

INTERPRETATION

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INTERPRETATION

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HALIFAX: THE COMPLETE TRIMMER REVISITED

J. E. PARSONS, JR.

I

In the age of party government and its attendant spirit of partisanship, the name of George Saville, First Marquis of Halifax is remembered primarily for his “unprincipled” principles associated with the term, Trimmer. A Trimmer eschews partisanship on principle. As Halifax explains:

The innocent term Trimmer signifieth no more than this, that if men are together in a boat, and one part of the company would weigh it down on one side, another would make it lean as much to the contrary; it happeneth that there is a third opinion of those who conceive it would do as well if the boat went even, without endangering the passengers.¹

Yet Halifax is commonly identified with typically unscrupulous or dissimulating opportunism in statecraft, with little attention given to other of his pamphlets aside from *The Character of a Trimmer*. Nevertheless, his life and the complete body of his writings warrant in retrospect more generous, perspicacious estimates of Halifax’s statesmanship. If nothing else, his career demonstrates a full reliance of policy on principle, and the result for England was not inconsequential. Twice managing to avert civil war, Halifax delayed the reckoning for James II until that unfortunate monarch enflamed a crisis which forever removed him and the Stuart male line from the throne of England. It was as though Halifax had profoundly imbibed lessons learned from Machiavelli, according to whom the prudent statesman prepares for peace by going to war and inspires a “revolution settlement” by upholding the principle of legitimacy. Like Hume, Halifax was a non-Whig who nevertheless regarded political society as if it were based upon a tacitly understood original contract.²

Speaking in his own name, Halifax wrote that: “As a sword is sooner broken upon a featherbed than upon a table, so his [Charles II’s] pliantness broke the blow of a present mischief much better than a more immediate resistance would have. . . . If he *dissembled*, let us remember first, that he was a King, and that dissimulation is a

jewel of the Crown. . . .” Halifax adds pertinently: “Virtues must be enlarged or restrained according to differing circumstances.”³ Halifax does not and cannot be thought to recommend dissimulation for dissimulation’s sake. Each political quality or virtue has its uses when well adapted to the variety of circumstances for which it is suitable.

Halifax observes that good government is not the right of the governed, although all government is based on a tacit contract. Good government stems from the people’s good fortune or is a benefit unthinkingly received from the skill of a few—which the people neither deserves nor has contributed towards. Many often fail to notice a distinction between good and bad government except in the extreme circumstance. The fact happens to be that there are few policies adopted intentionally for the public good: “There is seldome any good thing set on foot for the publique, but that a private ayme is the true motive of it . . . [;] *the people are never so perfectly backed that they will kick and fling, if not stroked at seasonable times.*”⁴ Halifax hastens to emphasize: “*In corrupted governments the place is given for the sake of the man; in good ones, the man is chosen for the sake of the place.*”⁵ Kings or rulers would not seem to constitute exceptions to this fundamental rule, and Halifax anticipates Bolingbroke’s watchword, “not men, but measures.”⁶

Halifax’s method of philosophizing on government is not articulated in the form of the political treatise. But if certain transitions are supplied by the investigator, a complete political method and set of principles for statecraft emerge—refined and coordinated in all aspects by the man of whom Macaulay wrote, “The truth is that the memory of Halifax is entitled in an especial way to the protection of history.”⁷ More recent historians have seen fit to sustain Macaulay’s judgment, and the Revolution Settlement of 1688, of which Halifax is regarded as a prime mover and shaper, still constitutes for them the pivotal event of English seventeenth-century history.⁸ The consensus of present-day historians identifies Halifax as England’s Elder Statesman in the gathering crisis of 1687-88, and they are in substantial agreement that it was Halifax who insisted that the form of the constitution in the Revolution Settlement be decided before the question of who was to rule. What some historians have at times scanted, however, is the revolutionary role of Halifax’s writings and the fact that his politics are better seen as a reflection of his writings than his writings as a reflection of his

politics. The variousness of Halifaxian statecraft is especially not perceived as stemming from his unprincipled principles. H. C. Foxcroft's *Life and Letters* (1898) puts this problem in its proper perspective, but Foxcroft is not thoroughly enough consulted on this problem. The result has been to overlook the unity of precept and practice from Halifax's *Advice to a Daughter* to *The Character of a Trimmer*, and the characteristic self-explanation which illumines the core of Halifaxian statesmanship is thereby neglected. This self-explanation was entirely epitomized by "our Trimmer" who "is . . . fully satisfied of the truth of those principles by which he is directed in reference to the public."⁹

Halifax has been accused, both in his time and intermittently ever since, of being a vacillating opportunist, an intriguer without integrity rather than a patriot. The fact that he never composed a systematic, 'scientific' treatise on politics has been alleged to signify that he never held unchanging political views, and his works have been dismissed as merely occasional pamphlets or tracts for the times. That Halifax was a patriot and that his works are something more than tracts for the times will soon become apparent. Admittedly, Halifax himself acknowledges the non-treatiselike presentation of his views; but this cannot be taken to mean that his writings are merely occasional pieces, owing to their discursive restatement of consistent political principles.¹⁰ As George H. Sabine observes apropos of the discursive, closely-reasoned quality of Halifax's works: "Thus Halifax, though he would not have been flattered by being called a philosopher, displayed an intellectual temper which became an integral part of philosophy."¹¹

Halifax's manner of writing, with its admixture of policy and principle, is illuminated by his sleighting estimate of human reason considered in the abstract, that is, the reason of most men most of the time. He considers men to be subject to rationality less frequently and to a more superficial degree than is generally recognized.

Most men make little other use of their speech than to give evidence against their own understanding. A little learning misleadeth and a great deal often stupifieth the understanding. In an unreasonable age, a man's reason let loose would undo him. A man that steps aside from the world, and hath leisure to observe it without interest or design, thinks all mankind as mad as they think him for not agreeing with them in their mistakes.¹²

That Halifax's policy recommendations were various or inconsistent is not borne out by the consensus of historians (*pace* Hume). Almost singlehandedly, in a century of civil wars he twice thwarted the likely recourse to civil war in England, once during the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-81 and again in 1688. His *Rough Draught of a New Model at Sea* (1694) helped reestablish Britain on the Baconian path of naval imperialism which it successfully pursued up until 1914. In the *Rough Draught* Halifax adverts to the occasion for his work and seems to present a reason for its apparently ad hoc manner: "It is not pretended to launch into such a voluminous treatise as to set down everything to which so comprehensive a subject might lead. . . ." ¹³ Since men are prone to consult their own interest rather than their reason, it is prudential to refrain from arguments presented on the strength alone of principles. Because of men's known partiality for their own opinionated preferences, it is hard to connect valid principles with the detailed arguments which apply them so as to be persuasive. The virtue of persuasiveness must assume that some, at least, are disposed to change their minds; but also that they are inclined to do so for reasons other than general arguments. In either case, Halifax vouchsafes one universal criterion as invariably applicable in politics: "That there is hardly a single proposition to be made which is not deceitful, and the tying our reason too close to it may in many cases be destructive." Halifax adds: "Circumstances must come in, and are to be made a part of the matter of which we are to judge; positive decisions are always dangerous, more especially in politics." ¹⁴

J.P. Kenyon has noted a parallel between Halifax and Burke, ¹⁵ and there is something ascertainably Burkean in the former's unwillingness to reduce the complex manifold of political life to any set of analytical principles. The same goes for Halifax's perceptions of the need for society to dissemble its differences behind some sort of veil. For example, Halifax speaks of "the embroidered part of the government" and remarks that "there must be milk for babes, since the greatest part of mankind are, and so ever will be included in that list." Likewise in the Burkean manner Halifax emphasizes the harmonious coordination of the various orders and ranks in the regime, so that one part of the constitution is proportionally offset and limited by another. "Our government is in a just proportion—no tympany, no unnatural swellings either of power or liberty." ¹⁶

