NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Thomas Jefferson's Philosophy of Education

A utopian dream

M. Andrew Holowchak

ROUTLEDGE

"Jefferson the dreamer, Jefferson the realist, or the complexity of a great mind is the theme of this insightful book by Holowchak. Or to paraphrase Jefferson's favorite novel by Laurence Sterne: he was always on a journey which is revealed herein."

—**Professor Richard Guy Wilson**, Department of Architectural History, University of Virginia, USA

"Written with engaging prose, Holowchak's vivid grasp of Jefferson's political and educational philosophy and his engagement with competing interpretations of Jefferson provide an outstanding historical synthesis of our third president's commitment to the republican canon. Holowchak brings to life Jefferson's crusade to institutionalize his educational ideals and his commitment to immersing subsequent generations with a civic virtue balanced by human reason and moral sensibilities. Holowchak's book is an exemplary work that will captivate readers and provoke debate among historians."

— **Assistant Professor Brian W. Dotts**, Department of Educational Theory and Practice, the University of Georgia, USA

"Public education for all citizens was a lifelong goal of Thomas Jefferson and M. Andrew Holowchak has written a valuable addition to the available literature on this topic. In this book, Holowchak offers a consistent interpretation that stresses Jefferson's philosophic foundation for his faith in education as a fundamental component of republicanism. This represents a different approach from most and in particular, he stresses Jefferson's moral focus as a driving force in his educational thinking. Holowchak's perspective is sure to generate a considerable 'buzz' among scholars and general readers alike."

— **Professor James Carpenter**, Graduate School of Education, Binghampton University, USA

This page intentionally left blank

Thomas Jefferson's Philosophy of Education

Thomas Jefferson had a profoundly advanced educational vision that went hand in hand with his political philosophy – each of which served the goal of human flourishing. His republicanism marked a break with the conservatism of traditional non-representative governments, characterized by birth and wealth and in neglect of the wants and needs of the people. Instead, Jefferson proposed social reforms that would allow people to express themselves freely, dictate their own course in life, and oversee their elected representatives. His educational vision aimed to instantiate a progressive social climate only dreamed of by utopists such as Thomas More, James Harrington, and Louis-Sébastian Mercier.

This book offers a critical articulation of the philosophy behind Jefferson's thoughts on education. Divided into three parts, chapters include an analysis of his views on elementary and higher education, an investigation of education for both the moral-sense and rational faculty, and an examination of education as lifelong learning. Jefferson's educational rationale was economic, political, and philosophical, and his systemic approach to education conveys a systemic, economic approach to living, with strong affinities to Stoicism.

Thomas Jefferson's Philosophy of Education will be key reading for philosophers, historians, and postgraduate students of education, the history of education, and philosophy.

M. Andrew Holowchak is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Rider University, USA.

New Directions in the Philosophy of Education Series

Series Editors

Michael A. Peters, University of Waikato, New Zealand;
University of Illinois, USA

Gert Biesta, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

This book series is devoted to the exploration of new directions in the philosophy of education. After the linguistic turn, the cultural turn, and the historical turn, where might we go? Does the future promise a digital turn with a greater return to connectionism, biology, and biopolitics based on new understandings of system theory and knowledge ecologies? Does it foreshadow a genuinely alternative radical global turn based on a new openness and interconnectedness? Does it leave humanism behind or will it reengage with the question of the human in new and unprecedented ways? How should philosophy of education reflect new forces of globalization? How can it become less Anglo-centric and develop a greater sensitivity to other traditions, languages, and forms of thinking and writing, including those that are not rooted in the canon of Western philosophy but in other traditions that share the "love of wisdom" that characterizes the wide diversity within Western philosophy itself. Can this be done through a turn to intercultural philosophy? To indigenous forms of philosophy and philosophizing? Does it need a post-Wittgensteinian philosophy of education? A postpostmodern philosophy? Or should it perhaps leave the whole construction of "post"-positions behind?

In addition to the question of the intellectual resources for the future of philosophy of education, what are the issues and concerns that philosophers of education should engage with? How should they position themselves? What is their specific contribution? What kind of intellectual and strategic alliances should they pursue? Should philosophy of education become more global, and if so, what would the shape of that be? Should it become more cosmopolitan or perhaps more decentered? Perhaps most importantly in the digital age, the time of the global knowledge economy that reprofiles education as privatized human capital and simultaneously in terms of an historic openness, is there a philosophy of education that grows out of education itself, out of the concerns for new forms of teaching, studying, learning, and speaking that can provide comment on ethical and epistemological configurations of economics and politics of knowledge? Can and should this imply a reconnection with questions of democracy and justice?

This series comprises texts that explore, identify, and articulate new directions in the philosophy of education. It aims to build bridges, both geographically and temporally: bridges across different traditions and practices and bridges toward a different future for philosophy of education.

In this series

On Study
Giorgio Agamben and educational potentiality
Tyson E. Lewis

Education, Experience and Existence
Engaging Dewey, Peirce and Heidegger
John Quay

African Philosophy of Education Reconsidered
On being human
Yusef Waghid

Buber and Education
Dialogue as conflict resolution
W. John Morgan and Alexandre Guilherme

Henri Lefebvre and Education
Space, history, theory
Sue Middleton

Thomas Jefferson's Philosophy of Education
A utopian dream
M. Andrew Holowchak

This page intentionally left blank

Thomas Jefferson's Philosophy of Education

A utopian dream

M. Andrew Holowchak

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2014
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Holowchak, Mark, 1958-
Thomas Jefferson's philosophy of education : a utopian dream / M. Andrew Holowchak.
pages cm. — (New directions in the philosophy of education)
1. Jefferson, Thomas, 1743–1826—Philosophy. 2. Jefferson, Thomas, 1743–1826—Political and social views. 3. Education—Philosophy. 4. Education, Humanistic—United States—History. 5. Education—United States—History. I. Title.
LB695.J42H65 2014
371.001—dc23
2014001024

ISBN: 978-1-138-78745-2 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-76650-8 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Statue of Homer before Old Cabell Hall on the lawn of the University of Virginia.

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

This page intentionally left blank

Series editor foreword

The thought of Thomas Jefferson does not usually occupy a central position in the canon of the philosophy of education. While Jefferson had a clear educational vision, informed by a distinctive set of principles and beliefs and leading to very concrete proposals for the organisation of the education of the citizenry, this vision was more a synthesis of existing ideas that made an entirely new contribution to educational thought. Notwithstanding this, Jefferson's was an influential and powerful voice, and his views about the purpose and practice of education constituted a strong reference point for educational and wider political discussions in his time. M. Andrew Holowchak's careful reconstruction of Jefferson's educational vision and the ideas upon which it is built makes these ideas available to a contemporary audience and thus constitutes a significant contribution to scholarship on Jefferson and to the wider fields of educational history and philosophy.

Holowchak provides a comprehensive reconstruction of the key elements of Jefferson's thought, so as to make visible how his views are an exemplary case of Enlightenment's belief in the power of education. While such education is aimed at the flourishing of each and every individual, such flourishing is never thought of in strictly individualistic terms; there is always also a concern for the common life, that is, the life as democratic citizens. It is therefore not simply an education *of* the citizenry but at the same time an education *for* the citizenry, that is, an education aimed at promoting democratic citizenship. For Jefferson such an education is not just orientated toward the present and the future, but is strongly rooted in tradition. Here Holowchak's reconstruction shows the strong influence of older notions of education as cultivation (*paideia* or *Bildung*), particularly those emerging from the Stoics. The influence of classical thought it is also evident in Jefferson's views about the curriculum, where, stated in modern terms, he clearly rejects a narrow instrumentalist curriculum in favor of a curriculum that allows for the formation of the whole person through engagement with culture in the broadest sense of the word.

While the present volume is partly interesting from the perspective of the history of education in that it provides a comprehensive picture of Jefferson's educational vision, it provides, at the very same time, detailed insights into a

prototypical case of Enlightenment educational thinking. In doing so, the present book helps to make visible how much such an educational vision still plays a prominent role in educational thought and practice today.

Gert Biesta and Michael A. Peters
Series editors

Preface

> A sage is never a private person.
>
> Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*

Jefferson, in a letter to J. Correa de Serra (25 November 1817), offers a précis of his views on educational reform, drawn from his "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" nearly some 40 years ago.

> I have sketched and put into the hands of a member a bill, delineating a practicable plan, entirely within the means they [the Virginia Legislature] already have on hand, destined to this object. My bill proposes: 1. Elementary schools in every county, which shall place every householder within three miles of a school. 2. District colleges, which shall place every father within a day's ride of a college where he may dispose of his son. 3. An university in a healthy and central situation.

He adds, "The object [of elementary schools] is to bring into action that mass of talents which lies buried in poverty in every country, for want of the means of development, and thus give activity to a mass of mind, which, in proportion to our population, shall be the double or treble of what it is in most countries." The last sentence, parturient, reveals much of the rationale for his educational reforms. Other nations have a sharp delineation between its few wealthy and its numerous penurious. In France, for instance, "every man . . . must be either the hammer or the anvil" and "the great mass of the people [suffer] under physical and moral oppression."[1] In the United States, Jefferson was hopeful that in time there would be no hammers to strike and no anvils to be struck.

Jefferson's rationale is economical, political, and philosophical. Economically, it is a matter of prodigious waste of resources. There is a mass of talents behind the mass of mind that lies buried in poverty. Politically, it is a matter of the demands of republican government. The mass of talents must be disinterred, if republicanism is to flourish, for republicanism demands that each citizen be active in political affairs to the fullest possible extent. Philosophically, it is

a matter of the strictures of morality. No mass of mind can be left to burke in poverty, if all citizens are equal by the law of nature.

After expatiation of his educational reforms in the letter, Jefferson sums, "Mine, after all, may be an Utopian dream, but being innocent, I have thought I might indulge in it till I go to the land of dreams, and sleep there with the dreamers of all past and future times."

Jefferson was, I believe, one of the greatest American dreamers. Yet his dreaming was not mere velleity. He was no stargazer, but foremost a practicalist, and, thus, he did not waste time on dreams that had little chance of coming to fruition.

Jefferson's greatest dream, without question, was instantiation of republican principles of government. For him, republicanism entailed a thriving citizenry – each citizen equal under the laws – and an alterable constitution to reflect the needs of a citizenry progressing over time in knowledge and virtue. That dream, he recognized early on in life, could not take root without across-the-board educational reform.

Equality of all citizens demanded that each citizen in the main be given the same resources to determine his own course in life – viz., that all citizens start from "square one," as it were.[2] Such freedom of opportunity could only be safeguarded through readily accessible general education for all citizens.

Freedom of opportunity, of course, could not guarantee all would advance equally or that all would be happy. Differences of talent and intelligence would make equal advance impossible. Moreover, it was not the job of government to ensure each citizen's happiness – only to ensure each citizen an equal opportunity to be happy.

For a republic to thrive – and Jefferson envisaged America as a republic so expansive that it would in time cover the continent of North America – elected representatives would have to be of the most intelligence and virtuous. Moreover, science would have to prosper. Neither could happen, he knew, if there would not be in place an educational system that "raked from the rubbish" the most preeminent in genius and character for the most important stations in the republic.[3]

In his own state of Virginia, there needed to be a university to accommodate the various needs of those preeminent to ready them for the various sorts of political involvement and scientific investigation. That university would need to be secular so the biases of religious education – for example, indoctrination in Anglicanism – would be incapable of contaminating political matters. That university would have to teach all the "useful sciences" in their most advanced forms so the scholars upon leaving the institution would be readied to govern and practice science in the most advanced manner. When that dream began to take the form of the University of Virginia, Jefferson wrote to Gen. Andrew Jackson (18 December 1823), "If I live to see this I shall sing with cheerfulness the song of old Simeon's *nunc dimittis Domine*"[4] – a song signifying an accomplishment so great and gratifying that the time was right to die.

Between the bookends of the numerous elementary-education schools and the university, there would need to be in place a sufficient number of "colleges" or grammar schools to accommodate elementary-school scholars most

promising in virtue and intelligence. At such colleges, scholars, too young for critical examination of issues, would focus on acquisition of languages, ancient and modern, and reinforce the principles of morality through exposure to history.

Jefferson avowed that his reforms must be taken in toto, for Jeffersonian republicanism bespoke a systemic approach of education, and there was no system in place in Jefferson's day. Republicanism, essentially a schema of governing with democratic and meritocratic components, demanded educational systematicity to preserve equality and freedom, to encourage maximal political participation at the bottom, and to reward intelligence and rectitude – each quality in service of political stability and advance – at the top.

Thomas Jefferson's Philosophy of Education: A utopian dream is an effort to offer a critical articulation of the philosophy behind Jefferson's thoughts on education – education in partnership with the principles of republican governing and in the service of virtuous living and human happiness. To that end, Jefferson's educational philosophy and political philosophy are grounded normatively – on a robust view of human thriving that requires both enlightened and virtuous governors and access by all citizens to some degree of learning. That vision develops over time as his thoughts on republican governing mature. This book is an attempt to bring to light that vision, essentially philosophical, chiefly through critical examination of and expatiation on Jefferson's own writings.

Part I, "The laborers and the learned," is an analysis of elementary education, available to all citizens, and higher education, available to those more prominent in virtue and talent. Chapter 1 is a critical analysis of elementary education; chapter 2, higher education, comprising grammar-school education and university-level education. Part II, "The head and the heart," is an investigation of education for the moral-sense faculty and for the rational faculty. Chapter 3 concerns moral education; chapter 4, education of the intellect, in the service of morality. Part III, "Lifelong education," is an examination of the usefulness of education and of education as lifelong learning. Chapter 5 is an analysis of Jefferson's focus on a useful American education; chapter 6, education in the service of lifelong needs. In all, I argue that Jefferson's systemic, economical approach to education bespeaks a systemic, economical approach to living, with strong affinities to Stoicism.

I have two caveats: one procedural, one methodological.

First, there is a pronounced tendency in the secondary literature today to assess critically Jefferson's thoughts and actions from the perch of modern moral mores – what I call elsewhere the fallacy of historical anachronism.[5] Concerning education, Jefferson nowadays is characteristically and often cavalierly dubbed misogynistic, racist, or even misanthropic because he did not have a plan for educating women beyond the primary ward-school level, he did not include blacks in his system of education, and he did not offer up a systemic plan that allowed everyone, the impoverished as well as the well-to-do, the same opportunity of educational advance. Such defects, I acknowledge, must be noted – though the last was financially out of the question – yet he ought not

to be castigated for them any more than Isaac Newton ought to be castigated for believing space and time were absolute, not relative. Jefferson and Newton were products of their time, and Jefferson was constrained by the science of gender and race in his day.[6] It is sufficient to state that he speedily would have changed his mind apropos of the capabilities of women and blacks were he alive in our time.

Second, there are several major compilations of Jefferson's writings, several of which I list in the following.

- *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson: Being His Autobiography, Correspondence, Reports, Messages, Addresses, and Other Writings, Official and Private: Published by the Order of the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library, from the Original Manuscripts, Deposited in the Department of State*, 9 vols., ed. Henry Augustine Washington (Washington: Taylor & Maury, 1853–4),
- *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford, 12 vols. (New York: Putnam, 1902),
- *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Definitive Edition*, 20 vols., ed. Andrew Adgate Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, DC: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907), and
- *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson,* 42 vols. (to date), ed. Julian Boyd et al. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950–).

There are also several one-volume compilations of Jefferson's writings – the best of which is Merrill D. Peterson's *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1984). Moreover, many of Jefferson's writing are readily available online – for example, Hathi Trust Digital Library, the Online Library of Liberty, and Founders Online. Thus, I have adopted the convention here, as in other publications, of labeling Jefferson's epistolary writings by reference only to his correspondent and the date of the letter, thereby giving readers the opportunity to refer to the edition most readily available to them. Non-epistolary writings, in contrast, are fully referenced throughout this book.

Notes

1 Thomas Jefferson to Charles Bellini, 30 September 1785.
2 For a distinction between equality of status and equality of opportunity, see Holowchak, *Thomas Jefferson: Uncovering His Unique Philosophy and Vision* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2014), chap. 5.
3 Writes Kett: "There was no real contradiction between Jefferson's desire to educate all free persons in the rudiments of knowledge and his hope that keen academic competition would guarantee the survival of the few truly fit scholars. His plan contained some features that were democratic, others that were elitist, but none that was simultaneously democratic and elitist." Joseph F. Kett, "Education," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 238.
4 Elliptical for *Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine* ("Now you dismiss your servant, Lord").

5 M. Andrew Holowchak, *Framing a Legend: Exposing the Distorted History of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2012), 98–99.
6 For more on Jefferson's views of women, see Steele's excellent article "Thomas Jefferson's Gender Frontier," *Journal of American History*, June 2008, 17–42. For more on Jefferson and race, see chapters 10 and 11 of Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent: Philosophical Essays on Thomas Jefferson* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).

This page intentionally left blank

Part I

The laborers and the learned

This page intentionally left blank

1 A crusade against ignorance

Educating the general citizenry

Accept each day. Accept the Night
And the friendly dark; accept the light.
What the simple, nameless man in the crowd
Believes and does – is enough wisdom for me.
Euripides, *Bacchae*

Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to Pierre Samuel Dupont de Nemours (24 April 1816), notes a peculiarity, of which he is especially fond, in the constitution of Spain: no person will acquire the rights of citizenship unless he is able to read and write. He adds:

> It is impossible sufficiently to estimate the wisdom of this provision. Of all those which have been thought of for securing fidelity in the administration of the government, constant ralliance to the principles of the constitution, and progressive amendments with the progressive advances of the human mind or changes in human affairs, it is the most effectual. Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day.[1]

What Jefferson readily recognizes in the amendment is not so much disrelish of illiteracy, but the need of literacy for participatory, democratic government. General education not only binds citizens to the government and its constitution, but also prepares them to change governors and the constitution pursuant to changes – especially in the form of advances – in human affairs.

This chapter is a critical analysis of Jefferson's views of general education. I begin with an exposition of Jefferson's thoughts on republicanism as a politics of rights entailing fullest political participation of all citizens – the democratic element of Jefferson's republicanism. I then turn to Jefferson's articulation of two "great" and needed measures for republican government: wards and general education. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the aims of general education and what might be said of a general-education curriculum.

"The spirit of the people"

Jefferson, perhaps more than other statesmen of his day, was inevasibly involved in attempting to instantiate principles of republican government. Democracy, "the only pure republic" he writes to Isaac Tiffany (26 August 1816), is "impracticable beyond the limits of a town." Yet with an expanding nation – whose limits he envisaged to be only those limits that the ambient oceans imposed on the North American continent[2] – there was need of representative government with the right sort of representatives. Hence, Jefferson's vision of republican government – influenced greatly by the works of thinkers like Locke, Montesquieu, Tracy, Sidney, Chipman, Smith, Priestley,[3] and even utopists like Plato, More, Harrington, and Mercier[4] – took the form of an experiment of some sort.

Heredity and wealth cater to force, history taught Jefferson, while morality and reason are on the side of the people. Thus, a government by and for the people had to be morally sensitive. Apropos of morality, Jefferson says to John Adams (28 February 1796), "If ever the morals of a people could be made the basis of their own government, it is our case." All people have a moral sensory faculty that allows them to judge moral scenarios equally. That makes them fit to decide for themselves their own manner of living. "State a moral case to a ploughman and a professor," Jefferson writes to nephew Peter Carr (10 August 1787). "The former will decide it as well, and often better than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules." In addition, that makes the general citizenry fit to decide the character of those persons governing them. Apropos of reason, Jefferson says to Judge John Tyler (28 June 1804): "No experiment can be more interesting than that we are now trying, and which we trust will end in establishing the fact, that man may be governed by reason and truth. Our first object should therefore be, to leave open to him all the avenues to truth." He had in mind especially freedom of the press.

Participatory republicanism is an experiment not just with parochial implications. To Joseph Priestley (19 June 1802), Jefferson writes, "It is impossible not to be sensible that we are acting for all mankind; that circumstances denied to others, but indulged to us, have imposed on us the duty of proving what is the degree of freedom and self-government in which a society may venture to leave it's [*sic*] individual members." Jefferson writes weeks later to Gov. David Hall (6 July 1802):

> We have no interests nor passions different from those of our fellow citizens. We have the same object, the success of representative government. Nor are we acting for ourselves alone, but for the whole human race. The event of our experiment is to shew whether man can be trusted with self-government. The eyes of suffering humanity are fixed on us with anxiety as their only hope, and on such a theatre for such a cause we must suppress all smaller passions and local considerations. The leaders of federalism say that man can not be trusted with his own government. We must do no act

> which shall replace them in the direction of the experiment. We must not by any departure from principle, disgust the mass of our fellow citizens who have confided to us this interesting cause.[5]

In his Second Inaugural Address almost three years later (1805), Jefferson speaks not without blandishment of the successes of instantiation of republican principles of governing. Freedom of discussion without compulsion has led to propagation and protection of truth. Government has acted with zeal and purity pursuant to the Constitution. Acting openly and honestly, it has done nothing "it would be unwilling the whole world should witness." The public through suffrage has shown him to be "the friend of man, who believes he may be intrusted with his own affairs." Jefferson's exuberance here is not so much political as it is philosophical. His reelection is not so much a political victory, as it is confirmation of his philosophical vision – in other words, that the people themselves are fed up with coercive government and are willing to be full participants as much as their affairs will allow in political matters.

Voluntary participation meant minimally that the citizenry must oversee the actions of those governing them. To Francis A. Van der Kemp (22 March 1812), Jefferson writes, "The only orthodox object of the institution of government is to secure the greatest degree of happiness possible to the general mass of those associated under it." For that to occur, the people must retain "sufficient control over those intrusted with the powers of their government." The issue, he adds, is whether the current constitution allows for "the exact degree of control necessary." In a letter to Isaac Tiffany (6 August 1816), he concedes that the "full experiment of a government democratical, but representative" has not been instantiated, as "it has not yet, by any of us, been pushed into all the ramifications of the system, so far as to leave no authority existing not responsible to the people." Here he is perhaps obliquely referring to the "despotism" of the judiciary – that "subtle corps of sappers and miners constantly working under ground to undermine the foundations of our confederated fabric."[6] He frequently objects to their power to decide the constitutionality of laws not only for themselves, but also for the legislature and the executive, as well as the fact that judges are elected for life.[7]

The successes expected of republicanism, inasmuch as it is an experiment, will be tardigrade. To Archibald Stuart (23 December 1791), Jefferson says that the Constitution as it currently stands promotes encroachments of the state governments toward an excess of liberty and encroachments of general government toward monarchy. The two antipodal tendencies, we are led to conclude, will allow over time for the right amount of freedom for republican government.

In Aristotelian fashion – Aristotle viewed morally right action as a mean between extremes of vice (e.g., self-control was a means between the polar vices of insensibility, the defect of pleasure, and Sardanapalianism, the excess of pleasure) – Jefferson's aim was mediation between the extremes of anarchic liberty and unrestrained coercion. Yet he recognized plainly that it is preferable to err through an excess of liberty than through a deficiency of it. He adds in

the same letter to Stuart, "I would rather be exposed to the inconveniences attending too much liberty than those attending too small a degree of it." It is a sentiment expressed in earlier letters to Edward Carrington (16 January 1787) and James Madison several days later (30 January 1787). To Madison, he writes of three types of societies: a society without laws (American Indians), a society in which all have equal voice (America and, to a lesser extent, Britain), and a coercive society (a monarchy and corrupt "republic"). Equalitarian government is best, but it too has its problems, for government by the people suffers a great deal of turbulence. Nonetheless turbulent liberty is preferable to quiet servitude, as it is incongruent with inertia, and lawlessness is "inconsistent with any great degree of population." Coercive government is worst, as it is a "government of wolves over sheep." That metaphor he ingeminates to Carrington. Inattention to public affairs makes wolves of every public servant. "It seems to be the law of our general nature, in spite of individual exceptions; and experience declares that man is the only animal which devours his own kind."

Those and other letters and writings make it clear that it is not so much an unswerving faith in the people that drives Jefferson's vision of government by and for the people through elected representatives, but lack of faith in people craving political power. First, it was obvious to Jefferson that power had a way of bringing out the worst in men, and that observation perplexed him. "I know that I have never been so well pleased, as when I could shift power from my own, on the shoulders of others," Jefferson writes to A.L.C. Destutt de Tracy (26 January 1811), "nor have I ever been able to conceive how any rational being could propose happiness to himself from the exercise of power over others."[8] Jefferson invoked neither the laws of a nation nor the decisions of its governors, but rather the spirit of the people as the true law of the land at any given time. Second, he recognized that the spirit of the people could and perhaps would in time languish. "But is the spirit of the people an infallible, a permanent reliance? Is it government? Is this the kind of protection we receive in return for the rights we give up?" he asks in Query XVII of *Notes on the State of Virginia*. "Besides, the spirit of the times may alter, will alter. Our rulers will become corrupt, our people careless. A single zealot may commence persecuter [*sic*], and better men be his victims. It can never be too often repeated, that the time for fixing every essential right on a legal basis is while our rulers are honest, and ourselves united."[9] Here Jefferson is dour, chapfallen. Upon cessation of the war with England, the people, ensconced in making money, will forget and be forgotten, and their rights will be ignored. "The shackles, therefore, which shall not be knocked off at the conclusion of this war, will remain on us long, will be made heavier and heavier, till our rights shall revive or expire in a convulsion." People are to a large extent constitutionally greedy and, what is worse, hebetudinous about their rights.

"Two great measures"

The chief function of government, Jefferson was wont to assert, was to champion the rights of its citizens and, thereby, to allow citizens to determine for themselves their own path to happiness. For that to happen, citizens had to be

fully involved at some level in political matters. Education in keeping with the varied needs of the citizens was essential. So too was a certain political structure to ensure maximal political involvement. Jefferson writes to John Tyler (26 May 1810):

> I have two great measures at heart, without which no republic can maintain itself in strength. 1. That of general education, to enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom. 2. To divide every county into hundreds, of such size that all the children of each will be within reach of a central school in it.

Those are statements, iterated in many other writings, that show the indissoluble link between political reform and educational reform in Jefferson's mind. It shows educational reform is a condition sine qua non for political reform. There can be no advance in the great political machine of republicanism if there is no advance in the general education of the populace. Note here that Jefferson is not advancing a thesis that he deems applicable only to the people and conditions of America. It is a thesis that is applicable to humans worldwide. It is for Americans to show the rest of the world that participatory government – where officials are elected because of talent and virtue, not birth or wealth[10] – can work.

General education

Jefferson's first great measure for maintaining a republic is general education. "Preach . . . a crusade against ignorance; establish & improve the law for educating the common people," he writes to George Wythe (13 August 1786). The price of ignorance is much greater than the price of education. "Let our countrymen know that the people alone can protect us against these evils, and that the tax which will be paid for the purpose of education is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests and nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance."

Since government by and for the people was deemed the only viable way of protecting the masses against the abuses of coercive and centralized government, republicanism could be assured only by having intelligent and morally sensitive politicians who would place the interests of the general citizenry and the rights of all citizens at the top of their political agenda. The key was to get just those sorts of leaders to govern. Yet history showed that the morally sensitive and intelligent were not keen about governing, for the price was neglect and, subsequently, degeneration of domestic affairs. Those readily willing to govern were just those persons with an appetency for power (see chapter 5). Therefore, to ensure government for the people, there had to be some measure of government by the people – viz., citizens had to be involved in selecting political leaders and responsible for superintending them. Should political corruption get out of control, citizens had a right, even a duty, to overthrow the government.[11]

At stake was a henotic, stable, and progressive state. He writes to James Madison (20 December 1787):

> And say, finally, whether peace is best preserved by giving energy to the government, or information to the people. This last is the most certain, and the most legitimate engine of government. Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. Enable them to see that it is their interest to preserve peace and order, and they will preserve them. And it requires no very high degree of education to convince them of this. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.

Why does overseeing the elected politicians require "no very high degree of education"? As we have already seen, citizens are at least the moral equals of them they elect. They are equipped with a moral sense sufficient to determine virtue and vice, and that moral sense is less likely to suffer corruption through participation in political bickering.[12] What they lack is sufficient intelligence concerning political matters.[13]

How was general education to take root? In 1776, Jefferson began work on a committee – comprising Thomas Ludwell Lee, George Mason, Edmund Pendleton, George Wythe, and himself – to revise the laws of Virginia. With Lee dying shortly after having been appointed and Mason asking to be excused because of insufficient competence in legal matters, the remaining three did the revising. The three lawyers, working independently most of the time, drafted 126 bills for the General Assembly to consider.[14] Knowing what we know of Jefferson's inexhaustible capacity for work, we can assume that he did the lion's share of the writing. Writes Gilbert Chinard of the result, "One may state here without fear of contradiction that no system so complete, so logically constructed and so well articulated had ever been proposed in any country in the world."[15] His contribution to his fellow Virginians in his work on these bills is by itself evidence of his *caritas humanitatis*. It is also evident, given the philosophical thread that connects the key bills drafted by Jefferson, of a systemic approach to legal reform that presupposes an underlying normative vision, of which a philosophy of education was a substantial part.[16]

We know that four of the bills – Bills 79, 80, 81, and 82 – were drafted by Jefferson. Bills 79 through 81 aimed directly at educational reform. None passed. Bill 82 concerned freedom of religion and was the only bill that eventually passed, though its significance for setting the stage for secular educational reform cannot be underestimated. The first bill "proposed to lay off every county into Hundreds or Wards, of a proper size and population for a school, in which reading, writing, and common arithmetic should be taught." The second bill "proposed to amend the constitution of Wm. & Mary College, to enlarge it's [*sic*] sphere of science, and to make it in fact an University." The third bill proposed to establish a library for scholars, elected officials, and talented citizens.[17]

"A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" (Bill 79) – the most significant bill for education, "the most important bill of our whole code," and

the surest "foundation . . . for the preservation of freedom and happiness"[18] – was drafted by Jefferson in the fall of 1778 and contained the rudiments of a philosophy of education as well as a full-scale plan of implementation of that philosophy.[19] Elementary or ward schools, where the rich as well as the poor were to be educated, were to be established as follows. Three aldermen – "three of the most honest and able men of their county" – were to be chosen through vote each year, by electors of each county. To begin, the aldermen in each county were to convene in their county's courthouse to divide their county into hundreds so that the school of each hundred might generally have the same number of children. Under the direction of the aldermen, electors would convene to decide on a site for each ward school. Aldermen of each county would choose each year an overseer – "eminent for his learning, integrity, and fidelity" – for every ten schools of each county, or roughly so. Every overseer would appoint a teacher for each ward school and be responsible for visiting each school to make sure that the "general plan of reading and instruction," proposed by the visitors of William and Mary College, was observed. Every teacher would have food and lodging provided for him and his washing done for him.[20]

In Section XV, Jefferson writes that the overseer of each ward school will select one boy, from among those scholars who have been at the school at least two years and whose parents are too impoverished to provide for higher education, "to proceed to the grammer [*sic*] school of his district" at public expense. In such a manner, Jefferson is making some effort – though recognizable today as one that is ultimately insubstantial – to reward the talented who happen not to be of sufficient wealth.

In "Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education" in 1817, Jefferson says that a judge in every county will appoint three Visitors to divide the county into wards. They will designate a day for each ward in which all adult males will meet, along with one of the Visitors, and vote on the location, size, and structure of the ward school and house for the teacher as well as how it is to be constructed – in other words, by the joint labor of the warders or by pecuniary contributions. They will also elect a warden to direct and superintend the buildings.[21]

The Visitors will be responsible also for designating in each ward "a person of good moral character," who will have a house and other accommodations and an annual salary to be determined by the warders. The instructor will teach reading, writing, numerical arithmetic, and geography. All persons will be entitled gratis to three years of education. No one, attaining 15 years of age, who cannot read "readily in some tongue, native or acquired," will be considered a citizen. A Visitor will visit each school at least once each year and reward with "honorary marks and testimonies of approbation" those that excel in any subject to "excite industry and emulation."[22]

Wards

Jefferson's second great measure for maintaining a republic is instantiation of wards. In "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," Jefferson

writes of how wards are to be established in Virginia. The aldermen will meet at their county's courthouse and devise a plan for dividing their county into hundreds – known as wards. The size of each ward is to be determined by population, though elsewhere and much later he says each should be roughly "5. or 6. miles square."[23] Each ward, given a particular name, will have a number of potential students sufficient to make up a general school, and that school will be readily accessible to each student.[24] Alterations will be made in congruence with increases or decreases in population. In keeping with Jefferson's insistence in disallowing the federal government any role in provincial affairs, all expenses will be paid through the counties.[25]

Wards were to be for Jefferson micro-republics – the "pure republics" of which he wrote in his letter to Tiffany. Each was to be relatively independent of every other. "In each of these might be, first, an elementary school; second, a company of militia, with its officers; third, a justice of the peace and constable; fourth, each ward should take care of their own poor; fifth, their own roads; sixth, their own police; seventh, elect within themselves one or more jurors to attend the courts of justice; and eight, give in at their folk-house, their votes for all functionaries reserved to their election."[26] Jefferson's aim was self-sufficiency. Members of each ward would govern themselves and only intrude upon higher levels of government when matters had implications at the county, state, or federal level. Consonant with Jefferson's libertarianism, allowance of any uninvited intrusion of higher government in parochial affairs would eventually lead to a demand for quid pro quo. That comes out remarkably well in a letter to Senator Joseph C. Cabell, who worked tirelessly as an advocate of Jefferson's educational reforms (2 February 1816). Jefferson states that if the state government wishes to take the business of ward schools into its hands, then it is best to strike out the provision. The ward schools will not be better managed by the governor and his council, the commissioners of the Literary Fund,[27] or any other general authority of the government, but by the parents in each ward. If officials are allowed to manage the ward schools, then they might wish to manage citizens' farms and mills as well as merchants' stores.[28]

Instantiation of wards was countenanced not wholly for educational reform. Jefferson also had political and philosophical agendas. Wards were to be established to solve three problems of a large nation: political stability, territorial expansion, and religious taint of political activity.

First, wards aimed at preserving local idiosyncrasies while allowing for political stability. The new-formed federation of states was embryonic and only a loose-knit unity. The loose collection of states, each with its own identity, were early on bound together for the sake of political expediency – in other words, as a means of collectively addressing and redressing the abuses of the mother country England. For Jefferson, the thorny difficulty was creating a strong sense of political unity at the federal level while allowing for independence at the state, county, and ward levels. In effect, the ward system would allow bottom-up political stability[29] and, thus, a greater probability of long-term survival of the nation. It would also allow for preservation of parochial customs, traditions, and

mannerisms at the ward, county, and state levels, while allowing for integration into a large political unity for political and economic stability. Jefferson writes in 1816 to Virginia Governor Wilson C. Nicholas (April 2):

> My partiality for that division [into wards] is not founded in views of education solely, but infinitely more as the means of a better administration of our government, and the eternal preservation of its republican principles. The example of this most admirable of all human contrivances in government, is to be seen in our Eastern States; and its powerful effect in the order and economy of their internal affairs, and the momentum it gives them as a nation, is the single circumstance which distinguishes them so remarkably form every other national association.

Second, wards were seen as a solution to the problem of territorial expansion. To James Madison (27 April 1809), Jefferson mentions a vision of an "empire for liberty" that is to cover the North American continent. He writes of gaining Cuba from Napoleon, using it as the ne plus ultra southern limit of southerly expansion, and then acquiring the northern lands of Canada. Yet how is one to have political stability in a large and expanding nation? Aristotle in *Politics* maintained that a state too large was incapable of order and unity; one too small, incapable of self-sufficiency.[30] Montesquieu in *The Spirit of Laws* states that large republics or empires can only be "united" through "despotic authority," hence they cease to be republics.[31]

Jefferson is unfazed. What Aristotle and Montesquieu say is applicable to democracies, but not to genuine republics, which are in essence large. He writes to Cabell (2 February 1816) of his dividing-and-subdividing plan, at the base of which are wards:

> The way to have good and safe government, is not to trust it all to one, but to divide it among the many, distributing to every one exactly the functions he is competent to. Let the national government be entrusted with the defence of the nation, and its foreign and federal relations; the State governments with the civil rights, laws, police, and administration of what concerns the State generally; the counties with the local concerns of the counties, and each ward direct the interests within itself. It is by dividing and subdividing these republics from the great national one down through all its subordinations, until it ends in the administration of every man's farm by himself; by placing under every one what his own eye may superintend, that all will be done for the best. What has destroyed liberty and the rights of man in every government which has ever existed under the sun? The generalizing and concentrating all cares and powers into one body, no matter whether of the autocrats of Russia or France, or of the aristocrats of a Venetian senate . . . The elementary republics of the wards, the county republics, the States republics, and the republic of the Union, would form a gradation of authorities, standing each on the basis of law, holding every

> one its delegated share of powers, and constituting truly a system of fundamental balances and checks for the government.

In such a manner, he goes on to say, each citizen participates as fully as possible in political affairs. As Jefferson writes in Book XIV of *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "The influence over government must be shared among all the people. If every individual which composes their mass participates of the ultimate authority, the government will be safe; because the corrupting the whole mass will exceed any private resources of wealth."[32] The gist here is not a clamorous endorsement of participatory republicanism. It is merely a better, happier alternative to strong, coercive governments.

Jefferson's divide-and-subdivide proposal is a recipe for showing how a nation can be large as well as orderly, irenic, and self-sufficient. The keys are division of labor within the nesting of wards in counties, counties in states, and states in the nation, and the relative independence of wards, to preserve the freedom and the rights of citizens to pursue their own manner of living. In that manner, parochial interests find expression at the level of wards. Should they prove eccentric and debilitating, their effect is local, for the turbulence created is swamped out at the larger levels of governing.[33]

Finally, wards were proposed by Jefferson as means of thwarting state-sponsored religion – especially Anglicanism – and secularizing each state from the ground up. If no ward of a state could give sanction to any particular religion, it would be impossible for any state or the nation to give sanction to any particular religion.[34]

It must be added that to supplement the schools in wards and as a benefit to the citizens of each county, Jefferson championed local libraries. He congratulates John Wyche (19 May 1809) on establishment of the Westward Mill Library Society and adds:

> I have often thought that nothing would do more extensive good at small expense than the establishment of a small circulating library in every county, to consist of a few well-chosen books, to be lent to the people of the country, under such regulations as would secure their safe return in due time. These should be such as would give them a general view of other history, and particular view of that of their own country, a tolerable knowledge of Geography, the elements of Natural Philosophy, of Agriculture and Mechanics.

The aims of primary education

In his 1818 "Report of the Rockfish Gap Commission Appointed to Fix the Site of the University of Virginia" (hereafter, "Rockfish Gap Report"), Jefferson gives a list of the aims of general education – the democratic component of his proposed system of educational reform.[35] I condense what he says there to the following four criteria and supplement the aims by reference to other writings.

The first and perhaps most critical aim of general education, consonant with the general aim of each citizen being educated in pursuance of his own needs, is that all citizens – the laboring and the learned as well as males and females – are to be generally educated to give them a foundation for conducting their own affairs.[36] Such affairs include the transaction of personal business, the preservation of one's ideas, and the calculation of contracts, accounts, and ideas. Jefferson writes in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "The first stage of this education being the schools of the hundreds, wherein the great mass of the people will receive their instruction, the principal foundations of future order will be laid here."[37] For political order to exist, there must be the fullest measure of political participation, for the affairs of each person in a thriving republic involve the affairs of others.[38] For fullest political participation, each citizen's personal affairs must be conducted efficiently, for no one will concern himself with communal involvement if his own affairs are in disarray – or as Jefferson says elliptically in "Opinion on the French Treaties," "the law of self-preservation overrules the laws of obligation to others."[39]

Second, general education, chiefly through the reading of history and secondarily through the reading of fiction with discernible moral content, will strengthen each person's moral sense and enhance his intellect.[40] "The first elements of morality," he writes in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, can be taught in general education to show people, when their critical faculty has matured, that their happiness is not due to the circumstances of one's situation, but is a consequence of "good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits."[41] Each person will be able to triumph over circumstances and seek an internal monitor of happiness. Each person will learn his duties to neighbor and country and discharge them with diligence, pride, and efficiency. Each person, upon detecting political ambition, will be encouraged to act to remove it through studying history. "The most effectual means of preventing the perversion of power into tyranny are to illuminate," Jefferson writes in Bill 79, "as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts, which history exhibits, that possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes." In short, primary education aids the moral faculty, facilitates industry, reinforces social relations, and checks ambition. In doing so, it involves all three of the main branches of learning: memory, reason, and imagination.

Third, general education teaches citizens their natural rights and how to exercise them with order and justice – viz., without encroaching on the rights of others. It is well known that Jefferson, when apprized of the drafted Constitution, objected not only to the lack of term limits for the executive, but also to the neglect of a bill of rights. "What I disapproved from the first moment," he writes James Madison (15 March 1789), "was the want of a bill of rights to guard liberty against the legislative as well as the executive branches of the government; that is to say, to secure freedom in religion, freedom of the press, freedom from monopolies, freedom from unlawful imprisonment, freedom

from a permanent military, and a trial by jury in all cases determinable by the laws of the land."[42] The worry here is not merely parochial. Jefferson aims at establishing a universal standard. "A bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular," he again writes to Madison (20 December 1787) "& what no just government should refuse, or rest on inferences."[43]

Finally, education enables citizens to choose and oversee those who govern them. In a letter to Mann Page (30 August 1795), Jefferson says Rouchefoucauld and Montaigne were wrong to assert that 14 of every 15 men are scapegraces. Men, he thinks, are fundamentally honest. Those persons who "rise" to positions of governance are the scapegraces. "These rogues set out with stealing the people's good opinion, and then steal from them the right of withdrawing it, by contriving laws and associations against the power of the people themselves." Thus, governors are to be chosen by the people, bird-dogged by the people, and, if needed, recalled by the people. When government turns coercive and pretermits the rights of its citizens, citizens are within their right to rebel and even overthrow the government.[44]

The ward-school curriculum

It is difficult today to grasp that the notion of educating the general citizenry in Jefferson's time was avant-garde, almost subversive, at least in the eyes of the gentry. Following a long line of thinkers from Plato to Hobbes, the notion that the masses, if given some substratal amount of education, could sufficiently manage their own affairs was outré. Moreover, the notion that the masses could select and oversee their governors was outré.

Ward-school education, for Jefferson, encouraged morally appropriate conduct, just transactions in everyday commercial affairs, and effective citizenry, among other things. It enabled citizens to know and act on their rights. It also suggested paths for participation in political affairs at the most basic level of government.

Key to meeting such aims was establishing an idoneous curriculum. In Section VI of his bill for general education in 1779, Jefferson treats of the subjects to be taught succinctly, almost curtly. "At every one of these schools shall be taught reading, writing, and common arithmetic [*sic*], and the books which shall be used therein for instructing the children to read shall be such as will at the same time make them acquainted with Græcian, Roman, English, and American history."[45] The concision of the account is no signifier of lack of interest in the subjects to be taught. It is Jefferson's aim as statesman to show via the bill that general education is practicable. It makes little sense to expatiate on minutiae of a proposal before the general infrastructure is laid out. That would be like a street vendor firmly deciding on which goods to sell in his kiosk and purchasing them before applying for a license to sell them. The license comes first; firm decisions later. In his 1817 bill, Jefferson lists the subjects to be taught only in passing. He writes in Section V: "It shall be the duty of the sd Visitors

to seek and employ for every ward, whenever the number and ages of it's [*sic*] children require it, a person of good moral character, qualified to teach reading, writing, numeral arithmetic, and the elements of geography." Section XII adds:

> Some one of the Visitors, once in every year at least, shall visit the schools, shall enquire into the proceedings and practices thereat, shall examine the progress of the pupils, and give to those who excel in reading, in writing, in arithmetic, or in geography, such honorary marks, and testimonies of approbation as may encourage & excite to industry & emulation.[46]

A few things are worth underscoring here.

First, one notes in his 1817 bill the inclusion of the subject of geography.[47] Jefferson's vision of American expansion, of an "empire for liberty," was being realized. The Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Louisiana Purchase occurred during Jefferson's first term as president (1801–1805). By the summer of 1817, Missouri had become the 20th state of the union. America was growing, prospering, and progressing. Youths without some sense of geography would be incognizant of and unprepared for the advance and growth of the American nation.

Jefferson always had keen interest in exploration, likely due to his father's expertise as a surveyor and cartographer as well as his own strong interest in scientific discovery. As early as 1800, Jefferson includes geography in the curriculum of general education. To Dr. Joseph Priestley (27 January 1800), Jefferson mentions "a sufficient number of good country schools, where the languages, geography, and the first elements of mathematics, are taught." To George Ticknor (25 November 1817), Jefferson writes of "reading, writing, common arithmetic, and general geography" as topics of general education. In 1818, he writes of the "outlines of geography" and "geography to a sufficient degree" as subjects.[48] In a letter to Cabell (28 November. 1820), Jefferson says that the elementary schools will teach "general notions of geography," while the district colleges, the first tier of higher learning, will teach "geography fully." We notice, in keeping with the tenet of an education in pursuance of the needs of all citizens, that he proposes merely "general geography," "geography to a sufficient degree," and "general notions of geography" for ward schools.

Second, one notes eschewal of religious instruction in elementary education. He explains that deliberate eschewal in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

> Instead . . . of putting the Bible and the Testament into the hands of the children at an age when their judgments are not sufficiently matured for religious inquiries, their memories may here be stored with the most useful facts from Grecian, Roman, European and American history. The first elements of morality, too, may be instilled into their minds; such as, when further developed as their judgments advance in strength, may teach them how to work out their own greatest happiness, by shewing them that it does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed them,

> but is always the result of a good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits . . . There is a certain period of life, say from eight to fifteen or sixteen years of age, when the mind, like the body is not yet firm enough for laborious and close operations. If applied to such, it falls an early victim to premature exertion; exhibiting, indeed, at first, in these young and tender subjects, the flattering appearance of their being men while they are yet children, but ending in reducing them to be children when they should be men. The memory is then most susceptible and tenacious of impressions; and the learning of languages being chiefly a work of memory, it seems precisely fitted to the powers of this period, which is long enough, too, for acquiring the most useful languages, ancient and modern. I do not pretend that language is science. It is only an instrument for the attainment of science. But that time is not lost which is employed in providing tools for future operation; more especially, as in this case, the books put into the hands of the youth for this purpose may be such as will, at the same time, impress their minds with useful facts and good principles. If this period be suffered to pass in idleness, the mind becomes lethargic and impotent, as would the body it inhabits, if unexercised during the same time. The sympathy between body and mind during their rise, progress, and decline, is too strict and obvious to endanger our being misled, while we reason from the one to the other.

The passage is multiparous with significance, hence my preference for giving a large part of it in Jefferson's own words. I focus on two points. First, Jefferson realizes that children's minds at this stage of life are insufficiently developed for critical inquiry. Thus, they might learn arithmetic, languages, and history – each chiefly a task of memory – but religious inquiries, which by implication go beyond memory, are out of the question. His apprehension is, I suspect, that exposure to religious sectarian dogmata at any early age disenables one's critical faculty to engage openly, disinterestedly, and rationally with that dogmata at a later age. Early exposure to dogmata can make one a slave to it for life. Second, Jefferson mentions learning the "first elements of morality." By reading the right sort of history – Tacitus, for example – one fills one's head with useful history – in other words, the sentiments of the moral sense are reinforced without the taint of sectarian religious principles, political in essence. Once reinforced and with the maturation of each person, persons can learn that happiness is not a matter of fate, but of "good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits." This is perhaps as close to a definition of "happiness" as Jefferson ever comes.

Why not, however, include the Bible as part of early moral instruction? Does not it too give the first lessons of morality? Are not many of its lessons mere tasks of memory? Did not Jefferson himself create his own version of the Bible for personal study?[49]

Study of the Bible would lead to moral debauchery, not moral enlightenment. First, the Jewish "Old Testament" offers a distorted depiction of deity and

contains no consistent moral doctrine. He says in his "Syllabus of an Estimate of the Merit of the Doctrines of Jesus, Compared with Those of Others" (1803):

> The Jews' system was Deism; that is, the belief of one only God. But their ideas of him & of his attributes were degrading & injurious. Their Ethics were not only imperfect, but often irreconcilable with the sound dictates of reason & morality, as they respect intercourse with those around us; & repulsive & anti-social, as respecting other nations. They needed reformation, therefore, in an eminent degree.[50]

He writes about the "Old Testament" to John Adams 10 years later (12 October 1813), "What a wretched depravity of sentiment and manners must have prevailed before such corrupt maxims could have obtained credit! It is impossible to collect from these writings a consistent series of moral Doctrine." Jewish "morality" is founded on fear. Its sole redeeming feature is its monotheism. Second, the "New Testament" has been corrupted by "schismatizing followers" and "Platonists" who have contaminated the actual teachings of Jesus with "meretricious trappings" for political purposes.[51] What is especially meretricious is the inclusion of miracles – clear violations of natural law. "When Livy or Siculus . . . tell us thing which coincide with our experience of the order of nature," Jefferson writes to William Short (4 August 1820),

> we credit them on their word, and place their narrations among the records of credible history. But when they tell us of calves speaking, of statues sweating blood, and other things against the course of nature, we reject these as fables, not belonging to history. In like manner, when an historian, speaking of a character well known and established on satisfactory testimony imputes to it things incompatible with that character, we reject them without hesitation, and assent to that only of which we have better evidence.[52]

Jefferson's Arcadia

As we have seen, republican government for Jefferson had universal implications – viz., the American version, played out fully, would show the rest of the world that a country could be large, well governed, meritocratic, and democratic in essence – and was a progressive standard to be met by other countries. Nonetheless, it is important to say something about Jefferson's vision of the unique circumstances that the American continent afforded the fledgling nation in which republicanism was to occur.

Jefferson was a true child of the Enlightenment. Schooled well in the notions of scientific, political, and moral progress – covered more fully in chapters 3 and 4 – he was constantly in the habit of seeing the world as it might be. Yet he was no pie-eyed idealist, without footing in reality. Jefferson had a distinct vision of American well-being. That vision is best delineated not by the epithet "utopia," but "Arcadia," characterizing austere and peaceful pastoralism.

Agrarianism was for Jefferson the preferred manner of living for cultivating human happiness.[53] "The cultivators of the earth are the most virtuous citizens, and possess most of the amor patriæ," he writes in answer to questions proposed by Monsieur de Meusnier (24 January 1786). He states to John Jay (23 August 1785): "Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests, by the most lasting bonds." To James Madison (20 December 1787), Jefferson says: "I think we shall be [virtuous], as long as agriculture is our principal object, which will be the case, while there remain vacant lands in any part of America. When we get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, we shall become corrupt as in Europe, and go to eating one another as they do there."[54]

What precisely about farming did Jefferson find so alluring? Agrestic living, he thought, promoted self-sufficiency, plenitude, and consanguinity with nature and was labor of unquestioned utility.

First, farmers are self-sufficient; manufacturers are not. To Jean Nicholas Démeunier (29 April 1795), he writes that husbandry yields "the most happiness & contentment to one of . . . philosophic turn," and such happiness and contentment are grounded in self-sufficiency. Manufacturers, in contrast, are dependent on the "casualties and caprice of customers." Dependence leads to subservience, venality, and ambition – each of which suffocates virtue. Though Europeans have an abundance of goods that Americans lack, such "goods," mere bagatelles, lead to unhappiness and loss of independence. He adds, "generally speaking the proportion which the aggregate of the other classes of citizens bears in any state to that of its husbandmen, is the proportion of its unsound to its healthy parts, and is a good-enough barometer whereby to measure its degree of corruption."

Second, farming gives a yield for one's labor that greatly exceeds manufacture. By nature, husbandry is cornucopian. To Benjamin Austin (9 January 1816), Jefferson writes, "To the labor of the husbandman, a vast addition is made by the spontaneous energies of the earth on which it is employed: for one grain of wheat committed to the earth, she renders twenty, thirty, and even fifty fold, whereas to the labor of the manufacturer nothing is added." Manufacture, in comparison, is sterile.

Third, as the letter to Austin shows, farmers work with nature; manufacturers, against nature. What farmers take from nature, they return to it. Though farmers take from the soil to reap benefits from it, they give back to it. Moreover, farmers mimic nature in doing what nature already does. Manufacturers, in contrast, steal from nature without giving back to it. Also, their work is not in accordance with nature.

Finally, and this is a point that needs no amplification, farmers engage in the most useful labor – in other words, feeding their fellow human beings. Items manufactured are often of questionable use.

Jefferson's overall account is noticeably and perhaps unfairly weighted in favor of agrarianism. Anticity sentiments are clearly at the back of his mind. "I am not a friend to placing growing men in populous cities, because they

acquire there habits & partialities which do not contribute to the happiness of their after life," writes Jefferson to Dr. Caspar Wistar (21 June 1807). To what habits and partialities does Jefferson refer? He answers that question in an earlier letter. "The general desire of men to live by their heads rather than their hands," he says to David Williams (14 November 1803) "and the strong allurements of great cities to those who have any turn for dissipation, threaten to make them here, as in Europe, the sinks of voluntary misery." Jefferson goes so far as to say that the scourge of yellow fever in the nation "will discourage the growth of great cities in our nation," which are "pestilential to the morals, the health and the liberties of man."[55] He even explains Rhode Island's obstinacy apropos of its tendency to vote against useful proposals by "her geography." It comprises seaport communities. "Merchants are the least virtuous, and possess the least of the amor patriæ. The latter reside principally in the seaport towns, the former in the interior country."[56] Finally, Jefferson writes to John Adams (1 June 1822) that manufacture and the "too great multiplication [of people] provided in the mechanism of the Universe" in the cities of Europe are responsible for the eternal hawkishness of humans. He adds:

> I hope we shall prove how much happier for man the Quaker policy is, and that the life of the feeder, is better than that of the fighter; and it is some consolation that the desolation by these maniacs of one part of the earth is the means of improving it in other parts. Let the latter be our office, and let us milk the cow, while the Russian holds her by the horns, and the Turk by the tail.

The implication is that manufacturing types are those quick to incite war though the least inclined to fight a war while farmers are the types suitably disposed to fight a war though least inclined to incite it.

There are three points worth expatiation in Jefferson's contrast of farmers and manufacturers. One concerns the dependency of manufacturers and the independency of farmers; a second, the argument from cornucopia; the last, a rooted-in-nature distinction between farmers and manufacturers.

First, it seems strange to asseverate baldly that agronomy leads to independency and manufacture to dependency. That is a claim that is nowise obvious in our day and would not have been obvious in Jefferson's day. It is likely that Jefferson recognized that each manner of living entails bondage of some sort – viz., that there can be no notion of independence without some form of yoke – so it is best not to take the claim categorically, but in a relative sense. Everything depends on the sort of yoke.

Farmers work outdoors, and their work complements the work of nature. In tilling the land, they greatly invest both time and toil in it and so come to know well and love their land, its foibles notwithstanding. They reap from the land, but they also fertilize and sow the land. Moreover, in times of crisis, they will be the first citizens to rush forth to defend their nation because they have a critical investment in the land. That is a lesson the Persian king Darias (and later his son Xerxes) learned in his war (490–478 BC) with the Greeks, who were

greatly outnumbered by the enormous Persian army and navy. While Darius was fighting to redress what was to him a wrong and to give the world another illustration of the greatness of his empire, the Greeks were fighting for their land and for their way of life. Spartans excepting, they too were mostly farmers.

Manufacturers work indoors, and their labor, as it were, competes with the work of nature. In producing things, they have no ties to land. They take from the land – metals, water, clay, stone, and wood, and so forth – and give back nothing in return. In most cases, manufacturers can just as readily move their shop of manufacture from one location to another, even from one country to another. Moreover, in times of crisis, they will be the least inclined to defend their nation, for they have no critical investment in the land.

Second, there is a sense in which the argument from cornucopia is puzzling. One might grant that the yield, upon placing miniscule tomato or broccoli seeds in the earth, is astonishing. A tiny Black Krim tomato seed, with conditions proper to good growth, produces a plant that yields several luscious tomatoes, each with a large number of seeds for future plants. Thus, so much comes from so little. Yet that is not to say that the yield for the labor is cornucopian. Farmers toil mightily, and everything rides on what one reaps. The soil must be readied for crops. Crops must be rotated. Moreover, there are the vicissitudes of nature. Floods, draughts, erosion, quality of soil, and pests, among other difficulties, are constant concerns. For instance, Jefferson in a letter to Tristan Dalton (2 May 1817) mentions continual difficulties with farming sloped lands, for "every rain . . . while it gave a temporary refreshment, did permanent evil by carrying off our soil: and the fields were no sooner cleared than wasted" – a difficulty eventually solved by the adoption of the method of making layers of leveled beds, each some 30 yards wide.

The yield from manufacture, in contrast, might not be so astonishing, but it is steady. Given a supply of primary materials, human labor puts out a product. There is much less concern of the exigencies of nature. One can consider here the productivity of Jefferson's nail factory, which was established in 1794 to stabilize the unsteadiness of his agricultural yield. It was an early success, as it provided mostly through barter for the maintenance of his family,[57] but soon met with the usual difficulty of gleaning money in exchange for his nails, as money was scarce in Virginia.[58]

Third, Jefferson sometimes writes of farmers and manufacturers as two fundamentally different sorts of people. For illustration, he writes to Marc Auguste (5 February 1803):

> The great mass of our people are agricultural; and the commercial cities, though, by the command of newspapers, they make a great deal of noise, have little effect in the direction of the government. They are as different in sentiment and character from the country people as any two distinct nations, and are clamorous against the order of things established by the agricultural interest.

In several passages, Jefferson asserts the differences between agrarians and manufacturers are rooted in nature. To Henry Lee (10 August 1824), for illustration, Jefferson writes:

> Men by their constitutions are naturally divided into two parties. 1. Those who fear and distrust the people, and wish to draw all powers from them into the hands of the higher classes. 2ndly those who identify themselves with the people, have confidence in them, cherish and consider them as the most honest & safe, altho' not the most wise depository of the public interests. In every country these two parties exist, and in every one where they are free to think, speak, and write, they will declare themselves. Call them therefore liberals and serviles, Jacobins and Ultras, whigs and tories, republicans and federalists, aristocrats and democrats or by whatever name you please, they are the same parties still and pursue the same object. The last appellation of aristocrats and democrats is the true one expressing the essence of all.[59]

Though Jefferson's depiction is often pejorative and propagandist – "the weakly and nerveless, the rich and the corrupt" versus "the healthy, firm and virtuous"[60] – to John Taylor (1 June 1798), Jefferson says, "In every free and deliberating society, there must, from the nature of man, be opposite parties and violent dissensions and discords; and one of these, for the most part, must prevail over the other for a longer or shorter time." The sentiment is that bipartisanship and its attendant violent tension are essential for progressive, republican government.[61] Political progress is tardigrade and requires rigorous debate.

Jefferson's depictions of urban living as vicious and of agrestic living as virtuous must be taken in some measure to be rooted in presupposition or bias, not necessarily in reality. The depiction of the corruption, gloom, and vice of urbanized living is certainly at odds with the depiction of progressive living of New Englanders that his granddaughter Ellen gives upon moving to Boston.

