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## PREFACE

LUSHA is once again proud to be able to publish for the Loyola University community a fourth journal of student papers in the areas of history and political science. It is hoped that an appreciation of this publication can lead to a greater appreciation of the disciplines of history and political science themselves.

E.J.G.

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# THE DRINKIN' GOURD: AN ILLUMINATION OF AN ILLUSION

by Julie Ford

## Introduction

The title of this paper, "The Drinkin' Gourd: An Illumination of an Illusion," was conceived of long before the actual text of the paper was written. Behind the lengthy verbiage lies a very simple statement. To the fleeing slave, the North Star was the sign to follow to freedom along the underground railroad. Polaris made up the most important part of the constellation forming the Big Dipper or the Drinkin' Gourd.

The premise on which this paper is advanced is that the hopes and dreams of freedom were not to be found in the North, as the slave expected them to be; freedom turned into a flickering illusion. The North Star in the Drinkin' Gourd had shown the Negro that his envisionment of the North as the Promised Land was simply not as he had hoped.

Escape to the North, from slavery to freedom: this was the hope of being free. But where was and what was this elusive and yet endlessly sought after freedom? Was it automatically obtained by a slave upon entering a free state (a state where slavery had been abolished), or was the Negro journeying into just another land where "white supremacy" reigned as lord, where the physical bonds were not so evident but the subtle whips cracked through the night?

A few years ago when folk music was experiencing a tremendous upsurge in America, a folk-singing group reissued a pre-Civil War song entitled, "Follow the Drinkin' Gourd." The song was named after the constellation in the sky better known as the Big Dipper with its guiding North Star.

"The Drinkin' Gourd" ("The Muddy Road to Freedom") was a song of great import to the mistreated slave, who prior to the Civil War found himself travelling along "The Muddy Road to Freedom" or the underground railway. Runaway slaves and sympathizers sang directions to those who would escape: "Keep your eyes pinned to the skies, and where the clouds cover the stars,

then follow the river. Sleep by day, ... travel under the cover of darkness...." It was a song of hope and encouragement, and mostly it was a roadmap which could be memorized and transferred without detection. The most important of its many directives was to follow "The Drinkin' Gourd," those stars that shine in the North.<sup>1</sup>

So now the slave was escaping, travelling North in hopes of something better than the slave states were offering him. However, all Negroes in America during this period were not slaves. Many Negroes were born in the North, in free states. For the purposes of this paper, all black men in the free states will be considered free Negroes; this includes fugitive slaves. But where and how did some Negroes obtain the adjective "free"?

Sources of the free Negro population varied. A few were descendants of free persons of color.... More commonly, they were the offspring of Negroes more recently freed, or themselves first-generation freedmen. A few were immigrants from the West Indies or their descendants, and a very small fraction were runaways. Occasionally they were persons who had been manumitted by legislative act as a reward for some public service.... Other freedmen in the Northern states were the beneficiaries of legislative emancipation after the Revolution....<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most common procedure of all was the release of the slave by the voluntary choice of the owner.

However he obtained his freedom, the Negro was not going to experience the white man's world. He would not be allowed to do the ordinary day-to-day things needed to sustain a man in body or spirit. This was something the Negro had not expected to be subjected to and something from which he wanted to escape. "Some who had lived as free Negroes in the South were especially disappointed with conditions in the North. Oppressive laws, no work opportunities, lack of respect, inability to get ahead, and ill-treatment were all cited by refugees who had left the free states for Canada."<sup>3</sup>

It seems to be very obvious as to why a slave would desire to go North to the free states. He had never known any existence other than bondage (the slaves born in America, that is). There were free blacks in the South and this text is not directly concerned with them.

From 1831 until 1865 and the end of the Civil War was the period of greatest pressure upon the Negro: pressure from the South in the form of strengthening of the institution of slavery by legislative acts, and pressure from the North in the form of the abolition movement that strove tirelessly not only to end the slavery in the South but also in the North in its less ostentatious form. Yet even within the ranks of these two polar groups there were controversies. In the South there were abolitionists, and in the North there were abolitionists who were emancipators in name only.

Some who considered themselves abolitionists were as prejudiced as the colonialists. In reporting cases of injustice towards slaves, the abolitionists usually put special emphasis on those involving mulattoes, implying that it was much worse a near-white person than a black... Mrs. Elizabeth B. Chase, a New England abolitionist, found that some persons who were opposed to slavery and were willing to work for its abolition objected strongly to any association with Negroes in their anti-slavery labors.<sup>4</sup>

The Negro who went North met with harsh prejudice. "Though conditions were rather different in different Northern states, the general statement can be made that wherever Negroes lived in significant numbers, they met considerable social segregation and discrimination."<sup>5</sup> Socially, religiously, and politically, the Negro was set upon and apart.

Why was this the case? Part of the feeling that Northerners had about Negroes was left over from the days before slavery was abolished in the North. In these states there had been the institution of slavery also, and its perpetrators had attempted to justify it by varieties of reasoning. These reasons, whether entrenched in the missionary appeal of the pre-"white man's burden" or in the scientific theories of the Negro's inferiority, physically and mentally; to the white man, these ideas did not magically disappear from the minds where for years and years they had been instilled.

Furthermore, there were those who feared the free black men. These were the money-conscious--"But many Northern states as well as Southern barred free Negroes, for it was generally assumed that they were either vicious or likely to become paupers."<sup>6</sup> And according to Litwack:

In the absence of adequate legislation, many feared that the Northern states would be inundated with emancipated slaves, some of whom would be too old and worn out to be anything but a burden on the community. This fear was particularly strong in those free states which bordered on the slave states, and it prompted most of them to adopt restrictive measures.<sup>7</sup>

Money also prompted the concern of the workers with whom the Negro would be competing (for he was not often allowed to join ranks with the white laborers). "Nowhere in the North were Negroes and abolitionists more hated than in New York City."<sup>8</sup> This was because of the Irish immigrant, the poor white laborer of the North, who really had more in common with the Negro than either knew, and yet they were constantly at odds. This situation more often than not proved to be most destructive to the Negro. "Fugitive slaves who succeeded in making their way to the free states quickly learned that they were not yet in the Promised Land. Work was hard to come by."<sup>9</sup>

Education-wise the situation looked almost the same. "In 1861 there were still five New England cities that maintained segregated public schools: Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut; and Providence, Newport, and Bristol, Rhode Island."<sup>10</sup>

This was many years after slavery had been abolished in these states, and these were the very states the Negro had come to in order to be free and to raise himself to a level of equality with all his countrymen.

But proposals to educate Negroes almost always roused sharp opposition in the North. And against the prospect of integration--of Negro and white children sitting together in the same classrooms--law, custom, and popular prejudice combined to erect high walls. Almost everywhere in the North, by the 1830's, Negro children if they were being educated at all--were attending separate schools.

When shut out of white schools, Negroes determinedly moved to start their own schools. But whites often did not accept these either. In Ohio, for example, several Negroes' schools were wrecked and their teachers insulted and beaten....<sup>11</sup>

Such was the fate of Negro education in the North, although it was not always like the case above. There were those of the caliber of Prudence Crandell, a Quaker who in 1831 met such opposition from the parents of her white pupils when one Negro girl was admitted to her school that it was forced to close, so she decided to reopen the school for Negro girls only. This was in Connecticut. "In 1831, when the citizens of New Haven in Connecticut resolved to oppose the establishment of a Negro college there, a meeting in Philadelphia passed enthusiastic resolutions commending their attitude in avoiding this monstrous evil and said that their action commanded the admiration of every true lover of his country."<sup>12</sup> Here was a situation that only time was going to correct.

Slavery had been abolished in all of the free states. In these areas were expected to be found models of what this move had rendered. But disappointment was the only prize won by those who had worked for freedom. "The most liberal states (Northern), though quick to improve every opportunity to assist fugitive slaves to freedom, perversely closed more and more doors of opportunity to the class whose numbers they were helping to swell."<sup>13</sup>

Politically, most doors were closed to the Negro, and some were even opening onto nightmare. When in 1850 the Fugitive Slave Act was passed, the small hopes of being free dwindled for escaped slaves. "In the Northern states, a fugitive slave, liable to be hunted at any moment like a felon and be hurled into the terrible jaws of slavery...."<sup>14</sup> This was not an idle threat: for there were many who reached the free states only to be surrendered again to their masters in the South.

The fugitive slave had no recourse against this act, and there were many in the North who would not hesitate to send him back to the South. What could he do against these whites to protect himself? "More prevalent than fear of the slave-catcher was the need for civil protection against Northern whites. In Indiana courts, for example, only the word of the white man was admissible as evidence."<sup>15</sup> Besides being denied the right to testify, the Negro could not seek legislative remedy, as he was denied the use of the ballot. "Negroes did not share in the explosion of political democracy in its first half of the nineteenth century; indeed, such expansion frequently came at the expense of their rights and privileges. By 1840, some 93 per cent of the Northern free Negro population lived in states which completely or practically excluded them from the right to vote."<sup>16</sup> Everywhere he turned, the free Negro was denied his civil rights.

