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### On Love and Justice

The fundamental virtue necessary to maintain a just commonwealth is genuine love. A society ruled by any other virtue or corrupted by vice will fail to simultaneously provide justice or equity for the one, individual, and the many, commonwealth or polis as a whole, because of a shallow or faulty foundation. Steven Weinberg explores a similar idea of a primary theory related to physics in *Beautiful Theories: Symmetry and Mathematics* which sheds light on the concept of a fundamental virtue for human society. The Socratic concept of justice described in *The Republic* by Plato can be summarized as a place for everyone and everyone in their place, and differs enough from a finer conception to require a definition of justice and a critique of Socrates. Augustine concludes in *City of God* that Rome was never truly a civil society because its faulty foundation of civic virtues never provided justice. Had love informed civil justice in Sophocles' *Antigone* the protagonist could have properly buried her brother without jeopardizing the authority of the new king thus serving the interests of the one and the many. Love would have transformed the gluttonous court of Denmark and forestalled the wrenching injustices of Shakespeare's tragedy, *Hamlet*. If love governed the City in Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, the interests of each individual and faction as well as the whole community could have advanced. Civilized society must rest firmly on the greatest virtue, love, for justice to prevail.

In a civil society love, the greatest of the virtues, serves to enhance all other the virtues and blunt the affects of the deadly sins, providing the most justice for all while maintaining justice for the individual. The cardinal virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance and especially justice would flourish on the foundation of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love. "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (Holy Bible, 1 Corinthians 13.13) When asked, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (Holy

Bible, Matthew 22.34-39). Jesus responded by quoting from the ancient Hebrew Shema found in Deuteronomy 6, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (Holy Bible, Matthew 22.34-39). Contextualized in the midst of the giving of God’s laws for both ceremony and civil society under the Palestinian Covenant, the Word of God reveals “love of God” and “neighbor” as the foundation for human society. Defined biblically, “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (Holy Bible, 1 Corinthians 13.4-7). No wonder the translators of the King James Bible use the word charity for this kind of love connoting selflessness and generosity. If humans would live such a love, a just society would emerge and the interests of the one and the many would flourish together.

Because humans are fallen in sin, the fundamental principle of love in the commonwealth must provide a means of defining and nurturing virtue while providing a mechanism for regulating the criminal affects of sin for justice to flourish. Humans naturally practice the deadly sins of avarice, pride, anger, lust, envy, gluttony and sloth. These sins unchecked give opportunity for twin injustices of tyrannical encroachment on individual liberty or anarchical diminishment of common prosperity. Love animated regulation will produce neither cruelty in regulatory application or an over tolerant licentiousness that will lead to society as a whole finally falling like a good for nothing overripe fruit. Rather, where justice through regulation in the commonwealth is firmly founded on love, the individual will prosper and society as a whole will thrive. In *Centessimum Annus*, Pope John Paul II elucidates the respective roles that the church, the family and the state must play to develop such a just society. The church should define love and virtue and then teach church members and proclaim publicly its attributes for application in the broader society. The family should nurture virtue in children so that each enters adulthood as a characterized contributor and not as a sloth or leach. Lastly the state must provide regulation of the expression of deadly sins through crime for a just

society to perpetuate itself. Although imperfectly, when the church, the family and the state fulfill their respective roles a just society is possible.

In *Beautiful Theories: Symmetry and Mathematics* Steven Weinberg searches for an ultimate theory of physics to unlock its full potential, much like love provides the best foundation for human society. Weinberg states that the simplest most fundamental theory would provide the most elegant and applicable answer to the complex whole understanding of physics. Newton's theory described in *The Principia* although an advancement in its day was both more complex and less fundamental than Einstein's Theory of Relativity based on gravitation and inertia. Weinberg argues that Einstein's theory provided more universally applicable answers to the world of physics because of its more ultimate or foundational nature. Weinberg's fascinating search for an ultimate or most fundamental theory of physics may provide answers applicable to the material world. Love provides the ultimate answer for a world of social justice.

In *City of God*, Augustine concludes that Rome was not a City or a civilized society because it never provided justice revealing the need for a firmer foundation for civil society than the relativistic civic virtues loosely held in common by Romans. Finally Rome fell under its own morally decadent weight. Christianity gradually and imperfectly displaced the declining virtues of the Empire with those founded in the Word of God providing hope through the righteous rule of Christ the Redeemer. Christ's rule of love and justice inaugurated at His first coming is based on the revealed will of God in the *Holy Bible* both Old and New Testaments. Because of the sinful frailty of humans each first needs Christ's sovereign grace and redeeming power to be freed from the tyranny of sin and then live under his just rule. Redemption must pulsate through the commonwealth for love to animate regulation of the deadly sins and enhance the virtues needed to support a just society. Any other utopian attempt at just society will fail for lack of foundation. Therefore, let love reign because of Christ and may humankind wisely govern to provide justice.

If love governed the world of Antigone, both the interests of the one and the many in Thebes could have been justly balanced. In Sophocles' *Antigone* the protagonist's brother, Polynices died in a failed attempt to inherit the reins of Theban power.

