

Leopoldo José Prieto López-José Luis Cendejas Bueno,
**Conclusion of *Projections of Spanish Jesuit Scholasticism on
British Thought. New Horizons in Politics, Law and Rights***

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Conclusion

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The twelve contributions compiled in this volume have shown how Spanish Jesuits such as Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), José de Acosta (1539/40–1600), Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526–1611), and Juan de Mariana (1536–1624) had a powerful impact on British thinkers of the magnitude of John Locke (1632–1704), Francis Bacon (1561–1626), the Jesuit Robert Persons (1546–1610), Algernon Sidney (1623–83), William Robertson (1721–93), Thomas de Quincey (1785–1859), and Hilaire Belloc (1870–1953). This influence was sometimes hidden and always controversial.

The works included in this volume make a valuable contribution to our understanding of this part of the history of thought, referring, in particular, to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Britain and Spain. It is not uncommon to find generalizations about the history of thought in the literature on the subject, which, although strictly speaking are not false, lack the information that only knowledge from primary sources can provide and without which any theory is insufficient. In this sense, these chapters provide valuable information taken from primary sources that are not well known or have even been overlooked. However, the oversight of important primary sources is a kind of sin against the light, unacceptable in a truly scientific researcher. Such sources contain the facts and ideas to which a history of thought must adhere. The chapters presented in this volume provide us with information of great value on the real state of intellectual relations and the trade of ideas (especially regarding natural, moral, legal, political, and economic philosophy) between Spain and England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, two decisive actors on the map of real forces in the Europe of those centuries.

Although the respective intellectual orientations of Spain and England would follow very different paths, the seventeenth century was still a century in which the debate *for or against* Aristotle was very much ongoing in Europe. Thus, while Spain, where the various Scholastic schools were predominant, generally remained under

the inspiration of an Aristotelianism renewed in the Renaissance, England became one of the main focal points of anti-Aristotelianism under the impetus of the corpuscular and mechanical philosophy, so characteristic of the pioneers of the Royal Society and its *virtuosi*, all of whom were followers of Bacon's natural program. Certainly, in the seventeenth century, anti-Aristotelianism had not gained more ground anywhere other than in natural philosophy. In this sense, Aristotle's natural philosophy—the part of the Stagirite's philosophy most profoundly subjected to review—was the subject area in which the English and Spanish authors found it most difficult to understand one another. Despite this, as shown in the chapters by Fermín del Pino-Díaz and Francisco Castilla on how the work of the Jesuit Acosta was received by the Scotsman Robertson in the eighteenth century and by the Englishman Bacon in the seventeenth century, the scientific value given in Britain to the experimental and interpretative work of an Aristotelian like Acosta in his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Natural and moral history of the Indies [1590]) is unquestionable. Bacon, a determined anti-Aristotelian, although in reality a prisoner of quite a few of Aristotle's ideas that had yet to be overcome (such as the idea of induction or abstraction of form, etc.), cannot fail to recognize the enormous value of the experimental observations and data that Acosta—who takes Aristotle's philosophy as his own from the very first lines of his work—presents in his history of the natural and ethnographic phenomena of ancient Peru and Mexico. Robertson, for his part, is an admirer of the scientific accuracy and veracity of the data of the American historiography preserved in the Spanish archives and libraries. The value of the work of the Jesuit naturalist, that is, Acosta, was recognized in the eighteenth century by Francisco Javier Clavijero (1731–87), another Jesuit scholar of the history of ancient Mexico, largely a follower of Acosta. Clavijero is the author of the commendable *Storia antica del Messico, cavata dai migliori storici spagnuoli*, where by means of the expression *migliori storici* he refers to the most truthful and reliable historians, among whom is Acosta. Therefore, that the *Encyclopaedia britannica* itself in its second edition prefers to place Clavijero's documentation in its “América” section rather than that from Robertson's *History of America* gives us an idea of the unequivocal scientific seriousness of these Hispanic naturalists, Acosta

and Clavijero, one Spanish and Aristotelian, the other Mexican and enlightened. Since the nineteenth century, North American historiography also preferred the presentations of Acosta and Clavijero, which were more sober and attentive to the facts than the sometimes forced interpretations from philosophical positions that, from the time of Locke, had been imposed both in Britain (Robertson, for example, in Scotland) and on the continent (Buffon and Paw). Only the new perspectives of nineteenth-century romanticism that Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) brought to research on America would help to overcome the interpretative patterns affected by certain theoretical deficiencies.

