

## The Manners of Liberalism: A Question of Limits\*

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There is a serious charge against liberal education. It is that its practitioners frequently if not always temporize with evil. The charge was not born in the left's general assault upon the academy in the 1960s. Fifth and fourth century Athens reverberated with similar attacks against Socrates and his pupils, in spite of the fact that Socrates was eventually subjected to punishment not as a temporizer but as a corrupter. Socrates won fame by hurling the charge of temporizing with evil against intellectuals of his day. Nor is the charge always invoked by social radicals and rebels. Julian Benda's *La Trahison des Clercs* of only a few years ago convicts the new intellectuals not only of temporizing with evil but of prostituting themselves to it.<sup>1</sup>

The substance of this charge is that liberal education leads men to substitute intellectual tolerance or ambiguity for righteous indignation. (This will be familiar to anyone who, from a few years ago, recalls the main justifications of black studies programs.) We have seen the charge more nearly assume its generic form in the persecutions of medieval Christianity. The emergence of humanism was, in many respects, an attempt to defend liberal education; that is, an attempt to defend its practitioners as serious moralists. Nevertheless, liberal education has never been able to shake, quite, the suspicion that its assault on prejudice but covers a tepid affection for good or, what is worse, an understanding acceptance of evil.<sup>2</sup>

The most notorious count in this indictment in American experience is the apparently indiscriminating tolerance of Thomas Jefferson. Suffice it but to mention Fawn Brodie, and the mind should at once conjure a legion of avenging angels.<sup>3</sup> We must mention four other counts in this building historical indictment. Many have regarded the philosophic expansion of Alexander's mind as the specific occasion of his enlarged ambition. Every school boy once knew of the Apostle Paul's umbrage before the philosophers in the Athenian agora. He admitted that some men might "be led by reason" to do what the law commands. But he more commonly found that such men "made nonsense out of logic and their empty minds were darkened. The more they called themselves philosophers, the more stupid they grew."<sup>4</sup> Thirdly, Leo Strauss has demonstrated that the philosophic tradition has turned around "basic truths which would not be pronounced in public by any decent man, because they would do harm to many people...." Yet, that

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<sup>1</sup> Julien Benda, *La Trahison des Clercs*, published as *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, translated by Richard Aldington (New York: Norton, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> Might this explain Leo Strauss's attitude toward Martin Heidegger? Also, consider Strauss's remarks on Marx and Nietzsche, "Liberal Education and Responsibility," in *Liberalism: Ancient and Modern* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Fawn Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (New York: Norton, 1974).

<sup>4</sup> Romans, 1:21-22.

same tradition has always “recommended education.”<sup>5</sup> Finally, the world will never forget that liberal educator who, it is said, originated the “realistic” view of politics, whose very name is a synonym for temporizing with evil.

While Machiavelli may have slipped men’s moral anchors, he is also regarded as an architect of liberalism. Leo Strauss, indeed, maintained that the philosophic tradition itself, even before Machiavelli, recommended education as the “only answer ... to the political question par excellence, of how to reconcile order which is not oppression with freedom which is not license”—in a word, how to construct liberalism.<sup>6</sup> Saint Paul, however, was consistent in regarding the sphere of decency or morality as independent of that form of education which eventually wins the title, liberal education. So, too, does the Christian tradition preserve that perspective. Aquinas took the distinction between moral and intellectual virtue more seriously, perhaps, than Aristotle intended but no less rigidly than Paul. And, in our day, Newman’s *Idea of a University* preserves the separation. It is a mistake, says he, to “burden” liberal knowledge with “virtue or religion.” The virtues of gentlemanliness “may attach to the man of the world, to the profligate, the heartless ...”<sup>7</sup> Alexander, on the other hand, however enlarged his mind, demanded of his followers rigid religious practices in that Eastern universe which he conquered. Was his liberal education the source, equally, of his ambition and his righteousness?

