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Modest proposals for a better Australian politics

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The beginning of history and the first man: a foundation for a better politics

Jonathan Cole

In a portent of the times, the *Washington Post* published an article in February 2017 with the foreboding title: “The man who declared the ‘end of history’ fears for democracy’s future.”¹ When the latter-day prophet of liberal democracy’s triumph begins to lose faith, one can rest assured that the moment of crisis is upon us. How is it that Francis Fukuyama could plausibly argue in 1992 that, “at the end of history, there are no serious ideological competitors left to liberal democracy,” only for liberal democracy to find itself in crisis a mere 26 years later?² While there is a pervasive sense that something is profoundly wrong with Western politics, accompanied by an equally pervasive yearning for a better politics, there is no consensus about the proximate or ultimate cause(s) of the current political malaise, notwithstanding the best efforts of professional and amateur prognosticators alike.

The present article aspires to a modest contribution to a vision for a better politics. It does so in three parts. The first critically examines Fukuyama’s “end of history” thesis with a view to illuminating the seeds of the current discontent with liberal democracy. The second calls for a retrieval of the Greek insight regarding the integral connection between the well-governed soul and the well-governed state. The third contends that the late-modern abandonment of the Christian doctrine of the fall has contributed to the

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degradation of our political culture and that its recovery is essential to the prospects of an improved politics.

My analysis proceeds from several axiomatic positions that I identify here in the interests of transparency. Firstly, I accept what is implicit in the title of this special edition of *St Mark's Review*, namely, that there is something wrong with Western politics, by which we really mean liberal democracy. Secondly, I share Fukuyama's belief that liberal democracy is the best form of *possible* government, in which case my vision for a better politics is a liberal democratic vision and not some alternative, old or new. Thirdly, I am of the view that political theory ultimately proceeds from anthropological premises, and therefore that disputes in political theory often turn on questions of anthropology. Accordingly, the ensuing discussion of Fukuyama, Greek political philosophy, and Christian theology privileges an anthropological lens.

***Thymotic* man and the end of history**

Given Fukuyama's name has become all but synonymous with a certain optimism regarding the virtues and prospects of liberal democracy, and given this optimism is in rapid decline today, his "end of history" thesis provides a good point of departure for an analysis of the current predicament facing liberal democracy. The cogency of any vision for political improvement is predicated on an accurate diagnosis of the existing problems in need of rectification. To that end, albeit somewhat counterintuitively, Fukuyama's argument about why liberal democracy works provides a basis upon which to identify what it is that currently is not working.

While Fukuyama is best known for the view that liberal democracy had vanquished all ideological rivals by the end of the twentieth century (namely, communism and fascism), the thesis he advances in *The End of History and the Last Man* is largely an exploration of political anthropology as it has developed historically. The crux of the thesis is that what impels historical development is the human "desire for recognition" and that liberal democracy's success rests in the fact that it manages this human desire better than all other systems. As Fukuyama explains,

The problem of human history can be seen, in a certain sense, as the search for a way to satisfy the desire of *both* masters and slaves for recognition on a mutual and equal

basis; history ends with the victory of a social order that accomplishes this goal.³

Fukuyama takes the notion of the “desire for recognition” from Hegel.⁴ But he traces its roots back to Plato, and in particular to Plato’s account of the *thymotic* part of the soul in the *Republic*, from which Fukuyama develops the notion of “*thymotic* man”—what it is that “drives men to seek recognition.”⁵ Fukuyama is not actually interested in Plato’s view of the soul *per se*, but rather in the Greek concept of *thymos*, a term that has long caused difficulty for translators, principally on account of the fact that its semantic field includes emotions or drives regarded today by English-speakers as distinct and contrastive, such as “anger” and “courage.”⁶

