

Interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Winter 2009

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|--|
| 103 | <i>M. Richard Zinman</i> | Review-Essay: Thinking about the Founding |
| 145 | <i>Heather Hadar Wright</i> | Lucrezia in <i>Mandragola</i> : Machiavelli's New Prince |
| 165 | <i>Wayne Ambler</i> | On Strauss on Vico: A Report on Leo Strauss's Course on Giambattista Vico |
| 189 | <i>David Lowenthal</i> | How Lincoln Defended Himself against the Charge of Religious Infidelity |
| 197 | <i>Marco Andreacchio</i> | Book Reviews: <i>Vico and Plato</i> by Nancy du Bois Marcus |
| 209 | <i>Jürgen Gebhardt</i> | <i>Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics, from the Great War to the War on Terror</i> by Michael Burleigh |

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The journal welcomes manuscripts in political philosophy in the broad sense. Submitted articles can be interpretations of literary works, theological works, and writings on jurisprudence with an important bearing on political philosophy.

Contributors should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th Edition). Instead of footnotes or endnotes, the journal has adopted the Author-Date system of documentation described in this manual and illustrated in the present issue of the journal. *The Chicago Manual of Style* offers publications the choice between sentence-style references to titles of works or articles and headline-style references to them. INTERPRETATION uses the headline style. Parenthetical references no longer use “p”, “pp.”, “cf.”, “see”, “f.”, “ff.” or the like. The year of publication follows the author’s name in the list of References. As implemented by INTERPRETATION, the Author-Date system requires titles of books and articles in a list of References always to be followed by a period rather than a comma.

Words from languages not rooted in Latin should be transliterated to English. Foreign expressions which have not become part of English should be accompanied by translation into English.

To insure impartial judgment, contributors should omit mention of their other publications and put, on a separate title page only, their name, any affiliation desired, address with postal zip code in full, email address, and telephone number.

Please send one copy in Word or Rich Text Format as an attachment to an email message to *interp@nyc.rr.com*.

It is particularly important for the journal to have the present email addresses of authors submitting articles.

Thinking about the Founding

M. RICHARD ZINMAN

JAMES MADISON COLLEGE
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

zinmanm@msu.edu

Alan Gibson, *Interpreting the Founding: Guide to the Enduring Debates over the Origins and Foundations of the American Republic*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2006, xvii + 174 pp., \$15.95 (paper).

———, *Understanding the Founding: The Crucial Questions*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2007, xi + 314 pp., \$29.95.

Note: A reply by Alan Gibson will appear in the next issue.

What should be our stance towards the Founders? Most citizens, including politicians, revere the Founders but know little about the Founding, including its great documents and debates. Much of the professoriate has contempt for dead white males, claims to greatness, and political history. Must we opt for either untutored veneration or debunking disdain? Alan Gibson can help us think well about such questions. Gibson began his publishing career in the early '90s with a series of insightful articles contesting Martin Diamond's influential interpretation of Madison's *Federalist* 10. He is now at work on a full-length treatment of Madison's political thought. The books under review seem to have grown out of the former and to be preparations for the latter. While each can be read with profit by itself, they are companion studies, with *Interpreting the Founding* (*IF*) being a kind of introduction to *Understanding the Founding* (*UF*). Both are primarily works of historiography—the kind of academic labor often relegated by lofty political philosophers to lowly historians (see *UF*, 165–66).

Gibson's primary goal in *IF* is to provide a broad overview and guide to the huge, diverse, complex, and contradictory twentieth-century academic literature on the Founding. In the preface and first chapter, which form a kind of prologue, he argues such an overview is necessary because the explosion of scholarship since Beard, the proliferation of interpretations, and the different methodological presuppositions and conflicting political agendas associated with each, have left even advanced students perplexed and disoriented. In chapters 2-7, Gibson lays out, in chronological order, the six most influential approaches to the Founding: the Progressive, liberal, republican, Scottish Enlightenment, "multiple traditions" (a term he adopts from Rogers Smith), and multicultural (that part of social history which focuses on "feminine, forgotten, and forced founders"). While these interpretations succeeded each other in time and each understood itself to be a revision of the immediately preceding and, for an historiographical moment, dominant interpretation, none ever triumphed completely and each remains alive, albeit in a more sophisticated and subtle form, the improvements resulting from the necessity to respond to the succeeding waves of revisionism (xii-xiii). Since he does not spy any new wave of revisionism on the horizon, we are led to wonder whether we live at the end of the age of grand interpretations of the Founding.

Gibson aims to be more comprehensive than others who have undertaken similar historiographical studies, but his overview is necessarily selective. He explicitly omits the literature on the anti-Federalists and on religion (see 104, n. 3). These topics would seem to be essential to any synoptic guide to the Founding. One could argue that the Founders' ability to harmonize the claims of secular political philosophy with those of revealed religion (or, perhaps more accurately, to enlist the latter in the service of the former) was crucial to their practical success (see *UF*, 169). And one could argue that the greatest theoretical and practical problem facing the Founders was the relationship between the national and state governments, that their solution to that problem was one of their greatest claims to novelty, and that the tensions in their solution, when coupled with their compromises on slavery, were their most volatile legacy (see *UF*, 177). Nevertheless, given the vastness of his task, Gibson succeeds remarkably well in meeting his primary goal. *IF* is the most complete and reliable historiographical introduction to the literature on the Founding in print.

IF prepares the ground for *UF*. Almost twice as long as the former, the core of the book consists of four chapters, each of which explores

one of the crucial questions generated by the quarrels among the twentieth-century schools examined in *IF*: What is living and what is dead in the Beard thesis? Was the Founder's Constitution democratic? How should we study the thought of the Founders? Are they best understood as liberals or republicans? Each of these chapters is designed to stand alone as an overview, guide, and contribution to the debate about the question in dispute. The fifth chapter, which is prepared by the introduction and serves as a conclusion, stands out because it is devoted to a question Gibson claims has been slighted or even denigrated by the contestants in his four central debates (and, as he implies in *IF*, by the partisans of his six schools of interpretation): Why the historiography of the Founding? As he makes clear, this question, which at first sight appears to be merely academic or even antiquarian, is even more fundamental than the questions examined in chapters 1-4 (and the interpretations examined in *IF*) because it enables us to uncover the presuppositions that lead us to the study of the Founders and guide our investigation of their speeches and deeds. Moreover, when properly understood, the historiographical question points to the broadest and deepest questions raised by the study of Founding: What has been the contribution of the Founders to political thought in general and American political thought in particular? What has been their contribution to American political development? What should be the authority of the Founding in American intellectual and political life? What do we owe the Founders? If I read it properly, the last chapter of *UF* is meant to vindicate Gibson's own turn to historiography and prepare his next (and more important) contribution to the study of the Founding. As such, it is the peak of *UF* and thus of the companion volumes.

Again, Gibson is selective. There are no chapters devoted to the questions "Does the Founders' Constitution presuppose a Christian nation?" or "How federal was the Founders' Constitution? But like its predecessor, *UP* is a remarkably complete and sound guide to the five questions it treats.

In *IF* Gibson is silent about his own political orientation, but in the acknowledgments to *UF* he declares that he is one of "the few left-leaning political theorists who study the American Founding" (ix). (Why so few?) Nevertheless, both books are models of open-minded and even-handed analysis, completely free of the partisan contentiousness that characterizes so much of the literature on the Founding. This achievement is all the more noteworthy because the questions Gibson considers in *IF* and *UF* are among the most politically charged in the academic literature on any subject.

Given the relationship between the two books, substantial overlap and even repetition are unavoidable. Since *UF* is a richer, deeper, and more thought-provoking book, I will focus on it (see Addendum 1).

I. ECONOMICS

Chapter 1 of *UF* examines the debate about Beard's (and thus the Progressives') principal claim: In writing and securing the ratification of the Constitution, did the Founders seek to protect and advance their own immediate economic interests (cf. *IF*, chapter 2)? Gibson is reluctant to admit that this debate is moribund. He is eager to demonstrate that the economic interpretation of the Constitution is alive (if not vibrant: see 45; cf. *IF*, 86-88). But the evidence as he presents it is more likely to lead the hard-headed reader to conclude that it is on life-support. Gibson's approach is straightforward: After providing his own careful restatement of Beard's most important arguments, he first reviews the post-war wave of revisionism by historians who challenge Beard directly (especially Robert Brown and Forrest McDonald), then the restatement, modification, and refinement of the Beard thesis by neo-Progressive historians (especially E. James Ferguson and Jackson Turner Main, but including McDonald), and finally the development of a new economic interpretation by economists and political scientists using the methods of rational or public choice theory (Calvin Jillson and Robert McGuire).

Gibson's sifting of this century of empirical analysis is meticulous and scrupulous. He distinguishes carefully between the evidence pertaining to the drafting and that pertaining to the ratification of the Constitution. With respect to the former, he concludes that the evidence is mixed: It refutes the strong claim that the delegates to the Constitutional Convention were a consolidated economic group in the sense that they were unified by holdings of personality or capital (as opposed to reality or land), but supports the more modest claim that they were an economic elite unified by wealth, education, occupation, ancestry, and geography (they were drawn overwhelmingly from the coastal regions and cities). The latter conclusion is, to say the least, not surprising. In contrast, the evidence provides only limited and indecisive support for the claims that voting patterns at the Convention can be explained by delegates' economic interests or that the Constitution was drafted to reflect the economic interests they held or represented. It does, indeed, support the claims that the Constitution was designed "to abolish the currency system of finance adopted by many states in the mid-1780s and to promote and protect the interests of commerce" (45). But what sensible

scholar ever denied these conclusions (which are obvious on the face of the document)? As Gibson points out, in order to confirm the more interesting claims of the economic interpretation, we would need a comprehensive study of the relationship between the personal economic interests of the individual delegates and the 569 recorded roll-call votes at the Convention. As yet, no such study exists. Moreover, since the evidence available to determine the votes of specific delegates is limited, any such study would be imperfect. With respect to the ratification process, Gibson concludes that the state of the data makes progress even less likely. Was the ratification struggle a “deep-seated conflict between opposing classes” (42)? The best available research does establish the aristocratic character of the Federalist leadership. Unfortunately, it also establishes that large parts of the anti-Federalist leadership were no less aristocratic. Gibson points out that we need comparative studies of competing aristocracies during the Founding era. It is hard to see how such studies could support a strong version of the class conflict thesis. The current research also “supports the propositions that support for the Constitution came disproportionately from delegates who represented commercial coastal regions and that opposition was led by delegates representing the interior” (45). But even this rather general conclusion is based on studies that have significant limitations and are largely impressionistic. As Gibson points out, in order to overcome such weaknesses, we need a methodologically sophisticated study of the economic characteristics of a random sample of the approximately 160,000 people who voted for delegates to the state ratification conventions. Not only does no such study exist, but the data necessary to conduct it are lost. While Gibson demonstrates that several important *aspects* of an economic interpretation remain alive, he seems to concede that only a highly modified version of such an interpretation is, at present, defensible. He leaves us wondering whether such a truncated version is truly distinctive or in any way controversial. Moreover, he indicates that he knows that no economic interpretation—no matter how comprehensive and sophisticated—can provide answers to *the* political question raised by the Progressives and their heirs. Even if we could prove that in drafting the Constitution the Framers sought to protect and promote their immediate economic interests, and even if we could prove that the ratification struggle was a genuine class conflict, we would still have to decide whether the Federalists’ class interests were more in harmony with the common good than those of their rivals (see 5-6, 114-15).

The Progressives’ methodology inclined them to prejudge the Founders’ speeches and deeds: As merchant oligarchs, the Founders *must* have crafted an antidemocratic constitution and their ideas *must* have been

mere reflections of their class interests (cf. *IF*, 88-89). The reaction to Beard generated debates about both of these rather crude assumptions. Chapter 2 examines the question “How democratic was the political system created under the Constitution of 1787?” Chapters 3 and 4 examine the debates generated by the resurrection of interest in the Founders’ ideas: If those ideas are not merely epiphenomenal, what is their cognitive status and how should they be studied? (chapter 3). If the Founders’ ideas cannot be reduced to their economic interests, what was their intellectual pedigree? (chapter 4).

II. DEMOCRACY

The most powerful and influential response to the Progressives’ contention that the Founders’ Constitution was antidemocratic was that of Martin Diamond. (For Gibson’s generous tribute to Diamond, see ix.) Although Diamond was responding primarily to the Progressives, his argument was also aimed at the neo-Progressive and New Left scholars who had refined Beard’s charges but, like the Progressives, continued to focus on the extent of white male suffrage and the constitutional devices designed to blunt (if not frustrate) the influence of popular majorities. Beginning in the mid-1980’s, the argument that the Founders’ Constitution was antidemocratic was broadened, first by a large group of social historians, who, under the banner of multicultural egalitarianism, sought to shift the debate to the exclusion of women, African Americans, and Native Americans, and, more recently, by a small group of scholars who emphasize those structural features of the original Constitution that unambiguously violate the principle of political equality (especially the equal representation of states in the Senate and the three-fifths clause). While Gibson’s analysis of the debate about the economic interpretation of the Constitution takes the form of an assessment of the work of others, he injects himself into the debate about the Constitution’s allegedly undemocratic character. He begins by explaining why the debate is so polarized: On the one hand, democracy is an inherently contestable concept. Those who criticize the Constitution as undemocratic tend to employ a standard of strong or participatory democracy; those who defend it tend to employ a standard of restrained or modulated democracy. Thus there is no common standard against which to measure the design of the original Constitution. Moreover, because there is no agreement about what democracy is, there is no agreement about what institutional arrangements are necessary to establish a democratic political system. On the other hand, because democracy, however defined, has come to be understood as the best and, indeed, the only legitimate form of government, the stakes in this debate

are among the highest in political life. After all, with some exceptions, those who argue that the Founders' Constitution was democratic defend and wish to preserve it, while those who argue that it was undemocratic attack and want to reform (or even revolutionize) it. Gibson seeks to contribute to but not resolve the debate. In his judgment, it cannot be resolved because the partisans' standards of democracy are incommensurable and no impartial standard can be discovered or invented. In the face of this dilemma, he devises a multifaceted but limited strategy. In order to advance the debate, he assesses the original Constitution in terms of three generally accepted measures of democracy: inclusiveness, responsiveness, and political equality. In discussing the first measure, he considers both constitutional and extra-constitutional features of the Federalists' system (*both* suffrage requirements and qualifications for office *and* expanded electoral districts, informal barriers to office, and class bias) and compares the Constitution of 1787 with its contemporary European rivals (the British constitution as it existed in 1787 and the constitutions generated by the French Revolution in 1791, 1793, and 1795). In discussing responsiveness, he first constructs a detailed Federalist defense of the familiar institutional features of the Federalist model: direct election of representatives from expanded electoral districts, indirect and staggered elections and appointments, long terms of office, prohibitions against Congress and the state legislatures, the amendment process, the extended republic, and the separation of powers. (It is striking that chapter 1 contains no similar Federalist defense of the economic dimensions of the Constitution.) He then compares the democratic credentials of the Founders' Constitution to those of the British constitutional monarchy, classical democracy, the Articles of Confederation, the state governments that existed in 1787, the forms envisioned by James Wilson ("democratic nationalism") and Thomas Jefferson ("ward republicanism"), and finally the U.S. Constitution today. In discussing political equality, he considers the three-fifths clause, the equal representation of states in the Senate, and the absence of a provision mandating legislative districts of roughly equal size. But in order to sharpen the focus of his intervention, he brackets two key questions: How democratic was American political culture and American civil society in 1787? and Was the Constitution of 1787 a pro- or anti-slavery document? Perhaps more important, he distinguishes between democracy and other ends the Federalists sought to promote (e.g., the protection of rights, good government, and federalism) and limits himself (at least initially) to the former (cf. 52, 72, and 89-90).

Gibson aims for and achieves “a balanced assessment.” Given the politically charged and intellectually contested nature of this debate, we expect that any balanced assessment will reflect the ambiguities inherent in its subject matter. We are not disappointed. Although it is impossible to reproduce the details of Gibson’s multifaceted, judicious, and even-handed arguments, it is fair to say that his broad conclusion is ambiguous: The Founders’ Constitution was less democratic than its defenders claim but more democratic than its critics allege.

While Gibson’s treatments of inclusiveness and political equality are interesting, his discussion of responsiveness is more revealing. He notes that the Federalists explicitly rejected both the modern British mixed regime and ancient “pure” democracy and suggests that their Constitution was much more responsive than the former and much less responsive than the latter. But he devotes only two brief paragraphs to the British constitution and one three-sentence paragraph to polis democracy. His relative neglect of these regimes is hard to understand. Among other things, it seems to deflect attention away from two of the Federalists’ principal claims to novelty: that they had invented a form of government that was wholly popular while also being wholly representative, and that they discovered how to secure a separation of powers by wholly popular means. Gibson’s emphasis falls on what he clearly considers to be the more salient, because politically immediate, objects of comparison: the Articles of Confederation and the post-Revolutionary state constitutions. Because the Articles created something closer to an alliance or league than a government, he believes that the state governments are the most relevant and revealing objects of comparison. In comparing the government established by the Founders’ Constitution to the “government” established by the Articles and the governments established by the state constitutions, Gibson distinguishes between what he (following Michael Zuckert) calls “long-leash” and “short-leash” republicanism (see 67 and 226-27, n. 91). The state governments (and, to a degree, the Articles) are examples of the latter, which is characterized by direct elections, short terms of office, provision for the recall of representatives, schemes of rotation in office, numerous representatives elected from small electoral districts confined to small geographic areas, virtually unchecked legislative supremacy, weak executives, and dependent judiciaries. The Federalists’ rejection of short-leash republicanism was as emphatic as their rejection of polis democracy. Since their Constitution embodies long-leash republicanism, there is no doubt that it was decisively less responsive than the Revolutionary state constitutions. Gibson points out that it was also less responsive than the

“regimes in speech” advocated by Wilson and Jefferson. Finally, since it is clear that American political development has been characterized by a movement away from long-leash toward short-leash democracy, he concludes that the political system established by the Constitution of 1787 was much less responsive than our present system.

In the brief (4-page) conclusion to this long (44-page) chapter, Gibson begins by situating his balanced but ambiguous interpretation between what he implies are the unbalanced and unambiguous interpretations of the participants in the debate. He suggests that the debate can be advanced if the critics concede that, when viewed in historical and comparative perspective, the original Constitution was more inclusive and more progressive than they have acknowledged, and if the defenders concede that it was less responsive and more inegalitarian than they have acknowledged. He also suggests that the debate can be advanced if the partisans realize that, because their “foundational assumptions, standards of judgment, and strategies of argumentation” (87) are so different, they have been talking past one another. The critics, for their part, must acknowledge that in judging inclusiveness, they employ standards of democracy that were “extremely rare” during the Founding period, that in judging responsiveness they presuppose that the characteristic features of short-leash popular government are both more democratic and more desirable than those of long-leash popular government, and that in judging political equality they assume that the only appropriate standard is something akin to one person, one vote. In contrast, the defenders must acknowledge that their argumentative strategies have sometimes deflected attention from the central issue. One such strategy is to employ shifting bases of judgment, sometimes admitting and sometimes denying the relevance of comparisons with the practices of the states and Great Britain, sometimes acquiescing in and sometimes resisting the standards adopted by the critics of the Constitution, and sometimes simply denying the relevance of any comparisons. Another is to subsume the question of the democratic nature of the Constitution within a broader and more complex debate about the relationship between the characteristic features of democratic government and the conditions of good government. After reminding us that there is no Archimedean point from which to arbitrate (much less resolve) the debate, Gibson offers four “substantive comments” intended to enable us to “surmount the tedious and repetitive exchanges between those scholars who want to raze and reform the Constitution and those who want to defend and preserve it” (90). While the implications of the word “surmount” are not clear, his concluding remarks can be read as

admonitions, some of which are meant to suggest a new research agenda. First, we should absolve the modern critics of the charge of anachronism. Since the New Jersey constitution permitted the enfranchisement of single women and some states enfranchised free blacks, those who criticize the Founders for not guaranteeing women and African Americans full citizen rights are simply “judging all the Framers against the most progressive standards of their day” (89). And since some of the leading Framers (including Madison) opposed equal representation in the Senate as unjust, and a majority of the state constitutions in 1787 included provisions designed to prevent malapportionment, those who argue that the character of representation in both houses violated norms of political equality and fundamental fairness can find support within the Founding generation itself. Second, we should acknowledge that the issue of democracy cannot be disentangled from the issue of federalism. The structure of the original Constitution was, by necessity, partly national and partly federal. Since many of the Constitution’s provisions that violate the critics’ principle of political equality result from its federal character, our judgments of those provisions should be based, in part, on a sober assessment of the practical dilemmas facing the Framers as they attempted to achieve a politically acceptable balance between national and federal elements. It should also be based, in part, on a sober assessment of the democratic implications of the more national and more federal (state-centered) options. Third, we should acknowledge that the issue of democracy cannot be disentangled from the Framers’ other pressing and weighty goals: securing good government and protecting rights. But, while acknowledging the original Constitution’s multiple goals, we should not blithely accept the Framers’ judgments about the tensions among those goals. Rather, we must judge for ourselves whether the conditions of good government (e.g., stability, energy, and impartial administration) and the protection of rights are incompatible with the characteristic features of short-leash popular government. Fourth, we must judge for ourselves the Federalists’ arguments on behalf of those constitutional provisions designed to reconcile democracy with good government and the protection of rights. Such judgments should be based on a careful examination of the details of their specific arguments. For example, is it true that longer terms are more likely to induce fit men to seek office? Is it true that larger legislatures are more likely to be dominated by fewer individuals?

