

# Interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Spring 1995

Volume 22 Number 3

- 301 Leo Strauss Two Lectures
- 339 Mark Blitz Plato's *Alcibiades I*
- 359 Jacob A. Howland Aristotle on Tragedy: Rediscovering the *Poetics*
- Discussion*
- 405 Dorothy L. Sayers Aristotle on Detective Fiction
- Review Essays*
- 417 Daniel J. Mahoney Modern Man and Man *Tout Court*: The Flight from Nature and the Modern Difference, Review Essay on *La Cité de l'homme*, by Pierre Manent
- 439 Peter McNamara Popular Government and Effective Government, Review Essay on *The Effective Republic*, by Harvey Flaumenhaft, and *Alexander Hamilton and the Political Order*, by Morton J. Frisch

# Interpretation

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individuals \$25  
libraries and all other institutions \$40  
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Single copies available.  
Postage outside U.S.: Canada \$4.50 extra;  
elsewhere \$5.40 extra by surface mail (8 weeks  
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Payments: in U.S. dollars AND payable by  
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Composition by Eastern Composition, Inc.,  
Binghamton, N.Y. 13905 U.S.A.  
Printed and bound by Wickersham Printing Co.,  
Lancaster, PA 17603 U.S.A.

Inquiries: Patricia D'Allura, Assistant to the Editor,  
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## Review Essays

### Modern Man and Man *Tout Court*: The Flight from Nature and the Modern Difference

DANIEL J. MAHONEY

*Assumption College*

Pierre Manent, *La Cité de l'homme* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 295 pp.

In his remarkable new book, *La Cité de l'homme*, Pierre Manent investigates the question of man in relation to what he calls the *modern difference*. He presents a penetrating and faithful phenomenology of modern consciousness in order to address the question of man in light of the modern modification or transformation of human beings. He grapples with the fundamental theoretical and practical dilemma confronting any effort to make sense of modern consciousness. Modern man remains a man, he retains some real relationship to man *tout court* ("simply"). Yet, his nature appears to be suspended in some kind of unexplainable limbo or located at least in part in an unavailable and definitively historical past.

Modern man then lives under the power or illusion of history. He experiences historical consciousness; he believes himself above all to be a historical being; he feels and is dominated by the sentiment of historicity. The modern difference is then essentially tied to a new "authority of history"—an authority which remains virtually unchallenged in all the theoretical and political camps of modern life. Manent's book is accordingly a profound, historical and philosophical investigation and reflection on the modern difference, on the origin, foundation and work of that new authority, history, and the way in which it transforms, deforms and coexists with the old human nature, with the substance, motives and ends of human beings.

Manent takes up and renews the problem of nature and history, of natural right and history, and in doing so he builds on the pioneering researches of Leo Strauss. Drawing widely on Strauss's analyses of the quarrel between the *ancients* and the *moderns*, Manent delineates as fairly and accurately as possible a *phenomenology* of the modern difference. And, like Strauss, he recognizes the centrality of the theological-political problem to any adequate comprehension of the human situation. He treats the theological-political problem in a manner which is indebted to but finally diverges from Strauss's approach, however. He

is more attuned to and sympathetic to the Christian accounts of nature, creation and law and to the place of Rome and all that it represents in the premodern presentation of and contestation about the human things. Strauss attributed the vitality of western civilization to the fundamental and irresolvable tension between Athens and Jerusalem. For Manent, in contrast, the invigorating moral and political tension which defines and sustains the vitality of the West is the conflict between humility and magnanimity—between the heroes of Plutarch and the *Imitatio Christi* heralded by Thomas à Kempis—between greatness of soul and humility before that which is divinely responsible for every human excellence. According to Manent, the city of man—the city of “history”—the “atheistic city”—is an effort to put an end to the tension and dialectic between greatness and humility, to literally “flee” any rigorous demands of a natural or created order, to flee the motives or contents of our nature.

Manent is, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> less a partisan of *philosophy* than of the moral phenomena or moral contents that the city of man ignores, transforms and relegates to the private, idiosyncratic realm of civil society. But he recognizes that the democratic revolution—the revolution described in different but complementary ways by Hegel and Tocqueville—the revolution which emancipates the human will (Hegel) or the sovereignty of man over himself (what Tocqueville calls “popular sovereignty”) does endlessly transform human beings. It gives man a *history*. Man becomes modern man, democratic man. As the work of Tocqueville most powerfully elucidates, “the principle of consent put in work by the will of the individual, penetrates and reconstructs the relationships which seemed until then invariably inscribed in the eternal order of human nature, for example, and eminently, the relations between parents and children, between man and woman, or in the eternal order of the world for example, and eminently those which constitute religion” (p. 230).<sup>2</sup> Modern democracy, the regime and social state whose generative principle is popular sovereignty, is not one regime among many conforming to a permanent possibility of human and social nature as in Aristotle’s classification of regimes. It is rather a new irresistible and irreversible historical state—it is the “fated circle” of modern man. Democracy is the successor regime to Aristotle’s cycle of political regimes. Democracy and aristocracy (the retrospective category within which Tocqueville locates all premodern political and social orders) are “like two distinct humanities.”

This sentiment of the modern difference, of democratic or modern man as the reflection of a “new humanity,” must be confronted with the utmost seriousness if one is to do justice to the phenomena. And Manent is, above all, interested in being scrupulously attentive to the phenomena as they come to sight in all their complexity and imprecision. A genuine science of man and society must do justice to the democratic revolution, to the seemingly endless transformation of human life under the aegis and empire of the human will. Modernity understands itself as the emancipation or triumph of the will, of its liberation from the framework of human ends, substance or finality. And yet

Manent believes that a genuine phenomenology of modern consciousness must recognize what Horace recognized, that nature despite the most powerful efforts of the human will always return, and what the French Catholic poet-philosopher Charles Péguy articulated with characteristic beauty, "Homère est nouveau ce matin, et rien n'est peut-être aussi vieux que le journal d'aujourd'hui." ("Homer is new this morning and nothing is perhaps as old as today's newspaper.") A true science of man must give "voice to the sentiment of our community of nature above the modern difference."<sup>3</sup> How can we moderns remain faithful to the claims of human universality? How can we sustain our very humanity while remaining faithful to the modern difference, a difference which threatens to erode or overcome that very universality? Manent's book, his penetrating researches and analyses, culminates in the paradoxical and arresting claim: the modern experience and sentiment of history, the work of human sovereignty of the emancipated will is very real indeed, but the moral authority of history is a "methodical illusion," in fact, the most emphatic illusion to which this thinking species has ever consented (pp. 293–94).

