# Ethos, "ethics," and public service

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THAT the United States is a moralistic nation has, at times, been one of our greatest virtues and, at others, one of our vices. Americans have always debated politics with the moral fervor of the born-again, canonizing the politically upright and damning the unclean. The politics of the past two decades, with all its exaggerated emphasis on public wrong-doing, both foreign and domestic, is unusual in its intensity, though not in its nature.

But the moralism of recent American politics is also unusual in that, for the first time, it has become thoroughly academized. Editorial writers and Congressional committees have turned their attention from Watergate and the CIA affairs, but in the groves of academe these events live on in what may be called the "ethics in government" movement. Classes on "applied ethics" are now given to (and often required of) undergraduate and graduate students; research centers have been established (the Hastings Center in New York, the Center for Philosophy and Public Policy in Maryland); conferences are held; journals are started (*Philosophy and Public Affairs*); grants are given; and dissertations are written. Professors of philosophy, political science, public administration, and public policy have all become troops in the movement, and at a

time when college enrollments are falling and academic departments are in financial trouble, ethics is big business.

The ethics in government movement has two distinct, but related branches. The first concerns itself with the morality of public policies themselves—the decisions to wage war, redistribute income, intervene in other nations, "restructure society," etc. This branch is interesting, if lately overwrought, and will always be part of normal American political discourse. The second branch is concerned less with the morality of political decisions than with the moral obligations of career public officials—the administrators, analysts, and legislative bureaucrats—whose job it is to serve elected officials.

A great number of middle- and upper-level career officials in the federal government (and, increasingly, state and local government) receive some sort of graduate training today, whether it is called public policy, public administration, or public management. These officials should receive a moral education along with their other studies so that they understand their duties in a democratic government and the virtues of a good public servant, and so those duties and virtues become habits. But students preparing for public service today are not receiving what can be called moral education, something akin to religious education which inculcates virtuous habits; they are learning a rather peculiar sort of philosophical discourse which allows them to make sophisticated excuses for their actions without preparing them to act responsibly in a democracy. Morality is a way of life, not a method of analysis, and by bringing abstract ethical reasoning to the study of public administration, the ethics movement helps to *create* a moral vacuum rather than fill one.

This paradox, of ethics without moral education, is a product both of recent trends in graduate education in public administration and changes in political and moral philosophy within the last decade. By confusing and compromising the purposes of both academic philosophy and public administration, the ethics movement can only hope to produce a new generation of casuists, not a revived tradition of moral public service.

## The ethos of public administration

Oddly enough, the teaching of public administration in American colleges and universities was itself the result of an "ethics" movement, of sorts, at the end of the 19th century. Until this time, American government operated on the assumption that politics and

the administration of public programs could not be separated, and that it was both the right and duty of each administration to replace incumbent government officials (from Secretaries to street-sweepers) with people loyal to the new regime. It was not only fair that the spoils belonged to the victors, it was thoroughly democratic.

Untempered democracy has its disadvantages, and it became evident near the end of the 1800's that one of those disadvantages is corrupt administration. With the wide publicity of public wrongdoing by the new "yellow press," there were attempts at all levels of government to clean up the public service. At the federal level, the bribery and patronage of the Grant Administration had led to national Republican good-government slates, the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1893, and the creation of a bipartisan Civil Service Commission.[1]

But it was at the local level that the good-government movement flourished, as it fought the corruption of the "machine" and "big city bossism." There were 84 local citizens associations in American cities by 1894, the year in which they organized themselves into the National Municipal League, an organization which, through influential surveys and comparative studies, sought to professionalize and de-politicize local administration. (The notion of an appointed city manager, for instance, was widely publicized by the League.) Soon the League and other organizations like it were training city managers in what was by then called "public administration." For the first time, the administration of public programs was separated from politics and turned into a profession.

Academic interest, mainly in political science departments, was also growing near the end of that century, with scholars such as Woodrow Wilson, Frank Goodnow, and Charles Beard writing on the new responsibilities of the unelected public servant. By 1914 colleges were offering one-year master's degrees in public administration, and in 1924 the first semi-independent school for training public officials was founded at Syracuse University.