At first sight, it may appear as if Gibson is too hard on the Founders and not hard enough on their critics. After all, he urges us to undertake the most rigorous examination of the Founders’ arguments defending

their long-leash conception of democracy without urging us to undertake the same kind of examination of the critics' defense of short-leash democracy. Gibson might justify his apparent departure from his usual even-handedness by pointing out that his procedure is required by the terms of the debate. The question before us is "How democratic is the Constitution of 1787?" So framed, he might argue, the burden is rightly placed on the Founders and not their anti-Federalist, Progressive, and neo-Progressive critics. Fair enough. But is Gibson correct to suggest that the principal cause of the intractability of this debate is disagreement about the *definition* of democracy? And is he correct to suggest that our goal should be to "surmount" rather than sharpen the debate?

The Federalists sought, in Madison's words, "a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government" (*Federalist* 10). What are the presuppositions and implications of this famous phrase? First, all forms of government—including democracy—are flawed. Second, the flaws of each are form-specific, i.e., rooted in the very nature and essential characteristics of that form. Third, the most dangerous flaws spring from each form's ruling element (see 177). From the Federalists' point of view, democracy was not merely an object of aspiration but a problem (or cluster of problems). If that problem was to be solved, it first had to be thought through. I doubt that Gibson would deny that the Federalists' solution rested on a remarkably broad, deep, and candid (see 228-29, n. 103) analysis of the problem of democracy. Moreover, while many anti-Federalists (and later many Jeffersonians) dissented from the Federalists' view that the greatest source of danger in a democracy is ruling majorities (see 265, n. 100), almost none rejected the view that democracy has characteristic flaws. The original critics of the Constitution thus shared a substantial common ground with their opponents. In contrast, the modern critics tend either to deny (often indignantly) that democracy is a problem or argue that "the only cure for the problem of democracy is more democracy." At a minimum, they tend to be much less troubled by, and much less attentive to, the problem of democracy than were the Federalists and anti-Federalists. (Consider Hamilton's remarkably bold claim in *Federalist* 9: If the new science of politics had not made it possible to overcome the traditional defects of republican government, "the enlightened friends of liberty would have been obliged to abandon the cause of that species of government as indefensible." Would any of the modern critics agree with Hamilton?) If there is something to these observations, then perhaps the debate about democracy and the Constitution can be advanced by being sharpened. Are the Federalists right to argue that democracy is a

problem? If so, is their analysis of that problem persuasive? Do the modern critics, in fact, argue (or imply) that democracy is not itself a problem? If so, are they right to do so? If they do admit that democracy is a problem, is their analysis of that problem persuasive? Do they, in fact, argue (or imply) that the solution to that problem is the radicalization rather than the moderation of the characteristic tendencies of democracy? It is at least possible that such an inquiry will lead dispassionate inquirers to the conclusion that, whatever the defects of the Federalists' solution, their understanding of democracy is superior to that of their Progressive and neo-Progressive critics (consider 127). Should that turn out to be the case, the burden in the debate about democracy and the Constitution would rightly shift from the Federalists to their critics.

III. METHOD

The question "How should we study the American Founding?"—the subject of chapter 3—seems to be much less politically charged and much more circumscribed than those taken up in the first two chapters. While hotly contested among academics, the debate on this question does not seem to threaten the very legitimacy of the Founders' Constitution. As Gibson initially formulates the issue, this is a debate "over whether we should study the Founding using a profoundly historical and contextual approach or one that contends that the Founders addressed 'perennial questions' in the history of political thought and considers their enduring guidance in addressing these questions" (9). The locus of this debate is the methodological writings of those historians whose historical works gave rise to the so-called "republican synthesis": Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood, Quentin Skinner, and J. G. A. Pocock (cf. *IF*, 22-24). While others have called their common methodological agenda "the new historicism" or "the ideological approach," Gibson prefers the term "linguistic contextualism" (see 237-39, n. 1). The aim of the contextualists is to establish the study of political thought as a genuinely historical enterprise. In order to do so, they fight a war on two fronts. On the one hand, they seek to defend the study of political ideas against Progressive (and, more broadly, Namierian and Marxist) materialist reductionism. On the other hand, they seek to overthrow the authority of Whiggish idealism and, more generally, "the traditional, philosophical study of the history of political thought" (92), especially the "great books" approach. Gibson calls the advocates of the latter approach "philosophical rationalists" (9). The contextualists contend that the philosophical rationalists are ahistorical because they fail to sever historical from philosophical

analysis and the study of history from the concerns of contemporary politics. These contentions reveal the extent to which this debate, like the first two, is, in fact, politically charged. If there are no “perennial questions,” if all eras are bounded by historically distinctive contexts, and if all political thought is context dependent, then we cannot appropriate the political thought of the Founders for ourselves. While this debate may not call into question the legitimacy of the Founders’ Constitution, it does call into question the authority and even relevance of the Founders. But the contentions of the contextualists also reveal that this debate is not merely academic. As Gibson makes clear, the contextualists challenge “the legitimacy and indeed the very possibility of the philosophic analysis of political texts” (92). Indeed, they renounce “the very act of political theorizing in general—at least as this has traditionally been conceived” (110). As we have seen, Gibson does not claim to settle the debates he treats in the first two chapters. Indeed, he suggests that they cannot be settled. In this chapter, he both intervenes in the debate and suggests that, in principle, it can be settled.

Gibson begins by reviewing Bailyn’s and Wood’s critiques of behavioralism and idealism, Skinner’s critique of the “great books” and “perennial questions” approach, and Pocock’s critique of those who are oblivious to the primacy of political languages.

Bailyn and Wood seek to transcend the conflict between the idealist (Whig) and behavioralist or materialist (Progressive) interpretations of the Revolution and Founding by employing a non-Marxist (i.e., non-materialist) conception of ideology derived from Clifford Geertz. Gibson therefore characterizes their approach as “anthropological.” For Bailyn and for Wood (who begins from but substantially develops Bailyn’s methodological arguments), ideologies, properly understood, are social conventions that crystallize clusters of ideas and provide a kind of cognitive road map of social reality. Ideas are neither independent, freely chosen, and self-consciously held, nor are they epiphenomenal abstractions from more “real” economic factors. And ideologies are neither pristine motives for action nor mere propaganda. Rather, they are matrices of social meanings that mediate between reality and action. Since action is public, historical agents are compelled to provide public justifications for their actions. Ideologies both compel and supply the basis for such justifications. Although Bailyn and Wood, like the idealists, defend the study of the history of ideas against the materialists, one could argue (although Gibson does not make this point) that they have more in common with the latter. Like the materialists, they argue that historical

agents are manipulators of ideas and that ideas are rationalizations of interests. And like them, they argue that the historical process is not under the rational control of free agents but is driven by forces deeper than deliberation and choice. Far from being masters of their fate, historical agents are in the grip of their historically fated ideologies. Ideological conflict is no less “impersonal” than class conflict. What then is the proper task of the historian of political thought? According to Wood (who has much more to say about this subject than does Bailyn), he should study how historically situated actors used their historically fated ideologies to solve their historically specific problems and make sense of their historically circumscribed world. A number of negative injunctions follow from this understanding of the task of the historian of ideas: He should not be concerned with the truth of the arguments and ideas he studies, try to discover answers to perennial questions in the texts of past political thinkers, try to appropriate past political ideas for use in the present, limit himself to the study of “great” thinkers, or presuppose that such thinkers are rational, brilliant, consistent, or coherent.

Skinner’s and Pocock’s methodological writings are much more extensive than those of Bailyn and Wood, who are best known as historians of the Revolution and Founding and not as methodologists. At the risk of oversimplifying Gibson’s careful interpretations of Skinner and Pocock, one could conclude that he believes that they employ more theoretically sophisticated means to arrive at more or less the same positive and negative injunctions pronounced by their less sophisticated American colleagues. (Gibson suggests that the only noteworthy differences are that Skinner and Pocock speak in terms of “political languages” rather than “ideologies” and that Skinner documents the interpretive errors about which Wood and Pocock complain [see 108-11].)

While Bailyn’s and Wood’s methodological project is rooted in Geertz’s anthropology, Skinner’s is rooted in Wittgenstein’s and Austin’s philosophical studies of language and Pocock’s in Kuhn’s studies of the history of natural science. (More precisely, Pocock marries the study of political languages to the study of paradigm shifts in natural science.) All three projects have an ambiguous relationship with philosophy. On the one hand, all trace the errors that contaminate the study of the history of political thought to bad (i.e., traditional or ahistorical) philosophy. On the other hand, all attempt to purify that study by employing the thought of scholars who are “philosophical”: Geertz’s “philosophic” anthropology, Austin’s linguistic philosophy, Kuhn’s “philosophic” history of science. It seems that

the discipline of history is both philosophically barren and endangered by philosophy. In order to be saved, it must become parasitic on philosophy. But once it is saved, it needs to be vigilant against recontamination by philosophy.

Finally, Gibson is careful to note that all the contextualists presuppose that objective historical research is possible and aspire to write “history as it actually happened.” In their efforts to transcend the opposition between idealism and materialism, all cling to the positivism they share with their opponents (see 99, 105, and 110).

The remainder—and heart—of chapter 3 is divided into three parts: Gibson first highlights the contributions of the contextualists, then catalogues their inadequacies, and finally offers his own suggestions about how the interpretation of the Founding ought to proceed. The rhetoric and tone of each of these parts is different. In the first and shortest, Gibson seems to align himself with the contextualists against the philosophical rationalists and his tone is admiring. He embraces the contextualists’ goals of objective history and impartial historical interpretation and applauds their elevation of the importance of historical context; he agrees that those goals are endangered by the characteristic interpretive errors of the philosophical rationalists, especially their neglect of historical context; he shares their view that those who appropriate the thought of past thinkers for present use often are politically motivated and seek partisan advantage; and he endorses the “humanistic” (111) lessons they teach about the historical process (each historical era is radically distinctive and the process itself is complex and unpredictable). In the second and longest part, he subjects the contextualists to hard-hitting criticism and his tone is, for him, unusually harsh. In the third, he attempts to stake out a position between the contextualists and philosophical rationalists and his tone is remarkably modest: He merely offers “suggestions.”

Gibson’s criticisms of the contextualists are wide-ranging: Collectively, they “mischaracterize” their opponents (123) and are guilty of “extreme hubris” (112). They commit multiple methodological errors. For example, Wood fails to distinguish “between the motives that generated an idea and that idea’s claim to the truth” (114); Skinner operates with “an impoverished conception of intentionality” (117). Their arguments are riddled with contradictions. For example: On the one hand, they argue that the thought of historical agents is “conditioned” and even “imprisoned” by social conventions that are monolithic, highly structured, or authoritative. On the other hand, when criticized for “linguistic determinism,” they admit

that the ideologies and political languages “available” during most historical periods (and certainly during the Founding period) were numerous, ambiguous, and malleable (112-13). They pose false choices. For example, Wood and Skinner present us with a choice between two forms of inquiry, one that is historically sensitive, impartial, and apolitical and one that historically insensitive (i.e., “philosophical”), partisan, and political. They simply ignore or rule out the possibility that a good scholar can be both historically sensitive and philosophical, both impartial and politically engaged. In other words, they simply deny that a sound scholar can learn from rather than simply manipulate an old text and that sound historical scholarship can be politically relevant without being politically partisan (122-23). When we examine what past thinkers, including the leading Founders, say about their intentions, we discover that many understood themselves to be speaking to both their contemporaries and posterity, and addressing both the particular questions of their time and more general questions that had been addressed by the greatest of their predecessors and would be addressed by the greatest of their successors (117-18). Moreover, it is difficult to deny that many past thinkers (great and not-so-great), and certainly the leading Founders, understood themselves to be engaging in “precisely the kind of ‘ransacking’ that [the contextualists] now reject as illegitimate” (124). In a word, the contextualists’ interpretations of authors, texts, and debates are often remarkably ahistorical. Gibson concludes that the contextualists’ response to the materialists is inadequate and that their arguments against those who believe in perennial questions and advocate appropriation are failures. It is worth noting that in criticizing the contextualists, Gibson does not appeal to any fancy “theory” rooted in disciplines other than history, but relies on common sense, cross-examination, and sound historical scholarship. Nevertheless, the results are devastating.

Gibson’s suggestions about how we should study the Founding are prefigured by the subtitle of chapter 3 and by his critique of the contextualists: He speaks “in defense of historically sensitive political philosophy” (91). He seeks a middle way between linguistic contextualism and philosophical rationalism. Following the former, he suggests that the proper study of the Founding requires that we “develop a tactile knowledge of the context of the American Founding” and attend “to the multiple levels of discourse in the early republic.” The latter, of course, requires, as the contextualists demand, that we examine “the thoughts of both great and lesser lights and [give] each its due” (125-26). But breaking with the contextualists and following the philosophical rationalists, Gibson also suggests that

when studying the greatest Founders—i.e., those who were philosophical statesmen—we should not homogenize their thoughts, suppose that they were limited by the common opinions of their time, rule out the possibilities they were engaged in a search for answers to perennial questions and often sought help from the greatest minds of the past and present, or assume “that surface contradictions in their writings are necessarily real ones.” In other words, like the philosophical rationalists, we should “[treat] the works of great minds as if they were produced by great minds” (125). In making his final suggestion, Gibson again breaks with the contextualists and aligns himself with the philosophical rationalists. The former maintain that the proper (i.e., historically sensitive) study of the Founding can teach only indirect (or negative) lessons about contemporary political life: institutions are historically contingent, ideas are historically conditioned, acontextual judgments are historically suspect. While acknowledging the importance of such lessons, Gibson, like the philosophical rationalists, suggests that we attempt to reason with and learn from the Founders. If we do so, we may discover that they have positive lessons to teach us. First, we may discover that, whatever their defects, they “thought profoundly about a range of issues ...with which we continue to struggle” (127). After all, our politics is, in part, the product of their handiwork. Second, we may discover that their thought, at least on some issues, is superior to our own. At a minimum, the study of their thought “may present us with competing interpretations of some of the foundational concepts of American politics” (128). Third, while a good-faith effort to apply the Founders’ thought to contemporary politics may lead us to discover that some aspects of their thought are, indeed, “irretrievable” (because false, unjust, or irrelevant), it may also lead us to discover that others are “worthy of reconsideration and capable of being translated into terms that can be applied to our culture” (128). Indeed, “precisely because their views were not framed by our scholarly conventions and political concerns,” “the arduous task of trying to understand the Founders as they understood themselves” may lead us to first discover and then reconsider “paths not taken and ideas now forgotten” (129).

Gibson does not mention any philosophical rationalists by name. This is odd for at least two reasons. First, the contextualists, especially Wood and Skinner, are not bashful about naming their principal opponents in the methodology wars: They are the Straussians (whom Wood labels “the fundamentalists” [see *IF*, 107, n. 10]). Second, in *IF* Gibson names the Straussians as one of the contextualists’ principal targets (along with the Progressives and neo-Whigs) and indicates that they are archetypical

philosophical rationalists (see 18, 22, and 116, nn. 15-16). Near the beginning of the third chapter of *UF*, Gibson states that his “goal in this chapter is not to present a novel approach to interpretation but rather to defend a sound one against the criticisms raised against it primarily by the linguistic contextualists” (92). And, indeed, Gibson’s critique of the contextualists is not novel. Throughout he relies on responses to the contextualists by Straussians, especially Nathan Tarcov and Michael Zuckert, but also Ralph Lerner, Thomas Pangle, and Paul Rahe (see 104, 111, 114, 119-20, 124 and the following notes to chapter 3: 1, 73, 74, 84, 88, 98, 101, 104, 107, and 113). Yet he refrains from identifying any of these scholars as Straussians. Why this practiced reticence?

Gibson’s procedure leaves unclear his own posture towards the Straussians’ *methodology*. In *IF*, he distinguishes between so-called “East Coast” and “West Coast” Straussian interpretations of the Founding. According to Gibson, the former argue that the Founding was wholly modern and liberal (or, more specifically, Lockean). This approach was “pioneered” by Martin Diamond, continued by, for example, Lerner and Pangle (3 and 107, n. 10), and developed most completely by Rahe (3 and 107, n. 10; 18-21 and 116-17, nn. 16 and 22). The latter argue that “the founding of the American regime was far from a wholly modern, liberal project.” This approach points back to the work of Paul Eidelberg and is exemplified by the work of, for example, William Allen, Colleen Sheehan, and Thomas West (109, n. 18). To look ahead to chapter 4 of *UF*, in the text and especially the notes to that chapter Gibson sharply rejects the arguments of Diamond, Pangle, and Rahe that the Founders’ thought is a species of “the new science of politics,” accusing them of having “ignored or presented perverse interpretations of important dimensions of the Founders’ thought that challenge this reading” (250-51, n. 5). He also rejects what he takes to be Diamond’s (and Pangle’s and Rahe’s) possessive-individualist and liberal-pluralist interpretation of their thought as anachronistic, while partially embracing “the kinder, gentler” (and apparently more historically accurate) interpretation of liberalism set forth of Tarcov (and Zuckert) (256-58, n. 52). Finally, he explicitly pronounces a failure “the West Coast Straussians’ efforts to interpret the American regime as designed to achieve classical ends,” especially “the formation of opinion and the development of a common character among the citizenry,” accusing them of overlooking the fact that the Founders’ conception of opinion was modern, not ancient (258-59, n. 54). Gibson suggests that each of these wholly (or partially) erroneous theses is ahistorical and results from insufficient attention to historical context. But, as Gibson has made clear, the contextualists are also guilty of such errors. The contextualists’

errors spring from their methodology. Do the Straussians' errors spring from *their* methodology?

Gibson attempts to distinguish his methodological position from those of both the contextualists and the Straussians. He defends what he calls an “historically sensitive but theoretically rich approach to the study of the American Founding” (9). In other words, Gibson wants to distinguish between good (historically sensitive) and bad (historically insensitive) philosophical rationalists. Yet while he admits that the contextualists “mischaracterize” and “misjudge” the methodology of the philosophical rationalists, apparently including the Straussians (see 123), he does not make clear whether he believes that the Straussians’ *methodology* (as distinguished from their practice) is defective. Does that methodology, rightly understood, advocate or encourage historical insensitivity? The former is absurd: Who is opposed to historical sensitivity? Clearly, in practice, some Straussians have lacked sufficient historical sensitivity. In his early articles, Gibson has shown that Diamond’s work is defective because it is insufficiently historical. But do the weaknesses in Diamond’s work spring from adherence to a faulty methodology or from failure to apply a sound methodology rigorously and consistently? In contrast, Gibson celebrates Zuckert’s historical work in both *IF* and *UF* and makes extensive use of his arguments against the contextualists. Zuckert’s Straussian credentials are impeccable. Whence his historical sensitivity and methodological sophistication?

