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## Drain the Swamp: A Critique of the Managerial Power of the Civil Service as an Apparatus of the Bureaucratic “Deep State”

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Drain the Swamp:  
A Critique of the Managerial Power of the Civil Service as an Apparatus of the Bureaucratic  
“Deep State”

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of Social Studies  
of Bard College

by  
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York  
May 2023

*This project is dedicated to my Mom, my Dad, and Malcy.*

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Thank you to my Mommy, the woman who is always right... my inspiration, the GOAT, the Boss, the source of my genetic stubbornness...when I see you in myself I'm filled with pride. Best Mommy ever, se agapo poli, and I love you infinity.

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*“One can conceive of Heaven having a Telephone Directory, but it would have to be gigantic, for it would include the Proper Name and address of every electron in the Universe. But Hell could not have one, for in Hell, as in prison and the army, its inhabitants are identified not by name but in number. They do not have numbers, they are numbers.”*

- W.H. Auden, *Postscript: Infernal Science*, 1962

## Introduction

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“In a fully developed bureaucracy there is nobody left with whom one can argue, to whom one can present grievances, on whom the pressures of power can be exerted. Bureaucracy is the form of government in which everybody is deprived of political freedom, of the power to act; for the rule by Nobody is not no-rule, and where all are equally powerless, we have a tyranny without a tyrant.”

– Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*

A defining characteristic of the present era of rational government is its reliance on a series of administrative offices that categorize every facet of society to generate an efficiently organized governing system and societal structure. These governmental bureaucracies emerged after the Enlightenment for the purpose of instituting "rationality" as a guiding principle of political governance, offering an antidote to a democratically oriented system that lacked efficient organization, and thus began the long and arduous development of what we know today as the bureaucratically rational systemic structure of modern government.

Before the familiar specter of bureaucratic rationality reared its head and established itself as the bedrock of our societal framework, the procedure of personnel appointment in government offices was the “spoils system,”<sup>1</sup> wherein the President was free to choose all of his appointees with no set standards of appointment. During the age of the spoils, the bureaucracy functioned as an extension of democracy—it was responsive to elections, establishing itself as an

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<sup>1</sup> “Spoils System - Political Dictionary.”

openly partisan body meant to fulfill the agenda of the democratically elected President. Now, the bureaucracy is contrived of a series of institutions, one of which is the civil service, a technically nonpartisan, extra-governmental body committed to the pursuit of “objectivity.”

The matter of the civil service is growing increasingly polarizing, garnering mounting controversy in recent years as former President Trump’s aspiration to “Drain the Swamp”<sup>2</sup> resulted in an executive order that overturned the Pendleton Act of 1883<sup>3</sup> (which President Biden reinstated), the foundational legislation underlying the present-day civil service. President Trump’s mission in this regard defines the bureaucratic deep state, or those who make up the body of the civil service, as “the swamp”—polluted and perpetually growing, oppressively flooding and spilling over its original repository to a point where we, or some, exasperatedly exclaim in unison, “enough!”

The civil service, a central tenet of “big government,” creates a broad class of public servants who have been hired rather than appointed to fill their specialized offices. Their main quest lies in carrying out administrative tasks and maintaining a level of responsibility in ensuring the efficient and effective operation of public services and institutions. The hierarchical system relies on a series of processes wherein each employee is an element of the procedure, and the possibility for positional mobility is based on one’s merit in holding a higher managerial position.

The managerial authority of the civil service has parasitically overtaken every sphere of activity in the United States as the bureaucracy grows. Books like Franz Kafka’s *The Trial* and movies like Terry Gilliam’s *Brazil* surreally speak to the common and bizarre experience of

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<sup>2</sup> Donald J. Trump Rally in North Carolina.

<sup>3</sup> “Pendleton Act (1883).”



finding oneself entrenched in a confusing web of procedures, often complex and absurd, living at the mercy of a faceless bureaucracy that prioritizes adherence to process over humanity.

At the same time, these offices were instated to pursue positive organizational initiatives, to regulate and enforce ubiquitous improvement of our living conditions, and to generate societal leveling and equality. Specialized jobs emerged as prospects for people with specialized knowledge and experience as opposed to people with political connections pursuing some partisan agenda, as was common with the spoils system.

The COVID-19 pandemic made increasingly evident our consensual partaking in bureaucratic regulatory processes as instructed by “the experts” as quarantine, masking, and vaccination policies were enforced, serving as an excellent example for the indirectness of bureaucratic authority. Whereas we heard about the various mandates on the news from public-facing experts, it was our managers, bus drivers, professors, and peers who told us to “mask up.” It was a series of company-wide emails, beginning with the notorious “Experts say...” imperative that resulted in an individual’s requirement to “get the jab.” We avert to our managers in times of confusion to tell us how to proceed because they have earned their spot as our superiors. We turn to various offices, like the EPA and the FDA, to guide our individual choices at the grocery store because they have the resolutions—they are the objective arbiters of truth as we know it. The managerial power of the bureaucratic state extends beyond the scope of our conscious activity while simultaneously maintaining total control over our personal lives and the broader political, societal, and governmental processes. Today there are fifteen executive departments alone, and over two million civilian employees.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “Number of Governmental Employees in the U.S. 2021.”

The lifeblood of our political and social infrastructure, the civil service as an expert institution has been dictating the happenings of the United States both in times of political unrest and docility since the ratification of the Pendleton Act. Placing the tenet of efficiency at the forefront of its philosophy, the civil service relies on a series of regulatory processes that rely on the participation and administrative control of the populace.

From the Enlightenment and the development of modern political thought in the 18th century grew a belief in the importance of individual rights, reason, and secularism, leading to an erosion of the authority of religious institutions and the emergence of new forms of political authority based on popular sovereignty, and democracy became the new guiding political principle of the United States. The “rule of the people” replaced the authority of the Church and monarchs, and power became manipulable by the majority rule.

Problems emerged from the rule of the people in practice, particularly from the absence of set limits placed on “democratic tyranny,” or the tyranny of the majority<sup>5</sup>, which is the notion that in a democracy, the majority rule will prevail and therefore potentially suppress the members of a minority. Democracy itself places no limits on institutions susceptible to the tyrannical rule of the people, like the bureaucracy under the jurisdiction of the spoils system, democratic in its pursuance of the will of the majority by acting as a political instrument of the President. As the spoils system crumbled so did the democratic qualities of the executive offices, replaced by a new aristocratic ideology: that rather than the will of the people, the system of government should center objective notions of rationality as declared by the most qualified to profess them, and the governing body should make decisions in accordance with the new standardized procedures.

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<sup>5</sup> de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

The new morality which guides modern governance can be measured scientifically, schematized and categorized based on objective rationality. Moral goodness has become quantifiable as opposed to spiritual, and morality is defined by how closely one adheres to the rules denoted by those most qualified to profess the truth: experts and technocrats. The new emphasis on reason for the purpose of efficiency and progress requires a government conducive to these ideological shifts, and so bureaucracy emerged as a progressive governing ideology.

The original political purpose of the institution of bureaucracy was to put people in charge who have the merit to lead, and suppress any potential for despotism by establishing a variety of offices that serve specialized purposes as opposed to the insulated rule of just one despotic leader. The etymology of the word *bureaucracy* itself<sup>6</sup> includes the Greek suffix *cracy*, denoting “power of” or “rule of,” and *bureau*, denoting “the desk” or “the office” in French. Etymologically, bureaucracy is “the rule of the desk,” “the rule of the office,” or, as Hannah Arendt has called it, “the rule of nobody.”<sup>7</sup>

In her book *On Violence*, Arendt analyzes the rise of the modern bureaucratic state which she characterizes by its depersonalization of power and its diffusion of responsibility, in contrast to traditional notions of political authority which are historically based on personal relationships and a sense of mutual obligation between rulers and subjects. According to Arendt, the emergence of bureaucratic systems and processes nullifies any semblance of personal responsibility, placing power in the hands of a nebulous, widely dispersed authority, operating solely based on rigidly established rules and procedures and lacking any accountability. Given the vast distribution of authority and decision-making across countless bureaucratic offices, it

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<sup>6</sup> “Bureaucracy | Etymology, Origin and Meaning of Bureaucracy by Etymonline.”

<sup>7</sup> Arendt, *On Violence*, 81.

becomes increasingly difficult to hold anyone responsible for their actions and we find ourselves subjected to a shadowy authoritative specter that permeates the interstices of society.

Hence, the rule of nobody: a hegemony of anonymity and unaccountability upheld by employees of bureaucratic offices, upheld by ourselves through our societal participation and our pursuit to climb the bureaucratic hierarchy—a suppressive reign of procedure and order perpetrated by the citizenry that is essentially cuckolded into upholding its own suppression, forcing individuals into elements of a structure.

This project takes on the polarizing question of whether the Pendleton Act, the foundational legislation for the formation and maintenance of the civil service, should be overturned, as endeavored by President Trump in his pursuit to “drain the swamp” through a comprehensive theoretical analysis of the societal impact of bureaucratic rationality as upheld and enforced by the civil service. Trump, frustrated in his stagnancy as bureaucrats continued to place limits on what he was democratically elected to do, strived to simply dismantle the institution of bureaucracy at large by issuing an attack on the civil service. He failed, and in his wake emerged a more amplified liberal focus on the civil service as something to be defended against the danger of Trumpism. Within the polarizing context of this political war, the project will ultimately result in a political and philosophical critique of bureaucratic rationality and the civil service.

Chapter I is a historical analysis of the history of the civil service beginning with the spoils system and its collapse, ultimately making the argument that the spoils system is a more democratic appointment process than the bureaucratically rational civil service and additionally citing the elitist loyalties of civil service reformers who were in favor of a professional civil service. At the same time, Chapter I explores the justifications for the implementation of a

bureaucratically rational civil service, the legitimate and destructive flaws rampant in the spoils system, and the purposive development of the civil service into what it is today.

Chapter II analyzes the sociological and philosophical justifications for the deliberate implementation of bureaucratic rationality as a guiding principle of government, and the idea that social sciences can improve the organization of society. Chapter II will make the argument on behalf of this rational ideology to holistically interrogate the issue by turning to classical proponents of bureaucracy like Max Weber and John Stuart Mill before Chapter III and IV, which serve as the ultimate argument of the paper.

Chapter III makes the argument against the widespread societal and governmental adoption of bureaucratic rationality as it is manifested in the civil service. The chapter offers a critical assessment of the technocratic tyranny that ensues from the institutionalization of elitist rule, which poses a threat to democracy and centers inaccurate and arbitrary tenets of social science as part of its guiding philosophy. This version of tyranny is manifested in the civil service and our contemporary understanding of bureaucracy. The chapter highlights the negative consequences of the prioritization of efficiency and rationality at the expense of participatory democracy, accountability, and the human spirit, making the argument by interrogating the works of classic proponents of anti-bureaucratic thinking such as F.A. Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, as well as contemporary critics like David Graeber.

Finally, Chapter IV is a Nietzschean critique of bureaucracy and rationality and their practical manifestation within the civil service. Drawing upon Nietzsche's conception of truth, I make Nietzsche's argument that truth is nothing more than a historical falsehood and a mechanism of power disguising itself as truth, and the civil service similarly operates as an instrument of elitist power that disguises itself as a truthful and rational entity. This Nietzschean

critique offers an analysis of how power and truth are intertwined in bureaucratic structures, revealing the inherent fallibility of the system.

The mission of the project rests on the belief that the civil service is ultimately anchored in political and philosophical deceit and stands in opposition to principles of democracy, catering solely to the privileged few, prioritizing procedure over human life and flourishing. The exclusive entity of the civil service, an appendage of the suppressive and faceless bureaucracy, upholds an elitist notion of power through its reliance on arbitrary social-scientific analyses that feign objectivity and truth. The civil service self-sustains, constantly reaffirming itself before force feeding its ideology back to the populace along with an imposition of invented virtue. The individual members of the populace are made into the “public,” having no choice but to continually uphold their own suppression at the hand of the anonymous bureaucratic entity. This elitist institution, concealed beneath a guise of truth, is an affront to democratic values and the very foundation of human dignity.

As President Trump’s pursuit to “drain the swamp” in overturning the Pendleton Act carries with it the weight of a populist movement, I strive to make a similar argument from a different perspective while still acknowledging the deliberate progressive efforts brought about by the implementation of a rational civil service. To paraphrase a Nietzschean conception of truth: although truth is a lie and an error, it still provides consensus and forges community through its universalization, which can be a good thing. The ratification of the Pendleton Act and the formation of a new civil service, although predicated on falsehood and deceit, brought about positive change as well. Some level of societal consensus is important, and there are plenty of legitimate reasons to have a professional civil service, which I will outline. At the same time, I have little faith that considering these problems the civil service as a manifestation of

bureaucratic rationality is in any way fixable. The decline of trust in experts has been rapidly picking up speed, even preceding domestic and foreign affair disasters like Watergate and the Vietnam War. Without mutual trust, without the belief that the authority we answer to maintains our best interests, we live under a despotic, faceless ruler. The project's critique unearths the inherent flaws of these structures, ultimately resting on the notion that the guiding principles of a bureaucracy (i.e. rationality, objectivity, efficiency, impartiality, procedural correctness, social-scientism, technocratic rule, expertise, etc.) are all successful “untruths,” and their implementation is deeply flawed and irredeemable.

Finally, emergent from this conclusion one is left grappling with the remaining question: if we have all these quandaries with the civil service, if reason is essentially inoperative, if truth is essentially impotent, if democracy and societal trust and the reign of expertise is crumbling, what do we do instead? One solution is that we strengthen our rational institutions to fight the rise of propaganda and sensationalist politics and pray that reason prevails, but I say that will never work. I argue that in addition to our conception of rationality being grounded in misconception, that in the present political battle between rationality and emotion, rationality will always fall flat. So then what is the only proportionate response to a dangerous movement which harnesses the emotions of the populace through lies and propaganda for votes? To do the same thing. The age of Rationality is over. The age of Religion is over. The age of Democracy is over. Enter a new age, one that can stand a chance against the power of sensation. All truth is a lie, says Nietzsche, and therefore combating lies with “truth” is futile. Let us put down our spreadsheets, let us dismount our pedestals, and let us practice radical reality acceptance: the new age is one where tenets of emotion and excitement are placed against tenets of science and reason. And the latter tenets stand no chance.

## Chapter One: The Death of the Spoils and the Birth of a New Civil Service

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### Introduction

1883 marked a significant year in the formation of bureaucratic order as it saw the passage of the Pendleton Act<sup>8</sup>, one of the least recognized but most consequential acts ever ratified by the United States Congress. The Pendleton Act put an end to the previous jurisdiction of the spoils system and reformed the Civil Service into what we know it as today: the infrastructure of our bureaucracy, and the very heart of the American political and social system.

The Founding Fathers crafted a framework for the United States government that constructed a civil service responsive to popular will. Various offices were created to disperse power as opposed to the insulated rule of a monarch. These civil offices compose the bureaucracy, and the appointment process by which members of offices are selected operated in cohesion with democratic principles: rotation of office and appointment based on popular interest. Democratically elected presidents appointed civil servants based on their ability to carry out their political agenda without mandating specific prerequisites, such as professional experience, entry exams, or university degrees. While some disapproved of the absence of professional standards in the selection process, the deliberate exclusion of aristocratic potential through the appointment of qualified individuals as opposed to members of the elite class was democratic, unlike the professional civil service implemented after the Pendleton Act.

Before President Andrew Jackson was elected, debates surrounding the civil service were rare. After President Jackson notoriously appointed friends and political allies as heads of civil

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<sup>8</sup> "Pendleton Act (1883)."



offices in the era of the spoils system, the question of the reliability and efficiency of the bureaucratic processes in the United States swept the nation. Whereas the spoils system is often dismissed as a presidential tool to stack the offices with his own personal preferences to further his agenda, in Section One of this chapter I argue that the civil service was initially imagined as a democratic instrument in the hands of the administrative branch with the spoils system, then further give a modern day argument in favor of “Presidential Administration,” as advocated by Elena Kagan, encouraging more Presidential discretion over the civil service.

As the era of the spoils system progressed, corruption emerged as a result of the Presidential administrative appointment process and the system began to break down. In Section Two of this chapter I trace the corruption of the spoils system and its eventual downfall, which resulted in a call for a new, professional, rational civil service.

