

CONVERSATIONS

WITH BILL KRISTOL

Conversations with Bill Kristol

Guest: Harvey Mansfield, Harvard University

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I: On Party Government (00:15 – 31:01)

KRISTOL: Welcome to CONVERSATIONS. I'm Bill Kristol, and I'm very pleased to have as our guest today, Harvey Mansfield, longtime professor of government at Harvard University. Welcome, Harvey.

MANSFIELD: Thanks, it's great to be here.

KRISTOL: Good to have you. Let's talk about party government. You wrote on that 50 years ago, a great book on *Statesmanship and Party Government* on Edmund Burke. Yuval Levin wrote a recent book, which you've just reviewed actually in the *Claremont Review of Books*, also discussing Burke and political parties in a somewhat different way. So –

MANSFIELD: Yeah. My book was about the respectability of political parties. It had always been thought before Burke, Edmund Burke who wrote at the end of the 18th century that it was a bad thing to have parties, and if there were parties, there would be the respectable people on one side, the nobles or the gentlemen and the plebes or the plebeians, the lower class on the other side. And Burke changed that. He tried to argue that it was respectable for gentlemen or nobles to disagree, and this was the big step toward making party government as a whole as a way of governing a respectable thing to do. So that was my book was about.

KRISTOL: And why was that a good idea according to Burke or necessary?

MANSFIELD: It was a good idea because, in fact, people do disagree and when they disagree, it's good that they have some responsibility for their disagreement.

And this means that you shouldn't just disagree as an individual, but you should disagree as a group, and there should be a kind of collective responsibility of the group for the policies that they're taking a risk on together. And otherwise if individuals are merely used by the king or by the government to bring into the cabinet and to make them ministers, that merely satisfies individual ambition and doesn't make it responsible. To be responsible, it has to be collective. So that was the general picture of Burke's argument.

Now, this recent book by Yuval Levin looks at the debate between Edmund Burke and Tom Paine. It was a kind of citizen of America and of other countries, too, France, a kind of world citizen before that idea got started. And he was the liberal, and Burke was the conservative. So here you have a picture of the two parties as they were at the time of the French Revolution. The liberals, those who wanted to see expansion of liberty and especially of equality, and Burke who stood against that, he wanted to stand in

favor of liberty more than equality, and he wanted to keep government in the hands of the gentlemen, of those who were by their position made more responsible for the decisions that they took.

So, Levin says that this debate between Burke and Paine was the beginning of our liberals and conservatives, and I think he argues that quite well and brings it right up to the present. Now, I was thinking about this in the review that I did of Levin's book, and it occurred to me that there is another way to look at the two parties, and that is in the way of Aristotle or the way of Tocqueville as between the democrats, those who, Tocqueville said, those who want to extend the power of the people and the oligarchs, the party of the few, those who want to restrict of the people.

And I think looking at it today, perhaps I'm just thinking this out now, there are these dual-party systems that we operate under. And the first is under the liberals versus conservatives, and there the advantage goes to the liberals.

The liberals stand for progress, they are progressives. Progress means that you take a step forward towards – it's unclear what but probably usually or maybe always – towards equality. They want to make more equality; democracy to them does not stand still but it's always moving forward towards ever greater democracy understood as more equality, to some extent, more liberty but especially equality.

And the conservatives resist. And their resistance has a character of reaction; they react to what the progressives do. The progressives act first, they initiate, going ever further in the direction of greater equality.

Now, progress has this, has several characters. And perhaps the first is that it's irreversible. It isn't progress unless you can't go back. And so when President Obama introducing his health care law, he said, "I want to be the first president who's taken this up and also the last," and that I thought was very significant. He wanted to, he was a true progressive in that he wanted to bring up health care and remove it, deal with it in such a way as to remove it from policy or political dispute and make it a matter of administration thereafter. This was something that would become an entitlement, as we say; that is, a right and therefore permanent, and not something that would be discussable afterward – or if it is discussable, at least it would be the discussion would take place to the advantage of the progressives, as "You want to reverse what we've done; you want to go back to the 19th century; you can't do that." So, progress is irreversible.

KRISTOL: You can't turn the clock back.

MANSFIELD: You can't turn the clock back.

KRISTOL: That's the perfect phrase for that, isn't it?

MANSFIELD: Yeah, it is, it is. As if you couldn't. Actually, we turn the clock back twice a year.

But, so, that's, that is indisputable or it heads toward administration of policies, which are no longer to be disputed. And, but the trouble is progress is not quite so sure where progress is or what progress is toward because progress would seem to require an end-state in your mind, which is the perfect state or a situation or condition to be in. And so a progressive is moving toward that state, and that's how he knows that he's a progressive. You don't know that you have progress unless you know, and you're quite sure where you're going to end up. But it's characteristic of progressives that they don't know where they're going to end up, they don't even know what the next stage is in progress.

So they're all for equality of the races but they don't realize that the next stage is equality of the sexes and the same thing, they don't realize when they're talking about the equality of the sexes that that means or will lead to equality of heterosexual and homosexuals, and so there is, it's always a surprise that just over the horizon, there is this other great inequality which has not yet been addressed and needs to be addressed and needs to be equalized and dealt with in some way.

Now, the way in which it's dealt with – here's another problem – is through a government program. The government program is a program of administration, and it turns out that the administration of what is called "big government" or the "immense being" by Tocqueville is not easy to accomplish. It suffers from what Steve Teles, a political scientist, calls "kludgeocracy."

So you would see going back again to the health care act, you would think that here is this new great program full of innovation and benefit to the American people, you would think that they would take great pains to make sure that it worked when it was rolled out, and yet they couldn't. And the problem, perhaps, generally is that government has to obey rules of due process, and this gets them involved in contradictions with efficiency. Anyway, the administration of the progressive ideal is always in question.

And then another problem that we're headed towards is you run out of money. As Margaret Thatcher famously said, "You run out of other people's money to give away." So government makes a habit of living off other people's money, and that's, in many ways, justice, but it also means that there is a limit that they, that the progressives don't really appreciate or underestimate.

On the other hand, it's possible to overestimate the importance of a limit or the nearness of it because Republicans are always saying, "We can't afford this and we can't afford that," and it turns out that we can afford it or for much longer than people think.

Now, one wonders, "Will there be some kind of crash in which the government falters and some great disaster occurs in which it becomes evident to everybody that this whole progressive agenda won't work" – that is probably a dream to suppose that. But it certainly could happen that they would run out of money, run out of money. Now, so that's the progressives and they have this advantage because as they say, there's a ratchet effect in progress since you can't go back, all the conservatives can do is to swallow the advances that are proposed and to suggest reasonable or prudent qualifications or modifications or in other words, as Newt Gingrich famously said, too, "to become tax collectors for the welfare state," to make their enemies into responsible politicians by securing that what they do is viable instead of infinitely costly. So, and that puts the conservatives always, I think, on the defensive and in a difficult position. Now, that isn't how really only we look at things.

