is of critical importance as it can be used as a salve for population growth.

³² Howse, Robert. "Montesquieu on commerce, conquest, war, and peace." *Brook. J. Int'l L.* 31 (2005): 702-703.

³³ Howse 2005, 700-701.

Montesquieu argues in Part 4, Book 23, Chapter 28, that when a population has suffered due to wars, plagues, and other such issues, a bad government can worsen it. This government has large tracks of field uncultivated but is held by the king, nobles, clergy, and select citizens (Montesquieu 1989, 454). The solution is once again to emulate the Romans and to “distribute the lands to all the families who have nothing, provide for them the means of cultivating and clearing them (Montesquieu 1989, 454). This is not to be done out of charity but to ensure that work can be done. Montesquieu is so adamant about his work that he spends a chapter in Part 4 denouncing poor houses and almsgiving as not helpful to society. Montesquieu says, "A man is not poor because he has nothing, but because he does not work," and that one who relies on their craft over their land is more likely to develop riches in the long term (Montesquieu 1989, 455).

Now, the state is not to disregard those who may fall on their luck concerning employment, nor are the sick, the old, and the orphaned neglected (Montesquieu 1989, 455). Instead, Montesquieu argues that the state is needed to provide “an assured sustenance, nourishment, suitable clothing, and a kind of life which is not contrary to health" (Montesquieu 1989, 455). Now, a more prosperous state presupposes much industry, so a poor house or such regulation is suitable when issues emerge. However, for poorer countries, a poor house would not be practical for commercial life (Montesquieu 1989, 455). Montesquieu has confidence in money and labor as a redress to society’s woes, and the woes concerning the population are indisputable. Does Montesquieu’s analysis of commerce refute or overwhelm Rousseau’s critique of commerce? I argue that it does not for a variety of reasons.

The first reason Montesquieu’s analysis of commerce is not superior to Rousseau’s critique of commerce is that Montesquieu’s binary between luxurious and economic commerce is unstable. One of the core insights concerning Rousseau’s view of money is that it can hide and to

be used for reasons that it was not intended for (Rousseau 2005, 125-126). Mismanagement of money implies mismanagement of commerce, which means that the line between commerce being useful for commerce and commerce being a tool for luxury can be easily crossed. The other fundamental issue of commerce is that it, by necessity, requires sustained engagement and reliance on neighbors, which can produce a level of dependency. Rousseau's goal is to create a formidable state yet not inclined towards aggression against others.

Rousseau would agree that the imperialism of Alexander the Great was good for commerce. However, considering the wars and oppression that emerged from the other empires once he died, Rousseau suggests that the price of commerce is not worth it. Furthermore, if the line between commerce and luxury can be crossed, it will be crossed. In addition, Rousseau would agree with Montesquieu that providing land to working people so they could cultivate the land would help raise the population. However, while Montesquieu considers it a last resort, Rousseau considers it his first option. The other reason that Rousseau doubts commerce is that it needs to find a way to value superfluous things to be effective. Having examined Montesquieu's perspective on commerce, the final section of this chapter will examine the regime types laid out by Montesquieu. By examining their strengths and weaknesses, I hope to shed light on whether any regime can resist the problems that commerce can bring on martial and marital obligations.

2.6. The Best Regime

Given the significant concerns that Montesquieu has expressed about the military and the family, this section looks at how Montesquieu thinks that commerce can play a role in fulfilling these obligations, though noting how Rousseau's critique of commerce complicates Montesquieu's aspirations. Given the issues with commerce as a solution to population issues, there is also the idea proposed by Montesquieu that good governance is a solution. A good

government not only subordinates commerce and curtails its worst effects, but Montesquieu also supports the idea that a "benign government" could help raise the population. As this section looks at Montesquieu and Rousseau's views of good governance, the critical question will be answered: what kind of government does Montesquieu think is the best, and can it overcome Rousseau's critique of government? To effectively answer this question, it is vital to assess Montesquieu's view of governments, their role, and how they can come about. It is a simple task that is difficult to complete, as Montesquieu's views seem contradictory at times, and the secondary literature is divided on Montesquieu's actual views.

Before diving into the divided opinions of Montesquieu's commentators, it is essential to let the text speak for itself as much as possible before looking at the secondary literature. To figure out Montesquieu's view of good governance, this section will focus on Montesquieu's *on the Spirit of the Laws*. This book is Montesquieu's mature assessment of political life, and unlike *The Persian Letters*, the *Spirit of the Laws* is under Montesquieu's name. This does not make deciphering Montesquieu's views easy, but he felt confident enough to attach his name to whatever thought Montesquieu wrote in *The Spirit of the Laws*. Montesquieu's splendid work begins with an assessment of human beings.

In Book I of Part I, Montesquieu declares that Man "as a physical being is governed by invariable laws, like other bodies...he must guide himself, and yet he is a limited being; he is subject to ignorance and error, as are all finite intelligence," (Montesquieu 1989, 5). Not only is our knowledge limited and tentative, but human beings are subject to "a thousand passions" and can forget God, their nature, and the values of society, issues that the laws of religion can redress, philosophers and legislators, respectively (Montesquieu 1989, 5). Humans are for Montesquieu creatures that have limited knowledge but unlimited appetites. One could suppose that the next

move would be to compare humans like Hobbes as a species prepared to declare war against all. However, the situation becomes more complicated when looking at Montesquieu's view of the state of nature.

When considering human beings in a state of nature situation, Montesquieu describes them as “having the faculty of knowing rather than knowledge” and would focus on self-preservation rather than attempting to discover their origins. Humans would also be driven by a sense of weakness and timidity, and, contrary to Hobbes, they would much rather flee any disputes than engage in violent conflict, but curiosity and pleasure would draw people together to form societies (Montesquieu 1989, 6). What would Rousseau make of this state-of-nature argument as laid out by Montesquieu?

Given Rousseau's thoughts in *On the Discourse of Inequality*, the human condition would not be one in which weakness is contemplated, as humans would be robust enough to brave most things except for pain and hunger (Rousseau 1983, 123-125). Montesquieu's evidence for the timidity of human beings comes from observations made by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* (Montesquieu 1989, 6). Granted, Rousseau would agree that Hobbes's account of the state of nature is incorrect. However, from Rousseau's perspective, Montesquieu had smuggled sociality into the human condition since they would eventually meet to talk. This is illegitimate for Rousseau since it does not factor in a solitary condition. This condition would not be broken for sexual encounters since both parties would leave after encountering one another (Rousseau 1983, 128). Nevertheless, despite the issues that Rousseau would have with Montesquieu's view of the state of nature, Montesquieu continues his account by describing his views on the several types of regimes, assessing the strengths and weaknesses each possesses.

According to Montesquieu, there are three types of governments: “Republican, Monarchical, and Despotic,” where republican governments are power held by most or some of the people, monarchical involves the rule of one person "but by fixed and established laws" and a despotic government, where the law and government do not counteract the rule of fear person is controlled by one person "will and his caprices” (Montesquieu 1989, 10). According to Montesquieu, when the people have a body as a sovereign power, it is a democracy. If sovereignty is in the hands of a select few, then it will be an aristocratic republic (Montesquieu 1989, 10). Each type of government has unique ways of being ruined, and because of this issue, Montesquieu provides different methods by which the regimes can sustain themselves.

For democratic republics, Montesquieu argues that the vote on different issues needs to be on the lookout for being seduced by corruption or losing enthusiasm for public concerns (Montesquieu 1989, 14). When turning to aristocratic governments, Montesquieu is more critical of the regime type than democratic republics. Montesquieu argues that the best aristocratic republics are when the people who do not have power are small and not worth oppressing, unlike the civil slavery of the Polish aristocracy (Montesquieu 1989, 17).³⁴ Montesquieu says that the more closely an aristocracy looks like a democracy, the better it will be, while aristocracies become worse and the more they emulate monarchies (Montesquieu 1989, 17). Of the two republican types, Montesquieu favors democracies, but his views on Monarchies need to be examined as well.

When turning to Monarchies, Montesquieu argues that the nature of monarchical government is constituted by "intermediate, subordinate and dependent powers," with the most

³⁴ Commentary on Montesquieu’s view of aristocratic republics are slim. For an illuminating examination of Montesquieu’s thoughts on the topic, as well as his view of the Venetian Republic as a premier aristocratic republic, see Carrithers, David W. “Not so Virtuous Republics: Montesquieu, Venice, and the Theory of Aristocratic Republicanism.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52, no. 2 (1991): 245–68.

natural expression of intermediate power being nobles, as they can serve to channel the monarchy so that the prince does not operate by their capricious will and become despotic (Montesquieu 1989, 17-18). Montesquieu takes issue with removing the nobility. It invites despotism and insists that parliament or political bodies like parliament are of tantamount importance because they serve as “depositories of the law” (Montesquieu 1989, 19). Suppose there are no nobles and no laws. In that case, the state becomes despotic, and the only thing that could remotely serve as a despot is for there to be a religion, as seen in Spain and Portugal, countries which Montesquieu suggests fall under despotic regimes (Montesquieu 1989, 18-19). Under a despotic regime, the ruler follows his senses and becomes "lazy, ignorant and voluptuous," resulting in them having no desire to engage in public life and will instead have subordinates take over the tasks for them (Montesquieu 1989, 20). The nature of these governments shows a decrease of laws from republics to despotism. The principles of these governments, which make them act, also differ from regime type to regime type.

When looking at popular states (democratic republics), Montesquieu argues that they are driven by virtue (Montesquieu 1989, 22). Under a democratic republic, virtue is not only the regime that needs virtue to flourish but also has to maintain it with great arduousness because if the virtue of the regime is lost, it will be tough, if not impossible, to get it back.³⁵ This differs from a monarchy, which can quickly repair the damage that a prince causes due to negligence or bad counsel (Montesquieu 1989, 22). Concerning the nature of virtue, Montesquieu explains in Part 1, Book 5, Chapter 2 that it is the love of the republic itself, “it is a feeling and not a result of knowledge” (Montesquieu 1989, 42). The love that a republic expresses in a democracy is

³⁵ See Levy, Jacob T. "Beyond Publius: Montesquieu, liberal republicanism and the small-republic thesis." *History of Political Thought* 27, no. 1 (2006): 50-90. Rousseau recognizes that the size of the republic matters and acknowledges that if they become larger, they will look more like aristocracies and monarchies, which only serves to justify smaller republics in Rousseau's mind further (Levey 2006, 56).

manifested in a love of equality, for everyone contributing to a republic, and a love of frugality so that no one is too great economically compared to the other citizens (Montesquieu 1989, 43). Frugality and equality can establish a love for the homeland; however, looking closer, one can see that the path that democratic republics must take to establish equality and frugality is more complicated than it seems.

For equality and frugality to take hold in a democratic republic, society needs to establish them in the laws; this differs from Monarchy and Despotism in that the latter two regimes wish to pursue supremacy (Montesquieu 1989, 44). Montesquieu looks at educators like Lycurgus and Romulus to show how republics can only be established early on or when the people are so corrupt and dispirited that they must accept the remedies of the legislators (Montesquieu 1989, 45). In addition to the laws, the crucial element of instilling democratic tendencies within a populace is education. Montesquieu argues that education is needed in a republic since the political virtue required of a republic is essentially "a renunciation of oneself, which is always a painful thing" (Montesquieu 1989, 35). Political virtue is something that is, to a degree, unnatural to the human condition but not one that is impossible to instill. The minute control required to maintain these regimes means any misstep will be deadly to the republic in the long run.

Montesquieu assesses various popular states, such as Athens, Rome, and Carthage, and notes how they could not sustain themselves after losing their virtue and becoming ambitious (Montesquieu 1989, 22-23). There are no apparent signs of decline, but over time, the republican values disintegrate, with concepts such as maxim, rule, and vigilance becoming severity, constraint, and fear (Montesquieu 1989, 23). Frugality becomes associated with avarice, and the republic becomes a "cast off husk, and its strength is no more than the power of a few citizens

and the license of all” (Montesquieu 1989, 23). Montesquieu also says that while Ancient Greece held the major factor in governance as a virtue, in Montesquieu's own time, all people discuss is "manufacturing, commerce, finance, wealth, and even luxury" (Montesquieu 1989, 23). This quote is interesting because Rousseau expresses a similar sentiment in *Discourse on the Arts and the Sciences* (Rousseau 1997, 18). Both agree that republics require virtue, but while Rousseau sees the discussion as a sign of corruption, Montesquieu sees it as a historical change that may preclude popular states from genuinely emerging.

When turning to the aristocratic republics, virtue is still an important principle, but because aristocrats can operate with their laws effectively, what they need is moderation emerging from virtue and not a type of laziness so that the aristocrats do not try to repress the people or each other (Montesquieu 1989, 25). While a king may turn to the pomp and splendor of the court to impress the people, what is needed from aristocrats is modesty and simplicity of manners so that the aristocrats can blend in with the people and become obnoxious to them (Montesquieu 1989, 51). There are various ways that inequality can be worsened in an aristocratic republic, and they must be avoided.³⁶ Aristocrats must not produce laws that make them seem haughty to the people, such as the Romans' prohibition on patricians marrying plebians.

Also, they must distribute the wealth they gather to the people as much as possible, and the aristocrats must not be the ones to levy taxes or engage in commerce as the nobles will be seen to be corrupt or they will favor policies that will make them corrupt (Montesquieu 1989, 52-53). To prevent these issues from appearing in an aristocratic republic, aristocrats must always

³⁶ Regardless of Montesquieu's thoughts on the best regime, Montesquieu is contemptuous of most aristocratic republics, besides the Romans, and would be unlikely to maintain the martial and marital obligations needed for political life. When visiting Italy, Montesquieu generally deplored the state of the small Italian republics (Carrithers 1991, 263-264).

pay their debts and have no right to primogeniture or any inheritance laws that aggrandize the family over the republic (Montesquieu 1989, 53). While the methods of expressing political virtue differ in a democratic or aristocratic republic, both types of republics depend on virtue to sustain their regimes. This is not the case with monarchies.

Under a monarchy, the state can work without much consideration for political virtue. Moreover, Montesquieu points out that the history books show how monarchies are filled with “ambition in idleness, meanness in arrogance, the desire to enrich oneself without work” and a host of other issues that make political virtue in individuals a rarity (Montesquieu 189, 25-26). Instead, monarchies are driven by the principle of honor, by the “prejudice of each person and each condition,” which, combined with the force of laws, can serve as something political virtue (Montesquieu 1989, 26). The principle of honor allows the different ranks' ambitions to push their self-interest. At the same time, this would be catastrophic for republics under a monarchy; it can serve the common good and be quickly repressed if one person tries to go too far (Montesquieu 1989, 26). Since everyone jostles for prestige in a monarchy, Montesquieu suggests that the education of monarchy will teach that “a certain nobility must be in the virtues, a certain frankness in the mores, and a certain politeness in the manners” (Montesquieu 1989, 31).

This education involves emulating virtue and truthfulness for the sake of reputation and ensuring that the drive for honor can be confirmed so that a person will conform to their rank (Montesquieu 1989, 34). To ensure a monarchy thrives, Montesquieu suggests that the laws must sustain the nobility and the hereditary to serve as a bond between the people and the king. In addition, commerce must be allowed so that the prince's needs can be met while ensuring that the

nobles stay away from commerce as much as possible (Montesquieu 1989, 56).³⁷ While Montesquieu has provided a detailed analysis of despotism, the likelihood of such a regime being Montesquieu's preferred type is slim to none. With republics and monarchies explained, the question that needs to be assessed is which type of regime Montesquieu preferred.

One of the more challenging questions in the Montesquieu scholarship is ascertaining what Montesquieu believes is the best regime.³⁸ All regimes have different historical circumstances that impact them in the long term, so just because Montesquieu prefers one type of regime does not necessarily imply that it will come about. However, secondary literature still needs to make such guesses. Robert Howse, for instance, argues that Montesquieu favors a federated government of republics.³⁹ Howse acknowledges that this may seem unlikely since in Book 9, Chapter 3, Montesquieu argues that republics of equal power are less likely to surrender that power out of jealousy and fear of their neighbor (Montesquieu 1989, 133). However, Howse believes that when an empire conquers and breaks down, there is a chance that a federation of republics can be formed.⁴⁰ This proposition is highly contingent and unlikely to happen. Howse's example of a potential federated republic forming after Alexander the Great's empire is against the historical reality of one empire breaking down and numerous smaller empires taking its

³⁷ Montesquieu does not believe that monarchy and commerce are antithetical. Evidence shows that Montesquieu was confident that France was rising as a commercial power (De Dijn 2014, 36). Rousseau would agree, though disagree on the desirability of France's commercial rise.

³⁸ As mentioned before, a complete answer to what Montesquieu believes is the best regime is outside the scope of this dissertation. Some like Paule Rahe have made the case for Montesquieu as a "liberal republican" Rahe, Paul Anthony. *Montesquieu and the logic of liberty: war, religion, commerce, climate, terrain, technology, uneasiness of mind, the spirit of political vigilance, and the foundations of the modern republic*. Yale University Press, 2009. For a perspective that makes the case that Montesquieu had greater monarchal sympathies, see De Dijn Annelien. "Was Montesquieu a Liberal Republican?" *The Review of Politics* 76, no. 1 (2014): 21–41.

³⁹ Howse 2005. This is the overarching thesis of Howse's article.

⁴⁰ Howse 2005, 701.

place. Even if an empire emerges and takes control of the land, this does not mean the transition will be good. To better examine the regime type Montesquieu preferred, it would be helpful to examine the one that Montesquieu believed offered the most liberty in his day, England.⁴¹

2.7. Conclusion

While Rousseau benefitted greatly from Montesquieu's analysis of political regimes, Montesquieu's analysis of the martial and martial obligations is still susceptible to the critiques made by Rousseau. The attempt to use commerce to raise the population would only work in the short term, as the creation of wealth would give way to luxury, decreasing the necessity and likelihood of having children. Monarchies, driven by honor and ambition, would have enough children to be reputable. However, the treatment of the children would run the risk of being underdeveloped since the children would be reared for the sake of external appearances and not for the good of the children themselves. At the heart of Rousseau's critique of Montesquieu is that Montesquieu believes that political virtue is dead in the modern world, and to achieve liberty and prosperity, there was an emphasis on laws and commerce. Rousseau insists that if commerce is pursued as a lifestyle for any given regime, then political virtue will never be able to form. The tranquility in Montesquieu's "liberty" is the kind that could be found in any despotic regime, given the vacuousness of Montesquieu's conception.

It is not my intent to slight Montesquieu. Montesquieu makes an excellent critique of republics and their propensity for expansion, especially when they have good laws. Rousseau did not have an adequate response to the expansion of republics despite his wishes for the republic, which Rousseau envisioned to stay small forever. Despite this problem for Rousseau,

⁴¹ This task may not be fruitful since Montesquieu recognizes England as an anomaly compared to other monarchies. See Manicas, Peter T. "Montesquieu and the eighteenth-century vision of the state." *History of Political Thought* 2, no. 2 (1981): 313-347. Manicas suggests that England's political structure and its handling of commerce differs widely from how other Monarchies perceived and handled liberty and commerce (Manicas 1981, 323-324).

Montesquieu admits that commerce corrupts and softens people's obligations toward each other over time. For Montesquieu to admit to the death of political virtue would be seen by Rousseau as an unwillingness to consider the possibilities the future holds. Furthermore, while Rousseau would appreciate Montesquieu's love for laws, Rousseau is right to insist that for laws to work best, the citizen needs to have a genuine love for a law, which requires political virtue. In addition, Rousseau and Montesquieu observe the role of politics in family life; if political virtue declines, this can cause familial virtue to decline as well. Still, others appreciate commercial life and believe that familial life and martial prowess can be upheld, such as the English philosopher John Locke. For my next chapter, I will evaluate John Locke's perspective on commerce to see whether his analysis can overcome Rousseau's critique of commerce as an enervating effect on the virtues necessary for the military and family.

Chapter Three. The People of Commerce: Rousseau's Critique of John Locke

3.1. Introduction

Having assessed and addressed the problems with Montesquieu's thoughts concerning population, this chapter will analyze and compare the thoughts of the esteemed English philosopher John Locke. Famous for his thoughts on social contract and property, John Locke's emphatic standpoint on the value of commerce and individual liberty contrasts with Rousseau's emphasis on virtue and achieving the general will. The primary questions this chapter will address are: what are Locke's thoughts on family, and what will help the population grow according to him? Are Locke's thoughts on the marital and marital responsibilities susceptible to the critique that Rousseau makes concerning the detriment of commerce? As someone so famous for arguing for private property, the preliminary thought is that Locke will argue that the rise of commercial societies could only help people shoulder the necessary obligations of political life, though Rousseau would say otherwise. By not adequately offering a way to handle luxury, the virtue of the people in a "Lockean Society" will become corrupted politically and impact families' procreation and the citizen soldier's stability. Before proving both positions in the chapter, I will provide a quick roadmap for how Locke's thoughts will be analyzed.

As with earlier chapters, I will investigate Locke's thoughts on the martial and marital responsibilities by beginning with his work as a primary source. I will rely on Locke's *Two Treatises on Government* for discussions on population and commerce. *The First Treatise of Government*, while associated with Locke's critique of Robert Filmer's view of the divine right of kings, is an excellent example of Locke's thought on the dynamics between men and women and the nature of the relationship concerning the family. Locke continues this investigation of the family in his *Second Treatise* while also investigating the state of nature, the notion of property,

and its significance in causing populations to grow. In these texts, Locke proposes naturalization to solve any population's woes.¹ Rousseau later rejects this idea as a solution because it can affect the ability to achieve a general will. I will then show how Locke's account of the family takes the harmony of all family members for granted without considering how a good political regime can help organize the family.² In addition, while Locke is not opposed to engaging in conflict against enemies of the people and does see the need for citizens to fight to maintain their rights should the government become oppressive, the predominant focus on the individual leaves the education and training of the citizen soldier as a haphazard process at best. A critical flaw of Locke's defense of a commercial commonwealth is that it does not show the necessity for citizens to be soldiers.³

3.2. Locke vs. Rousseau on the State of Nature

Before delving into Locke's thoughts on commerce and the family, it is imperative to quickly assess Locke's view of human beings and the similarities and differences between Locke's thoughts and Rousseau's. The state of nature for Locke is not a Hobbesian nightmare of violence and death, nor is it the paradise as described by Rousseau in *The Discourse on Inequality*. Locke's state of nature is a place where people are in a state of freedom to do what they want with their persons and their property (Locke 1980, 8). It is also a place of equality, not

¹ Resnick argues that Locke is motivated to establish a commercial society and opposes the classical republicanism promoted by people like Rousseau (Resnick 1987, 369). Resnick summarizes Locke's position in the following manner: "Locke was committed to the creation of an expanding commercial society which required a growing and disciplined labor force. Locke's neglect of the classical republican tradition can be seen as a judgment that it was essentially irrelevant to the task of forging a powerful and prosperous liberal society" (Resnick 1987, 382).

² In fact, Locke believes the opposite. The family has the formative power over political society, a position in contradiction to Rousseau and Montesquieu. See Pfeffer, Jacqueline L. "The Family in John Locke's Political Thought." *Polity* 33, no. 4 (2001): 593-619.

³ See Carter, April. "Liberalism and the obligation to military service." *Political Studies* 46, no. 1 (1998): 68-81. Part of the reason this chapter lacks John Locke's views on martial obligations is because he does not lay them out. Carter notes one discussion from paragraph 139 of *the Second Treatise*, about the need for the army to have absolute control, but this does not explain why the soldier should give up their life (Carter 1998, 72-74).

necessarily in natural equality such as intellect or beauty, but in a state where the power dynamics are not oppressive, with one person dominating the other. This equality is proven through mutual reciprocity, a naturalized version of "The Golden Rule" (Locke 1980, 8-9). Just because it is a state of freedom does not make it a state of license, as no one can violate the life and property of another. If anyone should transgress against another, Locke argues that a person has the right to retaliate against them until they achieve satisfaction (Locke 1980, 9-10). From what has been described so far, there are many things that Rousseau would disagree with about Locke's view of the state of nature, namely that some aspects of society are presumed to occur in the state of nature.

For starters, the naturalized version of the golden rule presupposes religious influences in the state of nature. This is an idea that Rousseau would not have assumed true in the state of nature. In addition, reason is already fully developed in the state of nature, bringing forth basic rules in the mind that human beings should follow. Rousseau would argue that the presumption of a fully developed reasoning faculty in the state of nature is a presumption that Rousseau is not willing to accept. What also strains plausibility is the established notion of property already in effect in the state of nature. Property is another critical element in both Locke's and Rousseau's thoughts, and by investigating their thoughts on property, it will be easier to assess Locke and Rousseau's differing thoughts on a person's obligations to society and the value of commerce.

3.3. Locke and Rousseau on Commerce

To prove the notion of property, Locke argues that the world was given to the people by God to be used in common by everyone, as the fruits of the trees and the animals are not made by man (Locke 1980, 18-19). Human beings have control over their own body, and with their body or "person," they can labor to acquire the goods they need to survive (Locke 1980, 19). As

Locke argues, when doing an activity such as collecting acorns for substance, the item becomes your property when you put the labor when you collect it, just when the “Indian” in the New World can lay claim to the deer once they begin to hunt the deer (Locke 1980, 19-20). This linking of labor to property is intuitive and could help justify specific *personal property*. However, Locke understands that the concept becomes trickier regarding the land itself.⁴⁵

Locke insists that when it comes to the land itself, a person can own as much as one "tills, plants, improves, cultivates and can use the product" (Locke 1980, 21). In addition, although God gave the earth as a common good to human beings, the labor they put into the land that ensures human flourishing belongs to the one who puts in the effort for the land.⁶ In addition, Locke argues that in the state of nature, the land is so vast and abundant that any parcel taken from one person could not be of much inconvenience to the rest of humanity, given the large amount of land left over (Locke 1980, 21). Before the advent of civil society, Locke argued that when people claimed the land, there was a certain level of moderation, a "measure" that ensured that a person could appropriate land without harming their fellow persons (Locke 1980, 22). Furthermore, Locke points out how a person who tilled and cultivated ten acres of land would have as much food as if they were to rely on one hundred acres of land that was not cultivated

⁴This dissertation will operate under the notion, at the bare minimum, John Locke is a theist. For further elaboration of this position see Dunn, John. *The Political Thought of John Locke: An historical account of the argument of the 'Two Treatises of Government'*. Cambridge University Press, 1982. See also Gardner, E. Clinton. "John Locke: Justice and the social compact." *Journal of Law and Religion* 9, no. 2 (1993): 347-371. For a perspective that challenges John Locke's sincerity as a theist see Zuckert, M. P. (2002). *Launching liberalism: On Lockean political philosophy*. University Press of Kansas. Whether Locke is a genuine theist or not is outside the scope of this dissertation. For John Locke, much of his political philosophy only by appeals to the divine.

⁵ Olivecrona, Karl. "Appropriation in the State of Nature: Locke on the Origin of Property." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35, no. 2 (1974): 211-230.

⁶ Olivecrona points that while Locke's ultimate justification for private property is through appealing to God, Locke also relies on Grotius and Pufendorf to an extent (Olivecrona, 1974, 219-221).

(Locke 1980, 24). In addition to the sheer abundance of land and the effects of cultivation, another element of property that impacted how much was accumulated was the waste problem.

When it comes to the goods that human beings truly need, Locke argues that many things are provided by nature with their built-in limitations, namely that goods can spoil and become useless to the well-being of human beings. Locke pays close attention to food, describing how a person can collect as much as they want so long as it can be used; otherwise, a person collecting the food and letting it spoil "took more than his share, and robbed others" (Locke 1980, 28). Now, the problem of spoiling could be solved by trading different goods, such as plums for acorns, who could then use the food to trade for things found pleasing, such as "nuts for a piece of metal" or "wool for a sparkling pebble or a diamond" and from this, we can see that nonperishable items could be used as a source of trade (Locke 1980, 28). With the introduction of non-perishable exchange, the solution to the problem of waste can be resolved through the introduction of money.

Locke's assessment of the value of money is more complicated than it may seem at first glance. On the one hand, Locke acknowledges how mediums of money, such as gold and silver, can help solve spoiling since the metal can be used to exchange for goods (Locke 1980, 28-29). On the other hand, the invention of money allows communities to enlarge their possessions past the point of necessity. Locke describes a scenario in which an island with a hundred families but plenty of animals, fruits, and vegetables would not actively go out of its way to find a source of money if the funds were unavailable (Locke 1980, 29). However, because people can make money out of silver and gold (or in our day paper), merely because people have come together and made money necessary through human consent, the ability to own possessions has increased

incredibly (Locke 1980, 29). This is not a problem for Locke, provided that there is no waste, but there is a problem that Locke tacitly acknowledges concerning the gathering of property.

Locke explains that with the introduction of money came the increase of "people and stock," creating a situation where land would become scarce and, by extension, "valuable" (Locke 1980, 27). For Locke, there is a link between the use of money and the population increase. To ensure that the families and communities do not conflict with one another, they begin to form compacts and agreements that establish and respect the property rights of others, giving up their claim of "common right" to the earth (Locke 1980, 28). While the land is claimed and shifted over to a civil or social right instead of a natural right, Locke does note that there are many parts of the "new world" that have not been claimed by civil societies and are currently being wasted as it lies in common, followed by the exciting comment from Locke that "this can scarcely happen among the part of mankind that have consented to the use of money," (Locke 1980, 27). Before assessing Rousseau's critique of property, Locke's comment and general analysis of money require further analysis.

Locke's analysis of money is intriguing for a variety of reasons. One is that, as mentioned before, Locke suggests that human beings could flourish without cash in certain circumstances. His hypothetical island, one on which families could have enough food, drink, and shelter to take care of themselves while also finding an equilibrium where waste is avoided, could function without the use of money, provided there is enough space. However, waste causes money, which then intensifies a desire to acquire. Again, Locke is explicit that the accumulation of goods is not wrong. There is, however, a problem of space. Locke supposes a clear connection between money and the growth of people and stock, presuming that a more commercial lifestyle will

necessitate an increase in the population that will require the law to rectify such quandaries.⁷

This is good, but how can the laws handle a growing population?

Locke suggests that the new world can serve as a way for the excess population to leave and cultivate unused land. All of this is to say that the link Locke sees between commercial activity and population differs significantly from Rousseau's assessment. For Locke, pursuing commercial activity will stimulate population growth and will not serve as a depressant in the long run as in Rousseau's perspective, because there is a link between population and the use of money, a different type of anxiety emerges compared to Rousseau. Instead of being concerned that the population will eventually cease, Locke sees an aggressive expansion over time that requires movement to alleviate the situation. The problem for Locke is overpopulation, not underpopulation. Locke does not elaborate on whether population growth eventually reaches an equilibrium, or the world becomes overcrowded, resulting in conflicts. Despite this analysis, Rousseau is fundamentally at odds with Locke's interpretation of property and the importance of commerce. To investigate Rousseau's view of property, it is essential to delve once again into Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*.

As discussed in Chapter One, Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* provides an in-depth analysis of Rousseau's view of the human condition both within and outside the state of nature. While the first chapter covered the first half of the discourse, we can turn our attention to the problem of property for Rousseau and why it presents problems. In part two of the discourse, Rousseau declares: "The first person who, having enclosed a plot of land, took it into his head to say *this is mine* and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil

⁷ The way that Locke ultimately envisions a commercial society is up for debate. See Wood, Neal. *John Locke and agrarian capitalism*. Univ of California Press, 1984. Others reject Wood's agrarian perspective and point out Locke's appreciation for Holland's ability to trade (Resnick 1987, 374-376).

society,” and that a host of “crimes, wars, and murders” could have been prevented if someone opposed this first move of private property and had reiterated that the land belonged to everyday use (Rousseau 1983, 140). Despite this lament about the birth of private property, Rousseau does believe that such a step in the development of humans was inevitable and that the development of the idea of private property would have “arisen successively” and “was not formed all at once in the human mind,” (Rousseau 1983, 140). From this, the following can be said about Rousseau's view of property. In general, there is some common property to the land that all humans have, a common right that in the past was abandoned for private property. Furthermore, this idea of private property was not instantly known by the people in the state of nature, as argued by Locke. Time and effort were needed for this idea to flourish. What were those steps?

Rousseau's account of the development of private property up to what he calls “the hut stage” has been discussed in Chapter One. However, human sociality developed in response to threats from predators and natural disasters, which incentivized humans to use tools and resources to combat environmental problems. Eventually, humans would learn to work together slowly but surely to hunt more giant animals and develop tools to improve hunting and shelter. Along the way, the relationships between men and women would intensify, allowing for “sweet sentiments” that would make them stay longer and have children together (Rousseau 1983, 140-142). This middle stage, or “middle position,” as Rousseau called it, is between the “indolence of our primitive state and the petulant activity of our egocentrism” (Rousseau 1983, 145). As long as people lived simple lives in their huts, or, as Rousseau says, “as long as they applied themselves exclusively to tasks that a single individual could do and to the arts that did not require the cooperation of several hands, they lived as free, healthy, good and happy as they could in accordance with their nature,” (Rousseau 1983, 145). This contentment would

eventually fall apart with the increasing specialization of tasks in the community and the rise of agriculture.

Rousseau argues that equality would fall apart as soon as other people were needed for different tasks. As metallurgy and agriculture were introduced into the world, they formed a “great revolution” that allowed for the wilderness to be transformed into “smiling fields which had to be watered by men’s sweat, and in which slavery and misery were soon to germinate and grow with the crops,” (Rousseau 1983, 145). Rousseau needs to provide an exact description of how metallurgy and agriculture came to exist among humans. There is a chance encounter here and there, and slowly but surely, humans can cultivate the earth for metal and food (Rousseau 1983, 146). As a result of the increase in the production of metals, the people who worked on the metals needed more time to work in the fields or collect food in general. As a result of this tension, a form of trade begins to appear between the metal workers and the farmers so that the metal workers can have enough foodstuff (Rousseau 1983, 146). The emergence of property begins to take shape from this cultivation of land. Rousseau explicitly agrees with Locke's connection between labor and property, saying it is impossible to imagine property appearing as an idea except through physical labor, and the one who cultivates the land has the right to the land (Rousseau 1983, 146-147). Again, Rousseau agrees with Locke's analysis of the development of property and exchange, though the difficulties will soon become insurmountable.

While Rousseau acknowledges Locke's analysis, there are specific problems that cannot be avoided with the establishment of private property. For instance, even if the private property distribution were equal per person, different individuals' natural aptitudes and talents would lead to unequal outcomes. Rousseau explains that as “the strongest did the most work; the most adroit turned theirs to better advantage; the most ingenious found ways to shorten their labor,” the

natural inequality of people's talents would be coupled with a socialization process that would make differences between people "more noticeable, more permanent in their effects, and begin to influence the fate of private individuals in the same proportion (Rousseau 1983, 147). Locke acknowledges the possibility that people will accumulate more goods than others. But what of it! Locke insists that the problem of property is not collecting goods but letting them go to waste. Rousseau, on the other hand, thinks that the difference in the accumulation of property is detrimental to human beings because it exerts social consequences that are destructive.

As human beings develop their natural talents, a sense of comparison, *amour propre*, begins to develop between people. It would result in situations where humans would flaunt their natural abilities or pretend that they had specific talents to start with (Rousseau 1983, 147). From this drive for distinction and the willingness to deceive rose the distinction in human psychology between "Being something and appearing to be something," creating deceptive roles that can only find gratification through others. It creates situations where a person becomes "two-faced and crooked with some, imperious and harsh with others, and puts him in the position to abuse everyone he needs when he cannot make them fear him" (Rousseau 1983, 148).⁸ The accumulation of property is not a simple accumulation of goods but of status.

This growth of status can create a deceptive mask between people and genuine hatred that can begin to rot between groups who have more or less than each other. The problem became even more difficult with inheritances as one group would still get land while the poorer group would acquire nothing. This would result in increasing conflict and violence, with the rich attempting to subjugate the weaker for their pleasure while the poor would act as brigands

⁸ While *amour propre* has traditionally been viewed as a purely negative phenomenon, some scholars have strived to reveal a more positive side to *amour propre*. See Dent, Nicholas JH. "Rousseau on amour-propre: NJH Dent." In *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, vol. 72, no. 1, pp. 57-74. University College London: The Aristotelian Society, 1998.

(Rousseau 1983, 148). The emergence of land property and accumulation of goods creates a social tension that would erupt into the worst of wars, producing murder and violence on a continuous level.

Locke does not foresee a war as property would emerge. Still, even he foresaw that instability over property rights would cause a drastic change from the state of nature into civil society. So far, we have looked at Locke's perspective on human beings and their control over their stuff. To fully appreciate the political thought of both Locke and Rousseau, the family must be examined, as it is the first social unit where a person (a parent) has some measure of control over another human being (a child). Analyzing the family will help enrich the discussion about the similarities of Locke and Rousseau's social contract and whether Locke or Rousseau effectively analyzed the population in a political society

3.4. Locke on families

Both of Locke's treatises attempt to reduce the patriarchal power of the father. This can be seen in many places in the *First Treatise*, such as Chapter II, "Paternal and Regal Power," Chapter V, "Of Adam's Title to Sovereignty by the Subjection of Eve," Chapter VI, "Adam's Title by Fatherhood," and Chapter VII "Of Fatherhood and Property" (Locke 1988).⁹ These chapters show an apparent attempt to include women in familial responsibilities and argue against sovereignty over family and country based on the title of Father alone.¹⁰ When we approach the

⁹ For more on the debate between Filmer and Locke see Kelly, Kristin A. "Private family, private individual: John Locke's distinction between paternal and political power." *Social Theory and Practice* 28, no. 3 (2002): 361-380. Kelly succinctly summarizes Filmer's position: "Filmer literally believed that political relations and family relations should be understood as coming out of a singular hierarchical order. For him, paternal and political power are not just similar, they are indistinguishable" (Kelly 2002, 363).

¹⁰ It is still debatable how much equality between the sexes Locke believed was good. For the perspective of Locke as a proto feminist, see Butler, Melissa A. "Early liberal roots of feminism: John Locke and the attack on patriarchy." *American Political Science Review* 72, no. 1 (1978): 135-150.

Second Treatise, Locke expands on his notion of parental power, explicitly changing it back to Paternal Power in Chapter VI.

In this Chapter, Locke notes that while the Bible commands children to obey their parents, fathers have tried to gather all the power for themselves when the responsibilities for child rearing are for both parents (Locke 1980, 31). The mother and father are co-equal in their responsibility of raising their children into rational and free adults. However, this is more of a qualitative assessment of the population rearing. This is because children are not able to take care of themselves until they reach "the age of reason" and therefore need to be, under the law of nature, the parents are obligated to "preserve, nourish and educate the children (Locke 1980, 32). Once again, Locke insists upon a natural obligation towards parenting, a premise neither Rousseau nor Montesquieu is prepared to accept. As discussed previously, both French thinkers are prepared to accept that parents can shirk their responsibilities both in and out of the state of nature.¹¹ While Locke justifies his appeal to obligation through the Bible, this appeal may not be persuasive to a non-Christian audience. This assumption of God-given rights significantly impacts Locke's thoughts on tending to children.

The primary obligation is that parents, but more importantly the father, not act as despots towards their children but should instead look to maintain the children until they reach a point where they can be considered free, usually when the child can understand and follow the law, whether it is the laws of nature or the laws that make up a country (Locke 1980, 33). As soon as the child reaches a point where they can effectively mature and take responsibility for themselves, then the authority that a father has over their child dissolves. Obligations towards

¹¹ The presumption of harmony in the family is also challenged by Kristin Kelly. Kelly takes issue with Locke underplaying the possibility of violence that can occur in the family. Even though Locke's system allows the state to serve as an "umpire" in political society, the family is separated from this supervision (Kelly 2002, 372-373).

parents remain in effect and must be obeyed by the child. Despite this obedience, the father has limitations over a child.

Much of the secondary literature has attempted to determine parents' central role over children and, by extension, their place in political society. In the past, it has been suggested that amid the English social contract theorists, Locke, unlike Sidney and Tyrrell, was willing to depart from patriarchal thought and emphasize a more individualistic account of people (Butler 1978). Others have argued that Locke's position is not as anti-patriarchal as suggested by previous scholars. Jacqueline L. Pfeffer argues that Locke is attempting to accomplish two goals: firstly, to show that the familial is not synonymous to the political, as seen in the thought of Sir Robert Filmer, while the second goal is to establish the necessity of the family as a stepping stone on the way for the political society to be formed (Pfeffer 2001, 597-599). The first goal is evident from the beginning as John Locke repeatedly affirms the limitations on the father's power. He does this by affirming that the control over a child is not just the father's responsibility but that of both parents, noting how in parts of the "New World" the indigenous population frequently gave greater authority to the mother concerning the family (Locke 1980, 36). In addition to sharing sovereignty with their spouse, the father's rule is not like a king over their subject, able to control them past the point of maturity and of reason. Instead, Locke frequently links the father's rule to that of a tutor, providing for the child's needs not just in the body but also in the mind.

Locke describes this tutelary power of the father in the following way: "His command over his children is but temporary and reaches not to life and property: it is but some help to the weakness and imperfection of their nonage, a discipline necessary to their education" (Locke 1980, 36). The father must help educate the youth to appreciate their liberties and be prepared to

be reasonable and free adults. On the other hand, Pfeffer insists that the goal of Chapter VI of the *Second Treatise* is to establish that the family is a necessary component for the development of society. Why is this the case? When turning to Chapter VII, Locke elaborates further on the relationship between men and women and the vital role that the family must play.

The relationship between men and women, or what Locke refers to as "Conjugal society," is the "communion and right in one another's bodies as is necessary to its chief end procreation" (Locke 1980, 43). For Locke, continuing the species is the primary goal of society between men and women, though he acknowledges it is not the only goal. The relationship comes with "mutual support and assistance, and a communion of interests too, as necessary to unite their care and affection, but also necessary to their common offspring"(Locke 1983, 43). It is not only the procreation of the species that the mother and father are attempting to accomplish but also the continuation of the species. This task involves a great deal of time, patience, and investment. Human beings are unique in their procreation because, unlike other mammals, the development of the young does not require as much investment. Locke discusses how animals who rely on eating grass, like deer, for example, have a conjunction that lasts as long as the copulation. Once the young animal is born, it can rely on its mother's milk briefly and then turn to the grass to feed itself (Locke 1980, 43). The father, upon finishing copulation, has no genuine concern for the young or the female and will depart, much in the manner that Rousseau suggests in his discourse. Locke complicates this analysis by drawing a link to human beings and "beasts of prey."

Locke draws a link between humans and beasts of prey based on how they care for their young. This is because the beasts of prey have a more "laborious, as well as more dangerous way of living," and because of this, the male needs to help the female take care of the young until the young are old enough to fend for themselves (Locke 1980, 43). Similarly, a human child cannot

survive by itself, and the coordination of the man and the woman is necessary for the continued existence of the child until the child reaches full maturity (Locke 1980, 43). In addition, the frequency in which humans can copulate creates situations where the mother can bring another child into the world before the previous child has reached an age of maturity (Locke 1980, 43). Due to the frequency that a human woman can get pregnant, the man will feel obligated to provide and stay with the family until the children come of age (Locke 1980, 44). Locke's insistence upon the obligation men have towards the young has been critiqued by Rousseau. Still, the comparison of humans to beasts of prey does provide different reasons for why the human family stays around longer than the average mammal. The function and responsibility of the family have been addressed with enough depth. Another essential element of the family that requires analysis is duration. How long is a family expected to last, and can it be broken up at a given point?

When looking at the family, Locke argues that the husband and wife have different roles and responsibilities as they have different wills. For instance, Locke thinks that because men are "abler and stronger," they get to have the "last determination" when deciding (Locke 1980, 44). With that said, the husband is not considered an absolute monarch, and Locke is clear that the husband has no control over the wife's property and no more control over her than she has power over him (Locke 1980, 44).

Locke's analysis of the family in the state of nature can help push forward a discussion on his view of the social contract while allowing Rousseau to voice his critique of Locke's society. Despite the depth of Locke's analysis, certain assumptions about the dynamics of husband and wife are supported by theistic premises that are primarily taken for granted. The idea that a father and mother would feel an almost naturalistic impulse to rear children is not something Rousseau

takes for granted, demonstrating that Locke still incorporates many societal expectations that, as Rousseau and Montesquieu pointed out in their work, obscures the analysis of the state of nature. This faulty view of the family will impact Locke's perspective on the social contract.

3.5. Locke and Rousseau on the Social Contract

Having examined the family, Locke examines how a state of nature becomes increasingly depleted and why a social contract is needed. As far back as Chapter II, Locke provides why people need a civil government. A significant problem in the state of nature is that everyone has the executive power to punish those who attempt one's life, liberty, or property (Locke 1980, 9). Locke acknowledges an objection that could be made that "self-love will make men partial to themselves and their friends: and on the other side, that ill-nature, passion, and revenge will carry them too far in punishing others" (Locke 1980, 12). While Locke has qualms with those who use this objection as an excuse for absolute monarchy, Locke is ready to admit that the objection requires a "proper remedy" found only in civil government (Locke 1980, 12). With the advent of a civil government, there can be judges who can hear different grievances and, are less influenced by passions, can provide a more equitable solution to the victim and the criminal. Furthermore, the desire to preserve the acquired property will incentivize people to escape the state of nature and form a civil society.

Instead of the natural right of the individual to pursue justice, the community comes together to establish laws and standards for different offenses while having magistrates from the community who can enact the punishments or resolve the disputes (Locke 1980, 46-47). This may seem like a loss for the individual natural right, but given the fact that the laws and standards for society are established by the people coming into this social contract and having laws that the individual agreed to, or a representative of the person makes the law for the society.

The desire for rules that can regulate punishments or disputes more equitably, coupled with property rights concerns, are two major catalysts for a group of people to form a community and a political society. However, this only addresses the problems that cause people to want to form a political society. What also needs examination is the type of social contract that Locke thinks people should form and the kind of society created when the social contract is completed. By examining these elements of the social contract, it will be easier to see how Locke believed commerce, the family, and the population should be handled in a political society.

Locke argues in Chapter VII that people form political societies with the overarching goal of having a “comfortable, safe and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any, that are not of it,” (Locke 1980, 52). This is the aspiration that Locke imagines people would and should follow in creating a political community. The social contract involves acquiring external goods such as peace, safety, and property preservation. There is no concern with the population, unlike how Rousseau frequently brought the question to attention in his corpus. As Locke envisioned, the commonwealth also operates by the rule of the majority, not the whole. Locke argues that the myriads of accidents in health or business are so numerous that requiring legislation to be operated by the whole of society is untenable, and it is more efficient and reasonable to rely on the majority (Locke 1980, 53). As Locke laid out, the social contract lacks a familial connotation. This is, by design, a significant part of the social contract to ensure that the paternal rights of fathers are not established as arbitrary.