Can an illusion be productive of so many results? The city of man, the atheistic city, is derived from an illusion, but it is the illusion upon which modern-man has made or constructed himself. It is a "sincere sentiment" which defines the consciousness of modern times. Yet it is a sentiment that can finally provide no guidance about how men ought to live and therefore no criteria of judgment about the inherent rightness or wrongness of human deeds. It can provide man only with a negative and ultimately self-refuting criterion: we must flee the law we are given by nature or God for a law that we have made for ourselves. And in the name of history modern man perpetually flees the law that he has made for himself, for law and tradition risk becoming a new kind of servitude, a new kind of limit. Modern man must flee every heteronomy, every authority, every claim of *phusis* and *nomos*: under the protective dispensation of history he must become the maker of himself. Under the authority of history, in this new city of man, "the nature of man is his principal enemy" (p. 292). In order to become truly human, to be free or autonomous, modern man risks his very humanity.

In the first half of his book, Manent shows the artificial or constructed and therewith distorting character of the modern consciousness of the self. It is impossible completely or successfully to flee our nature and the dialectic of nature and law which is constitutive of our humanity and human dignity, but the effort to do so creates a new world, the modern world, which is neither Christian nor Greek, where neither magnanimity nor humility rules. Let us turn to those artful fictions which have constituted the modern self-understanding, to a closer look at that city based largely on lies which are so conducive to strange, efficacious and awe-inspiring works.

In the first part of his book, entitled "The Consciousness of the Self," Manent investigates the three pillars of modern consciousness, "The Authority of History," "The Sociological Point of View" and "The System of Economy." In

order to comprehend each of these massive shapers and determinants of the modern self-understanding clearly, Manent turns to the origins of these new perspectives in the serious thought of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He does so not only because the origins of phenomena help to reveal their nature but also because these approaches which form the modern consciousness of the self, approaches which we take for granted, which seem as natural as the morning sun, were the deliberate products of thought. Modern consciousness then is not the result of an inexorable process of history or a mysterious dispensation of fate. It is rather the free creation of a human project, the result of a new empire governing the souls of men.

The consciousness of becoming modern was first experienced in England and France, the vanguards of modernity, in the eighteenth century. It was there that modern consciousness became self-conscious. Modern man is defined by the overwhelming sentiment of living under the authority of history. In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu gave shape and force to this sentiment, using the authority of philosophy and his own refined and subtle art to establish and reinforce that authority. For Montesquieu, “to become modern is to live in history.” Manent shows the pivotal role of Montesquieu in constructing the pillars of modern consciousness, but he also sympathetically recounts Montesquieu’s reservations about the results of the new modernity that he did much to shape and define. Manent appreciates Montesquieu’s greatness of soul, his capacious humanity which could appreciate the amplitude of human things in a way that his epigones hardly began to approximate.

Montesquieu established the authority of history, but he was no simple or naive progressivist. He also established the authority of the sociological point of view, inventing the very notion of general laws and sociological parameters which govern men (pp. 82–85, 90–94), but he was a philosopher not a sociologist. Manent cannot help loving Montesquieu, but he holds Montesquieu responsible for his works and that, of course, is how Montesquieu would want it. For Manent, Montesquieu “is decidedly the modern philosopher most capable of losing us as well as saving us” (p. 109). Let us turn to an examination of that subtle art by which Montesquieu is simultaneously capable of losing and saving us.

Manent shows that *The Spirit of the Laws* moves between the two poles of the old and the new: the ancient world of republican virtue and the new world of commerce and liberty, represented by England. Situated somewhere between the old and new world is moderate European monarchy, represented above all by France. And, of course, there is the “sempiternal menace” that Montesquieu never ceased fighting because it is always a human possibility: despotism. Montesquieu’s ambition is properly philosophical because he wished to understand all the forms of the human world. But he finally could not understand those forms *together*. He could not make a natural whole of the human world (pp. 18–19). Montesquieu’s famous classification of the nature and principles

of regimes, the republican regime which is moved by virtue, the European monarchy which is characterized by honor, and the despotism whose principle is fear, does not include the modern regime par excellence, England. The new cannot be apprehended and comprehended together with the old. Not only is Montesquieu's regime of choice, the modern regime of commerce and liberty, not comprehended by his classification of regimes, but one of those old regimes is no longer a human possibility: the ancient city with its republican virtue is no longer available to modern men. Montesquieu paints this regime which does great damage to human nature in strange and farcical strokes. Montesquieu's critique of the ancient republic is twofold: this regime, founded on a cruelly demanding virtue, is repressive of human nature; it is literally horrific in character. It is a strangely foreign thing unavailable to self-conscious men who will not mutilate themselves for the sake of some tenuous notion of the good. There is a new human order which has substituted for and surpassed the old one, an order of commerce and liberty where the flight from real evils has replaced the order where the pursuit of goods results in distorting cruelties.

In a careful analysis of the opening books of *The Spirit of the Laws*, Manent outlines the rhetorical strategy of this great work—a rhetorical strategy with immense consequences for the subsequent development of liberal societies. He shows the intriguing way in which Montesquieu's discussion of virtue entails the elaboration of a self-conscious chimera or fiction. Montesquieu literally “invents” an idea of virtue which “envelops not only ancient political virtue but also the ‘moral’ or ‘Christian’ virtues and, in general, virtue in all its forms” (p. 31).

In creating this fiction Montesquieu draws on the mutual reproaches and criticisms of classical political virtue or magnanimity, the virtue of Sparta and Plutarch's heroes and Christian humility with its recognition of man's ultimate dependence on an order of grace. He draws upon Christianity's “egalitarian” critique of classical politics, but he also utilizes the resources of classical heroism and statesmanship to ridicule the smallness and dividedness of the soul formed by Christian humility. Montesquieu intensifies and radicalizes the conflict between the two virtues and the two understandings of the human good and ends by assimilating the two European moral traditions into a unitary and never-before-recognized synthesis that he calls “virtue.” This virtue may well be admirable, but it assuredly is not “likable.” It is too “ascetic,” it makes too many demands on our fragile and needy human nature. Montesquieu, in fact, identifies the discipline and asceticism of the classical city with that of a monastery, and this identification, contrary to the claims of several contemporary commentators, is not intended to be flattering.