KRISTOL: So that's the pain.

MANSFIELD: That's the pain Burke –

KRISTOL: Generally, for 200 years –

MANSFIELD: Yeah. On the whole, that's to the advantage of the left and the progressives.

KRISTOL: And the Burkean forces are always saying slow down –

MANSFIELD: They're always saying slow down but always in retreat. That seems to be a permanent characteristic of the left-to-right party division. But then if you look to the other party division, which is not modern but comes out of Aristotle, a different picture emerges, and that's a division between democracy and oligarchy.

And in Aristotle, he shows this in Book Three of his *Politics* where he's defining what a citizen is and he first has a democratic citizen give a democratic definition, which is that the city as a whole, which includes everybody. And that's really the democratic view that everybody should be included, everybody is a member of the whole, the whole, doesn't leave out anyone. And you see that today in the demand for inclusiveness in the Democrats and the progressives.

But then in this debate as to what a citizen is, an oligarchical citizen intervenes, and he says but some citizens are better than others. And that's a crucial point. Some citizens have the capacity to be citizens because to be a citizen isn't just to live without any qualifications or without doing anything; a citizen is somebody who rules or who shares in rule, and it's not easy to do that. And not everybody is qualified.

So you have to distinguish between those who are qualified and those aren't. And the whole of the democrats just consists of homogenous quantities of single individuals who are all alike, and that isn't the way society is. Society is graded into ranks, and you see that in the way that everybody admires those who are really good at something. It's not possible to be a human being and simply live with what's today called empathy, as if everyone were equal and nothing is outstanding, and the only thing to do is, the only thing you need to do is to include everyone. You also need to admire and to respect those who you think are admirable, those who can do things better than you can. It's not possible to be a human being and not admire better human beings than yourself.

So that, I think, that fact can be the basis for conservative cheer that it isn't just a matter of always retreating, but they've got this permanent fact of human nature that virtue is something admirable. And now, of course, the Republicans live in a modern age and they – which is a democratic age – and so they have to democratize this understanding of virtue. And that's not always easy for them to do. But they do their best at it. Even Abraham Lincoln spoke of a free person, a free man as a worker, somebody whose work deserves, he deserves to get the rewards of his own work. And that's still an element of the republican liking of virtue – to respect those who earn a living or those who work for that as opposed to people who are just on welfare and get a welfare check.

And you see it also in immigration that Republicans, it's arguably in their interest to adopt a free and open policy towards immigrants or illegal immigrants but they don't, they can't really. It really bothers them that millions of people came here illegally, not obeying the law, that's not virtuous. And a country will get into trouble if it doesn't reward virtue – or it rewards lack of virtue.

So the Republicans, even though virtuous aristocratic in its essence, nonetheless look for ways to find democratic virtue, and they can't keep themselves from adopting a certain tone of not superciliousness, but at least superiority, which the Democrats always take advantage. The Republican is a little bit stiff, and fundamentally this is because he has certain things that he values or believes in, and he can't help being as we say "judgmental." So the fact that human beings are necessarily judgmental, I think, is an aid to conservatives and a way in which this more fundamental – I would say it's more fundamental – party division between democracy and oligarchy underlies the more relevant, or say more trendy, division of modernity between liberals and conservatives.

KRISTOL: And the liberal party tends to be the democratic party as well it seems somehow progress always seems to be towards equality, but I suppose in theory, one could have an oligarchic or an aristocratic theory of progress but it doesn't seem to ever quite work out that way.

MANSFIELD: Yes, you could. Yeah, you would have a progress which rewards the people who most contribute to progress and Republicans pick up on that entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurial spirit, that's their understanding of virtue or an understanding of virtue. So they can buy into the notion of progress in that way.

KRISTOL: But do you think sort of following Burke they do have to sort of resist the idea of progress to some degree. There seems to be a tension among today's conservatives that they want to say that liberalism doesn't work, that a better understanding of progress would mean freer markets or letting rich people become rich so they can help the society more. I mean how much do conservatives sign onto progress. I think that's a big, practical question.

MANSFIELD: That is a practical question for them, yeah, yeah. In that way, you could say that the two divisions sort of contradict each other or the one doesn't overlay easily on the other. And so and yeah the conservatives do in fact today have to buy into progress and not merely resist it but on the other hand, they can't buy into it all together.

KRISTOL: And I guess intellectually they can't delude themselves about it. I think that's the- so in that respect, Tocqueville is a better guide than Burke or would you go that far or?

MANSFIELD: Yes, I think maybe that's right, yeah, that see Burke lived before, just before it became necessary to be a democrat with a small "d." Which I guess and he perhaps realized that at the very end of his life that the French revolution was making a change that was in fact irreversible and would create a new era of democracy to which all parties would have to comply. So, yeah, I think it may have happened that way. And so Tocqueville is a better guide for us since he wants to give the French aristocrats a cold bath of reason to make them see that democracy is here to stay and that I think also works for sort of potential oligarchs or aristocrats in our time as well.

KRISTOL: I think Levin in his book also emphasizes the degree which – Burke of course was a great friend and defender, supporter really of the American Revolution. But his account, his own, the way he presents the American Revolution at least in Britain at the time is not really the way we think of it, I would say. It's a conservative revolution.

MANSFIELD: It was, yes.

KRISTOL: Upholding the rights of Englishmen. He never seems to have talked, written much about the Declaration, I think. I mean –

MANSFIELD: That's right. I don't know that he ever mentioned it. That he shares with Tocqueville, by the way.

KRISTOL: Well, that's true.

MANSFIELD: Tocqueville mentions the principles of the Declaration and which he doesn't care for.

KRISTOL: And why is that? So let's talk about that. But isn't that hard – and so even Tocqueville's accommodations to democracy is –

MANSFIELD: Yes, it has to be because democracy by itself is a runaway train towards it doesn't know what and because the analysis I gave before of progressivism really comes from Tocqueville.

Progressivism aims not towards what is perfect but towards what is perfectible. So you always think that what you've done is an improvement. It's like next year's car model. You've got the 2014 car now, that must be perfect. But, no, the next one will be better. But what is the perfect car? So it doesn't seem that there is one and that's Tocqueville's criticism; people are just going headlong.

And they're made to go more headlong by democratic theories, and democratic theories depend on the principle of the Declaration of Independence, which is all men are created equal. And Tocqueville mentions that but he says it comes from Jesus Christ and not from the Declaration of Independence. So that gives it a certain historical touch or and religious respectability.

And so to come back to Burke, yes, you see the same thing and Burke he stays away from the principle of the American Revolution as the Americans saw it, which is how Thomas Paine saw it. And so he actually really opposes that but he keeps quiet about it. I guess in the hope that these Englishmen over here, that's what we are, will get sensible and behave as if we are Englishmen.

KRISTOL: The hope that democrats won't appeal or that citizens in a democracy won't appeal to abstract ideas of equality and rights, that seems hard to sustain after the last few decades.

