

concepts from the West's cultural history and tried to retrieve them, bring them back to the center of liberal democratic theory, and in the process jettisoned those dimensions of possessive market society that thwarted the possibilities of individuals achieving their uniquely human capacities and potentials. Informing unfamiliar readers, and reminding those who may have forgotten, of Macpherson's noble vision of the possibilities of more fully developed humans living without the antagonisms of a class-divided society is a timely and worthy effort indeed.

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Ralph Ketcham. *Public-Spirited Citizenship: Leadership and Good Government in the United States*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2015. Pp. 258. \$69.95.

With the growing sense among American voters that mainstream party politics has nothing of value to offer them, the displacement of many civil society organizations across the United States by top-down government bureaucracy, and the increasingly bitter and adversarial tone of public discourse, a book on "public-spirited citizenship" could not be more timely. In *Public-Spirited Citizenship: Leadership and Good Government in the United States*, Ralph Ketcham advocates a form of public-spirited citizenship that was familiar to America's founding generation but has been occluded by the rise of rugged interest-based politics and the transformation of the public sphere into what Michael Sandel aptly termed the "procedural republic" of "unencumbered selves."

To be "public-spirited" is to have an abiding "sense of the public good" (3) and to possess the virtues (in particular, courage, temperance, justice, and practical wisdom) to promote and protect the public good even when it requires a significant personal sacrifice. To be public-spirited is to recognize that not all personal gains necessarily advance public prosperity, peace, justice, and civility. For example, a class action against a school for a violation of student privacy, where one can reasonably foresee that the school's finances could be ruined by the outcome, is probably not a lawsuit that serves the public interest. Investing in a company with a poor environmental track record may bring one personal wealth, but it does not safeguard the environment. Voting for a populist candidate who will protect one's group interests may be optimal from the standpoint of one's material interests, but if the candidate sows the seeds of division and incivility in one's society, one should think twice about supporting him.

As Ketcham persuasively argues in his book, public-spirited citizenship has all too frequently been drowned out in the United States by highly adversarial forms of political engagement, which have in turn found their legitimation in misguided tendencies in political science to restrict the scope of academic analysis to the “what” of political behavior, rather than inquiring into the proper ends of politics and the civic dispositions and behaviors most conducive to the public good. Ketcham laments the rise of interest-group politics and the failure of modern political science to offer a more inspiring vision of citizenship than the aggressive pursuit of private interests in the public square.

And there is more to his complaint than just some vague nostalgia for an imagined republican past. As Robert Putnam and others have persuasively argued, dispositions of trust and uncalculating service to the community, insofar as they create a climate conducive to constructive cooperation and dramatically reduce the costs of social transactions, constitute an invaluable form of “social capital.” Many commentators have noted the decline of social capital in American society, as evinced by increasing rates of litigiousness, distrust of strangers, and incivility. A highly individualistic, conflictual style of citizenship does nothing to rebuild social capital; on the contrary, it is only likely to drag American public life further into the gutter of demagoguery and civic fragmentation.

For all these reasons, it is hard to disagree with Ketcham when he calls for the renewal of “public-spirited citizenship” in the United States. Furthermore, Ketcham does us an invaluable service in articulating an ideal of public-spirited citizenship that has its foundations in something like an Aristotelian anthropology of *zoon politikon* yet is also firmly grounded in American traditions of republic government spearheaded by the likes of Madison and Jefferson. And he does not stop at vague generalities. He mentions a number of practical strategies for renewing public-spiritedness in American public life. For one, he recommends that the state adopt a friendly and permissive attitude toward the practice of religion, which can present to the faithful “a higher criterion in terms of which [all] can be judged” (quoting Robert Bellah) and can imbue in citizens “a deep, compassionate commitment to sentiments of human dignity” (191). The state, on Ketcham’s view, should foster conditions favorable to all religions, rather than promoting a particular faith.

Besides religious conviction, public-spiritedness can, in Ketcham’s view, be promoted through “education, life experience, protest movements, family tradition, community, civil society, and beyond” (192). He puts a particular emphasis on the study of the liberal arts, which, he believes, “can nourish the humane and just and principled understandings and convictions, and can provide the moral and spiritual grounds for [public-spirited] citizenship” (192). He also emphasizes the role of political leaders, who can model public-spiritedness for the nation. “For example,” he says, “suppose the president, and candidates for that office, were overtly public-spirited, that is, they kept the always-present

partisan and special interest maneuvering subordinate to the pursuit of the public good. Though they might well be party members and could work with the party in campaigns, this strategy would be only to gather like-minded and like-hearted people and forces to their side. Then victory at the polls would rest firmly on public-spirited principles and purposes that the public had in some fashion been drawn to, had understood, and had endorsed” (199).

