

JAMES HARRINGTON: HIS THEORY OF THE BALANCE OF PROPERTY AND THE POLITICAL POWER.

I. INTRODUCTION.

In 1847, Henry Hallam¹ once remarked that "England, thrown at the commencement of this period [Puritan Revolution] upon the resources of her own invention to replace an ancient monarchy by something new,...was the natural soil of political theory." It is quite true that all the different phases of the progressive movement of today are illustrated in the Puritan Revolution, from the severely practical to the most nebulously ideal, from the party whose notion was to prohibit all reform and to rivet the political machinery together as it stood, to those who, seeing that collapse of old machinery was inevitable, sought, like the pioneers of the French Revolution, to invent and establish a new ideal of government in a sense complete in all its details.

The first fruit of this ferment was James Harrington's *Oceana*,² published in 1656. This book is remarkable not merely as a product of the Commonwealth thought, it is also remarkable among political ideals. It is a book of essentially the same character as the *Republic*, the *De Monarchia*, and the *Prince*. It is an ideal formed at the time when England had violently cut

1. Henry Hallam: *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*. London, 1847, iii, 437.

2. Besides the main work, *Oceana*, Harrington's works include many political tracts in support of *Oceana* and setting forth his views upon other political questions. These are:

The Prerogative of Popular Government;

The Art of Law-giving;

A Word concerning a House of Peers;

A System of Politics, etc.;

Political Aphorisms;

Seven Models of Commonwealth;

The Ways and Means whereby an equal and lasting Commonwealth may be introduced with the Consent of the People of England. The humble Petition of divers well-affected Persons, with the Parliament's Answer thereto.

These works were edited by John Toland, with an account of the "Life of James Harrington," and published in 1699. In 1737 two more editions were issued, one in Dublin, which included Henry Nevill's "Plato Redivivus," one in London, which contained an Appendix of several of Harrington's lesser tracts not printed in Toland's edition of 1699. The references in this paper are made to the 3rd London edition of 1747.

herself adrift from her political traditions and entered upon the imagination of a new era. Historically, therefore, this work is of prime interest, but it has a more vital interest still, i. e., to anticipate solutions of many of the problems of our own age. It exercised a tremendous influence on American political institutions.³ But Harrington's reputation as a political thinker has not been what it deserves. It is principally due to the fact that the republican theories for which he contended were discarded in his own country. He had no followers and he founded no school. His work has been in part discussed by isolated writers, as by Hume, when he declared *Oceana* to be the only valuable model of commonwealth,⁴ and by John Adams, when he wrote that the honor of the noble discovery of the relation of Empire to Property belonged as exclusively to Harrington as the discovery of the circulation of blood to Harvey.⁵ But the ordinary historians have almost missed his significance. It is only in the last few decades that a truer appreciation of perhaps the most remarkable political thinker of an age pregnant with the original ideas has begun to appear.⁶

The *Oceana* is a political allegory, representing England, the history of which was shadowed out with fictitious names. But it is preliminary to a great object: the scheme of a new commonwealth, which, under the auspices of Olphaus Megaletor, the Lord Archon,—meaning, of course, Cromwell, not as he was, but as he ought to have been,—the author feigns to have established. But "Oceana," although an ideal state, is a work of a different type from the "Republic" or "Utopia." It was built neither for the skies nor for some spot on earth that did not exist, but for England. It is a definite proposal for solving the difficulties in which England had become entangled since the abolition of monarchy, and one which its author hoped Cromwell might be induced to consider.

Before we go into the fundamental theories of Harrington, it is advisable to examine his method with which he formulated his general doctrines. It was based on the historical study that Harrington made for his *Oceana*. By reading English history with intelligence and comparing it with ancient and modern history, he came to the conclusion that there were two main things wrong with England: the balance of property, and the working of the parliamentary system. By arranging his facts he was then able to formulate his two great political principles: that the preservation of states has in part depended, and probably still depends, on the preservation of the Balance of Property and on Rotation in government. He claimed to be a political scientist and not a political poet. Here he stood on firm ground. Some strong arguments were brought forward against Harrington's doctrines by contemporaries,⁷ but his method was the wrong thing to find fault with.

3. Theodore Dwight: "James Harrington," *Political Science Quarterly*, March, 1887.

4. David Hume: Essay 38, "Idea of Perfect Commonwealth."

5. *Works*, iv, 428.

6. G.P.Gooch: *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, 1927, 2nd ed., Page 250. The standard study of Harrington is: H. F. Russell Smith: *Harrington and his Oceana*, Cambridge (England), 1914.

7. Matthew Wren (1629-1672): *Monarchy Asserted, or The state of monarchicall and Popular government in vindication of the Considerations upon Mr. Harrington's Oceana*, Oxford, Printed by W. Hall, 1659.