Fukuyama interprets *thymos* as “something like an innate human sense of justice.” It is “the psychological seat of all the noble virtues like selflessness, idealism, morality, self-sacrifice, courage and honourability.”⁷ These virtues express themselves in the pursuit for recognition. However, *thymotic* man poses a threat to political order because *thymos* is also the “starting point of human conflict.”⁸ This is because *thymos*, according to Fukuyama, as the driver behind the pursuit for recognition, constantly leads to disagreement, argument, and ultimately anger. As Fukuyama explains,

people believe that they have a certain worth, and when other people act as though they are worthless—when they do not *recognize* their worth at its correct value—then they become angry.⁹

If left unchecked and unsatisfied, the *thymotic* desire for recognition can end in war, as indeed has happened repeatedly throughout the course of history.¹⁰

Fukuyama coins the term *megalothymia* to describe this negative expression of *thymos* as it manifests in political life (*thymos* can also be positive or benign in certain circumstances).¹¹ *Megalothymia* denotes “the desire to be recognised as superior to other people.”¹² It manifests, for example, “in the tyrant who invades and enslaves a neighbouring people so that they will recognize his authority.”¹³ The genius of liberal democracy, Fukuyama contends, is that it provides ample scope for individuals to safely and productively pursue and receive recognition:

democracy’s long-run health and stability can be seen to rest on the quality and number of outlets for *megalothymia*

that are available to its citizens. These outlets not only tap the energy latent in *thymos* and turn it to productive uses, but also serve as grounding wires that bleed off excess energy that would otherwise tear the community apart.¹⁴

Democratic elections represent the vehicle *par excellence* for managing *megalothymia*, as they “provide an outlet for ambitious natures” through which citizens can compete with each other “for public recognition on the basis of conflicting views of right and wrong, just and unjust.”¹⁵

While Fukuyama had formed the view by 1992 that liberal democracy represented the end of history, to the extent that it had vanquished all rival systems for harnessing and managing *megalothymia*, he did not maintain that liberal democracy was impervious to degradation. He regarded excessive, uncontrolled *megalothymia* as a serious threat to liberal democracy.¹⁶ This made him more circumspect regarding liberal democracy’s prospects than he is sometimes given credit for. He saw a growing risk in liberal democracy arising from its blindness to *thymotic* man.¹⁷ This blindness was the consequence of the West’s banishment of *thymos* in the name of *isothymia*—“the fanatical desire for equal recognition.”¹⁸ What emerged to take the place of *thymotic* man in Western political thought was “economic man.”¹⁹ The rise of “economic man” and “fanatical” *isothymia* risks transforming those of us who are citizens of liberal democracies into “self-absorbed last men, devoid of thymotic striving for higher goals in our pursuit of private comforts.”²⁰ It also risks re-opening the door to “extreme” and “pathological” forms of *megalothymia*, and thus returning us to “first men engaged in bloody and pointless prestige battles.”²¹

The problem of evil and the well-governed soul

I wish to affirm Fukuyama’s ambition to recover the political role and impact of the *thymotic* side of human nature, including the dangers of *megalothymia*. I also share his concern about the rise of economic man. Moreover, I think he has genuinely illuminated an important element in liberal democracy’s historical success, namely, its ability to provide avenues for human beings to pursue recognition in ways that do not lead to violent destruction. However, I do not find *megalothymia* a compelling explanation for the current crisis besetting liberal democracies from Australia to America and Europe. The essence of my criticism is that Fukuyama erred in embracing Hegel’s

anthropology (as he interprets it) and that he would have done better to adopt Plato's political anthropology more fully. In particular, I think Fukuyama has lost sight of something important by extracting *thymos* from its context in the Platonic soul and then grafting it onto Hegel's "desire for recognition." This is the problem of evil, which according to Plato emanates from within the individual human soul, as well as the important Platonic insight that the quality of the soul is reflected in the quality of political association.²²

The Hegelian anthropology at the heart of Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis rests on the view that humans do not possess a "permanent and unchanging" nature, but rather are "free and *un*-determined," and thus able to create their own nature in the course of history."²³ This sheds important light on Fukuyama's conviction that the "desire for recognition" is the cog that turns history, to the extent that history constitutes the progressive formation of human nature driven by the desire to attain recognition. The criterion for judging the efficacy of political order thus becomes the extent to which a political order can foster an environment conducive to the creation of a healthy human nature. However, this marks a significant departure from Plato's political anthropology and the place of *thymos* in it.