The service was rapidly growing and expanding, and the increased reliance on bureaucratic offices in government resulted in an increase of the concentration of power in the President’s hands as the appointer of the civil servants who compose the offices. Conflicts of interest increased and the prestige of the once honorable role of civil servant was lost. The civil service, the heart of the political and social system, the infrastructure of bureaucracy, lacked any competent organization, which appeared to be a necessary remedy for the breakdown of the spoils system, and an entirely new professional civil service was imagined. In Section Three of this chapter, I outline President Ulysses S. Grant’s push towards a rational civil service through the means of a Civil Service Commission. While the previous system was unsustainable, the insertion of professionalism transformed the bureaucracy into a meritocracy, pushing the democracy towards aristocracy. At the same time, calls for a new civil service were themselves

rational. The final part of this chapter focuses on the emergence and ratification of the Pendleton Act.

A system that was once implemented to be a people's check on the government became a competent check on the people by a professional administration, and the Pendleton Act continues to be the governing basis of our bureaucracy. The shortcomings of the spoils system encouraged measures toward a civil service focused around the ideals of bureaucratic rationality, professionalism, merit, objectivity, technocracy, and organization. These ideals and their implementation have percolated the very definition of bureaucracy as it is imagined in the United States, and their implications are drastic, long-lasting, and counter to the original ideals of the illustration of democracy.

The mainstream narrative surrounding the collapse of the spoils system is generally one sided, emphasizing corruption and nepotistic Jacksonian appointments while failing to address its democratic merit. We are often taught that the institution of a rational civil service was the most logical, if not the only, antidote to the conflicts of interest prevalent with the spoils. However, we will see in this chapter that the debate between spoilsmen and reformists is much more complicated than the reductive dismissal of nepotism or the infamous Jacksonian "kitchen cabinet."

Businessmen led the charge for a rational civil service to pursue business initiatives and spoilsmen, or common men, were worried that the little power they had left with their lack of capital—their vote—would be rendered completely null in a professional structure that prioritizes the smooth operation of the economy. The fears of the common man have been actualized as the civil service grows, and the bureaucracy is unaffected by the votes of the populace. Washington himself advocated against an administrative deep state, and now the institution of a new version

of aristocracy in the place of the democracy our forefathers so courageously fought for has pushed us back into alignment with the ideology the country once stood so vehemently against.

### **Section I– Democratic Justification for the Spoils System**

“To the victors belong the spoils,”<sup>9</sup> reads the infamous adage that gave the spoils system its name, suggesting that the triumphant will reap the benefits of their victory. In the case of the American government, this axiom is applied to the appointment process of administrative government positions: to those candidates who have emerged victorious in a democratically determined Presidential election belongs the discretion to choose who fills the offices that compose the government which they command. During the period which the spoils system was the primary system of bureaucratic appointment, democratically elected Presidents were given the power to choose who filled the administrative offices; they were not required to justify their choices with the natural assumption that they would fulfill the ambitions of their platform, which was endorsed by the popular will of voters.

Mainstream arguments surrounding administrative appointments are cautious of the despotic potential in bureaucratic offices filled on the basis of party allegiance. However, in the age of the spoils system, appointment of office based on political affiliation was a pillar of American democracy, whereas now the civil service asserts nonpartisan objectivity. Officeholders of a given administration were selected based on how effectively they pursued the political agenda of the administration. The system created an institution that continually upheld the democratic principles of citizen participation and progress, and had “grown with democracy”<sup>10</sup> as it was mutually influential with democratic principles.

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<sup>9</sup> “William L. Marcy | American Politician | Britannica.”

<sup>10</sup> Hoogenboom, *Outlawing the Spoils*, 4.

President George Washington wanted to ensure that the civil service was responsive to elections, and therefore the executive branch required control over appointments. Washington contended that an administrative deep state would be antithetical to the democratic will of the people, so there should theoretically be no long tenure of elite, non-partisan experts in delegated offices. Rather, there should be accurate representations of average citizens. With each election cycle, Washington argued<sup>11</sup>, the democratically elected President and Congress reserve the right to forge a civil service cohesive with the platform they were elected to pursue. If the civil service is motivated by politics, then politicians are “forced” to “build elaborate organizations to influence voters.”<sup>12</sup> The argument that rotation is democratic was popular amongst spoilsmen<sup>13</sup> who had a vested interest in maintaining their power in the civil service, as well as a pursuit of accountability. If the President maintains control over appointees in civil offices, there is no excuse in failing to pursue their agenda.

Whereas personnel recruitment existed before the American Revolution, the state of the spoils system in 1860 can be traced in large part to the precedent of the Washington Administration in 1795. President Washington claimed that to appoint anyone whose “political tenets are adverse to the measures the general government is pursuing” would be “political suicide.”<sup>14</sup> His appointments were growing increasingly partisan, and eventually any prerequisite for offices was practically diminished.

President Andrew Jackson is often credited with the breakdown of the civil service under the spoils system. Jackson’s initial aim in his administrative authority was to give “the common

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<sup>11</sup> Hoogenboom, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Hoogenboom, 4

<sup>13</sup> Hoogenboom, 6

<sup>14</sup> Hoogenboom, 4

man” a sense that “the government was in truth the people’s government.”<sup>15</sup> He pursued this aim by redistributing federal offices and filling them with his associates who were similarly aligned. By filling the offices with members of his party, administrative unity flourished. As Washington predicted, there were less political stalemates due to a polarized administration, and the civil service was thus managed at the discretion of the democratically instituted administration.

President Jackson’s anti-elitist stance on bureaucratic regulation was innately at odds with reformists who preferred a meritocratic structure. Jackson’s platform was centered around his “deep, natural understanding of the people”<sup>16</sup> as opposed to bureaucratically detached methods of leadership. He was mainly opposed by those who argued in favor of a technocratic bureaucracy because of the popular belief amongst the educated that the “everyday American” can not dictate what is best for himself in terms of government. One past advocate who took this opposing stance, Alexander Hamilton, had said “The people are turbulent and changing, they seldom judge or determine right... give, therefore, to the first class a distinct, permanent share of government...”<sup>17</sup> According to Hamilton, the average citizen is not adept to determine their own legislative destiny—a line of argument that is recurring throughout the development of the civil service. Lower class citizens tend to be dismissed due to their lack of education, and therefore are pushed to the periphery when it comes to dictating the policies that would be within their best interest.

According to advocates like Hamilton, in framing a government that would be in the best interest of everyone, an objective, educated, knowledgeable actor should logically mediate the

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<sup>15</sup> Schlesinger, *The Age of Jackson*, 45.

<sup>16</sup> Schlesinger, 34.

<sup>17</sup> Schlesinger, 17.

legislative processes. Hamilton said “society would be governed best by an aristocracy...”<sup>18</sup> which, stripped from its connotations, is a rational claim: those who are the best at ruling and know the most should rule, and the administrations will be united under the rule of reason, rationality, and objective truth.

Jackson alternatively argued that stacking offices with political allies “became an invaluable means of unifying administrative support”<sup>19</sup> and the spoils system “also contributed to the main objective of helping restore faith in the government.”<sup>20</sup> At a period characterized by declining public governmental trust, Jackson believed that the remedy was not to appoint more authoritative bureaucrats who lack a connection to the typical American citizen's reality. In the people’s view at the time, “the bureaucracy had been corrupted by its vested interest in its own power,”<sup>21</sup> the people were unable to see themselves in the systems meant to represent them. Jackson waged a political war against the “rich and powerful”<sup>22</sup> by means of his strategic manipulation of the civil service through the spoils system.

Jackson's catering to the concerns of the ordinary working-class farmer was unfavorable to business leaders who regarded the move as a departure from what they deemed to be the preeminent obligation of the government: advancing the interests of businesses to support the American economy. A professional civil service would work in the interest of businessmen partly because of class allegiances, but also due to its commitment to efficiency. George H. Pendleton of the Pendleton Bill said “The merit system... would supply urgently needed

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<sup>18</sup> Schlesinger, 19.

<sup>19</sup> Schlesinger, 35.

<sup>20</sup> See note 19 above.

<sup>21</sup> See note 19 above.

<sup>22</sup> Schlesinger, 36.

business capacity and principles”<sup>23</sup> and emphasized the “efficiency of the merit system.”<sup>24</sup> Jackson alternatively proclaimed “corporations neither have bodies to be kicked nor souls to be damned”<sup>25</sup> justifying his commitment to representing his interests with the spoils system, presumably on behalf of the people, as opposed to the proposed technocratic implementation of expert rule in bureaucracy.

Jackson was the referent democratic president, strictly committed to executing the primordial democratic ideals of rotation of office, the representation of the people, and equitable distribution of property as opposed to the “concentration of wealth and power in a single class.”<sup>26</sup> He was the first president born into poverty<sup>27</sup> and continued to maintain a violently adverse position toward any potential of aristocracy. Notably, he did not abuse the spoils system as extensively as he is posthumously accused. Depictions of Jackson’s presidency often include critiques of his “kitchen cabinet” of close advisors<sup>28</sup> and his consistent firing and rehiring of civil servants. In actuality, for Jackson the spoils system “was an essential step in the formation of democratic America”<sup>29</sup> as he took full advantage of his discretion over civil offices to most productively pursue his Presidential agenda.

Whereas much of the responsibility of the failure of the spoils system is placed on Jackson, the concept of patronage has been endemic to the country since the settlers stepped foot

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<sup>23</sup> Hoogenboom, 218.

<sup>24</sup> See note 23 above.

<sup>25</sup> Schlesinger, 139

<sup>26</sup> Schlesinger, 140

<sup>27</sup> “Andrew Jackson | Facts, Biography, & Accomplishments | Britannica.”

<sup>28</sup> Schlesinger, 42

<sup>29</sup> Schlesinger, 36

on Plymouth Rock,<sup>30</sup> and “Throughout colonial times, government jobs were looked upon as essentially favors bestowed upon the job seeker in recognition of past and in anticipation of future services,”<sup>31</sup> meaning the appointment of one’s friends and political allies was a natural part of the new government. Jackson followed a custom of patronage whose precedent was set by the first settlers—a more relational process of office appointing as opposed to one that has been schematized through the implementation of regulatory bureaucratic procedures. Regardless of the faults of the spoils system and its eventual corruption within itself, it still “destroyed peaceably the monopoly of offices by a class which could not govern, and brought to power a fresh and alert group which had the energy to meet the needs of the day.”<sup>32</sup> Since officeholders were being consistently rotated, and since they were appointed based on their passion and connections as opposed to their measured qualifications, the government never lacked spirit.

A modern day argument in favor of presidential appointment power in bureaucratic governing bodies is outlined by Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan in what she calls “Presidential Administration.”<sup>33</sup> She cites President Clinton<sup>34</sup> as a positive example of this phenomenon which she views as the antidote to the problem of a polarized polity and lack of faith in bureaucratic governance. She, like Washington and Jackson, views Presidential appointments as more aligned with democratic virtues as opposed to the aristocratic characteristics of technocracy and expert rule in bureaucracy. She says “the Presidentialization of

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<sup>30</sup> Friedrich, “The Rise and Decline of the Spoils Tradition.”

<sup>31</sup> Friedrich, 10

<sup>32</sup> Schlesinger, 36

<sup>33</sup> Kagan, “Presidential Administration.”

<sup>34</sup> Kagan, “Presidential Administration,” 2247.



administration renders the bureaucratic sphere more transparent and responsive to the public, while also better promoting important kinds of regulatory competence and dynamism.”<sup>35</sup>

If the goal of the government is to promote the ideals of the citizens through their popular will in accordance with democratic principles, then presidents like Jackson, Washington, and Clinton were correct to promote their own ideals through presidential appointment as opposed to the ideals of expert rationality through bureaucratic technocracy. Kagan said of Clinton that his “articulation and use of directive authority over regulatory agencies... pervaded crucial areas of his administration”<sup>36</sup> and that in general “presidential administration renders the bureaucratic sphere more transparent and responsive to the public and more capable of injecting energy as well as competence into the regulatory processes.”<sup>37</sup>

In the age of Jackson, the spoils system was the quandary of the bureaucracy that needed remedying, and so reform was promoted and a new solution swept the nation in the form of the Pendleton Act. Today, Justice Kagan references the complications that have developed as a result of the implementation of an expert, technocratic bureaucracy with the Pendleton Act, and suggests a solution similar to that of the spoils system. President Trump suggests something similar as well, with his pushes to overturn the Pendleton Act and create a new civil service corollary to the values of the administration. One wonders what the proper antidote to the elitism problem of the civil service is, without the civil service descending wholly into the hands of a single President. Either way, it is undoubtedly true that the civil service was more democratic and responsive to the will of the people with the spoils system.

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<sup>35</sup> Kagan, “Presidential Administration,” 2252.

<sup>36</sup> Kagan, 2248

<sup>37</sup> Kagan, 2246

## Section II– The Corruption of the Spoils System

The chaos of rotation and lack of professionalism within the civil service during the age of the spoils system resulted in calls for drastic reform. The establishment of the Federal Constitution did little to address the state of the personnel recruitment system aside from barring Congressional right to appointment, a precedent that had little relevance in 1865 when Congress was the governmental body that actually “dictated most Civil Service appointments.”<sup>38</sup> In 1820, the Tenure of Office Act was ratified, creating a “clean sweep”<sup>39</sup> and ultimately increasing Congressional control over who gets appointed to the civil service. By the time Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated, civil service appointments in the post office were dictated entirely by Congressional power.

An examination law for potential civil servants was put into place in 1853 which required clerks to take an easily passable examination that “ensured a minimum standard,” but this exam was “frequently farcical”<sup>40</sup> and could easily be subverted to continue to appoint those within the executive interest. According to reformers, the bureaucratic body is meant to be an unbiased arbiter of facts and reason, packed with the most credible experts in each office, and should not leave the potential for uncertainty or instability.

Ari Hoogenboom explains the contention surrounding the state of the spoils system as a matter of “outs” vs. “ins,” meaning those who were out of power antagonized the spoils system and called for reform, but once they were “in” political power in some way they were suddenly able to see past the evils of the system they were once so adamantly against.<sup>41</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>38</sup> Hoogenboom, *Outlawing the Spoils*, 5.

<sup>39</sup> Hoogenboom, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Hoogenboom, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Hoogenboom, 7.

the credibility of the civil service was rapidly declining. There was no longer any honor in the role, the prestige was gone, and it was based entirely on the President's partisan ties; as Hoogenboom says, "Political obligations of officeholders took precedence over their public obligations."<sup>42</sup> People in office were willing to do whatever it took to remain in power, even if it meant betraying the very constituents they were elected to serve. Jackson's perspective regarding civil servants was that their responsibilities should be straightforward enough to not necessitate any significant level of expertise, thereby allowing individuals with moderate competence to adequately fulfill their duties.<sup>43</sup> While this argument in theory makes the civil service more accessible, it resulted in a decline of efficiency and an increase of incompetence in office.

At the end of the Civil War, the civil service was the largest employer in the United States, employing 53,000 workers whose annual compensation amounted to about \$30,000,000,<sup>44</sup> and its reach has only increased. At that point, the bureaucratic system was divided into seven different departments.<sup>45</sup> Hoogenboom describes the 282 Treasurer's office employees in 1860 as a "motley group,"<sup>46</sup> further describing the system as "primitive,"<sup>47</sup> lacking any real order.

Regardless of the democratic merit of the spoils system, how could the United States establish a legitimate economy and governmental infrastructure by means of a "motley group" and a "primitive" structure? Groups of office seekers scoured for jobs, and once they got them their tenures were uncertain. In 1880, President James A. Garfield was assassinated by a

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<sup>42</sup> Hoogenboom, 8.

<sup>43</sup> Hoogenboom, 6.

<sup>44</sup> Hoogenboom, 1.

<sup>45</sup> See note 44 above.

<sup>46</sup> Hoogenboom, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Hoogenboom, 2.

job-seeker whose application to the civil service was rejected and directly before his assassination, Garfield was found saying “Do tell that crowd of office-seekers I cannot see them today– I am so sick.”<sup>48</sup> The state of the civil service had descended deeply into peril, and a new administration would not be able to remedy it within the standards of the spoils system.

Carl Schurz, a prominent reformist, pointed out the shortcomings of the spoils system in terms of its inevitable corruption. He said about civil servants at the time of the spoils that “In their earnest endeavor to serve the public interest, these people may be warm partisans,”<sup>49</sup> which is to say it is likely not their fault, but a partisan civil service is destructive to the whole of society.