Montesquieu's critique of virtue is a *polemic* in the literal sense of that term. He sets out to show the repressive effects of the two great moral traditions of Christian Europe. Manent eloquently shows, however, that Montesquieu does not for a minute believe that the new regime of commerce and liberty can

simply substitute for the virtue which had culminated in so many great if sometimes perverse works. Montesquieu, in the end, makes more of a “historical” than a “natural” defense of the English “constitution.” He knows that modern liberty can teach men to master their social constitutions. He knows that it can secure human dignity by softening mores (*Spirit of the Laws*, book 20, chapter 1) and by “curing men of Machiavellianism” day by day (book 21, chapter 20). But it cannot provide the real motives of a human life or do justice to the ample capacities of our nature. A moderate European monarchy such as France, less “modern” than England, leaves room for a refinement and cultivation of taste and soul which is largely absent in more bourgeois England. The English must always be vigilant in defense of their “extreme liberty.” They are “scarcely able to sleep.” Montesquieu freely admits that men are happier under the “moderate liberty” which characterizes the French monarchy. Such liberty “is always menaced by despotism, that ‘insult’ to human nature,” however. Manent writes:

If one wishes to banish decisively the despotism which is the fatality of monarchy, it is necessary to accept being extremely free. One must accept the moral effects of commerce and of liberty, which are not completely favorable to the greatness or to the happiness of man in his nature. (P. 69)

Montesquieu formulates the position of “progressivist good sense” as opposed to the enlightenment vulgate with its unalloyed faith in the progress and enlightenment of men. For Montesquieu, the regime of virtue or law can truly be said to be against nature, but the regime of liberty cannot truly be said to “conform to nature” or to be the “best regime.” It is a regime which is not sought out but instead “found” in the modern experience of things, just as Tacitus’s Germans “found” liberty in the forests of Europe. History has provided an example of a regime which successfully avoids despotism, but that regime cannot be said to be “the best regime” in the classical sense. Montesquieu has a negative standard of nature, the worst regime whose sempiternal possibility transcends the historical polarity between the old and new dispensations. But he recognizes no “best regime.” There is merely that “historical” regime which is “found” and not “sought out” and which best avoids, which is most vigilant against the menacing insult of despotism (pp. 19–21). And despite his polemical portrait of classical virtue, Montesquieu, that exquisite painter of moral and political types, provides a beautiful image of noble Epaminondas in book 4 of the *Spirit of the Laws*. In fact, Montesquieu does not equally condemn the faces of European morality: He is finally more sympathetic to classical or pagan magnanimity than he is to Christian humility because it does not divide men’s loyalties; it does not make him homeless, torn between two worlds. For all these reasons Montesquieu refused to go to the bitter end in his polemic against virtue. The authority of virtue could not simply be replaced by the authority of history, because history could not provide any

new idea of man, his nature, his possibilities and his vocation. Montesquieu refuses to countenance the thorough jettisoning of all images of virtue and the good life, for example, “the noble image of Epaminondas.”

The infinite art of Montesquieu, in the very process of destroying the intellectual and political authority of ancient virtue, preserves or rather invents its “imaginary” or “aesthetic” or “historical” authority, which will remain the principle of the best part of European education until the 1960s. (P. 43)

Manent beautifully reveals Montesquieu’s effort to sustain this aesthetic image of the moral contents of life. He reveals the ways in which Montesquieu can “save” us by sustaining some real contents to our life besides the admirable softening of mores brought about by the institutionalization of commerce. Montesquieu anticipated the dehumanizing consequences of the unadulterated victory of the very authority of history that he did so much to empower and legitimize: those consequences are emblematically clear in the human devastation wrought by communism. Manent writes:

This fiction plays a real moral rule and in Montesquieu’s eyes, a necessary and salutary one. In fact, let us think only of what will happen in the East of Europe, when modern man, intoxicated and as if possessed by the sole authority of History and the Future . . . completely empties his imagination of all the old images, and undertakes to realize, to cause to exist, the “x” of a New Man. (P. 43)

But what held together in the soul of Montesquieu, a soul “capable of understanding all things,” could not hold together in the world where history had become the standard of moral and political judgment. Even the “aesthetic” authority of virtue is under assault from a progressivism which will not rest content until all the reflections and manifestations of Athens, Jerusalem and Rome, which speak to us of our nature and therefore command a law, are thoroughly subverted. Every canon, every law, every heteronomy must be uprooted, must be “deconstructed.” The flight from nature must be complete, or else the danger of domination of man by forces outside of himself, by the forces of “reaction,” remains potent. Montesquieu truly risks losing and saving us at the same time.

Montesquieu could not control the trajectory of the very fiction that he had painted and designed with such subtlety and prudence. In the world that Montesquieu helped design, there is little room for the prudence of his impressive soul. In the next generation Rousseau and his epigones, most notably and ominously Robespierre, would use that fiction in ways which would have horrified Montesquieu. They formulated a new democratic and egalitarian version of Montesquieu’s fictive virtue. They attacked the regime of commerce and liberty in the name of virtue and citizenship (cf. *Social Contract*, 3, 15). With Robespierre and the Jacobin “moment,” virtue became truly “cruel” in order to ac-

comply with its egalitarian transformation of the world. Rousseau, of course, was not an advocate of despotism and terror, and one must avoid the temptation to reduce this profound philosopher to the status of an ideological advocate of “totalitarian democracy.” Yet, unlike Montesquieu, he saw cruelty as an integral element of political life proper, of the very life of virtue which he did so much to expound. This is one reason why he finally preferred the life of the “solitary walker” to the civic life. In any case, as the French revolutionaries’ appeal to virtue shows, history played a cruel and ironic trick on the intention, both audacious and measured, of Montesquieu.

Montesquieu, more than any other figure in modern European history, even more so than Rousseau, establishes the “authority” of history. He forms the profoundly modern sentiment that the human experience of morality and politics can no longer be thought of together as a whole through which men can search for the goods of their nature. He delineates the modern experience of

the succession and incompatibility of two distinct humanities, the ancient and the modern, and the consciousness of being modern is henceforth the consciousness of this division. When this consciousness is formulated explicitly and objectively it concludes that the two distinct, incompatible and successive humanities are contained and carried by an element which is neither nature nor law and which is the mother and sum of all the successions: *History*. (P. 71)

Chapter 2 investigates the “sociological point of view.” Manent points out that the newly emerged authority of history was accompanied by a recognition of the reality of “society” which dominates all currents of political thought in the nineteenth century. Europeans no longer felt themselves to be either natural or political animals, finding their motives for action in a realm of nature and law or deliberating together in the public space about questions of the “advantageous and the just.” They experienced what Montesquieu articulated in book 19, chapter 4 of the *Spirit of the Laws*: many things govern men. They increasingly believed that men are caused by forces outside of their own souls or deliberations or reasonable choices. They believed that men are products of historical and social processes. In the new science of society, sociology, the “desubstantialization” of human beings is completed. The social sciences aim to formulate for the first time a truly “scientific” science of man, but the “science of man exists only in refusing to be the science of the nature of man” (p. 79). Sociology as a means of understanding the human phenomena depends upon a dogmatic refusal to ask “metaphysical” questions about human nature. Its public self-presentation is that of agnosticism about all metaphysical or non-“scientific” questions. But the effectual truth lies elsewhere: social science is at its deepest core “atheistic.” Its most thoughtful architects believed that a recognition of a permanent human nature guided by definitive laws and ends and accompanied by those concomitants of human nature, choice and chance, does

not allow for a genuine science of man. Social science depends upon the abolition of man understood as a being who is by nature a moral and political animal.