Antigone seeks his proper burial to save him from the Greek conception of the soul's disturbed eternal wandering. Creon, the opportunistic new ruler of Thebes, asserts his authority over the city to restore order and denies Polynices' burial as a form of public reprisal. Antigone appeals immoderately and then symbolically buries him in public undermining Creon's rule. Creon hardens in his refusal and then imprisons Antigone denying both Polynices and Antigone reasonable human dignity. Perhaps if Antigone had entreated more wisely and less threateningly Creon would have reconsidered. However, Creon's opportunistic lust for power blinds him to any consideration of Greek protocol in death. Had he instead paused in thoughtful consideration of someone other than himself, perhaps he would have magnanimously allowed a burial and won Antigone as an ally. Neither Antigone nor Creon exhibit patient, kind nor selfless love for Polynices or for temperate social order resulting in injustice. If love rather than pride governed the circumstance it seems Polynices could have been buried quietly to put his soul to rest without undermining Creon's authority. A virtuous public society requires first virtuous citizens. The interests of the one and the many could have been satisfied through love.

The Socratic concept of justice described in *The Republic* by Plato could be summarized as a place for everyone and everyone in their place and differs enough from a finer conception to require a definition of terms and a critique. *Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language* defines justice as:

The virtue which consists in giving to every one what is his due; practical conformity to the laws and to principles of rectitude in the dealings of men with each other; honesty; integrity in commerce or mutual intercourse. Justice is distributive or commutative. Distributive justice belongs to magistrates or rulers, and consists in distributing to every man that right or equity which the laws and the principles of equity require; or in deciding controversies according to the laws and to principles of equity. Commutative justice consists in fair dealing in trade and mutual intercourse between man and man ("Justice").

If one was a philosopher king enjoying the highest strata of society and enjoying the most freedom and respect in the polis, keeping everyone in their places and calling this justice would seem attractive. In Socrates polis justice does not distribute fairly or evenly the benefits thereof to the tradesman, the warrior, the woman and worse yet, the slave. Further *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says:

*Justice* is here taken in its ordinary and proper sense to signify the most important of the cardinal virtues. It is a moral quality or habit which perfects the will and inclines it to render to each and to all what belongs to them. Of the other cardinal virtues, prudence perfects the intellect and inclines the prudent man to act in all things according to right reason. Fortitude controls the irascible passions; and temperance moderates the appetites according as reason dictates. While fortitude and temperance are self-regarding virtues, justice has reference to others. Together with charity it regulates man's intercourse with his fellow men. But charity leads us to help our neighbour in his need out of our own stores, while justice teaches us to give to another what belongs to him ("Justice").

Had charity undergirded Socrates' thinking on justice a more equitable system to fairly distribute and evenly apply the laws and benefits of society to all classes. The solution does not suggest a political communism but rather a system of justice that allows for social mobility and fair and proportional participation in the prosperity of the polis. The adherents of Socrates and Plato should consider Pope John Paul II 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annuus* as a more compelling treatment on what will make for a free and just society. A free and just society will only emerge with love as its basis rather than social stratification as its principal approach.

Love would have transformed the gluttonous court of Denmark and forestalled the wrenching injustices of Shakespeare's tragedy, *Hamlet*. If love governed the court perhaps the assassinated King would have lived to protect the Kingdom from the invading Norwegian army, the brother could have settled in a secondary role, the mother remained satisfied with her husband and Ophelia would have lived while Hamlet, the sweet prince inherited the crown of a stable state. Instead jealousy and gluttony trigger a

series of events that results in the death of all the royal court and the transfer of power to an ambitious Norwegian prince. The tragedy is obvious but the story also provides a warning for all people everywhere yearning for free and just society. Individual and collective commitment of common virtues under girded by love is the only means to justice.

If love governed the city in Ibsen's, *An Enemy of the People* the spa city could have flourished as a whole due to the collaborative contributions of its individuals. Dr. Stockman could have presented his findings without the ruining his brother, the Mayor and to the health and economic betterment of the city. The city leaders could have heeded the scientific evidence of water contamination in the spa, the people supported, the baths healed and both individual dignity and the common need for physical and economic health preserved. Instead Doctor Stockman selfishly agitated in favor of his own reputation while sullyng of the Mayor's. The journalist smelled fresh revolution and the HOA president leaned toward the most secure wall. Genuine love lived out in the polis as over against selfishness is the only long term hope for free and just society.

Civilized society must rest firmly on the greatest virtue, love, for justice to prevail. This paper briefly explores this idea of a foundational virtue, brings definition to justice and then shows the imperfect workings of justice in various works of fiction to teach by example. In our contemporary world where denial of justice affects the innocent everyday and threatens to engulf the whole of human society in totalitarianism or anarchy, the importance of the subject needs little argument. However, a utopian attempt to secure justice for individuals and society as a whole as another human experiment will fail if not founded on genuine love and supported by church, family and state. In future papers I intend to continue to develop the idea of justice from examination and critique of history, theology and political theory while positing a solution based on love. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen." (first attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi)

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