### **Section III– The Civil Service Commission**

Before the ratification of the Pendleton Act in 1883, President Ulysses S. Grant signed into law the United States Civil Service Commission (popularly referred to as the Grant CSC) on March 3, 1871. The Grant CSC was the first civil service reform act, lasting two years before being denied funding in 1874, though Civil Service Commissions are still vital in the bureaucracy and the Grant CSC shares fundamental objectives with the Pendleton Act.

In a speech delivered to the Senate and the House of Representatives by President Grant on December 19, 1871 in regard to his proposed Civil Service Commission entitled *A Message on Civil Service Reform*, he introduces the idea of an entry exam for the new board. Most entry exams are basic competency tests regarding “knowledge, ability, and special qualifications for the performance of the duty of the office.”<sup>50</sup> Due to the rapid growth of bureaucracy, the

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<sup>48</sup> Hoogenboom, 217.

<sup>49</sup> Schurz, “Civil-Service Reform and Democracy: An Address Delivered at the Annual Meeting of The National Civil-Service Reform League,” 7.

<sup>50</sup> “A Message on Civil Service Reform.”

President cannot personally approve potential employees and their qualifications. An impartial entity should then manage the appointment process for efficiency.

Grant describes the CSC as “an advisory board” instituted to make “appropriations for sundry civil service expenses of the Government for the fiscal year... and for other purposes” to “group positions in each branch of the civil service according to the character of the duties to be performed.”<sup>51</sup> The CSC exists as an organizational body for the purpose of boosting efficiency within the service.

The CSC is organized in a managerial structure, where heads of each department are qualified to manage their respective members, qualified to compose the commission. In order to maintain objectivity, even the most qualified bureaucrats from within each department do not individually have a say when it comes to budgeting for political purposes– they must answer to their authority.

Following the Grant CSC, from 1889-1895 President Theodore Roosevelt was the United States Civil Service Commissioner, committed to furthering the meritocratic aspect of the civil service and instilling technocratic values into the system that was formerly bound by the spoils. Roosevelt “Enabled the number of classified employees to surpass the number of patronage employees... eliminated political assessments and modernized civil service machinery,”<sup>52</sup> another key figure in the progression of the civil service.

The mission statement of the CSC in New York State reads: “The mission of the Civil Service Commission is to be fair and impartial in deciding appeals and to assure that the treatment of civil service applicants and employees is consistent with civil service laws and the

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<sup>51</sup> See note 50 above.

<sup>52</sup> White, “Theodore Roosevelt as Civil Service Commissioner.”

city's personnel rules."<sup>53</sup> Its lineage emphasizes the civil service's goal of impartiality and objectivity—stripped of its politics and purely dedicated to efficiency.

#### **Section IV— The Emergence of the Pendleton Act and a New Civil Service**

The Pendleton Act was a revolutionary act that replaced the democratically justified spoils system with a more aristocratic, expert, technical, professional civil service. The newly implemented qualifications for civil servants were based on social scientific methods of examination, mandating entrance exams and a commitment to scientific, standardized decision-making processes. George H. Pendleton and reformers aimed to increase bureaucratic efficiency through systematic, scientific processes and enhance the competence of civil servants, with the support of businesses and professional men, eventually succeeding when the legislation was passed in 1883.

Matthew Josephson, a business journalist from the 20th century, suggested that some civil service reformers had ulterior motives, presenting their reforms as a means for businessmen to seize control of the government rather than leaving it to Congress or political figures. In order to take back power from Congress, by reforming the civil service the businessmen and industrial capitalists had an interest in making political parties “dependent on contributions from businessmen.”<sup>54</sup> The ascendancy of capitalism and the growing significance of businessmen in the economy created an environment in which civil service reform was bound to prosper, as it yielded advantages for industrial capitalists and businessmen. The alignment of interests between the bureaucracy and businesses bolsters efficiency and generates comprehensive benefits for the United States government. The presence of professionalism within the civil service is a crucial

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<sup>53</sup> “Civil Service Commission.”

<sup>54</sup> Hoogenboom, ix

factor in maintaining the legitimacy of a government. It is no coincidence that leading up to the passage of the Pendleton Act, those who spearheaded the Civil Service Reform movement tended to be professional men.

Thomas Jenckes, a notable professional man, emerged as a prominent leader of the civil service reform movement, and eventually drafted the legislation that served as the blueprint for the Pendleton Act. Born into a powerful old New England family, Jenckes took issue with the spoils system as the bureaucracy expanded and the rotation of officeholders rapidly increased. With a commitment to the efficiency that the civil service today centralizes, Jenckes crafted a bill drawing inspiration from England post Crimean War as they efficiently built back their civil service, borrowing the concept of “open-competitive examinations administered by a commission”<sup>55</sup> from Great Britain.

Jenckes allied with other “professional reformers,” mainly from prominent New England families, descendants of other professional-class businessmen, professors, lawyers, public servants, merchants, etc.<sup>56</sup> Carl Schurz, another professional man and the founder of the Liberal Republican Party made a case for civil service reform and a denouncement of the spoils. In his famous speech *Civil Service Reform and Democracy*, Schurz defines civil service reform as “the application of common sense and common honesty to the public service.”<sup>57</sup> Countering the notion that the spoils system was more democratic than a professional civil service, Schurz argued that “Civil service reform is, in its field, the most perfect realization of the true democratic principle,”<sup>58</sup> and it would truly uphold the notion of a government “of the people, by

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<sup>55</sup> Hoogenboom, 16

<sup>56</sup> Hoogenboom, 21

<sup>57</sup> Schurz, 5

<sup>58</sup> Schurz, 13

the people, and for the people.”<sup>59</sup> The purpose of the suggested competency tests and merit tests would be to see how effectively an office-holder could serve the people. According to Schurz this is imperative to fulfilling the goal of “equal rights.”<sup>60</sup>

On July 14, 1886, President Grover Cleveland issued a directive to the heads of bureaucratic departments within the service of the General Government, outlining their responsibilities and reinforcing the fundamental purpose of the civil service to function on behalf of the populace, rather than serving as an additional source of individual power outside of the government. He said, “I... warn all subordinates... and all officeholders under the general government against the use of their official positions in attempts to control political movements in their localities. Officeholders are the agents of the people – not their masters.”<sup>61</sup>

In Congress, many claimed the bill to be undemocratic due to its class-consciousness, or the “aristocracy” of maintaining that only elites are in office,<sup>62</sup> referencing the democratic merit of the service under the spoils system. Echoing Schurz, Jenckes countered that the merit system is more aligned with democratic virtues due to its creation of the possibility for competition and is not limited by favoritism.<sup>63</sup> The notion of reform held a particular appeal for professionals, owing to the fact that the implementation of the merit system was expected to result in reduced taxes for them due to the anticipated elimination of one-third of the existing civil servants, while concurrently increasing the productivity of the remaining personnel by fifty percent.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Schurz, 14

<sup>60</sup> See note 59 above.

<sup>61</sup> “Congressional Record Senate,” 370.

<sup>62</sup> Hoogenboom, 30.

<sup>63</sup> Hoogenboom, 31.

<sup>64</sup> Hoogenboom, 28.



The Congressional vote revealed that those who represented more rural areas tended to be against the bill, and those who were more urban were more likely to be in favor of the bill.<sup>65</sup> Inserting the tenet of social science into the regulatory systems disways those who are less educated, more religious, and those who are more likely to have more familial relations with their neighbors in their small towns, a trend that persists through the development of bureaucracy and emphasis on social science in organizational structures.

The bill was killed in Congress, and instead the Tenure of Office Act was passed over Andrew Johnson's veto in 1867<sup>66</sup> which ensured that the President could not remove anyone from office without the approval of the senate. This act was a reformative measure, yet it did not align with the aspirations of some of the more radical reformers. The reform movement gained significant momentum between 1867 and 1883, notably following the impeachment of Andrew Johnson, and was also championed by several business organizations. It was during this period that the Pendleton Act was ratified.

After Garfield's assassination, Pendleton strategically "laid the blame (for the assassination) on the appointing system."<sup>67</sup> The system had finally reached the limit of absurdity, and when succeeding President Chester A. Arthur, took office, he requested that there be immediate legislation regarding civil service reform. Ohio Senator George H. Pendleton, who had once before in 1880 attempted to pass his reform bill heavily influenced by the various Jenckes bills, reintroduced his bill which yet again was killed on the floor. He said that his bill was "framed after much consideration and thorough examination of the civil service in Great

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<sup>65</sup> Hoogenboom, 246.

<sup>66</sup> Hoogenboom, 32.

<sup>67</sup> Hoogenboom, 217.

Britain and the methods already tried in our own country.”<sup>68</sup> Pendleton also cited the “twin evils of political corruption and business inefficiency”<sup>69</sup> as justification for reform. Finally, after the Democrats won the House on the reform issue, they once more introduced the Pendleton Act and ratified it successfully in 1883.

In tracing the history and legacy of the civil service we uncover many relevant arguments that pertain to the debates surrounding the civil service today. The foundational insight of this chapter should cast a light on how deeply rooted bureaucratic ideology is in the infrastructure of the United States government, and offer perspective on those who were historically in favor of the passage of the Pendleton Act and thus the formation of a professional civil service, and who was against it: the backgrounds of reformists and anti-reformists remained relatively constant throughout history. Metropolitan professionals tend to support the authority of a bureaucratically rational, organized, technocratic civil service whereas many in rural areas tend to campaign in favor of “draining the swamp.”

The United States began imagining the civil service democratically, which resulted in the emergence of the spoils system as corollary of their idea of a democratically controlled civil service. Early Presidents stacked their offices with administrative men who acted in accordance with their political ambitions for the new nation. The crusade for the establishment of a professional civil service was calculated and deliberate, representative of the interests of a professional sector, for the purpose of inserting the tenet of objective rationality into government. The insertion of objective rationality into government was a purposive move against the democratic spoils system, implementing an aristocratic body at the center of the political system. Whereas the spoils system had its own series of problems which contributed to its eventual

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<sup>68</sup> Hoogenboom, 200.

<sup>69</sup> See note 68 above.

demise, the battle to reform it into an elitist institution on the behalf of elite and professional men is relevant to its existence as an elitist institution today. The professional men who petitioned on behalf of the new aristocratic body took issue with Jackson's platform as it prioritized people as opposed to businesses. Whereas it is technically better for the American economy to have a government aligned with big business values, it remains exclusionary to those who are less connected, more poor, and underrepresented.

The civil service stands as a reflection of the values of businessmen, prioritizing efficiency and process over representative democracy. Although this chapter outlines the legitimate arguments in favor of a professional civil service replacing the system of the spoils, it is inarguably undemocratic and unrepresentative of the needs of the common citizen in its commitment to professional procedural virtues and its exclusion of the opinions of those its appointment process deems to lack the merit to have a say.

## Chapter Two: Arguments In Favor of a Bureaucratically Rational Government

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### Introduction

In Chapter One, I examined the ratification of the Pendleton Act as an aspect of progressive reform toward a more positive government structure. The rise of a professional civil service reflects a popularized belief that bureaucratic efficiency rather than a spoils system rests at the center of good government. In the resulting implementation of the civil service as we know it, the mission of a bureaucracy to counter the corruption of the spoils system is combined with the ideal of a professional, meritocratic, and organized civil service. The formation of an extra-governmental body committed to positive and progressive ideals is an improvement from the corrupt spoils system and earlier religious virtues that were once at the center of government. The Pendleton Act and its progeny aim to uphold and protect ethics of anti-corruption, organization, efficiency, and political unity through a newly implemented meritocracy.

While the meritocratic appointment process does not necessarily completely prevent corruption from infesting the more prestigious positions within the bureaucracy and civil service, it strives toward a less corrupt government. A pillar of our bureaucracy today, the Pendleton Act is an encapsulation of years of progressive social scientific thought and the solution to the dilemmas sociologists like Max Weber and John Stuart Mill have defined and explored, caused by an irrational societal structure.

The Pendleton Act created various specialized offices, each with their own administrative fiefdoms, so that each facet of the bureaucracy is managed with clocklike accuracy, efficiency, accountability, and specialized expertise in each separate department. The dissemination of

power ensured by a bureaucracy suppresses any potential for an individual power grab, and the primary focus of each office being a commitment to scientific rationality theoretically ensures that there is evidence to contend that, as many politicians say, “we have the best people on the job.”

Bureaucratic rationality is an organizing philosophy wherein individuals are elements of a structure meant to create an efficient and equal society—one that lacks thrill and turmoil, one that does not prioritize the desires of the individual over the whole, one devoid of any sense of mysticism or spirit. A bureaucracy eliminates institutional uncertainty and grounds for significant ideological disagreement by creating an objective version of “right” and “wrong:” a new morality that can be defined in written laws and emerges in practice through the instrument of institutions, like the Civil Service, and their administrative offices. These administrative offices are meant to be composed of well-educated, objective, and rule-following individuals committed to the cause of upholding this new form of rational and procedural government morality.

These individuals, civil servants, are the monads of our bureaucracy, powerless as individual agents, but still maintaining a fraction of the allocated power allotted to the overarching authority of the society. In a bureaucracy, authoritative power is dispersed among these various offices, with no one person responsible for the state of the system.

This chapter will explore the philosophical and sociological justifications for the implementation of bureaucratic rationality into the governmental structure after new conceptions of morality emerged after the Age of Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries. In this chapter, I turn to classic proponents of bureaucracy to argue that bureaucratic rationality is rooted in the long history of progress toward rational governance.

In Section One, I interrogate and explore the origins of the concept of modern rationality as an outcome of the Enlightenment and how the resultant rationalization of government comes to support the implementation of bureaucratic governance, grounded in Thomas Hobbes' and Robert Boyle's push towards rational governance as referenced by William Davies in *Nervous States*. From the Enlightenment emerged the proliferation of social scientific analysis as a structural basis for the formation of bureaucratic institutions and processes. These social sciences (i.e. sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, psychology), as they are popularly taught, can be learned in the same way physical sciences (i.e. physics, chemistry, biology) can be learned. One can obtain expert-status in the realm of social sciences if they have the proper amount of education on the subject, and can therefore give input on societal quandaries from a more respectable position, an elevated level of understanding, above the average citizen who spends little time focusing on mastering social scientific methods of analysis.

In Section Two, I turn to sociologists, primarily Max Weber, to show that years of social scientific theory backs up the assertion that bureaucracy is a positive form of government and authoritative structure. Whereas some may critique a system reliant on collective consent because it sacrifices individual autonomy for the "good of the whole," bureaucratic systems of governance offer an antidote to despotism in politics. The bureaucratic system places de jure limits on individual power, stifling potential for one despot to harness control over the entire system in their own favor, by implementing concrete laws that take significant time and a majority vote to alter, and ensures that those who have power to make administrative decisions have the merit to hold their administrative offices. These offices are meant to be governed rationally by the most efficient, scientifically established methods of administrative processes.

When offering a critique of the shortcomings of the bureaucratic process, it is imperative to understand the historical roots and philosophical underpinnings that have shaped its development. A critical examination of the bureaucratic process demands a nuanced understanding of its origins and the underlying motivations that drove its inception. It necessitates a recognition and appreciation of the complex social, economic, and political forces that have shaped the bureaucratic landscape, and the dynamic interplay between these forces and bureaucratic institutions. The primary aim of this chapter is to present a rationale for the adoption of a bureaucratically rational form of government and the use of social sciences as a tool for organizing and managing public institutions.

### **Section I – The “Scientification” of Morality: The Royal Society and Social Science as a pillar of Bureaucracy**

The 17th Century Enlightenment, otherwise known as the Age of Reason, was a time of rapid technological, scientific, and philosophical advancement which resulted in the rise of the authority of rational objectivity. The fundamental argument for the new government was that it should behave rationally by exercising legislative prudence fairly, upholding notions of equity and impartiality according to a universal standard of moral uprightness. As societal authority is habitually decided on political grounds, there was necessarily a convergence between this rational authority and politics, which William Davies in *Nervous States* describes as the birth of “technocracy.”<sup>70</sup>

“Technocracy”– from the Greek roots “cracy” denoting “rule of” and “techno” denoting “craft” or “practical skill” – is the authoritative political rule of the technical expert. A technocracy, correlative to the meritocratic aspect of a bureaucratically rational society, was one

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<sup>70</sup> Davies, *Nervous States*, 53.

of the revelations of the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment for an objective, impartial, and rational basis of government, and the eventual formation of the civil service. The rise of a technocracy, as it combines political and scientific authority, is also a progressive initiative toward “openness,” toward knowledge being made public as opposed to being restricted to a small class of people, another pillar of a bureaucratically rational, representative government.