This insight is certainly a radical and a discomfoting one. It seems to challenge the principle of the mutual toleration of disciplines by definition according to which no single perspective is "privileged." Of course, Manent is not discussing sociology in its narrow sense as a university discipline but rather as one of the distinguishing hallmarks of modern political consciousness. He turns to the study of what Péguy called the "method of the eminent cases," particularly of Durkheim and Weber, the social scientists par excellence. In doing so, Manent fulfills Péguy's great ambition to write the critique of "history and sociology in modern times." Like Péguy, Manent wishes to explore the unstated and problematic assumptions, the underlying hubris and the finally self-contradictory character of the new science of society. He will not accept a priori the sociological point of view as one equally legitimate "methodology" or "perspective" among others. This perspective must be confronted head on, because in it the modern difference is truly radicalized: as stated above the sociological point of view has no place for man as a prudent and deliberative being. It desubstantializes man in two different but ultimately complementary ways. In Durkheim's positivistic or "objective" social science, man is not a cause but caused. He is a being whose thought and action can be explained by a series of reductive and reciprocal causes, by general laws. Weber, under the influence of Nietzsche, seems to free himself from the confines of positivism. In Weberian social science, man is like a God who is pure will "but without intelligence" (p. 109). He sovereignly chooses the values, the gods and demons, to which he will dedicate his life. Despite their apparent opposition, both branches of sociology deprive human beings of practical or deliberative reason.

The only reason that survives is the reason of the social scientist who is exempt from the circle of causation and is able, *mirabile dictu*, to decipher the chain of causes that govern men or to recognize in the moral contents of life, in the search for the good life, the irrational but efficacious "values" which flow from the mysterious *fatum* (destiny) of the self.

In both its objective and subjective versions, sociology deprives human beings of practical or deliberative reason. It establishes a radical disjunction between *the point of the view of the actor* and *the point of view of the spectator* (p. 79). The prescientific point of view of the ordinary moral actor, family member, citizen or statesman, a point of view which identifies human action with certain motives or reasons for those actions, is without any scientific interest. The prescientific moral and political self-understanding of the citizen and statesman is a delusion without foundation in scientific reason. Durkheim believed the products of the human will are merely "fortuitous," "capricious," "contingent" (p. 80). They are without real efficacy or causal capacity. Durkheimian or objective social science deprives man of practical reason and concentrates all reason in the theoretical understanding of the social scientist who

understands the general laws and social relations that determine the thought and action of men. "Society" forms man independently of the moral will of real individual actors, and the social scientist observes and articulates the chain of social relations and causes. Causation and reason are reconnected in scientific observation as opposed to practical reason and human choice. The ordinary prescientific moral and political lives of actors are deprived of reason properly understood. From the sociological point of view, man does not and cannot understand himself.

Weber's "methodological individualism" is an impressive effort by social science to find a place for the human element in this circle of causation and scientific reason. Weber wished to return to the acting and thinking individual a role in the chain of causation. He wished to respect his "values." But the very notion of "value" is a scientific construction and substitution for the real moral life of deliberating individuals and citizens. Real human beings do not arbitrarily choose "values." They rather engage in a natural process of human reflection, a dialogue, however inchoate or undisciplined, about the various goods or ends of their nature. Sociology arbitrarily cuts off this natural process before it even begins. It thereby blesses or dignifies the action of the unthinking, the immoderate, the obstinate and the self-serving.

Social science then is not truly scientific because it cannot do justice to the moral and political phenomena and the dialectical reasoning to which the phenomena give rise. These phenomena constitute the prescientific home, the moral framework, of man and citizen.

Manent carefully shows how the rejection of human nature, of prescientific common sense and prudence and deliberative reason, was the self-conscious product of the effort to create a *science* of man. Durkheim knew that Aristotelean political science, because it was a science of human nature, left room for chance. It therefore could, at best, provide "artful" guidance for the better or worse conduct of human and political affairs (pp. 77–78). It could not provide the certainty or precision that Durkheim, in contrast to Aristotle, believed to be the hallmark of a science of man. In a powerful illustration of the differences between Aristotle's "imprecise" science of human nature, chance and prudence and Durkheim's science of society, Manent delineates how each can account for that crucial moral and political constellation called "1940," when Great Britain, seemingly against all odds, stood up to the National Socialist onslaught during the Battle of Britain.

Aristotle, as did all "pre-sociological" social science, affirms a causality of chance. The recognition of the causality of human nature is necessarily tied to a recognition of the causal role of chance. Manent's Aristotelian explanation of Churchill and "1940" deserves lengthy citation:

If, for example, one attributes the English resistance in 1940 to the great soul of Churchill, one attributes it at the same time to chance: it was great "luck" that a

man such as Churchill, found himself, at that moment, capable of acting. It is not necessary, in order to understand “1940”, to search for the cause of Churchill. It is Churchill who is the cause. Human nature is at the same time first cause and final cause. Hence, the effects that it produces are both fully intelligible, and unnecessary, and in this sense, in fact, fortuitous. (P. 86)

A sociological explanation of “1940,” in contrast, cannot allow the prudent statesmanship, the “great soul” of Churchill to be a free and self-determining cause of the events of 1940. This would challenge the primacy of the social whole, it would leave room for the free play of human nature. It would challenge the very possibility of a rigorous science because it would restore a place and fecund efficacy to the point of view of the citizen and statesman. Sociology must reduce the moral phenomena of 1940 to a set of sociological causes. It might, for example, find the cause of Britain’s civic virtue in 1940 in its comparatively rigid social structure which is more likely to preserve the virtues than France’s more divided and anomic social structure. But the rigid social structure of Great Britain cannot be the final cause of Churchill’s greatness of soul because it itself is the result of prior causes. Manent artfully shows the arbitrary and nonexplanatory character of sociological causal “explanation.” A series of causes is finally attributed to a deterministic cause which substitutes for man, his nature and vocation: society. This cause is vague and abstract, but the scientific character, the honor, of social science is maintained when a causality of chance and the human soul is scrupulously avoided. Manent shows how social science’s account of general laws and causal relationships often explains nothing. It establishes a set or series of mutually and reciprocally causal factors, each of which explains and determines the other. One becomes the prisoner of a brilliantly constructed, and arbitrarily designed, scientific circle of causation. It appears that what ultimately matters is to save the primacy, the quasi-divine and creative character of scientific reason, of the *point of view of the spectator*. It does not matter what causes the concatenation of human things, it is not important to establish the exact contours of this causal horizon called society, as long as man is not caused by his nature or his deliberative reason. Weber’s realm of “values” and his morally arbitrary and politically extreme substitute for moral and political prudence, *the war of the gods*, does not threaten the scientific pretense.

