



# Political Vices

*Mark E. Button*

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## **Political Vices** Mark E. Button

Historically speaking, our vices, like our virtues, have come in two basic forms: intellectual and moral. One of the main purposes of this book is to analyze a set of specifically political vices that have not been given sufficient attention within political theory but that nonetheless pose enduring challenges to the sustainability of free and equitable political relationships of various kinds. Political vices like hubris, willful blindness, and recalcitrance are persistent dispositions of character and conduct that imperil both the functioning of democratic institutions and the trust that a diverse citizenry has in the ability of those institutions to secure a just political order of equal moral standing, reciprocal freedom, and human dignity. Political vices embody a repudiation of the reciprocal conditions of politics and, as a consequence of this, they represent a standing challenge to the principles and values of the mixed political regime we call liberal-democracy. Mark Button shows how political vices not only carry out discrete forms of injustice but also facilitate the habituation in and indifference toward systemic forms of social and political injustice. They do so through excesses and deficiencies in human sensory and communicative capacities relating to voice (hubris), vision (moral blindness), and listening (recalcitrance). Drawing on a wide range of intellectual resources, including ancient Greek tragedy, social psychology, moral epistemology, and democratic theory, *Political Vices* gives new consideration to a list of deadly vices that contemporary political societies can neither ignore as a matter of personal sin nor publicly disregard as a matter of mere bad choice, and it provides a democratic account that outlines how citizens can best contend with our most troubling political vices without undermining core commitments to liberalism or pluralism.

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