The value of general arguments for political persuasion is undermined, in Halifax's mind, by men's partiality for their own preconceived ideas. Nevertheless, Halifax does not let this tendency prevent him from offering the public his own thoughts in a generalized form, according to J. P. Kenyon.¹⁷ It is a suggestive fact that in the *Rough Draught* where Halifax argues for the inefficacy of general principles, he delays the introduction of his specific recommendations for policy until more than half way through. Indeed, its title, *A Rough Draught of a New Model at Sea*, is quite misleading, as the work exhibits anything but a "rough" construction, and the opening line ironically underlines the delayed specific recommendations: "I will make no other introduction to the following discourse than that the importance of our being strong at sea was ever very great. . . ."¹⁸ The irony consists in the fact that this introduction next proceeds to discourse on the "forms (i.e. systems) of government" until more than half way through it concludes with the sentence, "the Navy is of so great importance that it would be disparaged by calling it less than the life and soul of the Government." The policy recommendation has at this point yet to be made.

We thus see that principles and general propositions are related to policy in such a way that the reader is led to consider general arguments at length before being introduced to specifics. Halifax does allude to "the present controversy" before he takes up the general "forms of government," but he decides that it is best to defer consideration of the former because "a man, who will be master of an argument . . . must look around to see what objections can be made." General arguments constitute a necessary part of presenting such 'objections.' Accordingly, the reader will "not go in a straight line, which is the ready way to lead him into a mistake." Almost in a literal way the reader is forced by Halifax to trim, viz. to proceed as if tacking in a sailing vessel, between general principles and expositions of, or allusions to, specific policies. Halifax, then, is more than simply a Trimmer in politics;¹⁹ in his very method of literary construction he "trims" between general principles and "the present controversy." This impression is enforced by Halifax's frequent use of antithesis in his writings and speeches.

Hence the structure of *A Rough Draught* reflects the Trimmer's pattern: first, general propositions are advanced as regards "the first

article of an Englishman's political creed," then allusion is made to "the present controversy between the gentlemen and the tarpaulins." Third, general "forms of government" are discussed and finally a return is made to "the present controversy." The Trimmer's zig-zag pattern of political conduct is reproduced within the dimensions of Halifax's literary method in *A Rough Draught*. Halifax's art of writing is a mirror reflecting his moderatist statesmanship.

The tactic of literary "trimming" is further exemplified in the framework of the discourse: ". . . for as the sea hath little less variety in it than the land, so the naval force of England," explains Halifax, "extendeth itself into a great many branches, each of which are important enough to require a discourse apart, and peculiarly applied to it."²⁰ But variousness, to be handled expeditiously, must be reduced to a single unified whole, for "a principle to be laid down that there is a differing consideration to be had if such a subject-matter as in itself distinct and independent, and of such an one as being a limb of a body, or a wheel of a frame, there is a necessity of suiting it to the rest and preserving the harmony of the whole."²¹ It emerges clearly and distinctly that the "body" or "frame" of which the harmony of the whole consists parallels in itself the unity of the part or "limb." Though the parts are various, their integrity among themselves is guaranteed by the unity of the whole, as is the case in practice of the English navy as part of the English Constitution. The English Constitution is the whole of which the English navy is its most integral representation. An alteration in the latter would mean an alteration in the former, which it represents. "A man must not in that case," explains Halifax, "restrain himself to the separate consideration of that single part, but must take care it may fall in and agree with the shape of the whole creature of which it is a member." The whole is not only the sum, but the paradigm of its parts.

In the framework of Halifax's discourse, then, the tactic of literary "trimming" between general propositions and specific applications forms part of a strategy which is dialectical. Dialectically, the mixed constitution as between monarchism and republicanism, exemplified by the temperate English climate and in what combines the opposites of sea and land as sea power (e.g., a flotilla), prescribe the mixed naval establishment Halifax recommends. The strategy, in general terms, is to strike a balance of the extremes by

defining a middle course. In addition, Halifax wishes to avoid any appearance of “affectation or an extravagant fit of unseasonable politics.” That this strategy is a result of dialectic can be seen by the contrast of two principles: (1) “Mankind naturally swelleth against favour and partiality,” and (2) “Partiality and common prejudice direct most men’s opinions without entering into the particular reasons which ought to be the ground of it.”²² These principles are both drawn from *A Rough Draught*, and they demonstrate how such conflicts are to be mediated by Halifax’s own activity as an author of political discourses. That activity may be seen to provide “a steady foundation” upon which prejudices can give way to reliable judgments. The process is the following one. Halifax holds general propositions to be useless without specific policy recommendations. Accordingly, “there is so much ease in acquiescing in generals, that the ignorance of those who cannot distinguish, and the laziness of those that will not, maketh men very apt to decline the trouble of stricter inquiries, which they think too great a price for being in the right, let it be never so valuable.”²³

What causes men’s judgments to miscarry is precisely a combination of such generalizing, “ignorance” or “laziness,” so that the result is either that men “let their opinions swim along with the stream of the world, or give them up wholly to be directed by success.” To avoid either supine laxity or unmitigated opportunism, men’s partiality must be transformed into impartiality and prejudice into reliable judgments. Without such a transformation, “the effect of this [laxity or opportunism] is that they change their opinions upon every present uneasiness, wanting a steady foundation upon which their judgment should be formed.”²⁴ Partiality can only be modified and prejudice transformed when a method is available for the formation of sound judgments through linking general propositions to their specific applications. This method consists in following the Trimmer’s middle course of balancing the extremes. The middle course is accordingly not an abstraction, but corresponds to a concrete series of policy decisions, made, in Halifax’s case, with amazing foresight. Macaulay focussed attention on this aspect of Halifaxian statesmanship when he wrote: “[Halifax] always saw passing events, not in the point of view in which they commonly appear to one who bears a part in them, but in the point of view in which, after the lapse of many years, they appear to the philosophic historian.”²⁵

II

The sole modern political thinker to be mentioned by name by Halifax in the whole corpus of his works is Machiavelli. Judging from the context of this single reference, Halifax's estimate of Machiavelli is favorable—a fact to which we will recur. Foxcroft notes that Halifax's maxim, "Men are more the sinews of war than money" (reflecting Machiavelli's warning to the plutocratic Medicis) is derived from the *Discorsi*, II, xx.²⁶ This in itself would be more or less indicative of a Halifaxian reliance on Machiavelli's thought. But numerous other examples present themselves which render the tie unmistakable. For example, Halifax's statement that "Mistakes, as all other things, have their periods, and many times the nearest way to cure is not to oppose them, but stay till they are crushed with their own weight"²⁷ recalls another chapter heading from the *Discorsi* (other than that of II, x), i.e., I, xxxiii: 'When an evil has sprung up either within a State or against a State, it is a more salutary proceeding to temporize with it than to attack it rashly.' Machiavelli adds by way of explanation: "For almost always those who try to crush it make its force greater, and make that evil which is suspected from it to be accelerated . . . since it is difficult to recognize these evils when they spring up, this difficulty caused by the deception which things give when they [first] spring up. . . . [And] by temporizing with them, they will either extinguish themselves, or the evil will at least be deferred for a long time."²⁸ It is an extraordinary fact that Halifax guided his statesmanship according to this derived precept, and it constituted the ground of his conduct during the Exclusion Crisis and the Revolution of 1688. In the first circumstance, he deferred the evil of civil war by lending support to the Duke of York's claim to the throne. In the second, he anticipated the failure of James II's statecraft by clandestine polemics to its disadvantage, such as *A Letter to a Dissenter*, and allowed the Jacobite cause to founder. Halifax's statement about mistakes paralleling Machiavelli's was prepared in manuscript for Charles II, but the work where it occurs, *The Character of a Trimmer*, was only published in 1688 to warn against premature resistance to James—and even then under his uncle's name. This activity fitted Halifax's prudential character, for it was shortly after the *Trimmer's* appearance that he became a reluctant conspirator against the Crown. The Elder Statesman of the Revolution was a

conspiratorial student of Machiavelli and his *Discorsi*, which presents a conspicuous chapter on conspiracies (III, vi), the treatise's most extensive one. It should come as no surprise that Halifax's reference to Machiavelli occurs precisely in *The Character of a Trimmer* and there alone.