Though ethics, as such, was not formally taught in these programs, they were based on and continued to pass along a strong sense of morality—an ethos—to their students. As a reaction to the corruption of local political machines, early public administration was founded on the notion that the world of professional administration could

[1] An excellent history of American public administration can be found in Frederick Mosher, ed., *American Public Administration: Past, Present, and Future* (University of Alabama Press, 1975).

be distinguished from politics and that the role of the moral public administrator was to serve his political superiors responsibly by carrying out their directives and providing them with information and expertise when necessary. The public could count on a corps of trained specialists who would be above politics, in the sense that they would be uncorruptible, yet beneath it in that the democratic political process remained the legitimate source of policy and moral guidance. The old public administration ethos was, at base, democratic at a time when local government had become most undemocratic.

The world wars and the New Deal turned the attention of schools of public administration to the federal government, and the ethos adjusted to this new and complex situation. Public officials in a growing federal government were no longer merely expected to follow the clear orders of political leaders; suddenly, the administrator found himself managing relatively large programs which affected millions of people, and often with unclear guidance from Congress, the President, or the courts. Further removed from the public than in state or local government, a new generation of federal administrators found itself with a small, but growing, degree of policy discretion which had previously been held by elected political officials.

From the 1930's through the 1950's there was an extended debate within the field of public administration on how much of this discretion the career official could legitimately claim in a democratic government. One camp, led by Carl J. Friedrich, argued that government had become so complex that the political process could not be counted on to make public decisions on its own; it was up to administrators to use their expertise and the tools of science to make decisions that served the public interest. Herman Finer led the opposing camp which held that administrative responsibility in a democracy had to be based on subservience rather than "the public interest"—a chimera, he claimed—if government was to remain representative.

Rereading these old debates, one is struck with how deeply an unquestioned ethos penetrated the ideas and writings of the time. No matter how much debate there was over the nature of administrative responsibility in a democracy, there was no question but that democracy in the U.S. was itself legitimate; the only question was how the moral public official could best serve that democracy when government agencies and programs became large and complex, and administrators found themselves with discretion. Like

Talmudic scholars, students and teachers of public administration pored over the Constitution and American legal history to find the proper interpretation of "duty" and "responsibility." That its character was so seriously debated shows that the democratic administrative ethos was alive and well.

## "Public administration" becomes "public policy"

The year 1960 proved to be a turning point for the field of public administration and the democratic ethos it embodied. The rise of the "whiz-kid" in the Kennedy Administration changed the popular and academic notion of the good public official from that of the responsible, careful, and probably stodgy middle-aged man to that of the young, energetic, and ambitious Ivy-Leaguer who, with shirt-sleeves rolled high, was prepared to apply the latest "scientific" management and analytic tools to the problems of public policy. Government, then populated by timorous old bureaucrats, was to be made active and activist by an infusion of new blood and new thinking. There would be progress.

This shift in perception can be traced, I think, both to changes within the federal government and within academia. The growth of government in the 1960's, especially in social programs (after the growth in defense spending in the previous two decades) not only gave public officials more to do, it also gave them evermore discretion with which to do it (even more than after the New Deal). Regulations had to be written, analyses had to be conducted, and legislation had to be drafted, and all of these activities were undertaken within federal agencies and on Congressional staffs with limited political oversight. At the same time, the "lingo" of government was changing as academics became more involved in public policy and as social science became viewed more as a science and less as part of a humanistic understanding of the social condition. People in government and academia began using the term "policy sciences." Operations research, developed during the two world wars to rationalize planning and carry out military exercises, was now available for application to non-defense matters, and game theory, once the recreation of mathematicians and economists, was soon applied to nuclear strategic planning in the Defense Department. Professors, with their bulging analytic tool-kits in hand, overran Washington attempting to "rationalize" everything from defense procurement to government budgeting.

It was thus inevitable that professors shuttling to all the excite-

ment in Washington would become rather bored with the staid nature of training for public administration. At a time when real social progress seemed at hand, both in government and in the social sciences, public administration programs and the ethos they embodied looked terribly out of date. So they were transformed. From Harvard to Michigan to Berkeley, programs in public administration were changed in the 1960's to graduate programs in public policy, and this change in appellation signified a great shift in what was taught and the spirit in which it was taught. No longer satisfied with teaching the fundamentals of American government, budgeting, and personnel management ("Public administration," one professor told me, "was chiefly concerned with how to set up chairs at a meeting"), public policy programs sought to keep their students abreast of the latest analytic techniques. A first-year graduate student at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, for instance, will take full-year courses in analytic methods (a mathematical grab-bag including cost-benefit analysis), economics, statistics and econometrics, a policy analysis workshop, and political analysis and management techniques. He will learn nothing—explicitly—about democracy.