The historical method was comparatively new to English political thought. Harrington carried it to its extreme and supplemented it by a practical knowledge of contemporary foreign politics. "No man," he wrote, "can be a Politician, except he be a Historian or a Traveller; if he has no knowledge in Story, he cannot tell what has bin; and if he has not bin a Traveller, he cannot tell what is: but he that neither knows what has bin, nor what is, can never tell what must be, or what may be."⁸ At Harrington's time, writing on Dutch, German and Italian history were poured forth from the press. Harrington made a special study of the institutions of Holland and Venice. In the construction of "Oceana," it was to the cities of the ancient world that he looked, especially Athens, Sparta and Rome. He remarked that "Oceana" was discovered, not in "phansy," but in the archives of ancient prudence.⁹ Yet, in his enthusiasm for history and travel, he did not omit to study his predecessors. Bacon, Grotius and Machiavelli were mentioned frequently in his work. Machiavelli is to Harrington "the greatest artist in the modern world," "the prince of politicians," and "the sole Retriever of this antient Prudence."¹⁰ Harrington, although a writer of an ideal commonwealth, saw that a politician must stand upon the ground of fact. Before him, Machiavelli had been alone in recognizing this. It is this very historical method that led Hume to classify Harrington with Bacon and Milton as "altogether stiff and pedantic,"¹¹ because the historical method will not in all probability produce a work of art.

II. THE BALANCE OF PROPERTY AND THE POLITICAL POWER

The leading principle of Harrington is that the power depends upon property. The domestic empire is founded on property, real or personal, land or money. When the land is in the hand of one, there is monarchy; when it is owned by few, there is an aristocracy; when it is controlled by many, you have a commonwealth. It was his great and cardinal thought that the institutions are not accidental or arbitrary, but rather of historical growth; and that there are natural causes in society which produce necessary effects in moulding and shaping institutions.

It was from historical study that Harrington derived this theory. He traced the Civil War to the policy of the Tudors. Henry VII [Panurgus] began the mischief with the Statutes of Population, Retainers and Alienation, which broke up the great estates of the barons and brought about a coalition of affairs under which "the great Tables of the Nobility...no longer nourish'd Veins that would bleed them."¹² Henry VIII [Corannus] continued his father's work by dissolving the monasteries and giving their lands to men of new families. Elizabeth [Parthenia] "converting her reign thro the perpetual love-tricks that fast between her and her

8. *Oceana*, P. 183.

9. "My Lord Archon made it appear how unsafe a thing it is to follow Phansy in the fabric of a Commonwealth; and how necessary that the Archives of antient Prudence should be ransack'd before any counsellor should presume to offer any other matter in order to work in hand." *Oceana*, P. 79.

10. *Oceana*, Pp. 39, 51, 147.

11. "Essay" XII.

12. *Oceana*, P.69.

People into a kind of Romance,"¹³ postponed the inevitable outcome of these measures. But under the Stuarts it became apparent that the moharchy had not got the necessary support to maintain its power, and it gave place to the Commonwealth. The continuation of this policy by Cromwell in the wholesale confiscation of the lands of Crown, Church and Royalist partisans pointed more and more to the necessity of democratic institutions for England. In the pre-Tudor days, when the land was in the possession of few barons and dignitaries of the Church dependent on the Crown, the natural form of government was a regulated monarchy; but with the enormous increase in the number of the land owners, monarchical institutions had finally become impossible. That was the reason why the throne of England began to shake.

This relation was explained more vividly by Henry Neville, the other great republican writer of this period, who reflected Harrington's theory so closely that I do not hesitate to quote in full. Neville remarked in his book that:¹⁴

"This harmonious Government being founded as has been said upon Property, it was impossible it should be shaken so long as Property remain'd where it was placed; for if, when the ancient Owners the Britains fled into the Mountains, and left their Lands to the Invaders, They had made an Agrarian Law to fix it; then our government by consequence our Happiness had been for ought we know Immortal for our Government was really a mixture of three, which are monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy so the weight and predominancy remain'd in the Optimacy, who possessed nine parts in ten of the Lands;...In this I count all the People's shares to the Peers, and do not trouble my Self to enquire what proportion was allotted to them, for that although they had an hereditary right in their Lands, yet it was so clog'd with the Tenures and Services, that they depended...wholly on their Lords, who by them could serve the King in his wars, and in time of Peace...could keep the Royal Power within its due bounds, and also hinder and prevent the People from invading the Rights of Crown, so that they were the Bulwarks of the the Government...But it is visible that the fortieth part of the Lands, which were in the beginning in the hands of Peers and Church, is not there now; besides, that not only all Villanage is long since abollished, but the other Tenures are so altered and qualified, that they signifie nothing towads making the Yeomandry depend upon the Lords.

"The Consequence is, That the natural part of our Government, which is Power, is by means of Property in the hands of People, whilst the artificial Part, or the Parchment, in which the Form of Government is written, remains the same...This alone is the cause of all the disorder you heard of and now see in England, and of which every man gives a reason according to his own fancy, whilst few hit the right cause."