When addressing a significant critique of the social contract, namely that such an agreement has not occurred in history, Locke argues that history has forgotten such contracts because they became supplanted by a worse form of government, which the father rules. In the

beginning, Locke shows why it seemed reasonable to allow the father to have political control: "He was fitted to be trusted; paternal affection secured their property and interest under his care; and the custom of obeying him, in their childhood, made it easier to submit to him, rather than any other," (Locke 1980, 56). Once the father died, it was taken as evident that the eldest son should take command, followed by his son, and so on (Locke 1980, 57-58). Locke goes as far as to consider the possibility that the past was a sort of "golden age," an age where the governors had more virtue. The subjects had less vice, an age where disputes of privilege were not brought up, and the leaders did not have stretching prerogatives (Locke 1980, 60). In a sense, the rule of the father could last as long as it did (even in Locke's day) because it was probable that, at some point, it did have some virtues, some factors that made such rule bearable and desirable. Like every golden age, it was not to last.

Why did the rule of the father lose the virtues that once made it something admirable? At some point, human beings became possessed and corrupted by "vain ambition, and amor sceleratus habendi (the cursed desire of having), evil concupiscence" (Locke 1980, 60). Locke continues that as the governments of fathers progressed, they reached a point when "ambition and luxury in future ages would retain and increase the power, without doing the business for which it is given (Locke 1980, 60). Within the span of one paragraph, Locke includes a complicated element in his analysis of property as well as a critique of the impact of luxury on governance. On the one hand, Locke clarifies that collecting property is not a terrible thing in and of itself.

On the other hand, the "cursed desire of having" has a detrimental effect on politics, and luxury can also have a harmful impact. Now, one potential way to resolve the tension is to suggest that the luxury problem emerges because only one person can acquire as much as they

can. Under the social contract, that power could be equally afforded to everyone, and with everyone acquiring as much as they can under the law, there can be a balance of influence. While this may work, there are specific problems with such a resolution.

One of the problems of such a resolution is that if everyone acquires as much as they can, it can fall under Rousseau's critique. Some people are more naturally talented than others, and the result will be that some acquire more property than others. With more property comes more luxury, and should that become the case, social relations will be negatively impacted. Justifying luxury for all falls into Rousseau's analysis, thus harming Locke's upbeat property assessment. If, on the other hand, Locke is serious about his negative evaluation of luxury, then how does he make such an assessment work with his benign view of the accumulation of property? Whatever the case, it is apparent from Locke's description of the fall of the "golden age" that virtue was more abundant in the past than in the present. However, due to ambition, luxury, and a host of complications that will emerge in the future, one cannot hope that a government can be sustained by virtue in the present age. Instead, like Montesquieu, Locke believes that the emerging commercial society will be a reality that must be faced head-on. Even if it can bring some problems, there is still a way to balance the goods that come with a commercial commonwealth while allowing for freedom and liberties for its citizens.

Locke envisions society as taking various forms, whether a democracy, oligarchy, hereditary monarchy, or elective monarchy (Locke 1980, 68). These different forms can be suitable if the majority agree to it and the supreme power resides in the legislative power (Locke 1980, 69). While the legislative power is supreme, the legislature still has certain limitations. First, the legislative power cannot have "absolutely arbitrary power over the lives and fortunes of the people" (Locke 1980, 70). The legislative has powers limited to the "public good," a good

that is primarily preservation and not to “destroy, enslave or designedly to impoverish the subject” (Locke 1980, 71). Locke envisions a government that does not interfere with the life or property of the citizens but instead sees it playing a negative role of not doing harm and preservation. Because of this insistence on private life and public good, it can be assumed that the parents primarily cover the procreative and rearing essential for humanity. The legislative branch does not, and from Locke's perspective, should not have a role in the procreative practices between families. This separation of parent and citizen is one that the modern world gravitates towards compared to the closer alignment that Rousseau envisioned. Still, a question that needs further exploration is what an excellent Lockean commonwealth should do if they find a population crisis, whether under-population or, as Locke suggests in the text, over-populated.

Locke does not believe that the legislative power can act on its own accord to resolve such conflicts, much less any other disputes. In addition to not having control over the people's lives and possessions, there are different restrictions Locke places on the legislative, such as not being able to establish arbitrary decrees and not taking property from any person without their consent (Locke 1980, 71-73). The primary responsibilities of the legislative power are to promulgate established laws; laws need to be designed for the good of the people, taxes cannot be raised without the consent of the people, and the power of making laws cannot be transferred to other powers (Locke 1980, 75). The supreme power has certain restrictions that would make handling population concerns problematic. Despite this, another branch could have an impact: the Executive.

To ensure the perpetual execution of the laws of the legislative power, Locke argues for a separate power that handles the execution of municipal ordinances while often having federative power, which relates to peace and war (Locke 1980, 76-77). A king could play this role, but in

our form of government, a close approximation to what Locke has in mind would be the President. While the Executive could have supreme executive power and even some legislative power, the Executive is always subordinated by the Legislative power in the ability to make laws. An executive could not do much in the face of a population crisis. If the executive power is subordinated to the legislative power, and the legislative power already has numerous restrictions on what it can and cannot do, nothing can be done. However, the Executive has prerogatives that can be used for different situations.

A prerogative is defined in Chapter XIV as the “power to act according to discretion for the public good, without the prescription of the law, and sometimes even against it” (Locke 1980, 84). The prerogatives exist because legislative power can only sometimes foresee the problems that will begin to emerge and lack the laws to sufficiently address a crisis (Locke 1980, 83-84). The extent of the Executive's prerogatives is contingent on how much the people agree with the actions of the Executive. Locke notes that when the prerogative is used “for the benefit of the community, and suitability to the ends of the government,” the people are less likely to question the Executive's prerogative so long as they operate to a tolerable degree (Locke 1980, 84). Once the people suspect that the prerogatives are being used against them, they will make their displeasure evident (Locke 1980, 85). With the notion of prerogative explained, is it still plausible that the Executive could address any procreative concerns in a commonwealth? The answer is most likely no.

Prerogatives cannot be the tool to address any procreative concerns in a commonwealth. While a prerogative could address population troubles such as migration influxes, the government could not control the private lives of its citizens. Firstly, the notion of a population crisis is on a time scale that is too long for an executive to justify using prerogatives for too long.

Given the length of population concerns, the legislative body could quickly come into play and work on laws to find ways to deal with population problems. In addition, Locke's primary concern is not underpopulation but overpopulation, which presents its unique challenges. Prerogatives would not be used for the population, at least towards the family, but encouraging migration may be an idea that could work to alleviate any population woes that arise. Overall, the government designed by the social contract works for the public good in a negative sense, prohibiting the people's rights unless approved by the people and ensuring that the citizens' life, liberty, and property are not taken without the consent of the citizens. What would Rousseau make of such a social contract, and how would his social contract differ from Locke's? To answer this question, it will be necessary to turn back to *The Second Discourse* and *On the Social Contract*.

In *The Second Discourse*, we see the first social contract emerge because the rich wish to cease the perpetual war they find themselves with the poor while finding a way to maintain their possessions. Finding themselves without a valid reason for their goods, the rich were "bereft of valid reasons to justify themselves and sufficient forces to defend themselves" (Rousseau 1983, 149). Finding themselves out of options, the rich conceived "the most thought out project that ever entered the human mind," a plan that would ensure that the masses would work for the interests of the rich and would provide the poor "other institutions which were as favorable to him as natural right was unfavorable to him," (Rousseau 1983, 149). Upon appealing to the poor and showing the malaise of constant conflict, Rousseau has the rich give an appeal to a social contract that sounds like the one proposed by Locke:

"Let us unite," he says to them, "to protect the weak from oppression, restrain the ambition, and assure everyone of possessing what belongs to him. Let us institute rules of justice and peace which all will be obliged to conform, which will make special exceptions for no one...In short, instead of turning our forces against ourselves, let us gather them into one supreme power that

governs us according to wise laws" (Rousseau 1983, 149). The rich had developed social contracts.¹²

Once this social contract was proposed, people experiencing poverty were seduced by the prospect of having arbiters who could settle their many disputes. Because of their "greed and ambition," they found themselves in need to "chain themselves" (Rousseau 1983, 149-150). Due to their ignorance of having a political society, they were not able to foresee the dangers; the rich could anticipate how they would profit from it and said nothing, and even the wise went along with the social contract as a "wounded man has his arm amputated to save the rest of his body," (Rousseau 1983, 150). Establishing the first civil society came with a level of organization and might that other villages could not compare. So, to cope with this problem, the rich and poor from various parts of the world came together to form their society (Rousseau 1983, 150). The creation of societies would lead to the decline of "natural compassion," paving the way for horrors greater than before.

With emerging societies rose countries, countries which would then create war against other nations. From this type of war, decent people "learned to consider it one of their duties to kill their fellow men. Finally, men were seen massacring one another by the thousands without knowing why" (Rousseau 1983, 150). Rousseau thinks the social contract established by the rich, like Locke's, is defective because by ensuring that violence could cease between individuals, war between societies would expand violence. There is not any appeal to defending the homeland so much as engaging in violence and plunder out of self-interest. In addition, there is a risk that due to *amour propre*, the violence of the warriors could be found socially desirable and worthy of imitation. However, Rousseau does not explicitly make this argument. To use an old expression,

¹² To further substantiate the point about Locke preference of the rich over the poor see Hundert, Edward J. "The making of homo faber: John Locke between ideology and history." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 33, no. 1 (1972): 3-22. Hundert examines Locke's methods for dealing with the poor, which primarily involved putting them to work against their will and a willingness to make the poor work via "hard labor, whipping, and torture" (Hundert 1972, 5).

Locke's social contract and all the other social contracts devised by different thinkers put human beings "out of the frying pan and into the fire." There is more to the critique, however. By exchanging their liberty for goods and peace, a specific degradation occurs that makes human beings less happy internally for the price of a comfortable material existence.

Rousseau believes that the people who have entered civil society are enslaved but dare to boast that their miserable slavery is really "peace." Rousseau contrasts the civilized man with the free people. These people are prepared to sacrifice "pleasures, tranquility, wealth and power and life itself" for the preservation of freedom and declare that the civilized person should not discuss freedom, or, more pointedly: "I sense that it is inappropriate for slaves to reason about liberty," (Rousseau 1983, 153). Is this stark stance romantic? Undoubtedly, in a particular light. To justify his claim, Rousseau turns to non-European indigenous tribes to justify his claim about the goodness of freedom, describing how he sees a "multitude of utterly naked savages' scorn European pleasures and brave hunger, fire, sword, and death simply to preserve their independence" (Rousseau 1983, 153). This account, harkening to a type of noble savage, is problematic for a variety of reasons, one of the obvious ones being the over-idyllic portrayal of indigenous groups. With the over-idealized account considered, Rousseau's point still stands. What Rousseau is inquiring into is how to make property or goods for a good life if liberty is deprived or deprecated. Moreover, if people are brought into this world and placed in an unfortunate standing based on society's expectations, is that society genuinely good?

Rousseau expands on this concern for goods over liberty when he critiques Pufendorf's version of the social contract. Pufendorf argued that just as people could give away their possessions to others by contract, so could they give away their liberties (Rousseau 1983, 154). Rousseau finds this to be lousy reasoning as "the goods I give away become something utterly

foreign to me, and it is a matter of indifference to me whether or not these goods are abused, but it is important to me that my liberty is not abused," (Rousseau 1983, 154). Property is alienable; people cannot alienate themselves from their bodies despite their best efforts. In addition, for Rousseau, property results from human convention and institutions. Liberty is a natural gift; no temporal conventional good can compensate for that loss (Rousseau 1983, 154). The abandoning of liberty would impact future generations, as children would be born in a society where their natural liberty was already removed. The Lockean social contract would not only esteem goods and tranquility over liberty, but Rousseau also believes that such a social contract would sow its seed of corruption and despotism in the form of the magistrate.

Like Locke, Rousseau understands the necessity of having magistrates or judges to help resolve disputes between people. The magistrates in the new civil society would be given honors and prerogatives to cope with the new responsibilities they would handle. Because the laws were so simple and fundamental early on, the magistrates would try to work for the best of the people while achieving public interests (Rousseau 1983, 155). Rousseau believes that the magistrates were elected initially and would be selected based on merit if wealth were not a factor in the decision-making process (Rousseau 1983, 156). Conflict, factions, and frequent disputes came with elections, resulting in societal violence. Some factions would then use the magistrate position to enrich themselves and their families, making them hereditary; the people, yearning for tranquility, would submit to this hereditary power to restore peace (Rousseau 1983, 156). With this move, the magistrates would remain in charge, and the political distinction would intensify political distinction. The problem of focusing on the accumulation of goods is that the magistrate can fall prey to this desire to the detriment of the political body. This is Rousseau's

fundamental critique of the types of social contracts established by Locke, in that they do not appreciate the power of wealth to corrupt the political body.

Of course, Locke makes clear in his work that the formal structures of the commonwealth would work for everyone, rich and poor alike. The problem that remains is that political and social status are deeply intertwined, and with the development of social distinctions comes more significant corruption. The rest of the citizenry, like the magistrate, cannot acquire power by themselves and must turn to "proteges" who can extend their power so long as they are provided certain powers in return (Rousseau 1983, 157). Rousseau explains that people are only driven to obey if they will be able to command. As people strove to dominate and serve, inequality came with greater frequency (Rousseau 1983, 157). All of this is to say that despite Locke's insistence on the laws applying equally, patronage between magistrates and their proteges can subvert a Lockean commonwealth's legal and social expectations.

In addition, Rousseau argues that having a single society invites comparisons among one another, with the significant sources of distinction emerging from "wealth, nobility or rank, power, and personal merit," and how well these values agree with each other is the litmus test of whether a state is "well or ill constituted" (Rousseau 1983, 158). Rousseau argues that wealth is the last distinction that most people look to, as wealth can be used to buy most of the other qualities because it is the most useful and the easiest to communicate (Rousseau 1983, 158). The price that wealth can bring to politics is more trouble than it is worth for Rousseau. It enables distinctions and patronage systems that subvert the law and intensify the oppression and cruelty that would continue to Rousseau's own time.

Given the deplorable conditions that Rousseau sees in civil society, it is natural to ask Rousseau for a proper solution, as diagnostics can only take one so far. Chapter One discusses

Rousseau's plans to improve different countries, but this primarily looked at the connection Rousseau drew to commerce and population. By looking at the inner workings of Rousseau's conception of the social contract, it will be easier to see not only why Rousseau thinks his version is superior but also how his social contract is better suited for concerns about a population that is not only comfortable procreating but can live well at the same time. Alternatively, as Rousseau eloquently put it, "Find a form of association which defends and protects with all common forces the person and goods of each associate, and using which each one, while uniting with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains free as before," (Rousseau 1983, 24). Rousseau explores and answers this tension in *On the Social Contract*.

Rousseau spends most of the early chapters of *On the Social Contract* explaining why those who propose that force is the deciding factor in the establishment of society need to be corrected. Like Locke, Rousseau also finds the notion of the divine right of kings to be ridiculous, barely spending any time on thinkers such as Robert Filmer, instead mocking thinkers like him who appeal to a king's right to rule because they descended from "King Adam or Emperor Noah" as Rousseau declares that he is "a direct descendent of these princes" (Rousseau 1983, 19-20). Instead, when looking at the nature of the social compact in Chapter VI, Rousseau argues that the compact must completely alienate natural rights to the whole group so that the general will can be set up.

By having each person give themselves to each person, the person will not lose anything as others are giving up their natural freedom, resulting in a situation where a person "gains the equivalent of everything he loses, along with a greater amount of force to preserve what he has," (Rousseau 1983, 24). The gist of the social compact, the essence that each person needs to agree to when forming a political body, is the following: "Each of us places his person and all his

power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and as one we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole,” (Rousseau 1983, 24). With this pledge, the people come together and form a moral and collective body that grants the people "its common self, its life, and its will"(Rousseau 1983, 24). The social contract for Rousseau is not just an external change of rights, as laid out by Locke, but a moral transformation that will begin to emerge and take a life of its own. It creates a public life and, with it, a host of new distinctions such as citizen, sovereign, power, republic body politic, and so on (Rousseau 1983, 24-25). The change in conduct stems from the fact that a private individual, now working in a political body, has more significant interactions with reason, which can transform them from how they were in the state of nature.

Rousseau assesses the trade-off in the transition from the state of nature to the civil state, describing how people lose their instincts for justice and their actions finally have a moral quality that they were lacking. As Chapter One of this dissertation mentions, Rousseau thinks that trading natural rights for civil rights is better overall. The impulses and appetites are replaced with duties and rights. Individuals who only focused on themselves in the state of nature have been given new responsibilities and principles that they must consider with reason (Rousseau 1983, 27). Rousseau acknowledges that significant advantages were lost with the formation of the social contract. Still, the social contract allowed for an individual to have significant benefits such as internal faculties which are "exercised and developed, his ideas are broadened, his feelings are enabled,” causing a transformation that Rousseau thinks is blessed since it transformed a human from a “stupid, limited animal into an intelligent being and a man,” (Rousseau 1983, 27). The social contract is not just about the preservation of Rousseau but about transformation, where people are no longer slaves to their appetites but can serve the laws that

they put into effect.¹³ The natural equality in the state of nature is replaced by a legal equality that can undo any natural inequalities by right and convention (Rousseau 1983, 27). Having examined how the social contract can change the human condition, the next element of Rousseau's thought on the social contract that needs to be discussed is sovereignty.

Rousseau suggests that a consequence of his principles is that the sovereign is an exercise of the general will and, as a result, cannot be alienated from itself (Rousseau 1983, 29). Now, while a private will can be in accord with the general will, this will only sometimes be the case as the private individual can go for their preferences. In contrast, the general will as a collective body will seek equality (Rousseau 1983, 30). In addition to being inalienable, the general will is indivisible as it represents the people or only part of them. In the first case, Rousseau argues it is the act of the people or constitutional law, while the latter is only the private will or the magistrate (Rousseau 1983, 30). The sovereignty of the general will must not be confused with what Rousseau calls "the will of all ."The general will look to the general interest of the political body, whereas the will of all "considers private interest and is merely the sum of private wills" (Rousseau 1983, 31).

When the populace is informed and not associated with parties and factions, it can be easier for the general will to be felt. Still, if there are factions, then the will of all can predominate to alleviate concerns about factions and to ensure the rise of the general will; Rousseau proposes that, like Lycurgus, institutions need to be developed so no partial society can take place, or, like Solon and Numa, the societies need to be multiplied so that one does not take too much advantage (Rousseau 1983, 32). The sovereignty of the people is beyond dispute for

¹³ See Masters, Roger D. "The duties of humanity: legal and moral obligation in Rousseau's thought." In *Constitutional Democracy*, pp. 83-105. Routledge, 2019.

Rousseau, and it is for him inalienable and indivisible, though certain limits to sovereignty need consideration.

Rousseau declares that the sovereignty of the social contract means that the citizen must do whatever the sovereign demands, but only if it is in the common interest of all (Rousseau 1983, 33). This appeal to common interest is at the heart of the general will.¹⁴ The moment that “it is a question of a state of affairs or a particular right concerning a point that a prior convention has not regulated” is when more significant confusion can emerge and separate the general will from a private interest (Rousseau 1983, 33). To further clarify the nature of sovereignty and its limits, Rousseau explains that an act of sovereignty “is not a convention between a superior and an inferior but a convention of the body with each of its members. This convention is legitimate because it has the social contract as a basis; equitable because it is common to all; useful because it can only have the general good as its object” (Rousseau 1983, 34). The sovereign can only lay power if there have been general conventions established. Next, the question that needs to be asked is whether the state can control the procreation of its citizens.

As mentioned as far back as Chapter One, Rousseau believes that the sign of good governance is whether the regime has a large and growing population, regardless of migration patterns (Rousseau 1983, 67). How the regime could make procreation a consideration for the general will could go about in two ways. First, Rousseau says the regime can remove partial interests by creating a general society like the one made by Lycurgus. In this way, the regime can concern itself with the procreation and welfare of children in the manner that Sparta supervised the rearing of their children. By allowing total supervision, procreation rates could be monitored

¹⁴ For more on the general will see Kain, Philip J. “Rousseau, the General Will, and Individual Liberty.” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1990): 315–34.

and encouraged. The trouble, of course, besides the absolutist control that Sparta had over its population, was that the supervision that Sparta had was extremely restricted land-wise.¹⁵ A country the size of the United States would be unable to supervise well. This may suggest that Rousseau believes that the size of a suitable regime should be at the level of Sparta. On the other hand, another way to stifle the factions is to multiply them but ensure they are not unequal, much like Solon and Numa's recommendation. In that case, the tension becomes whether Rousseau prefers Sparta or Rome. The debate about which type of regime Rousseau preferred rages to this day,¹⁶ but the discussion is more profound because Rousseau's investigation of the people demonstrates the complexity of forming a people who love liberty.

Whether a legislator is like Lycurgus or Solon, Rousseau believes that the laws can only match the people if the people are prepared to accept those laws, saying, "A thousand nations have achieved brilliant earthly success that could not have \bided good laws" (Rousseau 1983, 41). Suppose you want a person with good laws, laws suitable for loving liberty or rearing children, for example. In that case, a legislator must instruct the people when they are a young nation, as people will not change their customs and prejudices no matter what, as people hate to have their "evils" disturbed just like the "stupid and cowardly patients who quiver at the sight of a physician," (Rousseau 1983, 42). Rousseau does suggest that great crises can emerge, such as civil war or revolution, which can cause a people to remerge like "the phoenix from the ashes" and discover the vigor of their youth, though he suggests this rarely happens twice (Rousseau

¹⁵ Of course, Sparta is not without its flaws. See Strauss, Leo. "The spirit of Sparta or the taste of Xenophon." *Social Research* (1939): 502-536. Strauss astutely notes that Xenophon critiques the Spartan regime for lacking any discipline among their women, with their procreative obligations serving as a cover for licentiousness and unruliness (Strauss 1939, 503-505).

¹⁶ For commentary on Rousseau's thoughts on Sparta and Rome see Shklar, Judith N. "Rousseau's two models: Sparta and the age of gold." *Political Science Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (1966): 25-51; McCormick, John P. "Rousseau's Rome and the repudiation of populist republicanism." *Critical review of international social and political philosophy* 10, no. 1 (2007): 3-27.

1983, 42). The timing of the laws for a society is a part of whether they will be effective. Another element is the sheer size of the body politic, and increasing the size can create a potentially negative impact.

The size of a good political regime must strike a balance between being too large to properly govern and too small to protect and defend effectively (Rousseau 1983, 43). If the state is too large, it is harder to ensure the enforcement of the law, it is harder to have the citizens have respect for the government and its laws, and it can create a situation where different laws conflict with each other, creating greater animosity (Rousseau 1983, 43). This critique of multiplicity lets one suspect that Rousseau may tip his hand to Sparta as a model for good governance.¹⁷ However, Rousseau still acknowledges that not all countries are suited to any form of government. This stems in part from how a government survives, based on the surplus of private individuals (Rousseau 1983, 63). Some nations are not able to produce a surplus as much as other countries, which suggests that commerce could be the catalyst that could increase a population's numbers.

For Rousseau, this solution is not viable because "the ratio depends on the fertility of the climate, the sort of labor the land requires, the nature of its products, the force of its inhabitants, the greater or lesser consumption they need" among other things (Rousseau 1983,63). Commerce can only go so far if a society has something to trade. The external circumstances that people find themselves in can impact how successful any regime becomes, so for Rousseau, the internal constitution of the individual is more important for a successful regime than any laws or items that a people possess. A society that treats its political regime like an extension of its home is

¹⁷ Shklar believes that between Rome and Sparta, Rousseau is more sympathetic to Sparta but would have the women sequestered like the Roman Matrons (Shklar 1966, 35-37).

more likely to engage in sacrifice and duty for the government than a society striving to be a well-regulated and well-protected bazaar.¹⁸

3.6. Conclusion: Onwards to Education!

When comparing the thoughts of Locke and Rousseau, it is essential to acknowledge the degree of agreement of both thinkers. Both were adamant about the evil of arbitrary government joined in one person. An absolute monarch, whether from force or a perceived divine right of king, had little to no legitimacy. One person was not born to rule another, but initially, people came together to create a political society that would lead to the betterment of their progeny. Property is a vital element of human life and is a source of what made the Social Contract desirable. An essential aspect of what makes something someone property is the labor that is put into cultivating the object. Laws should be made for all people by the power of their reason. No special treatment or prejudice should be given that allows people to evade justice. On the private level, both agree that the father is not a tyrant, lording his power over his wife and child, but is a guardian and tutor, guiding the child until they can reach an age of liberty and rationality and become a part of the political community into which they were born. None of these points of basic agreement should be denigrated, as it shows the respect that Rousseau has for Locke's thought. That is, up to an end. Despite the many similarities between the two thinkers concerning their thoughts on the social contract, there is a significant divide between them that serves as a source of discussion and frustration.

Beginning with Locke's view of the state of nature and the human condition, Rousseau would have much to critique. Firstly, the fact that reason is fully developed in human beings,

¹⁸ For more on the differences between Locke's and Rousseau's social contract theories, see Riley, Patrick. "Will and Political Legitimacy: A Critical Exposition of Social Contract Theory in Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel." 1982.

even in the state of nature, is a premise that Rousseau finds unlikely. Also, it is the notion of God, or that God instilled specific laws into human nature that people could follow easily. Rousseau argues that if we imagine human beings in a state of nature, they must be abstracted of all sociality, including reason and belief in God. There is also the problem of men and women forming long-standing bonds and being compelled to care for their children in the state of nature. Rousseau would again think this is a mistake. It implicitly takes social dynamics in the modern world and projects it to the past. In addition, any appeal to obligation towards others would be met with disbelief. Rousseau points out how obligations as a concept were a development in the state of nature, and men and women in the state and nature would come together, procreate, and then leave each other. Even in modern times, Rousseau expresses doubt about how people want to have children or to bear the responsibilities of sex, so why would this be any different from the past? In addition to the internal disposition of men and women in the state of nature being problematic for Rousseau, there is also the property problem that Rousseau rails against.

While it is true that both thinkers acknowledge the value of labor in the creation of property, Rousseau does not believe that it was developed as it is in Locke's account, especially about the dispute of property over land. In Rousseau's opinion, the trouble that Locke must grapple with is how the property problem is not just about trying to protect what you have. It is a fact that property and the accumulation of goods, in general, are detrimental because of the social status that forms between the rich and poor. What was once a state of equality developed into groups of rich and poor who adopted attitudes of contempt and resentment towards one another, creating cycles of perpetual warfare? Locke's social contract cannot help alleviating this problem because the unequal distribution of goods can continue in the Lockean Commonwealth unabated, allowing for social animosities to grow and for corruption to seep in that would allow for the law

to be subverted or make exceptions. On a fundamental level, though, what separates the two thinkers is not just what they think people are like or how property should be handled but what the point of the social contract is and why it should be formed in the first place. This difference also reflects contrasting concerns about the obligations a citizen should have.

The point of the social contract for Locke is to create a society that offers peace and safety while allowing the accumulation of property. One must be made clear: Locke is not some crass materialist who thinks life is about consumption. When looking at Locke and Rousseau's views of education in the next chapter, it will be apparent that Locke believes that humans are meant to do more in life than to accumulate goods. There is something more that Locke believes people can reach on a moral level.¹⁹ The contrast between Locke and Rousseau is about developing the individual's character.

For Locke, the purpose of the government is to provide security both domestically and internationally, ensuring that the lives and property of the citizens can be protected. The government's point of the laws is to ensure people know what they cannot do. By setting up the government as a defender in the negative sense, the people have an outlet they can use to grow and develop, a private sphere where they can, if they so choose, build their character in a way that will make them happy. Otherwise, politics is the aggregate of the citizens looking out for their interests. Because of this, the family's right is kept separate from the state, and how procreation works out between couples is between couples and no one else. The primary threat to a Lockean commonwealth is dealing with the population if it becomes too high but leaving it alone. For Rousseau, this assessment of the social contract needs to be improved on many levels.

¹⁹ Civilizations can become more than just considerations of property. See Dunn, J. M. "Bright enough for all our purposes": John Locke's conception of a civilized society." *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 43, no. 2 (1989): 133-153.

For Rousseau, the beauty of the social contract is not just what it protects but what it can create. The emergence of society coincides with a moral development that was not possible in the state of nature. A level of rich interiority has been granted to humans, and with this new morality came new duties for someone besides the lone individual. Where Locke focuses on the aggregate, Rousseau sees the social contract in a holistic sense, where, in the best cases, the private and public interests can begin to intertwine, achieving a level of liberty and connection that was not possible in the past. Mutual obligations towards other citizens create opportunities for laws and conventions that can enhance human life. Because of the intertwining of the public and the private, any such clean separation of the private and the public seems disingenuous to Rousseau. If we have obligations in the public sphere, they do not simply vanish at home. Therefore, the government can express concerns about luxury in the body politic or population rates that are too high or too low and look to address it. It will need to be worked out in law as it would be meant for the common good, but it could be done. However, the use of law to address such problems may be too extreme, and there will need to be a turn to education to see if luxury (and any detrimental impacts it may have on the population) can be controlled through education effectively.

The fundamental problem of Locke's commonwealth for Rousseau is that it lays out their liberties but does not emphasize their obligations towards each other. While Locke lays out reasons why people should rebel against the government, it takes for granted that people will have the necessary martial prowess to regain their rights. Locke presumes that the martial spirit will emerge if enough abuses occur. Locke does not address the fact that the political regime

develops martial prowess through education and training.²⁰ The social contract envisioned by Locke asks that a citizen does not harm another citizen's life or property. Unlike Rousseau's social contract, it does not ask the citizens to be prepared to sacrifice their lives for the good of the other citizens or the regime. Like the martial spirit, the family is treated in isolation from politics. Rousseau is sympathetic to Locke's sentimental assessment of the family. Rousseau recognizes that the family is a part of political life and women should be expected to give birth to more citizens for the good of the regime, just like how men should be prepared to die for it.

Despite the problems that Rousseau sees with Locke's political regime, there may be a way forward for Locke. For Locke, Martial and Marital responsibilities are to be nurtured by the family, and it is essential to look at private education instead. There are also other reasons why it is essential to look at Locke and Rousseau's work on education. First, because Locke's ideas on ethical development are not linked to the state, the primary source to show Locke's other thoughts on luxury and commerce can be found in his texts on education, such as Locke's ideas of commerce and the importance of it as a career for young people. With Rousseau's *Emile*, there will be space to examine Rousseau's thoughts on the ideal ethical development of the individual, how commerce is not the answer, and how it corrodes the different responsibilities of a citizen. Reviewing both accounts will make it easier to see which one places a higher stock on the martial and marital responsibilities of the citizen

²⁰ Some commentators see Locke's failure to justify why a citizen should die for the regime as a glaring deficiency in the notion of liberal citizenship. See Carter, April. "Liberalism and the obligation to military service." *Political Studies* 46, no. 1 (1998): 68-81. .

Chapter Four. Children of the Enlightenment: Rousseau Against Locke's Education

4.1. The problem of education

The previous chapter focused on Locke and Rousseau's concerns about martial and marital responsibilities in political society. Locke expressed great concern about creating a society where the life, liberty, and property of individuals could be protected by law. Rousseau also has these concerns, but unlike Locke, Rousseau is prepared to problematize the concepts of property and money and its impact on the obligations of citizens. While Locke goes to great lengths to ensure the formal structure created by a social contract is addressed, Rousseau emphasizes the informal social elements that can cause havoc to citizens' responsibilities to the government and the family.

For Rousseau, social and political responsibilities are never evenly separated but are mixed, just as commerce and luxury cannot be effectively separated. However, it is a mistake to think that Locke was unaware of the social pressures that can be placed on the individual. While Locke did not conceive of the government playing a role in every social concern that would emerge among the people, Locke knew there needed to be a way to combat customs that could still be oppressive to people's liberties. The panacea that Locke felt that could work was education. Locke believed that if an effective education were provided, different obligations could be instilled, ensuring the young educated have a chance at becoming good citizens and people.

This chapter will assess Locke and Rousseau's texts that concern the development of individuals from the time they are born until they form a family. The primary text that will be used for Locke is *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, while for Rousseau, the analysis will primarily focus on *Emile*. The reason for focusing on these texts is because they address

education. In these texts, both Locke and Rousseau emphasize the social forces at work in an individual's life and how a person can be enslaved to their society. This chapter will demonstrate the differences between Locke's and Rousseau's goals of education. Locke's form of education attempts to provide a rigorous physical education for military service while focusing on ways young gentlemen can assume their role as members of the gentry class. Locke does not presume that martial prowess and education for handling money are exclusive. For Locke, a young man can be a warrior and have business knowledge, a presumption that Rousseau disagrees with because of commerce's corrupting influence. Instead, Rousseau will look at ways young men can enter the world as uncorrupted as possible by the effects of commerce while still learning the value of obligations to family and the political regime in which they live. I will show that Locke has a tension in his education schema, while Rousseau's view of education, though extreme, does educate towards appreciating the necessary things.

At the center, Locke argues that education is a pathway to mastery, while Rousseau points to an education of liberty. Under Locke's education schema, a person should develop mastery over themselves, their passions, and their environment through the power of their reason to develop into actualized persons. Locke seems to believe that a rigorous education is needed to develop the martial qualities esteemed in the aristocracy. Not only that, but Locke thinks this education will hold despite introducing the young man into a position of great wealth.

Rousseau's education will result in an individual who uses their reason to enable the best sentiments they possess while not having to conform to the prejudices and whims of a commercial society. The texts also focus on the individual's passions at greater length than the other political works, showing Locke's insistence that reason must have a tight rein over the passions. At the same time, Rousseau emphasizes how passions are an integral part of the human

condition that must be advised by reason but not subjugated. Lastly, both texts focus on the dynamics of men and women and how they come to create families. This analysis will differ from the previous chapters because it addresses unions in a social world where civil societies have formed. This will allow for an analysis showing how both thinkers view society and how to thrive in the world. It will also demonstrate the difference between both thinkers in the value of commerce and rearing children in family life.

What also separates the two thinkers is how they will raise their pupils. Locke looked at children of the gentry and aristocratic class as pupils he could educate, allowing them to live in society and have general access to luxury, despite Locke's disapproval of it personally.¹

Rousseau will remove the young Emile from the city so that Emile can associate with rural peasants, reducing Emile's chances of being exposed to commerce and luxury. From there, Rousseau nurtures Emile's appreciation for necessity by having him learn a valuable trade for living in general and not necessarily just for money-making. As Emile grows older, Rousseau can educate and guide Emile's sexual passions so that Emile can learn about the obligations he would have as a husband. From there, Rousseau guides Emile towards civic responsibility, training him to appreciate the obligations and duties that will make Emile a good citizen.

4.2. Locke on the rearing of the young

Locke begins *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* with an address to his friend Edward Clarke of Chipley, who had expressed interest in Locke's thoughts on education. This advice was no doubt sought not only for Locke's general brilliance as a thinker but also for his profession as a physician, which could be invaluable to rearing children. Locke would then

¹ For further confirmation of the elite level of education Locke envisioned, see Dunn, J. M. "'Bright enough for all our purposes': John Locke's conception of a civilized society." *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 43, no. 2 (1989): 133-153.

compile the advice into one consolidated essay so that the document could be made public. Locke considers it essential as he thinks “it every man’s indispensable duty, to do all the service he can to his country” (Locke 1824, 5). Education, in particular, was a concern of many of Locke's contemporaries, as he notes that many people in his day were "at a loss on how to breed children," a problem that Locke argues needs to be resolved as soon as possible as the faults of poor education will “carry their afterwards-incorrigible taint with them, through all the parts and stations of life” (Locke 1824, 5). While Locke recognizes that his thoughts on education are more than likely going to be read by members of the "English Gentry," Locke insists that the advice that he is offering is universal and that every parent should heed his advice for the development of their children (Locke 1824, 6).² It should be noted that Locke is aware that Locke's advice will only sometimes work, as some temperaments of children will not make them suitable for his education (Locke 1824, 6). Nevertheless, Locke believes that his advice can rear children who can be a joy to their parents and, overall, a genuine service to their country. The question that needs to be investigated is what the goal Locke wants to reach with the children is and the necessary steps to reach that goal.

Locke believes that people are in a happy state when they have a “sound mind and body,” and that the happiness or misery of the individual is contingent on the actions people take throughout their lives (Locke 1824, 6). While people can sometimes naturally come into this world with a great mind and body, most people are developed through education, so it is essential to start working on people. At the same time, they are infants, so they will develop well in life (Locke 1824, 7). Locke suggests that the minds of children are like water, “as easily turned, this

² Dunn expresses doubt about how universal Locke’s education could truly be. As Dunn argues, the education Locke envisioned was primarily meant for those who wished to expand their understanding of whether a member of the gentry class or not (Dunn 1989, 143).

or that way," and will need the most attention overall; however, in the early stages of youth, there needs to be a focus on the development of the body as a strong body is good for health which is essential to the pursuit of happiness (Locke 1824, 7). His advice for fathers concerning their children's health is to treat them "as honest farmers and substantial yeoman treat theirs" (Locke 1824, 7). We have an exciting comment afterward about how mothers will resist this tendency, but the father should overcome the objections they may have (Locke 1824, 7). It contrasts with the *Second Treatise*, where Locke says the mother also has a say in rearing children, and the father is not lord over his children because the mother has limited say in how the child is reared. The child can be expected to labor for the father. This contrast is less significant than one may think.

While it is true that Locke spent much of the *Second Treatise* decrying any absolute power that a father may have, he was also the final decision-maker in the family (Locke 1980, 44). In addition, while the father does not have ultimate control over their children's lives and property, Locke insisted that they had control over their education. While the type of education was not fully outlined by Locke in the *Second Treatise*, so long as the education is like that of the farmer and the yeoman, it creates a rational and free individual, and neither text contradicts it. Locke ultimately places the child's development in the father's hand, though both parents can make an impact by having their child understand their obligations to their political community.

The key point that Locke is conveying is that mothers will have a tendency, on average, to spoil their children more than the father will, and to address this problem, there needs to be a limit to the tenderness that a child receives (Locke 1824, 7). They should not be bundled too warmly during the winter and must learn how to endure the heat during the summer (Locke 1824, 7). Locke does acknowledge that this advice pertains to young boys becoming gentlemen,

so daughters may have to follow this advice less rigidly (Locke 1824, 8). The feet must be constantly exposed to icy water, allowing water to leak into his shoes and for him to have cold baths, providing cleanliness and endurance to the cold (Locke 1824, 8). Locke suspects that mothers will react in shock and horror to the advice, but he will insist that it is necessary and has been done in numerous parts of Europe with no significant detriment to the children (Locke 1824, 8). A certain level of resistance can be helpful in the development of children, but there are other needs a child has that need addressing.

Firstly, children should have access to the open air, allowing them to be outside as much as possible, as exposure will allow their bodies to grow and endure the hardships of Nature. Locke suggests that an attempt to keep children too shaded will turn them into "a beau, but not a man of business (Locke 1824, 10). This notion of a "man of business" will be expanded upon later in the chapter but for now it is worth noting that the endurance the child receives will serve as an aid for the rest of their lives. Concerning the diet of the child, they should not have any meat or "flesh" until the child is around the age of two or three; Locke suggests that this may be harder to enforce since parents, who have lived on the custom of eating excessive amounts of meat, will want to make sure babies will eat as meat as they can (Locke 1824,11). Locke notes the danger of customs with greater frequency as the essay progresses, as the power of custom over a person's life can be a detriment to the development of individuals. Customs ranging from how to act and what to eat can influence education.

Though Locke provides greater insight into a child's diet, belaboring each diet component would not be helpful. A general theme that Locke insists on concerning children's feeding is that the meal should not be luxurious. In Locke's own words: "But this I think, that many are made gourmands and gluttons by custom, that was not so by nature: and I see, in some countries, men

as lusty and strong, that eat but two meals a day, as others that have set their stomachs by a constant usage, like larums, to call on them for four or five,” (Locke 1824, 12). The luxury of meals and the quantity people consume are established by their customs and habits, which can be deleterious. To further justify his stance on eating, Locke looks to the Romans, describing their eating habits, outstanding frugality, and control over their appetite (at least before the empire started). He also turned to the stoic philosopher Seneca to further substantiate his point (Locke 1824, 12). Training in endurance and dieting provided to the child will help them wield arms, as Locke thinks every gentleman should be prepared to be a soldier (Locke 1824, 13). Locke is explicit in the value that a young man could have in serving his country one day. The martial prowess of the child can be developed by habits related to exercise and diet. The rigor of education extends not just to food but also to the exposure to the doctor a child should have.

Locke suggests that parents should abstain from seeing the doctor or "physician" as much as possible and should not consume much, if any, drugs provided by the physician (Locke 1824, 18). The physician should be consulted rarely, if at all, because if the physician is busy, he will “presently fill their windows with gally-pots, and their stomachs with drugs” (Locke 1824, 18). It is Locke's opinion that children should be left to heal naturally as much as possible and that the significant impact on a child's health is not through drugs but through diet. Locke summarizes the needs of a child as: “Plenty of open air, exercise, and sleep: plain diet, no wine or strong drink, and very little or no physic; not too warm and strait clothing; especially the head and feet kept cold, and the feet often used to cold water and exposed to wet,” (Locke 1824, 19). This is

the advice Locke offers to cultivate children as they grow up.³ The advice is interesting for a variety of reasons.

As mentioned before, a luxurious lifestyle is advised against. Instead, throughout the essay, we are treated to notions of "duty" and being raised to "bear arms" and be a "soldier." While these are not Locke's commands about how young men should be raised, there are normative claims attached to obligations that Locke believes people should fulfill. Moreover, although Locke constructs a political society that allows for the accumulation of goods, he recognizes that they can be used to the detriment of the body. Despite Locke's "live and let live" attitude in *The Second Treatise*, there is, for Locke at least, a proper way to live.⁴ The surface has only been scratched concerning Locke's education, as only the tending to of the body has been addressed. The mind is of greater importance.

Locke praises the value of educating the mind of the youth, as "setting the mind right" is "suitable to the dignity and excellency of a rational creature" (Locke 1824, 19). It is not only for Locke a higher priority, but a mind poor or well-educated sets people up on the path to happiness or misery (Locke 1824, 19). The critical component for developing a child's mind is the edification of the body, namely enduring hardship. Locke argues that the "great principle and foundation of all virtue and worth is placed in this, that a man can deny himself his desires, cross his inclinations, and purely follow what reason directs as best, though the appetite lean the other way," (Locke 1824, 19). Reason must be the predominant element in a person's life, ensuring that it can guide them toward mastering themselves and achieving the different ends society has set

³ Many people who read Locke's educational treatise approved of emphasizing physical education and considered it an innovation. See Ezell, Margaret JM. "John Locke's Images of Childhood: Early Eighteenth Century Response to Some Thoughts Concerning Education." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* (1983): 139–155.

⁴ Dunn emphasizes that Locke is aware that many of the desires that humans had were "pernicious and absurd" and those believed that they had no obligations except to please themselves was tantamount to blasphemy against the deity (Dunn 1983, 149).

out for the child. However, to develop to such a level where it is a dominant factor in a person's life, education must start as early as possible, just like physical education. The first major obstacle on the path to mental education comes from the parents.

Locke notices the tension in rearing children, as parents must make their children use their reason while they are young, a tender and pliant stage where they can be obedient to reason (Locke 1824, 19). The problem is that parents' love towards their children, a love that is both natural and a duty, can easily be given over to a tenderness that allows for a wide variety of actions to be permitted (Locke 1824, 19). Because of their love for their children, it can reach a point where the children become spoiled, where “they must not be crossed, forsooth; they must be permitted to have their wills in all things” (Locke 1824, 19). The thought behind these actions is that the children's desires when they are small are not incredibly significant or troubling to the parents, so indulging them will not be seen as much of a burden. As Locke points out, the fault with this logic is that the small actions left uncorrected will lead to more significant actions in the future (Locke 1824, 19). The troubles will begin with the child striking out and calling names, and then the child “must have what he cries for, and do what he pleases,” which is indulged by the parents (Locke 1824, 19). As the child grows more extensive and the wants become more prominent, parents complain and find their children ill-tempered brats (Locke 1824, 20). Locke has little sympathy for the parents as they are the ones to blame. The tenderness the parents display towards the child today could lead to a spoiled and craven citizen tomorrow, a problem Locke wishes to avoid.

Locke points out that if a child has had their way since they were tiny, why would this suddenly change when they grow older? Why now that “he is grown up, is stronger and wiser than he was then, why now of a sudden must he be restrained and curbed?” (Locke 1824, 20). If

any other animal were spoiled in the way a human being is, no one would be surprised that the animal was not compliant. The problem is that compared to man, other animals are not "half so willful and proud, or half so desirous to be masters of themselves and others, as man" (Locke 1824, 20). The fault is not in having appetites but in having appetites not guided by the "rules and restraints" of reason (Locke 1824, 20). If children are not taught to use their reason for their advantage, they will not use it for the betterment of others as they become adults (Locke 1824, 20). Permission of desires can lead to a person being full of vices. There are a host of other practices engaged by parents that Locke thinks are destructive to a child's character.

Besides spoiling their children, parents encourage a variety of vices that will hinder their children in the long wrong. First, Locke points out that violence and cruelty, allowing children to hit and harm others when they are little, can be detrimental and cause a growing person to think that they may continue to do this when they are older (Locke 1824, 20-21). Girls and boys are encouraged to try on clothes and have their egos increased by the praise they receive from their parents for the clothes they wear (Locke 1824, 21). Thus, vanity is added to violence as a quality of a person's character. Lying and equivocation are encouraged by parents to serve the parent's interests without considering what effects it will have on children in the future (Locke 1824, 21). The other habit is gluttony, as the parents may eat a lot when they have the opportunity, thus presenting an example for the child to emulate; the other problem is that the parents might make a great source of pleasure out of eating and will provide the child with whatever delicacies they can provide (Locke 1824, 21). The common occurrence of having a luxurious dinner among the British gentry invited the question of whether it should be considered a vice. However, Locke insists in the end that the luxuriousness of the dinner can serve as an opportunity for vice down the road.