MANSFIELD: It is, it is very hard to sustain. Tocqueville tries to calm this desire for abstract equality by showing what real equality is in practice and that's why his book is called *Democracy in America*. It's not just democracy and it's not just America but it's this theory, and he does speak of democracy as a theory in, as practiced in a certain place. And there you see that the practice has equality in general of qualifying theoretical abstractions. It's all very well to speak of democrats sharing in rule but how do they do it.

And so that's how he gets into the idea of town government, which you get near the beginning of *Democracy in America*, that people get together spontaneously in order to solve some common problem. You're living with a bunch of other people and you want to build a road, one person can't do that, so you have to get together to do it and to do it, you need a little bit of an organization, a kind of formal organization. So all this is showing how equality just as an abstraction doesn't go far enough or it doesn't really tell you what needs to happen.

Or the jury, when you're on a jury, you realize that the law, which is a very general proposition applies to actual human beings and it becomes your duty to judge whether a particular human being is going to go to jail or not because of you, because of your thinking. And so this forces you really to think more seriously about what the law requires and how it's applicable to particular human beings. Democracy has a great passion for passing laws, but what does it look like when you actually apply them. So this is the way in which Tocqueville tries to deal with or handle abstractions of democratic theory.

KRISTOL: Yeah and make people be practical about what works and what has worked and be respectful of these institutions I suppose to –

MANSFIELD: Yes, that's right, respectful of institutions and especially which he calls forms. This is a kind of Aristotelian or Platonic expression that forms and formalities of liberty are very, very important. It's what we today call due process, that you have to do it the right way and the right way is usually the slow way and slow is right on the threshold of deliberate and deliberate is right on the threshold of reasonable. So when you're slowed down by having to do it right, you might do it more reasonably or more sensibly than if you rush impulsively to do something right away like lynch a criminal without giving him a proper trial. So and democracy has this impulsiveness about it and impatience about that. You see that in foreign policy how America always wants things to happen quickly. If it doesn't happen right away, we get war weary.

KRISTOL: Right and Tocqueville's actual view of parties seems from Aristotle than –

MANSFIELD: More from Aristotle than from Burke and Paine because his actual view, he says that there are great parties throughout history and he describes them as I said before those who want to extend the power of the people versus those who want to restrict it.

KRISTOL: And those parties go all the way back apparently in his account.

MANSFIELD: Yes, yeah. That's and every free country.

KRISTOL: So that's not a phenomenon of modern democracy.

MANSFIELD: No. But you see, he's rephrased it. Aristotle's – Aristotle has a democracy versus oligarchy. And in Tocqueville, the oligarchy becomes those who want to restrict the power of the people, it doesn't say those who want to assert the power of the few, which is what the more- behind the reasoning of restriction of essence of fewness because when you're talking about admiration or respect, those whom you admire and whom you most respect tend to be few.

KRISTOL: And Tocqueville doesn't talk that much, as I recall, about particular American politicians or founders or but I do think he has that really striking, doesn't he praise the Federalist Party or the Federalist figures who –

MANSFIELD: Yes, that's right. He doesn't mention or go into particular names but as a party, they were aristocratic he says and America had the great fortune to be founded by an aristocracy. That's – he doesn't quite say it that way but you can infer it from what he does say and quite a few other little aristocratic remarks are scattered through *Democracy in America*, which come up to something quite impressive if you add them up.

KRISTOL: Without ever having explicit defense of –

MANSFIELD: Of aristocracy, no, definitely not. Aristocracy cannot defend itself and its own name, it has to defend itself as contributing to democracy, as necessary to democracy. And I think that's pretty much what Republicans try to do now without perhaps fully realizing it.

KRISTOL: Right. Maybe they'd be better off if they realized more what they were doing, thoughtful about –

MANSFIELD: Yeah, I think yes that's right. They're too American. They're too democratic. That means to understand themselves rightly.

KRISTOL: So they need to read –

MANSFIELD: They need to read Tocqueville –

KRISTOL: Aristotle, or Aristotle is too ambitious?

MANSFIELD: Yes, Aristotle is too ambitious, so read Tocqueville, that's it. Yeah.

II: Tocqueville's Critique of Philosophy (31:01 – 42:32)

KRISTOL: We've been talking about Tocqueville as a philosopher or a political philosopher. But I guess the obvious question to ask is it doesn't like just a political philosopher. He admired Rousseau and mentions Descartes but he doesn't look like Descartes or Rousseau, to say nothing of Hobbes or Plato or other such. So why that?

MANSFIELD: I think Tocqueville was a philosopher, a very deep and learned man, his learning he wears very lightly and he doesn't like to make reference to other philosophers but he occasionally uses philosophic expressions like the term "first cause," and also like the term "forms" or "formalities." But he belongs, he's not the first philosopher to be wary about philosophy, and certainly, I think Machiavelli fits into that category and you could even say Aristotle.

Begin with Plato. Plato is the philosopher who made his theme the philosophical way of life. All his dialogues are about Socrates or somebody like Socrates, arguing and making philosophy present and primary. The main thing you have to do with your life is to think and to think like a philosopher, hence the famous equation, virtue equals knowledge. So, that's very prominent in Plato.

And, Aristotle, his student comes along and wonders about whether it's a good idea to make philosophy one's open theme. And so even in Aristotle, already the great philosopher, the man who was called "the philosopher" by Thomas Aquinas, philosophy is much less prominent in his writings than it is in Plato. And, actually, if you want to make or think about what is more prominent is it's mortal virtue, Aristotle makes mortal virtue, which he actually says is second to philosophical virtue, the theme of his books on politics and ethics and how to live. It's as if philosophy gets in the way of morality. But there's such a thing trying to be too good, which will end by making you another philosopher, perhaps an incompetent philosopher instead of being the effective ruler or gentleman or a citizen that you might otherwise be.

So, Aristotle you could say has these doubts. Then and, I think Tocqueville in his way, shares them. For him, philosophy is bad because in the democratic age, philosophy is democratic; philosophy encourages democracy and that's, an example of that is Descartes. Descartes, when you read him, doesn't look at all to be like a democratic philosopher, but he introduced the principle that everybody should apply reason. You should doubt all authority, and all authority is questionable, and you should look for what is undoubted or doesn't need to be what survives doubt.

And, so, and that principle which is meant to be originally for philosophers becomes political, moral when it's applied to the ordinary person. It tells him that his reason is as good as anyone else's reason and that

he doesn't have to listen to any authority and that is the democratic principle or the democratic dogma, Tocqueville calls it and so you find that over and over again.

And the main trouble with the democratic theorists is that they're materialists. The democratic, there's a kind of affinity between democracy and materialism. What is that? Well, in a democracy, everybody is equal, that means nobody is an authority for me. I'm as good as anyone else but I need something to guide me and so I look around and there are these other people who are equal to me. So the other people, the majority, the majority opinion tends to become the authority in a democracy and that's, that's a very dubious thing. It's not that authority can be done away with, authority is necessary for human life. You always have to believe that there's some principle that's bigger or better than you are that you are following.