One last point about chapter 3. Gibson begins chapter 4 by reminding us that the methodological debate between proponents of philosophical and historical approaches to the study of the history of political thought in general and the political thought of the Founders in particular “has, at times, been vitriolic.” But he immediately adds: “What is *most important* about that debate, however, is the shared assumption of both sides. Both sides agree that *ideas matter* in a variety of ways, and that *political thought* must be taken seriously” (130; emphasis added). In the light of chapter 3, this is a remarkable—even shocking—argument. Remember that Gibson introduces that chapter by claiming that the contextualists’ approach challenges “the *legitimacy* and indeed the *very possibility* of the philosophical analysis of political texts” (92). If this claim is correct—if, that is, what is at stake in the methodological debate between the contextualists and the philosophical rationalists is the very possibility of philosophy—the fact that the contestants agree that “ideas matter” seems almost trivial. Moreover, in the light of chapter 3, one might have expected Gibson to argue that the

most important assumption shared by the contextualists and philosophical rationalists is the belief in the *possibility of objective history*. What is the status of *this* shared assumption? Near the beginning of his analysis of the methodological debate, Gibson admits that many scholars—especially historians—will not be persuaded by his critique of the contextualists (93). Why not? Not because they doubt the possibility of objective history but because they doubt the possibility of philosophy. In fact, as Gibson points out, historians such as Wood seem to believe there is no connection between the defense of the possibility of objective history and the defense of the possibility of philosophy. They happily embrace the former while rejecting the latter. He suggests that such historians contradict themselves because they fail to see that their contextualism (i.e., historicism) calls into question, not only the possibility of philosophy, but also the possibility of objective history (see, e.g., 248-49, n. 106). Gibson believes in both possibilities. But he says very little about the problem of the possibility of objective history and seems to believe that his “common sense” approach to the critique of the contextualists is adequate to defend the possibility of philosophy. But should we—can we—be satisfied by such an approach? The contextualists may contradict themselves in all sorts of ways. But do such contradictions prove they are wrong about *contextualism*, i.e., about *historicism*? Before turning to his critique of the contextualists, Gibson notes, almost in passing, that scholarship on the Founding has not been influenced by Gadamer’s hermeneutics (or, I would add, by postmodernism). This happy circumstance may explain why he does not pay much attention to the problem of historical objectivity. But behind the methodologically moderate Gadamer stands the much more radical Heidegger. “Common sense” may be adequate to deal with the likes of Bailyn, Wood, Skinner, and Pocock. But more powerful “methods” are necessary to meet the challenge to philosophical rationalism (and thus to both the possibility of objective history and the possibility of philosophy) posed by Heidegger. (At the end of the introduction to *UF*, Gibson invokes Heidegger’s understanding of truth [14]. This, however, is the only mention of Heidegger in the two books under review.)

IV. MULTIPLE TRADITIONS

In chapter 4, titled “Ancients, Moderns, and Americans,” Gibson revisits the once heated debate over the intellectual foundations of the Republic: Is the Founders’ thought best characterized as liberal and modern or republican and ancient? In the first pages of this chapter (and in the introduction), Gibson reviews the rise, course, and quiescence of

this once bitter “either/or” debate and its displacement by “an ‘amiable historiographical consensus’ around the conciliatory and catholic but also diffuse claim that the Founders’ political thought is best understood as an amalgam of liberalism, republicanism, and perhaps other traditions of political thought” (9-12 and 130-32; cf. *IF*, chapters 4 and 5). Gibson labels this interpretive avant-garde “the multiple traditions approach” (cf. *IF*, chapter 6). At the beginning of *IF*, he claims that approach has been adopted by “the most sophisticated students of the Founders’ political thought” (3) and at the end he announces “we are all multiple traditions interpreters now” (95). According to Gibson, the multiple traditions consensus has enabled scholars to transcend the original debate but now threatens further progress. In order to prepare the way for another advance, he first reviews the leading multiple traditions interpretations, then draws the lessons these approaches should have taught us about the character of the Founders’ thought, and concludes by sketching an agenda for future research. He seeks to demonstrate that the “either-or” debate about the pedigree of the Founders’ thought, far from being sterile, has made possible a more accurate and sophisticated understanding of the Founding; that the rise of the multiple traditions approaches has reignited the debate and raised it to a new level of maturity; and that the heart of the mature debate is the conflict among competing multiple traditions interpretations (132, 144, and 156).

Gibson identifies three distinct multiple traditions interpretations: “the neo-Lockean synthesis,” “liberal republicanism,” and “illiberal liberalism.” In each case, he focuses on what he considers the most impressive version. The first is exemplified by the work of Michael Zuckert. Zuckert argues that the Founders’ thought was an amalgam that drew on a variety of traditions, namely classical republicanism, Protestant Christianity, the English common law, and English Whiggish republicanism. But he maintains that the deepest stratum of their thought was Lockean, that the other traditions were admitted as parts of the amalgam only insofar as they could be rendered consistent with the Lockean core, and that it was the predominance of the Lockean element that made the amalgam a more or less coherent whole. The second version, best represented by the later work of Lance Banning, also agrees that the Founders’ thought was an amalgam, primarily of liberal and classical republican elements, but denies that it was a tight synthesis whose governing principles were Lockean. Rather, Banning argues that while we can distinguish liberal and republican elements in the Founders’ thought, they understand what we call “liberalism” and “republicanism” to be complementary not rival traditions. Moreover, he maintains

that the Founders “Americanized” both elements, creating a unique amalgam that was neither truly classical nor fully modern. Finally, although he admits that the amalgam became increasingly liberal over time, he insists that the republican element retained its distinctive power, at least for the Jeffersonians, well into the early national period. According to Zuckert’s interpretation, the Founders’ thought was a more or less coherent synthesis; according to Banning’s it was more or less coherent but not tightly synthetic. The third version of the multiple traditions approach is that of Rogers Smith. Smith agrees that the Founders’ thought is best understood as an amalgam. But he argues that amalgam was neither synthetic nor coherent. Rather, he maintains that it was an incoherent because inconsistent mixture of liberal, republican, and inegalitarian ascriptive (racial, ethnic, and gendered) ideologies. While acknowledging that the liberal element was the moral peak of this amalgam, he insists that none of its elements was authoritative and thus that the Founders’ amalgam was, at its heart, a clash of discordant (not complementary) traditions. From Smith’s point of view, the importance of the debate about the specific character of the Founders’ liberal republicanism or republican liberalism becomes relatively insignificant when we discover that their amalgam included illiberal ascriptive ideologies that were at least as weighty as liberalism and republicanism.

In the introduction, Gibson says that his “broadest goal in [chapter 4] is to analyze the *permanent* impact of the liberalism versus republicanism debate on our understanding of the intellectual origins of the American Republic” (12, emphasis added). We recall that Gibson did not claim novelty for his contribution to the debate about methodology but did seem to suggest that that debate had been, in principle, settled. While he doesn’t explicitly claim novelty for his contribution to the liberalism versus republicanism debate, his intervention in that debate is one of the boldest sections of *UF*. Moreover, it suggests that, in his judgment, that debate (or at least large parts of it) has also been settled. Now that the multiple traditions approach has triumphed, what are the “permanent” conclusions that can be drawn from this debate? Gibson counts five.

First, the Founders were in a profound sense liberals. That is, they “almost universally accepted” the liberal teaching about “first principles”: human nature, natural rights, the social contract, and the character and purposes of government. While Gibson is careful to note that Locke was not “the exclusive source” of the Founders’ liberalism, he does not deny that he was its principal source (144-45).

Second, the Founders were not classical republicans. As Gibson points out in an insightful note, the disagreement between the advocates of the neo-liberal and the original republican interpretations “has really been a submerged debate over the meaning of classical republicanism itself” (259-61, n. 55). If “classical republicanism” is “rigorously defined” (145), the claim that the Founders were classical republicans is ludicrous. Classical republicanism in the strict sense teaches that man is a political animal; that the polis is the highest and most comprehensive human community; its most important end is the cultivation of virtue; and that end is best achieved by means of a comprehensive code of laws designed to promote a common way of life, form citizens (especially citizen-soldiers), and insulate them from corruption. According to Gibson, the Founders accepted none of these teachings and the distance of their political thought from authentic classical republicanism was “[t]he corollary” of “their commitment to the natural rights–social contract tradition” (145).

Third, the Founders did, indeed, adhere to the characteristic maxims and make use of the constitutional mechanisms taught by the radical Whig science of politics: men craved power, liberty was fragile, corruption was to be feared, standing armies and public debts were to be opposed, and balanced forms of government were to be preferred. But the republicanism of Whig political science was itself liberal and the Founders embraced its teachings not because they were “classical” but because they were liberal (or had been liberalized by the Whigs). Once we free ourselves from the “exaggerated claims” (148, 149) made by the republican revisionists about the classical pedigree and character of English opposition ideology, we can accurately understand its importance to the Revolutionaries and Founders (especially anti-Federalists) and its pivotal role in the party struggles between the Federalists and Jeffersonians.

Fourth, despite their liberalism, the Founders did embrace and employ key political concepts that have a classical republican ring: virtue, liberty, and the public good. What are we to make of this “apparent paradox” (151)? Gibson’s explanation is not altogether clear. On the one hand, he maintains “few of the Founders ever held fully classical understandings of these concepts or abandoned a belief in their importance in favor of liberal axioms.” Rejecting these alternatives, “the Founders developed *unique* understandings of these concepts that *straddled* and *transcended* classical and liberal conceptions” (150, emphasis added). For example, “they remained attached to the belief that virtue is the foundation of republican

government and that no system of separation of powers can substitute for it” (150). Similarly, they regularly made use of the concept of the “public good” (and its cognates) and did not dismiss that concept as “an incomprehensible abstraction or the residue of the conflict of interests” or understand it to be merely “the aggregation of individual interests, the maintenance of public institutions, or the protection of individual rights” (151). On the other hand, Gibson admits and even emphasizes that “the Founders significantly modified the classical understanding of virtue” and the other two “classical” concepts (151) and did so by liberalizing them. For example, he admits that “few of the Founders believed that Americans could consistently exercise a sublime or self-abnegating form of virtue that required them to ignore their own interests” (150) and that “most of the Founders seem to have understood the public good or the common interest as the collective articulation of self-interest properly understood” (151). Gibson attempts to defend the proposition that the Founders’ definitions of such concepts “are not easily categorized as liberal or republican” (151). But in doing so, he seems to forget his praise for Tarcov’s (and Zuckert’s) neo-Lockean reinterpretation of liberalism, which argues that liberalism, far from being a “defense of atomism, greed, and selfishness,” defends rights, appreciates human sociability, includes a conception of the common good, cultivates a form of public-spiritedness, and teaches a set of decent (albeit bourgeois) moral virtues (137). Nor does Gibson discuss the Founders’ conception of (public) liberty. Earlier, he appeared to accept the liberal republicans’ contention that the Founders somehow repudiated the dichotomy between private and public liberty and even denied that there was a tension between the two (see 138-39). But if, as he contends, the Founders were, at bottom, liberals, it is hard to understand how they could, without contradicting themselves, have done either.

Fifth, the Founders were not possessive individualists and liberal pluralists. After twenty years of debate, we now know that “the possessive-individualist and liberal-pluralist interpretation synthesizes a series of half-truths into a fundamental misreading of the Founding’s intellectual character and the American political system’s original design” (153). Gibson says that there are many versions of this interpretation but refrains from naming their proponents. From what he says elsewhere, there is little doubt he believes that the most comprehensive and influential version is that of the “East Coast” Straussians in general and Diamond in particular (see *IF*, 3; 18-21; 107, n. 10; 116, n. 16; and *UF*, 158; 263, n. 81; and 264, n. 94). (While Gibson indicates that Robert Dahl’s interpretation is also important, his summary fits the common understanding of Diamond’s much better than

Dahl's. In speaking of those who teach that "the Framers relied on institutional structure to remedy the absence of virtue," he suggests that Diamond's interpretation is "more subtle and refined" than Dahl's [*UF*, 268, n. 34].) According to Gibson, this interpretation commits four errors, each of which he seeks to correct.

Error 1: The Founders believed that a properly constructed national government and the competitive clash of private interest groups are adequate substitutes for the promotion of political liberty, the cultivation of public virtue, and dedication to the common good.

Correction: "[T]he Founders remained attached to these concepts even as they rephrased and modified them in novel ways" (154).

Error 2: The Framers intended to establish a national government whose principal purpose was the integration and accommodation of interests. Moreover, they expected representatives to use their offices "to advance the interests of their constituents" and even "their personal interests" "at the expense of the public good" (154).

Correction: Most of the Framers adhered to "a republican conception of impartial representation, believed that the government should advance the common interest within the sphere of its limited power, and thought that this could be achieved only by deliberate acts of government made through representatives" (154).

Error 3: The Founders believed the only purpose of limited government is the protection of private rights from public tyranny. In pursuit of this end, the Framers established a national government whose central feature is a complex system of separation of powers designed to encourage competition among the three governmental organs. They knew that such a system risked inefficiency, inaction, and deadlock, but were more than willing to take that risk.

Correction: The Founders believed limited government had a second legitimate end: "good government." The Framers' system of separation of powers was designed not only to prevent governmental tyranny but to secure the conditions of good government: prudent deliberation, stable legislation, efficient and energetic administration, and impartial adjudication.

Error 4: The Framers' government "was designed to serve as the institutional framework for commercial capitalism" (153).

Correction: While some of the Founders (e.g., Hamilton and Marshall) were “commercial republicans” and thus “the forerunners of capitalists,” others, especially those who became Jeffersonians, were not. Moreover, Jeffersonian political economy has been consistently misunderstood. It was neither “strictly classical” nor “proto-capitalist.” While the Jeffersonians were agrarians who idealized the independent freeholder as the sturdiest basis of a free society, they rejected the view “that government should...prescribe a comprehensive vision of human well-being,” and embraced commerce and scientific farming. And while they favored economic growth and advocated free trade, they were “land-expansion agrarians” who were suspicious of the unbridled pursuit of economic opportunity (especially speculation) and opposed “industrialization, urbanization, a high division of labor, broad inequalities of wealth resulting from commercialization, and efforts to facilitate the growth of capital and centralize it in the national government.” Properly understood, the Jeffersonians were not motivated by romantic longing for a pastoral past but by a keen sense of the dangers of rapid development towards a completely commercialized society (155).

Gibson’s critique of what he calls the “possessive-individualist, liberal-pluralist, or commercial republican interpretation of the American Founding” is insightful but problematic. On the one hand, if Diamond is his principal target, he distorts Diamond’s work in two ways. First, he seems to ignore the differences between Diamond’s interpretation and that of the liberal-pluralists. To the best of my knowledge, Diamond never argued that the Founders rejected all substantive conceptions of the public good and never denied that they believed that some degree of virtue was a necessary condition for the health of popular government. In addition, Diamond was a fierce critic of the pluralists’ “deadlock of democracy” argument. One of the hallmarks of his interpretation of *The Federalist* was his insistence that the Founders’ system of separation of powers was designed *both* to secure limited government *and* create popularly based legislative, executive, and judicial organs that would infuse the national government with those political virtues hitherto thought to be the preserve of mixed regimes. Second, Gibson seems to ignore the distinction between Diamond’s early and late work. While it is true that the former overlapped with the possessive-individualist interpretation of the Founders’ thought, the latter sought to correct the defects of that interpretation by emphasizing the Founders’ embrace of an expansive notion of self-interest and their expectation that the enlightened pursuit of self-interest would indirectly generate the public-spiritedness

and private virtues necessary to sustain popular government (see 178-80). On the other hand, Gibson's critique obscures the extent to which he agrees with the most comprehensive and historically sensitive Straussian interpretations, e.g., Rahe's liberal version (see *IF*, 18-21) and Zuckert's neo-liberal version. As far as I can tell, neither Rahe nor Zuckert is guilty of Gibson's first three errors. As to the fourth, since Gibson himself admits that "*some of the Founders were 'commercial republicans'*" (154, emphasis added) and that the Jeffersonians were "*firmly committed to commerce and scientific farming*" (155, emphasis added), it is difficult to differentiate his view from those of Rahe and Zuckert. (The distance between Gibson's view and those of Rahe and Zuckert shrinks even further when we reconsider his statement that "*some of the Founders were commercial republicans.*" That statement is misleading. It would be more accurate to say that most of the Federalists, and some of the Jeffersonians, were commercial republicans.)

Now that the errors of the original liberal and republican interpretations have been exposed and the multiple traditions approach is ascendant, what still needs to be done? Gibson singles out four areas for future research.

First, we need to investigate the place of "civil society" in the Founders' thought. If they believed that virtue (including public-spirit- edness) was a necessary condition for healthy popular government but also believed that it was illegitimate for the national government "to promote virtue among the citizens or foster a particular conception of the good life" (157), how was the requisite virtue to be generated?

Second, we need to reconsider the Founders' self-under- standing, especially their understanding of their historical situation and historical project. The discovery that the Founders were republicans but not classical republicans and liberals but not ultra-modern liberals, "suggests that [they] made a unique contribution to the history of political thought by developing a novel conception that synthesized previous traditions into an amalgam that is unlike any of them" (157). In order to take this suggestion seriously, we need to reconsider the presupposition that guides *both* the clas- sical republican and liberal interpretations: "the ancients-versus-moderns framework of analysis." If we now agree that "republicanism" and "liberalism" are analytic concepts anachronistically imposed on the Founders' thought, perhaps it is time to consider whether the ancients-versus-moderns dual- ism is yet another—"indeed, the grandest"—such concept. The advocates of both the classical republican and liberal interpretations agree "that past

political thinkers should be interpreted from a genuinely historical perspective that attempts to understand how they understood themselves.” Yet both groups of scholars have assumed rather than demonstrated that the Founders understood the history of political thought and their place in it in the light of a conflict between the ancients and moderns (158). Gibson, following a suggestion made by Marvin Meyers in his critical appreciation of the work of his friend Diamond (see 264-65, n. 95), argues that we need a fresh study of the Founders’ self-understanding and offers an outline of an alternative interpretation, one that begins with “the peculiar set of problems they identified and addressed.” His proposed interpretation has three elements. To begin with, “the Founders were first and perhaps most fundamentally opponents of ‘monarchical absolutism,’ of corrupt hereditary monarchies with unlimited power such as those prevalent in modern Europe.” Their detestation of such governments, reinforced by the experience of the Revolution and coupled with their judgment that the character of the American people was republican, persuaded them that the new Constitution must be republican. But the post-Revolutionary experiments with republicanism and confederation led them to reconsider the characteristic problems of ancient (and, I would add, Renaissance) republics and ancient (as well as early modern) confederacies. In an effort to solve those problems (and avoid a relapse into hereditary monarchy and aristocracy), the Framers employed the inventions of modern political science to establish a novel federated republic, which was “extensive,” “partly national and partly federal,” and “wholly popular and wholly representative.” They agreed that such innovations were necessary to vindicate the cause of republicanism in the face of the challenges posed by modern absolutism and the deplorable history of republics in antiquity (and modernity). Finally, soon after the ratification of the Constitution, the Founding generation split over the likely fate of republicanism in America. The Jeffersonians feared what they regarded as Europe’s escalating corruption and unavoidable decay and sought to insulate the new republic from them. The Federalists (I would add) were more sanguine about America’s ability to combine its novel political arrangements and the more advanced stages of modern technological, economic, and social development (159-61). According to Gibson’s hypothesis, “The Founders...did not see themselves as moderns bent on repudiating classical political philosophy or as nostalgic republicans hoping to delay the advent of modernity.” As opponents of early modern absolutism, they were, indeed, “liberals,” but their liberalism “expressed their repudiation of [such absolutism], not their repudiation of classical republicanism.” As such, they were free to employ “multiple traditions” to address the partly

traditional, partly unique constellation of problems with which they were faced (161).

Third, scholars need to respond to the challenge posed by Smith's version of the multiple traditions approach. Since "Smith's essential point cannot be denied"—i.e., since "[t]he sets of ideologies that justified the exclusion of women, Native Americans, and African Americans from citizenship were undeniably a part of the intellectual origins of the American Republic" (162)—Gibson argues that we need to proceed on two fronts: On the one hand, we need dispassionate studies designed to test Smith's arguments about the relationship between the Founders' liberal-republican synthesis and such illiberal ideologies, about the relative strength of the two conflicting elements of the Founders' thought, and especially about the Founders' purposive use of such inegalitarian and ascriptive doctrines. On the other hand, we need to investigate whether Smith's critics on the Left are right to contend that the liberal element in the Founders' amalgam (which Smith defends) is itself a source of these illiberal ideologies (which he deplores) (161-62).