Of course, Locke realizes that not all indulgences are detrimental to the development of children, as when they are little, they should have access to "play, and to playthings." However, education requires that the things that are not necessary for the child should not be given to them (Locke 1824, 22). There needs to be a certain level of severity and restraint, especially from the father. To ensure the continued obedience of the child well into their adult years, the father needs to "admit him nearer to your familiarity; so shall you have him your obedient subject (as is fit) while he is a child, and your affectionate friend when he is a man," (Locke 1824, 22). Severity as an adult will serve no point, but when children are young and lacking judgment, it is the best time to guide them. Children should look at their parents with awe, seeing them as "their lords, their absolute governors," and so fear and awe will give parents "the first power over their mind" (Locke 1824, 24). Thus, a strict regime must be imposed on children today so that love and friendship can ripen between child and adult. This is the general scheme, but the particulars will also involve discipline for the good of the child.

Regarding punishments, Locke insists that "the most chastised seldom make the best men" (Locke 1824, 24). This is because children are continually punished if their "spirits be abased and broken much, by too strict a hand over them; they lose all their vigor and industry, and are in a worse state than the former," because while a lively spirit can be brought to heel but "dejected minds, timorous and tame, and low spirits, are hardly ever to be raised, and very seldom attain to anything," (Locke 1824, 24). The "true secret of education" for Locke is to educate a person so that they are "easy, active, and free; and yet, at the same time, to restrain him from many things he has a mind to, and to draw him to things that are uneasy to him," (Locke 1824, 25). Suppose corporal punishment is used with great vigor. In that case, the child will develop a "slavish temper," where the child will feign obedience while the rod is nearby but act

with impunity upon their natural inclinations, which will only have heightened (Locke 1824, 26). A far worse possibility is that the child becomes subservient to their parents and everyone around them, becoming a “useless thing to himself and others” (Locke 1824, 26). Punishments need to be limited and cannot be too severe. In addition, there need to be rewards, though they need to be managed effectively.

In general, Locke suggests that a reward should not be attached to accomplishing a task for most activities, as this will teach them to accomplish things for their own pleasure. This will open the child up to vices in the future, such as “luxury, pride, or covetousness” and a host of other problems (Locke 1824, 26). This does not mean that they should never receive awards, but that they should be granted when “they have those enjoyments, only as the consequences of the state of esteem and acceptance they are in with their parents and governors” (Locke 1824, 26). If there is so much regulation of discipline and rewards, what are the ways to ensure that a child will comply with their parents, according to Locke? Locke admits this is an intense difficulty as hope and fear are the best ways to guide a rational creature (Locke 1824, 27). However, the solution is to switch hope and fear from an object and switch them over to a more abstract concept, namely honor. Locke suggests that if one can “get into children a love of credit and an apprehension of shame and disgrace, you have put into them the true principle, which will constantly work, and incline them to the right” (Locke 1824, 27). If a child can develop a desire for the parent's esteem and want to avoid being shamed or blamed by them, then this will serve as a better path to a virtuous life than appeals to the pleasure of pain in an external sense.⁵ The question then becomes how does one instill this sense, this craving for esteem?

⁵ Locke may express confidence in shame as a tool to improve a child's character, but some commentators note a tension that may occur with this upbringing. Frances Ferguson believes that Locke's education will make a child self-effacing and wish to please society at all costs. See Ferguson, Frances. "Reading morals: Locke and Rousseau on education and inequality." *Representations* 6 (1984): pages 73-74.

Locke argues that the desire for esteem from the parents is natural to the child and that they will notice the approval they receive when they do something good and the disapproval when they do something wrong (Locke 1824, 28). In addition, having the child in a state of contempt from everyone when they do something wrong will further ingrain notions of esteem into their mind (Locke 1824, 28). Locke warns that housekeepers and other servants can ruin this plan as the attention they give the child would undo all the lessons the parents were trying to give them (Locke 1824, 28). Most people do not have servants to corrupt their children, so the advice can seem dated. Nevertheless, the idea that parents should provide a united front when assigning praise and blame to a child has validity. For assorted reasons, the maids will be a recurring danger to Locke's education, so parents are often advised to keep them in check. It is only through shame that a child can become aware of whether they do right or wrong, but the father must only be angry when the child truly deserves it. If corporal punishment were instigated regularly, the punishment would become ineffective over time (Locke 1824, 29). To effectively instill a desire for a parent's praise, Locke advises parents to chastise their children in private and to praise the children openly to increase the desirability of praise (Locke 1824, 29). Rules are another critical component of the praise process, though Locke advises a gentler touch concerning rules.

Children are naturally energetic, and the love of sport and play should not be condemned. However, if they become raucous, then a swift glance and disapproving glance from the parent will work if authority has been instilled into the child (Locke 1824, 30). Memory is also not the strongest for children, so there should not be such a need to drill countless rules into their minds if they cannot remember them all (Locke 1824, 30). If too many rules are provided, then the child "must be very often punished, which will be of ill consequence, by making punishment too

frequent and familiar; or else you must let the transgressions of some of your rules go unpunished, whereby they will of course grow contemptible, and your authority become cheap to him,” (Locke 1824, 31).

Instead, the few rules they are given must become habits and practices that can be followed repeatedly and corrected should the need arise (Locke 1824, 31). To ensure that the habits are implemented effectively, Locke argues that it is necessary for those who attend to the children to “study their natures and aptitudes, and see, often by trials, what turn they easily take, and what becomes them; observe what their native stock is, how it may be improved,” (Locke 1824, 31). The development of habits will give way to manners children can follow by the examples provided and then by any tremendous list of rules. Of course, in the pursuit of rearing the children the right way, there is still the problem of the maids and servants.

Locke offers scorn to the servants in the household, arguing that they can provide uncivilized and uncouth ideas and language that impact civility and virtue and "horribly infects the children" (Locke 1824, 34). The overarching concern that Locke is expressing, which still resonates even today, is that the company that a child keeps will always impact their development socially and perhaps even morally. Locke predicts a question will be asked about whether the child should be left with the parents or allowed to "travel abroad" and see the world. The dilemma of either option is described in the following way: “If I keep him always at home, he will be in danger to be my young master; and if I send him abroad, how is it possible to keep him from the contagion of rudeness and vice, which is every-where so in fashion?” (Locke 1824, 34). Again, some aspects of Locke's description of education are less relatable for the average reader. Many people do not find themselves traveling abroad. Despite this, the question that Locke is attempting to solve is whether education should belong within the parents' control via

homeschooling or whether the child is sent out to some school. The same tradeoff between home school and public school will occur. Either the child risks becoming ignorant of the outside world, or they become corrupt and work against the interests of the outside world. How is one to navigate this quagmire?

Overall, Locke is more sympathetic to homeschooling than sending the child away.⁶

While Locke acknowledges that a child who travels abroad can develop a certain level of boldness, he finds that trading the child's "innocence and virtue" for socialization and a "little Greek and Latin" (Locke 1824, 35). Going to school exposes the child to a "mixture of rudeness, and ill-turned confidence, that those misbecoming and disingenuous ways of shifting in the world must be unlearned, and all the tincture washed out again, (Locke 284, 35). Unlike school away from the family, the faults of private education at home, "sheepishness and ignorance of the world, are not a result of being taught at home, and those faults are dealt with greater ease than other forms of education (Locke 1824, 36). Teaching children the path to virtue is the primary goal that children should have when they are young. Giving enough time and intercourse with others will inspire confidence in the youth, especially young men. To help them along the way, the child's reasoning capabilities must develop.⁷

Children love to reason, though not with syllogisms or long philosophical tracts. Locke means that children are rational creatures because they will respect adults when they give children reasons for their commands in a manner devoid of "caprice, passion, or fancy" (Locke 1824, 44). The children need to be made to feel that their parents are acting out of their best

⁶ His emphasis on parental education was not without resistance from other intellectuals. Ezell describes how commentators such as Oliver Goldsmith and Jonathan Swift protested Locke's apparent disdain for public schools and both Swift and Goldsmith defended public education on various grounds (Ezell 1983, 146).

⁷ Ezell credits Locke for going against the traditional account of children. Instead of viewing children as creatures that respond only to physical pain, Ezell considers Locke's idea of children learning obligations through reason as "one of his most radical breaks with 17th century thought" (Ezell 1983, 152).

interest and using examples to prove the point (Locke 1824, 45). The teachers of Locke's day would insist that it was better to use corporal punishment than to engage in reasoning with students. However, Locke sees this as nothing more than a prejudice against children, as children can learn things more quickly than others when they are young, like dancing and arithmetic, compared to Greek and Latin (Locke 1824, 46). A governor or a tutor can instruct a child without bringing physical pain, but the father must ensure that the son respects the tutor, which means the son must respect the parent's will (Locke 1824, 47). Finding a proper tutor is necessary because the parents only know so much. Someone who is "wise" must be able to stay by the child and help them develop into the person they should be (Locke 1824, 48). Locke thinks that a good tutor will instill a sense of good breeding in the child.

In Locke's opinion, breeding is a demonstration of a person's virtuous or vicious qualities based on their upbringing in a balanced manner. Locke compares breeding and virtue to a diamond, noting, "Nobody contents himself with rough diamonds, and wears them so, who would appear with advantage. When they are polished and set, then they give a luster. Good qualities are the substantial riches of the mind, but good breeding sets them off" (Locke 1824, 50). The tutor must tend to establish good breeding, so it stands to reason that the tutor must also have good breeding. In addition, the tutor needs to be well-traveled and understand the world well (Locke 1824, 51). The tutor transfers this knowledge to the pupil so that the child will not fall prey to all the traps and snares of the world and lose their virtue or reputation (Locke 1824, 51-52). The work of the educator for the young is "to fashion the carriage and form the mind; to settle in his pupil good habits, and the principles of virtue and wisdom; to give him, by little and little, a view of mankind" (Locke 1824, 53). By exposing the child to the world bit by bit, the tutor will ensure that a transformation can occur from childhood and adulthood, or "boy to man,"

as Locke calls it, without losing their character. Finding tutors with all the qualifications that Locke suggests will be challenging, but if parents can discover such tutors, they should be employed. As the transition from youth is entirely underway, the father must decide how to guide the younger person into achieving success in life and happiness within themselves.

4.3. Locke on the development of men

As a child grows into adulthood, Locke argues that a father should develop a certain level of familiarity with the child, especially if they are sons, as this will have a twofold effect of putting more severe thoughts into the head of the child. It will allow for a friendship that can last once the child is genuinely independent of the Father (Locke 1824, 55-56). In matters such as “Particularly in morality, prudence, and breeding, cases should be put to him, and his judgment asked: this opens the understanding better than maxims, how well soever explained; and settles the rules better in the memory for practice,” (Locke 1824, 56). The more the child feels that his thoughts matter to the father, the easier he can understand life's different situations and be prepared for them. This will be a lengthy process in which the father must expunge as many seeds of vice as early as possible (Locke 1824, 57). Locke thinks parents should deal with as many vices as they can discover. He also thinks parents should deal with the central deficiency in their children: their drive for dominion. If this drive for dominion is not contained, then the development of a good citizen or a good person is impossible.

In Locke's discussion of dominion, we see a side of human Nature that was not prominent in *The Second Treatise*. While Locke does believe that human beings have a drive for liberty, there is a greater desire for dominion (Locke 1824, 58). Locke makes a few observations to justify this conclusion. First, Locke notes that whenever children do not get their way, they “cry, grow peevish, sullen, and out of humor” and that they would “have their desires submitted to by

others; they contend for a ready compliance from all about them, especially from those that stand near or beneath them in age or degree, as soon as they come to consider others with those distinctions,” (Locke 1824, 58).⁸

Second, Locke finds confirmation for the drive for dominion in the child’s desire to have possession over things and notes how it pleases children to have power and “the right they thereby have to dispose of them as they please” (Locke 1824, 59). This urge can be destructive and a source of much of the suffering that human beings endure, and it will be necessary for the Father to root this out both as a child and as they approach adulthood, as this desire may increase if they become independent of the Father. If the problem of dominion is not extinguished, then the likelihood of the political obligations becoming imprinted on the young person’s mind decreases. Besides the education that they will receive, they will also need to develop trades so that they can become helpful to the world.

A trade is essential for the young English gentleman for assorted reasons. It is not enough for a young gentleman to have skills in languages and the “learned sciences.” However, they should also know various manual labor skills such as “painting, turning, gardening, tempering and working in iron, and all other useful arts” (Locke 1824, 118). Part of the reason for learning the trade when they are young is that the child will have a more muscular body and, by extension, better health (Locke 1824, 118). In addition, having different manual trades will generate knowledge applicable to areas outside of the intellectual life, hopefully creating a well-rounded individual (Locke 1824, 118). Given the upbringing that the children of the English Gentry usually have great opportunities for laziness, which they disguise as “leisure,” Locke

⁸ Some commentators think that Locke does not handle the problem of dominion effectively. See Marks, Jonathan. “Rousseau’s critique of Locke’s education for liberty.” *The Journal of Politics* 74, no. 3 (2012): 694-706.

suggests that continuous manual activity will impart valuable knowledge and prevent any squandering of the young person's time.

To ensure that the resources and the time of the estate that the young person will soon control, Locke suggests that the young person should establish a merchant account to keep track of all the expenses they make (Locke 1824, 121). Suppose a young gentleman has their account on their mind and their affairs in order. In that case, they should be able to have a better financial position but also ensure they will appreciate the history of the family's money and will work not to squander it (Locke 1824, 121). There is an ultimate step to ensure that young gentlemen will be able to travel so they can acquire wisdom and experience about the rest of Europe (Locke 1824, 122). The problem that most parents have when they let their child travel abroad is that they are still too young when they travel (usually 17-21), and so what happens is that they are filled with passions and energy, guided by peers who have the same level of energy and lack the wisdom to make the most of the experience.

Even if they were to travel with a tutor or guardian, they would not be able to control them like they once did, and the travels would serve no ultimate purpose (Locke 1824, 122). Locke notes that there is an appeal to meeting new people and potentially finding the best people to talk about different affairs, but he argues that most young people will not encounter such people (Locke 1824, 123). Locke says the best time for traveling abroad is when the child is young, and the governor can still have the pupil's ear, or to wait until the passions have cooled in the late twenties and then send them out into the world. Locke believes parents will ignore his advice to the problem of customs rearing its head again. This is the gist of Locke's view of education, from physical development to mental and moral training, which are essential for

individual development. Before turning to the secondary literature and assessing others' thoughts on this text, preliminary remarks must be made.

Locke's education schema is highly restrictive. This would come as no surprise to Locke as he says in the conclusion of the essay that education is designed for the upper class, and the education of a “prince, a nobleman, and an ordinary gentleman's son,” people who have “different ways of breeding,” (Locke 1824, 124). It is an education that does not focus on women or other classes of society.⁹ Despite this setback, Locke establishes certain general principles in this essay that he believes can be applied to other segments of society. For instance, children have a hardy physical upbringing to endure various hardships. This will create training that will enable children to become happy, as the health of the body and the mind are paramount for good living. The use of pharmaceuticals should function as a last resort when it comes to aiding the body, and the overall diet should restrict the cravings as much as possible. Physically, the child raised in a manner set against luxury cultivates a level of endurance that is useful for going through life and handling the suffering of hardship for the sake of England. This theme of resisting craving is constant throughout the text, and the best way to control it is by establishing habits in the body and mind.

Locke gives the mind the most attention as a Lockean education aims to ensure that reason predominates over the passions in the individual. Locke suggests that human beings have an urge for dominion that, if left unchecked, will cause damage to society. To fight against this urge of dominion, it will not be helpful to cause pain or incentivize with rewards, but to establish a desire in the child to please the parents and attach that desire to please them by performing good acts. The best way to develop this love of the future is for the parents, with the aid of a tutor

⁹ Once again, Locke seems to presume that a woman's respect for marital obligations will be high. Locke does not seem to appreciate how respect and desire for marriage and children is a political problem as well as a personal one.

or governor, to raise the children at home and not send them away. The tutor must be exceptional, or the parents must follow Locke's advice as much as possible. The child will need to travel, but not to the usual age that custom dictated. Custom is the pre-eminent enemy that a parent must be on the lookout against as it can impact a young person's life. The maids and servants will need to be kept in line as well, as they can subvert the education of the parent and can also provide superstitious tales that will wreak havoc on the child's imagination. While some aspects of this advice apply to a larger audience, limitations are present and need addressing.

Locke's education aims to cultivate a virtuous person who can develop a love of reason and duty over their passions. The problem with education is that it asks too much and presents an ideal in tension with reality. The first concern is that the parents may need more discipline to effectively guide the child to a virtuous upbringing. This is due to a variety of reasons. The mother's love for the child will make it hard to resist the urge to spoil the child, whether by giving them rich food or clothing or excessive praise for trivial things. The customs may also become too strong or too numerous for parents to keep track of, significantly if the customs have already impacted the parents. In addition, the lack of excellent tutors who are well-bred and well-traveled will also impact the child's ability to be educated appropriately. The level of rigor that such an upbringing requires, the time and constant attention coupled with the adequate resources, make it hard to see how various parts of society can effectively employ such an educational model. The more significant problem is that Locke's education scheme cannot prevent luxury from emerging, which will enfeeble the goal of creating a rational person who can serve the state and perform significant duties for the country.

Admittedly, there is little in the physical upbringing of the child that Locke would consider luxurious. On the contrary, if the goal were to rear farmer citizens eager to serve the

good of the state, a goal that Rousseau would find salutary, then the education provided by Locke would be excellent for the task. However, there is an eventual transition from boy to man, in which the upbringing like that of a farmer gives way to the breeding of the country gentleman. This is when the problems begin to emerge. Firstly, there is the difficulty of having reason in control over passions. This goal is fine, but Locke sometimes wavers over how effectively this applies to children.

On the one hand, parents must teach children to resist cravings that are not good for them. On the other hand, Locke wants parents to treat children in a manner where they can play and enjoy themselves. The line between the two can cross quickly, and the development of reason in a child is easier said than done. There is consistent criticism of children's appetites. However, in Rousseau's examination of education, the appetites, or passions, as Rousseau calls them, are excellent and worthy of cultivation. The other reason that makes the young gentlemen susceptible to the call for luxury is their very social status and the impact of "good breeding" on the individual's psychological development.

As mentioned in this chapter, the notion of breeding is intricately linked to the development of the young English gentleman. Virtue is not enough for Locke, as good breeding provides balance and beauty to the young individual. The good breeding of the individual problematically focuses on appearances too much. It is now no longer enough to have virtue but to put on a show that others can see that you have virtue as well. Wanting to appear balanced and well-bred will naturally invite comparison with others. The hope that Locke suggests is that with the virtue rigidly attached to the individual's character, the display of good breeding will serve as a polish to a diamond in the rough. The problem, however, is that the sign of good breeding is intricately linked to the social status of the English Gentry; comparisons will be constant, and

rather than a polish, the lifestyle of the English Gentry could serve as an acid to the diamond of virtue instead. The other problem of Locke's education is that raising a young person to become an aristocrat has tossed the child from the frying pan of luxury into the fire.

Suppose the young person develops into a member of the English gentry. In that case, they will have access to leisure and luxuries that other members of society could only dream about, making it hard to see how a young gentleman could resist such temptations if Locke were teaching the youth virtue so they could avoid pathways to luxury that is one thing. However, Locke's education aims to raise a child into the gentry class. Locke could respond that if parents follow everything he suggests (which, given the number of things he suggests, is quite unlikely), then reason will be so deeply implanted in the individual that they will not fall prey to luxury. The question remains whether Locke's belief in reason is justified or not.¹⁰ If it is not, then a young adult surrounded by wealth and access to pleasure can be challenging to restrain.

Even if the young gentleman were to use merchant accounts to keep up to date on all their expenses, this would only make the person more commercially minded and more likely to succumb to temptation. In other words, Locke is attempting to have his cake and eat it too. Training someone to be virtuous and then placing them in a setting where they have the potential to work against their virtue is problematic. Locke suggests that virtue requires external goods to sustain itself. This is a well-bred opinion, as great thinkers like Aristotle have suggested that only the elites can be virtuous since they have the resources to engage in leisure and work on their virtues. Moreover, Rousseau is not against the pursuit of having items for living, but to think that

¹⁰ Another reason to question Locke's conviction of the power of reason can be seen in Marks, Jonathan. "Rousseau's critique of Locke's education for liberty." *The Journal of Politics* 74, no. 3 (2012): 694–706. In this article, Marks convincingly argues that Rousseau makes an excellent critique of Locke's education relying on reason, as it can create a situation where the child will be in a "habit either of submitting to arbitrary decrees or of gaming the system" (Marks 2012, 699). This failure demonstrates the difficulties with incorporating obligations by proponents of commerce.

using external goods is vital to living well is disagreeable with his thought. However, when looking at the rest of the secondary literature, it may be the case that Locke's education project is more tenable than suggested. Therefore, reading the literature and seeing what other Lockean scholars have suggested about this text is imperative.

4.4. Deeper Analysis of Locke's view of education

Much of the secondary literature has debated the value of Locke's scheme of education and what the education Locke offers implies about the human condition. A significant discussion in the early twentieth century has been about the extent to which John Locke is against the notion of innate ideas. Scholars like JA Passmore argue that given John Locke's empiricism and his eschewing of any notion of original sin, human beings are entirely malleable and can be perfected by a proper education.¹¹ This view has received pushback over the decades, but there is some justification for the view. In Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, there is a passage in which Locke says: "Men have a natural tendency to what delights and from what pains them. This universal observation has established past doubt. That the soul has such a tendency to what is morally good and from what is morally evil has not fallen under my observation, and therefore, I cannot grant it for as being".¹² This comment suggests that Locke conceives of human beings as hedonistic and that the moral compass of humans is linked to what offers them pleasure and pain.

Because of this, Passmore could argue that Locke thinks proper education could perfect humans and that "Men are born with one, and only one natural impulse-the morally neutral

¹¹ See Passmore, John. *The Perfectibility of Man*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1969.

¹² Crittenden, P. J. "Thoughts about Locke's Thoughts about Education." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 15, no. 2 (1981): 149–160. Specifically page 152.

impulse to pursue what gives them pleasure and avoid pain. Apart from that natural tendency, their minds are devoid of any impulses".¹³ What complicates this purely empirical model is how Locke argues that specific wants are natural in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. At the same time, some are pure fancy, suggesting that Nature has installed specific innate wants or needs (Crittenden 1981, 153).¹⁴ In addition, certain portions of Locke's view of education conflict with Passmore's account.¹⁵

PJ Crittenden, a member of the Department of Philosophy for the University of Sydney, notes how, in section 48, Locke "claims explicitly that the natural propensity to seek immediate physical gratification is "the Root from whence spring all Vicious Actions, and the Irregularities of Life".¹⁶ While Locke may say that human beings lack moral knowledge, this does not imply that they lack a drive for some good. Pleasure is the start of the development of human beings for Locke, but it is not the end, contra Passmore (Crittenden 1981, 153).¹⁷ In addition, Crittenden notes that while Locke justly deserves his reputation as a great proponent of education and his movement towards a more secular form of education, there is a less grandiose prognosis of what education could allow a person to become. Crittenden does show how Locke believes that humans can become virtuous via habituation, but it is certainly not the promise of "indefinite progress and human improvement" (Crittenden 1981, 153).¹⁸ The tension with a purely secular

¹³ Passmore 1969, 161.

¹⁴ Crittendon 1981, 153.

¹⁵ See Neill, Alex. "Locke on habituation, autonomy, and education." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 27, no. 2 (1989): 225-245. Neill argues that Passmore does not appreciate Locke's development of the understanding, which causes Passmore to have a skewed account of Locke's education (Neill 1989, 228-229).

¹⁶ Crittendon 1981, 153.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

account is that Locke still believes that much of the morality humans need that could work by reason can be found in the Bible, though no significant justification is offered. This is odd to Crittenden because so much of Locke's view of education rests on having a custom based on reason instead of simply basing it on tradition and authority (Crittenden 1981, 154).¹⁹ If this is the case, why rely on religious texts as the source of morality and not explain why? Furthermore, Crittenden finds the development of a child's education cloudy for several reasons.

Crittenden credits Passmore's interpretation of Locke when looking at a child's education development. Crittenden notes how Locke, on the one hand, argues that reason is a vital component of educating the youth. However, the more significant part of this education is providing habits and routines until the child accepts the education as usual and reasonable.²⁰ Crittenden argues that Passmore can use this recommendation to connect Locke to behaviorists such as B.F. Skinner.²¹

Furthermore, while Crittenden does acknowledge how radically Locke changes the punishment system, away from the use of physical pain and pleasure and towards good and bad reputation, Crittenden does acknowledge that the habituation is essentially hedonistic, in contrast to the "Socratic idea of the reward of virtue being internal to its practice, nor of the Christian conception of morality as presupposing 'Caritas' or love of God as more basic than love of self."²² The problem for Crittenden with linking morality to pleasurable feelings is that it needs to be more open and factor in other components of moral motivation.²³ Despite this problem with

¹⁹ Ibid, 154.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, 155.

²³ Ibid.

Locke's thought, Crittenden is clear that there is only a limited sense of malleability in Locke's ideas of education. This stems in part from Locke's hodgepodge of "rationalism in ethics, natural law theory, traditional religious belief, hedonism, utilitarianism, and elements of stoicism and epicureanism, both current in the seventeenth century."²⁴ Because of these influences, Locke has a more restricted conception of human perfectibility. This contrasts with scholars like Peter A. Schouls, from British Columbia University, who argue that Locke's ambition is for humans to develop complete mastery over themselves and their environment.

In *Reasoned Freedom: John Locke and Enlightenment*, Schouls argues that Locke's system of thought revolves around mastery and that each person can be a "potential master" under the right tutoring.²⁵ When examining *Some thoughts Concerning Education*, Schouls argues that not only is the discussion of power consistent across Locke's other texts, such as his essay on human understanding, but the tendency and the desire for power for mastery are universal.²⁶ Schouls provides a thorough investigation into the text, showing how the opening statement about a child's education is not a contradiction but is instead a call for the child to achieve their duty despite the factual circumstances of their upbringing.²⁷ A person can exert themselves and become a master even if the environment does not necessarily provide advantages for development.

Schouls insists that this ability and capacity for mastery extends over all classes. The gentry upbringing does not perturb Schoul's emphasis in *Some thoughts concerning education*, as

²⁴ Ibid, 156-157.

²⁵ Schouls, Peter A. *Reasoned freedom: John Locke and enlightenment*. Cornell University Press, 2018.

²⁶ Schouls 2018, 183-184.

²⁷ Ibid, 185.

for Schouls, every person has this capacity for mastery.²⁸ Schouls notes how Locke, unlike other theorists of education in the 17th century, did not believe that one's education had an irresistible impact on oneself. If they have a terrible education, there is a chance they can overcome it (Schouls 2018, 188).²⁹ This cuts both ways. If a lousy education is not irresistible, then there is no reason to think a good education is either. As a result, Schouls is more open to the malleability of the individual, at least when they are younger, compared to Crittenden.

Locke's notion of *tabula rasa*, of the blank slate, is part of why Schouls believes one can resist the effect of the wrong education. Schouls, however, does not deny that education can have a harmful and destructive impact since prejudices can impact a child early and create impressions that will last for many years. Locke warns against the many prejudices that can emerge from figures such as "the superstitious nurse, the prejudiced parent, the opinionated power of church or state."³⁰ These cultural prejudices hinder a person's drive for mastery, but they are not insurmountable. If human nature is some surmountable barrier, what else does Schouls think is the point of the education that Locke provides?

When looking at Locke's perspective on education, Schouls thinks there are four goals in mind. There is the mastery of desire, having reason be a judge over good desires and evil desires, instilling a praise and blame principle in the pupil's mind so they are more amenable to submitting to reason, and finally, leading them to an education that makes them best suited for the "autonomous action" that is aligned with morality and religion.³¹ The instilling of the praise and blame principle in the young person's mind is particularly interesting to Schouls. Schouls

²⁸ Ibid, 185.

²⁹ Ibid, 188.

³⁰ Ibid, 192.

³¹ Ibid, 207.

points out that it is not enough to establish a habit of praising and blaming the pupil for performing specific actions, as even tyrants and kings can praise their compliance subjects (Schouls 2018, 212).³² Instead, when the child acts according to the examples of reason and strives to emulate them, parents should assign praise or blame (Schouls 2018, 213).³³ In addition, Schouls finds that Locke encourages a form of progress, at least when it applies to the individual.

Schouls would disagree with Crittenden that progress is not a significant consideration of Locke's thought. Schools would agree with Crittenden that Locke does not envision education as a means of social control. However, reason is helpful in causing progress in a young person's life, both as a moral person and a person fully autonomous over their actions (Schouls 2018, 213).³⁴ Schouls believes that this can be applied to both rich and poor, as even the poor can have the ability to make their children not submit to every desire that comes into their heads (Schouls 2018, 213).³⁵ Schouls emphasizes this point to show that contra Passmore, it is not education that decides the outcome of the individual, but the individual's reliance on their reason, which allows them to progress towards their own goal (Schouls 2018, 213).³⁶ With reason at the helm, there will be a higher probability that an autonomous individual can master themselves and their environment. The secondary literature presents a multifaceted account of Locke's thoughts, from the Nature of human malleability to the goal of what Locke's education system strives to produce. However, an overarching problem of the secondary literature concerning Locke's view of education is the dearth of discussion on luxury.

³² Ibid, 212.

³³ Ibid, 213.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

Little of the literature so far focuses on how an educated individual is supposed to respond to the problems of luxury. Schouls makes no comments about the question of luxury. There is a seeming confidence that luxury will not threaten the autonomous individual as reason is now in control. This confidence does not provide explanatory power for how an autonomous individual can adapt the social position needed to their station while not succumbing to the lifestyle once they are on their own. Again, Locke and his commentators suppose that the strength of reason can overcome most obstacles. This is a supposition that Rousseau will challenge *Emile*. In addition to the luxury problem, the other difficulty that emerges with the secondary literature is the lack of connection between the private and the political and how luxury can permeate both areas of life.

In the secondary literature survey, Locke's thoughts about how the individual connects to politics meaningfully are not discussed. Granted, politics in the Lockean sense is prohibitive, offering negative freedom from specific harms that occur by both the neighbor and the state. However, Locke's thoughts on education display a positive commitment, a series of duties to the state that people must follow. The secondary literature has highlighted the difficulty of using Locke's education as a vehicle for progress or simply creating political change. These quandaries are either ignored or downplayed to the detriment of forming a connection between familial and political life. In the end, the question remains whether Rousseau's educational model can overcome the luxury problem and form a connection between private and public life. To assess Rousseau's thoughts on education, this chapter will primarily focus on the private education envisioned by *Emile*.

4.5. Rousseau on the development of the child

Chapter One focuses on Rousseau's concern about the significance of luxury and the value of procreation in *Emile*. One of the first distinctions noticed in Rousseau's thought

compared to Locke's is the acknowledgment that more of children's education when they are young will belong to the mother and not the father. Rousseau argues that mothers are usually responsible for the first education of the children, and due to the proximity of both the mother and children, the mother can easily see the problems their children are having developmentally and work to correct them (Rousseau 1979, 37). In addition, Rousseau argues that the mother's tenderness pales compared to the father's "ambition, avarice, tyranny, and false foresight, their negligence, their harsh insensitivity" (Rousseau 1979, 38). The problem that Rousseau is hoping to address in *Emile* is the fact that parents were not able to effectively able their children to raise their children. Mothers were becoming luxurious and not spending their time raising their children, instead going out into the city (Rousseau 1979, 44). Fathers would focus on their "duties" and business rather than developing a good relationship with their children (Rousseau 1979, 38). Already, the analysis Rousseau provides differs from Locke's in several ways.

The first significant difference between Rousseau's and Locke's views of education is seen in analyzing the targeted demographic for Rousseau's text. While Locke primarily focuses on appealing to the gentry class, Rousseau has a more urban audience in mind. This is important because while Locke's audience has the distance of the estate, Rousseau targets readers who may need a place to escape to and are in the cities. The other difference is that Rousseau acknowledges and encourages the role that mothers often play in the development of their children. Unlike Locke, Rousseau is willing to assign equal blame to both the mother and father. If the mother's significant flaws are her passions and fancies, the father is stuck in calculations of businesses and responsibilities, which are perennial excuses to abstain from helping children. Rousseau thinks parents are trapped in social interactions that withdraw them from the family's goods. Parents may have different social interactions, as the mother plays while the father works,

but both have inescapable social relations. The questions that need answering are: what type of education does Rousseau want to provide, and what is the best vehicle to ensure these results can be produced?

Rousseau explains that there are three types of education, “three masters” a person may have. They are the education of Nature, which is the internal development of “our faculties and organs,” the education of men, which decides what we are to do with ourselves once we develop, and the education of things, where we learn about “the objects that affect us” (Rousseau 1979, 38). Of these three types of education, the ones that humans can only control are the education by men, and it is through this type of education one can choose to make a person a “man or a citizen,” as the distinct types of education can become problematic and become incapable of reconciliation. Rousseau summarizes the notion of the natural man and the civil man in the following manner: “Natural man is entirely for himself. He is a numerical unity, the absolute whole relative only to itself or its kind. Civil man is only a fractional unity dependent on his denominator; his relation to the whole determines his value” (Rousseau 1979, 40). The trick of education via social institutions for Rousseau is to “denature man” to “transport the I into the common unity,” of society (Rousseau 1979, 40). This type of civil education emerges from the two cultures that Rousseau praises the most: the Romans and the Spartans.

The Roman citizen Regulus, who the Carthaginians captured during the Punic Wars, preferred to be tortured to death than to put the value of his own life over the country, an act which bears little relation “to the men we know.” (Rousseau 1979, 40). The Spartan Pedareetus, who lost an election for the council for three hundred, was happy with the outcome because it meant that people far worthier than him would now be running the council. This sentiment made Rousseau declare: “I take this display to be sincere, and there is reason to believe it was. This is

the citizen.” (Rousseau 1979, 40). And then there is the case of the Spartan mother who, when told that her sons died in battle, inquired as to whether the battle was won, and she gave thanks to God. Rousseau dubs her a "female citizen" (Rousseau 1979, 40). Rousseau provides these examples to demonstrate that people “in the civil order who want to preserve the primacy of the sentiments of nature does not know what he wants” and that this confusion will not produce a man or a citizen but instead a "Frenchman, an Englishman a bourgeois. He will be nothing,” (Rousseau 1979,40). The European society of Rousseau's day was a mix of different forms of education that were unable to achieve any goal. The idea of a public education seemed unlikely to occur.

Rousseau had doubts about the ability of public education to exist in Europe because Europe lacked notions of patriotism and fatherland and argued that attempts to instill these notions into people and from colleges and from society would not work since they were either ineffective or created different goals (Rousseau 1979,40-41). When we look at Rousseau's thoughts on Poland in Chapter One, we see his stance against colleges soften. However, when Rousseau wrote *Emile*, the idea of public education for citizens was an untenable project. The only options left were the “domestic education and the education of nature (Rousseau 1979, 40-41). Rousseau's ambition is to see if these two types of education could form into one, as “removing the contradictions of man” would mean that “a great obstacle to his happiness has been removed,” (Rousseau 1979, 41). Given the social position changes that occurred in Rousseau's day (and in our day), Rousseau argues that a domestic education of a natural person would create a person prepared for the extraordinary task of all people, natural or otherwise, which is living.

Rousseau boasts to the reader that he can take a child and raise them to be “all that a man should be,” and this education is truly the study of the human condition, from the time that they are born until they reach full maturity in society (Rousseau 1979, 42). Early education is similar to Locke's in that Rousseau proposes a physical education, whereby the child is free to grow. Rousseau disavows the use of swaddling and having wet nurses as both constrict the child and stop the mother and son from bonding at an early age (Rousseau 1979, 43-45). Despite Rousseau's willingness to emphasize the responsibilities of both parents, Rousseau, much like Locke, does argue that pampering a child is not good. It is one problem for a parent to avoid suffering or inconvenience on their part, but to prevent as much suffering from the child “preserves him for a moment from a few discomforts without thinking about how many mishaps and perils she is thereby accumulating for him to bear later,” (Rousseau 1979, 47). The commonalities between Rousseau and Locke begin to split as the question of dominion comes to the foray.

Rousseau disagrees with Locke, who believes that dominion is natural to human beings and is restrained through education. Contra Locke, the desire for dominion is not something inherent to the human condition but is something taught. From the moment a child is born, they start to cry. Adults either attempt to pacify the child or use threats to subdue them. Rousseau says: “Either we submit to his whims, or we submit him to ours... Thus his first ideas are those of dominion and servitude” (Rousseau 1979, 48). The desire for dominion emerges because of our upbringing, and it is only for people to grant this tendency to Nature and bemoan the results they spent so much time attempting to instill. The Father's negligence does little to alleviate this problem. Instead, they content themselves with the food they can put on the table instead of the knowledge and virtue they can put into their child. There are, for Rousseau, three obligations a

father must fulfill to be worthy of the title. They must provide for their children, they must provide for the species, and they must provide citizens to the state (Rousseau 1979, 49).

Rousseau's list of obligations for the father suggests that the role is interwoven with familial, social, and political connotations. The failure of the social and political system results in the child's deficiencies in other elements of their life. With the numerous deficiencies of the mother and the father and the lack of proficient governors to help rear the child, how does Rousseau hope to demonstrate the effectiveness of his education?

Rousseau embarks on the project by envisioning himself as an imaginary pupil, establishing his education from birth till Emile's complete ascendancy into manhood (Rousseau 1979, 50-51). Rousseau does this because he acknowledges that he cannot be a good preceptor and Father, and it is easier to provide examples by pen than by real life (Rousseau 1979, 50). The other benefit is that Emile's upbringing is a thought experiment; there is a less likely chance that an actual child could be impacted. In addition, educators in the past, like Locke, did not have children themselves but still felt confident in the advice they provided. If this benefit of the doubt can be extended to Locke, then it should be provided to Rousseau.

Now, one of the significant components of Rousseau's domestic education is that the governor spent most of his time with his pupils, and they worked to cultivate a loving and friendly relationship with each other as a cold dynamic would not make the lessons impress themselves on the pupil's mind (Rousseau 1979, 53). Another significant component of Emile's physical education of Emile will involve raising him outside of the city. Men, says Rousseau, are not meant to be "crowded into anthills but to be dispersed over the earth which they should cultivate," and "the more they come together, the more they are corrupted" (Rousseau 1979, 59). The best way to ensure the child's freedom is by teaching them in the countryside. Unlike Locke,

who aims for mastery in the pupil, Rousseau focuses on maximizing the pupil's freedom as much as possible to develop into the type of person Nature has in mind.

One of the significant lessons that Rousseau emphasizes concerning rearing his "pupil" Emile is learning how to accept suffering. If there are moments where Emile becomes injured, Rousseau will not lose his composure as this will create more significant anxiety in the child (Rousseau 1979, 78). In contrast to Locke, the other advice Rousseau emphasizes is not to attempt to control the children's desires at an early age and force them to submit to reason as soon as possible. For Rousseau, there are problems that children have, as well as problems adults have. Why attempt to blur the line and not let the children have fun while it lasts (Rousseau 1979, 79-80)? The goal is not to diminish our desires nor to extend our faculties but to "diminish the excess of desires over the faculties and putting power and will in perfect equality" (Rousseau 1979, 80). Of the faculties, Rousseau pays attention to the imagination, as it can create a measure of the possibility that outstrips our happiness. The imagination supplies the human mind with needs that are not necessary for our happiness. A good education for Rousseau will ensure that the needs match the individual's strengths (Rousseau 1979, 81). Parents who wish to prepare their children for the "civil world" lay burdens upon them that they cannot manage at their stage of development. Attempting to instill the desire for pleasing society will create chains that the child will have to wear for the rest of their lives.

For Rousseau, there are only two types of dependencies, "depending on things, which is from nature," and "depending on men, which is from society" (Rousseau 1979, 85). The education of many young people emphasizes how to please people and conform to society, creating obligations and burdens that will stay with the child their whole life. To focus on the child's natural needs is the primary education that needs to occur, at least while they are young.

As Rousseau says: "The true need, natural need, must be carefully distinguished from the need which stems from nascent whim" (Rousseau 1979, 86). As a result of focusing on a natural education over a social education, Emile's politeness is not a significant priority. This is because Rousseau sees politeness as dominating others through different means, as a child can see the code of etiquette as a means of acquiring what they desire (Rousseau 1979, 86). In addition, the use of reason is of little concern for Rousseau.³⁷

Rousseau considers reasoning with children to be "Locke's great maxim." It is an idea that he considers to be foolish because the individual is the final product of the faculties that humans possess, resulting in a situation where people want "to begin with the end to want to make the product the instrument" (Rousseau 1979,89). Rousseau points out that if children had complete control of their reason, rearing them would not be necessary, but speaking to them through reason only causes children to show off and think they are "as wise as their masters" (Rousseau 1979, 89-90). For Rousseau, children are not meant to know between good and evil or even to "sense the reason for men's duty," and as a result, they will come to resent their teachers and become "dissemblers, fakers, and liars" in order to escape punishment (Rousseau 1979, 91). Locke objects to this since reasoning with children would not involve complex philosophizing but providing good reasons for why the commands are good for them. However, children at an immature age often lack the capacity even to understand good reasons. Until their reason can fully develop, Rousseau argues that the use of command, of saying "No" when the request by the child is wrong, is the best solution.

Rousseau substantiates his claims by arguing that the real need for children is a "well-regulated liberty" (Rousseau 1979, 92). When looking at a child from the city class compared to

³⁷ Until the child grows and reaches an age where their reason is useful, Rousseau emphasizes the need to focus on the body over the mind.

a village boy, Rousseau says the village boy will have fewer outbursts because their freedom has not been as constrained; a "young gentleman" will do worse because their lives are more regulated, causing them to treat any freedom as an excuse for a great license (Rousseau 1979, 92). Therefore, until age 12, Rousseau argues that children should have a "negative education"; the point is not to instill virtue and knowledge into their minds but to ensure they are free from vices and errors (Rousseau 1979, 93). Rousseau suggests that a pupil should have all elements of his body educated, from his body to his strength, but a guardian should not touch the "soul" for the good of the natural education system. Rousseau acknowledges that the type of education he proposes is complicated and proposes difficult standards to reach. However, Rousseau insists that in applying this type of education and in "applying oneself to overcoming them, one does overcome them to a certain point," followed by an admission, "I show the goal that must be set; I do not say that it can be reached. But I do say that he who comes nearest to it will have succeeded best," (Rousseau 1979, 94-95). To have any chance of succeeding best in this natural education, Rousseau suggests that Emile must be raised away from the city and be put in the countryside.

Rousseau has already discussed his disdain for cities and uses that disdain as a justification for moving Emile away into the countryside. Rousseau does not argue that the people in the countryside are more virtuous than people in the city. Instead, Rousseau emphasizes that cities have a "veneer seductive and contagious for children" and the vices of a rural population are "unadorned in all their coarseness," which will serve to repel Emile from imitating their vices (Rousseau 1979, 95). It will also be helpful to have the child away from the city, as there will be fewer distractions, and the child will take the advice of their governor more seriously (Rousseau 1979, 95). Access to the country will also help teach Emile the importance

of property. Rousseau creates a story where he and Emile plan to plant some beans. Rousseau can incentivize Emile to the gardening project, showing how Emile's beans would be once ready. However, due to a disagreement with the Gardener, who was already planting some melons, Emile will be able to learn about the property of others and then learn how to cooperate and respect others' property rights (Rousseau 1979, 98-99). As Rousseau teaches the value of property and the respect for other people's property, Rousseau begins the process of ensuring that a love for luxury does not take root in Emile's soul.

The move to the countryside already prevents specific pathways for luxury taking root in Emile's heart, but there are still ways that it can emerge that need to be stifled. Clothing can serve as a luxury outlet as the child can want clothes made of rich material (Rousseau 1979, 127). Rousseau argues that by making the clothes uncomfortable so the child will always be ill at ease removes this desire (Rousseau 1979, 127). In another instance, Rousseau discusses how greed can be fought against. There was a lazy child that Rousseau strives to make enjoy running by making him watch other boys have races and the winner receive the cake. The winners are always greedy, but the lazy child begins to take part to win the prize. As the child wins consistently, he shares the cake with the defeated runners (Rousseau 1979, 142). Rousseau uses this account to demonstrate that generosity and other virtues emerge from a position of excess instead of deficiency. There will be other ways that Rousseau can show how luxury can be combatted through a domestic education, but for now, it is vital to delve deeper into what Rousseau would start to teach Emile in a positive sense.

As young Emile enters his teenage years, Rousseau will begin to teach different topics and show their value for Emile's life. This is key for Rousseau, as he criticizes the education of his day, which attempts to discuss the advantages of travel and commerce, regaling the young

pupil about the value of politics and astronomy even though the youth will probably not understand much of what is being said and will feel too intimidated to inquire further (Rousseau 1979, 180). In order to make a child understand the value of any given subject, show them the practical effects of learning the subject. For instance, when Rousseau teaches Emile geography and Emile inquires as to the value of the subject, Rousseau instigates a plan where they get lost in the woods, and from their geography lessons, Emile can figure out the best way to get home (Rousseau 1979, 180-181). In addition to learning theoretical topics, Rousseau shows Emile the value of the industrial and mechanical arts, establishing an esteem for the more valuable and physical arts.³⁸ The critical component is that Rousseau would attach less esteem and praise for the arts that work on creating luxuries, as this could potentially make Emile desire these professions (Rousseau 1979, 185-186). Rousseau argues that if a person values things not for the actual utility they provide but for the prices that the world places on these industries, then one should "...abandon the rest of the education. Despite you they will be raised like everyone else. You have wasted fourteen years of your life," (Rousseau 1979, 186). This is a stark warning and one that Rousseau is serious about. A natural education can be ruined by the measures that society fosters, and if the measure of man is accepted, then education will falter.

Rousseau predicts that there will be objections to his denunciations of society's standards. The objection against Rousseau's critique is primarily that the world is run by "mad men," and given the fact that human beings are made to be social creatures, the child must "know their madness since they wish to be led by them" (Rousseau 1979, 186). In addition, while it is

³⁸ The problem of the division of labor is alleviated in a provincial setting. This is because, as McLendon suggests: "Rousseau also thinks that provincial division of labor is ennobling. Everyone becomes a craftsman and can perform challenging and socially useful work that everyone recognizes – yet at the same time does not swell amour-propre. Since most people live modestly and work with their hands, few have the time and inclination to make great contributions to the arts and sciences. There is, therefore, less cognitive inequality than in the cities, as natural inequalities have much less space in which to develop. There are still intellectuals and artists, but they exist in fewer numbers and have much less social status." (McLendon 2014, 350).

essential to know about the real things and their value, the objector to Rousseau's view is that "men and their judgments are even more valuable" because the best "instrument of man is man" and as a result, there needs to be an acceptance for how the world is now to serve that the son can be wise and prosperous (Rousseau 1979, 186). Rousseau is entirely against this advice, as he thinks they are nothing more than "specious maxims which guide the false prudence of fathers in making their children slaves of the prejudice they feed them" (Rousseau 1979, 187). Rousseau's criticism of the type of arguments described above is that they suppose studying man is easy to accomplish. On the contrary, it is one of the most essential elements of education and one of the hardest.