I am less interested in inquiring whether they who have sullied academia’s gown were truly educated than in placing liberal education in the context of liberalism in order to judge the charges against it. For if, indeed, liberal education is education to liberalism, the more serious inquiry is whether liberalism is a worthy human way, exclusive of other ways. Let’s start, then, by asking whether the accusers of liberal education mean to accuse liberalism. How do they regard it?

The count against Thomas Jefferson may serve to clarify at least the more recent of such charges, including that against the main subject of this essay. Harriet Stowe probably expressed the case against Jefferson more beautifully than anyone before or since. In *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* she made the gentle slave-owner, Augustine St. Clare, a caricature of the author of the Declaration of Independence. Like his icon, St. Clare abhorred slavery, but he could not be moved to strike a positive blow against it.<sup>8</sup> In yet another work, *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands*, Stowe makes clear the reason for the impasse. There she constructed an allegory of the ship of life/state, which is under the headship of, of all people, the steward, the cook!

In brief, the cook is a philosopher, a melancholy soul whose ministrations run to the cosmetic in default of the stability which would permit provision of fundamental goods. To paraphrase Stowe:

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<sup>5</sup> Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1952), pp. 36-37.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Cited by Robert L. Spaeth, “Single-Issue Politics Threatens Universities,” *Improving College and University Teaching*, 29:1, (1981), p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Above all, see chapters 18, 19 and 23.

To what purpose is liberty?—of what avail equality?—much or little?—all is passing away—a little slavery or oppression, more or less, what is that? and so we get diluted liberty and equality, owing to our philosophic chieftain.<sup>9</sup>

Stowe charges Jefferson with the *dilution* of liberalism. According to her, his penetration of the human things produced a chastening view which weakened his determination to consummate the project of liberalism. He took liberalism to be tied to the liberal education of *all*, recognized the impossibility, and despaired.

Paradoxically, a peculiar version of Stowe's own case against Jefferson has been filed against her! We can clarify some questions by looking at it somewhat closely. First, however, let us be reminded of the difference between Stowe's case against Jefferson, and, for example, Brodie's or David Brion Davis' or John Hope Franklin's case against Jefferson.<sup>10</sup> These latter, too, defend liberalism. To them, however, Jefferson's failure was a moral failure. Much in the spirit, if not the ideas, of the Apostle Paul, they consider Jefferson not to have lived up to his moral pretensions, whether on account of the overpowering influence of class ideology or on account of the inherent, and even unconscious human preference for base passion. This modern historical criticism holds him to account in the name of an egalitarianism which they conceive not only to be the whole of liberalism but also wholly attainable. In short, to them nothing stands in the way of the consummation of liberalism but the weaknesses of powerful individuals. Democratic processes, understood as permissive egalitarianism seriously undertaken, answer to every need.

Jefferson's enemies—Stowe excepted—have aimed at what they regard as the heart of the matter. The spirit of their inquiry is much like that which Edmund Wilson avowed at the opening of *Patriotic Gore*. He determined to ignore the moral claims of American policy in order to get to the true sources of American expansion. Removing “the whole subject from the plane of morality” permitted him “to give an objective account.” In much the same manner, one of Wilson's epigones has gotten to an “objective account”<sup>11</sup> of Stowe's work. This account depicts nineteenth century “sentimentalism” as “dishonest” submission to the tyranny of robust capitalism.<sup>12</sup> It is well, though, to remember the parallel foundation Wilson had already “discovered” in *Patriotic Gore*, once he abstracted from the morality of the case. That was that Stowe, far from being a friend of the black man, was indeed a perpetuator of the worst sorts of stereotypes. Now, on top of this, Ann Douglas teaches that Stowe was a “feminizer of American culture,” with drastic consequences.

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<sup>9</sup> Stowe, *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1854), vol. I, Letter 1.

<sup>10</sup> David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), cf., his “Was Thomas Jefferson an Authentic Enemy of Slavery?” an inaugural lecture before the University of Oxford on 18 February 1970 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970). John Hope Franklin, *Racial Equality in America*, the Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c1976).