Plato, *contra* Fukuyama, thought humans possessed a nature (I'm using nature in the English sense here as Fukuyama uses it). Crucially, he believed that at the heart of human nature was found an inner conflict situated in the soul. The soul was comprised of three parts: the "rational," the "spirited" (*thymotic*) and the "appetitive," and these needed to be placed in a hierarchical order lest the human being be given over to evil.²⁴ The ideal hierarchy entailed the rational part of the soul ruling the other parts, something which could only be accomplished via education and a good upbringing.²⁵ One of Plato's most penetrating insights was to recognise that the quality of internal governance within the soul was determinative of the quality of external governance in the political community.²⁶ Humans are individually governed by a *politeia* (a constitution or regime) in the same way that communities are governed by a *politeia*, and the two types of *politeia* have a dependent relationship.²⁷ As Plato articulated it, "if the soul is bad it will perform its functions of governing and caring badly, but if it's good, it will perform all of these things well."²⁸ My affirmation of Plato's political anthropology should not imply affirmation of his metaphysical description of the soul. What I mean to affirm is the insight that individuals

can be well- or poorly-governed within themselves and that this internal governance materially affects political association.

The idea that humans can be well- or badly-governed within themselves and that individual moral character, to give it a contemporary name, collectively determines the moral character of society and political order is echoed in Aristotle, who wrote in *Politics* that

the virtue of a man and that of a citizen in the best state must of necessity be the same, it is evident that a man becomes good in the same way and by the same means as one might establish an aristocratically or monarchically governed state, so that it will be almost the same education and habits that make a man good and that make him capable as a citizen or a king.²⁹

There is a deceptively simple, yet easily overlooked, truism at the centre of this Greek understanding of the relationship between the well-governed soul and the well-governed state: good government depends on good rulers, and good rulers depend on good citizens. This especially inheres in the context of liberal democracies and is particularly apposite in the current moment: if Western citizens desire a better politics then the first step is to become better citizens.³⁰

Underpinning Plato's conception of the inner conflict of the soul and the need for citizens to have well-governed souls was the cognisance that human beings are innately capable of evil, and thus are not born good citizens but rather must be formed into good citizens. As Aristotle pointedly put it, "when devoid of virtue man is the most unscrupulous and savage of animals."³¹ This Greek insight finds its counterpart, *mutatis mutandis*, in Christian anthropology, and in particular its conception of human sin:

But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person (Matt 15:19–20, NRSV).

But unlike the Greek perspective, which looked into the depths of the human soul for insight regarding the possibilities and constraints of politics, Fukuyama's gaze is firmly fixed on the external environment. There is a striking

moral ambiguity in Fukuyama's *thymotic* man, whose *thymotic* expression is judged according to whether it contributes productively and harmlessly to society, which is to say that morality seems to rest in the social context rather than the inner constitution of individual citizens. There is little sense that those "concerned about good government," as Aristotle understood, ought to "take civic virtue and *vice* into their purview."³²