Rousseau argues that teaching Emile, or any child, is problematic as "Man is the last study of the wise, and you claim to make it a child's first!" (Rousseau 1979, 187). Because the child is so young, how does one expect the child to know and understand human beings if they cannot tell if the judgments made by human beings are good or bad, wise, or foolish? (Rousseau 1979, 187). If the child is not wise enough to sense deception, they will be led astray. To counteract this concern, Rousseau encourages the following: "Teach him, therefore, in the first place what things are in themselves, and you can teach him afterward what they are in our eyes" (Rousseau 1979, 187). This statement allows certain conclusions to be drawn about Rousseau's philosophy. First, Rousseau disagrees with the relativism proposed by Protagoras, which states that human beings are the measure of everything. There are natural things in themselves that one can esteem higher than man's opinions. By treating Emile's education in a natural sense, focusing on Emile as a "physical being" allows the pupil to draw "exact conclusions" about themselves, though admittedly not a great many conclusions (Rousseau 1979, 187). The social dynamics are

not of primary significance in Rousseau's educational model, and it is a result of this emphasis on the "physical being" that allows for appreciation for other elements of life besides commerce.

Due to Emile's education as a "physical being," Emile will focus on the things of Nature and of men that have a "palpable relation to his utility, his security, his preservation, and his well-being" (Rousseau 1979, 187). As a result, iron and glass will be more valuable to him than gold and diamonds, the shoemaker and the mason will be of more use than all the jewelers of France, and the "goldsmiths, the engravers and the gilders are in his view nothing but loafers who play perfectly useless games," (Rousseau 1979, 187). In other words, an education that emphasizes the body's needs, usefulness, and training to conform the imagination to the child's actual strength will decrease the desire for luxurious goods.

Moreover, education should work so that a child-like Emile will not even esteem the clockmaker because the happy child "enjoys time without being its slave. He profits from it and does not know it is valued" (Rousseau 1979, 187). Time is the valuation and commodification of a person's life and will not hold much value. Instead, Emile will appreciate the arts that are "the most general and most indispensable" and will be the most praiseworthy; in descending order, these arts would be agriculture, ironworking, woodworking, and so on (Rousseau 1979, 188). By appreciating the different trades serving the body's needs, Emile can be exposed to the general notions of trade and its value.

Once Emile understands the advantageous trades, he can begin to understand commerce. Despite the critiques Rousseau may have about commerce, Rousseau does well in Book III at explaining why it occurred. He explains the existence of commerce in the following manner: "No society can exist without exchange, no exchange without a common measure, and no common measure without equality. Thus, all society has as its first law some conventional

equality, whether of men or things" (Rousseau 1979, 189). The need to exchange creates conventional equality, which creates money. Money, for Rousseau, is "the term of comparison for the value of things of different kinds" and in a sense is "the true bond of society" (Rousseau 1979, 189). Rousseau suggests that once the notion of commerce and money has been explained, the "moral effects of this institution" should not be explained as that would be treating them like a philosopher and a wise man, which is not suitable for Emile's age (Rousseau 1979, 190). Once Emile understands the arts and commerce, Rousseau puts Emile to the test by having them attend an opulent dinner.

While Emile is at the dinner, amidst all the pomp and circumstance, amidst the lavish feast with "many people, many lackeys, many dishes, an elegant and fine table service," Rousseau asks Emile how many people it takes to create this lavish meal. This question will set Emile's mind racing as he concludes that "perhaps twenty million men hands have worked for a long time, and it has cost the lives of perhaps thousands of men" (Rousseau 1979, 190). The point of this mental exercise is to demonstrate the excess, the sheer uselessness of all the effort that occurred in making this luxurious night happen, which Emile will find abhorrent given his education of esteeming the most general and valuable of arts. Once Emile has established the calculation, Rousseau will follow this up by comparing a rustic dinner, where Emile still comes away being full despite the apparatus that luxury provides. Once the two meals have been had, Rousseau will inquire whether Emile would like to go to the luxurious home where frivolity abounds or back to the rustic home, to which Emile will insist on the rustic over the opulent (Rousseau 1979, 191). By teaching Emile about the universal natural goods of the body, Emile can effectively choose the simpler life over the ornate and luxurious.

Rousseau's education of Emile emphasizes the equality of human beings, as the rich do not have a bigger stomach than the poor, and a great family has basic needs just like a "man of the people" (Rousseau 1979, 194). This natural education will allow one not to invest in one social station as the tumultuousness of life can easily throw one out of one's social station. How pathetic, Rousseau asks, is it for a "great lord who has become destitute and brings the prejudices of his birth with him to his distress?" (Rousseau 1979, 194). The careerists of the modern world are susceptible to this problem as well. A career with a certain standing today may not have the same effect tomorrow.

Rousseau extends this assessment of the fragility of the social world by making a prophetic remark that "We are approaching a state of crisis and the age of revolutions," and held it to be "impossible that the great monarchies of Europe still have long to last," (Rousseau 1979, 194). For Rousseau, the question is, what is the point of valuing social goods and worth (especially luxury, which makes up such a big part of social worth) when it can all go away? The answer is that it is not good to hold on to these valuations and that the happiest person is "the man who knows how to leave the station which leaves him and to remain a man despite fate!" (Rousseau 1979, 194). The way to endure these changes in fortune is to have the ability to rely on oneself. To prepare Emile, and any other child for that matter, for an education of resilience and self-reliance, Rousseau insists on Emile developing knowledge of a worthwhile trade.

For Rousseau, the goal of learning a trade is "less to learn a trade in order to know a trade than to conquer the prejudices that despise a trade" (Rousseau 1979, 196). Learning a "true trade, a purely mechanical art in which the hands work more than the head" will help a person endure being without a fortune (Rousseau 1979, 196). The world may not always need princes and lords, but artisans can find a way to get by despite whatever woes society throws their way. Rousseau

describes how so many who study topics from politics and architecture run into a problem where they must find a way to appease society to advance in the world. Moreover, should any reversal of fortunes occur, students in politics and other fields of knowledge will need more resources to continue thriving (Rousseau 1979, 196-197). Suppose you know about crafts that are useful to human beings. In that case, Rousseau says that a person will not be "a coward and a liar with the nobles. Pliable and groveling with rascals, barely obliging to everyone, a borrower and thief" (Rousseau 1979, 197). The ability to not debase oneself in social relationships is crucial to why a trade should be learned. Nevertheless, what exactly does Rousseau think Emile should do?

Unlike "Locke's gentleman," Rousseau does not want to see Emile become an "embroider, a gilder or a varnisher," nor does he want him to be a "musician, an actor or a writer of books" (Rousseau 1979, 197). Why are these professions unsuitable? It is ironic for Rousseau to look down on book writing in his book. However, these professions all pander to the social opinions and desires of the present age. The professions also enable luxury but lack the utility essential for what Rousseau considers a good trade. Rousseau would rather that Emile be a "shoemaker to a poet, that he paves highways to making porcelain flowers" (Rousseau 1979, 197). When Rousseau considers the career as a "policeman, spies and hangman," Rousseau acknowledges that they are helpful to the government.

However, Rousseau caveats his notions of trade, saying that Emile's trade should not utilize the "qualities of the soul that are odious and incompatible with humanity" (Rousseau 1979, 197). It is not the same as martial duties because these professions emphasize internal violence in the city, whereas the soldier helps fight against enemies of the state. So, the trade must now be a "decent trade," though Rousseau still sees a connection between decency and utility. (Rousseau 1979, 197). With the skill set developed by Emile, he will not only know the

things in his control but also be in a position that will allow him to achieve independence in the face of any obstacles.

4.6. Conclusion

This dissertation chapter analyzed whether Locke's or Rousseau's education model could instill a sense of obligation in the face of the corrosive elements of commerce. Locke's education attempts to provide the physical training soldiers need while preparing them for a life as gentlemen. This creates tension and invites more opportunities for commerce to erode the sense of obligation the young man would have to the political regime. Rousseau's education attempts to not only prevent commercial influences from reaching young Emile's mind, but Rousseau's education actively denigrates commerce and luxury. This allows Rousseau to educate Emile on how Emile should act as a father for his future family and a citizen for his country. While Emile's education is not like the civil education of Sparta or Rome, Emile's upbringing would allow him to fit into that society with greater ease into those societies than Locke's education.³⁹

Still, in investigating the thoughts of both Locke and Rousseau on education, they both agree on certain essentials. One of the first significant commonalities both thinkers share is that a robust physical education is essential to rearing youth to prepare them for their martial obligations. Locke is more willing to lay out a strict regimen, while Rousseau moves to have Emile in a rural setting and be allowed a few scrapes and bruises to allow his body to manage hardship. The youth of children under Locke and Rousseau would be one that eschewed luxuries, foods, and clothes. Even the use of medicines and drugs would be underused as both Locke and Rousseau conceive of Nature as an educator that can take care of children well enough without

³⁹ Even if Emile does not desire to engage in war on a personal level. Rousseau's training of Emile will allow Emile to go into any military conflict if needed (Rousseau 1979, 137). Shklar corroborates Rousseau's training Emile to accept military obligations (Shklar 1966, 33).

the intercession of drugs and pills. Physical education is one of many components of a good education for both thinkers. Furthermore, once one moves past the agreement on the value of physical education, the differences between the two thinkers become readily apparent. One primary source of disagreement is the view that human beings have an innate desire for dominion.

Locke believes that human beings have an innate desire for dominion and that it is crucial to cultivate reason in children so that they may have control of their passions. Locke justifies this viewpoint by describing how children constantly strive for their way and desire to have other people's property and feel satisfaction when acquiring it. Rousseau acknowledges that small children want dominion, but this is not due to any innate desire, but because of the education they receive. From birth, a child is taught they can please themselves or everyone else around them, creating a desire for dominion and servitude that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Rousseau thinks a proper education can mitigate this tendency and ensure a path towards liberty is possible. The other source of tension between the two thinkers is the importance of reason and how much reason should be trained in human beings.

Locke believes that children can be taught to reason and control their passions. By reasoning with children, Locke meant explaining the actions of the parent and explaining why they are suitable for the child. If a child can use their reason to control their passions, it will serve them well as they strive for mastery over themselves and their environment. Rousseau disagrees entirely with Locke's assessment of reason. As children get older, they should learn how to use their reason. Reason, for Rousseau, is a final development in the faculties of human beings. It makes no sense for Rousseau to use a faculty-like reason so early on. Instead, the training should not focus on reason but on imagination, as the desires can match the child's

strength. In addition, Rousseau does not think mastery should be the pursuit of human beings but liberty. An attempt at mastery in the social world will involve a certain level of debasement of servitude. The problem of exposure to commerce is also something that Rousseau appreciates and works on ways to address.

Rousseau appreciates the problem of commerce in ways that Locke does not. The education devised by Locke, while having evident positive qualities, assumes a fixed social position. Rousseau is more sensitive to the element of change that society always has and that a social position one day does not mean it will stay that way for good. Rousseau encourages an education that emphasizes what is valuable for human life instead of the items valued by human beings at any given time. This is different from saying that Rousseau's education model is perfect. Far from it, as any critic of Rousseau's thought would note at the end of the day, Emile is an imaginary pupil.

Of course, everything can work out in the imagination, but isolating a child, devoid of a mother and Father, can have bad results in the real world. Rousseau would no doubt point out that education from parents was neglectful in his day and that civic education needs to be more meaningful in any sense. At a certain level, Rousseau suggests that a thought experiment is justified. This is plausible, but in the end, the education that Rousseau offers is useless to society. In addition, despite the critique Rousseau makes concerning luxury, the rise of commerce during the 18th century is unavoidable. Moreover, with the rise of commerce came defenders of commerce. One of the best was Adam Smith, who responded to Rousseau's critique of commercial life and attempted to ensure that the worst effects of commercial life could be avoided, especially concerning martial and marital responsibilities.

Chapter Five. Commerce's Retort: Analyzing Adam Smith's Response to Rousseau

5.1. Introduction

Having covered the confrontation of Locke and Rousseau's thoughts in their major works on politics and education, revealing their thoughts on the martial and marital obligations for society in general, it is imperative to address the simple fact that has hung over the entirety of this dissertation. Despite the incisive critique Rousseau has on commercial activity, namely that it fosters inequalities and luxuries that make the desire to procreate wane within families, as well as softening the martial spirit within a people, Rousseau has lost the debate against proponents of commerce. How can this be? One reason explored in Chapter Six involves the appropriation of Rousseau's thoughts by French Revolutionary thinkers, whose acts of violence would foster scorn of Rousseau's name (a scorn which persists in some circles today). Before addressing this, however, there is another reason for the defeat of Rousseau's position on commerce. Furthermore, it is simply that the defenders of commercial society made better arguments. One thinker who established, explored, and defended the virtues of commercial life was the Scottish polymath and friend of David Hume, Adam Smith.

This chapter will focus on Adam Smith's thoughts on commerce, luxury, and population, demonstrating Smith's sensitivity to how commercial society can impact citizens' obligations towards family and commerce's impact on the martial spirit. Smith will serve as the foil to Rousseau's worldview for assorted reasons. First, Smith was interested in Rousseau throughout his life, even offering a review of *On the Discourse on Inequality*. There have been multiple perspectives on Smith's assessment of Rousseau. Some propose that Smith held Rousseau in contempt, while others believe that Smith had a more sympathetic perspective of Rousseau. This

chapter will align with the latter position while recognizing how Smith effectively responded to Rousseau's critiques of commerce.

After addressing Smith's thoughts on Rousseau, the chapter will focus on Smith's commercial thought as expressed in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, also known as *The Wealth of Nations*.¹ In *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith defends commercial activity and its value to society. While some aspects of Smith's economic thought are worth exploring, the focus will reside in Smith's thoughts on the moral critiques of commerce. This chapter will analyze how Smith viewed luxury as a complicated good of a nation, having definite drawbacks, such as impacting the martial prowess of a people, but not enough to devalue the goods of a commercial society. There is not an appeal to selfishness but a recognition of all human beings' self-interest towards themselves. Smith recognizes that a commercial society needs people with a martial spirit and suggests an education that could provide citizens with martial training and basic skills to thrive in a commercial society.

Once the problem of martial prowess and the problem of luxury has been investigated, the rest of the chapter will focus on how Smith believes commercial society will make families happier and willing to have more children. Smith will suggest that not only can opulence improve the family, but it can also be good for the population in general. The abundance of goods will ensure that a family's needs can be met and that families can have the liberty and security that a commercial society provides so that husbands and wives can develop loving families that enrich the community through their self-interest. The first step, however, in

¹ I chose to focus on *Wealth of Nations* because it provides the fullest defense of commercial society and is considered Smith's "magnum opus." Smith put many years of his life into the work. Scholars like Geoffrey Kelly point out how meticulous Smith was with this work (Kelly 2022, 189). See Kellow, Geoffrey C. "Adam Smith's Sentimental Education." In *The Wisdom of the Commons: The Education of Citizens from Plato's Republic to The Wealth of Nations*, pp. 187-217. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022.

navigating Smith's thoughts and his view of the martial and marital responsibilities is to investigate Smith's view of Rousseau and see how and where their thoughts conflict or concord.

5.2. Adam Smith on Rousseau

This section will analyze Smith's thoughts on Rousseau to see the significant areas of agreement and disagreement. Before delving into the analysis of the two thinkers, it would help to establish the link between Rousseau and Smith and show why Smith was chosen as a thinker to compare Rousseau's thoughts. The truth is that neither of these thinkers ever corresponded with each other despite living and writing around the same time. Despite some suggestions that they could have met around the mid-1760s, the two thinkers likely never met.² Despite this, the two thinkers had numerous mutual acquaintances, the most significant of whom was the Scottish philosopher David Hume. Hume engaged in disputes with Rousseau in 1760, an intense affair that resulted in intense correspondence between Hume and Smith. In a letter, Smith called Rousseau a "great...Rascal" and a "hypocritical pendant."³ Despite Smith's jibes against Rousseau, there is evidence that Smith considered Rousseau a vital thinker. This suggests that the insults may have been about comforting Hume rather than completely dismissing Rousseau outright.

The first piece of evidence to suggest that Smith did consider Rousseau as someone worthy of analysis is the anonymous letter Smith sent to the *Edinburgh Review* urging the editors to engage with a wider variety of thinkers on the European Continent to ensure that there could

² See Paganelli, Maria Pia, Dennis C. Rasmussen, and Craig Smith, eds. 2018. *Adam Smith and Rousseau. [Electronic Resource] : Ethics, Politics, Economics*. Edinburgh Studies in Scottish Philosophy. Edinburgh University Press. <https://search-ebscohost-com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat00252a&AN=lalu.7191036&site=eds-live&scope=site>. Specifically, see page 4.

³ Paganelli, Rasmussen, and Smith 2018, 4

be a greater chance for the circulation of ideas.⁴ The plea to the editors also included a review of Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, where Smith is prepared to offer great praise for Rousseau. Smith notes the many contributions to the French *Encyclopedie*, calling Rousseau a great contributor who was “already known to foreign nations by the valuable works which they have published.”⁵

Smith would go on to make a few more comments about Rousseau, calling him “ingenious and eloquent” concerning Rousseau’s thoughts on the origins of language, while also deprecating Rousseau by saying in another work that as an author he was “more capable of feeling strongly than of analysing accurately.”⁶ While acknowledging the mixed perspective on Rousseau as a person, Dennis C. Rasmussen suggests that Smith took Rousseau seriously as an author.⁷ This observation is because Smith had numerous copies of Rousseau's work. When Smith wrote the letter and review of Rousseau to the *Edinburgh Review*, it was not only one of his earlier works but also written when he was working on one of his other significant works, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.⁸ These factors suggest that Smith was invested in addressing Rousseau's argument. To appreciate Rousseau’s significance for Smith, it is essential to delve deeper into Smith’s account of Rousseau’s *Discourse on Inequality*.

⁴ Ibid, 4.

⁵ See Rasmussen, Dennis C. 2008. *The Problems and Promise of Commercial Society. [Electronic Resource] : Adam Smith's Response to Rousseau*. Pennsylvania State University Press. <https://search-ebscohost-com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat00252a&AN=lalu.7141764&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

⁶ Rasmussen 2008, 56.

⁷ I largely agree with Rasmussen’s interpretation of Smith’s perspective of Rousseau as well as the effectiveness of Smith’s response to Rousseau overall. For a different perspective of Smith and Rousseau’s relationship, Mark Hullung offers a perspective that is dubious of Smith and Rousseau’s connection and Rousseau’s concern about commercial society in general. See “Hullung, Mark. *The Autocritique of Enlightenment: Rousseau and the philosophes*. Harvard University Press, 1994.”

⁸ Rasmussen 2008, 57-58.

Smith's analysis of Rousseau's work is two pages long and coupled with two pages of translation. It begins with the interesting claim that Rousseau has much in common with Bernard Mandeville and that, in fact, Rousseau's thought was occasioned by Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*.⁹ Smith recognizes that this is a startling claim since Mandeville views the state of nature in the bleakest of terms, whereas Rousseau portrays it more optimistically. Despite this difference, Smith notes that both thinkers agree that human beings do not have an excellent instinct for sociality; human beings began primitively with the arts and sciences, slowly but surely accruing over time. Both believed that governments were designed to advantage the rich over the poor. The formation of these governments was primarily a sham.¹⁰ However, Smith acutely notes that a significant difference between Rousseau and Mandeville is the notion of pity, as Mandeville accorded it a minor role. In contrast, Rousseau emphasizes its vital role in the state of nature for early humans and the development of other social virtues.¹¹ Another significant difference Smith notes about Rousseau's assessment of the state of nature is how indolent it is compared to other thinkers on the social contract.

Smith notes how "Mr. Rousseau, intending to paint the savage life as the happiest of any, presents only the indolent side of it to view" and that through a little "philosophical chemistry," Rousseau was able to transform the ideas of Mandeville into having the "purity and sublimity of the morals of Plato."¹² The "philosophical chemistry" results from Rousseau's belief in the natural goodness of human beings because they can be self-sufficient while also having pity and

⁹ Ibid, 60.

¹⁰ Ibid, 61-62.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid, 64.

not wanting others to suffer (Rasmussen 2008, 66).¹³ While Mandeville is content with assuming the worst about human beings, Rousseau's belief in the natural goodness of human beings can allow for the difficulties around modern commercial society to be overcome.¹⁴ From there, Rasmussen takes note of the three paragraphs that Smith decided to translate, arguing that Smith chose these three paragraphs because they represented three of the major critiques Rousseau had of commercial society.

Rasmussen explains that there are three critiques of commercial society made by Rousseau that Smith notices. The first is what Rasmussen calls the "division of laborers," where the invention of private property and dividing labor would create outcomes where the fruits of the labor would not be evenly distributed.¹⁵ The second critique that Rasmussen focuses on involves Rousseau's "empire of opinion" argument, where a commercial society causes people to value the opinions of others to such a degree that they become deceptive and immoral.¹⁶ The final paragraph translated by Smith aligns with what Rasmussen calls the "pursuit of unhappiness," where Rousseau explains that commercial pursuits will always lead to more toil and trouble and that most people will not be able to achieve the happiness they desire based on the complexity of commercial society.¹⁷ Rasmussen provides ample citations from Smith to substantiate his position and quite nicely sets the problems between Rousseau and Smith. While

¹³ Ibid, 66.

¹⁴ The natural goodness of people can allow people to work together to create alternative forms of government outside of a commercial framework. See Hont, Istvan. *Politics in Commercial Society*. [Electronic Resource] : Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith. Edited by Bela Kapossy and Michael Sonenscher. Harvard University Press, 2015.

¹⁵ Rasmussen 2008, 69.

¹⁶ Ibid, 69.

¹⁷ Ibid, 69-70. Rasmussen complements my research since he does not focus as much on commercial society's corrosive effects on political obligations.

exploring Smith's thoughts on commerce, luxury, and population, Rassmussen will repeatedly refer to these problems. My analysis of Smith's thoughts will begin with assessing his view of commerce.

5.3. Adam Smith on Commerce

To understand Smith's thoughts on luxury and population, it is crucial to analyze the essential components of Smith's thoughts on economics as well as the political considerations that he attaches to it. In Book I, Chapter II of *Wealth of Nations*, after laying out the influence that manufacturing can have on trade and commerce, the reader is invited to consider the deeper reasons why people begin to engage in the division of labor. It is not the grand foresight of human beings that made people wish to start dividing their labor, but it emerged out of the human desire to "truck, barter, and exchange with one another" (Smith 1981, 25). Smith makes an interesting comparison between humans and animals, describing how animals do not coordinate with other animals over food or other items intentionally, instead resorting to force and pleading if possible; humans do these things too to acquire what they desire, but unlike other animals, human beings still have a level of dependency with other (Smith 1981, 26). Smith argues that humans must rely on another component of human nature to gain what they desire. That component is the human capacity for self-love.

In Smith's own words, a person "will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favor and shew them that it is for their advantage to do for him what he requires of them" (Smith 1981, 26) It is through reciprocity that people acquire the majority of the goods that they want in life. A tit-for-tat approach allows for both parties to gain what they desire. As Smith also puts it: "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that

we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their interest" (Smith 1981, 27).¹⁸ Every person in society offers something for a good they desire; it is not virtue or piety that causes one to exchange goods, but it is in their self-interest.¹⁹ Only the beggars rely on the benevolence of others, and even then, they often have something they wish to exchange (Smith 1981, 27). As these exchanges took place, it dawned on people that by focusing on one trade or one type of production, they could make more straightforward exchanges and acquire the goods they desired. The division of labor is essential for exchange and sheer power, which can permanently affect a person's life.

One of the interesting elements of Smith's analysis of the division of labor is how it can catalyze inequality. Smith explains that the "difference of natural talents in different men is, in reality, much less than we are aware of" (Smith 1981, 28). What separates a "philosopher and a common porter" for Smith is not their nature but "habit, custom and education" and that two children alike will branch off when they are young until their talents are honed. They receive praise for their talents from the community, which causes them to hone in on their abilities further (Smith 1981, 28). This creation of differences is a good thing for Smith as the different goods of "different geniuses" can be used to work for a common stock so that he may purchase "whatever part of the produce of other men's talents he has occasion for" (Smith 1981, 30).²⁰ As

¹⁸ I want to clarify that while this is an argument for self-interest, it is not for greed. Greed involves an excess for good at the expense of others, which Smith finds deplorable. See Wight, Jonathan B. "Adam Smith and greed." *Journal of Private Enterprise* 21, no. 1 (2005): 46-58.

¹⁹ For a similar analysis of Smith's notion of self-love, see Coase, Ronald Harry. "Adam Smith's view of man." *The Journal of Law and Economics* 19, no. 3 (1976): 529-546.

²⁰ Rasmussen acknowledges later that the division of labor can negatively affect civic life. Kelly will go as far as to suggest that Smith has a "tragic vision" of capitalism (Kelly 2022, 192). While Rasmussen acknowledges trade-offs, Rasmussen still suggests that Smith views the commercial society with great optimism.

the division of labor became established in human society and the products that human beings made increased, specific problems that required the invention of money persisted.

The division of labor would succeed in making every person “in some measure a merchant and the society by itself grows to be what is properly a commercial society” (Smith 1981, 37).²¹ The problem that emerges is that as the products increase, some people want to barter different items despite disagreeing on the value of the different items, which frustrates trade. To rectify this concern, a medium of exchange was developed to ensure that different goods could be transferred to different people. Smith thinks it began with cattle or some animal as the means of exchange, eventually progressing to metals because they do not rot or die like organic commodities, and metals can be portioned into pieces in ways other exchanges could not (Smith 1981, 39). The establishment of money is always for the exchange to occur between different people; as the exchange grows, so does the accumulation of goods, and the opulence or richness of a country increases. In Book III, the discussion of opulence predominates, explaining how a country becomes more prosperous over time and why this is, in fact, a good thing. It will be helpful to assess what Smith considers opulent compared to luxurious and see how they differ and why one is preferable to the other.

Book III, Chapter I begins by explaining the dynamic between rural and urban centers, or as Smith calls it, “country and town.” The exchange is predicated on the country providing the “means of subsistence, and the materials of manufacture,” while the town sends back some of the “manufactured produce” to the country (Smith 1981, 376). This dynamic is helpful for both groups as the town receives goods to sustain its market. At the same time, the country gets not

²¹ Whether the division of labor is a source of good or ill, it is the most significant component of Smith’s worldview and failure to understand this is a failure to understand Smith. See Hearn, Jonathan. “How to read the *Wealth of Nations* (or why the division of labor is more important than competition in Adam Smith).” *Sociological Theory* 36, no. 2 (2018): 162-184.

only manufactured items but also allows the opportunity for its surplus goods to be sold to the market (Smith 1981, 376). Smith not only sees the exchange as beneficial for both the town and the country but insists that the development of the countryside is good for towns as well. Smith points out that subsistence is before convenience and luxury. As Smith explains: “The cultivation and improvement of the country, therefore which affords subsistence, must necessarily be prior to the increase of the town, which furnishes only the means of convenience and luxury” (Smith 1981, 377). Commercial life needs agriculture to flourish effectively. Moreover, Smith believes that if people could choose where to place their investments, they would undoubtedly be placed in the land.

Smith believes that people are more likely to invest their capital in the land than in manufacturing or foreign trade because a person can have more control over their land and be less susceptible to “accidents than that of a trader,” who must deal with not only natural disasters that can affect capital but also the problems of human folly and injustice, the danger of interacting with people in different parts of the world whom one does not know (Smith 1981, 378). Not only can the land be secured, but one who invests in the land can also enjoy the sheer beauty of the country, the tranquility of the mind, and a certain level of independence, which provides many charms for the people who invest in the land, highlighting the “predilection for this primitive employment,” (Smith 1981, 378). This tribute to the agricultural life suggests that Smith always envisions the enduring value and charm of the agricultural life. Rousseau would agree with the appreciation of agricultural life, but there are specific critiques that Rousseau would have of Smith's assessment.

While Rousseau would appreciate the stock Smith places in agriculture, there are problems with Smith's appreciation of agriculture while pushing for commerce. First, Rousseau

would note that as commercial societies advanced, there would be greater esteem for life in the cities than there would be for the country. This is because the cities have greater opportunities for pleasure and luxury and cities are the locus of a variety of social statuses. The drive for status and pleasure will drive people to the city. As a result, there will be a greater drive for people in the country to live in the city. With the devaluation of agriculture comes problems of subsistence, which requires those needs to be met by trade abroad or expansion. This critique of commercial life would not work for Smith because the interactions between country and town are so intertwined that there is no way for there to be one without the other in the long term.

Smith recognizes the farmers, subsistence providers, as the first component of commercial society. Nevertheless, the farmer requires "artificers" to help speed up the progress of farming. Otherwise, the farmer would face insurmountable difficulties. People like "Smiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, and plow wrights, masons, bricklayers, tanners, shoemakers, and tailors" are people that a farmer will always have use for (Smith 1981, 378). From there, other trades, such as the butcher and the baker, as well as those who provide things for "occasional wants," will emerge, which will further expand the town and the market (Smith 1981, 378). Now, Rousseau may not object to the existence of specific trades other than farming, as he acknowledges in *Emile* that some are useful for life in general. Smith's point is that the progression of trades will eventually result in trades expanding to fulfill tasks beyond mere necessity, causing a certain level of richness or opulence to emerge that is too difficult to reject. Smith reiterates: "The inhabitants of the town and those of the country are mutually the servants of one another" (Smith 1981, 378). The ability to distance the country and town is a futile endeavor for Smith, and because of this, this critique of commercial society would have less of

an impact on Smith. In addition, Smith lays out self-evident reasons for the good that commerce does for society as a whole and why opulence is a good thing.

In Chapter IV of Book III, Smith presents a variety of reasons why the increase in commerce and manufacturing in a country is suitable for rural areas and for people overall. The first reason is that increased commerce in society will lead to increased cultivation and improvement of crops and raw materials, allowing the countryside to provide more materials and become far more prosperous (Smith 1981, 411). The second reason is that the increase in cultivation will increase the likelihood of merchants becoming "country gentlemen." Smith explains that the merchant wishes to be a part of the landed gentry, and he considers merchants "the best of all improvers" as the merchant is bolder with his investments and pursues profitable projects. At the same time, the country gentlemen focus more on preserving their money and are "timid undertakers" (Smith 1981, 411). Why is this a good thing for the countryside?

Smith explains that those fortunate to live in a "mercantile town in an unimproved country" are much more "spirited" than those country gentlemen-run towns. As Smith says: "The habits, besides of order, economy and attention to which mercantile business naturally forms a merchant, render him much fitter to execute, with profit and success, any project of improvement" (Smith 1981, 412). With the increase of commerce comes commercial towns, which offer vitality and administration of projects that can help the community prosper in ways that rural communities alone do not. The final reason, and the most crucial reason the rise of commercial life is a good thing, is that it provides unprecedented liberty and security to communities and nations.

Smith explains that the third reason commercial society provides benefits is that "commerce and manufactures gradually introduced order and good government and with them

the liberty and security of individuals” (Smith 1981, 412). The boon of liberty and security is much more attractive than in the past, where the people had lived in "a continual state of war with their neighbors" while also being dependent on stronger powers (Smith 1981, 412). A crucial part of Smith's analysis is that the commercial society is much better than the feudal age. One of the significant problems in the feudal age for England (and most of Europe) was that it was a patchwork of "great proprietors," of which the King was merely the largest who could retrieve a small debt from Barons and other great proprietors while only occasionally receiving their help for common threats.

As a result, Smith points out that the King “abandoned the administration of justice through a greater part of the country, to those who were capable of administering to it, (Smith 1981, 415). Feudal law attempted to reign over the feudal lords. While it did strengthen the King and reduce the power of feudal lords, “it could not do either sufficiently for establishing order and good government among the inhabitants of the country (Smith 1981, 417). This lack of good government results in the subordinate powers having enough power to continue to make war at their own convenience, and the "open country " continued to be a scene of violence, rapine, and disorder (Smith 1981, 418). The power of law and might could not alleviate the almost Hobbesian landscape that Smith laid out. Only with the power of commerce was the power of government able to take a deeper root.

The introduction of foreign commerce and manufacturing allowed the lords to acquire things that they did not have to share with their "tenant and rentiers," embodying what Smith considers the “vile maxim” that is “All for ourselves, nothing for other people” (Smith 1981, 418). With the introduction of trade, something interesting begins to emerge. While the great proprietors can supply the needs of many retainers and tenants, the desire for goods among

merchants makes managing expenses problematic. Furthermore, merchants becoming empowered means that a group of people has a different relationship with the feudal lords compared to the serfs. The dynamic between a lord and a merchant is reciprocal, and more importantly, the merchant does not have to rely on the lord as much and can enjoy greater liberty (Smith 1981, 420). Now, because the feudal lords wanted to acquire more items from merchants, resulting in less money to sustain their tenants and retainers, the feudal lords would begin to decrease their retainers and their soldiers and would also start removing farmers from their territory and giving them their land to cultivate provided that the farmers acknowledged the authority of the feudal lord (Smith 1981, 420). In exchange for allowing their rent to be increased, the farmers would ask that they be secure in their possessions for an extended period, establishing the creation of long leases (Smith 1981, 421). The acceptance of this arrangement by the great proprietors would cause a radical shift in European society.²²

With the agreement to long leases, the farmer now becomes independent, and the landlord "must not expect from him even the most trifling service beyond what is either expressly stipulated in the lease or imposed upon him by the common and known law of the country" (Smith 1981, 421). The farmer's independence from the lord and the lord is decreasing their retainer, resulting in them losing their power to impact justice or peace in society. Like Esau, Smith argues that the feudal lords traded their birth rights away not for a meal but for "trinket and baubles, fitter to be the playthings than the serious pursuits of men" (Smith 1981, 421). According to Smith, luxury is, in fact, the hero who can put an end to the disorder of the

²² For a critical perspective of Smith's account of transition from feudalism to commercialism see Mumy, Gene E. "Town and Country in Adam Smith's 'The Wealth of Nations'." *Science & Society* (1978): 458-477. Mumy calls into question the ease of which serfs could gain their autonomy through economic concerns from feudal lords (Mumy 1978, 476).

feudal age. By pursuing luxury, the feudal lords were weakened in the long term, allowing for government to take place across the different territories and establish peace.²³ Smith does acknowledge that this trend does not play out the same in all countries, as the princes in Germany acquired more power with the advent of “the arts and luxury” (Smith 1981, 421).

Nevertheless, Smith insists that this is an exception to the rule and that a “revolution of the greatest importance to the public happiness” was implemented by the great proprietors who wanted to satisfy their vanity and merchants who looked out for their self-interest, neither of whom “had either the knowledge or foresight of the great revolution which the folly of the one, and the industry of the other, was gradually bringing about,” (Smith 1981, 422). Self-interest caused a revolution in the liberty of a people in ways they had never intended. Luxury was the great catalyst for the liberty of many overall. It is crucial to appreciate Rousseau's response to Smith's understanding of history, but before delving into Rousseau's analysis, it is critical to turn to Book V of *Wealth of Nations*. This section is crucial as it lays out the role of the government and how it should handle the economy and luxury.

Smith begins Book V by explaining that the priority of the "Sovereign or Commonwealth" is protecting the community from violence or invasion from other societies through force (Smith 1981, 689). Various stages of human development create different security needs. The first stage is the "nation of hunters," where the warrior and the hunter are evenly merged, and a person can oversee both tasks without a sovereign or a commonwealth (Smith 1981, 690). Next is the "nation of shepherds," such as the Tartars and Arabs, who are able to move and fight in more significant numbers than the hunter societies, are well trained for war

²³ The transition from feudalism to a commercial society is more complicated than Smith would have believed. See Wallerstein, Immanuel. "From feudalism to capitalism: Transition or transitions?." *Social Forces* 55, no. 2 (1976): 273-283.

due to their upbringing, and can supply and feed themselves with the flocks they have. Smith views the "nation of shepherds" as a more significant threat as the larger numbers can be detrimental to even advanced societies, citing the fear that the Tatars inspired while conquering parts of Asia" (Smith 1981, 692). The next stage in human development is the "nation of husbandmen," farmers who have little foreign commerce or manufacturing. They have the accessible capacity to be warriors, and when war arrives, enough of them can go while a specific portion must stay behind to take care of the farms (Smith 1981, 693-694). With more advanced states, two significant problems impact the ability to go to war.

The two significant elements that impede more advanced societies from going to war are "the progress of manufactures, and the improvement in the art of war" (Smith 1981, 694). Smith explains that while a "husbandman" can go to war after planting seeds and before the harvest, the moment an "artificer, a smith, a carpenter, or a weaver" goes to war, they have to stop their work, which means their revenue declines to a standstill (Smith 1981, 694-695). When war becomes so complicated and intricate that the skirmishes of the past become full-fledged campaigns that can last months, if not years, then many people are not able to go to war, and in what Smith considers as "civilized nations," the number of people going to war is smaller (Smith 1981, 695). Smith reports that in Europe, no more than "one-hundredth part of the inhabitants of any country can be employed as soldiers, without ruin to the country which pays the expense of their service" (Smith 1981, 696). The decline of military participation is a given in most industrialized countries today, as noted from the discussion of the introduction of the dissertation. However, if the rise of commercial society improves the law and government in a country, why would a decline of warlike spirit occur?

In commercial societies, someone engaging in military activity would not promote their interests, though a citizen may find amusement and improvement in their skill (Smith 1981, 697). Other trades would be more lucrative and profitable if the state were peaceful. Smith attributes the "wisdom of the state" to finding ways to find people who are permanently employed in the military, even in peacetime, so that the state's survival can persist (Smith 1981, 697). To ensure the continued existence of a country, a state has two options: create a militia and enforce military exercise on the whole operation or have a standing army where a particular portion of citizens train in the use of military exercises (Smith 1981, 698). Smith unreservedly thinks that a standing army is superior to a militia for assorted reasons.

Unlike past soldiers, who needed dexterity and skill with their weapons, the fate of battles relied on "Regularity, order, and prompt obedience to commands" (Smith 1981, 699). With the advent of cannons and gunpowder, the ability to cope with the noise and horror that these weapons could produce could only be established by groups of citizens who trained constantly to endure such phenomena. At the same time, the average militia could only exercise once a week or a month. It would not have the same training or ability compared to citizens in a standing army (Smith 1981, 699-700). This preference for standing armies would be considered intolerable for Rousseau and those with more republican sympathies. In their mind, the standing army could potentially destroy the liberty of a republic, as seen with Caesar's actions against Rome or Cromwell's removing Parliament (Smith 1981, 706). Smith knows this concern, though he believes there is a way to solve it.

The primary reason standing armies were a problem to republics in the past stems from the complete isolation of the military and the state. Because the army was removed from authority in the state, its interests were not with the state. To rectify this concern, Smith suggests

that when the military is placed "under the command of those who have the greatest interest in support of the civil authority because they have themselves the greatest share of that authority, a standing army can never be dangerous to liberty" (Smith 1981, 707). The sovereign will feel secure once the military is under their control, unlike the republic, where the jealousy the people possess for their liberty causes them to watch everything closely to every little disturbance, perpetually creating situations where the government must suppress even the slightest murmur of complaint (Smith 1981, 707). If the sovereign controls the military, there can be a greater license for disapproval and complaint since the sovereign is confident, they will not overthrow them (Smith 1981, 707). The defense of the country from foreign threats and assuring the state's authority is the first goal all states should achieve.

The second task is to ensure that the state can provide justice. Smith explains how justice was thought of in different periods of social development to explain the value of justice in society. In a nation of hunters, there are no magistrates to resolve conflicts. Smith points out that even at this level of development, there is a relative degree of security because people only attack a person out of "Envy, malice and resentment," which are feelings that most people do not feel very often (Smith 1981, 709). However, with property, there is a greater chance for violation of rights due to "avarice and ambition of the rich, in the poor the hatred of labor and love of present ease and enjoyment, passions much steadier in their operation, and much more universal in their influence" (Smith 1981, 709). Smith recognizes the problem of greed as a more significant threat to a community than resentment alone. Smith describes the unavoidable reality that where there is great property, there will be great inequality: "For one wealthy man, there must be at least five hundred poor, and the affluence of the few supposes the indigence of the many" (Smith 1981, 710). Because of this resentment, a wealthy person is surrounded by many

enemies and needs to turn to a civil magistrate so that they “can sleep a single night” (Smith 1981, 710). To establish a civil government, subordination must occur, and to help understand subordination more, Smith argues that four circumstances naturally instill subordination.

The four significant causes of subordination are a person's superiority in personal qualifications, age, fortune, and birth (Smith 1981, 711-713). The most important personal qualification is the mind, but this is often disputed, and something more "palpable" is needed to justify subordination, such as the age of an individual, as the older a person is, the more respect they will have compared to the youth (Smith 1981, 711). Then, there is the subordination based on fortune, which operates differently depending on the developmental state. A Tartar chief can control a thousand people because they all depend on the subsistence that his wealth can provide; a wealthy person in an “opulent and civilized society” can only command a few people who do not need to entirely rely on one person for their life (Smith 1981, 712). However, Smith insists that wealth holds greater authority in commercial societies than in hunting or shepherding societies since the universal poverty of the people translates to universal equality (Smith 1981, 712).

Finally, there is subordination based on the "superiority of birth ."Now, every family comes from an ancient line, but Smith suggests that what makes one viewed as superior is wealth or the greatness attached to wealth (Smith 1981, 713). Again, in societies where hunting predominates, the superiority of birth is not acknowledged. In contrast, in a shepherd society, there will occasionally be an acknowledgment of birth, suggesting that the subordination of fortune and birth are the two significant causes of subordination in society (Smith 1976, 713-714). There needs to be more than this form of subordination for Rousseau.

To perceive wealth and fortune as justifications for establishing civil government would be tantamount to esteeming the artificial over the natural. Rousseau would suggest that birth and money are only socially valued and, if valued, would only intensify the pursuit of commerce in society. Allowing subordination by birth and fortune would still negatively impact social relations between people. Smith acknowledges that this can be a problem; this critique will be further analyzed later in the chapter. For now, it is worth pointing out that Smith's overarching point is that virtue and wisdom are good qualities, but it is challenging to parse and decide on who is wise and virtuous.²⁴ This is because individuals struggle to decide what is virtuous and who qualifies. For Smith, political institutions are the means to ensure that there can be a secure and free society. To ensure that justice can be instilled, Smith argues that the judges need to be independent from other branches, so they do not need to rely on political factions. They should be paid provided they are on good behavior (Smith 1981, 722-723). The institutions of a country are the main focus of Smith's analysis, especially the ones that serve what he calls "public works."

Smith argues that a government's third and final responsibility is the "erecting and maintaining those publick institutions and those publick works," especially ones that cannot be erected or maintained by an individual or a group of individuals (Smith 1981, 723). Smith wants to focus on the institutions that facilitate the "commerce of the society" and promote "the instruction of the people." Smith divides the instruction of the people into two types: "those for the education of the youth, and those for the instruction of people of all ages" (Smith 1981, 723). Beginning with the institutions that are good for the commerce of society, Smith argues that certain things are needed to help facilitate commerce, such as "good roads, bridges, navigable

²⁴ Kelly argues that Smith is like Locke in that neither think that a political regime is not obligated to make it is citizens virtuous (Kelly 2022, 191).

canals, harbors” and other such means of transportation (Smith 1981, 724). Tolls and other such taxes are encouraged by Smith as a means of paying for and sustaining these systems of transportation, though he does acknowledge that abuses have occurred in Great Britain (Smith 1981, 725-726). The second expense of facilitating commerce is ensuring the protection of different companies as they trade in foreign places. Smith primarily thinks of joint-stock companies and other trading companies (Smith 1981, 731). This last piece of advice may seem dated, but it should be noted that specific industries are publicly owned or sustained even today for the good of manufacturing or the good of society. The final central element of public expenses that Smith wants to look at is education.

Smith’s analysis of education suggests that the state has some interest in funding public colleges and schools. When looking at the education of the youth, Smith critiques the education of his day for being not only too oriented to ecclesiastical concerns but also for not considering the new advances in sciences and philosophy, complaining that universities are still "sanctuaries in which exploded systems and obsolete prejudices found shelter and protection, after they had been hunted out of every corner of the world” (Smith 1981, 772). Smith argues that in a "civilized commercial society." At the same time, an ordinary person may not have the time to educate a country gentleman or other persons of fortune, but they must still be taught how to "read, write and account” (Smith 1981, 785). Smith advises that schools be planted in each parish to ensure some form of education can take place, and also encourages that the best students receive some reward or mark of excellence (Smith 1981, 786). However, what is essential for Smith is that the youth receive a type of education that allows the martial spirit to flourish.

Smith approves the way the Greek and Roman education systems were able to instill basic military exercises into the youth more straightforwardly than the militias of his day (Smith 1981, 786-787). Smith notes that the government needs to go out of it to maintain a martial spirit in at least some portion of the population as it will begin to decay, citing modern Europe as an example of this trend (Smith 1981, 786-787). Despite Smith's previous endorsement of a standing army, Smith seems to backpedal, as he argues that the security of any society depends on "the martial spirit of the great body of the people" (Smith 1981, 787). There is a nuance to Smith's perspective. Smith recognizes that martial spirit absent a well-trained standing army would not be enough to defend society, though he also says that if "every citizen had the spirit of a soldier, a smaller standing army would surely be requisite (Smith 1981, 787). In addition to a smaller standing army, a population with martial spirit would feel less threatened by a standing army, as they could resist it if needed (Smith 1981, 787). Smith's emphasis on the Greek and Roman training as a means for instilling the martial spirit stems from his disgust for cowardice as he feels it does terrible things to human character.

Smith is adamant about his disdain and disgust for cowards. For Smith: "a coward, a man incapable either of defending or of revenging himself, wants one of the most essential parts of the character of a man," and the coward is "mutilated and deformed in his mind, as another is in his body," (Smith 1981, 787). Smith contends that a coward is "wretched and miserable" because a coward has a deformation in their mind, and the mind is where a person has their "happiness or misery" (Smith 1981, 787). The need for a courageous population is of considerable importance to Smith because even if the martial spirit were of no value in defending society, it would still be essential to have a martial education to prevent the "sort of mental mutilation, deformity, and wretchedness, which cowardice necessarily involves in it" (Smith 1981, 787). Smith's contempt

for cowards is genuine, though it is complicated by the fact that commercial society can impact the ability of the martial spirit to develop in a people. Smith recognizes this as a drawback of commercial society. However, the good that a commercial society offers compared to other forms of government of the past makes Smith inclined to commercial society. The goal of education, other than the martial spirit, is to create a more agreeable and obedient population.