Furthermore, the complete context of just this reference of the Trimmer's recalls several passages from the first Book of the *Discorsi*. The Trimmer opines: "The people can never agree to show their united powers till they are extremely tempted and provoked to it, so that to apply cupping-glasses to a great beast naturally disposed to sleep, and to force the tame thing whether it will or no to be valiant, must be learnt out of some other book than Machiavelli [*sc.*, the *Discorsi*], who would never have prescribed such a preposterous method . . . duty, justice, religion, nay, even human prudence too, biddeth the people suffer anything than resist; but our corrupted nature, where ever it feels the smart, will run to the nearest remedy."²⁹ In *Discorsi*, I, lv, Machiavelli notes that the Roman plebs—often referred to by classical authors as the many-headed beast—did not think of evading a certain decree of the Senate and that lack of popular disorders "derives not so much from the goodness of the people . . . as from having a King who keeps them united, not only by his virtue, but by the institutions of those kingdoms which are yet unspoiled."³⁰ The parallel with Halifax's view here is sufficiently evident. Moreover, in *Discorsi*, I, lvii, "Together the Plebs are strong, dispersed they are weak," Machiavelli writes: "For the multitude many times is audacious in speaking against the decision of their Prince: but, afterwards, when they see the penalty in sight, not trusting one another, they run to obey."³¹ Now, Halifax appeals to Charles II in *The Character of a Trimmer* for the convening of Parliament, adding that the English monarchy exerts greater force in foreign policy when backed by Parliament. Parliament may even be an example, for Halifax, of Machiavelli's "institutions of those kingdoms which are yet unspoiled," and Halifax's reference to Tacitus elsewhere may suggest his recognition that parliamentary institutions are a Germanic inheritance, for it was Tacitus who emphasized the novelty of the same in *De origine et situ Germanorum*. Certainly, Halifax's close friend, Sir William Temple, shared this awareness, as is evident from the trial introductory chapter of his history of England.³² At the same time, where Halifax

invokes an *ad hominem* address to Charles II in the rhetoric of princely *virtu*, his arguments do not rely on separating the person of the King from the Crown or dividing the unity of King and Parliament as the earnest of national strength.³³ The people are not disposed to criticize or resist the King while their institutions are respected, for from these institutions stem what Halifax terms ‘duty, justice, religion, nay even human prudence too’ and what Machiavelli calls “the goodness of the people” (*la bontà de’ popoli*).

Halifax allows for the limited conflict between partisans of divine right and partisans of the people’s right, but he knows that the source of the English revolution of 1640-60 lay in Charles I’s Personal Government. The ruler’s *virtù* is and can be no substitute for the institutions, the laws and Parliament, which unite prince and people and provide the limit and framework to institutionalized conflict. But neglect or corruption of the institutions—which Machiavelli calls ‘modes and orders’—leads to self-defence as the sole criterion for action; in their ‘corrupted nature’ the people become ready for anything and hence dangerous.

The argument in *The Character of a Trimmer* for reliance on “the King himself, without the mixture of any other consideration” turns out to be nothing more than the admission that “whatever he can do, it is [not] possible for us to be angry with him . . .” Alone, the monarch can do little good and much harm because he cannot lead the people by himself, but alone he can provoke them, according to Halifax. Halifax’s deceptive rhetoric in favor of princely *virtù* is actually a warning about the limits of executive leadership and the sensitive nature of executive example.

A good deal more can be made of the derivation of Halifax’s political thought from Machiavelli’s analysis of the interaction of prince and people. It should be pointed out that, in doing this, there is no necessary contradiction to be found between Machiavellian and Burkean statesmanship.³⁴ The need to understand *The Character of a Trimmer* in the light of Machiavelli’s thought is not only rendered clear by Halifax’s far-ranging, but indirect references to other political theorists in that work, but what must have been Halifax’s repeated reading of and reflection on *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*. If I am not mistaken, the Trimmer adverts indirectly to views of Filmer and republican theorists such as Harrington and Sidney—and perhaps also to Bossuet. In so doing, his criterion is

political realism; however, political realism is variously understood. For example, political realism can be taken to mean Bismarckian *Realpolitik*. The solution to this problem seems to be already indicated (in outline) at the beginning. For when we specify political realism as Machiavellian political realism, there exists an ever solid basis on which to determine Halifax's apprehension of political reality. Halifax's understanding of political reality in terms of his principle will exclude other possible understandings: affirming a principle rules out affirming its opposite. In this way, every principle by its own character as affirmative is exclusionist. Halifax's political realism as a principle is no exception to this rule, and in its origin it is Machiavellian in an adapted or modified sense. (For example, Halifax declines to give tyrannical advice, unlike Machiavelli, as witnessed by his caution in ascribing virtues to Charles II.)

All in all, however, Halifax's debt to Machiavelli is best seen in his opinion on religion, as the sequel (III) will bear out. The Machiavellian aspect of Halifax's political realism is accordingly set apart in all its distinctness by comparison with, for example, Clarendon's religious policy of restoring the Anglican establishment as *the chief* support of monarchy.³⁵ Clarendon, unlike Halifax, did not perceive the Great Rebellion as a kind of constitutional calisthenics which—in a less accentuated form—“are natural to all mixed governments [and] . . . do by a mutual agitation from the several parts rather support and strengthen than weaken or maim the constitution.”³⁶ As with what the Trimmer has to state in favor of Reason of State, this Halifaxian judgment reflects further the Machiavellian necessity of providing scope for the inevitable discords between the two natural orders of men. This can be perceived as an aspect of the founding process, extended into the infinite future through the never-ending process of maintaining the state. As Mansfield summarizes Machiavelli on this subject: “The necessity of acquiring [new lands] reveals the two “humours” of “the people” and “the great” ([*Discorsi*] I, iv) . . . men differ in this respect, some desiring to command and others not to be commanded. When acquisition becomes paramount, the regime becomes a problem; the two orders of men, naturally hostile to each other, must be “managed” by the ruling or princely orders . . . *the laws must tolerate discords so that the rulers can manage them.*”³⁷

By “mixed governments” Halifax means mixed regimes whose

ruling parts reflect the distinction between “the people” and “the great,” as in seventeenth-century England. The monarch or the princely order must allow for dissensions and discords between the popular and the aristocratic “humours” naturally hostile to each other so as to be able to “manage” them by shaping the creative tensions thus established and maintained. The direction of this management moves essentially into foreign policy—in England, to be specific, towards the Baconian naval imperialism reasserted by *A Rough Draught of a New Model at Sea* (1694). Here the tensions are constituted by the discord between the tars and the gentlemen in staffing the navy. Because such discords are necessary, without exerting power over and ‘managing’ conflict between the two natural orders of men, there would otherwise be stagnation.³⁸ When the discords are well managed, “the whole frame (of the government), instead of being torn or disjointed, cometh to be the better and closer knit by being thus exercised,”³⁹ according to the Trimmer.