> I should judge from appearances that they are at least a century in advance of us in all the arts and embellishments of life; and they are pressing forward in their course with a zeal and activity which I think must ensure success. It is certainly a pleasing sight, this flourishing state of things: the country is covered with a multitude of beautiful villages; the fields are cultivated and forced into fertility; the roads kept in the most exact order; the inns numerous, affording good accommodations; and travelling facilitated by the ease with which post carriages and horse are always to be obtained.[62]

Though his granddaughter does go on to speak unfavorably of a great cotton factory she visited, the overall impression she gives in her letter seems quite favorable for one accustomed only to Virginian agrarianism.

Upshot

It is well known that Jefferson's scheme for instantiating general education was never adopted. His plan was always for an overhaul of the educational system en bloc. General education and higher education were to be part of a system for educating the nation. He attributed the failure to adopt his plan to the prodigious costs of the scheme in the minds of enemies of it as well as to their "ignorance, malice, egoism, fanaticism, [and their] religious, political and local perversities."[63] A large obstacle was that the financial burden was to be principally on the wealthy, and the wealthy refused to dole out money for the education of all children – poor especially.

Yet Jefferson had an argument for that too. He told Joseph Cabell in a lengthy and important letter (14 January 1818) that, without primogeniture, today's wealthy would be tomorrow's penurious, and so, in effect, asking the wealthy to pay for education would be like asking them to pay for the education of their own children, three generations hence. Using reasonable approximations where hard data were unavailable, he expatiated in significant detail on the expense of the existing system of primary schools, which he figured at $1,200,000 to the state to be gathered through taxes, compared to his proposed system of primary schools, which would cost $180,000. A second advantage, he tells Cabell, is that the $1,200,000 now paid as a poll tax would be paid equally by rich and poor alike, whereas in his system "the poor man would pay in proportion to his hut and peculium only, while the rich would pay on their palaces and principalities."

Moreover, as Jefferson recognized sagaciously and with much foresight, enemies of general education failed to recognize the prodigious cost of ignorance. "If the legislature would add to that a perpetual tax of a cent a head on the population of the State," he writes to Col. Charles Yancey (6 January 1816),

> it would set agoing [*sic*] at once, and forever maintain, a system of primary or ward schools, and an university where might be taught, in its highest degree, every branch of science useful in our time and country; it would rescue us from the tax of toryism, fanaticism, and indifferentism to their own State, which we now send our youth to bring from those of New England.

In another significant letter to Cabell (28 November 1820), Jefferson argued that his plan of educational overhaul would be cheaper than the current "system," bereft of order and purpose. He wrote, with considerable regard for minutiae:

> To assume the character of the friends, rather than the opponents of that object, the present plan has appropriated to the primary schools forty-five thousand dollars for three years, making one hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars. I should be glad to know if this sum has educated one hundred and thirty-five poor children? I doubt it much. And if it has, they

> have cost us one thousand dollars a piece for what might have been done with thirty dollars. Supposing the literary revenue to be sixty thousand dollars, I think it demonstrable, that this sum, equally divided between the two objects would amply suffice for both. One hundred counties, divided into about twelve wards each, on an average, and a school in each ward of perhaps ten children, would be one thousand and two hundred schools, distributed proportionably over the surface of the State. The inhabitants of each ward, meeting together (as when they work on the roads), building good log houses for their school and teacher, and contributing for his provisions, rations of pork, beef, and corn, in the proportion each of his other taxes, would thus lodge and feed him without feeling it; and those of them who are able, paying for the tuition of their own children, would leave no call on the public fund but for the tuition fee of, here and there, an accidental pauper, who would still be fed and lodged with his parents. Suppose this fee ten dollars, and three hundred dollars apportioned to a county on an average, (more or less proportioned,) would there be thirty such paupers for every county? I think not. The truth is, that the want of common education with us is not from our poverty, but from want of an orderly system. More money is now paid for the education of a part, than would be paid for that of the whole, if systematically arranged. Six thousand common schools in New York, fifty pupils in each, three hundred thousand in all; one hundred and sixty thousand dollars annually paid to the masters; forty established academies, with two thousand two hundred and eighteen pupils; and five colleges, with seven hundred and eighteen students; to which last classes of institutions seven hundred and twenty thousand dollars have been given; and the whole appropriations for education estimated at two and a half millions of dollars!

Note that it was not a matter of there being insufficient money for instantiation of a program of general education. There was instead "want of an orderly system." The implication is that opponents lack the broad-scale vision of a system of education for a unified, irenic, and progressive nation – one including not only wards, but also grammar schools and a university. A system would allow for a more efficient use of money. In that, each could be educated to his own needs, and the total cost of educating everyone would be less than the current costs of educating only the well-to-do citizens. The systematicity to which Jefferson refers bespeaks a consistent and coherent philosophy of education, about which Jefferson has thought long and strenuously.

Notes

1 Thomas Jefferson (hereafter TJ) to Chevalier Luis de Onis, 28 April 1814; and Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for Establishing Elementary Schools," 1817. Thomas Jefferson, "BEES," in *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson,* ed. Roy J. Honeywell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 233–43.

2 TJ to James Madison, 27 April 1809.

3 For example, TJ to John Norvell, 14 June 1807, and TJ to Francis Wayles Eppes, 27 June 1821.
4 The influence of utopian thinkers on Jefferson republicanism is undeniable and the subject of a work in process – M. Andrew Holowchak, *Pathological Moralist, Moral Pathologist: Thomas Jefferson as Political Philosopher & Moral Visionist* (forthcoming).
5 See also John Adams, 28 February 1796; "Second Inaugural Address," 1805; TJ to Thomas Seymour, 11 February 1807; TJ to A.C.V.C. Destutt de Tracy, 26 January 1811; TJ to James Madison, 24 December 1824; and "Draft Declaration and Protest of the Commonwealth of Virginia," 1825.
6 TJ to Thomas Ritchie, 25 December 1820.
7 See also TJ to Peregrine Fitzhugh, 4 June 1797; TJ to Judge Spencer Roane, 6 September 1819; TJ to Nathaniel Macon, 19 August 1821; TJ to James Pleasants, 26 December 1821; and TJ to Judge William Johnson, 4 March 1823.
8 See also TJ to James Maury, 25 April 1812; TJ to John Melish, 13 January 1813; and TJ to Edward Livingston, 4 April 1824.
9 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings: Autobiography, A Summary View of the Rights of British America, Notes on the State of Virginia, Public and Private Papers, Addresses, Letters*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 286.
10 TJ to John Adams, 28 October 1813.
11 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "The Paradox of Public Service: Jefferson, Education, and the Problem of Plato's Cave," *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 73–86.
12 See M. Andrew Holowchak, *Thomas Jefferson: Uncovering His Unique Philosophy and Vision* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2013), chap. 6.
13 Virginia throughout the eighteenth century did little to educate the masses. Persons of means were tutored and received an education commensurate with the talents of the paid tutor. Persons without means were not so fortunate. Some had access to free schools, funded by private charity, but most did not. Others had occasional access to itinerant teachers. In 1809, Virginia established its Literary Fund, at the bidding of Gov. John Tyler, from forfeitures, escheats, and other sources to generate money for public education. See Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 15, and Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., *Jefferson and Education* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 18.
14 Thomas Jefferson, "Autobiography," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 31–44.
15 Gilbert Chinard, *Thomas Jefferson: The Apostle of Americanism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, [1929] 1962), 99.
16 See TJ to John Adams (28 October 1813) for Jefferson's account of that philosophical thread.
17 Thomas Jefferson, "Autobiography," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 43–44.
18 TJ to George Wythe, 13 August 1786. Jefferson's sentiments in the bill were in keeping with essayists of his day.

> While they hoped that the general diffusion of knowledge would maximize happiness and assist able and deserving young men to attain positions of influence in society and government, they were in actuality much more concerned about the future of the nation than with the rise of individuals. These essayists, along with Jefferson, were searching for a system of education that would be suitable for coming generations of free and independent citizens intent on maintaining a republican society. They sought educational arrangements that would unite Americans as a people and as an expanding union of republics

bound together by ties of interest, affection, and mutual consent. (Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., *Jefferson and Education* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004], 51–52)

19 It was Jefferson's favorite bill (see TJ to George Wythe, 13 August 1786) and did not pass because the burden of expense for the schools would have been mostly on the well-to-do, and "the justices, being generally of the more wealthy class, were unwilling to incur that burden." In 1796, a version passed, so greatly amended that it defeated its original purpose (Thomas Jefferson, "Autobiography," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 274). In a memorandum (c. 1800), he writes: "It was received by the legislature with great enthusiasm at first; and a small effort was made in 1796, by the act to establish public schools, to carry a part of it into effect, viz., that for the establishment of free English schools; but the option given to the courts has defeated the intention of the act" (Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 703–4). To Joseph C. Cabell (24 January 1816), Jefferson writes of a proposal to transfer power from the court and aldermen to the visitors vis-à-vis ward schools. Experience had taught him that no court would ever approve of ward schools, for expenses were to be defrayed by taxes everyone pays, and members of the court, comprising the wealthy, considered the plan "to educate the poor at the expense of the rich." See also TJ to Cabell, 14 January 1818.

20 Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 365–68.

21 Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education," in Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson*, 234.

22 Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education," 235.

23 TJ to John Adams, 28 October 1813.

24 Wards schools, he later writes Joseph Cabell (28 November 1820), are to be no more than three miles from each student. The plan, where the size of a ward was determined by population though each ward school was to be readily accessible to all students, was impracticable. During Jefferson's life, some sections of Virginia were so thinly populated that it would have been impossible to establish a ward school, determined by population, that was accessible to scholars in need. See Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson*, 26.

25 Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," 366.

26 TJ to Major John Cartwright, 5 June 1824.

27 The Literary Fund was established on 8 February 1810 at the prompting of Gov. John Tyler. It provided that money from forfeiture, escheats, and the sale of banks' stocks would go toward public education. Prior to the fund, public education for the poor was at the mercy of private charity.

28 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "Individual Liberty and Political Unity in an Expanding Nation: The Axiological Primacy of Wards in Jefferson's Republican Schema," *Thomas Jefferson & Philosophy: Essays on the Philosophical Cast of Jefferson's Writings* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), chap. 3.

29 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "Individual Liberty and Political Unity in an Expanding Nation."

30 Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1932] 1990), 1326a25–b6.

31 Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, trans. Thomas Nugent (London: J. Nourse, 1777), Book VIII.16.

32 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 274–75.

33 For difficulties with this view, see M. Andrew Holowchak, "Individual Liberty and Political Unity in an Expanding Nation," chap. 3.

34 Ari Helo, "Jefferson's Conception of Republican Government," *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Frank Shuffleton (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 2009), 43.
35 Thomas Jefferson, "Report of the Rockfish Gap Commission Appointed to Fix the Site of the University of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 459.
36 See also Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 273.
37 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 273. See also TJ to Peter Carr, 7 September 1814.
38 He writes: "The influence over government must be shared among all the people. If every individual which composes their mass participates of the ultimate authority, the government will be safe." Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 274.
39 "Opinion on the French Treaties," 28 April 1793. See also TJ to Dr. James Brown, 27 October 1808, and TJ to John Colvin, 20 September 1810.
40 See also TJ to Robert Skipwith, 3 August 1771; TJ to James Madison, 20 February 1784; TJ to Ebenezer Hazard, 18 February 1791; TJ to John Norvell, 14 June 1807; TJ to Anne Randolph Bankhead, 8 December 1808; TJ to Col. William Duane, 1810; TJ to Col. William Duane, 4 April 1813; TJ to William Wirt, 1814; TJ to John Adams, 10 August 1815; TJ to William Wirt, 12 November 1816; TJ to John Adams, 5 May 1817; and TJ to William Short, 8 January 1825.
41 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 273.
42 See also TJ to James Madison, 28 August 1789; TJ to Noah Webster, 4 December 1790; TJ to James Madison, 28 August 1789; TJ to Thomas Mann Randolph, 30 May 1790; Report on Negotiation with Spain, 18 March 1792; TJ to James Monroe, 7 September 1797; TJ to Philip Norborne Nicholas, 7 April 1800; TJ to Benjamin Galloway, 2 February 1812; TJ to Joseph Priestley, 24 April 1816; TJ to Dr. John Manners, 12 June 1817; and TJ to John Hambden Pleasants, 19 April 1824.
43 See also TJ to George Washington, 4 December 1788 and TJ to Richard Price, 8 January 1789.
44 TJ to James Madison, 30 January 1787; TJ to Abigail Adams, 22 February 1787; and TJ to William S. Smith, 13 November 1787.
45 Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," 367.
46 Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education," 234.
47 Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education," 234.
48 Thomas Jefferson, "Rockfish Gap Report," 459.
49 See M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent: Philosophical Essays on Thomas Jefferson* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), chap. 5, and "The Fear, Honor, and Love of God: Jefferson on Jews, Philosophers, and Jesus," *Forum Philosophicum* (forthcoming).
50 Sent, for example, with an accompanying letter to Dr. Benjamin Rush, 21 April 1803.
51 TJ to Benjamin Rush, 21 April 1803; TJ to Joseph Priestley, 29 January 1804; TJ to Sam Kercheval, 19 January 1810; TJ to John Adams, 12 October 1813; TJ to Francis Adrian Van der Kemp, 25 April 1816; TJ to William Short, 31 October 1819; TJ to William Short, 13 April 1820; TJ to William Short, 4 August 1820; TJ to Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse, 26 June 1822; and TJ to George Thatcher, 26 January 1824.
52 For more on Jesus, see Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent*, 93–110.
53 Though he came to recognize the importance of manufacture for self-sufficiency later in life, he never changed his mind on the preferability of agrestic living.
54 See also TJ to Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville, 16 August 1786; TJ to John Blair, 13 August 1787; TJ to James Madison, 18 March 1793; TJ to James Madison, 18 March 1793; TJ to David Williams, 14 November 1803; TJ Thomas Jefferson Randolph, 3 January 1809; and TJ to Benjamin Stoddert, 18 February 1809.

55 TJ to Dr. Benjamin Rush, 23 September 1800.
56 Thomas Jefferson, "Answers to DéMeunier's First Queries, 24 January 1786," *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 10: *22 June–31 December 1786*, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954), 11–20.
57 TJ to James Lyle, 10 July 1795.
58 See Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962), 217–20.
59 See also TJ to Thomas Pinckney, 29 May 1797; TJ to Joel Barlow, 3 May 1802; and TJ to William Short, 8 January 1825.
60 TJ to Joel Barlow, 3 March 1802.
61 Given his purchase of progressivism in morality, politics, and science, it should come as no surprise that Jefferson would push for agronomy to be introduced to the curriculum of higher education. See, e.g., TJ to David Williams, 14 November 1803, and TJ to John P. Emmet, 27 April 1826.
62 Ellen Randolph Coolidge to TJ, 1 August 1825.
63 TJ to Albert Gallatin, 15 February 1818.

2 A dialog between ancients and moderns

Creating a natural aristocracy

> The character that comes from wealth is that of a living fool.
>
> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*

Thomas Jefferson spent the lion's share of his salad years, some 40 years, in various forms of political service to his state and country. He was member of Virginia's House of Delegates, governor of Virginia, Virginian delegate in Congress, minister to France, secretary of state, vice president, and even president. As a politician, he was an ardent patron of the sciences and a practicing scientist of some note. He studied and practiced in some degree paleontology, meteorology, philology, ethics, physics, political science, economics, religion, and agriculture, inter alia. As both politician and scientist, Jefferson betrayed vision, magnanimity, sedulousness, industry, sanguinity, and generosity.

That Jefferson had vision is incontestable. His two bills for wholesale educational reform in 1779 and 1817 are sufficient evidence. Additional confirmation comes with his participation in the revision of the laws of Virginia, his writing of the "Declaration of Independence," and his dream of an American nation, covering North America, in free and peaceable commerce with other nations, and with citizens engaged in the honest and virtue-engendering pursuit of agrarianism.

Second, Jefferson possessed magnanimity. The ideas he entertained were grand, the plans he formed were sizeable, and the actions he undertook and very often accomplished were superordinary. Religious freedom, human rights, and his expeditious action on the Louisiana territories are examples.

Third, Jefferson was sedulous. He persisted in significant tasks, like educational reform, which he believed were accomplishable, and only shunned tasks, like the eradication of slavery, when he found them inopportune.[1] He also executed such tasks with diligence. The energy he put into American meteorology and into advancement of agrarian practices, both local and global, are illustrations.

Fourth, in keeping with utopists Thomas More, Louis-Sébastien Mercier, and Constantin François de Volney,[2] Jefferson espoused industry as one of the ingredients in a happy, thriving life. "A mind always employed is always happy,"

he writes to daughter Martha (21 May 1787). "This is the true secret, the grand recipe for felicity. The idle are only wretched. In a world which furnishes so many employments which are useful, and so many which are amusing, it is our own fault if we ever know what ennui is."[3] As the quote shows, it is not only occupation, but fruitful, virtue-invigorating occupation, that is critical for happiness.

Fifth, Jefferson was always (or mostly) sanguine. "Hope is so much pleasanter than despair," he tells granddaughter Ellen Wayles Randolph (29 June 1807) "that I always prefer looking into futurity through her glass." Elsewhere, "I am closing the last scenes of my life by fashioning and fostering an establishment for the instruction of those who are to come after us," he writes to Judge Augustus B. Woodward (3 April 1825). "I hope its influence on their virtue, freedom, fame, and happiness will be salutary and permanent."

Finally, Jefferson exhibited generosity. He refused to patent his award-winning design of a plow mouldboard because to do so would be to deprive others of the benefits of an innovation, aiming to enhance production of food and human prosperity. Most importantly, as I already noted, he gave many years – the most important years – of his life to the service of his country to the detriment of his personal life. When duty called, it was not a matter of doing what one wanted to do, but doing what one had to do.

Upon retirement from public service, Jefferson's ceaseless labors to establish the University of Virginia offer perhaps the best illustration of his vision, magnanimity, sedulousness, industry, hopefulness, and generosity. For instance, he writes to Joseph Cabell (31 January 1821), though in declining health, to enjoin him to run again for congress and help move forward the plan for the University of Virginia.

> What service can we ever render her equal to this [university]? What object of our lives can we propose so important? What interest of our own which ought not to be postponed to this? Health, time, labor, on what in the single life which nature has given us, can these be better bestowed than on this immortal boon to our country? The exertions and the mortifications are temporary; the benefit eternal.

Jefferson's employment of "eternal" in his letter to Cabell is not a reference to the possibility of everlasting fame that attends on one's name once one gives up the ghost. The "immortal boon" is not a personal good. Jefferson refers to a timeless gift to future generations of Americans. As he writes to Judge Augustus B. Woodward (3 April 1825): "Withdrawn by age from all other public services and attentions to public things, I am closing the last scenes of life by fashioning and fostering an establishment for the instruction of those who are to come after us. I hope its influence on their virtue, freedom, fame and happiness, will be salutary and permanent." Thus, he refers to establishment of an institution of higher learning to churn out learned and virtuous men, such as himself, who will then devote their lives to the betterment of the lives of their fellow citizens.

The key function, then, of the highest level of education is to create what Jefferson called a natural *aristoi*.

This chapter is a critical expatiation on Jefferson's views of higher education. I begin with the meritocratic element of his republicanism – the establishment of a natural aristocracy through education – and turn to the aims of secondary education. Next I tackle the curricula at the levels of a state university and of colleges or grammar schools. I close with a critical analysis of his thoughts on higher education.

Natural versus artificial aristocracy

Philosophical differences between Jefferson and John Adams, political rivals but ultimately intimate friends, are no more evident than in an epistolary exchange vis-à-vis the nature of aristocracy.

The exchange begins at the prompting of Adams, who has written extensively on the subject in a book and series of published articles[4] and whose views on the human condition are conservative and by and large pessimistic. Adams starts (9 July 1813) by noting that Jefferson had asked him to write something on "aristocracy" some 30 years ago and he has been writing on it ever since, without being understood. "Birth and Wealth together have prevailed over Virtue and Talent in all ages," Adams sums glumly. "Inequalities of Mind and Body are so established by God Almighty in his constitution of Human Nature that no Art or policy can ever plain them down to a Level," Adams adds four days later.

Hinting at the subject in several other letters, Adams returns straightforwardly to the topic of aristocracy one month later (14 August 1813). He begins with a translation of a passage from the Greek poet Theognis: "When We want to purchace, Horses, Asses, or Rams, We inquire for the Wellborn. And everyone wishes to procure, from the good breeds. A good Man, does not care to marry a Shrew, the Daughter of a Shrew; unless They give him, a great deal of Money with her." Adams continues:

> "Well-born" . . . is the Ordonance of God Almighty, in the Constitution of human nature, and wrought into the Fabrick of the Universe. Philosophers and Politicians, may nibble and quibble, but they never will get rid of it. Their only resource is to control it. Wealth is another Monster to be subdued. Hercules could not subdue both or either.

Jefferson finally writes Adams on August 22 and apologizes for the many received and unanswered letters. Time disallows a reply to Adams's many thought-provoking topics, so he reconciles himself to a letter on religion.

Having received no reply to his thoughts on aristocracy in his several letters, Adams in effect demands a reply in a letter on September 2 that concerns nothing other than his thoughts on aristocracy.[5] Philosophers might state that the *aristoi* are "The Wise and Good," nonetheless "the World, Mankind, have by their practice always answered, 'the rich[,] the beautiful and well born.'"

Philosophers themselves marry off their children to the rich and wellborn as much as to the wise and good. Thus, "The five Pillars of Aristocracy, are Beauty[,] Wealth, Birth, Genius and Virtues. Any one of the three first, can at any time over bear any one of or both of the two last." Frustrated at not having received a reply and perhaps exhausted in expression, Adams states, "I can only say at present that I can pursue this idle Speculation no farther, at least till I have replied to this fresh proof of your friendship and Confidence [i.e., to Jefferson's letter on religion]."[6]

Jefferson finally replies to Adams's view on 28 October. "The passage you quote from Theognis," he begins, "I think has an ethical rather than a political object. The whole piece is a moral *exhortation,* παραινεσις,[7] and this passage particularly seems to be a reproof to man, who while with his domestic animals he is curious to improve the race, by employing always the finest male, pays no attention to the improvement of his own race, but intermarries with the vicious, the ugly, or the old, for considerations of wealth or ambition." Deity, Theognis writes, wishes man to partake of divinity as much as possible and has given man procreation to make "the generations uninterrupted and continuous." It follows that procreation is not for the sake of pleasure, but for that sake of making man as divine as possible.

Jefferson sees more in the passage. Nature is distrustful of the moral motive, and so it has made copulation pleasurable. In sum, man takes copulation to be for the sake of pleasure and continuation of the species as an aftereffect. Yet were humans to view procreation from the moral perspective, they would recognize that it improves the human stock as it does the stock of brutes. "Experience proves, that the moral and physical qualities of man, whether good or evil, are transmissible in a certain degree from father to son." Immediately he cautions that "the equal rights of men will rise up against this notion, as they, following pleasure, prefer the accidental *aristoi* produced by the fortuitous concourse of breeders."

There exists a natural aristocracy of men, Jefferson concedes. Yet this natural *aristoi* comprises only the virtuous and talented. "There is also an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents; for with these it would belong to the first class." Jefferson's phrasing here is cautious. Virtue and talent are sufficient to place one among the natural aristocracy. Lack of virtue and talent (more precisely, lack of either) is sufficient to exclude one. His description points to three scenarios, which I list in the following. I fill out scenario 4, to which Jefferson does not refer, for the sake of completeness.

Category 1: (Virtue & Talent) & (Wealth & Birth) = Natural Aristoi
Category 2: (Virtue & Talent) & (~~Wealth & Birth~~) = Natural Aristoi
Category 3: (~~Virtue & Talent~~) & (Wealth & Birth) = Artificial Aristoi
Category 4: (~~Virtue & Talent~~) & (~~Wealth & Birth~~) = The Ruck

Though the four scenarios are exclusive states of affairs, they are not exhaustive. There are 12 other possible combinations – for example, (Virtue & ~~Talent~~) & (Wealth & Birth) or (~~Virtue & Talent~~) & (~~Wealth~~ & Birth) – that

Jefferson does not consider. His point does not rely on enumeration of all possible combinations of attributes. He is not concerned with a taxonomy of the human organism to assess qualifications for governing. He is instead fixed on some general clarifications on good governing, which is not merely a matter of talent alone. Virtue too, Jefferson insists, is needed for republican governing – a point pretermitted by most scholars.

Jefferson aims to show that virtue and talent are sufficient to include one in the natural *aristoi* and that the lack of either is sufficient for disqualification. Birth and wealth, in sum, are irrelevant for governing. The wealthy and wellborn might have certain conveniences that those non-wealthy and non-wellborn do not have – viz., they might be better enabled to pursue virtue and to develop their talent, if they should so choose – but those conveniences themselves nowise make them any better suited for good governing than those I have categorized as "the ruck" in category 4.

In his disagreement with Adams, Jefferson might seem to be challenging Adams's grasp of Ancient Greek. Adams just might have an inadequate grasp of the Ancient Greek meaning not only of *parainesis*, but also of *aristos.*

That cannot be the case. Ancient Greek uses of the adjectives *aristos* (m.), *aristē* (f.), or *ariston* (n.) have a wide variety of uses. *Aristoi* (plural of *aristos*), used substantively as the Greek word for "best [men]," can refer to a man's virtue as well as his good birth or both. In early Greek antiquity, there was no clean separation between birth, wealth, talent, and moral standing. For example, as the son of Poseidon, King Aegeus of Athens, and Princess Aethra (Poseidon was said to have lain with Aethra on her wedding night after she had lain with Aegeus), Theseus's greatness as a mythic figure – in other words, his talent and moral discernment – is unquestionably due to his good birth. Again, *ariston* – the neuter, singular substantive – was applied to inanimate things, superior to others of a similar kind. In that regard, *aristos* (*-ē* or *-on*) is not unlike *aretē*, the Greek word for "excellence," which was often used by Plato and Aristotle to apply to a person's excellence of character, hence its frequent translation as "virtue," but it was also used to designate the excellence of natural or manufactured things.

Jefferson was not challenging Adams's understanding of Greek antiquity. Adams's claim that people have chosen and will always choose the rich, wellborn, and beautiful is as firmly rooted in antiquity as is Jefferson's claim that *aristoi* entails virtue and talent. Both, however, draw from antiquity to suit their own purposes: Adams's, a political purpose grounded in historical observation; Jefferson's, a political purpose grounded in moral sentiment. Thus, Jefferson was offering a reading of Theognis in keeping with his own republicanist views, founded on his normative vision of the good life. That goes some way to explicating why Jefferson takes Theognis's exhortation in a moral sense.

Jefferson continues in an oft-quoted passage:

> The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature, for the instruction, the trusts, and government of society. And indeed, it would

> have been inconsistent in creation to have formed man for the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom enough to manage the concerns of the society. May we not even say, that that form of government is the best, which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural *aristoi* into the offices of government? The artificial aristocracy is a mischievous ingredient in government, and provision should be made to prevent its ascendency.[8]

What seems clear in this passage is that, at least for the purposes of advancing new political ideals, Jefferson is proffering a redefinition of *aristoi*, in keeping with Theognis, in an effort to distance himself from Adams's political conservatism and to advance a notion of "republicanism," idoneous for his progressivist political thinking. This notion of republicanism is not substratally political, though it might seem to be. It is moral. He realizes that the people as members of a republic can govern themselves only to such an extent. As members of a county, a state, and a federation of states, there are non-parochial concerns – one, of course, being securing their human rights. For non-parochial concerns, they must have trustworthy and caring governors and officials. The best way to ensure that is to create a schema of government that guarantees only the true best, the natural *aristoi*, will be enabled to govern, if they so choose.[9] Only the natural best, with an eye to the good of the whole, will prorogue their own interests to be responsive to the needs and concerns of the general citizenry.[10]

Jefferson here is no mere speculative philosopher, inclined to satisfy himself with the mere knowledge that his system, thought up, is correct. He is, as he generally is, a practicalist. He is essaying to establish a system that would eventually remove the wealthy and wellborn from governing. In his *Autobiography*, he writes of four of the 126 bills drafted by him, George Wythe, and Edmund Pendleton[11] in their concerted effort to revise the laws of Virginia.

> I considered 4 of these bills, passed or reported, as forming a system by which every fibre would be eradicated of antient or future [artificial] aristocracy; and a foundation laid for a government truly republican. The repeal of the laws of entail would prevent the accumulation and perpetuation of wealth in select families, and preserve the soil of the country from being daily more & more absorbed in Mortmain. The abolition of primogeniture, and equal partition of inheritances removed the feudal and unnatural distinctions which made one member of every family rich, and all the rest poor, substituting equal partition, the best of all Agrarian laws. The restoration of the rights of conscience relieved the people from taxation for the support of a religion not theirs; for the establishment was truly of the religion of the rich, the dissenting sects being entirely composed of the less wealthy people; and these, by the bill for a general education, would be qualified to understand their rights, to maintain them, and to exercise with intelligence their parts in self-government: and all this would be effected without the

> violation of a single natural right of any one individual citizen. To these too might be added, as a further security, the introduction of the trial by jury, into the Chancery courts, which have already ingulfed and continue to ingulf, so great a proportion of the jurisdiction over our property.

Moreover, his message throughout his "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" is consistent with the tenor of his letter to Adams. In the letter to Adams, Jefferson underscores that virtue and talent are what make one deserving of governing. In Bill 79, Jefferson mentions "genius and disposition."[12]

Aims of secondary education

The need of institutions of higher education was generally recognized in Jefferson's time – at least, by the gentry. As Jefferson's correspondence with Adams on the natural *aristoi* suggests, institutions of higher learning were established for the sake and needs of the gentry. They were a means of keeping the wealthy and wellborn separate from the common people to preserve the status of the former as "betters."

Jefferson's notion of republican government, an avant-garde idea for his day, was a radical attempt to raze the differences between the "artificial *aristoi*" and the people. Jefferson rejected the notion of betterment through birth and aimed to mitigate differences in wealth. "My observations do not enable me to say I think integrity the characteristic of wealth. In general I believe the decisions of the people, in a body, will be more honest and more disinterested than those of wealthy men."[13] Such mitigation allowed for differences in wealth, but those were to be determined through industry and intelligence, not rank.

Jefferson had unswerving faith in the people. "I do not believe with the Rochefoucaults & Montaignes, that fourteen out of fifteen men are rogues," Jefferson writes to Mann Page (30 August 1795).

> I believe a great abatement from that proportion may be made in favor of general honesty. But I have always found that rogues would be uppermost, and I do not know that the proportion is too strong for the higher orders, and for those who, rising above the swinish multitude, always contrive to nestle themselves into the places of power & profit. These rogues set out with stealing the people's good opinion, and then steal from them the right of withdrawing it, by contriving laws and associations against the power of the people themselves.

In that regard, Jefferson's aims at educational reform were wholesale and methodical,[14] as educational reform was in the service of his republicanism. "[The people's] greatest good requires, that while they are instructed in general, competently to the common business of life," he writes to Joseph C. Cabell (28 November 1820), "others should employ their genius with necessary information to the useful arts, to inventions for saving labor and increasing our

comforts, to nourishing our health, to civil government, military science, &c." The contrast here is between general education and university-level education – the epitome of secondary education. The sentiment betrays a pragmatic, if not functionalist, approach to education. Pragmatically, Jefferson needs both a generally educated citizenry to enable citizens to conduct their daily affairs, without the intervention of government, and a highly educated and morally sensitive *aristoi* to push daily for scientific and moral advance, aimed at enhanced human well-being. Functionally, Jefferson's focus on the beginning and end of education suggests a preoccupation with inputs and outputs, not the process of education. Overall, here and elsewhere, Jefferson betrays his preference for the usefulness of learning at every level – the topic of chapter 5.[15]

Jefferson tells Peter Carr (7 September 1814) higher education must aim to teach "every branch of science, deemed useful at this day" to its "highest degree." To ensure utmost utility, Jefferson acquaints himself with the "best seminaries" in other countries and the opinions of "enlightened individuals."

In his 1818 "Rockfish Gap Report," Jefferson lists also the specific aims of higher education – the meritocratic component of his system of educational reform – as follows.

First, higher education is responsible for forming statesmen, legislators, and judges for "public prosperity and individual happiness." The notion expressed here attends on what I have said earlier about the natural *aristoi*. Higher education is a sort of selection mechanism that ensures that the true best – the talented and virtuous, not the wealthy and wellborn – are readied for governing and willing to govern. Thus, it rewards not birth or wealth, but intelligence and moral uprightness. As we shall see later, the specific proposals that Jefferson countenanced for ensuring talent and virtue to surge to the political top through access to higher education were insufficient. Nonetheless, he did much to pave the way for access of future generations to higher education – for example, riddance of entails and primogeniture as well as instantiation of freedom of religion.[16]

Second, higher education is needed for well-structured government, instantiating sound principles of government, developing the laws of national and international government, and creating a "sound spirit of legislation" that leaves citizens "free to do whatever does not violate the equal rights of another." Here one might ask: How are the right sort of political leaders to lead well? It is by having a certain schema for governing that prohibits governors from contravening the rights of citizens and keeps them in attendance of matters on which they ought to focus – issues of legislation that concern the nation and its interactions with other nations. That schema critically involves popular overseeing of elected officials. Jefferson writes to William Jarvis (28 September 1820): "I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power."

Third, higher education should promote and harmonize agriculture, manufacture, and commerce. Here, Jefferson shows that his notion of liberalism is not merely negative – viz., freedom from, or the freedom to act as one wishes without political interference. Political leaders are responsible for the well-being of the citizenry through active intervention in their affairs, but only for the sake of promoting human flourishing by offering varied and more numerous opportunities for profitable and progressive human labor and expression – viz., freedom to. Elected officials, especially at the state level, must be actively involved in overseeing agriculture, manufacture, and commerce by patronizing scientific inventions, creating roads and navigable waterways for commercial exchange, and seeing to it that agriculture, manufacture, and commerce work together for the sake of a thriving state and nation and a happy citizenry. America for Jefferson is to be chiefly an agricultural nation.[17] "[Agriculture] is the first in utility, and ought to be the first in respect. The same artificial means which have been used to produce a competition in learning, may be equally successful in restoring agriculture to its primary dignity in the eyes of men," Jefferson writes to David Williams (14 November 1803). "It is a science of the very first order." Yet America is not to neglect manufacture or commerce; it is only to engage in that amount of manufacture and commerce to cultivate and preserve both the Arcadian values of the fledgling nation – for example, simple living, love of the land, and peaceful and cooperative coexistence with one's neighbors – and its independency of amaranthine European political quarrels.[18] He likely had in mind chiefly domestic manufacture, as a letter to Charles Willson Peale (16 May 1816) suggests, though in the same letter he acknowledges that for finer goods (specifically fabrics), America must depend on "associated establishments" or "foreign countries."

Fourth, higher education teaches mathematics and the physical sciences to young men for the sake of advancing the arts and administering the health, subsistence, and comforts of life. This aim manifestly betrays Jefferson's preference for a practical education. One ought not to study chemistry or algebra for the sake of knowing chemistry or algebra, but for the sake of learning something that is applicable to and promotional of political and, especially, moral advance. "It either is, or ought to be the rule of every collegiate institution to teach to every particular student the branches of science which those who direct him think will be useful in the pursuits proposed for him, and to waste his time on nothing which they think will not be useful to him," Jefferson writes to grandson Francis Wayles Eppes (13 December 1820). "This will certainly be the fundamental law of our University to leave every one free to attend whatever branches of instruction he wants, and to decline what he does not want."[19] Such liberty at the University of Virginia, Jefferson thinks, will incline scholars to pursue an education in pursuance of their own needs.

Last, higher education will develop "reasoning faculties of our youth, enlarge their minds, cultivate their morals, and instill into them the precepts of virtue and order." It also forms "habits of reflection and correct action, rendering them examples of virtue to others, and of happiness within themselves."

These aims are merely an iteration of the notion that education at both levels ought to be directed not only at the head, but also the heart; education ought to focus on advancing not only science, but also morality.[20] The relationship between the two, however, is not codependency. Jefferson's practicalism has a moral slant – a moral undergirding. The advances of science, I show in the next two chapters, are for the sake of advances in morality – human happiness. In that sense, Jefferson might be dubbed, as I have elsewhere dubbed him, a "liberal eudaemonist."[21]

These principles clearly demonstrate that higher education, for Jefferson, is not solely or even chiefly for the benefit of those who are educated. As is the case with Plato's guardians in *Republic*,[22] higher education is for the sake of the state – viz., for the good of the general citizenry. Overall, it exists to "provide for the good and ornament of their country, the gratification and happiness of their fellow-citizens, of the parent especially, and his progeny, on which all his affections are concentrated." For individuals, it makes application, order, and love of virtue habitual and controls any "innate obliquities" in human behavior.[23]

The university-level curriculum

Jefferson's philosophy of education fits hand in glove with his political philosophy. Republican government is to be founded on the notion of maximal human freedom in a social and political setting. The freedom Jefferson has in mind, I argue elsewhere,[24] entails negative liberty ("freedom from"), positive liberty ("freedom to"), voluntary liberty (the freedom to make and act on choices), and moral liberty (the capacity to recognize right action as right action and act, upon that recognition, rightly or wrongly). Education allows for the possibility of not just entertaining or philosophizing about freedom, but of actualizing it.

The view of education as actualizing freedom was at the very core of the curriculum at the University of Virginia. "This institution of my native State, the hobby of my old age, will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind, to explore and to expose every subject susceptible of it's [*sic*] contemplation," writes Jefferson to Destutt de Tracy (26 December 1820). He repeats that sentiment exactly the following day in a letter to Thomas Cooper, but adds, "For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it." The germ of that view is evident in his thoughts on educational reform of William and Mary College in "A Bill for the Amending of the Constitution of the College of William and Mary" (Bill 80) in 1779 – an attempt to turn the college into a full-fledged university.

Bill 80 of 1779

Jefferson's "A Bill for the Amending of the Constitution of the College of William and Mary" contains the seedling of his philosophy of education as it relates to thriving republican government and his vision of the good life. He

turns to discussion of university-level education when he turns to discussion of William and Mary College. As his aims are reformist, it is difficult to tease out a full-fledged philosophy of upper education. Yet we should not expect that. Jefferson's educational bills are essentially political documents, designed to move legislature, and so they are not to be seen as anything close to full delineations of a philosophy of education. As he writes in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "Specific details were not proper for the law. These must be the business of the visitors entrusted with its execution."[25] Still the problems he notes and the reforms he offers are valuable insights into some of his principles of higher education.

Jefferson begins Section I with a synopsis of the history of the College of William and Mary. In the fourth year of the reign of King William and Queen Mary, 18 trustees, among them Lieutenant Governor Francis Nicholson, were appointed to found a "perpetual college" with a president, six professors, and roughly 100 students. The king and queen granted trustees a large plot of land for the establishment of the William and Mary College.[26] The institution would come to have a school of theology (one professorship for Hebrew and exposition of scripture; the other for expatiation on the nature of divinity and refutation of heretics), a school of philosophy (one professorship for rhetoric, logic, and ethics; another for physics, metaphysics, and mathematics), a school of Latin and Greek, and a school for educating and Christianizing Indian boys called "The Brafferton."

Jefferson writes that 100 years of experience has shown that the institution has not met the wishes and needs of Virginians. He elaborates, "There is reason to hope, that [William and Mary] would become more useful, if certain articles in its constitution were altered and amended, which being fixed, as before recited, by the original charters, cannot be reformed by the said trustees whose powers are created and circumscribed by the said charters." The institution, "being founded and endowed with the lands and revenues of the public, and intended for the sole use and improvement," must thus be under public direction. He adds that it should be altered and amended "until such form be devised as will render the institution publicly advantageous, in proportion as it is publicly expensive." Thus, publically funded, Jefferson believes that the institution must be directly answerable to the wants and needs of those persons funding it. As his algorithmic phrasing shows, the public advantages must be in proportion to public expense. For Jefferson, William and Mary College has hitherto nowise served the public in proportion to its public expense. The bill certainly reflects the numerous frustrations of his days as a student.

Jefferson, then, calls on the legislature "to aid and improve that seminary," for the students are the "future guardians of the rights and liberties of their country" and, to be suitable guardians, they must be "endowed with science and virtue" – a notion iterated in his natural-*aristoi* letter to Adams.

Section II of bill begins by noting the need for no more than five "visiters" for the William and Mary College to be appointed each year by a joint ballot of both houses of the Assembly. The visitors will choose a rector at the first

meeting. In a similar manner, three chancellors, with the power of removing professors for breach of duty or indiscretions, will be appointed by both houses.

Instead of six professors, Jefferson proposes that there should be eight professors, one of whom will assume the role of president of the institution. The professors, under the watchfulness of the visitors, will assume governance of the school. The professorships will be as follows:

1 Professor of moral philosophy, the laws of nature and nations, and the fine arts;
2 Professor of law and police;
3 Professor of history, civil and ecclesiastical;
4 Professor of mathematics;
5 Professor of anatomy and medicine;
6 Professor of natural philosophy and natural history;
7 Professor of the ancient languages, oriental and northern; and
8 Professor of modern languages.

Instead of The Brafferton to instruct Indian youths in the ways of Christianity, Jefferson's William and Mary College will appoint a missionary "of approved veracity" to the tribes of Indians. The missionary will "investigate their laws, customs, religions, traditions, and more particularly their languages, constructing grammars thereof, as well as may be, and copious vocabularies, and, on oath to communicate, from time to time, to the said President and Professors the materials he collects, to be by them laid up and preserved in their library."[27] One thing is especially worth noting here. The mission of the "missionary" is scientific, not proselytistic. Jefferson is interested in gathering information, not preaching a message of salvation. Gone is any express notion of conversion of young Indian boys to the tenets of right Christian thinking. One can only conclude that Jefferson's use of "missionary" is merely to quiet any suspicion that his unalloyed motive is secular.

The bill never passed. Yet as governor of Virginia and visitor to the college years later, Jefferson instantiated some changes at William and Mary. He removed the professorships of divinity, Oriental languages, and Greek and Latin and instantiated professorships in law and government (the first of its kind in the United States and chaired by his mentor George Wythe), anatomy and medicine, and modern languages.

Bill of 1817

In Bill 80 of 1779, Jefferson concerned himself merely with reform of a preexisting institution. In spite of his early political rhetoric on the need of periodic revolutions to maintain a healthy republic – rhetoric that has some make him out to be an anything-goes liberal[28] – when pushed, Jefferson preferred reform of existing institutions rather than razing and wholesale reconstruction. For illustration, consider his reformation of the laws of Virginia in 1776 at only

33 years of age. Yet his brainchild, the University of Virginia, allowed for the possibility of instantiating a new curriculum, based on a philosophy of education, from the ground up, as it were. In his 1817 "Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education," he essayed to do just that.[29]

Jefferson prefaces Section III, which begins discussion of university-level education, as follows, "And for establishing in a central and healthy part of the state an University wherein all the branches of useful science may be taught, Be it further enacted as follows." The statement, incomplete as it is, is more than a prefatory remark. It shows that any university, to best accommodate the needs of the citizens of its state, should be centralized in the state, be in a healthy part of the state, and teach all the useful sciences.

Eight visitors are to be appointed to the institution, and they will appoint a rector and secretary from within. The visitors will select for the university the most appropriate site, upon which its several buildings will be erected. The architectural plan is to combine beauty and elegance with convenience. Apropos of the last, the dormitories must allow for additions over time to accommodate anticipated escalations in enrollment.

The curriculum is given in sketch in Section 34:

> In the sd University shall be taught History and Geography antient and modern, natural philosophy, agriculture, chemistry & the theories of medecine [*sic*]; Anatomy, Zoology, Botany, Mineralogy and Geology; Mathematics pure and mixed, military and naval science; Ideology, Ethics, the Law of nature and nations, Law municipal & foreign, the science of civil government and Political economy; Languages, Rhetoric Belles lettres, and the fine arts generally: which branches of science shall be so distributed, and under so many professorships, not exceeding ten, as the Visitors shall think most proper.

The account seems hasty – the product of too little thought. Yet to judge Jefferson to be harefooted would be a mistake, for he was seldom harefooted on anything about which he cared much, and he cared much for the fledgling university. The curtness of his account is due to economics. His bill is an attempt to sell a proposal for wholesale educational reform. Thus, the details of university-level curriculum would be malapropos in such a bill.

Elsewhere, in a late-in-life letter to Dr. John P. Emmett (2 May 1826), he gives a better indication of the course of study of scholars over time. Scholars will be admitted at the age of 16. Upon matriculation, they are to be sufficiently instructed in the ancient languages so that they will need no more than one year of polish at the university.[30] Overall the first three years should be allowed to education of a broad sort and another three "to the particular profession for which they are destined." He adds:

> A student then with us may give his first year here to languages and mathematics; his second to mathematics and physics; his third to physics and

chemistry, with the other objects of that school. I particularize this distribution merely for illustration, and not as that which either is, or perhaps ought to be established. This would ascribe one year to languages, two to mathematics, two to physics, and one to chemistry and its associates.

Rockfish Gap Report

Jefferson returns to university-level curriculum in his 1818 "Rockfish Gap Report."[31] This time, he gives a tenfold "tabular statement of the branches of learning," suited to the newly forming University of Virginia:

I Ancient Languages: Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.
II Modern Languages: French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Anglo-Saxon.
III Pure Mathematics: Algebra, Fluxions, Elementary (that of straight lines and of the circle) and Transcendental Geometry (that of all other curves – especially projectiles), and Military (fortification) and Naval Architecture.
IV Physico-Mathematics: Mechanics, Statics (matter in a state of rest – including Hydrostatics, whether in motion or at rest), Dynamics (laws of solids in motion – including Hydrodynamics or fluids in motion), Pneumatics (theory of air, its weight, motion, condensation, rarefaction), Acoustics (theory of sound), Optics (laws of light and vision), Astronomy, and Geography.
V Natural Philosophy (Physics or the doctrine of physical objects of the senses): Chemistry (comprehending the theory of agriculture) and Mineralogy (embracing what is real in geology).
VI Botany and Zoology.
VII Anatomy and Medicine.
VIII Government: Political Economy, Law of Nature and Nations, History, Politics, and Law.
IX Municipal Law.
X Ideology (doctrine of thought): General Grammar (the construction of language), Ethics, Rhetoric, Belles Lettres, and Fine Arts.

Jefferson goes on to say that each professor will be granted by the visitors a salary of no more than $1,000 per annum, to be taken from the state's Literary Fund, and each professor will be given accommodations on the property of the institution. The visitors, he adds, will be responsible for the "erection, preservation and repair of the buildings, the care of the grounds and appurtenances, and of the interests of the University generally."

Jefferson then expounds on the study of modern languages, medicine, and religion.

French is needed, as it is the "language of general interest among nations" and "the depository of human science." Spanish is important for Americans – here Jefferson's foresight is in evidence – as Spanish is the "language spoken by so great a portion of the inhabitants of our continents, with whom we shall

probably have great intercourse ere long." Italian grants access to the finest works of taste and style and thereby enhances aesthetic sensibility. German, since the country is fast becoming one of the most "learned nations in richness of erudition and advance in the sciences," is increasingly valuable. He ends with some thoughts on the merit of the study of Anglo-Saxon, placed among the modern, not ancient, languages. "It has value . . . above the Greek and Latin, that, while it gives the radix of the mass of our language, they explain its innovations only." He sums, "a language already fraught with all the eminent science of our parent country, the future vehicle of whatever we may ourselves achieve, and destined to occupy so much space on the globe, claims distinguished attention in American education."[32] Jefferson's argument on the merit of study of Anglo-Saxon – for instance, it teaches us the roots of the mass of our language – has bite. One wonders why, with the attention that has been given to Greek and Latin at American institutions, there has not been equal attention, or at least more than has been given, to Anglo-Saxon.

Next, Jefferson mentions that study of medicine at institutions is usually enhanced by several professorships and the benefit of a hospital, so that there can be lectures supplemented by hands-on experience. Yet the population of Charlottesville and the numbers of the poor that might accept the "charities of an hospital" do not allow for a hospital, so he proposes merely and provisionally one professorship for both medicine and anatomy. To supplement medicinal study, there will be vegetable, mineral, and chemical pharmacy.[33]

Furthermore, there is to be no provision for a professorship of religion at the University of Virginia.[34] That, Jefferson says, is in keeping with the principles of the constitution, which countenance freedom of religion. It will be incumbent on the professor of ethics, he says, to discuss proof for the existence of "creator, preserver, and supreme ruler" of the cosmos. That in conjunction with the ancient languages, Hebrew included, will give students the basics of true morality – in other words, those principles of morality that are common to all religions. It will be for each sect to provide "further instruction in their own peculiar tenets."

Not providing for a professor of divinity was proof sufficient to many of Jefferson's godlessness. Jefferson, however, was not godless.[35] He was merely averse to the political maneuvering of religious prelates and the ceaseless and empty metaphysical squabbles of the various religious sects.

Jefferson realized that state sanction of any particular religion would be tantamount both to state sanction of one particular politicized formula for the good life and a refusal to acknowledge other possibilities. He recognized that liberty required toleration, so all forms of non-harmful religious expression would have to be allowed as well as atheism and agnosticism. Consequently, his university could not sanction any particular religion.

Jefferson was also against sectarian contamination of high-level education. William and Mary College, which Jefferson attended for two years, was run almost entirely by Anglican ministers. So infused was the curriculum with religious rituals that it could be said that the main aim of the institution was to

prepare a certain mass of the students for Anglican ministry. Each professor, like any public official of Virginia, had to subscribe formally to 39 articles of the Anglican faith; students worshipped twice each day; and professors and students thrice daily ate together at "Commons."[36]

There being no professor of divinity at the University of Virginia, Jefferson proposed, as a compromise to placate religionists and parry charges of atheism, space on the campus to provide instruction for adherents as they might see fit.[37] "By bringing the sects together, and mixing them with the mass of other students," he writes years later to Dr. Thomas Cooper (2 November 1822), "we shall soften their asperities, liberalize and neutralize their prejudices, and make the general religion a religion of peace, reason and morality." The sentiment bespeaks Jefferson's distaste of organized, sectarian religion and its interminable and pointless metaphysical argufying – mere jockeying for political power. "We should all then, like the quakers [*sic*]," Jefferson writes to John Adams (22 August 1813), "live without an order of priests, moralise for ourselves, follow the oracle of conscience, and say nothing about what no man can understand, nor therefore believe."[38] The gist of that claim is that true education is a matter of independency. Each person, suitably endowed with a moral sense, has a trustworthy internal monitor of right action.[39] There is no need of priests at institutions of higher education. There is, strictly speaking, not even need of ethicians.[40]

Thus, Jefferson's compromise was thus merely a political move to quiet malcontents. Dumas Malone writes: "In view of his private comments on the clergy he could hardly have been expected to welcome them as academic neighbors. No doubt his invitation represented a concession to expediency and may be regarded as a political gesture."[41]

Harold Hellenbrand sees in the curriculum "contradictory ideas that Jefferson intended to pass on to the young: acknowledgment of change in society and nature, yet veneration of economic stability and universal order; respect for the experimental method and empiricism, yet faith in the divine design of the world."[42] Jefferson entertained no such contradictory ideas. First, there can be stability throughout change by adhering to such things as the rights of men and respect for differences of opinion. Second, Jefferson's belief in divine design is not through a priori argument, but, following Destutt de Tracy, through direct sensory experience.[43] For Jefferson, one literally sees deity in the design; there is no reasoning from analogy.

The grammar-school curriculum

Wholesale educational reform for Jefferson was undertaken as a necessary ingredient of his views of political reform. Given that republican government was to be government for and by the people, the people had to take an active role in political participation, and a political structure had to be put into place to allow for popular participation in government. That was Jefferson's ward system. General education was needed for wards to thrive, for empowerment

of the general citizenry without a certain base of knowledge would nowise enable citizens to exercise their powers wisely. Given that the great majority of citizens would not be capable of high-level participation – county, state, and federal levels of participation – a political structure had to be put into place that allowed not only talent, but also virtue, to govern the masses of men. That was Jefferson's system of meritocracy. University-level education was needed to assure the emergence of talent as well as virtue, for talent without virtue would invite disaster for his political system.[44]

It follows in the sense in which I sketch out the needs of education at the top and bottom of Jefferson's republican system – and "top" and "bottom" are not to be taken axiologically – that there was a gap in the system: General education was to end at roughly 10 years of age, and university-level education was to begin at roughly 16 years of age. Those few who wished to and showed promise of matriculating and succeeding at the University of Virginia had to do something ad interim. In that sense, Jefferson devised colleges or grammar schools to supply the education needed to take those scholars with the promise of virtue and talent from ward schools to a university. To Gov. Wilson C. Nicholas (2 April 1816), Jefferson writes of his uncertainty apropos of the curriculum at grammar schools: "The university must be intended for all useful sciences, and the [ward] schools [are] elementary ones, for the instruction of the people, answering to our present English schools; the middle term, colleges or academies, may be more conjectural. But we must understand from it some middle grade of education."

In Jefferson's day, I repeat, there was no systematicity to education. Writes Roy Honeywell: "There was virtually no coordination between the elementary schools and the grammar schools and very little between these and the college. The elementary school did not prepare for the grammar school, nor did this prepare for the college as well as did private tutors." One graduating from, say, William and Mary was readied for no profession other than perhaps the Church of England.[45] Thus, Jefferson, through his educational bills, was proposing systematicity in the service of his republicanism and, more fundamentally, in the service of human thriving.

Recognizing that grammar schools are principally conduits for taking ward-level scholars and readying them for university-level education, Jefferson gives this apologia in his letter to Nicholas for a focus on ancient languages in such preparatory schools:

> Now, when we advert that the ancient classical languages are considered as the foundation preparatory for all the sciences; that we have always had schools scattered over the country for teaching these languages, which often were the ultimate term of education; that these languages are entered on at the age of nine or ten years, at which age parents would be unwilling to send their children from every part of the State to a central and distant university, and when we observe that the resolution supposes there are to be a plurality of them, we may well conclude that the Greek and Latin

> are the objects of these colleges . . . I think, therefore, we may say that the object of these colleges is the classical languages, and that they are intended as the portico of entry to the university.

Thus, grammar schools closed the gap in the system through a focus on the study of ancient languages and the lessons to be learned through such study.

Bill 79 of 1779

Jefferson covers grammar schools from Section VII to Section XIX of Bill 79 of the Bills of 1779 – his "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge." In keeping with his tendency to decimalize, he says that there is roughly to be one grammar school, conveniently located, for every 10 wards school and 20 grammar schools in Virginia.[46] An overseer will appoint an alderman – "eminent for his learning, integrity, and fidelity to the commonwealth" – who will appoint a schoolmaster to each grammar school in Virginia and superintend upon him, the school, and its scholars. Teachers will have an annual salary, drawn from county monies, and receive lodging, food, and the washing of clothes.

Each grammar school – a brick or stone building with schoolroom, dining hall, four rooms for a schoolmaster and usher, and 10 to 12 rooms for scholars – will be under the auspices of several overseers. The overseers will appoint a "visiter," from within or without, who will superintend upon the master and usher and settle the rate of tuition. Overseers will visit the school twice each year, "examine the scholars, and see that any general plan of instruction recommended by the visiters, of William and Mary College shall be observed." There will also be employed a steward to see to the procuring provisions, fuel, servants for cooking, waiting, house cleaning, washing, mending, and gardening on the most reasonable terms. The steward will also, under the direction of the visitors, see that the houses be kept in repair and necessary enclosures be made and repaired.

For the curriculum, Jefferson mentions in Section VII, "any general plan of reading and instruction recommended by the visitors of William and Mary College shall be observed." In Section XIII, he elaborates, "In either of these grammer schools shall be taught the Latin and Greek languages, English Grammer, geography, and the higher part of numerical arithmetick, to wit, vulgar and decimal fractions, and the extrication of the square and cube roots."

In Section XVIII, Jefferson posits a probationary period for all students who have been granted access to grammar schools without expense and at the discretion of the overseer of each ward.

> A visitation shall be held, for the purpose of probation, annually at the said grammer school on the last Monday in September, if fair, and if not, then on the next fair day, excluding Sunday, at which one third of the boys sent thither by appointment of the said overseers, and who shall have been there one year only, shall be discontinued as public foundationers, being those

> who, on the most diligent examination and enquiry, shall be thought to be the least promising genius and disposition; and of those who shall have been there two years, all shall be discontinued save one only the best in genius and disposition, who shall be at liberty to continue there four years longer on the public foundation, and shall thence forward be deemed a senior.

The verdict of insubstantiality, given in chapter 1, can now more strongly be confirmed. After year one, one-third of all poor students given a free education will be sent home; after year two, all but the best one will be sent home. It is difficult to see how Jefferson's system can be in the service of promoting true equality of opportunity by narrowing the divide between wealthy and poor. The wealthy are prodigiously advantaged. Only one poor scholar with talent, after two years, will have the opportunity to conclude his education and matriculate to William and Mary College. Very many talented penurious scholars will have their dream of higher education frustrated.

Here one could argue that the insubstantiality of Jefferson's plan is evidence of pandering to the wellborn and wealthy to get his bill passed. He wishes to allow for some upward mobility of the talented poor, but does not wish to affront the "artificial *aristoi*," still in positions of greatest political power, by allowing too many of the poor access to higher education in an effort to level the playing field and eliminate the artificial *aristoi*.

Doing the math, however, one sees that economical considerations preside. Given (roughly) ten ward schools for each grammar school and that each ward school will send gratis its best graduating student each year to its grammar school, there will be ten new students at each grammar school who are being educated gratis each year. Given that one-third of the ten students being educated gratis from the year prior are sent home, there will be, say, six students from that year remaining. We can see how things would progress from year 1 of a grammar school to its sixth year.

Year 1: Ten students educated gratis.
Year 2: Ten new students educated gratis and (roughly) six students from year 1 educated gratis.
Year 3: Ten new students educated gratis, six students from year 2 educated gratis, one student from year 1 moves on.
Year 4: Ten new students educated gratis, (roughly) six students from year 3 educated gratis, one student from year 2 moves on, and the one student from year 1 moves on.
Year 5: Ten new students educated gratis, (roughly) six students from year 4 educated gratis, one student from year 3 moves on, the one student from year 2 moves on, and the one student from year 1 moves on.
Year 6: Ten new students educated gratis, (roughly) six students from year 5 educated gratis, one student from year 4 moves on, the one student from year 3 moves on, the one student from year 2 moves on, and the one student from year 1 moves on.

Thus, by the sixth year and each year thereafter, there will be 20 scholars who are being educated gratis at each grammar school at any one time. Given, say, ten rooms at the grammar school and no more than four per room (he gives a maximum of two per room in his bill of 1817), it follows that one-half of all students at all times will not be paying for their education. To allow for a greater proportion would not be economically feasible.[47] That noted, the program is greatly accommodating, but it does not allow for a system that keeps the artificial *aristoi* from governing.

One could, of course, argue that fewer should be let in each year so that each of those let in would have a good chance of finishing grammar school. Why not, say, let in four worthy scholars and send home only one after the first year such that three would move on and finish grammar school? After year 6, that would mean 19 scholars educated gratis each year and 3 of them, not one, who would finish.

