BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

BACHELOR THESIS

BRATISLAVA 2013 **Alžbeta Hájková**

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

THE ROLE OF VIRTUE AND MORALITY IN THE THOUGHT OF XENOPHON AND LOCKE: THE CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF CYRUS' EMPIRE AND OF THE GOLDEN AGE

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Declaration of Originality

I declare that this Thesis is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and properly cited in references.

Bratislava 30/04/2013 Alžbeta Hájková

Abstrakt

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Názov práce: The Role of Virtue and Morality in the Thought of Xenophon and Locke: The Causes of the Decline of Cyrus' Empire and of the Golden Age

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Táto bakalárska práca má vo svojom centre dvoch politicko-filozofických mysliteľov, Johna Lockea a Xenofóna, a ponúka bližší pohľad na úlohu cnosti v Lockeovom koncepte *Zlatého veku* a v Xenofónovom diele *Cyropaedia*, teda v politických spoločnostiach vystavaných okolo kultu silného a cnostného vládcu. Bližší pohľad na oba tieto modely nám odhalí ich rýchly koniec, táto práca sa teda sústredí na možné príčiny rozpadov týchto politických systémov, ako aj na riešenia ponúknuté oboma autormi.

K odhaleniu možných ponúknutých alternatív práca využíva detailnú analýzu relevantných pasáží z diel Johna Lockea *Rozprava o Ľudskom Rozume* a *Dve Pojednania o Vláde*, za cieľom pochopiť prepojenie medzi cnosťou, rozumom, a zdrojom legitimity pre politickú spoločnosť, ktorým je pre Lockea univerzálny súhlas všetkých budúcich členov politického spoločenstva. Dielo *Cyropaedia* slúži na aplikovanie Lockeových teoretických princípov na konkrétny príklad mocného lídra, ako aj na porovnanie povahy cnosti v Lockeovej filozofií a v diele Xenofóna. Toto dielo zároveň ponúka iný zdroj legitimity politickej moci, ktorého oprávnenosť je z Lockeoveho pohľadu nepodložená.

Záver bakalárskej práce porovnáva stav, ktorý nastane po rozpade Cyrusovho impéria a Lockeového *Zlatého Veku*. Následky oboch rozpadov, a následná reformácia spoločnosti v Lockeovom prípade, nám odhaľujú príčinu kolapsu podobných politických systémov postavených na osobnostnej cnosti lídra. Locke zároveň ponúka riešenie pre stabilnejšiu politickú spoločnosť, ktorého korene siahajú opäť k prepojeniu univerzálneho súhlasu občanov na forme politickej spoločnosti a tým pádom zachovaniu rozumu ako najdôležitejšej ľudskej kvality zaručujúcej lepší život.

Abstract

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Title: The Role of Virtue and Morality in the Thought of Xenophon and Locke: The Causes of the Decline of Cyrus' Empire and of the Golden Age

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There are two political thinkers standing at the center of this bachelor thesis – John Locke and Xenophon. My thesis offers closer look at the role of virtue during the era of *Golden Age* in Locke's philosophy and in Xenophon's work *the Education of Cyrus*. Both of these societies were built around the strong figures of virtuous leaders, and yet, closer look at them reveals their rapid and unexpected ends. This work seeks the causes of the decline of these systems, as well as the solutions provided by both John Locke and Xenophon.

In order to reveal the alternatives to these failed regimes, I use detailed analysis of the relevant passages from John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* as well as *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The goal is to understand the connection between the virtue, reason and the source of legitimacy – which is the universal consent of all people entering the commonwealth – as presented in these works. The theoretical principles from Locke are then applied on *The Education of Cyrus*, which is a great example of a work where the god-like prince holds the reins of power, I therefore compare the accounts of virtue in *The Education of Cyrus* and in Locke's philosophy. Even though the nature of virtue in *Cyropaedia* resembles the account of virtue given by Locke, yet, Xenophon's leader draws his legitimacy from a different source, that Locke would consider invalid.

The conclusion of the work compares the state that occurs after the break-up of Cyrus' empire and the *Golden Age.* The results of both of these declines, and the consequent reformation of the political society in case of Locke, tell us about the causes of the collapses of the systems erected around the strong, virtuous ruler. Locke also implies the solution for more stable political society, and the roots of this solution go back

to the initial universal consent of the individuals founding the political society, and therefore to preservation of their reason as the most important life enhancing quality.

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I.

General Introduction

> "Ancient virtue is somewhat different from the modern notion. Virtue is just the virtues, admirable traits of character like bravery and justice, united by the fact that they share good practical reasoning about what should be done. A virtue is a disposition, that is, a habit of acting which has been built up through practice, though it is never thought of as a mindless habit, since it is a disposition to deliberate and to make decisions. Virtue is built up by following role models (as Aristotle stresses) or rules and principles (as the Stoics stress) but the point of virtue is that the virtuous person learns to think for herself about ethical matters, so that all ancient theories depart radically from everyday thinking and are quite critical of it."[1]

This passage from J. Annas' introduction to Cicero's *On Moral Ends* serves as an accurate overview of the ancient account of virtue. Among the ancient philosophers, virtue was an art of "being a good person." Excellence in one sphere or the occasional noble deeds did not make a person virtuous – virtue was a continual process, a way of living dedicated to unyielding excellence in all situations. For ancient Greeks, "happiness, our final goal," was "not a state of the person that actions are to bring about; it is the happy *life,* a way of living."[2]

However, as was hinted out in the introduction, the modern understanding of the virtue differs from the one summarized by Annas. At the center of this thesis stands early modern thinker John Locke, whose standard of morality is derived precisely from the state that our actions bring us into. According to his philosophy, virtue is practiced not for its own sake, but bears a practical purpose – it should be practiced for the sake of achievement of a future good, and is measured by the amount of

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1 Julia Annas, introduction to *On Moral Ends*, ed. Julia Annas, trans. Raphael Woolf (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 19, http://www.questia.com/read/105535129.

2 Ibid., 19 – 20.

pleasure it brings.[3] Hence, Locke's account of virtue is closer to our everyday thinking that the ancient Greek philosophers were critical of (as was mentioned in the quotation above), by turning it into a matter of utility. Surprisingly, similar approach to virtue can be found also among ancients. Ancient Greek philosopher Xenophon calls for the same way of practicing virtue as Locke does, i.e. with conscious regard to the attainment of the future goods. Virtue for him is not a matter of individual deeds, it too is the continual process, but his work *the Education of Cyrus* reveals that this process has other aim than the virtue in itself.

The account of virtue is not the only connection between Locke and Xenophon we can find. Virtues and morality are matters that do concern the individual's relationship to oneself, but are especially visible in our interactions with the others, society being the common ground for such interactions. Both *the Education of Cyrus* and the epoch of the *Golden Age* as presented in Locke's *the Second Treatise of Government* are political societies that were undoubtedly a fertile ground for such interactions. These regimes were built around the figure of a strong, virtuous, general-like leader, who was an embodiment of virtue and morality, and the society prospered under his rule. Yet, in spite of the seeming perfection of these societies, they soon cease to exist and leave only the debris and chaos behind. This bachelor thesis examines the causes of this decline and possible solution, precisely with regard to account of morality in *the Education of* Cyrus and thought of John Locke.

One of the first phenomenon closely observed in this essay is the beginning of the *Golden Age* and of the Cyrus' reign. The absence of the people's consent at the establishment of the Cyrus' empire might not seem like a serious infraction regarding the future prosperity of his reign. However, for Locke, the consent is the only way to secure that the citizens will not be deprived of the use of their reason when living in the particular commonwealth. Reason is the chief faculty when it comes to enhancement of our lives, and we can give our consent solely through reason. We might, due to our wrong judgment, assent to an error, but the truth itself presupposes

[3] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 230 – 231, §6.

the use of reason. Simultaneously, what prevents us from employing the reason at all is according to Locke the threat of force. Force makes the language, which is a means of arriving to consent to truth, purposeless, since it excludes the understanding as the end of language, and replaces universality of reason with arbitrary power. In my examination of Cyrus' assent to power and of his manners, I arrive to a conclusion that he did not avoid the use of force in a way that Locke would not approve of. The discussion of the nature of virtue in *the Education of Cyrus*, reveals not only utilitarian approach to virtue from Cyrus' side, but also tells us about what he valued before the independent and virtuous citizens. He, as a model of virtue and universal standard of morals, valued unconditional obedience and devotion before virtue, and even though he was warding both of these qualities, obedience was what he sought in his subjects in the first place. Thus, Cyrus' regime prefers citizens who are not independent in their judgment of morality, and whose source of motivation for being virtuous is their ruler and the awards he is giving. Once the embodiment of the virtue is gone, so is their motivation, and they quickly fall into chaotic and vicious state. It remains unknown to us whether they managed to reestablish previous society in its prosperity, and if yes, how long did it take.

Locke, in *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, requires the ruler, i.e. the magistrate, to abstain from setting the standards of morality, and leaves this role to the divine law, with God as the highest authority deciding from shall be punished and who rewarded, and to citizens themselves, who by the rule of opinion decide what kinds of actions are to be praised, and who deserves disgrace for his deeds. In Locke's political society, unlike in the one described by Xenophon in *the Education of Cyrus*, it is not the ruler who is in charge of rewards and punishments of the good and the bad behavior.

This is also true for the *Golden Age.* The societies of the *Golden Age* might not have been fully institutionalized and there was an absence of the promulgated laws, but they were established through the original consent of each and every member. This way, the reason as the main faculty of the life improvement, remained preserved, and people were independent enough to set their own standards of morals through the law

of opinion, which determines who in the community is to be disgraced and who praised. At the end of my thesis I arrive to the conclusion that the reason why people of the *Golden Age* find the way out of the bad state they were left in, lies in the preservation of their reason. The problem of the Cyrus' reign does not lie in the utilitarian approach towards virtue, since such account is not only necessary, but also desired for the functioning of the political society. The problem is the dependency in which Cyrus kept his people when it comes to their morals. During the *Golden Age*, there existed the civil society, that sets the standard of morals. Even when the *Golden Age* fails due to the misuse of the privileges of the elected ruler, people are not left without the means of recovery, and they soon find the way out of the miserable state they were left in, and establish the political society where there are limits set on the magistrate's power, this way the mistakes of the *Golden Age* will not repeat themselves. All this is thanks to the consent through which the societies of the *Golden Age* were elected, as opposed to force standing behind the establishment of the imperium of Cyrus. The conclusion of the thesis then goes back to its very beginning, and it puts an emphasis on the preservation of the reason through consent. However, to gain deeper understanding of how the consent and reason are connected to the beginning of the political societies, closer look at Locke's account of the language and the role of consent there is needed. Let us proceed to the discussion of this subject in the following chapter.

II.