William Davies in *Nervous States* references classical proponents of rational thinking, particularly Thomas Hobbes and Robert Boyle, to argue that the Enlightenment and the formation of the Royal Society happened as an attempt to rationalize politics. He cites Hobbes’ and Boyle’s argument that these conceptions of rationality can lead to a better society and that these structures and movements emerged to strip politics of its emotional and unreasonable aspects, instead bringing an expert, rational, social scientific discourse to policy. This section of the paper in large part relies on Davies’ historical analysis of Hobbes, Boyle, and the Royal Society to make this chapter’s argument about the intentionality of the implementation of bureaucratic rationality in policy and society at large.

The Royal Society, founded in 1660 by physicist Robert Boyle aimed to “institutionalize experimental methods of natural science” while maintaining a commitment to “openness”<sup>71</sup> as a “facilitator of progress, allowing one finding to be added to another.”<sup>72</sup> This openness set a precedent for the standards of rational governance as fair and representative, on top of the strategic method of building on past discovery which required some convention or standard for the authorized research methods. The aim of the Royal Society during the Enlightenment was to seek a new definition of “truth” separate from God, or to come close to it, and instill positive

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<sup>71</sup> Davies, 72.

<sup>72</sup> Davies, 48



order in society. This can be done through the pursuit of knowledge and an agreed upon understanding of the world.

Davies says “It is only if knowledge is committed to record, and that record is made public, that there can ever be consensus on the nature of truth.”<sup>73</sup> Here he is recapitulating Enlightenment ideology in its continual pursuit of consensus, of universal understanding contributing to a universal standard. Davies later pinpoints a mechanism of public consensus that emerged from the Enlightenment: language and numbers.<sup>74</sup> Through the authority of systems of language and numbers which are already universally accepted, we can build universal consensus, and form a societal structure responsive to this newly defined reality.

Davies concludes that the objectives of the empiricists of the Royal Society were simply to make sense of the world, to “bear witness to the wondrous machine in front of him.”<sup>75</sup> This objective observational perspective is crucial to the development of rational government, because it is through the objective lens which we view ourselves scientifically that we have crafted a government that can most rationally and effectively suit our interests. In our objectivity we are also encouraged to remove our personal biases and emotions from what we are passing judgment on, as we’ve seen that our feelings and desires have the tendency to lead us hastily into conflict.

Friedrich A. Hayek describes the way scientific methods as they arose from the Enlightenment shaped the emergent social sciences, which are used to measure and make sense of humanistic aspects of society, crucial to modern technocracy. He describes the application of natural science to social science as “scientism.”<sup>76</sup> In social scientists’ quest for their sciences to

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<sup>73</sup> Davies, 49

<sup>74</sup> Davies, 53

<sup>75</sup> Davies, 51

<sup>76</sup> Hayek, “Scientism and the Study of Society. Part I.”

be taken as legitimate methods of analysis, they must extract general laws and come to applicable conclusions about social phenomena in the same way as physical scientists. Regulatory governmental structures were implemented for the purpose of creating a more predictable and organized society, and social science aims to reduce intangible aspects of human nature into digestible, predictive laws. This way, as social science is incorporated into our institutional structures, there is nothing in our commonwealth unknown to us, and we can be better prepared to face periods of tumult.

Hayek, in his essay *Scientism and the Study of Society (pt. 1)*, describes the “persistent effort of modern science” as a quest to “revise and reconstruct the concepts formed from ordinary experience on the basis of a systemic testing of the phenomena, so as to be better able to recognize the particular as an instance of a general rule.”<sup>77</sup> These general rules are grounded in what is decidedly an objective “fact” as to what the most effective and positive rules of governance are, based on testing. In a technocracy, social scientists are the “experts” at the top of the hierarchy in specialized offices in charge of policy making to ensure the execution of the most rational action in a given situation. Social scientific law has become analogous to objective fact in government, so as to create a tangible standard for government. These laws overall have developed into standards for good government, simplifying and making increasingly efficient governmental processes.

The beginnings of scientific legitimacy were scrappy—people were not willing to take seriously the notion that the physical world acts according to a series of laws that can be better understood through scientific methods. Hayek describes the plight of establishing scientific legitimacy as in their beginning having to “fight their way in” to a world where most concepts had heretofore been interpretive, wherein we derived meaning from actions and interpersonal

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<sup>77</sup> Hayek, “Scientism and the Study of Society. Part I,” 271.

relationships and applied conceptual meaning to them.<sup>78</sup> He goes further to describe the scientific method and efforts of science as getting down to “objective facts” and to “cease studying what men thought about nature or regarding the given concepts as true images of the real world” and discarding “all theories which pretended to explain phenomena by imputing to them a directing mind like our own,” instead forming a foundation of testing from our ordinary experiences for the purpose of being able to better “recognise the particular as an instance of a general rule.”<sup>79</sup>

Creating a series of general rules by which the world naturally abides makes it easier to predict what will happen in the future, therefore the application of these methods of rule-forming to society was politically prudent. Sociologists then ventured to apply research methods to the social realm and form a governmental structure most reflective of the paramount trends in society. In *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes famously claims that science minimizes elitism by increasing public consensus and therefore disparages the idea that any one person is inherently better than the next.<sup>80</sup> This is why, he argues, language and science should be at the epicenter of the commonwealth. Whereas Hobbes was in some ways at odds with the Royal Society, due to his exclusion,<sup>81</sup> he still stood behind the validity of scientific advancement as a means of improving society.

After the Enlightenment, the societal shift in priorities created a basis for what we consider “good government;” the formation of an objective, nonpartisan body to carry out the new priorities of the government. In *The Utopia of Rules*, David Graeber argues that it was in the “mid-to-late eighteenth century” that modern bureaucratic society and the origins of industrial

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<sup>78</sup> Hayek, “The Problem and the Method of the Natural Sciences,” 81.

<sup>79</sup> Hayek, “The Problem and the Method of the Natural Sciences,” 82.

<sup>80</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*.

<sup>81</sup> Skinner, “Thomas Hobbes and the Nature of the Early Royal Society.”

capitalism emerged,<sup>82</sup> and bureaucracy itself emerges as a solution to vast societal disempowerment. In the pre-rational version of society which was foundationally hierarchical, bureaucracy and rational government is a great “leveling,” in its dispersion of power through all corners of the polity.<sup>83</sup>

The Royal Society set standards for methods of analysis that are used today based on rationalism and objective morality as opposed to fluctuating religious or democratic standards of morality. The subsequent contribution of the Royal Society and the Enlightenment to the enrichment of social sciences laid the foundation for the rapid development of technocracy in the United States, a positive initiative to ensure our security in the fact that we have experts in our offices, advising and administering our bureaucracy in the most efficient and effective ways, suiting the scientifically proven “best interests” of humanity, and never deviating from established order.

## **Section II – “Demagification:” a necessary initiative toward good government**

Max Weber purported increasing bureaucratization as the “demagification of society.”<sup>84</sup> Famously in favor of a “rational-legal authority” as the most efficient and robust type of systemic authority as well as social structures centered around bureaucratic rationality, Weber acknowledges that there’s no “magic” in rational government. “Demagification” is the result of the shift from a religious society to a society that centers scientifically based methods of promoting equality. This shift inevitably leads to efficient public mechanization and therefore a lack of “magic” since everything can heretofore be known through rational methods of analysis.

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<sup>82</sup> Graeber, *The Utopia of Rules*, 167.

<sup>83</sup> Kierkegaard, *The Present Age: On the Death of Rebellion*.

<sup>84</sup> Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*.

Weber's "demagification" refers to the process of removing charismatic and personalized elements from the exercise of power, and replacing them with rational structures. Any other form of authority is often based on a charismatic figure whose personal qualities inspire loyalty and obedience from their followers. These types of authority are the basis for instability and unpredictability in government. In contrast, a bureaucratic system relies on clear rules, procedures, and roles to guide decision-making, reducing the influence of personal relationships and individual discretion. By "demagifying" the exercise of power, Weber argued that a more stable and predictable form of authority could be established, one that is less vulnerable to the whims of individual leaders or the vagaries of public opinion.

Weber's argument is rooted in his assessment of the three types of legitimate rule in *Politics as a Vocation* which are Charismatic Authority, Traditional Authority, and Rational-Legal Authority.<sup>85</sup> He posits that contemporary societies are characterized by three distinct categories of authority, all of which pertain to the operation of governmental entities. Consequently, the optimal form of governance should be structured in a manner that fosters the most efficient and effective category of authority. The measurement of an effective authority and governmental structure is how effectively correlative to ubiquitous equality, justice, transparency, efficiency it is; we do not want corruption and spoils, but a competent and deliberate authority that maximizes equality through impartiality and efficient societal coordination.

In Weber's section on "The Plebiscitarian Machine," he implies that due to its partisan nature, the spoils system is a conduit for "unprincipled parties" to assail one another, and that the parties themselves "are purely organizations of job hunters drafting their changing platforms according to chances of vote-grabbing."<sup>86</sup> The new civil service, however, is a structure of

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<sup>85</sup> Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*.

<sup>86</sup> Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, 108.

integrity and morality. He says “Modern bureaucracy in the interest of integrity has developed a high sense of status honor; without this sense the danger of an awful corruption and a vulgar Philistinism threatens fatally,”<sup>87</sup> after addressing the apathetic and debauched nature of the spoils in the United States.

Instead, the new civil service as an honorable vocation: “The honor of the civil servant is vested in his ability to execute conscientiously the order of superior authorities. ... This holds even if the order appears wrong to him....Without this moral discipline and self-denial, in the highest sense, the whole system would fall to pieces.”<sup>88</sup> The duty of civil servants involves executing the directives of the rational hierarchy, which is honorable in itself. The bureaucratic structure is based on predetermined ethical frameworks that precludes ethical dilemmas and provides civil servants with a systematic means of carrying out positive morality.

Weber argues that a regulative bureaucratically rational government is the best way to execute a rational-legal authority.<sup>89</sup> Here I will epitomize the three forms of authority and make Weber’s argument in favor of a rational-legal authority.

Weber’s definition of a charismatic authority is based on the personal qualities of the leader, or “resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him.”<sup>90</sup> A charismatic authority is one whose followers believe that the leader has extraordinary qualities or a divine mission, and that these qualities justify their obedience and submission to their leader. This type of authority is often associated with a cult of personality, where the leader is seen as

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<sup>87</sup> Weber, 88.

<sup>88</sup> Weber, 53.

<sup>89</sup> Weber, *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*, 215.

<sup>90</sup> Weber, *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*, 242.

the embodiment of the group's values. There are certainly benefits to a charismatic leader: they can inspire followers to transcend their normal limitations in pursuit of a common goal, and generally create a motivating sense of belonging and purpose.

But a government with a charismatic authority can be exceptionally erratic as it operates by harnessing the emotions of the populace in support of the leader as a representation of their beliefs. The leader's authority can be easily lost if they can no longer maintain the perception of their greatness and their followers lose faith, or if they die and as a consequence the governmental structure crumbles. This is a problem the third chapter will address relating to the crisis of expertise and President Trump's charismatic leadership. At the same time, Weber notes that a charismatic authority can be a developmental step in the positive direction of a rational-legal authority.<sup>91</sup>

The second type of authority, traditional authority,<sup>92</sup> is a form of authority rooted in the ancient customs of a society, grounded in a belief in the sanctity of age-old traditions. Traditional authority is typically associated with patriarchal societies, where authority is vested in a particular person or group based on their status, pertaining to their lineage or class. He argues that it is often maintained by symbols and rituals, which reinforce the legitimacy of the leaders as the populace internalizes their subordination to the ruling class, wherein "the servants are completely and personally dependent upon the lord."<sup>93</sup> Weber takes issue with the irrational and concentrated rule of a traditional authority, arguing that its commitment to custom makes it resistant to change and progress as the priority of this type of authority is not on the innovation of the society itself, but rather on maintaining a traditional leadership. Additionally, these

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<sup>91</sup> Weber, *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*, 242.

<sup>92</sup> Weber, *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*, 215.

<sup>93</sup> See note 92 above.

societies tend to be exceedingly unequal, and Weber emphasizes fairness as a priority of good government.<sup>94</sup>

These two types of authority center the “eros,” prioritizing the emotional aspects of humanity and embedding charisma and ritualistic behavior into the governmental structure, which Weber posits as unproductive for a functioning society.<sup>95</sup> These governments tend to be fragile and erratic, untethered by the necessary force of logic. For a government to succeed, Weber shows using the examples of the shortcomings of a traditional and charismatic authority, it must be grounded in deliberate and logical order—a tenure of rationality that transcends the emotions of the populace or the tenuous reliance on a single leader. This leaves us with a rational-legal authority, the authority of established, regulatory organization.

In Weber’s words, a rational-legal authority rests on virtues of:

“1. Continuous organization of official functions bound by rules; 2. A sphere of competence:... obligations to perform functions/authority to carry out the functions; 3. The organization of offices follows the principle of hierarchy; 4. The rules of which regulate the conduct of an office may be technical rules or norms; 5. In the rational type it is a matter of principle that the members of the administrative staff should be completely separated from ownership of the means of production or administration...; 8. The exercise of authority/imperative coordination consists precisely in administration.”<sup>96</sup>

All of these attributes are crucial elements of our modern bureaucratic state. Rational-legal authority essentially refers to a system of governance based on established regulatory processes and procedures, wherein power is vested in organizations and individual office holders who hold a legitimate claim, or the merit, to exercise authority. Weber argues that this type of authority ensures the efficient and effective functioning of institutions, and is especially advantageous in its clear framework for decision-making and governance. The

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<sup>94</sup> Weber, *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*, 213.

<sup>95</sup> Weber, 211.

<sup>96</sup> Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, 304.



framework is based on procedures designed to ensure consistency and fairness in the exercise of power, which prevents arbitrary or capricious decision-making. Therefore, this type of authority provides a stable and predictable environment for decision-making, eliminating uncertainty and maintaining order throughout regular and tumultuous situations.

Rational-legal authority also provides a mechanism for accountability.<sup>97</sup> Individuals and organizations are held accountable by well-established rules and procedures, which preserve the trust of the public as they can feel certain that civil servants will be held accountable based on universal regulations. And even further, due to the fact that this type of governance is maintained by formal rules and procedures, individuals and organizations are free to challenge authoritative actions they view to be unjust or unfair according to the laws and regulations that are made publicly available, which contributes to the rational-legal prevention of corruption.

In *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, Weber utilizes “management science”—the study of the processes that characterize all kinds of organizations—to describe the bureaucratic state and its sociological implications. He attributes the rise of organizations to the expansion of markets, developments in the law, and changes in the nature of authority, ultimately concluding that societal rights of control should be increasingly derived from “expertise” and “rationalization” processes as opposed to the spoils system, or “lineage.”<sup>98</sup>

Weber attributes the rise of modern state bureaucracy to “rationalization,” a process committed to “efficiency” and characterized by its system of explicit rules and division of labor. The division of labor gives rise to the modern bureaucrat, or the “administrative man,” an expert of sorts in his field with an unwavering grasp on the rules and a commitment to objectivity and fairness, whose main role is to find efficient and above-board solutions. Weber aims to lay out

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<sup>97</sup> Weber, *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*, 217.

<sup>98</sup> Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 77.

the “purest” form of societal control, which he claims to be “that which employs a bureaucratic administrative staff,”<sup>99</sup> as bureaucratic authority is based on merit, creating a pure administrative deep state separate from partisan politics. He says “Bureaucratic administration means fundamentally the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge.”<sup>100</sup> To have a governmental system based on knowledge seems like the ideal form of government— what better be the basis of society than “knowledge” itself, with institutions built around the pursuit of knowledge and reason?

Other sociologists agree that rationalized government is the most effective, efficient, and equal basis for society. In John Stuart Mill’s *Considerations on Representative Government*, Mill attests that government should be “representative”<sup>101</sup> of the interests of the people while also emboldening and strengthening the best qualities of the members of society. His argument is centered around the notion that government is a form of power, and he says “to make these elements of power politically influential, they must be organized; and the advantage of organization is necessarily with those who are in possession of the government.”<sup>102</sup> The primary function of a government should be to act as an organizing tool for the symbiosis of elements of power, which is not possible without regulatory and rational order. For a representative government, order must be a dominant virtue in order to ensure the people are being properly represented.