What Fukuyama, and with him, contemporary Western political thought lacks (at least in its English-language variant) is the idea that human nature materially affects the quality of political life. This inverts the Greek conception of the relationship between the citizen and political order: whereas the Greeks (of the classical period) had political order reflecting the moral character of its citizens, Fukuyama has human nature being shaped by political order. At some point in Western history we ceased to look within ourselves for the source of our political woes and began instead to blame the structures around us, seduced by the illusion that human nature is fundamentally good and only requires the right environment to flourish. We also began to look to environment and structure as the locus of our political salvation, under the misapprehension that the good and the just are simply engineering problems. If, as Fukuyama contends, human nature is historically formed and thus historically contingent, then justice and the common good do not depend on human nature *per se*, but rather political order. Hence the view that liberal democracy represented the consummation of history to the extent that it successfully formed the type of human nature Fukuyama could affirm as optimum (within the constraints of human biology). But, this inverts Greek political thought in a second respect. The Greeks thought that the best political order was that which fostered human well-being, which in turn depended on mitigating the evil that lay within the human being. Fukuyama argues that the best political order is that which allows the human being to establish its self-determining nature. This is to say that in Greek political thought, order *reflects* human nature whereas in Fukuyama's political thought order *determines* human nature.

The idea that the source of political problems, including injustice, are structural and environmental, rather than a consequence of what proceeds from the heart, is commonplace in contemporary Western political discourse. We decry, for instance, the quality of politicians as though they are an alien species from that which elects them, or somehow uniquely prone to vices like egocentricity, arrogance, and selfishness, rather than a reflection

of who we are, and who we have become, as a community and individuals. Alternatively, the poor quality of politics is blamed on systemic factors, whereby the current “system” or “architecture” is thought to be either vulnerable to manipulation by the malevolent or incapable of elevating the best citizens. But treating politics in this mechanistic way is simply a means for absolving citizens of any personal blame for the quality of the political order in which they live.³³ It is important to recall that politicians are reared and educated in the same environment as their voters and are thus largely products of the same culture. In that sense, they serve as mirrors in which we can see our own reflection, if only we are prepared to open our eyes. Twitter offers a perfect example of the inability of Western citizens to look within themselves for the source of the decline in contemporary Western political culture. Many curse the invention of Twitter as though it were the impersonal technology itself that had corrupted our common political life rather than the vitriol meted out by its very real human users against real human victims. The sobering reality is that Twitter simply amplifies what is in the human heart, validating Aristotle’s time immemorial dictum that the human being devoid of virtue can be unscrupulous and savage.³⁴

Plato’s awareness of the destructive social consequences of human evil led him to perceive *stasis* as the great and ever-present threat to political association. *Stasis*, often translated as “faction,” denotes the propensity of human beings who are otherwise connected by kinship, language, culture, and religion to become divided, sometimes violently, because of innate human passions and desires like greed and jealousy. Political order can mitigate or exacerbate *stasis*, but *stasis* is fundamentally the product of human nature and thus something that can only be managed, not eradicated. Fukuyama’s *megalothymia* comfortably falls within the scope of *stasis*, but without a concept of innate evil, Fukuyama can only explain political problems, such as injustice, structurally and contextually.³⁵ *Stasis* strikes this author as a better description of the current unravelling of the social fabric in Western societies than runaway *megalothymia*, although as I note above the latter can be viewed as a component in the former. I therefore think a more fruitful place to look for the source of the current *stasis* afflicting Western liberal democracy is the quality of the internal governance of Western citizens.³⁶

Christianity and the rise and demise of liberal democracy

The issue of the soul and evil brings us to Christianity. Fukuyama contends in the *End of History and the Last Man* that Christianity is nothing more than another “slave ideology,” to the extent that it “posits the realisation of human freedom not here on earth but only in the Kingdom of Heaven.”³⁷ The logic behind this view appears to be Fukuyama’s assumption that because Christianity promises freedom in the afterlife, it necessarily promotes slavery to political power in the present life. Setting aside the fact that this is a somewhat simplistic distillation of Christian political theology, Fukuyama’s sentiment reflects (perhaps preceded) the increasingly popular view that the demise of Christianity was a necessary cause in the emergence of liberal democracy.³⁸ However, what Fukuyama fails to countenance is the possibility that it was Christianity’s keen perception of the problem of universal sin and the need to be liberated from its bonds through reconciliation with God which helped to keep the more destructive manifestations of *megalothymia* at bay, thus contributing to liberal democracy’s previous success.