The value of this sort of training for government service is, I think, great. However one may feel about the broad responsibilities given today to federal career officials, those officials will certainly be ill-equipped to carry out their duties if they are unable to understand the language of formal analysis. (It is no different today in large corporations where chief executive officers must take minicourses in econometrics in order to keep up with their young MBAs.) Economics, statistics, and mathematical reasoning all help the official use his discretion more responsibly by building his intuition about the second and third order effects of government policies, and in this sense an education in public policy is a far superior preparation for government service than was the old public administration.

But however inadequate the old public administration was in analytic sophistication, it did embody an ethos which prepared the student, through an informal moral education, to take his place within a democratic government. Public policy has no such ethos; if it has any ethos at all it is a scientific one wherein the main virtue is efficiency. Graduate programs in public policy are simply silent about democracy, and, given the state of undergraduate education, neither can we be certain that entering students assume democratic principles. It takes no appreciation of the nuances of gov-

erning a democracy to carry out a cost-benefit calculation, run a regression, or forecast the demand for energy in the year 2000. It is essential that these things be done, but a student who merely learns to make these calculations receives no moral guidance at all. He has discretion and can determine the most cost-effective way to achieve a particular end—but what end?

By 1970, policy analysis had come under significant criticism, but, as these things always seem to go, it was not conservatives who were the first to complain that the ethos had been lost, but the New Left which argued that policy analysts lacked any social conscience. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, public policy programs seemed to attract those intent on working for government as agents for social change. But this was a generation brought up on Marcuse, not Madison; on the Frankfurt School, not the Federalist. Convinced that *praxis* makes perfect, students flocked to public policy programs only to be disappointed when they found out that they would simply be taught analytic techniques. And the techniques themselves, it was claimed, were "biased" in favor of those in power and had led to inhumane policies at home and abroad.[2] In short, policy analysis was immoral.

Charges of immorality were something for which public policy programs were unprepared. Policy analysis was overly complex, perhaps, and may have been misapplied on occasion, but it was difficult for public policy professors and administrators to think of analysis as particularly moral or immoral. (In part, this was because they already shared the implicit democratic assumptions their students lacked. But they failed to pass on those assumptions.) The old public administration ethos at least could have answered that as long as the political process was operating properly, public officials were acting morally by following orders; but the policy analysts simply had *no* answer. So as the tone of political discourse in the early 1970's became more moralistic, public policy schools became convinced they should do *something* about ethics. But what?

## Call in the ethicists

At the same time that schools of public policy were changing and sorting out questions of morality, there was a rather similar revolu-

[2] See Lawrence Tribe, "Policy Science: Analysis or Ideology?," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* Vol. II, No. 1 (1972), pp. 66-110. Even Jules Feiffer, in his short play "The White House Murders," blames policy analysis and the whiz-kids for what happened in Vietnam.

tion—whether major or minor remains to be seen—occurring in political philosophy as taught and studied in departments of philosophy. The obituary which was written for political philosophy in the 1950's was undoubtedly premature, given the tremendous interest generated in the early 1970's by the publication of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* and Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia.* What these books have done, really, is reestablish contemporary political philosophy as a branch of moral reasoning (which, depending on your opinion of the state of contemporary moral philosophy, may or may not be such a good thing). Rather than merely studying the history of political thought, students and scholars in philosophy departments today take the neo-Kantian and neo-Lockean political arguments of Rawls and Nozick in a serious, though entirely abstract, way.

A new sort of moral-political argument suddenly came in vogue. We have always been a moralistic nation, but seldom before have we conducted our political arguments in full academic regalia. Abstract philosophical arguments about U.S. foreign and domestic policy, human rights, economic justice, and the actions of certain public officials are now made in slick academic journals (*Philosophy and Public Affairs* is probably the best) and relatively popular books (e.g., Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars*). Some of the questions that are being argued in this mode, and taken quite seriously, are simply absurd. (Do radishes have rights? Should parents be licensed?) But this sort of moral discourse is now so pervasive that even the moral obligations of government officials, formerly consisting of the old ethos of public administration, are now discussed in the obscure and formal analytic language of the contemporary theoretical philosopher.

Ethical theory is really the furthest thing from an ethos, and it is theory construction (and destruction) which has come to dominate British and American moral philosophy in this century, and political philosophy in this past decade. The development (or demise, if you like) of British and American philosophy in this century is a complex matter, but it is not unfair to say that the legacy of logical positivism, linguistic analysis, and formal logic has been tendency towards abstract logical systems quite divorced from the lives we live. In moral philosophy, philosophers have either been absorbed in meta-ethical questions (Do we justify our moral arguments through metaphysical underpinnings or our intuitions?), or the disjunction between the good and the right. This last question roughly divides contemporary moral philosophers into "deontolo-

gists," who argue that acts are wrong or right intrinsically, and "utilitarians" who claim that acts or social rules are right only if they produce the most happiness. While angels dance on pins, these thinkers ponder such questions as: If a group of people are hopelessly trapped in a tunnel by a fat man stuck in the opening (and they will die if they can't get out), is it right to blow the man to bits to save the group?