Fourth, scholars need to unlock the potential of the multiple traditions approach to provide a fresh understanding of the nature of the American political tradition. Everyone recognizes that "the structure of American political institutions, the path of American political development, and even contemporary discourse in American politics" are marked by characteristic tensions that generate recurring conflicts. We need to explore whether the multiple traditions approach can help us develop explanations for such tensions and conflicts that are superior to those offered by the dominant modes of historical and political analysis. For example, is Zuckert right to suggest that the present-day American political order is largely the product of "the grafting of a Jeffersonian 'expressive' conception of republicanism onto a more elitist Madisonian framework of government"? Is Smith right to suggest that "there is a logic of American political development based on the interaction of illiberal and liberal-republican ideologies?" Are many of the most persistent and intractable political conflicts of our time—e.g., those over affirmative action, gun control, the proper relationship between religion and politics—traceable to the tensions among the liberal, republican, and illiberal elements in the Founders' political thought (163-64)?

There is much to be said for Gibson's proposed research agenda. His first and fourth suggestions are particularly promising. For those eager to appropriate the Founders' thought, the third is particularly pressing.

But I would suggest an amendment to Gibson's first suggestion and argue that his second (which he regards as the most important [see 157]) needs some refinement.

The amendment: The question of the place of civil society in the Founders' thought points to larger questions about the possible limits of their thought. Near the end of *IF*, immediately before declaring that "we are all multiple traditions interpreters now," Gibson asks "what does the reality of discursive pluralism say about the kind of *regime* that the Founders created?" (95, emphasis added). As he presents it, the debate about democracy and the Constitution is too narrow to provide an adequate answer to this question. Few have attempted to grapple with it in a comprehensive, sophisticated, and rigorous way. The works of Banning, Diamond, Wood, Zuckert, and perhaps a few others provide outlines of such an analysis. Eidelberg and Rahe have attempted large-scale versions (see Addendum 2). Some might argue that to ask the regime question is to beg it. After all, the question seems to presuppose that the classical concept of "regime"—a concept which conjoins rather than separates "form of government" and "way of life"—is applicable to the Founders' handiwork. Didn't the Founders, as good liberals, reject the very notion of "regime"? This objection, while serious, is not decisive. Even if the Founders rejected the classical concept of regime, they did more than invent a form of government. They helped generate a distinctive way of life. Did they intend or anticipate that way of life? In his discussion of the liberal republican synthesis, Gibson emphasizes that the Founding generation lived in "a period of transition" (137), "a transition in which liberalism became increasingly important over time, but republicanism remained as a distinguishable political language" (138). Does this formulation adequately capture the nature of transition induced or experienced by the Founding generation? The best of the Founders were distinguished by their gentlemanly breeding and liberal education, both of which were more aristocratic than democratic. As thinkers, they exhibited a rare blend of theoretical and practical wisdom. As public men, their conduct was marked by the devotion to duty, honor, and even the self-conscious pursuit of fame. While these qualities can be called "republican," they are also "aristocratic." If the Founding period marked a transition from a kind of republican liberalism to a kind of liberal republicanism, it also marked a transition from aristocratic to democratic republicanism. Did the Founders believe that the new, more democratic, "regime" would continue to generate men like themselves? If so, why? If not, did they believe it would be less dependent on such men? If so, why?

The refinement: What was at stake in the quarrel between the ancients and moderns? The Founders had experienced one version of that quarrel almost firsthand. That version had irrupted at the end of the seventeenth century as “the battle of the books.” At its deepest level, the question in dispute was the relative superiority of ancient and modern *philosophy* or *science*. Gibson is surely right to argue that scholars need to investigate whether the Founders did, in fact, take their bearings from the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, and whether they did, in fact, understand themselves as having to choose a side in that quarrel (158). But his formulation of those issues is misleading in two ways. First, he fails to distinguish between theory and practice (both when discussing the ancients and when discussing the moderns). Second, he tends to focus on ancient and modern practice to exclusion of ancient and modern theory. On the plane of theory, it is difficult to deny that the Founders understood the history of philosophy or science—and thus the history of political thought—in terms of a quarrel between the ancients and moderns, understood themselves to be engaged in that quarrel, and understood themselves to be moderns. This was especially true of the Jeffersonians, who Gibson repeatedly turns to for evidence that the Founders were not simply moderns and liberals. Jefferson’s intellectual heroes were Bacon, Newton, and Locke. Even Jeffersonian political economy—which is central to Gibson’s argument—was understood by the Jeffersonians to be based on the “stage” theory that was a prominent feature of the new science of political economy developed by the Scots (see 160-61). Gibson might respond that the issues are less clear cut on the plane of practice. But even on that plane he admits that Founders had no intention of returning to ancient practice as understood by the ancients (either philosophers or politicians). Why didn’t they? In part, of course, because circumstances had changed. But, as Gibson acknowledges, they also rejected ancient practice as a guide because of their adherence to modern theory. For example, as modern liberals they regarded any attempt by government to foster virtue directly to be illegitimate (and not merely impractical). If there is something to this, Gibson’s argument that the Founders, in confronting the concrete problems of their time, took their bearings not from the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns but from the clash between modern monarchical absolutism and modern republicanism, is, at best a half-truth. Why were the Founders ardent opponents of monarchical absolutism? Above all because absolute government in any form violates natural rights. The ancient thinkers, of course, were, for all practical purposes, also opponents of absolutism. But ancient philosophy taught that some men have a natural right to rule others without their consent.

And Christian theology (“modern” or Protestant as well as “medieval” or Catholic), taught that some men have a divine right to rule others without their consent. In opposing modern monarchical absolutism, the Founders understood themselves to be opposing a form of government that rested, in part, on an “ancient” theory of right that had been refuted by the modern liberal theorists who were their teachers.

V. AUTHORITY

The title of the fifth and final chapter of *UF* is “Taking Historiography Seriously.” This could be the motto for Gibson’s two volumes taken together. He begins this chapter by reminding readers of his defense of the study of historiography in general and the historiography of the Founding in particular. From the outset, he has maintained that the historiographer need not be an antiquarian and the practice of historiography need not be a merely historical exercise (3, 12-13, and 165-67). Thus it is fitting that he concludes by taking up four questions that speak directly to our relationship to the Founders and their handiwork (13 and 167): What is the character of the Founders’ thought? What is its ultimate significance? How did the Founders’ Constitution affect American political development and how does it affect contemporary American politics? What authority do the Founders have over us?

Since, according to Gibson, the multiple traditions approach has triumphed and since Zuckert and Smith “have set forth the two most sophisticated and challenging” multiple traditions interpretations (168), he approaches the first question by returning to the confrontation between Zuckert’s and Smith’s interpretations. Which of these “provides the best framework for interpreting the American Founding and for understanding the course of American political development? Should we adopt an approach that suggests that liberalism was pervasive, that it provided the organizing logic on which other sets of ideas were integrated and thus was the empirical center of American political thought? Or should we adopt an approach that suggests that no single political tradition—even liberalism—organized and ordered the others?” (168). Although, as Gibson points out, Zuckert and Smith “both defend liberalism and see it as the *moral* core of American political thought” (171, emphasis in the original), their differences, which Gibson here rehearses (168-71), dwarf their agreement. They lead to “different assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of the American Founding” and “distinct—*though not necessarily contradictory*—understandings of the trajectory of American political development” (171, emphasis added). In

order to assess these differences, we need an answer to a “threshold question”: Should we accord “conceptual identity” to the inegalitarian and ascriptive ideologies Smith identifies as elements of the Founders’ thought? (171). He points to this question in chapter 4 but does not explicitly answer it (162). Here he confronts it directly and his conclusion seems to be unequivocal. Smith’s evidence is overwhelming. After Smith, “there is no way to deny” that racism, sexism, and nativism are “recurring, highly structured, and sophisticated—if repulsive” components of American political thought in general and the Founders’ political thought in particular (173; cf. 162). This would seem to settle the matter. But even here Gibson seeks a kind of middle way. He argues that we should not “dismiss the considerable empirical strengths of Zuckert’s multiple traditions approach or his insights into the course of American political development.” Rather we should adopt “a multiple traditions interpretation that *integrates* the empirical insights of Zuckert and Smith” (173). This would be a kind of “super” multiple traditions interpretation, one that recognizes *all* the elements of the American amalgam (liberal, republican, and illiberal), acknowledges the *partial* truths contained in the literatures touting America’s consensus and exceptionalism, and emphasizes “the dynamic, constructive, and aspirational quality of America’s liberal principles, especially Americans’ fundamental commitment to equality... while also acknowledging that victories for progressive causes may be tenuous and are often followed by conservative counterrevolutions” (174).

There are three problems with Gibson’s proposal. First, his attempt to “save” Zuckert’s interpretation is unpersuasive. While Smith would have no trouble accepting the views that American political development has, in part, been consensual and exceptional, and that liberalism has been its moral motor, Zuckert could not accept Smith’s view of the place of illiberal ideologies in the Founders’ thought and their role in American political development without abandoning the organizing principle of his interpretation. If the illiberal ideologies identified by Smith do have “conceptual identities” and if Smith’s interpretation can absorb the insights provided by Zuckert, why can’t we dispense with the latter’s interpretation? Hasn’t Smith by himself already provided the “super” multiple traditions interpretation we need? If so, shouldn’t we all become Smithians? By not raising and answering these questions, Gibson obscures the extent of his agreement with Smith and disagreement with Zuckert. Not all middle ways are possible. Second, throughout *IF* and *UF*, Gibson grapples with the problem of the coherence of the Founders’ thought and seems eager to establish that it is, indeed, coherent. But if Smith’s interpretation is correct, we must concede

that the Founders' thought is dramatically incoherent, marked as it is by "*irreconcilable and contradictory commitments*" (171, emphasis in the original). Third, Smith's interpretation seems to call into question the legitimacy of the Founders' thought and erect a barrier to its appropriation, thus undermining their authority (cf. *IF*, 97-101). Gibson does not take up these issues when he revisits the Zuckert-Smith confrontation. Does he, in the remaining parts of his key chapter on the relevance of the Founders, defend them against the damaging charges leveled by Smith? If not, can they be defended against those charges? (See Addendum 3.)

Gibson turns next to the second of his concluding questions: Does the political thought of the American Founders, understood in the light of the now ascendant multiple traditions approach, constitute a significant contribution to the history of political thought? In responding to this question, he endorses and buttresses Wood's well-known contention that the Founder's political thought "was not political theory in the grand manner, but it was political theory worthy of a prominent place in the history of Western thought" (180).

According to Gibson, the Founders' claim to a place (albeit a secondary one) in the pantheon rests on four "qualities" of their thought. First, unlike many philosophical statesmen, the Founders refused to simplify the ends of politics or deny the tensions among them. On the contrary, they embraced multiple and conflicting ends and sought the means to moderate the resulting tensions. As a result, they had a remarkably sophisticated understanding of the political problem. Second, the Founders' thought was both innovative and sober. In contrast to their French counterparts, they were moderate revolutionaries who succeeded in combining noble idealism and gritty realism. Indeed, Gibson goes further, claiming that "the Founders' political thought stands as a testament against the errors of utopianism and totalitarianism, ancient and modern" (175). Third, the Founders were philosophically informed statesmen, not "closet philosophers." Unlike most revolutionaries, they were able to learn from experience. The tumultuous politics of the Revolution, post-Revolutionary state governments, and Articles of Confederation led them to modify and perfect their understanding of the political problem. In particular, it led them to develop "a profound understanding of the proper relationship of power and liberty." At the outset of the Revolution, they believed that the greatest threat to liberty was excessive governmental power. By 1787, they had learned that liberty was equally endangered by weak government, incompetent government, and majority

tyranny (177). Fourth, Gibson argues the Founders had an unusually sophisticated understanding of the relationship between interest and virtue. It is mistake, he maintains, to believe that their “contributions to the history of political thought were little more than an exploration of the proper institutional implications of liberalism.” On the contrary, “the institutional design of the constitutional system of 1787 should be seen as a conceptual and theoretical accomplishment worthy of consideration as a contribution to the history of political thought” (177). According to Gibson, three aspects of the Framers’ thinking about institutions stand out. First, they understood that “institutions matter.” Second, they devised a unique solution to the problem of federalism, one that divided powers between the national and state governments, thereby combining the advantages of centralization and decentralization. Third, their institutional design was grounded in an understanding of the relationship between interest and virtue that is “far more realistic than [that of] either their cynical or their utopian critics” (180). The latter mistakenly believe that the Framers had (in the words of Garry Wills, quoted by Gibson) a “truly noble vision of virtuous impartial leaders”; the former mistakenly believe “that the Founders expected rulers to act based on calculations of interest and power, with the understanding that institutional organization would nevertheless produce virtuous results” (179). In fact, the Framers rejected both views as unrealistic, that of the utopians because it fails to do justice to the worst tendencies of human nature; that of the cynics because it fails to do justice to the full range of self-interested motives. Unlike the utopians, the Framers understood the weaknesses of virtue; unlike the cynics they continued to disdain narrowly self-interested behavior.

Gibson’s list of the Founders’ contributions to Western political thought is impressive. But is it comprehensive? Does it include what the Founders themselves understood to be their most important contributions? Does it do justice to the Founders’ inventiveness? I would suggest that Gibson’s list fails to capture what is most distinctive about the Founders’ thought. One could argue that the Founders’ most novel and important contributions concern not politics in general, but democracy in particular. The Founders were the first political thinkers to argue that what we now call liberal democracy is the best and only fully legitimate form of government. (Perhaps Spinoza deserves this distinction. If so, he would be the Founders’ most illustrious predecessor.) Although it is not clear that Gibson would dispute this claim, there is some evidence that he might. Throughout his two volumes, he seems to take for granted rather than attempt to uncover the grounds of the Founders’ preference for democracy. Consider, for example,

his argument on behalf of the view that the Founders took their bearings from the conflict between monarchical absolutism and republicanism. He makes two points about the Founders' preference for republicanism. First, their opposition to absolutism "was at once the progenitor and the product of the American Revolution." Second, when "coupled with their belief that the 'genius' or character of the American people was republican, this vehement opposition to monarchical absolutism convinced [them] that a republic was the only form of government suitable for the United States" (139). But did the Founders understand their preference for republics to be merely negative and circumstantial? Gibson's use of the term "genius" points to a famous passage from *Federalist* 39. That passage, however, indicates that the Founders had a more robust understanding of the grounds of their preference. Madison offers three reasons why Americans rightly demand that "the general form and aspect of the government [established by the new Constitution] be strictly republican": "It is evident that no other form of government would be reconcilable with the genius of the American people, with the fundamental principles of the Revolution, or with that honorable determination which animates every votary of freedom to rest all our political experiments on the capacity of mankind for self-government." Madison's last two reasons are positive, not merely negative and circumstantial. Both, and especially the third, suggest that he understands the American people's preference for republics to be rooted in first principles. Moreover, they suggest that he understands it to be rooted in the first principles of what we now call liberalism. If these inferences are correct, one could argue that the Founders (or at least the original Federalists) were not only the first political thinkers to argue that a properly constructed republic is the best and only completely legitimate form of government, but also were the first great *liberals* to argue *explicitly* that the principles of liberalism, rightly understood, entail republicanism. Neither Locke nor Montesquieu went so far or was so bold.

At first sight, it is strange that Gibson neglects these radically innovative contributions of the Founders. But in doing so he is not alone. Not even Diamond—the most influential defender of the Founders' democratic credentials—penetrated to this level of the Founders' argument. (To my knowledge, the most sustained and sophisticated attempt to expose the liberal ground of the Founders' commitment to republicanism is David Epstein's, in his unjustly neglected *The Political Thought of "The Federalist."* Gibson includes Epstein's book in the bibliography attached to *UF*, but does not mention Epstein in the text.)

The Founders' novelty—and their self-conscious embrace of novelty—comes into sharp focus when we consider their relationship to Montesquieu, their most comprehensive liberal predecessor. In *The Federalist*, both Hamilton and Madison pay homage to the Frenchman's authority. In *Federalist* 9, Hamilton makes use of Montesquieu's celebrated arguments on behalf of small republics and confederations of such republics. But in doing so, he cleverly distorts the Frenchman's definition of a confederation and prepares the way for Madison's rejection of the small republic argument in *Federalist* 10. Publius' linked arguments against small republics and on behalf of large republics are the logical and rhetorical conditions of the Founders' revolutionary federalism (an innovation recognized by Gibson [see 177]). They are meant to demonstrate that republics can become large without endangering their republican character. Similarly, in *Federalist* 47, Madison makes use of Montesquieu's equally celebrated argument on behalf of the separation of powers. But in subsequent papers, he silently rejects a key element of the Frenchman's account. Montesquieu argues that successful separation requires a mixed society, one composed of qualitatively different orders. Madison, in contrast, detaches the argument for separation of powers from the argument for a mixed society and shows how separation can be achieved in an unmixed society by wholly popular means. The Founders replaced the traditional small republic argument with a novel argument on behalf of an extended republic. They replaced the traditional mixed regime argument with a novel argument on behalf of an unmixed republic. In doing so, they went further than any of their liberal predecessors in republicanizing liberalism and further than any of their radical Whig predecessors in liberalizing republicanism.

Gibson's response to his third question about our relationship to the Founders and their handiwork is less an answer than a cautionary tale. He begins by differentiating the question now under consideration from the question he addressed in chapter 2: "We are not examining how democratic or undemocratic the Framers' Constitution was intended to be or actually was. We are addressing the even more vexing and intricate issues of how the Framers' Constitution has shaped the development of democracy in America and the continuing effects of living under essentially the same constitutional framework" (180). Instead of addressing these issues directly, Gibson takes a "case study" approach, examining two recent books which attempt to assess the impact of the original Constitution on the course of American political development and the Framers' responsibility for the shape of contemporary American politics: Jennifer Nedelsky's *Private Property and the Limits of*

American Constitutionalism: The Madisonian Framework and Its Legacy and Robert Dahl's *How Democratic Is the American Constitution?* Nedelsky criticizes the Framers for creating a class-based system; Dahl criticizes them for creating a structurally flawed system; both argue that the Constitution is an undemocratic, anomalous relic in need of radical reform. In response, Gibson concedes that Nedelsky and Dahl succeed in identifying "some persistent and, in some cases, decisive criticisms of the original design of the Constitution and its contemporary effects on the character of American democracy." But he also accuses them of misunderstanding certain aspects of that design and of misrepresenting and exaggerating its effects (183 and 184). While he is eager to expose their misinterpretations, he is more troubled by their failure to differentiate between those aspects of our contemporary problems that spring from the Constitution of 1787 and those that are rooted in broader historical forces, recent rulings and policies, and our own defects. According to Gibson, Nedelsky and Dahl fail to do so because they treat "the influence of the Framers' Constitution and the original constitutional design" as the *only* variable necessary to explain "the particular form of democracy we have today" (188). In contrast, Gibson argues "that we need to tell a much more complex story of American political development," one that recognizes that the Framers are only partly responsible "for what America is today" (189). We need complex stories because simple stories are not only theoretically deficient, but politically dangerous: "It makes a real difference," Gibson points out, "whether the weaknesses of our institutions can be traced to the initial design of the political system, to later changes in institutional structures and practices, to transformations in the beliefs and expectations of the electorate, or to relatively recent laws, rulings, and policies." Gibson, who is himself left-leaning and reform-minded, concludes with a salutary warning: The telling of complex stories is "the only prudent way to locate responsibility and approach reform" (190).