Just as the trade of ideas between these two nations in a field pertaining to natural philosophy, so different in Spain and England, had not been stopped, it had surely also not been stopped in other fields addressed by the works in this volume referring to ethical and political questions. In this sense, Daniel Schwartz's paper provides interesting information on the flow of moral ideas between these two countries and, in particular, on the revaluation of casuistry in England. As we can see, this is very useful information to nuance the everyday stereotypes in the great presentations of the history of thought. Schwartz shows how the casuistry cultivated by seventeenth-century Anglican theologians (in particular, Jeremy Taylor [1613–67] and Robert Sanderson [1587–1663]) maintained, despite the criticism, recognizable links with the Catholic casuistry of the great Catholic moral treatise writers, especially Spanish and Italian authors. Nevertheless, the revaluation of Scholasticism in England was mainly promoted in the environment of nineteenth-century English literary romanticism. In said environment, De Quincey defends the value of a renewed casuistry that is capable of overcoming the limitations and errors of the casuistry of many Catholic and Anglican theologians of the previous centuries. Moreover, that De Quincey draws on Immanuel Kant's (1724–1804) theory of judgment, as expounded in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), to justify the fact that casuistry is needed for moral philosophy demonstrates that the original idea of casuistry, far from being absurd, is actually very valuable. In effect, without knowledge of the particular circumstances present in the problems of moral life, a suitable moral judgment will never be possible, as the morality of an action can only

be established by determining the general principles of morality or by subsuming the particular aspects of each case under the general principles.

By far, the field in which intellectual relations between seventeenth-century Spain and England were most intense was that of political philosophy. Here, too, a substratum of political ideas, partly of Aristotelian origin, with deep historical roots, unaltered by the Protestant Reformation, persisted in both nations. The works of Francisco T. Baciero, Francisco Javier Gómez, and Leopoldo Prieto are devoted to the field of political philosophy. One common aspect of these three contributions is that the political thought of the Spanish authors, a large number of whom were Jesuits, clearly constitutes one of the sources of British republican anti-absolutist thought, both of British authors before the English Civil War (1642–51) and after it, in the period when the monarchy was restored. Thus, a great deal of the anti-absolutist intellectual stimuli, especially in the Stuart period, is the work of Spanish authors such as Mariana, Suárez, and so on. In this context, the fact that the anti-absolutist ideas of Roberto Bellarmino (1542–1621) and Suárez (and, in general, of the Jesuit school) were well received on English soil not only by the Jesuit Robert Persons (1546–1610) but also, as the writings of Baciero and Prieto prove, by authors as important to the Puritan bloc and the Whig party as Locke and Sidney, shows how intense the trade of political ideas was, often underground and always concealed, at the time of the restoration of the English monarchy. Therefore, it is indicative of this state of affairs that the posthumous publication of Filmer's *Patriarcha* in 1680, was, as Baciero believes, the reaction to the preceding publication of Suárez's *De legibus* (On laws) (in 1679) promoted by the republican or Whig party, given its ideological affinity with Suárez. Prieto, for his part, shows that the similarity between Suárez's political philosophy in *De legibus* (1612) and *Defensio fidei* (1613) and Sidney's *Discourses concerning Government* goes beyond the fact that the two authors coincide in some particular features. It is, in fact, a structural or architectural similarity in the political principles that shape the political theories of Suárez and Sidney. Gómez, for his part, presents the work of three Jesuits from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, namely Ribadeneyra, Suárez, and Persons (the latter under the pseudonym of Doleman), who faced the spiritual and political crisis

caused by the appropriation of religious power by the Tudor and Stuart governments while fighting for the spiritual and political freedom of all subjects, including Catholics, before the English crown in the context of the religious persecution that had been unleashed. Gómez believes that in that hour of trial for English Catholics, the more serene and reasoned positions of Suárez would have been of greater benefit than Persons' s more radical positions.