Mill’s conception of order is characterized by obedience and the preservation of peace through the cessation of private violence. According to Mill, a government can be considered

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<sup>99</sup> Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, 305.

<sup>100</sup> Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, 311.

<sup>101</sup> Mill, *Representative Government*, 22.

<sup>102</sup> See note 101 above.

orderly so long as “it succeeds in getting itself obeyed,”<sup>103</sup> and the concept of order exists “by cessation of private violence.”<sup>104</sup> Mill argues that a good government should embody the virtues of its citizens, namely industry, integrity, justice, and prudence. The quality of a government is determined by the extent to which it embodies these virtues, which in turn enhances the sum of good qualities among the governed. Further, the standard of a good government can be measured by the “degree to which it tends to increase the sum of good qualities of the governed.”<sup>105</sup> The effectiveness of a government is also dependent on its ability to create the necessary conditions for these virtues to flourish, and its quality is contingent upon both the goodness of the governed and the effectiveness of the government machinery itself. These two modes of measurement can be regulated and checked through bureaucratically rational processes.

In terms of the role of the populace, Mill says that in order to maintain a good government ordinary people must “be willing and able to do what is necessary to keep it standing.”<sup>106</sup> Mill further posits that for a society to operate effectively and efficiently in this way, individuals must relinquish some of their power to the regulative authority. A popular anti-bureaucratic claim is that the jobs in an ordered society are uninteresting and it would be against our human nature to work repetitive and monotonous bureaucratic jobs, to which Mill replies that those who do not want to work uninteresting jobs are uncivilized. These jobs are necessary for a functioning, ordered society, and “Civilization is at this price; without such labor, neither can the mind be disciplined into the habits required by civilized society.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Mill, 28.

<sup>104</sup> Mill, 29.

<sup>105</sup> Mill, 40.

<sup>106</sup> Mill, 15.

<sup>107</sup> Mill, 47.

Mill and Weber argue that the rigidity and intense commitment to regulation are necessary in creating a good and fair government. Bureaucratic processes are in essence the procedural application of rational thinking and the development of reason in government since the Enlightenment. The concept of “demagification,” of stripping the government of its attributes that make it alluring or tumultuous and prioritizing social-scientifically proven laws for the purpose of rational efficiency was the foundation for the positive implementation of the objective, rational, bureaucratic body of the civil service as an embodiment of these ideals.

## Chapter Three – The “Delusion” of Bureaucratic Rationality

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### Introduction

Chapter II served to contextualize the issue of the civil service as a deliberate implementation of rationality into a government structure that lacked rational order. So far in the project, I followed the lineage of our modern conception of bureaucracy beginning with the overturning of the spoils system, and explored political and sociological arguments in favor of the implementation of rational governmental infrastructure to serve as a tenured, objective, nonpartisan deep state which creates an elite and professional consensus that is functionally the moral compass of our society.

In Chapter III, I turn to theorists and philosophers who critique our societal commitment to bureaucratic rationality and social science, noting the declining credibility of experts and technocrats and the subsequent unraveling of the credibility of the civil service. This chapter looks to critics of bureaucracy to fully interrogate the political and philosophical implications of bureaucratically rational ideology. I argue that bureaucracy suppresses the human spirit and institutionalizes elitist rule, excluding the legitimate opinions and knowledge of democratic individuals. As genuine as bureaucratic strides might be in their efforts to limit the excesses of democratic rule and in its rational implementation of efficient government, the modern civil service is harmful in practice. We are left answering to an anonymous and diluted authority and are powerless in its decision making. The entire basis of its decision making is based on arbitrary applications of scientific methods to the social sphere, and since it is an exclusionary structure of

elitism its application can never be impartial. Our moral goodness is not measured on how virtuous we are, but how well we behave in our assigned roles.

This chapter will analyze the works of F.A. Hayek, delving more thoroughly into his concepts of “scientism” and “scientific prejudice” to highlight the inherent error of social science as a guiding principle of policy and governance using the positivist movement as an example of the danger of the application of this error. Then, the chapter will look at Ludwig von Mises, Hayek’s mentor, and his critique of bureaucracy before turning to David Graeber’s argument about bureaucracy and expertise.

### **Section I – Scientism and Scientific Prejudice**

In Chapter II, I touched on the Hayekian notion of “scientism” as supplementary to arguments in favor of bureaucratic rationality as a governing principle. Whereas Hayek does allude to the initial struggle of science in establishing legitimacy in a previously “unreasonable” world, his essays surrounding “scientism” have a chiefly negative outlook on bureaucratic order as a mechanized system of social science. Undoubtedly, the application of social science to societal processes have increased the efficiency of the mechanized order of bureaucracy through the formation of general rules and laws by which the infrastructure of administrative rule abides. But at what cost?

To begin, we must first understand the connotations of the terms “scientism” and “scientific prejudice.” As illustrated in Chapter II and as its material conception in the form of the civil service is described in Chapter I, scientism refers to the notion that the most reasonable and reliable means of acquiring knowledge and building societal structures is through the methods of natural sciences. The negative connotation of Hayek’s use of “scientism” stems from

the application of scientific methods beyond their rightful domain in examining natural, physical phenomena.<sup>108</sup> This is what “scientistic prejudice” refers to: the tendency to then perceive *all* human issues and social phenomena in the same way as scientific phenomena, which in turn neglects to consider the multifaceted nature of the human experience, ultimately leading to a reductive and mechanized approach to human affairs.

Whereas Hayek views this process negatively, as it reworks our distinct human experience into something mechanized and numerically categorizable thus diminishing the last of our immeasurable human sense, many consider this sacrifice necessary for a functioning society. In fact, some Positivist philosophers view this phenomenon as actively good. Henri de Saint-Simon, a French social theorist and early Positivist philosopher, represents an antagonist in Hayek’s essay *The Accoucheur D’Idées: Henri de Saint-Simon*, as Saint-Simon stands for the establishment of a new social order based on the principles of rationalism, science, and technology.<sup>109</sup> Saint-Simon advocates for a society organized around a rational, scientific, and technocratic elite that would use their expertise to manage social and economic affairs.

Positivism emphasizes empirical observation, scientific inquiry, and logical reasoning as central tenets of its philosophy. The philosophical framework of positivism posits that any assertion that can be rationally justified must also be scientifically verified by logical or mathematical methods. It therefore rejects metaphysics or any line of thinking which cannot be empirically, mathematically, or logically demonstrable. Whereas this philosophy is not perfectly analogous to the guiding philosophy of a bureaucratically rational system, Max Weber and other sociologists whose theorizing directly inspired the formation of bureaucratic infrastructure, like

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<sup>108</sup> Hayek, “The Problem and the Method of the Natural Sciences.”

<sup>109</sup> Hayek and Caldwell, *Studies on the Abuse and Decline of Reason*.

the civil service, drew inspiration from positivist philosophy, and elements of our bureaucratic system mirror much of the thinking of great positivists.

The main project of Henri de Saint-Simon was an effort to restructure society by “regarding our social relationships as physiological phenomena”<sup>110</sup> to effectively reduce the most complicated facets of humanity into something that can be used as a mechanism of social order. But Saint-Simon’s notoriety in this regard transcends the typical push to legitimize social sciences in their attempt to explain the inexplicable. His concern in his project was not just about recasting social phenomena physiologically, but reducing all phenomena to a singular law: the law of universal gravitation.<sup>111</sup> In the age of positivism, we are concerned with what is provable, and the formation of facts around what has been proved true. Hence, the most ubiquitous fact: if you throw something up, it comes down. The hypothesis: the law of gravity. To be rational: to understand that facts are observable and bound by laws. We can understand everything if we treat everything as observable phenomena, and we can create a rational world.

Saint-Simon describes the task of his autobiography as combining “nearly all the characteristics of the modern scientific organizer. The enthusiasm for physicism... and the use of ‘physical language,’ the attempt to ‘unify science’ and to make it the basis of morals, the contempt for all ‘theological,’ that is anthropomorphic reasoning, the desire to organize the work of others, particularly by editing a great encyclopedia, and the wish to plan life in general on scientific lines...”<sup>112</sup> Here is the first instance of the New Morality, tangible in its basis.

His justification for this initiative is its forging of a new form of morality from which all new laws can emerge, therefore clarifying the once arbitrary nature of “right” and “wrong” in a

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<sup>110</sup> Hayek, *The Accoucheur D’Idées: Henri de Saint-Simon*, 191.

<sup>111</sup> See note 110 above.

<sup>112</sup> Hayek, “*The Accoucheur D’Idées: Henri de Saint-Simon*,” 195.



given situation. From here, society can be arranged around this conception of morality.<sup>113</sup> All phenomena being cast under the law of universal gravitation bestows an omnipotence to those who understand the scientific basis of gravity: if you are aware of the technical operation of the primordial law then you have a succinct explanation for the events of the past and a solid basis for predicting the future. Saint-Simon says that with these scientific advancements and the application of science to every facet of humanity “We can develop a theory of history, a general history of mankind, which will deal not merely with the past and present but also with the future...”<sup>114</sup>

This all sounds extremely idyllic: a singular rule that umbrellas all phenomena so nothing goes unexplained, and then a system of government which emerges in the most logical way from this objectively factual basis. Saint-Simon advertises this system of governance as one of pure organization, one he describes as doing nothing except ensuring that “the workers are not disturbed” and one “which arranges everything.”<sup>115</sup> Hence, a regulatory system of organization emerges to fulfill the prophecy of societal order and the eradication of uncertainty. This system emphasizes the separation of its parts into distinct categories, or offices, all to respectively manage specific aspects of the government, and the appointment process will be starkly meritocratic. With this new organizational structure, people will no longer be “subjects but associates or partners,” and there will no longer be need “of ‘government’ but merely of ‘administration.’”<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Hayek, “The Accoucheur D’Idées: Henri de Saint-Simon,” 196.

<sup>114</sup> Hayek, “The Accoucheur D’Idées: Henri de Saint-Simon,” 197.

<sup>115</sup> Hayek, “The Accoucheur D’Idées: Henri de Saint-Simon,” 200.

<sup>116</sup> Hayek, “The Accoucheur D’Idées: Henri de Saint-Simon,” 201.

In applying even elementary level analysis to Saint-Simon's conception of an ideal society to modern day bureaucracy and its priorities one can easily draw parallels. Although we do not view the law of universal gravitation as at the epicenter and as the primordial guiding principle of scientific and social scientific thought, Saint-Simon's early plan of positivist government has in many ways structured and contributed to the common goals of good governance in a bureaucratic system and the creation of an administrative state. Hayek says that this conception of government is a "delusion (p.208)," that forging any tangible system based on science is extending its intended reach far beyond its appropriate field—hence, scientism.

In his essay entitled *The Problem and the Method of the Natural Sciences*, Hayek defines the terms "Scientism" and "Scientification" as describing "an attitude which is decidedly unscientific in the true sense of the word, since it involves a mechanical and uncritical application of habits of thought to fields different from those in which they have been formed."<sup>117</sup> The application of the methods of natural science to the unscientific world is in itself unscientific because it is uncritical—it places immeasurable aspects of social and interpersonal life in scientific categories for efficiency purposes.

This process is executed for the sake of certainty. With no central "truth" to ground society in, without God, there is no choice but to reduce the pluralistic nature of humanity to a series of common laws in order to forge unity and therefore community—some level of consensus is necessary. But the problem is that this consensus is a fallacy when it is grounded in objectivity, because the forging of objectivity happens on the basis of social science: creating new objective truths about humanity through the means of psychological, sociological, anthropological, etc. examination, even if they do not truly encapsulate the human spirit. In fact, they are nothing more than "a set of rules" enabling us to "trace the connections between different complexes of

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<sup>117</sup> Hayek and Caldwell, *Studies on the Abuse and Decline of Reason*, 80.

sense perceptions”<sup>118</sup> which are exceedingly more complicated and pluralistic than how these phenomena are defined in social scientific terms.

The creation of artificial unanimity through social science is an example of how the rationality of the civil service as elite consensus is not scientific, but is an institution of power masking itself as rationality. The civil service itself is a manifestation of this elite power, justified through mechanisms of social science settling on objective “truths” to ground its procedure in, and its adherence to these “truths” are an enacting of elite power. Hannah Arendt posits in *Truth and Politics* that the quest for objective truth through rational inquiry is a futile endeavor,<sup>119</sup> as truth is not a static construct but a malleable and subjective one, intricately woven by those in power into the social and historical context within which it operates. Power thus shapes the current conception of truth, exercising its capacity to manipulate public discourse and institutions, while selectively presenting information to shape the public's perception of truth. Through this strategic control of the narrative, the powerful can establish their own version of truth, which they can utilize to legitimate their actions and undermine dissenting voices by casting them aside as irrational or untruthful.

In this way, Arendt is in agreement with Nietzsche, whose conception of truth and power will be further elaborated on in Chapter IV. To supplement this Arendtian point about objective truth, I now allude to Nietzsche's conception of truth and power in saying that traditional notions of truth and power are inherently flawed as they function as mechanisms of dominance on behalf of the ruling class due to the fact that all knowledge is based on perspective and interpretation, meaning there is no such thing as objective truth—no truth independent of human

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<sup>118</sup> Hayek and Caldwell, 84.

<sup>119</sup> Arendt, *Truth and Politics*.

consciousness.<sup>120</sup> Truth is thus a matter of power relations, with different individuals, classes, and groups asserting their own interpretations of various phenomena, and those with any level of dominance (the elite class, dominant in their merit and control over institutions) hold the dominant narrative. In our desperate societal need for guiding principles and truths, we turn to the dominant class—the experts, technocrats, and elites—to tell us what is true. They maintain their dominance through their imposition of values and their interpretation of truth, and the force of their imposition creates a sense of guilt and self-denial for all those who do not conform to these invented values and truths.

Thus, not only is objectivity based on social science inaccurate in its failure to encapsulate the sensual aspects of humanity, it also operates as a suppressive mechanism of truth on behalf of the ruling class. It manipulates the discourse, polarizes the non-conformist, and manifests itself as a mechanism of power through the body of the civil service and other bureaucratic institutions.

Further, there is no space for sensual aspects of humanity within rational methods of examination, which is ultimately harmful to the spirit of the individual. These methods of examination, as we have seen, are the very basis of our governing structure: they pave the ground on which we stand, spin the gears of our bureaucracy, and emerge as the foundation of our most preeminent guiding principles. Sciences establish validity through their quantitative subjectification of immeasurable aspects of humankind: the spirit, the psyche, the instinct.

And not only are the social sciences inaccurate and reductive in their explanation of social phenomena, they are counterproductive to our understanding of humans in general. Hayek claims that trying to define human action in physical terms “would confine ourselves to less than we know about the situation” as “most of the objects of social or human action are not ‘objective

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<sup>120</sup> Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense,” 18.

facts' in the special narrow sense in which this term is used by the Sciences and contrasted to 'opinions,'"<sup>121</sup> so they can not be relegated to purely physical terminology like in the sciences.

Hayek further argues that the human spirit is positively unquantifiable by numeric measurements. He says "What men know or think about the external world or about themselves, their concepts and even the subjective qualities of their sense perceptions are to Science never ultimate reality, data to be accepted."<sup>122</sup> The scientific method renders invalid the individual perceptions of man, which are in actuality the most reliable sources of observation. It eradicates subjectivity for the purpose of establishing scientific consensus—"to make more definite and more certain our statements"<sup>123</sup> by changing which concepts are relevant to begin with.

The pendulum of science—once a mechanism for understanding the physical world around us—has now swung to a point where we apply even the most sensual facets of our lives to numerically measurable standards of examination. Hayek quotes Susan L. Stebbing in *Thinking to Some Purpose* as having said "Physical science has now reached a state of development that renders it impossible to express observable occurrences in language appropriate to what is perceived by our senses. The only appropriate language is that of mathematics."<sup>124</sup> The sensual experience has now been eradicated by scientific standards, and individuals have been relegated to explicit sociological categories. These scientific organizational methods have completely altered our perception of reality so that our sensual understanding of events around us has been

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<sup>121</sup> Hayek and Caldwell, *Studies on the Abuse and Decline of Reason*, 86.

<sup>122</sup> Hayek and Caldwell, *Studies on the Abuse and Decline of Reason*, 86.

<sup>123</sup> See note 122 above.

<sup>124</sup> Hayek and Caldwell, *Studies on the Abuse and Decline of Reason*, 107.

