Agency at the Crossroads of the 16th Century: Governance and the State in Humanist and Contemporary Political Thought

by

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BAH, Queen's University, 2009

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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This thesis seeks to investigate the relationship between the concepts of the State and Governance in political and international relations theory with the hope of recovering a place for agency. Following from the work of Michel Foucault, and drawing on the historical methodology of Quentin Skinner, I locate in the 16th century a 'crossroads' in the development of the State and Governance, particularly in the work of the Henrician humanists – political writers of the Early Tudor period (1513-1533). I argue that their articulation of a politicized conception of Governance held a central place for the human agent living the *vita activa* as an ambassador between the rationality of the divine sphere and that of the terrestrial. Reading these findings through the later work of Foucault, I locate in this dynamic a central role for agency as tied to these theories of Governance that have become veiled by the State. Finally, I make two suggestions in regards to the application of these findings. First, that political/international relations theory take seriously the role of the diplomat as agent, and second, that the disciplinary intersection between history and politics be further emphasized and explored.

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Introduction

When referring to political actors in contemporary language, we often use the terms 'state' and 'government' synonymously, despite assertions in the field of political theory that "government and state are emphatically not the same."[1] These arguments are difficult to substantiate, however, especially when the ideas are brought to their theoretical and idealized abstractions in the concepts of the State[2] and Governance, as these ideas often resist concrete definition.[3] There has been a considered effort of late to try to understand these terms, especially in the flood of recent literature on the State and in the wake of the popularity of Michel Foucault's work on governmentality. Attempts to define these terms, and to establish the importance of the concepts in relation to each other, have led to more contention than consensus and a debate which only serves to reinforce the boundary between them, rather than to determine their relation. Furthermore, as I will show, the debate over the nature of these terms has served to remove human agency from common consideration, masking the ways in which the human agent can serve a crucial role in the interaction between these two ideas.

As such, instead of attempting to define Governance and the State in opposition to each other – as is commonly done – I suggest an analysis of the convergence of these concepts. Given how the segregating tension in the contemporary literature makes it

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[1] Martin Van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 415.

[2] In referring to 'the State' as opposed to 'a state,' I employing a generally accepted distinction in the literature between a particular political entity and the larger theoretical construct. See, for example, the distinctions made by reviewer Paul Thomas in "The State of the State," *Theory and Society* 33.2 (2004): 270

[3] Governance, as I use it, is synonymous to the language of "the problematics of government," or the "problem of government" in much of the literature. See Gerry Stoker, "Governance as Theory: Five Prepositions," *International Social Science Journal* 50.1 (1998): 17-28; Thomas Lenke, "Foucault, Governmentality and Critique," *Rethinking Marxism* 14.3 (2002): 49-64; Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, "Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government," *British Journal of Sociology* 43.2 (1992): 172-205.

difficult to understand how these ideas are related by analyzing current thought, I propose that it is necessary to follow the concepts back, temporally speaking, to where the intersection of meanings significantly occurred. Governance and the State share a common history in political thought that is too often ignored in attempts to determine primacy between them. This common history is found in a precise historical moment of transition, in which political legitimacy was not grounded in divine, nor royal, nor statist authority, but rather the power and agency of the educated citizen. This was based on a particular understanding of the nature of the political, and a specific relationship between Governance and the State, expressed in the work of sixteenth-century humanists.[4] It was in this period when political philosophy brought moral governance under the purview of increasingly centred territorial political rule – in other words where Governance and the State encounter each other. I posit that by tracing the work of political theorists of this period – the Henrician humanists – we can begin to understand the relation between the State and Governance and the critical place held by the human agent.

As my first two chapters will serve to provide much of the introductory background to this investigation by highlighting the extant work in political theory and intellectual history, I will use this introduction simply to say a few words in regards to my methodological leanings, and to provide an overview of the argument I will be presenting chapter-by-chapter. First, in terms of methodology, I am employing a historical contextualist reading of sixteenth-century thought as a means to understand the basis of the ideas that we use today, especially to explore concepts, and more importantly

[4] My work will be on English political tracts spanning the period from 1513-1533.

the relations between concepts, that we may 'take for granted' or have in some sense ceased to question critically. Relationality has only recently become a disciplinary focus, and as such, there is much work to be done applying it to the history of political thought.

My contextualism is very much drawn from the Skinnerian tradition, or what has been called the 'new' history of political thought. Presenting it briefly through the concise summation provided by James Tully in "The Pen is a Mighty Sword" this method involves situating the historical text in its linguistic, ideological and practical (or political) contexts, which I will do in the latter half of my second chapter. Following this, the historian marks where (historically speaking) change occurred and how/why this change became conventionalized.[5] Certainly this relates very much to my aim, in terms of tracing the interactions of the State and Governance; however, I would mark that my deviation from this Skinnerian method occurs in terms of the treatment of change. I am not so much looking for the change, but rather the process of change – the transitional moment itself – and what themes were present in that moment. It is truly only a slight deviation, and really only changes the focus, not the method itself.[6]

My contextualism, however, has an added element, and this is related to a theme which will reoccur throughout my work here. I am interested in a specific kind of *unveiling* when it comes to those ideas which we take for granted, or that which may be 'under' or 'supporting' dominant or hegemonic concepts such as the State. Whereas other attempts to get 'beneath' or 'beyond' the State have sought to do so by destroying or

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[5] James Tully, "The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics," in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. James Tully (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 7-27.

[6] Skinner's methodology also importantly emphasizes agency and an interaction between theory and practice – themes which will becomes important in my analysis of the Henrician humanists. There are important connections to be made between the work and aims of the sixteenth-century humanists and those of Skinner's methodology; due to the scope of this piece, I will only make indications towards such connections, and attempt to draw them out a little more fully in my conclusion.

removing it, I take the words of Michel Serres as my method: "Unveiling does not consist in removing an obstacle, taking away a decoration, drawing aside a blanket under which lies the naked thing, but in following patiently and with respectful diplomacy the delicate disposition of the veils, zones, neighbouring spaces."[7] To apply this to the project at hand, I am not interested in tearing the veil of the State in order to discover what may lie beneath it, but rather in understanding how the relations it forms with other concepts may be shaping our interaction with it.

This attention to the relations between concepts forms the content of Chapter 1, in which I seek to present the contemporary standing of the concepts of the State and Governance in political and international relations theory. In this chapter, I am particularly concerned to draw out the literatures that establish a relation between these concepts, despite the fact that this relation is usually one of supremacy and subjugation. In order to organize this discussion, I present three categories within the scholarship of State-framing: (1)State-centrism, (2)State-critique and (3)State-shaping. Through theorists such as Jen Bartelson and RBJ Walker, I highlight the ways in which the State has become all-encompassing and largely unavoidable, despite attempts in the last thirty years to promote a focus on Governance. I suggest that this has a great deal to do with the temporal framing of the debate – for both sides contingency is weakness and the more enduring or even timeless concepts take precedence. Following from the work of Foucault on governmentality, I argue for a historical perspective that takes into account

[7] Michel Serres, *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*, trans. Margaret Sankey and Peter Cowley (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 82.

the contextual nature of both concepts, not at their origins but at a fascinating moment of convergence – that of sixteenth-century English humanism.

This brings me to Chapter 2, where I begin to 'follow patiently' the disposition of the veils temporally, by examining the historiography of sixteenth-century English political thought. Here again we encounter the veiling nature of the State, as we find the disacknowledgement of the political theory of the humanists has been grounded in their lack of clearly articulated State theory. It is further veiled by a related line – that which separates the medieval and modern periods. The very reasons that I come to the sixteenth century as a period of interest – its transitional nature and the focus on Governance – are the reasons that it has remained so understudied in intellectual history. After noting some of the more recent works from historians that draw out the potential of work on this period, and especially emphasizing the necessarily political nature of any such investigation, I will present some contextual evidence for the transitional nature of the period. In particular, the intellectual context of continental humanism and secularized conciliarism provides a fascinating connection to – and simultaneous break with – medieval thought. The political context of early sixteenth-century England echoes this trend, as the violent and dramatic break with medieval feudalism represented by the Wars of the Roses led to increased centralization and the rebuilding of political legitimacy in terms of a tightly controlled print and propaganda culture, while still carrying many of the legacies of a feudalistic structure.

Chapters 3 and 4 present the work of a number of Henrician humanists who were seeking to guide this transitional moment according to their own philosophies. In Chapter 3 I present texts written by John Rastell, Desiderius Erasmus, Thomas More, Christopher

St. German, Thomas Elyot and Thomas Starkey, highlighting the ways in which these thinkers were in dialogue contextually, and used a dialogical form and method in their work. Specifically, I will draw attention to their reconciliation of the medieval separation of body and soul, and their placement of both under the purview of the political, which politicized 'higher' notions of Governance. Their reconceptualization of the aims of the political to include spiritual as well as material welfare necessitated the articulation of a new skill-set to be held by governors – termed the 'art of government' by Foucault. By understanding Governance as connected to a specific form of reason, the humanists shifted the attention away from the prince, and to their own role as counsellors and ambassadors of both the practical and theoretical realms. This convergence of the practical and the theoretical is articulated in their reconciliation of another previously dichotomous pairing – the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* (or active and contemplative life). As I will show, understanding the nature of this relation between the active and contemplative, occurring at the junction between political/spiritual Governance and the creation of the administrative State, provides us with a real understanding of the human agent as the central component, and agency thus as a central thematic.

Ending with Serres' attention to 'respectful diplomacy' and 'veils, zones [and] neighbouring spaces,' in Chapter 4 I will present, as a final source, Hans Holbein's 1533 portrait, *The Ambassadors* (Appendix 1). Thinking through this painting will allow us to connect the humanists' negotiation of the spheres to the contemporary attention to lines in political/international relations theory and to understand how the human agent has been resituated in present thought not at the crucial negotiatory nexus of these lines as with sixteenth-century English humanism, but rather limited by the lines of the State. As I

will demonstrate, the vertical line of Governance is now ruled by the horizontal State line, in a way that disallows the human agent to act at their intersection. Agency is lost under this line, this veil, the State.

Chapter 1 – The State of the Literature

As I outlined in the introduction, there is some conceptual confusion in contemporary language in how we employ and understand the concepts of the State and Governance. This confusion is made worse by the common conflation of Governance and government, which I also mention in my introduction. By focusing on the more abstract 'problem of government,' we move away from questions of a particular government, or even a particular form of government, to the very nature of 'to govern' and the ideals that such a concept carries. As such we enter the literature of political theory, where the confusion over Governance and the State has the potential to turn to contention.

There is a complex relationship between the State and Governance as they have been expressed in the literature of political theory. Although each concept has a long history, in terms of how it has been engaged with by political theorists, I would like to begin by discussing the ways in which the concepts have been articulated in relation to each other in the scholarship of the last forty years before moving on to the more historical literature in the subsequent chapters, taking this recent scholarship as problematic in the framing of the relations between the State and Governance. What one sees, by taking this focus, are two distinctive yet related literatures: the first and more traditionally dominant, which I term 'State-framed,' in which ideas of government and Governance are subsumed by the concept of the State as the means by which the State asserts its authority and fulfils its function. The second literature, built in some sense as an opposition or critique of the first, reverses this move, placing structures or issues of Governance over that of the State in terms of their importance or relevance to the questions of political theory. Both of these arguments employ a specific notion of

temporality in their assertions – the more ‘enduring’ concept wins; contingency is weakness. As a subset of this discussion, then, is a third move, in which the contingency of both concepts is recognized, allowing the criteria according to which these concepts are given precedence to be reformulated. In my case, this is precisely the move which allows agency to re-enter the discussion. Whereas the focus on temporal endurance places emphasis on the institutions and their ability to endure temporally, understanding how both these concepts allow or disallow the performance of agency places primacy on the human agent, and institutions can be judged accordingly.

An important note before I continue: when I refer to State-framed literature, I do not mean only those scholars who argue prescriptively for the maintenance, continuance or dominance of the State. One does not have to espouse the benefits of the State in order for it to form the centre of an argument. Perhaps more importantly, and more alarmingly, one does not have to even explicitly deal with the State in order for it to dominate one’s discourse. This is why I employ the term ‘State-framed’ literature, rather than a more familiar term, such as ‘State-centrism.’ State-centrism certainly forms a component of State-framing; in my view it captures the literature which explicitly deals with the State as the focus of analysis, either as a subject or an object of study. However, by acknowledging only this literature, we miss the more subversive ways that political theory is drawn to and by the State.

So within the literature of State-framing, we have the most obvious State-centric literature, the literature of State critique (which includes the scholarship espousing the focus on Governance over the State), and finally, and more difficult to isolate, we have political theory that is shaped by the State, consciously or unconsciously. My attention to

the first category will be limited, as it is becoming a less predominant tendency in political theory. That being said, there is a limited revival of State-centrism through the resurgence of Hobbesian State-as-fiction arguments, which I will treat through the work of Kenneth Waltz and David Runciman. This literature has been in decline due in large part to the critique that it sustained in the later decades of the 20th century. In fact, for the last thirty years or so, the trendy, if not dominant, arguments have been to critique rather than espouse State-centrism. One line of this critique has been that of Governance-over-the-State, where Governance is presented as the alternative to the study of the State, based largely on a concept of the State as historically contingent. However, as Jens Bartelson has pointed out, such critiques have actually served to perpetuate the State by continuing to take it as the critical object of analysis, and that a fully contingent State actually circles back to the State-as-fiction, as I will demonstrate in the work of Quentin Skinner. Finally, arguments have emerged recently that even when the State is not the object of analysis/critique, it remains the dominant framing device of political theory. Attempting to capture this literature and the way that it assumes the State is difficult in its inexplicitness, so I turn to the work by R.B.J. Walker as a way of understanding how this more subversive State-framing operates.

One may note quite rightly that although I set out to present two literatures – State-over-Governance and Governance-over-State – in fact the latter scholarship is absorbed into the critical category of State-framing, and the entire literature of political/international relations theory, as Walker will present it, is shaped by the predominance of the State, leading us to question whether this second literature presents an actual alternative to the first. This is, of course, precisely the problematic that I am

interested to investigate. It appears that the State has stolen focus, even by those who critique it, and a radical shift in perspective will be required to understand what this may mean for those interested in recovering human agency.[8]

State-centrism and the Eternal

As sociologist Neil Brenner points out, "a state-centric epistemology has dominated the modern social sciences since their inception during the late nineteenth century."[9] Drawing from the work of John Agnew, Brenner defines this phenomenon as consisting of two characteristics: "1) the conception of space as a static platform of social action that is not itself constituted or modified socially; and 2) the conception of state territoriality as a preconstituted, naturalized, or unchanging scale of analysis."[10] In both elements Brenner draws attention to the temporality of state-centrism: "Taken together, these assumptions produce an internalist model of society development in which territoriality operates as the *static, timeless container of historicity*."[11] The static and unchanging conception of the State is a key element of a State-centric discourse.

This "discourse of eternity," as historian and international relations theorist Andreas Osiander terms it, places value on the "necessity and timelessness of units."[12] Associated strongly with the theorists of the realist school of international relations such

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[8] There is, as many have pointed out, some room for human agents within the wider State-framed literature. In particular, two roles for agency can be identified: the individual subject of the State with rights and duties; or the individual (or group or people) with the right to revolt against a government or state. That being said, I am still interested to investigate how agency can be understood in a different way – as a *central* concern of the political.

[9] Neil Brenner, "Beyond State-Centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies," *Theory and Society* 28 (1999): 46.

[10] Brenner, "State-Centrism," 45. See John Agnew, "Timeless Space and State-Centrism: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory" in *Global Economy as Political Space*, eds. Stephen J. Rosow, Naeem Inayatullah and Mark Rupert (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 87-108.

[11] Brenner, "State-Centrism," 46. Emphasis added.

[12] Andreas Osiander, *Before the State: Systemic Political Change in the West from the Greeks to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11.

as Kenneth Waltz, this State discourse is both ahistorical and presentist, taking as an assumption "that in the history of 'international' relations there has never been a time that was not the present."[13] Also in Brenner's statement above is the State-as-container view; in addition to being eternal, the State is all-encompassing and contains "components" like government.[14] The State encapsulates Governance as well in its actions, as it is assumed that the "modern state *governs*," but without a full understanding of this concept of governing – where it comes from or what it is – outside of the ways in which it is caught up in the State.[15]

As both Brenner and Osiander point out, this discourse was nearly hegemonically dominant until the 1970s, when a variety of factors (Brenner points primarily to the rise of globalization theories, other scholars have attributed it to alternate sources) led to the questioning of this disciplinary assumption. Before turning to the nature of this 'questioning' and the less obvious State-framing that pervades it, it should be noted that it has not succeeded in fully discrediting or destroying realist State-centrism, as it still has vehement supporters. One notable example is Waltz, who continues to write on the resilience of the State. For example, in a 1999 piece entitled "Globalization and Governance," a subject with particular relevance to this discussion, Waltz tackles head-on the view that State-centrism, and the State, were in any way affected by the critiques of the latter decades of the 20th century: "States perform essential political social-economic functions, and no other organization appears as a possible competitor to

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[13] Osiander, *Before the State*, 11.