Manent shows how social science’s emphasis on general laws of society cannot do justice to the things that are causally related, to the things in themselves. Social science may, for example, be able to prove the causal relationship between Christianity, monogamy and moderate monarchy and the causal relations between Islam, polygamy and political despotism as Montesquieu attempted to do in *The Spirit of the Laws*. But its method does not allow it to ask those prescientific or “Socratic” or “commonsensical” questions that truly matter: What is the true religion? What is the familial and political organization that most conforms to the nature or the vocation or the rights of man? (p. 96).

Social science, then, self-consciously substitutes a new *universal*, general laws, for the old universal, human nature. This substitution was begun by Montesquieu and vigorously and rather dogmatically completed by Durkheim. The new science of sociology claimed that it could make sense of the varieties of human experience in a way that the old science with its recognition of the causal role of human nature could not. It can explain nothing, however, about the only question that really matters: What is man and how should he live? In the process, particularity ceases to provide access to the universal articulations of human experience and becomes a mere reflection of anterior causes explained by general laws. It ceases to provide access to the genuinely universal at the same time that it ceases to maintain its interest or status as a particular.

Manent shows that even Weber's great work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, suffers from this fatal flaw. Weber respects the importance, the human seriousness of religion. For him it may, in fact, be the only question worthy of serious attention. But he relegates it to the realms of "national character" and "culture" and "values." He must, as a "scientist" or "sociologist," scrupulously avoid asking the Socratic question, the what-is question, about religion. How can Weber establish a causal relation between Protestantism and capitalism when he cannot philosophically study the meaning of either? Science can say nothing interesting about the motivation of Weber's researches in his own serious soul, in his search for the truth about human things, nor his deepest fears about the outcome of the modern adventure: namely the petrification of man in an "iron cage" of bureaucracy bereft of genuine individuality or substance of soul. Weber's pathos stems in large part from the fact that his methodological asceticism conceals his generous soul and his fertile philosophical mind. His greatness is interned in the "iron cage" of social scientific dogmatism.

Sociology, following its Montesquieuan paternity, recognizes that many things govern men. It recognizes a plurality of causes, but this plurality is finally reducible to one undefinable abstraction: society. But it does not include human nature or reasonable choice among those things which govern men. Politics itself, as a realm of collective human self-determination, as the realm of prudence, the "god of this world below," as Burke eloquently called it, is replaced by society, that unseizable kingdom governed by nonhuman causes and by nonrational human ones, namely, "values." All of this is presided over by the social scientist who alone, in his supreme pride, understands the science behind the appearance of things. Manent truly establishes what Péguy had felt and sketched with unparalleled intensity: sociology abolishes man while deifying a theoretical observer or spectator by attributing to him godlike knowledge of causation. Manent discreetly implies the following truth: the social scientist in his scientific pretension becomes a creator of new gods and values for the human world. He becomes the artist or designer of the social whole, of the abstraction called "society." Manent's work suggests that the *point of view of*

*the actor*, of the citizen and statesman, exists on the much more solid ground of our human nature and is the basis of any truly “scientific” comprehension of the human world.

In chapter 3, Manent turns to an analysis of “The System of Economy” as delineated in the work of Adam Smith, the father of modern political economy. Like Montesquieu, Smith attempted to understand the relationship between and movement from the old and the new human orders. Manent shows that Smith’s claim to have successfully done so is finally deceptive. Smith claimed to have found the key to understanding the progress and improvement of human societies in a constitutive element of human nature: “the desire of bettering one’s condition” (pp. 125–26). In this account, human beings at all times and places are incipient bourgeois. They are driven by a desire to improve their conditions through detailed attention to their “interest.” Manent provides a careful analysis of the discussions of the “invisible hand” in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *The Wealth of Nations* as well as of the famous chapter in the latter entitled “How the Commerce of the Towns Contributed to the Improvement of the Country,” in which Smith sketches the movement from feudalism to a commercial society. Manent shows the difficulty that Smith has, despite the claims of his official teaching of interest, of comprehending the old and the new as part of a unitary human order. Smith’s account of the feudal proprietor in *The Theory* is drawn in rich and generous colors. He is a proud figure whose imagination is driven by vanity and by the appreciation of the pleasures of wealth and greatness. This life with its satisfactions and beauty captures the imagination of men and induces them to strive to better their conditions. It entices them, as Smith writes, “to cultivate the ground, build houses, to found cities and commonwealths, and to invent and improve all the arts and sciences which ennoble and embellish human life.” In the psychology of *The Theory*, “when we search for utility, we are in fact searching for vanity and when we give way to vanity it is in fact beauty which carries us along” (p. 131).

Yet Smith’s account of the movement from the feudal to the commercial order in *The Wealth of Nations* leaves behind the rich psychological developments of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The feudal proprietor is said to have abandoned his power over men and resources for the sake of luxury goods such as a pair of diamonds. This great figure abandons his way of life, his dignified repose and his political authority for the sake of frivolous and useless objects. In the account in the *Wealth*, the proprietor is driven by the most “puerile,” “vulgar” and “sordid” vanity to barter away his power and authority (p. 134). Smith writes that a fundamental revolution in human affairs with the greatest consequences for public happiness occurred because an “invisible hand” led the childish vanity of the feudal lords and the more reasonable interestedness of merchants and artisans to coalesce into the development of commercial society.

