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PHIL-201

REACTION #12

According to Locke, the anarchistic state of nature is rightly ruled by reason. As he describes it, in the state of nature every man has his freedom, liberty, and equality (independence) without a common authority to answer to and thus is individually the judge, jury and executioner over natural law whose aims are to protect life, liberty, and property. When man emerges from the state of nature, he binds together in a community preserving the common good, existing to formally protect these same life, liberty and property rights as well as the interests of formalized contracts that exist among men and between man and the polity. These formalized contracts are codified by the law, before which no man is immune. To Locke, no man is above the law, and all men are subject to the law by virtue of finding themselves subject to its jurisdiction which exists wherever they are protected by the law.

Majority rule as exists in community, regardless of whether that community is subject to the rule of a greater domineering entity, is viewed by Locke as prevailing where the actions of the many are said to fairly represent both majority and therefore also minority opinion. Only a despotic tyranny, as Locke seems to presume happens under any absolute monarch who defines the rule of the state by whim, negates any claim to an evolved state designed to equally protect everybody subject to its jurisdiction. A despotic tyranny exists where the executive branch executes around independent judicial oversight of an established legislature's creation of valid law representative of the people's will.

In the United States, we have a pluralistic society that endeavors to cater equally to the needs of the individual under a system of structured liberty designed particularly to ensure equality before the law which means the rights of the many, the few, and the isolated outcasts are protected and their interests (the blessings of liberty) are commonly and mutually assured amongst them privately and between them and the state. This is a hallmark of American Democracy.

According to private militias existent in the United States prior to the perpetual war on terrorism, it's in their view only when the legislative process breaks down and law making and enforcement grind to a halt that the state ceases to function, in light of the Court's absolute powerlessness to thus do anything about it but issue feckless Orders that the Executive may freely disregard. This is a hallmark of tyranny.

Accordingly, particularly under Pres. Trump, the United States is slipping to tyranny, however it is this author's opinion the United States is still overarchingly guided by traditional notions of American Democracy as evolved through to the modern day.

I remind the professor, that if the bad decisions of the horrors of our country's past stuck around forever, through to the modern day, afro-American slavery would still exist in the United States as well as state-enforced notions of equality like separate but equal. Even things that last 100 or more years in the United States thus ultimately evaporate when they don't stand the test of time as a blessing of liberty for us and our posterity.

It is clear to me that likely none of us will ever see what happens to Pres. Trump and his border wall over the next 150 years, like to gentry old slave owners and the evolution of equality unthinkable to them in the antebellum south.

Final Exam Questions

Explain how Aristotle's notion of ethics was based on the fulfillment of human function and an activity of soul. Elucidate the different kinds of soul that Aristotle biologically charts in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Also, explain how the Aristotelian notion of human function connects to virtue. What precisely are virtues for Aristotle? Finally, how are both virtues and vices voluntary decisions and, so to speak, up to us?

What does Schmemmann mean by the "life" that is offered in Christianity? How does this life connect with worship and why must this worship be communal and liturgical? How, for Schmemmann, is secularism a negation of both life and worship?

In what does Descartes' philosophical method consist? Why is he so obsessed with doubt? What causes him to doubt his sense-based beliefs? Formulate Descartes's dream hypothesis. Which of his beliefs does it call into doubt? Which ones does it leave intact? What causes him to then doubt his mathematical beliefs? What is the Evil Demon hypothesis? What is the Cogito argument? How does Descartes derive it? Formulate his proof of the existence of God. Explain how he finally argues to the probable existence of bodies from the fact that he can imagine mathematical objects like triangles and why he thinks body and mind are absolutely distinct based upon the divisibility argument.

What kinds of rights does John Locke believe that an individual brings from the state of nature into a civil society? What kinds of violations in "government" would lead Locke to assert that a breakdown of civil society occurred and there has been a reduction of the people to tyranny?