[14] Bartelson, *Critique*, 106.

[15] Rees Davies, "The State: Tyranny of a Concept?" *Journal of Historical Sociology* 15.1 (2002): 71. Emphasis added. Governance therefore becomes a crucial term to understanding when it is expected to work outside of or beyond the State, such as in the plethora of emerging Global Governance literature. See Wendy Larner and William Walters, eds., *Global Governmentality: Governing Global Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2004).

them."[16] For Waltz, States endure. They *must* endure because of the necessary actions that they perform: "The range of governmental functions and the extent of state control over society and economy has seldom been fuller than it is now."[17] Of course, here again is the ambiguity between the roles of the State and government and, despite the title of the article, Waltz does not flesh out exactly what role he assigns to Governance. Instead, he brings in Governance as a remedy to the increasing inequality (in terms of power capabilities) between States on the international stage. Governance outside the State for Waltz has the potential to mitigate the varying power of governments within the State that define and justify its existence. The State line is, of course, key, separating and cutting across varying and particular forms of governance.

Beyond international relations, some political theorists are also attempting to revive the concept of the State against those who would seek to cast it off. Much as the realist school of Waltz draws greatly from Hobbes, so too with political theorists who see the essentialness of the State captured in its very fictitiousness. For example, David Runciman notes that the apparent disappearance of the State is not so much because it is actually fading as a tool or object of political discourse, but rather because it is an association that is, in legal terms, fictional and therefore difficult to see or define.[18] He compares the State to money: neither truly exists, and when you take away "all the gold

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[16] Kenneth Waltz, "Globalization and Governance," *Political Science Online* (1999).

[17] Waltz, "Globalization and Governance."

[18] What is interesting in Runciman's piece here is his assertion that, although the state cannot "be identified with a relation between individuals or groups of individuals," it can "emerge out of such a relation." It may be safe to assume that Governance would fall under this categorization of 'relation' and I will, in time, be dealing with it in those terms. Runciman's pointing to the State's emergence out of relationality also draws on the Hobbesian contract position; I will be thinking it through another historical literature. David Runciman, "The Concept of the State: the Sovereignty of a Fiction," in *States and Citizens: History, Theory Prospects*, eds. Quentin Skinner and Bo Straith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 28-9.

and the government – it is hard to see anything still there."[19] Runciman engages importantly with this language of the visual in terms of the State. Drawing upon Hobbes, Runciman notes that "Another way of putting it (which is close to the way Hobbes himself puts it) is to see the state as a kind of mask. It is important, for all concerned, not to look behind the mask, though there are certain circumstances in which it is impossible not [to] wonder at the whole giant charade."[20] As he points out in his final paragraphs, this conception of the State as a fiction might at first seem to weaken it, but in fact makes it more resilient: "The forces of globalisation will inevitably undermine some of those things with which we identify the state…. But the state, like money, is a kind of fiction, and it owes both its existence and its power to the fact that it is never to be identified with anyone, or anything, in particular."[21] By becoming a fiction, the State has the ability to transcend the particular and become eternalized.

State-critique and Contingency

As Runciman alludes to, it is this conception of the State that makes it especially difficult to critique; its fictionality not only serves to make it complicated to define, but also means that critique will only serve to perpetuate the fiction. If we accept this, the only way to truly rid ourselves of the State is to simply not acknowledge it. This has the potential to do two things: either we then simply take it for granted (a view I will return to) or we find ourselves struggling not to think of the proverbial pink elephant.

International relations scholar Jens Bartelson has recently documented the extant literature that serves to critique the State, and the problems, such as those above, with

[19] Runciman, "Concept of the State," 35.

[20] Runciman, "Concept of the State," 36.

[21] Runciman, "Concept of the State," 37. I will be returning to the Hobbesian state-as-fiction in my discussion of Quentin Skinner to follow.

these projects. In *The Critique of the State*, Bartelson addresses the same arguments that Waltz engages with, the suggestions "that the sovereign state is unlikely to remain the main source of political authority in the future."[22] Not only does this create fear, because of the ways that "what lies beyond it is not simply unknown to us, but also effectively hidden by our statist intellectual predispositions," but Bartelson also puts forward the argument that critique actually serves to constitute the State, both in its historical development and its contemporary presence in political thought: "far from being inherently opposed to authority, criticism ought to be understood as conducive to its smooth functioning, not because of what it says, but rather because of what it does by saying what it says. So when somebody says that the modern state is withering away, that may be seen as a way of breathing new life into it."[23] Cries of 'the king is dead' carry with them the response of 'long live the king.'

Although Bartelson details a variety of traditions of State critique, as well as few that have attempted to answer them, one of particular interest here is historical contingency.[24] What may also be called the temporalization or contextualization of the State, this move as Bartelson describes it involves "arguing that a given identity not only has a history of its own, but in fact is nothing but the outcome of its history when viewed from the present."[25] When applied to the State, this shows the State as "but one possible

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[22] Jens Bartelson, *The Critique of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1.

[23] Bartelson, *Critique of the State*, 2, ix-x.

[24] This is a concept akin to, although not the same as, discourse contingency. What I focus on is the second of the two-part definition that Bartelson provides on page 152; rather than denaturalization, I focus on temporalization. This choice is based less on an evaluation of what is relevant for political theory as a whole than an attention to the intersection of the political and the historical – a point which is of particular interest here.

[25] Bartelson, *Critique of the State*, 155.

constellation of authority in the historical evolution of technologies of power."[26] Making an argument for contingency through contextualization allows scholars to argue that the State is "merely one of the forms which, historically speaking, the organization of government has assumed, and which, accordingly, need not be considered eternal and self-evident any more than were previous ones."[27] In this example from the work of historian Martin Van Creveld, the State is derided as unenduring in contrast to the more enduring question of how to order society. Bartelson conceptualizes this sort of argument as consisting of "successive rhetorical battles over the relationship between the state and civil society," including the move "to replace the state with the concepts of government or political system."[28] A somewhat similar argument is made by Foucaultian scholars Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, who argue that "the state can be seen as a specific way in which the problem of government is discursively codified."[29] It is this "problem of government," or Governance, which dictates the State, and therefore changes the relevant question of political theory from "accounting for government in terms of the 'power of the State'" to "ascertaining how and to what extent the state is articulated into the activity of government."[30]

Of course this comes exactly to the thrust of the argument that I present here, as Bartelson himself shows by immediately bringing in Foucault's arguments regarding governmentality. Foucault may have emphasized the study of mechanisms of Governance, but understood both the State and Governance in specific historical

[26] Bartelson, *Critique of the State*, 169.

[27] Van Creveld, *Rise and Decline of the State*, 415.

[28] Bartelson, *Critique of the State*, 170.

[29] Rose and Miller, "Political Power Beyond the State," 176.

[30] Rose and Miller, "Political Power Beyond the State," 176.

contexts. In particular, Foucault isolated the role of sixteenth-century 'art of government' literature in the development of the concept of the State.[31] It was this sixteenth-century discourse, which encompasses several of the texts I will be examining in latter chapters, that laid the groundwork for "governmentality," a crucial support for the State. By examining the ways in which governmentality supported the State historically, Foucault drew attention to the political mechanisms of Governance that operated within the structure of the State, but that had remained veiled by a conceptualization of the State that integrated them without expressly taking them into account.[32]

In "Governmentality," Foucault draws attention to the "crossroads" of the sixteenth century in which the questions of Governance and the State are both encountered in new ways:

> How to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to become the best possible governor – all these problems in their multiplicity seem to me to be characteristic of the sixteenth century, which lies, to put it schematically, at the crossroads of two processes: the one which, shattering the structures of feudalism, leads to the establishment of the great territorial, administrative and colonial states; and that totally different movement which, with the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, raises the issue of how one must be spiritually ruled and led on this earth.[33]

What emerges out of this interaction is a new rationality of Governance. Whereas governing had previously encompassed a wide variety of practices – Foucault draws specific attention to its articulation in the Christian pastoral – the art of government

[31] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*, eds. Michel Senellart, François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: studies in governmentality: with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); *The Birth of Biopolitics*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[32] Foucault, "Governmentality."

[33] Foucault, "Governmentality," 87-88.

literature expresses these questions specifically in terms of the political, and in terms of means towards a desired end. The interaction between Governance and the State occurs at this point, "when governmentality became a calculated and reflected practice."[34] As such, there is a close connection between these questions of Governance and the endurance of the State, for "the governmentalization of the state is at the same time what has permitted the state to survive."[35]

One could, and many do, see Foucault's analysis as expressly falling into the category that I detailed above: promoting a study of Governance over the contextualized state. However, as I see it, Foucault's attention to Governance was not to dismiss or destroy the State, but rather to understand these 'battling' (to use Bartelson's term) concepts in historical context. By understanding the linkages between Governance and the State, Foucault points to the undeniable relation between them – a relation that may be misrepresented by the way the literature has set them up in an battle for subjectival supremacy. Furthermore, Foucault notes that it is this relation which has allowed the State to endure. Where the State-centric theories note the endurance of the State as a reason to study it, as I detailed above, Foucault links this explicitly to themes of Governance, without making a similar unlimited temporal claim about the latter concept.[36]

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[34] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 165.

[35] Foucault, "Governmentality," 103.

[36] It is worth qualifying this statement, as Foucault does identify a general sense of government in his later works that exists in any 'form of association' and would therefore be temporally enduring. Governmentality, as such, becomes a particular species of this more generalized governance. However, in so far as it converges with the explicitly political (and therefore meets with the political theory-oriented interests I have here), Governance for Foucault is historically situated. See Michel Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality*, Volume II," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 333-339.

As a final note, Foucault's later works, which amend his views on governmentality, recover a sense of agency and freedom in the performance of certain perceptions of governance. The way that the State serves to veil Governance, for Foucault, has the potential to veil agency as well, by supporting one discursive mode and set of relations over another. The details of this later recovery of agency form much of my third chapter, and as such I will not present them here, but it is important to note for the moment that the dual contextualization of theories of the State and Governance has this potential for rediscovering agency.

Bartelson responds to the Foucaultian contingency move by asserting: "a full temporalization of the state does not just necessitate a substitution of questions of government for questions of state… [but also] a wholesale relativization of the state be rendered a historically contingent mode of government… consequently, the concept of sovereignty must be treated as a juridico-political fiction, and then carefully contextualized in all its historical variety."[37] In other words, to fully understand the State in context involves the implication of understanding it as a fiction, and as I drew attention to above, the State-as-fiction is in fact the strongest articulation of the State in the literature. Bartelson draws attention therefore to a dangerous circularity that results from the oppositional or subsuming framing of the State and Governance. In seeking to escape the Hobbesian State, temporalization seems to lead us right to it.

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[37] Bartelson, *Critique of the State*, 173. I should note that Bartelson is referring here to State *sovereignty* and not the State itself, a distinction worth considering. However, such an investigation is outside the scope of the current piece.

There is perhaps no better example of this occurring than in the work of Quentin Skinner.[38] Much like Foucault, Skinner's method involves the contextualization of such political ideas as the State, in terms of the problems that they were expressed to answer.[39] Language thus becomes key, as does an attention to the intellectual debates surrounding the expression of new political vocabularies.[40] Skinner has turned his attention to the State in a number of works, most notably his *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*,[41] "The State,"[42] and, most recently, "A Genealogy of the Modern State."[43] Beginning with a traditional and Hobbesian view of the State in *Foundations*, Skinner in "The State" begins to turn his gaze to the power of civil society within the State, and concerns of Governance. However, in the most recent piece, Skinner reverses this view and through a genealogical examination of the fully-contextualized State once again arrives as the powerful and subsuming State-as-fiction. This set of texts therefore represents strongly the circularity pointed out by Bartelson, as its attention to context both begins and ends with a Hobbesian fictionalized State. What I am most interested in is the middle text,

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[38] Skinner might present a divergence from exactly the methodological phenomenon to which Bartelson is referring as he's not contextualizing the State as a means to critique or replace it. However, I think a treatment of the circularity in his work does serve to explicate the circularity that Bartelson is drawing attention to.

[39] For a detailed account of the differences between Foucault and Skinner methodologically and politically see Ryan Walter, "Reconciling Foucault and Skinner on the State: the Primacy of Politics?" *History of the Human Sciences* 21.3 (2008): 94-114.

[40] For more on Skinner's method see Quentin Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume One: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), x. See Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas" and "A Reply to my Critiques," in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. James Tully (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 29-67, 231. See also James Tully's summary of the Skinnerian method in the same volume: "The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics," 7-27.

[41] Skinner, *Foundations: Vol. One*, Quentin Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume Two: The Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[42] Quentin Skinner, "The State," in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, eds. Terence Ball, James Farr and Russell L. Hanson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 90-131.

[43] Quentin Skinner, "A Genealogy of the Modern State" (British Academy Lecture; published in *Proceedings of the British Academy* 162, 2009): 325-370.

"The State," in which Skinner stresses the positive potential of moment of transition between medieval and early modern theories of Governance to allow for human agency under a concept that is inherently seeped in absolutist theory.

In *Foundations*, Skinner conducts a review of political thought in the "hope to indicate something of the process by which the modern concept of the State came to be formed."[44] This approach assumes quite clearly a definite modern concept of the State, one that endures from its inception to the present-day. The orientation of the investigation towards the expressly *modern* concept of the State is highly problematic. Not only does it have the potential to disacknowledge a whole discourse, given the State-centrism detailed above, but it is also predicated on a notion of the 'modern concept of the State,' which is hardly a concrete one within political theory. It assumes this definition in the search for its own development, further veiling other elements that shape the concept. Finally, it assumes that once this vocabulary is introduced, it endures. Despite the Skinnerian attention to contexts and his characteristic aversion to questions considered to be 'timeless,' the State that he presents seems to have a timeless quality to it once it is fully articulated.[45]

Perhaps as a result of this approach, Skinner sees little or no room for human agency, as the development of the State he details moves directly from the rule of the monarch in medieval discourse to that of the State in the early-modern Hobbesian discourse: "the power of the State, not that of the ruler, came to be envisaged as the basis

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[44] Skinner, *Foundations, Vol. 1*, ix.

[45] Many of these critiques have been offered before, and even answered by Skinner, who admits that the temptation toward teleology may have overcome his methodological leanings in *Foundations*. See Mark Goldie "The Context of *The Foundations*," in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, eds. Annabel S. Brett, James Tully and Holly Hamilton-Bleakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3-19.

of government. And this in turn enabled the State to be conceptualised in distinctively modern terms - as the sole source of law and legitimate force within its own territory, and as the sole appropriate object of its citizens' allegiances."[46] Although the second volume of *Foundations* does detail a non-State tradition of popular sovereignty in contrast to the main Statist position, it is on the latter that Skinner is focused, given the teleological and modernist tendencies in *Foundations*.

This position is reversed in "The State." Published a full decade after *Foundations*, this short piece further interrogates the "historical transformations" which surround the emergence of the concept of the modern State.[47] Like in *Foundations,* Skinner notes that with Hobbes we see the "end of one distinct phase in the history of political theory as well as the beginning of another and more familiar one."[48] However, unlike in *Foundations*, the transformative and transitional begins to take precedence over an essentialized modern State. It should be noted that in this piece he still subscribes to the notion that there *is* a modern conception of the State that has specific and definable characteristics, and he still locates the articulation of this concept in the absolutist writers of the seventeenth century. However, he is far more attentive, in my view, to the negotiations and debates that led to this articulation, and the "process of displacement and redefinition that accompanied the entrenchment of the modern idea of the state."[49] In other words, he suggests that the acceptance vocabularies of the State which are 'familiar' to us, required the veiling or altering of other theories that had come to define the political.

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[46] Skinner, *Foundations, Vol. 1*, x.

[47] Skinner, "The State," 91.

[48] Skinner, "The State," 90.

[49] Skinner, "The State," 123.

Skinner identifies the language of 'State' in the English tradition as developed in the mirror-for-princes literature and then taken up by the republican tradition (similar sources as those that Foucault draws attention to and that I examine in Chapter 3). As he points out, the theorists in both these traditions contribute important elements to the development of the State, but in neither case do they "express our modern concept of the state."[50] This is because, instead of articulating the "doubly impersonal character" of our modern State, which is distinguished both from the rulers and the ruled, the republican theorists consciously associate this concept with the power of the people, through a specific understanding of what it is to govern.[51] In order to understand how the State came to be severed from the people, Skinner asserts, we must look to those who opposed the republican tradition, namely the absolutist writers of the seventeenth century.

As such, he sets up a contrast between the popular sovereignty of the humanist/republican traditions of the sixteenth century and the State sovereignty of the seventeenth. In the former traditions, we have an understanding of the role and power of the human agent, in the latter we do not. Not only does he identify and treat "the tradition centring on the claim that, if there is to be any prospect of attaining the *optimus status reipublicae*, we must always institute a self-governing form of republican regime," but he notes that in contrast to this "the concept we have inherited" comes from "the more conservative mainstream of early-modern political thought," one that is "at once absolutist and secular-minded in its ideological allegiances."[52] There is likely no question that Skinner is as aware as any of his readers about the dangers of a political structure

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[50] Skinner, "The State," 112.