<sup>11</sup> Edmund Wilson, *Patriotic Gore* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. xxxi.

<sup>12</sup> Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1977).

What, then, accounts for this racist feminizer of American culture marching under the banner of liberalism? Wilson originally credited Stowe's Christianity, in the service of which she preached, not on behalf of liberalism, but against obnoxious social practices. Douglas, however, finding some of these very preachings obnoxious and illiberal, deepens Wilson's original understanding. Stowe becomes a temporizer with evil, opting for half measures and concessions as an expression of her own irresolute, self-serving attachment to liberal principles which she had every reason to know and understand. She, like Jefferson, came to temporize with and pander for evil, retrograde social forces which resisted the advent of unlimited equality. Contemporary poet Ishmael Reed calls her "Naughty Harriet" in his *Flight to Canada*. But then he also calls her a spinster—a "spinster school teacher" with "no *a priori* beliefs."<sup>13</sup>

The source of Stowe's apparent weakness is her own liberal education, as she revealed in her sympathetic, if damning, caricature of Jefferson. The democratic or liberal project, to her mind, was but a reflection of advancing understanding. Her very attachment to democracy was expressed in terms of appropriate education, as the discussion of freeing the slaves revealed in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, or, again, as is shown by her rejection of colonizing the slaves in Africa in favor of settling them in Canada, where they could more surely receive the educational care necessary to forming responsible futures. In a word, Stowe seemed to think that the differences made by education made differences in men and made men different. Still, she did not insist on universal enlightenment as a precondition to liberalism and liberal education.

Calvin Stowe, perhaps, best summarized why she thought this view could go beyond Jeffersonian pessimism. He argued

that it is the object of education to perfect the mind; to give to all the intellectual *and* moral powers their complete development; to place the man on such ground that he can exercise entire *control* over all his faculties, and bring them to bear with most effect on the 'various purposes for which they were designed.'<sup>14</sup>

Liberalism, or the consummation of liberal education, in this light, will preserve distinctions; namely, the distinctions with which all were born. It will, therefore, resist egalitarianism. Perhaps, then, egalitarianism is not the aim of liberalism. If this view of liberalism is defensible, then so must be liberal education. The passage cited, however, emphasizes moral education, self-control, as much as intellectual education. Stowe regarded both as the aim of liberal education even while admitting, as above, that the aim of liberalism is liberty and equality.

We may contemplate Stowe's own defense, at least one version of it, as an illustration of the defense of liberal education. The point, to be clear, is to show how to transfer all effective power to the least men without, for all that, abandoning the best men to the whims of the least.

Each of Stowe's works turned upon the very simple premise that the establishment of liberalism depended not upon universal enlightenment but the cultivation of cer-

<sup>13</sup> Ishmael Reed, *Flight to Canada* (New York: Random House, 1976), ch. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Calvin Stowe, "Importance of Studying the Bible in Connexion with the Classics," *American Biblical Repository*, 2d Series, Oct. 1832, p. 725.

tain manners, certain limits. Because her works were almost never didactic, this was not made explicit. Hence, any account of her political philosophy takes on the characteristic of recounting the successive mosaics through which she sought to evoke a sense of the necessity of the conclusion. There is, nonetheless, a surprising thread of dialectical consistency which runs through even the most apparently diverse of her works. That I shall next consider is as diverse as any.