“replaced... by a different classification of events,” as the entire purpose of this advancement is to “produce a new organization of all our experience to the external world.”<sup>125</sup>

The civil service, although technically composed of autonomous individuals, relies on the notion of scientific organization. It confines the individual to an element of a formulated structure, an actor carrying out the duties of Rational processes as opposed to abiding by sensual instinct, which is incidentally suppressed. As Hayek asserts that the confinement of the sensual world to a series of systematic mechanisms incidentally alters and skews our intrinsic perception of the world itself, the individual as an element of bureaucratic structure now has an altered and skewed intrinsic perception of himself. Once an extension of the sensual world, now a number, an “employee,” a salaried instrument of the bureaucratic machine, tasked only with carrying out the demands of his manager, who is tasked only with carrying out the demands of his manager, who is tasked only with carrying out the demands of his manager.

Hayek’s argument as it relates to power in a bureaucracy is an economic one. He criticizes the push to regulate the free market according to the aforementioned notion of objective truth that is based in deceit, elitism, and successful analytical untruths—men should not be confined to their social and economic destiny based on the imposition of a deceitful, faceless bureaucracy which feigns objective truth. Thus, Hayek argues, the free market is more democratic than the regulative entity of the civil service.

The anti-democratic values of the civil service are undeniable. Its conception of objectivity is an error, no one can simply profess the truth because there is no truth, only perspective, and men can only know their own perspective. Whereas I believe this to be accurate, I will not make a capitalist argument in favor of a free-market. In fact, I will not make an economic argument whatsoever, just a Nietzschean one: intellectual power, which we can now

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<sup>125</sup> Hayek and Caldwell, *Studies on the Abuse and Decline of Reason*, 87.

view as a tool of the elite class, is suppressive of life as it rationalizes life's fullness for the benefit of one class of people. At the same time, it promotes life through its use of power to build a social world that is capable of doing good things. Essentially, my argument here is that these deceitful and erroneous systems of control can be positive so long as their ends promote life in some way. We still strive for truth, even if it can be anti-life, because it serves us as humans through its creation of consensus and civilization, while we still forget that the truth is an illusion based on who has the most power. And whereas the civil service is in some ways life-preserving, it is still a mechanism of the elite class to exert power over the public, creating consensus around social control and scientism. The next part of the chapter will expand on this critique.

## **Section II – The “Delusion” of Bureaucracy and the Emergence of a New Aristocracy**

Hayek was inspired by his mentor Ludwig von Mises' antimodernist attacks on the positivists. Hayek's critiques of Weber's ideals of bureaucratic rationality and a rational-legal authority were meant to encourage more subjectivist analysis for the “science of human action” in order to undercut the reductive, positivist methods of examination in social science.<sup>126</sup> A staunch ideological individualist, Mises advocates for a free-market approach to economics for the sake of the prevailance of the individual. To him, regulatory processes are the bane of government: they stifle innovation, the entrepreneurial spirit, and freedom at large as their adherence to order overrides the prioritization of the prosperity of the human spirit. Mises in his anti-regulatory ideology makes the ultimate economic argument in favor of a free-market system, like Hayek. Whereas his critiques of the managerial power of the bureaucratic state stand independently of this solution for the sake of this project, often criticisms of bureaucracy are

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<sup>126</sup> Caldwell, “Hayek's Scientific Subjectivism.”

criticisms of regulation of individual markets and are thus pro-free market. He and Hayek suggest ends to the problems illustrated in this section; I do not.

Mises, in his book *Bureaucracy*, likens bureaucracy to a form of oppressive government intervention that limits the individual spirit and therefore undermines the most meaningful of human values, like interpersonal relationships and personal freedom at large. He attributes the shortcomings of the welfare state not to individual bureaucrats, but to the systemic profit orientation of bureaucratic institutions—though this project is more concerned with his critique of the spirit and theory of bureaucracy and rationality as they relate to the philosophical justification for the tangible societal implementation of rational ideals and infrastructure, such as the establishment of the civil service as an embodiment of these theories.

Regulatory processes and institutions, established as a method of expanding equal opportunity and impartiality to all corners of the polity and therefore demonstrating a commitment to “progress”—an advancement from the aristocratic tyranny of a less heavily controlled system, are actually forms of systemic stagnancy. Due to the system’s reliance on previously established ideals (i.e. Enlightenment era conceptions of morality, scientism, and the procedural limits on any drastic change), Mises asserts that bureaucracy hinders progress since it requires individuals to adhere to their superiors, who adhere to outdated rules and regulations, and therefore does not permit any advancement. He says “For a bureaucratic mind law abidance, i.e., clinging to the customary and antiquated, is the first of all virtues.”<sup>127</sup>

This claim about the prioritization of custom pertains to the “delusion” of the bureaucratic system: that in its subordination of the human spirit, like the aforementioned reframing of the world through the lens of science, the bureaucrat begins to view himself as

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<sup>127</sup>Von Mises and Greaves, *Bureaucracy*, 67.



wholly an appendage of the maintained social structure, and not as a human. The “well-intentioned office holders”<sup>128</sup> who en masse uphold the regulatory system are forced to adopt the mentality that it is their sacred duty to defend the state against tumult through their menial role in the structure of regulatory processes, and in result they extract their absolute meaning from their role. Powerless and dejected in a system that sculpts their very being into a piece of machinery, sharpens the edges of their selfhood to perfectly fill the square of their assigned role, and enters their name into a spreadsheet and replaces it with a title—it is no wonder that when the bureaucrat finds himself in the blessed and rare position wherein a single drop of power saturates his palette he embodies his role at its fullest capacity for a chance to exercise the authority he does not even have over himself.

This, Mises, and many, argue, is not the way things are supposed to be. Men should not have to abide by suppressive, antiquated regulations as the primary duty of their lives, be confined to a number, and defined by an office. Rather, each of us should be categorized by his character, his good nature, the power he has over his self... man should be free to pursue his own interests, be it wandering through the meadows, napping under the trees, or contemplating in solitude. The existence of a fluorescently lit cubicle is in the first place antithetical to the innate nature of the human spirit: to be free, and to flourish.

In *Bureaucracy*, Mises describes the suppressive day to day of the bureaucrat—once a passionate young man eager to begin his life, now having “No illusions about his future” because “He knows what is in store for him.” That is,

“He will get a job with one of the innumerable bureaus, he will be but a cog in a huge machine the working of which is more or less mechanical. The routine of a bureaucratic technique will cripple his mind and tie his hands. He will enjoy security. But this security will be rather of the kind that the convict enjoys within the prison walls. He will never be free to make decisions and to shape his own fate. He will forever be a man taken care of by other people. He

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<sup>128</sup> Von Mises, 75.

will never be a real man relying on his own strength. He shudders at the sight of the huge office buildings in which he will bury himself.”<sup>129</sup>

The powerful dramatism of the bureaucrat’s banal day-to-day well demonstrates the “delusion” that the system is committed to progress, that it uplifts the “good of the whole”— as the “whole” in question are in actuality the individuals who make up the system at large. And now we must again refer to one of these systemic structures: the innovative and reformist–revolutionary, some may argue–civil service. A solution-oriented body upholding the long valued and sought after tenets of equality, impartiality, objectivity, and rationality, fails in regard to freedom and flourishing, as it employs the men whom Mises describes here.

And further, Mises argues, the body itself fails in regard to being “solution oriented.” He claims that due to the bureaucrat’s despondent state and the administrative system’s commitment to archaic rules and regulations, bureaucrats “are no longer eager to deal with each case to the best of their abilities; they are no longer anxious to find the most appropriate solution for every problem. Their main concern is to comply with the rules and regulations, no matter whether they are reasonable or contrary to what was intended. The first virtue of an administrator is to abide by the codes and decrees. He becomes a bureaucrat.”<sup>130</sup> The bureaucrat is an embodiment of his duties, and his duties are to maintain an unwavering commitment to the instituted regulatory processes, whether or not they themselves agree with them. And in a bureaucracy, Mises says, “the duties of the citizens are more important than their rights.”<sup>131</sup>

One of the duties of a bureaucrat is the act of “managing.” The structures of the civil service and other bureaucratic bodies are hierarchical, as previously described, wherein each

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<sup>129</sup> Von Mises, 94.

<sup>130</sup> Von Mises, 41.

<sup>131</sup> Von Mises, 88.

civil servant answers to their manager. The managerial power is the main concentration of power in the bureaucratic state, as there is no one insulated despot. The manager is “responsible to nobody,”<sup>132</sup> is but a tool of the “hereditary aristocracy”<sup>133</sup> that emerges from a new managerial class. This assertion again is reflective of Hannah Arendt’s classification of bureaucracy as the “rule of nobody,” and the “tyranny without the tyrant.”<sup>134</sup> Through the managerial power of the bureaucratic state, the tyrant is a ubiquitous and anonymous act of management. A regulated and procedural tyrant, which materializes its dispersion of power through the conduit of managers. These managers, earning their position by their merit to hold office (be it due to their education, experience, an entry exam, or other qualifications) have a claim to authority based on regulatory decrees of validity in their pursuits—their standardized climbing of the bureaucratic ladder.

This new class of managers, Mises says, is akin to an “omnipotent business clique (p.41)” wherein those who “know better” because they have proven themselves worthy in an invented system of qualifications have power over those who do not. And, Mises argues, this class is only concerned with maintaining its own power, only addressing the interests of its own members, and “cannot bother about other branches” that do not share its interests; “The specialists are intent upon improving the satisfaction of needs only in their special branches of activity. They do not and cannot bother about the check which an expansion of the plant entrusted to them would impose upon other classes of need-satisfaction.”<sup>135</sup> All the while, in their omnipotence and control, they are “rather mediocre men,”<sup>136</sup> who make up the class of managers that constitutes

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<sup>132</sup> Von Mises, 11.

<sup>133</sup> Von Mises, 41.

<sup>134</sup> Arendt, *On Violence*, 81.

<sup>135</sup> Von Mises, 62.

<sup>136</sup> Von Mises, 56.

the new “Aristocracy.” Now, let it be known that I personally tend to have nothing against the everyday bureaucrat. This paper is analytical—and in the next few paragraphs I am going to analytically imply that mediocre managerial “gentlemen” are theoretically castrated. The tragedy is that it is not always their fault or choice; most people are doing their best, finding jobs where they can. The point is that in a bureaucratic system, we are all victims of circumstance!

Chapter II touched on Robert Boyle as an influential pioneer of scientific rationality in his founding of the British Royal Academy. Boyle is one of the referent rational, truth telling, trustworthy “gentlemen,”<sup>137</sup> committed to the pursuit of neutrality. Steven Shapin in *A Social History of Truth* makes the argument that Boyle himself was a rather “mediocre” man.<sup>138</sup> As the fourteenth child and seventh son of Richard Boyle, who was the first earl of Cork, he established a reputation of trustworthiness through his innate classification as “gentleman” (of a respectable lineage), while still maintaining an ordinary demeanor as one of fourteen children.

Boyle pioneered the trend of mediocrity among those who are deemed most trustworthy: the “middlers,” reliable in that they fall somewhere in the middle. These are the ideal candidates for the class of experts: not particularly special or exorbitant, but well-off and accomplished enough to be considered trustworthy. We want gentlemen in charge, accessible to the public, people who will remain level in a time of crisis. These gentlemen, Shapin says, can then be categorized as eunuchs, since their lack of excitement or lustful passion make them more rational and trustworthy—the ideal bureaucrats. It is no coincidence that politicians change their names to make themselves appear more mediocre (Joseph Robinette Biden Junior, now “Joe”)—they essentially castrate *themselves*. Bureaucratization is essentially a forced castration of men who were otherwise destined for greatness, and thus is the most painful step in the great leveling.

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<sup>137</sup> Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*.

<sup>138</sup> See note 137 above.

The formation of this eunuch class was one of the positivist ambitions Saint-Simon strove for with his proposed scientification of social phenomena to ensure all problems are solvable by scientific means. He says in his autobiography “Just as every question of social importance will necessarily be solved as well as the existing state of knowledge permits, so will all social functions necessarily be entrusted to those men who are most capable of exercising them in conformity with the general aims of the community. Under such an order we shall see the disappearance of the three main disadvantages of the present political system, that is, arbitrariness, incapacity, and intrigue.”<sup>139</sup> The logical next step of the establishment of rational, scientific social systemic processes and thus a more ordered society is to appoint qualified gentlemen to decide upon and administer the new rules.

### **Section III – The Modern Epistemological Crisis**

The formation of the expert class is based on scientism, as its expansion of science to all realms of society has made each facet of humanity knowable and thus masterable by those who are skilled enough in their specialized field. The new aristocracy in science is about credibility, and those who make up the expert class must prove to be “the best” before they take their administrative office. Scientific institutions, as well as scientified institutions (i.e. journals, law, academia, and the civil service), attempt to expand the virtue of bureaucratic impartiality in their authority.

Of course, impartiality is nearly impossible to attain. In *Truth and Politics*, Hannah Arendt cites Homer<sup>140</sup> as the ultimate example of impartiality as his narrative of *The Odyssey*

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<sup>139</sup> Hayek, “The Accoucheur D’Idées: Henri de Saint-Simon,” 208.

<sup>140</sup> Arendt, *Truth and Politics*, 18.

declaims both opposing chronicles of the war between Greece and Troy—otherwise, even bureaucratic homogenization can not strip people of their natural biases. Scientists do not claim to provide purely objective knowledge but to have a seasoned understanding of the scientific methods in which we have placed our societal trust. At the same time, scientists and experts can not operate entirely independently of biases, be it stemming from their backgrounds, capital motives—the source of their research funding—or in their higher education, which places them at a more privileged position than the uneducated, regardless of how accessible they try to make themselves for public approval purposes.

In *Post-Truth*, Lee McIntyre cites big tobacco companies in the 1950s as having contributed to the unraveling of scientific legitimacy through their “vested interest in raising doubt about whether cigarette smoking caused lung cancer (p.21),” hiring experts to find scientific loopholes in the once “objective” and scientifically authorized fact that cigarettes smoking is actively harmful to one’s health. He also cites Exxon Mobile as following a similar suit in terms of the fossil fuel industry to combat allegations that fossil fuels contribute to climate change. This trend of public manipulability with the alibi of expertise also pertains to global atrocities like the Vietnam War, which Noam Chomsky in *American Power and The New Mandarins* argues is the responsibility of the expert and technical class, who use the expert as an “ideological cover”<sup>141</sup> for what they have done and what they have to do. The power of the expert is politically valuable, and also politically polarizing.

Alasdair MacIntyre’s *After Virtue* takes on expertise as an ideological cover, a hindrance to human flourishing as it relies on reductive methods of social science, and as a “basis for a manager’s authority to manipulate human beings into compliant patterns of behavior (Nathan

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<sup>141</sup> Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins: Historical and Political Essays*, 9.

Pinkoski),” essentially existing as a justification for social control of the populace. When it comes to the managers themselves, MacIntyre “regards managerial experts as impotent,”<sup>142</sup> mediocre and weak, while simultaneously impressively effective “actors.”<sup>143</sup> A managerial bureaucrat must be able to convince everyone in the “fiction of (his) expertise,”<sup>144</sup> while simultaneously self-aggrandizing to convince the public that they *should* be excluded from the decision making because of their incapability to understand what he understands. Thus, he instigates severe polarity by stirring up such a drama, dividing the public so that anyone who disagrees with him is accused of waging a “war on science”<sup>145</sup> and the experts then have the disclosure to continue to do what they want.

Any form of “truth” can be constructed by those who have the tools, the power, and the motive. And now, while the truth grows even less significant in politics as semiotics and sensationalized reporting takes over, “experts” can be referenced by anyone as an “ideological cover,” for any point whatsoever. Fox News can bring on an “expert” of foreign policy to tell us that we will soon be living under Sharia Law; MSNBC can bring on an “expert” of domestic affairs to tell us that the events of Margaret Atwood’s *Handmaid’s Tale* are projections of the near future—the “experts” are officially in flux.

After Socrates was charged with corrupting the youth of Athens and subsequently executed by drinking poisonous hemlock, Plato recognized that we could not reasonably live in a world of heterodoxy because if the public has too much power it can lead to chaos as well as the persecution of individuals of intellect akin to Socrates, so the only ones who should have access

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<sup>142</sup> Pinkoski, “Coronavirus and the Cult of Expertise.”

<sup>143</sup> See note 142 above.

<sup>144</sup> See note 142 above.