In Harrington's own words, it was that the balance of the property, "which was daily falling into the scale of the commons from that of the king, until the scale of the latter had well-nigh kicked the beam," caused the great upheaval of his own time. Because the laws were passed since the

13. Ibid.

14. Henry Neville: *Plato Redivus, or a Dialogue concerning Government*, London. Printed for S. I. in the year 1681. Pp. 132-134.

time of the Tudors permitting the nobilities to sell their estates, the property is no longer properly distributed among the supporters of the monarchy. Proceeding on this historical reasoning to examine the causes of the distempers of his own day, he concluded that these troubles were attributable neither wholly to wilfulness nor faction, neither to the mismanagement of the prince nor to the stubbornness of the people, but to a change in the balance of property, which had been going on in England for centuries. This was Harrington's capital contribution to the political thinking, that the distribution of power must in the long run correspond to the distribution of property.

Before we continue the discussion of his ideal state and practical proposals, we have here to make clear an important point, viz., by the term of property, Harrington meant primarily the landed property. "Because, as to Property producing empire, it is requir'd that it should have some certain root or foot-hold, which except in Land, it cannot have, being other wise, as it were, upon the Wing."¹⁵ He explained more clearly that "if the People have Clothes and Mony of their own, these must either rise out of property of Land, or at least out of the cultivation of the Land... Wherefore seeing the People cannot be said to have Clothes and Mony of their own without the balance in Land."¹⁶ It is true that under the "balance" which his agrarian measures were to provide, Harrington did include limitations on capital as well as land; but his references to capital are subsidiary because England was for him characteristically a "commonwealth of husbandmen." "In such a Territory as England or Spain, Mony can never com to overbalance Land."¹⁷ But in reference to Holland and Genoa, he makes the balance of treasure hold the same function as the balance of land in England, as he supplemented that "nevertheless in such cities as subsist mostly by trade, or have little or no land, as Holland and Genoa, the ballance of treasure may be equal to that of land."¹⁸

Based upon the historical study, Harrington is going to frame his ideal state and to formulate proposals which should establish the new government in great security and reender it more like the cities of Greek and Roman history that he so much desired. There are two fundamental principles on which the health of a commonwealth depends: one is the equality in its foundation, i.e., one based on an equal distribution of the power accruing from the possession of material wealth, and the other is the equality in superstructure, i.e., maintaining a similar balance in the distribution of power proceeding from intellectual authority. It is the function of material power to guarantee equality in the foundation, and of the intellectual to secure freshness in the superstructure. But how are these results to be achieved? The answers constitute the essence of the system. The equality of material well-being on which the state rests is produced by an Agrarian law; the equality of superstructure by which the state makes progress is effected by the Rotation.¹⁹

15. *Oceana*, P.83.

16. *Prerogative of Popular Government*, Pp.246-47.

17. *Prerogative of Popular Government*, Pp.246-47.

18. *Oceana*, P.38.

19. "An equal Commonwealth is such a one as is equal within the balance or foundation, and in the superstructure; that is to say, in her Agrarian law, and in her Rotation. An equal Agrarian is a perpetual Law establishing and preserving the balance of Dominion by such a distribution that no one Man (Continue)

The Agrarian law is of such nature that no state where it has obtained has met destruction, and no government which has neglected it has long survived. The agrarian is an eternal problem in human history. The political importance of the possession of the land has been recognized from the time when Joseph made his investments in property before the Egyptian famine. The institution of the Jubilee among the Jews, the reforms of Lycurgus and Solon, the work of the Gracchi, of Julius Caesar, as well as the whole feudal system, depended on the practical recognition of this fact. But no one before Harrington had been conscious of a principle and developed a theory. The contemporary politics and various problems during the period of the Puritan Revolution must have attracted Harrington's attention and greatly influenced him. In 1647, at the important debates over the propositions of the Agreement of the people, the thesis that power ought to depend on property was urged by Ireton and the more conservative officers.²⁰ The position maintained by democrats and arguments advocated by their leader, Colonel Reinsborough, was "that the poorest He that is in England hath a life to live as well as the greatest He; and therefore every man that is to live under a government ought, first, by his own consent, to put himself under the government." Ireton, in replying, used the argument that is always used on the other side in this eternal problem: Only those deserve a vote who "have a permanent fixed interest in the kingdom...the persons in whom all land lies and those in corporations in whom all trading lies." For if by the law of nature every man has a "right" to elect his governor, he has by the same dangerous law the "right of self-preservation," which means the right to procure food and clothes and to have a piece of land on which to live. If this be granted, what becomes of private property?

The preservation of private property was the chief article of Ireton's political creed, and the obvious means of securing it was to confine the government of the country to the owners of private property,—those who have a fixed interest in the country.²¹ While Ireton was trying to show why his class of people ought to govern, Harrington was beginning to discover that they do govern when he came to publish his discovery and illustrate it in concrete form in his ideal state.