Denial was the key word during the years between 1831 and 1865. "'North as well as South, this outraged people encounter DENIAL everywhere,' asserted Gerrit Smith in a ringing denunciation of racial discrimination in the North: 'Even the noblest black is denied that which is free to the vilest white.'"<sup>17</sup> In some states he was even denied the right of residence. "Many Northern communities favored the exclusion of Negroes from their limits, and at one time or another, Illinois, Indiana, Oregon and Iowa all had constitutional clauses preventing free Negroes from settling within their boundaries."<sup>18</sup> Much of this action stemmed from the fear of what the people felt would be a flood of dependent immigrants (free slaves).

Perhaps the most disheartening treatment that the Negro received in the North was in the lack of his social acceptance:

...doomed by an inveterate prejudice against color to insult and outrage on every hand,--denied the privileges and courtesies common to others in the use of the most humble means of conveyance--shut out from the cabins on steamboats--refused admission to respectable hotels--caricatured, scorned, scoffed, mocked and maltreated with impunity by anyone, so he has a white skin.<sup>19</sup>

This was the world in which the free Negro lived. North and South he met discrimination as his daily fare. One of the most outspoken advocates of racial equality at this period was Frederick Douglass, who was an escaped slave living in the North. Douglass became an ardent abolitionist who spoke and wrote much on the topic of anti-slavery. He was adamant, however, about the treatment of the free Negro in the North. From his own personal experience Douglass recalled:

I also remember attending a revival meeting in the Reverend Henry Jackson's meeting-house, at New Bedford, and going up the broad aisle to find a seat. I was met by a good deacon, who told me in a pious tone, 'We don't allow n----rs in here.' Soon after my arrival in New Bedford from the South, I had a strong desire to attend the Lyceum, but was told, 'They don't allow n----rs in here.' While passing from New York to Boston on the steamer Massachusetts, on the night of 9th December, 1843, when chilled almost through with the cold, I went into the cabin to get a little warm. I was soon touched upon the shoulder and told, 'We don't allow n----rs in here.'<sup>20</sup>

Frederick Douglass was not the only Negro author at this time who was openly advocating abolition of slavery and then equal rights and citizenship for the freed and free Negroes who came North. Charlotte Forten was another colleague of Douglass'. She was born in the North, free, and though not of great physical strength became a school teacher. She had been educated by tutors in Philadelphia because she was denied admission to the public schools there because of her color. A journal of Charlotte Forten's was completed just prior to the Civil War, and much of the writing in it exhibited the feelings of sadness and indignation that she felt at the treatment of Negroes in the North:

That the social question should constantly intrude on Charlotte Forten's consciousness as she wrote her Journal was not surprising; for sixteen years she had been regularly reminded that her dark skin doomed her to an inferior

social station. When she was a child, she and her parents had been barred from stores and denied service in restaurants. They had been forced to sit in segregated sections of omnibuses and railroad cars. They had been turned away from lectures and theatres. They had heard thoughtless white men refer to them as 'niggers' without realizing the insulting sting of that word.<sup>21</sup>

Negroes in the North were not unprepared for the climactic act of this period, 1831-1865, which would be the Civil War. Nor were they unprepared for the ill reception they received to the voluntary offer of help they made at the outbreak of the hostilities. Nevertheless, it was shocking to see that those who had most to gain by the war, if the North won, were not at first allowed to participate, "But the North was not ready in 1861 to let Negroes help save the nation. "'We don't want to fight side and side with the nigger,' wrote Corporal Felix Brannigan of the New York 74th, 'We think we are too superior a race for that.'"<sup>22</sup> But the free blacks were too sorely needed to be disregarded for long. Besides, the abolitionists were hard at work on this issue of inequality too.

When the Negro was finally allowed into the ranks of the Union army, he was met with further evidence of inequality, as for instance wages:

The only law applying specifically to colored soldiers was the militia act of July 17, 1862, which stated that Negroes would be paid \$10 per month, \$3 of which could be deducted for clothing. While privates received \$13 per month, plus a clothing allowance of \$3.50. At the time the law was passed, it was envisaged that Negroes in the army would serve primarily as laborers rather than soldiers.<sup>23</sup>

After a meeting took place between Frederick Douglass and President Lincoln, the latter promised to resolve the conflict in the pay rates. "On June 15, 1864, Congress finally enacted legislation granting equal pay to Negro soldiers."<sup>24</sup> Even with this there were still further inequalities left to be worked out in the manner in which their pay rates were qualified.

How did the Negro himself feel about his "Promised Land" in the North, to which the "Muddy Road to Freedom" had led him? "Many Negroes who claimed freedom by escape, by manumission, or by birth, left the Northern states for Canada. One of them, Nelson Moss, testified that during his three-year stay in Pennsylvania he had suffered more from prejudice than he had in Virginia."<sup>25</sup> Other similar testimony came from a "woman who had lived ten years as a free Negro in Ohio [and she] said, 'I would as lief live in the slave States as in Ohio. In the slave States I had protection sometimes, from people what knew me--none in Ohio.'"<sup>26</sup>

Statements such as those greatly enhanced the pro-slavery advocates in the North and the South. With so many Northerners considering the Negro as an inferior, sub-human being, it was not unbelievable that the following should occur:

The last ante-bellum generation even saw the enactment of measures looking to the re-enslavement of free Negroes, including laws to facilitate their voluntary re-entry into slavery. The fact that some free men really acted upon their suggestion affords at least some evidence that the lot of the free Negro could

be even more unendurable than that of the slave. He was not wanted anywhere; on that, North and South were agreed.<sup>27</sup>

None wanted the Negro. This realization was fast becoming an undeniable fact. The presence of the free Negro in Northern states was difficult for the white man to accept, and where he could not gain the sanction of the law for his foul deeds against the Negro, he resorted to mob violence and physical force. "They called this strong, or emphatic, or unmistakable expressions of public sentiments, the will of the community.... These men sought to ease their own consciences and to justify their actions before the public, perhaps even in the annals of history, by changing the guilt of a mob to its victims."<sup>28</sup> Many cities met with racial violence in the North, the causes of which were as varied as its participants.

Socially, politically, educationally and economically the Negro in the North even before and after the period of 1831-1865 experienced a vicious policy of discrimination. He was shunned by private citizens and legislated against by politicians. The North was an apartheid world, and the Negro was its victim.

This paper has on the whole attempted to illuminate some of the injustices committed against the Negro in the North. This has not taken into much consideration that how even poorly treated the free Negro was in the North, his condition as a slave in the South would have been worse. In the North, he had some liberty to bring these social injustices to the attention of the public, if they would be willing to listen to him. He would eventually make far more progress in the North after the Civil War than the Southern Negro, who after winning a temporary battle in Reconstruction, lost the rest of the war to Jim Crow.

Justice was surely blind in weighing the injustices of the South against those of the North. There are too many qualifying and limiting clauses placed on either side of the picture to see it clearly, and yet, enough is seen through the murky haze to know that the view is not a pretty sketch, but rather a tragic portrait of a nation's brutal mistake.

## Notes

- 1 New Christy Minstrels, Ramblin' (1963).
- 2 Richard Bardolph, The Negro Vanguard (New York, 1959), pp. 20-21.
- 3 Larry Gara, The Liberty Line (Lexington, 1961), p. 65.
- 4 Idem, p. 64.
- 5 Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma (New York, 1944), p. 599.
- 6 Frederic Bancroft, Slave-Trading in the Old South (Baltimore, 1959), p. 18.
- 7 Leon F. Litwack, North of Slavery (Chicago, 1961), p. 67.
- 8 James M. McPherson, The Struggle for Equality (Princeton, 1964), p. 231.
- 9 Larry Gara, op. cit., p. 62.
- 10 James M. McPherson, op. cit., p. 228.
- 11 Milton Meltzer (ed.), In Their Own Words (New York, 1964), Vol. I, p. 75.
- 12 Edward Raymond Turner, The Negro in Pennsylvania, 1639-1861 (Washington, 1911), p. 146.
- 13 Richard Bardolph, op. cit., p. 44.
- 14 Philip S. Foner, The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, "Early Years, 1817-1849" (New York, 1950), p. 127.
- 15 William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, Black Utopia (Madison, Wisconsin, 1963), p. 6.
- 16 Leon F. Litwack, op. cit., pp. 74-75.
- 17 James M. McPherson, op. cit., p. 222.
- 18 Larry Gara, op. cit., p. 63.
- 19 Philip S. Foner, op. cit., p. 127.
- 20 Idem, p. 128.
- 21 Ray Allen Billington, A Free Negro in the Slave Era: The Journal of Charlotte L. Forten (New York, 1953), p. 12.
- 22 James M. McPherson, op. cit., pp. 192-193.

- 23 Idem, pp. 212-213.
- 24 Idem, p. 217.
- 25 Larry Gara, op. cit., p. 64.
- 26 Idem, p. 65.
- 27 Richard Bardolph, op. cit., p. 22.
- 28 Dwight Lowell Dumond, Antislavery (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1961), p. 229.

## THE FRENCH NOBILITY IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

by Thomas F. Budlong, Jr.

For some eight hundred years, from Charlemagne until Louis XIV, the nobility of France held enormous power and had great influence in running the affairs of France. From the time of Louis XIV up to the fall of the monarchy in the French Revolution, the power of the nobility was completely surrendered into the hands of the king. There now is no nobility in France. How did this come to pass? How did a powerful class which had held sway over France for over eight centuries come to lose completely its power and influence? By an examination of the condition and position of the nobility in seventeenth and eighteenth century French society, it is hoped that some insights into this distinctive class and answers to these questions may be found.