[51] Skinner, "The State," 112.

[52] Skinner, "The State," 104, 113, 112.

inherited from absolutism. By noting the ways in which the formulation of the State is contextualized through a negotiation between those espousing popular sovereignty and those arguing for State sovereignty, this piece has the potential to draw attention to the sacrifice of human agency in the acceptance of "state" as the "master noun of political argument."[53]

In a recent piece, Skinner adjusts his position once again, employing a Foucaultian genealogy to research the development of the concept of the State. He remains attached, in classic Skinnerian fashion, to the importance of language: "I assume in the first place that the only method by which we can hope confidently to identify the views of specific writers about the concept of the state will be to examine the precise circumstances in which they invoke and discuss the term *state*," but is less attached to tracing a defined modern meaning of the State historically.[54] The attention to vocabularies thus remains, but instead of looking for the emergence of a 'new' vocabulary in order to indicate the articulation of a new political idea (which then endures to the present-day) as in *Foundations*, Skinner in this piece is tracing the use of an established vocabulary in order to determine the particular meaning of the concept each time it is employed. This approach "reveals [the] contingent and contestable character of the concept [of the state], the impossibility of showing that it has any essence or natural boundaries" and that "there has never been any agreed concept to which the word *state* has answered."[55] This is of course in clear opposition to his previous

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[53] Skinner, "The State," 123.

[54] Skinner, "Genealogy," 1.

[55] Skinner, "Genealogy," 2, 1.

essentialized concept of the modern state – he notes in “Genealogy” that his previous approach misrepresents this variability in meaning.[56]

Despite the significant ways in which this piece differs methodologically from *Foundations*, both conclude with a pronouncement of the utility of the Hobbesian model of statehood, countering the potential for popular sovereignty alluded to in “The State.” In line with Runciman’s assessment above, Skinner counters the view that the State is “nothing more than the name of an established apparatus of government” and argues instead that it is the State-as-fiction, the Hobbesian model, which “ought never have been put aside.”[57] In contrast, other theories are of “exclusively historical interest.”[58] The criteria are alarmingly presentist for Skinner. And human agency, once again, is subsumed by the fiction of the State, the artificial person of Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, which takes its “artificial eternity of life” from the people, leaving them with only obligation to it, not a role within it.[59]

Despite Skinner’s inclusion of the non-State tradition in *Foundations* and, even more expansively, in “Genealogy,” I am most interested in the Skinner of “The State,” where the veiling, subsuming, and constraining elements of State sovereignty are recognized and denounced in opposition to the humanist and republican traditions that they displaced/subsumed. The ways in which Skinner, in this piece, establishes the negotiation of the concept of the State, and how negotiation turns to negation with the entry of the masterful State, has great potential for an understanding of the political that

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[56] See footnote 1: “Genealogy,” 1.

[57] Implied in this is the idea that it *has* been put aside, an assertion not present in *Foundations* or “The State” where he is confident that the abstract state, articulated by Hobbes, “has remained with us ever since.” “The State,” 90.

[58] Skinner, “Genealogy,” 35.

[59] This is a direct quotation from Hobbes in Skinner, “Genealogy,” 37.

takes into account notions of Governance and, through an analysis of Governance, human agency.

One of the most important parts of this slightly reoriented approach involves understanding how this transitional moment may still be at play in the theories that we have inherited. Whereas Skinner notes how "our thinking may have become impoverished as a result of our abandonment of a number of earlier and more explicitly normative theories," I do not assume that previous ideas were abandoned in the face of modern State vocabularies, but veiled or subsumed.[60] Our thinking is impoverished not by a *lack* of such theories, but rather by a *lack of awareness* of how they still operate 'beneath' or 'through' State-framed theories.

Taking the State for Granted

This brings us to the final literature of State-framing, and by far the most difficult to detail. I understand this last literature as that which assumes the State, or is structured by it, without acknowledging or treating the State explicitly. At the broadest understanding of this literature, it encompasses all political and international relations theory, and specifically operates to perpetuate the divide between these disciplines – the State line delineates the purview of each field. This is the argument put forward by RBJ Walker, who in his work *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* questions the spheres generated by the State line and the related "discourses that invoke an eternally present political community within [the State] and those that project an eternally absent community between modern sovereign states." Once again the eternalization of the State line is a key part of the critique. However, what Walker

[60] Skinner, "Genealogy," 2.

appears to be critiquing is not just the concept of the State, as the critiques that Bartelson addresses do, but a more subversive move in which "attempts to think otherwise about political possibilities are constrained by categories and assumptions that contemporary political analysis is encouraged to *take for granted*."[61] The State as an "unquestionable given" involves the veiling phenomenon that I drew attention to in the introduction, and that Runciman sees operating in the masking State.[62] The State-as-given is just as problematic and resilient (if not more so) than the State-as-fiction.[63]

Walker asserts: "If the early-modern principle of state sovereignty that still guides contemporary political thought is so problematic," which he argues it is, then "it is necessary to attend to the questions to which that principle was merely an historically specific response."[64] Once again, the move against the State is to contextualize it. Walker, in his exploration of the line of the State through time, space and disciplinarities, is primarily concerned with what is delegitimized and marginalized through such delineations, especially where it could form the grounds of "critical thought and *emancipatory* practice."[65] In contrast, I am less interested in what is excluded by the framing than what is covered by the veiling. In the same way that these assumptions establish legitimate and delegitimate grounds for political inquiry, they cover the rationalities and relationalities present in the legitimizing move. As such, returning to the original questions that the modern State was articulated in order to answer may not be

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[61] R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 5.

[62] Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 7.

[63] Of course they need not be compared in opposition like this, as the most resilient conceptualization of the State would involve both this giveness and fictionality.

[64] Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 21.

[65] Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 21. Emphasis added.

enough, as it is the modern State itself which acts to conceal. I will be returning to an earlier political theory, one that is recognized as contributing to the modern State, but before it became a fictionalized agent of its own. Instead, I am interested in a political theory that sees agency resting with an educated citizenry that, for the first time, is responsible for governing itself. It is an important and transitional moment between divine ruler and artificial State, on one hand, and the non-State popular sovereignty tradition on the other.

Chapter 2 – Transitions: Historiography and Context

I want to pick up this theme of transition in my second chapter, specifically in terms of the historiography, intellectual context and political context of early sixteenth-century English political thought. The transitional nature of the early Tudor period is both what makes it so important for the study that I have outlined, and what has made it so elusive to historians of political thought. Specifically, the fact that English political writers of the sixteenth century did not express modern State theory recognizable to intellectual historians has caused the period to be associated with 'outdated' medieval modes of thought. However, turning our attention once more to Governance, there are important differences to be brought to the fore between medieval theories of territorial Governance, and the Governance theories of Tudor humanism. It is only recently that this scholarship has been reinvigorated and freed from the Statist glance of political theory, largely through the methodological shifts in the history of political thought. By tracing the literature on the intellectual history of this period through the last hundred years, one sees a number of trends, all built around a tendency in the history of political thought to draw a definitive line between the medieval and modern periods. First, a propensity, as I have said, to equate the theories of sixteenth-century humanists with their medieval predecessors in opposition to their early modern successors. One sees this in the 'classics' – the work of John Allen, G.R. Elton and Christopher Morris. Beginning in the 1960s with the work of Arthur Ferguson, there is an increasing desire to begin to cut across this boundary, to search beneath this veiling line, and examine the theories that form the transition between the medieval and early modern political mindsets.

Following from the work of scholars such as Skinner, Francis Oakley, and Constantin Fasolt, I want to suggest an approach that seeks to understand how the political thinkers of this period negotiated the various intellectual contexts of their time, and within a fraught political context. It is the very transitional nature of this period that makes it of interest. The line that has the potential to cover the work of sixteenth-century humanists is precisely what draws my attention to them, for the connections that this line forms with that of the State and how their negotiations between medieval and modern political contexts form an essential part of understanding theories of Governance.

In particular, I want to draw attention to two intellectual contexts: conciliarism and, as I have already mentioned, humanism. These intellectual movements were both crucial to forming the way that Henrician political thinkers (who are typically, and perhaps rightly, more often identified with humanists rather than conciliarists) encountered their political context. Emphasis must be placed on humanism as forming the immediate framework for their thought, but it is worth mentioning how a secularized conciliarism also impacted their politics.[66] The conciliarist humanism of the thinkers of this period puts emphasis on a participatory politics, focused on creating space for debate and dissent in an increasingly centralized political regime.

Both humanism and conciliarism found particular articulations in the context of early sixteenth-century England because of the specific political context which the writers of the period were attempting to negotiate. This context forms the third manifestation of the theme of transition that I want to draw out. Henrician England was an era of flux, of renegotiations of authority, legitimacy and sources of power.

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[66] When referring to this form of conciliarism as 'secularized,' I do not mean that it was without religious foundation or consideration, but rather that it was applied to secular, in addition to spiritual, authority.

Understanding the different political influences, as well as the increasing pressure from the crown, is essential to understanding the theories of these thinkers, as well as the political implications of their work.

Historiography

There is an irony in the historiography of this period: the very line between the medieval and early modern that veils humanist political theory was instituted by the humanists themselves. As Fasolt notes in his *The Limits of History*, the "success with which [the humanists] imposed a new periodization on history" was the most "enduring symbol" of their "victory" over "medieval universalism."[67] In breaking with the middle ages, and preserving that break in their histories, the humanists veiled their action, for in this breaking they were neither one nor the other, neither the medieval (before the break) nor the modern (after the break) but rather the break itself.[68]

Beyond the "conceptual difficulty" posed by such an act, there is also a disciplinary difficulty of attempting to categorize the period.[69] As Oakley has pointed out, in order to study the thought of the period "running from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries," one must insist "on transgressing the sharp dividing line that for long it was customary to draw between 'the medieval' and 'the modern,'" the line that "that served to introduce so many distortions into our understanding of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century intellectual developments."[70]

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[67] Constantin Fasolt, *The Limits of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 18.

[68] Recall my slight deviation from the Skinnerian method, which comes into play here. I am not interested in the change – which here would be the medieval/modern – but rather the transitional line that is formed between them.

[69] Fasolt, *Limits*, 47.

[70] Francis Oakley, *Politics and Eternity: Studies in the History of Medieval and Early-Modern Political Thought* (Leiden: Koninklinjke Brill NV, 1999), 1.

Oakley's claims are supported by even a brief engagement with a historiography of sixteenth-century intellectual history. Until very recently, in order to study this period, "one could refer readers only to such classics as John Allen's *History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century*" as "Tudor political ideas and culture have received relatively little scrutiny for almost four decades."[71] What these 'classics' had to say about Tudor thought speaks to the 'distortions' Oakley references above. For Allen, for example, writing in 1928, the period did not produce "much that was strikingly new in political philosophy" as "political thought remained essentially medieval in nature."[72] He had difficulty, in particular, finding a political thinker from England who contributed to the most important 'tendency' to come out of this period: a "democratic conception of the State."[73]

One hears the same argument echoed in the work of historian of political thought Christopher Morris in the 1950s. He begins his work, *Political Thought in England: Tyndale to Hooker*, with the assertion that "sixteenth-century Englishmen had no political theory whatsoever," for they had "no theory of what we call the State."[74] Instead, they wrote about society within an "intellectual framework… accepted, often uncritically, from mediaeval Schoolmen." This amounts to, for Morris, "an attempt to use a junk shop as a living room. Indeed it was worse still, for some of the furniture was never fitted in at

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[71] Fasolt, *Limits*, 46-7; Paul Fideler and T.F. Mayer eds., *Political Thought and the Tudor Commonwealth: Deep Structure, Discourse and Disguise* (London: Routledge, 1992), 1.

[72] J.W. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1928), xiv.

[73] Allen, *A History*, 516.

[74] Christopher Morris, *Political Thought in England: Tyndale to Hooker* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 1.

all but had to be left out in the rain."[75] As such, he discounts two traditions, that of medieval scholasticism, for developing such a weak framework for thinking about politics, and Tudor thinkers, for attempting to apply it to a rapidly changing political environment. He presents most clearly as well the underlying requirements for 'political theory' in doing the history of political thought: that it must be State theory. All other theories are outside the purview of the political.

Prominent Tudor historian G.R. Elton, writing in the same year as Morris, also discredited the theory of the period as sufficiently advanced or political. He argued that, when it came to the dramatic political changes of the Tudor era, "political events precede mental reorientation" and that "the general intellectual and spiritual effects of the revolution came later – as effects, not causes."[76] Tudor political thought was medieval and non-political and, as such, we see that almost no text from this period (with the possible exception of *Utopia*) is considered to be part of the history of political thought canon.

Changes begin to occur with the work of Arthur B. Ferguson. His 1965 work, *The Articulate Citizen and the English Renaissance*, should be seen in the tradition of the work of later historians like that of Skinner and Oakley, for it highlights the need to "consider the Renaissance in England as a period of transition" by considering it "in relation to what went before as well as what came after."[77] This "problem of transition,"

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[75] Morris, *Political Thought*, 6.

[76] G.R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 426, 427.

[77] Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Articulate Citizen and the English Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965), xiv

he observes "remains stubbornly in the center of Renaissance historiography."[78] It is the "failure to pay sufficient attention to these processes taking place just below the literal surface" that has resulted in the "tendency to underestimate the writings of the early Tudor period, especially those of the humanists, and to misinterpret their place in the history of thought."[79] What is needed is a "systematic way of looking not only at the lines but between and beneath them."[80] This is an approach very similar to the one that I have outlined. As a result of this method, Ferguson does admit that these theorists "raised very few new questions of theory."[81] However, it is not new *questions* that the historian should see as important, but rather how "in the process [of answering these questions]… they adopted new attitudes towards the *problems of government*."[82] Like Skinner would shortly thereafter, Ferguson criticizes the A.O. Lovejoy approach to the history of ideas, arguing that, at least in the case of early Tudor thought, it did not yield results, for the period defies the "usually recognizable landmarks of intellectual history" in the attempt to "chart one's progress" through the eras of intellectual history.[83] Instead, by looking between the lines and under the surface, one can begin to see the process of renegotiating the answers to recurring questions of Governance.

In accordance with Ferguson's predictions, a recent piece by intellectual historians Paul Fideler and T.F. Mayer draws attention to the effect of the "'new' history

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[78] Ferguson, *Articulate Citizen*, xiv.

[79] Ferguson, *Articulate Citizen*, xii.

[80] Ferguson, *Articulate Citizen*, xii.

[81] Ferguson, *Articulate Citizen*, xi.

[82] Ferguson, *Articulate Citizen*, xi. Emphasis added.

[83] Ferguson, *Articulate Citizen*, xii.

of political thought" in "reviv[ing] interest in Tudor intellectual history."[84] By this, they are referring to the methodological shifts put into place by historians such as Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock shortly after Ferguson's work. As reiterating these methodological shifts seems redundant, especially as they have been summarized and commented on widely elsewhere, I will focus more on the effect that these changes have had on the historiography of sixteenth-century English political thought. Fasolt puts these effects best in *Limits*:

> The days when the Renaissance and the Reformation were thought to mark an absolute divide between medieval and modern history are gone…. Modernists are now entering into encouraging conversations with medievalists and vice versa…. Thanks to the efforts of James Burns and Quentin Skinner, we even have histories of political thought that treat medieval and early modern political thought almost in one breath.[85]

In addition, Fasolt comments on how Skinner has "famously warned against the 'mythology of doctrines' and the temptation to read the history of political thought backward."[86] Such a warning is important in a discipline where:

> [i]nstead of showing how politics came to be defined as a separate sphere of human thought and action where no such sphere previously existed, we still presuppose the existence of 'politics,' pursue its origins as far back in time as our means permit, then further, and all the while refrain from sidelong glances at things that do not fit the presupposition – never mind that such things may be crucial for understanding how modern politics came into being.[87]

And finally, in opposition to the scant and "seriously outdated" classics, "there is now a whole body of scholarship that is growing by the day and illuminating the landscape of

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[84] Fideler and Mayer, *Political Thought*, 6-7.

[85] Fasolt, *Limits*, 49.

[86] Fasolt, *Limits*, 47.

[87] Fasolt, *Limits*, 47.

early modern political thought in ever finer detail."[88] Such scholarship includes the previously mentioned work of Fideler and Mayer, who, in their *Political Thought and the Tudor Commonwealth*, attempt to "to reinvigorate interest in Tudor political thought by beginning to clear fresh paths into its languages and debates."[89] They point out as well that "since the early 1980s, probably the most resourceful purchase on the 'political', broadly and deeply conceived, in the Tudor and early Stuart years has been provided by 'literary historicism.'"[90]

Certainly this is an area that should be highlighted. In addition to the classic works of Stephen J. Greenblatt and Dominick LaCapra, who Fideler and Mayer emphasize, I would add the works of literary historians such as Gillian E. Brennan on the connection between the English state and print culture, J. Christopher Warner on humanism, censorship and good governance, Mary Thomas Crane on humanist education practices and the public sphere, and David Colclough on *parrhesia* in humanist discourse.[91] Their emphasis on the culture of censorship draws attention to the ways in which humanism has been misread by historians, and they suggest "that it possessed greater theoretical sophistication, manifested a more complex and problematized

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[88] Fasolt, *Limits*, 47.