Manent analyzes the inadequacy of this “history” from Smith’s own point of view. His history is dependent upon a caricature of the human motivations of

the feudal lord. It also remarkably abstracts from the *political* constraints imposed by the emerging modern state on the feudal authority and way of life. Manent shows that Smith's real insight lies elsewhere: the new regime of commerce depends upon a revolutionary transformation of the *imagination* of men. Profit becomes the instrument and spirit of this world where men work not for the sake of living or living nobly but for the sake of work itself (p. 156). Work alone enables men to achieve those useful things that their new transformed imaginations conceptualize. *Homo oeconomicus* no longer dreams of Love or War or Glory. He satisfies his imagination in the world of work and profits. He is guided by a new prosaic poetry of production and statistics. In the new market society profit is the indispensable means of coordinating the system of distribution and consumption. The attempt to replace it by a system of collective property or authoritative planning "petrifies the network of social valences and paralyzes" the necessary movements of the economic imagination (p. 155). The modern economy, without those dynamic signals of imagination provided by money and profits, ossifies into a world of "industrial museums." But the necessary choice for capitalism is not simply a choice for human nature. It is a choice for a somewhat narrowed and desiccated nature. It is a choice for man severed from some important contents of his nature. Smith himself may have recognized this as his concern, expressed in book 5 of the *Wealth of Nations*, about the integrity of the human person and the vitality of martial virtue under a complex system of division of labor, intimate. One possible criticism of Manent's rich treatment of Smith is that he does not sufficiently emphasize Smith's own reservations about the world that he did so much to construct. If Montesquieu is in some real sense a *political* sociologist, Smith is in some sense a *political* economist.

An important motif of Manent's book is the centrality of the will for understanding the project or enterprise of modernity. Nietzsche's reinterpretation of the human world in terms of the multiple effects of the "will to power" is an "exaggeration" and "generalization" of the very "English ideas" of which Nietzsche was so contemptuous (p. 251). It was Hobbes who had initially reduced human nature to the desire for power which ends only in death. Locke had completed this reduction by deconstructing and desubstantializing human nature: both the moral and political phenomena became mere constructs and effects of the human will. In chapter 4 of his work "L'homme caché" ("The Hidden Man") Manent brilliantly details the Lockean deconstruction of the human soul in *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*. It is this "deconstruction" of the soul which is the necessary underpinning and accompaniment of the new political order consecrated to the rights of man. It is difficult to do full justice to Manent's textured treatment of the Lockean moment in the history of the movement of the Christian West from the regime of nature to the regime of sovereignty and human autonomy. But the following remarks must suffice to convey the importance of Locke's profound and profoundly significant attack

on the very notion of the soul and a nonarbitrary moral order. Manent is acutely aware of the comparatively sober, moderate and “constitutionalist” elements of Locke’s political teaching, but he refuses to accept the received pieties which ignore Locke’s stature as a serious thinker and which place him into reassuring categories, like “Calvinism” or “natural law,” which conform to the intellectual historian’s or exegete’s prejudices. In a detailed and nuanced reading of the longest chapter, “On Power,” of *An Essay* (book 2, chapter 21), Manent shows the reinterpretation of the human world which is at the heart of Locke’s audacious and “revolutionary” project.

At the core of *An Essay* is the intention to discredit the very notion of substance. “Power” provides the “universal idiom” for understanding what had previously been understood under the rubric of a self-moving human soul guided by natural or final ends.

Power is no longer understood, as Hobbes understood it, in reference to the directing role of the passions and desires of men. Power “invades all the other domains,” however (p. 165). Manent summarizes the omnipresent role of power in the Lockean universe:

- A. Color and odor are only the “power” of primary qualities, that is of “invisible particles producing those sensations or effects that we call secondary qualities.”
- B. “Substance is only the power of producing a number of effects that we perceive empirically, without knowing in the least the nature of this ‘substance.’”
- C. “The will is the *power* of preferring one action to another.”
- D. “Liberty is the power of realizing this preference; it has nothing to do with the will because it would be then the power of a power, which is an absurdity.”
- E. “Understanding is a power” (p. 165).

Power, which explains so many disparate things, deals not with the nature of things, but rather with *relations* and *effects*. It is Locke’s substitute for an unknowable and inaccessible soul or substance.

It is necessary to repeat: According to Locke we do not and cannot know what man is. But we do know that the moral notions which allow human beings to live together are constructions and artifacts and that civil society itself has no natural status. Man is an “artist” who produces things that are not given to him by nature. Manent, in a thorough analysis, shows that a moral abyss is at the foundation of the Lockean understanding of the human world.

There are no innate natural ideas of the good. Man, as the famous formula

recounts it, is a *tabula rasa*. Our moral notions are “mixed modes” rather than simple or innate ideas. They are constructed for the sake of commodious living and are socially verified by “commodities,” by the assent or will of the community. According to Locke, fundamental moral notions such as murder are arbitrary ideas constructed for the sake of individual and collective self-preservation. There is no moral order independent of human artifice or will. Yet Locke’s political teaching partially “renaturalizes” human beings and the human world by building the “high architecture of the liberal and democratic state” on the “puny base of the solitary animal in quest of nourishment.” “The only teaching of nature, the only uncontestable one in any case, is the injunction of animal necessity: survival” (p. 178). It is on this low but solid basis that Locke constructs the moderate representative state dedicated to the protection of individual rights and the economy of rational, industrious and profitable labor. On this thin reed is built the superstructure of the modern regime of commerce and liberty.

Manent shows that at the heart of Locke’s enterprise we can find three fundamental propositions: (1) Man is the being who fabricates his moral notions; (2) Man is the being with rights; (3) Man is the being who works (p. 191). These three notions are essential ingredients of modern political consciousness. But they do not hold together in contemporary life and thought as they effortlessly do in Locke’s audacious redefinition of man and society. Of these three notions, only the second can provide the foundation for a real society. Communism’s reduction of man to economy, to work and the material substructure of the social order “has revealed itself incapable of establishing any sort of institution or stable relation between men, so much so that one is able even to fear that where it reigned the longest and most completely, it has rendered men definitively incapable of fastening such relations” (pp. 192–93). Likewise, “culture” or “values” cannot provide a sufficient basis for the organization and the sustenance of the human world. They are preeminently “useful” politically as negative or “critical” notions which allow men to challenge the pretension of any social order to conform to the nature or vocation of man. But they cannot provide men or society with real motives for action.

Of Locke’s three fundamental propositions about man, the notion of rights alone can provide a foundation for a human social order. If man does not know anything about his nature, he can at least know that he is that equal being with rights that must be respected by others. As Marx astutely observed in *On the Jewish Question*, the representative regime of rights both “annihilates” and “presupposes” the “material and spiritual elements which form the content of life of individuals” such as religion, profession and birth. The liberal separation of state and society—its *general prohibition* against any political embodiment of the human good and its subsequent general authorization of the moral contents of life in the realm of civil society—simultaneously denatures and tenuously renaturalizes human beings. Democratic man has a real and abiding but tenuous and unfathomable relationship to man *tout court* (pp. 254–60).