As we have just seen, Halifax owes a debt not only to Machiavelli, but to Bacon as well, who wrote: “We are much beholden to Machiavelli and others that wrote what men do, and not what they ought to do.”⁴⁰ This ethical revolution against classical philosophy constitutes the basis of modern political realism. Halifax belonged, as most commentators perceive, essentially and unmistakably to the moderns. As he wrote in attestation of this fact, “Philosophy, astronomy, etc., have changed their fundamentals as the men of art no doubt called them at the time—motion of the earth, etc.”⁴¹ Paul Elmer More emphasized that Halifax belongs to the modern tradition of Machiavelli and Bacon, or “to that small group of writers in England who kept their eyes steadily on the reality of things.”⁴² It has been the neglect of Halifax’s evident debt to Machiavelli and Bacon which has constituted the chief obstacle hampering recent interpretations of Halifax’s thought. J. P. Kenyon, for example, though he rightly interprets the experiential factor in Halifaxian thought, omits mention of Machiavelli altogether from his Introduction to *Halifax: Complete Works* (1969).

Before we turn to the question of Halifax’s religion, we should note that what Machiavelli attributes as the origin of justice is reflected in Halifaxian maxims. Again, the source of these considerations is the *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*. Halifax states: “He that is not concerned when he seeth an ill thing done to another

will not be very eager to do a good himself.” Amplified, this statement becomes: “He that can be quite indifferent when he seeth another man injured, hath a lukewarm honesty that a wise man will not depend upon.” With regard to injuries done to ourselves, however, Halifax asserts: “It is a general fault that we dislike men only for the injuries they do to us, and not for those they do to mankind.”⁴³ First of all, the problem of justice in Machiavelli is separate from the problem of the regime, which supposes a juridical order applicable to ‘the people’ and ‘the great.’ The former is clarified by the fact that men forget the murder of their fathers sooner than the loss of their patrimony. That is to say, in general, injuries done to others are less resented than injuries done to oneself. If so, the question is then, how are self-centered men to attain a sense of justice and how is it to prevail in the ordinary course of affairs, as it must for the problem of the regime to arise? Machiavelli devotes the following exposition to explicate this question. In the beginning, before the founding of every regime, men lived dispersed and “like beasts.” We can see from the outset that Machiavelli generates a sense of justice from men’s common lack of a sense of justice. As generations multiplied, men gathered together and began to elevate the strongest and more courageous as chiefs for the sake of common defence. Seeing one of their number gratuitously injure their common benefactor whom they had agreed to obey, caused feelings of hate and compassion. They censured the offender’s ingratitude and rewarded those who manifested gratitude towards their benefactors, “believing also that these same injuries could be done to them . . . [and so] to avoid similar evils they were led to make laws and institute punishments for those who should contravene them; whence came the cognition of justice.” Machiavelli identified such an origin as the origin also of “the cognition of honest and good things.”⁴⁴

Such is the original contract understood as a tacit social contract, as it was envisaged by Halifax. This is what he means when he reminds us that: “That Prince’s [sc. Charles I’s] declarations allow the original of Government to come from the People.”⁴⁵ As a non-Whig, Halifax recognizes that the terminology of the original contract originates with the Whigs, but as he understands the term, it militates against party government, that is, against a final partisan effort to dominate the government. “A Party, even in times of peace,

(though against the Bill of Rights and the Original Contract) sets up and continues the exercise of martial law; once enrolled, the man that quitteth, if they had their will, would be hanged for a deserter.”⁴⁶

At all events, Halifax’s conception of the origin of government, law and justice is similar to Machiavelli’s. Laws—that is, ‘a constitution of laws’—are the condition without which “our unruly passions . . . like wild beasts let loose, would reduce the world into its first state of barbarism and hostility.” Without laws and the dignity of public justice, “the world would become a wilderness, and men little less than beasts,” according to the Trimmer.⁴⁷ Fear, with Halifax as with Machiavelli, is not a sufficient condition for the rise of government; there must also be love or gratitude. “So that without a principle of love there can be no true allegiance, and there must remain perpetual seeds of resistance against a power that is built upon such an unnatural foundation as that of fear and terror.”⁴⁸ The origin and principle of such gratitude, it seems, is the ability to imagine injuries done to another as if they were done to oneself. This sentiment of pity or compassion akin to gratitude, which leads to justice and law, is present in the just and absent in the unjust. Such a sentiment is a natural foundation as opposed to fear and terror, which constitute an unnatural foundation. Moreover, it contributes to the anticipation of just treatment. Where absent, as Halifax notes: “it . . . [is] impossible to do injustice and not fear revenge.” And Halifax adds that he who observes “the rules of justice hath always the blessing of an inward quiet and assurance, as a natural effect of his good meaning . . .”⁴⁹ The Trimmer completes the analysis of justice by observing that “there can be no greater solecism in government than a failure of justice.”⁵⁰

Evidently, then, Halifax and Machiavelli are in accord on the subject of government and the motive for justice. At the very least one is forced to admit that Halifax leans more to the Machiavellian than to the Hobbesian origination of government.⁵¹ In point of fact, Halifax’s works contain no mention of the expression, “state of nature,” and his conception of the original contract is not even Lockean because for him the contract is not an explicit agreement, just as his notion of consent is of “virtual consent.” Likewise, Halifax conceives of the rights of the people as correlative to their duties. It follows that government by consent is not a right but a

privilege deserved by the fulfillment of duties.

On one further point Halifax approaches the teaching of Machiavelli. He denies that it is possible to adhere to a doctrinaire mean between the extremes: "Human nature will not allow the mean. . . . The generality of the world falleth into an insufficient mean that exposeth them more than an extreme on either side."^{5 2} For Machiavelli human things are in motion and human affairs must consequently either rise or sink. There is no place in the natural order for a permanent equipoise of forces in conflict. This conclusion is expressed in *The Prince*, where it is not possible that "any state ever believe that it can always adopt safe policies." "For this is what we find to be in the order of things: that we never try to escape one difficulty without running into another . . ."^{5 3} In consequence, there exists no exact mean between the extremes; the prince must either act through the nature of the beast or of the man—he cannot act as a centaur. Or as Machiavelli expresses the same thought in terms of Roman history: "The Romans . . . in judgments pronounced by their government . . . always avoided a middle course and preferred the extreme. . . . That they never adopted a middle course is, as I have said, of importance, and rulers should imitate them in this."^{5 4} Accordingly, the Trimmer's is not a permanent mean between the extremes, but a shifting mean which constitutes an extreme with regard to the opposed policy presenting the greatest immediate threat. In this, as in other matters, the Trimmer is *au fond* a Machiavellian political realist.

III

In 1688-89 the English regime changed from being an unlimited monarchy by divine right to being a limited monarchy by consent of the aristocracy. At the same time, the essentially Whig doctrine of the divine right of the people, espoused by the Puritan clergy, yielded to a more or less deliberate demotion of the religious issue, and this demotion was effected, for example, by the Toleration Act of 1689. Locke's *Letter on Toleration* expresses the fundamentally secularist aim of post-Settlement toleration: "The Commonwealth seems to me to be a society of men constituted *only* for preserving

and advancing their civil goods [which are] . . . life, liberty, bodily health, and freedom from pain, and the possession of . . . lands, money, furniture, and the like.”⁵⁵ In the process of achieving a tolerationist religious settlement, divine right—Jacobite and popular alike—underwent an irreversible decline as the principle by which to order and guide the English regime. As Edmund Burke later declared concerning the secularist aim of the Revolution Settlement in *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (1770), “the great parties which formerly divided and agitated the Kingdom are known to be in a manner entirely dissolved.” The “great parties” are the pre-Settlement parties of Whig and Tory arising with the Exclusion Bill crisis and divided on the issues of the divine right of kings, and of papacy and episcopacy. The pre-Settlement Whigs and Tories were parties constituted by religious principle and activated by indefatigable, boundless, burning zeal. It was by damping down the ardors of the “great parties” and submerging them in the Revolution Settlement which Delolme calls a “System of Public Compacts”⁵⁶ that Halifax effected his anti-partisan policy announced by the Trimmer. At the same time, this Trimmerlike solution turned out to be indefectible owing to the fact that it allowed for the moderate partisanship of small parties (the eighteenth-century Whigs and Tories).⁵⁷ Indeed, through the error of equating eighteenth-century Whigs and Tories with pre-Settlement Whigs and Tories, we encounter an irremovable obstacle to an understanding of Halifaxian statesmanship.