*American Woman's Home* was co-authored by Stowe and her sister, Catharine Beecher. Indeed, Stowe seems to have lent her name to it primarily as a means of aiding her sister's livelihood. It is the last work she published, and it is generally agreed that the great bulk of the work is identifiable as the product of Catharine Beecher. In fact, maybe all of it is hers. For the sake of convenience, however, I will treat chapter XV, "Domestic Manners," as Stowe's own work, or, at least, bearing her imprint. It introduces a discussion of fundamental import in the consideration of liberalism—that is, the distinction between democratic and aristocratic manners.<sup>15</sup>

This was no new subject for Stowe. Besides sketching the artful contrast between the "natural aristocrat" and the "natural democrat" in the persons of the twin brothers, Alfred and Augustine St. Clare in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she had delineated in much detail the characteristics of the English "working class" and English aristocracy in *Sunny Memories*. She demonstrated that magnanimity could be a democratic virtue and, what is more, not only is democracy open to the influence of aristocracy but is inseparably tied to it. Her defense of aristocracy was based on the understanding that aristocracy was not necessarily a regime principle. This was so, apparently, because one does not require the formal distinctions of constitutions in order to distinguish the benevolent and malevolent.<sup>16</sup> Rather, Stowe took as the core of her theory the distinction between state and society, or public and private, as if *it* were the originating principle of modernity and not a mere derivative of social contract theory. And thus far she is right: the idea of a community consciously formulating a political system for itself presupposes a prior distinction between the public and private things, in which distinction the private things are of greatest importance. Ultimately, she urged the aristocrat to discover the justification of his status in the principle of representation; that is, in liberalism.<sup>17</sup>

Naturally enough, the achievement of this end depends upon the likelihood of discovering an appropriate ethics and manners under the aegis of democracy. The chapter on "Domestic Manners" is Stowe's most accessible discussion of that prospect as it relates to America. That is why it occupies our attention.

The key to the discussion is its reliance on Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. This was not the first occasion of her use of this work. She constructed the entire dra-

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<sup>15</sup> Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home*, introduction by Joseph Van Why (Hartford, Connecticut: Stowe-Day Foundation, 1975), ch. xv, "Domestic Manners," pp. 197-211. The reader may compare this version with the original in Catharine Beecher's *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841). Because the chapter cited here is a short one, further quotations will not be noted.

<sup>16</sup> Cf., Aristotle, *Politics*, 11, 18; wherein the "good man" may be thought a "bad citizen" for a "poor regime."

<sup>17</sup> Cf., John Stuart Mill's faith in the schemes of Hare and Fawcett, in *On Representation*.

matic theme of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on the foundation of Tocqueville's principles. Having studied in his seminary, she became master to her countrymen, his pupil and yet, rightly enough, his pupil as to correct his own chaste judgment of the prospects of liberalism.

Lest memories dulled by distance make us skeptical about the relevance of Tocqueville to the proper management of a household, I hasten to invoke his own account. The reflections which formed the basis for Stowe's remarks were such as follow. In the first volume, listing the "causes which tend to maintain democracy," Tocqueville had remarked that religion, while unable to influence laws and public opinion in the United States, nonetheless "regulates the state" by directing the "manners of the community and by regulating domestic life." It achieves this, however, rather by agency of those citizens who are least buffeted by the passion for gain in everyday life, and those were women. Religion's influence "over the mind of woman is supreme, and women are the protectors of morals."<sup>18</sup>

Describing democracy's "influence on manners," he remarked that the circumscription of women of the domestic sphere was nonetheless coupled with their occupying a lofty position in the United States. Nowhere else had he seen it loftier, and, under question, he thought the "prosperity and growing strength" of the Americans was "mainly" attributable "to the superiority of their women." The argument is rooted in the seriousness of the claim that modernity's acquisitiveness turns the mind away from "the ideal" and towards the "proximate." For this division of labor was discovered by Tocqueville as a precise response to equality's lowering the "flight of the imagination to the level of the earth."<sup>19</sup>

It is not the equality of conditions which makes men immoral and irreligious; but when men, being equal, are at the same time immoral and irreligious, the effects of immorality and irreligion easily manifest themselves outwardly, because men have but little influence upon each other, and *no class* exists which can undertake to keep society in order.<sup>20</sup>

The discovery of the superiority of women coincides with the demise of a class in society, the better sort, who could be understood as the bearers of manners of decency. And, indeed, Tocqueville affirmed that it might be possible to construct manners of decency; they *could* result from "an arbitrary convention between men."<sup>21</sup> If manners may be acquired as well by art as by nature, there remains but to consider what mechanism is available to liberalism to provide for the acquisition.