The origin of the French feudal nobility is found in the society of the Franks. The nobles arose from the Frankish chieftains who were given parcels of land by the Frankish king to defend, administer, and from which they collected revenues to give to the king. The relationship between the king and these nobles or chieftains was that of vassalage. It was a system of mutual duties, responsibilities, and commitments which were not to be taken lightly.

In the medieval period, this system of vassalage continued to grow. The feudal nobles were in theory the vassals of the king, to whom they offered allegiance and service. But in fact France was a myriad of small and large feudal dukedoms, counties, and other states, whose dukes and seigneurs were constantly forming alliances, feuding and warring with each other, and in general trying to annex their neighbors and increase their own territories as much as possible. The king was in fact merely one more contender for power and territories who had to struggle along with the rest. If he were powerful, he could manage to acquire large territories and obtain the loyalty of a large number of the nobles; but if he were weak, another lord might become more powerful than the king. Or a foreign ruler such as the king of England might acquire more territory and rule a larger part of France than the king of France did.

Gradually the kings of France became more powerful and managed to put most of France under their control. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, unification and centralization of the country was essentially completed. Decadent feudalism, writhing under the centralizing tendencies of monarchy, had been Henry IV's enemy; the reaction from its factious destructiveness was his ally.<sup>1</sup> The growth of wealth in France between the Edict of Nantes (1598) and its revocation (1685), urbanization, the decline of religious belief after the religious wars and Jansenist disputes, had produced in the nobility a relaxation of morals symbolized by Louis XIV in the youth of his reign.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France, the nobility had evolved into a complex and exclusive system consisting of many ranks and degrees. As Montesquieu has said, "In France there are three professions which confer nobility--the Church, the Sword, and the Bar--and each feels the utmost disdain for the other two."<sup>2</sup> And Montlosier, quoting Cherin, an authority on the history of France in his day, said:

As the first known titles of nobility dated from the fourteenth century, and adopting the generally held theory of a conquering, and a vanquished race, all who could submit "proof" by title-deeds anterior to this century must belong to the conquering race--that is, to the Franks. There was therefore a noblesse presentee--that is, a nobility which could prove its descent back to the fourteenth century, and there was another non presentee, which, for one reason or another, could not produce such ancestry. Though unable to show title-deeds dating back as far as this, the second class, provided it had sufficient title to be admitted to the Order of Malta or to pages in Noble Colleges, claimed like the first class to belong to the original nobility. Thus, as one section was excluded from court owing to lack of title-deeds, and another--the merely ennobled (les anoblis)--was denied office and the dignity attached thereto, there arose three distinct factions within the class of the nobility, and these divisions were sorely wounding to self-esteem.<sup>3</sup>

In the noble class there was no definite hierarchy, since titles which ought to distinguish the various ranks had no constant value. In place of one class, there were seven or eight--one of the sword and one of the bar, one of the court and one of the provinces, one old and one new, one large and one small. One pretended to be superior to the other, which, in turn, claimed to be equal to the former.<sup>4</sup> The state also raised money by creating offices the purchase of which conferred nobility, and at the side of or rather below the nobles, arose the ennobled. The bourgeois, or middle classes, hastened to buy these savonnettes a vilaines, as they were called.

In essence there were three primary types of nobility which one could possess. The first and highest was la noblesse d'epee (nobility of the sword). These were territorial seigneurs deriving their titles from the land they owned. Their chief duty was to organize and lead the defense of their region, country, and king. They were divided into jealous ranks, consisting of: the offspring of the reigning king; the pairs (peers) of France, consisting of princes of the blood (lineal descendants of previous kings), seven bishops, and fifty dukes; and lesser dukes, marquises, counts, viscounts, barons, and chevaliers. These could often only be distinguished by the ceremonial privilege given them. Within the noblesse d'epee was la noblesse de race, which traced its titles and possessions through many generations. It looked down upon nobles owing titles to recent ennoblement of ancestors or which had been bought. Commoners could buy titles, receive them with offices or with land. It is said that by 1789 probably ninety-five per cent of all nobles were of middle class origins. The third class was la noblesse de robe (nobility of the gown), which was a hereditary aristocracy derived from the hereditary transmission of magistracies and membership in the parlements. The noblesse d'epee had been more successful than England in retaining privileged status. Even so, they were not absolutely a closed caste. The highest ranks could be conferred, and there were ways of by-passing the

genealogical rules which in theory protected the old families. Also, a rich bourgeois could buy the estates of impoverished noblemen and the droits de seigneur that went with them. By 1789, the mingling of the noblesse d'epee and the noblesse de robe had been completed.

The rights and privileges of the nobility were many. At court, even at the start of the seventeenth century, the lives of the courtiers were much concerned with etiquette. Competition for precedence was almost as fierce in the rough and tumble of the courts of Henry IV and Louis XIII as in the more ordered splendor of Versailles. A prince du sang always came before a prince legitime, and the other degrees were ranked in descending order. Some of the other powers to which a seigneur was entitled included: lods et ventes, a ten per cent tax on any land changing hands among tenants; redevances en nature, a ten per cent tax in kind on all crops raised on seigneurial land; the aveu, a document exacted from every tenant listing the property and obligations attached to it; peages, tolls on goods passing through their estates; the corvee, a claim to the labor of peasants for a few days each year; banalites, obliging the peasants to mill their grain and press their grapes in the nobles' mills and presses; and they also received various petty perquisites such as rainwater which fell on the manorial roads and the tongues of animals killed by their tenants.

Of all the privileges which the nobility enjoyed, the most splendid, as well as the most lucrative, was that of seeing the king and of living in his shadow; for it was at Versailles that the rain of pensions, offices, and posts was poured forth; and Versailles, in fact, was inhabited, not only by the courtiers who thronged with outstretched hands, but also by ladies who disputed with one another for the privilege of approaching the queen and the supreme honor of sitting on a tabouret. Highest of all honors was the tabouret for ladies and the ordon bleu for men. The tabouret was a small stool, which all duchesses possessed. Ordons bleus were members of the Royal Order of the Holy Ghost. They wore elaborate costumes for this office, which had been established by Henry III in the sixteenth century. They were limited to one hundred knights. Nobles squandered fortunes for offices and honors. The poorer they became, the more extravagant they got.

The great noble was seldom seen by his tenants. Nobles were forbidden to preside over feudal courts by the Ordinance of Moulins (1566). This court, which should have been the hub of lordly justice and protection, was handed over to second-rate officials. Criminal jurisdiction had largely been removed from the manorial courts, but they could still deal with many civil cases.

The rural nobility of 1640 was a depressed class crippled by debts. For even a small seigneur living in rustic simplicity had to maintain a large family, secure army commissions, educate his sons in the university, secure dowries, and keep servants and dress which his rank demanded. Many of the old nobility were impoverished by careless or absentee management of their domains, exhaustion of the soil, and depreciation of the currency in which they received their tenant rents or feudal dues. Since nobles were not supposed to engage in commerce or industry, many provincial nobles lived in poverty. Other nobles dissipated vast fortunes exempt from taxation.

Before the seventeenth century, the landed nobility had served economic and administrative, as well as military functions. Seigneurs organized the division and cultivation of the soil, either through serfdom or leasing to tenants. They provided law, order, trial adjudication and punishment; maintained schools, hospitals, and charity. On hundreds of seignories the feudal lord had performed these functions, and peasants gave obedience, respect, and sometimes affection.

In a society of cash relationships, feudal privileges had no sort of raison d'etre, and their existence could only make for bitterness. When, as the century advanced, the state, in the form of the intendant and his subdelegue, encroached more and more upon his powers, the position of the seigneur became even more blatantly an anachronism. When, especially in the pays d'election, the peasant paid a heavy taille on top of his feudal dues, the exemption of his superiors offended.

Primarily, two factors changed the feudal relationship: 1) appointment of intendants by and after Richelieu; 2) the transformation of seigneurs into courtiers by Louis XIV. The intendants were middle-class bureaucrats who improved sanitation, lighting; embellished towns; dammed rivers; irrigated soil; helped prevent floods; and built a magnificent system of roads. It was Louis XIV who invited the seigneurs to court. He glorified them with empty titles and they lost touch with local affairs, drawing from manorial revenues to maintain palaces in Paris or Versailles. They clung to feudal rights, after abandoning their feudal tasks. Their loss of administrative functions, in both the economy and the government, opened them to the charge that they were dispensable parasites on the body of France.<sup>5</sup>

It is impossible to have an understanding of what court life did to the feudal nobility unless one has some knowledge and understanding of the man who developed it, Louis XIV, and also knowledge of what life at Versailles was like.

Louis XIV (1638-1715), who ruled for all but the first five years of his long life, was Europe's towering figure, envied and feared by other monarchs. He imposed the will of France through wars, alliances, and marriages. He ruled his subjects with harsh despotism and indifference to their needs. He made the nobility go through its paces like a troupe of trained seals. He had a vocation for greatness which has since become a model for other rulers, and yet he was not a great man. It was for this reason that Saint-Simon, the most famous of the court chroniclers, could never forgive him.