Jefferson's answer at the time, and here I can only surmise, would have been that it would have been difficult to find a reliable mechanism for culling four students from ten ward schools each year. It would complicate the system by requiring a super-overseer or many super-overseers (overseers to oversee the overseers) of each grammar school to assure that the best four scholars could be culled. The system Jefferson devises has some measure of systemic simplicity – one student from each ward matriculates to his corresponding grammar school – and has mathematical elegance, and Jefferson was almost always in favor of mathematical elegance – half the students of any one year will be educated gratis.[48]

Jefferson ends his account of grammar schools in Section XIX by stating that each odd-numbered year one student southwest of the James River – "the [student of] best learning and most hopeful genius and disposition" – will be awarded a full-paid scholarship to the William and Mary College; another, northeast of the James River, will be awarded a full-paid scholarship each even-numbered year. It is not to be assumed that the student culled each year is to be culled from the stock of poor students, educated gratis. The scholarship, it seems, is to be given merely to the student of greatest talent and virtue. The system, overall, is structured, he tells David Williams many years later (14 November 1803), to create a "competition of learning."

Bill of 1817

Jefferson covers grammar school education in Sections 15 to 30 in his "Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education."[49]

The president of the Literary Fund, he begins, will appoint one person from each county of a particular district to compose the Board of Visitors for the grammar school of that district. The Visitors will appoint a rector and secretary for presiding over and recording the transactions of the meetings and will select a suitable site for their college. On the specified site,

> one or more substantial buildings the walls of which shall be of brick or stone, with 2. schoolrooms & 4. rooms for the accomodation [*sic*] of the

> Professors, and with 16. dormitories in or adjacent to the same, each sufficient for 2. pupils, and in which no more than two shall be permitted to lodge, with a fire place in each, & the whole in a comfortable & decent style suitable to their purpose.

The dormitories are to be constructed to admit of periodic additions. The college of each district – and with the reduction of Virginia's territory due to settling the Pennsylvania boundary and secession of land for other western states, there were 9 districts, when previously there were to be 20 – will be given a name. "The College of the district first in this act described, to wit, of Accomac Etc. shall be called the Wythe College, or the college of the district of Wythe," and the other districts will have names as yet to be determined. The Visitors will also be responsible for maintenance of the buildings and grounds, the curriculum the school, assessment of the professors, the wellbeing of scholars, and rules for their discipline. In summation, "In general they shall direct & do all matters & things which, not being inconsistent with the laws of the land, to them shall seem most expedient for promoting the purposes of the sd institution: which several functions may be exercised by them in the form of bye-laws, rules, resolutions, orders, instructions, or otherwise, as they shall deem proper."

In Section 21, Jefferson offers a précis of the curriculum, expanded from 1779. "In the sd Colleges shall be taught the Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian & German languages, English grammar, geography antient & modern, the higher branches of numerical arithmetic, the mensuration of land, the use of the globes, & the ordinary elements of navigation." Added to the curriculum of 1779 are four modern languages, surveying, cartography, and navigational science, construed practically. The additions are evidence of Jefferson's vision of an expanded American nation – what he calls in a letter to George Rogers Clark (25 December 1780) an "empire of liberty" and to James Madison (27 April 1809) an "empire for liberty."

There will be two professors for each college – "the one for teaching Greek, Latin, & such other branches of learning before prescribed as he may be qualified to teach, & the other for the remaining branches thereof" – Jefferson says in Section 22. Each professor will be given an annual salary of 500 dollars, drawn from the state's Literary Fund. Tuition for students will be assessed by the Visitors.

Jefferson ends the sections of the bill concerning grammar schools in a manner similar his bill of 1779 – with an incentive to enable the talented and virtuous among the poor to pursue university-level education – to wit, education at the University of Virginia. On a specified day (Section 42) – Jefferson strangely gives February 29, a bad joke or an oversight – the Visitors of the wards schools of each county shall meet and select from the several schools two scholars "of the most sound & promising understanding" from them who have been schooled for at least three years to matriculate at the apposite grammar school for five years of education, given gratis. (Note here the reduction from six to five years.) The plan, once fully implemented over a five-year period, allows

that ten boys in year 5 and each year thereafter to be educated freely at any one time. At the end of five years for an incoming group of scholars, the most excellent of the two scholars awarded scholarships will be awarded three years of education, given gratis, at the University of Virginia. There they will be able to pursue such course of study as they deem inappropriate.

Year 1: Two students educated gratis.
Year 2: Two new students educated gratis, and both students from year 1 continue their education gratis.
Year 3: Two new students educated gratis, and both students from years 1 and 2 continue their education gratis.
Year 4: Two new students educated gratis, and both students from years 1, 2, and 3 continue their education gratis.
Year 5: Two new students educated gratis, and both students from years 1, 2, 3, and 4 continue their education gratis.

The plan, though noticeably simpler than Jefferson's plan of 1779, has a similar result – one scholar from each grammar school given a full scholarship to the University of Virginia, and here we are told it is an impoverished scholar. Nonetheless, it admits eight fewer boys in the first year. Thus, on the one hand, the 1817 plan offers fewer incentives to the poor because it admits much fewer students. On the other hand, fewer hopes are dashed. In keeping with the 1779 bill, only one of the ten impoverished boys gets a full grammar-school education, and that one is unlikely to be allowed entrance to William and Mary College through scholarship, given the likelihood of several paying scholars graduating at the same time. In keeping with the 1817 bill, one of the two impoverished boys admitted is allowed entrance to the University of Virginia, upon completion.

Both bills illustrate the importance of incentives for the best scholars and illustrate what Joseph Kett thinks is "the competitive feature of education" for Jefferson. "That the rich and poor should be educated in common was an important objective for Jefferson because of the distinctive emphasis that he attached to the competitive feature of education," writes Kett. "At each step he provided for winnowing the weak scholars and harvesting the strong ones. Each level of schooling was charged not only with educating the many but with selecting the few." He adds, "Schools should be so arranged as to maximize academic competition."[50] That Jefferson's aim is maximizing academic competition seems overstated. Jefferson was, however, focused on an efficient system of education that would reward virtue and industry to allow for the true best scholars to assume the most important political positions and enter into science.

Rockfish Gap Report

Recall here that Jefferson proposed a tenfold curriculum for the newly forming University of Virginia in his 1818 report. Listed first were the ancient languages,

which he grudgingly included at the university. The ancient languages, he says, "being the foundation common to all the sciences," are to be included in the curriculum, though, being foundational, they ought to taught elsewhere, as "the intrusions and the noisy turbulence of a multitude of small boys" will prove a great hindrance to "industrious study" of the young men at the university. Moreover, their numbers might be so large that the university will be to all intents and purposes a grammar school. Furthermore, parents would fret over having to send boys of ten years of age to a "school so distant as the central establishment" of a university.[51]

To solve the noisome problem, Jefferson returns to preliminary or grammar schools, "intermediate between primary schools and University." Grammar schools should be situated throughout the state such that the parents of no boy are more than a day's journey from him. The curriculum would include the easier Greek and Latin authors, perhaps also English grammar, the higher branches of numerical arithmetic, the geometries of straight lines and of the circle, elements of navigation, and some sufficient amount of geography. Upon completion of a suitable amount of Greek and Latin authors, they might undertake study of modern languages or begin their desired course of study prior to matriculation at the university. The curriculum is much the same as the one he outlines in his bill of 1817. Thus, colleges "might then be the passage of entrance for youths into the University, where their classical learning might be critically completed, by a study of the authors of highest degree." By their 15th year, they will be ready for matriculation.[52]

Letter to Peter Carr (1814)

Jefferson's most complete articulation of the curriculum for a grammar school occurs in a peculiar letter to Peter Carr (7 September 1814), some four years prior to the "Rockfish Gap Report." This letter, drafted for the Albemarle trustees to establish a curriculum for Albemarle Academy in Charlottesville and later published by Joseph Cabell,[53] goes far beyond anything suggested in his bills of 1779 and 1817, where his intent was not so much to propose a curriculum but to push forth political bills, intent on reforming wholesale education.

The sciences of the grammar schools, here called "professional schools," are to be divided among three departments – those of language, mathematics, and philosophy.

I Languages

- A Languages and History, ancient and modern (linked together for expediency)
- B Grammar
- C Belles Lettres (Poetry, General Composition, and Literary Criticism)
- D Rhetoric and Oratory
- E School for Deaf, Dumb and Blind

II Mathematics

- A Pure Mathematics
  - 1 Science of Numbers (Arithmetic, Algebra, and Fluxions)
  - 2 Science of Abstract Measure or Geometry (Trigonometry: Plane and Spherical, Conic Sections, and Transcendental Curves)
- B Physico-Mathematics
  - 1 Mechanics
  - 2 Statics
  - 3 Hydrostatics
  - 4 Hydrodynamics
  - 5 Navigation
  - 6 Astronomy
  - 7 Geography
  - 8 Optics
  - 9 Pneumatics
  - 10 Acoustics
- C Physics or Natural Philosophy (Theories of Motion, Action, Magnetism, Electricity, Galvanism, Light, Meteorology, etc. apropos of natural substances, their properties, mutual relations, and action)
- D Chemistry
- E Natural History (Mineralogy)
- F Botany
- G Zoology
- H Anatomy
- I Theory of Medicine

III Philosophy

- A Ideology
- B Ethics
- C The Law of Nature and Nations
- D Government
- E Political Economy

The curriculum is extraordinarily broad and seems poorly suited to be called a "grammar school." It seems to fit better with university-level education or a trade school. Here we must note that Jefferson is still involved with the proposed college at Albemarle – specifically the notion to turn Albemarle Academy into Central College[54] – and the expansive curriculum seems for the sake of creating a top-notch, nonpareil grammar school, worthy of Jefferson's approbation, that leaves university-level schools for true specialization.[55] Nonetheless, one can only be nonplussed, as the grammar-school curriculum is tailored to the capacities of boys between the ages of 10 and 16, whose critical faculties he acknowledges in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* are underdeveloped.[56]

A letter of Jefferson to Governor Nicholas (2 April 1816) perhaps settles the issue. Acknowledging that it is the function of colleges qua intermediate institutions to teach languages – especially Greek and Latin – Jefferson turns to the issue of a university for Virginia. He writes of the need of a report by the president and directors of Virginia's Literary Fund:

> The report will have to present the plan of an university, analyzing the sciences, selecting those which are useful, grouping them into professorships, commensurate each with the time and faculties of one man, and prescribing the regimen and all other necessary details. On this subject I can offer nothing new. A letter of mine to Peter Carr, which was published during the last session of Assembly, is a digest of all the information I possess on the subject.

Thus, it seems, Jefferson very likely had in mind university-level education in his letter to Carr.[57]

Keeping alive the vestal flame

In spite of insistence that his educational reforms be taken en bloc, there was too much resistance to his ward schools for any chance of their realization. It soon became obvious to Jefferson that he could content himself with seeing through to completion only one part of his overall plan for reform – the University of Virginia – or abandon completely his plans for wholesale educational reform. Though he recognized that implementation of ward schools was more important than an institution of higher learning – institutes of higher education to which only the wealthy and wellborn had access were an obstacle to republican government[58] – he gratified himself with founding an innovative institution that would, it was hoped, complement his republican principles. To General James Breckinridge (15 February 1821), he writes of a hallowed duty to establish the university:

> The reflections that the boys of this age are to be the men of the next; that they should be prepared to receive the holy charge which we are cherishing to deliver over to them; that in establishing an institution of wisdom for them, we secure it to all our future generations; that in fulfilling this duty, we bring home to our own bosoms the sweet consolation of seeing our sons rising under a luminous tuition, to destinies of high promise; these are considerations which will occur to all.

"I fear not to say that within twelve or fifteen years from this time," he writes to William B. Giles (26 December 1825), "a majority of the rulers of our State will have been educated here. They shall carry hence the correct principles of our day, and you may count assuredly that they will exhibit their country in a degree of sound respectability it has never known, either in our days, or those of our forefathers."

Professors would be culled for intelligence, integrity, breadth of knowledge, and liberality of character. "No secondary character will be received among them," he writes to William Short (31 October 1819). "Either the ablest which America or Europe can furnish or none at all. They will give us the selected society of a great city separated from the dissipations and levities of its ephemeral insects." To Joseph Cabell (23 February 1824) some five years later, he says, "I have the most unlimited confidence that in the appointment of professors to our nursling institution, every individual of my associates will look with a single eye to the sublimation of its character, and adopt, as our sacred motto, 'detur digniori.'[59] In this way it will honor us, and bless our country."

Unlike today's professors who are increasingly picked on account of their capacity for specialization, Jefferson wanted only well-rounded educators. He continues in the letter to Cabell:

> A man is not qualified for a professor, knowing nothing but merely his own profession. He should be otherwise well educated as to the sciences generally; able to converse understandingly with the scientific men with whom he is associated, and to assist in the councils of the faculty on any subject of science on which they may have occasion to deliberate. Without this, he will incur their contempt, and bring disreputation on the institution.

If professors with such features should not be had in America, Jefferson advocates finecombing Europe for them. He gives several arguments for importing professors in a letter to J. Evelyn Denison (5 November 1825). Jefferson acknowledges that the teachers in Europe are better than those in America because science in America lags significantly behind Europe. Moreover the practice of culling professors from Europe will doubtless have the happy consequence of promoting goodwill in foreign affairs. Furthermore, failure to procure professors of the first rank will certainly have insalubrious consequences, for the scholars to be educated are "exactly the persons who are to succeed to the government of our country, and to rule its future enmities, its friendships and fortunes." England's succor in educating the future leaders of the American nation will conduce toward "regenerating the condition of man, the sources from which representative government is to flow over the whole earth." Thus, the letter to Denison is evidence of hope of republicanism as a global movement, with higher education of the right sort as catalyst.[60]

Vis-à-vis teaching, Jefferson opted for lectures in preference to daily recitations. "Lectures gave professors the opportunity to convey the depth and complexity of a subject, making them more than schoolmasters who forced daily recitations by students as the academic equivalent of parade-ground drill."[61] He also opted for written exams in preference to oral quizzes each day.

In the main, Jefferson advocated, against the current trend of allowing the trustees to have the final voice in deciding which texts to use in classes, that professors were the best judges of the best texts. "I should not propose this [allowing trustees to cull the texts] generally in our University, because I believe

none of us are so much at the heights of science in the several branches, as to undertake this, and therefore that it will be better left to the professors until occasion of interference shall be given." Still, he wished to keep a watchful eye on the professorship of government – a novelty of the University of Virginia.[62] "There is one branch in which we are the best judges, in which heresies may be taught," he writes to Joseph Cabell (3 February 1825),

> of so interesting a character to our own State and to the United States, as to make it a duty in us to lay down the principles which are to be taught . . . It is our duty to guard against such principles being disseminated among our youth, and the diffusion of that poison, by a previous prescription of the texts to be followed in their discourses.

To James Madison (8 January 1825), Jefferson expresses trenchantly his guardedness:

> In the selection of our law professor [for the University], we must be rigorously attentive to his political principles. You will recollect that before the Revolution Coke-Littleton was the universal elementary book of law students, and a sounder whig never wrote, nor of profounder learning in the orthodox doctrines of the British constitution, or in what were called English liberties. You remember, also, that our lawyers were then all whigs. But when his black-letter text, and uncouth but cunning learning got out of fashion, and the honied Mansfieldism of Blackstone became the student's hornbook, from that moment, that profession (the nursery of our Congress), began to slide into toryism, and nearly all the young brood of lawyers now are of that hue. They suppose themselves, indeed, to be whigs because they no longer know what whigism or republicanism means. It is in our seminary that that vestal flame is to be kept alive; it is thence it is to spread anew over our own and the sister States, because I believe none of us are so much at the heights of science in the several branches, and many disciples will have carried its doctrines home with them to their several States, and will have leavened thus the whole mass.

Jefferson's attachment to Whiggish principles of government and his insistence that Toryism be kept out of the University of Virginia's political curriculum are usually cited as additional confirmation of Jefferson's hypocrisy: He promotes open-mindedness but shuts the door on conservatism. Yet one must recall that for which Jefferson was fighting – moral and political progress with an eye to the rights of man.[63] Progress and equality were bedfellows for Jefferson, and scientific disinterest was deemed necessary for both. Thus, he wished to give the institution a shove in the forward direction. As Jennings Wagoner writes, "In creating his university, Jefferson had hoped to provide an intellectual and moral environment that would bring out the best, not the worst, habits and conduct on the part of the students."[64] He wished to continue the spirit of

American Revolution – its promise of liberty, through education – or, as Harold Hellenbrand calls it, "revolution through instruction."[65] Thus, it was clear to him that his fight was at base ethical, not political,[66] whereas today it is easy to see just how often the crusade for liberty, expressed in ethical terms – consider the second Bush administration's shifty justification for the invasion of Iraq[67] – insidiously cloaks a political agenda.

In keeping with Jefferson's libertarian liberalism and greatly unlike today's colleges and universities, the institution had few governors and administrators. The Board of Visitors, trimmed to seven, was given full control over the running of the university. Each professor was to be compensated remuneratively the same as all others and had an equal voice in the institution's affairs. Of the seven, one was to be elected each year to the office of chair to function somewhat like a president at a university today does. Rapid rotation reflected Jefferson's disrelish of long tenureship in high political offices, as long tenureship led to thirst for power.[68] Lack of a president of the university was merely to ensure that that power could not be centralized and that the institution would not be run autocratically.[69]

Jefferson attempted to supplant the religious, authoritarian model of instruction of William and Mary College, which could not in any respect be considered an institution on par with the University of Virginia, with a model, soigné and based on mutual respect and equality through daily shared experiences.[70] Professors were to be the superiors of students only insofar as they possessed knowledge and maturity that students lacked. To promote mutual respect and equality, students and faculty each were to be lodged at the university. Students were to live in dormitories. Professors were to live in pavilions, sandwiched by students' dormitories (see Figure 2.1).

Moreover, there were no distinctions between freshmen, sophomores, and others. Jefferson clearly had in mind the sort of tutorial education by intimate instruction through ready access to teachers that he had – William Small at William and Mary College and George Wythe as a tutor in law thereafter. Here, he was a visionary.

Education was elective, so scholars were to be in large part responsible for their education. Scholars would choose their lectures. He writes to George Ticknor (16 July 1823):

> I am not fully informed of the practices at Harvard, but there is one from which we shall certainly vary, although it has been copied, I believe, by nearly every college and academy in the United States. That is, the holding the students all to one prescribed course of reading, and disallowing exclusive application to those branches only which are to qualify them for the particular vocations to which they are destined. We shall, on the contrary, allow them uncontrolled choice in the lectures they shall choose to attend, and require elementary qualification only, and sufficient age. Our institution will proceed on the principle of doing all the good it can without consulting its own pride or ambition; of letting every one come and listen to whatever he thinks may improve the condition of his mind.

Figure 2.1 Pavilion III, with bold and beautiful Corinthian columns. A professor would live on the upper floor of the pavilion and lecture in the room below. Students were housed on each side of the pavilion. (M. Andrew Holowchak)

The proposal was extreme, much ahead of its time. "Jefferson's conception was far more radical than that of the elective systems that gradually infiltrated American Colleges during the nineteenth century. The latter allowed a growth of elective branches off a trunk of required courses," writes Joseph Kett. "Jefferson made no provision for required courses of any sort."[71] Instead of a regimented curriculum in which students were forced to take courses they did not wish or need to take, Jefferson instantiated a curriculum in which students could take courses in pursuance of their own interests and needs. Upon completion of their courses, students were awarded a diploma; there were no degrees until 1831 – five years after the death of Jefferson. Thus, elective education bespoke a specific philosophical vision of the human organism – desirous of liberty, innately curious, morally equal, and intolerant of wasted effort.

Scholars were also in large part responsible for their behavior. Punishment for miscreants, except in extreme cases of major offenses, would be handed down by a board of six students, appointed by the students, not by faculty or the visitors. Jefferson hoped, thus, to avoid the skirmishes and battles that plagued William and Mary College without recourse to numerous burking rules.[72] "The long lists of rules and regulations and specified fines and penalties so common at other colleges were not allowed to set the tone for the University

of Virginia," writes Wagoner.[73] Perhaps following Locke,[74] fear, Jefferson noted and rightly so, was a poor motivator. Instead, he opted for a model based on paternal affection. As he writes in the "Rockfish Gap Report":

> The human character is susceptible of other incitements to correct conduct, more worthy of employ [than fear], and of better effect. Pride of character, laudable ambition, and moral dispositions are innate correctives of the indiscretions of that lively age; and when strengthened by habitual appeal and exercise, have a happier effect on future character than the degrading motive of fear. Hardening them to disgrace, to corporal punishments, and servile humiliations cannot be the best process for producing erect character. The affectionate deportment between father and son offers in truth the best example for that of tutor and pupil.[75]

In keeping with that model, the university adopted the following policy, based on willingness to testify on behalf of miscreants, in 1825: "When testimony is required from a student, it shall be voluntary, and not on oath. And the obligation to give it shall be left to his own sense of right."[76] Thus, Jefferson was relying mightily on each scholar's own inborn sense of right and wrong to adjudicate knotty situations.

The libertarian, egalitarian policy ultimately failed. As Wagoner notes, "Disorder marked the university almost from the very beginning." He adds, "Students at Virginia pursued pastimes at home and at the university that included partying, drinking, dancing, smoking, card playing and gambling, horse riding and racing, and occasionally cock fighting."[77] The board of scholars assigned to assess punishment for miscreants refused to function as Jefferson thought they would. Instead, honor compelled them to stand with the miscreants. On 1 October 1825, months after the opening of the university, 14 drunken students, disguised as Indians, acted rowdily on the lawn of the university. One shouted, "Damn the European professors!" When Professors Emmet and Tucker seized one student in order to identify him, they were assailed with brickbats. Afterward, the faculty insisted that the rioters be made known, but a majority of the student body, 65 in number, signed a declaration that placed blame for the rioting on the two professors.[78] The faculty who were not involved resolved to resign if order was not restored. The Board of Visitors, to avert a crisis, subsequently called the students before them at the Rotunda. The guilty students – espying the distinguished faces of James Madison, Gen. John Breckenridge, Chapman Johnson, Joseph Cabell, and a crestfallen Jefferson, among others – surrendered themselves. Four students were expelled, Jefferson writes in a letter to granddaughter Ellen Randolph Coolidge (14 November 1825), while 11 others were suspended.[79]

Days later, Jefferson himself as rector of the university wrote on behalf of the board (7 October 1825): "Experience has already proved that stricter provisions are necessary for the preservation of order. That coercion must be resorted to where confidence has been disappointed." Tighter controls over scholars'

liberties were subsequently imposed. In a letter to Joseph Coolidge (4 June 1826), Jefferson writes: "The most effectual instrument we have found to be the civil authority. The terrors of indictment, fine, imprisonment, binding to the good behavior, etc. have the most powerful effect." The sentiment, written exactly one month before his death, is out of keeping with his denunciation of motivation through fear in his "Rockfish Gap Report" in 1818. It must have been a frightfully difficult concession for Jefferson to make, though one must at the time consider his age and failing health. He was likely just too old and too frail to fight on behalf of the students and his ideology.

What went wrong? One could say that Jefferson suffered from an unduly sanguine, blue-sky grasp of the human organism. For Jefferson, all humans, though endowed with both rationality and moral sensitivity, were fundamentally moral, not rational, animals.[80] "An honest heart being the first blessing," he tells Peter Carr (19 August 1785) "a knowing head is the second." For Jefferson, all humans, equally endowed with a moral sense, were roughly by nature moral equals.[81] Artificial moral rules, imposed in an effort to restrain vice, did more to foster that mitigate vice. "State a moral case to a ploughman and a professor," Jefferson writes to Peter Carr (10 August 1787). "The former will decide it as well, and often better than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules." The implication is that morally correct action is not a result of rational deliberation, but of following the "sensory" instincts of the moral faculty. One might say, as Freud would have said, that Jefferson's view of the human organism with its moral sense failed to accommodate the existence of innate brutish impulses.

Jefferson's *nunc dimittis*

To Gen. Andrew Jackson (18 December 1823), Jefferson speaks of seeing the university through to completion as his "*nunc dimittis*":

> Perhaps our University which you visited in it's [*sic*] unfinished state when finished & furnished with it's scientific popln, may tempt you to make a little stay with us. This will probably be by the close of the ensuing year, when it may appear to you worthy of encouraging the youth of your quarter as well as others to seek there the finishing complement of their education. I flatter myself it will assume a standing secondary to nothing in our country. If I live to see this I shall sing with cheerfulness the song of old Simeon's *nunc dimittis Domine*.[82]

What Jefferson hoped to accomplish with the University of Virginia was a *hors pair* prototype of progressive, liberal education. To that end, there could be, so to speak, no stone left unturned. Jefferson placed considerable thought into the location and design of the university. Centrality of location was important for access, but it could not be centralized at the expense of health and other concerns. The architecture of the institution too had to be conducive to health

and safety. To L. W. Tazewell (5 January 1805), he writes: "large [*sic*] houses are always ugly, inconvenient, exposed to the accident of fire, and bad in cases of infection. a plain small house for the school & lodging of each professor is best." He adds, "in [*sic*] fact, an University should not be a house but a village." Years later, Jefferson states to Hugh L. White (6 May 1810), "Much observation and reflection on these institutions have long convinced me that the large and crowded buildings in which youths are pent up, are equally unfriendly to health, to study, to manners, morals and order." Jefferson adds in a letter to Gov. Wilson C. Nicholas (2 April 1816):

> As the buildings to be erected will also enter into their report, I would strongly recommend to their consideration, instead of one immense building, to have a small one for every professorship, arranged at proper distances around a square, to admit extension, connected by a piazza, so that they may go dry from one school to another. This village form is preferable to a single great building for many reasons, particularly on account of fire, health, economy, peace and quiet. Such a plan had been approved in the case of the Albemarle College, which was the subject of the letter above mentioned; and should the idea be approved by the Board, more may be said hereafter on the opportunity these small buildings will afford, of exhibiting models in architecture of the purest forms of antiquity, furnishing to the student examples of the precepts he will be taught in that art.

Louis Greenbaum notes that Jefferson's design of symmetrical pavilions on sides of an open lawn – each pavilion conjoined by a covered porch – and with a dominant building at one end of the open lawn and conjoining the two sides of pavilions was "strikingly similar" to the architect Jean-Baptiste Le Roy's design for hospital pavilions in France – further evidence of Jefferson's familiarity with the prodigious problems concerning care for the infirm of his day. The design was created to foster "ventilation, economy, efficiency, cleanliness, privacy, and safety, while cutting down the risk of fire and contagion, and reducing noise."[83]

The university itself had to be beautiful, proportionable, and even, as a first-tier university, awe-inspiring (see Figure 2.2). Foremost among scholars on Jefferson's views on architecture, Richard Guy Wilson notes Jefferson followed Lord Shaftesbury in thinking that what was beautiful was proportionable and harmonious and what was proportionable and harmonious was true and, ultimately, good.[84]

To ensure such features, he would not allow anyone but himself to design the institution. "Jefferson not only designed all the buildings," writes Frederick Nichols, "but also fought off attempts to make changes in the original design, saying that it had been approved by the Rockfish Gap Commission and that no alterations could be made. He never allowed a single deviation from his original design, nor did he ever say that he would have changes the design in any aspect if he had had more money."[85] The overall design was Jefferson's own, writes Dumas Malone. Jefferson had "no existing or historic model in mind," but proceeded stepwise over time. "The germinal concept – the juxtaposition

Figure 2.2 Jefferson's Academical Village, north view. A view of the Rotunda, with Pavilions I–IV in sight. The lawn slopes upward, toward the Rotunda, and creates a sense of awe from a distance. (M. Andrew Holowchak)

of pavilion and dormatories, of professor and pupils, the linking of learning and domesticity – this idea or cluster of ideas was clearly his own."[86]

The result was, to many, stupendous. Noting the limited materials with which Jefferson had to work – for example, as Wilson notes, Jefferson was forced to use bricks because they were readily available and because his workmen could only work with bricks or wood[87] – architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler of the *New York Times* said in 1895 that Jefferson's university was "incomparably the most ambitious and monumental architectural project that had or has yet been conceived in this century."[88] Three years later, Stanford White stated the "old University buildings surrounding the Campus are the most monumental, if not the most beautiful piece of Colonial architecture in America."[89] Though believing Jefferson to have overextended himself with the Rotunda, Lewis Mumford in *The South in Architecture* praised Jefferson's overall effort:

> The design is a masterpiece. For if the plan and the general order were good, the execution of the details was no less admirable. Jefferson designed each of the professors' pavilions to be a replica, as far as possible, of some noble classic temple; in order that the students of architecture might have a model of the best taste of the past always before their eyes.[90]

The design of the University of Virginia contrasted mightily with William and Mary College. William and Mary College was essentially one building with three stories and two rear wings, each with a hall and chapel. The building enclosed a garden with graveled walkways. Lecture rooms were on floor one, at the front of the main building. The second floor housed a Convocation Room, to accommodate the professors and visitors. Next to the Convocation Room was a Common Room, in which the professors would socialize. On the third floor, each professor had a modest living space of two rooms. Additional rooms were there for the better of the more established students, no more than four to a room. A library was added in 1773. Grammar-school students slept in dormitories over the hall and chapel of each wing. Jefferson describes it in a letter to Joseph Priestley (18 January 1800) as "just well enough endowed to draw out the miserable existence to which a miserable constitution has doomed it." He adds, "It is moreover eccentric in it's [*sic*] position, exposed to bilious diseases as all the lower country is."

Jefferson, in contrast, dreamt up an "academical village," not a school. The metaphor "village," as Richard Guy Wilson notes, was an admixture of Jefferson's anticity sentiments and his relish of order – "the mixture of farm and books, of healthy rusticity and intellectual urbanity, of trees and plantings in a controlled architectural setting." Wilson sums, "The village became a metaphor for an organization both of architectural elements and of knowledge."[91] Here Jefferson was outstandingly visionary and farseeing. Instead of cramming everyone into one large building, as was the case at William and Mary:

> it is infinitely better to erect a small and separate lodge for each separate professorship, with only a hall below for his class, and two chambers above for himself; joining these lodges by barracks for a certain portion of the students, opening into a covered way to give a dry communication between all the schools. The whole of these arranged around an open square of grass and trees, would make it, what it should be in fact, an academical village, instead of a large and common den of noise, of filth and of fetid air.[92]

Jefferson's design was meant also to encourage scholars' independency and creativity, hence the several pavilions, as well as the interaction of scholars with mentors, hence dormitories sandwiching the pavilions.

Jefferson's depiction of a first-tier university was ahead of its time. Writes A. Hyatt Mayor, "By elaborating the colonnades where Greek philosophers used to teach into an 'academic village,' he evolved for the University of Virginia a unity whose convenience, economy, and elegance are only just beginning to be appreciated by our college planners."[93] Richard Guy Wilson states that the aim of the academical village was not merely architectural inspiration but also architectural instruction. "One can interpret the different facades [of each professor's pavilion] as an attempt to teach architectural taste to the students by providing ten different [architectural] models."[94] He adds, "The meaning may go deeper, since a dialogue takes place on the lawn between the ancients and moderns."[95]

Notes

1 See M. Andrew Holowchak, *Framing a Legend: Exposing the Distorted History of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2013), chap. 6.
2 Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Gilbert Burnet (London, 1684), 80; Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1795), 133–37; and Constantin François de Volney, *The Ruins, or Meditations on the Revolutions of Empires* (Teddington, UK: The Echo Library: 2010), 176–84.
3 See also Thomas Jefferson (hereafter TJ) to Martha Jefferson, 28 March 1787; TJ to Martha Jefferson, 5 May 1787; TJ to Martha Jefferson Randolph, 26 April 1790; and TJ to Mary Jefferson, 30 May 1791.
4 For example, "Discourses on Davila" and "Defence of the Constitutions of the Government of the United States of America."
5 Adams throughout appeals to the authority of the Greek poet Theognis.
6 Hamilton expresses a similar view:

> As riches increase and accumulate in a few hands; as luxury prevails in society; virtue will be in a greater degree considered as only a graceful appendage of wealth, and the tendency of things will be to depart from the republican standard . . . Look to the rich and the poor of the community; the learned and the ignorant. Where does virtue predominate? The difference indeed consists, not in the quantity but kind of vices, which are incident to the various classes; and here the advantage of character belongs to the wealthy. Their vices are probably more favorable to the prosperity of the state, than those of the indigent; and partake less of moral depravity. (Alexander Hamilton, "Address before the New York Ratifying Convention of Poughkeepsie, New York, 21 June 1788, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 5, ed. Harold C. Syrett [New York: Columbia University Press, 1962], 42–43)

7 The title, ΘΕΟΓΝΙΔΟΣ ΜΕΓΑΡΕΩΣ ΠΑΡΑΙΝΕΣΕΙΣ, is translatable as "Exhortations of Theognis of Megara."
8 Steele rightly notes that Jefferson's assessment of European gender reversal was "ultimately a condemnation of the artificial aristocracy." The drudgery of peasant women was contrary to nature. So too was the effeminacy of aristocratic men. Brian Steele, "Thomas Jefferson's Gender Frontier," *Journal of American History*, June 2008, 32–33.
9 Jefferson recognizes that men of the first rank of ability will likely not engage in politics, but instead in science.

> I am . . . satisfied there is an order of geniusses [*sic*] above that obligation, & therefore exempted from it, nobody can conceive that nature ever intended to throw away a Newton upon the occupations of a crown . . . Cooperating with nature in her ordinary economy we should dispose of and employ the geniusses of men according to their several orders and degrees. (TJ to David Rittenhouse, 19 July 1778)

10 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "The Paradox of Public Service: Jefferson, Education, and the Problem of Plato's Cave," *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2013, 73–86.
11 Thomas Ludwell Lee and George Mason were two others of the committee. Mason, citing ignorance of legal matters, excused himself from the committee. Lee soon died, so the work devolved on Jefferson, Pendleton, and Wythe.
12 Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," §§XVI, XVIII, and XIX (372–73), *Thomas Jefferson – Writings: Autobiography, A Summary View*

of the Rights of British America, Notes on the State of Virginia, Public and Private Papers, Addresses, Letters, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984).

13 TJ to Edmund Pendleton, 26 August 1776.

14 E.g., TJ to George Ticknor, 25 November 1817.

15 See also TJ to Mann Page, 30 August 1795; TJ to Gov. Wilson C. Nicholas, 2 April 1816; TJ to Gen. Breckinridge, 9 April 1822; TJ to George Ticknor, 16 July 1823.

16 Hellenbrand is right to warn that Jefferson's patrimonial characterization of the aristocratic accumulation and passing on of wealth is oversimple. See Harold Hellenbrand, *The Unfinished Revolution: Education and Politics in the Thought of Thomas Jefferson* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 96–97.

17 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "Jefferson's Moral Agrarianism," *Encyclopedia of Food and Agricultural Ethics*, ed. Paul B. Thompson (New York: Springer, 2013), and M. Andrew Holowchak, "Jefferson's Moral Agrarianism: Poetic Fiction or Moral Vision?" *Agriculture and Human Values*, Vol. 28, 2011, 497–506.

18 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984), XIX and XXII, 1782; TJ to John Jay, 23 August 1785.

19 See also TJ to John Adams, 5 July 1814.

20 For example, Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 459–60; TJ to Count Charles Van Gysbert, 13 October 1785; Answers to Questions of M. de Meusnier, 24 January 1786; TJ to Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville, 16 August 1786; "Extempore Thoughts and Doubts on Running over Bankrupt Bill," December 1792; TJ to Thomas Digges, 19 June 1788; and TJ to P.S. Dupont de Nemours, 18 January 1802.

21 See M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent: Philosophical Essays on Thomas Jefferson* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), chap. 3.

22 At the start of *Republic* IV, Socrates, who has been expositing the austere lifestyle of the guardians, is interrupted by Adeimantus, who objects that the guardians seem to secure the happiness of others in a city-state, without themselves deriving any benefits. Socrates replies, "In establishing our city, we aren't aiming to make any one group outstandingly happy but to make the whole city so, as far as possible." Plato, *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1930] 1994), 419e–20b.

23 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 460–61.

24 M. Andrew Holowchak, *Thomas Jefferson: Uncovering His Unique Philosophy and Vision* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2014).

25 Thomas Jefferson, Query XIV, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 273.

26 For more on the college, see Mark Wenger, "Thomas Jefferson, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* Vol. 103, No. 3, 1995, 339–74.

27 Cf. TJ to Meriwether Lewis (27 April 1803):

> You will therefore endeavor to make yourself acquainted, as far as a diligent pursuit of your journey shall admit, with the names of the nations & their numbers; the extent & limits of their possessions: their relations with other tribes or nations; their language, traditions, monuments; their ordinary occupations in agriculture, fishing, hunting, war, arts, & the implements for these; their food, clothing, & domestic accommodations; the diseases prevalent among them, & the remedies they use; moral and physical circumstance which distinguish them from the tribes they know; peculiarities in their laws, customs & dispositions; and articles of commerce they may need or furnish & to what extent.

> And considering the interest which every nation has in extending & strengthening the authority of reason & justice among the people around them, it will be useful to acquire what knolege [*sic*] you can of the state of morality, religion & information among them, as it may better enable those who endeavor to civilize & instruct them, to adapt their measures to the existing notions & practises of those on whom they are to operate.

28 For example, Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Thomas Jefferson: Radical and Racist," *Atlantic Monthly*, October 1996, 53–74.
29 Objections to the bill, Cabell tells Jefferson (6 February 1818), concern the notion that the bill is "a finished production in *theory.*"
30 Overall, the youths admitted were a disappointment and could not live up to the rigorous standards vis-à-vis mathematics and the ancient languages Jefferson advocated as prerequisites for matriculation. For more on the presumed standards, see Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Works of Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 129.
31 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 463.
32 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 466.
33 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 466–67.
34 TJ to Thomas Cooper, 7 September 1814.
35 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "The Fear, Honor, and Love of God: Jefferson on Jews, Philosophers, and Jesus," *Forum Philosophicum*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2013, 49-71.
36 See Mark R. Wenger, "Thomas Jefferson, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia," esp. 346–50.
37 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 467.
38 Compare with Thomas More, *Utopia*, 84–85; Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Memoirs of the Year*, 133–37; and Constantin François de Volney, *The Ruins*, 47–50.
39 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "The March of Morality: Making Sense of Jefferson's Moral Sense," *Thomas Jefferson & Philosophy: Essays on the Philosophical Cast of Jefferson's Writings* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), chap. 8.
40 Jefferson advises nephew Peter Carr that attending lectures on ethics is time wasted. TJ to Peter Carr, 10 August 1787.
41 Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, Vol. 6: *The Sage of Monticello* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1981), 392–93.
42 Harold Hellenbrand, *The Unfinished Revolution*, 150.
43 A.L.C. Destutt de Tracy, *Élémens d'Ideologie*, 5 vols. (Bruxelles: Courcier, 1827), III.164. See TJ to John Adams, 15 August 1820.
44 See also Roger D. Heslep, *Thomas Jefferson and Education* (New York: Random House, 1969), 50.
45 Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson*, 9–10.
46 In the letter to Nicholas (2 April 1816), it is roughly one grammar school every eight square miles.
47 In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson proposes 20 grammar schools throughout Virginia. At each school for every incoming group of students, the best genius after a period of one or two years will be selected and allowed to continue gratis, so there will be 20 total "graduating" each year with a free education. The rest, found not to be the best, are to be dismissed after the trial year. Of the 20 who have finished a free grammar-school education, half will matriculate at William and Mary for three years of free instruction in useful sciences of their choice. Thomas Jefferson, Query XIV, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 272.
48 If eight to a room, then 25 percent.

49 Staloff rightly warns against positing continuity of effort and aims in these two bills, separate by nearly 40 years. There were significant changes in Jefferson's political thought and rhetoric over the years. In 1779, he "sought to secure the liberties of a newly established and potentially fragile republican order in his state." In 1817, his "campaign was against a perceived sectional threat." Darren Staloff, "The Politics of Pedagogy: Thomas Jefferson and the Education of a Democratic Citizenry," *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Frank Shuffleton (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 128.
50 Joseph F. Kett, "Education," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 238.
51 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 464.
52 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 464–65.
53 See Joseph C. Cabell to TJ, 21 February 1816.
54 Thought the notion of a state university is likely at the back of his mind. See Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson*, 39–41, 45, and 165, and Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 964.
55 Writes Hellenbrand:

> In effect, Jefferson's plan for Albermarle Academy grafted onto a grammar school a departmentalized university. And onto the university it attached a vocational institute, a department in technical philosophy at the highest grade for mariners, carpenters, soapmakers, cutlers, and others who needed to deepen their trade with an exploration of relevant scientific fields such as hydrostatics, hydraulics, geometry, and chemistry. (Harold Hellenbrand, *The Unfinished Revolution*, 138)

Wilson et al. note that Jefferson's plan all along was that Central College in due time would morph into a university. Richard Guy Wilson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village: The Creation of an Architectural Masterpiece* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 9.
56 E.g., Thomas Jefferson, Query XIV, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 273.
57 A point noted by Richard Guy Wilson et al., *Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village*, 10.
58 TJ to Joseph C. Cabell, 13 January 1823.
59 To be given honor.
60 See also TJ to John Adams, 8 January 1825.
61 Joseph F. Kett, "Education," 247.
62 TJ to Major John Cartwright, 5 June 1824.
63 TJ to Major John Cartwright, 5 June 1824.
64 Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., "Honor and Dishonor at Mr. Jefferson's University: The Antebellum Years," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1986, 164.
65 Harold Hellenbrand, *The Unfinished Revolution*, 11.
66 M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent*, chap. 3.
67 See M. Andrew Holowchak, *"Where Wings Take Dream": The Looking-Glass Logic of George W. Bush* (Carson City, NV: Bridger House Publishers, 2005).
68 For example, TJ to William Carmichael, 3 June 178l; TJ to William Carmichael, 3 June 1788; and TJ to James Madison, 31 July 1788.
69 Mark R. Wenger, "Thomas Jefferson, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia," 368–69.
70 Mary N. Woods, "Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia: Planning an Academic Village," *Journal for the Society of Architectural History*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 1985, 272.
71 Joseph F. Kett, "Education," 246.

72 TJ to Joseph C. Cabell (24 January 1816). See also Mark R. Wenger, "Thomas Jefferson, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia," 369.
73 Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr. "Honor and Dishonor at Mr. Jefferson's University," 165–66.
74 Perhaps following Locke here. John Locke, *Some Thoughts concerning Education* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, [1706] 1996), §§43–55.
75 Thomas Jefferson, "Report of the Rockfish Gap Commission Appointed to Fix the Site of the University of Virginia," 4 August 1818. On the other hand, he disavowed "premature ideas of independence, too little repressed by parents." TJ to Dr. Thomas Cooper, 2 November 1822.
76 "Enactments by the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia" (Charlottesville, 1825), 10.
77 Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., "Honor and Dishonor at Mr. Jefferson's University," 171–73.
78 Rioting was not uncommon at such institutions in Jefferson's day. See Harold Hellenbrand, *The Unfinished Revolution*, 147–48.
79 Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., "Honor and Dishonor at Mr. Jefferson's University," 175–77.
80 M. Andrew Holowchak, *Thomas Jefferson*, chap. 6.
81 TJ to Thomas Law, 13 June 1814.
82 See also TJ to Judge John Tyler, 26 May 1810, and TJ to Judge Spencer Roane, 6 September 1819.
83 Louis S. Greenbaum, "Thomas Jefferson, the Paris Hospitals, and the University of Virginia," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 611 and 616–17. As Wilson notes, there is no scholarly consensus on the inspiration of the design. Richard Guy Wilson et al., *Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village*, 85. It seems likely that the design was the result of a multiplicity of influences.
84 Richard Guy Wilson, "Thomas Jefferson and the Creation of the American Architectural Image," *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson,* ed. Frank Shuffleton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 123.
85 Frederick Nichols, "Architecture," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 225–26. Jefferson asked for advice from architects William Thornton and Benjamin Latrobe and followed the suggestions of each, especially the latter, but the ultimate decisions apropos of design were Jefferson's. Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson*, 79.
86 Dumas Malone, *The Sage of Monticello*, 258.
87 Wilson notes that use of bricks, "too lowly a material for important monuments or institutions," gives the university a "democratic quality" it otherwise might not have had. Richard Guy Wilson et al., *Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village*, 112.
88 Montgomery Schuyler, "A History of Old Colonial Architecture," *Architectural Record 4*, January–March, 1895, 351–53.
89 Stanford White, "The Buildings of the University of Virginia," *Corks & Curls II* (University of Virginia Yearbook, 1898), 127–30.
90 Lewis Mumford, *The South in Architecture: The Dancy Lectures* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941), 71–72.
91 Richard Guy Wilson et al., *Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village*, 104.
92 TJ to the Trustees for the Lottery of East Tennessee College, 6 May 1810.
93 A. Hyatt Mayor, "Jefferson's Enjoyment of the Arts," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1943, 146.
94 See TJ to William Thornton, 9 May 1817.
95 Richard Guy Wilson, "Thomas Jefferson's Classical Architecture: An American Agenda," *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America*, ed. Peter Onuf and Nicholas P. Cole (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 120.

Part II

The head and the heart

This page intentionally left blank

3 Fixing the principles and practices of virtue

Educating the heart

> To say that there are no things as moral facts because desires control formation and valuation of ends is in truth but to point to desires and interests as themselves moral facts requiring control by intelligence equipped with knowledge.
>
> John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*

Jefferson famously disadvises Peter Carr to study ethics. "I think it lost time to attend lectures in this branch [ethics]. He who made us would have been a pitiful bungler if he had made the rules of our moral conduct a matter of science" (10 August 1787). To Dr. Thomas Cooper decades later (14 August 1824), Jefferson states: "It would be a waste of time for him [Jefferson's grandson] to attend professors of ethics, metaphysics, logic. This first of these may be as well acquired in the closet as from living lecturers." Yet in numerous other writings, Jefferson speaks of the significance of education for morally correct action. In a letter to John Minor (30 August 1814), for illustration, he even includes an ethical course of study, including the works of Locke, Stewart, Enfield, Condorcet, Cicero, Seneca, Hutcheson, Kames, and Charron. Why, then, does Jefferson disadvise his nephew to attend lectures on ethics?

The answer is that moral education is a needed part of a person's education, but the nature of the moral sense makes moral education unique. Just as each normal person is born with the faculty of sight, each normal person is born with knowledge of right and wrong, so educating the moral sense is not a matter of being schooled in different systems of ethical thought, but instead of encouraging and enabling persons to act most effectively on what they already know.

In this chapter, I flesh out the nature of Jefferson's moral-sense and rational faculties and expatiate on their probable relationship. I then turn to what Jefferson says of the roles of history, fiction, and religion apropos of moral education.

Jefferson's *billet doux* to Maria Cosway

In keeping with other moral-sense thinkers of his day, for Jefferson, there are three faculties unique to humans: reason, the moral sense, and taste. Each functions independently, or relatively so, of the other, and each, underdeveloped at

birth, requires a large amount of maturation for proper functioning. In what follows, I focus exclusively on the nature and relationship of the moral sense and reason through examining an underappreciated source: Jefferson's *billet doux* to Maria Cosway (21 October 1786).[1]

The impassioned *billet doux* to Cosway, in inimitable Jeffersonian fashion, takes the form of a dialog between Heart and Head. He begins by expressing that the Head and Heart have their own empires – science and morality, respectively. Writes Heart, "When the circle is to be squared, or the orbit of a comet to be traced; when the arch of greatest strength, or the solid of least resistance is to be investigated, take up the problem; it is yours; nature has given me no cognizance of it." It is otherwise for Heart. "In denying you [Head] the feelings of sympathy, of benevolence, of gratitude, of justice, of love, of friendship, [nature] has adopted the mechanism of the heart. Morals were too essential to the happiness of man to be risked on the incertain combinations of the head. She laid their foundation therefore in sentiment, not in science."

Head has "grave saws and maxims" to guide moral conduct, but such thetic assertions are mere ventose verbiage. Rational maxims are usable as axioms or lemmas in geometry or logic but have no place in moral scenarios, which are dictated by immediate judgments of the moral sense. Reason plays no role. Jefferson gives three illustrations of the inutility of reason in moral scenarios. First, there was the time when his coach drove through Chickahomony and passed a "poor weathered soldier," with pack on his back, who begged to be let up on the carriage. Head calculated that the soldier was merely one of many, that all could not be taken up, and that to take up one would lead to greater distress of the others, so Jefferson's carriage passed by the soldier. Heart, realizing that "tho we cannot relieve all the distressed we should relieve as many as we can," knew better. Jefferson turned back for the solider, but the soldier was not to be found. Jefferson was filled with regret due to his failure to act on morally correct sentiment. Second, there was the time when a woman in Philadelphia asked for charity. Head took the women for a drunkard and refused. Heart, again regretful, sought out the woman and gave the woman one half-dollar, which she immediately used, not for a bout at the ale house, but to place her child at school. Finally, there was the American Revolution. "You [Head] began to calculate & to compare wealth and numbers: we threw up a few pulsations of our warmest blood; we supplied enthusiasm against wealth and numbers; we put our existence to the hazard when the hazard seemed against us, and we saved our country." Heart severely castigates Head, "I do not know that I ever did a good thing on your suggestion, or a dirty one without it."[2]

The three illustrations show that Head, when it comes to moral decision making, is burked by calculation, and through such calculation it tends to make morally wrong decisions. Head seems to judge morally correct action to be what is easiest and least inconvenient for one to do in a specific scenario. As a excuse for velleity, it wishes to have all available information before one puts oneself out to help another for fear that the other, needing help, is merely

taking advantage of the one offering it. In doing so, it privileges the deliberating agent and offers nothing but reasons for disengagement in the affairs of others.

In contrast, Heart disdains inferences from appearance. It acts brashly. It makes its "decisions" immediately, as judgments concerning courses of human action often require immediacy. Unlike Head, Heart is not suffocated by amaranthine calculation. It just acts. Careful deliberation on the most effective action to assist a man choking on food can easily mean death for the man. Though it decides immediately, Heart's choices are always correct, or nearly so. Thus, Head and Heart rule in a "divided empire." Head is sovereign over intellectual concerns; Heart is sovereign over moral concerns.

Key here is the notion that obtrusions of the Head in matters of the Heart are unwelcome, because they lead to vice, not virtue. This Jefferson consistently avows, which is something missed by most scholars who, delving into Jefferson's ethical views, see a substantial change in his thinking over time apropos of the role of reason in moral scenarios.[3] As early as his "Summary View on the Rights of British Americans" in 1774, Jefferson writes, "The great principles of right and wrong are legible to every reader; to pursue them requires not the aid of many counsellors [*sic*]." The "many counsellors" here is certainly an oblique reference to reason. To James Fishback in 1809, he says, "The practice of morality being necessary for the well-being of society, [deity] has taken care to impress it's [*sic*] precepts so indelibly on our hearts that they shall not be effaced by the subtleties of our brain" (27 September). To Thomas Law (13 June 1814), he ingeminates that sentiment. "How necessary was the care of the Creator in making the moral principle so much a part of our constitution as that no errors of reasoning or of speculation might lead us astray from its observance in practice."

Thus, Jefferson consistently avers that reason left to itself in practical matters is a most disobliging, fluctuant guide.[4] "I see too many proofs of the imperfection of human reason," Jefferson writes to John Randolph (1 December 1801) "to entertain wonder or intolerance at any difference of opinion on any subject." That precise notion he iterates as late as 1824 in a letter to Edward Livingston (4 April). To grandson and namesake Thomas Jefferson Randolph (24 November 1808), he states that exemplars are better guides to morally correct action than any course of reasoning. To John Adams late in life (25 February 1823), he expresses befuddlement vis-à-vis Napoleon's claims to have acted with moral rectitude in his sanguinary campaigns. Napoleon, he concludes, must be without a moral sense. The intimation is that reason, when acting on its own in practical affairs, can rationalize any course of human activity, however brutish and violent.

Jefferson's exhortatory letter to Peter Carr

Jefferson also tells us much about the nature of the moral sense in the letter to Peter Carr, to which I refer at the chapter's beginning. Here he expatiates on the innateness of the moral sense and its relative independence from reason. He also encourages Carr to read books with moral content.

> For one man of science, there are thousands who are not. What would have become of them? Man was destined for society. His morality therefore was to be formed to this object. He was endowed with a sense of right & wrong merely relative to this. This sense is as much a part of his nature as the sense of hearing, seeing, feeling; it is the true foundation of morality, & not the το καλον, truth, &c. as fanciful writers have imagined. The moral sense, or conscience, is as much a part of man as his leg or arm. It is given to all human beings in a stronger or weaker degree, as force of members is given them in a greater or less degree. It may be strengthened by exercise, as may any particular limb of the body. This sense is submitted indeed in some degree to the guidance of reason; but it is a small stock which is required for this: even a less one than what we call common sense. State a moral case to a ploughman & a professor. The former will decide it as well, & often better than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules. In this branch therefore read good books because they will encourage as well as direct your feelings. The writings of Sterne particularly form the best course of morality that ever was written. Besides these read the books mentioned in the enclosed paper; and above all things lose no occasion of exercising your dispositions to be grateful, to be generous, to be charitable, to be humane, to be true, just, firm, orderly, courageous &c. Consider every act of this kind as an exercise which will strengthen your moral faculties, & increase your worth.

The passage is gravid with meaning. First, Jefferson says that man is a social creature. Given his social nature, he has been fitted with an innate sense of right and wrong, to accommodate that nature. Here he follows the lead of Aristotle and the Greek and Roman Stoics, who greatly influenced the moral-sense thinkers of Jefferson's day.

Second, there is an analogy with the senses. The moral sense is a part of man's nature as are his senses of hearing, seeing, and feeling. Jefferson gives the comparison with other sensory faculties as well to show that moral judgments are to the moral sense as seeing is to sight – in other words, moral judgments come naturally and readily to the moral sense. They do not need any prodding or encouragement to occur. The implication again is that man's moral sense is innate – part of the essence of man. That, contrasted with the first statement, shows that reason cannot be a guide to morally correct action, for genius is rare.[5]

Third, there is an analogy with limbs. Though innate, like limbs, the moral sense is given to all persons in a greater or lesser degree and can be strengthened by exercise. A limb, subject to inactivity through faineance, atrophies and cannot do the normal work of a limb. Likewise the moral sense, subject to inactivity through social detachment, becomes enfeebled and incapable of sound moral judgments. The sentiment here is that the moral sense, like a limb, is meant to be given its share of proper work. Underwork enfeebles the faculty; overwork stresses the faculty. Jefferson's wording advises persons to beware especially of underwork.

Fourth, the passage entails that there are no axial moral rules. He tells Carr that artificial moral rules lead astray the learned. Moral judgments cannot be subject to moral rules otherwise the moral sense would be prone to misjudgment through the misguidance of reason. That is why a ploughman is generally a better moral judge than a professor. A professor's albatross will be the tendency to have moral judgments pass the test of reason through the exposure of such judgments to moral principles. That the learned are led astray by moral principles is strong evidence that there are no substratal principles of right moral activity. This is a view to which Jefferson consistently adhered throughout his life in spite of a tendency at times to write as if moral principles existed.

Fifth, Jefferson asserts that good books are needed to encourage and direct one's moral feelings. Why ought one concerned with moral progress to read good books if moral discernment is irrational? Moral discernment might be irrational, but ethics, or moral activity qua science, is not. Moral activity needs prodding and direction. Rationality provides that prodding and direction.

Finally, Jefferson asserts that the exercise of the moral faculty increases one's worth. We should not take Jefferson to be referring to popular fame (*fama popularis*) to which Cicero refers in *Tusculan Disputations*, one of Jefferson's favorite ancient books, but instead immovable glory (*gloria solida*) – the approbation of good men who, by virtue of their goodness, are positioned to distinguish between "preeminent merit" and "headstrong and thoughtless" popular fame.[6] Glory here is immoveable because it is due to virtue, which does not answer to an external monitor.

Ruling passions

If reason encourages the moral sense, how are the two faculties related? Jefferson's reference to a "divided empire" in his letter to Cosway is misleading. It suggests prima facie that reason and the moral sense are two faculties of equal strength that rule over equal, but different, empires. Yet in the realm of human activity, the moral sense rules and reason is a tin god. "I can assure you, that the possession of [science] is, what (next to an honest heart) will above all things render you dear to your friends, and give you fame and promotion in your own country," Jefferson advise Peter Carr (19 August 1785). "An honest heart being the first blessing, a knowing head is the second."

Jefferson's advice to Carr is more than an expression of a wish for his nephew to be good. It expresses Jefferson's belief in the feebleness of the rational faculty in everyday affairs – viz., its impotency in practical matters. Such impotency in practical affairs makes it an unfit guide for commonplace matters.

In espousal of the limits of reason in practical concerns, Jefferson follows a line of empiricists such as Bacon, Hobbes, Smith, Bolingbroke, Kames, and Hume – each of whom linked moral assertions with passion and placed reason at the service of passion.[7] The ablest spokesperson and keenest intellect of the group is doubtless David Hume. Thus, expatiation on the thoughts of Hume on the relationship between reason and passion vis-à-vis moral activity is aidful

insofar as it helps to delineate the probable relationship between reason and the moral sense for Jefferson.

Hume argues that morality cannot be founded rationally. "[Newton's] scientifical method, where a general abstract principle is first established, and is afterwards branched out into a variety of inferences and conclusions, may be more perfect in itself, but suits less the imperfections of human nature, and is a common source of illusion and mistake in this as well as in other subjects," writes Hume. He continues:

> Men are now cured of their passion for hypotheses and systems in natural philosophy, and will hearken to no arguments but those which are derived from experience. It is full time they should attempt a like reformation in all moral disquisitions; and reject every system of ethics, however subtile [*sic*] or ingenious, which is not founded on fact and observation.[8]

Forbidding reason in moral concerns,[9] Hume's grounding of morality is feeling[10] – a social or moral sentiment of all human beings to act in socially beneficial ways. To the normative question "Why ought we to benefit others?" comes the descriptive answer "Because that is something humans tend to do when socially acclimated by maturation." In short, the normative question is literally meaningless.

Hume arrives at such an answer to the normative question because of his empiricism. Appeals to experience proffer no way to ground morality securely. In short, no non-demonstrative inductive argument can be marshaled to justify fully any claim, moral or otherwise, of universal scope, such as "One ought never to lie." Appeals to experience are appeals to a finite amount of evidence marshaled, and no finite amount of evidence marshaled can justify a universal proposition. Moreover, it is not clear how evidence marshaled, qua matters of fact, can be used to justify normative claims. That is known today as the is-to-ought fallacy and is a matter of considerable debate by philosophers.

It follows for Hume that reason is of no assistance to morality. Since reason cannot ground moral claims, one can scrap completely moral investigation or ground moral judgments in passion – in other words, social sentiment – and Hume is disinclined to scrap moral investigation.[11]

Not only is reason unavailing of morality, but reason is unavailing of human agency. "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them," says Hume.[12] Thus, all human action is determined by passion.