[89] Fideler and Mayer, *Political Thought*, 11.

[90] Fideler and Mayer, *Political Thought*, 10.

[91] Gillian E. Brennan, *Patriotism, Power and Print: National Consciousness in Tudor England* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2003); J. Christopher Warner, *Henry VIII's Divorce: Literature and the Politics of the Printing Press* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998); Mary Thomas Crane, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); David Colclough, "*Parrhesia*: The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Early Modern England," *Rhetorica* 17.2 (1999): 177-212. See also the analyses provided in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, eds. Annabel S. Brett, James Tully and Holly Hamilton-Bleakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

ideological stance, and exerted a more pronounced (but different kind of) influence than has generally been recognized."[92]

My argument, therefore, falls into this tradition of a "'defense' of English humanism" and part of the practice of "transgressing the sharp dividing line" of medieval/modern.[93] However, and this is where perhaps I deviate from many of those mentioned above, I take Fasolt's warning that the nature of this line "is political, not historical," which is why it "refuses to yield to the most well-intentioned efforts" of historians.[94] Taking the historiography I detailed above to heart, it must be understood that this is not only a historical study but one entrenched in the political theory that I detailed in the last chapter. I am looking for the interaction between theories of the State and Governance, and hoping to uncover themes of agency in a political theory veiled not only by the lines of the State, but by those of history, lines that, as Fasolt suggests, may not be as disparate as the separations in the disciplines of history and political thought may suggest. As Skinner wrote in his "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas":

> [I]t is a commonplace – we are all Marxists to this extent – that our own society places unrecognized constraints upon our imaginations. It deserves then, to become a commonplace that the historical study of the ideas of other societies should be undertaken as the indispensable and the irreplaceable means of placing limits on those constraints.[95]

[92] Crane, *Framing*, 7.

[93] Crane, *Framing*, 7; Oakley, *Politics and Eternity*, 1.

[94] Fasolt, *Limits*, 227.

[95] Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding," 67.

Intellectual Context – Conciliarism and Humanism

Another sticking point in the study of sixteenth-century English political thought is the ambiguity surrounding Renaissance humanism. In the words of historian Maria Dowling:

> The difficulty of defining humanism has never been entirely overcome, while the philosophical connotations of the term have led to confused and often anachronistic speculations as to its nature. Humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries belonged to no recognisable sect or co-ordinated movement equipped with a universally accepted manifesto of belief, and their enthusiasm for the new learning did not prevent them from indulging in vitriolic controversies with each other.[96]

I would like to suggest, in what follows, that this penchant for dialogue, controversy and ambiguity of set beliefs is precisely what characterizes Henrician humanism and its contribution to the political context with which it interacted. Combined with legacies from the conciliarist tradition, this has the effect of branding a particular humanism within England, one framed around negotiation, agency and good Governance.

Beginning then with conciliarism, it is worth noting a few of the broader trends of this movement which were inherited by the Henrician humanists. The connection between conciliarism of the late middle ages and Renaissance humanism is a controversial one, and I draw here primarily on the work of Francis Oakley and T.F. Mayer, who focus on its manifestation in England, primarily in the work of Christopher St. German, Thomas More and Thomas Starkey.[97] Oakley notes that "little attention has been paid to the conciliarist legacy to the Tudor and Stuart period," because in the

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[96] Maria Dowling, *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 1.

[97] See: Francis Oakley, "Constance, Basel and the Two Pisas: The Conciliarist Legacy in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England," *Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum* 26 (1994): 87-118; Thomas F. Mayer, "An Unknown Conciliarist in the Court of Henry VIII," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49.2 (1988): 207-227.

fifteenth century, "England had produced no conciliar theorists of note."[98] However, by the early sixteenth century, conciliarists claims were well enough entrenched to "familiarize generations of English people" with the philosophy of conciliarism.[99]

This was a philosophy that, like humanism, emerged as an answer to a specific contextual problem. Put most broadly, in its original context, "Conciliarism was the doctrine that the council held supreme authority in the church. It could override the judgment of anyone, including the pope; its own judgment and decrees were infallible, and must be obeyed by all, including the pope."[100] Although expressly about a religious issue – that of the right placement of church authority – it was effectively political, and many conciliar theorists drew the connections between spiritual and secular authority themselves: "The strategy of conciliar theory, aimed at subjecting the pope to the council, rested on the idea that the church was the real sovereign; they related this to the sovereignty of the whole people in secular government, and thus became involved in a broad tradition of popular sovereignty."[101] A.J. Black, writing on conciliar theory, and specifically the on work of John of Segovia, traces the development of the fictional 'public person' in such works and concludes: "Perhaps, if we want a term for the concept 'state' in its nascent form, we could not do better than Segovia's 'public person', as meaning in one sense the government, and in another the people, according to their relation to the public interest."[102] Certainly, if we turn to Segovia, we find him putting forward an argument that forms an interesting parallel to the State theory articulated by

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[98] Oakley, *Politics and Eternity*, 162.

[99] Oakley, *Politics and Eternity*, 162.

[100] Anthony Black, *Monarchy and Community: Political Ideas in the Late Conciliar Controversy, 1430-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 7.

[101] Black, *Monarchy and Community*, 8.

[102] Black, *Monarchy and Community*, 28.

Hobbes centuries later: "Whoever is made ruler or president of any people puts aside his private and takes on a public person, in that he must seek not, as before, what is useful to himself, but what is useful to all. He carries two persons; he is a private person, and by legal fiction a public person."[103]

Putting this tendency toward a State theory similar to the one that I outlined in my first chapter aside for the moment, I want to turn to the legacy of conciliarism that I see operating most explicitly in the work of Henrician humanists, and one that is far more concerned with good Governance. This is a tempered and, for our concerns, secular conciliarism, the view that "everybody (that is, again, everybody within the commune, in this case the council) must be considered in decision-making, that the common good is the criterion of right action."[104] This is a conciliarism that emphasizes the "principle that those who governed should always remain under the watchful eye of an interested public of spectators."[105] In sixteenth-century England, this form of conciliarism played out in ways that interacted powerfully with the humanism inherited from the continent.

In particular, the figure of the humanist as mediator, negotiator, counsellor or ambassador should be emphasized. Certainly this is related to a conciliatory move – both in terms of the tradition of thought outlined above and in terms of the other meaning of conciliatory: a process of overcoming distrust, a way of presenting discourse that is designed to ameliorate, placate or bring together, involving a sense of dialogue,

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[103] Black, *Monarchy and Community*, 25. See, for example, Hobbes' argument: "And he who carries this person [the commonwealth], is called SOVEREIGN, and said to have *sovereign power*." Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 114.

[104] Black, *Monarchy and Community*, 22. I will come back to this emphasis on the common good as both the conciliarists and humanists shared it as a focus of their work.

[105] John Keane, *The Life and Death of Democracy* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2009), 277.

compromise, the creation of middle ground and negotiation.[106] As I will be fleshing out these positions more specifically in the chapters that follow, I will speak in fairly general terms about these themes in continental humanism, before briefly demonstrating how they interacted with the turbulent political context of Early Tudor England.

First, the humanist assigned humankind a new role in the organization of society. Whereas the medieval Great Chain of Being saw the human as part of a universal structure over which he exerted little control, the humanist put forward "the view that human beings are free and independent agents with the ability to shape their fate, the obligation to act on that ability, and responsibility for the consequences."[107] In other words, in contrast to a medieval system in which human beings are "governed by divine providence" or the "thoughtless repetition of custom," human beings are "in charge of their own affairs."[108] Of course this was not entirely secular, and humanists still emphasized the divine laws that governed the cosmos, nature and history. But the human agent could interpret these laws and transpose them to the political sphere. The humanist was the ambassador between the higher and lower planes.[109]

Such a focus on the human necessitated renewed attention to the 'common good,' one of the most crucial concepts for the humanists (especially those concerned with the political – usually referred to as civic humanists).[110] Determining what this common good

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[106] In particular, Thomas Starkey has been credited with "inventing the foundations of the Anglican *via media*." Mayer, "an Unknown Conciliarist," 211. I will return to this theme in treating Starkey's work in the next chapter.

[107] Fasolt, *Limits*, xvi.

[108] Fasolt, *Limits*, xvi.

[109] I will be returning to this theme in chapter four. See R.B.J. Walker, *After the Globe, Before the World* (London: Routledge, 2010), 8-9.

[110] I treat the development of the language of the common good at length in my Bachelor's thesis, , entitled "Rethinking the Henrician Period: Political Thought and the Development of State Theory, 1485-1547"

(or public good, common weal, etc) referred to is one of the keys to understanding the humanists' political theory, as Governance for the humanists was oriented towards preserving this common good. Tracing the language of the common good also serves to demonstrate the differences between the political theory of the humanists and that of the medieval and early modern theorists, as I will show in the subsequent chapters. In particular, the humanists' move away from a conceptualization of common good as material sustenance or security and to a 'higher' end characterizes the shift from the medieval theories of Governance and also serves to differentiate them from the early modernists such as Hobbes.

Crucial to this higher common good, as we will see, was the idea that people participate in politics, for "political activity was essential for self-fulfilment."[111] It was essential that there be space for a modicum of participation in governance. The humanists thus became ambassadors in a new way, negotiating for the space to participate and engage in dialogue in the context of a political regime that attempted to use "a consensus of opinion to close down the space of debate."[112] Through their education program, the humanists advocated "the Ciceronian ideal of the vita activa" and "rhetoric as a socially cohesive force."[113] What was potentially radical about their curriculum, was that it used "democratic and republican sources while living in a monarchy."[114] This was part of a

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[111] M.M. Goldsmith, "Liberty, Luxury and the Pursuit of Happiness," in *The Language of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Mebourne: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 226.

[112] Warner, *Divorce*, 44.

[113] Colclough, "*Parrhesia*," 189

[114] Colclough, "*Parrhesia*," 189.

larger goal of "delineat[ing] a sphere where the reader will be able to exercise his or her civic abilities."[115]

An important part of this focus on participation was the expectation of counsel, one grounded in dialogue, and J. Christopher Warner draws attention to the importance of the dialogue as a literary form during this time. By staging political practice in this way, "the audience was now extended to include the public" with the hope "that building such expectations in Henry's subjects would translate into pressure on Henry's actions."[116] By creating an image of good Governance and the protection of the common good occurring only through the involvement and voice of the (educated) people, the humanists created this expectation in the people and "called public attention to the distance (and, by implication, urged Henry to close the gap) between the actual and the ideal."[117] The humanist, as counsellor, functioned as a mediator between the idealized and real images of Governance that they themselves put forward as a means to securing and increasing the political influence of counsel. It was a delicate strategy for a dangerous time.

Political Context – Centralization, Propaganda and the *Vita Mixta*

The dangerous nature of the period should not be understated. The political changes of the early Tudor period were dramatic and violent. Much of the thought of the early Henricians was formed by the experience of the Wars of the Roses, an aristocratic civil war that wiped out entire families and saw kings rise and fall with the machinations of a power-hungry elite. The 15th century was taken up by a series of intense battles between claimants to the throne from two prominent noble families. It is not an

[115] Colclough, "*Parrhesia*," 189.

[116] Warner, *Divorce*, 59, 111.

[117] Warner, *Divorce*, 113.

exaggeration to state that this drawn-out war may have witnessed the defeat of feudalism. The medieval political structure of England was fragmented, with a variety of apexes of power. The Wars of the Roses brought this to the fore, by demonstrating in a dramatic way the disastrous results of a politics that was simultaneously decentralized and based on the accumulation of arms and territory.

In 1485 Henry of Lancaster overthrew Richard III and installed himself as monarch, effectively ending the Wars of the Roses. Henry VII had a very weak claim to the throne, and it was only military might that allowed him to take power. The Wars of the Roses had in some ways wiped the feudal slate clean, while at the same time remaining a powerful memory in the minds of the people and a powerful motive for a centralized form of Governance. Henry VII provided this. There is near consensus among historians about the centralization of power under the first Tudor monarch, most agreeing that the growth in monarchical power was unique to this new dynasty.[118] For example, the strict fiscal policies of Henry VII meant that he had little reason to call parliaments. Perhaps the greatest example of the absorption of medieval liberties under the prerogative of the crown is the use of the Star Chamber. This judicial council was used against enemies of the crown, and Henry VII employed it extensively to destroy the landed gentry that might still carry resentments from the civil war. In doing so, he appropriated for the crown much of the property that had been held by the feudal aristocracy. This was really the mechanism of his centralization: "The political anarchy of the Wars of the Roses, and the confiscation and absorption into the royal domain of feudal estates by Henry VII, engendered both the desire and the means for the establishment of a

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[118] See Frankin Le Van Baumer, *The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 21.

monarchy greater than any of its parts."[119] As the crown grew in power and control, "medieval liberties were almost entirely absorbed by the central government."[120]

In order to centralize the government so dramatically, especially with such a weak claim to the throne, Henry VII required an intense propaganda campaign: "[t]he early Tudor monarchy of England sorely needed a doctrine of a religious duty of obedience to constituted authority. It had, to begin with, to restore order, and to so do it constructed what was practically a new machinery of government out of the wreckage of the fifteenth century."[121] Humanism filled this need. It is perhaps an irony of history that humanism first entered England in order to buttress Tudor centralization and authority, given the ways that it countered the regime in the sixteenth century, and contributed to anti-royalist sentiment in the seventeenth.

However, we do not need to go so temporally far afield to see how the articulation of humanism in England served to counter the centralization of authority in the crown, for even under Henry VII, the humanist circle resisted. Upon the accession of Henry VIII in 1509, Thomas More declared: "This day is the limit of our slavery, the beginning of our freedom."[122] The expectation of the philosopher-king that played such a key role in opening the space for humanist dialogue, as I described above, was present from the very beginning of Henry VIII's reign. However, it didn't take long until humanists had to fight to preserve that space.

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[119] Baumer, *Kingship*, 21.

[120] Baumer, *Kingship*, 155.

[121] For more on the variety of propagandistic forms employed by Henry VII see: Dale Hoak, *Tudor Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 65. Allen, *A History*, 121.

[122] George M. Logan, "Thomas More on Tyranny," *Thomas More Studies* 2 (2007): 22.

This became especially true during in the years surrounding Henry VIII's break with Rome in the late 1520s and 1530s. As Warner points out, during this time "men of letters were not writing poetry and plays but religious polemics, government propaganda, and political philosophy" in an attempt "to exert literary pressures on actual behaviour" and "steer the ship of state."[123] Henry VIII had lost the control over humanists that his father maintained for most of his reign and, although he projected an image – that of the philosopher king – that "appeared to allow space for dissent," it was the same image that "allowed Henry to retain almost total control over the published expression of that dissent."[124] As the drama wore on, Henry VIII left less and less "room for an opposition to print counter-propaganda within England" and by the time the Act of Supremacy was passed in 1534, no official room for dissent was left at all.[125]

Even before 1534, one had to be "in a legitimate position to address the king and to represent his interests" in order to "sway Henry's actions."[126] In other words, a public position at court or as an ambassador abroad (or typically both as they were often synonymous). This meant that necessity as well as philosophy demanded that the humanists take up what Richard J. Schoeck called the *vita mixta*, formed in opposition "to the singlemindedness of either the *vita comtemplativa* or the *vita activa*," in order to have any political influence and, often, to attempt to preserve their own lives. [127] *Decorum* was the term of the day, demanding that, in Starkey's words "a man must

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[123] Warner, *Divorce*, 1, 5.

[124] Warner, *Divorce*, 3.

[125] Warner, *Divorce*, 4, 133.

[126] Warner, *Divorce*, 4.

[127] Richard J. Schoeck, "Humanism in England," in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms and Legacy, Volume 2 – Humanism Beyond Italy*, ed. Albert Rabil Jr. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 14.

regard time and place if he will handle the matters of state."[128] The conscious situatedness of the humanists in a time of censorship, centralization of authority and violence demands that their work be read with the same factors in mind, as well as lending credence to the argument that what they were doing was negotiating a politics in transition; they were advocating for ideals of good Governance at the same time as the boundaries of the centralized and administrative State were being drawn.

[128] Quoted by Warner, *Divorce*, 53.

Chapter 3 – Henrician Humanism: Dialogue and the Art of Government

Having established the relevance of a study of sixteenth-century political thought, and the implications that such a study would have for contemporary political theory, I would now like to explore some of the works of sixteenth-century Henrician humanists, with an attention to their theories of Governance. It is worth reiterating the goal of my study – to explore the relationship between theories of the State and Governance at a moment where the two intersected, to note the nature of this interaction and to try to determine where agency may fit in this relation. It is worth also recalling from the previous two chapters the way in which drawing lines – of the State, of time – have served to veil their relations with theories that support and structure them.