So you can't really get rid of it, and what you do is you – now, and what is the authority or what does the majority want to do? It doesn't want to do something, which is far off into the future and which requires a lot of sacrifice and effort because that means you have to trust the principle that you're – that you're believing in to produce some beautiful result. And so cathedrals that may take centuries to make.

And you're always, but it's something that is beautiful in your mind, in your imagination that you're devoted to. But that, you see, takes belief in God or a belief in the church. Or if you're believing in what the majority wants, the majority wants something close and immediate and satisfying and all that means materialism in practice. So that's the affinity between democracy and materialism and the democratic philosophers encouraged this affinity instead of discouraging it as they ought to. Men have souls, or, at least, men need to believe that they have souls.

But let's say that men have souls. Tocqueville speaks about degraded souls at the beginning of *Democracy in America*. So you can't, without a soul, you can't really be free because you're not free if you're always being moved by some external force. And so the philosophers or the historians or the social scientists of our day try to find these external forces, grand historical forces that actually end up by making each person on whom they impinge feel impotent. You feel as if you're a kind of victim and there's nothing you can do. And this is the great problem of a mass society that there's no, you're forced into your individuality because you don't feel that there's any way you can accomplish anything with anyone else. So the only thing you can do is to sort of shutter up, shut yourself up in your family or with your friends. And this is what Tocqueville calls individualism.

So, individualism and materialism go together, and both of them also go together with big government, as big government is the government that brings you the material benefits that your materialism makes you desire, but also leaves you unsatisfied with. Unsatisfied because man is fundamentally a spiritual or soulful being. And so you have to think that you're – there's some meaning in yourself which is beyond your material and which therefore might survive your death. You can survive your death. So this is the fundamental notion of a soul. And democrats have a big problem with that, and Tocqueville tries to help them.

KRISTOL: And I guess one way he tries to help them is doesn't he call it a doctrine himself? The doctrine of self-interest, well understood.

MANSFIELD: Yes, well, he says that's the American doctrine. Yeah, so I-

KRISTOL: But he interprets it –

MANSFIELD: Yeah, he interprets it – yeah, self- yeah, self-interest well understood. That's a little bit ambiguous, that well-understood. Does that mean that everything can be, everything good can be understood as self-interest or does it mean that you have to have some community interest which is separate from your self-interest and that's what makes your self-interest well-understood.

KRISTOL: It doesn't at least I think try pretty obviously to show that if you think through your self-interest, you should be led to a longer time horizon than he is that even long and round-about way, it bring you back to –

MANSFIELD: Yes. To a community interest or to the common good.

KRISTOL: Than religion –

MANSFIELD: Yes and religion comes in, too. Yeah. Religion tells you that you have a soul and that this gives you something to devote yourself to which is not material. It's yourself just doesn't capture it because yourself doesn't seem to have any authority over yourself but your soul does. That's something that you could also say your character, to live so as to have a fine character and to show it in your actions. That's what a democracy should be about, according to Tocqueville.

KRISTOL: And the public presentation of philosophy or his dealing with philosophers and philosophical doctrines wouldn't be meaningful –

MANSFIELD: Yeah, mainly that's right. So he makes fun of the materialists. He says that they think that human beings are of little or no importance and yet they think that they themselves are very important. So, this kind of contradiction, which is not exactly a reputation of materialism but is a comment on the behavior, which is true, I think, of materialist philosophy.

So, yeah, he doesn't argue directly with it. Sort of on a philosophical level. He doesn't want to take them on on the level of philosophy but and that I guess what he's really showing is that philosophy can find itself in things which are below philosophy in what you might call sub-philosophy or in politics. You can find philosophy in politics, and, that, I think is very Greek, very Platonic and very Aristotelian at the same time.

III: Is Machiavelli a Philosopher? (42:32 – 1:07:22)

KRISTOL: I guess the only thing or maybe that you've written more about than Tocqueville is Machiavelli, another thinker who it occurs to me you consider a philosopher, but most of the world doesn't and doesn't present himself as such I guess.

MANSFIELD: That's right. I think that Machiavelli is a philosopher. This was first shone and very clearly by Leo Strauss in his great book, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. And so I sort of follow on Strauss.

But try to study a few things that he left generously for people, for his followers to work out for themselves and so yeah Machiavelli also I think was a philosopher. He spoke of the world and of knowers of the world and I think he tried to reduce the object of philosophy to the world, meaning the visible world or even the tangible world, what you can touch as the most reliable part of your experience.

So I think that this led, this statement of Machiavelli's in which he speaks of the world, led to the early modern epistemology which tries to confine human, human knowledge to what is available to us from our senses, rather than from our imagination or from our reasoning out of what we imagine things might be at their best. And so Machiavelli has this famous paragraph, first paragraph in chapter 15 of *The Prince* in which he speaks of the necessity of going to the effectual truth of the thing, rather than to the imagination of it.

So what people need to do is look at how fine words come out in practice, the fine words of Plato came out in the fine words of St. Augustine as Plato's idea of the good was understood by St. Augustine or transformed by St. Augustine into the idea of God or the city of God and the idea of the city of God in effect is the church and Christian church and all its nefarious practices which Machiavelli exposes and admires to some extent and wants to imitate or adopt to his own purposes. So when people talk fine about utopias, pay attention to what those words will actually produce in practice and that would be the effectual truth, the effects of a thing.

So he, too, speaks of parties like Burke and he says that the Roman republic was characterized by these party disputes between the nobles and the plebes and the Roman historians like Livy or the philosophers looked down on this. They thought that a republic is a bad republic if it isn't harmonious. The parties should get together. Machiavelli says, no, you have to look at the effects and the effects were that Rome was made free and strong by its party disputes, rather than –

KRISTOL: Internal competitions –

MANSFIELD: Internal competition, yes, bringing out the opportunities for ambition, the very nasty tricks that were performed by both sides by the tribunes and by the nobles. That was good that made Rome stronger, allowed it to become an empire. It was good that it was a republic that became an empire. That was not a bad transformation. Caesar only did what he had to do at the time. So the effects were good and that is the standard by which you should judge theories.

And Machiavelli again doesn't want to argue you this out with Plato and St. Augustine or anybody else, any other philosopher. But he refers in many ways surreptitiously to philosophical doctrines and that gives them expression as for example the French. You have to think, "Who were the French in his time?" And they have certain characteristics and if you imagine a little bit, you can see that he's using the French as a kind of concept of people who believe in a certain way. And so he has this kind of half secret machinations of philosophy underneath the surface of his writing.

But, still, he doesn't really refute them except by inference. He wants to rub your nose in the dirtiness of dirty politics and make you see what harm moralism or a high moral virtue such as Aristotle presented for us, the splendor of moral virtue, how that has been interpreted and misrepresented and put into practice, evil practice by the Church.

KRISTOL: And how do we know that the effectual truth is true or that he's right about that?