How, then, is reason related to passion? Hume states: "Reason is the discovery of truth and falsehood. Truth and falsehood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of ideas, or to real existence and matter of fact." That is precisely the role Jefferson ascribes to reason in his *billet doux* to Cosway. Reason's role is to square the circle, trace the orbit of a comet, and determine the solid of greatest strength. Hume continues: "Now 'tis evident our passions, volitions, and actions, are not susceptible of any such agreement

or disagreement; being original facts and realities, compleat in themselves, and implying no reference to other passions, volitions, and actions. 'Tis impossible, therefore, they can be pronounced either true or false, and be either contrary or conformable to reason." It follows that judgments on actions, as products of passions that are "compleat in themselves," cannot be "pronounced either true or false,"[13] and that applies equally for moral actions. Jefferson, we recall, denied to reason the feelings of sympathy, benevolence, gratitude, justice, and friendship, which compose the moral sense. "Morals," he said, "were too essential to the happiness of man to be risked on the incertain combinations of the head."

Overall, for Hume, reason represents the world to us as it is. It is then up to the moral faculty to decide correct moral action.[14] Moral activity is freedom from various incapacities – ignorance, lack of understanding, shortsightedness, and unconcern. By having of the right sorts of passions, directed by sentiment, we engage in morally appropriate behavior.[15]

Hume's self, fundamentally impassioned, is not a tumbleweed of passions that gets blown here or there, depending on the direction of the wind. Hume's self is not passive, yet it is not an agency that sits above the passions and directs them. To effect such a separation is, in outcome, to effect a separation of passions and intellect, as Kant separates the noumenal self from the phenomenal self.[16] Therefore, moral deliberation, like deliberation on all types of human activity, is entirely first order – a matter of active engagement with the world, not of introspection. Deliberation does not occur above the world. It is only when we criticize ourselves morally or philosophize about passions that we panic and go astray morally because we attempt to sit on a second-order perch. Consider again Jefferson's three illustrations of reason's gauche interference in moral matters in his letter to Cosway. Yet when we recognize that our desires are properly related to our normal concerns, the panic dissolves.[17]

Thus, for Hume, there is no divided empire when it comes to human actions. Passions control reason, and passions dictate morality in a first-order manner. Only when humans allow the vagaries of circumstances or the intrusions of reason to have an influence on human sentiment do humans go astray.

It is the same with Jefferson. First, the moral sense acts independent of reason. Second, reason is in its own proper sphere of activity a capable but not a fleckless faculty. Third, the moral sense is superior to reason.[18] Finally, too few humans are capable of honing reason. So, Jefferson's reference to a "divided empire" is misrepresentative. For Jefferson, as for Hume, passions rule. Consequently, the two parts of the empire are only "geographically" divided in the manner that the Virgin Islands are divided from the United States. Head's parcel of land is a satellite of Heart. For Jefferson, as for Hume, passion does not sit above reason and guide it. It sits beside reason and guides it in the sense suggested by the prior analogy – viz., a mother country sitting beside a satellite.[19]

If this account of the relationship between Jefferson's moral sense and reason is correct, and I believe it is, humans for Jefferson are fundamentally passionate, moral animals. That explains completely Jefferson's insistence that education ought to be essentially practical.[20]

A "small stock"

Recall Jefferson makes mention in his 1787 letter to Carr that the moral sense is subject in some slight degree to the guidance of reason. "This sense is submitted indeed in some degree to the guidance of reason; but it is a small stock which is required for this: even less one than what we call common sense."[21]

Jefferson's reference to a small stock of reason might be taken as evidence that the moral sense does not function spontaneously and independently of reason.

That is hasty induction, for it is easy to explain Jefferson's curious addendum without assuming a relationship of dependency between reason and the moral sense when confronted with moral decision making. Reason might have as many as seven functions vis-à-vis the moral sense. It might function to encourage or reinforce morally correct action, to keep the moral sense vital and vigorous, to instill the first elements of morality in children through exposure to moral exemplars in history, to allow for a sort of cultural sensitivity to morally retarded cultures, to ensure the continual advance of morality through charting the course of moral progress through reading history as adults, to encourage the moral improvement of the species over time through sexual selection apropos of moral discernment, and to remedy the infrequent defect of the absence of a moral sense in certain unfortunate persons. As I have already covered the first six of these in great detail in chapter 8 of *Dutiful Correspondent*, I merely summarize those findings here.

First, reason functions to encourage and reinforce morally correct action. Jefferson writes in an early letter to lifelong friend Robert Skipwith (3 August 1771) that acts of charity or of gratitude presented to sight or imagination impress in humans "a strong desire in [them] of doing charitable and grateful acts also." It is the opposite with acts of dereliction. Of virtuous actions, he adds: "Now every emotion of this kind is an exercise of our virtuous dispositions, and dispositions of the mind, like limbs of the body acquire strength by exercise. But exercise produces habit, and in the instance of which we speak the exercise being of the moral feelings produces a habit of thinking and acting virtuously." In sum, virtuous acts, whether observed or imagined, are contagious; vicious acts are repulsive. He tells Peter Carr, we recall, to read good books because "they will encourage as well as direct your [moral] feelings." That is advice he himself was wont to follow. "I never go to bed without an hour, or half hour's previous reading of something moral," he writes his physician Dr. Vine Utley (21 March 1819) "whereon to ruminate in the intervals of sleep."

Second, reason watches over the moral sense to keep it strong, vigorous, and adaptable to varying circumstances. Since the moral sense is strengthened with use and enfeebled with disuse, reason functions to maintain or improve the strength of the moral sense and perhaps even refine its use.[22] That is why Jefferson likens the moral sense to a limb in his 1787 letter to Carr. To some extent, any limb is made more dexterous with practice at certain types of activity – imagine a carpenter's skilled use of his hammer – and so right use of the moral sense over time makes it stronger.

Third, reason can allow for cultural sensitivity to morally retarded or regressive cultures. In such instances, reason can recognize moral lag, as in the case of the American Indians of Jefferson's day, or moral decline, as in the case of large European nations in the early nineteenth century (according to Jefferson). It can convince the moral sense to withhold its correct judgment of moral indignation or moral condemnation and offer instead moral guidance for American Indians or moral remediation for retrogressive European nations. Thus, it is reason's role to see to it that the moral sense, forming immediate judgments, does not always act with immediacy, but that it uses resourcefulness and tact.

Fourth, reason enables children whose moral-sense faculty – here, more like a limb than an eye – is still maturing to overcome prejudices and social biases. In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson says that children, through study of history or even fiction, can store what is "most useful" from it and acquire the "first elements of morality."[23] They will learn that wealth and good birth are mere accidents and that conscience, health, occupation, and freedom of action enable persons to rise above the condition of life in which chance has placed them.

Fifth, by reading and assimilation of history, reason can reflect on the barbaric practices of earlier times that were given moral sanction, compare them with later moral advances, and work toward still further advances of the sort anticipated by the utopists Thomas More in *Utopia*, James Harrington in *Oceana*, Constantin François de Volney in *Les ruins*, Pierre Charron in *La sagesse*, Louis-Sébastien Mercier in *L'An 2440*, and especially Jean-Antoine Nicolas Condorcet's *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*.[24] "It is the happiness of modern times," writes Jefferson in a manner to mark moral improvement of humans over time, "that the evils of necessary war are softened by the refinement of manners & sentiments and that an enemy is an object of vengeance, in arms, & in the field only."[25] This type of abstract reasoning – reasoning over history – cannot be the work of the moral sense, which works spontaneously, but is the work of the rational faculty.[26]

Sixth, reason can facilitate moral improvement through promoting breeding for moral advance. In his natural-*aristoi* letter to John Adams, Jefferson argues for the possibility of moral improvement of humans through the creation of a "natural aristocracy," founded on virtue and talent. Like sheep and other animals that are bred for physical or behavioral characteristics, "the moral and physical qualities of man, whether good or evil, are transmissible in a certain degree from father to son" (28 October 1813). The implication here is that reason is needed in order to breed selectively virtuous persons. Yet Jefferson acknowledges that breeding for moral improvement would be anathema to "the equal rights of man" – in other words, the masses would adjudge it repugnant.

Finally, in the rare occurrence of a person with want of a moral sense, Jefferson tells Thomas Law (13 June 1814) that education can remedy the defect, insofar as such a thing can be remedied, through education:

> When it is wanting we endeavor to supply the defect by education, by appeals to reason and calculation, by presenting to the being so unhappily

> conformed, other motives to do good and to eschew evil; such as the love or the hatred or rejection of those among whom he lives and whose society is necessary to his happiness and even existence; demonstrations by sound calculation that honesty promotes interest in the long run; the rewards and penalties established by the laws; and ultimately the prospects of a future state of retribution for the evil as well as the good done while here.

Those are the correctives of moralists, preachers, and legislators. In such a scenario, reason allows persons wanting a moral sense the capacity to act in conformance with morally correct action, but that is not to say that such acts will be morally correct, for such defective persons will not be capable of sensing that their actions are correct.

It follows that Jefferson's mysterious statement about reason assisting the moral sense can readily be accommodated to the view that the moral sense functions, in forming its judgments, independently of reason.

Teaching ethics

Thus, for Jefferson, reason is beholden to the moral sense, not in the manner of a first-order faculty to a second-order faculty, but in the manner of a weaker, less significant, and fluctuant faculty to a stronger, more significant, and stable faculty. Reason is given as an aid to the moral faculty. It might inspire and reinforce morally correct action, keep strong the moral sense, encourage sensitivity to morally retrogressive or retarded cultures, disincline children to peer pressure, encourage moral progress through exposure to history, encourage discretion in breeding, and compensate behaviorally one born without a moral sense. Nonetheless, it is not there to decide courses of action, but merely to assist the moral sense with information sufficient to complement its decisions and perhaps even help the organism to do what it ought to do. Humans, for Jefferson – and this cannot be reiterated often enough – are foremost moral, not rational, creatures.

Because morally correct action is not the result of rational deliberation on possible outcomes, there are no axial principles of morality – no inviolable rules à la Kant to follow from which one can deduce the correct course of action. One merely senses the right thing to do in circumstances.

If one senses the right thing to do and if learning is a matter of honing one's instincts – in other words, reinforcing what one already knows – then teaching is a matter of bolstering the developing moral sense and encouraging right action, or, as he says to Peter Carr (10 August 1787), of encouraging and directing one's feelings. Ethical education, thus, is mostly a matter of ethical encouragement. It follows that moral education is principally to be had early in life, when moral encouragement can have greatest effect. Jefferson writes in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*:

> The first elements of morality . . . may be instilled into [children's] minds: such as, when further developed as their judgments advance in strength,

> may teach them how to work out their own greatest happiness, by showing them that it does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed them, but is always the result of a good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits.[27]

The sentiment is starkly Stoical and is meant to show that one's happiness is not the result of chance, but is genuinely up to each person, irrespective of one's circumstances.

It is important to underscore that ethical education mostly should occur early in life. To John Brazier (24 August 1819), Jefferson writes of the significance of mastering certain subjects as a youth. In the early years, "memory is susceptible of deep and lasting impressions, and reason and judgment not yet strong enough for abstract speculations." It is at such time that ethical encouragement is to occur, and ethical encouragement is to come chiefly through study of history and secondly through the reading of inspirational works of fiction. Jefferson is also clear that religious study in the young should be eschewed.

History

"History" can be defined as a continuous, systematic, and chronological narrative of past events that relates to a particular person, people, country, or period of time. That definition, I suspect, would suit Jefferson. Nonetheless, he might insist that there be given a significant addendum, since the teaching of history for Jefferson served an important moral function: It was a means of disclosing unjustified past perversions and abuses of political power at the expense of the masses. "The most effectual means of preventing the perversion of power into tyranny are to illuminate, as far as practicable," Jefferson writes in his "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," "the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts, which history exhibits, that possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes."[28] The study of history at the first level of education at a university will make scholars fit judges of political corruption and its makebates. "History, by apprising them of the past, will enable them to judge of the future," he adds in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. "It will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views."[29] Thus, Jefferson suggests that history ought to be written in such a manner that it is an easily accessed account of the mistakes of the past – in short, a guarantor of future moral progress to which Jefferson was unquestionably wedded.

The history of his day, Jefferson says, is selectively descriptive and conservative, and therefore ill-suited as a corrective of past mistakes. "I am happier while reading the history of ancient than of modern times," he writes William Duane (4 April 1813).

> The total banishment of all moral principle from the code which governs the intercourse of nations, the melancholy reflection that after the mean, wicked and cowardly cunning of the cabinets of the age of Machiavelli had given place to the integrity and good faith which dignified the succeeding one of a Chatham and Turgot, that this is to be swept away again by the daring profligacy and avowed destitution of all moral principle of a Cartouche and a Blackbeard, sicken my soul unto death.

The accounts of Livy, Sallust, and, especially, Tacitus are preferred, for they are unafraid to be condemnatory of the injustices of their day. Jefferson repeats the sentiment in a letter to granddaughter Anne Randolph Bankhead (8 December 1808): "Tacitus I consider as the first writer in the world without a single exception. His book is a compound of history and morality of which we have no other example."

Why is it that Jefferson is so drawn to Tacitus? Tacitus's *Histories* aims at an accurate chronicle of past events and a dispassionate depiction of the motives of human agency. His style is clear and concise, sometimes sententious, but never antiloquent and always without the aim of political bias. Truth is his intendment. Tacitus writes, "Those who profess inviolable fidelity to truth must write of no man with affection or with hatred."[30] His *Histories* is replete with references to virtue and vice, and though morals are easily seen with scrutiny, they are not meretricious or forced – viz., there is poignancy without pretense. A fine illustration is Tacitus's account of Servius Galba, upon his death:

> Galba himself was of mediocre genius, being rather free from faults than possessing virtues. He was neither careless of reputation nor one who cared to boast of it. He was not greedy for another's property; he was frugal with his own, stingy with the state's. Kindly and complacent toward friends and freedmen, if he found them honest; if they were dishonest, he was blind even to a fault. But his high birth and the terror which the times inspired masked the truth, so that men called wisdom what was really indolence.[31]

Like Tacitus, Jefferson thought truth ought to be the aim of history, written aright. "We who are retired from the business of the world, are glad to catch a glimpse of truth, here and there as we can, to guide our path through the boundless field of fable in which we are bewildered by public prints, and even by those calling themselves histories," he writes to John Quincy Adams (1 November 1817). "A word of truth to us is like the drop of water supplicated from the tip of Lazarus's finger. It is as an observation of latitude and longitude to the mariner long enveloped in clouds, for correcting the ship's way." To John Adams (5 May 1817), Jefferson writes that good history "glean[s] up matter from every quarter, and furnish[es] materials for reflection and digestion" to show to thoughtful readers "there [is] a great deal of matter behind the curtain."

Consistent with Jefferson's empiricism and his penchant for meticulous gathering of data, there is a method to truthful history. To historian William

Wirt (14 August 1814), he laments the fact that few public officials take detailed notes of what is being transacted. Later Jefferson castigates, at least obliquely, Wirt (12 November 1816) for writing happy history. "You have certainly practiced vigorously [in the *Life of Patrick Henry*] the precept of 'de mortius nil nisi bonum.'[32] This presents a very difficult question, – whether one only or both sides of the medal shall be presented. It constitutes, perhaps, the distinction between panegyric and history." To John Adams (10 August 1815), Jefferson writes: "You say I must go to writing history. While in public life I had not time, and now that I am retired, I am past the time. To write history requires a whole life of observation, of inquiry, of labor and correction. Its materials are not to be found among the ruins of a decayed memory."

To Ebenezer Hazard (18 February 1791), Jefferson frets over the loss of invaluable documents pertaining to early American history:

> Time and accident are committing daily havoc on the originals deposited in our public offices. The late war has done the work of centuries in this business. The last cannot be recovered, but let us save what remains; not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use in consigning them to the waste of time, but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident"

Over 30 years later, he writes to Hugh Taylor (4 October 1823), "It is the duty of every good citizen to use all the opportunities which occur to him, for preserving documents relating to the history of our country." To Judge William Johnson (12 June 1823), Jefferson pleads for public exposure to the "private hoards" of the "letters of the day":

> History may distort truth, and will distort it for a time, by the superior efforts at justification of those who are conscious of needing it most. The opening scenes of our present government will not be seen in their true aspect until the letters of the day, now held in private hoards, shall be broken up and laid open to public view.

Given that history not only preserves but also teaches valuable moral lessons, here one might ask: What are the lessons of history? In a nutshell, one might say it is to pursue a steady course of moral advance. Yet how might that be done, when history offers too few illustrations of moral cynosures?

Jefferson's reply is in effect that of Aristotle. For Aristotle, as only a sage is a perfect moral exemplar, it is difficult to achieve moral perfection. Yet that is not to say it is difficult to set on the path to moral rectitude. Each person can readily recognize extremes of vice, and, thus, each can steer clear of such extremes. Others advanced in virtue – in other words, moral exemplars – can thereafter be emulated.[33] For Jefferson, it is similar. Consider what he writes to John Norvell (14 June 1807) about bad governments. "History, in general, only informs us what bad government is." A government, aspiring to virtue, knows

enough to steer clear of past illustrations of government-sanctioned vice. Along those lines, the best history of a nation, which has followed a moral course, is a quiet history – viz., to be overpassed by historians. "Wars and contentions, indeed, fill the pages of history with more matter," Jefferson says to Comte Diodati (29 March 1807). "But more blessed is that nation whose silent course of happiness furnishes nothing for history to say." The implication of the two passages is that historians tend to write about what is sensational, and vice, not virtue, is sensational. The silence of historians on the course of a nation might not be proof of virtue, but it is manifestly a signifier of lack of noticeable vice.

Jefferson often is roundly accused of embracing history that has a political slant – viz., liberal, Whiggish history.[34] The criticism is not without merit. Nonetheless, Jefferson's "slant," as I said in the prior chapter, was not political, but moral. He embraced government by and for the people through elected representatives not merely because it was a political alternative to traditional (artificial) aristocracies. Jefferson's view of meritocratic democracy was founded on a notion, empirically derived, of the nature of the human organism. Given the moral equality of all persons and given that the moral sense was a faculty in some sense axiologically superior to reason, certain things inevasibly followed. One such thing was that wealth and birth ought not to be determining factors for honest government.

Fiction

The lessons of history, chiefly moral in content, are supplemented by reading useful fiction. In a letter to Robert Skipwith (3 August 1771), Jefferson asserts that the "entertainments of fiction" are not only pleasant, but also useful. Their pleasantness is obvious to any vigilant reader. Their utility is less obvious. He writes:

> Everything is useful which contributes to fix in the principles and practices of virtue. When any original act of charity or of gratitude, for instance, is presented either to our sight or imagination, we are deeply impressed with its beauty and feel a strong desire in ourselves of doing charitable and grateful acts also. On the contrary when we see or read of any atrocious deed, we are disgusted with it's [*sic*] deformity, and conceive an abhorence [*sic*] of vice.

Jefferson continues: "Every emotion of this kind is an exercise of our virtuous dispositions, and dispositions of the mind, like limbs of the body acquire strength by exercise. But exercise produces habit, and in the instance of which we speak the exercise being of the moral feelings produces a habit of thinking and acting virtuously."

Here we have what might be dubbed an argument from emulation:

1 Reading works of fiction with moral content present to our minds both virtuous acts and vicious acts.
2 Acts of virtue, fictive or otherwise, appear beautiful and give rise to a strong desire for emulation.

3 Acts of vice, fictive or otherwise, appear repugnant and give rise to a strong desire for repulsion.
4 Conjuring up feelings of emulation and repulsion constitutes an exercise and strengthening of the moral sense.
5 Exercise and strengthening conduce to habit in thought and action.
6 So, reading works of fiction with moral content occasions virtuous action and retards vice.

Jefferson gives the works of William Shakespeare, François Ravaillac, Jean-François Marmontel, and, of course, his beloved Laurence Sterne as illustrations. The argument shows also that the aesthetical pleasures of the eye and ear for Jefferson, as for Lord Kames,[35] are goads to morally correct action, if not enjoyed in excess.

Jefferson suggests in this early letter to Skipwith that the works of fiction are superior, or at least potentially so, to works of history in that they allow more frequently for moral lessons. He continues:

> Considering history as a moral exercise, her lessons would be too infrequent if confined to real life. Of those recorded by historians few incidents have been attended with such circumstances as to excite in any high degree this sympathetic emotion of virtue. We are therefore wisely framed to be as warmly interested for a fictitious as for a real personage.

Moral lessons are not to be had only by heroes of the highest moral rank. Moral lessons can be assimilated by antiheroes as well. Jefferson tells his granddaughter Anne Randolph Bankhead (26 May 1811) that a character, adept in "making herself and others unhappy," can also inculcate virtue "by the rules of contraries."

It is commonly acknowledged that Jefferson's fondness of fiction waned in later life. His letter to Nathaniel Burwell (14 March 1818) is generally cited as evidence. Jefferson writes: "A great obstacle to good education is the inordinate passion prevalent for novels, and the time lost in that reading which should be instructively employed. When this poison infects the mind, it destroys its tone and revolts it against wholesome reading. Reason and fact, plain and unadorned, are rejected." One's imagination becomes bloated; one's judgment, sickly; one's attitude toward the "real businesses of life," disgusted.

The critique, trenchant, offers evidence of heightened opposition toward reading novels. Yet one must be sensitive to the phrase "time lost in that reading," which points to reading novels when there is business at hand. Reading novels can lead to hebetude or even a disinclination to engage with everyday living. It privileges irreason to reason and fantasy to fact. It disinclines one to read things more wholesome. Jefferson is writing about indulgence, perhaps overindulgence, and he is not referring to fiction with moral content.

Jefferson qualifies his trenchant critique. "This mass of trash, however, is not without some distinction; some few modelling their narratives, although fictitious, on the incidents of real life, have been able to make them interesting

and useful vehicles of a sound morality." He offers Marmontel's new moral tales, the writings of Miss Edgeworth, and some of those of Madame Genlis. It is the same with poetry. "Pope, Dryden, Thompson, Shakspeare [*sic*], and of the French, Molière, Racine, the Corneilles, may be read with pleasure and improvement."

Thus, Jefferson was not chiefly concerned with literary merit of fictive works – hence his preference for the literarily dry vignettes of Laurence Sterne (see chapter 6). Such reading ought to be done only if there is moral content, for the pleasure then experienced will be an exercise of the moral sense to occasion virtuous action and retard vice.

Religion

The question of religion, Jefferson tells nephew Peter Carr (10 August 1787), is a matter that requires the scrutiny of a mature intellect. Prior to investigation, all bias must be dismissed. "Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call to her tribunal every fact, every opinion." Examine every religion in the manner in which one examines Livy or Tacitus.

> Those facts in the bible which contradict the laws of nature, must be examined with more care, and under a variety of faces. Here you must recur to the pretensions of the writer to inspiration from god. Examine upon what evidence his pretensions are founded, and whether that evidence is so strong as that its falsehood would be more improbable than a change in the laws of nature in the case he relates.

Jefferson has in mind Conyers Middleton's book on miracles[36] – he cites him in a letter to John Adams (22 August 1813) – and, of course, Lord Bolingbroke[37] and perhaps also David Hume's essay "On Miracles" as his measuring sticks. All sensibly and soberly argue, apropos of any reported miracle, which is essentially a violation of a law of nature, that it is always much more probable that one's testimony of the "miracle" is erroneous, rather than that a law of nature has been contravened.[38]

Jefferson even enjoins Carr to question the existence of deity. "If there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear." Later he adds:

> Do not be frightened from this inquiry by any fear of it's [*sic*] consequences. If it ends in a belief that there is no god, you will find incitements to virtue in the comfort & pleasantness you feel in it's exercise, and the love of others which it will procure you. If you find reason to believe there is a god, a consciousness that you are acting under his eye, & that he approves you, will be a vast additional incitement; if that there be a future state, the hope of a happy existence in that increases the appetite to deserve it; if that Jesus was also a god, you will be comforted by a belief of his aid and love. In

> fine, I repeat that you must lay aside all prejudice on both sides, & neither believe nor reject anything because any other persons, or description of persons have rejected or believed it. Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable not for the rightness but uprightness of the decision.

Two things are worth underscoring. First, religion is a personal affair. Thus, if investigation is to be undertaken with sincerity, it is best left for each himself to do. Second, integrity in pursuing the investigation is of utmost significance – more important than the outcome of the investigation. Should deity exist, deity would find blind acceptance more contemptuous than atheism, if atheism is the result of aboveboard rational investigation.

Jefferson had a strong aversion to organized, sectarian religions as they were commonly practiced. To Dr. Richard Price (8 January 1789), Jefferson states that he sees little difference between atheists and most practicing Christians. "I concur with you strictly in your opinion of the comparative merits of atheism and demonism, and really see nothing but the latter in the Being worshipped by many who think themselves Christians." To John Adams (11 April 1823), he at first calls the intolerant religion of Calvin "atheism," and then "demonism." To Mathew Carey (11 November 1816), he writes:

> On the dogmas of religion as distinguished from moral principles, all mankind, from the beginning of the world to this day, have been quarrelling, fighting, burning and torturing one another, for abstractions unintelligible to themselves and to all others, and absolutely beyond the comprehension of the human mind. Were I to enter on that arena, I should only add an unit to the number of Bedlamites.

To Charles Clay (29 January 1815), he gives a mathematical slant to the Bedlam argument:

> I should as soon think of writing for the reformation of Bedlam, as of the world of religious sects. Of these there must be, at least, ten thousand, every individual of every one of which believes all wrong but his own. To undertake to bring them all right, would be like undertaking, single-handed, to fell the forests of America.

Jefferson's chief gripe with organized religion is its political dimension. He continues in the letter to Clay. Government has its emperors, kings, princes, and nobles; religion has its popes, cardinals, archbishops, and priests. To Elbridge Gerry (19 March 1801), Jefferson says:

> The mild and simple principles of the Christian philosophy would produce too much calm, too much regularity of good, to extract from its disciples a support from a numerous priesthood, were they not to sophisticate it,

> ramify it, split it into hairs, and twist its texts till they cover the divine morality of its author with mysteries, and require a priesthood to explain them. The Quakers seem to have discovered this. They have no priests, therefore no schisms. They judge of the text by the dictates of common sense and common morality.

In several letters, he asserts that the uncorrupted teachings of Jesus compose the purest system of morals. He blames "Platonists" – viz., Neoplatonists – for corrupting Jesus's teachings for the purposes of establishing political power over religious concerns.[39]

In keeping with his embrace of liberalism and the tenor of the letter to Gerry, Jefferson's consistent message is that religion is a personal affair. "But I have ever thought religion a concern purely between our God and our consciences, for which we were accountable to him, and not to the priests," he says to Mrs. Samuel Harrison Smith (6 August 1816). "I never told my own religion, nor scrutinized that of another. I never attempted to make a convert, nor wished to change another's creed." Being a personal affair, no one is to be castigated or ostracized for atheism or neglect of religion. "The care of every man's soul belongs to himself," he states to John Hancock (11 October 1776). He continues:

> But what if he neglect the care of it? Well what if he neglect the care of his health or estate, which more nearly relate to the state? Will the magistrates make a law that he shall not be poor or sick? Laws provide against injury from others; but not from ourselves. God himself will not save men against their wills.

What is salvageable among the numerous and varied religious sects? To James Fishback (27 September 1809), Jefferson writes: "The interests of society require the observation of those moral precepts only in which all religions agree (for all forbid us to steal, murder, plunder, or bear false witness), and that we should not intermeddle with the particular dogmas in which all religions differ, and which are totally unconnected with morality." He states to Thomas Leiper (21 January 1809):

> My religious reading has long been confined to the moral branch of religion, which is the same in all religions; while in that branch which consists of dogmas, all differ, all have a different set. The former instructs us how to live well and worthily in society; the latter are made to interest our minds in the support of the teachers who inculcate them. Hence, for one sermon on a moral subject, you hear ten on the dogmas of the sect.[40]

Thus, religious doctrine, stripped of its sectarian absurdities, is moral doctrine.[41]

Given Jefferson's thoughts on religion, we come to see the motivation for a prominent feature of Jefferson's educational curriculum, discussed in the prior

chapters – eschewal of religious studies in grammar schools and at the University of Virginia.

Jefferson believed that there should be no course of religious study at grammar schools. As he says in his 1787 letter to Carr, the mind is too underdeveloped for the disinterested ratiocination required in religious matters. This is a point he makes earlier in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*. "Instead . . . of putting the Bible and the Testament into the hands of the children at an age when their judgments are not sufficiently matured for religious inquiries, their memories may here be stored with the most useful facts from Grecian, Roman, European and American history."[42] Religious study at too early of an age is tantamount to brainwashing.[43]

Jefferson also asserted, as we saw in chapter 2, that there should be no course of religious study at the University of Virginia. Religious study is characteristically given by a prelate, clinging to a particular religious sect. To invite one religious sect to teach religion is to disallow dispassionate investigation of religious topics – in other words, to proselytize, not to teach.[44] It also invites religious contamination of secular education and promotes the linkage of religion and political power.

Notes

1 It is underappreciated because it is often assumed that Jefferson's moral thinking changed over time such that the views espoused in his letter to Cosway are views he later disavows. I have elsewhere shown that Jefferson's view of the relationship of the moral sense and reason remained relatively constant over time. See *Dutiful Correspondent: Philosophical Essays on Thomas Jefferson* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 159–75, and *Thomas Jefferson and Philosophy: Essays on the Philosophical Cast of Jefferson's Writings* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), chap. 8.

2 Yarbrough mistakenly asserts that Jefferson generally disacknowledges that virtue is often difficult and painful. These passages show otherwise. Jean Yarbrough, "The Moral Sense, Character Formation, and Virtue," *Reason and Republicanism: Thomas Jefferson's Legacy of Liberty*, ed. Gary L. McDowell and Sharon L. Noble (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 273.

3 For example, see Adrienne Koch, *The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 40–43, and Jean Yarbrough, "The Moral Sense, Character Formation, and Virtue," 271–303.

4 Thomas Jefferson (hereafter TJ) to Gov. Patrick Henry, 27 March 1779.

5 Here Jefferson goes against the ancient eudaimonists, for whom consistent morally correct action – that is, sagacity – is rare.

6 Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J. E. King (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1927] 1945), III.3–4.

7 Various manifestations of cognitivist (i.e., descriptivism and naturalism) and noncognitivist (i.e., prescriptivism, emotivism, and postmodernism) accounts of morality today – in reducing morality to wanting or desiring – have by fiat reduced morality to one form or another of hedonism.

8 David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. J. B. Schneewind (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 16.

9 Kames rejects reason as the faculty for morality because it is too weak in the general public, who have "little capacity to enter into abstract reasoning" and who show

every capacity to form correct moral judgments and act accordingly. Lord Kames, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion: Corrected and Improved, in a Third Edition*, ed. Mary Catherine Moran (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2005), 69.

10 Justice was an exception. Hume believed that its "sole" ground was public utility. David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, 34.

11 The problem, of course, was redoubled in that Hume lacked a unitary conception of personhood in which to ground social sentiment. David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, 50 and 77.

12 David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1969), 462.

13 David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, 510.

14 Here I follow Blackburn's account of Hume. Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions: A Theory of Practical Reasoning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 240.

15 Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, 241.

16 Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, 250–51.

17 Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions*, 254–56.

18 TJ to Peter Carr, 19 August 1785; TJ to John Randolph, 1 December 1803; TJ to James Fishback, 27 September 1809; TJ to Thomas Law, 13 June 1814; TJ to Thomas Cooper, 11 December 1823; and TJ to Edward Livingston, 4 April 1824.

19 Lehmann notes that Jefferson subsumes moral philosophy under reason in his library catalog, though "it would have been more logical to replace that Baconian category by his moral sense, which seemed to be the root rather than the offspring of organized reason." Karl Lehmann, *Thomas Jefferson: American Humanist* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, [1965], 1994), 132.

20 For example, TJ to John Adams, 5 July 1814, and TJ to Francis Wayles Eppes, 13 December 1820.

21 That puts him at odds with Hutcheson, who goes so far as to present formulae for calculating the virtue of various courses of action. Francis Hutcheson, *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, [1725] 2004).

22 Compare with Kames, who writes: "Nothing contributes so much to improve the mind and confirm it in virtue, as being continually employed in surveying the actions of others, entering into the concerns of the virtuous, approving their conduct, condemned vice, and showing an abhorrence at it; for the mind acquires strength by exercise, as well as the body." He adds that works of fiction are beneficial, for such "scenes in real life . . . rarely occur." Lord Kames, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, 18.

23 Thomas Jefferson, Query XIV, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings: Autobiography, A Summary View of the Rights of British America, Notes on the State of Virginia, Public and Private Papers, Addresses, Letters*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 273.

24 Condorcet lists ten epochs of human history – the last describing the "indefinite" perfectibility of man. Jean-Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind: Being a Posthumous Work of the Late M. de Condorcet* (London: J. Johnson, 1795), 366.

25 Thomas Jefferson, "Declaration concerning Ethan Allen," in Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, Vol. 1: *Jefferson the Virginian* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948), 291.

26 Jefferson's sentiment is in keeping with the progressivism of much of Enlightenment thinking.

27 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 273.

28 Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 365.
29 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 273.
30 Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *The Histories*, trans. Clifford H. Moore ([1925] 1962), Book I.1–3.
31 Tacitus, *Histories*, I.49.
32 Roughly, "Write only good things about the dead."
33 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1926] 1990), II.8.
34 For example, TJ to John Norvell, 14 June 1807; TJ to Col. William Duane, 12 August 1810; TJ to John Adams, 25 November 1816; TJ to William Short, 8 January 1825; and TJ to unknown professor of UV, 25 October 1825.
35 Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 5th ed. (Dublin: Charles Ingham, 1772), ii–iv.
36 He had in mind especially *A Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers in the Christian Church* (1749). Jefferson had in his library Middleton's four-volume *Miscellaneous Works*, published posthumously in 1752.
37 Thomas Jefferson, *Jefferson's Literary Commonplace Book*, ed. Douglas L. Wilson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), §§22–27.
38 David Hume, "On Miracles," *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Richard H. Popkin (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 111.
39 TJ to Benjamin Rush, 21 April 1803; TJ to John Adams, 22 August 1813; TJ to John Adams, 12 October 1813; TJ to Thomas Law, 13 June 1814; TJ to Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse, 13 October 1815; TJ to Charles Thomson, 9 January 1816; TJ to William Short, 31 October 1819; TJ to Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse, 26 June 1822; and TJ to John Davis, 18 January 1824.
40 See also TJ to William Canby, 18 September 1813; TJ to John Adams, 22 August 1813; TJ to Miles King, 26 September 1814; TJ to George Logan, 12 November 1816; TJ to John Adams, 11 January 1817; TJ to John Adams, 5 May 1817; TJ to Thomas Parker, 15 May 1819; and TJ to John Davis, 18 January 1824.
41 A thesis I develop fully in "Duty to God and Duty to Man: Jefferson on Religion, Natural and Sectarian," *Philosophical Pilgrimages: Essays on Thomas Jefferson's Writings and on Writings on Thomas Jefferson* (forthcoming).
42 Thomas Jefferson, Query XIV, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 273.
43 TJ to Joseph C. Cabell, 28 November 1820.
44 See TJ to Thomas Cooper, 7 September 1814

4 I feel – therefore I exist

Educating the head

> [Studies] perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like plants, that need pruning, by study; and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience.
>
> Francis Bacon, "On Studies"

Jefferson, in an important letter to Peter Carr (7 September 1814), writes of a "long entertained . . . hope" that Virginia would soon have a avant-garde institution of higher education "where every branch of science, deemed useful at this day, should be taught in its highest degree."[1] With that end in mind, he tells Carr he has acquainted himself with the "organization of the best seminaries in other countries, and with the opinions of the most enlightened individuals, on the subject of the sciences worthy of a place in such an institution."

Jefferson adds that he has garnered several, diverse plans for study – no two alike. Their diversity, he is convinced, is no sign of lack of wisdom by their framers, but instead the result of parochial differences, dictated by parochial needs. As evidence, he cites the unsuitability of any of the plans, unaltered, as a plan for a university in Virginia. "The example they set . . . is authority for us to select from their different institutions the materials which are good for us, and, with them, to erect a structure, whose arrangement shall correspond with our own social condition, and shall admit of enlargement in proportion to the encouragement it may merit and receive."[2]

The remainder of the letter is a synopsis of Jefferson's views on educational reform, considered as a whole, in a manner at odds with his bills of 1779 and 1817.

There are, Jefferson continues, two general classes of persons: the laboring and the learned. The laboring, comprising farmers and handicraft artists, will need a general education to enable them suitably to conduct daily affairs and participate politically in community affairs insofar as time and talents allow. The learned, comprising "scientists" in the general sense of "knowers," will acquire a general education to enable them to move on to the "general schools" (colleges or grammar schools) and "professional schools" (universities).[3]

Jefferson lists but never fully expatiates on the subjects to be taught at ward schools. They are reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography. I suspect he thought listing, because education as this level was so basic, was sufficient. The subjects to be taught at the most basic level of education, available to all citizens, have been listed in chapter 1.

Jefferson does expatiate on the subjects to be taught both in grammar schools and universities. Such expatiation usually occurs in letters to select correspondents, with interest in one or more of the subjects of higher education or with a general interest in educational philosophy.

In what follows, I expand on what Jefferson has to say concerning the subjects of higher education. For the most part, I follow his categorization of subjects to be found in his retirement library catalog. Following Francis Bacon's tripartitioning of knowledge into imagination, reason, and memory, subjects covered are to be subcategorized under the rubrics "Fine Arts," "Philosophy," and "History." My elaboration is not exhaustive, but is merely meant to give a representative sample of the sorts of issues with which Head needed to concern itself to be of utmost service to Heart. Some of the topics under the first section, "Imagination/Fine Arts," are strictly speaking matters of the aesthetic sense, but might be treated here, as their cultivation is a matter of rational assistance to the development of the aesthetic-sense faculty.

Imagination/fine arts

Other than some passing remarks on the beautiful and the sublime in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson writes little about aesthetic appreciation and the working of the aesthetic sense.[4] In consequence, we are forced to refer to his recommended readings concerning aesthetic appreciation. Foremost among those is Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism*, a work recommended to Robert Skipwith and Gen. John Minor.

Honor and interest, says Kames, require us to "second the purposes of nature" and cultivate the pleasures of the eyes and ears, the superior senses, through proper appreciation of poetry, painting, sculpture, music, gardening, and architecture. "A taste for these arts is a plant that grows naturally in many soils; but, without culture, scarce to perfection in any soil: it is susceptible of much refinement; and is, by proper care, greatly improved."[5]

Refinement being the aim of aesthetic sensibility, the aesthetic sense aligns itself with the moral sense. "In this respect, a taste in the fine arts goes hand in hand with the moral sense, to which indeed it is nearly allied," says Kames, "both of them discover what is right and what is wrong: fashion, temper, and education, have an influence to vitiate both, or to preserve them pure and untainted: neither of them are arbitrary nor local; being rooted in human nature, and governed by principles common to all men."[6]

Aesthetic sensibility, between intellectual and corporeal pleasures, has a "mixt nature" and promotes dignity and elevation. These pleasures revive and relax the spirits.

> The pleasures of the eye and the ear, being thus elevated above those of the other external senses, acquire so much dignity as to become a laudable entertainment. They are not, however, set on a level with the purely intellectual; being no less inferior in dignity to intellectual pleasures, than superior to the organic or corporeal: they indeed resemble the latter, being, like them, produced by external objects; but they also resemble the former, being, like them, produced without any sensible organic impression. Their mixt nature and middle place between organic and intellectual pleasures, qualify them to associate with both: beauty heightens all the organic feelings, as well as the intellectual: harmony, though it aspires to inflame devotion, disdains not to improve the relish of a banquet.[7]

Pleasures of the eye and ear are equally distant "from the turbulence of passion and the languor of indolence." When organic pleasures are prolonged or overindulged, they cease to satisfy and delight turns to disgust. At such time, mere cessation from stimulation does not give immediate relief. The void must be filled by an amusement, suited to relax gently the spirits. Thus, "the finer pleasures of sense, which occupy without exhausting the mind, are finely qualified to restore its usual tone after severe application to study or business, as well as after satiety from sensual gratification."[8]

Several things are worth noting. First, the aesthetic sense, like the moral sense, is an innate faculty, but needs nurture for proper functioning. Second, the aesthetic sense, a faculty distinct from the moral sense, naturally inclines to work consonant with the moral sense. Third, the aesthetic sense links corporeality with intellection, as they offer a bridge between corporeal and intellectual pleasures. Finally, aesthetic indulgence, as it were, is a perfect *intr'acte*, so to speak, between corporeal pleasure and idleness. It calms one and offers a repose after corporeal pleasure that idleness cannot give, and it keeps one from the waste of idleness without the physical demands of corporeal pleasure.

Beaux arts

The beaux arts are architecture, gardening, painting, sculpture, and music.[9] Architecture and music, covered in the next chapter, need not concern us here.

In keeping with the thesis of the next chapter, Jefferson was mostly a practicalist apropos of the fine arts. He and others of his day – for example, J. J. Rousseau, John Adams, Benjamin Rush, Richard Price, and John S. Barbour – link ostentation and luxury as symptoms of decline.[10] Nonetheless Jefferson declared himself in a letter to James Madison (20 September 1785) "an enthusiast . . . of the arts," yet the object of such enthusiasm "is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect to the world and procure them it's [*sic*] praise."

Gardening

In a letter to granddaughter Ellen Wayles Randolph (10 July 1805), Jefferson enumerates the fine arts. There is no general consent on the number or kinds of fine arts.

> No perfect definition of what is a fine art has ever yet been given. Some say that as those are mechanical arts which consist in manual operation unconnected with the understanding, those are fine arts which to manual operation join the exercise of the imagination or genius. This would comprehend sculpture, painting, architecture and gardening, but neither music, poetry, nor oratory. Others say that the sciences are objects of the understanding, the fine arts of the senses. This would be gardening, but neither poetry nor oratory. A definition which should include Poetry and Oratory and no more would be very difficult to form.

In sum, not everyone thinks gardening – "not horticulture, but the art of embellishing grounds by fancy" – is one of the fine arts. He then appeals to the authority of Lord Kames: "I think Kaims [*sic*] has justly proved this to be entitled to the appellation of a fine art. It is nearly allied to landscape painting, and accordingly we generally find the landscape painter the best designer of a garden."

It might seem queer to us today that there should have been dispute in Jefferson's day about whether gardening is a fine art. It is perhaps more the norm than the exception that Americans today use externally decorative plants to beautify their home. What is overpassed or ignored by us today is that people in Jefferson's time, if they were not farmers, needed gardens to provide at least for some of their own food. Beautification was ancillary. For example, in his "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," Jefferson writes about employment of a steward to attend to a schoolmaster's varied needs – in other words, procuring provisions, fuel, servants for cooking, waiting, house cleaning, washing, mending, and gardening.[11] To Nathaniel Bowditch (26 October 1818), he says that every professor at University of Virginia will have a separate house "containing his lecturing room with two, three or four rooms for his own accommodation according as he may have a family or no family, with kitchen, garden, etc." (see Figure 4.1).

Jefferson, however, had sufficient wealth to beautify Monticello with decorative gardens. Yet when it came to beautification, he was in large measure a practicalist. In a section "A Tour of Some of the Gardens of England" in his *Travel Journals*, Jefferson examines the gardens with Thomas Whately's description of the gardens in his book *Observations on Modern Gardening* – "I always walked over the gardens with his book in my hand" – and finds to his astonishment almost exact correspondence of words and observations. He adds, "My inquiries were directed chiefly to such practical things as might enable me to estimate the expense of making and maintaining a garden in that style." The garden at

Figure 4.1 Pavilion X. Gardens were to be behind each pavilion. (M. Andrew Holowchak)

Chiswick has an obelisk on the middle of a pond that is "useless." In general, it "shows too much of art" – an objection iterated of the garden at Blenheim. The garden at Wotton has a Corinthian arch of "a very useless appearance, inasmuch as it has no pretension to any destination." It is not an object from the house, but an "obstacle to a very pleasing distant prospect."[12]

It is not that Jefferson had no appreciation of the ornamental function of gardens. He writes William Hamilton (July 1806) for advice apropos of beautifying the grounds of Monticello. The subject, "so unique . . . and refractory," demands "much more the genius of the landscape painter & gardener than I pretend to." The need of shade from the nearly vertical summer sun makes aesthetic enjoyment nearly impossible. Defending his love of ancient Greek literature to John Brazier (24 August 1819), in an argument from luxury, he says succinctly, "I deem luxury in science to be at least as justifiable as in architecture, painting, gardening, or the other arts." To Charles Willson Peale (20 August 1811), Jefferson laments, "Here . . . we are all farmers, but not in a pleasing style. We have so little labor in proportion to our land that, although perhaps we make more profit from the same labor, we cannot give to our grounds that style of beauty which satisfies the eye of the amateur." Yield trumps consideration of beautification, and labor is wanting. He continues in an oft-quoted passage:

> I have often thought that if heaven had given me choice of my position and calling, it should have been on a rich spot of earth, well watered, and

> near a good market for the productions of the garden. No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden. Such a variety of subjects, some one always coming to perfection, the failure of one thing repaired by the success of another, and instead of one harvest a continued one through the year. Under a total want of demand except for our family table, I am still devoted to the garden. But though an old man, I am but a young gardener.

Over two years later (8 December 1813), Jefferson writes to Madam de Tessé to congratulate her on her gardens at Auenay. Of gardening, he adds, "No occupation can be more delightful or useful." He then turns to the botanical "spoils" of Captain Lewis's westerly expedition. "Some of them are curious, some ornamental, some useful, and some may by culture be made acceptable to our tables." He mentions a certain snow-berry bush, which has "a great produce of berries of the size of currants, and literally as white as snow, which remain on the bush through the winter, after its leaves have fallen, and make it an object as singular as it is beautiful."

Painting and sculpture

Jefferson unquestionably had an appreciation of art – his collection of paintings, busts, and Indian artifacts at Monticello, for illustration, attests to that – but his appreciation was neither Freudian nor autotelic. Unlike Freud for whom artistic appreciation was a matter of entering the unconscious mind of an artist and disclosing the motives beneath the work, Jefferson cared nowise about the psychological motives of artistic creation. Moreover, though he is committed to the existence of an aesthetic sense, he gives little indication of being able to appreciate beauty for its own sake. For example, he recognizes that the "entertainments of fiction" are pleasant as well as useful, but counts as codswallop literature that "fails to fix . . . the principles and practices of virtue."[13] Portraiture and sculpture are evaluated by exactness of resemblance. Thus, he recommends none other than Houdon for a statue of Washington for only Houdon can create the best likeness of the president.[14] Having selected the figurines of Minerva, Diana, and Apollo for Abigail Adams (25 September 1785) and straining to select a fourth while in France, he opts for Mars in preference to Venus, for though "Wisdom is our guide, and the Song and Chase our supreme delight, . . . we offer adoration to that tutelar God also who rocked the cradle of our birth, who has accepted our infant offerings & has shown himself the patron of our rights & avenger of our wrongs." In sum, he is moved more by what the figurines signify than their beauty.

Consider also this passage in which Jefferson, while in France, writes to his daughter Mary, at a convent in France, about "nightingales in full chorus" (21 May 1787):

> I write you, my dear Patsey, from the canal of Languedoc, on which I am at present sailing, as I have been for a week past, cloudless skies above, limpid

> waters below, and on each hand a row of nightingales in full chorus. This delightful bird had given me a rich treat before, at the fountain of Vaucluse. After visiting the tomb of Laura at Avignon, I went to see this fountain – a noble one of itself, and rendered famous forever by the songs of Petrarch, who lived near it. I arrived there somewhat fatigued and sat down by the fountain to repose myself. It gushes, of the size of a river, from a secluded valley of the mountains, the ruins of Petrarch's chateau being perched on a rock two hundred feet perpendicular above. To add to the enchantment of the scene, every tree and bush was filled with nightingales in full song. I think you told me that you had not yet noticed this bird. As you have trees in the garden of the convent, there might be nightingales in them, and this is the season of their song. Endeavor, my dear, to make yourself acquainted with the music of this bird, that when you return to your own country, you may be able to estimate its merit in comparison with that of the mocking-bird. The latter has the advantage of singing through a great part of the year, whereas the nightingale sings about five or six weeks in the spring, and a still shorter term, and with a more feeble voice, in the fall.

The passage indicates limited, if any, true aesthetic appreciation. His aim is comparative. He wishes his daughter to be able to distinguish the nightingale's song, with "more feeble voice," from that of mockingbird. He wishes his daughter to know that spring is the season of nightingales, while mockingbirds sing throughout most of the year – in other words, that the capacity to discriminate the varied voices of birds functions as a sort of clock of the seasons. Moreover, given Jefferson's intendment in *Notes on the State of Virginia* of showing that the animals of America are at least as robust as them of Europe, it is probable that Jefferson's own attention to "nightingales in full song" while he is in France is a matter of comparing European nightingales with American nightingales. What this and the other examples illustrate is that Jefferson is a deep-dyed practicalist when it comes to beauty.

Still, Jefferson does exhibit some non-banausic aesthetic appreciation for works of art. He writes to Charles Bellini (30 September 1785) concerning the fine arts in Europe: "Were I to proceed to tell you how much I enjoy their architecture, sculpture, painting, music, I should want words. It is in these arts they shine." While traveling through southern France and northern Italy, he observes to George Wythe (16 September 1787), "In architecture, painting, sculpture, I found much amusement." Yet it is agriculture that most grips him, for he finds "many objects of which might be adopted with us to great advantage." Once again, practical considerations trump pure aesthetical considerations.

In Query VI of *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson writes of budding American genius:

> As in philosophy and war, so in government, in oratory, in painting, in the plastic art, we might show that America, though but a child of yesterday, has already given hopeful proofs of genius, as well as of the nobler kinds,

> which arouse the best feelings of man, which call him into action, which substantiate his freedom, and conduct him to happiness, as of the subordinate, which serve to amuse him only.

The qualifying clause is critical and Kamesian. It implies that painting or sculpture that does not elevate Americans – arouse the best feelings, incite appropriate action, substantiate freedom, and promote happiness or flourishing – is idle amusement and, thus, worth little.

Jefferson says to John Rutledge (19 June 1788) that painting and statuary are "too expensive" for Americans. "It would be useless therefore and preposterous for us to endeavor to make ourselves connoisseurs in those arts. They are worth seeing, but not studying."

The parturient final sentence betrays an attitude similar to that which Aristotle had vis-à-vis competitive sport.[15] Aristotle favored training in gymnastics so long as it was prescribed early in life, before reason was fully developed, and was undertaken ultimately for the sake of cultivating ethical character, not as an end itself. Physical training had to be light so as to promote and not impede growth. He says, "The proper physical condition, therefore, is one that is achieved by exertion, but not by violent exertion, and that promotes not just one thing, as the athletic condition does, but the actions of free people."[16] The competitions of professional sportsmen were extravagant and of no social benefit. They were mere tinsel displays of excess. Something similar might be said of Jefferson concerning painting and sculpture.

Belles lettres

Rhetoric and oratory

Jefferson writes to Thomas Mann Randolph (6 July 1787):

> As soon as such a foundation is laid in them, as you may build on as you please, hereafter, I suppose you will proceed to your main objects, Politics, Law, Rhetoric, and History. As to these, the place where you study them is absolutely indifferent. I should except Rhetoric, a very essential member of them, and which I suppose must be taught to advantage where you are. You would do well, therefore, to attend the public exercises in this branch also, and to do it with very particular diligence.

Jefferson says to John Garland Jefferson (11 June 1790): "Should there be any little intervals in the day not otherwise occupied fill them up by reading Lowthe's grammar, Blair's lectures on rhetoric, Mason on poetic & prosaic numbers, Bolingbroke's works for the sake of the stile, which is declamatory & elegant, the English poets for the sake of the style also." To Ellen Wayles Randolph (10 July 1805), Jefferson says that the number of the fine arts have not been fixed by convention, though most include painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and

poetry. "To these," he adds, "some have added Oratory, including within that Rhetoric which is the art of style and composition."

In his "Bill for Amending the Constitution of William and Mary" (1779), he proposes a professorship for logic, ethics, and rhetoric – suggesting an important link between speaking and writing rationally, honestly, and persuasively. Patrick Henry mastered the last category, but in the words of Gary Wills, his speaking was "pure music without logic."[17] The great Indian chief Logan, in contrast, possessed rationality, honesty, and persuasiveness. Jefferson writes in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*: "I may challenge the whole orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, and of any more eminent orator, if Europe has furnished more eminent, to produce a single passage, superior to the speech of Logan, a Mingo chief, to Lord Dunmore, when governor of this state."

In *Thomas Jefferson and the Rhetoric of Virtue*, James and Allan Golden write that their research led to an inevasible link between rhetoric and virtue in Jefferson's thinking. "A quest for virtue was the guiding principle of his life, and the crucial duty of discourse . . . was to move individuals and society as a whole upwards on the scale of good."[18]

Jefferson, in an advisory letter to Gen. John Minor (30 August 1814), recommends that oratory and rhetoric be among the subjects read from dark till bedtime. Apropos of oratory, he commends a course of exercises:

> This portion of time (borrowing some of the afternoon when the days are long and the nights short) is to be applied to acquiring the art of writing & speaking correctly by the following exercises. Criticise the style of any books whatever, committing your criticisms to writing. Translate into the different styles, to wit, the elevated, the middling and the familiar. Orators and poets will furnish subjects of the first, historians of the second, & epistolary and Comic writers of the third – Undertake, at first, short compositions, as themes, letters &c., paying great attention to the correctness and elegance of your language. Read the Orations of Demosthenes & Cicero. Analyse these orations and examine the correctness of the disposition, language, figures, states of the cases, arguments &c. Read good samples of English eloquence, some of these may be found in Small's American speaker, and some in Carey's Criminal Recorder, in which last the defence of Eugene Aram is distinguishable as a model of logic, condensation of matter, & classical purity of style. Exercise yourself afterwards in preparing orations on feigned cases. In this observe rigorously the disposition of Blair into Introduction, Narration &c. Adapt your language & figures to the several parts of the oration, and suit your arguments to the audience before whom it is supposed to be spoken. This is your last and most important exercise. No trouble should therefore be spared.

He adds that the practice of arguing *in utramque partim* is essential for oratorical excellence. He urges Minor to find another person engaged in study of oratory so that each can "take [up] different sides of the same cause." Each is to prepare

pleadings, "according to the custom of the bar," where the plaintiff begins, the defense answers, and the plaintiff responds to the defense. He recommends also the practice of exercising oratorical skill in the presence of someone that can act as a judge.

Given Jefferson's purchases of progress and truth and the disrelish Jefferson acquired for the meretricious oratorical showmanship of Patrick Henry – "he said the strongest things in the finest language, but without logic, without arrangement, desultorily"[19] – it is clear that Jefferson did not appreciate style without substance. He states Demosthenes's orations have a "dense logic" that Cicero's orations lack, but praises Cicero for being "able, learned, laborious, practiced in the business of the world, and honest."[20] Cicero, in short, is authentic.

Criticism

The importance of criticism for education cannot be underappreciated. Condorcet states it makes erudition "truly productive." In breaking free from the religious persecution of medieval times that grounded itself in early texts, scholars recognized that ancient texts still must be read, but they must not be assumed true because of their authorship. "Men were aware that, however they might admire [the ancients], they were entitled to judge them." In sum, in the contest between reason and authority, criticism sharpened reason to give promise of a triumph over authority.[21]

"If you are fond of speculation the books under the head of Criticism will afford you much pleasure," writes Jefferson to Robert Skipwith (3 August 1771), in reply to a letter by Skipwith (17 July 1771) for a list of books for someone "who understands but little of the classicks and who has not leisure for any intricate or tedious study."[22] The books he lists are Kames's *Elements of Criticism*, Burke's *The Sublime and the Beautiful*, Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty*, Reid's *On the Human Mind*, Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Johnson's *Dictionary*, and Capell's *Propulsions.* To Gen. John Minor many years later (30 August 1814), Jefferson lists John Horne Tooke's *Diversions of Purley* and the *Edinburg Review* to Kames's work. Thus, Kames's *Elements of Criticism*, listed as recommended reading in 1771 as well as in 1814, can be taken as a work that passed the test of time for Jefferson and a guide to the science of criticism in Jefferson's day.

The aim of criticism is not morality, states Kames, but to seek out those objects that are by nature agreeable and disagreeable and to discover "the genuine principles of the fine arts." He adds:

> The man who aspires to be a critic in these arts, must pierce still deeper: he must acquire a clear perception of what objects are lofty, what low, what proper or improper, what manly, and what mean or trivial. Hence a foundation for reasoning upon the taste of any individual, and for passing sentence upon it: where it is conformable to principles, we can pronounce with certainty that it is correct; otherwise, that it is incorrect, and perhaps

> whimsical. Thus the fine arts, like morals, become a rational science; and, like morals, may be cultivated to a high degree of refinement.

For Kames, the advantages of criticism, qua rational science, are numerous. First, being thoroughly acquainted with the principles of the fine arts, we derive from those arts great pleasure. Feeling without judgment, in contrast, is mere pastime.[23] Second, through criticism, the mind becomes inured to "the most enticing sort of logic." Reasoning leads to habit and habit readies the mind for "subjects more intricate and abstract."[24] Third, critical reasoning apropos of the fine arts, unlike mathematical or metaphysical reasoning, is "of the same kind with those which regulate our conduct," as both improve the "common affairs of life." In sum, criticism prepares persons for dignified and proper social interaction.[25] Fourth, criticism bolsters the functioning of the heart as well as the head. It moderates selfishness, mitigates passion and violence of pursuit, tempers pride and envy, and "delights in the virtuous dispositions and actions of others."[26] Fifth, criticism, leading to delicacy of taste, incites sympathy, "the capital branch of every social passion." Sympathy leads to a communication of joys and sorrows and of hopes and fears and sympathetic communication leads to mutual benefaction.[27] The last advantage of criticism – that criticism, inciting admiration of virtue and disgust of vice, is a great support to morality – I leave in Kames's own words:

> No occupation attaches a man more to his duty, than that of cultivating a taste in the fine arts: a just relish of what is beautiful, proper, elegant, and ornamental, in writing or painting, in architecture or gardening, is a fine preparation for the same just relish of these qualities in character and behaviour. To the man who has acquired a taste so acute and accomplished, every action wrong or improper must be highly disgustful: if, in any instance, the overbearing power of passion sway him from his duty, he returns to it with redoubled resolution never to be swayed a second time: he has now an additional motive to virtue, a conviction derived from experience, that happiness depends on regularity and order, and that disregard to justice or propriety never fails to be punished with shame and remorse.[28]

Philology

Jefferson, I have shown in chapter 1 of *Dutiful Correspondent*, was unquestionably a lover of languages and a lover of words. He stated a preference for reading Greek and Latin authors in their original languages. He also spoke French and Italian in addition to his native English, and he could read Spanish to some degree.[29] Moreover, his writings are replete with comments on the study and acquisition of languages, the significance of ancient languages, the relative merits of present languages, the indispensability of neoterism, the comparative study of languages, and the numerous and varied Indian "tongues." As his "Thoughts on English Prosody" shows, he also studied sonority, meter, rhyme, and verse.