Language, Reason, and Consent in Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *The Second Treatise of Government*

"Every man being conscious to himself, that he thinks, and that which his mind is employ'd about whilst thinking, being the *Ideas*, such as are there, 'tis past doubt, that men have in their minds several *Ideas.*"[4] These ideas have a two-fold origin: they are based on our observations of the "external, sensible objects," and they are also reflections on the internal operations of our mind.[5] Our mind perceives, thinks, doubts, and goes through a countless number of other mental processes that we are aware of, and our understanding of these processes creates an internal sense, which along with our external observation of the world create the "fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring."[6] Even though Locke is convinced that distinct knowledge would be achieved more easily if we would try to examine our ideas in themselves, he admits that our custom of expressing ideas through words and sounds makes this almost impossible. When our mind is engaged in reflecting upon itself, without making the ideas known to the outside world, we are still not in a position to liberate ourselves from thinking in the words that stand for the particular ideas we have, we always think through speaking to ourselves. This is certainly true on the individual level, and is the absolute necessity when it comes to conveying our ideas to someone else; in that case, the names of the ideas in form of sounds and words are the only means through which we may pass our knowledge and understanding to someone else. Language is a means of expressing our "*internal conceptions*; and to make them stand as marks of the *Ideas.*"[7] Without the communication of our thoughts to the outside world, "the comfort and advantage of society" would be unachievable.[8] In order to enjoy the comfort of simple expression of our thoughts through speech and writing, language stripped our ideas of

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4 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 104, §1, ll. 1 – 4.
5 Ibid., 104, §2, l. 22.
6 Ibid., 104, §2, ll. 25 – 26.
7 Ibid., 402, §2, ll. 12.
8 Ibid., 405, §1, ll. 4 – 5.

their invisibility and individuality, we separated them from "the circumstances of time and place" and created the words that capture the *general* meaning standing behind the particular ideas.[9] This agreement makes it possible to express something as internal as ideas. The very origin and simultaneously existence of language then requires our *agreement*, when by a "voluntary imposition" we arbitrarily assign some word as a mark of an idea.[10] The language stands on a mutual agreement of the one who is expressing the ideas and the listener; the expressing side must choose the words that, by arbitrary imposition of the people, universally stand for his ideas, in order to make the listener *understand* his ideas, because *understanding* is the end of speech. Listener then too, must acknowledge the meaning of the words that was given to them in a society in order to grasp other man's ideas correctly. Thanks to our constant use of words that made the connection between language and ideas immediate, we do not go through this process of consent every time we manifest or absorb certain ideas, but nevertheless, we can see that without our constant internal consent on the meaning of the words, the language as a "common tye of society" would be inconceivable.[11]

Truth and language are inseparable as well. In the very process of creating mental proposition of the disagreement and agreement of certain ideas, we make use of the words. The result is that the truth is marked down in words, and the truth or falsehood of a certain proposition is again twofold. In each proposition, we first must see whether the word signifies the idea we have in mind – this way this part of the truth goes back to the agreement on general meaning of words necessary for the functioning of words. This is the *verbal* truth captured in words, that exist regardless the *real* truth. The real truth that has the "existence in nature" and provides us with a tangible evidence.[12] However, the problem with truth is that there are very few matters in which the result of the process described above is the certainty of knowledge. Certainty of truth, i.e. the agreement of the words and the ideas they represent, might be easily achievable, but the certainty of knowledge equals the certainty of truth of any general proposition. In most things, the nominal essence we ascribe to them does not capture the "precise real essence," it determines and bounds

[9] Ibid., 411, §6, l. 38.
[10] Ibid., 405, §1.
[11] Ibid., 402 – 408, §1 – 8.
[12] Ibid., 575 – 578, §1 – 10.

the phenomenon to some extent, but many of the particularities differ from one individual phenomenon to another.[13] The nominal essence of "man" helps us to distinguish him from the other species in nature. However, our nominal essence does not copy "precise boundaries set by nature." None of our definitions of the word man "perfect and exact" because true essence and qualities of each and every individual man are different.[14] "The more...of these co-existing qualities we unite into one complex *Idea*, under one name, the more precise and determinate we make the signification of that word; But yet we never make it thereby more capable of *universal certainty,* in respect of other qualities, not contained in our complex idea."[15] Certainty of knowledge is therefore rare, and general certainty is only found in our minds, our external observation can inform us always only about particulars. "'Tis the contemplation of our own abstract *Ideas*, that alone is able to afford us *general knowledge.*"[16] Where the certainty of knowledge is not immediately at our hand, we make use of our faculty of judgment. Judgment is what enables us to choose among the propositions the one which is most likely to be true, without having "demonstrative evidence" or proofs at hand. We assess the ideas delivered to us in words, and then according to what appears to us as presumably true we *assent* or *dissent* to them. However, just like in the case of knowledge, from which we share only a very small part, the faculty of judgment - to assent or dissent - is often deceiving, because we are not careful in our examination of words and the relationship of the ideas that they stand for, and we determine our dissent or assent too hastily and superficially. We also tend to employ this faculty in cases where our laziness and unskillfulness prevent us from touching upon "certain proofs" that would make our assent to truth easier .[17]

Fortunately, in the world where the general certainty is beyond our grasp, and our judgment of truth imperfect, we are not left without the useful faculties that allow us to build on the portion of certain knowledge we got, in order to conduct our lives. The faculty that was given to us in order to accomplish our "desire and endeavour after a better state" and to help us leave the state of "mediocrity and probationership" is

[13] Ibid., 580, §4.
[14] Ibid., 454 – 455, §27.
[15] Ibid., 584, §10, ll. 1 – 6.
[16] Ibid., 591, §16, ll. 4 – 5.
[17] Ibid., 653, §3 – 4.

reason.[18] "What need is there of reason? Very much; both for the enlargement of our knowledge, and the regulation of our assent."[19] Where there is a lack of certainty of knowledge – which is, as we already know, in most of the cases – and our assent is needed to rightly estimate whether some idea is true or wrong. Reason is what enables us to properly examine the "propositions for true," the coherence or incoherence of the ideas, and the degree of probability of a certain phenomenon.[20] Wherever such a capacity of making the right conclusion and therefore assenting to truth is lacking, our judgments are not the result of reason, but merely "effects of chance and hazard."[21] Consequently, error is never the error of our reasoning, but of our incorrect judgment, through which we assent to something that is not true. We do not even use our reason when making an assent to error, because "the act of ratiocination is the finding of the agreement."[22] What follows from this is the fact that in order to give the consent to some phenomenon, we must employ *reason* while judging, without reason there is only assent and dissent, but the capacity that would make the assent an *assent to truth*, to knowledge, is absent. How does this absence of freedom of understanding, i.e. the absence of reason, comes about? Locke names specific factors that influence people in their judgment, but are mere pretenses of reason. Our submission to self-evident truths and authorities who argue on the basis of their tradition, antiquity, or power prevents us from assenting to truth. Pretended "guidance of heaven" or, in other words, false revelation – these are some of the things that keep reason at a distance, nourish the state of ignorance and enslave understanding, and are not compatible with reason at all.[23] "The mind by *proceeding upon false Principles* is often engaged in absurdities and difficulties, brought into straits and contradictions, without knowing how to free it self: And in that case it is in vain to implore the help of reason, unless it be to discover the falsehood, and reject the influence of those wrong principles. Reason is so far from clearing the difficulties which the building upon false foundations brings a man into, that if he will pursue it, it entangles him the more, and engages him deeper in perplexities."[24] Not only the factors mentioned above are not built on true reasoning, but once we live under such conditions – which, according to

[18] Ibid., 652, §2, ll. 15 – 19.
[19] Ibid., 668, §2, ll. 22 – 23.
[20] Ibid., 668 – 669, §1 - 2.
[21] Ibid., 669, §2, l. 24.
[22] Ibid., 685, §18.
[23] Ibid., Missing. 699, §5.
[24] Ibid., 82, §12, 27 – 31.

Locke, most of the people do – the further engagement of reason is absolutely excluded. False principles prevent us from enhancing and building on the faculties that were given to us to conduct our lives and "lead us to state of greater perfection."[25] These faculties are, as we know, certain knowledge, which is very scarce in scale, and judgment, upon which we may assent to more knowledge. However, there is no option of correct judgment that would bring us to greater understanding, where there is no reason attached to it.[26]

We have already seen how the language would not be possible without consent, the consent on the general meaning of what kind of idea each word represents. This consent leads not only to understanding among people and is therefore justifiably called a tie of the society, but contributes to our inner understanding of the ideas, because our thinking is performed through words as well. Consent, i.e. assent to understanding and truth, is not possible without reason, reason itself is therefore present in the language, which is undoubtedly a life-enhancing instrument. We are social creatures, Locke says, and thanks to language we can enjoy the fellowship of other people.[27] However, the presence of consent and consequently reason in language does not solve everything – the language is not an instrument that could not be misused in a way that would make us more distant from the reason. As we have seen, there are many false principles that keep us away from reason which operate through language. How can we prevent ourselves from adopting those false principles set by self-evident truths? When it comes to society, Locke's solution in *the Second Treatise of Government* is to make consent the very beginning of the political society. "When any number of men have so consented to make one community or government, they are thereby presently incorporated, and make *one body politick*, wherein the *majority* have a right to act and conclude the rest."[28] If we would have read this before knowing that consent is necessarily the result of reason, we might have thought that people can give their consent also to something that is not rational, wrong, and disadvantageous. But now we see that the initial consent given by every single individual in order to establish a political society requires the use of *reason* from

[25] Ibid., 653, §2, ll. 24 – 25.
[26] Ibid., 682 – 687, §9 – 24.
[27] Ibid., 402, §1.
[28] John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 331, §95, ll. 11 - 14.

every future member of the commonwealth. Simultaneously, we have seen that where reason is not the foundation of the principles, all what we would built on them would not touch upon the true knowledge. Setting consent as a corner stone of the society, Locke ensures that the road to its further use will not be blocked, and the commonwealth established will be "the commonwealth of learning," where there is no person "who does not profess himself a lover of Truth: and there is not a rational creature that would not take it amiss to be thought otherwise of."[29] In *the Second Treatise*, Locke gives us yet another instance where reason is excluded from our actions. In the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* examples of preventing a man from arriving to truth were the argumentative ones. When it comes to the political societies, what rejects reason ultimately and puts it aside is the use of force. Force, not relying on the language, is not compatible with reason, and therefore consent – where there is no use of language, the assent to truth is not possible, since the *words* represent the ideas, and "where-ever we have no *Ideas*, our reasoning stops, and we are at an end of our reckoning."[30] Whoever uses force has, of course, ideas, but since he does not make them *known* through words to the other party, but uses violence instead, he omits the reason, puts an end to its presence in the situation, and suspends the possibility of consent indefinitely. Force is introduced in *the Second Treatise* as an irrational element even before Locke discusses political society. In the state of nature, the basic and fundamental law of nature guarantees us precisely the right to protect ourselves from the arbitrary use of an unprovoked violence. "Reason, which is that Law, teaches all Mankind, who will but consult it, that being equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his Life, Health, Liberty or Possessions.[31] Reason then is not only life-enhancing instrument, but in in the form of the law of nature, it is also a life-preserving instrument, that bounds us to protect our lives, and punish those who put our existence in danger. Without this law, governed by universal reason, that ensures the basic respect for our life and the lives of others, the thought of a common political society would clearly be impossible. Self-development is clearly possible only under the conditions where our life is not constantly endangered by the trespassers of the law of nature.

