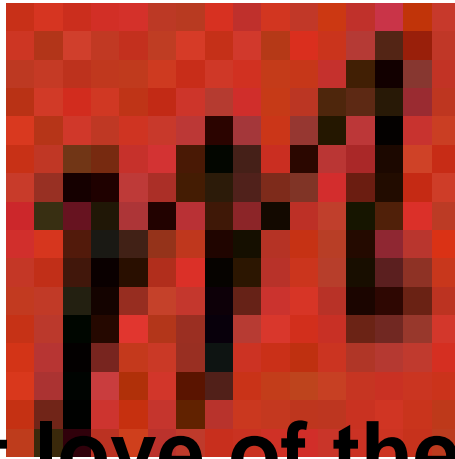


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V.3 What love of the republic means in a democracy

- The Spirit of Law - Book V. That the laws made by the legislator must be relative to the principle of the government -

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V.3 What love of the republic means in a democracy

Love of the republic in a democracy is love of the democracy ; love of democracy is love of equality.

Love of democracy is in addition the love of frugality. As everyone is supposed to have the same prosperity and the same advantages, they will enjoy the same pleasures and harbor the same expectations, something that can be expected only from universal frugality.

Love of equality in a democracy limits ambition to the single desire, the single happiness, of rendering greater services than the other citizens to one's homeland. They cannot all render equal services ; but they must all equally render some. At birth one contracts an immense debt towards it which can never be paid.

Thus, distinctions arise from the principle of equality, even while it appears to be precluded by useful services or superior talents.

Love of frugality limits the *desire of possessing* to the attention required by what is necessary for the family and even the surplus for the homeland. Wealth confers an authority which a citizen cannot make use of for himself, for he would not be equal. It produces delights which he should not enjoy either, because they would violate equality just as much.

Thus good democracies, by instituting domestic frugality, have opened the door to public spending, as was done in Athens and Rome. Then magnificence and profusion arose from the basis of frugality itself ; and as religion requires that none but pure hands make offerings to the gods, the laws called for frugal ways so that the individual could give to his homeland.

Good sense and the prosperity of individuals largely consist in the modesty of their talents and fortunes. A republic where the laws have formed many modest persons, made up of wise persons, will govern itself wisely ; made up of satisfied persons, it will be very satisfied.