Gibson now turns to the last of his questions: What authority do the Founders have over us? His response is a fitting conclusion to *UF* and, indeed to *IF* and *UF* as companion volumes. Both volumes have their genesis in this question, and are meant to provide a foundation for engaging it in a thoughtful way. Moreover, his "last word" exemplifies the spirit and method that are characteristic of his inquiry as a whole. Gibson divides his final question into two related questions: How should we appropriate the Founders' political thought? and What do we owe the Founders? In chapter 3, he defended the view that appropriation is sometimes legitimate. Here he seeks criteria for distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate forms

of appropriation. He offers two (191): “First, scholars engaged in appropriation should explicitly state what aspects of their ideas come directly from the Founders and which ones are extrapolations necessary to make the Founders’ ideas work today. Second, scholars should not invoke the name of the Founders in the service of proposals that they directly opposed.” According to Gibson, an illegitimate appropriation is a mere “rhetorical raid” in which a scholar “ransacks” and “manipulates” the ideas of the Founders in support of his favored solution to a contemporary problem. In contrast, a legitimate appropriation promotes a genuine dialogue, one designed to test both the scholar’s favored solution and its fidelity to the ideas of the Founders. In other words, Gibson suggests that the hallmark of legitimate appropriation is intellectual honesty. This, of course, is a virtue that his two books are meant to exemplify and promote.

Gibson’s approach to the radically polarized debate about the Founders’ authority is meant to exhibit another of his favored virtues: intellectual moderation. As usual, he seeks a middle way, this time between those scholars who seek to buttress and those who seek to destroy the authority of the Founders. The former, he claims, tend to be “foundationalists,” attempt to glorify and vindicate the Founders, argue that “the Founders’ understandings of particular constitutional concepts are the sole legitimate standard for constitutional interpretation,” defend only those reforms that will allegedly restore the Founders’ ideas, attack all those that allegedly depart from those ideas, and cling to “a pristine view of the past.” The latter, he asserts, tend to be “anti-foundationalists,” seek to excoriate and debunk the Founders, attack them as narrowly self-interested and profoundly unjust, insist that they can offer little or no help toward the resolution of contemporary problems, and cling to “an unflinching faith in moral progress” (193). Gibson argues that “a third—and much more desirable—relationship to the Founders is possible.” His third way would avoid “either romanticism and puerile worship on the one hand or self-righteous, acontextualized condemnation on the other. It would also require that we interpret the American Founding as neither virgin birth nor original sin, as neither a repository of true or first principles, nor a source of shame or guilt.” Instead, it would regard the Founding as “providing the materials for an intelligent and necessarily perpetual conversation about what our foundations are and what role they should have in the present.” It would, in other words, “continue to search for foundations *without being committed to foundationalism*.” Those who adopt Gibson’s third way “would have *no legal or moral reason* to be bound by [the Founders’] ideas or the founding principles of the American political system,” but would have

“numerous *prudential* reasons” to attempt to understand and learn from the Founders. They would “follow their advice when they are right and because they were right, not because they were Founders.” They would regard the Founders as “deserving our most serious consideration but having authority over our ideas, actions, and institutions *only so far as reason abides*.” “This,” Gibson concludes, “is the most we owe the Founders and the least we owe ourselves” (193-94; emphasis added).

Gibson’s impassioned tone and rhetorical flourishes suggest the intensity of his feelings about the issue of the Founders’ authority. But they also raise serious questions about the soundness of the last of his recommended middle ways. First, there seems to be a tension between his rejection of “foundationalism” and his powerful critique of linguistic contextualism in chapter 3. Second, there seems to be a tension between his rejection of the possibility that the Founding is “a repository of true or first principles” and his claim in chapter 5 that the Founders’ made “enduring contributions to the history of political thought” (174). Third, his suggestion that we “have no legal or moral reason to be bound by [the Founders’] ideas or the founding principles of the American political system” (194) should give us pause. Isn’t some form of “originalism” entailed by the American idea of constitutionalism, which understands the Constitution to be “fundamental law” established by an extraordinary act of the sovereign people? Most important, his suggestion that the Founders deserve “our most serious consideration” “only so far as reason abides” (194) seems to betray “an unflinching faith in moral progress” (193). At a minimum, it seems to signal a rejection of the moderate, anti-utopian Enlightenment, which guided the most thoughtful of the Founders, and an embrace of the radical, utopian Enlightenment, which, according to Gibson, they prudently rejected. I am reminded of *Federalist* 49, where Madison criticizes Jefferson’s proposal to prevent legislative tyranny (and thus solve the central problem of separation of powers) by means of frequent appeals to the people. Madison concludes his famous critique as follows:

If it be true that all governments rest on opinion, it is no less true that the strength of opinion in each individual, and its practical influence on his conduct, depend much on the number which he supposes to have entertained the same opinion. The reason of man, like man himself, is timid and cautious when left alone, and acquires firmness and confidence in proportion to the number with which it is associated. When the examples which fortify opinion are *ancient* as well as *numerous*, they are known to have a double effect. In a nation of philosophers, this consideration ought to be disregarded. A reverence for the laws would be sufficiently inculcated by the voice of enlightened

reason. But a nation of philosophers is as little to be expected as the philosophical race of kings wished for by Plato. And in every other nation, the most rational government will not find it a superfluous advantage to have the prejudices of the community on its side. (Madison's emphasis.)

One wonders how Gibson would respond to Madison.

In the introduction to *UF*, Gibson tells his readers that this book “marks my maturation from a puerile (but remarkably typical) affection for the Founders to a deeper understanding of their place in the history of political thought and a more balanced assessment of their accomplishments and failures, especially the strengths and limitations of the political system they founded” (3). Gibson set out to vindicate the study of the historiography of the American Founding. He does that and more. His companion volumes, and especially *UF*, make it possible for his readers to follow him in rethinking where they stand with respect to the Founders. The Founders understood founding to be the highest form of political activity. The philosophers, ancient and modern, agreed, but also understood founding to be the most revealing political phenomenon. From this point of view, the study of founding—“the art of the legislator”—is the peak of the philosophical study of politics. For Americans, rethinking the Founders and the Founding may be the best protreptic and propaedeutic to the study of political philosophy.

ADDENDA

1. Four of the six interpretive frameworks discussed in *IF* are discussed in greater detail in *UF*. The exceptions are the Scottish Enlightenment and multicultural approaches. Gibson does not explain why he does not return to those two frameworks in *UF*. In *IF*, he notes that “the Scottish Enlightenment contributed in such a variety of ways to the Founding project that it is difficult to characterize that contribution” (93). In *UF*, he implies that the Scottish tradition is one of those included in the multiple traditions approach (see 132 and 140). In *IF*, Gibson makes clear that he believes the topics taken up by the multicultural approach are of great import. (The chapter on that framework is the longest in the book.) But he also admits that “much of this [multicultural] scholarship is an exercise in identity politics and a kind of liberation historiography” (64-65) and suggests that it is often marked by “self-righteous judgments and moralizing” (83). (He makes no such criticisms of the other five frameworks.) Perhaps Gibson would argue

that Smith's multiple traditions interpretation incorporates the multicultural approach at its best.

2. In *IF*, Gibson lists Eidelberg's *The Philosophy of the American Constitution* in his bibliography and cites it in a note as a precursor to the argument of the "West Coast" Straussians (109, n.18). He does not list Eidelberg's *A Discourse on Statesmanship* in *IF*'s bibliography. He does not mention Eidelberg in *UF* and lists neither of Eidelberg's books in its bibliography. In *IF*, Gibson provides a summary of Rahe's interpretation (18-21). He does so for two reasons. On the one hand, it is "the most detailed historical" version of the "East Coast" Straussian (i.e., liberal or Lockean) interpretation. On the other hand, such an interpretation "has become a kind of unexamined foundation underlying many studies of the political thought of the American Founders, even those written by opponents of the liberal interpretation" (18). In *UF*, Gibson refers to Rahe a number of times but does not engage his interpretation of the Founders' regime.

3. Gibson is aware of attempts to defend the Founders against the charges that they were racist, sexist, and nativist. For example, in *UF*, he briefly rehearses the arguments of Robert Goldwin and especially Herman Belz and Thomas West (48, 56, 207, nn. 10-11, and 216-17, n. 47). In his view, such arguments are not nearly strong enough to counter the evidence assembled by Smith. According to Gibson "there is no evidence that [the Founders'] commitment to natural rights principles led them to seriously consider guaranteeing voting rights to women and blacks *or* to believe that these principles would someday become the basis for progressive reforms that expanded the political community"; "the Founders simply did not accept the proposition that fidelity to those principles *required* granting full civil and political rights to all groups regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity" (56; emphasis added). On West, also see *IF*, 97-98 and 141, n. 24; and *UF*, 192-94, and 270, n. 64.

Lucrezia in *Mandragola*: Machiavelli's New Prince

HEATHER HADAR WRIGHT

WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY

hwright@wittenberg.edu

A young woman, a shrewd one,
was much loved by him,
and by him was tricked,
as you will hear. And I would wish
that you might be tricked as she was.

—from the Prologue of *Mandragola*

...as Machiavelli has shown most obviously by his comedy *La Mandragola*, human life requires also levity...in changing from gravity to levity or vice versa, one imitates nature, which is changeable...

—Leo Strauss

Within the intricate tapestry of Niccolo Machiavelli's political thought is woven a perplexing array of female images. Although Machiavelli's teachings are directed toward men, his writings are rich with images of women. Women are presented as virgins and as older married shrews, as objects of conquest and as barriers to conquest. Perhaps figuring most prominently in his writings relating to women, Machiavelli presents his readers with *Fortuna*: a deified entity with whom men do battle for their fate.

It is this last image that has by far provoked the most criticism (and outrage) from feminist scholars. In Chapter 25 of *The Prince*, Machiavelli offers potential sovereigns the following advice:

it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman; and it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down. And one sees that she lets herself be won more by the impetuous than by those who proceed coldly. And so always, like a woman, she is the friend of the young, because they are less cautious, more ferocious, and command her with more audacity. (Machiavelli 1985, 101)

Taken literally (unless s/he views sado-masochism as an exercise of sexual freedom) this is objectionable material for any feminist. Hannah Fenichel Pitkin's *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* provides the classic feminist treatment of Machiavelli and the issue of misogyny in his work. Pitkin argues that "autonomy...is Machiavelli's central preoccupation, the thread that unifies the contradictions and tensions in his works, enlarging the seemingly personal issue of *machismo* and tying it to his meditations on political themes" (Pitkin 1984, 7). As Pitkin sees it (see also O'Brien 2004), a foundation of inegalitarian sexism underlies Machiavelli's republican politics, for he unfailingly identifies the masculine with strength and autonomy (necessary virtues in life and certainly in politics) and the feminine with weakness and dependence (unnecessary and dangerous vices, at least for men).

Not all feminists agree with Pitkin's assessment, however. Catherine Zuckert takes the opposite view, arguing that in Machiavelli's *Clizia*, "we see that the cagey Florentine does not simply dismiss or demean women," but instead, "by presenting a woman as the embodiment of virtù, Machiavelli suggests that there is no essential difference between the sexes with regard to their potential for achieving human excellence. In this way he appears to make way for—or even to be the founder of—what has become known as 'liberal feminism'" (Zuckert 2004, 199).

Who is correct? Is Machiavelli friend or foe to feminist concerns? In this essay I explore the female image who is not only Machiavelli's most intriguing character, but the one finally most instructive on this question: Lucrezia in *Mandragola*, a play "considered by many to be the most important comedy to have been written during the Italian Renaissance" (Falco 2004, 10).

On the surface, *Mandragola* is the story of Callimaco, a young Italian expatriate living in France who, while attending a dinner party one evening, hears of a young woman reputed to be so beautiful and desirable that he returns to Italy at once to win her. Surprisingly, the enormous obstacles that stand in the way of fulfilling his desire do not deter Callimaco. First, the woman, Lucrezia, is married. While this might not necessarily pose an insurmountable barrier for him, depending on the lady's view of marital fidelity, Machiavelli indicates that something else does: Lucrezia has a reputation of extreme virtue and piety. Conveniently, though, her aged husband Nicia is both not terribly bright, and has an overwhelming desire to have a child (after six years of marriage the couple is still without offspring). Consequently Callimaco and the parasitic Ligurio (aided in various ways by Callimaco's servant Siro, the "ill-living *frate*" Timoteo, and Lucrezia's mother Sostrata) proceed with an elaborate scheme (10). Callimaco pretends to be a Parisian fertility specialist so renowned that in the past he has been called upon to aid the King of France and his wife. Upon obtaining a specimen of Lucrezia's urine, "Dr." Callimaco gives Nicia the good news that he can help them to have a child. If Lucrezia simply takes a potion of mandrake root (*mandragola* in Italian), she will become fertile.

The unfortunate catch is that the first man to share her bed after she takes the medication will die! Nicia is predictably upset by what he calls "this sugar and vinegar" (25). But "Dr." Callimaco has a seemingly simple remedy to this "difficulty": all they need do is kidnap an "idle young fellow" off the street, encourage him to have sex with Lucrezia, then release him. Of course the fact that the mandragola won't actually make Lucrezia fertile poses no problem since Machiavelli implies that it is Nicia who is the sterile partner, and because the "idle young fellow" will be none other than young Callimaco in disguise. The plan goes off with hardly a hitch, and in the end Lucrezia and Callimaco become lovers right under Nicia's nose, with him apparently none the wiser. It is an ingenious and brilliantly comic plot.

The question of Lucrezia's significance both within the comedy itself and in the larger scheme of Machiavelli's thought has in recent years prompted much debate among scholars. Most interpretations of *Mandragola* see her as only a passive object of acquisition (Sumberg 1961, for example). Instead, Callimaco is cast as the central figure, the new prince exemplifying Machiavellian *virtù*, who successfully employs deceit to overthrow the aging tyrant for the benefit of the entire community. Yet this understanding of *Mandragola* is easily disposed of with a close reading of the text. It is

repeatedly commented, seemingly emphasized, that Callimaco is apolitical, not to mention unpatriotic. He left Italy initially because he was sent by his guardians, but he stayed in Paris for twenty years because (as he tells it) “at the end of ten years, there began, with the march of Charles, the wars in Italy which ruined this country,” therefore “I decided to live in Paris and never repatriate myself, judging that I’d be able to live more securely in that place than here” (9). He returns to the homeland he had forsaken only to see Lucrezia, “not thinking any more of the wars or peace of Italy” (13).

Further, throughout the play, Callimaco despairs of the future and speaks of suicide. Even Ligurio notices and responds to this. Such a lack of courage in the face of fickle fortune is certainly not an admirable or effective trait in a Machiavellian ruler; indeed Callimaco’s contemplation of suicide occurs “as an alternative to risky plots” (Flaumenhaft 1984, 39). The confusion he displays is not characteristic of Machiavelli’s greatest rulers, suggesting that he is “perhaps more like those second-level intelligences in *The Prince* who can discern and make use of what others understand” (Flaumenhaft 1984, 39; see also Mansfield 2000). Finally, it is clear that Callimaco is ruled entirely by his passions, by lust, with the result that he is entirely lacking in prudence. If not for the influence of Ligurio, Callimaco would surely have done something rash and ill conceived before the end. Finally, it is interesting to note that in the Prologue, in addition to being called a miserable lover, Callimaco is thus described: “This man, among all other good companions, shows the signs and traces of carrying off the honor and prize for courtesy” (10). An unexpectedly weak characterization, this is a clear invitation to closer analysis. Machiavelli tells us at its end that the Prologue is a summary of the play. Perhaps Machiavelli refers to Callimaco’s courtesy in doing for others in the play what they would like him to; most particularly Lucrezia (more on this later).

Other interpreters question the role of Ligurio: is he simply an aid to “Prince” Callimaco or an advisor who takes over rule? Surely this clever manipulator is “Machiavellian” in the worst sense of the word! If Callimaco is flawed, isn’t it natural to look to Ligurio as Machiavelli’s ideal ruler? George Thomas argues that “Ligurio is the one who takes on *Fortuna*, as it were, and in doing so he displays his virtue”: his talent in “unleashing and channeling human desire” to construct a stable polity (Thomas 2003, 187, 179). While Ligurio is clearly a key player in the movement of the plot, this conclusion is less than persuasive. First, as Theodore Sumberg points out, although he is a potential rival for Lucrezia, “that he is not a real one is

the basis for Machiavelli's representation of Ligurio as a man with a passion for food, not sex... It shows that the conspirator must choose associates with ambitions that do not conflict with his... That he could not possibly be a rival for political power is why Callimaco can place so much confidence in him" (Sumberg 1961, 324). Second, there is no textual evidence to contradict the suggestion that someone besides Callimaco may have enlisted Ligurio's help in achieving his or her own ends. Perhaps Nicia is Machiavelli's Prince? Harvey Mansfield encourages us not to be mired in conventional morality when interpreting the play, arguing that though Nicia's stupidity is a running joke he might just be willing to *appear* simple (and be a cuckold) insofar as it allows him the freedom to achieve his desired end—progeny (see also Palmer and Pontuso, 1996). Yet Mansfield is mistaken in holding that if we're left unsatisfied by Callimaco and Ligurio as Machiavellian princes, Nicia is the only answer (Mansfield 2000, 28).

Although a few scholars do view Lucrezia as an active subject who either changes character over the course of the play or is of questionable character from the start, and thus come closer to the mark in describing her strength, to my mind they do not go far enough. Jack D'Amico has argued that Callimaco and Lucrezia *join together* to "create a new order and to prevent the decay of a family through an unconventional merging of the public and the private, of ceremony and desire" (D'Amico 1984, 271). Arlene Saxonhouse argues that Lucrezia exemplifies Machiavelli's new understanding of virtue:

Lucrezia learns that she cannot be good and preserve her chastity in a world in which most others are not good. The rule of *The Prince*, Chapter 15, changes her from an ancient Lucretia to a modern Lucrezia. The mandragola is a medication that supposedly gives life by killing. Though in the play its potency is a sham, Lucrezia's transformation mimics this death and birth. The old chastity dies for the sake of the new life of happiness. The cure does not come from the bottle, but from a transformation of the values of the main female character. (Saxonhouse 1985, 169)

Saxonhouse goes further than other interpreters in suggesting that Lucrezia "is not only fit to rule, she does rule" (169). But in also comparing Lucrezia to Fortuna (both favor the young, she points out), and in her argument that Lucrezia undergoes a change of character, Saxonhouse ultimately sees Lucrezia as *judiciously consenting* to being corrupted (see also Barber 1985). This interpretation too undermines Lucrezia's true authority and powerful role in the drama.

In a more persuasive reading, Susan Behuniak-Long argues that Lucrezia does not undergo a conversion in character, but rather, is questionable from the beginning. Like Saxonhouse, Behuniak-Long believes that Lucrezia *consents* to the plan, and that Lucrezia possesses many of the same characteristics as the goddess Fortuna. Interestingly, Behuniak-Long advances the suggestion that this is not a deliberate construction on Machiavelli's part, but rather that "Machiavelli was so consumed with the study of Fortune that in creating Lucrezia he drew on the characteristics of the most fascinating 'woman' of all" (Behuniak-Long 1989, 270). Like Fortune, Lucrezia is possessed of "two faces." She rejects the aging Nicia who cannot keep up with her, and embraces Callimaco's bold deception instead (271). Behuniak-Long concludes that "upon examination, her similarity with the Goddess Fortuna reveals a deeper tale being told within the play. Machiavelli uses her to mock the Church, and St. Augustine in particular, and to deliver a frightening message that the free will is no match for the goddess" (264). Lucrezia reveals the consequences of the Church's denial of Fortune: "If we...assume that Lucrezia and Fortune are linked, observe the results of the Church's underestimation of her: while the Frate believes that he has allowed Lucrezia one night of adultery, she will take many. His casuistry has not controlled her but has *unleashed* her, and he is not even aware of the fact. Thus it is with Fortune; ignore her at your own peril" (Behuniak-Long 1989, 277; see also Pitkin 1984).

There is certainly evidence that Lucrezia is of questionable character from the beginning of the play. Or rather, there is no evidence that she is not. The proposition that Lucrezia's character changes over the course of the play is based entirely on the comments made about her by the other characters (Behuniak-Long 1989, 267-68). In this regard we must heed Machiavelli's own wisdom on the nature of human life: we can never know with any certainty about a person's soul, but can be certain only of his or her actions. In fact in the Prologue of the play, Machiavelli cautions, "We shouldn't pay attention to words, or esteem some monster who doesn't know perhaps, if he's still alive. Callimaco is coming out" (11).