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[29] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 697, §1.

[30] Ibid., 682, §9.

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It is more than clear that the state where force is used to influence our judgment creates what Locke describes as a state where men are entangled in the perplexities, and the absence of reason disables them from making their lives better. Force may be even more dangerous than the false principles "legitimated" by tradition or pretended revelation, because these require the realization of our falsehood and the rejection of it, while force cannot be overcome merely through mental processes. Someone who is willing to use force might not abandon the means of persuasion through language completely, but his readiness to use the force alone excludes the possibility of a free consent in such case. We know that what would follow after our disagreement is violence, language here therefore does not determine the outcome of the situation, the judge is the force standing in the background of a seemingly equal dialogue. Monarchy, one of the regimes where the arbitrary power of a ruler is backed up with force, is inconsistent with the civil society and is not legitimate because a man in such a state is "degraded from the common state of rational creatures, is denied liberty to judge of, to defend his right, and so is exposed to all the misery and inconveniences that a man can fear from one, who being in the state of nature, is yet corrupted with flattery, and armed with power."[32] Force does not allow the language to meet its final purpose, which is mutual understanding when it comes to communication, and the enlargement of our knowledge via reasoning. These functions are only accessible through reason, and the expressed consent that every individual must give in order to enter the political society serves as a great demonstration of the preservation of reason within the political society, which makes it legitimate.[33]

Someone might oppose, that the original consent does not guarantee a long lasting stability, because what was founded upon reason, might adopt false principles later in time. However, Locke warns us that in order to join the commonwealth which already exists, every new member must give consent, even the ones who were born in in it, as soon as they become free agents and their parents are no longer substituting for their reason. Locke admits that this is often overlooked, and that commonwealths tend to naturally suppose that everyone living within its boundaries is their member, but this is not true. Every man is at liberty to choose a different commonwealth to live in, and

[32] John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 327, §91, ll. 19 – 23.
[33] Ibid., 330 – 331, §95 – 96.

his presence is not enough to make him a member of a society, it is the consent that is crucial. If the necessity of consent is present even at the later state of society, it follows that reason is preserved as well, as the only means through which we can arrive at consent. What appeared to be a mere gesture in context of the continuance of the political society, turns out to be a powerful means of ensuring that the most important quality that enables us to achieve truth and consequently to constantly improve our lives.[34]

Consent does not seem to play any role when it comes to monarchies, where the prince claims "soveraign arbitrary authority over the persons of men," and the source of power is force, not people's consent.[35] Yet, Locke claims that even the original primordial monarchies appeared from the consent of people, and the misconception that people are born subjects within such political system appeared only later. The next chapter is dedicated to such ancient monarchies, where I will apply Locke's theory that all original monarchies were elective on the image of great ancient ruler Cyrus, as delineated in Xenophon's *the Education of Cyrus*.

[34] Ibid., 330 – 331, §95 – 96.

[35] John Locke, *The First Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 169, §41, ll. 6 – 7.

III.

Role of Consent and Force in Cyrus' Rise to Power

After the discussion of consent as the only legitimate source of the commencement of the political society according to Locke, let us see what he has to say about the origins of monarchies in the chapter on the "Beginning of Political Societies" from t*he Second Treatise*. Locke does not deny that when we look back into times when the mankind was on the edge between the state of nature and political society, the first commonwealths tended to be formed "under the government and administration of one man."[36] In the state of nature, where families often lived separated from each other, it was the figure of the father of the family who often adopted the qualities of a simple government. There were multiple reasons why the competences of governor naturally belonged to the father. His power to punish the transgressors of the law of nature was, of course, equal to the power of the other family members. However, it was the obedience children owe to their father that made them not only accept the punishments he performed on them, but also trust and join his judgment when it came to punishing the violators of the law of nature outside their family. What made the father trustful in the matters of governing the family according to the law of nature is the paternal affection and the duty of preservation, that included not only his person, but also his offspring. When the custom of living together under the father's power was interrupted by his death and there was no one with the needed experience and other qualities within the family circles to replace him, or when the several families met in one community, "they used their natural freedom, to set him up, whom they judged the ablest, and most likely, to rule over them."[37] If the monarchy was indeed the first and the most intuitive form of government, according to Locke it was because people were accustomed to a similar way of living from their infancies within the bonds of their families. Since they had never experienced either the inconveniences of absolutist power and the "oppression of tyrannical dominion," nor the advantages of promulgated laws and balance of power, they had no reason to go beyond the goal of

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[36] John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 336, §105, l. 3.

[37] Ibid., 337, §106, ll. 27 – 29.

security that they were originally provided with in their families. The chief role of the ruler within such commonwealths was then to shift this security to a higher level and protect them against foreign force.[38]

Hence, this "poor but vertuous age" was in need of the general-like rulers with the absolute competences in the making of war, but with no vast scale of responsibilities during the times of peace. People gave the reins of power into one man's hands, but did not have to put any "express limitation or restrain" on him, since during that age, the end of the government was identical with the one sought by the people – "publick good and safety."[39] Such was the *Golden Age*, where people chose to live under the rule of one person, and could rely on his honesty and prudence. "Members of families naturally accommodate to one another, and in the *Golden Age* personal and social life would have been so simple and so lacking in material goods that conflict would not have been a major problem."[40] There were no laws to limit ruler's power or to define his competences, his virtuous character was the sufficient guaranty that he will not be misusing the power that he possessed.[41]

Locke gives the examples based on Scripture in order to illustrate the nature of ruling in the *Golden Age.* In order to establish my own the example of a ruler bearing the qualities typical for the kings of the *Golden Age,* I too chose the figure that appears in the Bible, Cyrus the Great. However, this thesis draws on a different source which is centered around Cyrus. *The Education of Cyrus* by the ancient Greek thinker Xenophon introduces Cyrus as an extremely virtuous, general-like ruler who had no equals in the world during his times. As a Persian, with his small army he "attached to himself so many nations that it would be a task even to pass through them."[42] However, it is not the extensive list of the nations which Cyrus had conquered which is the most impressive thing about him. It is the way he subordinated not only Hyrcanians, Syrians, Assyrias, but even Greeks in Asia or Egyptians and many more

[38] Ibid., 336 – 339, §104 – 107.
[39] Ibid., 342, §110.
[40] J. B. Schneewind, "Locke's Moral Philosophy" in *The Cambridge Companion to Locke's 'Essay Concerning Human Understanding,'* ed. Lex Newman, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press: 2007), 216.
[41] Ibid., 341 – 343, §110 – 111.
[42] Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 23, §5.

nations, that made him exceptional. Cyrus' excellence was so high that those nations, no matter how distant, regardless the fact that most of his subjects were never to see him in their lifetimes, obeyed him willingly and were paying him honor. The vastness of his empire could not prevent him from making it prosperous, cohesive and, of course, extremely strong, and it was not the legal system or the form of government that ensured such state, the bond was Cyrus' virtuous personality.[43]

Xenophon acquaints us with Cyrus when he is still a child. We soon discover that his early years, which he spent in his fatherland Persia, taught him about the importance of the common good. Unlike laws in most of the other cities, Persian laws give the common good the greatest importance, and "take care that the citizens will not in the first place even be such as to desire any vile or shameful deed."[44] In order to achieve this, the boys are taught about justice, within the structures of strict and hierarchical regime. Justice is the most crucial matter along with the recognition of the cases of ingratitude, because "shamelessness seems to follow especially upon ingratitude."[45] Moderation and continence create non-negligible part of their education too, followed by learning the strict obedience for the rulers, because that is obviously in the interest of the common good.[46] In Locke's *Golden Age*, the common, or using his term "public," good, was something that was not the subject of a dispute between the ruler and his subjects. People and the ruler seemed to hold the same perspective on what is best for the political society. We can see that Cyrus' whole early education was directed in such a way as to ensure not only the knowledge of the importance of the public good, but he was also taught the ways of maintaining it. He was indeed brought up so that he could become one of the "nursing fathers tender and carefull of the publick weale," as Locke described the ideal leader in early monocratic commonwealths.[47] The idea of preservation of the public good as a goal of one's rule, in the case of the Persians as the main goal of one's life in fact, was therefore a prerequisite that Cyrus' reign definitely had.

However, we must not forget that the main reason why Locke even arrives to the

[43] Ibid., 21 – 23.
[44] Ibid., 23, §3.
[45] Ibid., 24, §7.
[46] Ibid., 23 - 25
[47] John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 341 – 342, §110.

concept of the *Golden Age*, is to give arguments that would support his claim that even if monarchies emerged commonly as the first forms of commonwealth, they were not build on *Jure Divino*, rulers were not deriving their right to rule from the imagined appointment from God, or from the idea that the political power is derived from the paternal power. Monarchies were not the objects of inheritance either, because, as we already know, people had to *choose* among the possible candidates the ablest one. The measure of power was one's character and experience, not the blood lines. According to Locke, "all peaceful beginnings of government have been laid in the consent of the people," which is the only legitimate way to establish a political society.[48]

Even though the rulers during the first ages of political societies had the competences of a warlord, the newly arose political societies were *electing* them. The example Locke gives us is not that of a conqueror subduing already existing societies, but a strong ruler selected from the ranks of the people, who then had the absolute power concerning the protection against foreign nations. Due to the frequency with which wars appeared in the history of mankind, "many have mistaken the force of arms, for the consent of the people; and reckon conquest as one of the originals of government. But conquest is as far from setting up any government, as demolishing an house is from building a new one in the place."[49] Locke defines state of war as "a sedate setled design upon another mans life," an attempt to gain the arbitrary power over our life without our agreement, using force.[50] Conquest could be compared to the state of war on a national level, where the aggressor tries to subject a certain political society without any just reason behind his actions, and the force is the only irrational means he uses in order to claim the obedience of the invaded nation. From this should be obvious how the societies emerging from the conquest are not legitimate at their cores. People need to be free in order to provide their future ruler with their consent, and there is obviously not an option of voluntary agreement under the threat that conqueror puts on people.[51]

As we already know, Cyrus *was* a great conqueror with an absolute power in war, and

[48] Ibid., 344, §112.
[49] Ibid., 384, §175, 6 – 10.
[50] Ibid., 278, §16.
[51] Ibid., 384 – 386, §175 – 176.

we also know that his empire was the result of his campaign, and included many kinds of nations that existed under the different leaderships before Cyrus united them into one realm. Xenophon gives readers a chance to observe Cyrus' steps in his victorious way to being a great ruler, and we therefore might examine to what extent was his success based on the conquest as described by Locke, and whether the consent played any role in Cyrus' expansionist tactics.