Halifax reinforces his anti-partisan in *The Character of a Trimmer* by his implied criticism of Filmer and divine right monarchy, on the one hand, and, on the other, of Whig republican theory, which was allied with the Puritan notion of popular divine right. Accordingly, Halifax’s intended demotion of the religious issue, repeated in both *A Letter to a Dissenter* (1687) and *The Anatomy of an Equivalent* (1688), is indissolubly linked with the Trimmer’s pursuit of “the rules of governing prudence.” The partisanship which Halifax prudentially managed to defeat was the essentially religious partisanship of the “great” parties.⁵⁸

Hence we can perceive the significance and thrust of Halifax’s Machiavellian opinion concerning revealed religion. For Machiavelli, Christianity was the religion which effeminated the martial “modes and orders” of the Roman principate. It preached an unarmed

Heaven and the solicitude of an unarmed Prophet—which Machiavelli intended to supersede with a civil religion teaching an armed Heaven.⁵⁹ As Halifax once asseverated entirely in the spirit of Machiavelli: “Men must be saved in this world by their want of faith.”⁶⁰ Halifax equally observes in his *Political Thoughts and Reflections* under the heading “Religion”: “The several sorts of religion in this world are little more than so many spiritual monopolies.”⁶¹ On God, Halifax has this to say: “He that feareth God only because there is an Hell, must wish there were no God. . . .”⁶² On the other hand, Halifax dares to avow: “The people would not believe in God at all, if they were not permitted to believe wrong in Him.”⁶³ With Machiavelli’s irony and in view of his condemnation of Ferdinand II’s “pious cruelty” in the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, Halifax declares: “In her [the Church of Rome’s] language the writ *de Haeretico Comburendo* is a love letter, and burning men for differing with them in opinion, howsoever miscalled cruelty, is (as they understand it) the *perfection* of flaming charity.”⁶⁴ Furthermore, in *Advice to a Daughter* Halifax asserts: “Religion doth not consist in believing the legend of the nursery, where children with their milk are fed with tales of witches, hobgoblins, prophecies and miracles.”⁶⁵ But Christianity is nothing if it is not founded on a miracle—the resurrection. To condemn religions equated with the fabulosities of the nursery is for Halifax to indict Christianity itself.

To say the very least, Halifax’s ironical and skeptical tone in his treatment of revealed religion indicates a persistent lack of conviction. In editing *Political Thoughts and Reflections* H. C. Foxcroft notes a parallel between the maxims under the heading “Religion” and Montaigne’s *Essays*—for example, II, xii. There Montaigne claims that “the most unknown things are most proper for being deified”; religion consists of mysteries and miracles, while knowledge is founded on the testimony of the senses. Religion is presented as a pure convention supported by belief in its divine source. “Some make believed that they believe what they do not believe; others, in greater numbers, believe it, not knowing what it is to believe.” The clergy are such men. Halifax accordingly directs his attention toward the clergy in “Religion”: “It is a strange thing that the way to save men’s souls should be such a cunning trade as to require a master.”⁶⁶ Prior to this he had just stated: “The clergy, in this sense, [are] of

Divine Institution—that God hath made mankind so weak that it must be deceived. So are dry nurses of Divine Institution, etc.”⁶⁷ (Paganism, we might assume, is a wet nurse of divine institution.) The majority of men in matters of religion are like children in the nursery, and Christianity resembles a nursery tale designed to frighten timorous and susceptible children into complying with the behest of their nurses. As Halifax elsewhere says of the problem of the clergy, “good resolute nonsense backed with authority” no longer avails as it had in “ages of less inquiry,” “when the men in black had made learning such a sin for the laity that, for fear of offending, they made a conscience of being able to read.”⁶⁸ Halifax is consequently determined to be resolutely anti-clerical—and this includes all the existing sects of Christianity, not just Roman Catholicism. Incidentally, Halifax reserved high praise for Montaigne’s skepticism. In a preface to Cotton’s translation of the *Essais* he writes that they constitute “the *Book* in the world I am best entertain’d with.”⁶⁹

When we consult Hume’s judgment concerning Halifax, we find further indications of his utter lack of religious belief. Hume asserts: “The abuses, in the former age, arising from overstrained pretensions to piety had much propagated the spirit of irreligion; and many of the ingenious men, of this period, lie under the imputation of deism. Besides wits and scholars, by profession . . . Halifax [and] Temple are supposed to have adopted these principles.”⁷⁰ The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in recounting Halifax’s life includes mention of Clarendon’s suspicions of his irreligion and comments: “his brilliant paradoxes, his pungent and often prophane epigrams were received by graver persons as his real opinions and as evidences of atheism.”⁷¹ It is noteworthy in this regard that Halifax’s family chaplain, William Mompesson, undertook to vindicate Halifax of the charge of irreligion. As Foxcroft observes, this vindication ‘must be accepted with considerable reservation’: “It is the misfortune of great men that they are thought to entertain low-ebbing thoughts of Religion, when they do lay open the wrong methods by which it is managed. His Lordship suspected broad symptoms of allay in the Church to the present decay and the possible ruin of Christianity, but . . . of Religion itself he had a noble and a lively sense.”⁷²

Again, in considering Halifax’s opinion on Christianity we gain the clearest insight by returning to Machiavelli’s anti-Christianity,

reflected in his contempt for Papal politics and his praise for ancient Roman religion. At the beginning of "The Trimmer's Opinion Concerning Religion in relation to the Producing Quiet Amongst Ourselves," there is also praise for ancient Roman religion. The Trimmer remarks: "And though false gods have been imposed upon the credulity of the world, yet they were gods still in their opinion; and the awe and reverence men had to them and their oracles kept them [*sc.* the Romans] within bounds towards one another, which the laws alone, with all their authority could never have effected."⁷³ Foxcroft in a footnote avers that this sentence has a parallel in a passage of Machiavelli's *Discorsi*, I, xii. That passage from the section on Roman religion states:

Titus Livy shows how the plebs, out of reverence for religion, preferred rather to obey the Consul than to believe the Tribunes; and on behalf of the ancient religion uses these words: "Not as yet was there that negligence of the gods which now prevails in the world, nor did the individual put upon oaths and laws his own interpretation" . . . Religion enabled the Senate to overcome these difficulties, which, otherwise, they would never have succeeded in doing.