Christianity is indeed a slave “ideology.” But not in the way Fukuyama contends. Christianity teaches that humankind is fallen, and thus all human beings are enslaved to sin. However, Christianity teaches that humans can be liberated from their enslavement to sin through repentance and reconciliation with God through Christ. As John’s gospel recounts,

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying ‘You will be made free’?” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin” (John 8:31–34, NRSV).

It is interesting to note that Hegel was able to grasp what Fukuyama apparently was unable to:

The Christian doctrine that man is by nature evil is superior to the other according to which he is good. Interpreted philosophically, this doctrine should be understood as follows. As spirit, man is a free being [*Wesen*] who is in a

position not to let himself be determined by natural drives. When he exists in an immediate and uncivilised [*ungebildeten*] condition, he is therefore in a situation in which he ought not to be, and from which he must liberate himself. This is the meaning of the doctrine of original sin, without which Christianity would not be the religion of freedom.³⁹

Plato believed that a well-governed soul was attainable, but only through a process of education. While the particular educational regime he recommended, whatever its merits might have been in the context of the Athens of his day, is unsuitable for a twentieth century liberal democracy, the idea that mature citizens must be formed through education is still apt. However, contemporary education in Western liberal democracies, whether at the primary, secondary or tertiary level, does not focus on developing citizens with well-governed souls, or liberating humans from the bonds of sin. Its focus is “economic man.” Its ambition is to equip girls and boys with the skills required to help them find jobs and thus become productive contributors to the gross domestic product. It is no longer the role of education to shape citizens’ morality; this is a matter of personal choice and personal freedom. One could argue that education is not the appropriate place to embark on moral formation, and I certainly do not wish to imply that it is unimportant to equip children with the skills needed to find their way in today’s rapidly changing (digital) economy. However, in prior ages the average citizen received something of a moral formation at church, and there was wide agreement that human nature was fallen and in need of repair. With the precipitous decline of church attendance and Christian belief in Western societies, there is now little impetus for citizens to look within their own souls and ask how well-governed it is and how well it contributes to the governance of the wider political association.

Fukuyama incisively observes that “the self-professed aim of modern education is to “liberate” people from prejudices and traditional forms of authority,” amongst them the church.⁴⁰ However, one of the “prejudices” that education has liberated “economic man” from is the notion that all men and women are affected by sin and are thus in need of liberation from their own fallen natures. If freedom from this “prejudice” really does elevate human nature to a higher plane, then we might reasonably expect to see

this reflected in a higher form of politics. And yet we find ourselves mired in political crisis and mystified by our “newly” discovered incivility.

The metaphysical claims of Christian theology are a bridge too far for many citizens now suckled on naturalism and scientism. Yet an important truth about the human being, which is of the utmost consequence for political association, has fallen victim to the rejection of Christianity, and to our detriment—the need for humans to be morally formed, morally disciplined, and morally repaired (Plato’s well-governed soul).⁴¹ The view that there is something fundamentally and universally deficient in human nature is not *prima facie* incompatible with naturalism and scientism. Nor is it exclusive to Christianity, as we have seen with Plato and Aristotle (the problem of sin also plays a fundamental role in Judaism and Islam). However, the context out of which liberal democracy arose happened to be Christian, with its central doctrine of the fall. The abandonment of the doctrine of the fall possibly represents the greatest political casualty of the decline of Christianity in the West. We now suffer from the delusion that we are unaccountable, autonomous demi-gods, unhindered by a fallen nature.

Fukuyama is right that citizens of liberal democracies have become blind to the dangers of *megalothymia*. But this is symptomatic of a more dangerous and potentially destructive blindness to the problem of sin, out of which *megalothymia* arises. This is the source of our growing *stasis*, just as it was in classical Athens, a testament to the permanent threat posed by human nature to political order. A return to Christian anthropology and Greek ideas about the relationship between the inner governance of human beings and the state will not lead to nirvana any more than it did in fifth century Athens or medieval Christendom. However, rediscovering the truth about the beginning of history and the first man could provide a basis upon which to contemplate a realistic and efficacious vision for a better politics.