The movement of Anglicizing Ireland must have influenced Harrington in the formation of his principle. Since the middle of the 16th century, the attempt had been made to Anglicize Ireland by setting men of English birth upon the land. This policy was given a more definite form by the Confiscation Act of 1642. In the Cromwellian settlement, about half of the total land of Ireland, which formerly had been in the hands of the Crown, the Church, or the rebels, was declared to be forfeited and divided among the adventurers, the army, and the creditors of the Commonwealth. It was estimated that between 1641 and 1687, 2,400,000 acres of land were

19. (Continue) or number of Men, within the compass of the Few or Aristocracy, can com to overpower the whole People by their possession in Lands. As Agrarian answers to the Foundation, so dos Rotation to the Superstructures. Equal Rotation is equal vicissitude in Government, or succession to Magistracy con fer'd for such convenient terms, enjoying equal vacations, as take in whole body by parts, succeeding others, thro the free election or suffrage of the People given by Ballot." *Oceana*, P.54.

20. C. H. Firth, ed.: *Clarke Papers*, London, 1901, i, 299-345.

21. Loc. cit., p. 319.

transferred from Catholics to Protestants.²² The settlement was carried out under the direction of Sir William Petty, who was a friend of Harrington. In *Oceana*, Harrington took opportunity of expressing his approval of Cromwell's policy on the ground that it made for peace.²³

Another movement which must have influenced Harrington in the formation of his principle was the Diggers Movement in the days of the Commonwealth.²⁴ The Diggers had created no small stir in the year 1649 by attempting to cultivate the commons in various parts of South England. The movement was not purely political. Like the modern socialism it was ethical. But the political aspect of their communism is what affected the present argument. They defined liberty as the freedom of the earth. They believed that the Norman kings recognized this view when "they took possession of the earth for their freedom," and they went on to argue that the victory of the Commoners was useless unless they asserted the liberty which they had won with their swords and in their turn "took possession of the earth." Acting upon these principles, they attacked two institutions in particular,—the rights of the lords of the manor, and the law of primogeniture which excluded all younger sons from any share of family property. In protesting the former, they assumed the practical form of digging up the common lands. The Diggers Movement was perhaps unimportant, but their arguments had attracted the attention of Harrington and no doubt exercised certain influence on his thinking, as it was reflected in his book, *Oceana*.

Harrington's great purpose and the object of his book were to find out a mode of restoring the equilibrium and orders in England. There were two ways of remedying the distempers of England and bringing about the coincidence of power and property. The government might be changed to suit the changed balance of property, or the balance of property could be changed so as to make the old form of government again possible. But Harrington himself was of opinion that it was easier to change the form of government than to revert to old economic conditions, and it was for this reason that he was the most uncompromising republican in his age.

Accepting as he did the altered economic conditions, he proposed to enforce an agrarian law which he tabulated for his idealized England,—*Oceana*. By this law, the policy of breaking up large estates was to be pushed one stage further. The details were to be arranged after a valuation of the land had been made,²⁵ but the provisional idea was to allow no one to possess land above an annual value of £ 2000 in England and Ireland, or £ 500 in Scotland. Harrington estimated the total rent of the land of England and Wales at ten million pounds, so that the total number of land owners would never fall below five thousand. It would probably be far larger in view of the absurdity of imagining five thousand men clinging to the possession of the exact maximum legally allowed them, with everybody looking on.

How to achieve this object? Harrington was not desirous of introducing a too sudden change.

22. Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice: *Life of Sir William Petty*, London, 1895. Pp. 51-65. C. H. Hull: *The Economic writings of Sir William Petty*, Cambridge, 1899, ii, P. 606.

23. *Oceana*, P. III.

24. Cf. Lewis Henry Berens: *The Diggers Movement in the Days of the Commonwealth, as Revealed in the writings of Gerrard Winstanley*, London, 1906.

25. *Oceana*, P. 110

He recommended that this breaking up of estates should be brought about quite gradually. Therefore he proposed three moderate measures to effect a gradual change. Firstly, he proposed the abolition of primogeniture as the least violent way of dividing up the large estates. This would be supplemented with two other measures: He would forbid men who owned property worth £ 2000 or more to make a further acquisition by purchase, and he would restrict marriage provisions to £ 1500. But with his belief in moderation he would not forbid acquisition by legacy, and he made it clear that this Agrarian law would only come into force in the case of children born seven years or more after its passing.

Since the author felt that there was no reason why a Commonwealth should not be as immortal as the stars in the heavens, no efforts were to be spared as to the methods of attaining this object. The discussion of the Agrarian law²⁶ is noticeable for its thoroughness. The thirteenth article of the Constitution of Oceana enacts that no individual shall own land in value above £ 2000 a year. Since this law strikes at the root of primogeniture, the heir-apparent of a noble house rose at the council table and attacked the proposition on the ground that it was destructive to families, reducing all their members to poverty. Such assaults on men's estates would cripple industry by discouraging the accumulation of capital. The Lord Archon immediately rose to defend the measure, declaring that it would not destroy them. The essence of a Commonwealth was equality. How could it be better described than as the destruction of a family when we used our children as puppies, taking one and feeding it with choice morsels, and drowning five? who would dare to balance the interests of a few hundred with those of a nation?

