

In the Praenumbra of Praxiology: Towards a Thymology of Tyranny based on the Psychology of Hegemonic Bonds

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Abstract

Is there any point in positing a science called ‘thymology’? If we define thymology as any psychology appropriate to free and rational beings we can elucidate two possible applications, one positive and one negative. The first would constitute those psychologies which aid in understanding the mental states of actors in the market process. Arguments could be evoked either for or against such studies, as being either a helpful auxiliary to, or rendered superfluous by, praxiology. This paper considers the second, negative, application of thymology, in which psychology functions to elucidate social relations which are the obverse of, and in some instances antagonistic to, contractual relations. This is the psychology of hegemonic bonds. One of the important functions of such a thymology is to distinguish between hegemonic bonds which are natural and socionomic and those which are pathological or evil. Paradigmatic of hegemonic bonding which is morally positive when functioning normally is the family, to which may be added any number of other asymmetrical human relations. Such a thymology is distinct from, while circumscribing, praxiology. It is the synthetic study of human agency operating in tandem with human patiency. It posits that all hegemonic bonds can be analyzed into three parts 1) an agent, 2) a patient, and 3) the bond between them. In addition to its elucidation and legitimization of normal social bonds such a thymology also has special application to the understanding of tyranny and statecraft. While materialist theories of the origin and maintenance of the state disclaim loudly against psychologism, it is clear that all such theories, however elegant and necessary, are insufficient to account for state hegemony in the absence of some psychology of mental domination to demonstrate how bonds are maintained without constant recourse to physical constraint. The sorcerer is the individual who, in traditional societies, epitomizes the abuse of mental binding. On a larger scale tyranny and statecraft can be elucidated in accordance with the paradigm provided by sorcery. The bonds employed in statecraft are those mental representations by which the general population is bound. From a thymological point of view these mental representations differ from the collective representations of Durkheimian or structuralist thought in being the product of human agency. Thus the thymology of tyranny is brought into line not only with the principle of methodological individualism, but with

moral notions of human culpability.

Introduction: Mises on Psychology/Thymology

Mises, like Galileo, may be said to have invented, or at least renamed, two new sciences, praxiology and thymology. However these 'new sciences', or perhaps reclassification of pre-existent studies, though sprung from the same pen, have undergone very different careers. Praxiology has established itself as the logical foundation of economics among all those minds who concur with the Austrian school. Thymology, Mises' name for 'literary psychology' has remained in the shadow, a kind of *terra incognita* in which all sorts of speculation may be given free reign. To be exact, Mises was not, and certainly did not consider himself to be, a contributor to, let alone a founder, of thymology in any sense equivalent to his foundational role in the explication of praxiology. Rather he simply coined the term 'thymology' in order to legitimate 'literary psychology', noting that positivist psychology was useless as a support for the understanding of human nature which underlies praxiology. Thus we might abdicate 'thymology' as a special project to be undertaken by those who pursue the goals of classical liberalism, granting the label to any extant or historical school of psychology which is not contrary to the vision of human nature towards which libertarian thought strives. The opposite course to take would be for classical liberals to arise to the challenge of extending psychology into areas where the dilemmas involved in the pursuit of freedom are rendered acute, and to call this 'thymology'. Occasionally attempts have been made in this latter direction, and this paper concerns one further such attempt, one that I believe cuts to the core problem of any future 'thymology'...albeit one that may appear paradoxical and even unpalatable to many advocates of freedom.

Unsurprisingly, since both men were members of what might be termed the Viennese Renaissance, in Mises' mind the paradigmatic 'thymologist' was Sigmund Freud. Indeed, Mises speaks with warm appreciation of Freud, both as a human being and as a scholar, in *Theory and History*. He praises Freud's psychoanalysis as an outgrowth of that methodological dualism wherein the human sciences distinguish themselves from physics and other materialist and/or determinist studies. For in spite of the unseemly nature of the libido theory (perhaps shocking to conservative circles in early 20th century Vienna) Freud's therapeutic subjects retain the dignity of human personhood. His clinical subjects are minds which exhibit noetic and teleological qualities, even when these thoughts are submerged in the unconscious. They have not yet been reduced, as per

behaviorism, to entities awaiting the impact of efficient causes. Those capable of putting prudery and squeamishness aside should indeed hail Freudian psychoanalysis as 'a psychology (or thymology) of human dignity'.