Not only politics but the fundamentals of law and economics (the “deals and contracts” of the School of Salamanca) also occupied an important place in late Scholastic reflection as part of a moral theology concerned with all aspects of human coexistence. Jesuit Scholastic thought, continuing the Scholastic tradition that combined the Aristotelian heritage of *Ethics* and *Politics* with Roman law, ended up providing a theory on the origin and lawfulness of the institutions that make life in society (civil government and private property) viable, which powerfully influenced modern political and legal thought. We could state that, based on the Scholasticism of Suárez, Locke and other Whig authors updated and renewed a tradition that came to be read from that moment on as modern.

As highlighted in the work of José Luis Cendejas, in order to legitimize the existence of civil government, both Suárez and Locke resort to historical-genetic arguments that logically explain and morally legitimize the emergence of this institution. Both authors presuppose a *potestas* or *facultas* that lies in the overall previously established body politic, thanks to which the granting of power to the sovereign is lawful. This *potestas*, later called national sovereignty, is transferred to the sovereign to be administered in accordance with a pre-existing law that must be respected. The members of the body politic, considered individually, are holders of a set of innate rights that the ruler must respect and protect. Without the prior development of a subjectivist understanding of law, Suárez and Locke could hardly have devised their pact-inclined explanations of political power with the coherence with which they did. Under the name *dominium*, the theory of subjective natural rights, developed by Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546) and known to Suárez, served as a necessary substratum to explain the change from the state of natural liberty to

the civil state, and also from common property to private property. For Locke, both processes of institutional change are related to each other logically and historically.

Suárez's influence on English Whig thought continued beyond the seventeenth century. As Alfonso Díaz Vera shows us in his work, based on this tradition, Belloc found in Suárez the political theory that completed his distributist state ideal, and thus, in his opinion, he still had something important to contribute in the twentieth century. Belloc saw in Suárez how political organicism (that is, political Aristotelianism) and moral consent could be understood as two sides of the same coin, which distanced him from purely contractualist perspectives. For León Gómez Rivas, the Suarezian, and voluntarist, concept of law could lead to undesirable consequences as far as taxation is concerned, since the ruler does not need consent to approve each and every one of his laws; this is so because, for Suárez, the legitimate government is fundamentally a legitimate legislator. Also, in line with the Suarezian view of law, Lorena Velasco's work shows how the modern concept of citizenship is precluded in Suárez: the *ius civile*, the specific law of a political community, establishes the obligations of citizens and foreigners, where what is important is the assignment to the jurisdiction of a given legislator, not linguistic or cultural considerations.

For other Jesuits, closer to the medieval tradition, such as Mariana, consent had to extend not only to the appointment of the ruler but also to the imposition of new taxes, even if they were under the guise of monetary debasement. Monetary theory, the origins of which can be found in Aristotle's *Politics*, experienced a real breakthrough (not yet surpassed in essence) at the hands of the so-called School of Salamanca. Cecilia Font's work shows how Mariana and Locke, either because they continued the same tradition or because of Spanish influences on the Englishman, agreed on the fundamental issue, namely that monetary debasement causes inflation and, in a hidden way, detracts wealth from the subjects only to hand it over to the government. However, as advisors to the government, their fate was different, for Mariana's advice was not heeded, while Locke's advice bore fruit in his lifetime. Finally, the chapter by Rafael Alé and María Idoya Zorroza serves to prove the versatility of Locke's contractualism and theory of property, but also to catch a

glimpse of his economic Aristotelianism. Indeed, property that is lawfully acquired by applying one's own labor to goods not yet appropriated (uncultivated land) and the accumulation of property enabled by the use of money speak volumes about entrepreneurial activity and economic growth, as the authors of the chapter emphasize. The art of chrematistics that pursues the accumulation of wealth is clearly present in Locke's narrative, although the subsequent Aristotelian condemnation is not. Chrematistics must be at the service of the *oikos* (the home). Beyond what is necessary, the accumulation of wealth as an end in itself is unnatural. Locke dispenses with these considerations as far as the accumulation of property and money is concerned, which would have gone against the sign of the new times.