MANSFIELD: Yeah, that is, I think that is a problem with Machiavelli, is all truth effectual truth, you might ask and I think the answer has to be no that there has to be a certain plain truth in order to look at whether effectual truth has actually been effectual or not. So you sort of step outside Machiavelli in order to judge Machiavelli, which is what he's asking, he's saying that effectual is better. He says, "I'm bringing the common good of humanity to each, to each human being," he promises that, each of us will get something good out of this and that's the beginning of our modern individualism as a kind of promise.

Not to peoples, not to Italians, not to Florentines but to *ciascuna*, each. That's really quite remarkable and a remarkable step in his philosophical thinking. So but that, but you have to, each person then would have to be or at least have the capacity to judge whether it really is of benefit. And if you look at the 20th century, I think, there's plenty of evidence to suggest that it hasn't been of benefit and that the atheist regiments of the 20th century, Nazism and Communism, are really worse than anything we ever saw in religious persecution or religious civil war by ability and often unreasonable as that was.

KRISTOL: But I suppose you would say or one could say that modern science, modern medicine, at the end of the day, the benefits dwarf the slight problems that have happened along the way.

MANSFIELD: That's right, that's right, yeah. And we put those things behind us. Yeah. That's a delusion I think. It's a delusion. We have modern medicine but we also have modern nuclear bombs. So for the first time, man can just has a capacity to destroy himself as a species and so maybe not very likely but it's definitely possible. And that's hardly a welcome idea.

KRISTOL: And Machiavelli didn't believe in sort of automatic progress. I mean you think that –

MANSFIELD: That's right. Yeah, see, he did believe in progress. He believed that his way of thinking was certainly progress over the old way of Plato and Aristotle and of Thomas Aquinas but to him, I think, that

there's always a belief in virtue, in human virtue. In *virtù*. And that's pretty much confined to a few, to a few especially great doers. So he always has greatness in mind.

And I forgot to say, by the way, that Tocqueville also has greatness in mind. And both of them have it, however, that greatness is not, or doesn't seem to be, philosophy, or doesn't have to be. But both of them were great philosophers.

KRISTOL: And Machiavelli would, I suppose, suggest that these men of *virtù* would always be required somehow to guide modernity even as things are chugging along and –

MANSFIELD: He remarks at some point that nature supplies a few virtuous men. It's not that there is no natural provision. We can count on that. But how they – how they survive or prevail is another matter. That is up to us. And so we need to, you could say that his doctrine is meant to reproduce conditions in which virtue can excel and express itself. And this would mean of course especially the virtue of a few.

So, you could say that the greatness of the human race is confined to the few great. That's in Machiavelli. But on the other hand, he's more democratic, too, than that would seem because the greatness that he wants comes about by appeal to the people. So, in general, his advice to a prince is make friends with the people, they are better friends for you than other princes or other nobles. They're the ones who are ambitious like you and will try to push you out if you don't push them out first. And then perhaps the greatest virtue of a democratic people for Machiavelli is its hatred of nobles and its desire for revenge against that. So we say he likes republics because they have more hatred and more revenge in them.

KRISTOL: I think you've written that out of effectual truth comes the fact-value distinction, which is so important, and that Machiavelli does not seem to be a believer in that distinction, and he certainly recommends things that are good for man and –

MANSFIELD: Yeah, well, I've been thinking about that recently, and I think that Machiavelli had this notion of effectual truth. He certainly didn't believe in the fact-value distinction as we have, that's true.

As we have it, that distinction says that science is about facts and science is not about values. So, your values are your own and you can't – you can't impose them on other people because they're not a matter of knowledge, they're a matter of emotion or something which is not reason or not knowledge. But I think that Machiavelli's effectual truth has led over the five centuries since he wrote that to our fact-value distinction.

And just the word *fact* is interesting. The Greeks didn't use that; they spoke of the – that but they didn't speak of *fact*. Fact is something close to what Machiavelli spoke of as effectual. It's something you cannot deny and it's also something that gets in your way. So facts or especially stubborn facts or occasionally brute facts. They're not, you can't reason about them, you can't take them and try to imagine them as better than they are in order to arrive at the perfect tree.

Say, you look at a tree and you're really, the fact of a tree is just what it is and how it looks, the perception of it. And you can't work your way from that to the definition of a tree as if it were a Platonic form. So, reason has to accept that facts exist; or as we say today, data. Data means given, things that are given. The givens. And so and that's I think pretty much what Machiavelli is meant. And I'm not sure whether the word *effectual* leads to the word *fact*. *Fact* from Latin would just be *facere*, a deed, a deed. And Machiavelli uses it as a human thing.

Now, we speak of fact as of things, as what was human doings or deeds or like that. Yeah, so with the Greeks, you have deeds versus speech, whereas with the moderns, you have facts versus values. And that's – now, just to look at the fact-value distinction, I think, is interesting. And I think in order to work ourselves out of this notion that everything that we desire is unreasonable or cannot be defended by reason or justified by reason, we need to come back to something like what Plato and Aristotle thought. And you could do this from an example, which I like to use – it sounds as if it's against Ohio State – but

when I was a boy, my father was a professor at Ohio State and I finished up high school in Columbus and my father used to tell a kind of joke or wry jest that was passed around among the Ohio State faculty. And it went like this: how many students are there at Ohio State? Answer, about one in a hundred. So, it's not an uproarious laugh but still now that's full of interest and wisdom, I think.

In the first place, it's a faculty joke directed against the administration. The administration of Ohio State is so proud – well, this was half a century ago that Ohio State has 50,000 students registered. But if you divide by a hundred, then it isn't quite as big as people like to think it is.

But and also it's kind of oligarchic because what just as in Aristotle, the oligarchic citizen says only the most capable citizens are really citizens. So this joke says that only students who really study instead of go to parties and football games are really students. And so from the standpoint of this, of a faculty perspective on this, the one in a hundred is the real fact.

And I think you know that's already saying that the real, the reality of thing isn't so much what is visible. What is visible is that 50,000 students have signed up with the registrar and so and they paid their dues or their tuition, and so yeah, and that's important obviously if you're a manager of the dining hall and you know how many students you're going to have to feed.

But it's more important because to make the distinction because what Ohio State is there for is to – is for students to study. That's the real purpose of the institution. So and you get that, that purpose is really connected to the fact but it's also a kind of critique of the fact as it exists. And so according to the fact-value distinction, you would have to say the one in a hundred is just a value and that's what the professors are evaluating in their students and there's no –

KRISTOL: Arbitrary standards –

MANSFIELD: Yeah, that's right. And so but no there's a connection between the fact and the quote value, unquote. It said that the value is the real fact. So and just as Plato said, what is invisible is more real than what is visible. Yeah.