However it would be no more accurate to designate Freud as the founder of 'thymology' than Mises. As Mises indicates, Freud was willing to humor the scientific establishment of his time by acquiescence in such positivist hypotheses as the ultimate reducibility of mind to matter. Mises takes less note of another sense in which Freud was willing to compromise with the prevailing positivist world view: the notion that psychology as a science was an innovation of the late 19th century. Thinkers subsequent to Mises have uncovered more evidence that psychology, in the sense of thymology, has a long prehistory which antedates the historical rupture premised by positivism. In fact, psychology/thymology has always been an integral part of the *philosophia perrenis*, the humane tradition which stretches back to the high middle ages at the very latest.

This is not, of course, to say that modern psychology contains no innovations and improvements, even if by 'modern psychology' we restrict ourselves to non-behavioral or 'literary' psychology. The libido theory has already been mentioned in passing, and the list could be extended indefinitely. However there is one important sense in which modern psychology is definitely not an improvement on the *philosophia perrenis*. It does not integrate vertically into a philosophical anthropology in the same way that its classical, medieval and renaissance equivalents did. Such a contrast is most striking if we compare the post-positivist enclaves of literary psychology with those highly systematic and rational types of philosophy which have been classed as Aristotelio-Scholastic. This is because modern psychology, even of the literary sort, evolved out of psychiatry and the study of mental pathology, and thus had difficulty in reclaiming the high ground of human nature considered in its pristine state.

Psychology within the context of classical or 'high' philosophical anthropology

Given the trade off between historical detail and useful generalization, any attempt to reconstruct the general paradigm of classical psychology/thymology must paint with very broad strokes indeed. Suffice it to say there were never such unspecifiable thinkers as Aristotelio-Scholastics in the medieval or renaissance periods. Rather there were Thomists, Averroists, al-Farabians, Avicevians, Maimonideans, Scotists, and so forth. The category included people belonging to the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religious communities as well as the distinction within each community between secular and religious thinkers. Beyond these religious and cultural

distinctions there were more technical issues which divided the Aristotelio-Scholastics over such issues as hylomorphism, the plurality of forms, and the compatibility of Platonic with Aristotelian metaphysics. However we may posit a sort of consensus theory which provided the context for all forms of Aristotelio-Scholasticism. It may be termed classical philosophical anthropology, and it is largely derived from a synthesis of Platonic and Aristotelian ideas under the auspices of neo-Platonism and subsequently developed by Christian thinkers and after that by philosophers of all three faiths situated in the Islamic world. It is an 'analytical' psychology in a very different sense than modern systems and may be defined as consisting of three levels.

- 1) The active intellect: that part of the mind which generates/receives abstract, objective ideas
- 2) The passive intellect: that part of the mind which thinks and is influenced by thoughts coming from an exterior source
- 3) The sensitive soul: that part of the mind which is influenced by sensations

Differences among the various Aristotelio-Scholastic schools did not involve questioning the basic assumptions of the tripartite model itself. Rather they differed over the ontological attributes of the three categories. For example Averroists theorized that the passive intellect was an attribute of the human collective mind rather than the individual. This Averroistic panpsychism can be usefully compared to Jungian psychology. Both seem similar in their metaphysical premises, however they put a rather different emphasis on the phenomena with which they are concerned. Jungianism, like other modern analytical psychologies emphasizes consciousness, while Averrosim, whatever its merits or demerits, remains classical in emphasizing intellect. It is the classical emphasis on will and intellect which makes the 'soul-theory' of Aristotelio-Scholasticism, whether we call it psychology or thymology, the integral basis of a 'high' anthropology, as opposed to the 'low' anthropologies which are characteristic of modernity. These are an inevitable outcome of the emphasis on pathology and sensation which characterized even the most humanistic forms of the modern psychological movement. Thus one might say that while the systems of Freud, Jung, and other modern analytical movements are 'thymological' in the bare sense of being 'literary psychologies' and concerned with the data of consciousness, they are not nearly as thymological as the classical psychologies which put a greater emphasis on intellect and will.