It is not only the coward that Smith despises but also the “gross ignorance and stupidity which, in a civilized society, seem so frequently to benumb the understandings of all the inferior ranks of people” (Smith 1981, 788). Due to the division of labor, civilized commercial society has created a situation where most people do not pursue learning other than what is essential for their job. Whether or not education could be used to improve the intellect of the majority of people is of little concern to Smith. The masses' instruction would reduce the enthusiasm and superstition permeating less commercially inclined societies and become “more decent and orderly” (Smith 1981, 788).

The well-educated can also quickly obtain the respect of their “lawful superiors,” which in turn causes the people to respect their superiors, and they are more likely to see the sedition and factions that interested parties are engaging in (Smith 1981, 788).²⁵ A discerning and agreeable public will be of use to governments in a “free country” as Smith argues that it is the opinion the people have of a government that can impact how smoothly a country will operate (Smith 1981, 788). The government must provide a decent education,²⁶ an excellent army, good

²⁵ For further examination of Smith’s interest in education see Hamilton, David. “Adam Smith and the moral economy of the classroom system.” In *Rethinking Schooling*, pp. 38-59. Routledge, 2006.

²⁶ Whether or not Smith’s push for education would be sufficient to impact the problem of civic duty is debatable (Kelly 2022, 211).

judges, and institutions and practices that facilitate commerce. Once these things are achieved, creating a commercial society that offers liberty and security will be possible.

So far, this chapter has analyzed Smith's view of commerce and luxury and the institutions a government must possess. The commercial society is better than previous societies that came before due to the liberty and security provided by commerce. Smith suggests that the rise of commerce in Europe was how the ordinary person was freed from the yoke of great proprietors. Pursuing luxury is part of a commercial society; condemning one would condemn the other. The next question that needs to be answered is what Smith thought about the connection between commerce and population. One can assume that Smith will argue that commerce can be good for population growth, but it will be essential to see how he thinks it happens and how it can overcome the critiques of Rousseau about commerce.

5.4. Adam Smith on Population

Smith's thoughts on the family and its expansion have yet to be analyzed extensively in the literature.²⁷ One of the more noticeable analyses of Smith's views on population came from Joseph J. Spengler, an American Economist and professor at Duke University. Spengler analyzed Smith's thoughts on population in 1976 in an article entitled "Adam Smith on Population Growth and Economic Development."²⁸ The article focuses on the negative impact that state intervention can have on countries and on Smith's quotes about the population in *Wealth of Nations* and *The*

²⁷ For a recent attempt to assess Smith's view on the family, see Nerozzi, Sebastiano, and Pierluigi Nuti. "Adam Smith and the family." *History of Economic Ideas* 19, no. 2 (2011): 11-41. Nerozzi and Nuti note the general absence of family in *Wealth of Nations*. Smith's conception of love between the sexes is similar to Rousseau's, especially concerning the sentiments it produces (Nerozzi and Nuti 2011, 18-20).

²⁸ See Spengler, Joseph J. "Adam Smith on population growth and economic development." *Population and Development Review* (1976): 167-180.

Theory of Moral Sentiments. The analysis begins with a discussion of the importance of food for the population.

One of the significant elements in Smith's thought that Spengler pays attention to is the division of labor and how it is the primary engine for societal development.²⁹ As capital and technology improved the division of labor, the output of goods could continue at a steady and efficient rate.³⁰ The most important output is food. Spengler points out that Smith insists that the population increase is not based on the clothes that could be made or shipped but on the amount of food that could be produced.³¹ With the division of labor and the eventual cultivation of land, more people can be fed on smaller land.³² Because Smith evaluates the importance of food and agriculture for the development of the economy, Spengler credits Smith with anticipating how “an underdeveloped economy is unlikely to continue to grow if its agricultural base stagnates, and the related belief that agricultural expansion is prerequisite to economic expansion generally.”³³ The increase in food will lead to an increase in the economy and, by extension, population.

After examining the importance of food for population growth, Spengler begins to analyze Smith's views on the value of more children and the several types of societies and their perspectives on population. Spengler shows that, overall, Smith would see more children as an opportunity for more opulence in the family, provided that there are productive jobs that those

²⁹ Spengler 1976, 170.

³⁰ Ibid, 170-171.

³¹ Ibid, 171.

³² Ibid, 172.

³³ Ibid, 173.

children can have.³⁴ Smith's view of the population was also divided into types of societies that were stationary, progressive, and declining, with the criterion being whether the funds for the payment of wages were stationary, progressive, or declining.³⁵ Smith's primary example of a stationary country when he was writing was China, noting "competition of laborers would reduce their wages to "the lowest rate which is consistent with common humanity."³⁶ In a declining country, however, such as Bengal or the East Indies in Smith's time, the shortage of funds is linked to "want, famine and mortality," creating a situation where the poor die and the wealthiest in a country could fall into a lower class.³⁷ While Spengler notes that Smith does acknowledge that a growing population can be beneficial, Smith acknowledges there are certain situations where a large population can be more of a bane than a boon.

Smith acknowledges that while poverty does not prevent people from having children, it can still be detrimental to raising children since so many of them die when they are young. Smith describes how few children in the Scottish Highlands survived childhood, and "very few" survived to thirteen.³⁸ While the funds available to a wealthy country could increase the population, the excess child mortality rate and other assorted fertility problems lead to a stalemate in population growth.³⁹ Because of the stagnation of a stationary state and the precarious situation of a declining state, Spengler notes that Smith encourages a progressive state, as declared in glowing terms: "It is in the progressive state...that the condition of the

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid, 173-174.

³⁸ Ibid, 174.

³⁹ Ibid.

laboring poor, of the great body of the people, seems to be the happiest and the most comfortable.”⁴⁰ While Smith considers the progressive state the best, this does not mean a country can consistently achieve it. When Smith was writing, Smith linked the progressive state to the colonies in North America and England, and other places like Scotland were not considered progressive enough.⁴¹ The progressive state required specific policies and practices to be implemented.

Spengler suggests that while Smith did not call for detailed economic policies to increase the rate of population, Smith was concerned with showing how the system of natural liberty and competitive markets could not sustain the standard of living and the population in the long run (Spengler 1976, 176).⁴² In particular, Smith is aware of the risks that a stationary state could bring, describing how “in a country fully peopled in proportion to what either its territory could maintain or its stock employ,” the competition would be so great that the population would not receive wages to advance in their prosperity, a problem that Smith thinks “this state as compatible with a comfortable standard of living on the part of the working classes.”⁴³⁴⁴

Spengler suggests that Smith did not envision a problem of overpopulation overall, thinking that the “prudence and frugality that animated many, if not most, individuals” would serve as a way to keep the family size in check, coupled with the fear of sliding to a lower station in life, which would only result in greater misery for the family (Spengler 1976, 177).⁴⁵ The risk of a stationary

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid, 176.

⁴³ Ibid, 176.

⁴⁴ For more on the stationary state see Boulding, Kenneth E. "The shadow of the stationary state." In *No Growth Society Pb*, pp. 89-101. Routledge, 2012.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 177.

state can emerge from the limitations in the land, as Smith believed that agriculture was the foundation for production and the commercial system as a whole. The limits of the land are the limits of the economy (Spengler 1976, 177).⁴⁶ However, specific economic policies established by people also serve as a limit to a population.

When looking at the significant example of a stationary state, which Smith argues was China, Smith suggests that the laws and institutions made China's economy perpetually stagnate. Some of the problems were that the laws constrained the freedom of trade and created "insecurity of capital," which placed the country into a stationary state pre-maturely.⁴⁷ Also, while Smith acknowledged the limits that could be placed due to agriculture, different crops could be used to sustain a larger population. Spengler examines Smith's attention to the potato and how that single crop changed the face of Europe.⁴⁸ By containing more calories than other vegetables, the potato could fill up workers while still having a surplus of potatoes, which landlords could sell to feed and expand the population.⁴⁹ Spengler's emphasis on the innovations in agriculture is significant because, when the article was written, Spengler was no doubt seeing the effects of the agricultural revolution on fertilizer and machinery, which was helping to quell the anxieties about the population emerging during the 1970s. There were many other innovations that Smith could not see that would emerge in the future, but the increase in agricultural output would result in changes for the world for the better.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 177-178.

If the pitfalls of a stationary state can be avoided, then Smith presents an optimistic portrait of the population. Spengler explains Smith's overarching perspective in the following manner: "For then the system of natural liberty, together with free competition, would give full power to man's self-love and desire to better his condition and thus result in as high a rate of growth of critical agricultural produce as was likely in the current state of knowledge."⁵⁰ In addition to the fulfillment that people would receive from a system of natural liberty, the frugality and prudence of a family would guide families into having children at the appropriate time, and the increasing wages and capital would allow for the population to expand naturally.⁵¹

5.5. Smith's Sympathy with Rousseau

Having examined Smith's thoughts on economics, politics, and population, it is now imperative to examine Smith's critiques of commercial society and how, despite the legitimate drawbacks of commercial life, Rousseau is wrong to be so critical of commercial society. This analysis will rely on Rasmussen's scholarship, but other commentators will be included to provide further nuance. As mentioned previously, Rasmussen uncovered three critiques of commercial society. The critiques are that the division of labor imposes hardships that do not create an equal share of the reward, commercial society creates an "empire of opinion" where everyone must subject themselves to the opinion of others, thereby becoming hypocritical and debased, and most importantly, the commercial society will not make people happy. Smith acknowledges these charges against commercial society, but as we will see, the drawbacks of commercial society do not mean that it is not worth striving for.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 178.

⁵¹ Ibid, 178.

Concerning the first critique of commercial society, the division of labor and its effect on the population, Smith agrees with Rousseau that the establishment of civil government is a means for the rich to maintain their wealth, declaring: “Civil Government, so far as it is instituted for the security of property, is in reality instituted for the defense of the rich against the poor, or of those who have some property against those who have none at all, (Smith 1981, 715).

Rasmussen also analyzes this quote, noting that, unlike Rousseau, Smith thinks the poor consented for their protection but that the original agreement for the civil government was made for the benefit of the wealthy.⁵² In addition, Rasmussen insists that Smith describes the impact of the division of labor on the average person in the most disparaging terms, rivaling if not surpassing Rousseau in his contempt for what it has wrought (Rasmussen 2008, 70-71).⁵³

Rasmussen substantiates this claim by looking at comments made in *Wealth of Nations* and his other texts.

Rasmussen examines Smith’s early work, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, showing how Smith frequently refers to the plight of the poor laborer, explaining: “the poor labourer who . . . bears, as it were, upon his shoulders the whole fabric of society, seems himself to be pressed down below the ground by the weight, and to be buried out of sight in the lowest foundations of the building.”⁵⁴ In addition, Smith points out that the division of labor, while good for commerce, is problematic for people. Smith argues that the impact of focusing on one element of the production of focusing on one task over and over again creates a situation where a person “has no occasion to exert his understanding or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients

⁵² Rasmussen 2008, 71.

⁵³Ibid, 70-71.

⁵⁴Ibid, 73.

for removing difficulties which never occur (Smith 1981, 782). As a result, the laborer generally "becomes as stupid and ignorant as a human creature can become," (Smith 1981, 1982).

Rasmussen extensively cites Smith about the effect of the division of labor on the person. The result is that the person's dexterity in their trade comes at the cost of "his intellectual, social and martial virtues" (Smith 1981, 782). Rasmussen is right to note that Rousseau and Smith would agree about the impact of the division of labor on a person. Rasmussen quotes a long passage from Book V of *Wealth of Nations* emphasizing these flaws, but what is particularly interesting is that he leaves out the comments about the division of labor's impact on the martial spirit.

When quoting from Smith, Rasmussen chooses not to elaborate on the following observation Smith makes: "And unless very particular pains have been taken to render him otherwise, he is equally incapable of defending his country in war" (Smith 1981, 782). This is because "the uniformity of the stationary life naturally corrupts the courage of his mind, and makes him regard with abhorrence the irregular, uncertain and adventurous life of a soldier" (Smith 1981, 782). In addition, Rasmussen wishes to focus on the three critiques he has described. The problem is that when comparing Rousseau and Smith, both are aware that the rise of commerce correlates with a decline in the value of the martial spirit amongst the population.

Rasmussen links this under the division of labor problem, but the other instances where Smith goes out of his way to bemoan the decline force one to consider that it is a unique challenge and something that Rousseau and Smith would have in common. However, Rasmussen does not make much of this objection, in part because Smith is not as concerned about patriotism or the common good, but the fact that an outsider group can cause problems, citing the Jacobite rebellions as an example of how a less commercially oriented society can cause havoc against a

commercial society.⁵⁵ Rasmussen nuances his comparison between Rousseau and Smith by acknowledging that “Smith’s statements regarding the injustice of inequality are somewhat more moderate than Rousseau’s (particularly in his published works), and his worries about the decline of citizenship do not take quite the same form as Rousseau’s.”⁵⁶ However, Rasmussen clarifies that Smith is sympathetic to the difficulties of the division of labor, even more so than Rousseau.⁵⁷ In addition to Smith agreeing with Rousseau about the problems of the division of labor, there is also the problem of commercial society creating an "empire of opinion."

Rasmussen notes a similarity between Rousseau’s notion of *amour propre* and Smith's notion of sympathy, suggesting that both beliefs shape and impact the conduct of human beings. There are some differences that Rasmussen notices. The first one is that while the emulation of specific figures can lead to immoral and debased behavior, Smith argues that it is not primarily through humans imitating each other but in emulating the rich and powerful, with Smith laying particular blame at the feet of the aristocracy as they are the ones who are more likely to engage in immoral actions.⁵⁸ In addition, Rasmussen makes the point that while Rousseau believes that the appeals to self-interest can be deceptive, meaning that someone can appeal to another person’s self-interest while still wishing them harm, Smith believes that the appeal to mutual reciprocity is genuine.⁵⁹ Smith believes that the only group of people who are actively manipulative and working for their own interests are the merchants and manufacturers.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 74.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 76.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 78.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 79-80.

Rasmussen provides numerous examples of the manipulative nature of merchants and manufacturers, providing copious quotations from *Wealth of Nations*. For instance, in Book I, Smith notes that it is often in the interest of the merchants to create laws to reduce competition. These laws come from a group "whose interest is never the same with that of the publick, who generally have the interest to deceive and even oppress the publick, and who accordingly have, upon many occasions, both deceived and oppressed it" (Smith 1981, 267). In Book IV, Smith's discussion about the harms that monopolies can have on commerce and society at large stems a great deal from the machinations of the merchant and manufacturing class, who push for laws that "confounded the common sense of mankind" and that their interests are "directly opposite of the great body of the people (Smith 1981, 494). Rasmussen points out that Smith does not think that Merchants are naturally rapacious people but that the circumstances they find themselves in have made them act in a rapacious manner.⁶⁰ The problem with Rasmussen's observation is that the places he cites concern merchants under a mercantile system are not the type of commercial society Smith advocates. Rasmussen's analysis of Smith recognizes that to a certain extent, Smith is not completely sympathetic to Rousseau's objection about the "empire of opinion;" there is an appreciation for how opinion causes the poor to perceive the rich positively.

For Smith, there is a person who is simply more likely to sympathize with the rich than with the poor because the rich receive a higher status than the poor (Smith 2002, 61). As Smith explains in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, "The rich man glories in his riches because he feels that they naturally draw upon him the attention of the world and that mankind is disposed to go along with him in all those agreeable emotions with which the advantages of his situation so readily inspire him," (Smith 2002, 61). Because the wealthy have status, they are given more

⁶⁰ Ibid, 80.

significant notice and appreciation, whereas the poor attract contempt and derision. As a result, people are more likely to sympathize with the rich than the poor because the rich are perceived as being happier than the poor. It is easier to sympathize with joy than sorrow, creating situations where a person is willing to be servile to others for the sake of reputation.⁶¹ Again, while Rasmussen concedes that Smith is more limited in his critique of the power opinion has over people, Smith and Rousseau both appreciate how opinion has destructive tendencies in society. Before moving on to the final critique of commercial society, which they both have in common, it is essential to analyze Rousseau's response to Smith's analysis.

One of the significant differences Rasmussen notices between Rousseau and Smith is that Smith thinks people are genuine in their mutual reciprocity. At the same time, Rousseau is more likely to think that deception can be involved in the analysis. The problem that Rousseau could find is that Smith seems to assume that people can respect self-interested behavior that is manifested. Rousseau's acknowledgment of deception stems from the reality that virtue has a more excellent reputation than vice, and someone perceived as acting selflessly versus someone acting self-interestedly will have a greater incentive to appear selfless and appear virtuous even if they have other aspirations. Furthermore, cheating is a problem that can occur. Two people may act out of self-interest, but one might want to create a more significant advantage for themselves by cheating. This may be problematic for long-term interactions, but if it is in one's best interest to cheat, a person will do so. The more significant problem that Smith must overcome is explaining how to make self-interest appreciated in society and how only a select few are responsible for acting immorally.

⁶¹ Ibid, 81.

Smith is not a promoter of selfishness, cruelty, or vice. He acknowledges that self-interest is a component of life and needs to be acknowledged and accepted. Even Rousseau makes a place for self-love. However, Rousseau's self-love differs from his notion of *amour propre* because *amour propre* concerns the reputation we seek from others. Smith acknowledges that certain parts of the community, the rich and powerful, may focus on reputation, but most are not subject to these desires. Rousseau could rightly wonder why a particular group is targeted when the society at large is affected. Smith argues that the rich people pursue and emulate may corrupt their sentiments, but it will not corrupt their morality as it does for the rich.⁶² Rousseau's point is that the corruption of sentiments is not just about the virtues but the liberty. In society, people are trained to be masters and servants. Rasmussen has a problem in comparing the liberty that Smith proposes and argues that it is like the one that Rousseau proposes. Smith's conception of liberty focuses on tranquility, and in much of Rousseau's work, tranquility as liberty does not always align with Rousseau's worldview. Even despotism can offer tranquility, so there needs to be something more in Smith's definition. However, despite this concern, Rasmussen does an excellent job showing how Rousseau and Smith agree that a commercial lifestyle is not the path one needs for happiness.

Rasmussen acknowledges the differences between Rousseau and Smith, noting that Smith does not believe that there was a state of nature in which man was originally good).⁶³ Rasmussen argues that Rousseau and Smith have the same conception of happiness as a type of tranquility and uses this definition to argue that tranquility cannot be achieved through pursuing

⁶² Ibid, 78.

⁶³ Ibid, 83.

riches.”⁶⁴ In addition to this problem, it is even more important to ascertain Smith’s view of happiness and why the pursuit of commerce will not lead to happiness. As Rasmussen explains, great fortunes do not make one happy but “simpler and calmer pleasures such as rewarding relationships with family and friends and the knowledge that one has acted virtuously.”⁶⁵ For Smith, the happiness we receive from “warranted praise and warranted approbation” from virtuous acts, as well as friendships that are full of “mutual affection and genuine sympathy,” are the surest signs of one having a happy existence.⁶⁶ In addition, Rasmussen shows clearly that Smith believes that not only is friendship more important than fortune, but that fortune that is gained quickly (such as winning the lottery) causes more envy and alienation compared to slowly but surely rising to a more prominent position.⁶⁷ Furthermore, not only is happiness independent from the need for material goods, but the pursuit of commerce can lead to a person’s unhappiness.

Rasmussen clearly shows that Smith thinks that pursuing money is not the path to happiness because “when people desire ever more wealth and material goods, they often submit themselves to nearly endless toil and anxiety in the pursuit of them.”⁶⁸ For Smith, the idea that people could pursue wealth and achieve happiness was an illusion, but the problem is that this proclivity has been with us from “the womb, and never leaves us till we go to our grave” (Smith 1981, 341). Rasmussen explains that because of this innate tendency placed in us by nature, most

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 84.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 85.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 86.

people will think that possessing wealth and aggrandizing our vanity is the way to achieve happiness. When they discover that it is not the way to achieve happiness, they will eventually falter back into the same mindset because the philosophical arguments to see why wealth does not lead to happiness are hard to grasp for most people.⁶⁹ Commercial societies only fuel the fire of this illusion, making it even harder for someone to escape this mindset.

Rasmussen points out how Smith shows that the commercial society does not dampen the illusionary desire for happiness through wealth but can inflame it.⁷⁰ In Book I of *Wealth of Nations*, the limited desires that human beings have (such as food) are often given over for “the amusement of the desires which cannot be satisfied, but are altogether endless (Smith 1981, 181). Rasmussen quotes from *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, where Smith responds that the delusion that people have about wealth is a good thing because “It is this which prompted them to cultivate the ground, to build houses, to found cities and commonwealths and to invent and improve all the sciences and arts, which ennoble and embellish human life.”⁷¹ Rasmussen agrees with Rousseau that this argument is not satisfying because it must explain how civilization can be a worthy prize in exchange for our happiness.⁷² Rasmussen sees this final critique from Rousseau as the most critical critique and will spend a whole chapter in his text attempting to refute this one critique. As for the problem of the division of labor and the corrupting power of opinion, Rasmussen argues that these critiques do not overwhelm the good that a commercial society provides because of the material benefit a commercial society provides.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 87.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid, 88.

⁷² Ibid, 89.

The good of commercial society is that its economic productivity allows even the lowest person to have material benefits that noncommercial societies could not even dream of possessing. As Smith argues: "the accommodation of a European prince does not always so much exceed that of an industrious and frugal peasant as the accommodation of the latter exceeds that of many an African king, (Smith 1981, 24). The reason for improving people's lives and having more than luxury in other countries is attributed to Smith due to the division of labor (Smith 1981, 22). Rasmussen explains that Smith thinks this is the case because the division of labor does three things: "It increases the dexterity of the workers concerning the operations they have to perform, it saves the time of switching from one task to another, and it encourages the development of time and labor-saving inventions."⁷³

While Smith does not confront Rousseau's critique that commercial society creates social inequalities head-on, Smith does insist that a nation's opulence increases the material goods of people with low incomes and can lift their material standards (Rasmussen 2008, 104).⁷⁴ A free-market system creates competition, allowing products to have lower prices and be acquired by low-income people. Rasmussen makes the insightful point that the wealth of nations is not about GDP or aggregate sums but about the "prospects of every individual in the society, including (and especially) the poor."⁷⁵ Smith acknowledged that even with more significant consideration for the poor, there would still be poverty, and Smith encouraged many ways to alleviate it.

Rasmussen's analysis of Smith reveals how one of the first steps needed to alleviate the situation of people with low incomes was to break up the mercantile system that predominated

⁷³ Ibid, 102.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 104.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Smith's time. Throughout *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith critiques multiple elements of mercantile policy, such as the Statute of Apprentices and the Settlement Act, as well as feudal practices, such as primogeniture and entail, all of which served to maintain wealth in the hands of the few, as opposed to a free market which could allow for the wealth to spread.⁷⁶ Rasmussen also points out how policies such as taxing the rich for certain luxuries or goods and providing compulsory education to the poor are practices that today may need to be revised. However, during Smith's time, they were revolutionary.⁷⁷ In addition to these methods, Smith insists that education is one of the best ways to alleviate the condition of people with low incomes.

Rasmussen notes how education is a critical component in alleviating the state of people experiencing poverty. He describes the ways that education can be helpful to the state, such as reducing religious enthusiasm and making people more agreeable to complying with superiors of the state.⁷⁸ He also points out how Smith thinks it can be used to deal with the deformation of character that can ensue with the division of labor. Rasmussen acknowledges that Smith expresses some ambivalence on whether it helps enlighten the population, but the advantages of education are worthwhile. The other problem that Rasmussen attempts to handle is the "great pains" a government needs to take to create an education that can effectively cultivate the martial spirit.⁷⁹

As mentioned previously, a martial spirit is opposed to commercial life, so the educated person is pliable, able to handle less prosperity, and has their opinion controlled. Rasmussen insists that Smith is not advocating some form of "social control," as Marx would suggest.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 106

⁷⁷ Ibid, 107.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 111.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 112-113.

However, the nature of education and the compulsory element of a martial education conflicts with an education that is supposed to raise one towards a pliable state as a member of a commercial society. Regardless, Rasmussen suggests that Smith has confidence in the power of education to help ameliorate the consequences of the division of labor and that the division of labor is good for the prosperity of society. The following critique that Rasmussen focuses on is how opinion is not considered oppressive by Smith, as Rousseau argues, but is instead an integral part of society.

To explain how Smith overcomes Rousseau's critique about how commercial societies make people slaves to opinions, Rasmussen analyzes *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* to investigate the moral theory advanced by Smith. Rasmussen argues that Smith “quietly rejects the idea of an independent moral standard, such as natural law or divine commandments, as well as the idea that moral standards can be found through reason alone.”⁸⁰ Instead, Smith argues that our morality stems from our feelings and sentiments and that through sympathy, we find a person's actions praiseworthy.⁸¹⁸² While Rousseau would suggest that the opinions of others are a significant burden to people, Smith sees it as the fountainhead of morality, as seeing ourselves from the perspective of others is how we can come to see ourselves as moral beings.⁸³ For Smith, sentiments provide the foundation of the general rules of morality, but individual feelings are not the sole source of morality; they also require habitual input from others about

⁸⁰ Ibid, 115.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² For a more critical perspective of Smith's view of praiseworthiness, see Douglass, Robin. "Morality and sociability in commercial society: Smith, Rousseau—and Mandeville." *The Review of Politics* 79, no. 4 (2017): 597-620.

⁸³ Rasmussen 2008, 115-116.

what is praiseworthy and what is not.⁸⁴ As Rasmussen explains: “In short, moral systems arise spontaneously from a multitude of individual actions, much the same way markets do in economics.”⁸⁵ The most crucial question about Smith’s moral system is whether it entails relativism.⁸⁶

Rasmussen acknowledges that many commentators have suggested that Smith’s worldview entails a soft form of cultural relativism since the sentiments of a particular culture establish morality. Smith, for example, was baffled by cultures that were willing to practice slavery and infanticide, practices that he found abhorrent. However, his methodology needs to offer him a way of establishing which type of civilization or practice is superior to the other.⁸⁷ Smith does have a notion of an “impartial spectator,” someone who is “sympathetic, informed and unprejudiced” and would view different actions that are occurring, but even then, the problem remains that a spectator would be judging by the standards created by society’s sentiments.⁸⁸ Despite this, Rasmussen thinks Smith provides a middle ground between absolutism and relativism. Despite the problems with Smith’s theory, Smith’s analysis still provides reasons for why opinion is reasonable.⁸⁹ According to Smith, opinion is reasonable because people want something more than just praise. They want to be praiseworthy.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 116.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ See Fleischacker, S. (2011). Adam Smith and cultural relativism. *Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics*, 4(2), 20-41 for an association between Smith and Cultural Relativism. Rasmussen is more sympathetic to Smith and sees Smith’s philosophy as a middle ground.

⁸⁷ Rasmussen 2008, 117.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

According to Smith, it is not enough for a person to be praised but to be worthy of praise, one must act in a way that aligns with society's standards.⁹⁰ While this standard is immanent to society and not transcendent, it is still one that a person can understand and follow. Unlike Rousseau, Smith suggests that people want to align the praise they receive with reality. The desire for the worthiness of praise will drive a person to act in conformity with society and not deceive. Rasmussen draws a parallel between Smith and Mandeville to show how Smith differs from any appreciation of deception, further substantiating Smith's comparison of Rousseau to Mandeville.⁹¹⁹² Instead of deceivers and flatterers for praise, Smith envisions a "prudent man" who will not only be someone worthy of praise but could be an exemplar of the best type of person in a commercial society.

Smith considers prudence "of all the virtues most useful to the individual."⁹³ The "prudent man" can always do his duty, be a good and loyal friend, refuse to meddle in the affairs of others, cultivate his talents and abilities, and is willing to delay gratification for tranquility and security.⁹⁴ The "prudent man" focuses on achieving external goods such as health, prosperity, and security but is neither a person fixated on achieving money at all costs nor one of Rousseau's bourgeois who strives for an excellent reputation at the expense of their integrity.⁹⁵ Rasmussen drives the point home that Smith acknowledges that the "prudent man" is "not particularly noble

⁹⁰ Ibid, 118.

⁹¹ Ibid, 119.

⁹² Smith is largely more optimistic about the nature of sympathy and how it can be extended towards mutual benefit. See Schwarze, Michelle A., and John T. Scott. "Mutual sympathy and the moral economy: Adam Smith Reviews Rousseau." *The Journal of Politics* 81, no. 1 (2019): 66-80.

⁹³ Rasmussen 2008, 119.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 120.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

or endearing” but is someone who is "decent and respectable" and is a realistic consideration of what the average human being can become.⁹⁶⁹⁷ People will not pursue a vicious and deceptive mentality in a commercial society. However, they will instead strive to achieve prudence because it is easier than the standards of virtue of the past. Prudence is one of the best qualities for achieving success in a commercial society.⁹⁸

The type of person that Smith believes a commercial society can produce would, in all likelihood, not have impressed Rousseau; the prudent man lacks the stark virtues of the Spartans and the Romans and the natural freedom portrayed by Emile. Smith acknowledges this critique but insists that most people cannot become Spartans or Emile. Furthermore, Smith casts doubts on whether people genuinely want to be Spartans. Grant for a moment that fame and reputation for virtue are desirable, but there is still the reality of how brutal a Spartan was to his enemies and slaves. For Smith, the great virtue of commercial society is that it would expand the middle class, allowing for the vices of the rich and the powerful to be kept in check and for the rule of law to be firmly established so that people would comply with the letter of the law, if not always the spirit of the law.⁹⁹ Instead of taking people's virtue, commerce requires a certain level of virtue that people must maintain for the good of commerce. Therefore, Rasmussen finds that despite any drawbacks to commerce relating to opinion, he suggests that Smith would not consider it a detriment to society overall. The last major critique that needs to be addressed

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Other commentators are prepared to acknowledge Smith's "prudent man" has more virtue than Rasmussen gives credit. See Pack, Spencer J. "Adam Smith on the virtues: A partial resolution of the Adam Smith problem." *Journal of the history of economic thought* 19, no. 1 (1997): 127-140. Pack suggests that Smith derives some of his thoughts on virtues from Aristotle, though Smith provides a smaller scope for justice (Pack 1997, 129-130).

⁹⁸ Ibid, 121.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 125.

concerning Rousseau's attack on commerce is that commercial life does not make a person genuinely happy.

Rasmussen wants to answer a puzzle that has plagued the Adam Smith scholarship: "Why does he advocate commercial society if it undermines people's happiness—if it falls short of his measure of a good society?"¹⁰⁰ Rasmussen answers that Smith thinks the rise of commercial society will offer unprecedented liberty and security, allowing more significant opportunities for people to be happy.¹⁰¹ Rasmussen cites Smith's comments about the "public happiness" that occurred during the commercial revolution of the feudal age as proof that because of commerce, people have a greater opportunity to achieve happiness.¹⁰² The advent of commercial society offers personal liberty that could not have been achieved in the past. Smith spends a considerable amount of time refuting Rousseau's notion about people's happiness in the past, arguing that the poverty level in the societies Rousseau admired, coupled with the overwhelming power of the father, created a level of unhappiness far graver than that in commercial societies.¹⁰³ A commercial society provides security and reduces the dependency of other people on each other.

One of the chief ills that Smith believes can be alleviated through commercial societies is the problem of dependency, of having to rely on someone else for necessities and privileges entirely. Smith surveys the lack of power the average serf had during the feudal age, providing a litany of restrictions their lords had placed on them. Of average serf, Smith explains, "they could be sold, but not separately. They could marry, provided it was with the consent of their master...If he maimed or murdered any of them, he was liable to some penalty, though generally

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 131.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 131-132.

¹⁰² Ibid, 137.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 141-142.

but to a small one” (Smith 1976, 386). In addition to a lack of control over their lives, Smith explains that their lord could quickly take whatever property they acquired (Smith 1976, 387). While Smith did not believe that human beings could be completely self-sufficient, the essential element of commercial society is that it can reduce a person's dependency on another.¹⁰⁴ Even in modern commercial societies, the dynamics between employers and employees can be fraught with tensions and problems. Despite these problems, the employer has specific restrictions on what they can do to one's person and property in ways feudal lords never had to concern themselves. Rasmussen makes the excellent point that Smith reveals how the commercial society can offer us a path away from unhappiness. It removes obstacles rather than provides a road map, but it can be easier to achieve in a commercial society than ever before.

5.6. Conclusion

Adam Smith's thorough analysis of commerce addresses how humans are commercial by nature and how commerce can save us from oppression and harm. We are, by our nature, required to exchange goods to survive, and commerce is how this exchange takes place. The history of commerce paints a picture of progress against the feudal age of the past and a brighter future than before, where people can enjoy peace and liberty on a level not experienced before. What is remarkable about Smith's analysis of commerce is his willingness to acknowledge the drawbacks that can emerge in society. Like Rousseau, Smith acknowledges that the division of labor, the slavery to opinion, and the inability of commerce as a pursuit to make a person happy are all valid critiques of commercial society. In addition, the commercial society can impact the martial spirit of a people and potentially make them weaker to threats. Nevertheless, given the overarching goods that can be provided, they are not a refutation of commercial pursuits—not

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 148.

just materially but socially. In addition, the freedom offered under a commercial society allows the population to grow. It allows people to take control over their familial lives and not be subjected to lords like in the past.

While Smith recognizes that a commercial society can affect the martial spirit, the feudal age was the premier time when societies demonstrated their martial prowess. Smith considered it a time of unprecedented bloodshed and violence. Smith believed that there was a way to tame human beings' aggressiveness while educating them enough to develop military discipline for whatever problems emerged against other nations. Smith was sympathetic to Rousseau, that is beyond dispute, but having a commercial society does not mean that the martial obligations had to be abandoned. Instead, Smith thinks that a standing army should be allowed to cultivate their martial prowess while other citizens could cultivate their prosperity in peace.¹⁰⁵

In addition to the martial obligations, Smith did not believe that a commercial society would negatively impact families' ability or desire to have large families. On the contrary, Smith suggests that families could develop in security, be allowed to pursue their interests, and benefit from the exchange of goods that markets provide. Opulence was a sign of a healthy society for Smith, and prosperity would allow families to expand with greater ease while maintaining the loving sentiments that Rousseau also admired in the family. Smith acknowledges that countries could reach a "stationary state" where the population would reach its limit. Smith resists the idea that this would happen globally and predicts that a commercial society could last far longer than other societies that came before.

¹⁰⁵ At the heart of the dispute between Rousseau and Smith is that Rousseau is prepared to believe that commerce will produce the worst in people, while Smith does not fall prey to this pessimism. See Rasmussen, Dennis C. "Smith, Rousseau and the True Spirit of a Republican." *Adam Smith and Rousseau: Ethics, Politics, Economics* (2018): 241-259.

Having analyzed the Scottish philosopher's view of Rousseau and commerce, it will be essential to turn to critiques of Rousseau's view of commerce and family in a different direction. Crossing over time and space, the next chapter will assess Rousseau's reception in France during the French Revolution. The point will not belabor whether or not Rousseau's thoughts engaged in the French Revolution but on how different intellectual figures praised or blamed elements during and slightly after the revolution. It will offer evaluations from multiple figures, focusing on Abbe Sieyes and Benjamin Constant.

Chapter Six. Interpretations of Rousseau's Thought during the French Revolution

6.1. Introduction

Smith's retort to Rousseau's concern about commerce represents an advanced and well-articulated response. Despite the drawbacks of a commercial society, Smith acknowledged and refuted them to one degree or another. It is an undeniable truth that commercial life was ascending in the world, and the push against commerce was not advancing well. Commercial society had the intellectual capacity to not only justify itself as superior to Rousseau's model but also provide ways for maintaining and perhaps strengthening the martial and marital obligations to In addition to able defenses of commerce, the other element in investigating how Rousseau's pleas against commerce were brushed aside is to look at how Rousseau's thoughts were seen during the French Revolution.

Many French thinkers would use Rousseau's name as a rallying cry for the revolution. What I will examine, though, is how the martial and marital responsibilities were perceived by two of the most important political theorists during the French Revolution: Abbe Sieyes and Benjamin Constant. Sieyes will promote the commercial society, unimpressed with concerns about the decline of the martial spirit of the people. For Sieyes, commerce was the future, and the future should be embraced with gusto. While appreciative of Rousseau's genius, Benjamin Constant ultimately finds his project of reviving classical republicanism a futile gesture. Like Sieyes, Constant agreed that commerce weakens the martial spirit, but this was good.

The emerging commercial society would offer greater protections for the individual and prevent people like Napoleon, a man driven to demonstrate his prowess on the battlefield, from emerging and causing further destruction to the world. The society envisioned by Sieyes and Constant would also be better for familial life, and they do not express any anxiety that

commerce could be destructive to the family or the population in general. The destructive wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon's conquests are pinned on Rousseau's teaching, according to Constant, because people did not understand Rousseau's goal and because, like Rome, the French Republic developed a martial spirit and began to conquer. To understand these French Revolutionaries, their context will need to be understood.

The French Revolution, one of the most critical social and political transformations that occurred in the West, has been analyzed by legions of scholars from various angles. To attempt to review most of the research in the field would be an exercise in futility. However, it will be necessary to briefly cover the influence of Rousseau on the average reader before and during the French Revolution. Rousseau was able to achieve fame and soared to incredible heights. The enthusiasm for Rousseau's work led to an intense following, an enthusiasm that remained high during the Revolution. The question, however, is what elements of Rousseau's thought enflamed the hearts of different people? Moreover, how was Rousseau's thought appropriated during the Revolution? In order to effectively gauge how other thinkers viewed Rousseau, it is essential to find the thinkers that were integral parts of the French Revolution, were able to survive past the "Reign of Terror," engaged with Rousseau's thought in a substantial matter, and were invested to discussing the value of a commercial society.

Since Sieyes is considered one of the foremost political theorists of the French Revolution, I will look at his writings, mainly *What is the Third Estate?* which was considered the manifesto of the French Revolution. Sieyes political theory shares similarities with Rousseau's thought, especially concerning the value of democracy and the need for a new social contract to remove the arbitrary powers and privileges of the past. However, despite any agreement between the two thinkers, it is clear that Sieyes had different ambitions for his

political theory than Rousseau. Sieyes's perspective on property and the value of a commercial society is of particular interest. How Sieyes differed in his marital and marital spirit assessments will also require analysis.

With Benjamin Constant, the focus will be on his essays and speeches, with particular attention to Constant's essay "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared to the Moderns." This essay not only critiqued the mindset of many of the intellectuals of the French Revolution but also critiques Rousseau's appreciation for older regimes such as Sparta and Rome. Constant will be essential to evaluate because his critique also extends to Napoleon, whose campaigns would be criticized. The over-arching goal of Constant's political thought was to demonstrate that commercial society was both inevitable and desirable compared to the past. Constant will also look at ways to preserve individual liberties to ensure certain abuses are curtailed. A vital element of this analysis will be whether Constant's critiques are fair to Rousseau and whether the critiques in and of themselves are detrimental to Rousseau's analysis of commercial life. Before analyzing both Sieyes and Constant's perspectives on Rousseau and commerce, it will be essential to survey the general perspective that many people had of Rousseau during the French Revolution.

6.2. Rousseau appropriated during the Revolution

As mentioned before, assessments of Rousseau's role in the French Revolution have spanned generations and resulted in many responses towards Rousseau. He is perceived by some as the great inspiration of the Revolution and lauded for the role that his thought had in removing the *ancien regime* and empowering the people. Others find him to blame for regicide, deaths during the "Reign of Terror," and the rise of Napoleon. Such a bipolar reaction to Rousseau is expected from someone as paradoxical and radical as Rousseau. While connecting Rousseau's

thoughts as a cause of the French Revolution is difficult at best, there are still elements of Rousseau's thoughts that can be connected to the French Revolution. It is easier to gauge those who were impressed by Rousseau's thoughts and what elements of his thoughts people were attracted to. What becomes clear is that much of the attraction to Rousseau did not emerge from engagement with his political theory.¹ Instead, Rousseau's educational and literary works created the "Cult of Rousseau."

Gordon H. McNeil's article "The Cult of Rousseau and the French Revolution" discussed one of the earlier analyses of Rousseau and the cult that formed Rousseau in the twentieth century.² The cult-like respect for Rousseau developed in two phases; the first is respect for Rousseau as a literary figure, while the second focuses on Political elements. This is important for McNeil because the split was not recognized then, leading to the erroneous conclusion that the whole corpus of Rousseau's work was praised. Instead, McNeil points out how "Rousseau was admired and honored, not for the *Contrat social*, but for the *Nouvelle Heloise* and the *Emile*."³ According to McNeil, readers of Rousseau preferred his literary works because they offered more for their emotions than other French thinkers writing at the time. People began to see Rousseau as "the advocate of the cause of the emotions, of romantic love and virtue, of nature and simplicity, of a devout theism," and under the surface of Rousseau's "reserve and boorishness" was someone who had a "charming personality (McNeil 1945, 198)⁴. The importance of sentiments and Rousseau's odd yet endearing personality attracted a cult.

¹ See McNeil, Gordon H. "The cult of Rousseau and the French Revolution." *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1945): 197–212.

² While McNeil's article is older, it provides a good synopsis of the French feelings and attitudes toward Rousseau.

³ McNeil 1945, 197.

⁴ Ibid, 198.

To say that Rousseau received laudatory remarks for his works would be an understatement. McNeil does an excellent job demonstrating the extreme zeal of Rousseau's fans before the French Revolution. An Abbe said the following about his encounter with Rousseau: "I have seen him; I have conversed with the wisest of men. He accepted my youth, and I never left one of his conversations without feeling my soul uplifted and my heart more virtuous," (McNeil 1945, 198).⁵ Female followers such as Mme. de Latour de Franqueville described how she has Rousseau's portrait on her secretary "exactly as a believer places above her oratory the image of the saint for whom she has the most fervent devotion" (McNeil 1945, 198). Even when he died, the devotion did not dissipate; it only got stronger. After his death, there was a cottage industry, as "portraits, prints, statuettes, and busts were produced to satisfy an inexhaustible market for such items" (McNeil 1945, 199).⁶ Many people felt extreme feelings for Rousseau. This was not simply a mass appeal, mind you, as many famous people during the French Revolution considered themselves disciples of Rousseau in one way or another,

The cult of Rousseau had an intense following with many people who would rise to fame during the French Revolution. McNeil describes a few: "Both Mme. de Stael and Mme. Roland wrote of their devotion to their 'bon Jean-Jacques.'" So did the young Mirabeau in his 'letters to Sophie.' (McNeil 1945, 200).⁷ McNeil would describe others who were big fans of Rousseau's literary work, such as "Sylvain Marechal and Babeuf, Charlotte Corday, the poet Roucher, and Barere, who were also among the new adherents to the literary cult in the 1780s." (McNeil 1945, 200).⁸ The most moving, or honestly most disturbing, element of the reverence that Rousseau

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid, 199.

⁷ Ibid, 200.

⁸ Ibid.

received was when his followers would go on pilgrimages to his grave. Upon arriving at Rousseau's burial at the Isle of Poplars, Rousseau's fans, and followers "came to weep, to pray, to kiss the tomb and decorate it with flowers, to compose verses about Rousseau; and one at least came to commit suicide and be buried close to Jean-Jacques," (McNeil 1945, 201).⁹ The importance of writing about the devotion that many felt towards Rousseau is essential for a few reasons. One, the extreme devotion shown to Rousseau demonstrates the impact that Rousseau had on the French before the Revolution. Two, showing the extreme reactions to his literary work, attempts to link Rousseau's political work to the French Revolution as an intuitive proposition. Third, figuring out which texts were beloved by Rousseau's followers will make it easier to see how the distortions of Rousseau begin to emerge.

Before going deeper into McNeil's analysis of the political enthusiasm for Rousseau, there is an element of McNeil's dichotomy between Rousseau's fame that needs to be critiqued. While historically, it is correct to assess Rousseau's popularity as starting with his more literary works and then phased into political enthusiasm, there is a problem with *Emile* and where it falls in these two categories. McNeil is quick to describe *Emile* as a work of education and religion, and rightfully so because these are both apparent elements of the book. However, Book V of *Emile* is evident in its political importance and has its assessment of what makes a good and what makes a bad regime, making remarks that would be repeated in *The Social Contract*. The description provided by McNeil leaves out the analysis of the social and commercial life that Rousseau provides throughout the book. Furthermore, Rousseau's readers could easily have read Rousseau's prediction that there would be revolutions in Europe and that the monarchies of the past would not survive as a prophetic pronouncement of what was to come decades later.

⁹ Ibid, 201.

Rousseau considered *Emile* his magnum opus, so ignoring the socio-political significance of the text complicates the clean schema of the reception of Rousseau's literary and political works.

With the advent of the French Revolution, Rousseau's name begins to emerge as a justification for different actions during the Revolution. McNeil questions how much knowledge the different actors in the Revolution had about Rousseau's political philosophy and whether they were merely using the prestige of his name as a "rubber stamp" for whatever action was being pushed for at the time. Part of the hesitation to assigning deep knowledge of Rousseau's political thought was that different political works were only voraciously purchased after the Revolution. McNeil points out that the last time Rousseau's *Social Contract* was reprinted was in 1775, a decade and a half before the French Revolution came to a boil, though in 1790, four separate editions were published and three more in 1791 (McNeil 1945, 202).¹⁰ Much like his literary works, Rousseau's name was plastered on pamphlets and slogans with little investigation into what Rousseau believed. McNeil acknowledges that there have been some true disciples in the ranks, but for many of the leaders at the time, Rousseau's name, and texts "were merely weapons for ideological battle" (McNeil 1945, 202).¹¹ Many factions during the Revolution could use Rousseau's work for their ends.

McNeil describes how a host of Revolutionaries attributed their actions to Rousseau's influence, and counterrevolutionaries were quick to denounce Rousseau as the culprit of the violence occurring during the Revolution (McNeil 1945, 202).¹² There was, however, a third group of thinkers that McNeil finds to be "persuasive" who were of a more conservative

¹⁰ Ibid, 202.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

disposition, who argued that the actions taken by the Revolution were counter to the proposals of Rousseau's *Social Contract* (McNeil 1945, 202).¹³ However, the revolutionaries ignored such arguments, insisting that Rousseau should be attributed to the overturning of what one revolutionary described as “the enormous colossus of despotism” (McNeil 1945, 203).¹⁴ As the French Revolution progressed, the appropriation of Rousseau increased, as well as the intense devotion that would permeate every level of the French Revolution.