Now the thing is, the trouble is that the one in a hundred may not be exact and different professors would dispute which – which of them is a real student or belongs to the one and which to the hundred and so that's what is invisible is not as indisputable as what is visible and is therefore a fact. But our social science or political science needs to become more tolerant and more knowing about its critics and the critics are just like those who look on from the faculty perspective who say that here you've made this survey of perceptions. No, you haven't. You've made a survey of what people think are perceptions, among those, what you call perceptions are many misperceptions. And so and you have to, you are responsible for that. I mean, how can you just leave it that people are relaying to you their delusions and you call them perceptions?

This came up in a funny way in an article that I wrote for *The Weekly Standard* a couple of years ago on sexism. There's a couple of psychologists in New Zealand wrote an article on sexism. In New Zealand, they had made a big survey of college students in New Zealand and they found that the women defer to the men and the men like it that way and like to take the initiative and they call this "benevolent sexism" or "BS" for short. Yeah and they, this was, this, however, astonished them, these psychologists said, "New Zealand is a very equal country. How can these women be satisfied with less than full equality?" There must be hidden underneath this benevolent sexism "HS," which is "hostile sexism." And so they decided at the end of their paper, which is still rather short that everything that they had found and spent their money to acquire was wrong. And all they'd done was to uncover a great delusion of New Zealand college women and they ended up wanting to warn these people against the result of their own, of their own.

So, in other words, these social scientists, when it came to something they felt strongly about couldn't stop themselves with the mere fact, quote/unquote, and had to investigate, which they quickly did, as to whether it really was a fact that they were uncovering.

KRISTOL: I suppose in the case of the Ohio State students, one could argue that you can't really even understand the category student without understanding what the purpose of being a student is and therefore ranking among students and so that it's the fact, it can't just be the value is somehow mixed in with the fact of the category.

MANSFIELD: It is. So, you're really taking a value position when you think you're describing a fact, yeah.

Now, when it comes to voting, then you see the problem. Democracy says one vote is as good as any other but political scientists often distinguish between informed voters and uninformed voters. And that's still making that oligarchical or aristocratic supercilious distinction or grading among those whom they ought to be ranking equally. So, and so if you're serious about what it is to vote, that means that you would not be a voter when you're voting on the basis or declaring your vote on the basis of a whim or of ignorance or of passion. You have to be really quite wise in order to vote well. But voting well is the same thing as voting.

So that's the value hidden in every fact. To do is to do well and so you might end up that only one person was a real voter and in the whole electorate. And that's not very democratic, which means that the fact-value distinction has its purposes, mainly a political purpose of a moral purpose that there are certain things for which we want to pay people as equals and other things where we want to rank them.

But you shouldn't get all hot and bothered if people criticize your facts as containing hidden values. There is a difference between the way things are and the way they ought to be. And that's the common sense which is behind the fact-value distinction. But I think it's wrong to say that reason is or science is involved in one and not in the other.

KRISTOL: And I suppose the democratic response to the low-information versus high-information voter; those are themselves, of course, democratic terms instead of saying intelligent or less intelligent voters. I guess would be, I think, is from Hobbs, isn't it, or maybe it's before even you know while the shoe pinches, you know everyone can tell how the shoe pinches, you don't have to be smarter or less smart. You want to register that vote, so to speak, and that's an equal – equal hurt from the shoe pinching. So each individual or consumer –

MANSFIELD: The consumer is the best judge of the meal and not the chef. So yeah. And so that makes good sense.

KRISTOL: But that too is a value judgment that you should weigh the common pain from the shoe pinching.

MANSFIELD: It's just saying that no, all virtue is not confined to a few but there are some virtues which many people have. Yeah, right.

KRISTOL: Or some perceptions. Are they virtues though, or are they just pains or difficulties?

MANSFIELD: Yeah, well, that's, you know, saying that that judgment is to be trusted that your shoe pinches. So that's better than the shoemaker who says, "No, it doesn't."

KRISTOL: Right, or in the long run it will be better.

MANSFIELD: Long run, yes, it will be better.

KRISTOL: Social science. Obamacare, you know. You don't like losing your plan but it will end up better for everyone. In this respect, the Democrats, the liberals, the progressives are making the more oligarchic or aristocratic argument in a certain sense, right? Against the populist reaction that "Gee, this doesn't seem good to me."

MANSFIELD: Rational control is the idea behind progress that we can live much much better if we live according to reason instead of according to custom or tradition or authority. And so that is and that rational control must come from reason, which means especially scientific reason and that gives sort of oligarchical controllers to the scientists or to those who pretend to have science or claim to retail to you the benefits or the discoveries of science so that you can make use of them.

The application of science is not by science but through people who aren't scientists but who claim to be knowing about science. And that is I think a weak part in the influence or the spread of science into society and therefore a weak part of the notion of progress.

KRISTOL: Yeah, the conservative populist revolt against these liberal elites. That doesn't cut across though the progressive, in that respect, the people who are on the side of tradition and custom.

MANSFIELD: That's right, yeah, because the people have common sense. That's another way of speaking of this shoe pinching argument. People have common sense. *Le bon sens* of the American people, the good sense.

So and that's their resource against science or rational control. Science has to be and is a great enemy of common sense because it replaces common sense, it replaces what most people have thought about things. Most people are prejudiced and superstitious. That's what the scientists say. And there's some truth in that, indeed a good deal of truth in that. But on the other hand, there might be some common sense as well. When I read a social science study, I always judge it by a standard of common sense. And if it accords with common sense, I tend to go with it and if it doesn't, I reject it.

KRISTOL: You don't think the enlightenment dreams, of enlightening common sense across the board to be more in accord, I suppose, with scientific findings worked out maybe –

MANSFIELD: Of course, science has a way of imposing itself on its own judges so that they use scientific terms and even jargon. When they're not scientists, sort of not entitled to the use of those terms themselves. So, like the scientific use of the word *perception* in surveys as a neutral thing. You perceive something but you're not judging whether it's true or not, you're just believing that is, perhaps ignorantly. So, that's a kind of rephrasing perception as a word which rephrases the common sense meaning of *perceive*, as perceiving as opposed to being deluded.

KRISTOL: Do you think Machiavelli and Tocqueville, maybe one of them, not the other, was also worried about what happens to philosophy when it becomes too visible and in the public sphere?

I mean, philosophy also can corrupt, so to speak, common sense or be corrupted, I suppose, and imposed on people. You know, Platonic ideas become the rationale for the Church governing or democratic ideas become the rationale for endless democratic progress and, the way that Tocqueville, weakens man and so forth. But maybe it's also bad for philosophy. I mean, they might have thought to be out there so much.

MANSFIELD: Oh, you mean Machiavelli and Tocqueville? Yeah, yes, I think that's right that, yeah, they both. Yeah, Aristotle. They all, they're wary of philosophy and its pretensions and –

KRISTOL: But also protective maybe of philosophy.

MANSFIELD: Protective of philosophy in its, from its opponents, yeah. It can be true to itself and at the same time, not harmed by its enemies if it doesn't become too visible or too thematic. If it doesn't make a point of the philosophic life as the only good life.