A psychology which does not vertically integrate into a high anthropology is intrinsically demoralizing. Although the 'literary psychologies' of the early 20th century were an improvement on their deterministic and physicalistic rivals, their basis in psychiatry and pathological studies tended to abet the 20th century tendency towards low anthropologies. This culminated, by mid-century in the kind of thinking characterized as 'existential'. Generally speaking the philosophical anthropologies characteristic of existentialism were those which emphasized the pathos of the human condition

characterized by anxiety, irrationality, and mortality. Although there was also a motif of freedom and defiance in the 'literary psychology' of existentialist writers, this counterpoint was insufficient to reclaim the high ground of an inspiring anthropology.

If the classical psychologies which preceded modernity emphasized only the autonomous working of the intellect and will, one could argue that their anthropologies were too high, and that they were descriptions of angels, not humans. Indeed, if the classical model only contained a higher register, that is to say, if it was exclusively dedicated to speculations on the active intellect, then one could say with justice that its psychology was only theoretical, rather than practical. However this is not the case, since the model included an Aristotelian emphasis on human passability and physicality. The notions of the passive intellect and the sensitive soul allow the model to take into account not only the idea of human perfection but the mechanisms by which humans become defective. This is not to say that the passive intellect and the sensitive soul are intrinsically defective, and one of the most important qualities of the classical model is that it is not a form of moral and ethical dualism in which the lower register of human functions is somehow made the primal antagonist of the higher. Rather it is in the lower registers that the potential for moral bifurcation, whether seen forensically as good/evil, or therapeutically as wholeness/sickness is to be found. Another important distinction between the upper and lower registers is that the upper is characterized by a union of individuality and universality while the lower is a disjunction of plurality and sociality. Thus sociological issues, issues rooted in the question 'how do people constitute a society?' are, from this classical perspective, largely the domain of the passive intellect and the sensitive soul.

In this way the classical model teaches us that individual autonomy, in the sense of total self-sufficiency, is a utopian notion, since sociality is built into the lower regions of human nature, and only by the sundering of these could one obtain total universality and individuation. However there is more to it than this. It is not that individuals are dependent on some abstraction called 'society' that they must swear allegiance to, although the illusion of such an entity plays an important part in the etiology of tyranny, as discussed below. Rather each individual is dependent on one or more other individuals, thus forming networks which may be termed bonds. Furthermore each of these bonds is either 1) a symmetrical bond formed for the purpose of asymmetrical exchange or 2) inherently asymmetrical. These are, of course, the "contractual bonds" and "hegemonic bonds" of Mises.

These primordial distinctions, thought through to their logical conclusions, serve to rid libertarian thinking of two fallacies which have held back progress against remediable tyranny, the first fallacy being the dream of total personal autonomy and the second being that of egalitarianism. However, as valuable as these insights might be, they are only tangential to the present issue, which is

the relationship between praxiology and thymology, where thymology is defined in terms of the classical psychological model.

Now let us posit a second schema for the understanding of what we wish to call ‘thymology’ along side of the tripartite analysis which we have inherited from the classical model. In this schema we will divide thymology into two parts, praxiology on one hand dealing with human action, and another part concerned with human beings in so far as they are the receivers of action. The first corollary that we can draw from this distinction is its irrelevance to the active intellect. Since there is no distinction between subject and object in the active intellect, we cannot speak of human action and its reception. In one classical exemplification, Plato’s *Meno*, the startling discovery is that the slave boy does not have to either innovate his own cognition or have it imparted to him through teaching.: the solution of the geometrical problem is simply there to be recovered from its timeless state. This is the working of the active intellect, although Plato allows reincarnation as a sort of allegorical explanation. Another way of looking at the active intellect is to see it as illumination from the divine. At any rate it is not the product of human action but, at most, of reception. Since the active intellect is transcendental it cannot be a subject for praxiology even if it might be considered a part of thymology. Therefore it is not a part of the following schematic which assumes the form of a four cell diagram:

	Action	Reception
Passive Intellect	<i>Thought</i>	<i>Culture</i>
Sensitive soul	<i>Imagination</i>	<i>Perception</i>

From this diagram we can see that thymology, thus construed, is not simply a superfluous synonym for psychology but rather may be considered a kind of synthetic discipline incorporating sociology, for it deals with plural minds in asymmetrical relation to one another. However the above diagram remains impersonal in the sense that it is nothing more than a listing of categories abstracted from the actions of persons. To arrive at a thymology that satisfies the principle of methodological individualism we will have to personalize the principles involved and conflate the processes at each level into a middle term uniting them. Thus the thought or image of one which is received by another is not two things but a single item uniting the pairs involved. Thus we obtain the following diagram:

Agent	→	Bond	→	Patient
<i>Passive Intellect</i>				<i>(cognitive bonds)</i>
<i>Sensitive Soul</i>				<i>(aesthetic bonds)</i>

The above model may be termed a general theory of bonding, and may serve as a basis for cognizing all non-market processes in human society, a huge area whose understanding is a necessary auxiliary to the economist's study of the market process. On the other hand, the normative individualist may be loath to embrace such a model due to its mental extrinsicism. The integrity of the individual is primarily a property of the active intellect according to the classical model. On the other hand, at the level of the passive intellect and the sensitive soul, the mind becomes permeable and thoughts become participatory. The notion of two or more minds participating in the same thought is indeed a strange one from the point of view of post-Cartesian metaphysics, and one for which no rigorous argument will be made here. All that is being maintained is that such a notion is sociologically useful.

The usefulness of a General Theory of Bonding for understanding Hegemonic Bonds

Let us reconcile ourselves to the fact that the compass of thymology is much broader than that of praxiology. While praxiology provides the premises for understanding the world of the free act, thymology deals with all conditions of human existence, including restraint as well as freedom. In short, while praxiology is exclusively dedicated to the sphere of 'human freedom', thymology contemplates that 'of human bondage' whether the bonds in question are the sweet bonds of love or the gloomy chains of tyranny. The former applies principally to the market process while the latter applies to non-market processes including politics. In *Human Action* Mises terms these contractual bonds vs. hegemonic bonds. Furthermore contractual bonds and praxiology largely involve the logical side of human life, while hegemonic bonds are deeply involved with its paralogical side. Contrary to extreme rationalism, the paralogical side of human existence is not to be considered evil *in toto caelo*, however it is true that the origins of evil, or more specifically the roots of tyranny, are to be found in that general region. This is important to note at the outset, for it may seem that the kind of thymology being proposed here, one which encompasses passivity and irrationality along side of action and reason, constitutes a surrender of principle. Why return to the land of Egypt, the land of bondage, after having spied the praxiological garden flowing with milk and honey? Why indeed, unless such a dialectical recursion is essential for the recovery of freedom. To be able to turn reason and freedom on their head in a speculative sense while retaining a normative commitment to reason and freedom, is the desiderata of such a thymology.

In discussing the difference between hegemonic and contractual bonding Mises makes the following remarkable statement:

“The power that calls into life and animates any social body is always ideological might, and the fact that makes an individual a member of any social compound is always his own conduct.”¹

This is a highly compressed and meaningful sentence and one that seems contradictory at first glance. The first half seems idealistic and impersonal, the second invokes the principle of methodological individualism which the reader is confident underlies Mises’ theory of human action. If we take it on good faith that Mises is saying something coherent we must posit a great number of inferences which have been assumed in the process of getting from the first to the latter part of the sentence. We know from *Theory and History* that Mises accepted Hume’s consent theory of governance, according to which even apparent tyrannies rest on the unwillingness of majorities to change the regime. Inversely, it is generally minorities which are in opposition to the governing order, and this is quite independent of whether or not representative institutions have developed in a polity or not. The action of the majority is the outcome of some mental process or other, but on the surface may be considered action none the less. Mises’ usage of the expression ‘ideological might’ is surprising. For it conjures up the image of a force floating about independent of human agency. If such is the case then ‘ideological might’ is no better than society, culture, destiny, or genes as an explanatory category. That ideological might must be produced or at least manipulated by agents has to be assumed in order to make the statement correspond with the principle of methodological individualism. We can begin to unravel this compound by assuming that the statement spans the fields of thymology (psychology) and praxiology. Getting from the beginning to the end of the sentence may require more than just the reconstruction of Mises’ unstated presuppositions, it may involve the rediscovery and expansion of a thymology which, as mentioned above, embraces the study of humans both as actors and as acted upon. It will be useful to call the first category of persons agents and the latter patients.

