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Introduction

After staking so much for so long on the effective operation of self-interest rightly understood, political scientists, political theorists, politicians themselves have begun to call for a renewed appreciation of the place of virtue in the citizenry's moral and political life. The roles virtue is invited to play are manifold, and the politics that underlies this renewed interest in such virtue is diverse. The cultivation of virtue – moral virtue, civic virtue, private virtue, public virtue – is praised both as an intrinsic good that might animate the citizen's public and private endeavors and as a means to the better securing of the most basic political end: "the preservation of the community and its way of life."[1] Some of those striving to bring virtue back into political argument have only minimal quarrels with the status quo, adapting their proposals to a modern polity understood to function primarily on the basis of self-interest and the satisfaction of material desires.[2] Others, however, espouse a more transformative politics of virtue – one that would recall the modern polity to Aristotelian principles of government – or at the very least, to a political program in which the cultivation of the virtues, public or private, moral or civic, would play a far greater role than the one accorded it in the current Western incarnations of liberal democracy.[3]

1 William A. Galston, "Liberal Virtues," *American Political Science Review* 82 (1988), 1280.
2 The case for the pursuit of political virtues already practiced by or easily cultivated within liberal democratic citizens is made by, among others, Bruce A. Ackerman, "The Storrs Lectures: Discovering the Constitution," *Yale Law Journal* 93 (1984): 1013–72; Rogers Smith, *Liberalism and American Constitutional Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); Stephen L. Elkin, *City and Regime in the American Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Stephen Macedo, *Liberal Virtues: Citizenship, Virtue, and Community in Liberal Constitutionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1990.
3 Alasdair MacIntyre's moral philosophy implicitly supports an Aristotelian politics of virtue; see especially *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981). Explicit advocacy of such a politics can be found in, among others, J.

The possibility and desirability of implementing any of these agendas is rightly a matter of some debate, mostly within the academy, but also, in attenuated tones, without. Two issues figure most prominently in this discussion. The first concerns the compatibility of wealth and virtue. What sort of virtues can be expected of the citizens of commercial liberal society, their private lives bursting with claims on their time and energy, their public, political lives strangely stunted?[4] Although it is possible to consider this question solely in terms of the political culture of late twentieth-century capitalism, most recent work has focused on a related historical inquiry. To what extent did the rise of commercial society and its attendant ideology of liberalism make the practice of civic virtue impossible? J. G. A. Pocock has framed his account of the last generations of the republican tradition in terms of this antinomy between virtue and commerce, and much of the continuing controversy surrounding the principles of the American founding places this question at its center.[5] The issue of the compatibility of wealth and virtue is thus historical as well as contemporary: not just whether we twentieth-century Americans (and Europeans) are handicapped

Budziszewski, *The Resurrection of Nature: Political Theory and the Human Character* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); *The Nearest Coast of Darkness: A Vindication of the Politics of Virtues* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) and Stephen Salkever, *Finding the Mean: Theory and Practice in Aristotelian Political Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

Other works not explicitly Aristotelian, but still committed to a strong politics of virtue include George Will, *Statecraft as Soulcraft: What Government Does* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983); Clarke Cochran, *Character, Community, and Politics* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1982); William Sullivan, *Reconstructing Public Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) and from a religious perspective, Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

4 For an early effort to grapple with this problem, see Fred Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976) and more recently Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

5 For Pocock's account, see especially "Virtue and Commerce in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 3 (1972): 119–34; "Early Modern Capitalism: The Augustan Perception," in Eugene Kamenka and R.S. Neale, eds., *Feudalism, Capitalism and Beyond* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1975); *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), chapters 14 and 15 and *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

On the American debate, see besides Pocock, Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1969) and the slew of books and articles that followed its publication, ably summarized in the articles of Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historigraphy," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 3d series, 29 (1972): 49–80; "Republicanism and Early American Historiography," *ibid.* 39 (1982): 334–56 and Peter S. Onuf, "Reflections on the Founding: Constitutional Historiography in Bicentennial Perspective," *ibid.* 46 (1989): 341–75.

in the pursuit of virtue by commercial society, but whether at the founding of their new republic, Americans took a turn away from virtue that continues to plague (or bless) their polity today.