Endnotes

- 1 Ishaan Tharoor, “The man who declared the ‘end of history’ fears for democracy’s future,” *The Washington Post*, February 9, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/02/09/the-man-who-declared-the-end-of-history-fears-for-democracys-future/?utm_term=.eefofd23428f. See also Louis Menand, “Francis

- Fukuyama Postpones the End of History,” *The New Yorker*, September 3, 2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/09/03/francis-fukuyama-postpones-the-end-of-history>.
- 2 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992). In an interview with *Esquire*, Fukuyama conceded that “the world is not moving toward greater democracy,” but noted that “it’s still too early to tell whether this is just a glitch akin to a market correction or some kind of permanent state of affairs.” Wesley Yang, “Democracy and Its Discontents,” *Esquire*, October 17, 2017, <https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a23695274/francis-fukuyama-trump-democracy/>.
 - 3 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 152. Emphasis original.
 - 4 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 64-65. The notion of the “end of history” comes from Hegel, particularly as interpreted by Alexandre Kojève, whom Fukuyama describes as Hegel’s greatest twentieth-century interpreter.
 - 5 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 163, 166, 180. According to Fukuyama, Plato’s *Republic* includes the first “extended analysis of the phenomenon of the desire for recognition” in the Western intellectual tradition. *Thymos* and the “desire for recognition” remain central to Fukuyama’s analysis of politics. See Francis Fukuyama, “Against Identity Politics: The New Tribalism and the Crisis of Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2018 issue), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/americas/2018-08-14/against-identity-politics-tribalism-francis-fukuyama>.
 - 6 The complex polysemy of *thymos* is evident in the collection of English terms offered by Liddell and Scott to capture its meaning: “soul,” “spirit,” “the principle of life,” “feeling and thought,” “desire,” “inclination,” “mind,” “temper,” “will,” and “the seat of passion, emotion.” Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* 8th ed. with supplement, rev. Henry Stuart Jones with Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). In the context of Plato’s *Republic*, Emlyn-Jones and Preddy translate *thymos* as “passion” and “spirit.” See Plato, *Republic*, 440b, 441a. Shorey translates *thymos* as “high spirit.” See Plato, *Republic*, ed. and trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937).
 - 7 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 171.
 - 8 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 163, 182. The desire for recognition “is the most specifically political part of the human personality because it is what drives men to want to assert themselves over other men.”

- 9 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 165. Emphasis original.
- 10 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 145.
- 11 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 182.
- 12 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 182.
- 13 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 182.
- 14 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 315.
- 15 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 317.
- 16 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 314.
- 17 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 189-190.
- 18 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 190, 314. “a civilisation that indulges in unbridled *isothymia*, that fanatically seeks to eliminate every manifestation of unequal recognition, will quickly run into limits imposed by nature itself.” *Isothymia* receives attention in the context of Fukuyama’s recent work on identity politics. See Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018).
- 19 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 145, 174, 190. “Economic man” is my term, but the idea is Fukuyama’s. “The failure to understand the thymotic component of what is normally thought of as economic motivation leads to vast misinterpretations of politics and historical change.”
- 20 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 328.
- 21 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 328.
- 22 “Evil” (*kakia* or *to kakon*) is also translated as “vice.”
- 23 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 146. Emphasis original.
- 24 The translation of these terms is taken from F. E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 170.
- 25 Plato, *Republic*, trans. and ed. Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2013), 441e, 442a. “Is it then fitting for the rational to govern, as it is wise and has forethought for the whole of the soul, and for the passions to be subject to and an ally of it? ‘Certainly.’” Plato regarded education and upbringing as intimately connected:
- For a good upbringing and education kept up produces people who are naturally good, and good offspring in turn seize upon such an education and grow even better than their predecessors” (424a).