It is not until Scene Ten that we actually meet Lucrezia, although we have been hearing much about her since the beginning. Indeed, as Mansfield humorously observes, her first "appearance" is in the form of a container of urine (Mansfield 2000, 13). This is strange, considering that Lucrezia is in fact the central character, the person around whom the plot revolves. Callimaco describes how he first heard of her from Camillo

Calfucci in Paris: “he spoke such praise for both her beauty and manners, that he left every one of us stupefied” (13). He describes her nature (*ibid.*) as “extremely honest and in all ways alien to the ways of love” (by love he means sexual intimacy; in this context, adulterous). “The foresight and firmness of Lucrezia make me fear” (39). He describes her as bored, and as lacking the amusements other young women enjoy. All of this and he has never so much as met her.

In contrast, Lucrezia's husband considers her a stupid and obstinate woman with whom he has to constantly battle: “How much labor I've endured to make this stupid woman give me this specimen! ... as soon as I want to make her do the least little thing, I get a big story!” Nicia complains to Siro (23). This in itself would seem to indicate her intelligence, as Nicia's “good” judgment is consistently undermined as events unfold.

Similarly, to view Frate Timoteo as a reputable character witness is ironic at best, considering what we learn of him from Machiavelli's presentation. In the Preface Machiavelli refers to him as “ill-living” (10). He is a hypocritical and self-interested person, eager to commit even the most immoral act if it will result in tribute to the Church (sure to end up in his own pocket). Not only is he willing to condone abortion, clearly against Catholic doctrine, but he lies to Lucrezia about what he believes at the time to be the certain death of her would-be lover. Timoteo states: “Madonna Lucrezia is wise and good... All women have few brains, and if there's one of them who knows how to say two words, it's preached about, because in the city of the blind, whoever has one eye is lord” (34). He is certain that he will be able to, as he puts it, “dupe her by her goodness.”

If Lucrezia is indeed the pious, virtuous and *passive* woman she is thought to be by the other characters of the play, why is she described repeatedly by Machiavelli as the ruler of the household? In Act One Callimaco elaborates: “she has a very rich husband, and one that, in all things, lets himself be governed by her” and a few lines later: “she has no maid or servant who's not afraid of her” (14). Machiavelli teaches in *The Prince* that it is not truth, but reputation, which is of fundamental importance for a prince. Lucrezia maintains the reputation of a pious and virtuous woman, even after she commits adultery; not only among the public who know nothing of the scheming which has occurred, but brilliantly, even among those who do. Even her lover Callimaco sees her as unwilling and initially resentful of what has happened to her. Although Callimaco does believe that he has convinced

her with his “youthful kisses” to carry on a relationship with him, he still believes that she was initially chaste and resistant.

Indications of Lucrezia’s true significance in the play come to us primarily through its action (although Machiavelli leaves much for us to infer), but there are even a few direct statements to this effect. The most obvious, and one which can hardly be overlooked, is made by Ligurio (who not only seems to be the most astute of the other characters in the play, but also seems to speak for Machiavelli himself). Not only does he refer to her as “prudent”; he exclaims to himself (and to the audience!): “he has a beautiful wife, wise, well-mannered, and fit to govern a kingdom” (17).

In Lucrezia we see what Leo Strauss refers to as the “judicious alternation of virtue and vice” advocated by Machiavelli in *The Prince* (Strauss 1987, 301; 1958). Lucrezia’s vice in fact continues to “coexist with the old meaning [of virtue], according to which virtue is shocked by vice” (Mansfield 1985, xix). In *The Prince*, Machiavelli asserts:

since human conditions do not permit it, it is necessary for [a prince] to be so prudent as to know how to avoid the infamy of those vices which would take his state from him and to be on guard against those that do not, if that is possible; but if one cannot, one can let them go on with less hesitation. And furthermore one should not care about incurring the reputation of those vices without which it is difficult to save one’s state; for if one considers everything well, one will find something appears to be virtue, which if pursued would be one’s ruin, and something else appears to be vice, which if pursued results in one’s security and well-being. (Machiavelli 1985, 62)

To fully understand Lucrezia, though, we must consider her origin: Sostrata. Throughout the play Lucrezia’s mother seems to be something of a tyrant. Frate Timoteo describes her as “really a beast” (34). Callimaco remarks that although she is a rich woman, she “used to be good company”; i.e., a woman of “easy virtue” (14). It is interesting to consider the reason this unexpected fact is mentioned in the play: is it merely for comic effect? Or is it not the case that her mother’s “looseness” must make even the most skeptical reader admit the possibility that Lucrezia herself possesses a questionable (or to put it non-judgmentally, at least non-traditional) character?

Further, aren’t we led to wonder why Lucrezia married Nicia, a weak, simple-minded and easily manipulated man? Given all the clues Machiavelli lays out for us, surely there is only one logical explanation. Lucrezia marries Nicia for the explicit purpose of escaping from her mother’s

rule to found her own principality. In true Machiavellian fashion, Lucrezia is willing to commit a crime to secure and maintain her state, just as is any good prince according to Machiavelli. As a matter of fact, as described in *The Prince*, crime and violence are a necessary part of the maintenance of principalities. As Leo Strauss writes, in Machiavellian thought, “the foundation of justice is injustice; the foundation of morality is immorality; the foundation of legitimacy is illegitimacy or revolution; the foundation of freedom is tyranny. At the beginning there is Terror, not Harmony, or Love” (Strauss 1987, 302). Mera Flaumenhaft notes that “in Machiavelli’s political works the greatest prince eventually organizes everything anew in order to insure that the regime he founds will outlive him” (Flaumenhaft 1978, 40). Unfortunately she fails to notice that this is precisely what Lucrezia has done. At various points throughout the play, Lucrezia is described as longing to have children. Clearly Nicia would like an heir as well. Yet they remain childless. It is implied, both through Nicia’s character and through comments made by Callimaco, that Nicia is impotent. This would explain Lucrezia’s obvious reluctance to have any sexual relations with him. Nicia tells Callimaco: “...she stays on her knees for four hours, stringing together Our Fathers before she comes to bed, and she’s a beast for enduring cold” (24).

Their marriage had initially been one of acquisition. For what other reason would a beautiful young woman marry an unintelligent aged man but for material security? Yet upon her discovery of Nicia’s impotence, it suddenly becomes obvious that their marriage lacks what is needed to sustain it much longer. To make matters worse, Nicia has been a harsh partner to his wife. In response to Siro’s remark that kind words usually lead women where others wish, he replies, “What kind words! After she’s worn me out!” (ibid.). Lucrezia may have been sweet and demure to Nicia at the beginning of their marriage (“She used to be the sweetest person in the world, and the most easy-going” [28]), but upon discovery of his problem, she let her true character shine through—but only within his ken. After all, who would trust his judgment, irascible simpleton that he is? And why would prudent Lucrezia expend energy where it isn’t required? Surely Lucrezia has concluded there is more to be gained from Nicia through engendering fear than inspiring love.

Though some interpreters argue that when Callimaco and his fervent interest come along, Lucrezia is intelligent enough to take advantage of the opportunity presented by her sister Fortuna (or by Ligurio, as argued by Matthes 2004), I suggest that Lucrezia may have actually *sent* her

husband's cousin Camillo to Paris to find a lover for her (13), a lover weak enough to be sufficiently controlled. Who could be more perfect than a native Italian staying in France out of fear? Curiously, Machiavelli emphasizes (in the opening lines of the play, no less) that Callimaco first hears of Lucrezia's reputation from Camillo, and that he is a fierce ("almost" "angry") defender of her (*ibid.*). Such loyalty by her *husband's* cousin is impressive, particularly when one can easily imagine Nicia complaining about Lucrezia's temperament to family members.

Others argue that Lucrezia's unreflective piety causes her "change" of mind (for example, Knippenberg 1996, 26). Yet Lucrezia is surely not convinced to proceed with the adultery by the Frate's logic. What intelligent person would be persuaded by such nonsense, particularly from the mouth of a self-interested hypocrite? When Sostrata is attempting to "convince" her to listen to Frate Timoteo, Lucrezia replies "I'm in a sweat from what I'm going through" (35). Flaumenhaft's translation explains that the Italian word from Machiavelli's text is "passione." This need not connote nervous anxiety, but rather intense (sexual) excitement at the prospect of what is to come. And in the passage describing her initial discussion with Timoteo, Lucrezia takes a condescending, albeit innocent-sounding, tone with the Frate: "What are you persuading me to?" and "What are you leading me to, Padre?" (36). That the play is a comedy must not be forgotten in its interpretation (see Flaumenhaft 1978).

Further regarding the matter of religion and the Church, although Lucrezia makes remarks which would seem to indicate her piety at various points, the simple fact that she is willing to adopt the course of action recommended by Timoteo, who is a moral and religious hypocrite, indicates that this too is mere appearance. Lucrezia readily lets religion take the burden of responsibility for her actions, much as Cesare Borgia ultimately let Remirro de Orco take the blame for his own actions, to de Orco's final detriment (described in Chapter 7 of *The Prince*; see Addendum 1). Lending support to this claim is the fact that Lucrezia doesn't come from sincerely Christian origins (after all, Sostrata doesn't object to using the Frate to deceive Lucrezia), and Nicia's appeal to Lucrezia to fear God in the last scene (53).

Finally, there are the remarks related by Callimaco regarding Lucrezia's response to her "discovery" that she had been "tricked." Lucrezia seems to have had a surprisingly well-thought out response:

Therefore, I take you for lord, master, and guide; you are my father, my defender, and I want you to be my every good; and what my husband wanted for one evening, I want him to have always. You will, therefore, make yourself his close friend and you'll go to the church this morning, and from there you'll come have dinner with us; and your comings and goings will be up to you, and we'll be able to come together at any time and without suspicion. (53)

Lucrezia will take Callimaco for her "lord" and "master" to the same extent that she did Nicia. She directs Callimaco in every aspect of what he is to do from this very moment onward. Lucrezia's character clearly does not change throughout the course of the play; Lucrezia succeeds because she is savvy enough to seize the opportunity Fortuna affords her. She simply has the sense to hide this from those who would use this knowledge to undermine or harm her, for it was not considered fitting. The consequence of the discovery of her true nature would ultimately result in a complete loss of power. Lucrezia is Machiavelli's new prince, perfectly exemplifying his *virtù*.

In the Prologue, Machiavelli's opening remarks alert the careful and philosophically astute audience to the context in which we are to understand both the dialogue and the action of the play. In these lines, Machiavelli tells us a number of things. First, that Lucrezia is in fact not simply intelligent, as indicated later, but "shrewd." He seems to say that Callimaco tricked her, but one immediately notices Machiavelli's phrase "as you will hear." As mentioned earlier, Machiavelli repeatedly throughout his works makes a very clear distinction between the appearance (what one might see or "hear") and the reality of a situation. The meaning of the perplexing statement that follows, "And I would wish that you might be tricked as she was," necessarily becomes clear in light of this. If Lucrezia is not tricked, which she clearly is not, then Machiavelli does not intend an astute and aware audience to be fooled as to the meaning of his comic play. For although it is "a thing to break your jaws with laughter," he also says "we want you to come to understand a new case born in this city" (9).

There is little disagreement that Machiavelli directs his teaching to potential princes and their would-be advisers for the implied purpose of creating stable political regimes. Effective rulers must necessarily follow the successful example of Lucrezia in *Mandragola*. To fail to do so, to be Livy's Lucretia described in *The Discourses*, is literally, as well as figuratively, politically suicidal (see Addendum 2).

Susan Behuniak-Long notes an interesting piece of history regarding Lucrezia's name:

One cannot read *The Prince* without appreciating Machiavelli's admiration of and familiarity with the Borgia family. Both Cesare and Pope Alexander VI are frequently mentioned in Machiavelli's handbook for princes, but there was another infamous member of the family—Lucrezia Borgia, sister of Cesare and daughter of the pope. While she shared the name of the ancient Roman woman, her reputation was founded not on virtue, but on promiscuity, manipulation, and murder. She was said to have access to the Borgia venom, used to poison enemies of the family.... While there is good reason to believe that Lucrezia Borgia's name was unjustly blackened...her name was one of ill-repute both during and after her lifetime. (Behuniak-Long 1989, 267)

It would seem that the new prince should not follow the example of this Lucrezia either: although powerful during her lifetime, she remains to this day of ill repute and of ill fame.

An important question remains: what, if anything is the significance of Lucrezia beyond *Mandragola*, for Machiavelli's political theory? Does she shed any light on Machiavelli's views about gender, about politics, and about their relation? Arlene Saxonhouse offers an interesting but ultimately unsatisfying conclusion about the role of women in Machiavellian political thought:

Machiavelli retreats from...precision, a retreat captured by the ambiguity of his political teachings. Within that ambiguity women play various roles. None of them, though, is definitive. Fortuna is a woman, but so is the weak man trained in the art of submission by Christian dogma. Men can become women and become fickle, changing with the changing time, as Machiavelli does; or men can become women and become submissive, yielding to whatever happens as they allow others—be they males or females—to dominate. While images of women are central to Machiavelli's presentation of his political thought, women are unimportant in political life; they are easily dismissed by Machiavelli from the traditional tales that had emphasized their influence...

Unlike previous authors with whom we have dealt, Machiavelli leaves the status of women uncertain because all is uncertain, subject to manipulation... (Saxonhouse 1985, 173)

The conclusions of Pitkin and Zuckert turn out to be equally unsatisfying. Even though Zuckert fundamentally disagrees with Pitkin regarding the

ultimate relation of Machiavellian political thought to feminist politics, Zuckert follows her in arguing that Machiavelli tries to destroy everything which reminds him of the limits of human existence. Zuckert asserts, "Insofar as the feminine is associated with that which is desirable and beautiful, with that which lies beyond or transcends market exchange and the struggle to survive, with that which reminds us all of the limits of everyday human existence, Machiavelli tries to destroy it" (Zuckert 2004, 199). Yet such a claim fails to do justice to the subtle complexity of Machiavelli's vision.

For, as evidenced by his creation of Lucrezia, Machiavelli observed that women needed to be quite resourceful in his day to live anything even approximating an independent existence. And while women are forced through circumstance into an awareness of their dependence on other human beings, men traditionally live under what Machiavelli views as an illusion of *absolute* freedom.

Indeed, Machiavelli's *Mandragola* offers an important corrective, lest we think that he is serious in suggesting elsewhere that Fortune can be overcome absolutely, every time, through mere will, defiance, and impetuosity. After all, if we thought that, and tried our best and failed, we might give up trying entirely. Consider *The Prince*, Chapter 25, which Machiavelli famously ends with his "fortune is a woman" flourish. He never actually states that attempts to master fortune, even with impetuosity and ferocity, will always be successful; indeed, he judges that it is "better" to take a spirited approach. "Holding her down" is not commensurate with permanent control. "She lets herself be won more," he tells us, by the impetuous and audacious (Machiavelli 1985, 101). Consider too that this passage is preceded by a surprisingly straightforward discussion of the impossibility of ever achieving complete control of fortune, unless something exceptional occurs, as it did for the impetuous Pope Julius II: that is, one's nature is completely in harmony with the times. Machiavelli writes, "if times had come when he had needed to proceed with caution, his ruin would have followed: he would never have deviated from those modes to which nature inclined him" (ibid.). Still, he implores us to build "dikes and dams" to try to lessen the impact of negative fortune. What could this mean but to exercise caution and prudence, to employ reason, when considering a course of action? We must not forget that Machiavelli recommends that the prince model himself after the fox, not just the lion.

For Machiavelli's recommendation that human beings must strive to conquer Fortune certainly doesn't ignore his own keen awareness of

reality. Machiavelli acknowledges the existence of natural limits (for arguments concerning Machiavelli's understanding of nature and natural cycles, see Jacobitti 2000 and Parel 2001; also Coby 1999); he simply doesn't think it productive for human beings (particularly our leaders) to be cowed by life. I certainly do not mean to suggest here that Machiavelli is an Aristotelian (Pocock's suggestion; see Pocock 1975 and Sullivan 1992); Machiavelli clearly contends that our relationship with nature is largely adversarial. Yet Machiavelli has no respect for anyone who is so weak as to despair in the face of life (like Callimaco and Livy's Lucretia). His Lucretia is resourceful, and when Fortune (which she refers to as God) presents an opportunity, she knows she should take it: "I'm determined to judge that it comes from a heavenly disposition which has so willed; and I don't have it in me to reject what Heaven wills me to accept" (52). Lucretia is well aware that she is enjoying exceptionally good circumstances.

Lucretia has a realistic sense of when (and whom) she can push, and when she must wait. She is both the lion and the fox, Machiavelli's ideal model (in combination) for successful rule. Patrick Coby observes that "the performing prince, like an actor on the stage, does better if he is no one type but is able to play a variety of roles" (Coby 1999, 175). Lucretia is indeed perceived differently by different characters in the narrative. "This variability Machiavelli advises and seems to expect, although he immediately acknowledges that being both loved and feared may overtax the acting skills of any given prince" (ibid.). Lucretia too is both feared and loved, just as Machiavelli recommends in *The Prince* (Machiavelli 1985, 66), and hated by no one. Harvey Mansfield observes that "getting around Nicia is the same as getting around the law" (Mansfield 2000, 11), but Lucretia is the true "law-giver" (tyrant is a more apt characterization), establishing the boundaries of her household, as evidenced by the unreflecting and obedient parroting of her words by both Nicia and Callimaco, as well as Ligurio and Camillo.

Machiavelli recommends a striving, a self-overcoming, if one is inclined to fear or stasis. Lucretia expresses fear because she has learned to mistrust Fortune when it comes to childbearing. An inability to get pregnant is sorely disappointing for a woman who desires a child to hold, for whatever reason. Machiavelli suggests that in addition to her husband, Lucretia tried to conceive with "one of those big frati" to no avail (28). (Why else would she attend twenty masses at the Servi?) But she overcomes her fear and takes action, precisely the approach recommended by Machiavelli.

Recall Lucrezia's acute awareness of the necessity of maintaining a good reputation, a concern clearly not shared by the male characters in the play, most strikingly Ligurio and Callimaco, the one a known parasite and the other an adulterer (a fact known to *almost* everyone in the play). And of course it is one thing to be aware and concerned; quite another to be successful in maintaining one's image.

Consider too the ends, the desires and goals, of the various actors. Are Ligurio and Callimaco's actions motivated by pure self-interest? Yes; in fact, it's nearly impossible to view them any other way. And what of Lucrezia? If she too is motivated by self-interest, it is a fact well hidden, and known only to her. As discussed earlier, it is without exception the case that everyone lives a better, happier life under Lucrezia's new regime—even the cuckolded Nicia, since Lucrezia is sure to be less frustrated with him from now on (though pushing the case this far is surely to be understood as over-the-top comedy on Machiavelli's part: only in a fictional world could the deposed ruler be better off). And even if Lucrezia is self-interested, isn't her self-interest arguably of a different variety than that of the male characters? In contrast to Mary O'Brien's claim that "Lucrezia has forgotten her desire for children in her desire for Callimaco" (O'Brien 2004, 187), Lucrezia seems less concerned about passionate sex than about procreation: Callimaco clearly represents fertility in contrast to Nicia's sterility. At what time in a woman's life is she more acutely aware of her connectedness to others than when she is concerned with childbearing? A male character, particularly one possessed of high social status and the latitude that accompanies such a position, would obviously fail to raise these critical issues.

Yet one might object: what of Machiavelli's infamous claim about women in Book III.26 of *The Discourses* ("How Women Have Brought About the Downfall of States")? That Machiavelli could be serious here strains credulity. Indeed on a close reading it is clear that in every example, *men* are unable to restrain themselves and as a result create chaos. Women are not the cause of the downfall of states; the uses to which men have put women are to blame. It is in this context that Machiavelli brings up the Roman Lucretia. Unlike men, women are not slaves to their sexual nature in Machiavelli's representations. Lucrezia, after all, is sexually calculating and empowered.

Finally, consider the implications of such a prince, a leader not only acutely aware of the limits of her own existence but possessed of a strong sense of her connectedness to others. Machiavelli suggests that only armed with such knowledge can a prince be virtuous: adept at maintaining

peace, and at cultivating the greatest good for the greatest number (defined as the fulfillment of self-interest, against the ancient conception) (Sullivan 1992, 316; Mansfield 1985; 1996).