This veiling, if we recall, served to mask the work of sixteenth-century English humanists in two ways: first, because their work focused on theories of Governance, not the State; and second, because they formed the transitional moment between medieval feudalism and early-modern Statehood. In order to bring their work to light, I have decided to draw on the work of a number of sixteenth-century English theorists, rather than focus on one or two, examining texts by John Rastell, Desiderius Erasmus, Thomas More, Thomas Elyot, Christopher St. German and Thomas Starkey. Although I will be drawing on the writings of all six of these thinkers, I will be devoting the most attention to Starkey's work, which, given its position at the end of the period, presents the most complete summation of the theories of the Henrician humanists. My overall intention is to put these thinkers in dialogue, not manipulating the texts, but consciously recognizing the ways these thinkers were aware of each other and were often responding directly to

each others' work, as they were contemporaries. [129] The texts I am examining span only two decades, giving their responses to each other a measure of immediacy. Although this twenty-year period (1513-1533) was politically tumultuous, and often dangerous, this humanist circle of dialogue was resilient and productive.[130]

I begin with the Henrician humanists' dialogical negotiation of the relation between body and soul, and their resituation, in a political context, of the soul within the body. This move, uniting interests which had defined the line between political and spiritual authorities, had the effect of politicizing a wider conception of Governance than that of the medieval period. It also greatly increased the sphere and ends of the political beyond material concerns – such as health, wealth and security – to the improvement, perfection and salvation of man. Finally, this move changed the means of political rule from one of property or divine right, wherein one could justify birthright as a source of authority, to a meritocratic system, in which a specific skill-set was required to rule.

This skill-set, or what has been called the 'art of government,' shifted the political focus, so to speak, from the prince to his advisors and educators – in other words the humanists themselves – as the figures who had the qualities required to govern. As such, in addition to the all-important question "Of the Best State of a Republic" (the subtitle to More's *Utopia*) the humanists were forced to also examine the means, ends and dangers of a public life (as More does in the first Book of *Utopia*). What results is a fascinating

[129] That is to say I am not interested in presenting a chronological study that presents the complete theory of each writer in sequence. Although such a study may be more attentive to the nuances of each work, as well as the comparative differences of each thinker, given reasons of expediency as well as relevancy, I will be more focused on the common assumptions that form the theoretical framework of their dialogue.

[130] The works I am examining in this chapter are here listed chronologically (some dates are approximate): John Rastell -*Book of Assizes* (1513), Desiderius Erasmus – *Education of a Christian Prince* (1516), Thomas More – *Utopia* (1516), Christopher St. German – *The Doctor and Student* (1518), Erasmus – *Complaint of Peace* (1521), Rastell – *Expositions of the Terms of English Laws* (1525?), Thomas Starkey – *A Dialogue Between Pole and Lupset* (1529?), Thomas Elyot – *A Book Named the Governor* (1531), Elyot – *Of the Knowledge Which Maketh a Wise Man* (1533).

negotiation between the pulls of the active and contemplative ways of life – the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* respectively. More than just a choice between an active or academic lifestyle, I suggest that the debate between the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*, and their resolution in a sort of *vita mixta*, actually represents a fascinating convergence of theories of Governance and the Western juridical institutionalism of Statehood.

In order to advance this argument, I will be drawing on the work of Foucault; primarily that of the later years of his life, when his "autocritique" led him to reconsider governmentality in terms of its ability to recover freedom and agency. His previous work on governmentality had located an important convergence of thought and political practice in the art of government literature of the sixteenth century, especially in terms of the rationality by which a subject was "governed, that is to say directed towards his salvation, by someone to whom he was bound by a total, meticulous, detailed relationship of *obedience*."[131] However, in the last years of his life, he made a drastic shift to an analysis of the self, and attempted to locate agency in ethics and practices of the self, arguing that "the concept of governmentality makes it possible to bring out the freedom of the subject and its relationship to others – the very stuff of ethics."[132]

I am interested in using the analysis provided by these later works of Foucault to understand the ways in which these sort of ethical ideas – "practices of self-formation and self-awareness in relations with others in Greek and Roman authors" – may be interacting

[131] Michel Foucault, "What is Critique?" in *The Essential Foucault* ed. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (New York: Editions Gallimard, 1994), 264, emphasis added.

[132] Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom" in *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth, Essential works of Foucault, Volume 1,* ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 300.

with the "Christian morality" in the work of humanists who intended to draw from such classical sources while retaining their dedication to a Christian spirituality.[133] In the same way that State theory serves to dominate and veil theories of Governance, Foucault argued that "the rise of Christian morality and natural law tended to 'juridicalize' our conceptions of morality and to overshadow ethics."[134] In particular for a discussion of sixteenth-century English humanism, the way that Foucault sees the relationship between care of the self (his 'spirituality') and knowing oneself (his 'philosophy') forms a parallel to the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* in the work of the Henrician humanists. This, in turn, informs the relationship between contemporary State and Governance theory and may suggest paths to recovering agency. An investigation of these themes in the work of Early Tudor humanists allows us to once again unveil without destroying and untangle without severing by investigating an important moment of convergence and of dialogue in the sixteenth century.

Body and Soul

Beginning with the very meaning of Governance, Foucault notes that "before it acquires its specifically political meaning in the sixteenth century," the concept "'to govern,' covers a very wide semantic domain" including "movement in space, material subsistence, diet, the care given to an individual… and also the exercise of command."[135] It also involved "the control one may exercise over oneself and others."[136] Finally, it

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[133] James Tully, "The Question of the Subject in the Later Foucault," (Reading Seminar at the University of Victoria, Spring 2008), 6. I will be using Tully's commentary on Foucault throughout this chapter in order to summarize Foucault's later works. I acknowledge that Foucault's analysis is of *classical* sources, and the connections do not always carry completely through to the work of Renaissance humanists.

[134] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 6.

[135] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 122.

[136] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 122.

"refers to an intercourse, to a circular process or process of exchange between one individual and another."[137] Most of these conceptions were not part of a political understanding of Governance in the medieval period, and it is in fact due largely to the work of theorists such as Rastell, Erasmus, St. German and Starkey that Governance *does* acquire this "specifically political meaning in the sixteenth century."[138] By turning the object of political attention from the body to the soul, and then resituating the two in a relationship with each other, the humanists expanded the role and definition of political Governance significantly.

Whereas the political medieval system saw a split between the spiritual governance of the soul and the political governance of the body, the humanists were interested in situating the soul back into the body, and bringing the whole self under the purview of the political. As Starkey expresses: "man is not only the soul, insomuch that he is made of it but as one chief and principle part, but a certain nature which riseth of the union and conjunction of the body and soul togidder" in which "standeth the weal and felicity of man."[139] This synthesis of soul and body is very much in line with the conciliatory nature of their thought, as I touched on in the previous chapter, and creates a parallel with their reconciliation of the dichotomy of the active and contemplative life.[140] The transition from the wellbeing of the body to that of body *and* soul can be traced in the texts that I present here. Starkey's argument "that the weal of man resteth not only in the mind and the virtues thereof but in the body also, and in the prosperous state of the

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[137] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 122.

[138] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 122.

[139] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 52

[140] The way in which their theories may be understood as conciliatory or forming a middle ground will be explored in the next chapter.

same," reflects criticism of those earlier humanists who placed emphasis on either the mind or soul alone, they in turn critiquing the medieval political focus on the body.[141]

For example, in the earliest text I am engaging with, the *Book of Assizes*, Rastell notes, rightly, that one of the most debated subjects of the time is "wherein the commonwealth standeth, and what thing it should be."[142] He critiques the medieval system of thought in which the common good was conceived in terms of material or status-oriented goods, such as "great abundance of riches," "[rulers'] power and strength," "honour and glory" or "in them all intermixed."[143] Instead he puts forward the argument that it "resteth neither in increasing of riches, power nor honour, but in the *increasing of good manners and conditions of men* whereby they may be reduced to know God, to honour God, to love God, and to live in a continual love and tranquillity with their neighbours."[144] It is for this reason that it is "most expedient to have ordinances and laws," for "good and reasonable ordinances and laws lead and direct men to use good manner and conditions."[145] In another piece, *Expositions of the Terms of English Laws*, Rastell reinforces this idea by arguing that "a good law observed, causeth ever a good people: and good reasonable, common law maketh a good, common peace and commonwealth among a great community of people."[146] The aim of politics is to

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[141] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 52.

[142] Rastell, *The Book of Assizes*, 169.

[143] Rastell, *Book of Assizes*, 169.

[144] Rastell, *Book of Assizes*, 171, emphasis added.

[145] Rastell, *Book of Assizes*, 171.

[146] Sir John Rastell, *Expositions of the Terms of English Laws*, in *The Thought and Culture of the English Renaissance: An Anthology of Tudor Prose, 1481-1555*, ed. Elizabeth M. Nugent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 176-177.

establish laws that will not just preserve or strengthen the body but rather transform the inner condition of the people, to make them *good*.

We can see the same evidence of transition in Erasmus' *Education of a Christian Prince*. Once again critiquing the medieval focus on material welfare, Erasmus writes: "let this be the only way [the prince] assesses his people's happiness: not by whether he keeps them in great wealth or optimal health, but by their honesty and moderation; by the absence of greed, aggressiveness, contention; and by the presence of the fullest possible harmony."[147] Contrary to a feudal system in which the ruler was only truly active when there was a threat, the prince is to administrate in times of peace, instituting laws or assigning magistrates, with the aim of improving his citizenry, for there is "nothing of greater importance for the prince [than] that he should have the best possible citizens."[148] The life of the prince "grips and transforms the moral attitudes and character of his subjects," through example, legislation and education.[149]

St German, writing only a few years later, sets out clearly "that the intent of a maker of a law is to make the people good, and to bring them to virtue."[150] He dedicates a chapter to setting out a definition of 'conscience,' one that will be crucial to my later discussion of Foucault's philosophy and spirituality, and argues that this conscience "must be ordered by the law, as it must be upon the law of God and upon the law of reason" upon which all man's law must be based. For "every good law is ordained to the

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[147] Desiderius Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, ed. and trans. Lisa Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 72.

[148] Erasmus, *Education*, 72

[149] Erasmus, *Education*, 21. These three factors – example, legislation and education – will become crucial to my discussion of governmentality in the next chapter.

[150] Christopher St. German, *The Doctor and Student*, *LONANG Institute Library* (http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/stgermain/sgm-102.htm).

health of the Soul, and to the fulfilling of the laws of God, and to induce the people to fly evil desires, and to do good works."[151]

Returning to Starkey, we can see why he would remind the humanists that, although they were interested to counter the medieval focus on material concerns, a consideration of the body is still necessary as a means to this higher end, as "health of body" and "riches and convenient abundance of all worldly things meet to the maintenance of every man's state" are "to be esteemed, ever referring to virtue as their end and purpose why they are to be desired, and as the chief point of their felicity, weal and prosperous state of man."[152] He then creates an microcosmic analogy to the body politic, in which he compares the human body to "the multitude of people, the number of citizens, in every commonalty, city or country" and the soul to "civil order and politic law administered by officers and rulers."[153] Like the relationship between the body and soul, "in whose flourishing and prosperous state both togidder standeth the weal and felicity of man," it is in the commonwealth's body and soul, "flourishing both togidder [where] resteth also the true common weal."[154] And this once again relates strongly to the newly conceptualized aims of Governance, "for like as the body in every man receiveth his life by the virtue of the soul, and is governed thereby, so doth the multitude of people in every country receive, as it were, civil life by laws well administered by good officers and wise rulers, by whom they be governed and kept in politic order."[155] In the same vein then as Rastell, Erasmus and St. German, Starkey emphasizes that the end of political

[151] St. German, *Doctor and Student*, emphasis added.

[152] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 46, 47, 49.

[153] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 55.

[154] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 55.

[155] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 55.

Governance, akin to the role of the soul in the body, "is to induce the multitude to virtuous living, according to the dignity and nature of man."[156] The soul is resituated back into the body, and both are brought under the purview of the political, creating the very crossroads Foucault described between an administrative State concerned with the regulation of bodies and a theory of Governance concerned with the betterment of the soul.

The Art of Government

What was particular to this convergence is the articulation of "a kind of rationality which was intrinsic to the art of government."[157] As Foucault states, these authors "shared a common concern to distance themselves from a certain conception of art of government which, once shorn of its theological foundations and religious justifications, took the sole interest of the prince as its object and principle of rationality."[158] This choice was more than just an attempt to distance themselves from a theory that depended on the prince, it was required of the new conceptualization of Governance detailed above for if Governance is about crafting a better citizenry, one will need governors skilled in this craft.

As Rastell and Erasmus put forward clearly in the last section, the humanists established that "good and reasonable ordinances and laws" were now expected to "lead and direct men to use good manner and conditions."[159] In order to accomplish this, the maker of the law – the prince or governor – had to "learn the principles of

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[156] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 61.

[157] Foucault, "Governmentality," 89.

[158] Foucault, "Governmentality," 89.

[159] Rastell, *Book of Assizes*, 171.

government."[160] However, there was a contradiction, which Erasmus notes, between a political system based on inheritance and a meritocratic system of thought: "since in all skills the highest are the most difficult, none is finer or more difficult than to rule well; why is it then that for this one skill alone we do not see the need for training but think a birthright is enough?"[161] The way to negotiate the transition from this system, for Erasmus, was to compromise by ensuring that the prince had a humanist education: "when a prince is born to office… then the main hope of getting a good prince hangs on his proper education, which should be managed all the more attentively, so that what has been lost with the right to vote is made up for by the care given to his upbringing."[162] So although Erasmus still advocates "that a prince should play the minister among his people," the focus shifts from the prince to the humanist, either the educator or, more often, the advisor, for "a country owes everything to a good prince; but it owes the prince himself to the one whose right counsel has made him what he is."[163]

Following Erasmus' work, Elyot makes these humanists, and not the prince, the figures who, "excelling in knowledge whereby other[s] be governed," become the "ministers for the profit and commodity of them which have not equal understanding."[164] Rather than putting the emphasis on material possession or birthright, the humanists, like Elyot in his *Book Named the Governor*, argued that as "understanding is the principle part of the soul, it is therefore congruent and according that as one excelleth another in that influence… so should the estate of the person be advanced in degree or place where

[160] Erasmus, *Education*, 3.

[161] Erasmus, *Education*, 9.

[162] Erasmus, *Education*, 5.

[163] Desiderius Erasmus, *The Complaint of Peace*, ed. William James Hirten (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1946), 24, Erasmus, *Education*, 6.

[164] Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*, ed. S.E. Lehmberg (Dutton: Everyman's Library, 1962), 4.

understanding may profit… to the living and governance of mankind."[165] These humanists figures must be so advanced as "it is expedient and also needful that under the capitol governor be sundry mean authorities" so that "he shall govern with the better advice, and consequently with more perfect governance."[166] This understanding or reason is so valued over inheritance that Elyot is even willing to allow those of "the base estate," if they are "thought to be so much advanced" in these qualities of "virtue and wisdom" to the position of governors of the commonwealth.[167]

Likewise, St. German's treatment outlines clearly the same emphasis on a specific rationality of Governance: "Like as there is in every artificer a reason of such things are to be made by his craft, so likewise it behoveth that in every governor there by a reason and a foresight in the governor of such things as shall be ordered and done by him to them that he hath the governance of."[168] For St. German, this reason is drawn directly from the Law of God, giving it an important element of divine truth and making it a quality that all mankind has the potential to exhibit, if only they can be shown the proper way.[169]

Starkey takes this argument furthest, in stating that "man by nature… is by the high providence of God set to govern and rule" for "man is born to as a governor."[170] In fact, for Starkey, drawing on work of the earlier writers, the perfection, improvement and salvation of mankind which is the aim of political governance cannot be achieved without

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[165] Elyot, *Governor*, 4.

[166] Elyot, *Governor*, 13.

[167] Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*, ed. John M. Major (New York: Teachers College Press, 1969), 59.

[168] St. German, *Doctor and Student*.

[169] I will come back to St. German's treatment of rationality and truth in Chapter 4.

[170] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 29, 80.

involving oneself in governance: "the body of man is then most perfit in his nature when it hath power to gender another thereunto, so it the mind is most perfit when it communeth and spreadeth his virtues abroad to the instruction of other[s]."[171] So from a unique skill or rationality, geared towards a theory of Governance transgressing the lines between the body and soul, the art of government becomes an essential part of the human, a divinely given aspect of the soul that must be expressed. As such, the end of Governance – improving the soul – becomes caught up in the means by which that Governance occurs – the art of government.

The Active and Contemplative Life

This union of ends and means in the Henrician humanists' theory of Governance was accomplished through their theory of the *vita activa*, heavily influenced by classical authors. In order to examine this concept, it is necessary to bring in the later work of Foucault, particularly his analysis of classical ethics and the self. Employing the summary provided by James Tully, we see that Foucault in these later texts (such as *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, *The Use of Pleasure*, *The Subject and Power* and *Fearless Speech*) focused on "Greek and Roman authors" who "are all philosophers in the ancient sense: that is, practicing a form of knowledge and ethical formation that make up a *practical philosophical* way of life."[172] This emphasis on a practical way of life, like the *vita activa*, overcomes "what [Foucault] sees as the *disconnection* between political-legal theory and the actual practice of the theorist" in dominant Western thought since the classical age.[173] This relationship between the practical and the theoretical is held

[171] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 25-6.