Jefferson was a staunch advocate of neoterism. To Joseph Milligan (6 April 1816), he says, "Nothing is more evident than that as we advance in the knowledge of new things, and of new combinations of old ones, we must have new words to express them." Elsewhere Jefferson castigates conservatives that would prohibit new words from entry into English and fix it to Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* – a sort of language fixed in stone. A language, he argues, moved to a different climate at another part of the globe must change with the move. To John Waldo (16 August 1813), he speaks of change as enlargement. "[The English] language's enlargement must be the consequence, to a certain degree, of its transplantation from the latitude of London into every climate of the globe; and the greater the degree the more precious will it become as the organ of the development of the human mind." In short, enlargement of language paves the way for progress in the sciences.

To John Adams (15 August 1820), Jefferson writes of a friendly embrace of neology, as it gives a language "copiousness and euphony." He continues: "Dictionaries are but the depositories of words already legitimated by usage. Society is the work-shop in which new ones are elaborated. When an individual uses a new word, if illformed it is rejected in society, if wellformed, adopted, and, after due time, laid up in the depository of dictionaries." Usage over time sets the parameters of grammar; established words do not determine usage – at least, not forever.

Ancient Greek, of which Jefferson was particularly fond, was a language especially friendly to neologism. Jefferson's letter to John Waldo (16 August 1813) explains why. He begins with a listing of Greek roots and commonly accepted terminations in an effort to show that the copiousness and versatility of the Ancient Greek language was not in the number of their roots, but in "the infinite diversification which each of these admitted." He then turns to English roots and many of its idiomatic terminations, which he lists as follows:

> *Subst*. Gener-ation-ator; degener-acy; gener-osity-ousness-alship-alissimo; king-dom-ling; joy-ance; enjoy-er-ment; herb-age-alist; sanct-uary-imony-itude; royal-ism; lamb-kin; child-hood; bishop-ric; proced-ure; horseman-ship; worthi-ness.
> *Adj*. Gener-ant-ative-ic-ical-able-ous-al; joy-ful-less-some; herb-y; accous-escent-ulent; child-ish; wheat-en.
> *Verb*. Gener-ate-alize.
> *Part*. Gener-ating-ated.
> *Adv*. Gener-al-ly.

English, thus, has the capacity for greater copiousness than Greek.

Having a neologism-friendly language goes beyond euphony and copiousness. It allows for utmost precision of meaning and clarity of expression. That is a point made plain by Condorcet in his *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind* – a book, under the rubric "ethics," Jefferson recommended to John Minor.[30] For Condorcet, an imprecise language for science

would be an impedance to the inevasible progress of the human mind over time – an impedance especially to a person of limited leisure and an impedance especially to his moral improvement.[31]

Jefferson then considers "another source of copiousness more abundant than that of termination" – the composition of the root along with members of its family, with prepositions and with other words. Here English has the capacity for distended copiousness, since many of its prepositions and words are based on Greek and Latin. For illustration, if one were take the English root of the verb "to place" (place) and the commonly accepted Americanized roots from the Greek and Latin roots of the word of the same meaning (*thesis* from θεσις and *location* from *locatio*) and add to them prepositions, one could fashion the following words.

English	*Greek*	*Latin*	*Latin*
mis-place	amphi-thesis	a-location	inter-location
after-place	ana-thesis	ab-location	intro-location
gain-place	anti-thesis	abs-location	juxta-location
fore-place	apo-thesis	al-location	ob-location
hind-place	dia-thesis	anti-location	per-location
by-place	ek-thesis	circum-location	post-location
for-place	en-thesis	cis-location	pre-location
fro-place	epi-thesis	col-location	preter-location
in-place	cata-thesis	contra-location	pro-location
on-place	para-thesis	de-location	retro-location
over-place	peri-thesis	di-location	re-location
out-place	pro-thesis	dis-location	se-location
thorough-place	pros-thesis	e-location	sub-location
under-place	syn-thesis	ex-location	super-location
up-place	hyper-thesis	extra-location	trans-location
with-place	hypo-thesis	il-location	ultra-location

What Jefferson has in mind here, among other things, is that one could come up with three distinct words with the same meaning – for example, *over-place* (English), *hyper-thesis* (Greek), and *super-location* (Latin) – as well as additional words with the same meaning by mixing English with Greek, Greek with Latin, or Latin with English – for example, *over-thesis, hyper-location,* and *super-place.* In such a manner, "the language would become, in strength, beauty, variety, and every circumstance which gives perfection to language, were it permitted freely to draw from all its legitimate sources."

To J. Evelyn Denison (9 November 1825), Jefferson recognizes a debt to Dr. Hickes and Mr. Bosworth for their efforts in the preservation of Anglo-Saxon. "I think it, however, a misfortune," he adds, "that they have endeavored to give it too much of a learned form, to mount it on all the scaffolding of the Greek and Latin, to load it with their genders, numbers, cases, declensions,

conjugations, &c." It should be stripped of "these embarrassments" – the formalities listed in this section – and vested in Roman black-letter type.

There is also Jefferson's interest in the languages of Native Americans. From his days as a boy, Jefferson was intrigued by American Indians, and that intrigue manifested itself over the years in a study of their varied languages. When he writes William Dunbar (12 January 1801) to thank him for sending "the little vocabularies of the Bedais, Jankawis, and Teghas," he has already collected some 30 different "tongues." When Jefferson writes to Benjamin Barton eight years later (21 September 1809), he mentions a collection of some 50 "vocabularies."[32]

Reason/philosophy

Jefferson laconically labels mathematics, what we would call arithmetic, the science of quantity, and geometry, the science of space. The labels, the latter especially, bespeak a non-Platonist's view of the sciences.

Mathematics (arithmetic and geometry)

Jefferson writes little about arithmetic and geometry per se in his writings, but that is no indication of their insignificance in education from ward schooling to university-level education. Arithmetic and geometry, like the languages, are substratal sciences. Jefferson writes in the "Rockfish Gap Report" (1818) that "numerical arithmetic" and the "elements of mensuration" are to be taught in ward schools, higher arithmetic and geometry at the colleges and the University of Virginia. Arithmetic education culminates in such subjects as statics ("matter . . . in a state of rest"), hydrostatics ("the laws of fluids . . . at rest or in equilibrio"), dynamics ("the laws of solids in motion"), pneumatics ("weight, motion, condensation, rarefaction, &c." of air), acoustics ("the theory of sound"), and optics ("the laws of light and vision"), among other things. Geometric education culminates in "Transcendental Geometry (that of all other curves – especially projectiles), and Military (fortification) and Naval Architecture."

Being a substratal science, the significance of arithmetic and geometry is best exemplified by application. I illustrate through the sciences of agriculture and geography.[33]

To George Washington (14 May 1794), Jefferson writes of the sorry condition of his lands upon returning to Monticello after public service. He adopts the plan of zoning this arable land – and he has now opened up much used land – into six fields.

> I have therefore determined on a division of my farms into 6. fields, to be put under this rotation: 1st. year, wheat; 2d., corn, potatoes, peas; 3d., rye or wheat, according to circumstances; 4th. & 5th., clover where the fields will bring it, & buckwheat dressings where they will not; 6th, folding, and buckwheat dressings. But it will take me from 3. to. 6. years to get this plan underway.

The plan, due to the poor condition of his lands upon his absence, will take a few years to bear fruit. He adds, "Time, patience & perseverance must be the remedy; and the maxim of your letter, 'slow & sure,' is not less a good one in agriculture than in politics."

One year later, Jefferson decides on a seven-field plan. He writes to James Monroe (26 May 1795): "I have divided my farms into seven fields on this rotation. 1. wheat. 2. peas & potatoes. 3. corn & potatoes. 4. peas & potatoes till I can get the vetch from Europe. 5. rye. 6. clover. 7. clover. My lands were so worn that they required this gentle treatment to recover them. Some of yours are as far gone."[34] In each field, there was a granary, four men, four women, four horses, and four oxen. Overall, there were four teams of laborers for plowing.

Jefferson's *Garden Book* and *Farm Book* are fraught with numerous illustrations of the use of arithmetic and geometry to plan out gardens and areas for crops.

In an 1809 entry from the *Garden Book*, he writes of George Divers's plan for plotting out certain vegetables.[35]

> Celery 400. f. running measure, to wit 10. Rows of my squares 3. f part 4 is better
> Salsafy 320. f = 8. Rows of my squares of 40 f. at 6. I every way
> Carrots 320. f = 8. d°. 12. I apart
> parsneps 200. f = 5.d°. 12. I apart
> beet 200. f = 5. d°. 12. I apart

In the *Farm Boo*k, Jefferson adds an entry on 9 August 1795 concerning a comparative experiment on the yields of equal parcels of land.[36]

> The Knobfield was sown the last fall with wheat on the North side of the road, and rye on the South side. before harvest I laid off an acre on each side of the road where the ground appeared nearly equal. that of the wheat however was somewhat the best, but the wheat & rye having been sown at the same time, which was very late for the wheat & in good time for the rye, this circumstance was thought to make up for the difference in the quality of the ground. The wheat & rye being stacked separately, each stack measured exactly 4.8 cubic yards; & the wheat yielded 3. Bushels 3. Pecks, & the rye 3½ bushels of clean grain.
>
> the bulk of wheat in the stack then was
> to the bulk of grain as 129.6:4.6875::27.64:1
> that of rye . . . as 129.6:4.375::29.62:1

This entry – and there are numerous others like it – testifies not only to a propensity for scientific farming but also to a love of tinkering with numbers and shapes.

The *Farm Book* contains a large quantity of entries, given as algorithms or equations. In his Diary of Harvest, Jefferson writes, "13. Cutters × 12 day = 156.

which gives near 2. a^{s}. a day for each cutter, supposing 300. acres."[37] He writes concerning a threshing machine:

> [It] would take 4. men & a girl to work, and they would get out about 40. bushels in 12 hours, when the machine comes to work glib and smooth. one may say on the whole that [the threshing machine] gets out the double of what the same men could thresh. but infinitely cleaner. there did not appear to be 1. grain in 100. or 150. Left in the straw.[38]

Finally, he says apropos of cattle on a farm: "The number of cattle to be kept on a farm must be proportioned to the food furnished by the farm. as this increases by the progress of improvement, the number of cattle may be increased, & with that the quantity of manure."[39]

Jefferson also applied mathematics in designing a state-of-the-art plow mouldboard. He wished to create a mouldboard that was lighter, easily made, capable of furrowing deeper with less resistance, and readily and exactly replicated.[40] The last condition was especially important, as plows in Jefferson's day were "copied by the eye," each noticeably distinct. "I have imagined and executed a mould-board which may be mathematically demonstrated to be perfect, as far as perfection depends on mathematical principles," Jefferson writes to John Taylor (29 December 1794), "and one great circumstance in its favor is that it may be made by the most bungling carpenter, and cannot possibly vary a hair's breadth in its form, but by gross negligence." He continues: "It is on the principle of two wedges combined at right angles, the first in the direct line of the furrow to raise the turf gradually, the other across the furrow to turn it over gradually. For both these purposes the wedge is the instrument of the least resistance."[41]

Of Jefferson's mathematical manner of harvesting, Robert Shalhope says, "The emphasis Jefferson placed on order and calculation in his harvesting scheme reflected a basic trait in his character: had had a passion for measuring, calculating, counting, and figuring."[42]

Wide application of arithmetic and geometry is readily apparent in geography and its varied applications – exploration of unexplored lands and zonation of and building on them.

In a message to Capt. Meriwether Lewis (18 January 1803), Jefferson writes of one of the ancillary aims of the westward expedition. "The interests of commerce place the principal object within the constitutional powers and care of Congress, and that it should incidentally advance the geographical knowledge of our own continent." Use of the word "geography," grasped as "the science of space," is telling. James Rhonda writes:

> Like his fellow American geographers – Jefferson was a geographer in the broadest sense – the Virginian saw the landscape in terms of balance and symmetry. The mountains and rivers on the western side of the continent must surely be similar to those on the eastern side. The Rocky or Stony

> Mountains were certain to be like the Applachians [*sic*] – heavily timbered and blessed with many passes and water gaps.[43]

Much can be said. Geography offers a weighty clue to Jefferson's Arcadian vision, with America being an instantiation of that vision. America is to be a nation that spans the northern continent, a nation predominantly of farmers, a nation uninvolved in the wrangling and tensions of European nations, and a nation of self-sufficient, free, and too-industrious-to-be-hawkish citizens – each intimately involved in the goings-on of the nation insofar as time and talents allow. The key to instantiation was to tame what might appear to be the intimidatingly wild landscape. The tool to domesticating the beast was geometry, used with sangfroid and inventiveness. Proper use necessitated aesthetic vision – viz., vision of the beautiful behind the sublime.

For Jefferson in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, complete aesthetic experience of nature comprises both a first-glance perspective and a distant-finishing perspective. The first-glance perspective of nature is overwhelming – "one of boundless and incognizable power and violence." Yet the finishing-touch perspective is as "placid and delightful, as [the former] is wild and tremendous."[44] Jefferson sums, "The sublime moves, the beautiful charms."[45]

Descartes and Newton gave Jefferson the tools to charm the sublime landscape. Descartes bequeathed a three-dimension geometrical coordinate system. Newton bequeathed infinite and uniform space, in which to impose the grid, and infinite and uniform time, in which imposition could occur. For Jefferson, it was merely a matter surveying the land and imposing the grid on it.[46] "An Ordinance for Establishing a Land Office for the United States" (1784), of which Jefferson was a part, begins:

> Be it ordained by the United States in Congress assembled, that the territory ceded by individual States to the United States, when the same shall have been purchased of the Indian inhabitants, & laid off into States, shall be disposed of in the following manner. It shall be divided into Hundreds of ten geographical miles square, each mile containing 6086 feet and four tenths of a foot, by lines to be run & marked due North & South, & others crossing these at right angles, the first of which lines, each way, shall be at ten miles distance from one of the corners, of the State within which they shall be. But if the Indian purchase shall not have included any one of the corners of the state, the lines shall then be run at the termination of integral miles as measured from some one of the corners, but shall be extended, by actual marks, only so far as the purchase extends. These Hundreds shall be subdivided into lots of one mile square each, or 850 acres and four tenths of an acre by marked lines running in like manner due North & South and others crossing these at right angles.

Jefferson also wished at one point to impose a checkerboard grid on cities to keep away the scourge of yellow fever by allowing for enhanced ventilation.[47]

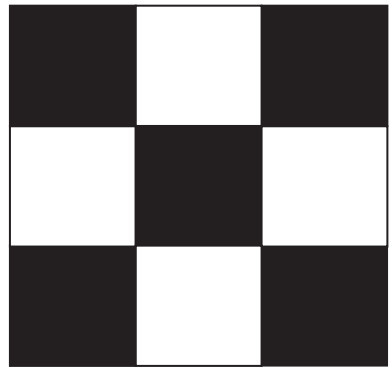

Figure 4.2 Checkerboard pattern for streets. Each black square represents a house, and each white square, open space. Streets or, at least, passageways would presumably run horizontally and vertically, between the houses. (M. Andrew Holowchak)

To Comte de Volney (8 February 1805), Jefferson elaborates through use of a diagram (see Figure 4.2): "Let the black squares only be building squares, and the white ones be left open, in turf and trees. Every square of houses will be surrounded by four open squares, and every house will front an open square. The atmosphere of such a town would be like that of the country, insusceptible of the miasmata which produce yellow fever."

For the study of "Mathematiques," there are two books, Jefferson tells Gen. John Minor (30 August 1814), that stands out from all others – Jean Étienne Montucla's *Histoire des mathématiques* and Jean Bernard Charles Bossut's *Essai sur l'histoire génerale des mathématiques*. For geography, he recommends John Pinkerton's *Modern Geography*.

Laws of nature and of nations (politics)

"The Gothic idea that we are to look backwards instead of forwards for the improvement of the human mind," Jefferson writes to Joseph Priestley (27 January 1800), "and to recur to the annals of our ancestors for what is most perfect in government, in religion & in learning, is worthy of those bigots in religion & government, by whom it has been recommended, & whose purposes it would answer. But it is not an idea which this country will endure." To John Wayles Eppes (18 September 1813), he says: "We, this age, and in this country especially, are advanced beyond those [ancient] notions of natural law. We acknowledge that our children are born free; and that freedom is the gift of nature."

To Isaac H. Tiffany (6 August 1816), Jefferson writes that the style of society in antiquity was so different that "little edification can be obtained from their writings on the subject of government." He continues: "They had just ideas of the value of personal liberty, but none at all of the structure of government best calculated to preserve it. They knew no medium between a democracy (the only pure republic, but impracticable beyond the limits of a town) and an

abandonment of themselves to an aristocracy, or a tyranny independent of the people." In short, they knew only freedom and tyranny, as if they were contradictories, not contraries. They did not grasp representative government, which could secure independence and rights through popular election of representatives, governing for short periods. "It seems not to have occurred [to them] that where the citizens cannot meet to transact their business in person, they alone have the right to choose the agents who shall transact it; and that in this way a republican, or popular government, of the second grade of purity, may be exercised over any extent of country." Thus representative democracy has made de trop the study of ancient politics, which could only envisage democracy in a city-state of limited size.[48] "The introduction of this new principle of representative democracy has rendered useless almost everything written before on the structure of government; and, in a great measure, relieves our regret, if the political writings of Aristotle, or of any other ancient, have been lost, or are unfaithfully rendered or explained to us."[49]

Given Jefferson's liberal eudaimonism – the normative notion that freedom and happiness are the ends of politics, the former subserving the latter[50] – the laws of nature and nations is an especially important subject of education. As the passages will show, here as in ethics and science in general, Jefferson is a dyed-in-the-wool progressivist.[51] They will also show that for Jefferson the chief function of history is to serve as a harbinger of continual progress. Jefferson had little appreciation for the study of history merely as a vehicle for knowing the past. The obsolescence of ancient politics "relieves our regret" concerning lost or contaminated treatises. *Pace* the filiopietistic and inertial Federalists, the injustices of the past are not evidence of reprise of the same injustices in the future. The pattern is not static. To the discernible eye, people are moving and moving forward. Republicanism is a signpost of political progress.

Jefferson struggled to define "republicanism," and that struggle is most evident in 1816. To P. S. Dupont de Nemours (24 April 1816), he lists many "moral principles" upon which republican government is founded – for example, the innateness of morality, compassion, and generosity; right independent of force; a right to property; no justification of a right to obstruct others; social justice as the fundamental law of society; no justification of coercive actions by any majority on any individual; and political action by all citizens according to their competency in affairs within their competency and election of representatives in affairs outside their competency.[52] To John Taylor (28 May 1816), he writes:

> Were I to assign to this term a precise and definite idea, I would say, purely and simply, [republicanism] means a government by its citizens in mass, acting directly and personally, according to rules established by the majority; and that every other government is more or less republican, in proportion as it has in this composition more or less of this ingredient of the direct action of the citizens.

To Samuel Kercheval (12 July 1816), he writes thrice of the "mother principle": "Governments are republican only in proportion as they embody the will

of their people, and execute it"; "A government is republican in proportion as every member composing it has his equal voice in the direction of its concerns . . . by representatives chosen by himself, and responsible to him as short periods"; and "The true foundation of republican government is the equal right of every citizen, in his person and property, and in their management."[53]

In keeping with the empiricism of the day and the excitement of Enlightenment thinking – the French philosophes especially – Jefferson was proposing a radically new way of thinking about governing: an "experiment," as he and others were wont to call it, of republican government. Jeffersonian republicanism was both foundationally democratic and meritocratic. It was foundationally democratic in that government was ultimately for the sake of the people and the people were ultimately responsible for the governors elected. It was foundationally meritocratic in that the basic republican schema aimed to cull both intelligence and virtue for the highest and most demanding offices of public service – in other words, politics and science.[54]

As we have already seen, the key to successful implementation of Jefferson's republican schema was education of the masses. Without general education, the people would not possess sufficient tools to conduct their own affairs efficiently, not have the capacity for some level of political participation, and not be able to oversee the political activities of elected officials.

Added to the difficulty of making elementary education accessible to all citizens was the difficulty of the conservatism of extant "institutions," which merely reinforced the notion of an aristocracy of heredity and wealth. "I have great confidence in the common sense of mankind in general: but it requires a great deal to get the better of notions which our tutors have instilled into our minds while incapable of questioning them, & to rise superior to antipathies strongly rooted," Jefferson says in a letter to Jeremiah Moor (14 August 1800).

Jefferson's solution to the imbroglio, in part, was to combat the ill effects of political conservatism by not allowing the poison of conservatism to take root at the University of Virginia. That we saw in chapter 2 through the caution he aimed to employ in selecting the right sort of professor of law for his institution as well as in allowing only the right sort of texts to be used.[55] To John Norvell (14 June 1807), Jefferson notes there "does not exist a good elementary work on the organization of society into civil government," but he recommends John Locke's *Two Treatises on Government*, Algernon Sidney's *Discourses concerning Government*, Joseph Priestley's *Essay on the First Principles of Government*, Nathaniel Chipman's *Principles of Government*, and *The Federalist Papers* as well as, perhaps, Cesare Beccaria's *On Crimes and Punishments*. For study of Political Economy, he recommends Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and Jean-Baptiste Say's *A Treatise on Political Economy*.[56] With the publication of Destutt de Tracy's *Commentaire sur l' esprit des lois de Montesquieu*, Jefferson finds his perfect text, an idoneous complement to his republican principles. He translates the book and sends it to a publisher in Philadelphia in 1811 to have it published. "What is the best elementary book on the principles of government? None in the world equal to the Review of Montesquieu," he writes to

Joseph C. Cabell (2 February 1816). "It has the advantage, too, of being equally sound and corrective of the principles of Political Economy."

Memory/history

In what follows, I treat history distinct from languages, though Jefferson tended to collapse the two disciplines, as the languages, both ancient and modern, could be learned through study of history.

History

Jefferson believed history to be the most important part of the grammar-school curriculum, as it was capable of inculcating moral lessons to shape a benevolent citizenry. Thus, the function of a historian was to write history of the right sort – history with a moral message. This suggests that history for Jefferson was in some measure Aesopian.

In *Notes on the State of Virginia,* Jefferson writes:

> History, by apprising the people of the past, will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it May assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views.[57]

In "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," he says:

> The most effectual means of preventing the perversion of power into tyranny are to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts, which history exhibits, that possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes.[58]

The intimation is that Jefferson thought history ought in some harmless measure to be propagandist – in other words, it ought to be done for the sake of advancing republicanism. That much is true. Since governing up to the present, for Jefferson, has mostly been in the hands of the wealthy and wellborn, and since the wealthy and wellborn tend to govern with an eye to their own best interest, history, he relates to John Norvell (14 June 1807), is a lesson in bad governing. Historical accounts too – consider John Adams's "Defence of the Constitutions of the Government of the United States" and "Discourses on Davila" – have been written to perpetuate the canard that only the wealthy and wellborn are fit to rule. Jefferson disavowed such "Toryism" and sought "Whiggish" accounts of history, hence his avowed repellency of Hume's *History*

of England[59] and the Humean notion that liberty must always be tethered by authority. Hume writes, "In all governments, there is a perpetual intestine struggle, open or secret, between Authority and Liberty; and neither of them can ever absolutely prevail in the contest." While liberty has inundated popular British opinion, there is occurring slowly a preference for monarchy. "The tide has run long, and with some rapidity, to the side of popular government, and is just beginning to turn towards monarchy."[60] Hence, there is Jefferson's preference for John Baxter's republicanized *A New and Impartial History of England*.[61]

Again, one must grasp fully what Jefferson takes his republicanism to be. Science for Jefferson is progressive, but so too are morality and politics. Thus, his republicanism, democratic and meritocratic in essence, was to him an advance, in keeping with the advance of morality, over the filiopietistic artificial aristocracies that predominated until Jefferson's day. Whereas escomatage and deception have been the custom of artificial aristocracies, truth and transparence would be the practice of republicanism. To James Madison (20 February 1784), Jefferson writes favorably of "*Chatellux* [*sic*] *Journal*" of the American Revolution. "There are about six sentences of offensive bagatelles, which are all of them publicly known, because having respected individual characters they were like carrion for the buzzard curiosity. All the rest of the book (and it is a 4to of 186 pages) is either entertaining, or instructive & would be highly flattering to the Americans." Chastellux, Jefferson notes, has given the best extant account of the major American battles. He does not take British historical accounts at face value. Instead, he has visited all the principal battlefields and enquired minutely into the detail of the actions.

In a letter to the editor (29 August 1787) of *Journal de Paris*, Jefferson complains of certain colored accounts of American history. Much of his life he has labored in writing letters to correct fictive accounts. Here specifically Jefferson rebuffs one account given of Pennsylvania congressman John Dickinson's signing of the Declaration of Independence. Dickinson's name, contrary to the account, was not among those of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. "If the histories of d'Auberteuil & of Longchamps, and the travels of the Abbé Robin can be published in the face of the world, can be read & believed by those who are cotemporary with the events they pretend to relate," he writes, "how may we expect that future ages shall be better informed? Will those rise from their graves to bear witness to the truth, who would not, while living, lift their voices against falsehood? If cotemporary histories are thus false, what will future compilations be? And what are all those of preceding times?" I give Jefferson's account of the events that led up to the signing of the Declaration and its eventual signing in toto, for it shows Jefferson's steadfastness in thinking that history can be written with painstaking regard for minutiae.

> On the 7th of June, 1776, the delegates from Virginia moved, in obedience to instructions from their constituents, that Congress should declare the 13 united colonies to be independant [*sic*] of Great Britain, that a

Confederation should be formed to bind them together, and measures be taken for procuring the assistance of foreign powers. The house ordered a punctual attendance of all their members the next day at ten o'clock, & then resolved themselves into a Committee of the whole and entered on the discussion. It appeared in the course of the debates that 7. states. viz., N Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Virginia, North Carolina & Georgia, were decided for a separation; but that 6. others still hesitated, to wit. New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, & South Carolina. Congress, desirous of unanimity, & seeing that the public mind was advancing rapidly to it, referred the further discussion to the 1st of July, appointing in the mean time a Committee to prepare a declaration of independance, a second to form Articles for the confederation of the states, and a third to propose measures for obtaining foreign aid. On the 28th of June, the Declaration of Independance was reported to the house, and was laid on the table for the consideration of the members. On the 1st day of July they resolved themselves into a committee of the whole, and resumed the consideration of the motion of June 7. It was debated through the day, and at length was decided in the affirmative by the vote of 9. states. viz New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode island, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, N. Carolina and Georgia. Pennsylvania and S. Carolina voted against it. Delaware, having but two members present, was divided. The delegates from New York declared they were for it, & their constituents also; but that the instructions against it which had been given them a twelvemonth before, were still unrepealed; that their convention was to meet in a few days, and they asked leave to suspend their vote till they could obtain a repeal of their instructions. Observe that all this was in a committee of the whole Congress, and that according to the mode of their proceedings, the Resolution of that Committee to declare themselves independant was to be put to the same persons reassuming their form as a Congress. It was now evening, the members exhausted by a debate of 9 hours, during which all the powers of the soul had been distended with the magnitude of the object, and the delegates of S. Carolina desired that the final decision might be put off to the next morning that they might still weigh in their own minds their ultimate vote. It was put off, and in the morning of the 2d of July they joined the other nine states in voting for it. The members of the Pennsylvania delegation too, who had been absent the day before, came in & turned the vote of their state in favor of independance, and a 3d member of the state of Delaware, who, hearing of the division in the sentiments of his two colleagues, had travelled post to arrive in time, now came in and decided the vote of that state also for the resolution. Thus twelve states voted for it at the time of its passage, and the delegates of New York, the 13th state, received instructions within a few days to add theirs to the general vote; so that, instead of the "egalité des suffrages" spoken of by M. Mayer, there was not a dissenting voice. Congress proceeded immediately to consider the Declaration of Independence which had been reported by

> their committee on the 28th of June. The several paragraphs of that were debated for three days, viz. the 2d, 3d, & 4th of July. In the evening of the 4th they were finally closed, and the instrument approved by an unanimous vote and signed by every member, *except Mr. Dickinson*. Look into the Journal of Congress of that day, Sir, and you will see the instrument, and the name of the signers, and that Mr. Dickinson's name is not among them. Then read again those words of your paper. "Il (M. Mayer) assure qu'une seule voix, un seul homme, prononça l'independance des etats unis, ce fut John Dickinson. – l'Amerique lui doit une reconnoissance eternelle; c'est Dickinson qui l'a affranchie."

Jefferson obdurately clung to the notion that the American Revolution was at least the most significant event of recent history, as it marked the first sustained effort to instantiate government by and for the people through elected and recallable representatives. Thus, every detail needed to be chronicled with meticulous and duteous regard for accuracy. To John Adams (10 August 1815), Jefferson laments the fact that no one is in position to write a truthful, detailed account of the American Revolution, for its councils, designs, and discussions have been conducted behind closed doors and no one took notes.[62] In an attempt to avert such future mishaps, Jefferson writes to Hugh P. Taylor (4 October 1823), "It is the duty of every good citizen to use all the opportunities which occur to him, for preserving documents relating to the history of our country." To William Wirt (14 August 1814), Jefferson says:

> It is truly unfortunate that those engaged in public affairs so rarely make notes of transactions passing within their knowledge. Hence history becomes fable instead of fact. The great outlines may be true, but the incidents and coloring are according to the faith or fancy of the writer . . . When writers are so indifferent as to the correctness of facts, the verification of which lies at their elbow, by what measure shall we estimate their relation of things distant, or of those given to us through the obliquities of their own vision?

Some two years later (12 November 1816), he obliquely castigates Wirt for panegyric in writing of the life of Patrick Henry, as Wirt has given life to the precept *de mortius nil nisi bonum*.[63]

It was not only important that events are chronicled with an eye to minutiae, it is also that events chronicled are publicly accessible. "Time and accident are committing daily havoc on the originals deposited in our public offices," Jefferson writes to Ebenezer Hazard (18 February 1791). "The late war has done the work of centuries in this business. The last cannot be recovered, but let us save what remains; not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use in consigning them to the waste of time, but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident." Public access is critical, for a dearth of access keeps valuable information from the people, and

people cannot govern themselves without ready access to their own history. To William Johnson (12 June 1823), Jefferson says:

> History may distort truth, and will distort it for a time, by the superior efforts at justification of those who are conscious of needing it most. The opening scenes of our present government will not be seen in their true aspect until the letters of the day, now held in private hoards, shall be broken up and laid open to public view.[64]

The historical works he recommends to Gen. John Minor are:

> History. Antient the Greek and Latin originals. Select histories from the Universal history. Gibbon's Decline of the Roman Empire. Histoire Ancienne de Millot.
>
> Modern. Histoire moderne de Millot. Russell's History of Modern Europe; Robertson's Charles V.
>
> English. The original historians, to wit. The Hist. of Ed. II. by E. F. Habington's E. IV. More's R. III. Ld. Bacon's H. VIII. Ld. Herbert's H. VIII. Goodwin's H. VIII. E. VI. Mary. Cambden's Eliz. & James. Ludlow. McCaulay. Fox. Belsham. Baxter's Hist. of England. (Hume republicanised & abridged) Robertson's Hist. of Scotland.
>
> American. Robertson's History of America. Gordon's History of the independence of the U.S. Ramsay's Hist. of the Amer. Revolution. Burke's Hist of Virginia. Continuation of do. by Jones and Girardin nearly ready for the press.

Ancient languages

History, Jefferson says in his educational bill of 1779 and in his 1814 letter to Peter Carr (September 7), can be taught while students are learning languages, so the two subjects are in that sense intertwined. "The books which shall be used," he writes in his bill, "for instructing the children to read shall be such as will as the same time make them acquainted with Graecian, Roman, English, and American history." "History," he tells Carr, "is here associated with languages, not as a kindred subject, but on a principle of economy, because both may be attained by the same course of reading, if books are selected with that view." In the elementary schools as in the grammar schools, the ancient languages are introduced to "instill in the young the principles of service and self-restraint."[65]

The ancient languages Jefferson gives in his "Rockfish Gap Report" as Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. All three allow for proper moral instruction and are to play a significant role at the University of Virginia, especially early in the educational process.[66]

Jefferson's fullest justification of study of the ancient languages – here he has Greek and Latin in mind – comes in a letter to John Brazier (24 August 1819). First, they offer us "models of pure taste in writing" that are both "national and

chaste" in style. Second, there is unquestioned "luxury of reading the Greek and Roman authors in all the beauties of their originals." Classical works enable one, enfeebled with age, to fill the "vacuum of ennui." Last, there are "stores of real science" in the classics. He lists ancient history, ethics, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and natural history.[67]

The last point warrants elaboration. Moralists will find "highly and justly esteemed" ethical writings. Though such writings have been surpassed by modern authors, the Greek ethicians contain the seed of modern thought and are morally inspirational. Lawyers will find Latin of inestimable use. The language of civil law is essentially Latin. Physicians will find "as good a code of his art as has been given us to this day." The present store of medical knowledge builds on Hippocratic medicine. Statesmen will find useful ancient accounts of history, politics, mathematics, and ethics. They will also be moved by ancient eloquence and philopatry. Merchants does not need ancient languages. Still, ethics, mathematics, geography, political economy, and history are likely the "immediate foundations of [their] calling." Agriculturists and mechanics will need ethics, mathematics, chemistry, and natural philosophy. In short, there are numerous instances of men of uncommon capacities in all the businesses of life who have gotten where they have gotten with nothing but an education in the ancient languages. Finally, every science has the roots of its fundamental terms in the ancient languages. Jefferson sums, "The classical languages are a solid basis for most, and an ornament to all the sciences."

One must say something also about the "luxury" of reading the ancient languages so as to fill the vacuum of ennui. As Aristotle noted in antiquity and as we tend to believe today, work is for the sake of leisured activity, and leisured activity is what especially conduces toward happiness.[68] Today, when persons are not working, there are so many ways to pass their leisure time that perhaps many do not take seriously the issue of boredom. Because of the variety of leisured activities – at-home activities alone include texting, Twittering, spending time on Facebook, listening to music, reading, playing games, conversation, and choosing among hundreds of channels on television – it is difficult to imagine boredom as an inevasible part of life. Yet we do not live in Jefferson's time, especially in the chill and sluggish winter months at an estate as remote as Monticello. In Jefferson's day, ennui was a part of life.[69] Thus, the ancient languages proved a luxury for Jefferson insofar as they offered him a pleasurable means of eschewing boredom and gleaning useful knowledge in the process.

Modern languages

For Jefferson, languages are not fixed, but in continual flux. The reason for this flux is generational change, prompted mostly by moral, political, and scientific advances. The relative ease of communication with other countries and cultures – relatively easy as compared with centuries prior to Jefferson – makes some competency in other languages aidful in scientific and political intercourses. The most useful languages he lists in his "Rockfish Gap Report" as French, Spanish, Italian, German, and, strangely, Anglo-Saxon.

The most important modern language to acquire is French. First, French is useful because the French treat many scientific subjects better than do the British. Jefferson advises nephew Peter Carr (19 August 1785) to study French "because the books which will be put into your hands when you advance into Mathematics, Natural philosophy, Natural history, &c. will be mostly French, these sciences being better treated by the French than the English writers." Second, France is amicably disposed to America. Prior to the rise of Napoleon, Jefferson often writes as if the fate of France and the fate of America are intertwined. Thus, he counsels Thomas Mann Randolph (27 August 1786) to undertake his course of study in France. There Randolph will acquire the language, have exposure to the French fine arts, and forge "acquaintance with the individuals & characters of a nation with whom we must long remain in the closest intimacy & to whom we are bound by the strong ties of gratitude and policy." One year later (6 July 1787), he tells Randolph that French is "indispensable."[70] He tells granddaughter Anne Cary Randolph (8 March 1808), "There is not a science (medicine excepted) in which the best books are not in French." In his "Rockfish Gap Report," Jefferson states baldly that "French is the language of general intercourse among nations, and as a depository of human science, is unsurpassed by any other language, living or dead."

Beyond French, Spanish is second in importance. "Our future connection with Spain," he writes presciently to Peter Carr (19 August 1785), "renders that the most necessary of the modern languages, after the French." Two years later (6 July 1787), he writes to Thomas Mann Randolph: "Next to [French] the Spanish [language] is most important to an American. Our connection with Spain is already important & will become daily more so. Besides this the antient part of American history is written chiefly in Spanish." The line of reasoning is iterated one month later in another letter to Carr (10 August 1787) and 31 years later in his "Rockfish Gap Report."

German and Italian are also given consideration as acquirable and useful languages. In his "Rockfish Gap Report," Jefferson writes, "The German now stands in a line with that of the most learned nations in richness of erudition and advance in the sciences. It is too of common descent with the language of our own country, a branch of the same original Gothic stock, and furnishes valuable illustrations for us." He continues, "The Italian abounds with works of very superior order, valuable for their matter, and still more distinguished as models of the finest taste in style and composition." Yet in letters to Carr and Randolph 31 years earlier, he expresses caution apropos of its acquirement, as Italian, French, and Spanish are "degenerated dialects of the Latin," and one with facility in French and Spanish will likely "speak a compound of the three, & neither perfectly."

Next, Jefferson lumps Anglo-Saxon with the modern languages and argues for its study. He writes in "Rockfish Gap Report":

> The Anglo-Saxon is of peculiar value. We have placed it among the modern languages, because it is in fact that which we speak, in the earliest form in

> which we have knowledge of it. It has been undergoing, with time, those gradual changes which all languages, ancient and modern, have experienced; and even now needs only to be printed in the modern character and orthography to be intelligible, in a considerable degree, to an English reader. It has this value, too, above the Greek and Latin, that while it gives the radix of the mass of our language, they explain its innovations only. Obvious proofs of this have been presented to the modern reader in the disquisitions of Horn Tooke; and Fortescue Aland has well explained the great instruction which may be derived from it to a full understanding of our ancient common law, on which, as a stock, our whole system of law is engrafted. It will form the first link in the chain of an historical review of our language through all its successive changes to the present day, will constitute the foundation of that critical instruction in it which ought to be found in a seminary of general learning, and thus reward amply the few weeks of attention which would alone be requisite for its attainment; a language already fraught with all the eminent science of our parent country, the future vehicle of whatever we may ourselves achieve, and destined to occupy so much space on the globe, claims distinguished attention in American education.[71]

To John Cartwright (1824), Jefferson writes of certain "novelties" adopted at the University of Virginia – Anglo-Saxon being one of them. "As the histories and laws left us in that type and dialect, must be the text books of the reading of the learners, they will imbibe with the language their free principles of government."[72] The sentiment expresses obliquely Jefferson's purchase of the Saxon myth – viz., that there was freedom breathed by the Saxons with an implicitly grasped code of conduct that was ultimately lost with the Norman Conquest and the advent of feudalism in England.[73]

Finally, there are the Indian dialects. We recall in chapter 2 that one of the schools of William and Mary College was The Brafferton, which functioned to Christianize Indian boys. In his bill for reform of the school, Jefferson intended for missionaries to interact with Indians, collect their various dialects, and study their customs. We know also Jefferson was keenly interested in Indian languages and collected words of various Indian dialects. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he advances the hypothesis that the peoples inhabiting the east-most Asian coast are descendants of Indians, since Indian dialects outnumber the Kamchatkan dialects some 20 to one.[74] Why, then, does he not include study of Indian dialects among modern languages worth studying?

A letter to an unknown correspondent (20 February 1825) offers some clue. "We generally learn languages for the benefit of reading the books written in them," writes Jefferson.

> But here our reward must be the addition made to the philosophy of language. In this point of view your analysis of the Cherokee adds valuable matter for reflection and strengthens our desire to see more of these languages as scientifically elucidated. Their grammatical devices for the

> modification of their words by a syllable prefixed to, or inserted in the middle, or added to its end, and by other combinations so different from ours, prove that if man came from one stock, his languages did not.

In short, Jefferson sees no practical benefit to the study of Cherokee, or perhaps any other Indian dialect. Why? We note that he gives, as one of two main reasons for the uptake of Spanish, the connections with Spain on the continent of North America. Americans have the same sort of continental connections with Native Americans. Why then is study of Indian dialects of mere philosophical import?

Part of the answer lies in Jefferson's vision of an "empire for liberty." He envisaged Americans spreading out and occupying wholly the continent of North America. The Indians are to be given the "choice" of either miscegenation and integration or gradual suffocation. The Indian dialects, thus, would soon be dead dialects.[75] Moreover, given that Native Americans have written no books to chronicle their history, with integration or suffocation, there would be little incentive to study their dialects.

Natural history

To Harry Innes (7 March 1791), Jefferson wrote that natural history was his passion; politics, his duty. As such, both were to him equally desirable. George Ticknor observed on entering Monticello:

> On one side hang the head and horns of an elk, a deer, and a buffalo; another is covered with curiosities which Lewis and Clark found in their wild and perilous expedition. On the third, among many other striking matters, was the head of a mammoth, or, as Cuvier calls it, a mastodon, containing only *os frontis, Mr. Jefferson* tells me, that has yet been found. These fossils were from the famous cache at Big Bone Lick, Kentucky. Jefferson had commissioned William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to explore the site, at his own expense. He kept the above mentioned specimens "for a special kind of Cabinet I have at Monticello." Jefferson was particularly proud of this collection and considered them [the specimens] the prize of his natural history collection. The majority of the bones he sent on to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia.[76]

Jefferson's interest in natural history – in general, things according to nature, or, more specifically, the origins and interactions of organisms and other natural objects[77] – was piqued during his research for *Notes on the State of Virginia*. "I received in August your favour wherein you give me hopes of your being able to procure for me some of the big bones," he writes to James Steptoe (26 November 1782). "A specimen of each of the several species of bones now to be found is to me the most desirable object in natural history, and there is no expense of package or of safe transportation which I will not gladly reimburse to procure them safely." He requests specifically "Elk horns of very extraordinary size, or anything

else uncommon." He then asks Steptoe to furnish freely whatever observations on the bones or other natural curiosities he has, for "I know you see the works of nature in the great, & not merely in detail."

Jefferson was greatly interested in theories of natural phenomena to be put to the test of further confirmatory or disconfirmatory observations. It was of considerable interest to him to glean evidence that North American biota were not inferior to those of Europe – a hypothesis advanced by many scientists, Buffon especially. In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson states that Buffon is committed to four theses apropos of animals: animals common both to the old and new world are smaller in the latter, animals peculiar to the new are on a smaller scale, animals that have been domesticated in both have degenerated in America, and America, on the whole, exhibits fewer species of animals. The reason Buffon gives for biotic inferiority is that America is generally colder and wetter that Europe. "In other words," writes Jefferson, "*heat* is friendly, and *moisture* adverse to the production and development of large quadrupeds" – in other words, animals thrive in hot and dry climates, while they suffer in cold and damp climates.[78] While the hypothesis is questionable to Jefferson – for he notes vegetative life thrives in hot, damp climates, and where vegetative life thrives so too does animal life thrive – he uses the bones of the mammoth as evidence of the falsity of Buffon's hypothesis. Even if the American climate is colder and wetter than that of Europe, the cold and wet climate has produced an animal as large in bulk, if not superior to in bulk, anything yet found in Europe—the mammoth. If that should not be sufficient, Jefferson also appeals to four comparative tables that offer proof sufficient at least to cast doubt on the truth of Buffon's quadripartite thesis.

Some years later, Jefferson writes to Buffon (1 October 1787) of certain "spoils" from New Hampshire and Massachusetts shortly to be sent to Buffon. "I am happy to be able to present to you at this moment the bones & skin of a Moose, the horns of the Caribou, the elk, the deer, the spiked horned buck, and the Roebuck of America." His aim, he states, is not to refute Buffon, but to add to his collection of new massive species. He adds:

> I . . . beg of you not to consider those now sent as furnishing a specimen of their ordinary size. I really suspect you will find that the Moose, the Round horned elk, & the American deer are species not existing in Europe. The Moose is perhaps of a new class. I wish these spoils, Sir, may have the merit of adding anything new to the treasures of nature which have so fortunately come under your observation, & of which she seems to have given you the key.

One suspects some duplicity here, for it seems impossible to believe that refutation is not at least part of his aim.

At the time of the writing of his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson thought that the bones of the mammoth signified an animal that still existed. He accepted the then-popular view of the *scala naturae* – the "Great Chain of Being." According to that view, there exists a hierarchy of all living things – a

scale of things from lesser to greater, with the latter for the sake of the former. This view is traceable back to Aristotle, who writes in *Politics*:

> Clearly we must suppose that . . . plants exist for the sake of animals and the other animals for the good of man, the domestic species both for using and eating, and most, if not all, of the wild animals for the sake of his food and others auxiliary purposes, so that they may furnish him with clothing and other tools. Thus, if nature makes nothing incomplete or purposeless, then it has made all the animals for the sake of men.[79]

It is also expressed eloquently in Jefferson's time by Louis-Sébastien Mercier:

> That the several species touch . . . they run, so to speak, into each other; that by the delicate and sensible connections between the mere stone and the plant, the plant and the animal, the animal and man, there remained no interstices. That their growth, duration, and destruction, were determined by the same causes . . . That nature in all her operations, tended with energy to the formation of man; and that laboring patiently, and even at a distance, that important work, she endeavoured, by various essays, to arrive at the gradual term of his perfection, which seemed to be the utmost effort of her power.[80]

Purposiveness is the key to grasping nature, and purposiveness implies economy, not profusion and waste.

Jefferson's early view of nature too was purposive and economical. Thus, he made purchase of the continued existence of the mammoth somewhere on the continent. The same, of course, applies to all fossilized remains.[81] Jefferson writes in a publication for *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*:

> The movements of nature are in a never ending circle. The animal species which has once been put into a train of motion, is still probably moving in that train. For if one link in nature's chain might be lost, another and another might be lost, till this whole system of things should evanish by piece-meal; a conclusion not warranted by the local disappearance of one or two species of animals, and opposed by the thousands and thousands of instances of the renovating power constantly exercised by nature for the reproduction of all her subjects, animal, vegetable, and mineral.[82]

Years later, Jefferson received bones from an extinct ground sloth, found in what is now West Virginia. Impressed by the size of its extant claws, Jefferson at first judged the animal to be a leonine-like carnivore on account of its huge claws. In terms of its bone structure, the animal was roughly twice the linear size of a lion, which made it roughly double the body volume and put it at roughly 800 pounds. Of the discovery, Jefferson writes to Dr. Benjamin Rush (22 January 1797):

> I am indebted to the Philosophical society [for] a communication of some bones of an animal of the lion kind, but of most exaggerated size. What are

> we to think of a creature whose claws were 8 Inches long, when those of the lion are not 1 1–2 I; whose thigh-bone was 6 1–4 I. diameter; when that of the lion is not 1 1–2 I? Were not these things within the jurisdiction of the rule & compass, and of ocular inspection, credit to them could not be obtained. I have been disappointed in getting the femur as yet, but shall bring on the bones I have, if I can, for the Society, & have the pleasure of seeing you for a few days in the first week of March. I wish the usual delays of the publications of the society may admit the addition to our new volume, of this interesting article, which it would be best to have first announced under the sanction of their authority.

When traveling to Philadelphia to be sworn in as vice-president of the country, Jefferson's wagon was filled with the fossilized bones of the large creature, which he was to deliver to his friend Dr. Caspar Wistar, who was to arrange the bones in the best possible manner. Jefferson reported the discovery in a paper, given to the American Philosophical Society (APS) in 1797 and thereafter published, titled "A Memoir of the Discovery of Certain Bones of an Unknown Quadruped, of the Clawed Kind, in the Western Part of Virginia."[83] The animal was later given the name *Megalonyx Jeffersoni* by a French naturalist.[84]

It was not only large animals to which Jefferson was attracted. To Thomas Mann Randolph (1 May 1791), Jefferson mentions a committee of the APS to study the Hessian fly. "I do not think that of the weavil [*sic*] of Virginia has been yet sufficiently detailed." Practicality is certainly the issue for Jefferson. The weevil is ruinous to crops.

Natural history also covered botany. To Thomas Mann Randolph (5 June 1791), Jefferson writes of a trip he took through the northern states with James Madison.

> We were more pleased however with the botanical objects which continually presented themselves. Those either unknown or rare in Virgna [*sic*] were the Sugar maple in vast abundance, the Silver fir, White pine, Pitch pine, Spruce pine, a shrub with decumbent stems which they call Juniper, an azalea very different from the *nudiflora*, with very large clusters of flowers, more thickly set on the branches, of a deeper red, & high pink-fragrance. It is the richest shrub I have seen. The honeysuckle of the gardens growing wild on the banks' of L. George, the paperbirch, an Aspen with a velvet leaf, a shrub-willow with downy catkins, a wild gooseberry, the wild cherry with single fruit (not the bunch cherry) strawberries in abundance. From the Highlands to the lakes it is a limestone country. It is in vast quantities on the Eastern sides of the lakes, but none on the Western sides.

Sixteen days later, he writes to Madison (21 June 1791):

> I am sorry we did not bring with us some leaves of the different plants which struck our attention, as it is the leaf which principally decides *specific* differences . . . The Balsam tree at Govr. Robinson's is the Balsam poplar, *Populus Balsamifera* of Linnæus. The *Arolea* I can only suspect to be the

> *viscosa*, because I find but two kinds the *nudiflora viscosa* acknoleged to grow with us. I am sure it is not the *nudiflora*. The white pine is the *Pinus Strobus*.

He asks Madison also to "continue the enquiries relative to the Hessian fly, & note them."

In an earlier letter to Madison (16 December 1786), Jefferson writes of another puzzling discovery – trees and other flora found below the surface of the earth. He refers to a theory – "not absolutely reasonable, but somewhat more so than any that has yet appeared – of a certain Whitford. It is full of interesting facts, which however being inadequate to his theory, he is obliged to supply them from time to time by begging questions."

Shortly before his death, Jefferson advises Dr. John Patton Emmett (27 April 1826), professor of natural history at the University of Virginia, to introduce lectures on botany at the university in the year to come.

Mineralogy also comes under the scope of natural history. The first seven queries of *Notes on the State of Virginia* concern natural history. Queries IV through VI – covering the mountains, caverns, and minerals of Virginia – concern mineralogy. Query VI expatiates on the gold, lead, copper, iron, black lead, pit coal, precious stones, marble, limestone, stone, earths, niter, salt, mineral springs, and burning springs.

To Thomas Mann Randolph (5 June 1791), Jefferson writes of the limestone near Lake George. "From the Highlands to the lakes it is a limestone country," he writes.

> It is in vast quantities on the Eastern sides of the lakes, but none on the Western sides. The Sandy hill falls & Wing's falls, two very remarkable cataracts of the Hudson of about 35 f. or 40 f. each between F. Edward & F. George are of limestone, in horizontal strata. Those of the Cohoes, on the W. side of the Hudson, & of 70 f. height, we thought not of limestone.

Jefferson, in the main and especially early on, did not seem to think much of geology, another subdiscipline of natural history. He writes: "What difference does it make whether the earth is six hundred or six thousand years old? And is it of any real importance to know what is the composition of the various strata, if they contain no coal or iron or other useful metal?"[85] To Constantin Volney (8 February 1805), he writes that the "skin-deep scratches" we make on the earth's surface do not repay the efforts.

Overall, Jefferson's interest in natural history was lifelong, as shown by the inclusion of a professorship in natural history in his two educational bills. In his "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," he proposes a professorship of natural philosophy and natural history – one of eight chairs. In his "Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education," he proposes a professorship in the subjects anatomy, zoology, botany, mineralogy, and geology – roughly equivalent to a professorship in natural history.

Jefferson's passion for natural history brought him political ridicule. It was thought beneath the dignity of a politician to involve himself in natural objects,

let alone to involve himself intimately in them. The unfinished East Room of the White House was chockablock with specimens of natural history, so much that it was called by some the "Bone Room" or the "Mastodon Room." "Mr. Mammoth," as Jefferson was nicknamed, was also roasted in poem for his delight in fossils. William Cullen Bryant even pasquinaded Jefferson in a poem titled "The Embargo":[86]

> Go, wretch, resign the presidential chair,
> Disclose thy secret measures foul and fair,
> Go, search, with curious eye, for horned frogs,
> 'Mongst the wild wastes of Louisianian bogs;
> Or, where the Ohio rolls his turbid stream,
> Dig for huge bones, thy glory and thy theme;
> Go scan, Philosophist; thy ****** charms,
> And sink supinely in her sable arms;[87]
> But quit to abler hands, the helm of state,
> Nor image ruin on thy country's fate!

Jefferson in his advisory letter to Gen. John Minor (30 August 1814) suggests the following books apropos of natural history: in anatomy, he recommends John and James Bell's *Anatomy*; in botany, Benjamin Barton's *Elements of Botany*, William Turton's *Linnæus's* Systema Naturae, and Christiaan Hendrik Persoon's *Synopsis Plantarum*; in chemistry, Antoine Lavoisier's *Conversations in Chemistry*; in geography, John Pinkerton's *Modern Geography*; and in zoology, Sir Geoffrey Gilbert's *Abregé* du Systeme de Linnée, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's *Manuel d'*Histoire Naturelle, Georges Louis Leclerc Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*, Générale et particulière, Philibert Guéneau Montbeillard's *Histoire naturelle*, Bernard Germain Étienne de La Ville-Sur-Illon Lacépède's *Histoire naturelle de l'homme*, and Alexander Wilson's *American Ornithology*.

Medicine

Jefferson's attitude toward medicine was distinctly ambivalent, and even sometimes hostile. As Merrill Peterson notes, for Jefferson, it occupied "the shady ground between science and charlatanism."[88] In many instances, hospitals, instead of fostering convalescence, were death sentences for the ill or infirm. The famous Hôtel-Dieu of Paris – having as many as 3,000 patients, mixing patients with different illnesses in the same wards and even beds, crowding as many as six patients to a bed, and being in an unhealthy location – is said to have had a 25 percent mortality rate.[89] For all the acknowledged advances in science, morality, and politics, little had been done in medicine to advance beyond the Hippocratic humoral practice, rife still in Jefferson's day.

Appeal to the extant treaties shows that Hippocratic theories and practices were many and varied. Ancient theories aligned themselves with various philosophical schools of the day – for example, Atomism, Peripateticism, and Stoicism – and functioned according to thetic etiological principles such as the principle of opposition (opposites cure opposites), the principle of analogy (to

dream of something bad is a symptom of underlying pathology), and the principle of composition (all symptoms and diseases are caused by bodily matters). Nonetheless, medical practices were relatively uniform across the various schools of thinking. Physicians were guided by detailed methodological observations over time, the reports of other physicians, and even creative experimentation. Their methods included surgery, cautery, blood-letting, purgative drugs, and, especially, regimen (diet and exercise).[90]

According to the Galenic take of Hippocratic medicine that was predominant in Jefferson's day, medicine is defined as "the knowledge of what is healthy [and] what is morbid." A healthy body has from birth a "good mixture of the simple, primary parts, and good proportion in the organs." A morbid body has from birth a "bad mixture in the homogeneous parts, or a bad proportion in the organic ones, or both."[91]

There were believed by Galen to be four humors – bile, black bile, phlegm, and blood – and four elements – hot and cold (active) and wet and dry (passive). Health was seen to be right balance of the humors within a person's body; illness, disturbance of that balance. Writes Galen in "The Best Constitution of Our Bodies":

> First, that our bodies are a mixture of hot, cold, dry, and wet . . . Secondly, that one must distinguish between the mixture of different parts . . . The next point is that each of the organic parts of the body has a single cause of activity of the parts contained within it; and everything else that goes to make up that organ as a whole comes into being in accordance with that purpose . . . It would thus seem plausible that the best constitution of the body is that in which all the homogeneous parts . . . retain their proper mixture. The composition of the organic parts from these homogeneous ones is then a matter of the best-balanced constitution of them with regard to size, amount, construction, and relationship between each other.[92]

Bodies are harmed by being exposed to extremes: being heated, cooled, moistened, or dried. Thus, diet, habits, and environment are critical to health. This Jefferson notes in a letter to granddaughter Mary Jefferson Eppes (16 July 1802). "And as to yourself it is of great importance to get up into the country as soon as you are able, the liability to bilious diseases being exactly in proportion to the distance from the sea."

A significant concept of humoral medicine was the notion of "crisis" – the point at which recovery from illness would begin or from which any hope of recovery would be lost. Crises were believed to occur on "critical days," which were in the main thought fixed by phases of the lunar cycle – viz., the waxing and waning of the moon.[93] Physicians needed to be wary of critical days.

When the yellow fever hit Philadelphia and forced Washington and his staff to flee the city, Jefferson betrays more than a dilettante's interest in the disease in several letters. I give one account in a letter to Thomas Mann Randolph (2 September 1793).

> A malignant fever has been generated in the filth of the docks of Philadelphia which has given great alarm. It is considerably infectious. At 1st 3. out of 4. died, at present not more than one out of three. Several days ago (my latest information), about 70. had died and about that number were ill of it. It is called commonly a yellow fever, but by the physicians Typhus gravior. Begins with a pain in the head, sickness in the stomach, with a slight rigor, fever, black vomitings and fæces, and death from the 2nd to the 8th day. At first it was confined to Water street, but is now in many parts of the city. It is still spreading, tho' become less mortal. Everybody, who can, is flying from the city, and the country people, being afraid to come to the market, there is fear of a want of supplies. Tho' there is some degree of danger, yet, as is usual, there is much more alarm than danger; and knowing it to be usual also to magnify these accounts in proportion to distance, I have given you the particulars, that you may know exactly, what the case is.[94]

Over a decade later, Jefferson writes to John Page (16 August 1804) apropos of the question of the disease's contagion. It can exist only in a "pretty exactly circumscribed" local atmosphere and is generated near the water side, in close built cities, and under warm climates. He sums: "According to the rules of philosophizing when one sufficient cause for an effect is known, it is not within the economy of nature to employ two. If local atmosphere suffices to produce the fever, miasmata from a human subject are not necessary and probably do not enter into the cause." Nonetheless, not having made medicine his life's work, he admits he is unfit to decide the issue.[95]

Jefferson was always ambivalent about the medical practices of his day. He followed medical advice to convalesce for bad hemorrhoids by bathing in warm medicinal springs near Monticello. He writes John Adams (18 December 1825), "They destroyed in a great degree, my internal organism, and I have never since had a moment of perfect health." Yet it is not merely bad advice by a physician about which he complains, but incomplete science. "We have taken too little pains to ascertain the properties of our different mineral waters, the cases in which they are respectively remedial, the proper process in their use, and other circumstances necessary to give us their full value," he writes months earlier to Fanny Wright (7 August 1825).

Jefferson's ambivalence vis-à-vis medicine is best expressed in a letter to Dr. Caspar Wistar (21 June 1807). The letter, in gist, is a lengthy argument to the effect that nature is often, if not generally, the best physician – at least, at the current stage of medical knowledge. When a human body suffers illness, nature reestablishes order through exciting "some salutary evacuation of the morbific matter, or by some other operation which escapes our imperfect senses and researches. She brings on a crisis, by stools, vomiting, sweat, urine, expectoration, bleeding, &c., which, for the most part, ends in the restoration of healthy action."[96]

Good physicians emulate nature by applying internally or externally certain substances to the body that excite the same evacuations in a shorter interval

of time. Emetics relieve bloated stomachs; purgatives empty the bowels; bleeding reduces inflammation; Peruvian bark alleviates intermittents; mercury aids syphilis; opium mitigates watchfulness. That much he acknowledges.