The second question central to the debate on civic virtue raises issues equally as far-reaching. Is it possible to institute a politics of virtue in which the freedoms of liberalism would coexist with a greater commitment to a common morality and the public good? Most participants in what has come to be called the "republican revival" assure us that we may have the best of both worlds, a modern pluralistic society converted into a "community of the good" without endangering the personal liberties that remain the distinctive achievement of liberal democracies.[6] Critics of such republican communitarianism dispute this assertion, arguing that the practice of political virtue called for in such proposals necessarily entails the type of homogeneous, close-knit, overbearing community lauded by theorists like Harrington and Rousseau but rarely found palatable in practice. Calls for the renewal of virtue, these critics point out, retain their appeal by avoiding the question of what precisely the renewal of virtue would mean politically, what procedures and institutions would be used to call forth the virtue desired.[7]

How then are we to decide whether a politics of virtue is fit for the modern world or not? One possibility, little explored in the literature, is to consider the lessons of history. Ours is certainly not the first generation to entertain the idea of bettering society through increasing the virtue of its members. However, the fact that we are once again debating the uses to which a greater civic virtue could be put is ample evidence that none of the previous experiments in a politics of virtue was lastingly effective. Perhaps by examining the problems encountered by an earlier effort to impose a

6 Explicit assurances to this effect can be found in Frank Michelman, "Law's Republic," *The Yale Law Journal* 97 (1988): 1493–538 and Cass Sunstein, "Beyond the Republican Revival," *ibid.*: 1539–90. See also Clarke Cochran, *Character, Community, and Politics,* esp. chapters 7 and 8; Benjamin R. Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) and Michael J. Sandel, "Morality and the Liberal Ideal," *The New Republic,* May 7, 1984.

7 A particularly damning indictment of republican vagueness can be found in John R. Wallach, "Liberals, Communitarians and the Tasks of Political Theory," *Political Theory* 15 (1987): 581–611. For the potential dangers implicit in contemporary proposals for a politics of virtue, see Amy Gutmann, "Communitarian Critics of Liberalism," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14 (1985): 308–22; Don Herzog, "Some Questions for Republicans," *Political Theory* 14 (1986): 473–93; H. N. Hirsch, "The Threnody of Liberalism: Constitutional Liberty and the Renewal of Community," *ibid.*: 423–50; Stephen Holmes, "The Permanent Structure of Antiliberal Thought," in Nancy L. Rosenblum, ed., *Liberalism and the Moral Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989) and George Kateb, "Democratic Individuality and the Meaning of Rights," in *ibid.* A far more sympathetic consideration of the strengths as well as the weaknesses of communitarian ideals can be found in Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of a Democratic Community* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).

politics of virtue, we can learn more about the prospects for such an undertaking today. Were the problems encountered by the advocates of civic virtue unique to that period or are they likely to surface again today? Were these problems directly linked to the rise of commercial society? Or was the gradual eclipse of virtue the result of contingent factors that would not trouble a renewal of virtue today? Did this earlier debate on the importance and possibility of civic virtue produce any conceptions of the good citizen upon which we now could draw? Or are all forms of civic virtue tied to political and social structures no longer available to modern polities? None of these questions has been systematically addressed by either proponents or critics of the revival of virtue. Yet an understanding of how and why various politics of virtue once lost their force could help us decide if it is appropriate or possible again to pursue politics of this sort in the contemporary political arena.

This study then looks backwards in time to the beginning of the modern era, to the first years of the eighteenth century in England, a time in which the politics of virtue were vigorously pursued – and just as vigorously challenged. By investigating the factors that led in this period to the transformation of virtue, to the discrediting of publicly oriented ideas of civic virtue and the emergence of privately oriented ones, I hope to provide a promising critical perspective on the question of what sort of politics of virtue are possible or desirable today.