KRISTOL: And I suppose the counter-argument to that, I mean –

MANSFIELD: The counter-argument to that is it is the only good life and that everybody when you come down to it, really thinks that it's better to accept the guide of reason than of mere custom tradition.

KRISTOL: And I suppose also just that if you don't explicitly make that case, you end up just with nihilism or something –

MANSFIELD: Right, yes, and or you end up with a stupid custom.

KRISTOL: Or one country is fighting another –

MANSFIELD: Yeah, one country is fighting another, yeah.

KRISTOL: You could certainly, Strauss, who you mentioned, seems to have thought it was important to go out of his way to make the case very explicitly to revive the Socratic case for the philosophic life –

MANSFIELD: Yes. Among those who follow Strauss, there's a kind of party difference between the ones who take his political reassurances most seriously and those who take his philosophical assertions most seriously.

And Strauss himself sort of laughing, leaves it to each one of his readers to discover or to decide or to think about which is better. Is it better to be with the people with common sense as against pretentious philosophers, or is it better on the contrary to recognize the pretentiousness of ordinary people and their resistance to, real resistance to thinking and work against that by bringing out the necessity of philosophy?

KRISTOL: Whichever way one comes down on that, it does seem before that you need to understand the fundamental disconnect or tension or between the philosophy –

MANSFIELD: Philosophy and morality, or philosophy and society. Philosophy and opinion.

KRISTOL: That needs pretty intransigent of Strauss –

MANSFIELD: Yeah, that he is, yes, yeah.

KRISTOL: That it had been forgotten. That the forgetting of that costs us all kinds of huge problems for both society and philosophy, I suppose.

MANSFIELD: Yeah. That's the enlightenment, which Machiavelli began that philosophy can be translated directly into politics and to morality in such a way that philosophers can, so to speak, directly rule or preside over society.

You've got the picture of that in 18th-century France when the authority, the common authority that people would refer to or the *philosophe*, the philosophers of the enlightenment. After that, things became a great deal darker, and Nietzsche took over and Hitler followed Nietzsche. So, pretenders of science and pretenders to philosophy became horrible totalitarian politicians.

KRISTOL: And Marx in the Soviet Union –

MANSFIELD: Marx in the Soviet Union, similarly.

KRISTOL: So the recovery of the tension is important for politics as well as for –

MANSFIELD: It is important for – yes, yeah, for –

KRISTOL: To understand the limits of what you can do in politics, I suppose. That always seemed to be very –

MANSFIELD: The Federalists were very understanding of that, yeah, although they perhaps, too, somewhat exaggerated the benefits of political science because they were quite open. If you look at *The Federalist*, you see it's quite open about the dependence of the new American republic on political science. And I think that the political science of *The Federalist* is a lot better than the political science we have today, and so that the handing over to political scientists of the protection of our republic was much wiser in 1787 than it would be today.

KRISTOL: Well, somehow, isn't also in *The Federalist*, a political science that understand the limits of political science? I mean, that's stressed several times.

MANSFIELD: Yes, it is.

KRISTOL: Ambition has to counteract ambition, and it puts limits on how clearly you can delineate things that humans fear.

MANSFIELD: And theorists have ambition, too, though they may not recognize it.

KRISTOL: Right, and so *The Federalist* is fairly hostile in a way to theory –

MANSFIELD: Theory, yeah, it talks, sometimes it talks like Machiavelli, the theoretic politicians or Republican theorists. Previous ones who didn't recognize necessities. So, yeah, they're somewhat Machiavellian but in a moral way. Yeah, it becomes moral to recognize necessities.

KRISTOL: But I think not so much the delusion of rational control.

MANSFIELD: No. That's right.

KRISTOL: And *The Federalist* – I mean there's some rational control at the beginning of setting up a system maybe but it doesn't presume excessive –

MANSFIELD: The limit of rational control in the Constitution is that each generation of Americans needs to be as wise as the original generation, that how we practice the Constitution is or can be decisive. We can't take for granted that an institution merely perpetuates itself by being an institution. It has to be, it takes the virtue of a people and of its leaders of every succeeding generation to keep it going. So it's not a perpetual republic in the sense of one that works automatically.

KRISTOL: Though *The Federalist* gives that impression a little bit, don't you think, that once it's set up, it just requires a bunch of ambitious politicians to fight with each other and preserve the separation of powers and –

MANSFIELD: That's right, it does.

KRISTOL: *Federalist* 10, it's just the big sphere that will work out.

MANSFIELD: That's right but still, I mean, ambition isn't enough, wisdom is also necessary and some kind of political wisdom or virtue.

KRISTOL: That's particularly clear in, maybe, the executive, I suppose.

MANSFIELD: Yeah, sure, for sure.

IV: Progress and Rational Control (1:07:22 – 1:36:40)

KRISTOL: So you're a great critic of rational controls, so let me push back a little on that. I mean, couldn't one say, "Look, of course, there are limits to what one can do in practice and no one ever gets anything right and progress isn't, no one can determine ahead of time exactly where progress goes. But is it really

a fundamental criticism to say that one has to approximate one's way towards better programs and you know one finds new frontiers for equality, but one knows basically what direction one is going and the fact that people who were championing equality for blacks didn't fully think through the notion of equality for women or for gays? It's still the same principle basically."

So, why is it such a problem to say that's kind of what we believe in, sort of a progress towards greater equality, a more rational society, more freedom from these customs and prejudices of the past. I mean does that really, why need that not work, I guess, or does it, need it not work?

MANSFIELD: Well, yes, because you could say irrational control doesn't work either. And so surely philosophy or political philosophy has to do with some understanding of reason and the control of reason.

The question is whether that rational control should be entirely devoted to what is material and to what is most obvious about all human beings, namely that they're equal. Aren't there other, let's say, values to keep in mind as well, that those higher things in which our appreciation and capacity differs? Some people are good painters and others aren't, and good musicians, others aren't. So, together with a fundamental equality of human beings, you also need to keep in mind the fundamental inequality of human beings.

I got into trouble with a friend of mine who likes to – Harry Jaffa – who likes to speak of the Declaration of Independence and its self-evident truth that all men are created equal. When I said that, "That's a self-evident half-truth, that inequalities are just as obvious and in a certain way important as the equalities."

And reason, if it's to be, if it's to control, needs to take account of both. And so it's then that you get into trouble. It's very hard to mix both the way in which we're all equal and the way in which we're all unequal. And that I think is perhaps the most fundamental limitation on rational control.

Now, the way in which we're most fundamentally unequal is in wisdom or the capacity to think or to philosophize. And so this you could say is another way of stating the discrepancy between philosophy and society. Society is based on most people's belief that he himself as an individual is important and deserves to be respected and not taken for granted. So, you could say that the principle of society is in a way, in that way, democratic.

In an aristocratic society, those few people who are on top think that they are the most important and that that needs to be – see, but the philosopher is not, he is not attached to any notion of self-importance to the extent that his object is to study eternal truths, he studies truths in which individual differences have disappeared, he studies man and not human being and not specific human beings. But each one of us is a specific human being and this is reflected in the fact that we all have names and your name is only yours and you like people to get it right if you please. And so if they don't, you correct them and let them know that you're somebody to be noticed.