<sup>145</sup> Pinkoski, “Coronavirus and the Cult of Expertise.”

to this power are the “philosopher kings.”<sup>146</sup> Now, heterodoxy is endemic among the “philosopher kings” of our time, and the institutions meant to execute their conceptions of truth. Herein emerges the dissolution of the legitimacy of expertise, the jeopardy of technocracy, the modern epistemological crisis. The state we are in is a failure of the Enlightenment:<sup>147</sup> The “credible” disagree with one another, and the original unifying conception of rationality is lost.

All societal infrastructure relies on mutual consent and trust. Any political action requires some level of participation from the populace. Science in government is not an ultimate truth but an organizing tool; as Hayek says, “What is relevant in the study of society is not whether these laws of nature are true in any objective sense, but solely whether they are believed and acted upon by the people,”<sup>148</sup> and now, the people are less inclined to act upon them. As members of the populace, we must trust that the entity we are surrendering pieces of our autonomy to has our best interests as their priority. But with science as a potential weapon for the ulterior motives of companies or powerful individuals, with scientists and journalists and academics openly claiming allegiance to some political party, with political parties and figures claiming allegiance to either science or propaganda, the previously more generally accepted notion that bureaucratic rationality, grounded in principles of science, served as a solid mechanism for enabling effective governance and societal organization has become a subject for debate.

Trust, a vital component of the workings of our institutions, has been rapidly declining in recent years, polarized on a few conspicuous lines: according to a poll taken during the 2016 Presidential election, 86% of Hillary Clinton voters reported to trust the government as opposed

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<sup>146</sup> Plato, *Republic* (*Πολιτεία*).

<sup>147</sup> MacIntyre, *After Virtue*.

<sup>148</sup> Hayek and Caldwell, *Studies on the Abuse and Decline of Reason*, 93.



to only 13% of Donald J. Trump voters.<sup>149</sup> This phenomenon is coherent with Trump's symbolic image: a valiant chieftain whose name carries the power of the politics of the "overlooked" in the mass media, with a message and a promise that stands starkly in contrast to the arbitrary message of widely dispersed bureaucratic management supported by Clinton and democrats who urge us to "trust the experts," as opposed to the more appealing Trumpian decree, "trust *me*."

David Graeber in *The Utopia of Rules* addresses this rapid and destructive polarization on the issue of "rationality," and its creation of two different schools of thought. He says "This tendency to enshrine rationality as a political virtue has had the perverse effect of encouraging those repelled by such pretensions, or by the people who profess them, to claim to reject rationality entirely, and embrace 'irrationalism.'"<sup>150</sup> Through the politicization of rationality and the subsequent diminishing of its claim to objectivity, expert authority wavers.

By claiming to be on the side of rationality, Clinton and institutional politicians create deeper divisions than solely between science-doubters and science-believers. Rational institutions like the civil service not only lose their authority, but they become scapegoats for those who adopt a sensationalized view of politics in their polarized frustration. This is to say that in the Democrats' claim to expertise, those who disagree politically with democratic ideology will be more inclined to dismiss institutions of expertise entirely. They then subject themselves to the accusation of "irrationality" as the verb "to be rational" becomes synonymous to being a democrat. Hence, "rationality" takes on a politically polarized identity where one is either "with it" or "against it." Once labeled irrational, there is hardly any possible reclamation of political and social legitimacy. Thus, those who are "irrational" have few choices other than to

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<sup>149</sup> Davies, *Nervous States*, 63.

<sup>150</sup> Graeber, *The Utopia of Rules*, 168.

devote themselves to sensational politics. The issue has transcended a partisan discourse of determining an optimal solution based on a shared understanding of rational justification, but a new battle of science versus emotions. Graeber says “Claiming one’s own political positions are based on ‘rationality’ is an extremely strong statement. In fact, it’s extraordinarily arrogant, since it means that those who disagree with those positions are not just wrong, but crazy.”<sup>151</sup>

The proliferation of scientism is additionally exceedingly polarizing to those who lack the education to fully grasp scientific modes of analysis, and this division tends to exist on class and urban lines. What was once considered an innate human sense in interpreting a relationship with one’s neighbor has been “scientified” into the classification of sociology. What was once simply assessing the needs of one’s child has been “scientified” into the psychology of early childhood development. These human affairs have been distanced from the interpersonal level, broadened to a science, and that science has been applied to our governing system.

A bureaucracy is predicated upon individuals ceding certain facets of personal autonomy to the system, and thus to the experts whose formulas underlie societal functioning, on the premise that the bureaucratic structure as a whole serves the collective good, but again this implies a universalized definition of “good,” and it is increasingly clear that universality does not truly exist, that everyone has their biases, and that as experts have been at odds with one another it makes sense for one to feel resistant to buying into the “dominant narrative.”

Further, perhaps people who live in urban areas tend to be more in favor of bureaucratic policy initiatives as they believe more in social scientific methods of analysis because they are less familiar with the communal dynamic typical to small towns, more physically detached from others, and therefore more accustomed to viewing people in their relation to statistics as opposed to viewing them as their neighbors. People who live in urban areas are also more likely to get

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<sup>151</sup> See note 150 above.

their food from grocery stores or restaurants and will therefore be more disconnected from agricultural processes, diverting their trust in the process to the FDA. Those who live in rural areas, however, might have their own farms or may be closer to the agricultural process and therefore are more self-reliant in harvesting the right produce as opposed to relying on a metropolitan bureaucrat who declares what is consumable based on lab results.

This trend was luminescent during the events of the COVID-19 pandemic, when those who lived in populated cities were more likely to follow CDC guidelines as they trusted the technocrats who have the education, expertise, and therefore the merit to apply scientific methods to the examination of crisis and disease. Others in more rural environments, who are more connected with their neighbors, felt less comfortable sacrificing those human connections in favor of a scientific theory of what constitutes “safety.” They exhibit frustration that the initiative in a time of crisis was to sacrifice everything that makes us uniquely human—our feelings and relationships—in favor of a theory regarding the preservation of life.

“If surviving means we must sacrifice human connection, what makes life worth living?” one may ask. “Who granted these eunuch bureaucrats the authority to strip me of my individual autonomy and confine me to the bounds of bureaucratic order for the ‘good of the whole?’” Here they would be invoking the discrepancy between “living” and “flourishing,” or, as Albert Camus describes the quarantined townspeople in the infected town in *The Plague*: “they drifted through life rather than lived.”<sup>152</sup> What should be the priority of the government, to promote living or flourishing, drifting or living? The answer, the bureaucratically rational government responds, is efficiency.

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<sup>152</sup> Camus, *The Plague*, 66.

A system that prioritizes efficiency can never have a claim to objectivity because it is consistently in pursuit of something—the reason and rationality that lay the groundwork for efficiency exist only to an end, not for the purpose of being “reasonable” in and of itself. We are not seeking an ultimate state of “rationality,” but for the most rational ways to construct an efficiently functioning system; Graeber says “Reason cannot tell us what we should want. It can only tell us how best to get it (p.165).”<sup>153</sup>

In *The Utopia of Rules*, Graeber posits that reason, as it was once understood, has been subverted by the proliferation of bureaucratic rules and regulations, which has led to a state of “bureaucratic irrationality” wherein rules and bureaucratic processes themselves have become the primary societal focus as opposed to any social outcomes: Efficiency is now the ultimate goal of modern societies, to the detriment of other human values, like empathy, compassion, and generosity. Instead, he argues, “reason” should be liberated from the suppressive and misguided straitjacket of bureaucratic rationality and human flourishing should be at the forefront of the construction of a new utopian society.

Even in a religious society that places God at the epicenter of our conception of reason, people were more self-determined than they are as cogs in the machine of bureaucratic order. Graeber says of the laws that structured religious society “God did not impose these laws, He was those laws. Human reason, then, was simply the action of that divine principle within us. In this sense, rationality was not just a spiritual notion, it was mystical: a technique for achieving union with the divine.”<sup>154</sup>

And now, rationality is imposed on man from the outside, not the other way around. Self determination and seeking purpose within oneself is counterintuitive to the structured order of

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<sup>153</sup> Graeber, *The Utopia of Rules*, 165.

<sup>154</sup> Graeber, 170.

bureaucracy, to the systemic imposition of the new God crafted from mechanical, empirical, calculated tools of creation. Whereas in many ways peering inward to discover the true self separate from our systemically imposed limitations is an aspirational endeavor, once mentally liberated from the confined order of bureaucracy but still operating within the system one feels only more physically suppressed as a mechanized piece of infrastructure; one then realizes how confined they really are. It is easy to view oneself within the hampering walls of the organized prison of rational order, to view oneself in reference to colleagues, to view one's natural state as an apparatus of a societal structure and one's purpose as a job title—it is easier to remain within the confines of the allegorical cave than to have knowledge of the outside, only to sit imprisoned, watching the confounding shadows cast themselves on the walls in perpetuity.

## Chapter Four: The Bureaucratic Pathos of Distance

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### Introduction

The critique of bureaucratic rationality has its roots in anti-rationalist thinking prevalent in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, who worries that our modern conception of “truth,” as important as it technically is, denies other important aspects of humanity like emotions, impulses, and everything that has typically been thought of as the opposite of reason. The critique of bureaucracy that I’ve offered sees bureaucracy as an elite consensus that is not itself “true,” but instead a manifestation of power, which has its foundation in Nietzsche’s critique of truth. At the same time, while Nietzsche can be used to make the argument that the civil service is a form of power that presents itself as truth, he, and I, can not make a pure argument against the existence of the civil service because truths, and the civil service, can in many ways be useful and life-preserving. Still, Nietzsche’s anti-rationalist perspective of truth as an “error” influenced the position of this project as a critique of the civil service, which, too, has its foundations in an organizational and ideological error as it falsely and deceitfully takes the role of the societal arbiter of truth.

Overall, this chapter argues, in cohesion with Chapter III, that the civil service and our bureaucracy is based in deception and acts as a mechanism for control on behalf of the ruling class based on reductive mechanisms of scientific measurement applied beyond their intended sphere. Ultimately, bureaucracy, elite consensus, and the civil service are forms of power, manufactured artifices, masquerading as truth.

### Section I – How the “True World” Finally Became a Fable

“In some remote corner of the sprawling universe, twinkling among the countless solar systems, there was once a star on which some clever animals invented *knowledge*. It was the most arrogant, most mendacious minute in ‘world history,’ but it was only a minute. After nature caught its breath a little, the star froze, and the clever animals had to die,”<sup>155</sup> begins Nietzsche in *On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense*. Here, in our remote corner of the sprawling universe, staked out with our invented claim to knowledge, we thirst for the elusive springs of truth that forever elude our grasp. Thus, to sate our lust for orientation, we create our own illusory reflections of reality and use them as reasonable organizational mechanisms, stretching them far beyond their relevant scope to simulate the effect of having an explanation for the inexplicable.

According to Nietzsche, the construct of truth and rationality on which our conscious world is founded is a fictitious tale—a fable—that lacks coherence.<sup>156</sup> Anyone who earnestly seeks to adhere to the principles of truth will eventually discover that it is deeply flawed, infused with its own set of politics. Nietzsche’s conception of truth and rationality dissects the idea of truth and dismantles the concept of objectivity, which subsequently dismantles the guiding principles of rationality and the institutions that exist to uphold it, ultimately leading to the conclusion that, like truth, rationality is an illusory notion even when pursued in the service of a greater good. Consequently, the endeavor to create an authentic world based on rational principles, in the hopes of achieving unanimity and harmony, is bound to falter, as evidenced by the present. So, one asks, “Then what are we supposed to do, Nietzsche? How else are we supposed to organize the world, if not with these erroneous mechanisms of social order?” And Nietzsche answers with a stoic gaze into the distance.

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<sup>155</sup> Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense,” 1.

<sup>156</sup> Nietzsche, “How the ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fable—The History of an Error.”

In his seminal work *How the "True World" Finally Became a Fable*, Nietzsche traces the lineage of the concept of "truth" from its inception in the philosophical musings of Plato and the Idealists. Through the development of this work, Nietzsche refers to the "truth" as an error, a delusion, perception, a woman (elusive and deceitful), "A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms... a sum of human relations that have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, translated, and embellished, and that after long use strike people as fixed, canonical, and binding... illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions, metaphors that have become worn-out and deprived of their sensuous force, coins that have lost their imprint and are now no longer seen as coins but as metal,"<sup>157</sup> ultimately creating a fictitious engendered reality. Essentially, the truth is a lie that was invented as an act of will—the declaration of *something* as the truth—to provide a sense of societal consensus. Nietzsche references Plato, who, once he declared "I, Plato, am the truth,"<sup>158</sup> defined the truth as something that can be known, solely by philosophers, but still capable of being known.

Plato arrogantly attested that he embodied the truth after the death of Socrates which to him signaled that the heterodoxy of Ancient Athens had reached an unbearable peak, and by establishing and implementing the notion of truth into a society at odds with itself, in the hands of people who do not know any better than to sentence Socrates to death, he created consensus. Here in his articulation of law as will,<sup>159</sup> he sets precedent for what systems of control are grounded in: the will to power.

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<sup>157</sup> Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense," 30.

<sup>158</sup> Nietzsche, "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable—The History of an Error."

<sup>159</sup> Constable, "Thinking Nonsociologically about Sociological Law," 637.



The entrance to Plato's Academy in Athens bears an inscription that reads, "May no ignorant of Geometry enter here,"<sup>160</sup> a testament to his famous emphasis on the importance of geometry in imparting a sense of certainty and accessing the world of ideas beyond the tangible world. Through an understanding of geometry, one learns to be rational: to understand that facts are observable and bound by laws. According to Nietzsche, we can never truly know the truth, as it is non-existent. Laws and rules by which we abide are merely inventions, while acts of will involve the creation of something that did not exist before, and are thus inherently deceptive in nature. Hence, Plato deceptively claims to have access to a truth more profound and genuine than the tangible world around us, in the invented world of ideas. His supposed truth is ultimately a fabrication, a deceitful and anthropomorphic<sup>161</sup> invention that isolates him from the authenticity of life. If a philosopher has "the truth" he is deprived of life, since he is detached from actualized reality—whatever it is, nobody knows.

Plato's invention of truth and his self-proclamation as its embodiment render him a fallacy in his own right. Thus, the lineage of truth itself is rooted in deception as Nietzsche's genealogy of truth begins with Plato's proclamation. Further, Nietzsche posits that the act of creation itself is a manifestation of the "will to power,"<sup>162</sup> which he claims to be the ultimate primal driving force within all living beings. This instinctual drive, according to Nietzsche, is gratified by the attainment of power. Plato's imposition of his self-made truth and his elevation of it to a position of superiority typify a fundamental error in the conception of truth itself. The notion of the lineage of truth is a fallacy, as it presupposes that truth is a stable, objective entity that can be traced through time. Instead, Nietzsche suggests that the act of creation is inherently a

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<sup>160</sup> Martínez, "Platonic Academy (1)."

<sup>161</sup> Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense."

<sup>162</sup> Nietzsche, "The Will to Power."

manifestation of power, and that this drive for power is ultimately what motivates human behavior.

If our conception of truth and the development of the truth stems from Plato's idealism, a functional error, bureaucracy and rationality as they stand as embodiments of truth and as mechanisms of power are grounded in a delusion, and their intellectual power is essentially anti-life as they rationalize the fullness of life. Further, the civil service as an embodiment of rationality, created through an act of "will" on behalf of businessmen reformists during the debates surrounding the Pendleton Act and sociologists who advocated for the institution of a structure of rationality—one that did not already exist—have created a world of rationality separate from reality, a lie that forces us to be compliant and accept it as the truth and the guiding structure of our lives.

At the same time, because of the fact that these organizational structures promote power, they therefore promote life as well in their fulfillment of the instinctual urge to power. As we have explored in this project, common truths that emerged societally after the Enlightenment operate as a consensus in the name of hierarchical power. Whereas some are subordinated, some are benefiting from their spot on the hierarchy and are thus experiencing a fullness of life. Reason and rationality are both suppressive and beneficial as they operate as mechanisms of power, and the "reasonable" man sits at the top of the hierarchy of a "reasonable" society, but reason is not man's most important trait. Reason is simply one way to organize the world.

As Nietzsche says in *On The Genealogy of Morality*, it is not human consciousness that shapes the law and other social structures, but these structures that shape our perception of morality and human consciousness—institutions serve as tangible manifestations of "good" values; however, value creation is a privilege, and the principles we embrace and that institutions

uphold are fashioned by those in power who possess a profound sense of detachment from reality, or the “pathos of distance.”<sup>163</sup> He further argues that those who are weak rely on institutions, or structures of lies, because they must overcompensate their physical inadequacies with intellect. He cites Socrates<sup>164</sup> as an example of this, noting his physical unsightliness.