In tackling this question, I begin with the vexing problem of definitions. I have just written of public virtue and civic virtue, of publicly oriented civic virtue and privately oriented civic virtue. Because my argument is not one that sits easily with the generally accepted account of political thought in this period, I want to clarify here what I mean by these terms.

The term "civic virtue" as applied to eighteenth-century political thought is an anachronism. Augustan writers consumed with the problem of the place of virtue in their polity spoke of public virtue, private virtue, public spirit, politick virtues, patriotism, but not of civic virtue nor even of political virtue.[8] J. G. A. Pocock, however, among others, has made a forceful case that at least some Augustans worried about something that we can now call civic virtue even if the eighteenth-century authors gave this praiseworthy citizenly disposition other names, and I agree with him. The question then

8 These terms come, in order, from Charles Davenant, *An Essay on the Probable Methods of Making the People Gainers in the Balance of Trade* (1699) in *The Political and Commercial Works* (London, 1771), II, 338; John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, *Cato's Letters,* 4 v., 3d ed., facsimile reprint in 2 v. (New York: Russell and Russell, [1733] 1969), II, 11; *ibid.,* I, 6–7; *The Spectator,* 4 v. (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1957), no. 93; *ibid.,* no. 248; Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, *Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism,* in *Works,* 4 v. (London: Henry Bohn, 1844; reprint New York: A.M. Kelley, 1967).

arises of what we take the term "civic virtue" to mean both in general and as it is applied to the thought of eighteenth-century Englishmen.[9]

In thinking about this question it is helpful to observe that the virtues can be defined both substantively (through a descriptive list of what counts as human virtues) and formally (by means of a definition abstract enough to accommodate the various members of the substantive list). Considerations of virtue in moral philosophy typically proceed along these lines. Thus Edmund Pincoffs defines the moral virtues as "forms of regard . . . for the interests of others" and provides a listing of them which includes honesty, loyalty, benevolence, selflessness, reliability, helpfulness.[10] Josef Pieper speaks of those excellences which "can enable man to attain the furthest potentialities of his nature" and focuses on four in particular, the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.[11]

This mode of understanding the moral virtues may be extended by analogy to the political virtues. We tend, for example, to define political virtue with a list of the citizenly dispositions favored by the classical republican tradition: public spirit, patriotism, love of country, love of equality, the willingness to subordinate private to public good. But republican authors consider these character traits politically virtuous because, given republican ideals of the good community, they render the citizen the best possible member of the polity. Just as the moral virtues "make an individual a good human being" so the political virtues, formally understood, are those that make the individual a good citizen.[12] Joseph Raz's account captures this approach when he describes the political virtues as "mark[ing] the quality of people as citizens. They are forms of individual excellence which are manifested in public attitudes and actions."[13]

9 I use the word "Englishmen" advisedly. Although a few women entered the lists of Augustan political controversy (Mary Astell, for example, in favor of the ultraconservative High Church cause), the writers on political virtue are overwhelmingly male. On Astell, see Ruth Perry, *The Celebrated Mary Astell: An Early English Feminist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). There remains the more difficult issue of whether the virtues argued for by these men are understood to be desirable properties of men alone or of English men and women. This issue was never confronted in the contemporary literature and, by keeping most references to citizens plural, my analysis generally reflects this ambiguity. In fact, of the works discussed below, only Bolingbroke's account of a virtuous "spirit of patriotism" is on its face exclusively masculine for it assumes that patriots will be members of parliament, an office barred to women at this time. The other understandings of citizen virtue I examine here see it issuing in public actions available, at least in theory, to both men and women.

10 Edmund L. Pincoffs, *Quandaries and Virtues: Against Reductivism in Ethics* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 89, 85.

11 Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, [1954] 1966), xii.