Cyrus' father was Persian king, and as was mentioned above, Cyrus spent his early years in Persia going through their process of education. His mother was the daughter of Astyages, the king of Media. This connection with Media is not important only because Cyrus spent the portion of his youth in the care of his grandfather, but because the bonds between Persia and Media gave him the opportunity to initiate his military career. At the time when Cyrus already entered the ranks of the mature men in Persian hierarchy, and the departed king of the Medes was replaced by Cyrus' uncle Cyaxares, Media found itself in danger. The Assyrian king, who already subdued, or was besieging, surrounding nations, perceived that the Medes are the strongest of the nations in the area, and after he succeed in subordinating it, "he would easily come to rule over all those in the area."[52] He gained the allies in many other nations by convincing them that the union of Media and Persia is in its enormous power threat to them all, and that in this union they surely intend to subdue the nations around them, soon or a later. The Assyrian king represents the conqueror who has no lawful reason to invade other people's rights. From the perspective of Locke, his manifestation of force is irrational and clearly unjust, since there was not any violation of rights on the side of the Assyrians (or at least Xenophon does not tell us about any such violation), that would give them a sufficient reason to attack their neighbors.[53]

In Locke's state of war, the party whose right to liberty is endangered by the transgressor of the law of nature, has a right to defend itself and destroy the violator, in order to ensure its preservation, because our preservation is what the fundamental law of nature calls for. When Locke proceeds from the discussion of the unlawful conquest to a case where the "victory favours the right side," we see that he

[52] Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 43, §2.
[53] Ibid., 42 – 43.

distinguishes between the previous type of the conqueror and the one in *a lawful war*.[54] Even though he does not specifically set the circumstances that makes the victorious conqueror a lawful one, from the previous discussion of the state of nature can be inferred that the *right side* is the one that uses force as a mere defense, the party that was not the initiator of the conflict but enters the battle in order to prevent the original conqueror from taking over its freedom.[55] In *The Education Of Cyrus* we see a concrete example of the similar way of distinguishing between the just and the unjust side in the war. Before the commencement of the war, an Indian embassy visits both the Assyrian king and Cyaxares in order to inquire "who has been unjustly treated." The importance of this distinction is demonstrated in the conclusion of such an inquiry - it is the just side of the war that will be offered the alliance of the Indians, after they assess the arguments of each participant. Cyaxares' and Cyrus' answer to such a question was, of course, the statement that they "are not at all unjust to the Assyrian."[56] When we look at the starting position of both Media and Persia in the conditions of an immediate war, we must agree with this proclamation. What made the Persians and the Medes unite and collect their powers in the first place was the threat that was put on the freedom of their nations. They were not the ones to start the conflict by desiring more land and power. However, the war proceeded in a way that enabled the general of the Persians, Cyrus, to include many nations and territories under his leadership, and precisely the process of their incorporation is what reveals his manners and whether he would stand as a lawful conqueror in Locke's view, and his empire as legitimate political society based on people's consent.

Since, as we was know, the Assyrian king already subdued many nations and gained numerous allies, it was clear that they prevailed over the troops of Cyrus and Cyaxares. Hence, these were in the obvious need for allies. Even though the Armenian king promised an alliance to Media and simultaneously was obliged to pay them a financial tribute, he was not pursuing his promise under the occurring conditions. Cyrus therefore undertook an expedition in order to rectify that. When we are being introduced into the circumstances of the relation between the Armenians and the

[54] John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 386, §177.
[55] Ibid., 270 – 272, §6 – 8.
[56] Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 79 – 80.

Medes, the Armenians are described as both "allies and subjects" of Media.[57] In Locke's terms, this sounds like an oxymoron, because we can only enter contract when we are *free*, i.e. the contract accompanied by the subjection is in fact not valid.[58] However, when Cyrus besieges the Armenian king and his family who are trying to escape, we are explained the circumstances and that changes the perspective on the event. The Armenian king almost immediately recognizes his injustice in not paying the tribute and sending an army, because what seemed as subjection from the side of Media turns out to be a compensation for the conquest initiated against them from the side of Armenia.[59] Compensation, or reparation to use Locke's term, is, along with the restraint, a legitimate way to punish violator of the law of nature, and the conquest obviously is such a violation, as we know already. In this case, Cyrus is therefore not really a conqueror, he only reinforces the already established conditions of a long-term punishment for the Armenian conquest. The fact that it is Cyrus, not Cyaxares (as a representative of the Medes, who were originally involved), who is reclaiming the reparation, is not an issue here, since Locke states that "any other person who finds it just, may also joined with him that is injur'd, and assist him in recovering from the offender."[60] According to Locke, such recovery must be performed in a balanced way regarding the severity of the crime. Since the conquest is a transgression of a large duration and intensity, the compensation here appears proportionate. Additionally, since Cyrus spared the lives of the Armenian royal family even after they were unjust in not pursuing their obligations, he secured their honest gratitude and willingness to follow him to the war.[61]

The next strategic point for Cyrus, now accompanied by both Medes and the Armenians, was to take the charge of the mountainous area between the Armenians and their neighbors the Chaldaeans, because through guarding this land Persians will secure respect of both of these nations. Now these two nations were in continual war with each other, because the Chaldaeans often attacked and plundered Armenian land.

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57 Ibid., 83.

58 John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 330, §95.

59 Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 87.

60 John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 273 – 274, §10 – 11.

61 Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 87 – 94.

Cyrus, in order to secure his side more power in the upcoming war, again did not act as mere conqueror, but rather as a mediator standing in the middle of the conflict without being previously involved. The Armenian army approaches the Chaldaean land by attacking, but it is used only as a way to start dialogue. The captives from this short battle are released and sent home with the choice whether they "wish to make war" with the coming troops, or "become friends." At this point, Cyrus himself emphasizes the significance of the consent among the Chaldaeans concerning the peace-making. "I am sending your captives home, and I am allowing you to deliberate along with the other Chaldaeans."[62] Even though clearly a very important matter is being decided here by a consent among inhabitants of Chaldaea, it is not the consent that Locke discusses, not the original consent standing behind the establishment of legitimate political society. This particular example is related to making of peace and war, an issue that as we know Locke proclaims to be at the core of a political power during the *Golden Age*.[63] Cyrus was willing to initiate the real conquest against Chaldaea merely in case his proposition would have been rejected, however, the decision to adopt peace appears to be mutual. His diplomatic solution benefited both sides – by agreeing on renting Armenian land by the Chaldaeans for the agricultural purposes, industries and markets of both nations would flourish. Those from the ranks of Chaldaeans who did not wish to pursue the life of industrious labor, because "they were accustomed to live by war" (99, 25) joined Cyrus as mercenaries, so along with the control of the border land, he gained yet another advantage from this negotiation.[64]

This strengthened, Cyrus with Cyaxaeres decided not to wait for the enemy to attack, but to enter his territory. Their armies could therefore maintain themselves "from the enemy's territory" and simultaneously they launched a quick and unexpected attack against Assyrian troops.[65] The Assyrian king's speech before this first battle reveals the truly despotic nature of his conquest. According to his words, the "victors both save and take in addition what belongs to the defeated, while the defeated at the same time throw away themselves and everything that belong to themselves."[66] The best of

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62 Ibid., 96 – 98.
63 John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 339 – 340, §108.
64 Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 95 – 99.
65 Ibid., 103, §15.
66 Ibid., 107, §45.

the Assyrian troops suffered a defeat in this battle and their king was killed. The circumstances in which still vast but disoriented Assyrian army found itself brought another nation's army to Cyrus' side. The Hycarians were a small nation bordering Assyrian empire. The Assyrians abused their smallness in size and subdued this nation, and this fact alone made the Hycarians hate them and they grasped the opportunity to desert in order to become Cyrus' "allies and guides."[67]

All the following cases of the armies joining Cyrus in his preparations to fight against Assyrians appeared to be inspired by the same resentful opinion on Assyrians, more specifically their new king Croesus, and the admiration for Cyrus' virtuous character. New Persian ally Gobryas, who as a powerful Assyrian offered to Cyrus his cavalry, and Gadatas, who contributed by allowing Cyrus' troops to use his fortresses, were both in past unjustly treated by Croesus on a personal level.[68] This of course, kindled the desire for a vengeance in them, and similarly they recognized how noble Cyrus was and therefore decided to help him. The last powerful man who joined Cyrus was Abradatas. However, the circumstances of his arrival were a little different. His wife was a captive in Cyrus' camp since the first battle against Assyrians. Since she did not directly engaged in the conquest against Persian troops, in capturing her Cyrus distanced from Locke's vision of just conquest, where the conqueror does not make arbitrary decisions over the lives of those who are in Locke's view innocent.[69] Nevertheless, Cyrus treated her with all due respect and it was her who proposed the alliance of her husband. Abradatas himself comes to Cyrus in grateful manner, "as a friend, as an attendant, and as an ally."[70]

The final stage of the war was thus undertaken by this constitution of Cyrus' allies. Another contract was made during the battle itself, when Cyrus decided to give the besieged Egyptians a chance and gave them two options – either to be destroyed or to join him, with the promise of receiving benefits of greater wage, and "land, cities, women and servants" at the time of peace.[71] Still, to what extent this might be

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67 Ibid., 103 – 111; 118, §4.
68 Ibid., 137 – 140; 154 – 155.
69 John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 387 – 388, §178.
70 Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 184, §48.
71 Ibid., 210.

considered as a true choice? Even though the Egyptians are promised benefits, the validity of such an agreement is undermined by the fact that their refusal would bring a death upon them, they are therefore not in a position of free agents, but the nature of the proposition still reflects the state of war as defined in the *Second Treatise*. Moreover, Cyrus here talks about the cities, land, and even people as of the objects of exchange, even though the characteristic of a just emperor is, as was already mentioned, that he does not succumb to the temptation culminated by the "confusion of war," and does not apply power over those not being employed straight in the course of war.[72] Flow of the upcoming events is rather rapid, Xenophon is listing another nations that Cyrus managed to bring on his side by either negotiations or simply thanks to his magnificence, or, as in case of the Lydians or Arabians who were Assyrian allies, through compelling and subduing them.[73] The last thing to conquer was the seemingly impregnable city of Babylon. Yet, Cyrus was not called great for no reason – Babylon was seized successfully by him, and he got settled there. First, he disarmed all Babylonians and soon after that "he distributed both houses and government buildings to the very ones he believed were partners in what had been accomplished," there is no doubt he viewed his assent to power as legitimate and the beginning of his rein over the newly put together empire as natural outcome of his campaign.[74]