Manent knows that Locke's "revolutionary" deconstruction of the human soul and its works is not the whole truth about modern metaphysics, or rather more accurately, the modern attack on metaphysics. One might ask, What about the conservative reservations about the project of enlightenment and liberation from tradition and moral restraints? Manent sympathetically recounts Hume's radicalization of Locke's epistemology at the service of conservative or rather liberal-conservative ends. Hume "deconstructs" Locke's substitute for substance, power, and shows that it itself is a construction, a kind of superstition. He utilizes the weapons of skepticism against enlightenment itself in order to defend that *common life* of custom and tradition which nourishes and protects human nature. Hume defends a useful superstition against a harmful one. In the process he reinvigorates an older view of political philosophy which links philosophy to civic moderation. Today, the Humean concept of the moral sense is all the rage among conservatives looking for an alternative to the regnant moral relativism. (But the same conservatives, somewhat incoherently if salutarily, find sustenance in Aristotle's world of substance, character and virtue). Manent shows that Hume's salutary desire to find a nonarbitrary natural foundation for morality in the moral sense falters because it too radically separates the sentiment of the moral actor from the reason of the theoretical spectator. In Hume's account the moral sentiments are passions devoid of any connection to prudence or deliberative reason. Hume restores the moral life to the natural world, but it is a world bereft of any rational as opposed to customary foundations for moral action (pp. 207–8). Manent also shows the unintended consequences of Humean skepticism: rather than undermining Lockean or enlightenment dogmatism, the posthumous fate of Humean skepticism has been to erode and undermine all those moral contents of life rooted in the traditions of Athens, Jerusalem and Rome. These contents challenge the unqualified victory of the regime of rights and thereby humanize our democracies (pp. 209–10). Manent believes that it is in the United States, formerly the most prudent or sober manifestation of modern democracy, as Tocqueville noted, that the victory of what Mary Anne Glendon has called "rights talk" is most unqualified.

In his treatment of Locke Manent highlights a point that he returns to throughout his book: there is at the heart of modern political consciousness a tension between a "reforming or revolutionary activism under the banner of the rights of man" and "scientific passivity under the name of the diversity of cultures." But this tension is, according to Manent, thoroughly intelligible. Both propositions "equally and simultaneously issue from the rejection of the 'substantial' definition of man." And they both affirm the thesis that man is the autonomous being who makes himself; they both affirm the triumph of the will. Both understand man in his *indetermination*, both affirm the "general power of man over his own humanity" (p. 213). Manent suggests that it is precisely this double and parallel negation and affirmation that accounts for the phenomenon of the "fellow-traveling" Western intellectual who is critical of the slightest

defects of liberal societies but waxes poetic about illiberal foreign “cultures” and is indulgent toward the despotism which rules in the name of History.

Already in the eighteenth century, certain *philosophes* such as Voltaire were indignant about the slightest injustice in their own society but indulgent towards foreign and exotic despotisms. As Tocqueville noted in *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, the *philosophes* were ambivalent toward political liberty. They dreamed rather about the possibility of enlightened despotism even as they denounced the “tyranny” of the Old Regime: *Le plus ça change. . . .*

Manent shows the pivotal theoretical and practical place of Locke in the modern affirmation of the self, an affirmation of the self which is inseparable from the “desubstantialization” of man. In chapter 5, “The Triumph of the Will,” he provides a history of that triumph in light of the theological-political problem, in light of the specific problem that Christianity posed to the governance of the political order. Manent develops the profound treatment of the theological-political problem that he had already sketched in the *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*.<sup>4</sup> In doing so, he presents an original and convincing portrait of the “liberalism” or “pluralism” of spiritual and political goods in Aristotle’s political science against which modern political philosophy had reacted. He shows that Aristotle is no partisan of a dogmatic ideal of the common good but instead an umpire who weighs and balances seemingly incommensurable human goods in his own capacious soul. He thereby shows that the incommensurability of certain “spiritual masses” or moral contents of life need not give rise either to a tyranny of the good or to the perception that the moral world is an arbitrary abyss. Aristotle’s model of statesmanship shows that a dynamic and pluralistic conception of the common good, one which carefully unites nature and law without denying the complexity of nature, is available in principle to men and societies. But the founders of modernity believed that such a prudent communion of nature and law was too dangerous, too likely to culminate in the excesses of priestcraft and the horrors of civil war. Instead they opted for that twofold general prohibition of opinion from power and general authorization of the moral contents of life in the realm of civil society which characterizes the dynamic of modern liberal democracy.

Manent is awed by the audacity of this project, and he knows that it is not altogether without real and enduring nobility. But he cannot share the admirable hopes of a Milton in his *Areopagitica* that men would use the general authorization, the pursuit of happiness, to “sincerely” pursue the goods of their nature, to pursue above all the truth (pp. 256–58). Liberalism, to its eternal credit, allows for the pursuit of the true and the good, and only the perverse fail to recognize the “Miltonian” possibilities in the liberal regime. But following Tocqueville, Manent fears that the authorization to pursue one’s happiness while respecting the rights of others risks inexorably becoming a right not to pursue the goods of our nature and even an authorization not to pursue them for fear that such a pursuit will undermine the rights of others. A strong element of

creeping conformity, mediocrity and relativism lurks within the seemingly noble authorization of the moral contents of life in the private sphere. To put it pungently and epigrammatically: the naked public square irresistibly leads to what Tocqueville called “democratic despotism,” to what Nietzsche called the “last man” who believes that he has “invented happiness.” Manent’s phenomenology of modern political consciousness points to the need for a Tocquevillian “political science” which protects human liberty and greatness from the effects of unencumbered human willfulness, from democracy defined as the unlimited *triumph of the will*.<sup>5</sup>

The final chapter of Manent’s work is entitled “La fin de la Nature”—“The End of Nature.” Manent does not suggest that modernity—the modern difference—has in fact succeeded in freeing man from his human nature and its ends. But he does suggest that modernity is defined by the *effort* to create a law which is completely detached from our nature and which is truly “sovereign” over the human world. Its perspective denies a natural order to the soul and any law or ends, any heteronomy, which comes outside of mankind’s autonomous self-direction and creation.

In France today, the collapse of the ideological hegemony of the various Marxist vulgarates has led to a revival of interest in political philosophy. Thinkers such as Luc Ferry and Alain Renault have tried to find in the work of Kant and other German idealists the moral and intellectual resources for a reinvigorated republican politics and for a nonhistoricist account of the human “subject.” Manent does not share the Kantian inspiration which dominates so many currents of non-Marxist thought in France today. In his final chapter the reasons for this refusal to take the Kantian route followed by so many of his peers are made abundantly clear. Despite his noble and salutary efforts to do justice to the moral life of man, Kant’s formalistic ethics goes further in separating man’s reason from his nature than previous currents of modern thought. Kant’s work is modernity’s most noble effort to create a law severed from the requirements of nature or human nature. It is the most morally sublime moment in modern man’s project for creating that third city, the purely human city, the city of man.