Philosophers probably would have been content to remain in their armchairs and seminars debating such abstract matters, were it not for the politicization of the academy and the shrinking philosophy job market of the past two decades. By politicization I mean only that professors and students have lately come to feel guilty if they are not involved in something *au courant*, and philosophers have come to feel guilty as well. The new moral-political philosophy conveniently allows the young philosopher to pursue an academic career while "committing" himself to a form of social activism. And as the number of teaching jobs shrink, "applying" this sort of work to entirely new fields—not just public policy but medicine and business as well—becomes awfully attractive for a very practical reason: There are jobs.

Out of all this emerged, in the past five years, the marriage of the new public policy schools and the new moral-political philosophers. Without an ethos to hold onto, and under attack for unethical behavior, schools of public policy decided to buy some ethics. And young moral and political philosophers, sporting a new political outlook and hungry for work, have jumped at the chance to help. In the great theater that is academe, public policy schools yelled "Is there an ethicist in the house?," and in the back row the philosophers enthusiastically responded, "You bet!"

## The new casuistry

The child of this odd marriage can only be called a new form of medieval casuistry. The term that is used though is "applied ethics." (It is a sad comment on the state of contemporary moral philosophy that there is a real distinction between theoretical and applied ethics.) Applying ethics seems to mean taking a certain moral theory—rather than a commandment, as did the casuists—and seeing how it solves certain moral "dilemmas" we face in everyday life.

Getting a handle on applied ethics is a difficult thing since, by definition, it is practiced in particular cases either in class or in the occasional essay. But this past year the Hastings Center published a

series of reports summarizing the state of ethics instruction in colleges and universities.[3] These reports give a better than adequate description of what is happening in graduate schools today, but more than that, they reveal the problems with casuistry as a form of moral education.

The most striking thing about these volumes is the sort of language which they use. Since so many of the writers and instructors in applied ethics are either philosophers or social scientists trying to dabble in philosophy, the language they use and the attitude they exhibit is a peculiar combination of the highfalutin and the pedantic. We are told that "tools" must be developed for the teaching of ethics so that students might "develop analytical skills" and thereby become "rigorous" and "systematic" in their thinking. "Ethical analysis," as it is called, can then become "helpful to decisionmakers."

It is ironic that the ethics movement in public policy schools, which was born out of a reaction against economic and mathematical analysis, should adopt the same sort of scientistic approach to moral matters. Modern philosophy, with all its analytic pretensions, is surely to blame for much of this, but the analytical mode and argot of science also gives applied ethics a strange sort of legitimacy within the public policy curriculum and the other academic disciplines. By becoming versed in different moral theories, the student can "apply" them to public policy problems, much as he would a mathematical model. And if he is lucky, he can construct a complete theory of the obligations of the public official. As the hardheaded authors of one Hastings Center report put it, "A major purpose for teaching specific courses in ethics should be to uncover hidden assumptions, unchallenged and unexamined values, and to treat the realm of morality with all of the rigor and discipline that other areas of human study and concern already receive in the university."[4]

This application of ethical theories reflects a very limited conception both of ethics and of moral education within the university. The sorts of cases to which the theories are applied are always called "dilemmas": Should the "decisionmaker" allow a dam to be built to produce electricity if it permanently destroys part of the environment? Should he leak information to the press if his superior is doing something illegal or which he considers immoral? Should he

[3] The two volumes which touch on public policy are *The Teaching of Ethics in Higher Education*, and J. L. Fleishman and B. L. Payne, *Ethical Dilemmas and the Education of Policymakers*.

[4] *The Teaching of Ethics in Higher Education*, p. 8.

tell a lie in public or break a law to serve some higher purpose he has in mind? What would a deontologist or utilitarian say? Cases like this occur, I am sure (and the ethicists always seem to be able to dig up Watergate-like cases to ruminate), but the moral life of the public official is made up of much more than these catastrophic cases which call for immediate decisions. It is made up of a set of virtues which the official has acquired throughout his education and it reveals itself in the attitudes and habits he displays toward the political process and the public in his day-to-day work. And if the democratic virtues of the moral public official are to become habits, those virtues must be taught with some authority.

