



The Owl of Athena

CONTRATYRANNOS

The Natural Law Theory of Human Progress Website

EXCURSUS #2

One of a series of monographs that expands the discussion of important topics examined in *The Natural State of Medical Practice*.¹

EXCURSUS #2: INDUCTIVE PROOF OF THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF LIBERTY AND LIMITED GOVERNMENT IN HUMAN PROGRESS

Summary: This excursus, a summary of the political implications of *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, is an “opening salvo” for much that follows. It identifies the role of descriptive science, or “inductive” reasoning, in the work’s conclusions, the relevance of human freedom to natural law, and, supported by statistical proof, the essential role of the unprivileged but free “common man and woman” to human progress as gauged by life expectancy. The conclusion targets modern-day threats to that progress.

Beyond mere economic efficiency, contemporary argument favoring limited government is based on evidence of government dysfunction (negative evidence) and on societal improvements that follow governmental deregulation (positive evidence). The persuasiveness of this argument is bolstered by appeal to tenets of theoretical political philosophies that argue individual liberty is an inherent right or gift of God, an end also consistent with limited government. The latter appeals represent *deductive* reasoning as derived from philosophical or religious principles or dogma, often supported by reference to the contentious subject of natural law.² There has, however, been

¹ Volume, chapter and page number of otherwise unreferenced statements in this monograph refer to the version of the four volumes as published by Liberty Hill Press:

- Vol. 1 – *The Natural State of Medical Practice: An Isagorical Theory of Human Progress*
- Vol. 2 – *The Natural State of Medical Practice: Hippocratic Evidence*
- Vol. 3 – *The Natural State of Medical Practice: Escape from Egalitarianism*
- Vol. 4 – *The Natural State of Medical Practice: Implications*

² For example, Objectivists view what is generally considered “natural rights” as “objective rights,” the latter term being a matter of definition and an analytical approach of a philosophy. But the argument and proof posed in this excursus is not philosophical. It is, instead, rational in that it is derived by induction from observed events. As a piece of induction, it can then be considered for a place within a theory from which issues might then be deduced. Natural rights/natural law, whether God-given or derived from the rational mind of man, might be considered such a theory. The present excursus provides positive support for the theory. For Objectivism, however, it appears to be irrelevant to any validation of philosophical theory, for it can be argued that Objectivism requires no such validation. If one concludes, therefore, that the argument of the excursus is convincing, it strengthens the case for natural rights/natural law but not for Objectivism. In the former it is a formal supportive proof to be further studied; for the latter it is but to be expected, and if it does not provide such proof the philosophical strength of Objectivism is unimpaired. As a

presented no justification for limited governance of a society solely using *inductive* reasoning, *i.e.*, based on historical facts that provide a scientific proof of the beneficial effect of limited governance. The three-volume work, *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, provides such a proof.

Some years ago while on the staff of a large municipal hospital in New York City I began to study the history of earlier medical practices with the intention of finding clues that could improve unsatisfactory aspects of modern medical care in the United States. Unexpectedly, I discovered that the deleterious issues throughout the history of medicine were not of medical origin, instead being attributable to social issues, primarily stemming from authoritarian governance. In the "great civilizations" of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China, authoritarian governments or institutions commandeered medical practices that had evolved during their early primary civilizations (*de novo* civilizations not shaped by dependence on or control by other more complex societies) to serve their own purposes. There were but two exceptions to this *political authoritarianism* in the historical record: Hippocratic medicine in ancient Greece (transient) and modern Western medicine (still operative.)

I then sought even earlier medical practices. With the reasonable conjecture that modern humans assumed their place on this planet perhaps 50,000 years ago, I looked at medical practices in prehistory, assuming there was no logical reason to think that prehistoric *Homo sapiens* was less intelligent than are we. In brief, reviewing scholarly reports covering twelve primary urban or proto-urban civilizations ranging from 8th millennium BC to 1300 AD I found no evidence of formal medical practice, even though three of the twelve prehistoric civilizations each endured for more than a thousand years. Simple statistical analyses applied to the necessarily limited and sometimes circumstantial data on hand supported the conclusion that initiation of formal medical practices was profoundly inhibited by a different expression of authoritarianism, the *social egalitarianism* of the kinship.³ Australian aborigines, having an isolated existence for perhaps 50,000 years without formal medical practices and without forming a single town, can be viewed as contemporary evidence for this claim. Thus, the common denominator opposing medical progress has always been authoritarianism in either its political or egalitarian guise.