However, we might want to ask whether all this can still be called a mere defense against the original conqueror represented by the Assyrians and their allies. At the earlier stages of the war, Xenophon was providing us with a more detailed account of how Cyrus was gaining allies. The goal there was obvious - to gain enough power in order to protect against Assyrians. His actions resembled the actions of those who being unjustly treated seek the sufficient means for defense and self-preservation. When later the tide is turned and it was Cyrus who was stronger in the size of army, it appears that his ambitions grew accordingly. As Locke's says, it is hard, once men enter the chaotic state of war that sweeps all the original motives together, to make a distinction between what is just and what is not, even for the side that did not initiate

[72] John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 388, §179.
[73] Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 218 – 220.
[74] Ibid., 220 - 224

the present conflict. Again, applying the observations made by Locke to Cyrus, the way he acted once he was in a position to deprive his enemies of possessions or family members, we could perhaps say that in some aspects the confusion of war took over him. "He that by conquest has a right over a man's person to destroy him if he pleases, has not thereby a right over his estate to possess and enjoy it."[75] For Cyrus, to appropriate the possessions, animals, wives, children, and servants of his defeated enemies is a matter of course. The very fact that Cyrus decided to move to enemy's territory as soon as possible in order to maintain the army from his resources confirms such attitude. Cyrus himself warns his troops before licensed plundering, but yet, he approves of taking over enemy's possessions to the extent that it would help the army to sustain itself.[76] We have also seen the example of this in his dialogue with the Egyptians, where he offered the possessions taken this way as the objects of an exchange.[77] Even though Cyrus most of the time happens to act in conformity with Locke's prescription that the just conqueror would not employ despotic power over those who were not directly involved in the assault against him, when entering Babylon, he shows willingness to destroy people's households and their inhabitants along with them, in case it would be necessary. He simultaneously ordered his soldiers "to kill whomever they found outdoors." It is the very final stage of his expansion where Cyrus shows such arbitrary decisions over the lives of those who are not immediately dangerous.[78]

Ultimately, his newly gained political power itself is arbitrary and despotic, since the detailed observations of his campaign showed us that no consent is present in his rise to power, his monocratic rein sees the victorious conquest as its beginning, and for Cyrus, unlike for Locke, such an establishment of a political society is perfectly legitimate. Cyrus' empire therefore could not serve as an example of the ancient elective monarchy, where people are free agents at its birth, as well as while it lasts. Nevertheless, from the discussion of the *Golden Age*, the transitory temporary stage between the state of nature and fully constitutionalized political society, we must admit that Cyrus on a personal level matches Locke's vision of a ruler within such

[75] John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 390, §182.
[76] Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 121.
[77] Ibid., 210, §43.
[78] Ibid., 222 – 223.

society. Cyrus was a great general, with significant skills in war-making, which is also one of the main characteristics of the typical ruler of the *Golden Age*.[79] Cyrus also bore the necessary idea of public good in his mind from his very youth. What was the *most* outstanding quality of his person, the one that, as we could have observed, inspired many of his allies to join him, was his absolutely virtuous character.

Despite the fullness of virtue Cyrus had, Locke talks about his *Golden Age* built around the virtuous God-like princes as of something *transitory* and *temporary,* which implies that there was something about its nature that made it short-lasting and weak. However, the vastness of Cyrus' empire itself suggests that in his case it might have been something that could substitute for a constitution and laws on a full scale. The nature of virtue in *The Education of* Cyrus, the ways in which Cyrus' virtuous character created the pillars of his assent to being a king, of his political society as such, and the importance of the virtue in relationship with his subjects will be discussed in the next chapter, in order to see whether Locke's doubts about the societies culminated around the virtuous figure or the cult of virtue is justifiable, looking at this particular example.

[79] John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 339 – 340, §108.

IV.

Virtue in *The Education of Cyrus*

In the previous chapter, we described the way Cyrus was gaining his allies when pursuing the goal of building the great empire. The emphasis in the previous discussion was given to an inquiry of the importance of the consent of the subjects as the basis of Cyrus' expansionism, and whether Cyrus could be, in Locke's view, given the title of the "just conqueror." Observing the way Cyrus behaved in relation to both his enemies and allies, the conclusion is that he in many cases abandoned the manners that Locke ascribes to the just side of the conquest. Yet, we are told that Cyrus was obeyed *willingly* by both his friends and subjects. In this chapter, the space will be given to his virtue, the first and the most important source of this willingness, and the way it shaped his assent to power and his rule as such.

At the very beginning of the *Education of Cyrus*, Xenophon introduces Cyrus by praising his nature, which was such that "he endured every labor and faced every risk for the sake of being praised."[80] And we know that what follows from being praised is simultaneously being respected and obeyed as a ruler. J. Faber in his article "The Cyropaedia and Hellenistic Kingship" explains that unlike in Aristotle, where virtue is an end in itself, "the *aretē* [virtue] which Cyrus practices... is practiced not for its own sake but for a political end."[81] Let us look at the passage in the book where there is evidence that Cyrus practiced and nurtured his virtue for the aim external to it, i.e to increase his power, obedience of his subjects and of course to build his empire. We then might be able to see whether, as J. Faber' claims, the *aretē* in the Education of Cyrus does not justify the rule, but has merely instrumental value directed towards gaining political power, and is even deceiving due to its apparentness.[82]

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[80] Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001),23, §1.

[81] J. Joel Farber, "The Cyropaedia and Hellenistic Kingship," *The American Journal of Philology* 100, no. 4 (1979): 500, acessed November 11, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/294063.

[82] Ibid., 500.

> "I consider our ancestors to have been no worse than we. At least they too spent all their time practicing the very things that are held to be works of virtue. What good they acquired by being such, however, either for the community of the Persians or for themselves, I cannot see. And yet I do not think that human beings practice any virtue in order that those who become good have no more that do the worthless. Rather, those who abstain from the pleasures at hand do so not in order to that they may never have enjoyment, but through their present continence they prepare themselves to have much more enjoyment in the future. Those who are enthusiastic about becoming clever and at speaking do not practice it so that they may never cease speaking well, but they expect by speaking well to persuade human beings and thereby to accomplish many and great goods. Those in turn who practice military affairs do not work at them in order to that they never cease fighting, but these too do so believing that by becoming good in military affairs they shall secure much wealth, much happiness, and great honors both for themselves and for their city. If any who have labored at these things see themselves become incapacitated by old age before they have reaped any fruit from them, they seem to me to suffer something similar to someone who, enthusiastic to become a good farmer, sows well and plants well, but when it is time for the harvest, lets his ungathered crop fall down to the earth again. And if an athlete, after undertaking many labors and becoming deserving of victory, should pass his life without a contest, it would not seem to me to be just that he not be blamed for folly."[83]

This rather a long passage is a speech given by Cyrus to his fellow Persians whom he chose to go with him to help Medea at the very beginning of his conquest. The importance of this passage lies in the fact that, as will be shown on the specific examples from the book, what Cyrus tells his subjects here is some sort of instruction that he personally follows throughout his victorious way to the absolute rule over his empire. Even though he gives some credit to his Persian ancestors, the critique of them in the first lines of his speech is clear. What makes Cyrus doubt about their contribution to the society is the fact that the former generations' virtue did not bring any visible outcomes, the outcomes he calls for at the latter stage of his speech. Cyrus therefore apparently has no understanding for a virtue practiced for itself, he does not understand that the "good" his ancestors were pursuing lied in the very performance and practice of the virtue on a long-term scale.

[83] Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 44 – 45, §8 – 10.

What is, on the contrary, well understood by Cyrus is the fact that through the "present continence" he will have "much more enjoyment in the future."[84] Indeed, we see Cyrus and his troops being continent through all the conquest. Cyrus maintains his strict Persian eating habits, and he never joins Cyaxares in his feast to celebrate the latest victory. He warns his troops not to plunder the enemy's territory but only to collect resources necessary for the long-term preservation of the army. He does not revel in outside signs of nobility, and in his look resembles his soldiers, marked by the tough conditions of the conquest. The robe sent to him by Cyaxares under the occasion of receiving the Indian messengers remains rejected. Cyrus welcomes them "in his Persian robe, which was no way ostentatious."[85] As W. Ambler shows us in his introduction to *the Education of Cyrus*, such a moderate behavior is in Cyrus' case performed really to secure the future goods, not out of his inclination towards the virtue itself. As an example, both Ambler and J. Faber point out the way Cyrus treated the beautiful Panthea. As we already know, in spite of her defenselessness Cyrus never appropriated her. However, that he bade Araspas to guard her "until such time as he should take her for himself," since he fears that her beauty might prevent him from fulfilling his current responsibilities concerning war, again we see how behind the current restraint he saw potential future enjoyment.[86] Later, his intention changes and he uses Panthea, more specifically the protective way of treating her, as a means of turning her husband into an ally, and securing yet more praise on his account. His private intention was according to his own words originally different, and here, according to Ambler, his virtue is in fact only seeming virtue, and is replaced by sophisticated calculation.[87]

Piety in *the Education of Cyrus* is similar in a way that it is always performed under the practical purpose and accompanied by a calculation. "Its utility is revealed in Cyrus' talk with his father: piety can cause prayers to be answered and and can even put one on terms of friendship with the gods."[88] Cyrus clearly remembers his father's

[84] Ibid., 44, §9.
[85] Ibid., 79, §5.
[86] Ibid., 141.
[87] Wayne Ambler, introduction to *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001) 14.
[88] J. Joel Farber, "The Cyropaedia and Hellenistic Kingship," *The American Journal of Philology* 100, no. 4 (1979): 501.

advice, since soon after he began his rule he sacrificed every day to gods not to show them his thankfulness for his good fortune, but because "he believed that the good ruler was a seeing law for human beings," that by displaying virtue of piety he would inspire imitation and honor in his subjects. "Cyrus believed that piety of those with him was also good for himself, calculating just as do those who choose to sail with the pious rather than with those who seem to have been impious in something."[89]

The virtue of speaking cleverly in order to "accomplish many and great goods," was to some extent shown in the previous chapter, where we have seen how it provided Cyrus with, in combination with proper actions, many new allies, for example Indians, who came to inquire about who is the just party in the occurring war, and he cleverly leaves the judgment to the Indian king alone. The ingeniousness of his speech was certainly most obvious in the case of the Armenians and the Chaldaeans, where Cyrus as a mediator between them secured the control over the strategic land between their territories to Persians, while leaving the Armenians and the Chaldaeans to think that there was no party who came out as superior from the new arrangement.[90] When it comes to excellence in military affairs which Cyrus also mentions in his speech, it is clear that he did what he thought one ought to do when he is practicing military virtues – he "secured much wealth, much happiness, and great honors" for himself and his fellows. The importance of military virtue is, of course, not possible to overlook when one reads *Cyropaedia*. "Forty five pages for the one battle, over eighty for the different battles, a quarter of the whole volume" – this is how much space is given to affairs directly concerning war in the book, the conditions that call for the nourishment of the military virtue are therefore vastly present.[91] We know that under Cyrus' rule during the times of peace the military exercise was regularly organized in the form of hunts in order to keep Cyrus in a good shape and his subjects inspired, but clearly his lifestyle did not equal the one he maintained during the conquest, once the goals behind the military excellence are fulfilled, it is no longer the chief activity that he pursues.[92]

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89 Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 237.