Hegemonic bonding, as opposed to contractual and market relations between acting individuals, can be described according to the forementioned interrelation among 1) agents, 2) patients, and 3) the bonds between them. This is the only way of describing the building up of hegemonic social structures which keeps faith with methodological individualism. Most holistic theories of society are reifications of bonds. In fact, such theories become bonds in and of themselves. Since the rise of positivism and the social sciences, it has been assumed that there is an overarching entity called ‘society’ or ‘culture’ or ‘race’ which is more often than not arbitrarily posited without any particular ontological argumentation. The consensus of the modern human sciences, based on Comptist-Durkehimian or neo-Kantian presuppositions is that populations are to a greater or lesser extent cemented into cohesion by social ideas which float, authorless, above acting humans. Such

modern theories stand in proud contrast to primitive beliefs in law-givers, gods or heros who designed and then donated cultural institutions to whatever people happened to be within the sphere of their domination. That such primitive beliefs, taken as subjective accounts, were generally examples of naïve mythologies which had suffered from historical falsification can hardly be denied. However the modern rejection of agency in cultural process has less to do with the absurdity of primitive myth than scientific fascination with efficient causality and the inexhaustible potential of incremental, as opposed to punctuated, evolution.

The theory of political process, like that of market process, must begin with human action. However it does not end there, since the political problem *par excellence* is the willingness of people to suffer domination. Thus to the theory of human agency must be added a theory of human patiency, a theory of the surrendering of human will, action, and responsibility to an exterior agent. The intermediary term between the agent and the patient is the bond. It is the nature of the bond which is clearly the salient element of the process, and hence this kind psychological (or thymological) paradigm may be termed 'a general theory of bonding'.

Inattention to the importance and necessity of asymmetrical bonds in human society has caused much libertarian theorization to shade into egalitarianism, thus rendering the demand for an end to state tyranny indistinguishable from a typical utopian project. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that asymmetrical bonds between agents and patients are essential to those wide areas of natural society which are outside of, but which do not necessarily conflict with, the market process. Such paradigmatically asymmetrical relationships include parent/child, teacher/student, healer/healed, and caregiver/ward. All of these may intersect with the market process at some point while remaining essentially non-market relations. Once one lays aside the mental blinkers of egalitarianism it is clear that there is nothing inherently unjust about such relations. Thus the first and most foundational advantage of a general theory of bonding is to replace the kind of egalitarian/contractarian thinking which is presuppositional not only in the social sciences, but in classical liberalism, with a more realistic understanding of the social background against which the market process operates.

A second benefit of the general theory of bonding is its potential to distinguish between socioeconomically asymmetrical bonds and abusive or tyrannous ones. All classical liberal thought agrees that contractual relations are non-tyrannical, the difficulties are presented by those non-state, non-contractual relations outside the market process. Should these bonds be considered allegories of the state's legitimacy and naturalness, refractory obstacles in the progress of 'new contractual man', or ignored as *adiaporiae*? One of the major dilemmas which libertarian theorizing has boxed itself into is

the contradiction between a materialist definition of coercion, largely taken over from 19th century positivism⁴, and the widely recognized fact, as attested by Mises above, that hegemony is largely maintained by ideological factors rather than force. This disjuncture between ontological and ethical levels prevents the kind of crisp moral distinctions which the partisans of anti-statism strive for. To be sure, all clarity comes at some price or sacrifice in another area, and there may be many who will balk at the exacting price (largely in terms of delusions of omnipotence) which the theory of general bonding calls for, namely a psychologization of ethics.