12 James D. Wallace, *Virtues and Vices* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 41.

13 Joseph Raz, "Facing Diversity: The Case of Epistemic Abstinence," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 19 (1990), 22. The philosophical literature on the virtues contains a certain amount

Different understandings of what constitutes and sustains the good state will thus produce different understandings of what constitutes political virtue. There are certain political virtues that fit liberal society, others that fit republican; Christian philosophies will offer one sort of vision of the good citizen, secular theories another. This pluralistic approach to political virtue reflects Aristotle's view that while there might be one best regime, political virtue cannot be said to exist only in that polity. Rather, "the excellence of the citizen must be an excellence relative to the constitution."[14]

A very few modern commentators regard "civic virtue" as synonymous with "political virtue." They treat it as a term that stands simply for "the moral and political qualities that make a good citizen," whatever the regime within which the citizen finds him- or herself.[15] Thus Richard Sinopoli contends, "Civic virtue can be defined formally as a disposition among citizens to engage in activities which support and maintain a just political order." He adds specifically, "This definition is neutral with regard to the particular plan of justice the citizen supports."[16] This conflation has the advantage of simplicity, yet it slights the particularly charged meaning "civic," as opposed to "political," has acquired in recent years. For most people interested in the matter, to say that individuals have civic virtue is to say something very definite about the regime in which these virtuous individuals live, the qualities they possess and the activities in the public realm which these qualities support or dispose to. For this reason, it makes sense to treat "civic" as a separate, narrower category than "political," and to designate civic virtue as a specific sort of political virtue, one particularly appropriate to and manifested in a political regime that allows for a civic mode of life.

What we need now is a concrete sense of what is meant by a civic mode of life. Following much of the recent work on this question, I would describe a civic mode of life as one that is grounded in "participatory self-rule." It is bounded on one side by despotism and on the other by extreme forms of

of debate on the question of how to characterize the virtues: as "dispositions to act in certain ways," "skills," "habits," "qualities," "excellences," "properties of the person," "character traits," etc. For these alternatives in particular, see Gilbert C. Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), chapter 1; Budziszewski, *Resurrection of Nature,* 95; Pincoffs, *Quandaries and Virtues,* chapter 5. Without slighting what is at stake in making these distinctions, I use "dispositions," "character traits," "excellences," and "qualities," interchangeably to describe the nature of the political and civic virtues with which I am concerned.

14 Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1276b:11–31.

15 Michael Walzer, *Radical Principles: Reflections of an Unreconstructed Democrat* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 55.

16 Richard C. Sinopoli, "Liberalism, Republicanism and the Constitution," *Polity* 19 (1987), 344.

"procedural liberalism."[17] Between these poles lie a variety of regimes in which individuals participate, to a greater or lesser extent, in the shaping of their collective destiny. Here I think is the key to an appropriately expansive definition of civic virtue. Civic virtue names those dispositions of the individual that make him or her a good citizen of this sort of regime – that is, that lead him or her to engage in the sort of public (and private) behavior that enable a civic mode of life both to survive and to flourish.

Some might object that this approach frames the definition of civic virtue too broadly. For them, the distinguishing feature of a civic regime is the priority it places on political activism – either as "the very substance of the good life," or as the only way to stave off despotism.[18] The qualities or dispositions that make an individual an enthusiastic and effective participant in such a demanding public life are the only ones that, in this reading, should count as civic virtue. Regimes that do not require or expect a thorough engagement in public affairs cannot be homes to *civic* virtue, although their inhabitants may exhibit political virtue of some other sort.

But this objection unduly narrows the scope of the civic, ruling out of hand its presence in free societies that have a somewhat less demanding sense of the nature of and requirements for "participatory self-rule." A correct understanding of the virtues that sustain a free society must include some that dispose the citizen to political action on a fairly regular basis. However, it is possible to imagine and proper to leave room for an account of the qualities that keep people free that does not depend on their immersing themselves in the public realm, and I shall attempt to make the case for one at the conclusion of this study.