[172] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 11, emphasis added.

[173] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 12.

together largely by the "Greek parrhesiast" who "does not construct a theory but, rather, speaks her criticism directly to the powerful in a courageous dialogue."[174] For Foucault, this was a "form of care of self" which "consists in turning oneself into an ethical being who has the comportment, courage and equipment to speaking truthfully to the powerful and to enter into a dialogue with them over the unjust relationship between them with the aim of transforming the relationship into an open one."[175] This is precisely the form of the self that the humanists were most interested in advocating, as we will see by an examination of the *parrhesiatic* themes in their work, as well as their negotiation between the active and contemplative life.

Beginning with *parrhesia*, Tully summarizes Foucault's definition as: "speaking truthfully to others in *dialogical* relationships with others, such as mentor-protégé relationships (pedagogical), but also relationships of power in which the less powerful has the ethical obligation to speak a difficult truth to the more powerful partner in the relationship," or what has become known as "speaking the truth to power."[176] The humanists were very familiar with both kinds of dialogical relationships – their dual emphasis on education and the political demanded this. Focusing on the latter, the humanists' works were almost always addressed to the sovereign (in this case usually Henry VIII) and the introductions of these works demonstrate this position. I will use the example of Elyot's *Of the Knowledge Which Maketh a Wise Man*, although most humanist tracts begin in a similar way, praising the powerful addressee for allowing the writer to speak the truth. *Of the Knowledge* is a dialogue in the classical form, in which

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[174] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 12.

[175] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 23.

[176] Tully, "The Question of the Subject," 11.

the character of Plato tells the story of his poor treatment after giving his counsel to a king.[177] Elyot establishes in his introduction the expectation that kings be tolerant of the words of philosophical writers: "In Lyke wise our moste dere soveraygne lorde perfectly knew that no writar ought to be blamed whiche writeth neyther for hope of temporall rewarde nor for any private didayne or malice, but onely of fervent zele towarde good occupation and vertu."[178] Through Plato, Elyot advances the idea that it is the role of the philosopher (or humanist) to speak this truth to power, as in the dialogue Plato states: "it semeth therefore… that I should tell hym truthe and according to my profession."[179] There is in fact an *ethical* obligation to speak the truth to power. A philosopher, knowledgeable about the art of government, has the duty to advance these truths through participation in politics. In other words, the contemplative life carries with it an obligation to the active life. However, as we will see, the relationship between the two is in fact a little more complicated than just this.

There are two texts that most clearly set out the relationship between the contemplative and active life, and both do it in a dialogical form. The first is More's *Utopia*. In it, More sets out to examine "the Best State of a Republic" but does not advance along this path until the second book.[180] He begins, instead, with a discussion about the value of the *vita activa*.[181] The character of More attempts to convince the wise

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[177] Which brings in once again the other dialogical form emphasized by Foucault: that of pedagogy. Most of the humanist dialogues had this form – of a wiser teacher instructing a student on the state of best commonwealth (the clearest example being St. German's *Doctor and Student*).

[178] Thomas Elyot, *Of the Knowledge Which Maketh a Wise Man*, in *Tudor Prose, 1513-1570*, ed. Edmund Creeth (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), 181.

[179] Elyot, *Of the Knowledge*, 195.

[180] Aside from the critique he provides of European politics and societies in Book One.

[181] So we can see a literary trend in the way that this *parrhesia* plays out: first in establishing the humanist's right to speak the truth to power to the audience within to the immediate political context, and then establishing it in terms of the *vita activa* within the fictional reality of the dialogue.

Raphael Hythlodaeus that: “your advice would be extremely useful to the public. Which means that it’s your positive duty, as a good man, to give it. You know what your friend Plato says – that a happy state of society will never be achieved, until philosophers are kings, or kings take to studying philosophy. Well just think how infinitely remote that happy state must remain, if philosophers won’t even condescend to give kings a word of advice!”[182] The active philosopher is a precondition to a “happy state of society” and has a duty to advise the king. Of course More is successful in convincing Raphael, and so we have the description of the island of Utopia.[183]

Starkey’s *Dialogue* begins with a similar introductory discussion. This time it is the character of Thomas Lupset attempting to convince Reginald Pole to speak on the best state of the commonweal.[184] Lupset begins by commenting: “I have much and many times marvelled… Master Pole, after so many years spent in quiet studies and learning… [why you] have not settled yourself and applied your mind to the handling of matters of the common weal here in our own nation.”[185] In response, Pole sets out the dichotomous choice between the contemplative and active life, as a means to determine “wherein lieth the perfection of man… whether it stand in the active life, and in administration of the matters of the common weal… or else in the contemplative, and knowledge of things, it is not all sure.”[186] Lupset responds, as one may expect, by uniting the two through the

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[182] Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Paul Turner (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 35.

[183] More also makes clear his views about *parrhesia* in an impassioned speech to parliament in 1523, pleading with the king to “give all your commoners here assembled your most gracious permission and allowance for every man freely, without fear of your dreaded displeasure, to speak his conscience and boldly declare his advice.” Thomas More, “Petition for Freedom of Speech,” in *A Thomas More Source Book*, eds. Gerard B. Wegemer and Stephen W. Smith (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 241.

[184] These “characters” were in fact contemporaries and friends of Starkey’s, further blurring the line between the *parrhesia* of the ‘fictional’ dialogue and that of Starkey’s immediate context.

[185] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 21.

[186] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 23.

teachings of the Greeks: "[Aristotle] teacheth and showeth most manifestly the perfection of man to stand jointly in both, and nother in the bare contemplation and knowledge of things separate from all the business of the world, nother in the administration of matters of the common weal, without any further regard and direction thereof; for of them, after his sentence, the one is the end of the other."[187] However, rather than placing the *vita contemplativa* as the means to the *vita activa*, as one might expect, he argues that "high philosophy and contemplation of nature be of itself a greater perfection of man's mind, as it which is the end of the active life… the principle mean whereby we may attain the other." In other words, the active life is in fact the means to attain the ends that Pole had associated with the contemplative life – the "perfection of man," that "resteth in the mind and in the chief and purest part thereof, which is reason and intelligence."[188] For Starkey, knowledge alone is not enough to achieve these ends: "it is not sufficient, a man to get knowledge and virtue, delighting himself only therewith… but chiefly he must study to commune his virtues to the profit of other[s]."[189] It is in the very act and relation of 'communing,' of transferring, of *governing* that "is the end of civil life, or, as me seemeth, rather the true administration of the common weal."[190] He concludes this introductory section by stating that "the perfection of man standeth not in bare knowledge and learning without application of it to any use or profit of other; but the very perfection of man's mind resteth in the use and exercise of all virtues and honesty, and chiefly in the chief virtue whereunto tend all the other, which is, doubtless, the communing of high

[187] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 24.

[188] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 25, 23.

[189] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 25.

[190] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 25.

wisdom to the use of other[s]."[191] In order for the humanist subject to gain the true wisdom and knowledge which are the ends of the contemplative life, he must become a *parrhesiast*, living the active life of governance.

In order to make this connection clearer, I will once again borrow from the work of Foucault. His study of practices of the self is rooted in an attempt to "recover the meaning of 'care of the self', and of 'know oneself' *within* the framework of care of self," in much the same way as we now seek to understand the relation between the knowledge of the *vita contemplativa* as situated within the Governance of the *vita activa*.[192] Care of the self, for Foucault, "consists not in formal 'learning' but in practices or *askeses*," such as *parrhesia*, connecting it very clearly with the humanists' active life.[193] What makes this connection even clearer is Foucault's description of care of self (which he labels spirituality) and the relation knowledge (or philosophy) forms with it. Foucault observes that in the classical examples, care of the self *precedes* knowing oneself – "care of the self is the 'ground' of knowledge of oneself" – in the same way that the active life precedes the truth and virtue of a contemplative life in the work of the sixteenth-century English humanists.[194]

Spirituality forms the ground for philosophy in that "one has to undergo certain exercises of the self on the self in order to enter into the games of 'knowing oneself.'"[195] Seen in the *vita activa*, whereby the life of an active governing agent is the means by

[191] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 26.

[192] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 15.

[193] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 19. A second such practice is critique, which, although I do not draw explicit attention to it here, one can see clearly operating in the work of the Henrician humanists, as Foucault points out himself in "What is Critique?"

[194] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 16.

[195] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 16.

which the individual can achieve the higher knowledge and perfection of mind given by God, this connection is also clear in terms of the rationality of Governance espoused by the humanists. Although the exact nature of this divinely given rationality will also be explored in the next chapter, I want to spend a bit of time with one manifestation of it in the work of St. German, in order to further cement the connection between the work of the humanists I have been engaging with and the analysis provided by Foucault.

St. German devotes a chapter of his *Doctor and Student* dialogue to the meaning of 'conscience.' He breaks it down into its Latin components, *cum* and *scientia*, defining it as "knowledge of one thing with another thing," or more comprehensively: "an applying of any science or knowledge to some particular act of man."[196] This seems to be a very knowledge-based description of a typically spiritual concept, and St. German even goes so far as to say that the best form of conscience is "whereby a man truly knoweth himself," creating a striking continuity with the 'philosophy' of Foucault.[197]

Despite this emphasis on knowledge, and in line with Foucault's analysis, St. German states clearly that conscience must be "grounded particularly on universal rules" and "must be ordered by the law, as it must be upon the law of God and upon the law of reason."[198] As I have already alluded to, for St. German, like many of the other humanists, this reason was *not* associated with knowledge in the same sense that he connects conscience with knowledge, rather it is the divinely inspired 'truth' given to those who govern. The "*Law Eternal*" known by the "light of natural reason," "by heavenly revelation" or by "the order of a prince, or of any secondary governor" that

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[196] St. German, *Doctor and Student*.

[197] St. German, *Doctor and Student*.

[198] St. German, *Doctor and Student*.

“ordereth a man to the felicity of his life” and “bring [a people] to virtue” *precedes* the conscience whereby man may “truly know himself.”[199]

It seems, therefore, that these humanists were concerned with what Foucault calls spiritual philosophy, as the three “central features” of spirituality include: first, that the “*subject, as given* does not have access to the truth by means of knowledge alone,” or in St. German’s case, by conscience alone.[200] Second: in order “for the *subject* to gain access to the truth he or she has to transform his or her being” in terms of the practices of the self detailed previously, such as *parrhesia* and the *vita activa*.[201] Finally: that “once one has opened oneself to the truth through the work of the self on the self, *the truth in turn effects the subject*,” as with St. German, for whom God “maketh this *Law Eternal* known to his creatures reasonable.”[202]

So what can we learn from this in terms the relationship between Governance and the State? While I’ll leave final conclusions for the moment, Foucault certainly leads us in the right direction. He demonstrates how philosophy, despite this complex and prior relationship to spirituality, has dominated Western discourse at the cost of a true understanding of spirituality.[203] However, akin to my argument in Chapter 1 in regards to Governance and the State, for Foucault spirituality and philosophy are “never completely

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[199] St. German, *Doctor and Student*.

[200] Tully, “The Question of the Subject,” 18

[201] Tully, “The Question of the Subject,” 18

[202] Tully, “The Question of the Subject,” 18, St. German, *Doctor and Student*. Of course more work would be required to demonstrate absolutely that the humanists were putting forward the same argument that Foucault identifies in the work of classical authors, and I’m not sure that it would be successful. The humanists were negotiating space for this thought in a difficult political context, and as such some of the classical themes are lost and/or diluted. In particular, as we will see in the next chapter, there is a question about how much agency is afforded to those *not* counted among the class of humanists/governors, and the legacy of the strategies put forward by the humanists in order to deal with them.

[203] Tully, “Question of the Subject,” 15.

severed" and instead "it is rather that one [philosophy] becomes predominant and the other overlooked or unthematized."[204] This connection between spirituality and Governance, philosophy and the State is even more apt given Foucault's treatment of care of the self as governmentality and as opposed to juridical political institutions, such as the State. Taking it from the point of view of the recovery of freedom:

> …if you try to analyze power not on the basis of freedom, strategies, governmentality, and ethics, but on the basis of the *political institution*, you can only conceive of the subject as a subject of law. One then has a subject who has or does not have rights, who has had these rights either granted or removed by the institution of political society; and all this brings us back to the legal concept of the subject. On the other hand, I believe that the concept of governmentality makes it possible to bring out the freedom of the subject and its relationship to others – which constitutes the very stuff of ethics.[205]

And so once again, we find that agency does indeed exist in the relation between these concepts (or groupings of concepts as we now have them: spirituality/Governance/*vita activa* and philosophy/State/*vita contemplativa*), as the emphasis on the latter is the means by which "the very practices that turn us into subjects with the abilities to participate in the practices of modern societies are *imposed and overlooked*."[206] It is the task of the next chapter to answer the question of how we might go about uncovering these practices in the context of the contemporary relationship between Governance and the State.

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[204] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 16.

[205] Foucault, "Ethics," 300. Emphasis added.

[206] Tully, "Question of the Subject," 26.

Chapter 4 – Agency and Ambassadors

In my introduction I established a methodological theme through the words of Michel Serres: "Unveiling does not consist in removing an obstacle, taking away a decoration, drawing aside a blanket under which lies the naked thing, but in following patiently and with respectful diplomacy the delicate disposition of the veils, zones, neighbouring spaces."[207] I want to continue to think through this theme in this chapter by analyzing the material presented thus far – both that of the Henrician humanists and contemporary political/IR theory – in terms of lines ("veils"), spheres ("zones") and space/place ("neighbouring spaces"). More than this, the idea of "respectful diplomacy" presents an important thematic – that of a negotiated *via media* – that plays an important role in understanding the relationality of State and Governance and the place of the agent in this relation.

This analysis draws on the work of a number of theorists, and I want to highlight again the work of RBJ Walker, as he also seeks to

> offer a reading of modern theories of international relations as a discourse that systemically reifies an *historically specific spatial ontology [space/place]*, *a sharp delineation of here and there [lines]*, a discourse that both expresses and constantly affirms the *presence and absence of political life inside and outside the modern state [spheres]* as the only ground of which structural necessities can be understood and new realms of freedom and history can be revealed.[208]

Retaining a focus on the theme of agency, I, like Walker, am interested in ways to salvage "new realms of freedom" from such an investigation.

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[207] Serres, *The Five Senses*, 82.

[208] Walker, *Inside/Outside*, ix. Italics and square brackets added.

Walker's recent work, *After the Globe, Before the World*, picks up on a specific understanding of Governance and the State as representing an interaction of vertical and horizontal lines, and it is with this intersection that I would like to begin. Particularly, I will expand on the notion of reason as presented by the sixteenth-century English humanists with which I have already engaged – Rastell, Erasmus, More, St. German, Elyot and Starkey. They saw their position (synonymous with the position that they were advocating for) as translating the laws of the higher sphere onto the lower – as negotiating between God's law and that of man – a relational negotiation that was manifest in a number of ways.[209] Most importantly here, their negotiation between the real and the ideal required attempts to bring those who did not have access to this higher knowledge 'in line' in with the rationality of the higher sphere, and we can see a Foucaultian governmentality start to emerge out of such tactics. However, it can be suggested that these tactics were only part of this initial negotiation between the real and the ideal – as an attempt to carve out space for participation and the expression of agency – and that in fact this participation and agency was meant to be more widely experienced, with the real end being the one previously established – the betterment or perfection of mankind.[210]

However, we can see that this interaction has been lost in the contemporary focus on the preservation of the system (the State). The institutionalization of the process by

[209] This is what Walker identifies as the "late-medieval and early modern struggle to free accounts of political life from the hierarchical incorporation of a particularity into an overarching universalism" which "appears with the principle of state sovereignty." Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 62. I will be only briefly touching on the issue of negotiating between particular and the universal in the way that Walker does. However, it should be clear that this issue stands at the heart of the humanists' attempt to reconcile the real and the ideal, and the rationalities of the higher and the lower spheres.

[210] In noting that these theorists were assigning agency to 'mankind,' there are a plethora of important questions that could be asked about who would be included or excluded; however, the project of answering such questions merits an investigation of its own and cannot be reasonably included in the present piece.

which the ends were achieved has completely eclipsed those ends. This once again falls into the recurring theme of veiling, of which we have now seen a number of times throughout this piece. By "following patiently" the "delicate disposition" of these veils, I have presented relations between concepts historically. In this chapter I will be presenting some further analysis of these relations, and beginning to suggest applications for contemporary political thought. In particular, understanding how these lines, spheres and spaces can once again be relationalized in a way that recaptures a sense of agency.

In addition to the six humanist authors highlighted in the last chapter, these themes bring me to include another sixteenth-century political tract – a 1533 painting by Hans Holbein aptly titled *The Ambassadors*, and I want to begin by spending a moment explaining this choice. *The Ambassadors* comes out of the same political moment of transition as the other works I have been describing and, as such, it serves a dual purpose of providing a visual representation of many of the themes that I will be working through and as further evidence of the English sixteenth-century humanist tradition.