And this means, this is a kind of break on your reason because it requires you to always maintain in reserve your own self-importance. So if it works out that reason tells you you're not important, that you're likely to reject that reason and to stick to your sense of self-importance.

And the trouble with science is that it doesn't understand this. Science doesn't understand the resistance to science that comes from people's feeling that their importance – so at MIT, this scientific university, the buildings don't have names, they have numbers. That shows their devotion to science. They're not going to honor some individual human being, especially someone who just has money and isn't really a scientist, where the scientists that to have this kind of contradiction that they're interested in Nobel Prizes, whereas science, as science really is a collective enterprise in which no single human name really should be featured. So that, so the idea of rational control really doesn't understand itself, it doesn't understand the resistance to reason.

KRISTOL: And it's the – so it could be a fact that people are just very resistant to reason, I guess both ways, right, to democratic reason in the sense that people want to distinguish themselves, they want to

be known as a better scientist than someone else and to, let's call it, philosophical reason – maybe that's not quite the right term – but to the reason that would point towards the wisest ruling everyone. People want to say, "Well, still I know some things, even if I don't know everything, and I have some right to say about what, should have some right to say something about my own choices and fate."

MANSFIELD: Yeah, I'm closer to me than you are.

KRISTOL: Right, so that's worth something. But is this all just a resistance, is this a resistance that has to be recognized as a practical matter because obviously society can't function if you don't recognize it? Or is it a resistance that has to be respected somehow? I mean, I guess, that would be the question.

MANSFIELD: Yeah, it's a resistance I think that needs to be respected somehow because it represents unreason. So and there's plenty of unreason in the universe and some of it is even found in human beings who are you could say the source of reason, perhaps the only source of intelligence that we've found so far. But even within our own souls, there's this unreason that we're each of us attached to his own matter or to his own body in a way that no one else is.

And so and this realization that you have within your soul passions, which take you away from reason or make you unruly, that's – each person if you realize this in your own psychology, you have in a way an entrance into the greatest metaphysical problem, which is, you could say, the distinction between what is intelligent and what is unintelligent, what is reasoning, what is life or awareness of life and what is not, what is simply dead matter.

And so I, yeah, I think it is important for people of reason to see the importance of non-reason. When a scientist deals with the universe, say a physicist, astrophysicist speaking of big bangs and dark clouds, dark stars, whatever, dark spaces, it has to realize that in this universe, there is also the scientist himself who is using his intelligence to understand or try to make intelligible what doesn't have intelligence. And so that and usually it doesn't, usually the scientific theory as opposed to philosophic one, scientific theory only looks at everything as if it were matter and not as if it had awareness or intelligence as well. And therefore modern physics is materialistic and really one-sided. And this is just like the democratic one-sidedness of the idea of rational control when it comes to politics and society.

KRISTOL: And I suppose it's also true, I mean just from a simple-minded view of the account of the soul or whatever that you wouldn't even have the reason or the, maybe the impulse to reason without these less reasonable parts of the soul, right?

MANSFIELD: Well, that's true, too, yeah.

KRISTOL: So that there's a way which we would should be respectful of them –

MANSFIELD: Yes, for helping us to raise our problems, yes. Right. So –

KRISTOL: We want to be free and then we wonder about what it means to be free –

MANSFIELD: That's right, yeah, whereas if we were purely wise and capable of ignoring our bodies and of everything that's required because of our bodies, namely all morality, if we were like that, then we wouldn't really have any problems, we would just fit in, we would adapt and our reasoning would be adjusting to natural necessities.

But, no, as we say, we push back, we push back and that means resist and that means insist on ourselves. And but reason needs to insist on itself. So reason itself needs to become or take something from human assertiveness because when you resist something, you're always in saying no, just say no, it's never enough just to say no because behind that no is always a yes.

So behind our resistance to reason is always some reason why we want to say no and that's a positive thing. So, reason resisting on its own behalf is also asserting its own importance and this means

asserting the importance of human beings and thus justifying the fact that each one of us wants to have an individual name.

KRISTOL: And that comes from sort of a certain kind of desire to be free and different and distinct, distinguished, I suppose, and distinct from everyone else and everything else. It's also the kind of – I mean the love of, the wonder and the love of the truth that seems – maybe that's a different psychological source though, you know the wish not to simply fit in in the sense of never thinking about what you're doing. I mean, that would be another alternative, I suppose, right?

MANSFIELD: Yeah. Yeah, it's both making a whole of things and seeing the true distinctions of things. So reason is both of those and it has to assert itself, insist on itself as well as take a modest role and admit that no particular human being is of that terrific importance.

KRISTOL: And today, you've written about manliness. I mean, that's related to this discussion.

MANSFIELD: Manliness, yeah, manliness is always related to any political discussion. Yeah, manliness is the special insistence on importance that males seem to specialize in. The idea of a man who takes charge of a risky affair when rational control is not available or when, yes, when there's no obvious or easy answer when something has to be done to overcome threatening conditions and you have to take a risk and be courageous. The Greek word for *courage* is the same as the Greek word for *manly*.

KRISTOL: And presumably the contingencies of life and politics are such that you never, you're not sure that something will work out so you need to have that ability to –

MANSFIELD: And you could say that that kind of manliness in that sense could apply to the scientists as well, that they take a risk in going, in challenging things that have always been taken for granted and looking to see some new way, some innovation.

We nowadays take innovation so much for granted but it's a risk, it's a risk for a businessman. The entrepreneurial spirit, that's kind of a manliness or courage. People who not only face risk, but actually prefer that or like an interesting life, an adventurous life. Adventure is part of modernity, too. Conformity and rational control is one side, but adventure is also an important side. I have a student named Bruno Macaes, he wrote his dissertation on modern adventures – adventurousness. He's in politics now.

KRISTOL: That's right. But even for the scientists, I think I'm struck by that they don't really want to work extremely hard to confirm, for 30 or 40 years, to confirm what is already known about the universe. They would sort of like to make a breakthrough. You know, somehow not simply a devotion to scientific progress, though it is partly that but also kind of they want to make their own mark and change the status quo.

MANSFIELD: Yeah, because you make your own mark by changing. Yeah.

KRISTOL: And since you wrote the manliness book, are you more cheered up or more depressed about the prospects for manliness? The health of manliness –

MANSFIELD: I can't say I'm cheered up. No.

KRISTOL: Is that right? You haven't turned things around in spite taking that risk.

MANSFIELD: Somehow, yes, somehow I've been, yes, quite thoroughly not listened to.

KRISTOL: That's always the prelude to being truly listened to. Allegedly.

MANSFIELD: Well, we'll see, won't we?

KRISTOL: Thank you, Harvey, for joining me today in this CONVERSATION.

MANSFIELD: My pleasure.

KRISTOL: And thank you for joining us. See you next time.

[END]