A final note regarding Machiavelli's use of gender. While we clearly see in *Mandragola* his use of a female character to raise issues of autonomy, dependence, and their relation to good rule, Machiavelli is not a biological essentialist, believing that only (or all) women possess particular innate qualities conducive to good rule. Indeed it seems most likely that Machiavelli simply intends male rulers to learn from his observations about women. Consider Machiavelli's discussion of the Countess of Forli in both *The Prince* and *The Discourses* (Zuckert 2004 and Saxonhouse 1985 give interesting, albeit quite different, analyses of the significance of the Countess). We get different bits of information about her in each work. In *The Discourses*, in a chapter seemingly devoted to conspiracies, Machiavelli describes the Countess's political acumen in outsmarting a group of citizens who, having killed her husband, took the Countess and her children prisoner. Fearing for their own safety, however, the rebels decided that they must gain control of the citadel, which the governor refused to hand over. Machiavelli writes,

...Mistress Catherine, as the countess was called, promised the conspirators that, if they would let her go to the citadel, she would arrange for it to be handed over to them. Meanwhile they were to keep her children as hostages. On this understanding the conspirators let her go to the citadel, from the walls of which, when she got inside, she reproached them with killing her husband and threatened them with vengeance in every shape and form. And to convince them that she did not mind about her children she exposed her sexual parts to them and said she was still capable of bearing more. The conspirators, dumbfounded, realized their mistake too late, and paid the penalty for their lack of prudence by suffering perpetual banishment. (Machiavelli 1970, 419)

Having recovered from our initial shock (!), it is most instructive to compare this passage with the account found in *The Prince*:

In our times fortresses have not been seen to bring profit to any prince, unless to the Countess of Forli, when Count Girolamo, her consort, died; for by means of a fortress she was able to escape a popular uprising, to await help from Milan, and to recover her state. And the times then were such that a foreigner could not help the people. But later, fortresses were worth little to her when Cesare Borgia attacked her, and her hostile people joined with the foreigner. Therefore, then and

before it would have been more secure for her not to be hated by the people than to have had fortresses. (Machiavelli 1985, 87)

Notice that it is in *The Prince*, perhaps surprisingly, that Machiavelli cautions potential rulers to an awareness of their very real interrelation with and dependence upon their subjects. Notice too that we don't see precisely how self-sufficient the Countess believes herself to be unless we also read the account in *The Discourses*, where she demonstrates how little her children mean to her—she can always make more, she asserts. Amazingly, she fails to recognize the simple truth that making more requires at least one other. The very form of Machiavelli's work here reflects its content, purely and simply. And one doesn't need to think very far to realize that the walled fortress might just be a metaphor for the human desire for complete self-sufficiency, and consequently, the tale one of precisely how misguided, nay dangerous, Machiavelli finds such unchecked desire. Indeed, he writes, "I shall blame anyone, who trusting in fortresses, thinks little of being hated by the people" (ibid.).

ADDENDA

1. In *The Prince* Machiavelli describes Cesare Borgia's pragmatic treachery. Needing to gain control of an unruly province, Borgia sent de Orco to Romagna with the absolute authority to rule as he saw fit. De Orco calmed the region quickly, with the use of much force and cruelty (just as Borgia expected, Machiavelli implies), and, not surprisingly, acquired much hatred among the populace. Borgia, wishing to show that any cruelty had not been his own but was de Orco's, and seeking to purge, preserve, and enhance his own reputation, deprived him of power, set up a civil court, then had de Orco placed in the center of Cesena in two pieces (Machiavelli 1985, 30).

2. Behuniak-Long (1989) nicely summarizes the story: "Lucretia was the name of the Roman matron whose rape was reported in book one of *From the Founding of the City* by Livy. Threatened with death and a plan to disgrace her by placing a dead slave next to her corpse, Lucretia submitted to the sexual assault of Sextus Tarquinius. Later, upon the arrival of her husband and father, she tearfully tells them of the rape and has them swear that they will avenge her. They comfort her by telling her that 'it is the mind that sins, not the body: and that where purpose has been wanting there is no guilt'... Unheeding, Lucretia takes a knife from her bodice and kills herself" (266-67).

REFERENCES

All references to *Mandragola* herein refer to numbered pages of the Flaumenhaft translation (Machiavelli 1981). I wish to thank Mary Nichols for her encouragement, careful reading and fine suggestions concerning my initial work on *Mandragola*, as well as the anonymous referee at *Interpretation* for insightful and generous criticism that pushed my argument further still.

- Barber, Joseph A. 1985. The Irony of Lucrezia: Machiavelli's *Donna di virtù*. *Studies in Philology* 82(4), 450–59.
- Behuniak-Long, Susan. 1989. The Significance of Lucrezia in Machiavelli's *Mandragola*. *The Review of Politics* 51 (Spring), 264-80.
- Coby, Patrick. 1999. *Machiavelli's Romans: Liberty and Greatness in the Discourses on Livy*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books.
- D'Amico, Jack. 1984. The *Virtù* of Women: Machiavelli's *Mandragola* and *Clizia*. *Interpretation* 12 (May), 261-73.
- Falco, Maria. 2004. Introduction. In *Feminist Interpretations of Niccolò Machiavelli*, ed. Maria Falco. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Flaumenhaft, Mera J. 1978. The Comic Remedy: Machiavelli's "Mandragola." *Interpretation* 7 (May), 33-74.
- Hullung, Mark. 1978. Machiavelli's *Mandragola*: A Day and Night in the Life of a Citizen. *Review of Politics* 40, 32-57.
- Jacobitti, Edmund E. 2000. The Classical Heritage in Machiavelli's Histories: Symbol and Poetry as Historical Literature. In *The Comedy and Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works*, ed. Vickie B. Sullivan. New Haven: Yale University Press, 176-92.
- Knippenberg, Joseph M. 1996. Virtue, Honor, and Reputation: Appropriation of Christianity in the "Rape" of Lucrezia. In *Poets, Princes, and Private Citizens: Literary Alternatives to Postmodern Politics*, ed. Joseph M. Knippenberg and Peter Augustine Lawler. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 21-38.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò. 1970. *The Discourses*. Ed. Bernard Crick. London: Penguin.

- . 1981. *Mandragola*. Trans. Mera J. Flaumenhaft. Long Grove, Ill.: Waveland Press.
- . 1985. *The Prince*. Trans. Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mansfield, Harvey C., Jr. 1985. Introduction. In Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, vii-xxvii.
- . 1996. *Machiavelli's Virtue*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2000. The Cuckold in Machiavelli's *Mandragola*. In *The Comedy and Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works*, ed. Vickie B. Sullivan. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1-29.
- Matthes, Melissa M. 2004. The Seriously Comedic, or Why Machiavelli's Lucrezia Is Not Livy's Virtuous Roman. In *Feminist Interpretations of Niccolò Machiavelli*, ed. Maria Falco. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 247-66.
- O'Brien, Mary. 2004. The Root of the Mandrake: Machiavelli and Manliness. In *Feminist Interpretations of Niccolò Machiavelli*, ed. Maria Falco. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 173-95.
- Palmer, Michael, and James F. Pontuso. 1996. The Master Fool. *Perspectives on Political Science* 25(3), 124-32.
- Parel, A. J. 1991. The Question of Machiavelli's Modernity. *The Review of Politics* 53(2), 320-39.
- Pitkin, Hannah Fenichel. 1984. *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Pocock, J. G. A. 1975. *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Saxonhouse, Arlene. 1985. *Women in the History of Political Thought: Ancient Greece to Machiavelli*. New York: Praeger.
- Strauss, Leo. 1958. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- . 1987. Machiavelli. In *The History of Political Philosophy*. 3d ed., ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 296-317.
- Sullivan, Vickie. 1992. Machiavelli's Momentary "Machiavellian Moment": A Reconsideration of Pocock's Treatment of the *Discourses*. *Political Theory* 20(2), 309-18.
- Sumberg, Theodore A. 1961. *Mandragola: An Interpretation*. *The Journal of Politics* 23, 320-39.
- Thomas, George. 2003. The Parasite as Virtuoso: Sexual Desire and Political Order in Machiavelli's *Mandragola*. *Interpretation* 30(2), 179-94.
- Zuckert, Catherine H. 2004. Fortune Is a Woman—But So Is Prudence: Machiavelli's *Clizia*. In *Feminist Interpretations of Niccolò Machiavelli*, ed. Maria Falco. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 197-211. Originally published in *Finding a New Feminism: Rethinking the Woman Question for Liberal Democracy*, ed. Pamela Grande Jensen (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996).

On Strauss on Vico: A Report on Leo Strauss's Course on Giambattista Vico

WAYNE AMBLER

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER

Wayne.Ambler@colorado.edu

This is a report on Strauss's only course on Vico, taught in the autumn quarter of 1963, at the University of Chicago. Like the course itself, it attempts to identify questions for further study more than to resolve any of the massive issues Vico raises.

I must begin with several cautions against taking what follows to represent Strauss's final or unqualified view of Vico or any other of the subjects discussed. First, even apart from the question of whether transcripts of his seminars are the best places to look for his most conclusive reflections, the transcript of this course is in very bad condition. Seminars 8, 10, and 16 are missing altogether (as matters stand, the transcript includes few general statements and few that claim to be final); there are frequent lacunae in what is reported (including the frequent or almost usual failure to capture the many questions and comments by members of the class), and some of these lacunae occur at moments of special importance; the transcripts of most seminar sessions end before the seminar itself did (see 7.2, for example); and there are also errors in the transcript (the obvious ones, like a reference to Rome's defeat of Carthage in 1724 or "Stengler" for "Spengler," lead me to fear there are others that are less easy to detect).

Second, Strauss begins this course by explaining that it is the first time he has taught Vico—this for the very simple reason that he had never studied him; he frequently indicates throughout the course that his own and the group's reflections on Vico should be understood to be preliminary; he volunteers that his initial reasons for taking up Vico should not guide their study of the text (2.2-3); he more regularly states what would have

to be studied to achieve a full understanding of Vico than professes to be presenting the fruits of such an understanding; and he occasionally changes his mind during the course of class (or in a subsequent class). Strauss also candidly reports that the *New Science* is a puzzling or even “strange” book. [Such thoughtful devotees of Vico as Bergin and Fisch do not hesitate to say Vico “misremembers, misquotes, distorts, or misrepresents” his sources, and they add bracketed exclamation points throughout their edition of the *New Science* to call attention to such apparent lapses (Vico 1986, xviii). Strauss stops short of leveling this charge, but he does register occasional surprise at some of the peculiar characteristics of Vico’s writing, such as his penchant for implausible etymologies (9.8; 11.12; 5.3; 13.6; 9.3).] In short, Strauss is careful not to claim that his short course, which lasts only eight weeks and takes up Vico’s *Autobiography* in sessions 2-4 and his *New Science* in sessions 4-15, presents anything like a comprehensive or final teaching on Vico. Nor does it appear that Strauss made Vico central to his subsequent studies. (See, however, the second paragraph of Strauss’s preface to the seventh impression of *Natural Right and History*, 1971, vii).

Third, the seminar touches on a wide variety of challenging authors and issues. The best student of this transcript would know the following well: the Bible and especially the Old Testament; Spinoza (especially his Biblical criticism); Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel; Machiavelli’s treatment of Livy and, indirectly, of the Bible; traditional teachings on natural right and natural law; and much more. Moreover, Vico’s *New Science* appeared in several substantially different editions during his lifetime, and the text of the third edition, used by Strauss, has been heavily edited, first in its Italian original by Nicolini (Vico 1928), and then in the English translation by Bergin and Fisch (Vico 1986). Strauss stresses that a more serious study of Vico would require more frequent consultation of the original manuscripts (13.10-11).

In keeping with the imperfect accuracy of the transcript, the informal and tentative nature of remarks made in a seminar, and the ways remarks are revised from time to time, I will not use quotation marks even if I should quote the transcript directly; unless noted otherwise, all quotations are from Vico.

The total length of the surviving transcript is about 160 single-spaced typed pages. Strauss’s share of this is perhaps 50 percent; the other 50 percent records comments by others or the reading of Vico, or is merely blank space.

I begin with seminars 9 and 1, and I devote disproportionate attention to them, for these are the two seminars in which Strauss speaks at greatest length and in the most general terms. In seminar 9 Strauss presents a suggested program for anyone going to pursue Vico further. By so doing, he indicates that the course points toward a study more than it presents one. His overview also takes up again his opening justification for teaching Vico; after reviewing it, I shall turn back to the first seminar and its parallel but more complete account of the reasons he chose to teach the course.



Strauss states that he wishes to understand better the replacement of natural right by history, and he elaborates by brief references to Ernst Troeltsch, Karl Mannheim, and Martin Heidegger (9.3-4). Troeltsch indicated that this replacement had occurred in Germany after World War I, while in the non-German West the tradition of natural right continued to enjoy support, but Troeltsch also let it be known that in spite of the political advantages of the natural right tradition, he could not himself embrace it. Mannheim was more superficial than Troeltsch, but his popular restatement of Troeltsch in *Ideology and Power* helped to spread his ideas more broadly into the social sciences in the West. Partly for this reason, Troeltsch's perception of a vigorous natural rights tradition in the West is hardly to be seen today, at least in the academy. But Troeltsch is now forgotten, and this is simply because Heidegger put what Troeltsch had to say in a deeper and much more interesting manner: Strauss presents his own studies as a reaction to Heidegger, and he sees natural right as the most direct response to history. His interest in Vico is in trying to understand better the replacement of natural right by history, for Vico is a candidate for being the first to effect this replacement. Strauss notes that Vico frequently uses the phrase "natural right [*diritto natural*]," but this traditional phrase must not keep us from seeing the extent to which he historicizes its meaning. [See also Strauss 1971, 1-2, and, more generally, chapter 1. In this text Strauss does not mention Heidegger (or Mannheim or Spengler), but its most obvious difference from the Vico seminar is that it also outlines responses or alternatives to the historical approach.]

In looking back to the first seminar, we find a parallel but much more complete account of why Strauss turned his attention to Vico (and why he did not do so earlier), so I turn now to it. In this account he speaks of Vico's influence on modern historical criticism in the nineteenth century, which was especially concerned with the interpretation of Homer

and of early Roman history, but Strauss also traces its fundamental principle to Spinoza, whose use of history in interpretation was focused on the Old Testament. Spinoza, then, is earlier and of more fundamental importance than Vico, at least in this regard.

This said, Strauss pauses to explain his turn to Vico on the basis of the problem of history. This problem appears first as a solution, for it organizes the chaos of multiple and conflicting answers to the question of the good or just society. These many answers, whose number and variety may appear so overwhelming as to induce skepticism, turn out to be linked to the times and places in which they were given, so this chaos of ideas is reduced to a certain order. Of course Aristotle and Locke disagreed on property, for example: each was an exponent of a very different society. The multitude of conflicting doctrines is thus replaced by a single doctrine, the doctrine that doctrines are functions of their times. But the neatness of this solution comes at a heavy price, for it implies that political philosophy as the search for the regime that is simply good or just is not possible. All thinkers turn out to be sons or stepsons of their times, even or especially in their highest thoughts.

This view seemed to Spengler to imply the equality of all high cultures and to American anthropologists to imply the equality of all cultures, and this equality is now the prevailing way of seeing this issue. And yet at the same time we speak of developed and underdeveloped nations, and so we imply that cultures are unequal. In short, there is an egalitarian view on the one hand and on the other is the view that there is and should be progress from the underdeveloped to the developed culture. Historically speaking, the belief in progress was earlier, and it is associated with the view that science is not merely the expression of a particular culture but transcends cultures: physics proper is neither Venezuelan nor Chinese.

The earlier modern view, that science and progress establish the inequality of cultures, is denied by Spengler, whom Strauss considers to be of supreme importance as a popularizer of the historicist view. "Science" needs an adjective in this view, and even the diffusion of modern Western science does not establish that it is science proper; it is evidence rather of Western cultural domination. Indeed, modern science rests on hypotheses which cannot be proven with the same rigor as the proofs that come to be made on the basis of these hypotheses, so it cannot be simply scientific at its foundation. In short, an analysis of science might in the end support the claim that all thought is historical (1.2-3).

In the meantime, however, the success of modern natural science keeps alive the rival claim that there is at least some knowledge that transcends culture or history, and this reminds of the Greek distinction between nature and *nomos* (law, convention, custom). It is nature that science seeks to understand, while historicism seeks to interpret the changes in *nomos* over time. Nonetheless, the nature/*nomos* relationship comes to be understood differently. Whereas changes in *nomos* had been understood as caused by human action, historicism came to understand them as the consequence of a process of growth and hence as natural. What had been understood as *nomos* comes to be seen as natural; historicism expands the scope of nature (1.4). [See also Strauss 1971, 11.]

Or, to approach this problem in a different way, travelers in the old days, like Odysseus or Marco Polo, saw a variety of cultures. But among these different cultures, some things are common: men, women, and children are different kinds of human beings, and human beings are not horses. These seemingly obvious points might be called the floor, while the points on which cultures disagree are the ceiling or the heights. The first step of philosophy, then, would be to try to replace mere opinion on the heights with knowledge. The task would be to ascend from the agreed facts regarding the floor, facts that do not differ from tribe to tribe, to the heights.

But this view was challenged in modern times: we have no knowledge of things in themselves, even of simple things like dogs. Rather, we know only phenomena. All our raw sensations become organized by the forms by which we interpret them. Our understanding is not perception; it is rather the putting of form on matter. This holds as well in the case of nature, for our understanding consists in imposing laws of human understanding on nature. Instead of coming to know what is highest, these forms or categories (as Kant called them) are themselves what is “highest”; instead of seeing what a tribe looks up to as highest, the modern anthropologist looks for the categories by which the tribe perceives and thinks. Whereas before the traveler might wonder whether the views of some tribe might be true or true in some important respect, now all thought is understood to be colored by the use of certain categories. Ultimately, then, there are no knowable facts: what we call facts are already an interpretation (1.6).

But what if the categories by which we interpret things do not always take the same form? It was a still later modern development to see these categories as changing radically in different ages or cultures. In this view, all thought—not only opinions about the highest things—is historical.

Strictly speaking, then, no fact goes unchanged from one culture to another, for even simple things have different connotations or metaphorical meanings in different cultures. It is in this general connection that Strauss sees Vico as having been important, for even though he precedes Kant by two generations, he goes beyond him in preparing for this historical approach, which is so dominant today. Studying Vico thus might help understand the birth and development of historicism. [Cf. Strauss 1971, 13: “The genesis of historicism is inadequately understood.”]

Strauss discusses the changed meanings of the word “history” (from inquiry, to an inquiry that can be resolved only by consulting the human record, to the results or object of such an inquiry); one consequence of these changes is that nature and history become wholly separate areas of study. He also discusses the absence of history in the strict sense from the Old Testament, and the origins of the historical school in the early nineteenth century. He stresses in particular that the historical school initially had the conservative purpose of opposing the emphasis on natural law and the fabrication of constitutions that underlay the French Revolution [cf. Strauss 1971, 13-16]. Growth, not fabrication, should characterize political change, and positive law should not be so lightly discredited by appeal to supposed natural law. Historical consciousness thus was to take the place of natural law and its potential for justifying radical breaks with the past. History must therefore be understood in light of the natural law which it was introduced to replace (1.8-9). A sign of this replacement is speaking not of the rights of man, which depend on a view of nature, but of the rights of Englishmen, which stress a historical category.

Returning briefly to natural law, then, Strauss stresses the challenges posed to Thomistic natural law in the seventeenth century and after. In particular, laws need to be promulgated, and Thomas maintained that the natural law was sufficiently promulgated through the conscience. Hobbes, Locke, and especially Rousseau challenged this notion (and traditional natural law in general), for early man was too simple or savage to understand his duties. Strauss sees Vico’s thinking as akin to that of Rousseau for its emphasis on the bestiality and pre-rationality of early man, but he notes that Vico did not write a book, like *The Social Contract*, that would outline a solution to the problem (1.10-11).

It becomes clear in the second class that the first class did not end at this point, but the transcript does. Readers are thus left with the

pleasant challenge of putting together what appear to be several different reflections on the problem of history.