In terms of establishing Holbein's humanism, it is difficult enough to locate the intentions of a political theorist in a written political treatise and it is even more difficult in a portrait painting, a medium that is in many ways designed to obscure the presence of the artist. As such, there is no way to demonstrate outright that Holbein intended to express humanist political philosophies in this painting; contextually, however, there are some strong indicators. Holbein spent a great amount of time in the company of significant humanist scholars such as Erasmus and More and, arguably, was a member of the humanist circle in the court of Henry VIII. As art historian John North establishes, it

was Holbein's contact with this scholarly circle that "helped to create an atmosphere that was highly conducive to the tacit imagery of *The Ambassadors*."[211] In treating *The Ambassadors*, I will be drawing almost exclusively from the work of North, who provides a lengthy description of the imagery and meaning of the portrait in his *The Ambassador's Secret.*

In particular, he notes the importance of the religious imagery; despite the "symbols of political power" present in the painting, he reminds us that "all rulers, like those they ruled, were set in a hierarchy with God at the highest level."[212] This hierarchical view of the political is very important to my argument here, as it resonates with Walker's view of the vertical in *After the Globe*. In addition, although North focuses on "sixteenth-century humanism of an intellectual and artistic character," he notes importantly the "powerful movement sponsored by the same class of scholars, with a very different aim, namely to encourage that individual to take an active part in civic affairs," which is of course the *vita activa* of the Henrician humanists.[213] In treating the painting as a primary source, I will be bringing it in as necessary, rather than attempting to provide a description of it as a whole, much in the same way I engaged with the humanist texts in the previous chapter. Specifically, I will be calling attention, as North does, to Holbein's use of lines in his painting, as well as the representations of the higher and lower spheres. In accordance with North, and recalling Foucault and Serres' attention to intersections, I want to suggest that "the true secret of the painting is found only when

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[211] John North, *The Ambassadors Secret: Holbein and the World of the Renaissance*, (London: Hambledon and London), 232.

[212] North, *Ambassadors*, xvii-xviii.

[213] North, *Ambassadors*, 8.

we discover where the threads finally meet," in other words, where it intersects with the other humanist theories that form its context.[214]

The imagery of *The Ambassadors*, whether it was intended or not, gives us a visual understanding of the important theories emerging out of this scholarly movement for, in the words of Ernst Cassirer, at this time, "the history of art, the history of politics, and the general history of culture all seemed to point in the same direction."[215] Beyond the contextual analysis, I will also be appropriating the painting, stealing it out of its time and place, as a way simply of exploring the concepts of veils/lines, zones/spheres, and space/place visually. This use has less to do with the epistemology of the sixteenth century and more with my own argument, one that relies very heavily on the drawing out of political theories in visual/material ways. As such, these ambassadors will help to lead us through the arguments that I present below and, as always, serve to negotiate the middle ground between disparate perspectives.

Reason Above and Below the Line

In *After the Globe*, Walker establishes a distinction between the horizontal lines that predominate the landscape of political theory – those between sovereign states and individuals – and the vertical lines that defined the hierarchies of the medieval and Renaissance period – "the line between immanent and transcendent authority, between earth and heaven, and by all those lines, or 'levels', that can be erected somewhere in between."[216] I want to spend some time exploring the theories behind some of these vertical lines, lines that I suggest are those of Governance, in order to further explore the

[214] North, *Ambassadors*, xviii.

[215] Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. Mario Damandi (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Press, 1963), 4.

[216] Walker, *After the Globe*, 170.

intersection between Governance and the State pointed to by Foucault's 'crossroads' and evident in Walker's vertical/horizontal. In particular, and adding a dimension that is less emphasized by Walker, I want to explore the ways in which the humanists located themselves as a middling conduit between these spheres, taking in a divine rationality and communing it downward as a rationality of Governance. As we saw in the previous chapter, it is this position that appears to hold the potential for agency, and as such it deserves a closer analysis with the aim of giving it a more contemporary theoretical application.

As established in the previous chapter, the humanists' politicization of Governance of the soul established the requirement of a new kind of governmental 'reason' amongst those who were to rule. Those figures were required to participate in the active life in order to both receive and commune this rationality, with the end of bringing all mankind to 'perfection' and 'virtue.' Given that they also established that the active life was the only way to attain such ends, one can raise the question of how expansive this project was meant to be – was every man expected to become a *parrhesiast*? – and it is certainly a question I will be addressing here. For the humanists established a second sort of rationality, one of the terrestrial or earthly level, one that bares striking parallels to Foucault's original description of governmentality – a governmentality of obedience and conditioning, not of freedom and agency. The question thus becomes - which governmental reason predominates? I want to suggest that this second governmentality was intended as a temporary measure, a means to transform man enough so that he too could perceive the rationality of the eternal powers. This is accomplished by evaluating the articulated ends – whether it is the transformation of the

self, or the perpetual continuance of the system itself. The latter leads us back to a governmentality of a fictional and timeless State, the former to recovering agency.

Returning for a moment to the work of the Henrician humanists, St. German's *Doctor and Student* establishes the nature of reason in a way that presents a concise summation of the work of other theorists of the period. After noting that governors require a specific reason as appropriate for their craft, St. German puts forward that this reason is derived from the *Law Eternal*, which "no man may know as it is in itself," but rather it is shown by God to "His creatures reasonable."[217] As I established previously, for St. German this occurred either by the "light of natural reason," "by heavenly revelation," or "by the order of a prince, or of any secondary governor, that hath the power to bind his subjects to a law."[218] I want to suggest that the first two categories – named by St. German as the Law of Reason and the Law of God respectively – are those available to the humanist-figure through the practices of the self, and it is the latter – the Law of Man – that represents the rationality akin to governmentality, aimed at the betterment and control of the rest of mankind.

Beginning with the laws of reason and God, St. German is referring to the common assumption amongst Henrician humanists (expressed both by those writing before and after him) that the "principles of right government" can be understood "by reference to the example set by the eternal powers."[219] This is both expressly stated, as by Erasmus in this last quotation, as well as being made clear through the examples and evidence that they provide. Taking an example from Erasmus once again, he

[217] St. German, *Doctor and Student*.

[218] St. German, *Doctor and Student*.

[219] Erasmus, *Education*, 2.

demonstrates that with "many arguments nature hath taught peace and concord" by examining how "the confederations of so many celestial circles, albeit their motion and power is not all one, yet they continue and live thus many years. The powers of the elements, striving among themselves, do defend with equal weight eternal peace."[220] He then applies these lessons to the political realm. Starkey takes this argument further, by establishing that the "sensible world" is "a glass of the divine majesty, whereby man's judgement and capacity is opened, the infinite power, and wonderful wisedom of him, who by his high providence governeth and ruleth all."[221] As such, consciously recalling Erasmus, Starkey states that in this 'glass' "there shall [man] see the infinite number and multitude of stars ever keeping their certain course and moving without all instability… there shall he see, of the four elements… so knit by due proportion in a certain equality, that though they be by nature most diverse and full of contrariety, yet they are coupled and joined together, as it were in a nature concord and unity." He then too applies this to his prescriptions for the common weal.[222]

Turning to our visual ambassadors, the table at the centre of the painting is worth isolating in terms of discussion of this rationality. On the top shelf are a variety of man-made instruments whose function it is to discover the order of the celestial sphere – to predict it, to chart it, and use it to understand our place within space and time. For example, the large celestial globe demonstrates clearly that the stars do indeed follow the order that Erasmus and Starkey note. This top shelf, from which the two ambassadors

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[220] Erasmus, *Complaint of Peace*, 8.

[221] Starkey, *Exhortation,* 1.

[222] Thomas Starkey, *Exhortation to Unitie and Obedience* (Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1973), 1. In addition to providing examples of the humanists' use of the 'sensible world' for divining God's universal principles, they also touch on the theme of a mediated concord drawn from an apparent discord, observable throughout the discourse.

gain authority, seems to exemplify Starkey's description of the "divine power, wisdom, providence" achievable if one would only "lift up your eyes with some consideration."[223]

It was not just in the celestial sphere that once could see God's order through observation and delineation, as we see in the bottom shelf of the table. On this shelf are instruments of the terrestrial, specifically of harmony, place and mathematics, which use the immutable laws of nature to man's advantage. For example the math book, globe and measuring implements may recall Foucault's observations that the major effect of the scientific "discursive practices" of the time "was to show that ultimately God only rules the world through general, immutable, and universal laws, through simple and intelligible laws that are accessible either in the form of measurement and mathematical analysis, or in the form of classificatory analysis in the case of history, or in the form of logical analysis in the case of general grammar."[224] More contemporary to Holbein's own context, we can relate the lute, flutes and song book perhaps to Elyot's recommendation that a governor "commend the perfect understanding of music, declaring how necessary it is for the better attaining of knowledge of a public weal; which, as I before have said, is made of an order of estates and degrees, and by reason thereof containeth in it a perfect harmony."[225]

This discussion of hierarchy in Elyot brings us nicely to a contentious issue in a discussion of Henrician humanism. We saw that the humanist, through participation in governance (and self-care), has a way of expressing his agency. His relationship to the higher truth detailed above gives him the opportunity to be a full "ethical being" and have

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[223] Starkey, *Exhortation*, 1.

[224] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 235.

[225] Elyot, *Governor*, 23.

a “relationship to the self as a work of art.”[226] So it is in the very act of receiving this higher reason, understanding these divine principles, that the humanist expresses his/her agency. However, it is clear that most citizens, for the humanists, fall under the third category of St. German’s laws, having a relationship to divine truth only though obedience to man’s law and, as we will see, this begins to sound a lot like Foucault’s earlier conception of governmentality, or what he calls in his later work the ‘spell of the Cartesian moment.’ This other category of individual is unable to access the higher truths, and is bound therefore by the line that separates the higher and lower. This forms the precursor to our modern relationship with power and truth, where agency is out of the question:

> In modern society, under the spell of the Cartesian moment, ‘individuals’ start from the forms of subjectivity that are given to them by normalizing and pastoralising relationships of power that govern their conduct. They take these games of subjectivity and truth as the basis of agency and think and act within their ways of knowing and bodies of knowledge, their ‘self-understandings’ and ‘social imaginaries’ (i.e. the knowledge that describes and legitimates the practices in which they are governed, not spiritual practices, is taken as basic). They are *unfree*.[227]

As Foucault suggests, it is certainly this conditioning form of Governance that has predominated, tied as it is to the institutions of the State. So where is the emphasis in the work of the Henrician humanists?

In order to try to answer this question, let us examine some of the practices that the humanists prescribed for dealing with those members of the population unable to interpret God’s law. First, this lack of ability has nothing to do with a natural

[226] Tully, “Question of the Subject,” 7.

[227] Tully, “Question of the Subject,” 24.

precondition. The power to see God's law in nature is given by God to every man. As Starkey describes it, "The goodness of God… hath made man of all creatures in earth most perfit, giving unto him a sparkle of his own divinity – that is to say, right reason – whereby he should govern himself in civil life and good policy according to his excellent nature and dignity."[228] St. German as well notes that "the law of reason is written in the heart of every man."[229] However, it can be "greatly lett and blinded by evil customs, and by sins of the people" and, as such, "it was necessary, for the good order of the people, to have many things added to the law of reason, as well by the church as by secular princes."[230] So the potential is there for every person to be enlightened by God's truth, but first he or she must be transformed, in line with Foucaultian spirituality. In order to deal with this reality, the humanists prescribed certain practices of Governance – namely education, legislation and example – for those unable to undergo the practices of the self on the self (by themselves), in an attempt to bring them too to perfection.

Beginning with Erasmus, in his *Education of a Christian Prince*, he argues that "the utmost care must be taken over public and private schools" for this is where future citizens "absorb both Christian principles and also literature that is of sound quality and conducive to the welfare of the state."[231] Importantly, "in this way, it will come about that there is truly no need for many laws and penalties, because the citizens follow the right course of action of their own accord."[232] This becomes a common argument amongst Henrician humanists. Starkey repeats it a number of times in his *Dialogue* as a goal of a

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[228] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 152.

[229] St. German, *Doctor and Student*.

[230] St. German, *Doctor and Student*.

[231] Erasmus, *Education*, 72.

[232] Erasmus, *Education*, 72.

good commonwealth: "if all men could perceive [right reason], as I said before, it should be little need of many laws."[233] He too comes to education as a means to achieve this, although is not as optimistic as Erasmus about the chances of its success: "Howbeit, forbecause that man is so frail and given to pleasure, beside this education it shall be necessary to have some other laws for the correction of this faut."[234]

Starkey's emphasis throughout the *Dialogue* is on law. For him, "man by instruction and gentle exhortation cannot be brought to his perfection. Wherefore it was necessary to descend to the constitution and ordinance of laws civil and politic, that whereas man, blinded by affects and vanities thereof, would not follow the trade of right reason, he should at the least by fear of punishment be constrained… and so at the last, by long custom, be induced to follow and do that thing for the love of virtue which before he did only for fear of the punishment prescribed by the law."[235] Eventually, through this method, man will realize the higher truth and *want* to follow God's law. Previous to this, however, obedience to the law becomes the key component, which Starkey expresses most clearly in his *Exhortation*: "obedience in all times, and with all nations hath ever been reputed, the chief bond of all virtue and good civility."[236]

Contrarily, Erasmus argues for persuasion and deception rather than obedience and punishment, as he states that "to persuade men not to break the law, you must first use reasoned arguments, then, as a deterrent, the fear of divine vengeance against criminals, and in addition threats of punishment. If these are ineffective, you must resort to punishment, but of a comparatively light kind, more to cure the disease than to kill the

[233] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 138.

[234] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 144.

[235] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 138.

[236] Starkey, *Exhortation*, 5.

patient."[237] He even goes so far as to say that "if the people are obstinate and resist what is to their own advantage, then either you will have to go along with them for the time being and gradually win them over to your plans, or do this by some skilful strategy or some benign deception."[238] Certainly this would seem to fall under the category of 'tactics' or 'strategies' of Governance. Despite this slight dispute over means – either education or legislation, the ends remain the same to both Erasmus and Starkey: to train men to good (and orderly) behaviour through political institutions.

Another such strategy, which I have already alluded to in previous chapters, is what can be called 'exemplarity' and in this tactic Erasmus and Starkey are in accordance, as are many of the other humanists. The governor (either the prince or the humanist) was meant to hold a position whereby through example he will also improve the people. As Erasmus writes: "For this very reason the prince should take special care not to fall into wrongdoing, so as not to turn innumerable people to wrongdoing by his example; and for the same reason he will rather devote himself to setting a good example, so that many more good people may result."[239] Elyot too gives such reasons when explaining why those skilled in the art of government should be set above the majority; it is not just because they must be in a position to legislate, but also "they ought to be set in a more high place than the residue where *they may see and also be seen*, that by the beams of their excellent wit, showed through the glass of authority, other of inferior understanding may be directed to the way of virtue and commodious living."[240] This last stratagem differs from the first two, as it requires more explicitly a certain amount of

[237] Erasmus, *Education*, 82.

[238] Erasmus, *Education*, 73.

[239] Erasmus, *Education*, 22.

[240] Elyot, *Governor*, 4. Emphasis added.

agency on the part of the 'residue' of mankind. In order to follow the example of the good prince or good governors, and therefore to improve oneself, the individual has to make a conscious choice to see and follow the example set before him.

I would like to make only indications about how the tactics of the humanists may or may not accord with Foucault's governmentality, as an in-depth discussion deserves more analysis than I can provide here. The entry of the pastorate in the political for Foucault marks the "point of formation, of crystallization, the embryonic point of governmentality," found at the "end of the sixteenth and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."[241] What is located in the sixteenth century for Foucault, and for us, is "a development of forms of the activity of conducting men outside of ecclesiastic authority."[242] In particular, he draws attention to the "education of children" which was the "fundamental utopia, crystal and prism through which problems of conduction were perceived."[243] Education and the laws guide man's conduct with little room for agency.

However, we might be able to contest the application here of Foucault's earlier governmentality on two grounds. First, the emphasis on exemplarity, as I have said, leaves more room for freedom; it includes quite clearly the existence of "individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behaviour are available" and they are, in making such a choice, free.[244] Second, the ends of governmentality as Foucault initially sets them out do not seem to accord with those of the Henrician humanists. Foucault

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[241] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 165.

[242] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 230.

[243] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 231.

[244] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Power, Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 342.

argues that the end of such a system is a "state of affairs where all the subjects without exception obey the laws."[245] Given the discussion in the last chapter, this does not appear to be the end of the system being put forward by the Henrician humanists, but rather a means. It seems instead that obedience, "multiform tactics" and other "instruments of government" are, at this point, means to a different end – that is the perfection and self-fulfilment of the individual.[246] These elements appear to represent a compromise – a temporary accommodation – until all individuals are able to participate in the practices of the self – including *parrhesia* and the *vita activa* – that will lead them to perfection. The end, as Starkey articulates it, is: "every man, and so the whole, may at the last attain to such perfection as by nature is to the dignity of man due."[247]

This element of compromise is key to understanding the work of the Henrician humanists. They were negotiating between a variety of dissenting and differing forces – we have already encountered some of the temporal, contextual and theoretical pulls – and these included the higher and lower planes of reason as I have presented them here. The humanists, in their role as governors, served as the very medium by which the reason of the higher was translated into the 'governing rationality' of the lower. Politically, this position was understood as between the prince and the people. Even Erasmus, whose focus largely remains on the prince, sees that "next to [the prince] stand the magistrates, partly carrying out and partly giving instructions; they obey the prince but command the people."[248] They are Elyot's "sundry *mean* authorities" and make up Starkey's counsel,

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[245] Foucault, *Governmentality*, 95.