Of course, most students of the classical republican tradition describe its conception of civic virtue in a way that would seem to be at odds with the definition I have just defended. Thus Isaac Kramnick writes, "The meaning of virtue in the language of civic humanism is clear. It is the privileging of the public over the private." Gordon Wood describes "what the eighteenth century termed public virtue" as the "willingness of the individual to sacrifice his private interest for the good of the community." And Anthony Pagden observes, "For most classical republicans, liberty could only be achieved by each man's willingness to renounce his purely private concerns for the greater good of the community."[19] But the evident gap between my

17 Charles Taylor, "Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate," in Nancy L. Rosenblum, ed., *Liberalism and the Moral Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 178, 172.

18 Budziszewski, *Resurrection of Nature,* 109. For a classic formulation of this view, see Hannah Arendt, "What is Freedom?" in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Penguin Books, 1954).

19 Isaac Kramnick, "The 'Great National Discussion': The Discourse of Politics in 1787," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 3d ser. 45 (1988), 15; Wood, *Creation of the American Repub-*

definition and theirs does not necessarily mean that the accounts conflict. Their definitions correctly characterize the particular answer given consistently throughout the republican tradition to the question, "What citizen excellences are necessary to preserve a free and flourishing society?" What is particularly interesting about the eighteenth century – and what the following case studies seek to underscore – is that for perhaps the first time in history, new answers to this question emerged, answers that affirmed the importance and possibility of civic virtue while refashioning its content.

Up until this point in history, those speculating about the conditions for a free society argued that its inhabitants must possess a strongly public virtue, one understood, says J. G. A. Pocock, in an "austerely civic, Roman and Arendtian sense."[20] (Not all inhabitants need possess this virtue – just those men with sufficient property to qualify them for the franchise or, more restrictively, for service in parliament.) In this view, the character traits that made such a citizen virtuous, that made him an effective defender of civic liberty and a judicious deliberator on the public good, were those that disposed him to give priority to the realm of politics, to find personal fulfillment in public service.

Pocock has vividly evoked the various political and economic pressures which led some writers in early eighteenth-century England to fear for the survival of such virtue and in consequence propose strategies by which society might remain free and stable without recourse to political virtues at all.[21] As Pocock describes it, those Augustan authors who interpreted the circumstances of England's post-revolutionary polity as undermining the English citizen's capacity for virtue faced a stark alternative. They could pursue a traditional politics of public virtue in the hopes that such virtue "might be reaffirmed independently of social conditions" (perhaps "by means of legislation or educative example"). Or they could "admit that government was an affair of managing the passions" and seek to develop an account of the good polity that dispensed with an ideal of citizen excellence altogether.[22]

This account, although a powerful rendering of certain aspects of eighteenth-century thought, overlooks a third path, an important alternative to these extremes in which civic virtue is not abandoned but transformed. I have tried to capture the nature of this transformation by distinguishing

lic, 68; Anthony Pagden, "Introduction," in Anthony Pagden, ed., *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 10.

20 Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History,* 48.

21 See especially Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment,* 446–60, "Early Modern Capitalism," and *Virtue, Commerce, and History,* chapter 6.

22 Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment,* 459.

between a publicly oriented civic virtue (what we now usually call civic virtue or public virtue) and a privately oriented one, arguing that as the case for publicly oriented virtue faltered in eighteenth-century English political argument, the idea of a civic virtue more privately oriented emerged.

To call a civic virtue "privately oriented" might strike one as a contradiction in terms; let me say a little here about how I use the term and why I think the term makes sense of a particular development in Augustan political thought.

The accounts of civic virtue with which we are most familiar are ones that posit a stark divide between public and private, arguing that the good citizen is one who privileges the public, political realm over private, personal wants, desires, ambitions.[23] Civic virtue conceived in this manner is often called "public virtue." Thus Carter Braxton, writing during the American Revolution contrasted public virtue, "a disinterested attachment to the public good, exclusive and independent of all private and selfish interest," with private virtue, in which man "acts for himself, and with a view of promoting his own particular welfare."[24] Public virtue retains a similar meaning today: a recent account described "the elements of public virtue" as "dedication to the well-being of one's political community and willingness to sacrifice for it."[25] In describing the virtuous citizen as imbued with "love of one's country" or "public spirit," the classical republican tradition embraces this publicly oriented conception of civic virtue as well.