Modern man, including Kant’s moral agent, is neither magnanimous nor humble precisely because there is no order of nature or creation which he either manifests and reflects or is subordinate to. Modern man aims to be autonomous or self-creating; one is tempted to say in a polemical moment that he aims to be a god. Yet his double negation of the order of nature and the order of grace does not entail an affirmation: modern man flees the old laws, the old heteronomies, and he pursues a law of his own making. But what he pursues is a chimera, an illusion, a kind of nothingness. Modern man qua modern man, as the being released from the ancient laws, and freed from the authoritative guidance of the moral contents of life, can only affirm his *nothingness*. The will can only will itself: modern sovereignty and autonomy are literally tautological in

character. The will wills itself, as Hegel affirmed. But where are the motives of human action to be found? As Tocqueville noted, democracy is partly natural—its recognition of a fundamental equality among human beings is more true than the conventions and pretensions of aristocracy. But at the deepest level the democratic “revolution” threatens the excellences of our nature. Democracy must be humanized by the contents of our nature: by an active religion, a responsible patriotism and by the rich associative life of a liberal society.

As Manent shows, democracy is in many ways more natural than regimes which came before it. But democrats are paradoxically incapable of affirming the very “naturalness” of nature and thereby the truly natural character of democracy. If one recognizes the naturalness of nature, one has a nonarbitrary standard for relating human beings in their similarities and differences. The Greeks and the Christians have a different understanding of how to conjugate that simultaneous equality and inequality of human beings: for Christians, the Lord of Creation became incarnate not as a philosopher or as the magnanimous man but as the Suffering Servant. This tension between the greatness of soul which reflects the excellences of our nature and humility before the order of Creation became insufferable for European man. He wishes to flee this moral ambiguity, he wishes to build the city of man (pp. 292–93). The modern project succeeds only in its double negation, however. By itself it can affirm nothing. And even here nature, through sinewy paths, returns. Christian humility cannot refute the claims of magnanimity precisely because, as St. Thomas Aquinas recognized, “nature is more essential to man than grace”: “man receives grace only because his *nature* is capable of receiving it.”

Manent shows that the most modest and generous treatment of the relations between humility and magnanimity is that of St. Thomas, who stressed that “*magnanimitas et humilitas non sunt contraria quamvis in contraria tendere videantur*” (“magnanimity and humility are not contrary even though they appear to go in contrary directions”) even as he simultaneously affirmed the created, necessitous and dependent character of man. Thomas provides a *reasonable* model of a position which respects the irreducible and eternal tension between reason and revelation, between magnanimity and humility, while making that tension *liveable* for human beings (p. 286). Today both democratic ideology and the Christian religion which is often corrupted or transformed by that ideology unite in attacking pride in its political manifestations as a kind of elitist or aristocratic atavism. But as Manent argues in another recent work, if man is in some real sense a political animal, the proper conclusions must be drawn. He writes:

If a man is a political animal—and of course everything hinges on this proposition, on the meaning and the reach one attributes to it—then his moral and intellectual life is necessarily dependent on the body politic in which he actualizes his nature; it is thus dependent even if the political institutions are so contrived as to make him feel perfectly free. Then, he acknowledges his condition, he touches it, he acts

according to it, in so far as he is truly a citizen, which means, in the modern age, in so far as he is an active member of a nation. And national self-affirmation, even national pride, or, in De Gaulle's words, preoccupation with "rank," or "grandeur," are not as such subjective manifestations open to the critique that both Christian religion and ideology, however different their reasons, direct against pride, they are objective means for coming into contact with the real world, since this proud sizing up and rough interplay between bodies politic gives us our first access to the articulations of the world.<sup>6</sup>

It seems to me that Manent continues the reasonable, modest and generous attitude of St. Thomas: the Christian must do justice to the claims of "grandeur" precisely because he must do justice to the reality of man as a *zoon politikon*. Attention to the "naturalness of nature" helps account for Manent's solicitude for great political men such as Aron and de Gaulle. It also accounts for his deep respect for the researches of Leo Strauss, who has done so much to illuminate the character of the natural world, to restore a phenomenology of the city and man unencumbered by the presuppositions of either the Christian religion or democratic ideology. At the end of this erudite, wise, prudent, yet modest book Manent announces that he will prepare another book on the relations between Christianity and modernity: he will investigate the science of Rome. Modernity began as a visceral polemic against Christianity, and yet it would not be possible without the model of invisible rule or empire provided by Christianity. It appears that in some paradoxical way the authority of history aped the invisible authority of the servants of the servants of God. Manent concludes his magisterial work with some cautionary words to friends and allies: "We will never understand more than the half of things when we ignore the science of Rome" (p. 295).

## NOTES

1. For an overview and analysis of Manent's work as a whole, see my essay "Modern Liberty and the Moral Contents of Life: An Introduction to the Political Reflection of Pierre Manent," *Perspectives on Political Science* 21, no. 4 (1992), pp. 193–200.

2. Quotations and references are from *La Cité de l'homme* unless otherwise stated. All translations are mine.

3. Pierre Manent, "La vérité, peut-être" in *Débat*, no. 72 (novembre–décembre 1992), p. 177. This article appeared in a special issue of *Débat* dedicated to the work of the new generation of French philosophers. The article is indispensable for understanding Manent's intellectual itinerary and influences as well as the place of *La cité de l'homme* in his work as a whole. See especially his remarks on Raymond Aron (pp. 172, 174), Leo Strauss (pp. 172–73), Tocqueville and democratic despotism (pp. 173–74), the city of God and the terrestrial city (pp. 175–77) and on nature, history and "la différence moderne" (pp. 177–78).

4. Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme: Dix leçons* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1978, reedition Pluriel-Hachette, 1989). This book appeared in English in the fall of 1994 in a new series on contemporary French political thought edited by Mark Lilla and Thomas Pavel for Princeton University Press. See Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, translated by Rebecca Balinski (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

5. Manent's book can most accurately be described as a phenomenology of modern political consciousness. He is most interested in describing precisely the "modern difference" and in understanding its relationship to the permanent human situation. But as Raymond Aron said about Tocqueville and Aristotle, Manent "judges in and by his description." His phenomenology therefore points toward a political science which can provide guidance for reasonable action in response to the problems and possibilities of democracy. We should remember that Tocqueville's remarkable phenomenology of democracy and democratic man was ultimately at the service of "a new political science for a world itself quite new."

6. Pierre Manent, "De Gaulle's Destiny: The Modern Nation as an Object of Thought and Action," speech delivered in Munich, November 1993, and to be published in French in *Pensée Politique*, no. 3, 1995.