Over all eras, it was demonstrated that an effective collegial medical practice (termed the *natural state of medical practice*) has arisen solely from efforts of the common citizenry. On their liberation, periods of documentable medical progress occurred *briefly* during early urbanization (the "settlement hierarchy" phase) of the primary city-states of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India and China prior to centralization of power, *substantially* during the early democracies of Classical Greece, and *definitively* in late 18th C Western civilization during its march to democracy that began when the Reformation curtailed a pan-European doctrinal kinship that had existed for more than a thousand years. As corollaries, it was demonstrated (1) that Hippocratic medicine has been irrelevant to modern medical progress, (2) that the Renaissance with its patronage by tyrants has been of no consequence to medical progress, and (2) that the recent phenomenal lengthening of life expectancy around the globe is solely the result of Western scientific medicine and method as it has been stealthily intercalated into local and traditional health practices.

"positivist" approach by proponents of natural rights/natural law one might consider the former more appealing in that objectivity is its nature. This suggests a curious anomaly in Objectivism, the latter being discussed in Excursus 10.

³ The details of this analysis are to be found in vol. 3 of *The Natural State of Medical Practice*, p. 313f.

Thus, it has been inductively proven that medical progress is associated with and attributable to one thing, and one thing only: freedom of the common man and woman.⁴ Furthermore, this proof is supported indirectly in that the absence of liberty is associated with only occasional medical observations or empirical remedies that might temporarily help a circumscribed population but would not be propagated or improved, regardless of how long a society endures.

Remarkably, from the course of medical discovery in early Classical Greece and in the 18th C West, the rise of efficient scientific discovery from ignorance and simple empiricism is shown to require, under appropriate circumstances, only two or three centuries. Furthermore, the mechanism for discovery of basic truths of scientific medicine practice is easy, cheap, simple, and convenient: the medical history and physical examination. It is, instead, external interference with collegial collection, dissemination, integration and coordination of clinical knowledge that has always been the problem.

But there is more. Because pain and suffering are equally felt in all societies and at all levels of a society, they should provoke a similar response in all societies and lead to a nascent discipline of medicine as people work together to seek solutions to problems at hand. This is so basic that a failure to do so suggests a systemic inability to progress in any discipline, the term "progress" being defined as awareness of the improbability of the communal status. This incompetence, of course, can be masked in societies/civilizations that survive and thrive by conquest, theft and deceit. It is concluded that medical practice is a surrogate for intellectual and technical progress in general. If this is the case, the arguments presented in this series of monographs can also be considered inductive proof for the existence of natural law in addition to being its consequence. When natural law, which I argue is an inviolable statement on individual liberty, is disobeyed by the politically powerful, progress is not possible.

But how can the common citizenry, the unprivileged, be the source of progress? *The Natural State of Medical Practice* provides abundant examples showing genius, defined as exceptional natural ability, is neither rare nor discriminative; it is profusely spread over all humankind. Left alone, the common man and woman will devise, discover, and invent, a process vastly accelerated if they are not inhibited from forming autonomous collaborative groups to exploit a common self-interest. Everyone bears the potential for genius, a unique biological variable found only in *Homo sapiens* and one that may not be apparent unless the requisite opportunity appears. Alternative theories of progress, whether attributed to "great men," "great empires," "great cities" or ethnic forebears, are either wrong or are the consequence of, rather than cause of, progress. Had humankind earlier broken through the opaque ceiling of authoritarianism, our ancestors would, for generations or even millennia, have had some effective alleviation of suffering from disease, difficult childbirth and injury. The full extent of this authoritarian tragedy is unfathomable.

The question arises as to present-day significance of the proof just reviewed. Many of today's problems arise from centralization of political power that subsumes personal liberty and responsibility. The medical profession is itself partly responsible for its own problems in that it has, over the last seventy-five years, invited that intrusion. Even the Hippocratic Oath, a personal promise of the physician to the individual patient, is being reinterpreted to fit authoritarian convenience. The authoritarian is always on the march, this time on a global scale, and the threat

⁴ It is understood that the strength of inductive reasoning relies on the confirmation of earlier findings. That is the reason for presenting this website, contratyranos.com, to the general public: the seeking of arguments *pro* and *con*.

to common men and women around the world is great. The magnitude of that threat over the ages is exposed in *The Natural State of Medical Practice*.