The ancient Roman religion aided the polity and led to the faithful observance of oaths and promises. Christianity, on the other hand, promoted the zeal and reciprocal hatred of the "great parties" because they were parties of religious faction. The same attitude towards factiousness informed *The Federalist*, reflecting the common opinion of statesmen up until Burke that parties are no more than factions. This explains why Halifax was a non-Whig who also condemned Toryism based on divine right monarchy. Halifax alone saw that in order for the English regime to be transformed into a limited monarchy by consent of the aristocracy, the aristocracy had to be cured of its persistent factionalism, which had occasioned the Civil Wars and sustained the Interregnum. For Halifax the principle of legitimacy and the principle of factional party government could not co-exist in English politics. Bolingbroke also understood this. That is why Halifax delayed until late in 1688 when the aristocracy was united for the first time since 1660 to repudiate monarchy *jure divino* and institute on the ground of aristocratic consensus the system of public compacts which was the Revolution Settlement. The Trimmer's teaching eventuated in the bipartisan programme Halifax initiated on the grounds of aristocratic consent.

What was this programme and what constituted its fundamental? The fundamental of the Revolution Settlement was the demotion of the religious issue, which gave rise to the unrestrained factionalism of the "great parties." The religious issue was demoted by the Toleration Act of 1689, the Licensing Act of 1694 and the irremovability of judges. As Mansfield indicates, these "were actually parts of the religious settlement. By William's policy and the Act of Settlement (1701) judges received tenure during good behavior, rather than at pleasure—a reform which Trevelyan praises for placing judges outside and above the sphere of politics. But one must remember that the politics above which judges were placed was religious politics, in which judges like Justice Jeffries sought out the enemies of the King. The Licensing Act of 1694 which provided for 'full liberty of unlicensed printing,' was held by Macaulay to be the most important reform resulting from the Revolution Comparison with the Licensing Act of 1662 shows that the new liberty of printing was chiefly in regard to heresy, or to sedition caused by heresy. As any student of Milton or Spinoza knows, freedom of the press was first and foremost an aspect of religious liberty."⁷⁴

The other, subsidiary aspect of the Revolution Settlement was the Bill of Rights (1689), guaranteeing no taxation without Parliament's consent, no recruitment of a standing army in time of peace without the same and no excessive bail. To the aristocracy the Bill of Rights represented an extension of Magna Carta and of Coke's agitation against judicial arbitrariness. Accordingly, the Revolution Settlement seems less a triumph of Parliament than a victory of the aristocracy and the extra-Parliamentary establishments officered by the aristocracy. Halifax recognized that a Parliament divided on partisan lines as it had been during the Exclusion crisis was incapable by itself of effecting a Revolution Settlement. In particular, the House of Lords had been paralyzed by the deterioration of that conflict. For his reforming policies, Halifax needed the assent and obtained the consensus of the aristocracy at large. Similarly, the Revolution Settlement was made less in the spirit of Locke and more in the spirit of Halifax since the Trimmer's teaching was *a parte ante*, whereas Locke's views were *ex post facto*, especially on the new fiscal institutions such as The Bank of England.⁷⁵ The similarity of recommendations as between *The Character of a Trimmer* and the post-revolutionary *Rough Draught* (1694) shows the continuity of

policy pursued by Halifaxian statesmanship where throughout Halifax attempted to imbue the extra-Parliamentary establishments, such as Church and navy, with the new spirit of compromise and consensus. The lessening of religious partisanship was the key to the whole consensus and compromise, which excluded only the Jacobites. Halifax's consensus is one to be seen primarily in the light of Machiavelli and the Machiavellian attack on Christianity as a disturbing influence on political life.

Apparent inconsistencies in Halifaxian statesmanship are produced by his need to temporize when the aristocracy becomes deeply divided on the issues of religious partisanship. Accordingly Halifax writes: "There must in everybody be a leaning to that sort of men who profess some principles, more than to others who go upon a different foundation; but when a man is drowned in a party, plunged in it beyond his depth, he runneth a great hazard of being upon ill-terms with good sense or morality, if not with them both."⁷⁶ Thus Halifax allows to the Trimmer a qualified or moderate partisanship: "If there are two parties, a man ought to adhere to that which he disliketh least, though in the whole he doth not approve it; for whilst he doth not list himself in one or the other party, he is looked upon as such a straggler that he is fallen upon by both. Therefore a man under such a misfortune of singularity is neither to provoke the world nor disquiet himself by taking any particular station. . . . Happy those who are convinced so as to be of the general opinions."⁷⁷

Halifax, however, is satisfied with the evidence of the irrationality of most men most of the time, and this would apply also to parliamentarians. Not only is a little learning a dangerous thing; a great deal is often useless. "In an unreasonable age, a man's reason let loose would undo him. A man that steps aside from the world, and hath leisure to observe it without interest or design, thinks all mankind as mad as they think him for not agreeing with them in their mistakes." The issue between Halifax and Locke is that while Locke assumes that there is a human reason governing men's passions, Halifax tended to see reason itself, as did Hobbes, as only a further passion.

It would be fundamentally an error on the part of historians to believe that the Revolution Settlement of 1688-89 was caused by an inevitable concatenation of events. No fate or destiny determined its outcome from the onset in the form of "historical force," hidden or

patent. Constitutions are results of the statesman's art, of his prudent calculation in the shaping of events and the moulding of policy. Nor does the Revolution appear to be in any sense attributable to pure happenstance. "The tendencies which were made dominant after 1688 were in being before 1688. Nevertheless we shall try to show that the measures taken in religion and in public finance constitute a program. Certainly they were more than the results of a consensus of existing forces."⁷⁸ Halifax addresses himself to this problem and summarizes a general solution to it. "A Constitution cannot make itself; somebody made it, not once, but at several times. It is alterable [and] . . . its life is prolonged by changing seasonably the several parts of it at several times."⁷⁹ If party government is no substitute for statesmanship, so statesmanship is no usual substitute for party government. To a large extent this is Aristotle's antithesis, *aut rex aut lex*, party government corresponding to the rule of uninterpreted law. For Halifax the issue is weighted in favor of statesmanship. Halifax especially calls attention to the art of his own statesmanship. For example, the 1688 Settlement depended essentially on the Toleration Act and that Toleration Act is based (*pace* Macaulay) on a tacit but universal principle: toleration necessarily enjoins intolerance of the intolerant. Roman Catholics were excluded from toleration, and this was not accidental but deliberate. The wisdom of such policy is best argued in *A Letter to a Dissenter* (1687), and the unity of all Protestants is founded on their intolerance of the intolerant. The constitutional reform of 1688 was a deliberate, principled act stemming essentially from the teachings of Halifaxian statesmanship.

It remains to examine Halifax's criticism of Filmerian divine right monarchy and the people's divine right adumbrated by the republican theorists. This criticism occurs only in *The Character of a Trimmer* and is one of the reasons why the Trimmer's teaching provides the key to Halifax's statesmanship as a whole. Halifax takes the basic position that his theoretical corrivals fail because they lack the Machiavellian political realism embodied by the Trimmer. For example, Filmer is presented to the *Trimmer* in terms of the inadequacy of divine right monarchism: "Our Trimmer thinketh it no advantage to a government to endeavor the suppressing all kinds of right which may remain in the body of the People, or to employ small authors [i.e., Filmer] in it, whose officiousness or want of money may encourage them to write, though it is not very easy to

have abilities equal to such a subject. They forget that in their too high strained arguments for the rights of princes, they very often plead against human nature, which will always give a bias to those reasons which seem of her side. It is the People that readeth those books [e.g., *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings* (1680); *The Anarchy of a Limited or Mixed Monarchy* (1680), etc.], and it is the People that must judge of them, and therefore no maximus should be laid down for the right of the government, to which there can be any reasonable objection."⁸⁰ Filmer's political doctrine is like the "good resolute nonsense backed by authority" which no longer avails when preached to discerning congregations because it imposes on men's intelligence, which though limited is not imbecile. As Halifax has already stated, "there can be no lasting radical security but where the governed are satisfied with the governors," but Filmer's doctrine does not begin to provide the basis for such satisfaction. Thus "it is a diminution to a government to promote or countenance such well affected mistakes, which are turned upon it with disadvantage whenever they are detected and exposed" [cf. Algernon Sidney's *Discourses Concerning Government* (1698)].⁸¹ As regards the pamphlet war between the Filmerians and the republican theorists Halifax comments: "The nice and unnecessary enquiring into these things, or the licensing some books [e.g., *Patriarcha*] and the suppressing others [e.g., Sidney's *Discourses*] without sufficient reason to justify doing either, is so far from being an advantage to a government that it exposeth it to the censure of being partial, and to the suspicion of having some hidden designs to be carried on by these unusual methods."⁸²