Concessions made, Jefferson continues in a skeptical vein: "But the disorders of the animal body, & the symptoms indicating them, are as various as the elements of which the body is composed. The combinations, too, of these symptoms are so infinitely diversified, that many associations of them appear too rarely to establish a definite disease; and to an unknown disease, there cannot be a known remedy." With the complexities of the human body and of human illnesses noted, a judicious and moral physician must stop when ignorance intercedes and let nature doctor.

> Having been so often a witness to the salutary efforts which nature makes to re-establish the disordered functions, he should rather trust to their action, than hazard the interruption of that, and a greater derangement of the system, by conjectural experiments on a machine so complicated & so unknown as the human body, & a subject so sacred as human life.

In cases in which a patient demands some action of a doctor, who is at sixes and sevens, the doctor should administer a placebo or act in some other harmless manner. "One of the most successful physicians I have ever known, has assured me," Jefferson adds, "that he used more bread pills, drops of colored water, & powders of hickory ashes, than of all other medicines put together. It was certainly a pious fraud."

Yet the quacksalver, as "adventurous physician," takes presumption for knowledge. Because of the exiguity of what is known, he brashly doctors from what is unknown.

> He establishes for his guide some fanciful theory of corpuscular attraction, of chemical agency, of mechanical powers, of stimuli, of irritability accumulated or exhausted, of depletion by the lancet & repletion by mercury, or some other ingenious dream, which lets him into all nature's secrets at short hand. On the principle which he thus assumes, he forms his table of nosology, arrays his diseases into families, and extends his curative treatment, by analogy, to all the cases he has thus arbitrarily marshalled together.

In short, led on by pure speculation, the adventurous physician categorizes the disease, offers a full explanation of it, and gives promise of complete apprehension of the course of the illness. Jefferson continues:

> I have lived myself to see the disciples of Hoffman, Boerhaave, Stalh, Cullen, Brown, succeed one another like the shifting figures of a magic lantern, & their fancies, like the dresses of the annual doll-babies from Paris, becoming, from their novelty, the vogue of the day, and yielding to the next novelty their ephemeral favor. The patient, treated on the fashionable

> theory, sometimes gets well in spite of the medicine. The medicine therefore restored him, & the young doctor receives new courage to proceed in his bold experiments on the lives of his fellow creatures. I believe we may safely affirm, that the inexperienced & presumptuous band of medical tyros let loose upon the world, destroys more of human life in one year, than all the Robinhoods, Cartouches, & Macheaths do in a century.

Jefferson begs for reform of medical practice in the direction of deference to ignorance – "abandonment of hypothesis for sober facts, the first degree of value set on clinical observation, and the lowest on visionary theories." Tyros must know the limits of their craft. It is no crime to be a "watchful, but quiet spectator of the operations of nature, giving them fair play by a well-regulated regimen, & by all the aid they can derive from the excitement of good spirits & hope in the patient."[97] Knowledge will come when there is greater understanding of the human body. That takes time. The effects of medicines and treatments on the body must be cataloged and studied.

Jefferson is taking part in a millennia-old debate – rationalism (or dogmatism) versus empiricism. The conflicting attitudes existed in the Hippocratic practices of Greek and Roman antiquity. Empiricist medical practitioners were guided solely by their collections of past experience, while rationalists strove for a causal understanding of such experiences – in other words, to formulate general principles, guided by theories, to aid medical practice. Empiricists aim to remove symptoms; rationalists aim to treat the cause of the symptoms.[98] Jefferson – as his letters to Caspar Wistar (21 June 1807), Benjamin Rush (17 August 1811), and John Brazier (24 August 1819), suggest – is in the empiricist camp. To the former, he says, "I acknowledge facts in medicine as far as they go, distrusting only their extension by theory." To the latter, he states, "Theories and systems of medicine, indeed, have been in perpetual change from the days of the good Hippocrates to the days of the good Rush, but which of them is the true one?"

What Jefferson says next about empirical medicine is critical for the approach to a school of medicine that his University of Virginia would take. I give his words.

> The anatomical & clinical schools, therefore, are those in which the young physician should be formed. If he enters with innocence that of the theory of medicine, it is scarcely possible he should come out untainted with error. His mind must be strong indeed, if, rising above juvenile credulity, it can maintain a wise infidelity against the authority of his instructors, & the bewitching delusions of their theories. You see that I estimate justly that portion of instruction which our medical students derive from your labors; &, associating with it one of the chairs which my old & able friend, Doctor Rush, so honorably fills, I consider them as the two fundamental pillars of the edifice. Indeed, I have such an opinion of the talents of the professors in the other branches which constitute the school of medicine

> with you, as to hope & believe, that it is from this side of the Atlantic, that Europe, which has taught us so many other things, will at length be led into sound principles in this branch of science, the most important of all others, being that to which we commit the care of health & life.

In effect, Jefferson is urging America to take the lead in medical reform. European institutions, he suggests, are wedded to theory, which offers no hope of medical advances. It is only by meticulous and patient empirical study of diseases that progress can be made.

At the University of Virginia, as we have already seen, Jefferson proposes only one professorship for medicine and anatomy. "Medicine, where fully taught, is usually subdivided into several professorships, but this cannot well be without the accessory of an hospital, where the student can have the benefit of attending clinical lectures, and of assisting at operations of surgery," he writes in his 1818 "Rockfish Gap Report.

> With this accessory, the seat of our University is not yet prepared, either by its population or by the numbers of poor who would leave their own houses, and accept of the charities of an hospital. For the present, therefore, we propose but a single professor for both medicine and anatomy. By him the medical science may be taught, with a history and explanations of all its successive theories from Hippocrates to the present day; and anatomy may be fully treated.

In his letter to Gen. Minor, he states John and James Bell's *Anatomy* is the best book on medicinal science.

Though fixed to the notion of humoral medicine and in fullest recognition of the limits of the medical knowledge of his day, Jefferson did acknowledge advances. He writes to Dr. Edward Jenner (14 May 1806) about his contribution to the eradication of smallpox through his vaccine.

> Medecine [*sic*] has never before produced any single improvement of such ability. Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood was a beautiful addition to our knowledge of the animal economy, but on a review of the practice of medicine before & since that epoch, I do not see any great amelioration which has been derived from that discovery, you have erased from the Calendar of human afflictions one of it's greatest [*sic*].

Natural philosophy

Natural philosophy, which studies nature, was in Jefferson's day to be distinguished from natural history in that the former was seen to be essentially quantitative, while the latter was principally descriptive. Whereas natural history studied things according to nature, natural philosophy studied nature itself. According to Lord Kames, the distinction was between a useful science and an etiological science, which works backward from effects to

causes.[99] Following Greek cosmologists – *kosmos* being Greek for "order" or "arrangement" – nature had shown herself to be an ordered system. The ordered system was conformable to laws, and those laws were expressible in terms of mathematical equations.

Among the subjects included in natural philosophy were physics, chemistry, and astronomy. "In natural philosophy," Jefferson writes to John Banister (15 October 1785), "I mean to include chemistry and agriculture; and in natural history to include botany, as well as the other branches of those departments." In his "Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education" (1817), natural philosophy includes "agriculture, chemistry & the theories of medecine [*sic*]". In *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1872), he mentions a professorship in natural philosophy and mathematics. "Mathematics and Natural philosophy are so useful in the most familiar occurrences of life," Jefferson writes to Gen. John Minor (30 August 1814), "and are so peculiarly engaging & delightful as would induce every person to wish an acquaintance with them. Besides this, the faculties of the mind, like the members of the body, are strengthened & improved by exercise. Mathematical reasonings & deductions are therefore a fine preparation for investigating the abstruse speculations of the law."

The impetus for Enlightenment science was the implosion of the Aristotelian *Weltanschauung*. Copernicus advanced the thesis that the earth moves around the sun, though his system labored mistakenly under the ponderousness of Aristotle's physics. Galileo, demonstrating that weight was not a factor in rate of a body's fall ($d = kt^2$; the distance of a body's downward fall [d] is in proportion to the time of its fall [t] squared, with k being a constant) and that projectile motion comprises two factors (in other words, rate of fall and tendency of a body to continue rectilinearly the motion it was given), showed Aristotle's physics could not be sustained. Newton fleshed out that second tendency of projectile motion with the formulation of the principle of inertia and added two other laws of bodily motion and the law of universal gravitation ($f = k[Mm/r^2]$; force [f] equals the mass of one body [M] multiplied by the mass of a second [m] over the distance between them [r] squared, with k being a constant). Kepler – *pace* Aristotle, Ptolemy, Ibn al-Shatir, Copernicus, Brahe, and numerous others – showed that planetary orbits were not circular, but elliptical, the sun being at one focus; that the line that connects the planet to the sun sweeps out equal areas in equal times; and that the square of a planet's orbital period [P] is proportional to the cube of the semi-major axis [a] of its orbit ($P^2 = a^3$). Boyle gave the ideal gas law ($PV = nRT$; where P is the pressure of a gas, V is the volume of the gas, n is the amount of substance of the gas, T is the temperature of the gas, and R is the ideal- or universal-gas constant).

Such illustrations show that nature itself was nomological and that its language was mathematics. "Philosophy is written in this all-encompassing book [of Nature] that is constantly open before our eyes, that is the universe," Galileo writes in *The Assayer*, "but it cannot be understood unless one first learns to understand the language and knows the characters in which it is written. It is

written in mathematical language, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures; without these it is humanly impossible to understand a word of it, and one wanders around pointlessly in a dark labyrinth."[100]

Even philosophy became mathematical or quasi-mathematical. In *Discourse on Method*, Descartes writes of epistemology:

> Those long chains composed of very simple and easy reasonings, which geometers customarily use to arrive at their most difficult demonstrations, had given me occasion to suppose that all the things which can fall under human knowledge are interconnected in the same way . . . Reflecting, too, that all those who have been able to find any demonstrations . . . I had no doubt that I should begin with the very things that they studied.[101]

Spinoza's *Ethics* was written in the language of Euclid's *Elements* – viz., that of definitions, axioms, propositions, corollaries, and scholia – and took the form of proofs.

Jefferson was schooled well in the natural philosophy, called "physics" in a letter to Thomas Mann Randolph (27 August 1786). In a letter to John Adams (15 August 1820), he says, "A single sense may indeed be sometimes deceived [*sic*], but rarely: and never all our senses together, with their faculty of reasoning." The senses work intimately with reason, and the totality of impressions gives reason information sufficient to guard against being mistaken. That is not to say that reason is an infallible guide.

In keeping with the thinking of Destutt de Tracy,[102] Jefferson offers Adams a Cartesian sketch of his epistemology in the same letter.

> "I feel: therefore I exist." I feel bodies which are not myself: there are other existencies then. I call them *matter*. I feel them changing place. This gives me *motion*. Where there is an absence of matter, I call it *void*, or *nothing*, or *immaterial* space. On the basis of sensation, of matter and motion, we may erect the fabric of all the certainties we can have or need. I can conceive *thought* to be an action of a particular organization of matter, formed for that purpose by it's [*sic*] creator, as well as that *attraction* is an action of matter, or *magnetism* of loadstone.

Here Jefferson follows Newton, who in *Principia Mathematica* begins by defining "mass" and "motion," and the forces of or that act on bodies – viz., the "innate force of matter," "impressed force," and "centripetal force." He then writes of "absolute time," "absolute space," "absolute place," and "absolute motion" without offering definitions because they are "well known to all." Next Newton offers his celebrated three laws of motion.[103] Newton's aim throughout is not to wax epistemological or metaphysical. Given the axioms, corollaries, and lemmas of his system, the explanatory power of the system speaks for itself. Jefferson, in contrast to Newton, gives no details of his physical universe. He does, however, show Adams that he is an out-and-out physicalist.

Jefferson then tackles the issue of the presumed immateriality of mind. The mystery of matter, having the mode of action called thinking, is no more mysterious than the sun, having the mode of action called attraction, Jefferson says to Adams. Thinking is a property of a certain type of matter just as attraction is a property of all bodies. He adds: "To talk of *immaterial* existences is to talk of *nothings*. To say that the human soul, angels, god, are immaterial, is to say they are *nothings*, or that there is no god, no angels, no soul. I cannot reason otherwise." Deity, who puts matter into motion, is also material, since, he argues reasonably, only matter can act on matter.

For Jefferson, the brain is the organ of thinking. "I have been lately reading a most extraordinary book, that of M. Flourens on the functions of the nervous system in vertebrated animals," Jefferson writes to Francis Adrian van der Kemp (11 January 1825).

> He proves by too many, and too accurate experiments to admit contradiction, that from such animals the whole contents of the cerebrum may be taken out, leaving the cerebellum and the rest of the system uninjured, and the animal continue to live in perfect health an indefinite period. He mentions particularly a case of 10½ months of survivance of a pullet. In that state the animal is deprived of every sense, of perception, intelligence, memory and thought of every degree. It will perish on a heap of grain unless you cram it down it's [*sic*] throat. It retains the powers of motion, but feeling no motive, it never moves unless from external excitement. He demonstrates in fact that the cerebrum is the organ of thought, and possesses alone the faculty of thinking.

In a letter to Dr. John Manners years earlier (22 February 1814), Jefferson, like the empiricist John Locke,[104] commits himself to nominalism.

> Nature has, in truth, produced units only through all her works. Classes, orders, genera, species, are not of her works. Her creation is of individuals. No two animals are exactly alike; no two plants, nor even two leaves or blades of grass; no two crystallizations. And if we may venture from what is within the cognizance of such organs as ours, to conclude on that beyond their powers, we must believe that no two particles of matter are of exact resemblance. This infinitude of units or individuals being far beyond the capacity of our memory, we are obliged, in aid of that, to distribute them into masses, throwing into each of these all the individuals which have a certain degree of resemblance; to subdivide these again into smaller groups, according to certain points of dissimilitude observable in them, and so on until we have formed what we call a system of classes, orders, genera and species. In doing this, we fix arbitrarily on such characteristic resemblances and differences as seem to us most prominent and invariable in the several subjects, and most likely to take a strong hold in our memories.

Though the aim is biological, as Jefferson is responding to the classificatory system of Linnaeus, the passage has implications for his physics, which following Newton is atomistic. Observed particulars, when scrutinized, he writes in a letter to Edward Everett (24 February 1823), are found to be nothing but concretizations of atoms.

For study of the physical world, Jefferson recommends Pieter von Mussenbroeck's *Cours de physique experimentale et mathématique*. He tells James Madison (20 February 1784), "It is certainly the most comprehensive & most accurate body of Nat^{l}. Philosophy which has been ever published." To Gen. John Minor, he adds Jeremiah Joyce's *Scientific Dialogues, Intended for the Instruction and Entertainment of Young People* and Benjamin Martin's *Philosophica Britannica*.

Astronomy is a subdiscipline of natural philosophy. To Thomas Mann Randolph, Jr. (27 August 1786), Jefferson lists astronomy as one of six sciences of which "no inquisitive mind will be content to be ignorant." To Caspar Wistar (28 February 1803), Jefferson writes that knowledge of astronomy is a needed for any explorer of the west. Preparing Meriwether Lewis for his expedition (27 April 1803), he says, "Instruments for ascertaining by celestial observations the geography of the country thro' which you will pass, have been already provided."

To astronomer David Rittenhouse (19 July 1778), Jefferson expresses his disappointment concerning a recent eclipse of the sun by the moon.

> We were much disappointed in Virginia generally on the day of the great eclipse, which proved to be cloudy. In Williamsburgh, where it was total, I understand only the beginning was seen. At this place which is in Lat. 38°-8′ and Longitude West from Williamsburgh about 1°-45′ as is conjectured, eleven digits only were supposed to be covered, as it was not seen at all till the moon had advanced nearly one third over the sun's disc. Afterwards it was seen at intervals through the whole. The egress particularly was visible. It proved however of little use to me for want of a time piece that could be depended on which circumstance, together with the subsequent restoration of Philadelphia to you, has induced me to trouble you with this letter to remind you of your kind promise of making me an accurate clock; which being intended for astronomical purposes only, I would have divested of all apparatus for striking or for any other purpose, which by increasing it's [*sic*] complication might disturb it's accuracy. A companion to it, for keeping seconds, and which might be moved easily, would greatly add to it's value. The theodolite, for which I spoke to you also, I can now dispense with, having since purchased a most excellent one.[105]

Jefferson recommends James Ferguson's *Astronomy Explained upon Sir Isaac Newton's Principles, and Made Easy to Those Who Have not Studied Mathematics*, Joseph Jérôme le Français de Lalande's *Astronomie*, and Pierre Charles le Monnier's *Institutions Astronomiques* as recommended reading to Minor.

Another subdiscipline of natural philosophy is chemistry, about which Jefferson is again of two minds. "If you are obliged to neglect any thing, let it be chemistry," Jefferson writes to Thomas Jefferson Randolph (3 January 1809).

> It is the least amusing to a country gentlemen of all the ordinary branches of science. In the exercises of the country and progress over our farms, every step presents some object of botany natural history comparative anatomy &c. But for chemistry you must shut yourself up in your laboratory and neglect the care of your affairs and of your health which calls you out of doors. Chemistry is of value to the amateur inhabiting a city. He has not room there for out of door amusements.

He tells Thomas Mann Randolph 22 years earlier (6 July 1787) that chemistry is a "precious and delightful" amusement for "hours of relaxation." To Francis Wayles Eppes (6 October 1820), chemistry is preparatory study for astronomy. To Prof. John P. Emmett (2 May 1826), he calls it among "the most useful of sciences," presumably because of its connection with agriculture.

The recommended text for study is Antoine Laurent Lavoisier's *Conversations in Chemistry*.[106]

Notes

1 To Joseph C. Cabell (24 January 1816), Jefferson writes that the letter to Carr "contains all I ever wrote on the subject of the College," here having in mind the subject of higher education.
2 The sentiments suggests a sort of Montesquieuian relativism. Parochial concerns are relevant, but Jefferson's chief concern, I suspect, is that the plans are not sufficiently progressive to meet the needs of Virginians.
3 Compare with Destutt de Tracy, who makes a similar distinction between *ouvriere* and *savante* and who argues for the need of two kinds of schools to accommodate the two types. A.L.C. Destutt de Tracy, *Élemens d'idéologie; Troisième partie; Tome deuxième; De da logique* (Paris, 1827), 332–34.
4 I treat fully of Jefferson and the aesthetic sense in chapter 2 of *Taking Things by Their Smooth Handle: Jefferson on Morality, the Moral Sense, and Good Living* (title provisional; forthcoming).
5 Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism,* 5th ed. (Dublin: Charles Ingham, 1772), ii.
6 Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism*, ii–iii.
7 Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism*, ii.
8 Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism*, ii–iii.
9 To James Oglivie (31 January 1806), he lists poetry.
10 William Howard Adams, "The Fine Arts," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 203.
11 Thomas Jefferson, Sect. XV, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings: Autobiography, A Summary View of the Rights of British America, Notes on the State of Virginia, Public and Private Papers, Addresses, Letters*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984).
12 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 623–25.

13 Thomas Jefferson (hereafter TJ) to Robert Skipwith, 3 August 1771.
14 TJ to Gov. Patrick Henry, 12 January 1785. See also Message to the Virginia Delegates in Congress, 12 July 1785. One must be mindful that artistic expression was the only means of leaving to posterity a visual likeness of an historical figure in Jefferson's day.
15 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "Virtue, Craft, and Contest: An Aristotelian Approach to Competitive Sport," *Sport in Society*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 65–75.
16 Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1932] 1990), VII.16 (1135b8–10).
17 Gary Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 10.
18 James L. Golden and Allan L. Golden, *Thomas Jefferson and the Rhetoric of Virtue* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), xi.
19 TJ to William Wirt, 12 April 1812. See also TJ to William Wirt, 4 August 1805, 14 August 1814, and 12 May 1815; and TJ to Leavit Harris, 11 October 1824.
20 TJ to John Adams, 5 July 1814.
21 Jean-Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind: Being a Posthumous Work of the Late M. de Condorce*t (London: J. Johnson, 1795), 212.
22 Robert Skipwith to TJ, http://founders.archives.gov/?q=+Recipient%3a"Jefferson,+Thomas"&s=1111311111&r=17, accessed 25 June 2013.
23 Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism,* xii.
24 Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism,* xii–xiii.
25 Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism,* xiii.
26 Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism,* xiii.
27 Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism,* xiii–xiv.
28 Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism,* xiv.
29 TJ to Joseph Delaplaine, 12 April 1817.
30 TJ to Gen. John Minor, 30 August 1814.
31 Jean-Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind*, 351–52.
32 He then mentions the unfortunate fate of his collection. Sending them in a trunk via river to Monticello from Washington, a thief singled out the trunk because of its weight and presumed precious contents. Disappointed on opening the trunk, the thief threw its contents into the river. Those papers that could be found ashore were "so defaced by mud and water that no general use [could] ever be made of them."
33 For more on Jefferson's use of geometry in architecture, see Rachel Fletcher, "An American Vision of Harmony: Geometric Proportions in Thomas Jefferson's Rotunda at the University of Virginia," *Nexus Network Journal: Architecture and Mathematics Online*, http://www.ccs.neu.edu/home/futrelle/diagrams/docs/pdfs/d00041.pdf, accessed 11 November 2012.
34 For more on Jefferson's method of Field's plan, see Robert E. Shalhope, "Agriculture," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 385–86.
35 Thomas Jefferson, *The Garden and Farm Books of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Robert C. Baron (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 1987), 93.
36 Thomas Jefferson, *The Garden and Farm Books of Thomas Jefferson*, 280.
37 Thomas Jefferson, *The Garden and Farm Books of Thomas Jefferson*, 293.
38 Thomas Jefferson, *The Garden and Farm Books of Thomas Jefferson*, 311.
39 Thomas Jefferson, *The Garden and Farm Books of Thomas Jefferson*, 322.
40 TJ to Robert Patterson, 31 March 1798.

41 See also TJ to Jonathan Williams, 3 July 1796; TJ to Robert R. Livingston, 30 April 1800; TJ to James Monroe, 26 October 1806; and TJ to Tristan Dalton, 2 May 1817.
42 Robert E. Shalhope, "Agriculture," 387.
43 James P. Rhonda, *Jefferson's West: A Journey with Lewis and Clark* (Charlottesville: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2000), 31–32.
44 M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent: Philosophical Essays on Thomas Jefferson* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 117.
45 Thomas Jefferson, Query IV, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 143.
46 See the Land Ordinance of 1785.
47 TJ to Gov. William H. Harrison, 27 February 1803. See also TJ to C.F.C. Volney, 8 February 1805.
48 For how Jefferson thought liberty and unity could be preserved in a large republic, see M Andrew Holowchak, "Individual Liberty and Political Unity in an Expanding Nation: The Axiological Primacy of Wards in Jefferson's Republican Schema," *Thomas Jefferson and Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), chap. 3.
49 See also TJ to A. Koraïs, 31 October 1823.
50 See M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent*, 51–68.
51 "Time, patience & perseverance must be the remedy," Jefferson says to President George Washington (14 May 1794); "and the maxim of your letter, 'slow & sure,' is not less a good one in agriculture than in politics."
52 Many of Jefferson's own thoughts were "validated" by Destutt de Tracy in his 1809 *Commentary and Review of Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws.* Tracy argued that much of what Montesquieu had written in 1767 has not passed the test of time. Tracy opted for communication and education instead of coercion for establishing a republic, individual liberty and freedom of the press, dissemination of knowledge and correction of error, and morality taught by the most enlightened, not by putative religious authorities.
53 For a fuller account, see M. Andrew Holowchak, *Thomas Jefferson: Uncovering His Unique Philosophy and Vision* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2014), chap. 2.
54 The difficulties Jefferson noted were similar to those Plato noted in *Republic*. See M. Andrew Holowchak, "The Paradox of Public Service: Jefferson, Education, and the Problem of Plato's Cave", *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2013, 73–86.
55 See also "Minutes of the Board of Visitors," 4 March 1825, for the texts and supplemental readings for inculcation of republican principles at University of Virginia.
56 For a fuller list, see TJ to John Minor, 30 August 1814.
57 Compare with Mercier, who believes history ought to be taught with moderation:

> because history is the disgrace of humanity, every page being crowded with crimes and follies . . . It is no purpose to say that history furnishes examples of instruction to succeeding ages; they are pernicious and infamous examples, that serve merely to encourage arbitrary power, and to render it more haughty and more cruel, by shewing that men have in all ages bowed the neck like slaves; by exposing the fruitless efforts of liberty, expiring under the attacks of men who founded a modern tyranny on that of the ancients. (Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred* [Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1795], 55–56)

58 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 365. Compare with Mercier, who writes:

> History is the disgrace of humanity, every page being crowded with crimes and follies . . . It is no purpose to say that history furnishes examples of instruction to

> succeeding ages; they are pernicious and infamous examples, that serve merely to encourage arbitrary power, and to render it more haughty and more cruel, by shewing that men have in all ages bowed the neck like slaves; by exposing the fruitless efforts of liberty, expiring under the attacks of men who founded a modern tyranny on that of the ancients. (Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred*, 55)

59 TJ to Col. William Duane, 12 August 1810, and TJ to John Adams, 25 November 1816.
60 David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, Vol. 1 (London, 1889), 126. Jefferson's disrelish of Humean political thinking is difficult to ascertain. Hume never disavows the significance of liberty in good governing. In Essay VII, for instance, he merely states a preference for monarchical governing over popular government, since popular governing, more perfect in imagination, is untried and likely to fail.
61 Baxter's work, of course, was anything but impartial. It was a republican deterging of Hume's work and lacked originality and substance. Moreover, Jefferson disavowal of Hume was never wholesale. He admired the work, but worried that its political biases were too subtle for young minds. For more, see Douglas L. Wilson, "Jefferson vs. Hume," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 1989, 49–70.
62 He does speak favorably, however, of Botta's account. TJ to John Adams, 5 May 1817.
63 Roughly, "Say only what is good of the dead."
64 See also TJ to William Short, 8 January 1825.
65 Hellenbrand seems to recognize something like the problem. He writes: "By the late 1770s, Jefferson was an experienced and well-read politician. How then could he have thought that the lure of success and power would inspire impoverished young men, who were accomplished competitors in school, to pursue the path of public service and virtue?" Harold Hellenbrand, *The Unfinished Revolution: Education and Politics in the Thought of Thomas Jefferson* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 83–84.
66 TJ to Joseph Priestley, 27 January 1800.
67 See also TJ to Joseph Priestley, 27 January 1800. Charron writes of Greek and Roman history being the "noblest and most useful Learning in the World" and "as entertaining, as easy to be comprehended, as any Romance of the same Bulk." Pierre Charron, *On Wisdom*, Vol. 3, trans. George Stanhope (London, 1729), 1333.
68 Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1932] 1990), Book VII (1337b30–31).
69 Boredom would have been decupled for women and female children whose social role was domestic.
70 To William Short (27 March 1878), Jefferson articulated a preference for Provençal over French. "Every letter is pronounced, the articulation is distinct, no nasal sounds disfigure it, and on the whole it stands close to Italian and Spanish in point of beauty."
71 For Jefferson's fullest account of the Saxon myth, see "Summary View of the Rights of British Americans." For more on Jefferson and Anglo-Saxon, see Stanley R. Hauer, "Thomas Jefferson and the Anglo-Saxon Language," *PMLA,* Vol. 98, No. 5, 1983, 879–98.
72 Hellenbrand writes: "When a person studied the ancient languages . . . [h]e glimpsed the origin of culture and language that underlay the profusion, the chaos, of contemporary civilization." Harold Hellenbrand, *The Unfinished Revolution*, 93.
73 For more, see M. Andrew Holowchak, *Thomas Jefferson*, chap. 4.
74 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 226–27. The opposite is the truth.
75 M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent*, 229–50.

76 Thomas O. Jewett, "Thomas Jefferson Paleontologist," http://www.earlyamerica.com/review/2000_fall/jefferson_paleon.html, accessed 15 November 2012.
77 For example, to Dr. Hugh Williamson (10 January 1801), Jefferson writes of the turkey in American; to Thomas Mann Randolph (1 May 1791), he speaks of the Hessian fly and the weevil; and to Philip Nolan (14 June 1798), he talks about the wild horses roaming in the west.
78 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 169–70.
79 Aristotle, *Politics*, Book VIII, 1056b15–22. With modifications from Rackham's translation.
80 Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred*, 218–19.
81 A change in scientific consensus convinced Jefferson in time of the reality of extinction and loosened his grip on the *scala natura*. To accommodate extinction, he writes of a certain "restoring power in nature" in a letter to John Adams that keeps the eventual extinction of all species of life (11 April 1823).
82 Thomas Jefferson, "A Memoir on the Discovery of certain Bones of a Quadruped of the Clawed Kind in the Western parts of Virginia," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 4, 1799, 255–56.
83 See TJ to Col. John Stuart, 10 November 1796; TJ to Dr. Benjamin Rush, 22 January 1797;
84 Thomas O. Jewett, "Thomas Jefferson Paleontologist," http://www.earlyamerica.com/review/2000_fall/jefferson_paleon.html, accessed 15 November 2012.
85 Taken from Roy Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 116.
86 William Cullen Bryant, "The Embargo, or Sketches of the Times" (Boston, 1808), 6–7.
87 This is a reference to slave Sally Hemings, with whom Jefferson is said by some, then and today, to have had a longstanding sexual relationship. For a critical account of the leading literature, see M. Andrew Holowchak, *Framing a Legend: Exposing the Distorted History of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2013).
88 Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1970), 973.
89 Louis S. Greenbaum, "Thomas Jefferson, the Paris Hospitals, and the University of Virginia," *American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 609–10.
90 See M. Andrew Holowchak, *Ancient Science and Dreams: Oneirology in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), 9–14.
91 Galen, "The Art of Medicine," *Galen: Selected Works*, trans. P. N. Singer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 345–47.
92 Galen, "The Best Constitution of Our Bodies," *Galen: Selected Works*, 291–92.
93 "Disease Progression and Critical Days," http://www.greekmedicine.net/pathology/Disease_Progression_and_Critical_Days.html, accessed 15 October 2012.
94 See also TJ to James Madison, 8 September 1793, and TJ to Thomas Mann Randolph, 2 November 1793.
95 See also Jefferson's "Fifth Annual Message," 3 December 1805.
96 In a letter to James Madison (13 January 1821), Jefferson speaks of treatment of his daughters, while in France, for typhoid fever by an old and very experienced English physician, Dr. Gem. The doctor stated that medicines, requiring the strength of a patient, often proved fatal and should be avoided. The disease tended to go away of itself over time, but so slowly that undernourished patients were disadvantaged. Thus, his primary role was to oversee the course of the disease over many weeks and force Jefferson's daughters to consume easy-digested foods every two hours and a

glass of Madeira. Citing those and other instances of Gem's successes, Jefferson adds, "I vouch for these facts only, not for their theory."

97 He writes to Benjamin Rush (17 August 1811): "I know that within that time I have received one or more letters from you, accompanied by a volume of your introductory lectures, for which accept my thanks. I have read them with pleasure and edification, for I acknowledge facts in medicine as far as they go, distrusting only their extension by theory."

98 M. Andrew Holowchak, *Ancient Science and Dreams*, 12–14.

99 Lord Kames, *The Gentleman Farmer, Being an Attempt to Improve Agriculture by Subjecting It to the Test of Rational Principles*, 4th ed. (Edinburgh, 1798), 1–2.

100 Galileo Galilei, *The Assayer, The Essential Galileo*, trans. Maurice A. Finocchiaro (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008), 183.

101 René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 19.

102 Following Destutt de Tracy here in the latter's *Élémens d'Ideologie*, 5 vols. (Bruxelles: Courcier, 1827), III.164.

103 Isaac Newton, *Principia*, Vol. 1: *The Motion of Bodies*, trans. Florian Cajori (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 1–13.

104 John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A. D. Woozley (New York: New American Library, 1964), III.iii.1.11.

105 See also TJ to Martha Jefferson Randolph, 24 March 1791, and TJ to Andrew Ellicott, 1 November 1806.

106 TJ to Gen. John Minor, 30 August 1814.

Part III

Lifelong education

This page intentionally left blank

5 An education directed to freedom and happiness

The usefulness of "American" education

A sage is never a private person.

Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*

Roy Honeywell writes: "Jefferson was a consistent utilitarian. Time after time he stated his purpose to found a university to teach 'all branches of science useful to us, and at this day.'"[1] That Jefferson preached consistently the usefulness of instruction in the variegated sciences is true, but that nowise makes him a "utilitarian" of any persuasion on education. In emphasizing the usefulness of education, he was merely following the lead both of the Enlightenment literature of his day, which sought to break clean with authority and metaphysical squabbling, and of the scientific societies that were sprouting in America.[2] For Jefferson, education was significant because it was needed to create a foursquare and thriving citizenry,[3] and, to do that, it needed to be education of a specific sort. In that regard, it is better to state that Jefferson was in some sense a eudaemonist, not a utilitarian. Usefulness for Jefferson was always usefulness for an end, and that end was human happiness or thriving.

In this book's final section, comprising chapters 5 and 6, I examine the issue of Jefferson's sense of holistic education. In that, education is much more than formal schooling, and its value cannot be measured numerically. As Merrill Peterson says, "The values of education, moral, political, and economical, were above all estimate, not alone for the individual, but for the state and nation."[4] The theme of this chapter is the usefulness of education; the theme of the final chapter is lifelong learning.

In this chapter, I aim to show that educating each person as a whole, for Jefferson, entails educative accommodation – educating each person pursuant to his years, capacities, and condition in life – and educative timeliness – educating each person in the things he needs to know when the time is best for him to know them. Accommodation and timeliness strongly suggest, if they do not entail, an economical education for economical living. I then turn to a descriptive catalog of some of the most useful and useless sciences for Jefferson. Next, I expatiate on an unexpected "Platonic" problem: that for a state to thrive, the citizens of greatest service to their state will sacrifice

the most and, thus, presumably be of least service to themselves. I end with some thoughts on the important role of free presses for disseminating useful knowledge.

Usefulness as economy

"Usefulness" might seem a slippery concept for Jefferson. Consider what Jefferson writes to Littleton Waller Tazewell (5 January 1805) apropos of the merits of education at William and Mary College over time. "What was useful two centuries ago is now become useless, e.g., one half the professorships of Wm. & Mary. What is now deemed useful will in some of its parts become useless in another century." The statement, taken in conjunction with numerous other statements, seems to paint Jefferson a relativist/utilitarian as scholars are it's redundant wont to do.[5] That is a mistake. Jefferson was an out-and-out progressivist in politics and morality as he was in science. Consequently, the changes in utilities over time are the result of advances in morality, politics, and science.

To enable changes of utility over time, as Neem writes, "the shackles of the past [e.g., entails, primogeniture, and religious sanction of government] had to be removed." He adds: "For generations, people had been born into dependence in a world marked by inequality. People had to learn to think of themselves as equal to each other, and to learn how to engage in their own pursuits of happiness. They needed to throw off the psychology of dependence and learn to think as democrats."[6]

Yet the question redounds: Usefulness for what? The answer can be found in several Enlightenment works that Jefferson read and recommended. Consider Pierre Charron's *De la sagesse*, an ethical book Jefferson recommended to Bernard Moore and decades later to John Minor.[7] Of speculative, practical, natural, supernatural, and nominal sciences, Charron says, "The Practical Sciences are of all others the most excellent; such as propose the Good and Happiness of Man for their End, and direct all their Instruction thither; that teach us to live, and to die well; to command and govern, to submit and obey as becomes us." Next in significance are the natural sciences. He adds, "As for the rest, they are empty and frothy Things in Comparison . . . because the Use and Effect of them is of no great Consideration, and they contribute nothing at all towards the making us one whit better Men."[8] Thus, it is not learning that makes better men, but wisdom – viz., "a calm and regular Government of the Soul," characterized by measured thought and timely action. Excess of learning is not only de trop, but a human disease. "Learning . . . may civilize and refine us, but it cannot moralize us, we may be more courteous, and conversable, and accomplished, but we cannot be one jot the holier, the juster, more temperate, or more charitable for it."[9] Like Charron, "usefulness" for Jefferson is a normative concept and a means, not an end, and the end at which Jefferson aims is human betterment or happiness.[10]

Contempt for simplicity

As we have seen, instantiation of Jefferson's philosophy of education entails wholesale reform of Virginia's educational "system" – a model for America and presumably all enlightened nations to follow thereafter – to accommodate his republican experiment. The notion of systematicity for Jefferson was key. The cosmos was well ordered, he learned from William Small[11] and the philosophers he read, therefore so too should education and life be.

There are, as I have shown, democratic and meritocratic components to Jefferson's republicanism. For government to be of and for the people, each citizen must have a minimum amount of education to conduct daily affairs capably, to participate in some measure of political activity, and to elect and oversee governmental officials. For elected officials to govern in the interests of the enlightened masses, they must possess intelligence and virtue.[12] Thus, republican government entails wholesale educational reform to guarantee that the right sort of system will be in place to educate the citizenry suitably and to ensure that only the natural *aristoi* will govern at the highest levels of governing. In "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," he writes:

> Laws will be wisely formed, and honestly administered, in proportion as those who form and administer them are wise and honest; whence it becomes expedient for promoting the public happiness that those persons, whom nature has endowed with genius and virtue, should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens; and that they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth or other accidental condition or circumstance; but the indigence of the greater number disabling them from so educating, at their own expense, those of their children whom nature has fitly formed and disposed to become useful instruments for the public.[13]

A systemic program of general education – in which reading, writing, common arithmetic, and elementary geography were to be taught – was essential to educate the masses and ensure an informed and thriving citizenry. To guarantee access of all citizens, Virginia's counties were to be partitioned into wards – roughly, ten per county and each some five or six square miles and with an elementary school in the center, he writes to Joseph Priestley (27 January 1800). University-level education was essential to educate and develop the natural *aristoi*. Each grammar school – one for each county and roughly ten per state – was to act as a conduit between the two levels of education for the best and most virtuous male citizens. The system was to be economical, as serviceability was its principle aim – in other words, each citizen was to be educated in pursuance of his needs – and the three-tiered structure would be in place to accommodate the four nested tiers of political units – wards, counties, states, and the union of states.

Structural economy was set in place to accommodate economy of content, which too was to be useful. To Priestley (18 January 1800), he limns "the sciences which seem useful & practicable for us." He tells Peter Carr (7 September 1814), "All the branches . . . of useful science, ought to be taught in the general schools, to a competent degree, in the first instance." To Joseph Priestley (14 January 1818), Jefferson states that general education will produce "useful and enlightened citizens, understanding their own rights and firm in their perpetuation." In his "Rockfish Gap Report," he states that study of Greek and Latin in grammar schools will be "useful and sufficient" for those scholars not moving to the University of Virginia. Other subjects – English grammar, higher numerical arithmetic, the geometry of straight lines and of the circle, the elements of navigation, and some geography – will give scholars "the means of being qualified for the various vocations of life, needing more instruction than merely menial or praedial labor."[14] To Charles Yancey (9 January 1816), Jefferson writes of hope of founding a university, "where might be taught, in its highest degree, every branch of science useful in our time and country."[15] To George Tickner (c. May 1817), he writes that usefulness at the highest level of education is universal in scope: It concerns "embracing every science deemed useful in the present state of the world." The overall aim is to shape malleable youths to be thriving and industrious citizens and to accommodate the varied needs of industrious adults, whose personal interests are harmonized with the interests of all other citizens at the various levels of occupation.

The basic schema is in sharp contrast to the education one would likely get in Europe, which was in place to reinforce the line between wealthy and well-born and the poor. Jefferson expounds on the differences between American and European education in a letter to John Banister (15 October 1785). Educated in America, one will learn classical knowledge, modern languages (mostly French, Spanish, and Italian), mathematics, natural philosophy (esp. chemistry and agriculture), natural history (esp. botany), civil history, and ethics. What will be lost is the ease of acquisition of modern languages other than English and a firmer knowledge of medicine. What will be gained is a practical education – viz., scholars whose "manners, morals, and habits, are perfectly homogeneous with those of the country." Moreover, educated in Europe, an American youth will acquire fondness of "European luxury and dissipation, and a contempt for the simplicity of his own country." Seeing the privileges of the rich and the abject penury of the poor, he will acquire desire for wealth, monarchy, and aristocracy and detestation of poverty, equality, and merit. He will acquire fugacious and convenient friendships in contrast to the faithful and permanent friendships he would have acquired in America. Worst of all, he will cave in to the most powerful human passion – "a spirit for female intrigue, destructive of his own and others' happiness, or a passion for whores, destructive of his health." In either case, the notion of fidelity to the woman one marries comes to be seen as ungentlemanly and inconsistent with happiness.

When the youth returns as a man, he will despise the haimish plainness of his country and fellow citizens. He will lack the dignity, knowledge of domestic

economy, and simplicity and honesty of expression to ensure distinctions and financial success. Jefferson sums, "It appears to me, then, that an American, coming to Europe for education, loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, in his habits, and in his happiness."

Economy, accommodation, and happiness

In reading Jefferson's writings pertaining to education, one is struck by the frequency of appeals or allusions to usefulness at all levels and in all aspects. He writes in "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," "The general objects of this law are to provide an education adapted to the years, to the capacity, and the condition of every one, and directed to their freedom and happiness." The sentiment, a staple of Jefferson's philosophy of education, expresses pithily Jefferson's liberal eudemonism as well as what might be called the principle of accommodation.

> *Principle of Accommodation:* Each citizen is to be educated in pursuance of his years, capacity, and condition of life.
> *Eudemonistic Principle:* Freedom and happiness are the ultimate aims of education.

I expatiate on each, in turn.

The principle of accommodation is not a "consumerist" principle – in other words, a claim that each person, in conformance with vacillating wants, can decide for himself how he is to be educated. That much is clear at the levels of ward and grammar schools. Nonetheless, even though Jefferson advocates free choice of courses of study by scholars at the University of Virginia, the choosing is not wholly up to the scholars. Jefferson writes to Francis Wayles Eppes (13 December 1820):

> It either is, or ought to be the rule of every collegiate institution to teach to every particular student the branches of science which those who direct him think will be useful in the pursuits proposed for him, and to waste his time on nothing which they think will not be useful to him. This will certainly be the fundamental law of our University to leave every one free to attend whatever branches of instruction he wants, and to decline what he does not want.

Students will be guided in their course of study by professors. The implicit sentiment is that students do not yet have sufficient rational maturity to decide by themselves what is in their best interest. That is in stark contrast to the tendency of today's American colleges and universities, which are increasingly in the business of catering to students' self-expressed "interests," however numerous, mottled, and confounded.

Jefferson's commitment to the eudemonistic principle – here happiness or human well-being is inevasibly conjoined with freedom – shows that education

is in the service of human thriving, which is a normative or ethical aim. He tells Gen. Thaddeus Kościusko (26 February 1810) that he voluntarily engages in the "direction of the studies of such young men as ask it" at Monticello. Such scholars have free use of Jefferson's library as well as advice, which invariantly focuses their attention to the "main object of all science, the freedom and happiness of man." Freedom and happiness, he adds, are also "the sole objects of all legitimate government." The conjunction of happiness with liberty is not accidental, but intentional, and consistent with what Jefferson asserts in numerous other writings. In that regard, it is impossible to take Jefferson as a liberal atomist – one who sees liberty as autotelic. As I argue in *Dutiful Correspondent*,[16] liberty is almost always linked with happiness in writings. Liberty for Jefferson is no proper end in itself, but for the sake of happiness – hence, my preference for Jefferson's "liberal *eudemonism*"[17] and not his "liberalism." In sum, happiness or human thriving is the end, and freedom is sine qua non for happiness.[18]

Accommodation and eudemonism show that education for Jefferson serves not a political, but rather a moral, end. The notion of "useful knowledge" is ethically charged. As Condorcet writes in *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind*, "Does not the well-being, the prosperity, resulting from the progress that will be made by the useful arts . . . naturally dispose men to humanity, to benevolence, and to justice?"[19] In short, useful knowledge is in the service of human improvement, and human improvement is fundamentally ethical.

Useful sciences

In the previous chapter concerning educating the head, I covered many of the sciences to be taught in the higher levels of education. Given Jefferson's insistence that Head answers to Heart, it follows that education is not autotelic. While Jefferson followed Bacon in noting that knowledge is power,[20] he did not follow Bacon in wholesale repudiation of Aristotle. In agreement with Aristotle, Jefferson noted that knowledge was for the sake of human well-being.

In this section, I treat of subjects of especial utility – some of the subjects, intentionally omitted in chapter 4 – for example, agriculture, architecture, law, geography, and meteorology. Two subjects of significant usefulness, history and languages, are omitted, as they have been treated fully in chapter 4.

First memory, then reason

"The foundations which you have laid in languages and mathematics are proper for every superstructure," Jefferson writes to Thomas Mann Randolph, Jr. (27 August 1786). "The former exercises our memory while that and no other faculty is yet matured & prevents our acquiring habits of idleness. The latter gives exercise to our reason, as soon as that has acquired a certain degree of strength, and stores the mind with truths which are useful in other branches of science." Once the languages and mathematics are mastered, only then

should study of astronomy, natural philosophy, natural history, anatomy, botany, and chemistry be undertaken. From those second-tier sciences, he adds, Randolph will find to his liking something he then can pursue with passion. This letter shows that the languages and mathematics are comprised of a two-step process of readying the mind for higher education. Languages exercise the developing mind; mathematics exercises reason.

In an advisory letter to Francis Wayles Eppes (6 October 1820), Jefferson enjoins his grandson, having sufficiently advanced himself in Latin and Greek, to enter immediately on the study of the sciences – especially mathematics. "I hope you will be permitted to enter at once into a course of mathematics, which will itself take up all that is useful in Euclid, and that you will not be required to go formally through, the usual books of Geometry." The requirement to study elemental geometry, he adds, "would be a waste of time which you have not to spare." Again Jefferson states that study of mathematics is the next step of education, after study of languages, here ancient. Study of languages and mathematics is foundational. Without them, more advanced courses of study are vain. Jefferson advises Eppes to get through his course of study as expeditiously as possible – viz., that education ought not to be redundant. That shows a conjunction of utility and efficiency, and it leads to the tantalizing suggestion, essentially Stoical, that the good life is one of maximal efficiency.

Agriculture

"Agriculture justly claims to be the chief of arts," writes Lord Kames, "it enjoys beside the signal pre-eminence of combining deep philosophy with useful practice." It is thus a science both useful and etiological—a branch of natural history and natural philosophy.[21] Jefferson agrees. In a letter to David Williams, he calls agriculture the science "first in utility" and, thus, deserving of the label "first in respect" (14 November 1803). It is the science that contributes most to increase of industry and to mitigation of misery. He continues:

> The same artificial means which have been used to produce a competition in learning, may be equally successful in restoring agriculture to its primary dignity in the eyes of men. It is a science of the very first order. It counts among its handmaids the most respectable sciences, such as Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, Mechanics, Mathematics generally, Natural History, Botany. In every College and University, a professorship of agriculture, and the class of its students, might be honored as the first. Young men closing their academical education with this, as the crown of all other sciences, fascinated with its solid charms, and at a time when they are to choose an occupation, instead of crowding the other classes, would return to the farms of their fathers, their own, or those of others, and replenish and invigorate a calling, now languishing under contempt and oppression. The charitable schools, instead of storing their pupils with a lore which the present state of society does not call for, converted into schools of agriculture, might restore them

> to that branch qualified to enrich and honor themselves, and to increase the productions of the nation instead of consuming them. A gradual abolition of the useless offices, so much accumulated in all governments, might close this drain also from the labors of the field, and lessen the burdens imposed on them. By these, and the better means which will occur to others, the surcharge of the learned, might in time be drawn off to recruit the laboring class of citizens, the sum of industry be increased, and that of misery diminished.

In "Travelling Notes for Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Shippen," Jefferson lists, presumably in order of importance, his eight "objects of attention for Americans," who are abroad. He begins with agriculture. "Everything belonging to this art, and whatever has a near relation to it. Useful or agreeable animals which might be transported to America. Species of plants for the farmer's garden, according to the climate of the different states."[22] In a memorandum today called "Services to My Country," Jefferson writes, "The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add an useful plant to its culture; especially, a bread grain; next in value to bread is oil." Similarly, to Alexander Giroud (22 May 1797), he says, "One service of this kind rendered to a nation is worth more to them than all the victories of the most splendid pages of their history, and becomes a source of exalted pleasure to those who have been instrumental to it." He writes to George Wythe (16 September 1787) of his amusement while traveling in France and Italy, "In architecture, painting, sculpture, I found much amusement: but more than all in their agriculture, many objects of which might be adopted with us to great advantage." To John Adams (25 April 1794), he states that his current agricultural course of living concurs with the principles by which he measures the value of living. Though he is silent on those values, it is not difficult to guess what they are. To Samuel Vaughan Jr. (27 November 1790), Jefferson says, "If . . . one species in an hundred is found useful and succeeds, the ninety nine found otherwise are more than paid for." When he thanks Augustin François Silvestre (29 May 1807) for having received a gold medal for his plow mouldboard, he adds, "Attached to agriculture by inclination as well as by a conviction that it is the most useful of the occupations of man, my course of life has not permitted me to add to it's [*sic*] theories the lessons of practice."

Jefferson was an avid farmer who countenanced a scientific approach to the discipline. Throughout his life, he experimented with crop rotation,[23] matching plants to soils and climates,[24] methods of soil enrichment,[25] horizontal plowing of hilly landscapes,[26] plant hybridization,[27] introduction of new plants and animals into America[28] (e.g., seeds, olive trees, and Merino sheep), and invention[29] (e.g., his own award-winning plow mouldboard to facilitate more efficient means of farming).[30] Enthusiasm notwithstanding, his political involvement in the affairs of Virginia and his country in the prime years of his life left him little time to oversee his farms directly, and he ultimately admitted in his later years to being an unproductive farmer.

Jefferson also delighted in gardening. "No occupation," he writes Madam de Tessé (8 December 1813), "can be more delightful or useful." Some plants are useful, others are edible, and still others are merely ornamental. He goes on to

describe a "snow-berry bush," with "berries of the size of currants, and literally as white as snow, which remain on the bush through the winter, after its leaves have fallen, and make it an object as singular as it is beautiful." The vivid description bespeaks a capacity for ornament.

Finally, at the University of Virginia near the end of his life, Jefferson had a six-acre plot set aside for a botanical garden. He requested Dr. John Patten Emmett to establish a list of botanical items for the garden so that Jefferson might begin arrangements for procuring plants.[31]

Architecture

Apropos of things manufactured, beauty without practicality was a vain indulgence – hence, Jefferson's preference for architecture to art.

In Book XV of *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson comments on the architecture of Virginia. Private buildings, constructed of scantling and boards and plastered with lime, are ugly, uncomfortable, and perishable. Houses are made from two or three plans. There are only four buildings, each in Williamsburg, with architecture worth recognizing – the Capitol, the Palace, the College, and the Hospital for Lunatics.

> The Capitol is a light and airy structure, with a portico in front of two orders, the lower of which, being Doric, is tolerably just in its proportions and ornaments, save only that the intercolonnations are too large. The upper is Ionic, much too small for that on which it is mounted, its ornaments not proper to the order, nor proportioned within themselves. It is crowned with a pediment, which is too high for its span. Yet, on the whole, it is the most pleasing piece of architecture we have. The Palace is not handsome without, but it is spacious and commodious within, is prettily situated, and with the grounds annexed to it, is capable of being made an elegant seat. The College and Hospital are rude, mis-shapen piles, which, but that they have roofs, would be taken for brick-kilns.

All other public buildings, such as churches and courthouses, are distinctly inelegant. Overall, the most expensive buildings lack symmetry and taste, which could have been readily added without cost. That is because the first principles of architecture, an "elegant and useful art," are unknown in Virginia.

Jefferson laments disuse of brick and stone and the preference for wood. Brick and stone houses are warmer in winter and cooler in summer, are cheaper to make where lime is convenient, and are "infinitely more durable." While a wooden home might last 50 years, a home of stone or brick becomes "an actual and permanent acquisition to the State, adding to its value as well as to its ornament." Again, there is clear regard for ornament, but only ornament in the service of usefulness. The relative permanence of buildings of brick or stone makes a lasting contribution to Virginia.

Architecture was a measure of the state of refinement of American culture. In that regard, Jefferson appropriated from the solidity, sublimity, and durability

of ancient architecture, minus excrescences, and put ancient models to modern uses.[32] William Howard Adams writes: "For Jefferson the architect, American's buildings placed its very civilization on trial, since they were readily available for study by foreigners and would be evaluated by future historians, as he had done in his analysis of the monuments of Rome through the study of Vitruvius, Sebastian Serlio, and Andrea Palladio."[33] He used Palladio's Maison Carrée as a model for the capitol of Virginia – called by Fiske Kimball the "first monument of the classical revival of America."[34] Monticello was designed, with Palladio in mind, to celebrate the joys of rural living. The goal, Robert Dalzell states, "was to create, in [Palladio's] phrase, 'a little city,' a veritable world unto itself, complete and all-sufficing, a place where the gentleman could at last be truly master, truly free."[35] Of the state capitol, Jefferson writes to Dr. James Currie (18 January 1786):

> [The designs of the capitol] are simple & sublime, more cannot be said, they are not the brat of a whimsical conception never before brought to light, but copied from the most precious, the most perfect model of antient *architecture* remaining on earth; one which has received the approbation of near 2000 years, and which is sufficiently remarkable to have been visited by all travellers. It will be less expensive, too, than the one begun.

In sum, ancient architecture is worth appropriating, as it has some 2000 years of approbation.

Concerning a new-constructed university, Jefferson in a letter to Gov. Wilson C. Nicholas (2 April 1816) recommends moving away from the one immense building à la William and Mary College and moving toward one small building for every professor – what he calls in a letter to the Marquis de Lafayette (9 October 1824) an "academical village." The total arrangement will be a square, with the buildings, at proper distances from each other, arranged around the sides of the square and connected by a piazza. The reasons for this recommendation are "fire, health, economy, peace and quiet," or, as he writes to Hugh L. White much earlier (6 May 1810), health, study, manners, morals, and order. Thus, the buildings will exhibit "models in architecture of the purest forms of antiquity" and will give scholars "examples of the precepts he will be taught in that art." Jefferson's aim is to construct something both beautiful and sublime. He writes Albert Gallatin (19 October 1822), "The buildings are in a style of purely classical architecture, and, although not yet finished, are become an object of visit to all strangers."

Jefferson thanks Joseph Coolidge (24 October 1824) for introducing him to Milisia's book on architecture:

> Searching, as he does, for the resources and prototypes of our ideas of beauty in that fine art, he appears to have elicited them with more correctness than any other I have read: and his work, as a text book, furnishes excellent matter for a course of lectures on the subject, which I shall hope to have introduced into our institution.

Law

In an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* (20 May 1773), Jefferson writes:

> On serious Consideration of the present state of our practice in the General Court we find it can no longer be continued on the same Terms. The Fees allowed by Law, if regularly paid, would barely compensate our incessant Labours, reimburse our expences and the losses incurred by Neglect of our private Affairs; yet even these Rewards, confessedly moderate, are withheld from us, in a great Proportion, by the unworthy Part of our Clients. Some regulation, therefore, is become absolutely requisite to establish Terms more equal between the Client and his Council. To effect this, we have come to the following Resolution, for the invariable Observance of which we mutually plight our Honour to each other: "That after the 10th day of *October* next we will not give an Opinion on any Case stated to us but on Payment of the whole Fee, nor prosecute or defend any Suit or Motion unless the Tax, and one half of the Fee, be previously advanced, excepting those Cases only where we choose to act *gratis*;" and we hope no person whatever may think of applying to us in any other Way. To prevent Disappointment, however, in Case this should be done, we think it proper to give this Warning, that no such Application, either verbal or by Way of Letter, will be answered to in the smallest Degree. We would feel much Concern if a Thought could be entertained that the worthy Part of our Clients could disapprove of this Measure. Their Conduct has been such as calls for our Acknowledgements and might merit exemption from this Strictness, were such Exemption practicable, but they will readily perceive this would defeat the Purpose, and that no distinction of Persons can by any means be attempted. We hope, therefore, from their Friendship, a cheerful concurrence in this Plan, since the Requisition is such only as their Puctuallity would of itself prevent.

The advertisement shows plainly the deplorable state in which law was practiced in Jefferson's day. Payments for services were tardy or not forthcoming, and cases often would go unsettled for years. Moreover, most lawyers in Colonial America were ill prepared for practice, as the methods of training – study at the Inns of Court in London, self-education, and apprenticeship – did little to prepare students readied for practice.[36]

Fresh out of college, Jefferson turned to the study of law. He learned under mentor George Wythe for some two years and was admitted to the General Court in 1776.[37] Though neither a demonstrative nor persuasive speaker, he practiced law successfully through painstaking attention to minutiae and logical rigor. His legal training is manifest in his political career – especially in the drafting of numerous bills throughout his life, putting together his manual for parliamentary practice, and his work on the revision of Virginia's laws through 126 bills – and even in his letters. Succumbing to many of the problems listed

in his advertisement and finding a greater need for his service as a politician, he ceded his practice to Edmund Randolph in 1774.

It is not surprising Jefferson would see law as one of the most useful sciences. He tells Thomas Mann Randolph (30 May 1790) that the profession of lawyer/farmer is an excellent combination, as "the one will relieve the other." He adds: "The study of the law is useful in a variety of points of view. It qualifies a man to be useful to himself, to his neighbors, & to the public. It is the most certain stepping stone to preferment in the political line." Through study of law, Davison Douglas states:

> Jefferson was particularly keen to educate a group of "public citizens" – those who would place public interest ahead of private interest and exercise leadership in preserving republicanism. Central to eighteenth-century republicanism was the notion of "public virtue" – "[t]he sacrifice of individual interests to the greater good of the whole." . . . For Jefferson, education must not only train the citizenry to exercise self-rule appropriately, it should also train leaders to practice public virtue and rule wisely.[38]

Thus, for Jefferson, as for Wythe, the study of law would train students not only to be expert in the practice of law but also exemplary citizens.[39]

One of the most astonishing letters Jefferson has written, to which I refer much in the prior chapter, is to Gen. John Minor (30 October 1814), a younger friend who served in the Revolutionary War, studied under Wythe, and was a practicing lawyer until his death in 1821 at the age of 60. In that letter, he advocates a course of study for the younger man, or more likely his son,[40] because "sufficient groundwork must be laid." The course of study is remarkable for its completeness. One studying law must be a comprehensive scholar and well versed in all the sciences. What is most extraordinary, however, is that, if followed to the letter, the course of study would leave little time throughout each day for anything other than study.

"For this purpose [law] an acquaintance with the Latin and French languages is absolutely necessary," he writes. Jefferson continues:

> Mathematics and Natural philosophy are so useful in the most familiar occurrences of life, and are so peculiarly engaging & delightful as would induce every person to wish an acquaintance with them. Besides this, the faculties of the mind, like the members of the body, are strengthened & improved by exercise. Mathematical reasonings & deductions are therefore a fine preparation for investigating the abstruse speculations of the law.