Suspicion of the nobility made him devise the court ritual, so that dissident barons and rebellious dukes could be turned into tractable courtiers always within sight and earshot. No one was a more devoted courtier than Saint-Simon, and yet he knew that the function of the nobles had been adulterated beyond repair. They no longer helped the king govern; they helped to keep him entertained.

Suspicion of Paris made him settle in Versailles. Caught up in the Fronde during his minority, he had to flee Paris in disguise. He never forgave the capital for being the cause of his fear and humiliation. Pettiness made him prefer his bastards to his legitimate children. He begrudged the hereditary rights of his natural sons to the throne because they were not his to bestow or remove. But improving the rank

of his bastards was a personal achievement, a measure of grandeur, tangible evidence of what the King could accomplish. In his declining years, the King came under the sanctimonious and restricting influence of Mme. de Maintenon, whom he secretly married. She dictated the conduct of the court and imposed her likes and dislikes. The courtiers were shocked at the marriage because it went against the system which the King himself had formed. The backbone of this system was a code of behavior that governed the smallest details of the courtiers' daily routine.

The King had manufactured a court that operated with the precise and tasteful cadence of a music box, protecting his ear from all dissonances.<sup>6</sup> The courtiers were in the curious position of being in continuous attendance on him, while hardly ever being able to talk to him. They watched him get out of bed in the morning, they marvelled at his appetite at lunch, they followed at a respectful distance when he strolled through his gardens. But the moments in the day when they could address him privately were brief and strictly defined. Courtiers, according to the ground rules of Versailles, were instruments of the King's pleasure and beholders of his magnificence.

The elite of Europe's major power were mesmerized into inanity by a king with modest gifts. In some mysterious fashion, whatever talent and energy Louis XIV did have rose to meet the challenge of his situation. He replaced intellectual brilliance with an unwavering faith in the greatness of his inherited crown and in himself as the incarnation of France. The famous statement attributed to him, "L'Etat, c'est moi," was no frivolous boast--it was the cornerstone of his faith and identity.

What were the personal qualities and capabilities of this most singular of kings? Saint-Simon, despite some prejudices, is most qualified to say. He tells us that the King was a mixture of goodness and greatness along with pettiness and meanness. He was born with a third-rate mind, but one capable of improvement, cultivation, and refinement. He loved glory and aspired to order and discipline. He was born wise, moderate, secretive, in perfect control of his language and gestures. He was born good and just, endowed by God with enough qualities to become a good and perhaps a great king. His troubles came from elsewhere. His early education was negligible and he barely learned to read and write, being ignorant of history, events, money, conduct, birth, or laws. He had a weakness for rather than a love of glory. He was easily spoiled by praise and could be approached readily by compliments. The only way to please him was submissiveness, baseness, and giving the impression that he was the only source of wisdom. Whoever strayed from this path strayed from favor. This was the origin of his thirst for glory, which made it easy for his ministers to start wars. His love of sieges was a cheap way to display his bravery and show off his ability, foresight, vigilance, and endurance. He insisted on staying at his command, and his robust condition protected him from hunger, thirst, cold, heat, rain, and bad weather. He had a passion for details and saw to uniforms, arms, maneuvers, training, discipline, and all sorts of vulgar details. He was also interested in construction projects, his household, and kitchens. The King's drowning himself in details was a triumph for his ministers.

Little by little he reduced everyone to subjection and brought to his court those very persons he cared least about. Whoever was old enough to serve did not dare demur. It was still another device to ruin nobles by accustoming them to equality and mingling with everyone indiscriminately. Those born to command found themselves commanding only in theory, while removed from all responsibility.

Using the pretext that all military service was honorable and that it is reasonable to learn to obey before one learns to command, the King made everyone, except princes of the blood, begin as cadets in his guard or in the army, and even as simple soldiers.

The court was another instrument of his despotic policy. We have already described the policies that divided, humiliated, and abashed the greatest of men; and the policies that elevated the authority and power of the ministers above everything, even the princes of the blood and people of the best quality, who found themselves diminished.

The court left Paris for a permanent stay in the country for several reasons. The King, as has been said, had an aversion to the city, which had been the scene of great turbulence during his minority. He was convinced that the danger of plots would be diminished by moving the court outside Paris, because of the distance from Paris to Versailles (however slight) and because it would be easy to notice the absence of courtiers.

Versailles, Marly, and Fontainebleau were the three places round which court life centered, Versailles, as the official residence of the monarch, being the most important of the three. If there is a monotonous uniformity about its outlines, a certain pomposity about its scheme of decoration, there was monotony and pomposity too in the life that was lived there, where daily the routine was a long parade and the most trivial act of the sovereign a ceremony; if the landscape is formal and artificial, so were the modes of thought of those who took their pleasure in its stately gardens.

The King personally named the guests for each festivity, each stroll through Versailles. These were his rewards and punishments. He knew that there was little else to distribute to keep everyone in line. He substituted ideal rewards for real ones; and these operated through jealousy, the petty preferences he showed many times a day, and his artfulness in showing them. No one was more ingenious than he in nourishing the hopes and satisfactions to which these petty preferences and distinctions gave birth. The highest premiums were placed on invitations to Marly and Trianon, being able to eat with the King, hold his candlestick, or wear the royal jerkin. The King also appreciated the presence of less distinguished guests.

The courtiers had the right to follow the King everywhere. He noted absences and penalized those who did not come. He had spies everywhere--in public places, private homes, and the international scene. Countless persons were ruined by these spies. He also had an elaborate system of opening letters sent by the royal mail service and having things which were said against him reported to him. He never told an outright lie and he prided himself on keeping his word. That is why he never gave it. He was also very fond of keeping people's secrets and liked receiving confessions. Not even his closest confidants or shrewdest ministers could pry these secrets from him.

There was never a man who knew how to give so well, which increased the value of his gifts. There was never a man who made better use of his words, his smile, even his glances. He made everything seem precious through quality and majesty to which the conciseness and rareness of his remarks added a great deal. There was never a man so naturally polite, or whose politeness was so measured and so sure. He was always patient throughout the long process of dressing. He was punctual at each of the day's events; there was a clean and laconic precision in his orders. This unwavering punctuality was a great convenience for the courtiers, and also allowed the King to be served promptly.

He was fond of fresh air and exercise; excelled in dancing, pall-mall, and tennis; and was an admirable horseman who liked seeing things done with grace and skill. He liked to shoot, and there was no more graceful a marksman. He was particularly fond of stag hunting.

He loved splendor, magnificence, and profusion in everything. He found it useful to make his tastes the law dominating the entire court. Courtiers spent extravagant sums on furniture, clothes, carriages, houses, and gambling to please and entertain him. He managed to exhaust everyone's means by making luxury a matter of honor. Many were cleaned out, and everyone was reduced little by little to complete dependence on the King's bounty. He took pride in the grandeur of his court and in the mingling which served to annihilate natural distinctions. It was a spreading affliction, a cancer that gnawed at everyone. From the court it spread to Paris, the provinces, and the army; and since that unhappy precedent, everyone was judged according to the extent of his luxury and magnificence. This was a great strain on most individuals and tempted them to commit graft and theft to bear the expense.

Louis XIV created a suitable court. A court provided the proper setting for majesty. Majesty was indispensable for a monarch by divine right. His majesty was the "Sun King" and his subjects were to adore and reverence this majesty as the source of a divine order upon earth.<sup>8</sup>

The historical and natural leaders of the people, i.e., the nobles, but recently feudal lords, often cruel, exacting, and warlike, had rarely indicated that they could or would consider any interests but their own. Even they, once realizing that their independence was hopeless in the face of royal authority, came to accept the divine right of the monarchy, and added their support to this cult of majesty.<sup>9</sup>

Louis XIV deliberately encouraged the nobility to come to court, but even in his reign only a minority were anything more than occasional visitors. Many noblemen of the highest rank kept away from court. The ordinary seigneur would only come to pay his respects on some great occasion, unless he had offices or were a determined adventurer or hanger-on. As it became obvious that promotion and pensions could only be won at court, nobles came there to offer their service and were drawn into the circle of privilege, while administrative control of the provinces slipped away from them. They stepped from the restrictive life of the country into a society which bore the hallmarks of crowned and idle isolation, detailed rules of etiquette, secret societies, gossip and scandal, jealousy, quick quarrels on points of honor, and affectations of accent and dress. Life at court did nothing to ease the financial distress of the great nobility. Gambling and excesses of maintaining large mansions and retinues caused

heavy losses. Profitable marriages were often the only way in which a nobleman could put his affairs in order again and avoid the danger of retreat to country life, and the bourgeois were willing to bid highly to marry those with ancient names.

Court etiquette was also a great strain. It was a network of complicated but unwritten rules that founded their authority on precedent; consequently, an accurate knowledge of precedents was essential to a man who meant to use the laws of procedure for his own aggrandizement. Precedents were often created on the spur of the moment and without any thought of the future.

We have examined the foundations for the decline of the French nobility in the seventeenth century; now let us examine the developments which led to its fall in the eighteenth century. This period can in general be defined as one in which conditions went from bad to worse.