McNeil describes how the devotion towards Rousseau was carried with a reverence that was similar to the following he had prior to the French Revolution: “A street in Paris was named for him and a section for his *Contrat social*. ...A bust of Rousseau and a copy of the *Contrat social* were given a place of honor in the National Assembly,” (McNeil 1945, 204).¹⁵ There was even an appeal in 1791 to get Rousseau buried at the Pantheon, though complications about removing Rousseau's body prevented that until 1794 (McNeil 1945, 204).¹⁶ As the Revolution continued, there were still people who wished to push against the use of Rousseau's name for the sake of the Revolution, such as Madame Stael, who used Rousseau's own words to suggest that the deaths of innocent people were occurring under the Revolution were antithetical to Rousseau's wishes (McNeil 1945, 205).¹⁷

Despite this protest, the French Revolution would enter a more radical phase, and many people would attach themselves to Rousseau. This ranged from the moderate Girondins, such as Charlotte Corday and the philosopher Condorcet, to the more radical Jacobins, such as Marat and

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, 203.

¹⁵ Ibid, 204.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 205.

Robespierre (McNeil 1945, 205-206).¹⁸ Different thinkers would lavish adulation on Rousseau's name. As the Revolution progressed, Rousseau's texts were continuously re-published, "thirteen times between 1792 and 1795, and one edition was appropriately issued in pocket Bible size for the soldiers defending *la patrie* (McNeil 1945, 206).¹⁹ Rousseau's popularity reached astounding heights, but it must be asked why Rousseau was so famous. What about his thought offered such intense reverence to his name?

Regarding why Rousseau was so famous, McNeil only briefly elaborates, explaining, "The best answer would seem to be that there was a need for it, and there was a favorable environment for such a phenomenon" (McNeil 1945, 211).²⁰ McNeil attributes to the French Revolution a type of romanticism and that Rousseau's sentimentalism and appeals to radical change were able to fill that niche (McNeil 1945, 211).²¹ However, this explanation could be more specific, and finding a way to identify Rousseau's impact on the Revolution is tenuous at best. Despite this drawback, questions about Rousseau's influence have persisted.

6.3. Sieyes on Government

Although the debate about Rousseau's thoughts will continue, there is still the matter of analyzing the impact Rousseau had on different thinkers and how they used his influence for their purposes. Like the literature on the influence of Rousseau on the French Revolution, the thinkers who were alive during the French Revolution and engaged with Rousseau's thoughts were legion. As mentioned before, the first thinker to be examined is Abbe Sieyes. The first text to be analyzed is Sieyes's "An Essay on Privileges," followed by his famous political pamphlet

¹⁸ Ibid, 205-206.

¹⁹ Ibid, 206

²⁰ Ibid, 211.

²¹ Ibid.

What is the Third Estate? The essay is vital to process because it helps exemplify Sieyes's problems with the ancient regime.

Sieyes notes in his essay how privilege has been defined as “a dispensation or exemption in favor of him who possesses it and discouragement to those who do not,” prompting Sieyes to declare privileges as “a very poor invention indeed!” (Sieyes 2003, 69). The outrage and disdain towards privilege stems from the fact that it can ruin the “happiest and best calculated” society by having one group in the society exempt from their duties. At the same time, the other members would be burdened and discouraged (Sieyes 2003, 69). The very notion of privilege allows for “dispensing with the law of the land” and placing the possessor of the privilege “beyond the boundaries of the common right” (Sieyes 2003, 69). Privilege is set against the power of the law, i.e., the general will, which, for Sieyes, has the object to “preserve the liberty and property of every individual from assault and violence (Sieyes 2003, 69-70). The goal of the law is in line with those of thinkers such as Locke and Rousseau, who recommend that the law be applied equally. The universal law that must be applied to people in a political community is “Do wrong to no man” (Sieyes 2003, 70). This primary injunction should incentivize people to remove laws against their liberty and property. However, history has made people survive bad laws and remove the urge to fight for good laws.

Sieyes is clear that the past is a burden that must be overthrown for the good of the Nation. Sieyes points out that the minds of the people have kept them subservient to laws that do them no good and even harm, making them unaware that they are entering a new “social state” that will allow them to revoke the abuses of the past and move ahead towards a better future (Sieyes 2003, 70). To have a privilege is to be exempt from the general law “do wrong to no man” and explicitly tells citizens who have the privilege that “You are permitted to do wrong.”

(Sieyes 2003, 70). Sieyes puts it more forcefully: "All privileges, then, from the nature of things, are unjust, odious and contrary to the supreme end of every political society" (Sieyes 2003, 71). Even the notion of "honorary privilege" of having some title attributed to one's name can be degrading to the political community as the honor will often lead to an expectation of exemption from specific duties or indulgence in some problems that other people are not allowed to have (Sieyes 2003, 71). That is not to say that someone who does good for the Nation should not be rewarded, but Sieyes insists there is a difference between "privileges and rewards" (Sieyes 2003, 72). The existence of privileges has created a situation not only adverse to the law but against the just deserts of the virtuous and wise people that make up the Nation.

Because of the presence of legal privilege in French Society, "genius is persecuted, and virtue is turned into ridicule," while those who have ribbons and honors attached to their name "imperiously command respect and homage to be paid to mediocrity, to meanness and even to crimes," (Sieyes 2003, 73-74). The defenders of privilege wish to be distinguished "*from* your fellow citizens, than *by* your fellow citizens," harboring a "secret sentiment" that is filled with vanity that "you are endeavoring to conceal under the appearance of public interest" (Sieyes 2003, 75). The lovers of privilege are driven by a sentiment similar to, if not outright, *amour propre*. This sentiment is "so hostile to mankind, with the natural equality of whom you are offended" (Sieyes 2003, 75). This comparative sentiment develops in opposition to the good of people and the laws. In addition, privilege has a corrupting influence on the person who receives it.

When the ministers or whoever is in charge offers privilege to a citizen, it opens "his mind to a particular interest and closes it more or less against the common good" (Sieyes 2003, 75). It decreases feelings of patriotism or love for the common good, incentivizes an urge for

domination, and creates an unseemly malady in the person's character (Sieyes 2003, 75). Not only will people with privilege look at themselves differently, but they will also view those with the same privilege as being a "separate order" or a "chosen nation within a nation" (Sieyes 2003, 75). This type of mindset creates a caste mentality, viewing the people as people who are not only separate but inferior from the privileged class. Sieyes insists that this delusion is so great that the privileged class considers themselves "another species of being" (Sieyes 2003, 76). The nobility may have a liberal and humane personality. However, any approach of the ordinary person is met with offense in the right circumstances. Of course, there is the constant discussion of lineage and family lines, which helps the nobility separate those who are like them from those who are not (Sieyes 2003, 76-77). The privileged class can serve as a "dreadful confederacy" when provoked and create problems for the political body. Sieyes argues that this type of privilege must be eradicated for the good of the political body. However, he recognizes that particular distinctions need to be made for the good of the government.

While eradicating privilege is desirable for Sieyes, his desire for respect for the equality of persons does not entail that there are no inequalities. Sieyes recognizes that a political body requires a government, meaning there will be those who govern and those who are governed. The critical point for Sieyes is that the governors may have a "superiority of employment, not of persons" (Sieyes 2003, 80). The privilege that Sieyes is primarily focused on critiquing is a hereditary privilege that compels a specific class of people worthy of praise and utterly essential to society (Sieyes 2003, 80-81). In contrast, excluding the people who govern, the country should ensure that all people are equal under the law. The rich and the poor are offered equal protection and responsibilities, though the more affluent person may have more property that needs protection (Sieyes 2003, 81). This discussion of property protection will be brought up again

later, but privileges do not just extend to the hereditary nobles. Other elements in French society were too privileged for Sieyes's taste.

In addition to the nobility, Sieyes also aims at the military class, arguing that the "military spirit would exalt itself into the judge of civil relations and consider a nation only as an extensive barrack" (Sieyes 2003, 82). In addition to the military, the clergy or the "monastic spirit" would strive for the government to operate by the strictures they placed within their monasteries. While nobility is a pernicious privilege, the subordination by the other classes of privilege is intolerable for Sieyes and must be condemned as well. It is interesting to compare Sieyes's comments to those of Smith's as they both show a unique perspective of the martial or military spirit. It is undoubtedly the case that Smith may be weary of a martial class exerting control over society. However, Smith was still prepared to praise the martial spirit in society and would be willing to encourage its development in much of the citizenry. Sieyes does not offer a high appraisal of the military spirit nor notions of teaching it to the citizenry. He thinks soldiers who protect the commonwealth should receive honor, but cultivating a martial spirit should not be encouraged. In contrast, for Sieyes, it is clear that a true commonwealth must be conceived as a commercial society in order for it to be moved forward.

Sieyes makes an interesting observation about how citizens should look at citizens in a commonwealth, as he begins by arguing that the relationship should be based on "freedom and equality" (Sieyes 2003, 82). Nevertheless, equality and freedom are described in commercial terms: "One gives his time or his merchandise, the other in return his money. There is no subordination but continual exchange" (Sieyes 2003, 82). In a footnote to this comment, Sieyes expounds further on the difference between natural and false hierarchies. The actual hierarchy is the governed and the governors. At the same time, the false is the subordination among the

governed, which makes up the “false, useless, odious and the unenlightened remains of the feudal system” (Sieyes 2003, 82). Sieyes compares the subordination among the governed to an armed troop that takes proprietorship of the country, dissolving the civil estate, no longer considered a people but an army (Sieyes 2003, 82). The comparison to subordination is not simply feudal but also martial, again demonstrating Sieyes's leeriness about allowing a military lifestyle or norms. By linking the military spirit to the past, the commercial society can be seen as desirable but progressive. Adam Smith has already established the link between commerce and progress, but this dichotomy between the martial and the commercial will become even more pronounced when turning to Benjamin Constant. In addition, Sieyes sees a difference between those who are rich and those of a privileged class who strive to maintain their wealth.

For Sieyes, there are two principles of action in society: honor and emolument (Sieyes 2003, 83). Both must balance each other, as the “ambition of being found worthy of the public esteem... will be found to operate a necessary check on the inordinate love of wealth” (Sieyes 2003, 83). While a member of the Third Estate must strive for honor, a person of privilege will expect it from birth, and the drive for more will be intense for the privileged because they feel they deserve it (Sieyes 2003, 83). Since they spend more than they earn, Sieyes explains that the privileged class will turn to “intrigue” and “solicitation” to attempt to gather more funds, which creates greater havoc in the economy of a nation (Sieyes 2003, 83). However, amidst all that they acquire, even though violence at times, the money often runs dry, and the “privileged poor” must find ways for the legislation to divert more funds their way, often by taking it from the Third Estate, people whose industry and hard work allowed them to accumulate their riches (Sieyes 2003, 86-87). For these reasons, amidst the myriads of other reasons laid by Sieyes, the

privileged class is a detriment to the Nation, and privilege needs to be stripped from the law with haste.

The radicalness of Sieyes' essay cannot be overstated. This essay indicts not just privilege but also the Kingdom of France. The leaders of the *ancien regime* were no better than parasites clinging to the honor and wealth that others worked to develop. The privileged class of the First and Second Estate held the rewards and none of the responsibilities of society. The privilege they clung to was of a feudal origin, and it needed to give way to a more commercially minded future. There is much in this essay that Rousseau would approve of, especially the emphasis on the equality of the citizens and the removal of privileges from the law. Everyone should be equal under the law. However, Rousseau would find it problematic that Sieyes seems unfazed about the inequality of property. As long as the legal rights of the rich and the poor are protected, Sieyes does not foresee any tensions that could arise from wealth differences. However, Rousseau clearly states that differences in property create differences in how society perceives a person. While having more property does not automatically entail privileges in the sense that Sieyes argues against, the increase in property can inflame amour propre and ensure that the rich compare themselves against the poorer citizens. Furthermore, with the increase in property comes the ability to delay or dispense justice in a manner that someone of the lower class simply could not.

Despite this critique, Sieyes's incisive analysis of the corrosive effects of the privileged class serves as a springboard for his other works. Suppose the First and Second Estates are the corrupting influence in French Society, the "villain" of the revolutionary tale. In that case, there needs to be a "hero," a group of people who could unite and vanquish the feudal privileged class to allow France to progress to a better age. The "hero" of this tale is none other than the Third

Estate. To explain the nature of the Third Estate and the justification of the Third Estate taking control, Sieyes wrote his most famous pamphlet, aptly titled *What is the Third Estate?*

The pamphlet *What is the Third Estate* would inspire the Nation to overthrow the *ancien regime* and highlight the ideals that many had for the French Revolution in its inception. It was published in 1788 at the time of the Assembly of the Notables and can be considered an extension of the thoughts laid out in the *Essay on Privileges* (Sieyes 2003,93). The pamphlet lays out three questions that Sieyes will answer:

- “1. What is the Third Estate?-*Everything*
2. What, until now, has it been in the existing political order?-*Nothing*
3. What does it want to be?-*Something*” (Sieyes 2003, 94).

The Third Estate comprises three "Estates" constituting the Kingdom of France. The First Estate was composed of the Clergy; the Second Estate was made of the nobility, while everyone else was a part of the Third Estate. The supermajority of the French people, ninety-eight percent, comprised the Third Estate, and Sieyes argues why they should decide how the Nation of France should operate.

According to Sieyes, a nation needs "private employment and public services" to survive and prosper (Sieyes 2003, 94). The significant activities of private employment, such as farmers, manufacturers, merchants, and people who consume these goods, from the professor to the domestic worker, make up the Third Estate (Sieyes 2003, 94-95). Concerning public services, such as "the army, the law, the church, and the administration," Sieyes argues that at least nineteen out of twenty of the jobs are held by people in the third estate, only for the other two estates to lay claim to the tasks that have more honor and reward (Sieyes 2003, 96). This is a state of affairs that Sieyes compares to a "strong, robust man with one arm in chains" and that the removal of the privileged orders would transform the Third Estate into an "Everything; but an

everything that would be free and flourishing” (Sieyes 2003, 96). It is not enough for Sieyes to demonstrate that the First and Second Estate are detrimental to the Nation. Instead, Sieyes suggests that only the Third Estate should remain because a caste mentality drives the other estates and exerts the least effort for the Nation's good (Sieyes 2003, 96-97). For a nation to be a nation, Sieyes believes it must operate under common laws, and the same legislature or the other Estates will continue to serve as an “imperium in imperio” (Sieyes 2003, 97). All responsibilities and capabilities to create and sustain a nation reside in the Third Estate. However, while they have had the capability, the Third Estate has yet to be able to reap the rewards.

Chapter two of Sieyes’s pamphlet primarily aims to further de-legitimize the First and Second Estate by demonstrating that they have exerted complete control over France to the detriment of the Third Estate and even the King of France. Sieyes points out that much of the justification the aristocracy had for their rule stemmed from the Frankish conquest of the past, an argument that Sieyes does not find very convincing since one would only have to look at the “year before the conquest” to show that people were free of their rule (Sieyes 2003, 99). Sieyes is unimpressed by the genealogical arguments because the mixture of different people over time makes it hard to distinguish who is genuinely a part of the conquest and who is not. In addition, the Third Estate can take the power that could be granted to the conquerors (Sieyes 2003, 99). The history of the conquest as an argument for the rule of the nobility is found wanting. However, the nobility could appeal to the Estates-Generals or the Parlements, where all three estates came together over history to make decisions. Unfortunately for the nobles, Sieyes will offer no quarter there either.

For Sieyes, the history of the Estates-Generals is wanted for assorted reasons. One reason is that the representatives were either nobles or people chosen for a term rather than being

selected by the people (Sieyes 2003, 100). Even the members of the Third Estate have been chosen, only to abandon the interests of the Third Estate due to the privileges they received and would then work with the other two estates for their interest. Because of this problem, Sieyes acknowledges that even the Third Estate has previously had problems with privilege. To form the three estates into one Nation, it will be essential to remove privilege from their ranks (Sieyes 2003, 101). Because the Third Estate either had representatives they did not select or representatives that would collude with the other Estates, the “caste” of aristocracy has been able to possess a monopoly of the army, church, and magistracy (Sieyes 2003, 102). Worse still, the aristocracy could exert influence over the executive by controlling access to the King, ensuring an alienation of the Third Estate from the Monarchy (Sieyes 2003, 102). The lack of representation demonstrates that the political rights of the Third Estate, the supermajority of the people of France, are null (Sieyes 2003, 103). Therefore, it is up to the Third Estate to seize their rights and develop their national identity.

To address the egregious violations the Third Estate had to endure, Sieyes believes three demands must be implemented to rectify the problem. The first is that the representatives for the Third Estate are “chosen from citizens who truly belong in the Third Estate,” which means that the representatives cannot be derived from the “robe nobility” or those who were able to buy an office which conferred upon them aristocratic status (Sieyes 2003, 105-107). The second demand is that “the number of deputies is equal to those of the two privileged orders” (Sieyes 2003, 110). The final demand is that the Estates-Generals “vote by head and not by order,” meaning that votes are considered across the different Estates as opposed to each Estate counting as one vote (Sieyes 2003, 115-116). These are the demands of the Third Estate, though, for Sieyes, they need to be more. Though the other Estates are alarmed by the Third Estate’s demand, Sieyes argues

that the power and influence of the privileged class can still impact the different representatives of the Third Estate by offering them protection and benefit (Sieyes 2003, 104). With the offices still maintained by the privileged class, there would not be an effective way for the three estates to have their rights protected. In addition, more than the compromises offered by the other two Estates were needed to appease Sieyes.

The other Estates offered numerous compromises to placate the Third Estate. There have been offers of provincial assemblies, Notables, and Patriotic writers from other Estates offering their support for the Third Estate and a willingness to share a more significant load of the taxes (Sieyes 2003, 116-120). All of the measures had a mixture of goodwill and self-interest, but they would not advance the causes of the Third Estate in the long term. Sieyes was particularly suspicious of the other Estates offer to be taxed equally, suspecting that the other Estates would treat it as an olive branch that would placate the Third Estate and allow everything else to remain the same (Sieyes 2003, 120-121). Even if the three Estates are taxed equally, the other classes hold power and honor. It will still be likely that not only will the First and Second Estates be able to shirk their duties, but the Third Estate will also have to bear the burden of responsibility (Sieyes 2003, 122-123). Other attempts at compromise include attempts to have a constitution based on the English version. Montesquieu held England as an exemplar of a regime that offered liberty, so surely this could be a good substitute. Sieyes disagrees.

The first problem that Sieyes sees with imitating the English Constitution is that the privileges would remain the same even if there were one parliament. Instead, the First and Second Estate would send people to the House of Commons while ensuring that no one from the Third Estate would reside in the French equivalent of the House of Lords. It would create the same situation France had always had (Sieyes 2003, 128). In addition, Sieyes has considerable

doubts about certain elements. One is that the House of Lords is nothing more than a “gothic superstition” that survived through the chance and circumstances of the Glorious Revolution and would serve as a chamber to be weaponized by the privileged classes (Sieyes 2003, 131). In addition, the representation system needs to be revised, and dividing legislative powers between the House of Commons, House of Lords, and Kings is problematic since the people choose the King and the Lords should not be representatives. While the English Constitution is suitable as a "scaffolding or precautions against disorder," it is too antiquated for the good of the French Nation (Sieyes 2003, 131). Imitating the English will be as unsuccessful as accepting compromises by the First and Second Estate. Therefore, Sieyes proposes further changes for the good of France.

To allow the Estates to transform into a nation, Sieyes begins by offering a theoretical framework of “first principles” to show what a good political society should be like. The framework offers not only a complete re-orientation of how the French people should perceive themselves but also provides an opportunity for Sieyes to expound on his interpretation of the social contract that is similar and different from Rousseau’s. Sieyes imagines, like many other social contract theorists, that humans were a "more or less substantial number of isolated individuals seeking to unite" (Sieyes 2003, 134). The individual will predominate until a "second epoch" occurs in which a united will begins to form, meaning that the people wish to “give their union consistency” and focus on making power belong to the public. As Sieyes says: "Individual will still lie at the origin and still make up its essential underlying elements. But taken separately, their powers would be null. Power resides solely in the whole” (Sieyes 2003, 134). As time goes by, the sheer size of the community will expand, and to ensure that the goals of the community

are met, Sieyes argues that a common will must give way to a "representative will" where different members of the community are delegated to have control over government.

Contrary to Rousseau, it is crucial to describe Sieyes's analysis of representative government since it contradicts Rousseau's view of government.²² Sieyes acknowledges that while the people have the inalienable right to will, they can still "entrust the exercise of that right to somebody else," and the community does not provide full power to the representatives but only as much that is necessary "to maintain good order" (Sieyes 2003, 134-135). Two significant points that Sieyes wishes to stress concerning the representative will is that it is "no more than a portion of the great common national will" and those who are delegated the power will not treat the power as their own but as "a right exercised on other's behalf" (Sieyes 2003, 135). While the representative government may serve a nation well for its expansion, Sieyes knows that representatives can betray their trust or commit abuse. Sieyes believes a constitution must be fitted to the peculiar character of each Nation so that the dynamic between government and Nation flows evenly (Sieyes 2003, 135). However, Sieyes provides further nuance to his notion of representation by arguing that there are diverse types of representation.

Sieyes says there are two types of representatives. There are what he calls "*ordinary* representatives" who are "people entrusted with exercising, according to constitutional forms, that portion of the common will that is necessary for good social administration" and concern themselves with matters of government (Sieyes 2003, 139). Then there are "*extraordinary* representatives" who assemble "every time that great circumstances may require," and the representatives for such extraordinary circumstances may have "whatever powers it pleases the

²² Bronislaw Baczko links Sieyes's appreciation of representative government to Sieyes's appreciation for the division of labor's impact on society. Baczko, Bronislaw. "The social contract of the French: sieyès and Rousseau." *The Journal of Modern History* 60 (1988): S121.

Nation to give them” (Sieyes 2003, 139). Despite the vague elaboration of the amount of power extraordinary representatives may have, Sieyes insists that it does not need to be entrusted with a “plenitude of the national will,” and they are only to “deal with a single matter for a limited time” (Sieyes 2003, 139).

Despite this reassurance about the extraordinary representatives, Sieyes clarifies that they are to operate independently from “constitutional forms” because the ultimate point of the extraordinary representatives is to create a constitution for the Nation. Sieyes's defense of the Nation as a separate concept from the government is different from Rousseau's, as Rousseau believes that a nation develops over time with the government. Sieyes presupposes the existence of the Nation before the government, and because of this, Sieyes can justify a call for a dramatic constitutional change. The extraordinary representatives must come together to create a constitution that will allow the Third Estate to assume the place it rightfully deserves.²³

As Sieyes draws his pamphlet close, he makes it clear that the Third Estate cannot rely on the goodwill of the other Estates for the development of the Nation and their political rights. As Sieyes points out: “The time for working for conciliation between parties is over. What hope of agreement can there be between the energy of the oppressed and the fury of the oppressor?” (Sieyes 2003, 145). Sieyes only has two options available. On the one hand, it can see itself as one order and have the Third Estate form a National Assembly where they can make decisions without the other two Estates. The other two Estates will be allowed to exist still, but any corrupting influence they may have will be negated (Sieyes 2003, 152). The other option is to appeal to the Nation to deputize extraordinary representatives to come together and create a new

²³ The representation as laid out by Sieyes also differs from Rousseau in that Sieyes places greater emphasis on the judiciary as a balm towards France's woes. See Goldoni, Marco. "At the Origins of Constitutional Review: Sieyès' Constitutional Jury and the Taming of Constituent Power." *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* (2012): 211-234.

constitution for the people. Sieyes prefers the second option as it will “put an end to present dissension and prevent the possibility of trouble within the Nation” (Sieyes 2003, 152). However, there is a more practical matter to sort out upon invoking these extraordinary representatives. Namely, what is the best way to ensure that the representatives will not operate out of their self-interest but will instead cleave themselves to the standard will and the public interest? For this quandary, Sieyes focuses on the question of self-interest and how it can be used for the good of France.

For Sieyes, there are three types of interests "in the human heart": There is the ordinary interest, where citizens resemble each other; factional interest, where the individual allies themselves with a small number of likeminded people; and self-interest, where the individuals think solely of themselves (Sieyes 2003, 154). Self-interest is not a concern for Sieyes as each interest is isolated and would hardly be a threat. Instead, the greater calamity can emerge from the factional interest because a few can unite and work toward their ends. Sieyes insists on strict scrutiny about who becomes a legislature member (Sieyes 2003, 154). This discipline in who is selected will help

6.4. Constant contra Rousseau

Sieyes's push for a radical transformation of the *ancien regime* had elements of the structure of Rousseau's social contract, and the substance was primarily predicated on accomplishing a commercial society. Sieyes' critique of privilege and the *ancien regime* removed the ancient feudal order and established a commercial society that would usher in greater peace and prosperity for the Nation. Key points of concern in Sieyes's analysis are to ensure the political representation is more commercially minded and links the military orders to the past. The family needs to be brought up for conversation in much of Sieyes's political work, but

Sieyes' specific comments have clear political connotations towards the family. Much of Sieyes's discussion of privilege aims at the aristocracy and their justification for their abuses based on their family. The appeal to the family's lineage is not a valid move for Sieyes to justify privilege and authority in general. For the Third Estate to develop and grow, the interests of the few families must give way to the interests of the Nation. While critical of the power of certain families, Sieyes finds the whole of the Nation in the Third Estate, and with the increase of the political rights of the Third Estate comes the increase in the rights of the families for the super majority of the people in France. The Third Estate contains all the essential functions, including having children. While Sieyes offers a spirited defense of the people of France, there is the problem of Sieyes's plans for France unraveling over time.

While Sieyes laid out a call for change meant to be enabled, the French Revolution would spiral into different calamities in ways that Sieyes could not have predicted. After the death of King Louis XVI, France began a reign of terror led by the Jacobins, resulting in intense disturbances of the peace until Napoleon rose to power and quelled revolutionary fervor. Did the rise of Napoleon betray the Revolution, or was the commercial society found to be complete under Napoleon's rule? To investigate this question, it is essential to turn to Benjamin Constant, whose political writings not only aim for elements of Napoleon's rise to power but also provide an intense defense of commerce while criticizing Rousseau's assessment of the modern world²⁴.

Born on October 25th, 1767, in Switzerland, Constant's father was a colonel in the Swiss army. His mother died eight days after he was born (Constant 1988, 4). He met Madame de Staël, the daughter of Jacques Necker, appointed as the Kings Finance Minister in 1795, and they

²⁴ On a larger scale, Constant can be seen as an advocate for modern liberalism, which generally overlaps with what proponents of a commercial society wanted. See Stephen Holmes, *Benjamin Constant and the Making of Modern Liberalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

immediately became infatuated with each other and became lovers. She introduced him to thinkers in her salon and helped Constant as a journalist (Constant 1988, 9-10). When Napoleon rose to power as First Consul, Constant worked under his regime until exiled in 1802. He returned to France in 1814 when the first restoration occurred, and when Napoleon returned to power, Constant was willing to cooperate with Napoleon in drafting a new constitution. This cooperation would be the final straw for Stael, who would end their relationship and friendship (Constant 1988, 12-14). When the second restoration began, Constant could find a job within the new regime despite working with Napoleon.

Despite the willingness to work with Napoleon, Constant was more than willing to critique Napoleon. Constant was willing to criticize elements of the French Revolution and much of Rousseau's thought. To investigate Constant's political thought, two of Constant's writings will be examined in great depth. The first one will be *The Spirit of Conquest and Usurpation and Their Relation to European Civilization* (referred to as *The Spirit of Conquest*). Finally, he would go on in his career to deliver a speech that would make him famous and explain the framework for his thoughts on the French Revolution. That speech is "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with That of the Moderns." All of these works will serve as a defense of commercial society and show how, far from detrimental, Rousseau's critique reveals a dangerous thread in Rousseau's thought that can create something worse than commercial society.

In *The Spirit of Conquest*, Constant begins by examining the military attitudes of the past, finding more to appreciate about the past than Abbe Sieyes. At the same time, Sieyes has a more negative view of the military and is willing to reduce the importance of the martial class for the sake of commercial society. Constant, however, is more appreciative of the connection between virtue and martial prowess in the past. Constant insists that "It is not true that war is always an

evil. At certain stages in the history of humankind, war is simply in man's nature" (Constant 1988, 51). Like Smith, Constant is willing to acknowledge that war can serve to elevate human beings, offering them "greatness of soul, skill, sang-froid, scorn for death," and "crowns noble deeds with noble leisure" (Constant 1988, 51). Constant divides wars of self-defense and wars of conquest, noting that the wars of self-defense always invite virtuous tendencies.

In contrast, wars of expansion and conquest can have virtuous conduct linked to war, citing the knights during the Middle Ages as an example (Constant 1988, 52). However, what works in the past does not work in the modern day, and Constant asks if the "amalgam of virtues" can persist in the modern day (Constant 1988, 52). Constant broadly thinks this is not the case given the state of people in the 19th century.

Constant is adamant that historical periods created different virtues and conducts. In this century, and one would say the 21st century as well, people have transformed from ancient people into that people are a "great mass of human beings" and are "essentially homogenous in nature" (Constant 1988, 53). The mass of people is at an age where they have nothing to fear from "hordes that are still barbarous," and it is "uniform tendency is towards peace" (Constant 1988, 53). This stems from the emergence of "the age of commerce," and it must replace "the age of war." Constant explains how war and commerce are different means to the same end: acquiring something one desires (Constant 1988, 53). Constant summarizes commerce as "simply a tribute paid to the strength of the possessor by the aspirant for the possession" (Constant 1988, 53). In the commercial age, nations wish for repose and comfort, and they are prepared to be industrious and reduce their chances of going to war to prosper (Constant 1988, 53). It is not only the desires that have made people more willing to pursue commerce. Constant pointed out how technology had radically changed the perspective of war.

Technology had allowed for what Constant calls "The new way of fighting," one in which rifles, and artillery had advanced to such a point that military life has lost "what made it most attractive," and as a result: "There is no longer any struggle against danger: there is only fatality. Courage itself must be tinged with resignation or indifference" (Constant 1988, 55). Constant agrees with Adam Smith's observations that the technological advancement of weaponry had radically changed how warfare was meant to be conducted. The difference is that while Smith only suggests that these changes would affect whether a nation will have a standing army, Constant goes further in arguing for a real possibility that war may decline in general. Of course, on Constant's Day, plenty of wars occurred. Napoleon made sure of that. Constant published *The Spirit of Conquest* in 1813, with Napoleon in mind as a usurper and warmonger. How is Napoleon not a repudiation of Constant's age of commerce? Constant argues that Napoleon is the anomaly and not the norm and that the conquest mentality of people like Napoleon will die out over time.

Napoleon had the problem that would befall all those nations driven by conquest. An ability to engage in constant warfare and always emerge triumphant is a "privilege that cannot last" (Constant 1988, 79). At some point, the conqueror will begin to lose, and when that day emerges, there will be very few places the conqueror can turn. Constant describes the resistance to the conqueror in the following manner: "All will unite against him. Peace, independence, and justice will be the rallying cry...these words will have an almost magical power (Constant 1988, 80). For Constant, the Napoleonic Wars will serve as the "greatest offense that a government can today commit" to commercial nations all over Europe (Constant 1988, 81). These wars "destroy every social guarantee without compensation; it jeopardizes every form of liberty; injures every interest; it upsets every security" (Constant 1988, 81). Napoleon, like the conquerors of the past,

such as “Alexander or Attila” is described by Constant as a “leopard” creature who belong to “another climate, to another land, to another species from our own.” If the people had rejected them, it would usher in a more peaceful and civilized world (Constant 1988, 82-83). Of course, Constant recognizes that just because conquerors like Napoleon will soon be left behind as commerce progresses, this does not mean that a commercial society will be entirely accepted. Rousseau's shadow hangs over France during the French Revolution, and Constant aims at Rousseau and others who attempt to promote alternatives to a commercial society.

In Part II of *The Spirit of Conquest*, Constant argues that the commercial age reduced specific types of martial aspirations and curtailed a type of liberty that modern people are not meant to have (Constant 1988, 102). The liberty of old involved the “active participation of the collective power rather than the peaceful enjoyment of individual independence” (Constant 1988, 102). This type of liberty required citizens to sacrifice their enjoyment, a sacrifice that Constant finds “absurd” and “impossible to exact” on the people at large (Constant 1988, 102). On a certain level, this is a glib dismissal of the ability of people to want to sacrifice something for the larger collective good.

However, Constant does point out that the ancient type of liberty was established when people had a smaller population and could reside closer to each other geographically. In older times, Constant describes how people could come together for “the making of the laws, pronounced judgments, decided on war and peace” (Constant 1988, 102). To ensure their political power, people were willing to sacrifice their independence, creating equality that would “prevent the increases of fortunes, proscribe distinctions and are set in opposition to the influence of wealth, talents even virtue” (Constant 1988, 103). People were willing to pay this price

because they had an apparent involvement in political life, which made those sacrifices worth it. However, in a more modern age, such sacrifices come at too high a cost.

Constant finds the ancient liberty of the past unsuitable due to the expansive size of modern countries and the swelling population. People cannot come together and make decisions as in ancient forms of government. As a result, representation was required to be the primary mode of government (Constant 1988, 103-104). Constant readily acknowledges that there are trade-offs with the several types of liberties. Ancient liberty allowed citizens to be involved in politics and "reach the rank of rulers," which produced a pleasure that was "flattering and solid" (Constant 1988, 104). Modern liberty allows a person the liberty to choose who will represent them. However, Constant does point out that the "immediate pleasure" of representation is not as intense as ancient liberty and does not have any of the "enjoyment of power" (Constant 1988, 104). Instead, modern liberty offers the pleasure of reflection. In contrast, ancient liberty offers the pleasure of action, which more people are willing to sacrifice compared to modern liberty (Constant 1988, 104). Despite the muted level of pleasure that modern liberty offers, commerce has made the sacrifices of the past undesirable.

In the modern commercial age, there are multiple ways of finding happiness. Constant suggests that all one has to do to find happiness is to have "perfect independence in all that concerns their occupations, their undertakings, their sphere of activity, their fantasies" (Constant 1988, 104). The masses of people are excluded from power and will only take a passing interest in public life (Constant 1988, 104). The difference between ancient and modern liberty is so considerable for Constant that it impacts the interior life of people. Constant argues that modern people have lost their imagination for the price of knowledge, and the people of the commercial age are "incapable of lasting emotion." The ancients were filled with the "full youth of their

moral life” (Constant 1988, 104). People in a commercial society are afraid of "being fools, and above all, looking like fools." There is always this tendency to reflect on oneself and not engage in actions with the same enthusiasm as ancient people. Put another way, Constant says that the ancients “had complete conviction in all matters” while the modern person only has a "weak and fluctuating conviction about almost everything" (Constant 1988, 105). For these reasons, Constant denies the ability of a great legislator to emerge.

The Lycurgus’s and Numas of the world will have no place in the commercial age, and the likelihood of producing a group of Spartans is small because the liberty that commercial people love to pursue is always attached to their pursuit of pleasure (Constant 1988, 105). The dismissal of ancient legislators and republics of the past is an implicit dismissal of the political life admired by Rousseau. Constant would then proceed to attack Rousseau's political theory (or his conception of Rousseau’s political theory) as an attempt to produce a way of life that is no longer possible.

When assessing Rousseau, Constant is both critical and sympathetic. Constant says that he will one day examine “the theory of the most illustrious of those writers” and will attempt to show how the metaphysical underpinnings of Rousseau’s thought actually “supply weapons and pretexts to all kinds of tyranny, that of one man, that of several and that of all, to oppression either organized under legal forms or exercised through popular violence” (Constant 1988, 106). This harsh declaration against Rousseau may suggest complete opposition, but a footnote attached to the above comment shows that a distinct perspective of Rousseau emerges—he constantly wants to clarify that he is not looking to defame Rousseau as some petty detractor. Frankly, Constant takes to task the “crowd of servile spirits” who wish to “blacken” the glory of Rousseau merely because it has become convenient to do so (Constant 1988, 106). Constant is

quick to praise Rousseau, recognizing that Rousseau was the first one to “make a sense of our rights popular” and that his voice had awakened “generous hearts and independent minds” (Constant 1988, 106). However, while Constant does not attack the intentions or sincerity of Rousseau’s work, there is an ambiguity that Rousseau has that can make it easy for despotism to flourish.

One of the problems Constant has with Rousseau is how vague many of Rousseau's writings can be, comparing Rousseau’s writing to the scholastics of the 15th century, as the different discussions of liberty and virtue often need to be more evident in Rousseau's writings. (Constant 1988, 106). In addition, Constant compares Rousseau to Abbe de Mably, a thinker whose work Constant considers the “most complete code of despotism that one can imagine” (Constant 1988, 106). By lumping in Rousseau with Mably and his ilk, Constant can accuse Rousseau of mistaking "authority for liberty," though Constant vents his displeasure towards Mably. Constant castigates Mably, describing him in the following manner: “He detested individual liberty like a personal enemy; and whenever he came across a nation deprived of it, even if it had no political freedom, he could not help admiring it” (Constant 1988, 107). For Mably, Sparta would serve as an ideal of a free republic (much like it had for Rousseau), a thought that Constant finds abhorrent as it still resulted in the enslavement of the individual (Constant 1988, 108). Again, it must be stressed that Constant finds differences between Mably and Rousseau, but this distinction did not matter to the French Revolutionaries.

Constant describes how the leaders of the French Revolution treated “philosophy as a prejudice, and democracy as a fanaticism” and would find thinkers like Rousseau and Mably as helpful in enabling their desire to extend the power of law, a power which slides into a despotism, over all of France (Constant 1988, 108). Held under the sway of the “austerity” of

Mably, while not appreciating the “subtlety” of Rousseau, revolutionaries “attempted to subject the French to a multitude of despotic laws which grievously offended all that they held most dear (Constant 1988, 108). However, despite the attempt to compel people to obey the law, the revolutionaries could not succeed because they were unwilling or unable to submit to the laws they provided. They could not apply "austere liberty" to the people, and the people would rather have a tyrant take control of their lives (Constant 1988, 108). While Constant presents a negative account of the people associated with Rousseau’s type of philosophy and a critique of the opaqueness of Rousseau's exposition on the political right, it is worth asking whether Constant’s critique of Rousseau is justified. Furthermore, the defense of commerce, as presented by Constant, rebuffs Rousseau's critique of commercial society.

The secondary literature on the thought of Rousseau and Constant is not immense. Many articles use the following schema: Rousseau’s thoughts on politics are presented, Constant’s political critique of Rousseau is presented, and Rousseau is found wanting.²⁵ One of the more exciting investigations involving the dynamic between Rousseau and Constant comes from Michael E. Brint, professor of political science at California Lutheran University, in his article “Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Benjamin Constant: A Dialogue on Freedom and Tyranny.” Unlike other works on this topic, Brint allows Rousseau to "have his say in court" against accusations made by Constant and allows for an even-handed "discussion" between the two thinkers. Brint is aware that the dialogue between the two requires a certain degree of imagination. However, Brint

²⁵ See Yelubayev, Bainur, and Csaba Olay. "Benjamin Constant’s liberal objections to Rousseau in the name of modern liberty." *Balkan Journal of Philosophy* 15, no. 2 (2023): 101-106 and Kalyvas, Andreas, and Ira Katznelson. "We Are Modern Men": Benjamin Constant and the Discovery of an Immanent Liberalism." *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical & Democratic Theory* 6, no. 4 (1999).

does an excellent job of providing Rousseau with plausible responses to Constant's critique and providing sound justifications from Rousseau's corpus to substantiate the claims.

One of the first ways Brint defends Rousseau is by pointing out that the Constant conception of ancient liberty is connected to a political economy of war and slavery, a set of conditions that Rousseau does not have to agree with.²⁶ Just because slavery and political liberty were two features of the ancient world, it does not follow that political liberty required the existence of slavery. Brint acknowledges that Sparta is one of the examples that Rousseau provides for a place where political liberty could thrive. This example also has enslaved helots, thus justifying Constant's point. However, Brint also points out that the Swiss cantons were provided as an example by Rousseau to demonstrate a place where political liberty could exist without "without a rumor of war or slave" (Brint 1985, 331).²⁷ While Brint is correct to point to a modern country that Rousseau felt had modern liberty, the complication to Brint's analysis is that Rousseau does think that the Swiss became corrupted over time due to commerce. Their people had their fair share of warriors, as seen in Rousseau's project for Corsica. Despite the quibble about the martial prowess of the Swiss, Brint does an excellent job at providing responses for Rousseau that show why Constant's vision of commercial society is not as rosy as Constant believes. Before addressing this, Brint wants to provide Rousseau with space to explain how his political philosophy is not a legal code for despotism.

Brint highlights the contrasting perspectives on liberty that Rousseau and Constant have, showing that while Constant is intent on preserving the individual liberty of the people,

²⁶ See Brint, M. E. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Benjamin Constant: A Dialogue on Freedom and Tyranny." *The Review of Politics* 47, no. 3 (1985): 323-346.

²⁷ Brint 1985, 331.

Rousseau would suggest that active participation in political life would ensure that the government would not trample on their liberties.²⁸ Constant worries that while Rousseau would allow for legislative approval, the people would largely relinquish power to the government that could allow for individual rights to be usurped; Brint, however, does note that Rousseau does provide numerous defenses against government overreach, such as the Roman notion of the tribune, the comitia, and the inherent structure of government.²⁹ Of course, a well-armed citizenry can make government overreach unlikely, provided the responsibility of martial prowess is distributed equally.

In addition to the safeguards that Rousseau felt the Roman Republic had against tyrants that could emerge, like Napoleon, Constant was susceptible to another type of danger: social tyranny. Because people under Constant's ideal regime would focus on their liberty, they could not effectively form close ties to the community. They would become isolated strangers to one another.³⁰ While Constant argued that happiness could be achieved through individual pursuits, Brint astutely points to how Rousseau would think that such pursuits "exclude from the realm of freedom those human convictions centered on a public and collective life".³¹ If they become absorbed in their lives, they will abandon their duties as citizens and not identify themselves "with others, but in *separation* from others."³² Even Constant acknowledges that isolation can be a potential defect in a commercial society. However, he does not consider this isolation to extend

²⁸ Ibid, 336.

²⁹ Ibid, 337-338.

³⁰ Ibid, 338.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

to the creation of families or of the population.³³ However, this isolation towards others can negatively impact procreation as pursuing careers can impact family formation and having children.

Brint pushes the critique of Constant further by showing that Rousseau's position on institutions reveals that a life focused on individual liberty not only removes the connections between people but does not even allow the people to form their own identity without approval from the masses due to the effects of *amour propre*.³⁴ Because people will be drawn towards wealth as a demonstration of their superior status, not only will class tensions never indeed be quelled, but the necessary tasks of any political regime, that is, having soldiers and families will be assigned a lower status in a commercial society.³⁵ Constant would push back against this insinuation, suggesting that people are more capable of resisting their peers than Rousseau believes. Even if that is the case, Rousseau would have a more extensive critique of Constant and of Sieyes, which is their complicity in the rise of Napoleon.

The Reign of Terror resulted in thousands of people being killed; the Napoleonic Wars resulted in the deaths of millions. Not only is Rousseau not to blame for the abuses committed by the Jacobins, but even if he were, how could Sieyes and Constant feign that they had clean hands? Abbe Sieyes would go on to collaborate with Napoleon and have him installed as a consul, which would allow Napoleon to rise to Emperor (Sieyes 2003). Moreover, despite Constant's critiques against Napoleon, when Napoleon rose back to power in 1815, Constant was prepared to collaborate with his new government, extending Napoleon's reign and the bloodshed

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid, 340.

³⁵ Ibid, 340.

attached to it, an action for which other liberals denounced Constant.³⁶ So how can Constant, justifiable, complain about Rousseau when Constant lacks consistency? To appreciate Constant's rejoinder to these critiques, one must look to Constant famous speech.

At first glance, "The Liberty of the Ancients and the Moderns" may seem to be a rehash of Constant's points in *The Spirit of Conquest*. However, Constant does focus less on Napoleon and more on the tensions of the French Revolution in general. Like *The Spirit of Conquest*, Constant asserts that the two liberties had been confused, especially in the French Revolution, where Constant notes that France was "exhausted by useless experiments" where leaders such as the Jacobins and Napoleon "sought to force her to enjoy a good she did not want and denied her the good she did want," (Constant 1988, 309). Furthermore, what were these liberties? For liberties valued by "modern" times it was the right to the rule of law, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom to participate in some capacity in government (Constant 1988, 310-311). It was freedom predicated on the individual. For the ancients, liberty consisted of collective yet direct action, whether in waging war, making alliances, checking accounts, or bringing people to court and deciding their fate.

The critical aspect of ancient liberty was the "complete subjection of the individual to the authority of the community" and that the individual, while "sovereign in public affairs, was a slave in all private relations" (Constant 1988, 311-312). Even ancient regimes that boasted of their freedoms, such as Athens and Rome, had no fundamental conception of individual rights comparable to modern times (Constant 1988, 312). The problem with the Jacobins was that they pretended to operate in a time that had passed. They played as Roman orators and Athenian politicians, not recognizing or not caring that pursuing the good of the republic would crush

³⁶Ibid, 345.

people's rights. Napoleon is slightly different in that while he may not have a republic on his mind, war was always there. Moreover, for Constant, war was linked to the liberty of the ancients. Modern liberty depended on commerce.

While acknowledging that "war precedes commerce," war would eventually tire people and cause them to look for other ways to achieve what they want, hence commerce (Constant 1988, 313). War was more beneficial for older regimes because "a successful war increased both private and public wealth in slaves, tributes, and land" (Constant 1988, 314). With the nations that had more land, there was a decrease in political influence when compared to Athens. Furthermore, abolishing slavery has reduced the ability for leisure and requires people to engage in commerce, which keeps people busy and creates "individual independence" (Constant 1988, 314-315). Napoleon tried to draw the Nation's attention to war for Constant, not the activity that moderns wished to pursue. Because of the historical changes, "we can no longer enjoy the liberty of the ancients...our freedom must consist in peaceful enjoyment and private independence" (Constant 1988, 316). There is a clear historical element in Constant as he notes that the "spirit of the age" had prevented ancient liberty from truly being resuscitated. Despite the failure of the Revolution to bring back this ancient liberty, there was still something to be salvaged from the Revolution.

Constant does not entirely despair when contemplating the Revolution. He goes as far as to consider it a "happy revolution" because he concentrates on the result of the Revolution, which is the removal of the *ancien regime* and the establishment of a representative government (Constant 1988, 309). The comments emphasize a pragmatic element to Constant's thought as he is willing to work with different regimes if he gets the desired outcome. He works with Napoleon for the first time, allowing greater peace. He works with Napoleon again because he can get a

constitution that reflects his values. While someone like Rousseau would not collaborate with Napoleon, Constant was willing to collaborate with the restored Emperor to have a regime with tremendous respect for property, freedom, and the individual. Constant does caution, however, against a weakness of modern liberty. If we enjoy the private sphere too much, we could risk surrendering our "right to share in political power too easily" (Constant 1988, 326). Constant believed that while the time had passed for ancient liberty *by itself*, it was still essential to find ways to "combine them" to have a reasonable balance of independence and political participation (Constant 1988, 327). For these reasons, the attempt to critique Constant needs to be revised because the division of labor had critically altered the freedoms and responsibilities that Rousseau desired.