A salient difference between thymology and praxiology is that the former deals with a plurality of mental faculties and states, while the latter focuses on the unitary act. Mises paid homage to the essentially analytical nature of thymology in those sections of *Theory and History* where he draws on the works of Sigmund Freud. Put in stark terms, for praxiology the human individual is treated as a unit while for thymology (or psychology) the individual mind is considered in its various parts. Mises has shown that praxiology is a sufficient basis for the science of economics, which concerns the choices and contracts of individuals. However praxiology is not a sufficient basis for political science. Political science deals with hegemonic bonds as well as contractual bonds. If political science only dealt with governors ('directors' in *Human Action*), then a praxiological account of their activities would be sufficient. However this is only one half of the equation. The remarkable question in political science is: How and why do people allow themselves to be governed?

The philosophy of classical liberalism is based on the ideal integrity and dignity of the human individual. This philosophy has very deep roots in classical and medieval thought. The principles of the integrity, autonomy, and rationality of the person are essential to the very definition of what it means to be human in classical terms. However the attainment of responsible and conscious humanity is not automatically guaranteed by human birth. It is an accomplishment, or to use more philosophical terms, something which is potential rather than actualized in human existence. If this were otherwise, there would be no reason for, or possibility of, hegemonic bonding, either in its socionomic or abusive applications. The very existence of hegemonic bonding shows us that, since physical force is too inefficient to maintain tyranny, people are evidently willing to abandon the autonomy of their own wills and open themselves up to mental domination.

The existence of such a phenomenon as 'the willing abandonment of the will' points in the direction of analytic psychology/thymology. Where as the normative goal of classical liberalism evokes an anthropological ideal which has been summarized in the renaissance phrase 'the dignity of man', (rationality plus autonomous will) analytical forms of psychology give us a clue as to those forces which impede the realization of this ideal. The psychiatric study of minds in which the will is

divided against itself has developed an ample literature on neurosis, addiction, obsession, psychosis, and hysteria. However the broader political implications of analytical psychology have not been taken up by the partisans of classical liberalism.

However the general theory of bonding, considered as a thymological theory, bridges the requirements of praxiology and methodological individualism on the one hand and the realities of the psychology of obedience on the other. All human beings are potentially both actors and patients, however in actual hegemonic bonds agents and patients are differentiated. The nature of the agent's act is its unicity, the fact that it is a vector of intention acting on some person or thing. In contrast the patient is a composite of mental states, and it is the agent, not the patient, who selects which of these mental states becomes the salient force in determining the behavior of the patient. The notion that human beings may serve as patients as well as agents may be offensive to ideals of individual autarchy, but it is not intrinsically sinister. The agent may be a lover, a saint, a therapist, or a parent with the interest and edification of the patient at heart. Perhaps the great majority of hegemonic bonds are of this benevolent nature.

On the other had the agent may be a sorcerer, someone who seeks to subvert the mental autonomy of the patient in order to turn the patient into a tool for personal power or gratification. To breach the subject of sorcery, and to imply that it has some efficacy, is to incur the well-founded protest of post-enlightenment sensibilities. For the time being let us simply lay aside all the claims which have been made by parapsychologists and restrict ourselves to such acts of sorcery as can be limited to the effects of minds on minds as opposed to minds on things. Anthropologists and others have studied sorcery as a phenomenon in itself, but it is of no intrinsic interest here. Rather, the present inquiry uses sorcerers as a type and sorcery as a process to elucidate tyrants as a type and statecraft as a process. There are many differences between the two phenomena, and it is more than a simple difference in scale. Yet one similarity is that they are both being considered here as psychological phenomena. We are taking it for granted that a prince cannot be turned into a toad. On the other hand, and with equal insistence, we know that princes throughout history have proved capable of turning their subjects into toadies.