An aristocracy is essentially a body of citizens which governs or takes part in government; whereas a caste is a closed corporation, and the distinctive mark of its members is birth. In France, in the eighteenth century, the nobility had ceased to be an aristocracy and had become a caste.<sup>10</sup> The nobility can less and less claim to direct affairs, but the nobles were more and more assuming the exclusive prerogative of being the first among the prince's servants.

Chanfort lays stress on the moral consequences of this abasement of the nobility:

I do not know how a Frenchman who has been in the King's Anteroom or the Oeil-de-Boeuf can say of any one there: "Behold a great noble." Practically all of them were great beggars, and the highest in the land of both sexes thronged the minister's waiting room; for is not Influence the Goddess of the French?...and the minister is the High Priest who sacrifices many a victim to her.<sup>11</sup>

There were many monetary perquisites which a nobleman could receive for even the slightest reason. In 1717 the Duc de Tremes received eighty livres in compensation for his mourning the death of Louis XIV. A pension could be had for droit d'avis, or counsel's opinion. There were numerous annuities and gifts of the king attached to offices. There was even a word in the French language, cheminer, which meant "to acquire a fortune at court." It has been said by some that France was bled white for some five hundred families, and even the Neapolitan ambassador, Caraccioli, declared, "In France nine-tenths of the population die of hunger and one-tenth of indigestion."<sup>12</sup>

The nobles continued to build even costlier houses. Enormous numbers of servants of all kinds were required to wait on the numerous guests invited to a gentleman's table, and for the upkeep of his establishment; in fact, a large staff of retainers was indispensable to anyone who wished to live up to his rank.

Useless and expensively wasteful offices were maintained. Use of les acquits du comptant--sums paid on the king's signature alone for unspecified objects, increased tenfold from ten million francs per year under Louis XIV to one hundred million francs under Louis XV. The three principal objects which absorbed the fortunes of the great nobles were their clothes, their table, and gaming. The highest nobles lived lavishly, running up huge debts until the moment of their bankruptcy.

Gambling was the chief cause of ruin to all the great houses. Many of the courtiers were quite shameless and profited on the losses of others by keeping gaming houses, such as did the Duc de Gesvres et de Tresmes, and by this means encouraged the evil. Many, however, lost not only their money but also their honor at the tables, as cheating was notorious. Bourdaloue, in his sermon "On Penance," admonishes that "Gambling is a vice which entails yet another, for it engenders those unworthy stratagems or, if I may use a stronger term, those frauds to which the thirst for gain drives its victims."<sup>13</sup> The only way to repair one's fortune was a good marriage. Need of money reconciled the nobles to the plebeians. By the middle of the eighteenth century this "reconciliation" of the classes had become a necessity for the French nobility, which, as d'Argenson said with a sigh, "is so ruined that it can only exist by marrying beneath them."<sup>14</sup>

Religious hypocrisy was rampant. Early in the century, the Duc d'Orleans, the Regent, once said of a courtier: "He is the perfect courtier, he is without honor and without humor." This definition would perhaps be more complete if we add: "and without shame."<sup>15</sup>

The court was also incredibly ignorant. The courtiers arrived with but little education, and dissipation of all kinds afforded but little time for reading. Even if they knew the names of the great writers of the time, they knew little or nothing of their works. In the words of Montesquieu, "No one can compete with the ignorance of those who frequent the Court of France."<sup>16</sup>

Overeating was a prevalent habit. The Queen was as well-known for her indigestion as for the twenty-nine course dinners she served. Many courtiers kept hoards of food in their rooms which they nibbled all day. There were frequent deaths from indigestion, and even the clergy were gluttonous. Drunkenness was also widespread, a complementary vice to greed. Even a princess of the blood such as Mme. de Vendome, according to Saint-Simon, could die from alcoholic poisoning. Petty thefts, such as stealing silverware at dinners and breaking into locked cabinets in boudoirs, were also quite common.

At Versailles, the main job of two thousand courtiers was to keep Louis XV from being bored. He bored easily. After a few years of marriage, he took up with a series of women, including a series of three sisters. The woman who pleased the King controlled the court, but satisfying Louis' precarious temper demanded prodigious skills.<sup>17</sup> Mme. de Pompadour had all the requirements: talent, taste, and an unerring touch. She ruled for twenty years as his official mistress, but her beauty failed. It is said that when she died, the King wept exactly two tears.

The court of Louis XV was dominated by women. "Everything depends on her, nothing is done except by her or for her," said Rousseau.<sup>18</sup> Women assumed this power by default of Louis XV's pleasure-seeking court, and an aristocracy which was too dissolute to pay attention to the real activity of the moment: the ferment of ideas stirring all of Europe. By controlling the nation's intellectual life as well as its affairs of state, aristocratic women cast France in their own image--exquisite, quick-witted, gay, and deceptive. No society was ever more delightful, or cultivated so brilliantly the seeds of its own destruction.<sup>19</sup> Private life for a woman of French

society was an elaborate ceremonial from the moment she awoke until the small hours of each day. Her toilette was a public affair at which friends, lovers, hairdressers, husbands, abbes, and others gathered to exchange new rumors, or give old rumors new sparkle by a graceful turn of phrases. Marriage scarcely interfered with a woman's freedom to amuse herself. "A husband who would wish to have sole possession of his wife, would be regarded as a disturber of the public happiness," declared Montesquieu.<sup>20</sup> Marital separation required only that a wife arrange for the man to slap her before two witnesses. This, and every other social situation, she met with style and elegance.

As new ideas demanding an audience arose in France, remarkable women established salons in their houses to substitute for a negligent court. These salons were highly influential in perfecting the art of conversation and refining the French language.

Upper class children received strange treatment. From the time they were babies, boys and girls were dressed as adults and treated impersonally like pretty toys. They scarcely ever saw their parents. A typical little girl of the nobility would be weaned by a wet nurse, then handed over to a governess to be taught manners. At five, she would be put in a convent, and at fifteen, taken out and pushed into a desirable marriage. Boys, too, were kept distant from their parents. "The most useful of all arts, that of making men, is forgotten," Rousseau wrote.<sup>21</sup> Children were spoiled, elegant, and versed in the manners of court at an early age. The Duc de Fronsac, for example, at age sixteen was elegant, witty, and already versed in the rudiments of seduction. Youth was, in short, debauched and versed in all the vices of their parents.<sup>22</sup> Rousseau suggested that a child should be given the opportunity to develop his natural gifts unhampered and shielded from the corruption of the day. He found many fashionable mothers supporting him. By such reasonable rebellion against one element of the society they had created, women encouraged rebellion against their whole society--and helped lead, some say, to its end in the French Revolution.<sup>23</sup>

As a whole, the court was a demoralizing place to live, and even the best were corrupted and sank in the mire to become implicated in frauds and swindles. "In general, the art of government consists in taking as much money as possible from one class of citizens to give it to the other," exclaimed Voltaire.<sup>24</sup>

We have had to blame the courtiers for many weaknesses and faults, and it must be admitted that, shorn of its outward trappings, the court does not appear to great advantage. Should it then be concluded that it was given up to profligacy and hypocrisy to an extent which would deserve d'Argenson's biting verdict: "There is not a single good man in all the Court"?<sup>25</sup> There were examples of more virtuous men at court, such as Bourdaloue, Saint-Simon, the Duc de Luynes, and the Duc de Croy--who led fairly exemplary lives. The main interest of court chroniclers centered in scandals, dishonest people, and unpleasant histories. "We must remember that the French, descended as they are from the Gauls, have always had a taste for stories of a somewhat questionable type, and that, unlike other nations, they do not hide their faults, but at times enlarge on them in order to laugh at themselves more."<sup>26</sup> There were in Paris and at court husbands who loved their wives, and women deeply attached and faithful to their husbands; but the chroniclers do not mention them because they had nothing to say about them, for about good women there was no gossip.

These conditions continued much the same into the reign of Louis XVI, if not more wasteful and extravagant under his flighty and whimsical Queen, Marie Antoinette.

The suppressed, overtaxed, and overburdened masses of France, led primarily by the Paris mob, reached a point where they could not, or at least were not willing to, bear any longer the weight of the nobility, the king, or the court. Stripped of all their power, serving no useful purpose, yet draining the economy of France, the nobility was the most expendable part of the new Republic which rose out of the French Revolution. And so, in the blood orgies of the Paris mob, the heads of the flower of French society rolled. The great nobility, partly by the fault of Louis XIV, who stripped them of their powers and encouraged their extravagance--and in large part due to their own lack of ability to resist these temptations--was destroyed, never again to rise in France.

## Notes

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## THE PARADOX OF ROUSSEAU:

### THE INFLUENCE OF ROUSSEAU ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

by Mike McConnell

In an attempt to define the influence of Jean Jacques Rousseau on the French Revolution, the prime difficulty becomes that of interpretations given to his writings. A substantial case can be made for a positive influence on the Revolution, and an equally strong case can be made for a negative influence. Just as Mallet Dupan could say that, "...he (Rousseau) alone inoculated the French with the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people..." and that it would be difficult to cite a single revolutionist who was not transported over these anarchical theories;<sup>1</sup> the comte Ferrand with equal ease could write a speech incorporating a series of quotations from Rousseau to prove that Rousseau would have opposed the acts of the revolutionary majority.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the reason for these paradoxical statements lies in the ambiguity of the writings of Rousseau. Rousseau apparently had no intention of proclaiming a theory of revolution, but on the contrary was concerned principally with the basic concepts of social existence. There seemed to be no singular direction to his writings. The main emphasis was on a definition of the social contract and the relationships which would of necessity stem from it. Thus the Rousseauist equation is composed of virtually unlimited variables and few constants. Only by a process of elimination can these constants be found.