The opposition to primogeniture had not been confined to the Diggers. During the 1640's, many writers attacked the system of land tenure which had been in vogue in England since the Norman Conquest, and proposed that the father should be allowed to divide his property among all his children or dispose of it as he might think best. Harrington therefore proposed the abolition of this relic of feudalism as the least violent way of dividing the large estates. This proposal, far less radical than many proposals of the time, had the merit of brevity and clearness. It was defended on the ground that the further partition of the land was necessary to secure the new republic in its democratic institutions.

Harrington's land policy was meant to achieve two objects. By his socialistic division of property he hoped to make republican institutions possible. By keeping power in the hands of the steadier section of the community, which is engaged in agriculture, he hoped to avoid the extreme form of democracy.

III. HARRINGTON'S THEORY AND THE REPUBLICANISM.

Harrington thought himself so sure of his general principles that the balance of power depends on that of property, that he ventured to pronounce it impossible ever to re-establish monarchy in

26. *Oceana*, Pp. 102-110.

England.²⁷ Though he had loved Charles I,²⁸ he was no lover of monarchy, still less of the monarchy that the approaching Restoration was to introduce. He echoed the cry for a free parliament and a government in accordance with the popular wish. His faith in his system led him to believe that in a very few years empire would once again follow property and that a republic would again be erected. He wrote: "If it be according to the Wisdom and Interest of the Nation upon mature debate that there be a King, let there be a King;" but he predicted that "immediately the Line of the King and the People become Rivals, in which case they will never restore monarchy...In the present case of England, Commonwealths men may fail thro want of Art, but Royalists must fail thro want of Matter; the former may miss thro impotence, the later must thro impossibility."²⁹

Henry Neville, the other great republican writer of this period, wrote *Plato Redivivus*, which was privately circulated in 1681. Taking the form of dialogue, he endeavored to "evinced out of these principles that England was not capable of any other government than a Democracy."³⁰

The first point of Neville's theory is the refutation of the theory of the origin of government which had appeared the year before in Filmer's *Patriarcha*, and the suggestion of an alternative, which was already meeting with acceptance from the Whigs, that the government was instituted for the preservation of property. He repeated Harrington's doctrine of the balance of property in these words: "Empire is founded upon Property; force or fraud may alter a government; but it is property that must found and eternize it."³¹ But the value of Neville's work lies, not in his new argument, but in the application of Harrington's idea to the problems of the Restoration period. Harrington had already prophesied that a monarch would find his position difficult in England because of the decline of the nobility and the purchase of so much land by the lesser gentry and common people. Neville pointed out that this was an adequate explanation of the difficulties which were actually being experienced by Charles II, as "The natural part of our government, which is power, is by means of property in the hands of people, while the artificial part, or the parchment, in which the form of government is written, remains the same."³²

Among Harrington's two ways of remedying this state of affairs,³³—power could be brought into coincidence with property, or property with power,—Neville's republican sympathies led him to adopt the former alternative. He therefore suggested that the power of king should be restricted in certain directions. He proposed (i) to abolish Privy Council and replace it by four new councils elected by Parliament to exercise the powers of making war and peace, controlling militia, and

27. Hume: *Essay VII*.

28. "He serv'd his Master with untainted fidelity...His Majesty lov'd his company, chose rather to converse with him than with others of his chamber. They had often discourses concerning Government; but when they happen'd to talk of a Commonwealth, the King seem'd not to endure it." Toland: *Life of James Harrington*, XVI.

29. *Ways and Means, etc.* P.540.

30. *Plato Redivivus*, "To the Readers," by the Publisher.

31. *Ibid.* P.35.

32. *Ibid.* P.134.

33. See *supra*.

spending the national revenue; (ii) to abolish the royal prerogative of creating peers, and to have them made in future by the act of Parliament; (iii) to have annual Parliament. These proposals were an attempt to adapt the republican idea to the restored monarchy and to weaken the power of the Crown to an extent which would in some way correspond with its diminished resources. These proposals are interesting, as they foreshadowed the settlements of the Revolution of 1688.

IV. CONTEMPORARY CRITICISMS.

Harrington not unnaturally aroused a great deal of criticism of an academic nature. The most noticeable critics were Matthew Wren (1629-1672), the son of the Bishop of Ely; Henry Stubbs (1632-1676), of Christ Church, Oxford; and Richard Baxter (1615-1691), the Presbyterian preacher. Much of the criticism is very uninteresting. On Harrington's fundamental ideas, the criticism directed especially toward the novelty and Utopian character of Harrington's proposals. Wren showed very capably that neither Aristotle nor Thucydides had the slightest conception of the balance of property. Imitations of foreign institutions were decried on all hands, and the tendency to turn to Sparta, Athens, Venice, or the Netherlands, as models for the English Constitution, was widely deprecated. The natural growth of the monarchical institutions of England was the common argument against republicanism.