- 26 Plato, *Republic*, 435de. “ ‘Is it not essential,’ I said, ‘that we agree on this at least: that there are the same concepts and character in each of us as in the state? I don’t think they could get there any other way: for it would be ridiculous to think that passion [*to thymoeides*] did not occur in our states from individuals who are indeed the origin of it...”
- 27 Plato, *Republic*, 579c, 591e, 605b. “ἀνὴρ ὃς ἂν κακῶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ πολιτευόμενος (the man who is badly governed within himself); “τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ πολιτείαν.” (his inner constitution); “κακὴν πολιτείαν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστου τῆς ψυχῆς.” (a bad constitution in the soul of each individual).
- 28 Plato, *Republic*, 353d.
- 29 Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944), 1288a35-1288b1.
- 30 This runs directly counter to the logic underpinning Plato’s *politeia* “in speech,” which is predicated on breeding and educating a superior ruling class (auxiliaries) from which rulers (guardians) are selected precisely on the basis of their superiority (in both nature and nurture) against the wider citizen body. Here I am drawing a different conclusion from the same premise. With Plato I think the internal governance of individual citizens determines the quality of rule in the state. However, unlike Plato, who thought that it therefore followed that only the best by nature should be allowed to rule (a form of aristocracy), and that this required the best being isolated from the majority, lest their souls be contaminated, I argue that the “souls” (to use Plato’s language) of the majority citizens ought to be elevated (with democracy in view).
- 31 Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a35.
- 32 Aristotle, *Politics*, 1280b5. Emphasis mine. The word translated here by Rackham as “vice” (*kakia*) is translated as “evil” in Emlyn-Jones and Preddy’s translation of Plato’s *Republic*.
- 33 This mechanistic view of government has an enlightenment pedigree. Mill, for example, identified two views of government prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century, which he designated “mechanical contrivances” and “living organisms.” Holders of the former view “look upon a constitution in the same light . . . as they would upon a steam plow, or a threshing machine.” John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (Withort: Anodos Books, 2017), 3–4.
- 34 Much is made of the fact that Twitter seems to encourage types of speech that users might not be prepared to engage in when confronted with real

interpersonal encounters. But this line of argument appears to make the technology itself—in this case a medium of communication—responsible for what is widely heralded as inappropriate behavior. I think this erroneously shifts the burden of responsibility. Twitter's anonymity might lure some individuals into saying nasty things they might not otherwise say, but one fails to see why this absolves users of full responsibility for their own speech and its effects.

- 35 I am not suggesting that structural and environmental factors play no role in injustice and human suffering, only that these are second-order effects of individual human sin/evil.
- 36 While few philosophers, let alone scientists, now take the soul, as conceived by Plato, seriously, most still recognise its constitutive parts, i.e., reason, desire and passion, as real and consequential aspects of the human being, irrespective of the material explanation given for them, e.g., neural pathways and chemicals in the brains.
- 37 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 197.
- 38 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 216. This is a highly contentious view for the simple fact that liberal democracy emerges in Christian societies (at least culturally) and the decline in Christian faith actually comes much later, bringing into question the posited causal relationship between the two.
- 39 G. W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 51.
- 40 Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 116.
- 41 I recognise that the Platonic soul is not tantamount to the Christian soul. While early Christian thought embraced the idea that the immortal soul is embedded in a corruptible body (with the Greeks), it did not ultimately adopt Plato's tripartite division of the soul. As the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* helpfully notes, "Israelite anthropology is monistic" in contrast to "older distinctions between dichotomy and trichotomy." Gerhard Friedrich, ed., and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. and ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), s.v. ψυχή (631). Here I use "soul" metaphorically to allude to Plato's insight that the individual is governed by a constitution (*politeia*) in the same way that states are, a notion I take to be compatible with the Christian doctrine of sin.