He then recommends the following books:

- Mathematics. Berout, Cours de Mathematiques. The best for a student ever published. Montucla or Bossu's histoire des mathematiques.
- Astronomy. Ferguson and Le Monnier, or de la Lande.
- Geography. Pinkerton.

- Nat. Philosophy. Joyce's Scientific dialogues. Martin's Philosophica Britannica. Mussenbroek's Cours de Physique.

Once the foundation is laid, it is time to begin the study of law and its kindred sciences, needed for preeminence. He lists physics, ethics, religion, natural law, belles lettres, criticism, rhetoric, and oratory as the principal kindred sciences. Though the number of auxiliary sciences might seem to be overwhelming, Jefferson writes of the "advantage" of conducting "several studies at a time." "Variety relieves the mind," he asserts, "as well as the eye, palled with too long attention to a single object." Thus, transition from one course of study to another at suitable intervals optimizes assimilation.

Jefferson also notes that the vigor of the mind varies naturally during the course of the day. Consequently, the best course of daily study is one that optimizes assimilation by accommodating the fluxes of the mind's vigor. "It's [*sic*] powers at these periods," Jefferson writes, "should therefore be attended to in marshalling the business of the day." There is never mention of a reprieve. When the mind succumbs to languor, it is time to change to a less rigorous subject of study. Overall, no time is to be wasted with rest.

Jefferson then gives Minor a précis for a daily course of study. I give it in summary and mostly in his own words.

<u>Waking till 8 a.m.</u>: Physical Studies, Ethics, Natural and Sectarian Religion, and Natural Law.

- Chemistry. Lavoisier. Conversations in Chemistry.
- Zoology. Abregé du Systeme de Linnée par Gilbert.
- Manuel d'histoire Naturel par Blumenbach.
- Buffon, including Montbeillard & La Cepede.
- Wilson's American Ornithology.
- Botany. Barton's elements of Botany. Turton's Linnæus.
- Person Synopsis Plantarum.
- Religion. Sectarian Bible. New Testament. Commentaries on them by Middleton in his works, and by Priestley in his Corruptions of Christianity, & Early opinions of Christ. Volney's Ruins. The sermons of Sterne, Masillon & Bourdaloue.
- Natural Law. Vattel Droit des Gens. Reyneval. Institutions du droit de la Nature et des Gens.

<u>8 a.m. till Noon</u>: General Law and Chancery.

1) Common Law:
    - Coke's institutes.
    - Select cases from the subsequent reporters to the time of Matthew Bacon.
    - Bacon's Abridgement.

- Select cases from the subsequent reporters to the present time.
- Select tracts on Law, among which those of Baron Gilbert are all of the first merit.
- The Virginia laws. Reports on them. Jefferson adds:

  In reading the Reporters, enter in a common-place book every case of value, condensed into the narrowest compass possible which will admit of presenting distinctly the principles of the case. This operation is doubly useful, inasmuch as it obliges the student to seek out the pith of the case, and habituates him to a condensation of thought, and to an acquisition of the most valuable of all talents, that of never using two words where one will do. It fixes the case too more indelibly in the mind.

2) Chancery:

- Ld Kaim's principles of Equity. 3d edition.
- Select cases from the Chancery reporters to the time of Matthew Bacon.
- The Abridgement of Cases in Equity.
- Select cases from the subsequent reporters to the present day.
- Fonblanque's Treatise of equity.
- Blackstone's Commentaries (Tucker's edition) as the last perfect digest of both branches of law.

Noon till 1 p.m.: Politics.

- Locke on government.
- Sidney on Government.
- Priestley's First principles of Government.
- Review of Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws.
- Anon. De Lolme sur la constitution d'Angleterre.
- De Burgh's Political disquisitions.
- Hatsell's Precedents of the H. of Commons.
- Select Parliamy debates on England & Ireland.
- Chipman's Sketches of the principles of government, The Federalist, Political Economy.
- Say's Economie Politique.
- Malthus on the principles of population.
- Tracy's work on Political Economy. *Now* about to be printed (1814).

In the Afternoon: History.

From Dark to Bed-Time: Belles Lettres, Criticism, Rhetoric, and Oratory.

- Belles lettres: "Read the best of the poets, epic, didactic, dramatic, pastoral, lyric &c. But among these Shakespeare must be singled out by one who

wishes to learn the full powers of the English language. Of him we must advise as Horace did of the Grecian models, 'vos exemplaria Graeca Nocturna versate manu, diversate diurna.'"

- Criticism: Ld Kaim's Elements of criticism. Tooke's Diversions of Purley. Of Bibliographical criticism the Edinbg Review furnishes the finest models extant.
- Rhetoric: Blair's lectures on Rhetoric. Sheridan on Elocution. Mason on Poetic and Prosaic numbers.
- Oratory.

The letter is astonishing in at least three important regards. First, the time Jefferson spent in writing the letter must have been considerable. Even though the course of study Jefferson suggests is taken from a letter to Bernard Moore "near 50. years ago," the letter, filling both sides of three pages of paper, is lengthy and contains numerous emendations.[41] It must have taken much time to compose, and it says much of Minor that Jefferson was willing to spend the time he did to outline a course of study for Minor. That indicates the esteem with which he held his younger friend as well as the seriousness with which he approached mentoring.[42] Second, one notes that it allows little or no time for any sort of activity or leisure not devoted to study. Every waking moment seems devoted to study. In an earlier letter to Peter Carr (17 August 1785), Jefferson advises his nephew to spend two hours each day in exercise, "for health must not be sacrificed for learning. A strong body makes the mind strong." To John Garland Jefferson (11 June 1780), he states "health is worth more than learning" and, thus, advises the young man to leave open the entire afternoon for "exercise and recreation."[43] Yet note in these earlier letters, neither rest nor reprieve is a concern. It is a matter of getting away from one sort of strenuous activity for another: mental exertion for physical exertion. Third, it shows that Jefferson thought, *pace* Patrick Henry, proper preparation for the practice of law requires polymathy, not antiloquence. The course of study is remarkably broad as well as dense. It is very likely that the rigorous course of study and relative completeness of the "sciences" undertaken were the result of the influence of Wythe on Jefferson.

Jefferson ends his recommendations to Minor with a note. The order of the books under each heading is critical. The books are to be read as they are listed. He adds:

> These by no means constitute the whole of what might be usefully read in each of these branches of science. The mass of excellent works going more into detail is great indeed. But those here noted will enable the student to select for himself such others of detail as may suit his particular views and dispositions. They will give him a respectable, an useful & satisfactory degree of knolege [*sic*] in these branches, and will themselves form a valuable and sufficient library for a lawyer, who is at the same time a lover of science.

Finally, in a letter later in life to Judge John Tyler (26 May 1810), Jefferson laments a tendency of young would-be lawyers to study a few books in their legal training. They focus on Blackstone's *Commentaries*:

> The opinion seems to be that . . . everything which is necessary is in him, and what is not in him is not necessary . . . Coke's institutes and reports are their first, and Blackstone their last book, after an intermediate course of two or three years. It is nothing more than an elegant digest of what they will then have acquired from the real fountains of the law. Now men are born scholars, lawyers, doctors; in our day this was confined to poets.

True lawyers are lovers of science, not fainéants.

Geography

Geography is a subject Jefferson believes needs to be taught at all levels of education. He advocates study of a "tolerable knowledge of Geography" in ward schools and broader and more detailed geographical study at grammar schools and universities.[44]

Geography is an estimable discipline because America is an as-yet-unripe country with much unexplored land with resources unknown. Jefferson as president writes to Captain Peyrouse (3 July 1803): "You know that the geography of the Missouri and the most convenient water communication from the head of that to the Pacific ocean is a desideratum not yet satisfied." Jefferson adds that he has commissioned Captain Meriwether Lewis to do just that. "His journey being merely literary," he adds with dissimulation, "to inform us of the geography & natural history of the country."[45]

Jefferson believes that the geography of a people and the artifacts of the land are essential to knowing the people.[46] As illustration, he begins *Notes on the State of Virginia* with seven queries that relate to the geography of Virginia. In Query VIII, he turns to the people of Virginia. To John Nicholas Démeunier, Jefferson explains the contrary nature of Rhode Islanders by their geography. It is a matter of amour patriae. Husbandmen, residing inland, possess it in abundance and are the most virtuous citizens. Merchants, residing mostly in seaport towns, possess scant amour patriae and are the least virtuous citizens. Because Rhode Island is a seaport state, everyone is "a merchant of some sort."[47] To Charles Thomson (20 September 1787), Jefferson writes that any persons who go to the western territories need to make "very exact descriptions of what they see" concerning the antiquities of the land. Patience and observation, untainted by theory, might lead to answers to the questions of whether the monuments of the West are the result of Mexican colonies or the founders of Mexico and of whether both are "descendants or the progenitors of the Asiatic redmen."

Meteorology

Meteorology was a science for Jefferson that fits appropriately under "Physico-Mathematics." Not mentioned in his "Rockfish Gap Report," his letter to Peter

Carr, or the 1817 bill for educational reform, we can assume it was not meant for inclusion among the available courses of higher-education study. However, knowing what we know of Jefferson's interest in it, we can only assume its appositeness. It was a science whose study by some group of learned men was indispensable for the prosperity of the fledgling nation.

It is well known that Jefferson, since 1776 and until one week prior to his death, took or had taken for him meticulous recordings of weather in Williamsburg and at Monticello. He writes of his method to Thomas Mann Randolph[48] (18 April 1790):

> My method is to make two observations a day, the one as early as possible in the morning, the other from 3. to 4. aclock [*sic*], because I have found 4. aclock the hottest and day light the coldest point of the 24. hours. I state them in an ivory pocket book in the following form, and copy them out once a week.

1790	*Monticello*			
Feb.	*Morning*		*Afternoon*	*Miscellaneous*
1	39	c	—	f a r
2	46	r	c	
3	29	c	31	c
4	—	c a r h s	—	f a r
5	30	f	—	c
6	25	f	30	s
7	54	f	—	f
8	42	f	43	c

> The 1st. column is the day of the month. The 2d. the thermometer in the morning. The 4th. do. in the evening. The 3d. the weather in the morning. The 5th do. in the afternoon. The 6th is for miscellanies, such as the appearance of birds, leafing and flowering of trees, frosts remarkeably [*sic*] late or early, Aurora borealis, &c. In the 3d. and 5th. columns, *a,* is after: *c,* cloudy: *f,* fair: *h,* hail: *r,* rain: *s,* snow. Thus *c a r h s* means, cloudy after rain, hail and snow. Whenever it has rained, hailed or snowed between two observations I note it thus, *f a r* (i.e. fair after rain), *c a s* (cloudy after snow &c.) otherwise the falling weather would escape notation. I distinguish weather into fair or cloudy, according as the sky is more or less than half covered with clouds.

Painstakingly recording meteorological readings at Monticello would have made sense if Jefferson's intendment was merely to garner data for his own purposes – farming, procuring water, and preservation of foodstuffs, and so forth. That certainly was part of his intendment.[49] Nonetheless, as his observations at Williamsburg show, his intendment was grander, not merely self-sufficing. His aim was comparative – viz., to establish a network of meteorologists that would gather meteorological information across the nation to be serviceable for future

generations of Americans. For example, he writes to James Madison, cousin of the fourth president of the same name (20 Feb. 1784):

> I wish you had a thermometer. Mr. Madison[50] of the college [William and Mary] & myself are keeping observations for a comparison of climate. We observe at sunrise & at four o'clock P.M., which are the coldest & warmest points of the day. If you could observe at the same time it would show the difference between going North & Northwest on this continent. I suspect it to be colder in Orange or Albemarle than here.[51]

Given his belief that someday America would span the continent of North America, that network could include data from anywhere on the continent, from Quebec to Natchez.[52]

Further illustration occurs in Query VII of *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Jefferson states that climatic differences are to be expected in all parts of the country. He notes that, proceeding due westward, the temperature continues to decline as one ascends the Alleghany Mountains and then increases as one descends. He appeals to the testimony of travelers who state the temperature near the Mississippi is warmer than by the eastern seacoast at the same latitude. To confirm those testimonies, he appeals to the warm-loving vegetables and animals – "Catalpas, Perroquets, and reeds" – that thrive near the Mississippi and do not exist near the seacoast. He cites also an observation in the summer of 1779. When the temperature was 90 degrees at Monticello and 96 degrees at Williamsburg, it was 110 degrees at Kaskaskia.[53]

In the same Query, Jefferson also lists meteorological observations from 1772 to 1777 at Williamsburg. He offers a list of its average temperature and precipitation during those years and adds valuable information apropos of winds:

> Though by this table it appears we have on an average 47 inches of rain annually, which is considerably more than usually falls in Europe, yet from the information I have collected, I suppose we have a much greater proportion of sunshine here than there. Perhaps it will be found there are twice as many cloudy days in the middle parts of Europe, as in the United States of America.[54]

Always guarded, Jefferson adds that meteorological data concerning Europe does not extend to the northern and southern parts.

Painstaking observations were not merely done to slake intellectual curiosity. In keeping with the Hippocratic notion that climatic conditions affect health, Jefferson aimed to glean as much information as he could about the American continent for its suitability for biotic, especially human, thriving. For Jefferson, physical health is needed for human happiness. He writes to William Dunbar (12 January 1801):

> I have often wondered that any human being should live in a cold country who can find room in a warm one. I have no doubt but that cold is the

> source of more sufferance to all animal nature than hunger, thirst, sickness, & all the other pains of life & of death itself put together. I live in a temperate climate, and under circumstances which do not expose me often to cold. Yet when I recollect on one hand all the sufferings I have had from cold, & on the other all my other pains, the former preponderate greatly. What then must be the sum of that evil if we take in the vast proportion of men who are obliged to be out in all weather, by land & by sea, all the families of beasts, birds, reptiles, & even the vegetable kingdom! for that too has life, and where there is life there may be sensation.

Preoccupation with climate as it relates to health is manifest in Query VI of *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Here Jefferson records the minerals and vegetables of Virginia and turns to native animals. Buffon, as we have seen, hypothesizes (1) that the animals of America are in the main smaller than animals of Europe, (2) that those animals common to America and Europe are smaller in America, (3) that domesticated animals in both countries have degenerated in America, and (4) that there are fewer species of animals in America. The reasons are that America has more moisture and less heat than Europe – in other words, heat and dryness are friendly to animal thriving; cold and wetness, unfriendly.[55] Buffon is also very likely making an axiological point. Heat and dryness are properties of fire, the most divine of the four elements in Aristotle's cosmology. Prior to Aristotle, there are Heraclitus's statements that fire is the first principle of all things, wet souls are dead souls, and wise souls are dry.[56]

Noting that plants thrive with abundance of moisture and heat and that animals thrive when plants thrive,[57] Jefferson begins skeptically. He writes, "We are not furnished with observations sufficient to decide this question [of moisture]." Moreover, there are insufficient meteorological observations to decide the issue of America's heat, but his supposition that there are perhaps twice as many cloudy days in Europe than in America suggests strongly a commitment to America being hotter than Europe. Jefferson essays to decide the issue by an extensive comparative chart of the animals of Europe and America that shows, for all intents and purposes, that there is no reason to think significant biotic differences one way or another exist in the two worlds.

Finally, during his presidency, Jefferson enjoined Capt. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark as part of their expedition to explore the West to record dutifully meteorological phenomena – temperature, rainfall, cloudiness, lightening, hail, snow, ice, onset and recess of frost, rainbows, and type and season of winds – and also items meteorologically linked – dates of budding of flora and times of appearance of birds, reptiles, and insects.[58]

Military instruction

Military instruction for all capable citizens was not only aidful, but deemed needed. Jefferson told James Monroe (18 June 1813) that soldiery in

defense of the American nation and American freedom is the duty of all citizens:

> It proves more forcibly the necessity of obliging every citizen to be a soldier. This was the case with the Greeks and Romans, and must be that of every free state. Where there is no oppression there will be no pauper hirelings. We must make military instruction a regular part of collegiate education. We can never be safe till this is done.

In a second letter to Monroe one year later (6 October 1814), Jefferson worries over "interminable war" with England and putting "our house in order." There is need for classing the militia and "assigning each class to the description of duties for which it is fit." There is to be no regular militia, for Americans are "easy and happy at home." He adds, "I trust it is now seen that the refusal to class the militia, when proposed years ago, is the real source of all our misfortunes in this war."

The difficulty for Jefferson was to have military presence without a standing army, which he thought was a step away from strong, despotic government, for a standing army was a step away from war. Peter Onuf states:

> War constituted the greatest challenge to the new nation, Jeffersonian republicans agreed, for the exigencies of mobilizing men and resources in the cause of national independence and self-preservation – the first and highest duty of any government according to the law of nature – tended to obliterate constitutional distinctions among warring powers, thus transforming republics into monarchies with powerful, irresponsible governments – even when they pretended to preserves their republican forms.[59]

In keeping with government of and for the people, Jefferson thought the military needed to be republicanized, hence the notion of "citizen-soldier" of Jefferson's "First Public Address."[60] To facilitate republicanization of military leaders, there needed to be instantiated a system of formal military instruction, inconsistent with the regnant aristocratic military standing. That system of formal military instruction was to be West Point.[61]

Useless sciences

Because of Jefferson's focus on the usefulness of education, there were subjects, considered an important part of traditional education, that he thought were unserviceable or of limited use for American education. I treat of four: philosophy, religion, poetry, and music.

Philosophy

To grandson Francis Wayles Eppes (27 June 1821), Jefferson responds to a request vis-à-vis "the utility of pursuing metaphysical studies" – what

Jefferson labels "ideology" in his letter to Peter Carr (7 September 1814). He writes:

> No well educated person should be entirely ignorant of the operations of the human mind, to which the name of metaphysics has been given. There are three books on this subject, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Tracy's Elements of Idiology, and Stewart's Philosophy of the Human Mind; any one of which will communicate as much on the subject as is worth attention.

Of those authors, he considers Tracy "the most correct metaphysician living"[62] and, thus, recommends foremost his *Elements.* Tracy, Jefferson adds, "prostrates the visions of Malebranche, Berkeley, and other skeptics, by resting the question [of the possibility of knowledge] on the single basis of 'we feel.'" Falling prey to skepticism, there is no foundation of reasoning.[63] There is a significant addendum. "To pursue the science further is following a will-of-the-wisp, and a very useless waste of time, much better given to sciences more palpable, and more useful in the business of life." With the words "we feel," skepticism is shown untenable and the millennia-old debates on epistemological and metaphysical issues are once-and-for-all-times settled.

As the addendum shows, Jefferson was not attracted to philosophical speculation. Philosophizing is for persons with a superabundance of time and nothing pressing to do. As the tenor of his *Notes on the State of Virginia* shows, he was a die-hard empiricist and wished always to focus on what was practicable and testable.

Yet that did not make him entirely banausic. As his habitual-anodyne letter to John Adams (15 August 1820) shows, he could slip into ideology from time to time. "I feel, therefore I exist," he, following Tracy, says to Adams. Jefferson then proceeds in quasi-Cartesian fashion to feel the existence of bodies other than himself and to give an account both of the material essence of such bodies and of motion. Moreover, in other letters, he was not averse to speculating on the essence of deity, nature as a normative force, and the cosmos.[64]

Religion

Religion, as commonly practiced, was a subject Jefferson considered not only useless, but also harmful. Recall Jefferson believed that languages, especially Greek and Latin, should be a youth's first readings. He writes in Query XIV of his *Notes on the State of Virginia*:

> Instead . . . of putting the Bible and Testament into the hands of the children at an age when their judgments are not sufficiently matured for religious inquiries, their memories may here be stored with the most useful facts from Grecian, Roman, European, and American history. The first elements of morality too may be instilled into their minds; such as, when further developed as their judgments advance in strength, may teach them

> how to work out their own greatest happiness, by shewing them that it does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed them, but is always the result of a good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits.[65]

Certainly youths can learn both important historical facts and the basic precepts of morality through studying languages. Jefferson says that study of the Bible should occur only when the mind is suitably mature. That means the Bible is not just to be read, but to be read critically. There are in it, Jefferson states in several letters,[66] numerous untruths through which one must sift to get at what is salvageable. In such letters, Jefferson is clear that the "Old Testament" is worth little and that the "New Testament" must be purged of its supernatural Platonisms.[67]

Here the influence of Enlightenment thinking, French philosophy especially, is most apparent. With education everywhere under the taint of religious instruction, writes Condorcet, educators were "clogging the reason of children with the weight of the religious prejudices of their country" and "stifling . . . the spirit of liberty" by political prejudices. Thus, any person wishing to tackle that "difficulties opposed by nature" had first to "undergo a thorough repair."[68] Volney, in *Les Ruins*, writes of the inevitability of progress in human affairs toward increasing prosperity and happiness. The sole impediment, he underscores, is religion. Numerous religions exist over the globe, and each swears that it alone is in possession of truth. The solution to religious "contradictions" is an appeal to the senses. Disputes with a basis in sensory data are readily resolved; religious disputes without a basis in sensory data are groundless and irresolvable. "Hence . . . the cause of your [religious] disagreement exist not in the objects themselves, but in your minds, in your manner of perceiving or judging."[69]

We saw in chapter 2 Jefferson's abhorrence of the religious contagions of William and Mary College during his tenure. Daily rituals reinforced the tenets of Anglican religiosity. He certainly found The Brafferton's mission of instructing the Indians in the ways of Christianity objectionable and preferred to use the school chiefly "to collect their traditions, laws, customs, languages, and other circumstances which might lead to a discovery of their relation with one another, or descent from other nations."[70] Education there was neither broad and deep nor useful, but religious. He aimed to rectify the various shortcomings of William and Mary College at the University of Virginia by teaching "all the useful sciences in their highest degree"[71] and by not having a professorship of divinity.[72]

Nonetheless, Jefferson's view of religiosity per se was not dismissive. Jefferson was a profoundly religious man, for whom belief in deity was essential to truly virtuous living.[73] He merely objected to the political cabal of particular religions as well as their dogmatism and metaphysical brabbling.[74] True religion is not so much a matter of one's words, but of one's deeds, as "we are to be saved by our good works which are within our power."[75] True religion is a personal, not a political, concern. It is only the "moral branch of religion" that

is relevant," he tells Thomas Leiper (21 January 1809), and that is "the same in all religions."[76]

Poetry

According to actor John Bernard, Jefferson said: "I was bred to the law; that gave me a view of the dark side of humanity. Then I read poetry to qualify it with a gaze on the bright side."[77] A fondness for poetry – comprising epic, romance, dramatic, didactic, lyric, amatory, and pastoral, inter alia – is evident in Jefferson's early life as well as in the period just after he ends his legal practice.[78] He commonplaces poets such as the Greeks Anacreon, Homer, and Smyrnaeus; the Romans Catullus, Horace, Manilius, Ovid, and Virgil; the English Mark Akenside, Samuel Butler, Robert Dodsley, John Dryden, John Langhorne, John Milton, Thomas Moss, Alexander Pope, William Shakespeare, John Sheffield, and Edward Young; the French John Racine; and the Scotts James MacPherson, David Mallet, and James Thomson. One can readily see how many commonplaced passages reflect his interests and passions. He commonplaces Horace's *Satires* (§177) on virtue:

> Who then is free? The wise man, who is lord over himself,
> Whom neither poverty nor death nor bonds affright,
> Who bravely defies his passions, and scorns ambition,
> Who in himself is a whole, smoothed and rounded,
> So that nothing from outside can rest on the polished surface,
> And against whom Fortune in her onset is ever maimed.

He commonplaces Edward Young from *Night-Thoughts* (§247) on joy:

> Nature, in zeal for human amity,
> Denies, or damps, an undivided joy.
> Joy is an import; joy is an exchange;
> Joy flies monopolists: it calls for two.

He commonplaces John Sheffield from *Julius Caesar* (§297) on truth:

> We break no Laws either of Gods or Men:
> So, if we fall, it is with Reputation;
> A Fate which Cowards shun, & brave Men seek.
> If Caesar punish Men for speaking Truth,
> My honest Tongue shall dare his utmost Doom.

It is well known that Jefferson was under the spell of the epic poems of Ossian. In a letter to Charles McPherson (25 February 1773), the brother of the collector and translator James McPherson, Jefferson writes: "These pieces have been and will, I think, during my life, continue to be to me the sources of daily pleasures. The tender and the sublime emotions of the mind were never before so wrought up by the human hand. I am not ashamed to own that I think this rude bard of the north the greatest poet that has ever existed." Jefferson asks his correspondent for copies of any manuscript in print. McPherson did not

comply with Jefferson's request. The reason, in keeping with the consensus of scholars today, is that James McPherson was a talented fraud, who collected old Gaelic folk tales, composed the epic poems, and invented Ossian.

In "Thoughts on English Prosody," Jefferson writes of his preference of blank verse to rhymed verse. "What proves the excellence of blank verse is that the taste lasts longer than that for rhyme," he states. Fondness of rhyme is in the main a childish pleasure. He continues:

> The fondness for the jingle leaves us with that for the rattles and baubles of childhood, and if we continue to read rhymed verse at a later period in life it is such only where the poet has had the force enough to bring great beauties of thought and diction into this form. When young any composition pleases which unites a little sense, some imagination, and some rhythm.[79]

What passion Jefferson had for poetry, even blank verse, faded in later life. By the time of his presidency, he writes to John D. Burke (21 June 1801) concerning some comments on Joel Barlow's epic "The Columbiad," which Burke had sent to him in a prior communication. He has given the poem a "hasty perusal" but concedes that the time spent was an agreeable employment. "Of all men living," Jefferson cautions,

> I am the last who should undertake to decide as to the merits of poetry. In earlier life I was fond of it, and easily pleased. But as age and cares advanced the powers of fancy have declined. Every year seems to have plucked a feather from her wings till she can no longer waft one to those sublime heights to which it is necessary to accompany the poet. So much has my relish for poetry deserted me that at present I cannot read even Virgil with pleasure. I am consequently utterly incapable to decide on the merits of poetry. The very feelings to which it is addressed are among those I have lost.[80]

Jefferson's late-in-life dissatisfaction with poetry is manifestly a matter of an obsolescent appreciation of the merits of poetry. Yet is that obsolescence due to a nascent ripeness of taste – viz., maturation of the aesthetic sense – or has the faculty of taste attenuated or become desensitized? Is it that he was fond of it early in life because he was easily pleased and aesthetically immature, or is it that the years, preoccupied with drudgery and political pettifoggery, have led to disrelish for things beautiful?

Jefferson's letter to Nathaniel Burwell 17 years later (14 March 1818) suggests maturation of taste. He states that some poetry – and he cites that of authors Pope, Dryden, Thompson, Shakespeare, Molière, Racine, and the Corneilles – is "useful for forming style and taste" and "may be read with pleasure and improvement," but too much, like reading too many novels, leads to "a bloated imagination, sickly judgment, and disgust towards all the real businesses of life." As it is doubly difficult to frame poetry around the business of life, poetry is, he suggests, especially to be avoided. If it is to be read, it should not be read in large amounts or as a diversion from life.

Dumas Malone advises caution about taking Jefferson too much at his word. "His lack of relish for the poetry of the ancients was not permanent. He read Virgil to some extent in old age and never lost his taste for Homer." References to English poems in late-life letters too shows he did not completely eschew poetry.[81]

Music

Last, there is music, which Jefferson considers – perhaps along with painting, sculpture, architecture, and poetry – one of the basal fine arts.[82] It is also clear that Jefferson considers education in music, as well as in dancing and drawing – what he calls the "arts which embellish life,"[83] to be ideally suited to females' character.[84] Nonetheless, given Jefferson's insistence that education be useful, it might prima facie seem implausible to list it among useful sciences.

To Giovanni Fabbroni earlier in life (8 June 1778), Jefferson, a capable violinist, admits of a passion for music. "This is the favorite passion of my soul." Yet American music, he laments, is barbaric when compared to that of Italy. He states:

> In a country where like yours music is cultivated and practised by every class of men I suppose there might be found persons of those trades who could perform on the French horn, clarinet or hautboy & bassoon, so that one might have a band of two French horns, two clarinets, & hautboys & a bassoon, without enlarging their domestic expenses.

Nonetheless, Jefferson admits that a true passion for music is a refinement of the aesthetic sense – a rare achievement – and that makes music of limited use, as it is not for the enjoyment of everyone. Jefferson's view of music appears intellectualist or elitist. "Music is invaluable [only] where a person has an ear," Jefferson writes to Nathaniel Burwell (9 April 1818), and the context of the letter makes it clear that too few people have such an ear. Otherwise it ought to be eschewed. He says, "It furnishes a delightful recreation for the hours of respite from the cares of the day, and lasts us through life." The sentiment is manifestly Kamesian. To daughter Martha (28 March 1787), he says music, drawing, books, invention, and exercise are resources against ennui. In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he acknowledges that blacks are intellectually inferior to whites, but more musical. "In music they are more generally gifted than the whites, with accurate ears for tune and time, and they have been found capable of imagining a small catch. Whether they will be equal to the composition of a more extensive run of melody, or of complicated harmony, is yet to be proved."[85]

Jefferson and Plato's cave

Higher education for Jefferson aimed to ferret out the talented and wise, the natural *aristoi*, to be fit guardians of rights and harbingers of social advance. Writes Michael Zuckert:

> Jefferson's system of education is . . . a limited vehicle for social mobility, but that is neither its purpose nor its justification. Its purpose is political – to

> find and form the talented among the poor and put them into a position from which they may "be called into the charge" of "guarding the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens." "Worth and genius" are thus to be "sought out from every condition of life and completely prepared by education for defeating the competition of wealth and birth for public trusts."[86]

The analysis is, in one key respect, misleading. Zuckert is correct to note that education is a limited vehicle for social mobility. By "limited," I assume he means that it can be used to advance social status, though that is not its aim. Yet he is wrong to assert that the aim of education is political – at least, not in any fundamental sense. As he himself notes, Jefferson is careful to list both genius and worth as attributes that qualify one for the natural *aristoi*, and worth is an evaluative or a moral category, not a category of political rhetoric. Recall how Jefferson mentions in his natural-*aristoi* letter to Adams that both "moral and physical" qualities of people can be passed on from generation to generation. In addition, he says "virtue and talents" are the natural grounds for the true *aristoi*. That talent and virtue are inseparably linked is evidence that Jefferson's republicanism has an inevasible moral component. That that moral component is not a counterpart, but foundational, to his republicanism is the message iterated in several writings in which he notes that intellection is secondary to morality.[87]

Given that Jefferson believes the natural *aristoi* are identifiable by both talent and virtue and that morality is foundational for politics – a point that does not escape Merrill Peterson's notice[88] – Jefferson runs into a problem similar to that of Plato, what I call the "problem of Plato's cave."[89] When Adeimantus in Book IV of Plato's *Republic* notes that the structure of the harmonized republic that Socrates proposes seems to be such that those responsible for maintaining the unity and harmony, the complete guardians or rulers, would be the least happy, Socrates replies that the aim of a stable, thriving *polis* is not to make any one group of persons especially happy, but to make the whole as happy as it can be.[90] Socrates subsequently goes on to show through his allegory of the cave that those citizens with the fullest education and in complete realization that their greatest personal happiness comes in contemplation, not political activity, will recognize the greater good of acting against self-interest and toward the betterment of their *polis*.[91]

Jefferson faces a similar problem. Like Plato, he notes that those citizens, fit to govern, are ill disposed to govern, and that those citizens, unfit to govern, are eager to govern. For Jefferson, the persons, large in number, who are willing to assume residency in the most important political stations are not the natural *aristoi*, but the artificial *aristoi*, as their claim to being "best" is meretricious – in other words, it rests merely on birth or wealth. Yet the true *aristoi*, the natural *aristoi*, in possession of virtue and talent, are quick to recognize the entrapments of public office, as it comes at the expenses of the order of domestic affairs and of personal happiness, and it offers in return only power and political

fame – two "returns" to which a virtuous person is indifferent. In short, it is difficult to practice politics and sustain virtue, or any sort of progress toward it.[92]

Jefferson's remedy is, in effect, Plato's – education. For Jefferson, higher education with a republican slant is suitably and secularly designed to give scholars the fullest appreciation of the gains of liberty and of progress for all citizens and the need of personal sacrifice by the most valuable members of a society to nurture and preserve liberty for the sake of scientific, political, and moral advance. The aim is human flourishing, not self-flourishing. He writes in the "Rockfish Gap Report" (1818):

> Education . . . engrafts a new man on the native stock, and improves what in his nature was vicious and perverse into qualities of virtue and social worth. And it cannot be but that each generation succeeding to the knowledge acquired by all those who preceded it, adding to it their own acquisitions and discoveries, and handing the mass down for successive and constant accumulation, must advance the knowledge and well-being of mankind, not infinitely, as some have said, but indefinitely, and to a term which no one can fix and foresee.

The returns for the talented and virtuous are likely to be small in comparison with the cost – viz., neglect of family and domestic affairs. Therefore, it is probable that those scholars "graduating" from the University of Virginia, or any other higher-education institution of republican persuasion, will merely recognize their duty, based on a keen and fully developed inner sense of benevolence, to embrace liberty and promote progress, and to act, as Kant would say, not merely consistent with their duty, but in fullest recognition of their duty. In Plato's words, on leaving the Cimmerian cave and seeing the brilliancy of the sun, the wise will willingly return to the cave to eradicate what darkness they can through efforts to educate their fellow humans.

Free presses

The ingredient key to eradicating the Acherontic darkness of the times, for Jefferson, is a free press. Freedom to act is a mere bagatelle without knowledge, as only knowledge provides an actor meaningful options for activity, and free presses are indispensable for knowledge.

Early in Jefferson's life, it was the rule that the presses in the southern colonies were under the yoke of governing authorities. In the absence of a large urban community and a strong commercial economy, printers in the south stayed afloat by subsidizing their income with a governmental salary. Thus, it is no surprise they tended to promote and sanction the policies of political and religious authorities – their agenda often being the same. There was nothing like a free press, though I suspect the category, taken literally, self-implodes oxymoronically. For illustration, the first issue of the *Virginia Gazette*, the first paper in Virginia, appeared in 1736, and it was tightly controlled by the government

of colonial Virginia.[93] Editor William Parks wrote in that issue, "By the Liberty of the Press, we are not to understand any licentious Freedom, to revile our Governors and Magistrates; to traduce the establish'd Laws and Religion of our Country; or any Attempts to weaken and subvert opprobrious Writings of that sacred Respect and Veneration which ought always to be maintain'd for Authority, and Persons in Authority."[94]

It was the pressure of commerce that eventually forced changes. One event was deemed particularly significant – the Stamp Act (1765–66). The Stamp Act imposed a half-penny duty on every paper and a two-shilling tax on every advertisement. It also mandated that presses use expensive imported paper instead of cheaper local paper. Thus, the Stamp Act rankled and stirred up opposition to political officials from some of the most influential members of society – merchants, clergy, lawyers, and printers – and forced a temporary shutdown of the *Virginia Gazette*. The shutdown and oppositional tension led to the birth of a second press, *Rind's Virginia Gazette* – later, *Virginia Gazette*, the same name of the still extant original press. With advent of a second press in Virginia, there was competition and an outlet for political opposition. The success of the second press prompted the first press too to give vent to public sentiment, and that led the way for slackened governmental control of presses in Virginia.[95]

Jefferson realized that for his republicanism to take root, citizens needed to be informed – thus, there needed to be free presses. Free presses, uncontaminated by political propaganda, allowed for a mechanism of public control over political ambition. In a letter to President Washington (9 September 1792), Jefferson states:

> No government ought to be without censors: & where the press is free, no one ever will. If virtuous, it need not fear the fair operation of attack & defence. Nature has given to man no other means of sifting out the truth either in religion, law, or politics. I think it is as honorable to the government neither to know, nor notice, it's sycophants or censors, as it would be undignified & criminal to pamper the former & persecute the latter.

Jefferson writes to Edward Carrington (16 January 1787): "I am persuaded myself that the good sense of the people will always be found to be the best army. They may be led astray for a moment, but will soon correct themselves. The people are the only censors of their governors." He adds that public error in censure of political leaders should not be punished too severely, for severe punishment would pose a great threat to the "only safeguard of the public liberty."[96]

How can the people be kept from error and from regular intervention in governmental affairs? "The way to prevent these irregular interpositions of the people is to give them full information of their affairs thro' the channel of the public papers, and to contrive that those papers should penetrate the whole mass of the people." Jefferson concludes in what has become a famous passage in a letter to Archibald Stuart (14 May 1799): "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers

without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them."

Free presses, for Jefferson, did not allow editors to publish what they saw fit to publish in any manner they saw fit to publish it. In his "Proposed Constitution for Virginia" in 1776, Jefferson articulates the sole, but very important, restriction. "Printing presses shall be free, except so far as by commission of private injury cause may be given of private action." That suggested that publishers were not at liberty to publish materials conducive to public harm – for example, libelous and scandalous materials, unfounded in truth.

Yet papers did publish libelous and scandalous reports, and Jefferson himself was the object of calumny as well as, in his mind, unwarranted praise like few politicians in American history. "You have seen my name lately tacked to so much of eulogy and of abuse that I dare say you hardly thought that it meant your old acquaintance of '76," he writes to Edward Rutledge (27 December 1796). "In truth, I did not know myself under the pens either of my friends or foes. It is unfortunate for our peace that unmerited abuse wounds, while unmerited praise has not the power to heal. These are hard wages for the services of all the active and healthy years of one's life." In a letter to Peregrine Fitzhugh (23 February 1798), Jefferson says:

> I have been for some time used as the property of the newspapers, a fair mark for every man's dirt. Some, too, have indulged themselves in this exercise who would not have done it, had they known me otherwise than through these impure and injurious channels. It is hard treatment, and for a singular kind of offence, that of having obtained by the labors of a life the indulgent opinions of a part of one's fellow citizens. However, these moral evils must be submitted to.

The calumny reached its zenith in the election period of Jefferson's first terms as president.

> In the first moments of quietude which have succeeded the [presidential] election, [the printers] seem to have aroused their lying faculties beyond their ordinary state, to reagitate the public mind. What appointments to office have they detailed which had never been thought of, merely to found a text for their calumniating commentaries. However, the steady character of our countrymen is a rock to which we may safely moor; and notwithstanding the efforts of the papers to disseminate early discontents, I expect that a just, dispassionate and steady conduct, will at length rally to a proper system the great body of our country. A coalition of sentiments is not for the interest of printers. They, like the clergy, live by the zeal they can kindle, and the schisms they can create. It is contest of opinion in politics as well as religion which makes us take great interest in them, and bestow our money liberally on those who furnish aliment to our appetite. The

> mild and simple principles of the Christian philosophy would produce too much calm, too much regularity of good, to extract from it's [*sic*] disciples a support for a numerous priesthood, were they not to sophisticate it, ramify it, split it into hairs, and twist it's texts till they cover the divine morality of it's author with mysteries, and require a priesthood to explain them. The Quakers seem to have discovered this. They have no priests, therefore no schisms. They judge of the text by the dictates of common sense & common morality. So the printers can never leave us in a state of perfect rest and union of opinion. They would be no longer useful, and would have to go to the plough. In the first moments of quietude which have succeeded the election, they seem to have aroused their lying faculties beyond their ordinary state, to re-agitate the public mind. What appointments to office have they detailed which had never been thought of, merely to found a text for their calumniating commentaries.[97]

Jefferson's mind became so poisoned by the presses' libel, not vetted, that in 1802, he told Gen. Thaddeus Kościusko (2 April), "Newspapers . . . serve as chimneys to carry off noxious vapors and smoke."[98]

Slander notwithstanding, Jefferson shied away from advocacy of prosecution of misguided presses. He tells Levi Lincoln (24 March 1802) that he finds punishment inexpedient:

> To punish . . . is impracticable until the body of the people, from whom juries are to be taken, get their minds to rights; and even then I doubt its expediency. While a full range is proper for actions by individuals, either private or public, for slanders affecting them, I would wish much to see the experiment tried of getting along without public prosecutions for *libels.* I believe we can do it. Patience and well doing, instead of punishment, if it can be found sufficiently efficacious, would be a happy change in the instruments of government.

The fear as always was that the damage of public prosecution would rekindle interest in governmental control over presses and the backhanded Toryist conservatism, at odds with science and moral advance.[99] One has only to consider what he writes to Dr. Thomas Cooper (29 November 1802) apropos the hopelessness of the republican cause in France and the quieting of the newspapers there.

In a letter to Gov. Thomas McKean (19 February 1803), Jefferson does recommend a "few prosecutions" of irresponsible editors:

> The federalists having failed in destroying the freedom of the press by their gag-law [the Sedition Act], seem to have attacked it in an opposite form, that is by pushing it's [*sic*] licentiousness & it's lying to such a degree of prostitution as to deprive it of all credit. And the fact is that so abandoned are the tory presses in this particular that even the least informed of the

> people have learnt that nothing in a newspaper is to be believed. This is a dangerous state of things, and the press ought to be restored to it's [*sic*] credibility if possible. The restraints provided by the laws of the states are sufficient for this if applied. And I have therefore long thought that a few prosecutions of the most prominent offenders would have a wholesome effect in restoring the integrity of the presses. Not a general prosecution, for that would look like persecution: but a selected one.

The sentiment, Merrill Peterson notes, could be interpreted as a "mask for tyranny" or a "responsible answer to a sickness that demanded some rather strenuous purgatives."[100] It seems clear that Jefferson, in this weak moment, prefers the latter, and rightly so.

Bombardment by opprobrious materials over his lifetime seems to have mitigated Jefferson's optimism about the need of free presses as the most important educative check on governmental corruption. In his retirement years after his presidency, if we take his word at face value, he seldom read newspapers. "Reading the newspapers but little and that little but as the romance of the day," he writes to James Madison (19 April 1809), "a word of truth now and then comes like the drop of water on the tongue of Dives." Over a year later (15 December 1810), he writes to David Howell, "I read one or two newspapers a week, but with reluctance give even that time from Tacitus and Horace, and so much other more agreeable reading."[101]

Jefferson's most vitriolic denunciation of free presses comes in a letter to John Norvell (14 June 1807). He responds to a request from Norvell concerning how newspapers ought to be conducted to be of utmost service to the public and replies tersely: "by restraining it to true facts & sound principles only." Immediately he qualifies the reply. Papers have become so incredulous that "truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle." Papers are reliable conveyances of the most general and useless facts – for example, that Bonaparte is a successful general – but the details are skewed to the extent of unreliability. "The man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them; inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehoods & errors. He who reads nothing will still learn the great facts, and the details are all false." The public has become acclimated to slander. He sums:

> Defamation is becoming a necessary of life; insomuch, that a dish of tea in the morning or evening cannot be digested without this stimulant. Even those who do not believe these abominations, still read them with complaisance to their auditors, and instead of the abhorrence & indignation which should fill a virtuous mind, betray a secret pleasure in the possibility that some may believe them, tho they do not themselves. It seems to escape them, that it is not he who prints, but he who pays for printing a slander, who is it's [*sic*] it's real author.

What happened? Why did Jefferson turn so dour concerning something perceived vital to his republicanism?

Jefferson always believed that, with free presses, truth would come to the fore. Early in his life, he believed it was merely a matter of severing the conjunction of politicians and printers to liberate the presses from the taint of tinseled aristocracy – in other words, the belief that government by birth and wealth was best. In allowing the presses to give expression to all opinions on contentious matters – especially, the voices of the people – truth would eventually surface and readily be recognized.

However, Jefferson soon came to realize that, though truth would eventually surface, it might not be recognizable because it would be camouflaged by the extraordinary farrago of canards, suited to the fancies of a gullible public. A truth surfaced, but unrecognizable, is perhaps no better than a truth undisclosed.

Thus, free presses posed a disconcerting dilemma. Was it better to have government-controlled presses that forbid truth or free presses that allow for expression of truth but cater to sensationalized scandal and cabal?

As early as 1793, Jefferson saw the dilemma had only one solution: Free presses were preferable to government-controlled presses. He writes in a letter to the Spanish commissioners:

> Considering the great importance to the public liberty of the freedom of the press, and the difficulty of submitting it to very precise rules, the laws have thought it less mischievous to give greater scope to its freedom than to the restraint of it. The President has, therefore, no authority to prevent publications of the nature of those you complain of.[102]

The scenario is reminiscent of the three types of government to which Jefferson refers in letters to Edward Carrington (16 January 1787) and James Madison (30 January 1787). There are the extremes of government – governments such as American Indian societies without need of laws (e.g., the American Indians) and governments in large societies that require laws but are coercive (e.g., monarchies and coercive republics) – and there is medial government, in which "the will of every one has a just influence," he writes to Madison. Jefferson speaks of coercive government as "government of wolves and sheep" and rules it out categorically. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether representative republicanism is better than lawlessness. Although lawless societies enjoy maximal freedom, lawlessness is impossible for sizeable populations. Although representative republics work for sizeable populations, there are constraints on freedom. Jefferson asseverates: "It is a problem, not clear in my mind, that the first condition is not the best. But I believe it to be inconsistent with any great degree of population. The second state has a great deal of good in it. The mass of mankind under that enjoys a precious degree of liberty & happiness. It has it's [*sic*] evils too: the principal of which is the turbulence to which it is subject."

Related to presses, a free press, in the literal sense of a press being able to publish whatever it wishes to publish, is an extreme. It would work excellently,

for instance, in a village, where news could readily be vetted, but it is difficult to imagine that a press like the *Virginia Gazette* could be a reliable conveyance of news for the state of Virginia in Jefferson's day. A press under governmental control is also an extreme. It could not be a reliable conveyance of news for a society of any size because the "news," propagandized, is incapable of being vetted. The best sort of press, following the analogical argument, is one in which presses are beholden to the will of all citizens. As with representative republicanism, there is a rub: the possibility of "turbulence."

What of governmental checks to militate against turbulence through promoting dissemination of truth? Jefferson was, after all, amenable to positive liberty in the sense of governmental intervention in the affairs of citizens to promote liberties and guarantee rights. He also promoted republicanism by prohibiting Toryist books in the teaching of politics and law at the University of Virginia. That is an option Jefferson did consider. He writes to William Short (6 September 1808):

> The papers have lately advanced in boldness and flagitiousness beyond even themselves. Such daring and atrocious lies as fill the third and fourth columns of the third page of the United States Gazette of August 31st were never before, I believe, published with impunity in any country. However, I have from the beginning determined to submit myself as the subject on whom may be proved the impotency of a free press in a country like ours, against those who conduct themselves honestly and enter into no intrigue. I admit at the same time that restraining the press to truth, as the present laws do, is the only way of making it useful. But I have thought necessary first to prove it can never be dangerous.

The last line of the passage, at least, hints of unflagging optimism in the face of weighty evidence to the contrary. One questions whether the optimism was justifiable.

Jefferson's optimism vis-à-vis free presses was always tested, but ultimately never faltered, as is evidenced by this letter late in life. "An hereditary chief, strictly limited, the right of war vested in the legislative body, a rigid economy of the public contributions, and absolute interdiction of all useless expenses, will go far towards keeping the government honest and unoppressive. But the only security of all, is in a free press," he writes to the Marquis de Lafayette (4 November 1823). "The force of public opinion cannot be resisted, when permitted freely to be expressed. The agitation it produces must be submitted to. It is necessary to keep the waters pure." In short, turbulent waters that are pure are always preferable to sullied waters in any condition.

Why ultimately did Jefferson have faith in freedom of the press? He realized that everything was at stake with advocacy of free presses. The regnant view was that freedom of the press in a large republic would lead to anarchy, not to orderly government. Jefferson's view was always and ultimately that free presses were not only compatible with orderly governing, but were required by the

best form of orderly governing – government for and by the people. He writes to Thomas Seymour (11 February 1807):

> This experiment was wanting for the world to demonstrate the falsehood of the pretext that freedom of the press is incompatible with orderly government. I have never therefore even contradicted the thousands of calumnies so industriously propagated against myself. But the fact being once established, that the press is impotent when it abandons itself to falsehood, I leave to others to restore it to its strength, by recalling it within the pale of truth. Within that it is a noble institution, equally the friend of science and of civil liberty . . . It would seem impossible that an intelligent people, with the faculty of reading and right of thinking, should continue much longer to slumber under the pupilage of an interested aristocracy of priests and lawyers, persuading them to distrust themselves, and to let them think for them.

To break the people of the spell of the perceived greatness of a tinseled aristocracy, general education was essential. So too was overall educational reform, in structured manner, to encourage government by merit – viz., talent and virtue – not government by birth or wealth.

Notes

1 Roy Honeywell, *The Educational Works of Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 146.
2 For example, the American Philosophical Society, the American Society for Promoting and Propagating Useful Knowledge (1766), which morphed two years later into the American Society Held at Philadelphia for Promoting Useful Knowledge and eventually merged with the APS in 1769. Ralph S. Bates, *Scientific Societies in the United States* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1945), 6–7.
3 A point recognized by Honeywell later in his book. Roy Honeywell, *The Educational Works of Thomas Jefferson*, 158.
4 Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson & the New Nation: A Biography* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1970), 972.
5 For example, Dumas Malone, *Jefferson & His Time*, Vol. 6: *The Sage of Monticello* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1981), 138; Henry F. May, "The Enlightenment," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 52; Gilbert Chinard, *Thomas Jefferson: The Apostle of Americanism* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, [1929] 1962), 132–35; Philipp Ziesche, "Exporting American Revolutions: Gouverneur Morris, Thomas Jefferson, and the National Struggle for Universal Rights in Revolutionary France," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 2006, 442; Adrienne Koch, *The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1957), 132; and Otto Vossler, *Jefferson and the American Revolutionary Ideal*, trans. C. Philippon and B. Wishy (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1982), 85, 117, and 181–86.
6 Johann N. Neem, "To Diffuse Knowledge More Generally through the Mass of People," *Light and Liberty: Thomas Jefferson and the Power of Knowledge*, ed. Robert M.S. McDonald (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 52.

7 Thomas Jefferson (hereafter TJ) to John Minor, 30 August 1814. The letter to Minor contains a copy, with modifications, of the recommended reading list for a student of law that was sent to Moore. The date of the letter to Moore is unknown.
8 Pierre Charron, *On Wisdom: Three Books*, 2nd ed., trans. George Stanhope (London, 1707), 508–11.
9 Pierre Charron, *On Wisdom*, Vol. 3, trans. George Stanhope (London, 1729), 1339–44.
10 See also Thomas More's *Utopia*, Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred* , and Constantin François de Volney, *Les Ruins.*
11 "I got my first views of the expansion of science, and of the system of things in which we are placed," Jefferson said of Small. Thomas Jefferson, "Autobiography," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings: Autobiography, A Summary View of the Rights of British America, Notes on the State of Virginia, Public and Private Papers, Addresses, Letters*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 4.
12 TJ to John Adams, 28 October 1813. Beach takes the democratic and meritocratic elements of Jefferson educational system to divaricate into two "competing philosophies of education," as the principles undergirding each are inconsistent. The democratic component entails equality; inalienable rights; life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness; governed by consent of the governed; laws for public good; and principles of freedom. The meritocratic component, based on "atomized individualism and exploitative capitalistic relations of power," entails self-reliance; hard work, frugality, dutiful industry, success, and prosperity. J. M. Beach, "The Ideology of the American Dream: Two Competing Philosophies of Education," *Educational Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 2007, 148–64. The divarication is based on a colossal misapprehension of Jefferson politics and economics. Jefferson was neither a political atomist nor an economic capitalist. See M. Andrew Holowchak, *Thomas Jefferson: Uncovering His Unique Philosophy and Vision* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2014), chaps. 2–4.
13 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 365.
14 Thomas Jefferson, "Report of the Commissioners," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 464–66.
15 See also TJ to John Adams, 28 October 1813; TJ to John Adams, 5 July 1814; TJ to Nathaniel Bowditch, 26 October 1818; and TJ to Gen. Breckenridge, 9 April 1822.
16 M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent: Philosophical Essays on Thomas Jefferson* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), chap. 3.
17 "Eudaimonism" I set off in scare quotes because the eudaimonism of Aristotle and the ancient Stoics was rational, not sentimental.
18 *Pace* Peterson, who argues, "Jefferson's 'quixotism for the diffusion of knowledge' . . . sprang from his political principles." Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson & the New Nation*, 145.
19 Jean-Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind: Being a Posthumous Work of the Late M. de Condorcet* (London: J. Johnson, 1795), 354–55.
20 TJ to George Ticknor, 15 November 1817; TJ to Joseph C. Cabell, 22 January 1820; and TJ to Joseph C. Cabell, 25 December 1820.
21 Lord Kames, *The Gentleman Farmer, Being an Attempt to Improve Agriculture by Subjecting It to the Test of Rational Principles,* 4th ed. (Edinburgh: 1798), v.
22 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 659–60.
23 TJ to John Taylor, 1 May 1794; TJ to James Monroe, 26 May 1795.
24 TJ to James Madison, 27 April 1795.
25 TJ to President George Washington, 14 May 1794.
26 TJ to Tristam Dalton, 2 May 1817.
27 TJ to Phillip Mazzei, 17 March 1801.
28 TJ to Edward Rutledge, 14 July 1787.

29 TJ to James Madison, 19 May 1793; TJ to James Madison, 1 September 1793; TJ to Thomas Mann Randolph, 2 September 1793; TJ to Eli Whitney, 16 November 1793; TJ to Tench Coxe, 1 May 1794; TJ to President George Washington, 19 June 1796; and TJ to James Monroe, 14 November 1801.
30 TJ to Jonathan Williams, 3 July 1796; TJ to Robert R. Livingston, 30 April 1800; C. F. Comte de Volney, 11 February 1806; TJ to Robert Fulton, 16 April 1810.
31 Rodney H. True, "Thomas Jefferson in Relation to Botany," *The Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1916, 358–60.
32 Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and the Rights of Man* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), 90.
33 William Howard Adams, "The Fine Arts," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 204.
34 Fiske Kimball, "Thomas Jefferson and the First Monument in the Classical Revival of America," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, Vol. 2, No. 9, 1915, 371–81.
35 Robert F. Dalzell, Jr., "Constructing Independence: Monticello, Mount Vernon, and the Men Who Built Them," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 1993, 558–59.
36 Davison M. Douglas, "The Jeffersonian Vision of Legal Education," http://law2.wm.edu/faculty/documents/douglas-1-6475.pdf?svr=law, 4, accessed 10 September 2013.
37 Richard Dixon, "Law and Thomas Jefferson," http://www.tjheritage.org/imagefiles/JeffersonNotesFall2007Insert.pdf, accessed 28 November 2012.
38 Davison M. Douglas, "The Jeffersonian Vision of Legal Education," 8–9.
39 Hume says framing of wise laws is more important than "the influence of useful inventions in the arts and sciences," for the usefulness of the inventions of arts and sciences is contingent on a government that allows their use. David Hume, "On Parties in General," *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (New York: Literary Fund, 1987), 54–55.
40 Cohen notes that Minor's follow-up letter indicates Jefferson's advice was for Minor's son, not Minor. "Accept, Dear Sir, my thanks for your kind Letter. I shall give it to my Son as the most valuable present I can make him." Morris L. Cohen, "Thomas Jefferson Recommends a Course of Law Study," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, Vol. 119, No. 5, 1971, 829.
41 For more on emendations, see Morris L. Cohen, "Thomas Jefferson Recommends a Course of Law Study," 831.
42 For more on law and mentorship, see Harold Hellenbrand, *The Unfinished Revolution: Education and Politics in the Thought of Thomas Jefferson* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 54–67.
43 Another late letter to Dabney Terrell (26 February 1821) includes time away from study. It recommends six hours of reading law, "six or eight hours for reading history, politics, ethics, physics, oratory, poetry, criticism, etc.," and 10 or 12 hours for repasts, exercise, and sleep. The course of study is still brutal.
44 TJ to John Wyche (19 May 1809). For a more detailed account of his varied views on geography in education, see William A. Koelsch, "Thomas Jefferson, American Geographers, and the Uses of Geography," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2, 2008, 260–79.
45 See also TJ to Captain Meriwether Lewis, 20 June 1803.
46 See also Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (New York: Penguin Books, [1759–67] 2003), 511–12.
47 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 577.
48 See also TJ to Jacob Bigelow, 11 April 1818, for a listing of 15 requisite "heads of observation" for meteorological phenomena.

49 TJ to James Monroe, 11 March 1794.
50 Rev. James Madison and cousin to the fourth president.
51 TJ to Thomas Mann Randolph, 30 May 1790.
52 TJ to James Monroe, 11 March 1794, and TJ to William Dunbar, 12 January. 1801.
53 *Thomas Jeffersons's Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 75.
54 *Thomas Jeffersons's Notes on the State of Virginia*, 74.
55 *Thomas Jeffersons's Notes on the State of Virginia*, 47.
56 Fragments 217, 118, 219, 229, and 230. G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Charron millennia later states that the condition of the brain, where the intellective soul is housed, for those who excel in memory and learning is moist; for those who excel in wisdom, is dry. Pierre Charron, *On Wisdom*, Vol. 3, trans. George Stanhope (London, 1729), 1347.
57 *Thomas Jeffersons's Notes on the State of Virginia*, 47.
58 TJ to Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.
59 Peter Onuf, *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 186–87.
60 Thomas Jefferson, "First Annual Message," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 505.
61 For more, see Robert M. S. McDonald, ed., *Thomas Jefferson's Military Academy: Founding West Point* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004).
62 To John Adams (14 March 1820), Jefferson calls Tracy "the ablest metaphysician living." To William Duane (22 January 1813), he calls Tracy "the most conspicuous writer of the present day in the metaphysical line."
63 Jefferson subsumes epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of mind under ideology.
64 For example, TJ to John Manners, 22 February 1814; TJ to John Adams, 8 April 1816, 12 May 1820, and 11 April 1823; TJ to William Short, 31 October 1819; and TJ to Edward Everett, 24 February 1823.
65 Thomas Jefferson, Query XIV, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 273.
66 For example, TJ to Joseph Priestley, 9 January 1803; TJ to Edward Dowse, 19 April 1803; TJ to Benjamin Rush, 21 April 1803; TJ to John Adams, 13 October 1813; and TJ to William Short, 13 April 1820 and 4 August 1820.
67 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "The Fear, Honor, and Love of God: Jefferson on Jews, Philosophers, and Jesus," *Forum Philosophicum*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2013, 49-71.
68 Jean-Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind*, 216–17.
69 Constantin Francois de Volney, *The Ruins, or On the Revolutions of Empires* (Fairford, UK: Echo Library, 2010), 163.
70 Thomas Jefferson, Query XV, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 277.
71 TJ to Correa de Serra, 25 November 1817. See also TJ to John Adams, 28 October 1813; TJ to Gov. Wilson C. Nicholas, 2 April 1816; and TJ to Thomas Cooper, 2 November 1822.
72 TJ to Thomas Cooper, 2 November 1822.
73 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "The Fear, Honor, and Love of God."
74 For example, TJ to William Rutledge, 2 February 1788; TJ to Thomas Leiper, 21 January 1809; TJ to Charles Clay, 29 January 1815; TJ to Dr. Thomas Cooper, 2 November 1822; TJ to John Adams, 11 April 1823; and TJ to George Thatcher, 26 January 1824.
75 TJ to Thomas Parker, 15 May 1819.