Before Rousseau's influence on the revolutionaries can be traced, the ideas which were to have the greatest impact must be examined. The first of these is the concept of the general will. In the words of Rousseau: "Each of us puts his person and all of his powers in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole."<sup>3</sup> Through a process of dialectics, conflicting interests among people are reconciled. Opposite views negate opposite views, and a synthesis follows. Thus formed the general will is placed in a position of authority by common consent of the people as embodied in a set of laws. In other words, we form a social contract.

Rousseau laid down four conditions for the creation of a general will. One, that the sovereignty of the general will is inalienable. It cannot be entrusted to any individual. However, the general will may empower agents to carry out the general will, but they will not be the sovereign. Two, the sovereignty of the general will is indivisible. Legislatures and executive bodies are only emanations of the sovereign. None of these bodies can be sovereign in its given sphere of activity. Three, the general will is, in a sense, infallible. Its goal can only be the common good, and thus it is superior to an individual who may seek his own advantage to the detriment of the whole. Four, an act of the general will is law. It is apparent that only the people can make laws, and not individuals. It is also clear that the law must be in the interest of all, and that it must bind everyone in the same manner. In other words, all the people act on all the people.<sup>4</sup> Because there is such a delicate balance involved with this last point, the

general will of necessity must confine itself to defining and protecting a system of general rights. Its object must be general consisting "in the formulation of a body of positive law."<sup>5</sup> The state is the only association which can define and protect these rights.

The state is an association according to Rousseau of all the members of society who in turn make up the sovereign in his theory. The will of the members is expressed as a political decision arrived at by the members after deliberating a problem which affects them as an association.<sup>6</sup> Laws are thus the political decisions. But Rousseau's concept of law also has the following characteristics.

A body of laws is essentially a framework within which members of society who are politically capable become disciplined and civilized. Also, the consequences of a man's act when that act is performed in accordance with the body of laws shift from the service of private interests to the public interest.<sup>7</sup> However, Rousseau does admit that there is sometimes a higher law than the general will. There are three authorities higher than the sovereign, that of God, natural law, and the authority that the concept of honor has over honest men.<sup>8</sup> He also places certain conditions on the formation of laws according to the general will which almost place society in a Utopian state.

The exercise of sovereignty demands a small state in which the people may express their will without the necessity of a representative assembly, and a constitution which puts the legislative power in the hands of the people. Also there must be a permanent desire on the part of the members of society to pursue the common good coupled with sufficient knowledge to enable them to put their desire into practice.<sup>9</sup> Rousseau attempted to establish a basis for law rooted in the freedom of the individual. The only way he discovered to do this was to have the people participate directly in the making of the laws under which they were to live. All men were equal under their general will. The ideas of the general will and its sovereignty were to become the touchstone for many of the revolutionists in their attempts to draw up a uniform body of laws and an equitable system of government.

Since most of Rousseau's political ideas are proposed in the Contrat social, the influence of his ideas can be detected in the acceptance and use of the Contrat social by the people and the leaders of the revolution. Before 1789 the Rousseau political cult was almost non-existent. The first edition of the Contrat social was published in 1762 by Rey of Amsterdam. There were no further editions until 1772 when one edition came out again by Rey.<sup>10</sup> After 1772 there were no editions published until 1790 after the Revolution had already begun. In that year, a new interest in Rousseau spawned four separate editions of the Contrat, and in the following year another edition appeared.<sup>11</sup>

In the pre-revolutionary years, only one pamphleteer referred to the theories of Rousseau, and he was a conservative who pointed to the fact that according to Rousseau the powers of the delegates to the Estates General ought to be limited.<sup>12</sup> This was in obvious reference to the necessity of having a small state without a legislature for the proper functioning of the sovereign will. D'Antraigues published his Memoire sur les Etats Generaux in 1788 in which he reinforced his idea of the imperative mandate with Rousseau's concept of the inalienable sovereignty. D'Antraigues argued that the inalienable sovereignty of the members of society had been recognized throughout French history by the insistence of the representatives of the people that they were bound by an imperative mandate which limited their powers to the simple expression of the will of the citizens.<sup>13</sup>

Certain other ideas of the Contrat social can be seen in the writings of D'Antraigues. He spoke of the recurrent national regeneration through violence in reference to Rousseau's idea of the regeneration of states. Rousseau had said that

violence and civil war had the effect of reinvigorating a people to the extent that a state could rise from its ashes like the phoenix to recapture its youth. But this was prefaced by the statement that this was quite rare and that it could happen only to a people who were still young and active.<sup>14</sup> But D'Antraigues had only a limited affect on the revolution. The aristocracy could not accept the idea of the sovereignty of the general will while the democrats could not accept, in practice, the idea of the imperative mandate.<sup>15</sup> The influence of Rousseau was also not directly recognized in the writings of D'Antraigues since the name of Rousseau was never mentioned explicitly in the pamphlet, and the idea of "regeneration" was frequently proposed by writers of this period.<sup>16</sup> But the influence was there if only in an inchoate form. This same period (1788-1789) also saw further political writings tempered with the fire of Rousseau. Among these were the abbe Bourdier Delpuito and M. Isnard.

Delpuito published a work entitled Observations sur le Contrat Social de J.J. Rousseau in 1789. This was the final result of a detailed examination and criticism of the Social Contract begun in 1762 by the Jesuit Berthier. M. Isnard sought to attack the concept of the general will on the other hand in his Le principe qui produit les Revolutions de France de Geneve et d'Amerique. His argument was that Rousseau placed power in the hands of the tyrannical and irrational will of the majority and that the theory of the revolutionaries was lifted from the Contrat social.

Paul Philippe Gudin de Brenellerie was the first person of the period to attempt to show a relation between the development of the revolution and the writings of Rousseau. In 1790 he addressed the Supplement au Contrat Social, applicable particulièrement aux grandes nations to the Constituent Assembly. He explained that the essence of Rousseau's theory was the concept of law as the expression of the general will, so the problem of a large state such as France was to combine the representative system with the legislative supremacy of the general will.<sup>18</sup> All of the other writers of this period who wrote on the general will and other ideas of Rousseau had a predilection for using Rousseau as an authority for their writing. However, this did not necessarily mean that they took Rousseau in the context of his own aims and concepts, but on the contrary they often removed Rousseau entirely from his own writings and filled the void with what they thought he said. Out of this fury of writing, there emerged a cult which placed Rousseau in an aura of sacredness, and placed his writings in a position of secondary importance.

Saints-Juste wrote a work entitled Esprit de la Revolution et de la Constitution de la France in which he used the themes of Rousseau. But his attitude toward Rousseau can best be seen in his closing sentence. "France has only now conferred a statue upon J.J. Rousseau. Ah! Why is that great man dead?"<sup>19</sup> The abbe Brizard wrote several manuscripts on Rousseau. One called Vie de Jean Jacques Rousseau calls the Emile the masterpiece of the eighteenth century, and another makes a comparison between Rousseau and Socrates in which Rousseau is held to be superior to Socrates on a number of points.<sup>20</sup> Brizard also wrote after visiting 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."<sup>21</sup>

Many people made pilgrimages to the tomb of Rousseau on the Ile des Peipliers at Ermenonville. The Marquis de Giardin wrote a guide book to the grounds, and he described his affection for Rousseau in slightly more than glowing terms. "It is to you, friend of Rousseau, it is to you that I address myself; you alone are able to sense the affecting charm of such a site. In these solitary places, nothing can distract you from the object of your love; you see it; it is there, let your tears pour out; never will you have wept sweeter or more justifiable tears."<sup>22</sup> The abbe Brizard visited Ermenonville with a group of friends who were all admirers of Rousseau. They first knelt and kissed the tomb after which each person paid tribute to Rousseau's

memory and laid flowers on the tomb. As a climax to their visit, they tore out and burned those pages of Diderot's Essai sur Senegue in which the author had attacked Rousseau.<sup>23</sup>

In one play of the period, the last scene consisted of a ceremony in which the busts of Rousseau, Mirabeau, Voltaire and Louis XVI were brought out to be honored. The last line of the play was: "Our great men, they are our gods!"<sup>24</sup>

In the National Assembly, a bust of Rousseau and a copy of the Contrat social were given a place of honor. On December 21, 1790, the Assembly decreed that a statue of Rousseau be erected, inscribed: "La Nation Francaise Libre a J.J. Rousseau."<sup>25</sup> The convention also decreed after a report by Lakanal for the Committee of Public Instruction, that Rousseau's remains be brought from Ermenonville and be placed in the Pantheon.