In all these examples, the qualities that make a citizen virtuous, while variously described, hinge on a mindset in which the goods of the public realm, the world of political action and deliberation, are given priority over private goods – whether from a rational decision to set aside "private interests" or from an intense emotional engagement with the public and its goods (liberty, national honor, political action itself.)[26] I call conceptions of political or civic virtue grounded in such a mindset "publicly oriented."

Political virtues in general and civic virtues in particular may also be privately oriented. That is, individuals can serve the public, engage in behavior that advances the stability, freedom and flourishing of their polity without possessing the passionate attachment to the polity and its needs that

23 For the various meanings the words "public" and "private" can take on in political argument, see Hanna Pitkin, "Justice: On Relating Public to Private," *Political Theory* 9 (1981): 327–52. I use public here in a strongly political sense, to refer to the goods and concerns of the *res publica* as considered separately from both the personal and the broadly social.

24 Carter Braxton, *Address to the Convention of...Virginia; on the Subject of Government* (Williamsburg, 1776) as quoted in Wood, *Creation of the American Republic,* 96.

25 Smith, *Liberalism and American Constitutional Law,* 52.

26 For a further discussion of these alternatives see Shelley Burtt, "The Good Citizen's Psyche: On the Psychology of Civic Virtue," *Polity* 23 (1990): 23–38.

grounds the more familiar sort of publicly oriented political virtue described above. This is not to say that such individuals have suddenly become "perfect privatists," inhabitants of a liberal state that asks nothing from them but that they treat others and others' life goals with equal concern and respect.[27] Rather, these are individuals who are exemplary citizens, energetically defending the ideals of their polity in public, political action, but who are disposed to these endeavors by concerns or character traits that lie outside of or do not directly engage the public realm.

Consider for example the account of the good citizen offered by Court Whig journalists, whose business it was to defend the prime minister Robert Walpole from opposition attacks in the 1730s. The opposition argued that only an unswerving devotion to the principles of the balanced constitution could gird individuals to defend the independence of parliament against the corrupting force of ministerial influence. Court Whigs took an opposing view, arguing that the dispositions which contributed most importantly to the preservation of public liberty were personal honesty, industry, frugality in one's personal affairs. By preventing one from becoming so needy as to succumb to ministerial blandishments these qualities grounded the responsible public deliberation that was the mark of the good citizen.[28] It would be hard to characterize this Court Whig conception of citizen virtue as publicly oriented: the citizens' actions are not grounded in the "disinterested attachment to the public good" or "dedication to the well-being of one's political community" that both eighteenth-century and modern accounts describe as central to public virtue.[29] But neither is it correct to say that the Court Whigs have given up on civic virtue altogether. Their ideal citizens behave in precisely the same way as the opposition's, acting in public to defend the nation's liberty against pernicious usurpers. In the Court Whig account, however, the character traits that ground this service to the public are personal virtues of honest and frugal household management. For this reason it is appropriate to describe the Court Whigs as advocating a privately oriented civic virtue, i.e., a quality that disposes to behavior beneficial to the public but not for publicly oriented reasons.[30]

Cato's Letters, the work of two critics of Walpole's administration writing in the 1720s, also advances a conception of civic virtue that is best understood as privately oriented. The letters, first published in the wake of the

27 The phrase "perfect privatist" is Bruce Ackerman's, used with somewhat different connotations in "The Storrs Lectures," 1033.
28 These contrasting accounts of civic virtue are further discussed in chapters 5 and 6.
29 See notes 24 and 25 of this chapter.
30 One can grant that the Court Whigs articulate a privately oriented conception of civic virtue without implying that it is a particularly persuasive one. See chapter 8.