It must be considered axiomatic that the qualities of the passive intellect and the sensitive soul which make them useful in the formation of benevolent hegemonic bonds are the very same qualities which make them dangerous in an abusive context. The crux of the matter is that psychic plurality lends itself to social solidarity. According to the classical model it is only the active intellect which is the *anthropos*, the true individual. Below a certain threshold the mind becomes, quite in the absence of fragmentation, decidedly multiple in its desires and impulses. Far from being pathological

this is decidedly natural and even socioeconomically essential. To use a geometrical metaphor, smooth objects will not adhere, while irregular ones can be fit together in a jigsaw puzzle like way. The desires and impulses of the sensitive soul, and even the cognitive needs of the passive intellect, gives them a predisposition to asymmetrical bonding.

Now let us return to the statement of Mises:

“The power that calls into life and animates any social body is always ideological might, and the fact that makes an individual a member of any social compound is always his own conduct.”¹

Here we can see that the ideology is in fact ‘called forth’...a renaissance magus or a shaman would say evoked, by the acting agent to bind the patients. Ideological might is a rather inexact phrase, but it shows that Mises was not unwilling to acknowledge the fact that ideas might have an emotive charge in and of themselves apart from their logical persuasiveness. It is the force of the imagination contained in the passive intellect which the sorcerer-tyrant uses to trump the more essentially human faculty of the active intelligence. The path of liberation lies in reversing this movement, in tearing the imaginative faculty away from the tyrannical bond so that the link with the active intellect may be reestablished. This is not to say that it is obligatory for all people to attain the level of philosophical enlightenment posited by Aristotelio-Scholasticism. At any time it is normal for the majority to be swayed by the imagination of their passive intellects. All that the principled anti-statist would ask of human weakness would be that it put itself in charge of such kinship structures or voluntary sodalities as may allow people to get by with the minimum of effort and responsibility. Unfortunately this tendency to rupture along the divide between the active and passive intellects creates a ready pool of patients easily exploitable by state builders. Let us conclude with a consideration of the historical depth of this process.

Sorcery and the Origins of the State

We can posit an archaic world in which people, although certainly capable of good and evil, were as yet incapable of building and maintaining states. The tendency towards the aggrandizement of power is the sempiternal factor in state building, while technological factors are the novelties which prompted the rise of archaic states. One can imagine a world of small communities in which the acme of power and respect was held by religious and medical specialists (let us call them shamans) exercising their hegemony in either benevolent or malevolent fashion as the case might be. However when the environmental and technological conditions were ripe we can imagine a morally negative shaman (a sorcerer) who binds together members of more than one community into a new hegemonic bond called the state.

In his work *Shamanism* Mircea Eliade writes:

We may note the fact that [in the Chinese tradition] a perfect sovereign must have the powers of a “magician.” “Ecstasy” was no less necessary to the founder of a state than his political virtues, for this magical ability was equivalent to an authority, a jurisdiction over nature. Marcel Granet has observed that the step of Yu the Great, Shun’s successor, “does not differ from the dances that induce trance in sorcerers (t’iao-shen)...The ecstatic dance forms part of the procedures for acquiring a power of command over men and nature. We know that this regulating power, in the so-called Taoist as in the so-called Confucian texts, is called Tao.”²

Thus we can see that the origin of the state was, in archaic times, ascribed to mental domination, or in common parlance, sorcery. This in no way invalidates the elegant and plausible theories which ascribe the origin of the state to technological and environmental factors. Such theories only become obstacles to inquiry when they assume the form of dogmatic materialism. That is to say, when they assume an either/or attitude towards material vs. mental causality. This is a mistake which results from the confusion of necessary with sufficient factors. If there was no mental “glue” to consolidate people together under the ambit of wide scale hegemonic bonds, no amount of dams, canals, weapons or roads would be sufficient to create a state.

The reason why the sorcerous origin of the state is opaque (and to not only to postivisticly prejudiced modern consciousness but to almost everybody for the last few millennia) lies in the series of rationalist and monotheistic revolutions which started around what Jaspers termed “the axial age” (beginning circa 600 BCE). These movements implemented, along side of their non-political objectives, the re-founding of the state on a naturalistic or legalistic basis, whether in Greece, China or elsewhere. This had the effect, intentional or otherwise, of obscuring the forces which actually drove early statecraft. Theorizing about justice, democracy or the imitation of heavenly archetypes separates the age of the sorcerer/king from that of the demagogue/tyrant. None the less even the accounts of the reformers retain strata of information which provide important clues as to the how hegemonic bonding was, and is, implemented in a polity.