Richard Baxter wrote *Holy commonwealth* against Harrington's democratic idea. Baxter urged that the people in a nation have no more rights of sovereignty than the members of a school or of any fortuitous aggregation of men; that the majority is frequently worse than the minority, because the government is an "aptitude" for which the common man is not fitted; that the people as a whole are neither wise, educated, leisured, moral, united, suited for secret or speedy work.³⁴ Democracy is the worst form of government, because it differs most from the government of God and His angels, and "comes nearest to the utter confounding of the governors and governed: the ranks that God separated by his institutions."³⁵ In adding his voice to the protests of others, he criticized the prevailing tendency from the religious as well as the political point of view. As a Puritan, he objected to Oceana, "in that it is such a government as Heathens have been our Examples in, and in which he [Harrington] thinks they have excelled us. And therefore doubtless he intendeth not that his frame shall secure us the Christian Religion, without which we can have no happy Government,"³⁶ and also because it is based on the practice of Venice, "where Popery ruleth and whoredom abounds."³⁷ Criticisms like Baxter's were too vague to be valuable. They are also unfair. Baxter himself was ready to grant "that the people's Consent is originally necessary to the Constitution of the Government, and that freedom is taken from them when it is denied them;"³⁸ and that it is unfair to blame Harrington for his democratic idea.

34. *A Holy Commonwealth, or Political Aphorisms*. Written by Richard Baxter at the invitation of James Harrington. London, 1659. Pp.61-68.

35. *Ibid.* P.89.

36. *A Holy Commonwealth*. P.225.

37. *Ibid.* P.226.

38. *Ibid.* Preface.

Of the individual measures *Oceana*, the agrarian proposals invited the severest criticism. Firstly, it was argued that the restriction of property was a check to industry of honest labor. Wren pointed out that "the Liberty of disposing as a Man thinks fit of his own, is essential to the Prosperity."³⁹ But Harrington had realized this, and attempted to work out the details of the scheme. Wren either could not or did not want to follow the working of Harrington's mind, and criticized him for the very method. Although he was himself based on individualistic principle in condemning the Agrarian, he criticized Harrington, from the point of state interference, for adopting the less drastic principle that "no man shall be more than thus rich," instead of the more uncompromising Spartan principle, "Every man shall be thus poor." In doing this, he was both inconsistent and unintelligent.

Another criticism directed against the Agrarian was based on different grounds. If the Agrarian law were at once established, not only would the upper class decline, but they would desert the estates which they had been compelled to divide, and flock to London. London, the abode of smoke, disease and democracy, would grow in consequence to an undesirable size, and all the legislation which had been directed against its further growth would be undone.⁴⁰ This would be regrettable not only from the economic but also from the political point of view. It would result in the government of the country by the the inhabitants of its capital.

The third criticism was based on economic grounds. It was argued that it was impossible to have a fixed Agrarian because of the continued changing of the value of money. Moreover, the maximum property which it was lawful to hold would automatically get lower and lower until it resulted in complete levelling.⁴¹ Harrington replied that this was unlikely, because the hired laborer, who earned £20 a year and kept his cow on the common, would be unwilling to exchange his position for that of a landowner in possession of land worth no more than £ 10 a year.

The theory on which the Agrarian was based was also criticized. There was a certain amount of truth in Wren's contention that Harrington, in speaking of the balance of property, was simply using a new vocabulary to express the truism that "riches means power." But Harrington seems to have realize this, his purpose being rather to emphasize the peculiar power which has undoubtedly been in the hands of the landowning classes in the course of English history.

V. VALUATION OF HARRINGTON'S THEORY, AND CONCLUSION.

The theory of the balance of property, explained in the dictum, "As is the proportion or balance of Dominion or Property in land, such is the nature of Empire," and claimed by Harrington as his own peculiar discovery, had met with general acceptance. Hume, in his essay on *Idea of Perfect Commonwealth*, declared that all plans of government, like the Republic of Plato and the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, are plainly imaginary; but he accredited to Harrington that "the *Oceana* is the only valuable model of a commonwealth that has yet offered to the public."⁴²

39. *Monarchy Asserted*. P.146.

40. *Monarchy Asserted*, etc. Pp.149-50.

41. *Monarchy Asserted*, etc. Pp. 149-50.

42. *Hume's philosophical works* Edinburgh, 1826 Edition. Essay XVI, P. 563.

James Bonar ascribed the importance of *Oceana* to the "new principle that the economical element in a state will determine its government."⁴³ Thorold Rogers counts it "a commonplace in practical politics that they who own the land of a country make its laws."⁴⁴ In a country like England where tradition and habit, to say nothing of positive institutions, have long deferred to the judgment of landowners, the commonplace has been an admitted verity.

Harrington was an interesting man rather than a great man. Living at an important period in the history of England, he produced a Utopia written in language which is generally interesting and picturesque, in which he embodied theories that were partly original and partly borrowed from Continental sources. For a time he was a public figure of some notoriety and one of the originators of the political club and coffee-house politics. His *Oceana* soon became a classic. Its theories gave support to the dominance of the landed classes in the 18th century England. In the 18th century, the rule of the king and the landed classes was promoted and defended largely by a distorted version of Harrington's ideas, which found a larger place than those of any other theorist.