Harriet Stowe studied these principles with care. She pondered the claim that the formation of women as a distinct social class still compatible with equality was an essential component of the founding scheme of liberalism. The question was not whether women would be the subordinate enforcers of traditional manners; it was rather whether

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<sup>18</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, introduction by John Stuart Mill, ch. xvii, vol. I (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), pp. 359-364.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II pp. 251-255.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix T.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

the decisive form or content of the manners of liberalism would be the responsibility of women as, in other ages, it had been the care of aristocracy.

Stowe entered wholly into the view that the liberal regime's survival depended on its acquiring moral authorities capable of imposing limits to its citizens' activities. Human nature is unable to support the foundations of a regime without certain habits and prejudices calculated to turn private exertions to the public benefit. In Stowe's terms, if the "democratic principle of impartial benevolence and equal rights" is to be reflected in the manners or external behavior of the citizens, it will be a consequence not of democratic processes but rather of systematic instruction.

The brief essay on "Domestic Manners" may be divided into six sections. Those are a statement of the general principles underlying concern with manners in America, an illustration of the particular practices requiring guidance, a discussion of how and where good manners are taught, a comparison of the effect of manners in democracy with those of monarchy and aristocracy, demonstration of the good of good manners, and, lastly, a description of the consummation of liberalism.

The discussion is an attempt to account for a specific regime in terms of its capacity to regulate interpersonal relationships. It is a construction of principles of guesting and hosting, if I may say so, wrought with Zeus-like precision. This offers quite a different picture of liberalism than the traditional focus on individualism. The reason is that this account is meant to provide the measure, the limits, of safe individualism.

The opening: liberalism needs a defense in the court of decency. It is crucial to know the tenor of that court. The motto of its justice is that "benevolence in personal intercourse by which we endeavor to promote the comfort and enjoyment of others, and to avoid all that gives needless uneasiness." Good manners, not democratic security, are the source of this thoughtfulness. There is nothing inherently democratic in either the motto or the application.

To notice the defect in American manners is to go to the heart of the democratic question. The first source of defective American manners is the Puritan legacy of severity and coldness. Those noble pioneers constructed a life founded on submission to "stern principle," not liberalism. They imparted their seriousness, and a certain rudeness, to their children. Their "calm, decided, and cold" manners suited the dangers and trials of their existence.

Altering the manners of a people may only be accomplished "during early life" and "in the domestic circle." Might this be as true of nations as of persons? The Puritan fathers had endured untold privations for the sake, ultimately, of civil and religious freedom; that is, a way of life in which the very repressions they underwent in the first instance would be uncalled for. Their success, along with other Americans, generated the second source of defective American manners.

"A general want of courtesy" followed adoption of the new, liberal institutions. It stemmed from the enduring legacy of the struggle against "the aristocratic principle," which elevated one class at the expense of another. Since every American is caught up in the defense of the democratic principle, "that every man's feelings and interests are equal in value to those of every other man," they frequently run to the extreme of "inferring

that all distinctions, involving subordinations, are useless.” They become egalitarians, embracing liberalism as an emancipation from artificial limits. That is why the motto for the court of decency is not explicitly democratic. Before the democratic principle can be made the gloss on that motto, the democratic principle must be purged of its unmannerly aspects. “Both for individual and public benefit” liberalism must recognize the utility of “certain grades of superiority and subordination.”

Few quarrel with this reasoning. But most, as we can note, have thought that liberalism ultimately inculcates such awareness, so far as it does, through what is called the “civil religion,” the canonical expression of interest rightly understood—a strange reification of democratic process, the foundation of which rests in the authority each person has to make decisions in his own interest by deciding on the interests of others. Stowe’s uniqueness is the following out of Tocqueville’s hint that something beyond enlightened (educated) self-interest must be the foundation of the manners of liberalism. Else, the “disrespectful treatment of parents, by children; of teachers, by pupils; of employers, by domestics, and of the aged, by the young;”—already well advanced—would be but a harbinger of the war of all against all.