In the West the best witness to the importance of mental bonds for the practice of state building is Plato. Plato deals explicitly with the forging of mental bonds by agents in order to consolidate patients into a state. However his most famous description of bondage is in a supposedly metaphysical allegory, the parable of the cave in the Book VII of the *Republic*. There he speaks of prisoners who are forced, in the allegory by fetters but in the real world by their own fascination, to witness a theatrical drama. They are enchanted by it, and this enchantment precludes any chance of their liberation. This is the master-metaphor for all similar descriptions of mental persuasion in Plato,

and is fundamental to politics regardless of its metaphysical context or the veracity of Plato's ontological premises. It is this notion of politics as a "theatrical" phenomena, that is, an enthralling participation in a reality which has been crafted by others which bridges the world of the sorcerer/king and the demagogue/tyrant. It is omnipresent in human history, and long outlives the sorcerer/king in its archaic sense to spring up as new forms in every age. It is as much the propaganda films of Leni Reifenstahl as the dance of Yu the Great.

To schematize in the broadest sense we can speak of an archaic period when the phenomena of mental participation and sorcery were unquestioned postulates, and in which resistance to the state per se was an impossibility due to the unavailability of ethical alternatives. Of course unethical alternatives were always at hand in the form of *coup d'etat* and counter-sorcery. For millennia this was the stuff of history (as opposed to 'History' in the Hegelian sense). With, for example, the Ionian enlightenment, and all other enlightenments then or since, we see the rise of rationalism, skepticism, and legalism. This culminates in the flowering of what we have been calling the classical model, arguing that it can be identified with medieval and renaissance Aristotelio-Scholasticism.

However increasing rationalism and legalism tends to obscure the fact that the post-archaic mechanisms of mental domination are in fact the same techniques as those used by the sorcerer/kings at the dawn of civilization. In one of history's supreme ironies the rationalistic and legalistic schemata are themselves turned into bonds, simultaneously obscuring the true nature of power and being twisted into emotionally charged fetishes. To think through these kinds of illusory premises requires a great deal of intellectual subtlety and effort, and although the classical model provided by Aristotelio-Scholasticism did indeed provide a paradigm for grappling with the relevant issues, the idealizing tendency of medieval anthropology disinclined scholars to examine the nature of power. It is only in the very late 'degenerate' phase of Aristotelio-Scholasticism, in the cynical ambiance of the Italian renaissance, that certain thinkers begin to examine the way in which the passive intellect and the sensitive soul could be manipulated for political ends. Machiavelli discards the taboo against talking about power qua power, and subsequently Bruno provides a detailed psychological account of bonding, illustrating how statecraft is essentially an extension of enchantment. Depending on how sympathetic one is, this may either be viewed as a moral regression, or as the understanding, through critical thought, of archaic power mechanisms. The church took an unsympathetic view, with tragic consequences for Bruno. Modern rationalism makes him a martyr of positivism's prehistory, which is equally superficial.

Leaving aside the dolorous history of Renaissance religion and politics, what is the libertarian payoff of such arcane studies? Once the type of the enchanter is established, a model has

been secured of a free human agent acting on patients apart from divine, demonic, or astral (today we would say environmental) influence...thus addressing itself to the issue of moral culpability. The sorcerer is the negative type of the enchanter. Bruno allows us to make the final inference independently, that the tyrant is the public version of the sorcerer. We have made a long end-run around history, but it will have been worth it if we can show that the sort of 'literary psychology', or thymology, which Mises advocated, a non-determinist psychology which put the onus of moral responsibility on fallible human agents, was already in place by the beginning of the 17th century. However it soon went into eclipse under successive waves of Cartesianism, materialism, and positivism.

Notes

1. Mises *Human Action* p. 196
2. Eliade *Shamanism* p.449

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