6.5. Conclusion

The attempts to link Rousseau to the French Revolution have been strained. While thinkers like Sieyes and Constant may have respected Rousseau, their ambitions did not align with Rousseau's ideals. Both Sieyes and Constant desired a regime to enhance and promote a commercial society. Despite the good intentions that Rousseau may have had, his worldview was associated with promoting a past that could not be made a reality. Any attempt to stall the push for commerce would fail. France was not the only country in an intense struggle about how commercial their republic should become. Both Sieyes and Constant are united in the beneficial effects commerce can have in quelling the martial spirits.

The birth of the French Republic was a watershed moment that led to devastating wars engulfing Europe for decades. Like the Romans, the French developed a strong nationalistic pride and exerted their influence over the continent, regardless of the consequences. Neither thinker squarely blamed Rousseau for the revolution or Napoleon. However, the push for a

republican government that mirrored the past unleashed a series of events that tarnished Rousseau's reputation. Once again, republics demonstrated a strong inclination to expand over time, contrary to Rousseau's wishes. The radical outcomes of Rousseau's dream were too extreme for the world to accept.

In addition, Sieyes and Constant showed that commerce would not degrade familial obligations. On the contrary, they could be protected, as every individual could be protected. While the soldier and the mother play essential roles in society, they were not the sole roles of these thinkers. Rousseau may express concern that these roles were of paramount political significance. Moreover, he may be right. Nevertheless, for Sieyes and Constant, if Rousseau's solution was even a fraction of what both thinkers went through, the price was not worth it. At least under a commercial society, the ferocious capacity of human beings could be subdued, commerce could replace conflict, and individuals could associate and cultivate their talents in any way they wish. To Sieyes and Constant, commercial society is hardly the Faustian bargain that Rousseau makes it out to be.

The next and concluding chapter will examine the American Revolution and focus on two of the greatest thinkers and politicians at the time, Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. I will show that the great clash of thought between these two thinkers reflects the struggle Rousseau had with proponents of a commercial society. On the one hand, there is Jefferson, a proponent of an agricultural lifestyle and citizen soldiers who emphasized communal and familial values. On the other is Hamilton, a decorated war veteran, who embraces a push for a commercial society as a defense against the surrounding empires and an opportunity for the enrichment of the American people, much like Rousseau, Jefferson's dream of a democratic agricultural republic would soon give way before the might of commerce. Of the two thinkers, it

will be shown that Hamilton's dreams for America have won out, much like commercial society has in our day.

Chapter Seven. Rousseau's Mirror Across the Ocean: Alexander Hamilton against Thomas Jefferson

7.1. The Fate of a Nation Debated

As the European continent had its great debate concerning the good of a commercial society across the Atlantic Ocean, the Thirteen Colonies, under the control of Great Britain, would begin its revolution in 1776. After several years of war, the colonists were able to defeat the British and eventually form their government and become Thirteen States. At the Constitutional conventions, arguments would rage over the type of republic and the many ways to ensure the government did not fall into the tyranny of the few or the many. Two thinkers would personify the debates that the Founding Fathers engaged in and would emerge to offer antithetical views of what society should be like and how the role that commerce would take in this new republic.

The first thinker that this chapter will look at is Alexander Hamilton. His achievements include playing a significant role in the Revolutionary War as Washington's aide de camp, ably defending the U.S. Constitution in his numerous *Federalist Papers* under the pseudonym of Publius, and eventually becoming the first Secretary of the Treasury. Hamilton offers a unique perspective to the debate on the nature of republicanism because he was a person focused on the problems of security and ensuring that the martial prowess of the United States was sufficient to handle threats both domestically and abroad while also deeply invested in ensuring that a commercial society would develop over time. While Hamilton attempted to shape the fledgling republic to align with his vision, another member of Washington's cabinet was intent on a different vision.

The writer of the Declaration of Independence, the first Secretary of State, and eventually the third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, was an adamant opponent of

Alexander Hamilton and proposed for much of his life a worldview that would have greater sympathy with Rousseau than with any significant proponents of commercial society.¹ Instead of an urbanized commercial society equipped with a standing army, as Hamilton's plan was, Jefferson promoted the yeoman farmer. This self-sufficient individual was a more significant part of an agricultural community predicated on community and virtue. Instead of a standing army, citizen soldiers and militias could be formed to ensure that any threats could be handled while maintaining the liberty needed for their self-sufficiency. Jefferson thought commercial life corrupted a person's character, though this chapter will investigate Jefferson's turn towards commerce.

This chapter will also examine Hamilton's and Jefferson's views of family life and the best way to ensure families can procreate and have families. Hamilton's views express the idea that a secure and prosperous country under the control of an executive government will allow the population to feel safe in bringing the next generation into the world. On the other hand, Jefferson will instead show how the concentration of power and increased commercialization impose tyrannical impositions and anxieties about the future. Hamilton sees America primarily as an empire that will be ready and able to thwart all aggressors and take its rightful place on the world stage. For this end, a populous regime will be necessary. In contrast, Jefferson saw the future of the young republic in the westward expansion into North America, allowing people to find land, plant crops, have children, and ensure that a self-sufficient and happy populace could

¹ While the comparison to Rousseau does not align perfectly other commentators have noted Jefferson's radically democratic perspective and his presentation of a worldview far removed from what proponents of what commercial society wanted. See Matthews, Richard K. "The radical political philosophy of Thomas Jefferson: An essay in retrieval." *Midwest studies in philosophy* 28, no. 1 (2004): 37-57 and Griswold, A. Whitney. "The agrarian democracy of Thomas Jefferson." *American Political Science Review* 40, no. 4 (1946): 657-681.

begin to form. In the end, while Jefferson may have strived for his vision for the New World, his surrender to commerce would pave the way for Hamilton's vision to take place in the long term.

7.2. Hamilton's Republic: An Energetic Republic and a Standing Army

To examine Hamilton's concerns about war, commerce, family, and population, it is essential to understand Hamilton's thoughts on republics in general. What did Hamilton think republics needed to flourish? What were the major problems of a republican government, and what could be done to address these concerns?² To address these questions, it is essential to understand Hamilton's dissatisfaction with the government formed before the ratification. Showing the different tensions that the new government had will show how Hamilton believed that a stronger focus on a unitary government was essential to deal with the problems, especially as they related to commercial activities.³ In a letter written to John Duane, a revolutionary leader and eventually a mayor of New York City, Hamilton bemoans the State of the government and what needs to be done to correct the different troubles plaguing the government.

The first problem that Hamilton critiques, which he will critique constantly throughout his career, is the lack of power in the general or national government. The Continental Congress did accomplish "many of the highest acts of sovereignty" as Congress declared war, raised an army for the colonies, and made alliances, all of which were essential for the republic" (Hamilton 2001, 71). The primary source of Hamilton's ire was the states, as Hamilton believed that each State did not always contribute their fair share for the good of the republic. As Hamilton argues: "The idea of uncontrollable sovereignty in each State, over its internal police,

² These questions will be assessed in this chapter, but other scholars have attempted to gauge Hamilton's political philosophy. See Flaumenhaft, Harvey. *The Effective Republic: Administration and Constitution in the Thought of Alexander Hamilton*. Duke University Press, 1992.; Walling, Karl-Friedrich. *Republican Empire: Alexander Hamilton on war and accessible government*. University Press of Kansas, 1999.

³ Hamilton's desires for a strong central government are corroborated in McCraw, Thomas K. "The strategic vision of Alexander Hamilton." *The American Scholar* 63, no. 1 (1994): 31-57.

will defeat the other powers given to Congress, and make our Union feeble and precarious (Hamilton 2001, 71). The sovereignty of the states was so great that they could influence the army itself, having various parts of the army attached to the interests of different states, a thought that was not only ludicrous for Hamilton but also dangerous. Hamilton insists that Congress must have complete control over the army, as the army is “the essential cement of the union” (Hamilton 2001, 71). The army needed to belong to one government, not thirteen. If the states were allowed to remain as powerful as they were throughout the American Revolution, Hamilton thought it would be too difficult for any national government to bend them to the "common interest," resulting in a situation where “the common sovereign will not have the power sufficient to unite different members together and direct the common forces to the interest and happiness of the whole,” (Hamilton 2001, 72).

Hamilton’s concerns about the republic extend to the past as well. He noted with clear disapproval that the "leagues among the old Grecian republics" were flawed in design and caused more harm than good as they were continuously at war with each other and were prone to not following through on their promises (Hamilton 2001, 72). Even modern-day republics, such as the Swiss cantons, do not impress Hamilton, as they are still susceptible to violence and only remain united due to their “weakness, to their poverty” and the fact that the cantons were too “equally matched to each other” so that none of them could develop a true advantage (Hamilton 2001, 72). The condition of the Swiss is not the condition the U.S. found itself in; in Hamilton's mind, one State would become more significant than the other and attempt to forge an empire. As Hamilton morbidly notes: “...we are so remote from other nations that we shall have all the leisure and opportunity we can wish to cut each other’s throats” (Hamilton 2001, 73). The failures of other republican governments are constant in Hamilton's thought, as it will be

referenced in *The Federalist*, No. 6 in greater length (Hamilton 2001, 178-180). The constant disparagement of other republics, the types of republics that Rousseau appreciated, makes it hard to ascertain what type of regime Hamilton truly desires.

In addition to too much power being placed in the states as opposed to the general government, the second defect in the government Hamilton draws attention to is the “want of method and energy” in government. This defect stems partly from the power of the states, but another component for Hamilton is “from prejudice and want of a proper executive (Hamilton 2001, 73). This is because Congress has held most of the power, so the ability to make decisions has slowed. While Hamilton acknowledges the powers that Congress should possess, Hamilton considers Congress as a “deliberative corps,” and it is impossible for Congress, which is “numerous as it is, constantly fluctuating,” to ever act with “sufficient decision” (Hamilton 2001, 74). In addition to the inability to make decisions efficiently and effectively, there is also a problem of knowledge as not all the members will know how the topic being discussed relates to other topics in the past, and members who do have the information are as prone to “mislead as enlighten” (Hamilton 2001, 74).

Congress attempted to alleviate these problems by creating boards to oversee different topics, but Hamilton still found this problematic as they were too slow and ineffective (Hamilton 2001, 74). Hamilton thinks that a “single man in each department of the administration would be greatly preferable” because it would offer “more knowledge, more activity, more responsibility and of course more zeal and attention” (Hamilton 2001, 74). The third and fourth defect of the state of government dealt with the army; as the army was constantly in flux, Congress could not resolve the problem, and Congress could not effectively provision the army (Hamilton 2001, 75). Hamilton's experience in the army made him painfully aware of Congress's inefficiency in

maintaining and supplying an army. Moreover, an army must win the revolution and ensure that the United States can handle any threats the country faces.

Having laid out all the major defects of the Congress, Hamilton provides a list of remedies that can resolve the problems. Hamilton's first proposal is that the power of Congress needs to increase, either by Congress "resuming and exercising the discretionary powers" that they were initially invested in for the good of states or by establishing a convention in which the states come together and form a "confederation" that grants Congress the power they so desperately need (Hamilton 2001, 76). Hamilton believes that Congress will view the first option as too radical to implement, so Hamilton thinks that holding a convention is the more likely and desirable option of the two (Hamilton 2001, 76-77). Once the confederation was formed, Congress should control everything except for "rights of property and life among individuals and raising money by internal taxes" (Hamilton 2001, 77). These decisions need to be made by the state legislature. However, everything else, especially tasks related to "war, peace, trade, finance, and the management of foreign affairs," should belong to Congress (Hamilton 2001, 77). Congress's finances could be sustained by various taxes and "duties on trade and the unlocated lands." Hamilton also suggests that the states must provide some money (Hamilton 2001, 78). With Congress enabled with greater sovereignty, Hamilton thought Congress could supply and train the army more easily.

Hamilton thought there would be significant benefits if Congress could better organize and provide for the armed forces. With the army attached to Congress, it would have "a solid basis of authority and consequence, for to me it is an axiom that in our constitution an army is essential to the American union" (Hamilton 2001, 80). Hamilton's statement reveals two critical components of his thought. The General Government of the United States can appeal to the

people and the consent of the governed as much as they want, but the army holds the republic together. Furthermore, if the army is meant to be the “cement” of the Union, then the army will need to be a permanent feature and not simply arise out of necessity. This is opposed to classical republican thinking about the dangers of a standing army. Hamilton would find little wrong with this idea, as he frequently critiques republics of the past and present. While Hamilton’s call for change would persist over the years, the Constitutional Convention would allow Hamilton to not only offer his new form of government but as it also became the case, to defend a government that was closer in line with his views by taking up a pseudonym and writing a majority of *The Federalist Papers*.

On June 18th, 1787, Alexander Hamilton proposed a form of government considered so radical that one has to ask how serious Hamilton was about the whole project. Under Hamilton's plan, there would be three branches of government: the legislature, composed of an assembly and a senate; a governor, who would represent the executive branch; and twelve judges, who would represent the "Supreme Judicial Authority" (Hamilton 2001, 149-150). Members of the Senate, the Judiciary, and the Governor would be elected and remain in power based on “good behavior” (Hamilton 2001, 149-150). The Governor would have veto power over all laws passed and complete control over who runs the Department of War, commerce, and foreign affairs (Hamilton 2001, 149). In addition to the intense increase of power in the general government, Hamilton’s plan would also severely reduce the power of the states, as any state laws contrary to the Constitution or the laws of the general government would be found void (Hamilton 2001, 150). Hamilton's plan would also have the governors of the States chosen by the general government, and these state governors would also have the power to veto state laws (Hamilton 2001, 150). This plan would have destroyed federalism and implemented what could only be described as an

elective aristocracy for life. Two critical questions require answering: was Hamilton serious about this proposal, and how could Hamilton justify this in any sense as a republican form of government?

There are reasons for thinking that Hamilton was serious about the proposal, even if Hamilton recognized on some level that it would not be able to pass through the convention.⁴ One reason to suggest that Hamilton was sincere was that his proposed plan would have removed the defects he found in government and implemented the remedies that Hamilton thought would be best for the nation. If Hamilton's plan had been ratified, it would have meant the states would be incapable of endangering the nation's common interests, and the general government would have the energy necessary to handle any problems with great speed and efficacy. It is also likely that his proposals will be considered severe, given the accounts of Hamilton's speech at the Constitutional Convention and Hamilton's writings in which he lays out the expectations and promises the Constitution could afford.

James Madison and Robert Yates wrote accounts of Hamilton's speech in the Constitutional Convention. Madison took note of Hamilton's insistence on the weakness of the Union if it continued to allow the individual states to maintain the power and prestige they had in the past and under the Articles of Confederation (Hamilton 2001,153). Hamilton compared the situation in which the United States found itself to the Amphycyonic Council and the German confederacy, two forms of political associations that empowered individual groups to the detriment of the whole (Hamilton 2001, 153). For this reason, Hamilton scorned the New Jersey plan, which would have allowed for equal representation of the states. This plan Hamilton

⁴ For further corroboration of Hamilton's elitist sympathies, see Koritansky, John C. "Alexander Hamilton's Philosophy of Government and Administration." *Publius* 9, no. 2 (1979): 99-122.

thought would be ridiculous since populous states like Virginia would oppose such a model (Hamilton 2001, 155).

Furthermore, Madison notes that Hamilton seemed to doubt that republican principles could govern the size of the country. However, Madison notes that Hamilton "was sensible at the same time that it would be unwise to propose one of any other form" (Hamilton 200, 156). In his private opinion, however, Hamilton was prepared to admit that he thought that the British Government "was the best in the world" and even the most enthusiastic proponents of republican government were sick of the "vices of democracy" (Hamilton 2001, 156). While praising the different elements of the British form of government, Hamilton insisted that the U.S. attempt to achieve such "stability and permanency, as republican principles will admit (Hamilton 2001, 156-157). Hamilton insists that his proposed form of government can still be considered as "Republican" if "all the Magistrates are appointed, and vacancies are filled, by the people, or a process of election originating with the people" (Hamilton 2001, 157). Madison does not describe his thoughts about Hamilton's views of republican principles. However, it must not have escaped his notice that Hamilton could justify people coming to power in the government from a smaller size of electors, provided that they "originated" with the people.⁵

Madison then proceeds to describe how Hamilton acknowledged that the plan went "beyond the ideas of most members" and did not offer his sketch of the government as a proposition but merely to provide "a correct view of his ideas" (Hamilton 2001, 158-159). From Madison's description of Hamilton's speech at the convention, it is clear that Hamilton doubted that members of the convention would accept his ideas. The fact remains that Hamilton was

⁵ Madison and Hamilton would but head over the years, despite both thinkers wanting a large commercial republic. For more on their conflicts with each other see Sheehan, Colleen A. "Madison v. Hamilton: The battle over republicanism and the role of public opinion." *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 3 (2004): 405-424.

serious about these ideas, and while he doubted the success of all his proposals that would come to fruition, Hamilton was clear about what his ideal form of government would look like.

Robert Yates's description of Hamilton's speech is written from the first-person perspective as if Hamilton were writing. While much of Yates's description of Hamilton's speech overlaps in general with Madison's observations, there are some aspects of Hamilton's speech where Yates provides more description of Hamilton's attitude. While recording Hamilton's complaints about other forms of republican government, Yates keenly notes Hamilton's anxiety about the situation the United States found itself in. When listing the different objectives that the United States needed to complete, Hamilton notes that the United States had two hostile powers bordering them (Canada and Spain) while securing the west would be a heady prospect given the numerous indigenous tribes that would have to be confronted in order to establish new frontiers and settlers (Hamilton 2001, 162). The New Jersey plan, the proposal to maintain the powers of the State, is unsuitable to Hamilton and would create more outstanding incidents of insecurity.

In addition to the security problem, Yates's description of Hamilton's praise of the British government offers more insight into the type of person Hamilton thought should be in charge. Hamilton describes how the British government can achieve both "public strength and individual security," and if the British type of government were established, it would be able to maintain itself (Hamilton 2001, 164). From this observation, Hamilton goes on to expound on how communities naturally create a distinction between the "few and the many," with the few being the "rich and well-born" while the many are "the mass of the people" (Hamilton 2001, 164). Hamilton is squarely on the side of the few against the many. While many are believed to be "the voice of God," Hamilton finds this comparison to be wrong since the people are "turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right" (Hamilton 2001, 164). Due to these deficiencies

found with the many, Hamilton argues for the well-to-do to have a "permanent share" in the government (Hamilton 2001, 164). The elitism of Hamilton's position would no doubt fall on unsympathetic ears. However, it further emphasizes Hamilton's overarching belief that the government should be in the smallest number of hands for the longest time possible, provided that they exhibit good behavior and are elected to their position in one way or another. Even if the government proposed in the Constitution does not offer everything that Hamilton wishes a government would have, there are still many good things that Hamilton would approve.

In a small writing entitled "Conjectures about the New Constitution," Hamilton believes that the convention will essentially approve the new Constitution because the "goodwill of the commercial interests throughout the states" will approve of a government that can ensure the "regulating protecting and extending the commerce of the union" as will "most men of property" (Hamilton 2001, 167). These comments provide further evidence of Hamilton's profound interest in the commercial life of the republic and ensuring that it could flourish. This ties in with Hamilton's concern about the sovereignty of the general government over the states since each State had different commercial practices and standards which hampered the common interests of the republic. With the new government, Hamilton suggested that the Union could protect the well-to-do's property, ensuring that the creditors would feel comfortable financing the nation as it recovered from the war (Hamilton 2001, 168). Despite the support from property owners, as well as the support of the immensely popular George Washington, Hamilton still foresees stiff resistance to the adoption of the Constitution.

Hamilton conjectures that if the Constitution is rejected, the discussion will "beget such struggles animosities and heats in the community that this circumstance conspiring with the *real necessity* of an essential change in our present situation will produce civil war" (Hamilton 2001,

169). Should this occur, Hamilton foresees the dismemberment of the Union and monarchies forming in certain parts of the United States. In contrast, republican confederations may form in other parts of the country (Hamilton 2001, 169). If, however, the Constitution is adopted, Hamilton thinks that Washington will be chosen, allowing for “a wise choice of men” to be selected and a good administration will be formed which will “conciliate the confidence and affection of the people and perhaps enable the government to more consistency than the proposed constitution seems to promise for so great a country,” (Hamilton 2001, 169). The power of the general government may then reach a point where it will be able to subdue the states and transform them into “an entire subordination, dividing the large states into smaller districts” (Hamilton 2001, 169). While none of these dire predictions happened, the predictions show how Hamilton believed high stakes were involved with establishing the new Constitution.

So far, it was evident that Hamilton had intense concerns about the martial prowess of the nation while also having clear doubts about the individual states having the power to provide the coordination and security needed for the new Union. Contempt for the many is apparent, and any conception of a republic in the classical sense. Given Hamilton's interests in security and commerce, Rousseau would find Hamilton an interesting opponent of his worldview. On the other hand, Rousseau would see Hamilton's scheme as nothing more than the operation of the commercial class attempting to impose its despotic "tranquility" and calling it liberty. Hamilton's retort to such accusations can be found in *The Federalist Papers*, where he defends the Constitution from its detractors and critiques the flaws with the classical notions of republicanism.

After Hamilton announces his plan to defend the Constitution in “The Federalist No. 1,” Hamilton spends a few articles critiquing past and present republics to show why calls to emulate

such republics would be detrimental to the new country. While Hamilton's critique of republics has already been noted, his analysis of the failures of republics is given greater depth in *The Federalist Papers*. In addition, Hamilton also looks at commercial republics of the past, like Carthage, to show how commerce and republicanism may not combine well at all. To begin his critique, Hamilton describes in "The Federalist No. 6" those who wish to have a confederacy of separate republics as those who have "must be far gone in utopian speculations" (Hamilton 2001, 176). To hope that numerous "independent unconnected sovereigns" could peacefully live together is considered by Hamilton to be unfathomably naïve, as it ignores the "uniform course of human events" as well as the "accumulated experience of the ages (Hamilton 2001, 176).

There are countless causes of war between nations, ranging from the desire for power to jealousy of the leaders to the private passions of individuals striving for supremacy (Hamilton 2001, 176-177). Hamilton proves his point by looking at historical examples, from Pericles destroying the Samians "in compliance with the resentments of a prostitute" to the intrigues of Cardinal Wolsey, which lead to conflict in much of Europe to show the countless ways independent countries can engage in discord and violence (Hamilton 2001, 177). The path to peace will not be formed by independent republics that can exist side by side. Hamilton also doubts the possibility of peace forming based on the coming of commercial republics.

Even though the account of history and experience demonstrates Hamilton's point, there are still those who say that republics are "pacific" and that "the spirit of commerce has a tendency to soften the manners of men," which implies that nations will not wish to go to war so they can avoid "ruinous contentions with each other" (Hamilton 2001, 178). While Hamilton does not name advocates for the commercial republic, Hamilton's comment about the "spirit of commerce" comes straight out of Montesquieu. Hamilton finds the hope that commercial

republics can produce peace dubious. Rhetorically, Hamilton questions whether “momentary passions and immediate interests” have had more control over human beings compared to “policy, utility or justice” (Hamilton 2001, 178-179). As Hamilton notes: “Is not the love of wealth as domineering and enterprising a passion as that of power and glory? Have there not been as many wars founded upon commercial motives...as were before occasioned by the cupidity of territory and dominion?” (Hamilton 2001, 179). The desire for wealth has been a significant cause of destruction for many nations, and republics are not immune to either going to war or engaging in wars under commercial means.

Hamilton justifies his point by turning to the ancient republics, describing how commercial republics like Athens and Carthage still had their fair share of wars of aggression, with Carthage engaging in aggressive wars through Hannibal, wars that led to their ruin (Hamilton 2001, 179).⁶ In more recent times, the Venetian republic, renowned for its commerce, often acted on its ambitions and was a “terror to the other Italian States.” The Provinces of Holland would engage in numerous conflicts against the British until they were overwhelmed financially (Hamilton 2001, 179-180). Hamilton describes how the commercial interests of different empires would instigate more conflict, as merchants would agitate for conflicts to achieve better trade arrangements and more profit (Hamilton 2001, 180-181). Due to many counts of war and conflict that have already emerged between commercial societies, Hamilton finds the idea that peace will be able to occur between the different states if left disconnected is only a fanciful notion.

⁶ In addition to their aggression, the martial spirit of these republics would incentivize slavery. See Chan, Michael D. “Alexander Hamilton on slavery.” *The Review of politics* 66, no. 2 (2004): 207-231. Hamilton believes in a formidable martial spirit, but commerce can make it more manageable for the general government and prevent the drive for “rapine and cruelty” that the Romans engaged in (Chan 2004, 227-229).

Hamilton continues his deprecation of confederacies of independent republics in *The Federalist*, No. 7, by looking at the situation the United States found itself in after the Revolution and showing how the different republics could find reason to engage in conflict with each other. One of the first causes of conflict that Hamilton elaborates on is the vast western territories that the United States now possessed. Under the Articles of Confederation, Pennsylvania and Connecticut had a dispute over the territory. Despite the courts siding with Pennsylvania, Connecticut "strongly indicated dissatisfaction with that determination" and only ceased pressing their claim until they were compensated some other way (Hamilton 2001, 184-185). Hamilton uses this incident as an example of how different states, especially the smaller ones, would quarrel with larger states and their territorial expansions, which could incentivize conflict.

Hamilton also lists commerce as a source of contention between different republics, as states would pursue "a system of commercial polity" that would set different states in opposition to each other, and the "spirit of enterprise" would not be adequately handled between different disconnected sovereignties (Hamilton 2001, 185-186). In addition to commerce in general, Hamilton astutely points toward the public debt as a significant source of conflict because different states will believe that other states are not paying their fair share and that the amount they need to contribute is too much (Hamilton 2001, 186-187). All of these reasons are enough for Hamilton to suggest that having the different states barely connected by a "league of offensive and defensive" will not hinder the different factional problems that could emerge over time, which could incentivize independent states to form foreign alliances or factional sects which would be detrimental to the whole of the Union (Hamilton 2001, 188). All of these problems may be true, and an objector may acquiesce, but how would the Constitution be able to handle a large republic? After all, a small republic is practically a tautology in classical

republican thought, and Rousseau also advocated for smaller republics so that communal life could be truly experienced. Nevertheless, Hamilton finds the detriments of small republics to be considerable.

The Federalist, No. 9, discusses the problem of small republics versus large republics. It deals with the problem of factions, though perhaps not as adroitly as Madison's more famous *The Federalist*, No. 10. In *The Federalist*, No. 9, Hamilton presents his contempt towards the republics of old in a profuse manner, declaring that it "is impossible to read the history of the petty republics of Greece and Italy, without feeling sensations of horror and disgust at the rapid distractions with which they were continually agitated" (Hamilton 2001, 196). The republics of old were consistently shifting and changing, engaging in frequent revolutions which put the republics "in a state of perpetual vibration, between the extremes of tyranny and anarchy" (Hamilton 2001, 196). Hamilton acknowledges the happy moments that would occur in the republics, describing them as "momentary rays of glory" that break out to "dazzle us with a transient and fleeting brilliancy" (Hamilton 2001, 196). However, amidst these fleeting moments of glory is a sea of "sedition and party-rage," causing one to lament the corruption of these governments and the talent they destroy (Hamilton 2001, 196). While "advocates of despotism" have used these failures of republics to justify their regimes, Hamilton does not wish to rule out republics wholesale.

Hamilton indeed looks down on republics, and though he does not buy into the arguments of despots, he does agree that the sketches of republics could lead one to think that republican projects are "indefensible" (Hamilton 2001, 196-197). Fortunately, Hamilton points out that, like most other sciences, the "science of politics" has dramatically improved (Hamilton 2001, 197). Due to the rapid expansion of knowledge occurring under the Enlightenment, the understanding

of politics has been enhanced to a greater extent, allowing for different mechanisms to help reduce problems relating to factions. Hamilton suggests that different principles such as “the introduction of legislative balances and checks-the institution of courts composed of judges...the representation of the people in the legislature by deputies of their election” are methods that were not discovered or employed in the past which are being used to progress politics towards an improved state (Hamilton 2001, 197). These techniques can be employed so that republics can maintain their strengths and lower their weaknesses. However, one other means of handling the deficiencies of a republic can also be employed.

Hamilton recognizes that objections have been made against the republic's size, as large republics are considered an oxymoron. Hamilton considers this “weakness” of a large republic a strength, though before explaining why, Hamilton wants to look closer at the proponents of a small republic. The opponents of the Constitution turned to the writings of great thinkers of the past to justify their opposition to a large republic. Montesquieu was used to justify smaller republics (Hamilton 2001, 197). Hamilton acknowledges Montesquieu as a “great man” but points out that his proponents have not considered his arguments so thoroughly.⁷ When Montesquieu referenced small republics, most states were too large and needed to be broken down. Hamilton lays out two options: “either of taking refuge at once in the arms of monarchy or of splitting ourselves into an infinity of little jealous, clashing tumultuous commonwealths (Hamilton 2001, 198). Some people were aware of this dilemma and were, in fact, in favor of cutting down the size of the states, an idea which Hamilton considered an “infatuated policy” as it would serve the ambitions of different individuals who would like to claim the new offices.

⁷ For further elaboration on Hamilton’s interactions with Montesquieu, see Stack, John. “Alexander Hamilton, Montesquieu, and the Humanity of the Modern Commercial Republic.” *Catholic Social Science Review* 5 (2000): 81-94.

However, it would never "promote the greatness or happiness of the people of America" (Hamilton 2001, 198). Hamilton cannot only refute the people who use Montesquieu's authority, but he also uses Montesquieu to justify the Constitution.

Hamilton uses Montesquieu's idea of a "confederate republic" as a form of government that can "withstand an external force" and "may support itself without any internal corruption" (Hamilton 2001, 199). The Constitution would fulfill the obligations of a confederate republic because it is an "assemblage of societies," and the states will not be destroyed in their power since the Senate will be elected by the legislatures of the State (Hamilton 2001, 200). Over time, of course, the Senate would be decided by the people in the State and not the legislature, demonstrating proof of Hamilton's belief that the Constitution would offer leeway over time to achieve the goals Hamilton wanted for the new republic. The sheer size of the republic would serve to coordinate against threats domestically and abroad, and the classical republican model will eventually be consigned to the past. Before going further into Hamilton's political thought, it is essential to contrast Hamilton's perspective against Rousseau's.

Rousseau would undoubtedly have numerous problems with Hamilton's worldview. Rousseau would quarrel with Hamilton's elitist position towards the masses and his derision of small republics. The tranquility and security that Hamilton pines for would better fit the defenders of despotism in Rousseau's mind. Republics of old could indeed be violent or bloody, but the connections that the people of those republics had, the bond that could develop in a small community, allowed for them a more satisfying communal life and to accomplish things that other forms of government could ever dream. In other words, for Rousseau, the brilliant rays of glory would be worth any gloomier elements that could emerge. In addition, the disturbances of the republic would often result from the drive for liberty to make the people remember their

rights and fight for them. Because Hamilton preferred the rich and the well-to-do, Hamilton's ideal government would inflame the amour propre to an intolerable level while allowing the government to have the force necessary to quash any resistance.

With that said, Hamilton was a realist about the political realities he was facing. Ideals were fine and well, but in the end, experience decides what will be actualized. Hamilton's realism also extends to commerce. While not emphasizing the corrupting or decadent elements of commerce like Rousseau, Hamilton's acknowledgment of commercial republics leading war highlights how sensitive Hamilton is to the reality that commerce can assuredly be a significant source of unhappiness. Despite the dangers of commercial life, it is also quite clear that Hamilton is one of the most able and adamant defenders of a commercial society. Hamilton provides copious descriptions of the good of commerce and the need for the general government to have a good grasp on the commercial activities of the nation, as well as the debt and manufacturing of a country. Assessing Hamilton's commercial thought will help reveal more about Hamilton's conception of commerce, the good it does for society, and the role it needs to play to advance the security and stability of the nation.

7.3. Hamilton's Republic: Defending Commerce and Manufacturing

While Hamilton's thoughts on commerce are spread out throughout his writings, there are two areas where Hamilton's thoughts on commerce are concentrated in great detail. The first area is *The Federalist Papers*, where Hamilton links the good of the nation to its commercial activities. The second area is Hamilton's numerous reports on commerce and manufacturing, especially his "Report on Manufacturers." In *The Federalist*, No. 11, Hamilton argues for the ways that the Union has significance commercially, as foreign powers are concerned about the "active commerce" that the Union could engage in and that would ruin the monopolies that

maritime powers have over parts of the world (Hamilton 2001, 202). If the United States could move away from being "addicted to agriculture" and transition to manufacturing, the differences this would make to trade, and navigation would eventually impact British hegemony over the seas (Hamilton 2001, 202-203). For Hamilton, "an active commerce, an extensive navigation, and a flourishing marine" could baffle rival nations and be a boon for the United States (Hamilton 2001, 205). If a disconnected union were pursued, there would be terrible results for the country.

With his typical rhetorical prowess, Hamilton paints a gloomy picture of the United States commercial activity if a robust general government had not been created. Hamilton says a weak union would lead to "passive commerce," resulting in a state where the "unequaled spirit of enterprise," which was familiar to Americans, "would be stifled and lost; and poverty and disgrace would overspread a country" (Hamilton 2001, 205). In addition to avoiding disgrace in foreign affairs, Hamilton points out that a more vital union could help the commercial ties between the states so that "the veins of commerce in every part will be replenished." Even if one State has a bad crop season or is undergoing commercial difficulties, other states can pitch in and help out the ailing State (Hamilton 2001, 207). Hamilton insists that the benefits of the states would only emerge through a strong union. Only in the "unity of government" can the "unity of commerce" be possible.

While Hamilton heaps praise on commerce's impact on foreign and domestic affairs, he wishes to drive the point home about how a commercial society is good. In "The Federalist No. 12," Hamilton discusses how the "prosperity of commerce" is acknowledged by the wisest of statesmen as "the most useful as well as the most productive source of national wealth" (Hamilton 2001, 209). Hamilton describes a progressive commerce account: "By multiplying the

means of gratification...it serves to vivify and invigorate the channels of industry, and to make them flow with greater activity and copiousness” (Hamilton 2001, 2090. Because of the increase in industry, the hardworking merchant, husbandman, mechanic, and manufacturer can now "look forward with eager expectation and growing alacrity to this pleasing reward for their toils” (Hamilton 2001, 209). Like Adam Smith, Hamilton sees that the increase in commerce, despite any drawbacks, is a boon to the average citizen. Whether rural or urban, it makes a slight difference to Hamilton as the increase in commerce benefits the farmer as much as the merchant (Hamilton 2001, 209). Increasing commercial activity in society will not only help people in the private sphere but also be an incalculable boon for the government in terms of revenue.

When comparing the United States to the "hereditary dominions of the Emperor of Germany," Hamilton points out that even though the emperor had a “great extent of fertile, cultivated and populous territory” as well as the “best gold and silver mines in Europe,” the financial situation of the emperor’s government was terrible (Hamilton 2001, 210). Hamilton describes how the emperor would have to beg other nations for “pecuniary succors” and could not engage in war due to the lack of commercial undertakings in the dominion, which would have been helpful for revenue streams (Hamilton 2001, 210). This is because Germany lacked a united union, which the United States could have if they had agreed to the Constitution. As Hamilton argues, should the revenue of a country falter, it will be transformed into a mere province that cannot keep up with foreign opponents (Hamilton 2001, 213). The lack of revenue equates to vulnerability. It implies a financial dependency on foreign actors or powers while also significantly reducing the ability of the State to engage in war in the long term. The martial spirit can be spread to every member of the political body, but it will not do any good against an army that is better equipped and has greater access to funds. Having fought in the Revolutionary War,

Hamilton was well acquainted with militiamen's desire to fight. However, the constant lack of funding nearly broke the back of the army and could have potentially resulted in the colonist's defeat. Hamilton knows deeply about the problems that emerge from a poorly funded army and is bent on preventing those problems in the future.

Arguments such as the ones found in *The Federalist Papers* were enough to quell the dissent that would emerge from famous Anti-federalists such as Brutus and The Federal Farmer and ensure that the Constitution was ratified. The concession of the Bill of Rights irked Hamilton, but overall, the structure that Hamilton broadly approved of had now been erected. With the emergence of the new form of government, George Washington would become the First President of the United States, with Alexander Hamilton serving as Washington's Secretary of the Treasury. As Secretary, one of Hamilton's duties was to provide various Reports to Congress concerning different economic concerns. From the problem of public debt to establishing a national bank, Hamilton would provide a detailed analysis of many problems plaguing the country. One of Hamilton's most important reports was the "Report on the Subject of Manufactures," known more commonly as the "Report on Manufactures." In this report, Hamilton argues not only for the good of commercial activity in general but also for the need to increase the industrial power of the United States. To make manufacturing play a pivotal role in the American Experiment, Hamilton had to justify increasing America's industrial might.

Having established the new Constitution, Hamilton shows how the domestic trade has intensified and the "expediency of encouraging manufactures in the United States" has reached a point where it can be "readily admitted" (Hamilton 2001, 647). However, despite the progress in commerce, there are still those whom Hamilton considers "respectable patrons of opinions" who oppose the pursuit of manufacturing (Hamilton 2001, 647). Hamilton's opponents argue that

agriculture is the "most beneficial and productive object of human industry." Given the vast and fertile lands that the United States has acquired, it is essential to cultivate the land into farms as it will contribute to the "population, strength and real riches of the country" (Hamilton 2001, 647-648). Instead of having the government promote the industry, which would be unwise as it could only be directed through "force or art," it is better to "leave the industry to itself" (Hamilton 2001, 648).

In addition to not forcing industry by government intervention, opponents of the industry also point out how pushing for the industry would be counterproductive since people will want to emigrate and people will wish for the independence of the farmer over the artisan, who is less accessible (Hamilton 2001, 648). Lastly, if the government decides to provide "forced expedients" such as heavy duties or prohibitions, then a monopoly could begin to form that would come to the expense of other members of society (Hamilton 2001, 648-649). Instead of forcing industry, it would be much more prudent to continue cultivating the land as farmers and rely on foreign trade until the time is right for industry to develop. There is much in this type of argument that would appeal to Rousseau. It prioritizes the agricultural lifestyle for population, strength, and the necessary things. It would allow people to become self-sufficient and oriented towards the community. Foreign trade could be a problem in the long term, but Rousseau would agree with the sentiments about focusing on farming over industry. Hamilton, on the other hand, is opposed to this position.

Hamilton begins his critique of the anti-manufacturing position by acknowledging the value of agriculture. Hamilton is more than willing to grant praise to the life of the farmer, considering farming the "immediate and chief source of subsistence to man" as well as offering "a state most favorable to the freedom and independence of the human mind, perhaps most

conducive to the multiplication of the human species" (Hamilton 2001, 649). Not only does farming keep people sustained, but it can also allow the population to flourish. Hamilton does not elaborate on why this is, but an inference can readily be made that when a group of people are fed and self-sufficient, it can make them comfortable to form families. Due to all of the good things that agriculture provides society, Hamilton considers farming to have "*a strong claim to pre-eminence over every other kind of industry*" (Hamilton 2001, 649). Once this final praise has been bestowed upon farming, Hamilton begins his campaign to offer support for other industries.

While the opponents of manufacturing are right to find value in farming, Hamilton suggests that their arguments contain dubious propositions, namely that farming is the only genuinely productive industry in society and that other types of industry will hinder instead of increasing the productivity of agriculture (Hamilton 2001, 649-650). Hamilton attacks the argument that the "artificers" or manufacturers do not add anything of value to the productivity of the economy, describing how manufacturers with their machines can improve not only the quality of farming but also help increase the output through "ingenious machinery" (Hamilton 2001, 651). The increase in the number of items created and sold can also increase the revenue and capital of a society, allowing for greater productivity overall and disproving the assertion that agriculture is the sole productive force in society (Hamilton 2001, 651-652). In addition to not being the sole productive power in a society, Hamilton also points to how industrial labor can enhance agriculture's productivity and make it more productive.

The opponents of manufacturing suggest that farming is more productive because nature and humans are "cooperating" together, and the productive power that humans and nature have combined is greater than that of humans by themselves (Hamilton 2001, 652). Hamilton disagrees with this proposition because the presumption that nature will always acquiesce to

human desires about farming is not correct. When it comes to working with nature, it is often the case that things do not occur as the farmer hopes. The productive output of farming is often “various and occasional, depending on seasons, liable to various and long intermissions (Hamilton 2001, 652). Simply put, farmers can have a bad harvest, and all the output can go to waste. With a manufacturer, however, there is greater ease with the labor they engage since they only have to work with items already at hand. Hamilton also says that those who primarily labor through manufacturing can be “more constant, more uniform and more ingenious” than those who engage in agriculture (Hamilton 2001, 653). Again, Hamilton recognizes that farming is the pre-eminent industry in productivity, but to suggest that it is a zero-sum game between farming and manufacturing is simply ludicrous to Hamilton.

Having established that manufacturing does not have to come at the expense of farming but can serve as a way to help farmers increase their output, Hamilton pushes forward his defense of manufacturing by arguing that “the establishment and diffusion of manufactures have the effect of rendering the total mass of useful and productive labor in a community, *greater than it would otherwise be*” (Hamilton 2001, 656). To justify this position, Hamilton turns to the division of labor and, much like Adam Smith, points out how it enhances the nation's productive capacities. Hamilton points to the simple reality that if the farmer had to do labor that did not include farming, such as creating clothing for use, it would necessarily detract from the time that could be used to farm, thereby justifying the “artificer” to manufacture clothing for the farmer (Hamilton 2001, 656-657). Due to the division of labor, the farmer and manufacturer can focus on their tasks and produce twice as many goods (food and manufactured goods) as if one had to try to work in both industries. Hamilton emphasizes that the manufacturer is not a parasite to farming or society, as the farming class will purchase what manufacturing produces to meet its

needs and expand its output. The increase in manufacturing will improve farms and provide numerous advantages to the nation.

In addition to the general benefit that the division of labor provides to the manufacturing industry, there is also a benefit in which people who are not engaged in farming or other industry types can find gainful employment. Hamilton describes the type of person who cannot find proper employment in the countryside for several reasons, such as “bypass of temper, habit, infirmity of body, or some other cause”(Hamilton 2001, 661). Hamilton also suggests that women and children, especially children, could be rendered more valuable with the establishment of manufacturing industries, noting that in the cotton manufacturing industry in Great Britain, up to 4/7 were women and children, and the more significant portion of that 4/7 population of workers were “children, and many of them of a very tender age” (Hamilton 2001, 662). Hamilton views this admission of the employment of women and children as a great boon. However, for someone like Rousseau, this could only be an attack on the family, the locus of sweet sentiments that people were able to form even before the creation of civil society.

From the modern perspective, something is discomfoting about letting children, especially at a "tender age," engage in work, especially in a field as fraught with danger as manufacturing. Women in the workforce is a welcome change, though the conditions of the 18th century would leave much to be desired regarding employment. There is a solid case to be made that Rousseau would oppose Hamilton's contented tone concerning the change in the working conditions of women and children. One problem would be the drudgery that would be enabled by allowing people to work for the manufacturing industry, serving as another example of the oppression that society can induce on its population. The more pressing problem for Rousseau would have been the manufacturing industry's negative impact on the cultivation of the family.

If the men, women, and children work, it is harder to have time to develop the social relationships needed for the family's development. In Hamilton's mind, the manufacturing industry can take members of the "masses" and put them to good work, ensuring that they would be helpful to both the industry they work for and the nation. Rousseau would insist that the price for the utilization of women and children is the inherent devaluation of the family. The sentiments produced through family are some of the best ones a person can experience, and Hamilton's disregard of the family for the sake utility and commerce would undoubtedly be frustrating to Rousseau. It would also highlight a dissonance occurring in promoters of the commercial. They would like it if the workforce could be expanded to everyone while maintaining an education system that could cultivate familial ties. In Hamilton's case, the rich and the well-to-do would be able to cultivate these dynamics while the rest of the people would go to work. Of course, the question someone like Rousseau would ask is that if the increasing manufacturing industry will increase the number of men and children in the workforce, how will families have time to raise their kids, much less have more of them?

Hamilton's answer to the question concerning population is found in the numerous people who will emigrate from their homelands to go to the United States. Hamilton considers that many Europeans engaged in manufacturing would move to the United States if they knew about the benefits that awaited them if they left for America (Hamilton 2001, 662). The benefits that Europeans would find if they headed to the United States would include lower prices for their "fabrics, or their labors" as well as "exemption from the chief part of the taxes burthens and restraints, which they endure in the old world, of greater personal independence and consequence," (Hamilton 2001, 662). These benefits, along with many others, will lead people to flock to the United States, where they can pursue their trade. Hamilton finds this potential

emigration an "important resource" because it will allow the population of the United States to grow while also allowing for the productive labor of the country to expand. The population will be able to be maintained more effectively by encouraging people to come to the United States.

Rousseau would disagree with this sentiment, as he did in *The Social Contract*. As Rousseau argued before, the best regimes are those that can ensure that the population arises without the need for migration. To be fair to Hamilton, an argument could be made that given how young the new republic was, it was inevitable that migration would occur. Even if that is the case for Rousseau, the increase in population should stem from people who have the liberty and security to tend to their interests while still being a part of a larger whole. The family will need help to develop correctly, or the obligations and responsibilities towards the political body will be hampered. If all the family has is work to focus on, it will suit their survival. However, it will make connections to the community harder to establish and maintain, even if Rousseau's complaint does not impact Hamilton. Even someone as pro-commercial as Adam Smith would recognize that the division of labor would negatively impact a child's personal qualities. This is why even Smith believed a certain level of education needed to be provided to the public and children to ensure that they could develop the necessary skills as workers and people. Despite the critique, Hamilton would be unlikely to be fazed by such critiques.

The increase of the manufacturing industry in the United States must be pursued to deal with threats from rival nations. By increasing the division of labor and allowing for emigration from other countries, Hamilton believed that the United States would be in a stronger position to handle any foes. The sentiments of the family may be sweet. However, in the face of an industrialized army, the bonds of the family will not permanently preserve the political Union's bond necessary for the country's defense. Moreover, of course, there are other benefits that

Hamilton implores his readers to consider. Introducing different industry types will allow people in the community to find a trade where they can thrive, something where their talent or “genius” can truly develop (Hamilton 2001, 663). The increase in manufacturing will also allow for the “spirit of enterprise” to take effect in the country, allowing more energy and exertion to occur in the country (Hamilton 2001, 663-664). Over time, the increase in commerce and manufacturing would replace concerns about the population or the family. At least, that would be the case if Hamilton had lived to push for his vision of the world.

