

**THE INNER CONNECTION  
BETWEEN POLITICS AND MORALITY:  
HISTORICAL AND ANALYTICAL EXPLORATIONS**

Thesis for a Doctor of Philosophy in Politics

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Submitted by Marios Filis to the University of Exeter  
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## THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the inner connection between politics and morality and the analytical challenges it has posed and still poses for political philosophy. In part one, I explore the problematic relationship between politics and morality as it has been conceived and analyzed by Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli and Weber. This exploration is a historical reconstruction, a 'genealogy', of four major philosophical accounts concerning the tension between the moral demands of politics and the moral demands of 'ordinary' life. The historical reconstruction aims at revealing the philosophical complexity of the problems that characterize the relationship between politics and morality. It is set to show that those problems have some basic perennial features which remain unresolved until nowadays.

In part two, following the conclusions of the historical reconstruction, I make the central contention that the insoluble fragmentation of moral values that characterizes our world is central to the understanding of the inner connection between politics and morality. For this reason I analyze this connection from the perspective of moral pluralism, the philosophical tradition that conceives moral conflicts as the very essence of moral activity. My claim is that politics appears to be structurally opposed to specific types of moral values, because political moral values themselves are part of the fragmentation of morality. I support this claim with a further analysis of the moral divisions between the private, public and political spheres of conduct. My argument is that each of those spheres is permeated by a dominant type of moral values which is in permanent tension with the dominant types of values in the other two spheres of conduct. Finally, I make the case, that the usual aphorisms against the immorality of politicians and the famous concept of 'dirty hands' can be better understood when viewed as the inevitable result of the insoluble fragmentation of morality. I conclude, however, that the perennial attempts to achieve some sense of moral unity through politics indicate the special moral status we should attribute to political action.



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