90 Ibid., 97 – 100.

91 Samuel James Pease, "Xenophon's Cyropaedia, 'The Compleat General'," *The Classical Journal* 29, no. 6 (1934): 438, acessed November 20, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/294063.

92 Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 238.

Ambler claims that once Cyrus holds the reins of absolute power, the change in his priorities and behavior is of a radical nature. "When Cyrus was eager to acquire allies, he wore fatigues and adorned himself in sweat, but after he had the world in his grasp, he turned to Median finery," he says.[93] It is true that when we look at Cyrus' life, we cannot dismiss the period of life he has spent in the guardianship of his grandfather who was the king of Media, and he seemed to have adapted well to their way of life accompanied by many enjoyments. We hear that after his return to Persia his fellows mock him from learning the life of pleasure among the Medes, but he soon reestablished his status by being outstanding in all their activities.[94]

Could it be that such a long pursuit of the outstanding virtue, even if practiced for the external outcome, is so quickly abandoned by Cyrus, after he got what he wanted? Let us first look at the points in the text that could potentially support this claim. After Cyrus achieved the final goal of his military virtue, i.e. he took over Babylon, we hear about the "enjoyment" more often. Soon after seizure, Cyrus was "desirious of establishing himself in the way he held to be fitting for a king," and he even complains when he at the initial stage of establishing his empire too occupied by receiving people that prevent him for having any leisure and he clearly expressed his desire for rest.[95] However, when the most important administrative matters are all set, we hear about him providing "leisure both for himself and for his circle."[96] Nevertheless, leisure is always present as a necessary transitory stage between taking care of yet more important affairs of the empire, Cyrus realizes that he must not give up on his previous way of life in order to maintain his rule successfully.[97] The "end" of virtue could not come with the beginning of the rule, a new goal is in front of him – the goal of being an efficient leader. "Realizing this, we must now practice virtue much more than before we acquired these good things, being well aware that when someone has the most, the most people envy him, plot against him, and become his enemies, especially if he also has possessions and service from unwilling [subjects],

93 Wayne Ambler, introduction to *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 17.
94 Ibid., 42 – 43.
95 Ibid., 224 – 226.
96 Ibid., 236.
97 Ibid., 230; 235.

just as we do."[98] In order to gain the admiration of the city that was hostile to him and full of ill will, Cyrus did everything it took to make his benevolence and virtue as visible as possible, hoping that he would inspire both respect and imitation in his subjects.[99] Now the "Median finery," that Ambler thinks Cyrus and his circle adopted in the way they dressed and looked, is in fact an imitation of the Babylonian customs from the Persian side, in order to gain yet more respect and trust from the side of the subjects, in these terms he also organized a procession where he showed off his grandeur.[100] It is true that their eating habits openly became less modest when it comes to variety of food Cyrus' table offered, but just like during the times of conquest, inviting people over for a dinner remained a form of gratification for their noble deeds. Cyrus valued friendships above everything, and invested many efforts into gaining and maintaining friendships, either through giving services to his friends, or through financial and material gifts. "By enriching and benefiting human beings, I acquire goodwill and friendship, and from these I harvest safety and glory."[101] Cyrus' genuineness of virtue therefore could not be called into question because he would have not performed it after the war was over, but because it appears that there is ever-present "I" when it comes to his virtue, there is always a precise calculation present in the background, to the extent that we might start to think that appearance of virtue is more important than the virtue itself, or Cyrus' behavior is completely self-centered and the good things flowing from it are mere by-products of his motto that through immediate continence, the higher goods will be achieved in the future. "To be thought of as a benefactor, to receive public *recognition*...was the important thing from the point of view of successful rule."[102] What is it, what is the "noble" that such a benefactor rewards the most? Let us reply to this with the words of Cyrus' devoted fellow Chrysantas: "As for the good things we now have, what else did we attain them more than by obeying the ruler?"[103]

Obedience is undoubtedly one of the most important matters when it comes to Cyrus'

98 Ibid., 230, §77.
99 Ibid., 288, §66.
100 Ibid., 239; 246.
101 Ibid., 245, §22.
102 J. Joel Farber, "The Cyropaedia and Hellenistic Kingship," *The American Journal of Philology* 100, no. 4 (1979): 512.
103 Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 233, §3.

subjects. “Obedience” and “submission” are probably two of the most frequent terms in the opening chapter of *the Education of Cyrus.* It is not by coincidence that Xenophon chose the private household and its servants and the herd and its keeper as the examples of obedience. When contemplating on how difficult it is to rule the people, Xenophon notes that even ruling people on a small scale is complicated, and not all masters of the households are able to keep his servants “obedient for their use.”[104] Subsequently, Xenophon mentions the *profit* that arises from herd's obedience. The very beginning of the book implies the advantage that the ruling party secures by being strictly obeyed. We then learn how greatly it was valued among the Persians, who teach their children “to obey the rulers,” and when the time comes to prove one's excellence, the reward goes to young men who are “most manly, most skillful, and most obedient.”[105] Cyrus seems to have appropriated the Persian approach (after all, he was Persian himself) – when he is deciding what kind of manners to adopt in order to rule securely, he “thought it would be especially abiding in his circle if he openly honored those who obeyed him without excuses more than those who though they contributed the greatest and most arduous virtues. Judging like this, he acted accordingly.”[106]. However, it looks like he “acted accordingly” even before Xenophon reveals to us the way Cyrus thinks. We already expressed the doubts about Cyrus' virtue as being genuine, now let us look at how does this assumption relates to the virtue of his subjects. At the beginning of the conquest, he decides to reward his soldiers according to their military excellence, the prizes were to be given to those who “showed themselves to be most obedient to their rulers and to practice most enthusiastically what was announced and what the army practiced.”[107] Along with material rewards, Cyrus was regularly inviting for a dinner “any whom he saw doing the sort of thing he wished them all to do.”[108] By doing this, and also by deciding that shares after the conquest is over will be divided according to one's contribution, not equally, Cyrus created a competitive environment, because he was aware that “human beings are much more willing to practice those things in which there are rivalries.”[109] We indeed see that “the excellence described is a competitive,

[104] Ibid., 21, §1.
[105] Ibid., 25 – 26.
[106] Ibid., 237 – 238, §29.
[107] Ibid., 66, §24.
[108] Ibid., 67, §30.
[109] Ibid., 65, §22; 72.

not a cooperative one."[110] Virtue in these cases, as well as at the end of the book where Cyrus generously lavishes gifts on all his friends, is stimulated and inspired by material provisions, again, it is not maintained and performed for itself, in but is directed towards clear and attractive outcome, offered by Cyrus who is a sponsor of virtue by giving merit-based gifts and by serving as an ostentatious example of a virtuous person. Clearly, such an approach does not create people who would pursue virtue for its own sake, and once their securement of honor and goods, that Cyrus talks about in his speech and now provides his subjects with, is gone, their motivation to be virtuous is gone as well. The way Cyrus acts then confirms the argument that the "obedience counts more in an official than any display of greatest excellence."[111] After showing many cases where Cyrus' own virtue was not only openly practical, but sometimes even seeming, his approach towards the subjects when it comes to virtue appears to be that of a father keeping his children dependent by not gradually teaching them self-direction.

Let us return to Locke for a moment, and remind ourselves of the reasons why we have established the comparison between Cyrus' empire and Locke's *Golden Age*. For both of these epochs was typical the strong, general-like ruler, who abounds with virtue and inspires his subjects to pursue the life of noble deeds. And yet, both these societies existed only for a slight period of time, and resulted in a decay. I have already covered the beginning and the nature of these regimes, now the last thing I will concentrate on is whether the fate of Cyrus' empire can be compared to this of the societies of the *Golden Age*, because, as we already know, "golden" in Locke does not equal final, but only transient stage on the axis of the historical progress of the political societies. Looking at the conclusion of *the Education of Cyrus*, readers might be taken aback to observe the rapid decay of Cyrus' empire soon after his death. "his sons immediately fell into dissension, cities and nations immediately revolted, and everything took a turn for the worse."[112] His former empire was suddenly full of injustice, impiety and Medes' softness, and all the virtues that he embodied, such as moderation, benevolence, and military excellence, started to disappear. Simply listing

[110] J. Joel Farber, "The Cyropaedia and Hellenistic Kingship," *The American Journal of Philology* 100, no. 4 (1979): 500 – 501.
[111] Ibid., 501.
[112] Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 273, §2.

on no more than four pages what state did Cyrus' empire turn into, Xenophon ends this unpleasant conclusion of his work by merely stating that he has accomplished what he proposed, without any hint of regret over the end of the great empire.[113] Ambler holds the opinion that "the dissolution of Cyrus' empire should neither shock nor cause dismay,"[114] and Sage follows the line of this argument claiming that "in an empire where the people have been repeatedly characterized as *paides*, dependent upon Cyrus looking after them as a father, this should perhaps not be a surprise. This very dependency may be partially responsible for the decadence."[115] When we closely look at the speech Cyrus' gave to his sons in the chapter proceeding the final one, it is clear that he was aware of this dependency that he himself in fact stimulated by always putting the goal of the reward behind obedience and noble deeds. Having a monologue about the possible immortality of his soul, Cyrus' tries to establish his presence even after he is dead, so that his sons will be motivated to pursue all he asks them for out of gratification for his eternal soul. "So if these things are just as I think, and the soul leaves the body behind, do what I ask also out of respect for my soul. If they are not so, but instead the soul remains in the body and dies along with it, then out of fear of the everlasting, all-seeing, and all-powerful gods....never either do or plan anything unholy and impious."[116] Here we see that Cyrus is well aware that without having anyone to watch his sons and his subjects, they might not be able to continue his rein the way he did – we can see that at the end of the book, he suddenly elevates the role of piety that we always hear of only in a practical way in the rest of the book, to something that should stand behind the stability of the whole empire. The farewell speech Cyrus gave to his sons is the first and the only place where Cyrus seems to have worries about the continuance of his empire, but this does not prevent him from being sure that at the very moment of his death, he leaves his land in a state of happiness.[117]

It is legitimate to ask whether the rather shocking deterioration of Cyrus' empire after

[113] Ibid., 274, §5; 275, §15; 277 §27.
[114] Wayne Ambler, introduction to *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 18.
[115] Paula Winsor Sage, "Dying in Style: Xenophon's Ideal Leader and the End of the 'Cyropaedia'," *The Classical Journal* 90, no. 2 (Dec. 1994 – Jan. 1995): 167, acessed November 11, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3297756.
[116] Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 271, §22.
[117] Ibid., 269.