Halifax's real though unstated antagonist in *The Character of a Trimmer* is perhaps Bossuet whose pro-monarchist tract, *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture sainte* (1679) articulates a political theology favorable to Louis XIV's aims in foreign policy. The original addressee of the *Trimmer*, Charles II, lived largely in later years on a subsidy from the *roi soleil*. The *Trimmer* adheres to a consistently anti-French foreign policy, and Halifax refers to Louis XIV where he mentions "ill arguments being seconded by good armies [which] carry such a power with them that naked sense is a very unequal adversary."⁸³ Halifax was particularly opposed, with fierce determination, to Louis' religious policy. His dismissal from James II's government in 1685 was concurrent with the revocation of

the Edict of Nantes, and James evidently desired to emulate the regime and political methods of Louis XIV.⁸⁴ Halifax deeply resented such an imitation, not only because it tended in the despotic direction, but perhaps even more because it was un-English. The Trimmer accordingly avows as regards Louis XIV: "Ambition is a devouring beast; when it hath so much the province, instead of being cloyed with it, it hath so much the greater stomach to another, and, being fed, becometh still more hungry; so that for the confederates to expect a security from anything but their own united strength is a most miserable fallacy, and, if they cannot resist the encroachments of France by their arms, it is vain for them to dream of any other means of preservation."⁸⁵ James II intended no attempt to lessen French pretensions or curb French ambitions, even through his allies, and this aspect of Jacobite policy weighed heavily with Halifax to the King's disfavor.

In internal politics Halifax opposed the republicans as aiming at a constitution which neglected precedent and prescription. In addition, he believed the Whig republican theorists to lack political realism not so much because their arguments, as with the Filmerians, were nonsensical, but because their aims were too lofty. The Trimmer asserts: "The rules of a Commonwealth are too hard for the bulk of mankind to come up to; that form of government requireth such a spirit to carry it as doth not dwell in great numbers, but is restrained to so very few, especially in this age, that let the methods appear never so reasonable in paper, they must fail in practice, which will ever be suited more to men's nature as it is, than as it should be."⁸⁶ As Machiavelli states in *The Prince*, ch. xv: "But my intention being to write something useful for whoever understands it, it seemed to me more appropriate to pursue the effectual truth of the matter ('la verità effectuale della cosa') rather than its imagined one. And many have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist in reality; for there is such a gap between how one lives and how one should live that he who neglects what is done for what should be done will learn his destruction rather than his preservation . . ." Halifax completes this thought in the *Trimmer* where he asserts: "By aiming to be more than a man, he [the ruler] falls lower than the meanest of them. . . ."⁸⁷ In other words, Halifax accepts Machiavellian political realism *in toto*, with no mitigations or reservations.

The Trimmer presents his policy as a third alternative to both divine right monarchy and a republic based on popular divine right. He appeals not to religion but to patriotism, to what is one's own—the way of life which is one's own. By “virtual consent,” “the whole” of the nation is represented by Parliament, and the monarchical executive gives “the sanction to the united sense of the people.” The object of men's veneration is not “nice disputes which can never be of equal moment with the public peace,” but to the Trimmer “his country is in some degree his idol.” Halifax anticipates by his reasoned basis for patriotism the Bolingbrokean programme of the patriot King.

In his peroration Halifax affirms the Trimmerlike qualities of the nation's institutions—its “modes and orders.” “That our Church is a Trimmer between the frenzy of Platonic visions and the lethargic ignorance of Popish dreams; that our laws are Trimmers, between the excess of unbounded power and the extravagance of liberty not enough restrained. . . .” Finally, God Almighty Himself is divided between His two great attributes, “His mercy and His justice.”^{8 8} Halifax ascribes to the divine (or even equates with the divine) the human insofar as it is confined to its particularity, the human understood as that which is one's own.

¹H. C. Foxcroft, *The Life and Letters of Sir George Saville* (London: Longmans, Green, 1898), II, 281. Cf. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New York: Library of the Liberal Arts, 1955), p. 291.

²Despite Hume's pejorative references to Halifax in *The History of England* (Philadelphia, 1822), IV, 381-82, Halifax would have concurred wholeheartedly with Hume's conclusion in Essay VII (‘Whether the British Government inclines more to Absolute Monarchy or to a Republic’) that: “Absolute Monarchy, therefore, is the easiest death, the true *Euthanasia* of the British Constitution.” (David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary* [Oxford University Press], p. 53.)

³H. C. Foxcroft, *op. cit.*, II, 359-60, 408, emphasis in original.

⁴*Ibid.*, II, 264, 495, emphasis in original.

⁵*Ibid.*, II, 496, emphasis in original.

⁶See, e.g., Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., *Statesmanship and Party Government* (The University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 58, 68-70, 74-80, 114.

⁷T. B. Macaulay, *The History of England* (Tauchnitz ed., Leipzig, 1855), VIII, 8. The historian adds: “For what distinguishes him from all other English statesmen is this, that, through a long public life, and through frequent and

violent revolutions of public feeling, he almost invariably took the view of the great questions of his time which history has finally adopted." Cf. Henry Hallam, *The Constitutional History of England* (London, 1846), II, 276, where Halifax is described as "a man so sound in principle . . . who had withstood the arbitrary maxims of Charles and James . . ."

⁸See, e.g., G. M. Trevelyan, *The English Revolution of 1688-1689* (London, 1938), p. 241; J. R. Jones, *The Revolution of 1688 in England* (London, 1972), pp. 242-43; David Ogg, *England In the Reigns of James II and William III* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 225-56. Maurice Ashley in *The Glorious Revolution of 1688* (London, 1968) at p. 146 calls attention to the role of Halifax's writings in the Revolution.

⁹H. C. Foxcroft, *op. cit.*, II, 338.

¹⁰J. P. Kenyon has noted in his Introduction to *Halifax: Complete Works* (Penguin, 1969), p. 27: ". . . if Halifax was slow to set down his ideas in any ordered or systematic form for posterity, he did have what Macaulay termed 'a passion for generalization.'"

¹¹George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (3rd ed., New York, 1961), p. 522.

¹²H. C. Foxcroft, *op. cit.*, II, 509, 513, 518, 520.

¹³*Ibid.*, II, 456.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, II, 458.

¹⁵Ed. J. P. Kenyon, *Halifax: Complete Works*, "Introduction" (Penguin, 1969), pp. 31-32. Cf. Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., *Statesmanship and Party Government* (University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 241.

¹⁶H. C. Foxcroft, *op. cit.*, II, 296.

¹⁷See note 10.

¹⁸H. C. Foxcroft, *op. cit.*, II, 455.

¹⁹See *ibid.*, II, 281. This passage is reproduced in note 1.

²⁰*Ibid.*, II, 456.

²¹*Ibid.*, II, 458.

²²*Ibid.*, II, 457, 463.

²³*Ibid.*, II, 457.

²⁴*Ibid.*, II, 427.

²⁵T. B. Macaulay, *The History of England* (Everyman edition), I, 191.