Although Hamilton had been pushed out of political life as a result of the Reynolds affair, where Hamilton had an affair and paid the husband to be quiet, Hamilton’s life would end at the age of forty-seven in 1804 after being shot in a duel with Aaron Burr. Despite his death, Hamilton still resides in the collective memory of the United States as a promoter of security and prosperity. His able defense of the Union helped create a current political regime. His advocacy for commerce and manufacturing would soon be realized, though that road was fraught with struggle. However, as Hamilton's life ebbed away, his vision for America, for the energetic commercial society he longed for, would ebb in favor of another vision. That vision was promoted by a long-time opponent of Hamilton, who would often quarrel with him at every opportunity. Thomas Jefferson, a man with numerous accomplishments and controversies over the years, offered a vision of America that aligned with more classical notions of republicanism and was amenable to Rousseau's critique. Having explored Hamilton’s thoughts about maintaining the martial prowess and population of the nation, it is essential to turn to Thomas Jefferson to assess the ways that he and Hamilton would often disagree and, surprisingly, the areas where they would agree with one another.

7.4. Jefferson's Republic: Population

Like Hamilton, Jefferson's writing was vast and erudite, able to talk about assorted topics with great aplomb. Covering the significant works of Jefferson's thought will be no easy task. However, to ensure that the analysis is as thorough as possible, the analysis will work chronologically through his thoughts on the military and commerce. This will allow structure for this thought and for changes that begin in Jefferson's thought to be reflected. This will be important when assessing Jefferson's view of commerce as that critical perspective of commerce will have a marked shift over time. The documents examined in the latter half of this chapter will include Jefferson's numerous writings for his home state of Virginia and the "Report on Foreign Commerce." In addition to the substantial papers, this chapter will look at the numerous addresses Jefferson made as President of the United States and the correspondence Jefferson had with many people about topics concerning war, commerce, and population. The examination of Jefferson's work will show Jefferson's meticulous nature as he laid out the future he saw for the United States. In this future, people could be free from the "degenerative" effects of commerce and find a way to develop their character and their self-sufficiency.

The first significant writing of Jefferson's that will be examined is *Notes on the State of Virginia*, written in 1781 to answer queries of a "Foreigner of Distinction." Jefferson later published the work in 1787 (Jefferson 1984, 124). The "Notes on the State of Virginia" provides a detailed account of the State of Virginia, demonstrating Jefferson's profound love for his home state and his opinions on different topics such as the military, commerce, and population. Jefferson writes about the topic of the population in "Query VIII" of *Notes on the State of Virginia*. While writing about the population size in Virginia, Jefferson uses the Query as an opportunity to expound on his views of population. Jefferson acknowledges a push in the 1780s

“to produce a rapid population by as great importations of foreigners as possible” and attempts to show the problems that would begin to emerge. Jefferson, supposing that four and a half million people would be considered a “competent population for this state,” calculates that doubling the population through the “importation of foreigners” per year would result in that number being reached in the year 1835 while engaging in average reproductive rates without emigration would result in the four and a half million population to be reached in 1862, a twenty-seven-year difference (Jefferson 1984, 211). Why is this a problem for Jefferson?

For one thing, the population goal Jefferson sets, while arbitrary, is one where the ability to feed and clothe people without “material change in the quality of their diet” becomes strained due to the “inerrable land” that was in Virginia (Jefferson 1984, 211). Even if technological developments could overcome this problem, Jefferson still has concerns about letting the population rise too quickly.⁸ As Jefferson explains: “It is for the happiness of those united in society to harmonize as much as possible in matters which they must transact together” (Jefferson 1984, 211). As a result of this pursuit of happiness, Jefferson argues that civil government, “being the sole object of forming societies,” needs to be ruled by “common consent.” Given that each nation has a peculiar government, Jefferson finds it highly problematic to import people who have lived under “absolute monarchies” (Jefferson 1984, 211). They will bring with them “the principles of government that they imbibed from their youth” or, upon leaving their homeland, will exchange it for “unbounded licentiousness,” making the likelihood that they will achieve “temperate liberty” a miracle (Jefferson 1984, 211). While this was a big problem for Jefferson, another problem was transmitting the principles to their children.

⁸ See Smith, Daniel Scott. “Population and Political Ethics: Thomas Jefferson's Demography of Generations.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (1999): 591-612.

As the increase in the number of migrants continued, they would share in the legislative power. From there, Jefferson supposes that the migrants “would infuse into their spirit, warp, and bias its direction, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mess” (Jefferson 1984, 211). Due to the concerns as listed, Jefferson asks if it would not be safer to “wait with patience 27 years and three months longer for the attainment of any degree of population desired or expected? May not our government be more homogenous, more peaceable, more durable?” (Jefferson 1984, 212). To be clear, Jefferson is not opposed to wholesale migration. If immigrants come to America of their own accord, they should be offered citizenship. However, Jefferson does not consider it wise to offer “extraordinary encouragement” to make people come en mass (Jefferson 1984, 212). Jefferson also supports encouraging migrants who are “useful artificers” and that no expense should be spared in acquiring them (Jefferson 1984, 212). This is because they will teach Virginians something new, and when the time comes, they will turn to the “plow and the hoe” (Jefferson 1984, 212). The reason they turn to farming has yet to be explained. However, Jefferson seems confident that the agricultural life will offer happiness that a regular commercial life simply cannot. Jefferson acknowledges an indifference toward agriculture among the people of the United States. However, Jefferson does not suppose this is a problem with labor but a problem of land since it is so abundant that it is put to waste (Jefferson 1984, 212). In addition to the hope that valuable immigrants will voluntarily arrive in America and eventually become farmers, Jefferson ends the Query with a discussion on slavery.

The connection between Jefferson and slavery has been a consistent source of discussion in Jeffersonian scholarship. Jefferson famously had numerous enslaved people throughout his life and appeared to have had children with one of his slaves. It is fair to suggest that Jefferson is hypocritical in arguing for the happiness of the community while others live under the yoke of

slavery.⁹ However, Jefferson is an incisive, if not complicated, thinker. He is aware that the radical republican model that he is striving for requires the eventual removal of slavery. Towards the end of “Query VIII” discusses how the “blot” of slavery has been increasing at a faster rate than free whites (Jefferson 1984, 214). Jefferson recounts how the royal government had placed duties on the importation of enslaved people, which resulted in a prohibition until an “inconsiderate assembly” repealed the law (Jefferson 1984, 214). Under the republican government, Jefferson describes how a “perpetual prohibition” was implemented against the importation of slavery. This action, Jefferson believes, will “in some measure stop the increase of this great political and moral evil, while the minds of our citizens may be ripening for the complete emancipation of human nature” (Jefferson 1984, 214).

Despite the complicated position Jefferson had with slavery regarding his affairs, Jefferson was aware that slavery was a great evil that needed to be eradicated. The discussion of population undertaken by Jefferson offers a perspective for why Rousseau argues for the increase of population based on procreation as opposed to migration. The rapid influx of migrants can radically change political communities and impact political regimes' peaceable and durable nature. A political community that cultivates the particular principles they cherish can better maintain those principles with children already raised in the community rather than those who are not. Jefferson supports migration for those who genuinely wish to assimilate into the community and those who are helpful, but only so long as the political community is still the same with the consent of those who initially made the community.

⁹ For Hamilton's perspective on slavery, see Chan, Michael D. "Alexander Hamilton on slavery." *The Review of politics* 66, no. 2 (2004): 207-231. Chan acknowledges that Hamilton was not an abolitionist, but his convictions against slavery are clearly based on enlightenment principles and Hamilton supported groups opposed to slavery throughout his life (Chan 2004, 222-225).

When opposed to Hamilton, as Jefferson often was, Jefferson looked at the general happiness of the political community that would come with migration. At the same time, Hamilton was focused on the general security of the nation and the sheer economic utility that migration would provide. Both Jefferson and Hamilton respect the need for farming and other industries. However, Jefferson sees the ultimate future of Americans as residing in farming, while Hamilton sees America's future in the commerce and military might of the new Union. Unlike Hamilton, who supported commerce for the army and any purpose, Jefferson's approach to commerce and manufacturing was more nuanced.

7.5. Jefferson's Republic: Commerce and Manufacturing

In "Query XIX" of *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson discusses his views on manufacturing during the Revolutionary War. In 1781, Virginia's interior trade was of no real significance, and the war hampered the external trade (Jefferson 1984, 290). Virginia focused primarily on agriculture and was prepared to produce raw materials, such as cotton, to trade them for foreign manufactures, a tendency that Jefferson believes people in Virginia would return to, though whether or not it is "wise or unwise" Jefferson does not outright declare (Jefferson 1984, 290). Jefferson acknowledges that many political economists in Europe had encouraged manufacturing. However, Jefferson thinks Americans attempt to transfer this principle without "calculating the difference of circumstance which should often produce a difference of result" (Jefferson 1984, 290). The difference between Europe and America in the late 18th century is a problem of space. The European powers had no more land to cultivate, and the population needed was growing. As a result, manufacturing had to be employed to support "the surplus of people" (Jefferson 1984, 290). In America, the situation is entirely different.

Due to the general abundance of land, Jefferson argues that instead of focusing on manufacturing, there needs to be a shift towards courting the "husbandman" and stop attempting to divide the population between farming and manufacturing (Jefferson 1984, 290). The esteem that Jefferson has for the farmer over other types of workers is immense.¹⁰ In praise of the farmer, Jefferson declares: "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God if he ever had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue" (Jefferson 1984, 290). This effusive praise from Jefferson stems from Jefferson's belief that farmers have the "sacred fire" and that farmers are a bulwark against corruption, declaring that there has been no corruption of morals in the "mass of cultivators" (Jefferson 1984, 290). Farmers are self-sufficient and depend only on "heaven" and on their "own soil and industry," unlike workers in any other profession, who must depend on the "casualties and caprice of the customers" (Jefferson 1984, 290). The dependency that Jefferson discusses is reminiscent of Rousseau's assessment of *amour propre* as the dependency that other types of workers "begets subservience and venality, suffocating the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition" (Jefferson 1984, 290-291). The farmer has to only appeal to the soil and its strength. Others must find themselves in an involuntary web of sociality, which will worsen their character and their happiness.

Jefferson continues his negative stance against manufacturing and other forms of commerce by noting that the "natural progress and consequence of the arts" can serve as a "barometer" of the amount of corruption in a regime by comparing the number of people who are "husbandmen" to the number of those who are not (Jefferson 1984, 291). This is another

⁷ On a personal level, Jefferson expressed his love for agriculture in various ways. Griswold describes how Jefferson promoted new techniques for farming and provided a curriculum on farming for the University of Virginia that "foreshadowed our whole national system of agricultural education" (Griswold 1946, 662).

similarity Jefferson has to Rousseau, as a similar sentiment on the arts could easily be found in Rousseau's *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*. To prevent the corruption that would emerge with the arts, Jefferson wanted to ensure that the citizens of Virginia were not "occupied at a workbench or twirling a distaff." At the same time, plenty of land was still available to the people (Jefferson 1984, 291). Jefferson acknowledges that there are helpful practices that would enhance agriculture, which is why professions such as "carpenters, masons, and smiths want husbandry" and should be encouraged in Virginia. At the same time, all the other types of art should be left in the workbenches of Europe (Jefferson 1984, 291). Jefferson is aware of the problems of relying on foreign manufacturing. However, manufacturing and commerce on a larger scale will provide a cure worse than the disease of foreign manufacturing.

As Jefferson points out, "The loss by transporting commodities across the Atlantic will be in the happiness and permanence of government" (Jefferson 1984, 291). Again, the happiness of the regime takes priority over any potential security that commerce could offer. If the route pursued by Jefferson had resulted in fewer large cities forming, Jefferson would not have found this problem very compelling. On the contrary, Jefferson argues that the "mobs of great cities" are as helpful to the government as "sores do to the strength of the human body" (Jefferson 1984, 291). Jefferson did not find the regime praiseworthy if it constructed large cities and vast commercial networks that provided abundant external goods. The political regime can cultivate an internal disposition that is happy, free, and worthy of approval.¹¹ As Jefferson eloquently framed it: "It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigor. A degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution."

¹¹ As Matthews argues: "As the one legitimate civic humanist among the founders, Jefferson believed politics was a noble activity that all should engage in as part of living a fully human life...Rather than an evil necessity, a defensive activity needed by a propertied few to protect themselves, Jefferson found politics to be an ennobling activity in which all had a right and duty to participate (Matthew 2004, 54).

(Jefferson 1984, 291). The ability to sustain the people's character will ensure that the regime's laws will be held high against any corrupting effects of manufacturing and commerce.

While Jefferson may have made his case for a more agrarian lifestyle, a lifestyle that Rousseau would find agreeable, Hamilton would undoubtedly be exasperated by the fixation on agriculture. Undoubtedly, Hamilton would point out that even the soil will only sometimes work as a farmer intended. Moreover, even if a farmer is self-sufficient because Virginia depends on foreign manufacturers, this self-sufficiency is canceled out eventually. Jefferson, in response, could argue that while the farmer will always have a degree of dependency on the soil, the times when crops fail are often sporadic, which means the unhappiness that comes with it is also sporadic. Dependence on others is a persistent source of powerlessness and unhappiness that other professions must deal with as they require them for their livelihood. Because of the constant dependence that other professions have, the greater the amount of happiness that citizens will have. From Jefferson's perspective, there is a greater insecurity risk due to the constant flow of commerce and people. This is because the different people coming into the country will have different perspectives of the common good, making it harder for consent to be reached by the government. In addition, the lack of reverence for the laws and Constitution will make the stability of the political government more tenuous since arguments will persist about what the laws should be for and who should benefit the most from them.

Aside from his critique of manufacturing, Jefferson demonstrated his resistance to the encroaching significance of commercial society in various other ways. In a writing entitled "Opinion on the Constitutionality of a National Bank," Jefferson lays out distinct reasons why he opposed establishing a national bank (Hamilton was also fond of promoting a national bank, demonstrating the riff between the two thinkers). One of Hamilton's attempted justifications for a

national bank is that Congress could "make all laws necessary and proper for carrying into execution the enumerated powers," a claim that Jefferson found objectionable because a national bank is not essential for the maintenance of the Republic and is therefore not "authorized by that phrase" (Jefferson 1984, 418).

Proponents of the bank argued that it would provide greater convenience for taxation if a national bank were implemented. Jefferson finds this argument lacking since arguing for things based on convenience can lead to the aggressive expansion of state power (Jefferson 1984, 419). Jefferson asks rhetorically if it would be suitable for the sake of convenience to break down the numerous laws in the states against "the laws of Alienage, the rules of descent, the acts of distribution, the laws of escheat and forfeiture, the laws of monopoly?" (Jefferson 1984, 420). The varieties of rules and responsibilities granted to the different states depend on a willingness to strictly adhere to what the Constitution says. As a strict constitutionalist, Jefferson was intent on preserving the power of the states from the general government and expanding the commercial society. However, while Jefferson is prepared to limit the commercial activities of the general government domestically concerning foreign policy, Jefferson is more supportive of America's merchants abroad.

In his "Report on Foreign Commerce," Jefferson provided reports about the state of foreign commerce between the United States and other nations as Secretary of State. When attempting to address the question of how to handle nations who place restrictions on the exports of the United States, Jefferson suggests there are two routes forward, which is by "friendly arrangements with several nations with whom these restrictions exist" or by "the separate act of our legislature for the countervailing effects" (Jefferson 1984, 443). Jefferson prefers the friendlier option, envisioning an arrangement between nations where commerce could be free

from "piles of regulating laws, duties and prohibitions" and people could freely exchange with one another (Jefferson 1984, 443). If this could be achieved, Jefferson believes a situation would emerge similar to Adam Smith's vision, where "the greatest mass possible would then be produced of those things which contribute to human life and happiness" (Jefferson 1984, 483). Not only would people's general happiness improve, but the population "would be increased and their condition improved," again sharing expectations about the effects of commerce on the population like other commercial thinkers have developed.

If, on the other hand, nations wish to reject this and continue to maintain restrictions against the United States, then Jefferson is more than prepared to fight fire with fire. To protect "our citizens, their commerce and navigation," Jefferson was willing to prohibit and impose duties on other countries (Jefferson 1984, 444). In addition to this willingness to counter-prohibit other countries' sales, Jefferson argues that a militant stance towards rights while on the ocean should be maintained against countries that "grasp at undue shares" and "seize on the means of the United States" (Jefferson 1984, 445). This is because Jefferson views the ocean as "the common property of all" and "every person and vessel should be free to take employment whenever it could be found" (Jefferson 1984, 444-445). When Jefferson authored this Report, Great Britain was the only nation with any substantial naval power that could exert dominion over the Atlantic Ocean. Due to their prohibitive practices against the United States, there had already been a loss of "eight and nine hundred vessels of nearly 40,000 tons of burden" as well as a "proportional loss of seamen, shipwrights, and shipbuilding (Jefferson 1984, 447). Hamilton would see this as an attempt to alienate Great Britain from the United States, which would impact the nation's access to credit and economic recovery from the war. For Jefferson, the

problem was not of pragmatically enduring hardship for some greater good but the problem of violating principles.

While Jefferson was willing to be pragmatic on some points, certain basic principles could not be brokered. Suppose the United States is seen as a country that is prepared to work with nations that are liberal and just in their foreign exchanges and countries that place prohibitions and duties on the United States. In that case, eventually, there will reach a point where "liberality and justice will be converted by all into duties and prohibitions" (Jefferson 1984, 447). Jefferson believes it is a mistake to rely on the moderation and goodwill of other nations, but instead pushes for "our means of independence, and the firm will use them" (Jefferson 1984, 447). This does not mean that Jefferson wished to needlessly antagonize countries, especially countries that were as strong or stronger than the United States. Jefferson insisted on cultivating friendly arrangements with other nations and that the United States should carry "all the liberality and spirit of accommodation which the nature of the case will admit" (Jefferson 1984, 448). France had already proposed friendly terms to the United States, and a proposal had been submitted to Great Britain for friendly terms (Jefferson 1984, 448). While Jefferson was willing to be firm against those who may thwart the United States' interests, there was no desire to align with one nation against another out of a strategic mindset. For Jefferson, open seas and exchange will provide the best options for countries' continued population increase and happiness.¹² Still, despite the hope for improvements in foreign commerce, Jefferson's ultimate goal was to be found in North America.

¹² For more information on Jefferson's thoughts on commerce prior to his presidency see Peterson, Merrill D. "Thomas Jefferson and Commercial Policy, 1783-1793." *The William and Mary Quarterly: A Magazine of Early American History* (1965): 584-610.

7.6. Jefferson's Republic: A Westward Nation

After serving as Washington's Secretary of State and John Adams's Vice President, Jefferson became the President of the United States in 1800. A veritable revolution emerged with Jefferson's ascent, as one of the significant focuses of Jefferson's presidency would be to see one of the most significant expansions in the history of the United States through one of the most significant land purchases in human history. On February 27th, 1803, Jefferson wrote the Governor of the Indiana Territory and future President, William H. Harrison, about the need to expand the borders of the United States. Given the potential for Louisiana to be occupied by “powerful and enterprising people” as well as the need to expand and incorporate the Native American tribes into greater assimilation with the United States, Jefferson was adamant that “we bend our whole views to the purchase and settlement of the country on the Mississippi, from its mouth to its northern region” (Jefferson 1984, 1119). The desire to expand the continental presence of the United States was clearly in President Jefferson's mind, a goal that would have been more pronounced if Congress had approved the Louisiana Purchase.

On August 12th, 1803, Jefferson discussed the Louisiana Purchase with John C Breckinridge, the Senator for Kentucky at the time, noting how the United States was able to purchase the vast territories that belonged to France, as well as the territory of Florida, which would be acquired from the Spanish (Jefferson 1984, 1137-1138). The opportunity to remove potential threats to the borders of the United States was an opportunity that Jefferson did not wish to give up. In addition, Jefferson saw the opportunity to expand into the West as a good opportunity for the Native Americans and the United States.

There is a clear paternalistic viewpoint on Jefferson's end concerning Native Americans and any potential states that are formed once the additional territory is developed, declaring:

“The future inhabitants of the Atlantic and Mississippi States will be our sons. We leave them in distinct but bordering establishments. We think we see their happiness in their union, and we wish it” (Jefferson 1984: 1138).¹³ For the time, Jefferson thought it would be sufficient for citizens in the United States to multiply east of the Mississippi River. Once that side is full, Jefferson foresees the formation of more states “from the head to the mouth, and so, range after range, advancing compactly as we multiply” (Jefferson 1984, 1138). The expansion of the United States geographically, not just commercially, is considered by Jefferson to be vital for the continued stability of the Republic, an assessment that even Hamilton would agree with.

Jefferson and Hamilton would engage in fierce disagreements about whether other confederacies could be produced next to the United States and whether that would become a source of war in the long term. Obviously, for Hamilton, this would be a strategic problem since any other confederacies could form alliances with foreign powers and represent a threat to American security in general. Jefferson is much more blasé on this concern. In an 1803 letter to Dr. Joseph Priestly, Jefferson writes about the opportunity that had emerged for the United States thanks to the Louisiana Purchase. Jefferson recounts to Priestly how he saw “that Louisiana was indeed a speck in our horizon which was to burst into a tornado” (Jefferson 1984, 1142). According to Jefferson, the situation over Louisiana was on the verge of erupting into “catastrophe,” which was only avoided thanks to “frank and friendly cause and effects” and the “good sense enough of Bonaparte” (Jefferson 1984, 1142). Jefferson found the purchase of the territory be a source of grand celebration, seeing the purchase as an opportunity “for extending a government so free and economical as ours, as a great achievement to the mass of happiness that

¹³ See Onuf, Peter S. ““We shall all be Americans”: Thomas Jefferson and the Indians.” *The Indiana Magazine of History* (1999): 103-141.

ensue" (Jefferson 1984, 1142). The vast purchase would allow people to spread out comfortably and acquire land. They could farm, have a family, and enjoy the liberty of the Republic.¹⁴ As mentioned, Jefferson acknowledges the possibility of different confederacies taking shape but is not concerned about this problem.

Jefferson is indifferent to whether the United States remains in "one confederacy or form into Atlantic or Mississippi confederacies" as it would have no significant impact on the "happiness of other part" (Jefferson 1984, 1142). To Jefferson, the "western confederacy" will be like "our children and descendants," and Jefferson feels an identification with that future confederacy as he feels with the United States" (Jefferson 1984, 1142). Jefferson is open to foreseeing the United States separating "some future day." However, Jefferson still saw it as his duty to promote the western part of the continent as much as the eastern part (Jefferson 1984, 1142). The point of expansion is not about security alone but about providing conditions where people can achieve a level of happiness that was impossible in the old European world. A split may cause problems, but Jefferson thinks that the confederacies could have a kindred relationship, and so long as both sides were able to achieve their happiness, then so much the better.

Acquiring Louisiana had more significance for Jefferson than just increasing the happiness of humanity. Towards the end of his letter, Jefferson asks if Priestly has read "the new work of Malthus on population?" declaring that the work is "one of the ablest I have ever seen (Jefferson 1984, 1143). Jefferson goes on to declare that Malthus addresses several topics on

¹⁴ The significance of the Louisiana Purchase is well known, but the clash of principles Jefferson felt when contemplating the purchase are important as well. See Balleck, Barry J. "When the ends justify the means: Thomas Jefferson and the Louisiana purchase." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (1992): 679-696. Balleck makes the point that even though Jefferson was a strict constitutionalist, he was prepared to make the purchase so that the republican ideal Jefferson had in mind could thrive (Balleck 1992, 692-695).

political economy and population with "a masterly hand" (Jefferson 1984, 1143). On February 1st, 1804, Jefferson wrote to the famous French Economist Jean Baptiste Say, comparing his work to Malthus's. Jefferson praises Malthus in this letter as well, calling his works on population "a work of sound logic" and also praises Malthus for having "ably examined" the works of Adam Smith and other political economists (Jefferson 1984, 1143). Jefferson's interest in Malthus stems from how Malthus's logic concerning population growth has impacted Europe and how it could potentially impact the United States.¹⁵ As Jefferson understands Malthus, the situation in Europe has reached a point where "the quantity of food is fixed, or increasing in a slow arithmetical ratio," which has resulted in an increase in "supernumerary births" and an increase in mortalities in Europe (Jefferson 1984, 1143-1144). The United States has a dissimilar experience, and with the acquisition of Louisiana, it has better opportunities than Europe.

Jefferson succinctly describes the United States' unique situation about their "uncultivated land," arguing for the following: "Here the immense extent of uncultivated and fertile lands enables everyone who will labor to marry young, and to raise a family of any size. Our food may increase geometrically with our laborers, and our births, however, multiplied, become effective" (Jefferson 1984, 1144). This passage from the letter has been quoted in full because it shows how Jefferson sees the opportunity that the expansion of the United States offers the population. It will allow people to find land, set up farms, and have kids. The increase in familial life is an ingredient in the happiness Jefferson diligently discusses.

Moreover, Jefferson once again argues against increasing manufacturing in the United States.

Instead, Jefferson would prefer the citizens of the United States be employed in agriculture, as

¹⁵ See McCoy, Drew R. "Jefferson and Madison on Malthus: population growth in Jeffersonian political economy." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 88, no. 3 (1980): 259-276. Jefferson used Malthus's work to confirm his view of an agrarian republic (McCoy 1980, 268).

the land could be cultivated, allowing for "a double or treble of food be produced," which could then be used to provide food for Europeans as they surge in population, who will then provide America's clothing and manufactured comforts (Jefferson 1984, 1144). The expansion of the United States is not just an opportunity to increase people's happiness but also provides an opportunity for the United States to become the breadbasket for Europe.

This solution also allows for the agricultural lifestyle to flourish, as Jefferson considers giving "just weight to the moral and physical preference of the agricultural, over the manufacturing man" (Jefferson 1984, 1144). This lifestyle allows for the effective cultivation of familial bonds and population, away from any corrupting effects of commercial and manufacturing enterprises. Rousseau approved of the attempts to promote a lifestyle that would reduce the sense of dependency people had to have on each other to be able to be happy and self-sufficient. Unlike Hamilton, who desires to increase the manufacturing industry for the myriads of benefits he envisions, Jefferson is set on keeping such an expansion of manufacturing at bay as much as possible.

The final portion of Jefferson's thought that needs examination is one of the most important. While it is suitable for people to have farms and raise kids, if there is not a community at large that can be defended, then it does not matter how much land one can acquire or what kids one has because it can all be lost in a war. By assessing Jefferson's views on war, especially his concerns about a standing army and his promotion of the citizen soldier who builds militias, one can see how Jefferson links the martial spirit to an agricultural lifestyle instead of the commercial. Cultivating soldiers is as essential to Jefferson as cultivating farmers and exploring Jefferson's perspective will show the good and the bad that Jefferson foresaw with the military.

7.7. Jefferson's Republic: The Citizen Soldier

To fully grasp Jefferson's perspective of war and the warrior, it is vital to turn to the copious letters that Jefferson wrote concerning the topic to assess his views and any announcements Jefferson made throughout his life, such as his Inaugural address. Looking at the early letters Jefferson wrote during the American Revolution reveals a person who is sensitive to war abuses and actively seeks ways to prevent them. In a letter written to Patrick Henry in 1779, Jefferson writes of the mistreatment of certain captive British soldiers received, expressing concern that they were not receiving enough food. Jefferson wants to maintain a level of civility, saying: "But is an enemy so execrable, that, though in captivity, his wishes and comforts are to be disregarded and even crossed? I think not" (Jefferson 2009, 14). Despite his pleas for greater humanity, this generosity did not always translate into good wartime strategy. For instance, Jefferson was the Governor of Virginia for part of the Revolutionary War and is considered a terrible wartime leader because the British were able to sack the city of Richmond, forcing Jefferson to flee (Jefferson 2009, 23). Despite these missteps, Jefferson was prepared to fight the enemy when needed, turning to the militia.

The problem that emerged with Jefferson was the unreliability of the militia to rise to the occasion when needed. In 1781, Jefferson wrote letters to Colonel James Innes and Colonel Benjamin Harrison to assist in the defense of Virginia. However, he had to deal with delays from the militiamen, a "fatal tardiness" that would cause problems for Virginia (Jefferson 2009, 26-27). Despite Jefferson's many letters to the military forces, there was no ability to bring everyone into line. The desire to defend their homes made the militiamen willing to disobey the authority. Hamilton had to deal with this worry while campaigning with Washington. Nevertheless, despite the poor handling of the militia in Virginia, Jefferson refused to denounce the militia as an institution and would even come to its defense during the Ratification process.

When Jefferson became aware of and reviewed the new Constitution thoroughly, he wrote a letter in 1787 to James Madison concerning his thoughts. There were many things that Jefferson approved, especially the idea of having a government that did not need recourse to the state legislatures, the ability of the legislature to tax, and the House of Representatives being based on population (Jefferson 2009, 60). Jefferson's primary problem with the Constitution was its lack of a bill of rights, such as "protection from standing armies" (Jefferson 2009, 60-61).

Jefferson reiterated his concern in another letter to Madison in 1788. Jefferson was glad to hear that the Constitution was being ratified. However, he was still concerned that a bill of rights would not be passed, or at the very least, certain basic guarantees were not being brought up, including "to abolish standing armies during peace times" (Jefferson 2009, 74). If the standing armies cannot be trusted, then Jefferson thinks it is better to "abandon them altogether, discipline well the militia and guard the magazines with them" (Jefferson 2009, 75). The standing army is emblematic of monarchy to Jefferson, and any attempt to maintain a standing army will run the risk of potential abuses and problems for the Republic down the road. A standing army is used for war, and Jefferson envisions it can be used to agitate for more war if it is allowed to remain in peaceful times.

Jefferson would see this agitation for war under Napoleon Bonaparte's reign; in 1800, Jefferson wrote about his disappointment in Bonaparte's war character to Samuel Adams, a famous revolutionary figure and brother to the second President of the United States, John Adams. Jefferson had hoped that Bonaparte would have pursued a more peaceful route for the fledgling Republic, hoping that Bonaparte could "calculate truly the difference between the fame of a Washington and a Cromwell" (Jefferson 2009, 148). Of Napoleon's willingness to engage in bellicose behavior, Jefferson observes that some will view this incident as "a lesson against the

practicability of republican government." In contrast, Jefferson sees it as a "lesson against the dangers of standing armies" (Jefferson 2009, 148). Jefferson's concerns with the ability of the French to deploy troops into the Mississippi (prior to the Louisiana Purchase) were so significant that he ordered all the state governors to develop their militias, arguing that "None but an armed nation can dispense with a standing army; to keep ours armed and disciplined, is, therefore at all times important" (Jefferson 2009, 167). While militias can be undisciplined, should such errors be addressed, Jefferson suggests it can be a bulwark against even the greatest threats to liberty. Jefferson, however, was, more than anything else, a lover of peace and would pursue every route possible to prevent war.

One only has to think about Jefferson's joy concerning the Louisiana purchase, writing how much better it was to make a "peaceable appeal to justice, in four months, what we should not have obtained in seven years of war" if they had decided to seize New Orleans by force (Jefferson 2009, 169). The notion of the militia is valuable to Jefferson because it can serve as a way to decrease the likeliness of war. If every citizen is called to fight and lay down his life, then he will do so when his most significant interests are at stake, especially when their homes or countries are threatened. Countries with standing armies risk supporting wars they do not understand because they will not share the cost of the conflict. Under a standing army, there is a division of labor where some go out to fight in conflicts other citizens do not have to face. With the militia, everyone possesses equality. This is part of why certain similarities between Jefferson and Rousseau could be made. The regimes that Rousseau valorized in his work, Sparta, Rome, the Swiss Cantons, and Geneva, all had citizen soldiers who were equally responsible for the protection of the Republic and had an equal appreciation for the obligations and duties that came with political life. In a letter from 1807 written to Comte Diodati, a friend of Jefferson, while he

was an ambassador for Paris, Jefferson remarks similar in spirit to Rousseau concerning the nature of war and peace. As Jefferson writes: "Wars and contentions, indeed, fill the pages of history with more matter. But more blest is that nation whose silent course of happiness furnishes nothing for history to say" (Jefferson 2009, 211). Despite the hope for reaching this blessed state, the rise of Bonaparte would force Jefferson to change his views on important topics.

In Jefferson's Eight Congressional Address in 1808, Jefferson addresses the violent wars still occurring in Europe and lists the several ways the United States should prepare in case of conflict. Jefferson maintained that for "a people who are free, and who mean to remain so, a well organized and armed militia is their best security" (Jefferson 2009, 230). This call for militia must be organized and regulated by Congress, as they represent the will of the people and can represent the interests of the Republic at large (Jefferson 2009, 230). However, due to the problems with foreign trade due to the Napoleonic wars, Jefferson approved the increase of public factories, machinery, and artificers to produce manufactured goods and to improve internal commerce (Jefferson 2009, 230). The industry, which Jefferson would often decry with great vigor, was allowed to grow under Jefferson's watch. As a statesman, Jefferson would have no doubt accepted the political environment and the need to change for the good of the Republic. As a philosopher, it is reasonable to assume that Jefferson would have felt worried that the spread of manufacturing would spread a weakness to the Republic and create conditions for the unhappiness of the Republic overall.

7.8. Jefferson's (or Hamilton's) Republic?

While neither Jefferson nor Hamilton achieved the republics they desired, there is a convincing argument that Hamilton, like the many proponents of commercial societies, is essentially the victor. America is not only a commercial powerhouse but also possesses one of

the largest armies on the planet. States' rights have been curtailed compared to what they were in the 19th century, and the general government has centralized its power. At the same time, manufacturing has declined in parts of the United States, though compared to the rest of the world, it is still a significant industrial power. The Republic Jefferson envisioned was not to last. Despite Jefferson's hope for the opposite, manufacturing and commerce would take hold in the United States, and the military would sequester itself under a standing army. Even after making compromises as President, Jefferson was still evident in his hopes for the direction the United States could take.

In 1814, Jefferson wrote a letter to American economist Thomas Cooper, comparing the United States to Great Britain. As Jefferson was writing, the United States was at war with Great Britain, so the comparison obviously should be taken with a grain of salt. However, since Hamilton admired Great Britain, it will be interesting to see how the late Jefferson assessed Hamilton's ideal form of government. Jefferson argues that Great Britain has three classes: the nobles, the laboring class, and the paupers. Jefferson describes a society where many must labor constantly, applying all their strength and mind to compete with other countries while meeting the demands of their employers (Jefferson 2009, 266). Should anyone in the laboring class fail or not find themselves able to maintain their status, they are scooped up into the military to be used for whatever task they require. Jefferson readily acknowledges that Great Britain has the means to defend itself, but he asks what they uphold. Jefferson describes what "scientific England" upholds as the following: "the pauperism of the lowest class, the abject oppression of the laboring, and the luxury, the riot, the domination of the vicious happiness of the aristocracy" (Jefferson 2009, 266). In contrast, according to Jefferson, the United States had fewer paupers, many laborers, and few excessively wealthy people (Jefferson 2009, 266-267). Most laborers in

America "possess property, cultivate their lands, have families." From their work, the American laboring class can demand from the rich enough that they are "fed abundantly, clothed beyond mere decency" and "to labor moderately and raise their families" (Jefferson 2009, 267). Great Britain, one of the significant apexes of commercial society in the 19th century, did not have the level of happiness that the United States had at the time. Does Jefferson exaggerate the happiness of the United States? Assuredly. Despite this exaggeration, the United States achieved a middle class that could meet its needs, be self-sufficient, and have families as they saw fit. In addition to the nation's happiness, the Republic also could defend itself.

Jefferson rhetorically asks if Great Britain can provide better defense than the United States, a question to which Jefferson responds that in America, "our men are so happy at home they will not hire themselves to be shot at for a shilling a day" (Jefferson 2009, 267). The capacity for a standing army does not exist in America because it lacks the paupers to fill its armies (Jefferson 2009, 267). In addition to the economic situation of the United States, Jefferson justified his stance against standing armies by appealing to the Greeks and the Romans, noting how the "Greeks, by their laws, and the Romans by the spirit of their people, took care to put into the hands of their rulers no such engine of oppression as a standing army (Jefferson 2009, 267-268). Jefferson explains how the Greeks and the Romans had a system to make "every man a soldier and oblige him to repair to the standard of his country whenever that was reared" (Jefferson 2009, 268). This level of training made the Greeks and the Romans invincible, and it was the remedy for the United States during the War of 1812.

During the early years of the United States, Jefferson argues that the government imposed "the least coercion possible on the will of the citizen," which resulted in a variety of problems for the colonists during the Revolutionary War and produced a system too "indulgent to his

indulgence" (Jefferson 2009, 268). In 1805, there was an attempt to formulate the militia nationally, which would have improved discipline and allotted different responsibilities to age groups, but it lost by one vote (Jefferson 2009, 268). Had this system passed, Jefferson thinks it would have been enough to handle the might of Great Britain. It is a speculative inquiry, to be sure. However, it does highlight Jefferson's belief that independence, farming, and family men would have been able to handle any significant threats to the Republic. Much like Rousseau's, Jefferson's vision valorized the good of the soldier and the father against the people in business and artificers that Hamilton hoped to introduce into the country. Rousseau and Jefferson's vision was not actualized overall, as the proponents of commercial society could appeal to the many goods that came with commerce and a realization of humans as they are, risk-averse and comfort-seeking, and not what they could be, devoted to the virtue of the country and the family.

However, another way of looking at the clash between Hamilton and Jefferson is that neither view can always triumph over the other. Neither Hamilton nor Jefferson had any animosity towards the military or family life. They had different ways of expressing the importance of martial and marital responsibilities. They believed their visions would ensure these obligations could be met for the United States to function. While a commercial society has predominated over the past two centuries, Americans often find appreciation for both Hamilton and Jefferson.

While the history of the United States has shown both thinkers rise and fall in importance, they are also brought back into discussion. Their concerns about security, liberty, commerce, population, and family will be expressed in Americans' different debates about what they want the country to be like. Their back-and-forth discussion can reflect Rousseau's struggle with various proponents of commercial society. The solution Rousseau offered was not tenable;

the diagnosis of commercial society was valid as it was emerging into reality, and it is true today. The problems expressed by Rousseau and Jefferson persist. So long as they are allowed to be brought into discussion, there may come a day when commercial societies can put those questions about the necessary things to rest.

Conclusion

C.1. Why Rousseau Matters: Correct Diagnosis with an Undesirable Cure

To ask why Rousseau matters is a rhetorical question since he is famous for his many talents and incisive insights on politics, philosophy, and many other fields. Whatever one may think of Rousseau's views, it is likely Rousseau's views will still be discussed a hundred years from now. However, to ask why Rousseau matters to this dissertation and the topic of commercial societies requires more elaboration. With the decline of feudal authority that had gripped Europe for over a millennium, many of the philosophers at the time believed that a commercial society would emerge that could offer liberty and security on an unprecedented scale. Rousseau is one of the few prominent Enlightenment thinkers who not only expected the feudal order to pass but also the problems inherent in political societies.

Rousseau's diagnosis of commercial society illuminates how specific problems can emerge concerning the martial and marital obligations required for all societies. Rousseau correctly identifies how commercial societies can devalue the profound and basic requirements for flourishing political regimes. When looking at the different proponents of commercial societies, the tension of martial and marital responsibilities is acknowledged. Commercial society needs soldiers and parents, just like any other society, but faces a constant temptation to downplay or devalue these roles. Part of this reason stems from the fact that commercial society produces hedonistic people who may run risks concerning their money, but not at the cost of receiving pain and discomfort, which wars and childbirth can often bring. Commercial societies also enflame the *amour propre* to the degree that commercial activities are predominant in the minds of the citizens.

In addition to providing a piercing diagnosis of commercial society, Rousseau does have an alternate vision of what society could look like. Rousseau's alternate society is a small,

nationalistic, patriarchal, agrarian republic that downplays commerce so citizens can focus on their political and familial responsibilities. The men will be soldiers and the women will be mothers, each having a separate sphere while serving the good of politics. The people would form a social contract together that would solidify moral duties and collective power to maintain the liberty and happiness of the people. The sign of the healthiness of the regime would come from the equality of property and the spread of obligations, with the sign of wealth being the number of citizens the regime can produce and not the amount of money they can earn and spend.

The type of regime presented by Rousseau is possible. Rousseau looks at Sparta, Rome, the Swiss Cantons, and potentially even Geneva as examples of republics that had qualities that Rousseau admired. Rousseau's alternative was, therefore, possible and could be actualized. The problem that Rousseau faces is that the cure to the woes of commercial society is worse than the disease. One of the first problems is that Rousseau wishes for a self-contained republic that maintains martial prowess. However, as defenders of commercial society showed, a republic with laws encouraging martial prowess and population growth will tend to expand. Time and again, Rousseau appeals against the urge for expansion and against the pursuit of glory. The general will could be seen as an attempt to push back against community members who wish for war, but even Rousseau acknowledges that, in the long run, republics will succumb to this temptation. Another problem with Rousseau's solution is that it does not appreciate how commercial societies can be flexible and self-correcting.

C.2. Why Commerce Prevailed: Self-Correcting

What led to the eventual triumph of commercial society over the republican model provided by Rousseau? It should be noted again that Rousseau doubted the probability of the

republican government he wanted to bring to existence. Despite this, Rousseau thought that the changes occurring in his age could allow for a country to have the regime that Rousseau felt would make people lead happy and fulfilled life. Part of the reason for the increasing victories of the commercial society was that the proponents of commercial society could provide what they promised. The proponents offered peace and material prosperity for many, and compared to the feudal past, the proponents have delivered on an unprecedented level.

Furthermore, while perhaps struggling to make citizens appreciate any military obligations, a commercial society has been able to raise standing armies that do not overthrow societies. Commercial societies can avoid the pitfalls of previous republics where the military would feel isolated from the rest of the society, and soldiers, while perhaps struggling with making citizens appreciate any military obligations, a commercial society would be prepared to engage in violence to meet their needs. While there is still some alienation between military concerns, the military in commercial societies can uphold some martial prowess while remaining content enough not to overthrow the regime. In addition, commercial societies have changed course on the treatment of the family by instituting more laws against child labor and extreme work conditions and the level of prosperity that commercial society could reach where families can have unprecedented material abundance. These corrections, coupled with the sheer abundance of a commercial society, appeal to the average person more than Rousseau's alternative form of government could. Despite this issue, there are still tensions within commercial society, problems that Rousseau was correct to notice.

C.3. Where commerce struggles: The problem of selfishness and the need for equality

Despite the failures of Rousseau's nationalistic agrarian model to develop commercial societies' innate ability to correct certain abuses within time, Rousseau is largely correct in

noting the tensions inherent in commercial societies. The specialization of martial and marital responsibilities in a commercial society will be intensified so that specific problems will occur. The increasing specialization of the military runs the risk of the increasing alienation of the military concerns from the public view. In addition to alienation, commercial society will produce risk-averse people, making attempts to fill the army voluntarily increasingly tricky. In addition, the super majority of the population being alienated from the military can result in wars being encouraged because most people will not have to bear an equal responsibility to fight in the war. Due to the lack of equality in military service, the people will be quicker to push for conflict, especially if they find it necessary for their economic interests. Despite the protest that commercial societies would be less inclined to go to war, Rousseau still sees the possibility of war occurring out of a desire for national aggrandizement. Even Hamilton, a proponent of commerce and manufacturing, recognized that increasing commerce would not inherently decrease war. Commerce could soften the people and make them agreeable to the law, but it also softens the courage needed to fight for the homeland should the need require it.

Like the martial responsibilities, the marital responsibilities have declined as well. The uncontested supremacy of commercial society as an ideal has seen a decline in the marriage and procreation rates in some of the most commercialized and industrialized countries on the planet. The tension for commercial society is that while the family is esteemed by many commercial-oriented thinkers such as John Locke and Adam Smith, the need for commerce will increase the workforce's involvement with women and children and exacerbate the bond that emerges from the family. While the issue of child labor has been rectified through law, demonstrating the ability of commercial society to correct itself, the pressures of commercial life have placed difficulties on families to bond together. Depending on the socioeconomic level of the industry,

the ability for families to enjoy the sentiments of the bourgeoisie, nuclear family, and sentiments that Rousseau felt were areas where happiness could be found becomes incredibly difficult.

The inability of commercial society to promote equal obligations of marital and marital responsibilities reflects commercial societies' struggle with promoting the necessary things, the common goods that are essential not just for the overall good of the government but also for the good of the individual. The willingness to sacrifice, the ability to withstand hedonistic and risk-averse calculations, and, in short, the necessity of a type of courage are foundational to the requirements of the army and the family. Any government needs people who are prepared to lay down their lives and bring life into the regime. While Rousseau did believe that the citizen he envisions is challenging to form, it is still possible, and should commercial society produce a people who at large are not willing to promote the necessary things, the public concerns, what is the point of calling them citizens?

The insight that Rousseau provides to commercial society is that commercial society will attempt to downplay or ignore the political obligations that all political regimes must have to function. Martial Spirit and Marital Rites are not only necessary things for political regimes, but they are responsibilities that will always have political connotations that are unavoidable. It is easier to see why the military has political significance. The family also has political significance since it is the first social unit where governing other human beings comes into effect. The martial and the marital have political significance and political obligations. In a commercial society, obligations are not equally distributed. This is because the equality of resources is not equally distributed. Rousseau spends so much time discussing the equal distribution of property because soldiers with land can feel invested in fighting for it, and mothers can feel secure in raising their children, offering them a good life for their future. To improve the way the martial and marital

responsibilities are viewed, proponents of commercial society should heed Rousseau's call of equality, so that the necessary political obligations do not feel like onerous, low-status burdens.

To bring this close, I would like to discuss an anecdote with the reader. I am a military child, or a Military Brat, whose father served in multiple tours in the Balkans and Iraq. As such, I lived on Army Bases and visited other military bases my whole life. When going to the grocery stores on base, a row of signs in the parking lot says, "Women who are pregnant or with small children can park here" close to the store. I rarely see such signs in other stores off base. How hard would it be to have a sign like that at other larger stores to express a small appreciation for those carrying the republic's future into the world? These little acts of respect, these little, necessary, and common things, would reflect the obligations we have for one another. All republics demand a recognition of the obligations owed to the regime, whether it is as a soldier or a parent. Rousseau could see the impact that commerce would have on the obligations of the republic, and even proponents of the commercial society were aware of the risks that could come from ignoring the martial spirits and marital rites. Perhaps it is time our republic remembered these responsibilities as well.

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