his death is an indirect criticism of Cyrus' reign and undermines the rest of the book where we witnessed the perfect coherence of his imperium. P. W. Sage suggests that we ought not to condemn Cyrus' rule just because it lasted only one lifetime, because Xenophon as the author of *Cyropaedia* puts the emphasis of the book on the person of Cyrus and his exceptionality, not on the universality of his system of ruling. We knew from the very beginning that he was one of a kind and that is precisely the reason why he cannot serve as "a model for other leaders to follow."[118] That the stability and security in Cyrus' empire was indeed centered around his person has already been proven, it would therefore be naïve to expect its endurance once the leading figure is gone. Rather than being a model of perfect society, *the Education of Cyrus* is only a description of the case that gave Xenophon "second thoughts about the impossibility of a leader ruling successfully over men, provided that such a person understood how to do it."[119] I would suggest that in this sense Cyrus' rule yet again resembles the period of *Golden Age* in Locke – the fact that it was only temporary does not negate its efficiency at the time it have existed, but when we are looking for the long-term stability of the political society, these regimes do not present us with the solution and after they end the conditions they have created appear to be even worse than the ones they have begun with. "The collapse of Cyrus' rule returns us to the spectacle of political instability with which the *Education* began, and we are compelled anew to look for help as to how best to respond to this problem."[120] It appears that we are encouraged to look for the solution outside of Xenophon's *Education of* Cyrus, because, as Sage emphasized, the author does not aspire to give us the explicit answer. Even the dark and shocking ending of the book does not have to be necessarily perceived as a critique of Cyrus, since Xenophon clearly sets out Cyrus' exceptionality at the beginning of the book - he has no equals and the shape he gave to his empire derives from this uniqueness.[121] Let us return to the *Golden Age* in *the Second Treatise*, to see what was it about its ending that resembles Cyrus' empire, and to see if Locke gives us a solution thanks to which people could pull ourselves out of the unpleasant state left behind by the Cyrus-like princes.

[118] Paula Winsor Sage, "Dying in Style: Xenophon's Ideal Leader and the End of the 'Cyropaedia'," *The Classical Journal* 90, no. 2 (Dec. 1994 – Jan. 1995): 165.
[119] Ibid., 164.
[120] Wayne Ambler, introduction to *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Wayne Ambler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 18.
[121] Paula Winsor Sage, "Dying in Style: Xenophon's Ideal Leader and the End of the 'Cyropaedia'," *The Classical Journal* 90, no. 2 (Dec. 1994 – Jan. 1995): 164 – 166.

V.

Source of the Rapid Decline of Cyrus' Empire and Solution Offered by John Locke

We have already shown the nature of virtue in *the Education of Cyrus*. Virtue of Cyrus was, as we now know, undoubtedly practical and enhanced not for its own sake, but for the appropriation of greater goods. It was also a means of motivation for the citizens, but the close look at Cyrus' requirements for his subjects showed us that he valued obedience before virtue. Even though he was awarding virtue, obedience was still more appreciated by him, and his virtue helped him to secure necessary level of the devotion of his subjects. While Cyrus was alive, the system on which he built his reign seemed to work perfectly, but was nevertheless followed by the rapid dissolution of his empire after his death. Xenophon does not explicitly point finger at Cyrus to retrospectively blame him for the poor state of his empire after he is gone, neither he discusses the possible solution. Thus, what remains is to try to find both the causes and the solution somewhere else, and since we have already found the possible connection between the character of Cyrus' reign and Locke's *Golden Age*, let us proceed to the discussion of the breakdown of the latter one. Before we do that, I shall explain the account of virtue in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in order to see what is it that stands behind the virtue, which was so vastly present in the *Golden Age.*

The standards of good and evil are according to Locke sensations of pleasure or pain accompanying both our actions and ideas. “That we call good, which is apt to cause or increase pleasure, or diminish pain in us; or else to procure, or preserve us the possession of any other good, or absence of any evil.”[122] If there would be neither pain nor pleasure produced in us while performing certain action or contemplating about particular idea, we would not have any motivation to strive for things, or, contrarily, reason to avoid things. Pleasure stemming from the particular good is what motivates us to achieve that good in the first place, pleasure is a means through which

[122] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 229, §2, ll. 18 – 20.

we *identify* something as good, without it, there would be no desires and we would be indifferent to everything. This way is the good and evil related to all our ideas and actions – good is what brings pleasure or heals pain, bad is what brings pain. When we look at these two categories from the perspective of morality in Locke, the morality again draws from our actions, and their goodness and badness is decided with regard to common moral law, which sets the boundaries of good and bad. The pleasure and pain are yet again present here, in the form of rewards and punishments. Since the moral law must be enforced somehow, there have to be consequences behind the obedience it requires. Such as the goal of our private actions was the achievement of a pleasure, here the pleasure comes in the form of reward when we act morally, and the punishment ought to follow when we violate the moral law. Now the moral law draws from more sources, it is not universal nor innate, but practical, and what is considered virtue in one place, might be of little importance in another, or could be even vice in different society.[123] There *is* one universal safeguard of moral law, and that is God, and yet, even though we all know that the life of virtue of piety and the honest worship of God are the best ways to live, we do not know *how* exactly to pursue these goals, this virtue is "hard to be understood," it therefore serves "very little to conduct our lives." Man is well aware that God is pleased when we do as He commands, but we often do not know "what it is, that God doth commands, there are no innate principles that would give as a certain direction in this matter."[124] Hence, the divine law set by God is the only infallible standard of morals, but simultaneously the most difficult to follow. His punishments and rewards are of "infinite weight and duration," but are not known to us beforehand, and are not restricted solely to our life here on earth, which makes them appear distant.[125] This is why is the life of virtue only according to divine law difficult. When it comes to laws produced by the people themselves, those of the commonwealth are not setting the standard of morality. The rewards and punishments the commonwealth orders are restricted to the "life, liberty, and possessions" of its members, magistrate's judgments do not concern our badness or goodness in a way that divine law does. The laws of magistrate therefore stem from the law of nature, which put the basic and essential restriction on our will, binding us in a way that we would preserve our own existence and not harm the life of others.

[123] Ibid., 229 – 230, §1 – 6.
[124] Ibid., 78, §17 – 18.
[125] Ibid., 352, §8.

The promulgated laws of the commonwealth operate in terms of crime versus innocence, and the commonwealth bears the power to perform the punishment over those who transgressed its laws.[126] Reciprocal justice of the state of nature turns into justice performed solely by the commonwealth, to whom people gave up their individual powers when they have entered the political society, in order to ensure greater security and peaceful living within a community.[127] Laws of the commonwealth are therefore derived from the original law of nature, and all attempts to appropriate the role of the divine law would be a transgression of the commonwealth's power; our piety and salvation ought to be beyond the reach of its force.[128] J. B. Schneewind explains that in Locke's morality, "a ruler's subjects can know what the laws are without knowing what good their obedience will bring, because the laws themselves do not specify that good."[129] Who is it then that makes this standard of good widely known? The answer is clear - it is the people themselves, the civil society that sets the standard of virtue and vice. When entering the political society, people gave up the use of their previous force in favor of the magistrate, but nevertheless, they still keep their private judgments on what is good and bad.[130] Through the law of opinion or reputation, people decide what is it that is praiseworthy, and what will bring the person disgrace and disrespect. "These names, *Vertue* and *Vice*, in the particular instances of their application, through several nations and societies of men in the world, are constantly attributed only to such actions, as in each country or society are in reputation or discredit."[131] The laws of opinion are to some extent compatible with the divine law, but the fact that they vary from society to society is a proof that people set them also according to the "judgment, maxims, or fashions of that place."[132] When someone does act in a way that displeases his fellow citizens, they do not have the right to punish him using the force that belongs exclusively to commonwealth. The punishment here is disgrace, blame or the detachment from the society, while reward is honor and praise. It is

[126] Ibid., 352 – 353, §9.
[127] John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 331, §95 – 96..
[128] John Locke, *A Letter Concerning* Toleration. ed. James H. Tully (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 42.
[129] J. B. Schneewind, "Locke's Moral Philosophy" in *The Cambridge Companion to Locke's 'Essay Concerning Human Understanding,'* ed. Lex Newman, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press: 2007), 215.
[130] Ibid., 353, §10.
[131] Ibid., 353, §10, ll. 8 – 12.
[132] Ibid., 353, §10, ll. 23 – 24.

essential that it never goes beyond the civil law and touch upon the things that are guaranteed to man by the commonwealth that he lives in, just like the civil law ought not to appropriate function of the divine law.[133]

Golden Age was also a primordial political society where people gave up their power in favor of the elected king. Such a king as the ablest from them was then let to rule without any legal restrictions put on his power. It was the virtuous character of the leader that made the people trust that he would follow the common good and defend them from any external threats, even if there were no laws to limit and define his power. While the princes in charge were virtuous and kept the common good in mind, there truly was nothing to worry about, and even their power was in theory arbitrary, they never misused it.[134] However, Locke reminds us the of saying that "the reigns of good princes have been always the most dangerous to the liberties of their people."[135] The problem with the prerogative that once belonged to the god-like princes occurred once their less virtuous and more selfish successors attempted to draw on their precedent, and directed this unlimited power in a way that harmed people and disordered the society. The end of the *Golden Age* lay in the appropriation of the unlimited power by the princes who shared the same amount of power as their predecessors, but aspired on using it the wrong way. Political society distanced from the public good suffered, and it took time for people to fix what the princes destroyed. In order to do that, people had to declare the limitations of prerogative, by creating the legal framework that clearly determines the power belonging to ruler.[136]

The account of virtue in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* corresponds with its usage during the *Golden Age* - we can see that, like in *the Education of Cyrus*, virtue is a means of achieving some greater future good, in case of the *Golden Age*, common good. Virtue in Locke is awarded and praised, "since nothing can be more natural, than to encourage with esteem and reputation that, wherein every one finds his advantage."[137] Locke's claim that not all morality and virtues are universal can be

[133] Ibid., 353 – 356, §10 – 11.
[134] John Locke, *The Second Treatise*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 376, §162.
[135] Ibid., 378, §166, ll. 5 – 7.
[136] Ibid., 376 – 378, §162 – 163, 166.
[137] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 356, §11, ll. 9 – 11.

observed in Xenophon's work as well, the clearest example of this is the contrast between the Median and the Persian education. On the other hand, Locke also claims that because the virtues are naturally directed toward our personal interest, they to a high extent overlap in many societies – all are here not only to advise us how to secure the achievement of our interest, but leads us to do it the way that would not destroy the interest of others. Indeed, in *the Education of Cyrus*, we can see that Cyrus is praised by many foreign nations, not only by the ones of his kind, even the strangers from different societies were therefore able to appreciate his virtue, from which follows that there must have been something to it that was universally good. The Persian law we heard of in connection to Cyrus childhood shows a contrast with Locke's separation of the standards set by the commonwealth and the civil society. In Persia, the civil and political laws were the one, moral values were anchored in them, and the punishment for their transgression was not only public disgrace, but the kind of means were used that in Locke's terms can be used solely when the magistrate is punishing a criminal, not when the citizens punish vices against morality according to the law of opinion. The notion of virtue as a useful tool for the attainment of the future goods is then equally present in both *the Education of Cyrus* and John Locke's philosophy. Yet, Cyrus' imperium and the *Golden Age* seem to fail in a different way. What is it then that creates the distinction between those two, and how does it reflect upon their endings?