76 See also TJ John Hancock, 11 October 1776; TJ to Elbridge Gerry, 29 March 1801; TJ to James Fishback, 27 September 1809; TJ to William Canby, 18 September 1813; TJ to John Adams, 22 August 1813; TJ to Miles King, 26 September 1814; TJ to George Logan, 12 November 1816; TJ to John Adams, 11 January 1817; TJ to John Adams, 5 May 1817; and TJ to John Davis, 18 January 1824.
77 John Bernard, *Retrospections of America, 1797–1811*, ed. Mrs. Bayle Bernard (New York, 1887), 238.
78 For an excellent account of Jefferson's reading interest through his commonplacing, see Douglas L. Wilson, "Thomas Jefferson's Early Notebooks," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4, 433–52.
79 Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 619.
80 For evidence that Jefferson did consider the epic to have merit, see TJ to Cornelia Jefferson Randolph, 26 December 1808.
81 Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, Vol. 6: *The Sage of Monticello* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1981), 187–88.
82 TJ to Ellen Wayles Randolph, 10 July 1805. To James Ogilvie (31 January 1806), he adds gardening.
83 "Rockfish Gap Report," 4 August 1818.
84 TJ to Martha Jefferson, 28 November 1783, and TJ to Nathaniel Burwell, 9 April 1818.
85 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 140.
86 Michael Zuckert, "Founder of the Natural Rights Republic," *Thomas Jefferson and the Politics of Nature*, ed. Thomas S. Engemen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 42.
87 See, for example, "Summary View," 1774; TJ to Peter Carr, 19 August 1785; TJ to Maria Cosway, 12 October 1786; TJ to James Fishback, 27 September 1809; TJ to Thomas Law, 13 June 1814.
88 Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson & the New Nation*, 974.
89 M. Andrew Holowchak, "The Paradox of Public Service: Jefferson, Education, and the Problem of Plato's Cave," *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2013, 73–86.
90 Plato, *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1930] 1994), 419e–21c.
91 Plato, *Republic*, 514a–18b.
92 Hellenbrand seems to recognize something like the problem. He writes: "By the late 1770s, Jefferson was an experienced and well-read politician. How then could he have thought that the lure of success and power would inspire impoverished young men, who were accomplished competitors in school, to pursue the path of public service and virtue?" Harold Hellenbrand, *The Unfinished Revolution: Education and Politics in the Thought of Thomas Jefferson* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 83–84.
93 Roger P. Mellen, "Thomas Jefferson and the Origins of Newspaper Competition in Pre-Revolutionary Virginia," *Journalism History*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2009, 152–53.
94 Roger P. Mellen, "Thomas Jefferson and the Origins of Newspaper Competition in Pre-Revolutionary Virginia," 153.
95 Roger P. Mellen, "Thomas Jefferson and the Origins of Newspaper Competition in Pre-Revolutionary Virginia," 152–56.
96 See also TJ to Monsieur Paganel, 15 April 1811, and TJ to Charles Yancey, 6 January 1816.
97 TJ to Elbridge Gerry, 29 March 1801.
98 TJ to Samuel Smith, 22 August 1798.

99 TJ to Mr. Pictet, 5 February 1803.
100 Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson & the New Nation*, 715.
101 TJ to J.B. Colvin, 20 September 1810; TJ to Dr. Walter Jones, 2 January 1814; TJ to James Monroe, 1 January 1815; TJ to Mr. Maury, 15 June 1815; TJ to President James Monroe, 4 February 1816; and TJ to Nathaniel Macon, 12 January 1819.
102 Thomas Jefferson, "Report to the Spanish Commissioners," 1793.

6 A heart at ease flies to no extremes

Life as a sentimental journey

> Now what man is free? The wise man who rules himself, afraid neither of poverty, death or prison; who has enough strength to check his passions and scorn honors; who is self sufficient; who offers to external accident no hold and whom chance cannot catch unaware.
>
> Horace

Jefferson's favorite novelist was Laurence Sterne. One of his favorite works of Sterne was *A Sentimental Journey.* As in the case of Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, the book is almost irreverently playful. A. Alvarez writes that the book is in "a style of pure talk, of controlled inconsequentiality, irrelevance and continual interruption."[1] Its "chapters" are often no more than a few paragraphs, and each chapter is anecdotal. Sentences are often aposiophetic. Still it is a form that Jefferson found irresistible, particularly because the anecdotes are chockablock with moral content – philosophical vignettes, as it were. "The writings of Sterne . . . form the best course of morality that ever was written," Jefferson writes to Peter Carr (10 August 1787).

The "traveller" – who Sterne invites readers to think is he – is no idle, inquisitive, lying, proud, vain, or splenetic traveler. He is instead a "sentimental traveller." A sentimental traveler goes through life with his eyes opened fully and turned to all things – especially things that, because they are common, escape the notice of everyday persons. "What a large volume of adventures may be grasped within this little span of life by him who interests his heart in everything," writes Sterne, "and who having eyes to see, what time and chance are perpetually holding out to him as he journeyeth on his way, misses nothing he can *fairly* lay his hands on."[2] Even everyday expressions are fraught with meaning. "There are certain combined looks of simple subtlety – where whim, and sense, and seriousness, and nonsense, are so blended, that all the languages of Babel set loose together could not express them – they are communicated and caught so instantaneously, though you can scarce say which party is the infecter."[3]

For the sentimental traveler, every moment of every day is an adventure. Sterne's sentimental traveler travels *au pied levé*. "I think there is a fatality in it – I seldom go to the place I set out for."[4] Yet the traveling is not aimless and

not goaded by mere inquisitiveness. The sentimental traveler strives for "useful knowledge and real improvements" of character.[5] "I have a mortal aversion for retuning back no wiser than I set out," writes Sterne in his travels through Italy.[6] With wisdom as his goal, life for the sentimental traveler is a moral adventure.

Jefferson too was a sentimental traveler for whom life was a sentimental journey. "It is unfortunate that most people think the occurrences passing daily under the eyes," he writes to John Page (4 May 1786), "are either known to all the world, or not worth being known. They therefore do not give them place in their letters." In a letter to the Marquis de Lafayette (11 April 1787), Jefferson expresses Sternian curiosity and adventuresomeness apropos of his travels through France:

> In the great cities, I go to see what travelers think alone worthy of being seen; but I make a job of it, and generally gulp it all down in a day. On the other hand, I am never satiated with rambling through the fields and farms, examining the culture and cultivators, with a degree of curiosity which makes some take me for a fool, and others to be much wiser than I am.

Jefferson's aim, like Sterne's, is acquisition of useful knowledge. It is as Pierre Charron writes in *De la sagesse*:

> The End of Travelling, is not to entertain ourselves with fine Sights, or to bring back an Account of the Buildings, or Grottos, or Foundations we see abroad; but to study Natives, and observes their different Humours, and manner of Living, their Vices and Virtues, their Laws and Customs, their private Conduct, and publick Constitutions. This is a most agreeable, and a most profitable Way of Education in all Respects.[7]

Jefferson is the Pythagorean "philosopher," who attends the public games neither for the glory of victory nor to buy and sell goods for gain, but merely to observe and study those competing and those buying and selling.[8]

This final chapter – the capstone of the book – concerns Jeffersonian education as going through life as a sentimental traveler. In that regard, most of what I have heretofore covered apropos of formal schooling is mere garniture – in other words, readying Head to be of service the Heart. In the final analysis, I argue that education for Jefferson is really in service of making persons sentimental travelers. In that regard, education is a lifelong process.

"A noiseless course"

"Whip me such stoics, great governor of nature!" says Sterne.

> Wherever thy providence shall place me for the trials of my virtue – whatever is my danger – whatever is my situation – let me feel the movements which rise out of it and which belong to me as a man, and if I govern

> them as a good one, I will trust the issues to thy justice – for thou hast made us, and not we ourselves.[9]

In the manner of a Stoic sage, Sterne invites fate to assail him with her arrows – the famous *tela fortunae* (arrows of fortune) of Seneca.[10] He will willingly endure them as tests of his mettle.[11]

For the Greek and Roman Stoics, virtuous living was willful acceptance of whatever fate would throw one's way as a needed condition of equanimity. In that regard, virtue, deemed sufficient for happiness, was perfect economy of living, where every action of a sage was a perfect action.[12] The claim I aim to develop now is that good living for Jefferson is efficient living – a claim consanguineous with ancient virtue ethics, especially Stoicism. Proper education – education with an ethical focus – has as its end useful living, which is substratally efficient living.

Even though Jefferson thought morally correct action was intuitive – viz., immediately cognizable by the moral sense without the influence of reason[13] – the pursuit of happiness was always taken to be the end of human action, and it was the role of good government to do what it could to ensure that citizens could be happy. "The only orthodox object of the institution of government," Jefferson writes to Francis A. van der Kemp (22 March 1812), "is to secure the greatest degree of happiness possible to the general mass of those associated under it." To Thaddeus Kościusko (26 February 1810), he adds freedom as one of the ends. "The freedom and happiness of man . . . [are] the sole objects of all legitimate government." Freedom, as I have noted before, is an end on par with happiness. Strictly speaking, freedom, not happiness, is the end of governing, as freedom is what government can ensure. Happiness is up to each person. By creating a free society – viz., one with constraints in place only to preserve freedom and rights[14] – governors can construct a milieu that is optimal for citizens to be happy. That cannot happen where "[noisy] kings, nobles, or priest are good conservators of the public happiness,"[15] but only where "government is administered in it's [*sic*] true republican spirit."[16] As Jefferson sums to Thomas Cooper (29 November 1802): "A noiseless course, not meddling with the affairs of others, unattractive of notice, is a mark that society is going on in happiness. If we can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people, under the pretence of taking care of them, they must become happy."

The linkage of happiness to freedom, the core of Jefferson's liberal eudaimonism, is also a grave concern of Sterne's sentimental traveler. Traveling through France without his passport, he considers being thrown into the Bastille. When ruminating about the horrors of the Bastille, he is drawn to the voice of an encaged bird. The scenario leads him to mull over the plight of an imprisoned man. He imagines the captive's emaciation and dejection from "hope deferred." He imagines him pale and feverish from want of sun and fresh air. He imagines the man – with chains on his legs and seated on the little amount of straw at the bottom of the cell that is both bed and chair – etching with a rusty nail on the wall another day of misery and sighing deeply.[17]

The key component of happiness for Jefferson is virtue.[18] Showing that utility is for the sake of virtue, not the converse, Jefferson writes Robert Skipwith (3 August 1771), "Everything is useful which contributes to fix in the principles and practices of virtue." He advises nephew Peter Carr (19 August 1785) to place virtue before all other things and to do always what is right.[19] He relates to Martha that goodness, industry, and kindness are more important than genius (5 February 1801). In numerous writings, Jefferson is clear that the road to good government occurs only through election of both the intelligent and the virtuous.[20] Moreover, virtue is not evanescent, but is a part of one's constitution, as it were. As Sterne says, "Any one may do a casual act of good nature, but a continuation of them shews it is a part of the temperament."[21]

Another key feature of virtue is authenticity – being the same person in private as in public. "I know but one code of morality for men, whether acting singly or collectively," Jefferson writes to James Madison (28 August 1789). "He who says I will be a rogue when I act in company with a hundred others, but an honest man when I act alone, will be believed in the former assertion, but not in the latter." He advises Peter Carr (19 August 1787), in times of difficulty, to act as if the whole world were looking at him, which is tantamount to advising him always to be authentic – to be the same person in public as in private. He tells grandson (Francis Wayles Eppes (21 May 1816): "Never suffer a thought to be harbored in your mind which you would not avow openly. When tempted to do any thing in secret, ask yourself if you would do it in public."[22] Sterne too emphasizes authenticity as central to virtue. He mentions a meeting, concerning a missing passport, with a certain Monsieur Duc de C*****. He considers reading the dignitary's face, comportment, bodily movements, and words for clues concerning how best to interact with the man to win his "good graces." Shamed by even considering any anfractuous course other than the unswerving path of truth, he settles on a face-to-face meeting among equals, for "whenever it is not so, man is false to himself . . . A heart at ease . . . flies into no extremes – 'tis ever on its center."[23]

Oikeiosis

"Le pour et le contre *se trouvent en chaque nation*,"[24] says Sterne, "there is a balance . . . of good and bad everywhere; and nothing but the knowing it is so can emancipate one half of the world from the prepossessions which it holds against the other."[25] Later he adds, "There is nothing unmixt in this world; and some of the gravest of our divines have carried it so far as to affirm that enjoyment itself was attended even with a sigh."[26] Though there cannot be good without ill, the tenor of his sentimental journey suggests that any agent in possession of such knowledge has tipped the balance of his own life in favor of good.

Jefferson's view is similar. Pleasure and pain are meted out to each human. Yet "it is a good world on the whole, [and] more pleasure than pain dealt out to us."[27] He adds, "There are, I acknowledge, even in the happiest life, some terrible convulsions, heavy set-offs against the opposite page of the account."

Nonetheless, when fronted with pain, we are to "meet and surmount difficulties; not to fly from them, like cowards; and to fly, too, in vain, for they will meet and arrest us at every turn of our road."[28]

Elsewhere I have made the case that Jefferson, in spite of his express disavowal of Stoicism – as it is an ethics too demanding[29] – is a living Stoic.[30] Key for Stoics in living a virtuous life was *oikeiosis*, expressed grandiloquently in Book VII of Diogenes Laertius's *Lives*,[31] Book III of Cicero's *On Ends*,[32] as well as in Seneca's *Letters*[33] – all of which were important books in Jefferson's libraries at Monticello and Poplar Forest. The word is difficult to translate, but it derives its meaning from the Greek word for "house" or "abode," *oikos* (see Figure 6.1), and is often translated as "appropriation," in the sense of the process of making something one's own that one has a right to make one's own. The qualifying clause, however, invites caution, as it suggests the venality of appropriating something one is not morally entitled to appropriate. What are the things worth appropriating? Virtue and the things conducive of it. What are the things worth avoiding? Vice and the things conducive of it. Thus, *oikeiosis* entails knowledge of self, others, and nature.[34]

"It is sufficient for my reader, if he has been a traveller himself," writes Sterne, "that with study and reflection hereupon he may be able to determine his own

Figure 6.1 Monticello, front view. Jefferson's *oikos*, Monticello, like a virtuous person, was the picture of architectural symmetry, proportion, balance. Like a person striving for virtue, it was constantly being vamped and improved. (M. Andrew Holowchak)

place and rank in the catalogue – it will be one step towards knowing himself."[35] Jefferson tells his grandson Thomas Jefferson Randolph (24 November 1808) that he, while young, extricated himself from Gordian difficulties and temptations by reflecting on what his cynosures William Small, Peyton Randolph, and George Wythe would do in similar scenarios. "Be assured, my dear Jefferson, that these little returns into ourselves, this self-catechising habit, is not trifling nor useless, but leads to the prudent selection and steady pursuits of what is right."

Another key feature of Stoic ethics is duty to others. Laurence Sterne writes, "A man who has not a sort of an affection for the whole sex, is incapable of ever loving a single one as he ought."[36] The sentiment is Platonic:[37] Generic love – viz., love of humanity – must precede love of any individuals, if one is to love aright any individual.

Duty to others is captured by Jefferson's embrace of benevolence being needed for morally correct action – what Jefferson also means, I suspect, when he uses the term "industry."[38] "I . . . place much of the happiness of my life in seeing you improved in knowledge, learned in all the domestic arts, useful to your friends and good to all," writes Jefferson to his daughter Mary (30 May 1791). "To see you in short place your felicity in acquiring the love of those among whom you live, and without which no body can ever be happy." His critique of the ancient ethicians is that they have not viewed duties to others "within the circle of benevolence."[39] The superiority of Jesus's precepts, he writes to William Short (4 August 1820), is that they are founded in benevolence, and benevolence is nowise in the service of self-interest. He writes to Maria Cosway (12 October 1786) that benevolence, sympathy, gratitude, justice love, and friendship are inborn to the moral sense. "I am conscious," Jefferson writes to Richard Johnson (10 March 1808) of his political actions, "of having always intended to do what was best for my fellow citizens; and never, for a single moment, to have listened to any personal interest of my own." Evidence of Jefferson's own benevolence, he gives in a letter to Thaddeus Kościusko (26 February 1810), is his willingness to direct "the studies of such young men as ask it," to fix them on the objects of all science – "the freedom and happiness of man" – and to avail them of his prodigious library.

"A polished nation," writes Sterne, "makes every one its debtor."[40] The implication is that a good nation gives gratefully what it can give to all others, and what applies to nations applies to individuals.

For Jefferson, though government has the role of cultivating suitable ground by which happiness can flourish, citizens are responsible for their own happiness. Liberty is critical. Forced happiness is not voluntary, and thus, not happiness. Feature ingredients of happiness are political participation as well as moral transparency and accountability.

Political participation is the glue of republican unity for Jefferson. "In no country on earth is [opposition to law] so impracticable as in one where every man feels a vital interest in maintaining the authority of the laws, and instantly engages in it as in his own personal cause," writes Jefferson to Gen. Benjamin

Smith (20 May 1808). To Joseph C. Cabell (2 February 1816), he expresses more forcefully the sentiment:

> Where every man is a sharer in the direction of his ward-republic, or of some of the higher ones, and feels that he is a participator in the government of affairs, not merely at an election one day in the year, but every day; when there shall not be a man in the State who will not be a member of some one of its councils, great or small, he will let the heart be torn out of his body sooner than his power be wrested from him by a Caesar or a Bonaparte.

Education is critical for participation.

Moral transparency and accountability too are essential for thriving republicanism. "No ground of support for the Executive will ever be so sure as a complete knowledge of their proceedings by the people," Jefferson writes to George Washington (2 December 1793), "and it is only in cases where the public good would be injured, and *because* it would be injured, that proceedings should be secret. In such cases it is the duty of the Executive to sacrifice their personal interests (which would be promoted by publicity) to the public interest." The notion that it is sometimes the duty of the executive to act in secrecy for the public good might be taken as evidence of Jefferson's dishonesty. It ought not to be taken thus. Jefferson is merely acknowledging that there will be certain times – for example, when expeditious action is needed as with the Louisiana Purchase or when a testy, impetuous citizenry might prefer war to embargo – that informing the citizenry on a course of action will do more harm to them than good, for they will not have fully assimilated that information. We ought to assume that such situations will be extraordinary and rare. It is also worth noting Jefferson's mention of the sacrifice of publicity, in keeping with self-interest, for public interest.[41]

Involvement in his own affairs entails not only involvement in the affairs of one's fellow citizens; it entails also involvement in the affairs of humankind. Jefferson's lifelong interest in science, with a global community of its "citizens" and whose daily advances allow for governors to govern with increased wisdom,[42] is sufficient evidence of global involvement. Liberty and regard for, maintenance of, and liberalizing human rights progressively, he writes to Czar Alexander (19 April 1806), are intimately related to "the progress of science and refinement of morality." Most significantly, the implications of Jefferson's republican experiment, tried on North America, are hoped to be global. By educating the masses, the gap between the people and the educated is for all intents and purposes eliminated, or at least appreciably narrowed. That allows for equality of opportunity, though no compensation needs to be made for inequality of talents. To Thomas Law (15 January 1811), Jefferson says of his views on foreign policy, "My affections were first for my own country, and then, generally, for all mankind." That each person ought to be involved to some extent in the affairs of all others, suggests mental alignment with Stoic sympathy (Gr., *sympatheia*) – a sort of cosmic connectedness and belonging.

Because of his purchase of *sympatheia*, in developing the thesis that good living is efficient living for Jefferson, we come to find that good governing

is efficient governing, for the principles that apply to virtuous living and a thriving life are, Jefferson thinks, straightforwardly applicable to virtuous governing. I, thus, turn to Jefferson's own thoughts on the administration of good government in a revelatory and important letter to P.S. Dupont de Nemours (24 April 1816):

> When we come to the moral principles on which the government is to be administered, we come to what is proper for all conditions of society. I meet you there in all the benevolence and rectitude of your native character, and I love myself always most where I concur most with you. Liberty, truth, probity, honor are declared to be the four cardinal principles of your society. I believe with you that morality, compassion, generosity are innate elements of the human constitution; that there exists a right independent of force; that a right to property is founded in our natural wants, in the means with which we are endowed to satisfy these wants, and the right to what we acquire by those means without violating the similar rights of other sensible beings; that no one has a right to obstruct another exercising his faculties innocently for the relief of sensibilities made a part of his nature; that justice is the fundamental law of society; that the majority, oppressing an individual, is guilty of a crime, abuses its strength, and by acting on the law of the strongest breaks up the foundations of society; that action by the citizens in person, in affairs within their reach and competence, and in all others by representatives, chosen immediately and removable by themselves, constitutes the essence of a republic; that all governments are more or less republican in proportion as this principle enters more or less into their composition; and that a government by representation is capable of extension over a greater surface of country than one of any other form.

Jefferson had numerous other Stoic tendencies. He consistently preached eschewal of anger, chiefly by avoidance of confrontation, for "it is not for a man of sense to dispute the road with [an angry bull]."[43] He countenanced reading good books to prompt virtuous action,[44] self-reflection,[45] emulation of cynosures,[46] and a veridical approach to living.[47] Finally, there were his purchases of usefulness and timeliness, which entail indifference to things inconsequential. I turn next to timeliness.

Timely living

An underappreciated aspect of *eudaimonia* is timeliness (Gr., *kairos*). Following Aristotle and the Stoics, who follow a tradition at least as old as Homer in the early eighth century BC, doing the "right thing" at the wrong time, for Jefferson, is not doing the right thing. Jefferson writes to Dr. Thomas Cooper (7 October 1814):

> We cannot always do what is absolutely best. Those with whom we act, entertaining different views, have the power and the right of carrying them

> into practice. Truth advances, and error recedes step by step only; and to do to our fellow men the most good in our power we must lead where we can, follow where we cannot and still go with them, watching always the favorable moment for helping them to another step.

Because virtuous activity is context sensitive or relative to one's circumstances, virtuous action is imprescriptible. There can be no inviolable rules of right action, though some will be generally applicable. Nonetheless, context sensitivity does not imply relativism in any harmful sense – in other words, it is not subjectivism. Right action in a particular situation for any two persons with identical capacities for virtuous activity and an identical life history, inter alia, is identical.

Timeliness as it relates to accommodation – that each be educated in pursuance of his years, capacities, and condition of life – is an indispensable part of the educational process. To Joseph C. Cabell (28 November 1820), Jefferson writes of the need of everyone to be educated to conduct everyday-life business and of some to be educated so that everyday-life business for all other citizens can be conducted as smoothly as possible. "The greatest good requires, that while they are instructed in general, competently to the common business of life, others should employ their genius with necessary information to the useful arts, to inventions for saving labor and increasing our comforts, to nourishing our health, to civil government, military science, &c."

A condition sine qua non of accommodation, a subprinciple, is the kairotic principle of education, which can be expressed as follows vis-à-vis education:

> Each subject (or task, etc.) must be learned at the right time for optimal assimilation and utilization.

First, Jefferson prescribes that certain subjects, on account of their complexity or its lack, should be taught at certain times. In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he writes:

> There is a certain period of life, say from eight to fifteen or sixteen years of age, when the mind like the body is not yet firm enough for laborious and close operations. If applied to such, it falls an early victim to premature exertion; exhibiting, indeed, at first, in these young and tender subjects, the flattering appearance of their being men while they are yet children, but ending in reducing them to be children when they should be men.[48]

The gist is in keeping with what Aristotle said millennia earlier, "Education through habituation must come before education through reason."[49]

Jefferson emphasizes that exposure to complexity can readily be debilitating for the young, as "memory is then most susceptible and tenacious of impressions" and the mind is ill-suited for critical analysis. For illustration, he advises strongly against exposure to religion during this stage, for religious instruction

is a matter of exposure to one of numerous schools of dogmata, each in key respects inconsistent with all others, and such exposure is always ipse dixit.

Yet it is not sufficient for youths to avoid strenuous mental exertion. "If this period be suffered to pass in idleness," writes Jefferson, "the mind becomes lethargic and impotent, as would the body it inhabits if unexercised during the same time." He adds, "The sympathy between body and mind during their rise, progress and decline, is too strict and obvious to endanger our being misled while we reason from the one to the other."

Strenuous exertion must be eschewed. So too, on the other extreme, must be hebetude. There is an upside to memory's susceptibility to strong impressions during this critical stage of life. "But that time is not lost which is employed in providing tools for future operation: more especially as in this case the books put into the hands of the youth for this purpose may be such as will at the same time impress their minds with useful facts and good principles."[50] Languages, we have seen, are especially useful during this period. Through acquisition of languages, youths can simultaneously absorb the lessons of history and intake, without critical strain, the "axioms" of morality. Useful too are the basics of arithmetic and geometry, as they are mostly a matter of memorization. In sum, subjects mostly a matter of memorization should be taught in late childhood to middle adolescence, while subjects requiring analytic skills should be taught in late adolescence and early adulthood.

Second, timeliness is also critical at any particular stage of the educational process. Jefferson, we recall, strongly suggests to Gen. John Minor (30 August 1814) that the extensive list of books he has given to him in preparation for a legal career should be read in the order in which the books are listed.[51]

> Under each of the preceding heads, the books are to be read in the order in which they are named. These by no means constitute the whole of what might be usefully read in each of these branches of science. The mass of excellent works going more into detail is great indeed. But those here noted will enable the student to select for himself such others of detail as may suit his particular views and dispositions. They will give him a respectable, an useful & satisfactory degree of knolege [*sic*] in these branches, and will themselves form a valuable and sufficient library for a lawyer, who is at the same time a lover of science.

Apropos of legal readings, a scholar should commonplace from "Reports on Virginia Laws" to learn conciseness, condensation, and avoidance of prolixity. "In reading the Reporters [Reports on Virginia Laws]," Jefferson adds, "enter in a common-place book every case of value, condensed into the narrowest compass possible which will admit of presenting distinctly the principles of the case. This operation is doubly useful, inasmuch as it obliges the student to seek out the pith of the case, and habituates him to a condensation of thought, and to an acquisition of the most valuable of all talents, that of never using two words where one will do. It fixes the case too more indelibly in the mind."[52]

Third, economy requires timely availability of educational resources – in Jefferson's day, books. At Monticello, Jefferson had two substantial libraries during his life. The largest, comprising some 6,500 volumes, was sold to the federal government and became the backbone of the Library of Congress. The second, his retirement library, was more modest, but more than half the size of the large one. Jefferson's libraries were too large to have been merely for personal use. Thus, he used them as reference materials in replies to letters, requesting pertinent information. Again, he lent them out to friends like James Madison. He also allowed numerous others access to his books – for example, the youths in the neighboring village, as he says in his letter to Kościusko – and delighted in guiding their education. For illustration, Jefferson tells James Ogilvie (31 January 1806) to make free use of Monticello's library, as circumstances require. "I have great pleasure in finding an opportunity of making it useful to you." He asks only that borrowers write down the books taken for use on a slip of paper and cross out the books that are returned into their proper place. The books, he says to his friend, are in the following order:

1 Antient history
2 Modern do. [history]
3 Physics
4 Nat. Hist. proper
5 Technical arts
6 Ethics
7 Jurisprudence
8 Mathematics
9 Gardening, architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry
10 Oratory
11 Criticism
12 Polygraphical

In a letter to John Wyche (19 May 1809), Jefferson asserts that every county should have a "small circulating library" with "a few well-chosen books" on lend to the members of the county. "These should be such as would give them a general view of other history, and particular view of that of their own country, a tolerable knowledge of Geography, the elements of Natural Philosophy, of Agriculture and Mechanics."

Fourth, we might note here that the overall system of education that Jefferson proposes – from ward schools to the University of Virginia – is a model not just for Virginia, but also for America, as well as for freedom-loving, progress-embracing countries across the globe.[53] His critique of European education has implications that extend beyond Americans educated there being corrupted. Moreover, it is clear that Jefferson thought his educational reforms were consistent with political and moral advances of Enlightenment times. The limiting factor for application of such reforms was, of course, timeliness. As he writes to Walter Jones (31 March 1801), "When we reflect how difficult it is

to move or inflect the great machine of society, how impossible to advance the notions of a whole people suddenly to ideal right, we see the wisdom of Solon's remark, that no more good must be attempted than the nation can bear." To James Heaton (20 May 1826), Jefferson says: "A good cause is often injured more by ill-timed efforts of its friends than by the arguments of its enemies. Persuasion, perseverance, and patience are the best advocates on questions depending on the will of others." Or again and metaphorically, "If too hard pushed," he says to Joel Barlow (10 December 1807) "[the people] balk, and the machine retrogrades."[54] In short, amply cognizant that people must be made aware that they are ill, as it were, before they will consent to remedy, he was chary of pushing his educative ideals on to other states or other nations.

Finally, in keeping with Aristotle's and the Stoics' ethical theories, timely living is perfect action in moral scenarios. For Aristotle, it is a matter of squaring one's feelings to circumstances to generate through reason right action. "Having these feelings at the right time, about the right things, toward the right people, for the right end, and in the right way, is the middle and best state, and this is proper to virtue."[55] For Stoics, it is a matter of perfect living through perfect acclimation to circumstances by reason-guided right action (L., *recte factum*, or Gr., *katorthoma* or *teleion kathekon*). For Jefferson, as we saw in chapter 3, reason is out of the equation. Good living is mostly a matter of following the dictates of one's moral-sense faculty without attending to the intrusions of reason. The moral sense is in the main an adequate guide to right action, even in scenarios of sufficient complexity.[56]

The "great experiment"

As the preceding section shows, formal education is highly structured, and its varied stages ought to occur at prescribed times in a person's life. Its function is to give to each citizen the tools he will need for responsible, participatory citizenship and to determine for himself his own course toward happiness, without the intrusions of government.

In that regard, Jefferson's republicanism was avowedly an experiment in human living. To John Tyler (28 June 1804), Jefferson speaks of representative government as an American "experiment," involving governance of man by man and allowing man to be "governed by reason and truth." He adds, and here his empiricism is manifest, "I hold it, therefore, certain, that to open the doors of truth, and to fortify the habit of testing everything by reason, are the most effectual manacles we can rivet on the hands of our successors to prevent their manacling the people with their own consent." In "Draft Declaration and Protest of the Commonwealth of Virginia, on the Principles of the Constitution of the United States of America, and on the Violations of Them," Jefferson writes:

> We owe every other sacrifice to ourselves, to our federal brethren, and to the world at large, to pursue with temper and perseverance the great experiment which shall prove that man is capable of living in society, governing

> itself by laws self-imposed, and securing to its members the enjoyment of life, liberty, property, and peace; and further to show, that even when the government of its choice shall manifest a tendency to degeneracy, we are not at once to despair but that the will and the watchfulness of its sounder parts will reform its aberrations, recall it to original and legitimate principles, and restrain it within the rightful limits of self-government.[57]

The experiment was for Jefferson not just a suggestion for a new manner of living for a people in a different continent. Several of Jefferson's writings make it clear that the experiment was universal in intendment and had global implications. "The plan," writes Robert Faulkner, "can be not only definite, but also a future-oriented and universal project to improve the world. For its politics and science of basic needs can be expected to attract most people, and it can also reconcile them to superiors who seem but representatives and experts in service to the public or to humanity at large."[58]

America was a political proving grounds for his view of the human condition – humans as free, rational, and progressive beings.[59] Jefferson wished to establish a minimal political structure that invited the fullest measure of political participation from all persons in a manner that allowed for virtue and talent, not for wealth and birth, to govern, as well as for the fullest measure of freedom from governmental intrusion in personal affairs. America would instantiate everything great from England and France, their science and technology, while avoiding the pitfalls of the excesses and deficiencies of each. It would be the rebirth of Greco-Roman agrarian-based societies within a liberal, noncoercive, and progressive republicanist framework. "Never was a finer canvas presented to work on than our countrymen," Jefferson writes in a letter to John Adams (28 February 1796). "Most are farmers; others are engaged honest industry. All, however, know their rights and all have due respect for the laws."

The aim, as I have argued in chapter 1, is an arcadia, where there is not surfeit of things a person could want, but a sufficient amount of the things conducive to simple, virtuous, and harmonious living – in other words, the necessities of a good life, not the folderols and trappings of a life of excess. That sentiment is echoed by Sterne, when he writes of a traveler seeking in another nation the very things readily available to him in his own. "That a man would act as wisely," writes Sterne,

> if he could prevail upon himself to live contented without foreign knowledge or foreign improvements especially if he lives in a country that has no absolute want of either – and indeed, much grief of heart has it oft and many a time cost me, when I have observed how many a foul step the inquisitive Traveller has measured to see sights and look into discoveries; all which, as Sancho Panza said to Don Quixote, they might have seen dry-shod at home.[60]

That, however, is the mistake of an inquisitive, not a sentimental, traveler.

Education had a vital role in shaping Jefferson's arcadia by shaping the citizens in his republic, and more must be said about Jefferson's educational scheme. Here I return to the issue of timeliness as it relates to the entire scheme of education, with a focus on transitioning from elementary education to education at the level of a university – viz., the meritocratic component of his schema.

In chapter 2, I suggested that one could say Jefferson had a functionalistic approach to education – a focus on inputs and outputs – and that grammar schools were a stepping stone from elementary education to education at a university. That is an oversimple depiction, however.

It was the case for Jefferson, as it was for John Dewey years later, that education is not static; it is a process. For Dewey, the problem of education is to link students with their past in a meaningful way and connect them to a sense of present. He asks, "How shall the young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in appreciation of the living present?"[61] It also gives him a sense of reasonable expectation for what the future might bring.[62] Immersion in the world is key; so too is interaction with others.

What is critical for Dewey is freedom. "The only freedom that is of enduring importance is freedom of intelligence, . . . freedom of observation and of judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worthwhile."[63] To maximize freedom, education must encourage activity, but not activity as an end. Viewing activity as an end "leads to identification of freedom with immediate execution of impulses and desires," and that is to make one a slave to impulses and desires. The end is intelligent activity of the sort where action is delayed until observation and judgment intervene.[64] The sorts of experiences that are intelligent lead to "knowledge of more facts and entertainment of more ideas and to a better, more orderly, arrangement of them."[65] The right sort of educational model enables students to recognize their capabilities so that they may thereafter make informed judgments and morally appropriate decisions, based on what they can do, under the constraints of morally appropriate behavior. That is mostly a matter of educational empowerment, expressed succinctly in Dewey's own statements that education is a matter of "freeing the life-process for its own most adequate fulfillment"[66] and that education is a matter not of "pouring in," but of "drawing out."[67] It is perhaps fair to assert with David Burns et al. that Jefferson was for Dewey not only the inspiration behind works such as *Freedom and Culture*, "Creative Democracy," and *The Living Thoughts of Thomas Jefferson*, but also that Jefferson embodied the sort of enlightened citizenship Dewey advocated.[68]

It is impossible to assert that Jefferson had insights similar to Dewey concerning pedagogy, when Jefferson said so little on pedagogy. Nonetheless, it is clear that Dewey acknowledged a debt to Jefferson vis-à-vis his pedagogical insights. Moreover, Jefferson's educational bills and his letter to Carr suggest education is not static, but a process aiming at freedom and happiness. At the elementary

level for Jefferson, students are given the minimum education – reading, writing, and arithmetic – for self-sufficiency and ward-level political involvement. Those scholars who move on to the grammar schools, scholars from the ages of 10 to 15, board at schools at a day's ride from home, focus on acquisition of languages as tools for future learning – in other words, to give them access to the finest publications in all the sciences – and learn the elements of morality through reading history in those languages. Those scholars, with reason sufficiently developed and morality sufficiently honed, who move to a university like University of Virginia are allowed to attend lectures in accordance with their interests and develop themselves intellectually as they see fit in any of the useful sciences. The movement throughout is from dependency to independency, from tight controls over the content and manner of education to a gradual mitigation of such controls. In the words of Dewey, education for Jefferson begins with pouring in and ends with drawing out. For Jefferson, as it is for Dewey, the overarching aim of the educational process is responsible citizenship, and citizenship for each extends beyond one's national ties.

Upshot

If we grasp the significance of the principles of accommodation and eudaimonism – viz., that each be educated in pursuance of his years, capacity, and condition in life and that the ultimate aims of education are freedom and happiness – we see at once that education for Jefferson is in the business of promoting human flourishing. Thus, any attempt to say something meaningful on Jefferson's philosophy of education must have something to say about Jefferson's view of human flourishing.

For Jefferson, human flourishing entails maximum human liberty, and it is the job of government to ensure all citizens can do as they see fit. Yet flourishing is no atomistic ideal because it does not entail that humans are at liberty to follow their passions come what may. Not all passions, but only the passions of the heart – in other words, the moral sense – are worth following, and the passions of the heart are indissolubly social passions.

It is the job of education to nurture the social passions so that humans can fully recognize their natural ties with others and, thus, voluntarily and completely participate in social and political affairs and act benevolently toward all humans everywhere. That means both moral instruction of the young through moral reinforcement of the natural impulses of the moral sense and proper development of the critical skills of the rational faculty of adolescents and young adults so that reason can be a stalwart ally of the moral sense.

Thus, an essential part of human flourishing for Jefferson is formal education. Education – with its three tiers to meet the needs of citizens at various levels – is the glue that keeps united a thriving republic, irrespective of size.[69] Through cultivating responsible citizenship through egalitarian and meritocratic means, it aims to ensure independence of all citizens as well as their fullest political participation insofar as their affairs would allow. In an egalitarian sense, each citizen

will be given a minimal education to give him the tools to manage his own affairs, without paternalistic governmental intervention. In a meritocratic sense, the most gifted and morally sensitive will be educated to their fullest capacity in an effort to serve the needs of a thriving, progressive republic.

Roy Honeywell argues Jefferson will always be considered an educational pioneer.

> He dreamed a magnificent prospect of political, moral, and social progress for his countrymen and toiled incessantly that the dream might be realized. He may have been arbitrary and dogmatic and may have used the tools of the politician and of the boss, but never that he himself might profit save in that deeper selfishness which finds its chief joy in the doing of a service which will outlive the doer. In this sense he will always hold a high place in that worthy company of American educational pioneers.[70]

Jennings L. Wagoner calls the great American statesman fatidic. Noting that what we recognize today as mistakes of judgment concerning education, he states we must understand the times in which Jefferson lived. "While Jefferson was in some ways a product of his time, he was most significantly the prophet of later times. His labors on behalf of the education of citizens showed him to be far in advance of the thinking of his day."[71]

In this chapter, I have argued and expatiated on a thesis first put forth in *Dutiful Correspondent* that education for Jefferson was lifelong. To be a good human being and solid citizen means that one is constantly in the business of self-discovery, and self-discovery is no mere atomistic ideal. "[Jefferson's] lifelong interest in learning came to encompass the whole range of recorded knowledge," writes Demetrios Constantelos.[72] For Jefferson, each person, if fully human, is a citizen of one's self, one's state, and the cosmic community of humans. To that end, citizenship for Jefferson is inescapably normative. Good living is sentimental traveling in the Sternian senses of living with one's eyes opened fully and of keeping one's heart unlocked to the possibility of integrating all events witnessed as meaningful sentimental experiences.

Notes

1 A. Alvarez, "Introduction," Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 8.
2 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 51.
3 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 77.
4 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 102.
5 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 34–35.
6 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 92.
7 Pierre Charron, *On Wisdom, Vol. 3*, trans. George Stanhope (London, 1729), 1358–59.
8 Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J. E. King (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), V.8–9.
9 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 118.

10 For example, Seneca, *Epistles*, Vols. 2 and 3, trans. Richard M. Gummere (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1917] 2002 and [1925] 2000), XLV.9 and CIV.22.
11 See also Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (New York: Penguin Books, [1759–67] 2003), 440.
12 See M. Andrew Holowchak, *The Stoics: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum Books, 2008), 24–29.
13 M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent: Philosophical Essays on Thomas Jefferson* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 160–63.
14 Thomas Jefferson, "Opinion on the French Treaties," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings: Autobiography, A Summary View of the Rights of British America, Notes on the State of Virginia, Public and Private Papers, Addresses, Letters*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 432.
15 Thomas Jefferson get rid of hereafter TJ to George Wythe, 13 August 1786. See also TJ to the Marquis de La Fayette, 28 October 1822.
16 TJ to David Campbell, 27 March 1792.
17 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 94–98.
18 To Amos Cook (21 January 1816), Jefferson writes, "Without virtue, happiness cannot be."
19 See also TJ to Maria Cosway, 12 October 1786; TJ to Wilson Cary Nicholas, 26 March 1805; and TJ to Dr. George Logan, 3 October 1813.
20 For example, "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 365; TJ to James Madison, 28 August 1789; and TJ to John Adams, 28 October 1813.
21 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 75. Later Sterne adds, "There is but a certain line of perfection that man, take him altogether, is impowered to arrive at – if he gets beyond, he rather exchanges qualities, than gets them," 114.
22 See also TJ to Edmund Randolph, 17 September 1792; TJ to William Hamilton, 22 April 1800; Second Annual Message, 15 December 1802; Second Inaugural Address, 4 March 1805; TJ to Don Vanentine de Feronda, 4 October 1809; and TJ to Albert Gallatin, 24 April 1811.
23 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 101. Elsewhere Sterne writes, "A bad life and a good belief are disagreeable and troublesome neighbours, and where they separate, depend upon it, 'tis but for no other cause than quietness sake." See also Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, 124 and 493.
24 "Pro and con find themselves in each nation."
25 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 84–85.
26 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 112.
27 TJ to John Adams, 8 April 1816. See also TJ to John Adams, 18 December 1825.
28 TJ to William Short, 31 October 1819.
29 TJ to William Short, 31 October 1819.
30 M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent*, 17–22. The claim is supported by the fact that many of the ethicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Jefferson read were profoundly influenced by Stoicism.
31. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Vol. 2, trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press [1925] 1991), VII.85.
32 Cicero, *De Finibus*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1914] 1994), III.62–63.
33 Seneca, *Letters*, trans. Richard M. Gummere (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1943] 2000), CXXI.20–24.
34 See M. Andrew Holowchak, *The Stoics*, 95–99.
35 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 35.

36 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 108.
37 Plato, *Symposium*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press [1925] 1996), 210a–12a.
38 Viz., industry implies flight from idleness, but flight in such a manner that one is of benefit to one's fellow men. For example, TJ to Martha Jefferson, 28 March 1787; TJ to Martha Jefferson, 5 May 178; TJ to Martha Jefferson, 21 May 1787; TJ to Martha Jefferson Randolph, 26 April 1790; and TJ to Mary Jefferson, 30 May 179.
39 TJ to Benjamin Rush, 21 April 1803.
40 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 114.
41 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "The Paradox of Public Service: Jefferson, Education, and the Problem of Plato's Cave," *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2013, 73–86.
42 TJ to Marquis de Lafayette, 4 November 1823.
43 TJ to Thomas Jefferson Randolph, 24 November 1808. See also TJ to Mary Jefferson, 11 April 1790; TJ to Ellen Wayles Randolph, 27 November 1801; TJ James Fishback, 27 September 1809; and TJ to Francis Wayles Eppes, 21 May 1816.
44 M. Andrew Holowchak, *The Stoics*, 176–77.
45 TJ to Dr. Vine Utley, 21 March 1819.
46 TJ to Thomas Jefferson Randolph, 24 November 1808; TJ to John Saunderson, 31 August 1820; and TJ to Isaac Engelbrecht, 25 February 1824.
47 TJ to Martha Jefferson, 7 April 1787; TJ to Peter Carr, 19 August 1785; TJ to Judge John Tyler, 28 June 1804; TJ to Dr. George Logan, 12 November 1816; TJ to William Roscoe, 27 December 1820; and TJ to Henry Lee, 8 May 1825.
48 Thomas Jefferson, Query XIV, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (New York: W. W. Norton, 1955), 273.
49 Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. R. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1932] 1990), VIII.3, 1338a3–4.
50 Thomas Jefferson, Query XIV, "Notes on the State of Virginia," *Thomas Jefferson – Writings*, 273.
51 See also TJ to John Garland Jefferson, 11 June 1790.
52 See also TJ to Peter Carr, 11 December 1783.
53 TJ to Joseph C. Cabell, 28 November 1820.
54 See also TJ Dr. Joseph Priestley, 29 November 1802; TJ to William A. Burwell, 28 January 1805; TJ to John Lynch, 21 January 1811; TJ to Marquis de Lafayette, 14 February 1815; TJ to David Barrow, 1 May 1815; TJ to P.S. Dupont de Nemours, 24 April 1816; TJ to Joseph C. Cabell, 24 October 1817; TJ to Joseph C. Cabell, 16 February 1818; TJ to Albert Gallatin, 26 December 1820; TJ to John Adams, 22 January 1821; and TJ to Thomas Leiper, 3 April 1824.
55 My translation. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1926] 1990), 1106b21–5.
56 See M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent*, 160–62, and M. Andrew Holowchak, "The March of Morality: Making Sense of Jefferson's Moral Sense," *Thomas Jefferson and Philosophy: Essays on the Philosophical Cast of Jefferson's Writings*, ed. M. Andrew Holowchak (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), chap. 8.
57 "Draft Declaration and Protest on Virginia," 1825. See also TJ to M. D'Ivernois, 6 February 1795; TJ to Harry Innes, 23 January 1800; TJ to Benjamin Rush, 22 September 1809; TJ to William Duane, 13 November 1810; and TJ to Dr. Walter Jones, 2 January 1814.
58 Robert K. Faulkner, "Jefferson and the Enlightened Science of Liberty," *Reason and Republicanism: Thomas Jefferson's Legacy of Liberty*, ed. Gary L. McDowell and Sharon L. Noble (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 42.
59 TJ to Count de Moustier, 17 May 1788.

60 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, 36.
61 John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938), 23.
62 Pedagogist Paul Goodman argued that study of history was needed for linking one to one's past; poetry, to a conceivable future.
63 John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 61.
64 John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 69.
65 John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 82.
66 John Dewey, "The Child and the Curriculum," *Dewey on Education: Selections,* ed. Martin S. Dworkin (New York: Teachers College Press, 1959), 101.
67 John Dewey, "The School and Society," *Dewey on Education: Selections*, ed. Martin S. Dworkin (New York: Teachers College Press), 54.
68 David P. Burns, Ann Chinnery, Claudia W. Ruitenberg, and David I. Waddington, "Taking on the Traditions in Philosophy of Education: A Symposium," *Paideusis*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2009, 6 and 8–11.
69 See M. Andrew Holowchak, "Individual Liberty and Political Unity in an Expanding Nation: The Axiological Primacy of Wards in Jefferson's Republican Schema," *Thomas Jefferson and Philosophy*, chap. 3.
70 Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 159.
71 Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., *Jefferson and Education* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 143.
72 Demetrios Constantelos, "American Philhellenism: Thomas Jefferson and the Influence of Greek Ideals and Culture in Writing the American Constitution," *Greek-American Review*, 2002, 37.

Bibliography

William Howard Adams, "The Fine Arts," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 199–214.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, [1926] 1990).

Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932).

Ralph S. Bates, *Scientific Societies in the United States* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1945).

J. M. Beach, "The Ideology of the American Dream: Two Competing Philosophies of Education," *Educational Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 2007, 148–64.

John Bernard, *Retrospections of America, 1797–1811*, ed. Mrs. Bayle Bernard (New York, 1887).

Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions: A Theory of Practical Reasoning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

William Cullen Bryant, "The Embargo, or Sketches of the Times" (Boston, 1808).

David P. Burns, Ann Chinnery, Claudia W. Ruitenberg, and David I. Waddington, "Taking on the Traditions in Philosophy of Education: A Symposium," *Paideusis*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2009, 3–18.

Jean-Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind*: *Being a Posthumous Work of the Late M. de Condorcet* (London: J. Johnson, 1795).

James Carpenter, "Jefferson's Views on Education: Implications for Today's Social Studies," *Social Studies*, Vol. 95, No. 4, 2004, 140–46.

Pierre Charron, *On Wisdom*, Vol. 3, trans. George Stanhope (London, 1729).

Gilbert Chinard, *Thomas Jefferson: The Apostle of Americanism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, [1929] 1962).

Cicero, *De Finibus*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, [1914] 1994).

Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J. E. King (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, [1927] 1945).

Morris L. Cohen, "Thomas Jefferson Recommends a Course of Law Study," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, Vol. 119, No. 5, 1971, 823–44.

Demetrios Constantelos, "American Philhellenism: Thomas Jefferson and the Influence of Greek Ideals and Culture in Writing the American Constitution," *Greek-American Review*, 2002, Part 1, 7–10, and Part 2, 35–38.

Robert F. Dalzell, Jr., "Constructing Independence: Monticello, Mount Vernon, and the Men Who Built Them," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 1993, 543–80.

René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

A.L.C. Destutt de Tracy, *Éléments d'Idéologie*, 5 vols. (Bruxelles: Courcier, 1827).

John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938).

John Dewey, "The School and Society," *Dewey on Education: Selections*, ed. Martin S. Dworkin (New York: Teachers College Press, 1959).

Richard Dixon, "Law and Thomas Jefferson," http://www.tjheritage.org/imagefiles/JeffersonNotesFall2007Insert.pdf, accessed 28 November 2012.

Davison M. Douglas, "The Jeffersonian Vision of Legal Education," http://law2.wm.edu/faculty/documents/douglas-1–6475.pdf?svr=law, 4, accessed 10 September 2013.

Robert K. Faulkner, "Jefferson and the Enlightened Science of Liberty," *Reason and Republicanism: Thomas Jefferson's Legacy of Liberty*, ed. Gary L. McDowell and Sharon L. Noble (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997).

Rachel Fletcher, "An American Vision of Harmony: Geometric Proportions in Thomas Jefferson's Rotunda at the University of Virginia," *Nexus Network Journal: Architecture and Mathematics Online*, http://www.ccs.neu.edu/home/futrelle/diagrams/docs/pdfs/d00041.pdf, accessed 11 November 2012.

Galen, "The Art of Medicine," *Galen: Selected Works*, trans. P. N. Singer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Galileo Galilei, *The Essential Galileo*, trans. Maurice A. Finocchiaro (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008).

James L. Golden and Allan L. Golden, *Thomas Jefferson and the Rhetoric of Virtue* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

Louis S. Greenbaum, "Thomas Jefferson, the Paris Hospitals, and the University of Virginia," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 607–26.

Alexander Hamilton, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Vol. 5, ed. Harold C. Syrett (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962).

Harold Hellenbrand, *The Unfinished Revolution: Education and Politics in the Thought of Thomas Jefferson* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990).

Ari Helo, "Jefferson's Conception of Republican Government," *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Frank Shuffleton (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 2009), 35–46.

Roger D. Heslep, *Thomas Jefferson and Education* (New York: Random House, 1969).

William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty* (London: J. Reeves, 1753).

M. Andrew Holowchak, *Ancient Science and Dreams: Oneirology in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002).

M. Andrew Holowchak, *Dutiful Correspondent: Philosophical Essays on Thomas Jefferson* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).

M. Andrew Holowchak, "The 'Reluctant' Politician: Thomas Jefferson's Debt to Epicurus," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2, 2012, 277–97.

M. Andrew Holowchak, "The Fear, Honor, and Love of God: Jefferson on Jews, Philosophers, and Jesus," *Forum Philosophicum*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2013, 49-71.

M. Andrew Holowchak, *Framing a Legend: Exposing the Distorted History of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2013).

M. Andrew Holowchak, "Jefferson's Moral Agrarianism," *Encyclopedia of Food and Agricultural Ethics*, ed. Paul B. Thompson (New York: Springer, 2013).

M. Andrew Holowchak, "Jefferson's Moral Agrarianism: Poetic Fiction or Normative Vision?" *Agriculture and Human Values*, Vol. 28, 2011, 497–506.

M. Andrew Holowchak, "The Paradox of Public Service: Jefferson, Education, and the Problem of Plato's Cave," *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2013, 73–86.

M. Andrew Holowchak, *Philosophical Pilgrimages: Essays on Thomas Jefferson's Writings and on Writings on Thomas Jefferson* (title provisional; forthcoming).

M. Andrew Holowchak, *The Stoics: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum Books, 2008).

M. Andrew Holowchak, *Taking Things by Their Smooth Handle: Jefferson on Morality, the Moral Sense, and Good Living* (title provisional; forthcoming).

M. Andrew Holowchak, *Thomas Jefferson: Uncovering His Unique Philosophy and Vision* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2014).

M. Andrew Holowchak (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson and Philosophy: Essays on the Philosophical Cast of Jefferson's Writings* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014).

M. Andrew Holowchak, "Virtue, Craft, and Contest: An Aristotelian Approach to Competitive Sport," *Sport in Society*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2005, 65–75.

M. Andrew Holowchak, "*Where Wings Take Dream": The Looking-Glass Logic of George W. Bush* (Carson City, NV: Bridger House Publishers, 2005).

Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931).

David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. J. B. Schneewind (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983).

David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, Vol. 1 (London, 1889).

David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1969).

Francis Hutcheson, *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, [1725] 2004).

Thomas Jefferson, *The Garden and Farm Books of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Robert C. Baron (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 1987).

Thomas Jefferson, *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, eds. Adrienne Koch and William Peden (New York: Random House, 1944).

Thomas Jefferson, *A Manual of Parliamentary Practice* (Applewood Books, 1801).

Thomas Jefferson, "A Memoir on the Discovery of Certain Bones of a Quadruped of the Clawed Kind in the Western Parts of Virginia," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 4, 1799, 246–60.

Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (New York: W. W. Norton, 1955).

Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 42 vols. to date (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950–).

Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson – Writings: Autobiography, A Summary View of the Rights of British America, Notes on the State of Virginia, Public and Private Papers, Addresses, Letters*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Library of America, 1984).

Thomas Jefferson, *Thomas Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954).

Thomas Jefferson, *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, 12 vols., ed. Paul Leicester Ford (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904).

Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 20 vols., ed. Andrew Lipscomb and Ellery Bergh (Washington, DC: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, Library Edition, 1903–7).

Thomas O. Jewett, "Thomas Jefferson Paleontologist," http://www.earlyamerica.com/review/2000_fall/jefferson_paleon.html, accessed 15 Nov. 1012, accessed 14 January 2013.

Joseph F. Kett, "Education," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 232–52.

Fiske Kimball, "Thomas Jefferson and the First Monument in the Classical Revival of America," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, Vol. 2, No. 9, 1915, 371–81.

G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Adrienne Koch, *The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1957).

Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Vol. 2, trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press [1925] 1991).

Gordon C. Lee (ed.), *Crusade against Ignorance: Thomas Jefferson on Education*, 5th edition (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967).

John Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A. D. Woozley (New York: New American Library, 1964).

John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, [1706] 1996).

Lord Kames, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion: Corrected and Improved, in a Third Edition*, ed. Mary Catherine Moran (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2005).

Lord Kames, *The Gentleman Farmer, Being an Attempt to Improve Agriculture by Subjecting It to the Test of Rational Principles*, 4th edition (Edinburgh, 1798).

Lord Kames, "Introduction," *Elements of Criticism*, 5th edition (Dublin: Charles Ingham, 1772).

Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, Vol. 1: *Jefferson the Virginian* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948).

Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, Vol. 2: *Jefferson and the Rights of Man* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951).

Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time,* Vol. 3: *Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962).

Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, Vol. 6: *The Sage of Monticello* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1981).

Henry F. May, "The Enlightenment," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 47–58.

Roger P. Mellen, "Thomas Jefferson and the Origins of Newspaper Competition in Pre-Revolutionary Virginia," *Journalism History*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2009, 151–61.

Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1795).

Conyers Middleton, *A Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers in the Christian Church* (Dublin, 1749).

Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, trans. Thomas Nugent (London: J. Nourse, 1777).

Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Gilbert Burnet (London, 1684).

Lewis Mumford, *The South in Architecture: The Dancy Lectures* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941).

Johann N. Neem, "To Diffuse Knowledge More Generally through the Mass of People," *Light and Liberty: Thomas Jefferson and the Power of Knowledge*, ed. Robert M. S. McDonald (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 47–74.

Isaac Newton, *Principia*, Vol. 1: *The Motion of Bodies*, trans. Florian Cajori (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962).

Frederick Nichols, "Architecture," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 215–32.

Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Thomas Jefferson: Radical and Racist," *Atlantic Monthly*, October 1996, 53–74.

Peter Onuf, *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007).

Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson & the New Nation: A Biography* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1970).

Merrill D. Peterson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986).

Plato, *Republic*, Vol. 1, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, [1930] 1994).

Plato, *Symposium*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, [1925] 1996).

James P. Ronda, *Jefferson's West: A Journey with Lewis and Clark* (Thomas Jefferson Foundation: Monticello Monograph Series, 2000).

Montgomery Schuyler, "A History of Old Colonial Architecture," *Architectural Record 4*, January–March, 1895, 69–79.

Robert E. Shalhope, "Agriculture," *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 385–98.

Frank Shuffleton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 2009).

Darren Staloff, "The Politics of Pedagogy: Thomas Jefferson and the Education of a Democratic Citizenry," *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Frank Shuffleton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 127–42.

Brian Steele, "Thomas Jefferson's Gender Frontier," *Journal of American History*, June 2008, 17–42.

Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (New York: Penguin Books, [1759–67] 2003).

Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986).

Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *The Histories*, trans. Clifford H. Moore ([1925] 1962).

Rodney H. True, "Thomas Jefferson in Relation to Botany," *The Scientific Monthly,* Vol. 3, No. 4, 1916, 344–60.

Constantin François de Volney, *The Ruins, or Meditations on the Revolutions of Empires* (Teddington, UK: The Echo Library, 2010).

Otto Vossler, *Jefferson and the American Revolutionary Ideal*, trans. C. Philippon and B. Wishy (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1982).

Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., "Honor and Dishonor at Mr. Jefferson's University: The Antebellum Years," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1986, 155–79.

Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., *Jefferson and Education* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Mark R. Wenger, "Thomas Jefferson, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia," *Virginian Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 103, No. 3, 1995, 339–74.

Stanford White, "The Buildings of the University of Virginia," *Corks & Curls II* (University of Virginia Yearbook), 1898, 127–30.

Gary Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976).

Douglas L. Wilson, "Jefferson vs. Hume," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 1989, 49–70.

Richard Guy Wilson, "Thomas Jefferson and the Creation of the American Architectural Image," *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Frank Shuffleton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 112–26.

Richard Guy Wilson (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village: The Creation of an Architectural Masterpiece* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

Richard Guy Wilson, "Thomas Jefferson's Classical Architecture: An American Agenda," *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America*, ed. Peter Onuf and Nicholas P. Cole (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 99–127.

Mary N. Woods, "Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia: Planning an Academic Village," *Journal for the Society of Architectural History*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 1985, 266–83.

Jean Yarbrough, "The Moral Sense, Character Formation, and Virtue," *Reason and Republicanism: Thomas Jefferson's Legacy of Liberty*, ed. Gary L. McDowell and Sharon L. Noble (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 271–303.

Philipp Ziesche, "Exporting American Revolutions: Gouverneur Morris, Thomas Jefferson, and the National Struggle for Universal Rights in Revolutionary France," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 2006, 419–47.

Michael Zuckert, "Founder of the Natural Rights Republic," *Thomas Jefferson and the Politics of Nature*, ed. Thomas S. Engemen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 11–58.

Index