The main provisions of *Oceana* were put into practice in colonial America,—in Massachusetts, the Carolinas, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, and Virginia,—and they exercised an enormous moulding influence on American political institutions, which are beyond the scope of this paper to deal with.⁴⁵

The first aspect of Harrington's importance which we shall evaluate is that of method. His selection of an imaginary setting for his ideas was no proof of Utopian leanings; his political works were no mere speculative pastimes, but earnest and practical exhortation to the Parliament and its governors. A glance at any of the Utopians of the 17th and 18th centuries convinces one of the fundamentally different character of *Oceana*. The form proves nothing as to the character of the work, which is in reality one of the earliest examples in political thinking of the historical method. The *Oceana* ranks in this respect with the *Discorsi* of Machiavelli and the *Republique* of Bodin in the period preceding the appearance of Montesquieu. Harrington himself, as the fellow-attendant on King's Records, was "the best read man in history of all sorts." The passages⁴⁶ in which he traced the dissolution of the Stuart monarchy are ones whose lucidity and grasp give him title to stand in the van of English philosophical historians. His aim was not merely to write a diagnosis, but to prescribe a cure, "to provide a method of preventing distempers."

Despite his method, however, it would be idle to deny that there is something of the doctrinaire in Harrington. That a political theory will be unconsciously moulded by the view of human nature that its author happens to hold is continually illustrated in the thought of the 17th century. Harrington's political philosophy was influenced by contemporary events quite as much as by Plato and Aristotle. His theory that power follows property met with general acceptance, but his economics is notably unsatisfactory. In spite of his passionate admiration of Venice,⁴⁷ Harrington, bound by the

43. James Bonar: *Philosophy and Political Economy*. Bondon, 1893. P. 90

44. Thorold Rogers: *The Economic Interpretation of History*. London, 1888. P. 163.

45. On Harrington's influence on American institutions, see Theodore Dwight: "James Harrington and his Influence upon American Institutions and Political Thought," *Political Science Quarterly*, March, 1887.

46. see *supra*.

47. "If I be worthy to give advice to a man that would study Politics, let him understand (Continue)

old prejudice in favor of agriculture and failing to learn one of the chief lessons which Venice taught, confined his dictum to property in land. His ideal government is an agricultural democracy of landed gentry which Aristotle recommended. He was himself a country gentleman with a passion for land. He had an excessive admiration for Rome in her simple brilliant days, when her generals left their ploughs for the battlefield.

“Agriculture is the bread of the Nation, we are hung upon it by the Teeth; it is a mighty Nursery of Strength, the best Army, and the most assur'd Knapsac; it is managed with the least turbulent or ambitious and the most innocent hands of all the Arts. Wherefore I am of Aristotle's opinion, that a Commonwealth of Husbandmen, and such is ours, must be the best of all others.”⁴⁸

He took pride in the particular genius of the English people with their “country way of life;” he compared it to the brilliant days of Republican Rome; “The Tillage bringing up a good Soldiery, brings up a good Commonwealth.”⁴⁹

In his *Discourses*, Machiavelli had written the following passage: “I call those gentlemen who live idly and plentifully upon their estates without any care or employment, and they are very pernicious, wherever they are...it would be impossible to erect a republic where they had the Dominion.”⁵⁰ But Harrington thought otherwise, and pointed out that all the great legislators, from Moses down to Cromwell, had been “gentlemen,” and gave it as his firm opinion that: “There is something first in the making of a Commonwealth, then in the Government of it, and last of all in the leading of its Army, which seems to be peculiar only to the Genius of a Gen-

47. (Continued) Venice; he that understands Venice right, shall go nearest to judg (notwithstanding the difference that is in every policy) right of any Government in the World.” *Oceana*, P.314.

48. *Oceana*, P. 178.

49. “But the Tillage bringing up a good Soldiery, brings up a good Commonwealth; which the Author in the praise of Panurgus [Henry VII] did not mind, nor Panurgus in deserving that praise; for where the owner of the Plough comes to have the sword too, he will use it in defense of his own; whence it has been happen'd that the People of Oceana, in proportion to their property, have bin always free. And the Genius of this Nation has ever had some resemblance with that of ancient Italy, which was wholly addicted to Commonwealths, and where Rome came to make the greatest account of her rustic Tribes, and to call her Consuls from the Plough; for in the way of Parliaments, which was the government of this Realm, men of Country lives have bin still entrusted with the greatest Affairs, and the People have constantly had an aversion to the ways of the Court.”

“Husbandry, or the country way of life, tho of a grosser spinning, as the best stuf of a Commonwealth, according to Aristotle, such a one being the most obstinate assertress of her Liberty, and the least subject to Innovation or Turbulency...”

“Whercas Commonwealths, upon which the City life has had the stronger influence, as Athens, have seldom or never bin quiet,...but where it consists of Country, the Plough in the hands of the Owner finds him a better calling, and produces the most innocent and Steady Genius of a Commonwealth, such as is that of Oceana.” *Oceana*, Pp.34-35.

50. *Works of the Famous Nicolas Machiavel*, tr. by Henry Neville, London, 1675 edition, P.325.

tleman.”⁵¹ He believed that there was no such thing as pure democracy,⁵² especially in a nation possessing a natural aristocracy of country gentlemen.