Though the mechanisms of civic renewal recommended by Ketcham are clear enough—in particular, religious faith, liberal arts education, public service, and political leadership—what is much less clear is how the American polity as it stands can provide meaningful institutional channels for these mechanisms to bear fruit in the long run. In spite of spending many pages explaining and dismantling the conflict-of-interest conception of citizenship that *de facto* seems to dominate the political horizon in America, Ketcham does not take the time to give proper consideration to the types of difficulties that are likely to confront his own rehabilitative project. While this does not invalidate Ketcham’s proposal, which I happen to find quite attractive, it does weaken its plausibility. Certainly, the argument for public-spirited citizenship is incomplete until it comes to terms with anticivic tendencies that seem endemic to the American political system and may prove to be the seeds of its downfall.

Three difficulties in particular must be addressed by any project of civic renewal in America. First, there is the first-past-the-post electoral system, which essentially marginalizes the voice of any citizen who dissents from the twin orthodoxies of Republican and Democratic ideologies. This makes meaningful and intelligent participation in the political life of the nation extremely difficult, compelling citizens dissatisfied with the two orthodoxies to either “waste” their vote on third parties or reconcile themselves with parties they do not believe in.

Second, there is the fact that there is no effective constitutional barrier to overspending in Congress. Congressional representatives have every incentive for so-called pork barrel spending, securing popular spending deals that can facilitate their reelection, and sending public spending spiraling out of control. One or two public-spirited politicians could refuse to drive up public spending, but their initiatives would be virtually powerless in an institutional environment in which refusing to play the spending game just leaves more money for one’s competitors. The overwhelming incentive for political representatives to “loot” the public exchequer under cover of law, at the expense of future generations, is a formidable obstacle to public-spirited leadership and cannot be solved simply by a call to greater civic virtue, until the institutional incentives for such behavior are removed.

Finally, there is the growing polarization of the American electorate on crucial aspects of social and political life, in particular, marriage, family law, re-

ligious freedom, the role of the judiciary, and the dignity of human life. Because of the growing ideological diversity of the American electorate, and the aspiration of diametrically opposed groups to have their way of life reflected and expressed in the law of the land, politics in America is becoming a zero-sum game, in which each group's attempt to bring the country in line with their principles only serves to provoke aggressive defensive maneuvers by their opponents, and in which distrust and incivility between ideological adversaries are only likely to intensify with every new public controversy. Witness the aggressive efforts by the federal government to impose transgender bathrooms on all public schools, tensions across the country over same-sex marriage, recent efforts by the federal government to impose contraceptive coverage on religious institutions, and lawsuits taken by states and private actors to overturn federal policies related to the "culture wars" in the courts.

Even if we do not go so far as to accept MacIntyre's assertion that judicial politics is "civil war carried on by other means," it is clear enough that the courts have shown themselves more than willing to settle political questions by judicial fiat, while the federal government does not seem to have any qualms about using its executive privileges and control of the purse to impose its own political agenda on the states over the heads of local citizens. In this environment, so demoralizing for civic engagement at the local level, it is difficult to see how one can be hopeful about a renewal of public-spirited citizenship. Ketcham succeeds in bravely articulating an attractive ideal of public-spirited citizenship and persuasively argues that such an ideal has found fertile soil in the history of the American republic, but in failing to confront the institutional and cultural obstacles to such an ideal in twenty-first-century America, he risks reducing the ideal to a standing condemnation of American politics, rather than being a positive source of civic renewal capable of raising the tone of local and national politics.

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Cass Sunstein. *Constitutional Personae*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xviii+171. \$24.95.

In this work, Cass Sunstein argues that the history of constitutional adjudication will be illuminated if we view it in light of four constitutional personae. These he stylizes as the Hero, who favors ruling on the basis of broad principle and has little concern for the claims of democratic authority; the Soldier, who is concerned about democratic authority and seeks to follow its orders, even if