We start with a new motto: “the law of Christianity and of democracy, which teaches that all men are born equal in rights, and that their interests and feelings should be regarded as of equal value.” The beauty of this motto, she argued, is that it is the identical principle aristocrats follow in reference to their own class. The democrat sees himself as merely extending an aristocratic principle to the whole of society. We continue to expect distinctions. However, rather than basing them “on accidents of birth, fortune, or occupation,” we would employ those mutual relations which the good of all classes require.”

The rules of good-breeding, in a democratic state, must be founded on these principles. It is indeed assumed that the value of the happiness of each individual is the same as that of every other; but as there must be occasions where there are advantages which all can not enjoy, there must be general rules for regulating the selection.

The only alternative: a scramble among equal claims resolved by “brute force.” The rule, then, “the democratic rule,” is that “superiors in age, station, or office have precedence of subordinates.”

Some will want to think that it takes far more than a liberal education to prove that distributing the “best of everything” on this formula is democratic rather than aristocratic. To Ishmael Reed, Stowe was not an architect of sound democracy, but a “toady to nobility,” when she sought to preserve that influence as a talisman for liberalism. Remember, however, that the democratic principle was but an emendation of the aristocratic principle, the whole to be interpreted by mothers. Thus, the deeper question is whether, indeed, Stowe abides by her own rule.

She gives examples of priorities immediately following the rule: age and feebleness over youth and strength and the “feebler sex” over “more vigorous man!” Stowe recognized the enormity of her claim. The only footnote of the essay occurs here. In it she rejects the severe expostulations of foreigners and others (presumably radical feminists),

who regard the pre-eminence of woman as unnatural. Stowe says that it is but evidence of our “superior civilization.”

Clearly, the democratic rule of superiority and subordination is one of those artificial works to which Tocqueville had invited his readers (and which Jefferson’s quest for a “natural aristocracy” failed to achieve). We will best understand Stowe’s defense of this artifice (Douglas is wrong to imagine that she has come to believe in the superiority of woman) after we examine her instructions to mothers.

The rector of good manners must focus on the “style” of deportment in terms of relations rather than classes. This will serve to facilitate easy recognition of relationships and, because of democracy’s peculiarity, render courtesy more nearly universal. The “means” of cultivating good manners is first and last the cultivation of habit in early life. The repetition of this maxim emphasizes that democracy no less than aristocracy leans on the crutch of prejudice. “Nothing” else may so well rescue “democratic institutions” from the opprobrium of mankind. This is a patriotic work to make the nation “respected and beloved.”

The foundation of public good is constructed on the frame of private practices which are prior to and not prescribed by law. There is, to be sure, the difficulty of accounting for the husband-wife relationship, and the *apparent* subordination of the members of this ruling class. Stowe explains to her slow students that love knows no law. Where love is not, women unjustly suffer (Xanthippe, according to Stowe, understood and thus “made a sage of Socrates”).<sup>22</sup> As for women who are loved, the ground of their marriage is every man’s self-sacrificing devotion to madam’s pursuit of her noble work.

The great work is to prepare souls fit for democratic self-governance. Here are a few examples of practices to be cherished: children should always be required to yield precedence to superiors in age or station in comforts and conveniences; the elder children of large families must be treated as superiors by younger siblings; children are to be taught to acknowledge all kindnesses; and violations of good breeding must be censured, such as the “practice of whispering and staring about” when someone is addressing a class or audience. “Such inattention” practically declares the worthlessness of what the person is saying, and “persons of really good-breeding always avoid it.”