He was quite aware that industry involved accumulation, and accumulation was incompatible with equality.⁵³ Yet he refused to extend his principle to property in general on the ground that “the Riches in general have Wings, those in Land are most hooded and ty’d to the Perch.”⁵⁴ Although in one passage he conceded that “in such cities as subsist mostly by Trade, and have little or no land, as Holland and Genoa, the balance of Treasure may be equal to that of Land,”⁵⁵ yet he adhered to his main assertion that power follows the balance of landed property, and saw no reason to extend it in case of England.

His narrow view on property was too obvious to escape his contemporary critics, and his work would have been of greater value if he had applied it to the industrial form of community as exemplified by Holland and Genoa. He was still enmeshed in the toils of mercantilism at the time when some of the clearest heads were beginning to see through its fallacies. But before Harrington is condemned, three points should be taken into consideration. Firstly, he had lived much of his life in dreams of the old days of Greece and Rome, and was not unnaturally influenced by the position which the commercial classes had occupied in the ancient city-states. Secondly, he did not desire to illustrate the larger truth which was already sufficiently recognized, that riches means power. Thirdly, up to the middle of the 17th century, the trade of England had been confined largely to wool, the connection of which with the land need hardly be pointed out. But his general position was sound. He was one of the first writers to give to economic considerations the prominence that they deserve, and to bring them into connection with the science of politics. The long duration of the sovereignty of the Whig landowners bears eloquent testimony to the soundness of his actual thesis.

In the works of Harrington there is moreover a solid fund of valuable thought. He possessed a breadth of conception as remarkable as Milton’s, in combination with a genius for details that was his own. More clearly than any of his contemporaries, he saw that a good government is an organism, and that it must grow naturally out of the conditions of society. His critical and constructive powers entitle him to rank among the foremost of those thinkers who have endeavored to combine democratic principles with the interests of order.⁵⁶ We may not endorse Toland’s opinion that he is “an author who far outdoes all that went before him, in the exquisite knowledge of the politics,”⁵⁷ and we may decline to follow Samuel T. Coleridge in classing him along with Thucydides, Tacitus, Machiavelli, and Bacon, as one of the “red letter names even in

51. *Oceana*, P.56.

52. *Ibid.* P.48.

53. *System of Politics*, etc. P.497.

54. *Prerogative of Popular Government*. P.243.

55. *Oceana*. P.40.

56. G.P. Gooch, *op.cit.* P.254.

57. Preface to Harrington’s *Works*. P. XXvii.

the almanacs of worldly wisdom,"⁵⁸ but the least enthusiastic cannot yet help paying some tribute to his clear thought and undoubted political instinct.

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58. Samuel T. Coleridge (1772-;834): *Statesman's manual, A Lay Sermon*. London, 1816. Printed in *Biographia and Literaria and Two Lay Sermons*. London, 1898. P.315.

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哈靈頓對於十七世紀英國史之解釋

——政權與財產相平衡之理論——

哈靈頓生長於英國史上惟一的政治革命時代——十七世紀——。根據歷史的研究，他發現政權的變革，由於財產之轉移而失去平衡。他所謂財產，專指地產而言。他追溯清教徒革命及內戰的根源，由於都鐸王朝之政策。亨利第七開始頒佈人口家臣分離法令，准許大貴族出售地產。大地產開始分割。亨利第八繼其父親之政策，解散寺院，授地予新家族。及斯都亞王朝接位，君權已失去有力之支柱，無法維持。清教徒領袖克倫威爾更大規模沒收王室，教會，及忠君黨之土地。英國政治制度有必然趨向於民主之勢。在都鐸王朝以前，土地集中於大諸侯，教會首長之手，他們是王室的有力支柱。政府之形式。自然成爲君主專制。及土地之所有者大量激增，財產的平衡，傾向於平民，此爲十七世紀革命風暴之根源。

按照哈靈頓的理論，君主復辟將爲不可能。然哈靈頓提出兩項協調的可能，使政權符合財產之分配，或使財產之分配符合政權。他提議（一）廢止樞密院 (Privy Council)，以國會選舉之各種委員會代之，行使宣戰，媾和，控制民兵及國用（二）廢止王室創設貴族之權，以國會法案代之。（三）每年選舉國會。凡此建議，均削弱王權，納共和思想於復辟君主政體之內。預示1688年榮譽革命後之解決方案。

哈靈頓之理論，政權隨財產而轉移，固爲一般人所接受。但其經濟觀念，則頗爲偏狹。其理想政府始終爲一種地主紳士之農業共和制度，如羅馬共和國。他不信有純粹的民主。他雖然承認以工商業爲基礎之社團。如荷蘭與熱那亞 (Genoa)，金融財富之平衡，與土地一樣，在政治上有支配力量。但他始終認爲英國政權，隨地產之平衡而轉移。因爲在十七世紀英國之商業，大部限於羊毛，而羊毛之生產，與土地不可分。以後英國史上輝格 (whig) 黨的地主，長期執政，證明哈靈頓之理論，並非空想。