But virtue and authority are the last thing the ethicists have in mind. Once the student has become well-versed in contemporary abstract ethical theories, all the teacher is supposed to do is put forward different dilemmas which raise "interesting ethical problems," and to which the theories must be applied. Indeed, to do anything more than this would be downright unethical. In the most striking section of the Hastings Center report we are told:

> Many educators and others, we discovered, believe there is no point in teaching an ethics course unless it will assure improvement in student conduct. We have concluded that this is not an appropriate explicit goal for a course in ethics.[5]

Changing behavior, you see, would require "manipulation" and "indoctrination," and that would be wrong. The only goal, it seems, is to raise the consciousness of students so that they "recognize ethical issues," "develop analytical skills," and become "morally responsible."

This, then, constitutes the moral education of a young person ready to enter public service today. No longer a mere public administrator, he is a highly trained analyst—which is good—but instead of acquiring the habits and attitudes of the democratic administrative ethos, he reads a little theoretical moral philosophy and practices ethical analysis in an (almost) value-free environment. He is told that he is morally responsible for his own actions and that this is the first day of the rest of his life. Then he is sent to work.

## Ethics vs. moral education

This may be ethics, but it is not moral education. By turning away from the way men live to higher and higher levels of abstract moral

[5] Ibid., p. 54.

reasoning, philosophers and "ethicists" no longer teach men to be moral, and may make them less so. For philosophers today seldom see themselves engaged in the moral education of their society; they merely see themselves as intellectual housekeepers, clearing up "muddles" here and there and checking the foundation occasionally, but not really becoming part of the family. And this attempt to "apply" ethics, to turn public servants into modern casuists, is doomed to failure because those engaged in it refuse to do anything but make students feel "responsible." Moral education, it seems, is too important to be left to the philosophers.

A morality—an ethos—is something we live, and, as Stuart Hampshire has put it, "A way of life is a complicated thing." It is not merely a set of propositions to be applied with legal precision to certain cases which arise in life; it is an attitude or outlook, a set of virtues and habits which we learn, sometimes rationally but usually not, from our families, churches, peers, and even our schools. The philosopher Annette Baier, in a recent unpublished essay, put it well when she wrote that morality is a "bootstrap operation." We *become* moral just as we *become* civilized by picking up habits and ideals from our parents, by standing on the shoulders of previous generations. And this sort of morality, the anthropological kind, works because it is more than abstract reasoning; it is a way of learning virtue which is time-tested and subtly complex. As Baier puts it:

> It is an important fact about any moral beliefs which anyone has acquired from parents that they have passed at least a minimal test for viability—they are two generations old. This is more than can be said for many philosophers' moral theories . . . Whatever else an acceptable morality must be, it must be in some sense "teachable" to young children, and understandable by non-intellectuals.

Casuistry might work as a morality, I suppose, though only if one has commandments to be applied to particular cases. But students of moral philosophy or applied ethics do not learn commandments, they learn competing moral theories, any of which may be superior to the others. Who can say? If an act-utilitarian would blow up the fat man in the tunnel but the deontologist would not, what is the student to conclude? Only that he can justify his actions (especially to his teachers) if he is sophisticated in his excuse and knows which clever arguments to make. He does not learn moral habits, he learns to be shrewd. Reflecting on her years of teaching ethics, Baier concludes: "In attempting to increase moral reflectiveness we are destroying what conscience there once was in those we teach."

A concern with a moral way of life and the virtues needed to

pursue it, rather than with abstract reasoning, is derived from Aristotle, who saw morality and moral education as the natural way in which men civilized themselves and their progeny. Except among a few contemporary philosophers—Stuart Hampshire, Michael Oakeshott, and, in his own way, Alasdair MacIntyre—this Aristotelian concern with ethos, rather than ethics, is rather unpopular.