²⁶Foxcroft, II, 517, and consider note 2.

²⁷*Ibid.*, II, 337; the variant reading is adopted. Halifax repeats this thought in *Miscellaneous Thoughts and Reflections* under the heading "Of Alterations": "In a corrupted age the putting the world in order would breed confusion. A rooted disease must be stroked away, rather than kicked away. . . . To know when to let things alone is a high pitch of good sense." (Foxcroft, II, 519.)

²⁸N. Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, I, xxxiii.

²⁹Foxcroft, II, 340.

³⁰N. Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, I, lv. Machiavelli gives the Germany of his time as an example of popular soundness and political liberty where such prevent foreigners from wishing to make inroads.

³¹N. Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, I, lvii.

³²See Sir William Temple, *Works*, ed. Jonathan Swift (London, 1740), II, 537, 550-51, 556-67, 566, 569.

³³See Foxcroft, II, 337-78. Cf. *A Character of King Charles II* in Foxcroft, II, 343-60.

³⁴See, e.g., Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., "Burke and Machiavelli on Principles in Politics," *Edmund Burke: The Enlightenment and the Modern World*, ed. Peter I. Stanlis (University of Detroit Press, 1964), pp. 49-79.

³⁵Clarendon, while Lord Chancellor, is reported to have asserted that "Sir George Saville was a man of a very ill-reputation amongst men of piety and religion, and was looked upon as void of all sense of religion, even to the doubting, if not denying, that there is a God, and that he was not reserved in any company to publish his opinions: which made him believe that it would neither be for his highness's honour to propose it, nor for the king's to grant it [viz., elevating Saville to the peerage] in a time when all licence in discourse and in action was spread over the Kingdom, to the heart-breaking of very many good men." (H. C. Foxcroft, *op cit.*, vol. I, p. 39, emphasis added.)

³⁶Foxcroft, II, 297.

³⁷Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., "Necessity in the Beginning of Cities," *The Political Calculus: Essays on Machiavelli's Philosophy*, ed. Anthony Parel (University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 122-23, emphasis added.

³⁸Halifax would have perceived the current predicament of the British polity as a form of such stagnation.

³⁹Foxcroft, II, 297.

⁴⁰Quoted in Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, eds., *History of Political Philosophy* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), at p. 247. Cf. Bacon, *Essays* (London, 1907), XIII "Of Goodnesse and Goodnesse of Nature," 48.

⁴¹Foxcroft, II, 492.

⁴²Paul Elmer More, *Shelburne Essays* (10th series, reprint edition; New York, 1967), p. 43.

⁴³Foxcroft, II, 525.

⁴⁴N. Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, I, ii. The edition of *Discorsi* which I have used in all references to Machiavelli is eds. F. Flora and C. Cordie, *Tutte le Opere di Niccolò Machiavelli* (Firenze: Mondadori, 1949), in two volumes.

⁴⁵Foxcroft, II, 503.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, II, 481. Cf. p. 483.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, II, 282, 285.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, II, 291. At this point Halifax seems to be rejecting the Hobbesian origin of government and the Hobbesian original compact. In *De Corpore Politico*, pt. I, ch. 2, xiii, Hobbes affirms: "It is a question often moved, whether such covenants [which establish the commonwealth] oblige, as are extorted by men from fear . . . And though in some cases such covenants may be void, yet it is not therefore void, because extorted by fear. For there appeareth no reason, why that which we do upon fear, should be less firm than that which we do for covetousness . . . And if no covenant should be good, that proceedeth from fear of death, no condition of peace between enemies, nor any laws, could be of

force, which are all consented to from that fear. For who would lose the liberty that nature hath given him, of governing himself by his own will and power, if they feared not his death in the retaining of it?" (Ed. Sir William Molesworth, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* [London: John Bohn, 1840]. IV. 92-93.)

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 292.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 300.

⁵¹ See above, note 48.

⁵² Foxcroft, II, 347, 523.

⁵³ N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Mark Musa (St. Martin's Press, 1964), p. 191.

⁵⁴ N. Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, II, xxiii. Cf. I, vi, last para.

⁵⁵ John Locke, *A Letter on Toleration*, ed. Klibansky (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 65, 67, emphasis added.

⁵⁶ J. L. Delolme, *The Constitution of England* (London, 1784), p. 343.

⁵⁷ The moderate partisanship of the small parties is satirized by Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*, bk. I, 'A Voyage to Lilliput.' Tocqueville maintains the distinction between great and small parties (*Democracy in America*, H. Reeve trans., [2 vols., New York, 1945], I, 175. Cf. Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, I, vi.

⁵⁸ On the Renaissance, Sir William Temple wrote concerning its spirit of partisanship: "Many Excellent Spirits, and the most Penetrating *Genii*, that might have made admirable Progresses and Advances in many other Sciences, were sunk and overwhelmed in the Abyss of Disputes about Matters of Religion, without ever turning their books or Thoughts any other Way. To these Disputes of the Pen, succeeded those of the Sword; and the Ambition of great Princes and Ministers, mingled with Zeal, or covered with the Pretences of Religion, has for a Hundred Years past infested *Christendom* with almost a perpetual Course, or Succession, either of Civil or of Foreign Wars . . ." (Sir William Temple, *Works*, ed. Jonathan Swift, [London, 1740], II, 167.)

⁵⁹ See Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, I, xi, xv and cf. Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), pp. 175-209, 296-97.

⁶⁰ Foxcroft, II, 520.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, II, 502.

⁶² *Ibid.*, II, 291.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, II, 502.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 432. Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ch. xxi.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 389.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 502.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 308.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 389.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 272.

⁷⁰ Hume, *The History of England* (Philadelphia, 1822), IV, 478-79.

⁷¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., XII, s.v. "Halifax."

⁷² Foxcroft, II, 196-97.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, II, 301.

⁷⁴ Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., "Party Government and the Settlement of 1688," *American Political Science Review*, LVIII, 4 (December, 1964), 942-43.

⁷⁵ See J. E. Parsons, Jr., "Locke's Doctrine of Property," *Social Research*, 36, 3 (Autumn, 1969), 389-411.

⁷⁶ Foxcroft, II, 480.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 507.

⁷⁸ Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., "Party Government and the Settlement of 1688," *American Political Science Review*, LVIII, 4 (December, 1964), 940.

⁷⁹ Foxcroft, II, 494.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 292-93. Halifax is not referring to Filmer as a contemporary author, but to the recent politically-motivated republication of his works.

⁸¹ Sidney's *Discourses* were circulated clandestinely during the Exclusion crisis, of which he was a prime political victim. More than Locke's *First Treatise* it subjects Filmer to searching criticism and affirms the divine right of the people in that every citizen not only has a voice in the exercise of ultimate sovereignty, but is called upon to take an actual part in the discharge of some government function, local or general.

⁸² Foxcroft, II, 293.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, II, 330.

⁸⁴ For James II's imitation of methods employed by Louis XIV, see J. R. Western, *Monarchy and Revolution* (London, 1972), pp. 89, 93. Cf. also R. H. George, "The Financial Relations of Louis XIV and James II," *Journal of Modern History*, iii (1931), 392-413.

⁸⁵ Foxcroft, II, 298.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 287.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 298.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 342. Cf. I. Kant, *Vorlesung über Rationaltheologie*: "Unparteilichkeit.—Das versteht sich bei Gott von selbst. Parteilichkeit ist die Schwäche, wenn ich aus Neigung an jemand hänge. Das Kann nicht bei Gott Stattfinden. Daher Können wir bei Gott Keine Praedilection für ein Volk oder für einen Menschen stattfinden lassen." (*Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. XXVIII, 2, 2 [Berlin: Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1972], p. 1295.)