Now, if every teacher must be approached in conformity with this rule of superiority-subordination before education can make manifest the distinction between the ignorant and the knowing, will not the distinctions revealed by liberal education be greatly softened by the rule of democratic benevolence?<sup>23</sup> Such restraints and encouragements are sure to produce young gentlemen. Thus may the plebeians shed their ungentle manners, yet retain their fondness for the right. Cardinal Newman held that the virtues of gentlemanliness may attach to the profligate. It is doubtful, however, whether liberalism can support gentlemanly profligacy, for these are the gentle manners not of subjects but of rulers whose realms are their own souls.

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<sup>22</sup> Stowe, op. cit., *Sunny Memories*.

<sup>23</sup> This will be necessarily so save, perhaps, for the rare teacher who can abide by Leo Strauss’s dictum that a teacher should approach his class as if it harbored some silent student sounder of mind and heart than himself.

Completing her construction, Stowe anticipated not mere decorousness but good from good manners, a good to be assured by dedicating a permanent class to its pursuit. It was twofold: on the one hand, a polish and refinement exceeding that of any civilization; on the other hand, and a consequence of the first, a general if not universal sophistication. We might expect to develop “poetry, music, painting, sculpture, and architecture .... to as high a state of perfection” as any nation. She overcame the familiar insecurities of nineteenth century Americans *vis-à-vis* Europe with a general project intended to civilize liberalism. It were wrong, however, to imagine that she may merely have indulged chauvinistic imaginings. Rather, as we have shown, she thought liberalism required civilizing, or, as I have said elsewhere, a defense for “mere morality”<sup>24</sup> over and above yet consistent with the defense of democracy.

The condition of liberalism’s civilizing, as the “true end and aim” of democratic manners, was an increase of “virtue and intelligence.” The “virtue and intelligence” for which Stowe had provided would bring still greater wealth to America. But, what is still more important, that “virtue and intelligence” would direct the use of that wealth. The use to which it would direct wealth was the continuing elevation of the many, or, the consummation of liberalism. To them, therefore, that regarded Stowe’s arguments as temporizing with evil on account of their defense of social distinctions (as a reflection of the natural distinctions revealed by education), Stowe’s response is a mating of liberal education and virtue on the strength of manners (or prejudices) calculated to serve the public benefit. Liberalism, in this view, cannot be preserved apart from an artifice designed to mitigate its worst tendencies. The consummation of liberalism is a question of the discovery of limits sufficient to civilize it. Liberal education in the best sense is eminently suited to that work of discovery.

To recall Stowe’s reaction to Jefferson, we can see how she dissents from his implicit belief that, unless the best actually do rule, liberalism fails. Given the nature of rule by the many, the idea of community is attenuated in that view. We may illustrate what is at stake with reference to the most profound expression in Washington’s “Farewell Address.” Addressing his fellow citizens, he declared at one point that “the unity of government which constitutes you one people is now dear to you.”<sup>25</sup>

That expression conveys the possibility of self discovery within the community over and above the individual interest to which liberalism as a system of thought had pointed. The actual existence of a particular community, conveying to men the idea of the end of their existence, is the moral and philosophical power which, in Stowe’s view, Jefferson failed to achieve. As it is the necessary condition of political right, so too is it the necessary condition of philosophic inquiry.

She thought, therefore, that the connection between liberalism and liberal education needed a further defense independent of the terms of philosophic necessity.

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<sup>24</sup> W. B. Allen, “The Case of Uncle Tom: Melodramatic Excess or Ethical Rigor?” a paper presented at the 1980 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, panel on “Politics and Literature,” sponsored by the Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy.

<sup>25</sup> George Washington, “Farewell Address,” September 19, 1776, in Alexander K. McClure, *Famous American Statesmen and Orators* (New York: F.F. Lovell, 1902), volume 1, p. 68

Reflection on liberal education—and her own liberal education—led Stowe to conclude that certain artifices—manners—are required to grace liberal life. So, too, do they seem to be required to grace liberal education, at least in the liberal regime.