Clearly, an ethos cannot be created rationally out of thin air, but public administration *had* an ethos, and a basically sound one, if a bit outmoded; this was abandoned when public administration became public policy and no longer saw itself essentially concerned with governing democracies. Moral education was taking place in these graduate schools, not explicitly perhaps, but implicitly as students learned what duties they had and what virtues they were to pursue as public officials in a democracy. Occasionally, a McGuffey-like reader would appear to guide students in their moral attitudes, and I am sure that they did more good than the ethics movement could ever hope to do. Paul Appleby, in one of the best early books on morality and administration, explained what underlay that ethos:

> Philosophers are not wise enough to tell us what particular decisions to make in the conduct of social business. The problems they set out to solve are intellectual and abstract, not the specific problems faced by social operators . . . Made as full-bodied as possible, their formulations still would be designed to illumine the field of action, not to relieve its captains of their responsibilities . . . We therefore beg the more general questions which philosophers ruminate; we begin by assuming democracy.[6]

## Teaching administrative statesmanship

We want our public officials to act morally, to "do the right thing," and there is probably less trouble in agreeing what moral action is than in training people to act that way. In schools of public policy and public administration, then, the emphasis must be primarily on moral education in democracy rather than on moral philosophy as studied in philosophy departments. Applied ethics, as currently conceived, threatens to teach future public officials how to justify their actions with high-flown excuses without teaching them what sorts of duties and virtues make up the moral life of someone in a democratic government, and without turning that

[6] Paul H. Appleby, *Morality and Administration in Democratic Government* Louisiana State University Press, 1952), p. 28.

understanding into habits. Indeed, at a time when students of public policy *only* acquire formal analytical skills, and when undergraduate schools are, at best, ambivalent towards democratic government, this sort of moral education in democracy is truly imperative.

But the sort of administrative ethos which existed in schools of public administration prior to 1960 is clearly inappropriate for most officials in government today. (This should not surprise us; it is in the nature of an ethos to change with circumstances.) Public administration was born out of the need to separate administration from politics and turn the public service into a corps of career officials able to carry out tasks in a thoroughly professional manner. With the emphasis on analytic training now given to students of public policy, this has been accomplished. The task for which students are now unprepared is the responsible use of the discretion with which they find themselves, especially in the federal government, and this new realm of action is profoundly moral in nature. Analysts are asked to provide information, but are given considerable discretion in framing their analyses; administrators receive their authorization from Congress, but also have the authority to write regulations and set standards; and Congressional staff members have been given so much authority and autonomy that they often act in the stead of their employers. As he moves higher in the administrative or Congressional bureaucracies, the public official today must be more statesman than mere functionary.

Preparing a public official for a career of administrative statesmanship must consist of more than the trite discussion of "moral dilemmas"—whistle-blowing, wire-tapping—it must center on the balance of virtues which officials in different positions in government must display. Those virtues are rather obvious: a respect for the law, a concept of the public interest, courage, tenacity, and prudence, to name a few. It is true that these virtues often do come into conflict, and it is through reflection on the role of certain officials in particular positions that the balances are struck. For instance, an assistant secretary of a federal agency probably has greater responsibility and authority to act on his own concept of the public interest than does an agency analyst whose analyses should be non-partisan. In an ethics class students would discuss case-studies (much as they do now), but in order to learn a way of life, not in order to apply a theory or make a generalization.

Courses or mini-courses on morality and public policy are undoubtedly a good way to reflect on and transmit an ethos, but it

is from the attitudes and experiences of instructors, many of whom have long experience in government, that students will pick up habits as they emulate those they admire. Teachers of economics and statistics are *examples* in the way they approach public policy issues, not just instructors, and they share the burden of passing along the democratic ethos of the administrator. Michael Oakeshott's insightful analogy between moral habits and grammar captures the importance of examples.

> We acquire habits of conduct, not by constructing a way of living upon rules or precepts learned by heart and subsequently practised, but by living with people who habitually behave in a certain manner: we acquire habits of conduct in the same way as we acquire our native language.[7]

This is rather old fashioned stuff—preaching, witnessing, setting a good example for the children—and it puts an enormous amount of moral responsibility on *all* teachers, but this is the only way students can understand, in a complex way, what their roles will be in a democracy and what virtue is in those roles.

The first step to reviving an ethos of public administration is to send the philosophers home, where they have plenty of housekeeping with which to busy themselves, and to admit that moral education will take place, much as it always has, through examples and even a bit of "indoctrination" in the virtues of democracy. This gives us the best chance of producing truly moral men and women to serve in the U.S. government. About moral education C. S. Lewis wrote:

> It still remains true that no justification of virtue will enable a man to be virtuous. Without the aid of trained emotions the intellect is powerless against the animal organism. I had sooner play cards against a man who was quite sceptical about ethics, but bred to believe that 'a gentleman does not cheat,' than against an irreproachable moral philosopher who had been brought up among sharpers.[8]

And I had sooner be governed by officials bred to believe in the democratic ethos than by those weaned on "ethics."

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[7] Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics* (New York: Basic Books, 1961), p. 62.

[8] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1947), pp. 33-34.