Even Robespierre allowed himself to be taken up by the wave of adoration for Rousseau. Robespierre had seen Rousseau in his last stay in Paris at which time he made this statement: "Divine man! ... I looked upon your august features; ... I understand all the griefs of a noble life devoted to the worship of truth."<sup>26</sup> On another occasion, Robespierre said: " No one has given us a more exact idea of the common people than Rousseau because no one loved them more."<sup>27</sup> Robespierre was not alone in his reverence for Rousseau, and tributes of this type were common until the dimming of his image in the period 1795-1799. The reason behind these references to the cultic ideas surrounding Rousseau in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods is that they throw some light on the emotional appeal which Rousseau had for the revolutionaries and the people in general.

The revival of the intellectual appeal of Rousseau brought with it a surprising twist. The interpretation of Rousseau shifted from a pro-revolutionary stance to an anti-revolutionary posture. In 1789, during the debates on the expropriation of church property, the abbe Maury defended the privileges of his Estate by citing Rousseau.<sup>28</sup> Charles F. Lenormant wrote J. J. Rousseau, aristocrate in which he portrayed Rousseau as being counter-revolutionary. Far from being the author of the Revolution, he would have been with the aristocratic minority. The practical features of the new constitution were shown to be opposed to the more theoretical features of the Contrat social while the more practical writings of Rousseau were shown to be opposed to the more abstract and idealistic aspects of the new French system.<sup>29</sup>

In another speech, Lenormant used a total of forty-nine quotations and references to Rousseau's works, including twenty-nine from the Contrat social, to prove that Rousseau's political theory was directly opposed to the legislation of the National Assembly. The comte Ferrand wrote a pamphlet called Adresse d'un citoyen tres actif which consisted of thirty-one questions to the National Assembly in each of which the deputies were asked to explain why the principles upon which they based their legislation differed from those set down by Rousseau in the Contrat social.<sup>30</sup>

Rousseau himself seemed to find no basic contradiction in the writings although some of them become quite evident upon closer observation. In the debate over the constitution for Corsica and Poland, Rousseau wrote a very conservative article for the fifth volume of the Encyclopedie on "l' Economie politique." Also in his Considerations sur le gouvernement de Pologne, he avoided any type of advice which could only make a bad situation worse.<sup>31</sup> In the dedication to the Second Discourse, he said that he was thankful that he did not live in the turbulent conditions of a new society, and in commenting on

the proposals of the abbe de Saint-Pierre he also asked who would be willing to take upon himself the abolition of old customs even if the advantages of a new plan of reform were incontestable.<sup>32</sup> In the Lettres de la Montagne, he urged them to be on their guard for turbulence and internal trouble caused by mischief-makers.<sup>33</sup> In commenting on his ideas of national regeneration, Rousseau thought the cases when this could occur were rare and the intention dangerous. He felt that it was precisely at such times that usurpers were likely to establish themselves, so that the people, far from obtaining additional liberties only found themselves restricted more than before.<sup>34</sup> These certainly are not the words of a revolutionary, but on the contrary could have been written by any conservative aristocrat. Perhaps, this is our greatest indication of the relatively obstructionless path anyone could follow at this time who wanted to use Rousseau to support his particular viewpoint. The abbe Maury and Robespierre met in the pages of the Contrat social.

In summary, Rousseau did have an influence on the French Revolution. There is no way of determining on a balance sheet whether the influence was in a positive or negative direction, but nevertheless it was present. The literary and political cults which grew up around the writings of Rousseau used him as their spiritual aid in their own private and public lives. The revolutionaries looked to Rousseau for confirmation of their plans of reform. The counter-revolutionaries cited Rousseau to lend emphasis to their aristocratic outlook on change. The fault for this ambiguity must lie directly on Rousseau, but in his ambiguity may also lie his ultimate position in history. The interpretations attached to Rousseau will never be able to find permanent acceptance, but will always be fuel for debates on the legislative rights of the people and the authority of their laws.

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28. G.H. McNeill, "Anti-Revolutionary Rousseau," American Historical Review, LVIII (1953), p. 809.
29. Ibid., p. 812.
30. McDonald. op. cit., p. 123.
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## THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD IN POLITICAL THEORY

by Philip Mullin

Political theory is rightly considered a philosophizing about government, or merely abstracted generalizations concerning government. It has been felt that in studying the thoughts of great political theorists and the progression of political thought through history, we can better formulate our own political theory. Unfortunately, such a study of political theory often becomes bogged down in merely relating the thoughts of a few great political thinkers isolated from their environment.<sup>1</sup> Such a study then falls out of the realm of political science and into the realm of history. Consequently, the historical method, which is most often used by writers of political thought, usually falls into the trap of being merely history and not using historical facts to explain political thought as it should. In order to return political theory to its proper perspective, namely that of philosophizing about certain political facts, the scientific method ought to be used to best arrive at these generalizations of political thought. In this paper, then, I will try to show how the scientific method, even with all its inherent dangers, can be shown to be the best and proper method in arriving at a coherent political theory.

First, let us begin with a definition of the scientific method. The scientific method is the pursuit of truth as determined by logical considerations. The scientist, not just the political scientist, is always conducting a persistent search for truth. He is always asking himself such questions as: Is it so? The scientist, in short, is concerned with finding things out.<sup>2</sup>

The scientist generally uses the inductive method. He begins with singular data, observes them, analyzes them, and then proceeds to make generalized statements about the data he has observed.<sup>3</sup> He considers many different variables, and then tries to discover some general concept that can adequately explain properties which are common to all the variables he has studied. He can also use the deductive method so common to the field of mathematics. In this method he begins with a general principle and proceeds to find the data which support his conclusions.<sup>4</sup> These, then, are the ways in which a scientist approaches his subject matter. Now, we will turn to the realm of theory, and see the use of science in adequately describing theories.

Just as the scientist searches for truth, the political theorist should also be one who is determined to discover the truth. Although, he probably will never discover the truth, he should always endeavor to find answers to the same questions the scientist asks himself. Most often, he will find himself asking himself the third question. A political theorist is concerned with, or at least should be, discovering the reason for which people adopt a particular government, the types of people who led the movement, and so

on.<sup>5</sup> After he studies these phenomena, he then arrives at some logical conclusions about politics in general. Thus, the political theorist is not so far removed from science after all. His basic procedure is usually one of analyzing types of government, the people in them, and other variables, and then he proceeds to make various generalizations about governments. Like the scientist, he too, is interested in finding out facts.

We can use examples of great political theorists to show in a sense how they used the scientific method in forming their theories. First, Aristotle looked at ancient Greek society in his lifetime, studied various factors in it, analyzed his data and produced his notion of a political society. His notion of the state's function as promoter of the good life was based in part upon his observation of men and their constant pursuit of happiness. Likewise, Machiavelli advocated a harsh ruler largely because his observation of men led him to believe they were, in effect, nothing more than backstabbers. Consequently, he felt they needed a very strong leader to keep them in line. Plato, on the other hand, using the deductive method conceived of a well-ordered society in his mind, but found that his concept of society could never be adopted in reality. Still, even he used the inductive form of inquiry to come to his conclusions. These three great political thinkers rather unconsciously used the scientific method in formulating their theories about government. Thus, even if this progression is unconscious on their part, it does show the ease with which the scientific method can be adapted to political theory.

The main difference between the scientific method as used in science and as used in political thought is the subject matter. The scientist studies physical phenomena, while the political theorist studies human beings. This is usually the primary reason given by those political scientists who object to the use of science in the study of political theory. First, they believe the subject matter of political science, human beings, is too inconsistent for a person to effectively use the scientific method in political theory. While it may be true that physical phenomena cannot act in a manner inconsistent with their normal behavior, the same can be said about most human beings. It seems that only in the event of action by some outside force upon them do physical beings and human beings act in a manner inconsistent with their normal behavior. Thus, the use of the scientific method in political theory should not be hindered because of the natural inconsistencies of human beings.<sup>6</sup>

A second objection to the use of the scientific method is that there would be a tendency in theorists to gather facts merely for the sake of gathering facts. Thus, they fail to show the continuity so needed in an adequate study of political theory. Unfortunately, this does happen in many cases with theorists, as I am sure is the case with some scientists. Yet, this does not detract from the value of the scientific method itself. It is the purpose of the political theorist to analyze and organize the vast amount of data available to him.

This last statement brings up a third objection to the use of the scientific method in political theory. This is the problem of the selection and rejection of data. Once again we are faced with the human element. One theorist can choose a particular set of data and come up with one theory, while another theorist can choose a completely different set of data and come up with a completely different theory. Thus the scientific method leads to a large amount of subjectivity and bias on the part of theorists. Once again, this fact should not deter from using the scientific method. The historical method is also subjected to bias. Any method is going to be highly subjective largely due to human nature. Each theorist has his own philosophy of life, so any method he uses will be largely subjected to his own notions of what is or is not true. Consequently, bias or subjectivity is not a deterrent in the use of the scientific method in determining political theory. One might even conclude it is natural to be biased.

A fourth and final objection is that in using the scientific method it is difficult to make generality and verifiability compatible with one another. If the theory becomes extremely verifiable in fact, it may tend to lose its generality. On the other hand, if a statement is too general, it may not be verifiable in fact.<sup>9</sup> This is the best objection that can be raised against the use of the scientific method. The success of any method in political theory however, depends largely on the ability of the individual theorist. In using the historical method, there are no doubt many theorists who are able to keep from falling into the trap of turning political theory into merely a history of political thought. Likewise, the able theorist using the scientific method will be able to reach a happy medium between generality and verifiability. It will then be for us to decide which theorist has actually succeeded in doing so.