In *The Problem of Socrates*, Nietzsche says that Socrates “turned reason into a tyrant.”<sup>165</sup> After Socrates declared “To live—that means to be sick a long time...”<sup>166</sup> he revealed himself to be a symptom of “decadence”<sup>167</sup> which is what made him ill, and ugly. Socrates’ solution to the tyranny of the instincts and the Gods was to combat it with the limiting tyranny of reason, and thus he doomed us all. And what a bleak attitude set as the foundation of the history of philosophy—that life is sickness and so we may as well drink our poison hemlock, that society is on a decline (as it was back in Ancient Athens) and the only solution is to be overly rational.

Whereas the attack on Socrates’ looks can be taken as ad hominem, these assessments of distance and empowerment of the weak through intellectualization sound familiar. The eunuch bureaucrat, whose specialized intellect affords him strength, endeavors to achieve “objectivity” by erecting structures that operate at a remove from the political and social sphere, thereby transforming these structures into mechanisms that promote the interests of the privileged. The drive to eliminate heterodoxy ultimately results in the establishment of a hierarchy, and the supremacy of rationalism leads to the suppression of individual spirit.

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<sup>163</sup> Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*, 17.

<sup>164</sup> Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*, 20.

<sup>165</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols: Or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*, 10.

<sup>166</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 1.

<sup>167</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 11.

And now, we are in an era where Platonic notions of truth are irrelevant. Whereas step IV of Nietzsche's *How The "True World" Finally Became a Fable* "brings the true world empirically down to earth,"<sup>168</sup> as it questions if the "true world" is actually unattainable, marking the rise of positivism and "the first yawn of reason,"<sup>169</sup> step V of Nietzsche's genealogy illustrates that at this point we still maintain a belief in the veracity and value of truth and knowledge as a means of attaining some measure of certainty, though it has become more "mundane,"<sup>170</sup> hence "Plato's embarrassed blush."<sup>171</sup> Instead, we have traded it for expediency, calling for the abolition of "the 'real world' of metaphysical ideals."<sup>172</sup> Step VI, looming in the distance, leaves us with the shell of the ravaged, "abolished" true world, as well as a ravaged apparent one. Here, Nietzsche asks us the important question: "What world has remained?"<sup>173</sup> The unanswerable question hovers over our heads as we consider next steps.

## **Section II – Not to 'Know,' but to Schematize**

In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche says "We can comprehend only a world we ourselves have made."<sup>174</sup> The urge to create a world that is within our cognitive grasp is at the root of the formation of systems of reason, hence the formation of the civil service and the proliferation of scientism. A problem emerges when having knowledge of the world that has been manufactured through invented systems of logic is considered analogous to having knowledge about the real

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<sup>168</sup> Constable, "Thinking Nonsociologically about Sociological Law," 633.

<sup>169</sup> Nietzsche, "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable—The History of an Error."

<sup>170</sup> Constable, 634.

<sup>171</sup> Nietzsche, "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable—The History of an Error."

<sup>172</sup> Constable, "Thinking Nonsociologically about Sociological Law," 633.

<sup>173</sup> Nietzsche, "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable—The History of an Error."

<sup>174</sup> Nietzsche, "The Will to Power," 495.

world. As previously stated, scientists do not claim to have grasped any form of “absolute truth,” just scientific methods and hypotheses. At the same time, after the Enlightenment established scientific legitimacy as a governing force, after Plato invented an idealistic “truth” and emphasized an understanding of geometry, the necessitated consensus at the epicenter of our systemic structure must be in accordance with agreed upon laws and principles, which have been manufactured through scientific methods. As Nietzsche says, “Logic was intended as *facilitation*: as a *means of expression*—not as truth... Later it came to function as truth.”<sup>175</sup> Our conception of what constitutes logical reasoning is subjective and changes over time, and yet it has become entrenched as a means of establishing objectivity.

Nietzsche rejects the premise that it is feasible to establish universal generalizations that encompass individuals, social groups, and the universe at large. Nietzsche says “(Judgment) works under the presupposition that there are in general identical cases...”<sup>176</sup> and argues that human plurality and universal plurality is beyond the scope of generalization. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche says “Great men...have contrived...to make use of the paraphernalia of science itself, to point out the limits and the relativity of knowledge generally, and thus to deny decisively the claim of science to universal validity and universal aims. And their demonstration diagnosed for the first time the illusory notion which pretends to be able to fathom the innermost essence of things with the aid of causality.”<sup>177</sup> Through science, these “great men” have revealed the limits and relativity of knowledge and have demonstrated that the notion of using causality to fully understand the essence of things is illusory. Knowledge is not objective and universal, but subjective and contingent on individual experience.

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<sup>175</sup> Nietzsche, “The Will to Power,” 538.

<sup>176</sup> Nietzsche, “The Will to Power,” 532.

<sup>177</sup> Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy: Hellenism and Pessimism*, 112.

Nietzsche argues that scientism is an illusion because causality is only one way of interpreting the world, and there are multiple ways of understanding and interpreting reality beyond the reach of science. His critique is directed towards the creation of simplistic and inaccurate generalizations that fail to capture the complexity of reality, arguing that such reductionist interpretations can have harmful consequences by suppressing the diversity and richness of life. Whereas social science serves to establish consensus and thus advance civilization, it remains a consensus of those who have power. Thus, considerations of truth become a discourse of those in power.

These judgments and conclusions are attempts to simplify the chaos of the world into easily digestible classifications, not to “know” it, but to “take control” of it: “The entire cognitive apparatus is an apparatus for abstraction and simplification—designed not for knowledge but for *gaining control* of things: ‘end’ and ‘means’ are as far from what is essential as are ‘concepts.’ With ‘end’ and ‘means’ one gains control of the process (one *invents* a process that can be grasped)...”<sup>178</sup> There is nothing simple in nature, we simplify it through our systems of logic, and then erect institutions in cohesion with these simplifications. As Nietzsche says, “everything simple is merely imaginary;”<sup>179</sup> we are living under the regime of illusory and imaginary institutions, an “other” world of images and ideals. At the same time, we benefit from this world because we can know it, and “coming to know it would be a way of making ourselves happy.”<sup>180</sup>

And this is the root of the formation of reason; the root of our bureaucratic institutions, the guiding concept of this project, and, according to Nietzsche, a false form of knowledge based on an invented world, with a “need not to ‘know’ but to subsume, to schematize, for the purpose

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<sup>178</sup> Nietzsche, “The Will to Power,” 503.

<sup>179</sup> Nietzsche, “The Will to Power,” 536.

<sup>180</sup> Nietzsche, “The Will to Power,” 586.

of understanding, of calculation...” and a mechanism of “assimilating, of equating—the same process that every sense impression undergoes—such is the development of reason!” He says reason relates to no inherent worldly idea or truth and is not an attempt to uncover and illuminate this truth to build a society around it, but rather “no preexisting ‘idea’ is at work; rather, the practicality that only if we see things crudely and leveled off do they become calculable and manageable for us.”<sup>181</sup> The purpose, once again, is management.

### **Section III – Sociology, a Successful Untruth**

Now we turn to Marianne Constable’s essay *Thinking Nonsociologically about Sociological Law*, written in response to sociological critiques of her essay *Genealogy and Jurisprudence* wherein she applies Nietzschean analysis to sociological law. In expanding on a previous reference to the *Problem of Socrates* and the tyranny of reason, Constable argues that sociology is an agent of the tyranny of reason over the tyranny of instinct as sociologists limit themselves to the empirical realm and to observable facts as if all facets of humanity are capable of being observed. Sociology, essentially, applies “truth” to a chaotic world to shape it into something more reasonable and rational. Now, we are trapped in the tyranny of reason by sociological order, which is based on the dominant narrative of truth: elite consensus.

Sociology, myopic in that its relevant areas of focus are decided upon by those who control the dominant narrative, reorients our societal focus on the issues it deems relevant and then ends up being self-reaffirming in its invention of a world with a dominant truth. This problem is where sociological critiques of anti-rationalist philosophy emerge, which Constable responds to when she refutes the reductive nature of dismissing claims based on the premise of social relations. Constable says that Nietzsche offers the opportunity to investigate the nuances

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<sup>181</sup> Nietzsche, “The Will to Power,” 515.

of evolving notions of truth without reducing them to "such obvious social relations of those of class, nationality, or gender."<sup>182</sup> Focusing solely on issues of social relations in a similarly reductive vein results in our overlooking other important aspects of humanity, but for the purpose of simplification, the “dominant narrative” is in many ways guilty of this phenomenon and objective, reductive “facts” are often used as political weapons.

In order to create a structured and rational system, the imposition of virtue is inevitable: certain conceptions of morality have to be clearly outlined, endorsed by the arbiters of justice (bureaucratic institutions). Laws are formed to uphold these conceptions of morality, sanctioned by law enforcement (bureaucrats with batons,<sup>183</sup> David Graeber calls them). In order to create a procedure by which these institutions of justice and enforcement abide, for the sake of equality, the populace must be numericized for sociological analytical reasons. Then, in the imposition of virtue and scientification, we apply illusory versions of truth onto a confused world.

And so we return to an initial question: what are we supposed to do, then? No clear answer emerges from this analysis. Constable says “The question Nietzsche’s work leads to is not the narrow ethicosociological question of what sociolegal scholars *should* do but, *What world remains?*”<sup>184</sup> What is left outside of the genealogy of truth? Throughout history, new “true” worlds are constantly being invented, “each truer, better, more just than the illusory worlds preceding them” and “each true world...becomes the (moral) standard by which to judge life in this world and is accompanied by a particular faith in willing and knowing as the means to reach its better world, until a ‘truer’ world appears.”<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Constable, “Thinking Nonsociologically about Sociological Law,” 633.

<sup>183</sup> Graeber, *The Utopia of Rules*, 87.

<sup>184</sup> Constable, “Thinking Nonsociologically about Sociological Law,” 629.

<sup>185</sup> Constable, 632.



The question of “What world remains?” is unanswerable without the invention of a new true world. Sociology claims that “the world that remains is a sociological one.”<sup>186</sup> And the guiding tenet of a sociological world? Expertise: the formation of a subgroup that has “a role in *generating* values...” a “small unelected cadre of sociologists” or social scientists, with the task of “deliberative *invention* of opinion” wherein they manually create the law, “some, simply by living and knowing,”<sup>187</sup> and then the procedures they enact apply themselves at the collective level, through bureaucratic procedures. This small cadre of experts act as our modern conception of truth in the new true world, upheld by bureaucratic institutions. Sociology is always going to be based on approximations, tasked with justifying and rejustifying itself, which is a fallacy in the same way that the Positivist declaration of being capable of observing ourselves objectively is a fallacy, as well as any claim to knowing what we simply can not know.

Sociology is, according to Constable, “Like God, a successful untruth–(it) may have had its centuries-long moment, a time when it expressed a resurgence of life and sought to transform the values by which we judge our world,”<sup>188</sup> and now, as Plato blushes with embarrassment that the “true” has become mundane, “those values have become the stale platitudes of an age that justifies itself.”<sup>189</sup> As we conclude the section on Nietzsche, conclude this chapter, and conclude this project, we are left without a solution. Whereas sociologists offer solutions, as with everything that at one point appears to be “true,” they all unravel eventually. In the midst of our mendacious minute, we are floundering. And in the age of reason, of sociology, expertise, bureaucratic institutionalized rationality, those in power will tell us what we are to do. Constable

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<sup>186</sup> Constable, 629.

<sup>187</sup> Constable, 635.

<sup>188</sup> Constable, 638.

<sup>189</sup> See note 188 above.

offers what she believes to be the project of sociology: “The task is to think the law of finite beings, whose finitude lies precisely in the need (our need) to judge a world that has no need to be judged.”<sup>190</sup> And yet, we have such a profound need to judge it, to create institutions in the wake of a singular conception of an invented truth. In the midst of this mendacious minute, we devote ourselves to the judgment of a world that, once it catches its breath a little, will freeze.

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<sup>190</sup> See note 188 above.

## Conclusion

I had hoped that through the thorough an interrogation of the development of the civil service as an institutional instrument of bureaucratically rational ideology, tracing the concept back to the Enlightenment and examining it literally, theoretically, and philosophically, that I would somehow manage to come up with a solution to the modern crisis in bureaucracy. But to expect a satisfactory and simple conclusion to anything coincides with a positivist worldview—in actuality, the issue is much more complicated and will only grow increasingly muddied with further analysis.

When driving down a residential road in an upper middle class blue area the other day I decided to notice the proliferation of the signs that are perched in windows, staked in front lawns, or as bumper stickers that list a series of adages that read as common sense in colorful writing. I noticed a Subaru Outback with two stickers plastered to its rear, one that said “Believe Science” and another that said “RESIST.”

A cheekier observer might point out the ironic pairing of these two stickers—how can you advocate for the rectitude of resisting authority while simultaneously promoting institutional order, advocate that we believe that those public officials who tell us what is “true” are not lying, and to put our lives in the hands of technocratic authority?

But denying to know why the two stickers are paired on the Subaru Outback would be purposefully obtuse: they are paired because of partisan ideological allegiances. Staking any sign or displaying any bumper sticker maintains its primary utility as a signal, a demonstration of character. One safely assumes that anyone suggesting we “believe science” or that “facts matter” in the form of a shirt or sign aligns themselves with the left, the party of “objectivity” and “truth,” as they maintain a stance of commitment to science and facts as the basis of their

policymaking. Now, in the age of Trump's pursuit to "drain the swamp," those who oppose the "expert class" are accused of waging a "war on science," and are dismissed in mainstream narratives due to their "irrationality." But as we have seen in this paper, there are plenty of "rational" arguments in favor of draining the swamp, just as there are in favor of keeping it muddy and filled.

How can anyone claim to be on the side of objectivity and truth if the truth is not universally agreed upon, if aligning with "rationality" essentially means aligning with democratic policy? How can science have any universal authority if it is now an instrument of bureaucratic order, a polarizing ideology? Trusting the government ostensibly means trusting those who are "qualified" to make regulatory decisions, but what if those who are "qualified" now openly align themselves with a political party?

I believe that the managerial power of the bureaucratic state, the Pendleton Act, and the Civil Service, were all in some way implemented with the good will of Good Governance, that the spoils system was destroyed for good reason beyond class loyalties, and some level of scientific consensus is necessary for the smooth operation of society. When I graduate, I'll enter the Professional Managerial Class, stake my regulated corner of the American experiment with my name and title, and answer to an authority, who answers to an authority. I believe that many on the side of "draining the swamp" are in some ways irrational, and that harnessing the emotions of the populace for political power is dangerous.

There is no "But," just an "And." And: I believe in the merit of personal instincts, in the integrity of individuality, in a mistrust of institutions tasked with reducing and imparting to the populace digestible conceptions of morality. I believe in the cries of those who refuse to "trust the experts" and in their loss of faith in the bureaucratic institutions that have consistently failed

them. I believe the manifestation of bureaucracy is elitist, that social science is “untruth,” that the civil service is an embodiment of elite consensus. I believe that the human spirit can not be scientified, that there is no universal conception of rationality, or truth, and that universality is itself impossible as nothing can be reduced so succinctly. And I believe that as the “truth” becomes more muddied through sensationalized politics, as science itself has been politicized, the future—once “predictable” through the application of scientific methods to the social world—is uncertain, as it always has been in actuality.

And thus, I do not believe in the sanctity of the Pendleton Act, of the sanctity of the civil service as an institution of rationality, and broadly in the experts and technocrats as universal arbiters of truth. I believe that the truth is essentially impotent, that reason is essentially inoperative, and in our bureaucracy we can no longer claim to be democratic citizens. That in the fight against sensationalized politics, rationality will always lose in its imposition of invented virtue onto a chaotic world, and the only proportionate response is that of emotional retort. What that looks like, I’m not sure. If the remaining question is whether we want to abandon all adherence to the illusion of truth, then I say that we already have, and that truth was an error to begin with. And as this project aimed to explore the origins, implications, intentions, and effects of bureaucratic rationality through the lens of the civil service in its long, far-stretching, arduous development, I have no solution to its inherently paradoxical nature. Thus, the main takeaway from this project can only be a plea: God help us!

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