[246] Foucault, *Governmentality*, 95

[247] Starkey, *Dialogue*, 26.

[248] Erasmus, *Education*, 92.

whereby the king may be "head and president" but it is they, representing the people, who by "all things pertaining to the princely state should be governed and ruled."[249]

This political position is paralleled theoretically in the place that they hold between the higher and lower forms of rationality. To summarize these two positions, I will quote a rather lengthy passage from St. German's *Doctor and Student*:

> Also reason is divided into two parts, that is to say, into the higher part, and into the lower part. The higher part hideth heavenly things and eternal, and reasoneth by heavenly laws or by heavenly reason what is to be done, and what is not to be done, and what things God commandeth, and what he prohibiteth. And this higher part of reason hath no regard to transitory things or temporal things, but that sometime, as it were by manner of counsel, she bringeth forth heavenly reasons to order well temporal things. The lower part of reason worketh most to govern well temporal things, and she groundeth her reasons much upon laws of man, and upon reason of man, whereby she concludeth that that is to be done that is honest and expedient to the commonwealth, or not to be done, that is not expedient to the commonwealth. And so that reason whereby I know God, and such things as pertain to God, belongeth to, the highest part of reason; and the reason whereby I know creatures belongeth to the lower part of reason. And though these two parts, that is to say, the higher part and the lower part, be one in deed and essence, yet they differ by reason of their working, and of their office; as it is of one self eye, that sometime looketh upward, and sometime downward.[250]

The humanist governor stands between these two rationalities, seeking to reconcile one to the other. Where civil law does not accord with God's law, or where God's law is not being reflected in political practice, this figure must seek to reconcile the disparity. As such, we might conceive of this rationality as along a vertical plane, necessarily (from a perspective of human agency) cutting through the horizontal delineation of the higher and

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[249] Elyot, *Governor*, 13; Starkey, *Dialogue*, 166.

[250] St. German, *Doctor and Student*.

lower spheres, with the humanist sitting at the exact point of intersection, the nexus of the two lines.

Connections

We have seen how, in the words of More, the humanists prescribed a course whereby "through the knowledge of things natural" they could "build a ladder by which to rise to the contemplation of things supernatural" and then translate such learning downward.[251] In order to lead into a discussion of contemporary theories of the State and Governance, I want to analyze the material presented above and in the previous chapter through the work of Walker, while keeping in mind always our ambassadors for visual representations of what is being put forward here.

Walker makes the connections between the sixteenth-century thought I have presented here and contemporary political/IR theory. He argues that "it is certainly no accident… that one of the most pervasive moves in contemporary political analysis involves an almost automatic resort to the terminology of 'levels' arrayed on a scale of higher and lower: a terminology that affirms much of what we call common sense yet is uncannily reminiscent of the hierarchical world of the 'great chain of being' against which modern forms of political life struggled so hard in order to affirm the possibilities and limits of modern freedoms."[252] It is not the case that the theory of the sixteenth-century English humanists represented explicitly the 'great chain of being,' rather theirs was one of the early attempts to combat it in order to assert human freedom. One can see the hierarchical remnants of such thought in their work, but it represents a different way

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[251] Thomas More, "Letter to Oxford University," in *A Thomas More Source Book* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 208.

[252] Walker, *After the Globe*, 8-9.

of thinking about the order of the world. As Foucault puts it, for these thinkers, "God does not 'govern' the world; he does not govern it in the pastoral sense. He reigns over the world in a sovereign manner through principles."[253] The humanists are the essential part of this vertical, even if they rest in a position at the middle of it.

So let's explore these 'levels' and the lines that are formed between them a little more in depth, in order to isolate where this place for agency may be recovered. Walker describes in detail how this "vertical plane between heaven and earth, or time and eternity, was flatted onto a horizontal plane between the new secular-sacred beings of the modern world: sovereign territorial states and free, equal and potentially autonomous individuals."[254] Whereas the emphasis in the Henrician humanists' work had been on the vertical relations of Governance, Walker describes how the emphasis shifts to the horizontal – "most notably the separations between sovereign states (the concern of what we now call international relations theory), between proto-sovereign/national subjects/ individuals (the concern of modern political theory and its derivatives)."[255] On the other hand, the vertical, the "hierarchical authority under God" is both "subverted, but in some senses also reinscribed" by this "modern secular authority articulated as the sovereignty of states."[256]

Certainly, the language of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' relations of power and Governance within both these disciplines resonates with the description above. However,

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[253] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 235.

[254] Walker, *After the Globe*, 81.

[255] Walker, *After the Globe*, 81. Walker also mentions "those deemed capable of a properly modern sovereignty/subjectivity and those who were not" which is the concern of "anthropologists, historians of empire," and so on, but the concern here is for political theory and IR, so I draw specific attention to the function of the horizontal in these disciplines.

[256] Walker, *After the Globe*, 81.

as the horizontal has ruled the vertical within the disciplines, these relations, when they are considered, are bounded by the horizontal State lines that contain/repel them. If we take as an apt example the discussion of diplomacy within international relations, we find that the "little attention" paid to it "among political scientists specializing in international relations" is often attributed to the "bottom-up conceptualization" of international relations, meaning that one sees "anything 'international' emanat[ing] from autonomous states" and not from another source.[257] The 'bottom,' in such an interpretation, occurs at the State line. Instead, it has been asserted that a "top-down" view would be more conducive to a study of diplomacy. However, one senses a confusion in the discipline over how to implement order without an institutionalized 'top' – international society is an anarchical one in most theories of international relations, with the States being the only possible actors.[258] Both the 'top' and the 'bottom', therefore, appear to be occurring at the horizontal State line, despite the language (and perhaps the intention) of bringing in a vertical. In other words, rather than a focus on the humanist agent negotiating between the reason existing above and below, "the claims of both the 'higher' and the 'lower' were conflated into the same homogenous space mid-way between the heights and depths of cosmic expectation."[259] The State, instead of the human agent, is now the line between the demands of these secularized higher and lower spheres, and the human agent becomes as limited by this horizontal as the subject who were unable to rise to higher truths within the humanists' work.

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[257] Christer Jonsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1; Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The practice of diplomacy: its evolution, theory, and administration* (Abington: Routledge, 1995), 13, 1, Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The practice of diplomacy: its evolution, theory, and administration* (Abington: Routledge, 1995), 89.

[258] This is of course countered by some of the anti- or counter-realist schools in IR theory and I will draw attention to some of their theories briefly in the conclusion.

[259] Walker, *After the Globe*, 81.

As Walker suggests, this rule of the State line has led some to "consistently invite the reconstruction of a cross in vertical space, of a line from below to above bisected not by the borders of territorial states…"[260] As we retain the idea that the vertical is representative of a specific, and arguable resilient, theory of Governance, then Walker is summarizing, in spatial-visual terms, the very debate detailed in the first chapter, between those who emphasize the State, and those who seek to break through the disciplinary hegemony of State by focusing instead on Governance. The move, which Walker rejects, is to reconstruct the vertical lines of Governance in order to shatter the horizontal lines of the State.

If we return to our sixteenth-century illustrated ambassadors, we can see many examples of the sort of penetration and breaking down of the horizontal lines between spheres which marked the humanists' art of government. Holbein employed the instruments on the top shelf to leave clues about the intended date and time of the piece: 3pm on April 11, 1533 – Good Friday. To Christian humanists this was precisely 1500 years after the moment of Christ's death - a moment when veils were torn and the boundaries between spheres were shattered.[261] Especially in spying the cross partially hidden in the top left corner, this imagery may recall to us the words of Erasmus: "behold the image of thy Prince. Observe and mark how He entered into his Kingdom, and He proceeded, how He departed hence; and though shalt easily understand how He would have thee to rule," for Christ, "was an ambassador."[262]

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[260] Walker, *After the Globe*, 170.

[261] North, *Ambassadors*, 247.

[262] Erasmus, *Complaint of Peace*, 20.

As well, the ambassador on the left (importantly the one dressed in secular, courtly garb and holding a dagger resembling scales of justice) has his foot forward, traversing two delineated sections of a macrocosmic diagram on the floor. Although, as I stated earlier, the ambassadors are leaning on the mechanisms that are required to understand the universal laws that can be discovered in the higher sphere, they are standing directly on a macrocosmic diagram that portrays visually the relationship between the elements of man, earth and the cosmos. And despite all these instruments on which the ambassadors stand or lean, it is the political figure that steals visual focus and makes space for himself, traversing the spheres on the macrocosmic floor and on the table, as "the agent of liberalism [in the Renaissance] was not the new view of nature, but the new view of the value of *humanity*."[263] His spatial traversing creates "a sense of real space inherited by real people."[264] This is the essential lesson here. If we want to relocate and recover a sense of agency, then the human agent must be placed at this central point – at the intersection of the lines. The human must once again steal focus. The only way to even begin to accomplish this is to understand the State and Governance as having a specific relation, negotiated by this human agent sitting at their intersection.

Any discussion that brought in Holbein's *Ambassadors* would be amiss if it did not integrate the most famous element of the painting – the skull. It is not the most prominent feature of the painting by any means, as it is not meant to be the visual focus; once the viewer sees it, however, it becomes the most engrossing element, and it is the reason for the portrait's fame. The skull is an early example of anamorphosis, a painting

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[263] Cassirer, *Individual and the Cosmos*, 120. Italics added.

[264] North, *Ambassadors*, 4.

technique that rose out of the Renaissance. Holbein designed it so the skull can be viewed without distortion from only one side; from the other it resembles driftwood – perspective is very important in *The Ambassadors*.

What I would like to advocate is exactly this sort of perspective shift, one that may allow us to see the theoretical field in a way that presents less distortion. The focus on the horizontal, the substantive nature of spheres and space in international relations veils the ways in which the vertical, the relational and place played a significant part in the development of these concepts at their convergence in the sixteenth century. Their intersection marks an important point of negotiation between concepts. The limited perspective further limits the ways in which these latter concepts are related today; as I showed previously, language that appears to employ the relational vertical ('top-down'/ 'bottom-up') is in fact ruled of the horizontal, as a search for both bottom and top ends up with the State line.

It was precisely this middle where, for a time, the humanists located the potential for human agency, in a self-forming politically active governing agent. What appears to have occurred, and here I demonstrate my indebtedness to Foucault once more, is that the seemingly temporary institutions utilized to bring all citizens to this level of agency and perfection took on a life of their own, with an aim to perpetuate the system *as it was*, not as it aimed to be. The *humanist* ends were lost in the institutionalization of the complex circle of ends and means that defined the system. Agency was lost when Governance (and its associated ties to participation, spirituality, and so on) was veiled by the State.

Conclusion

So where do we go from here? Having recovered a place for agency at the intersection of the State and Governance historically, and established how that place has become veiled in contemporary political/international relations theory, the question becomes how to reorient our disciplinary gaze in a way that can continue to take the human agent as the primary focus. What I have presented above is only a preliminary project, the barest beginnings, and I would like to employ my conclusion to indicate some of the directions that the project could take in the future. Primarily, I would like to make suggestions about the application of this project to international relations and the history of political thought, picking up once again on the themes of the diplomat, the humanist and the *via media*. As the central argument of this piece has been that agency can be located at the intersection of the State and Governance in sixteenth-century humanist thought, then the application of this argument would be to try to recreate such a position in contemporary theory – and I see two such opportunities. First, in the generation of a political/international relations theory that emphasizes the human agent, acting through theories of Governance, as the medium between the international and the domestic. Second, in the bolstering of a history of political thought that is both politically and historically oriented – where, once again, the human agent can stand at the intersection of a *knowledge* of the past (and as such knowledge of self) and *practices* by which she can change her fate (and herself).

Neither of these suggestions are new, I alluded to both in my first two chapters, but they are worth returning to following the reading of the sixteenth-century texts. Neither are they completely separate – the latter argument, in which the historical and the

political encounter each other, requires an understanding of how this political is to be conceptualized. As such I will begin with the politically-oriented argument.

Given the emphasis on negotiation and the humanist role of the ambassador detailed in the previous chapters, it may be too obvious to suggest that the application of my study be an emphasis on diplomatic theory in international relations, but certainly this is one aspect of what I am trying to put forward here. It is in the diplomatic where the connection between the Governance below the State line and the Governance above it is negotiated, and although dominant theory still assigns this task to States, an understanding of the role of human agents in the generation, articulation and negotiation of governmental norms on the international stage is an underexplored and underemphasized endeavour.[265] A focus on the diplomatic allows us to uncover a relationist middle ground between the Governance above and below.

Although there are a variety of international relations theories that have tried to oppose the realist emphasis on the State as the only actor on the international stage, thereby reinforcing the rule of the horizontal over vertical Governance and human agency, I would suggest that the greatest potential to put into disciplinary action the conclusions of my study lies with the English school. Although criticized for its ambiguity, incompleteness and lack of an agreed set of beliefs (which I in fact see as opportunities – such descriptions may remind us of the same ‘problems’ with studying English humanism), the English School integrates many elements that have the potential to recover human agency in an analysis of international relations. The emphasis on the diplomatic is primary, as English School theorists seek to “make IR theory relevant to

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[265] See for example the evidence provided in Chapter 4 by Jonsson and Hall.

diplomacy, and diplomacy relevant to IR theory."[266] This diplomacy is conceptualized as relational, dealing with the "dynamic relations that help differential political space," thereby transcending the 'higher' and 'lower' spheres in international relations.[267] The human agent is key in these relations; diplomats are "the real agents in international society" as well as the medium through which states act.[268] The diplomat, in this view, becomes the nexus of the international and domestic spheres, diplomatic culture being formed at the site of overlap and transference of the rationality operating in each sphere.

On a more foundational level, the theme of the *via media* present in the work of the English School also resonates with the analysis I have been presenting. Although Walker critiques this aspect of their work, as "the intended compromise reinforces the legitimacy of the two poles as the limits of permitted discourse," he, as I have said, is working to expand the limits of this 'permitted discourse,' whereas I am simply exploring what this discourse veils.[269] For a focus on the human agent, the work of the English humanists would teach us that the middle ground is precisely where such an agent acts. As such, the English School appears to present exactly that opportunity.

Regardless of these more specific suggestions, at the very least what I have presented here would suggest that political/international relations theory must shift focus to take in the line of Governance that intersects with the line between the disciplines and the State line (these latter two lines being synonymous for Walker). Having thus presented some suggestions on cutting through the line between political/international

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[266] Jonsson and Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy*, 3.

[267] Jonsson and Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy*, 25.

[268] Tim Dunne, "The English School," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity,* eds. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 132, 134.

[269] Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 32.

relations theory, I want to explore some ideas about where to position the human agent on the line between history/politics.

This intersection is most explicitly presented, as I have shown, through the work of Constantine Fasolt and the methodology of Quentin Skinner.[270] Skinner's methodological emphasis on a historical agent in dialogue, standing at the interaction between his context and the change he wishes to bring into the world resonates with Fasolt's identification of history with the knowledge of the past, and politics with the actions of human agents to change their fates.[271] This forms a convincing parallel with the knowledge and care of self of Foucault – a parallel which serves to further emphasize the importance of forming a connection between these two disciplines. Furthermore, if we carry this connection through, the lesson becomes that, like philosophy/spirituality, we cannot avoid an acknowledgement that the historical is *grounded* in the political and that a political approach to history may be the only way to experience it. Certainly, the historiography detailed in Chapter 2 demonstrated clearly that the historical was altered by the political perspective of the time – a focus on the State veiled the political theory of the sixteenth century. What I would suggest, however, is not that our politics will *dictate* our history in studying the history of political thought – like some force acting on it, defining our perspective or ability – but rather that we once again have the power to stand at the intersection between history and politics, between knowledge and action, and

[270] It should be noted that there remain important differences between the work of Skinner and Fasolt; however, for the purposes of this paper, we can draw out crucial commonalities.

[271] For Skinner's emphasis on agency see Holly Hamilton-Bleakley "Linguistic Philosophy and *The Foundations*" in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, eds. Annabel S. Brett, James Tully and Holly Hamilton-Bleakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 20-35. This piece highlights a number of themes – dialogue, agency, context and the relationship between theory and practice – in Skinner's methodology that resonate with the analysis I have provided of humanist thought. I would suggest that there is work to be done to draw out these connections even further in seeking to resituate the human agent in historical political study.

negotiate how one affects the other. The only way that this is possible, however, is to note the relation between them, for otherwise there is no place for the human agent to stand. In acknowledging such relations, we must become this agent, this ambassador – the humanist.

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Appendix 1

Hans Holbein, *The Ambassadors*, (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1533).