Possibly the greatest assets of the scientific method are its flexibility and its systematic approach to reality. First, the scientific method, being such a general way of viewing reality, can incorporate the data of all different methods. The scientific method can employ historical facts to provide a foundation for theory. It can use sociology to show how social environment can be of help in the formulation of theory. The boundaries for research through the scientific method are essentially limitless. In other words, the scientific method draws upon the knowledge of the other methods to develop its generalizations. Secondly, the scientific method of obtaining knowledge is highly systematic.<sup>10</sup> Science follows a very ordered, logical procedure to arrive at its concepts. Everything has its place, and each element in a way flows toward the general idea. Political theory, in a sense, also follows a logical, consistent, and systematic way of looking at things. Even with the inconsistencies of human behavior, political theory can be said to follow some logically consistent patterns. Thus, theory is in many ways compatible with science because they both follow certain systematic methods of viewing phenomena. If this is so, then the scientific method would certainly be the most applicable method of approaching political theory. Nevertheless, we should mention that the ideal political theorist will always try to be both a philosopher and a scientist. As a political scientist, he will be interested in describing and explaining the realities of political behavior; while as a philosopher, he will try to prescribe goals for human beings to follow. The knowledge that a political theorist obtains through the use of the scientific method of inquiry should help him in the formulations of various ideals. As was mentioned above, the ideals he is trying to describe would be clearly subjective, and his basis for selection would be largely philosophical. On the other hand, the philosophical aspect of theory can only truly be formed by an adequate understanding of the facts of political life.

In conclusion, the scientific method provides us with the proper means for connecting philosophy and science in theory. The scientific method provides us with the necessary means to make the generalizations we should and must make about politics as a whole. Though not without its weaknesses, this method's advantages outweigh its disadvantages. Consequently, if we do wish to arrive at an adequate notion of political theory, one based on a systematic progression of facts toward a basic unified concept of thought, then the scientific method will be the most proper way to approach that political theory.

## FOOTNOTES

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# THE IDEA AND METHODOLOGY OF POLITICAL THEORY

by Malcolm Childress

## Introduction

This paper seeks to discuss two fundamental aspects of political theory: first, the relationship between political theory and political science as a whole; and second, the methodology of political theory. With regard to the first aspect, I shall attempt a brief discussion of the nature of political theory in order to see how it fits into the organized discipline of political science. In discussing the methodology which I feel should be employed, in political theory, I think it only fair to point out that I favor the use of what is known as scientific, positivistic or behavioralistic methodology. Such a methodology, as shall be seen later, states that political science can be as "scientific" as the physical sciences. Thus it seeks to make political science more objective as an organized intellectual discipline which I feel is a step in the right direction for political science.

## Relationship Between Political Theory and Political Science

In this section I shall discuss the nature of political theory and attempt to show how political theory fits into political science as a whole.

As Brecht quite correctly observes, there is a good deal of confusion regarding the terms "philosophy" and "theory." However, there is some general acceptance of the meaning of 'theory.' "Thus 'theory' is always used to designate attempts to 'explain' phenomena, especially when that is done in general and abstract terms. It is quite usual to admit that theory may be 'scientific' or 'non-scientific' according to whether or not scientific rules are followed." 1. In this context, however, it is important to distinguish between political theory and what is known as political philosophy. Thus Brecht says that the word philosophy implies a universalistic reference; however, while theory only seeks to explain something, a philosophy seeks to explain everything. He concludes that, "... political 'theory' when opposed to political 'philosophy' now is usually meant to refer to scientific theory only, in distinction from political philosophy." 2

However, this distinction, while correct, seems to me to be a bit superficial. David Easton offers a fuller explanation:

Prior to World War II theory almost exclusively implied moral philosophy in its various forms or, at the very least, the history and analysis of the moral systems of the great political thinkers of the past. Only the barest glimmerings of the modern kind of theory were visible. For most students of politics the little that did exist was scarcely recognizable as such; very seldom was it clearly identified and labelled...

Empirical theory is by no means homogeneous; it varies widely in its scope and degree of abstractness... But the kind of empirical theory which represents the most striking and promising innovation since World War II seeks to illuminate the whole domain of political interaction. That is to say, the new theory which has special significance in political science seeks to systematize and lend coherence and direction to the whole field of political science as a discipline.<sup>3</sup>

Van Dyke takes a rather different view, namely that political philosophy is but an aspect of political theory. Hence he says that there are two different types of knowledge involved in political theory: "In the first place, it is concerned with political belief systems of a general and comprehensive sort; they can be called rationales or ideologies. In the second place, it is concerned with political philosophy --- thought about political thought."<sup>4</sup> Van Dyke feels, though, that the practice of treating political theory on the same footing with other branches of political science (such as comparative government, international relations, etc.) has an element of danger in it, namely that it seems to imply that any expression of theory should be placed in a category called political theory, and that the other areas of political science exceed their boundaries if any theory is included. Thus it seems rather apparent that Van Dyke's view is somewhat dissimilar to Easton's. Yet by utilizing his (Van Dyke's) framework we can observe how theory is differentiated from other fields of political science. For example, if we consider theory as the knowledge of general belief systems, then political theorists are concerned with normative propositions. As Van Dyke further notes, the political theorist at times personally endorses certain normative propositions, and in other cases simply describes the normative propositions of others; his point, however, is that the theorist is not limited to the normative, but also deals in description and explanation. Under this category, then, "... theory is distinguishable from other subdivisions not only in terms of the general and comprehensive nature of the belief systems examined, but also in terms of the question whether the beliefs are set forth in writing regarded as classical." When theory is considered as thought about thought (or philosophy), the term "... denotes the logical analysis of thought about politics expressed either by political actors or by commentators on the political process."<sup>6</sup>

#### Methodology of Political Theory

We next turn our attention to the methodology of political theory. As I mentioned in the introduction, my personal methodological emphasis is behavioral. I agree with Heinz Eulau that, "... potentially at least, all segments of political science can

be treated behaviorally."<sup>7</sup> As Charlesworth says in his introductory essay in Contemporary Political Analysis : "... the behavioral(method)is related to psychology, especially animal psychology, and also to sociology. Behaviorists are at once modest and immodest. They do not pretend to know the origin and destiny of man, but conclude that the only way to understand him is to observe him and record what he does in the courtroom, in the legislative hall, in the hustings. If enough records are kept we can predict after awhile what he will do in the presence of recognized stimuli."<sup>8</sup> Of course behavioralism, which is a relatively new methodological innovation in political science, is not universally accepted by all political scientists. For example, Christian Bay, professor of political science at the University of Alberta, Canada, states that, "... my argument will be,that much of the current work on political behavior generally fails to articulate its very real biases, and that the political impact of this supposedly neutral literature is generally conservative and, in a special sense, anti-political."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, I choose to employ empirical behaviorist methodology as the most objective and suitable for political theory.

The particular behaviorist methodology which I shall employ is generally known as system analysis.

A fully rigorous definition of system would single out from all classes, aggregates, or phenomena those which can satisfy the following criteria:

1. One can specify a set of identifiable elements.
2. Among at least some of the elements, one can specify identifiable relations.
3. Certain relations imply others.
4. A certain complex of relations at a given time implies a certain complex (or one of several possible complexes) at a later time.<sup>10</sup>

A theory must contain logically deduced propositions which in principle at least must be verifiable. In another sense a theory can be concerned with the identification of important concepts. Thus, according to Rapoport, "... if the theory is system-oriented these concepts will be elements and specifiable relations among these elements."<sup>11</sup>

Further, as Easton notes, "... the question that gives coherence and purpose to a rigorous analysis of political life as a system of behavior is: How do political systems manage to persist in a world of both stability and change." <sup>12</sup> Easton considers the fundamental functions without which no system could continue to exist and the methods of response by which systems manage to sustain them, to be a central problem of political theory. Thus he views political life, "... as a system of behavior imbedded in an environment to the influences of which the political system itself is exposed and in turn reacts."<sup>13</sup> For theoretical analysis this assumes, first of all, that political relations and interactions within a society constitute a system of behavior. Secondly, the system cannot be considered as existing in a vacuum, but must be seen as surrounded by the social and psychological environment. Thirdly, this supposes that the political system is not a closed system, but rather an open one, interacting with and influenced by other systems and the general environment. Lastly, the obvious fact that political systems do survive demonstrates that they have the ability to respond and adapt to external stimuli and disturbances. Understanding of this last fact, Easton feels, will allow the political scientist to, "... cut a new path through the complexities of theoretical analysis."<sup>14</sup>

We might conclude by considering some of the implications of what is sometimes known as the "theoretical revolution." As Eaton says "the revolution in political theory testifies to the fact that in political science we have been able to address ourselves directly to substantive construction in theory."<sup>15</sup> Since political science has now come almost completely under the influence of scientific method political scientists have been able to pursue a dual course: "We have been successful in.... sharpening our tools of empirical research and bolstering our substantive, theoretical understanding at the highest conceptual levels. We have found it neither necessary nor desirable to substitute methodological discussion for theoretical contribution or to mistake rigorous fact-gathering for explanatory knowledge and understanding."<sup>16</sup>

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