We might have noticed that while the endings of both the *Golden Age* and Cyrus' empire were equally painful and perhaps unexpected regarding the flourishing those regimes brought with them, in Locke's *Second Treatise*, the failure came from above, where the individual prince was not worthy of his position, which required an uncorrupted character, and the abuse of his privileges negatively impacted his subjects. However, the notion of common good was preserved in the peoples' minds, and they were therefore, even if with many difficulties, able to get rid of the flawed system and establish the political society that put an end on the unlimited prerogative of kings, and provided the legal frame within which magistrate protects the common good. In *the Education of Cyrus*, the corruption is not a matter exclusive to Cyrus' offspring, but consumes whole society and almost at once, it is not something coming from above what people perceive as bad, but they themselves willingly start to live in it. Why is this so? We should notice that while the decay in Xenophon comes from

within, the "rewards and punishments," i.e. the standard of virtue during the Cyrus' rule was coming solely from *above* – it was set by no one else than Cyrus alone, and he was simultaneously the one who was taking a good care that this standard will be preserved by awarding those who met it. Locke's *Golden Age* does not bring such a radical reversal of the society, and this is precisely because the morality in it was not built around the person who served as a prototype of virtue. Since the beginning of *Golden Age* was established through the *election* of the ruler, he only embodied the common idea of what was already praiseworthy. The morality that judges of "vertues and vices" in Locke always stems from civil society, and the civil society presupposes, as we already know, the possibility of giving our *consent* to its beginning. The reason why Cyrus' empire fell apart virtually the days after the king died is that there was no civil society to begin with. Cyrus was a conqueror that did not consider the consent of people whom he incorporated into his imperium as necessary. We have shown how the consent is the means through which the reason is used at the initial stage of the political society, but also how thanks to the consent of each and every individual the reason is *preserved* as the most important quality directing our judgment to the assent to truth, and enhancing our lives. When entering the political society, people give up their force, so that they cannot employ it "any farther than the law of the country directs: yet they retain still the power of thinking well or ill; approving or disapproving of the actions of those whom they live amongst, and converse with: And by this approbation and dislike they establish amongst themselves, what they call *Vertue* and *Vice*."[138] It is clear that the option of voluntarily giving up the power in favor of newly rising political society was denied to men subjected by Cyrus, who was always equipped by force, which is not compatible with the true consent. We should therefore not be surprised that the independently thinking civil society that would on the already set standard of promulgated civil laws build also inevitable morality, did not existed under the Cyrus' law.

The key problem from the point of view of Locke is not in the nature of Cyrus' virtue, that authors like Ambler and Faber considered to be purely utilitarian and to some extent even pretended, and therefore weak. According to Locke, it is natural for us to consider good that which brings us closer to more good, and without such a

[138] Ibid., 353 – 354, §10, ll. 27 – 31.

motivation in the future pleasure, virtue would not be worth any endeavors - in fact, there would be no virtue at all, because the absence of personal goals and preferences would make us indifferent to all actions and ideas. S. Forde claims that Locke considers such "hedonism," i.e. strive for personal gain, inseparable from rationality. "Morality, like obedience to any other law or rule, cannot reasonably be expected of men, unless they each gain individually by it."[139] There was therefore nothing wrong with Cyrus' private view on virtue. Similarly, there is no fragility in the nature of virtue that would make it insufficient to be a functioning part of the political society, quite the opposite, in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, and important role is assigned to virtue, that ties the society in the areas where the civil law has not (and ought not to have) any reach on the lives of citizens. However, the morality can play such complementary role in political society only when there is a civil society that would set and bear the standards of what is disgraceful and what praiseworthy. From Locke we hear that where people have "sense and reason, and their own interest," there is a very small chance that they would mistake in "in placing their commendation and blame on that side, that really deserved it not."[140] What Cyrus did wrong was to place himself as the only standard of virtue and vice, and similarly to become the only one in charge (with the help of his devoted fellows) rewarding that what was virtuous. However, the fact that he valued obedience at any cost more than virtue, suggests that he did not want his citizens to be free agents capable of adopting the role of judges of morality within the society. The citizens that had no opportunity to agree on the government that they live under, and to set the limits of the civil law that should serve their common good, are deprived of employing the reason in the most crucial moments, and live imprisoned in the false, insufficient principles, that do not correspond with their natural state of being free, rational agents. Once their embodiment of both civil and moral law is gone, they are left with nothing, and unlike after the *Golden Age*, where the rational principle was preserved among citizens, their work towards the better state would be more painful and long, since they have to discover and reject their false judgments in order to enter the road of assent to truth.

The decline of Cyrus' empire was caused by the quick spread of vice. "Foundation of

[139] Steven Forde, "Theology, and Morality in Locke," *American Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 2 (2001): 399. acessed November 12, 2012. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2669348.

[140] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 356, §11, ll. 20 – 22.

vice" lies "in wrong measures of good."[141] In order to prevent the society from falling into the deep abyss of immorality, we have to build it on consent. The initial consent alone assures that those who enter the society are free, rational agents, because the consent can be given only to that which contains truth. The consent of each new member joining the already existing political society is a sign that reason is still preserved within its bounds, and that the idea of common good captured in laws preserving the life, liberty and property of people is safe. Where there is functional civil law, there is also a flourishing civil society. Civil society is the fountain of morals, which are, like language, a tie of it, and ensure that the individuals in society direct their interests towards the goals that are not only useful on personal level, but also praiseworthy. Regimes where people are deprived of the most profound self-enhancing tool, which is the Reason, produce citizens who, due to the absence of civil law, have no basis on which they could build morality, and this adds to the fragility of a regime which is build on force. Locke emphasizes, however, that such a state of common error and lack of true principles is not voluntary. "There are not so many men in errours, and wrong opinions, as is commonly supposed. Not that I think they embrace the truth; but indeed because, concerning those doctrines they keep such a stir about, they have no thought, no opinion at all."[142] Once we keep the way to reason open to people, by giving them option of consent on the principles of the political society, Locke is convinced that there is no rational creature who would not "profess himself a lover of truth," and who would not employ reason to broaden his understanding and that way make his life better.[143]

[141] Ibid., 718, §16, ll. 16 – 17.
[142] Ibid., 719, §18, ll. 11 – 14.
[143] Ibid., 697, §1.

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Resumé

Táto bakalárska práca sa venuje otázkam cnosti a morálky v diele Johna Lockea a antického filozofa Xenofóna, pričom prepája ich koncept morálky s osudom politických spoločností opísaných v Lockeovom diele *Druhá Rozprava o Vláde* a Xenofónovej *Cyropaedii.* Obaja autori majú spoločný utilitaristický prístup ku cnosti – hlásajú, že cnosť sa má praktizovať za účelom dosiahnutia budúceho cieľa, ktorý nám ma priniesť osobný úžitok. Cyrusove impérium, ako aj *Zlatý Vek* opísaný Lockeom, boli postavené práve okolo kultu osobnosti mocného vládcu výrazne oplývajúceho cnosťou, no napriek tomu obe tieto politické spoločnosti utrpia rozpad po pomerne krátkej dobe svojej existencie. Moja práca sa venuje práve možným dôvodom tohto rozpadu, ako aj jeho prevencií z pohľadu Lockea.

Na ceste k tomuto cieľu som sa najprv zamerala na diskusiu jazyka v Lockeovej *Rozprave o Ľudskom Rozume*, ako nástroja komunikácie v ktorom je zakorenená naša kapacita súhlasu. Prostredníctvom súhlasu využívajúcom náš rozum môžeme dospieť k pravde a širšiemu chápaniu, ktoré sú zárukou sebarozvoja. Práve preto Locke zdôrazňuje potrebu súhlasu pri vzniku politickej spoločnosti – súhlas je prejavom racionality jedinca, keďže odsúhlasiť niečo, čo nie je pravdivé, nie je z hľadiska rozumu možné, ten je totiž nástrojom na odhalenie pravdy.

Práca nadväzuje na potrebu súhlasu pri vstupe do politickej spoločnosti rozborom Cyrusovho vzostupu k moci, kde paradoxne súhlas hral veľmi malú úlohu, a tomuto vládcovi nebolo cudzie ani presadzovanie cieľov vďaka fyzickej sile, ktorá rozum vylučuje. Ďalšia, v poradí 4. kapitola dáva priestor moralite v diele *Cyropaedia*, kedy nám bližší pohľad na Cyrusove spôsoby odhalí nie len prítomnosť neustálej kalkulácie za jeho cnostným správaním, ale aj fakt, že u svojich verných a občanov si viac než cnostnú povahu cení bezvýhradnú poslušnosť.

Na rozdiel od Xenofóna, kde štandard morálky udáva samotný Cyrus ako panovník, podľa Lockea nemá vládnuca moc akýmkoľvek spôsobom zasahovať do morálnych

pravidiel spoločnosti – má len ochraňovať životy, slobodu a majetok svojich občanov a ponechávať im voľnú ruku čo sa týka morálnych hodnôt. Ľudia v politickej spoločnosti určujú hranicu medzi dobrým a zlým správaním, pričom prvé si vyslúži obdiv, zatiaľ čo to druhé disrešpekt a vylúčenie z komunity.

V závere bakalárskej práce dospejem k záveru, že je to práve neustála závislosť Cyrusovych poddaných na jeho vzore morálky, ktorá spôsobila rapídny rozpad jeho ríše a pričinila sa o následný katastrofálny stav, v ktorom sa ľudia ocitli. Nesamostatnosť jeho občanov bola zakorenená už v pôvode jeho ríše, kedy ľudia nemali možnosť dať svoj súhlas, resp. nesúhlas na svoje začlenenie do nej, a boli pod hrozbou násilia nútení stať sa jej súčasťou. Naopak, Lockeove politické spoločnosti *Zlatého Veku* boli založené na základe súhlasu ich členov, a preto ich kapacita rozumu ostala zachovaná. Vďaka nej sa potom rýchlo pozviechali zo stavu, v akom ich koniec *Zlatého Veku* zanechal, tento koniec bol však spôsobený chybou vládnuceho jednotlivca, nie zlyhania morálky obyvateľstva ríše.

Moja bakalárska práca teda na príklade Lockea a Xenofóna dokazuje, že pre zdravú politickú spoločnosť je nutné ponechať ľuďom slobodu, t.j. zachovať ich kapacitu racionálne sa rozhodovať a dospieť tak k pravde, pretože akonáhle sa stanú závislými na vládnucej moci v takej záležitosti, akou je morálka, politická spoločnosť sa stáva krehkou a nestabilnou.