Although Strauss stressed that the seminar should take Vico on his own terms, regardless of Strauss's initial reasons for teaching him, as of the ninth meeting of the seminar he appears not to have changed his view about the possibility that Vico was early and instrumental in the replacement of natural right by history. [Bergin and Fisch try to map Vico's influence, which they find to be profound. They see him as especially important for changes in "the sciences of social change" and the scientific study of history, but they admit a full account of these changes had not been presented as of their writing. They cite Strauss's chapter on history in his book on Hobbes (Strauss 1963a) as a model for such studies (Vico 1963, 20, 210n7).] But to study Vico's roles in the replacement of natural right by history, Strauss suggests the following program would have to be followed (9.2-6).

I. First, one would need to make Vico's critique of natural right explicit. His critique takes the form especially of criticism of Grotius, Selden, and Pufendorf, whom Vico calls "the three princes of the doctrine of the natural right of the *genti*" [328], but Strauss suspects that Vico's criticism is different in different parts of the *New Science*, and he considers this worthy of further study.

II. In addition, however, Strauss asks about the extent to which this criticism extends also to Thomas Aquinas, to Cicero, and to other important teachings on natural right, and his comment here leads to a general question about how Vico writes. Vico concentrates his critique on "the three princes," but Strauss suspects it has a broader reach and even more distinguished targets. Might Vico intend a tacit critique even of the sacred tradition, even though he formally exempts it from his analysis?

III. Third, one would have to study carefully the variety within natural right as understood by Vico. Vico elaborates three stages of natural right—divine, heroic, and human—but it remains to identify these stages with full precision, both what they are and how each one develops out of its predecessor. One must especially attend to distinctions between rational and non-rational mechanisms and between pre-political and political human beings.

IV. Strauss calls, fourth, for a special focus on the third age, that of human beings living politically; in particular, what does it mean that civil equity is identical to the reason of state [320]? Is civil equity then

identical to political utility? And how does Vico assess democracy and monarchy for their ability to promote this utility?

V. Strauss next asks why Vico's new science is given a theological form. In particular, Vico claims to see divine providence at work in the unfolding of history, at least in the way the selfish or asocial actions of bestial men gradually bring about life in society and the common good, a development as remarkable as or more remarkable than the promises implicit in the metaphor of Adam Smith's "invisible hand."

VI. – VII. Strauss adds two more points. He wonders about the precise locus of Vico's originality, and he invites a critique of Vico. Does Vico achieve his goal of establishing a social physics?

Now, since Strauss indicates that these seven questions should form a future program of study, he clearly does not think his brief seminar has amounted to such a study; but this does not mean he has not made at least a start on several or most of these points. Since they identify the themes he considers to be most worthy of continued study, it makes sense to give them prominence and to organize this review of his course with them in mind. His third question is best suited for conveying a brief introduction to Vico, so I depart from Strauss's order and begin with it. The others will follow in the order Strauss gives them, as the Roman numerals will help to show.

III. Vico emphasizes a schema according to which there are three main ages of human history, each with its own natural right: divine, heroic, and human. Strauss calls for increased precision on these three ages and on the mechanics of their development one from another.

Strauss emphasizes the following main points: men in the first or "divine" age were pre-rational brutes; there was a promiscuous mingling of the sexes, with paternity going unrecognized; these individual "cyclopes," as Vico calls them, eventually developed rude and violent religious beliefs or superstitions, retreated into caves to form families, acquired speech, and formed into assemblies, thus beginning the second or "heroic" age (if they did not use fraud as well as force, it was only because they were too dumb to do so, 14.3 on 817). These assemblies of cyclopes (or "patricians," since Vico uses the Romans as the key example) lorded it over weaker followers (or "plebeians"), who sought out their protection; the growing numbers of the plebeians eventually enabled them to overthrow the patricians, and the human age was born. (Although human beings exist in all three ages, only the third age is called "human," which shows that Vico uses this word

in a stronger and a weaker sense. One might also think of it as “the humane age,” cf. 11.8 on 578.) First democracy and then monarchy generally prevailed in the human age; the human age will be replaced by a return to barbarism, as already happened once in the “the returned Barbarian times,” which is how Vico refers to the middle ages (4.10-11 on 25; 4.7 on 8; 11.3 [cf. 190-91, 338-39]).

As for natural right, it exists in all three ages but is different for each, a point Strauss says cannot be overemphasized (12.3; 13.1; 12.7-8 on 631: “providence turned the natural right of the greater *genti* [the patriicians]...into the natural right of the lesser *genti* [the plebeians]”). The three ages are radically different, but each is natural. Hence, when Vico uses the phrase “the so-called state of nature,” Strauss suggests he does so because all ages are generated by natural necessity (12.6 on 629; 6.8-9 on 141-42). And hence on another occasion, when Vico repeats the word “naturally” twice in a single sentence, Strauss takes the opportunity to underscore that the whole process is natural (11.11 on 583 [middle]). Strauss clarifies by explaining that natural right does not have the character of law, written or unwritten, but of custom (5.10 on 67 [and 1107, end]). That is, natural right—at least or especially in the first age—lacks the sense of “ought” or duty: it is what was done as if by custom. Certainly it is not a deduction of reason; it is immanent in the men of the time. (See also 7.12 on 314-15, where Strauss again stresses that primitive natural right is not the natural right of philosophers or moral theologians.)

It helps to remember that Strauss introduced Vico as applying the new science of Galileo, Bacon, and Newton to human things in an effort to understand in principle all of human history (9.3). As such, Vico's science should be understood as explanatory, not as offering advice to statesmen (12.6; 6.5). His history is a critical history, one in which there is nothing miraculous; everything is natural (see Addendum 1). This view, which Strauss links to Thucydides, also stresses that the origins are imperfect. Vico may have made this more clear than anyone earlier (6.3; see also 7.9 on Ibn Khaldun). As the foregoing implies, Vico notes how people did govern in different ages, but he does not advise them about how they ought to govern. Similarly, he sees nature as operating through or behind human choice, for what had been seen by Plato and Aristotle as strictly *nomos* comes to be seen by Vico as due to nature: the positing of Zeus by the Greeks, Jupiter by the Romans, and Teutonic gods by the Germans is rooted in nature. Vico even asserts that the particular words given to things are by nature and not by convention. The

natural variety among nations *might* help make this idea plausible or useful (9.1 [cf. 445]); it appears from 9.3 that the names of things are not clues to the named things themselves but to the mentality of the nations which coined these names. Strauss confesses a readiness to emphasize this point with the following overstatement: for Vico, convention too is natural (4.5-6).

But if these are the main points he emphasizes in regard to the three ages, Strauss is not entirely satisfied by them (e.g. 6.10-11). In the first place, he finds Vico's distinction among the three ages a bit unclear. It appears as though the divine age is characterized by the belief that gods inhabit the earth with men, that the heroic age is when heroes, born of the gods, are believed to live with men, and the human age is when there are no longer either gods or heroes, but only men. But do men in the heroic age not believe that the gods still walk the earth? And does Vico mean to suggest that religion can wither away in the human stage? Will it not always exist?

Perhaps a sharper distinction between the heroic and human ages is inequality, since the heroic age holds that the patricians and plebeians are of wholly different origins; perhaps a sharper distinction between the divine and heroic ages is that the cyclopes of the divine age are wholly disunited, whereas those of the heroic age form a group of united cyclopes that holds others in subjection (11.9 on 570; 3.9). Still another reason Strauss puzzles over the three ages is that philosophy is characteristic of the third age, and yet it often does not exist where Vico's schema would lead one to expect it (5.4-5 [e.g. 1101, 1043]). These and other reasons lead Strauss to wonder how and how strictly Vico means to differentiate these three ages; after all, Strauss notes, Vico attributes this differentiation to the Egyptians and treats it as hypothetical at 737 (5.7; 6.12).

A different sort of problem regarding the differentiation of the ages concerns the relationship between the original barbarism and "the returned barbarism," which is how Vico refers to the Middle Ages. Strauss notes that the latter, which is presented as a return to the former, is different in that it has traditions that have carried over from a preceding civilization, including Christianity, the Latin language, and scholasticism (6.11 on 159; 12.11-12; 14.13 on 842-43). Such differences as these need to be noted and their importance assessed. (See also 1106, where Vico distinguishes the old barbarism from the new by speaking of "a barbarism of sense" versus "a barbarism of reflection.")

As for Strauss's question about the precise mechanism by which history is driven forward, the extant transcript does not focus on it. Strauss calls attention to the struggle between Vico's stronger and weaker, his "patricians" and "plebeians," but this is not developed into a more comprehensive mechanics (4.10 on 18). Strauss does stress the naturalness of the entire process and sees it as presided over by a kind of law in the sense of modern science. Even though nature for Vico retains its etymological connotations of birth, and the origins are especially important for him, the process from beginning to end is also natural (3.1). Whatever the particulars of the process, it is akin to Newton's mechanical laws (4.2 on 2).

Having reviewed the seminar with an eye on Vico's presentation of the three ages of human history and of natural right, I turn to Strauss's call for study of Vico's criticism of "the three princes of the doctrine of natural right" (topic I). This topic arises explicitly in seminars 3 and 9 and implicitly when he discusses Vico's understanding of primitive man. He does not take up each of Vico's several criticisms of the three princes [cf. 310, 397, 493]; his focus is on Vico's insistence that men before the founding of the earliest nations were barbaric (cf. 4.7 on 8; 4.8 on 14). Vico's early men were beasts. They were cannibalistic (12.9 on 644), wracked by superstitious fears, in a state of "nefarious promiscuity of things and women" (16), ready to offer their children up as human sacrifices (517); they were not rational (923; see also 17, 547, 916, 570). The three princes hold that natural law is principally the law of reason, but Vico indicates that such a law would have no effect on the pre-rational men of the earliest times. The mistake of the three princes is taking the natural right of the philosopher to be the natural right of the nation (3.9-10). Any natural right operative on men before or as they first became political had to have been something very primitive, for the men themselves were very primitive. Natural right, for Vico, was identical to the customs of the early tribes; it was not a law of reason, and it does not apply to all men at all times (3.10). [Vico frequently uses the phrase *diritto natural*, and Strauss and his reader render it as "natural right," not "natural law," as do Bergin and Fisch (Vico 1963 and 1986). "Natural law" (*legge naturale*) also occurs, as in 292, but less often.] Vico finds it impossible to think that man's entrance into civil society was presided over by rules of the sort that philosophers might only understand two thousand years later (see Addendum 2), and he thus also explains it to have been an error that the three princes assumed that early men were essentially the same as they were: to the contrary, human nature had changed. One source of this mistake was paying too much attention to what writers said about the origins. The three

princes should have based their thought directly on “the authority of the human race,” not on “the authority of the learned” (350).

Strauss stresses that natural right as understood by Vico did not require divine revelation for its promulgation; it was hence intelligible to gentiles as well as to Jews and Christians. But what was “promulgated” to the bestial men at that time was very limited, limited perhaps to a kind of intra-tribal morality followed by the ruling group (or “patricians”). In this connection Strauss cites Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* regarding the nonexistence of innate principles and suggests Vico makes this point more powerfully than many others (3.10; 12.1; 11.5-6).

The usual emphasis on natural right shifts to natural law in seminar 7, thanks to 292, which speaks of “a natural royal law.” After asking what is meant by laws of nature, Strauss contrasts an older notion as expressed by Joseph Hooker with more modern conceptions expressed by Spinoza and Hobbes. The importance of a *telos* or end is rejected in the modern view, but so is the view that there are fixed essences. Noting that Hobbes substituted the word “effects” for the word “properties” used in the earlier Latin edition of the *Leviathan*, Strauss suggests that the modern view replaces the traditional focus on fixed properties by an emphasis on efficient causes (7.5). All this is implied in Vico’s focus on the birth or genesis of things. Concomitant with their focus on efficient causes, moderns such as Hobbes sought to discover laws of actual behavior, not correct or moral behavior; more generally, they concentrated their attention not on the “why” or on the first things, which concerned both the natural and the political philosophers of antiquity, but on the “how.” The success of modern natural science is easy to see; here we see its modesty (7.7-9).

Related to the question of whether there are essences—Strauss here seizes the opportunity to defend an apparently tautological defense of essences in Molière’s *Le Malade Imaginaire*, that a *virtus dormitiva* causes sleep—is the question of what we can know, and Strauss refers to Vico’s famous view that we know only what we make and to his own treatment of Hobbes’ version of this view in *Natural Right and History*, 172-73. If political institutions are manmade, they become fully knowable to us (though whether they are manmade is a point on which Hobbes and Vico may differ, 7.7); and if the gods make everything, we could on this principle understand nothing (12.4-5 on 412; for the implied difficulty in understanding nature, 2.1 [cf. 331]).

In light of this complex of issues, Strauss comments that he finds the concept of laws of nature to be among the most difficult (7.8).

II. The second point of Strauss's call for study invites us to consider both the full reach of Vico's critique and the possibility that he is not always forthright about the full implications of his teaching (9.4-5). Might it extend also to St. Thomas, Cicero, or even the Bible? [That Vico might understate the reach of his thought is suggested much more emphatically by Bergin and Fisch, albeit in a very different context. They see him as having presented revolutionary philosophical teachings as if they were an exercise in Latin etymology (Vico 1963, 8-9).]

Strauss calls attention to a passage in which Vico presents his criticism of the three princes as an act of Catholic piety: they were Protestant, so to show their errors is to advance the glory of the Catholic Church (3.11 on *Autobiography*, 173; cf. 155, on Grotius as a "heretical author"). But Strauss cannot help but notice that Vico is also openly enthusiastic about Bacon, a proponent of a new natural science whose principles Vico seeks to apply to society, and Bacon happened to have been a Protestant (3.5-6). Could Vico really understand his project as a defense of Catholicism against Protestants? And what of the substance of Vico's criticism of the three Protestants? Insofar as his criticism of them rests on a new understanding of natural right and of primitive man, does it not extend also to Catholic authors as well, such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas (9.4; 3.11)? Strauss doubts the view that Vico really advances his teaching as a defense of the Church.

But Strauss's eye is more focused on the divide between believer and non-believer than on that between Catholic and Protestant, and the seminar frequently considers the relationship between Christian orthodoxy and particular passages in Vico (see Addendum 3). As a general caution, Strauss mentions that in considering this question, the standards for Christian orthodoxy should not be defined by the views of today's theologians (5.1-2); it could even be that Vico was among those who helped to change the standards employed by subsequent theologians. (A parallel but less frequent question for the seminar was whether Vico was politically orthodox: did he imply criticism of monarchy, and how could he do so in an age of strong monarchs?)

Although Strauss does not announce a definitive resolution of the question of Vico's relationship to orthodoxy, he does indicate a variety of ways it arises. In the first place Vico may limit the apparent religious

implications of his new science of history by the distinction between *genti* and *nazioni*. The former word may mean “peoples,” but its meaning may also be limited to gentiles, not Hebrews; *nazioni* includes Jews and gentiles alike. Vico thus may help to protect his reputation for orthodoxy by limiting his teaching to the *genti*; the history of the chosen people is best left to more authoritative sources (4.7 on 8; cf. 5.2).

But Vico is not entirely vigilant in maintaining this firewall. Strauss notes, for example, that Vico uses *nazioni*, not *genti*, when he says “the first writers of both ancient and modern nations were poets” (14.13 on 848), so it would appear from this passage that the first writers among the Hebrews possess no special authority. Similarly, the title to Book IV, “The Course the Nations [*Nazioni*] Run,” also would seem to extend Vico’s analysis to Jews and Christians as well as to others (15.2; cf. 3.1 on *Autobiography*, 172). Another use of *nazioni* is noted in 931, and it links the Jews and gentiles in the third or human stage of history, when articulate speech is used by all. Should they not be linked in the heroic and divine stages as well (15.4-5)? Strauss also notes that Vico calls his history “universal” (5.6-7 on 51 [where the transcript reads “prior to orthodoxy,” I understand “proper to orthodoxy”]).

Even where the more inclusive word *nazioni* is not used, Strauss wonders about the bearing of Vico’s profane history on sacred history. He notes, for example, a passage in which Vico treats the Hebrews in essentially the same way he treats other practitioners of the heroic natural law, such as the American Indians and the Abyssinians (12.12 on 658; see also 12.12 on 660), and he wonders whether comments on gentile history are sometimes mentioned to call to mind Biblical parallels. Might a discussion of Aeneas’s flight from Troy and founding of Rome shed light on Moses’ flight from Egypt and legislation for the Jews (13.13 on 772)? Might Vico’s account of the Egyptians’ vainglory in believing they were the oldest nation of the world—whose vainglory was equaled by the Greeks in thinking their Hercules freed the world of monsters—help explain his view of the beliefs of the chosen people (13.13 on 761; cf. 5.5-6)? And when Vico considers whether to agree that the Romans “had a privilege from God,” might this invite consideration of other such claimed privileges, even if they are not mentioned in this context (12.13 on 665)? Strauss wonders also whether Vico’s extended discussion of Homer is an implicit comment on the Bible. We read, for example, that the “heroism of virtue which realizes its best idea belongs to philosophy and not to poetry,” so should we think of a possible philosophic critique not only of Homer, whom Vico mentions, but also of the Bible, which goes unmentioned

(13.6-7 on 708; cf. 9.9 on 433)? (See Addendum 4.) And with regard to the discovery or invention of letters, Strauss notes how Vico first suggests that the invention of letters was more than human or was at least owing to “men eminent in divinity” but then revises this view; letters later turn out to be an invention of peoples (15.7 on 935-38). In the most general terms, Vico's account of the origins strikes Strauss as more Hobbian or Epicurean, even when it shows a certain external harmony with the Bible (2.9-10).

Another way Strauss sees Vico's orthodoxy as being at issue regards the several chronologies presented in *The New Science*. In particular, Vico cites a chronology of the Egyptians, he presents one of his own, and there is of course also a Biblical chronology. The first of these is an especially clear challenge to the chronology of the Bible, but Vico is more vigilant in denying that the Egyptians could have been wise long ago—for his own view of brutish origins does not allow this—than that they could have existed long ago, even though the Bible would deny this (5.2-4 on 45). And Strauss suspects—but does not quite affirm—that Vico's own chronology also departs from and hence questions the Biblical view. Strauss implies that whatever attacks the chronology of the Bible also throws its truth into question. This in turn challenges the truth of Christianity, at least if one leaves aside the efforts of such heretical sects as the Marcionites to liberate Christian teachings from their roots in the Old Testament (5.1-4).

Strauss reports that Nicolini finds Vico's chronology to be discordant with that of the Bible, but he generally limits himself to noting a few places where he thinks further thought is needed (13.9 on 736; 5.13 on 83 presents a more conclusive statement). For example, the Biblical account of the origin of language, from the Garden to the Tower of Babel, seems to leave no place for the language-less bestial men who are so important for Vico's account of the origins (5.9 on 62; cf. 9.12).

Strauss also calls attention to the authorities Vico cites. He notes, for example, that the entire *New Science* contains but two mentions of Jesus Christ and two mentions of “the golden sayings of Moses” (13.3; see 816, 948). He later notes that the first mention of Christ occurs in a discussion to the effect that the early or poetic way of thinking would exaggerate the importance of, say, an Achilles. Early men even deified this hero; they made men into gods (just as they also turned natural events into divine ones, 6.4 on 120, 137). But of Christ Vico says only that he was painted as being larger than life-size (14.3 on 816).

Strauss notes that Vico praises Thucydides as “the most acute and sapient writer” (12.9 on 645). No other author receives such praise, and that Moses did not may suggest something of the place in which Vico holds the texts he was held to have written. Of course the failure to praise Moses might also be a sign of due respect, for who are we to praise a holy writer? But Vico twice uses “golden” to describe a phrase of Moses, so he is not entirely averse to passing judgment. Strauss wonders out loud whether Vico treats the Bible as did Machiavelli, who raised up the authority of Livy, only to bring it down, bringing down that of the Bible along with it (12.11 on 657). Strauss appears to find Vico’s effort to “find the true Homer” to be provocative in this regard (13.3-4).

Vico’s criticism of the princes of natural right is also linked to criticisms of Hobbes, Locke, and Aristotle, though with these authors Vico is willing to be more openly critical. In discussing the emergence of civil authority out of family or paternal authority, Strauss stresses Vico’s disagreement with Hobbes and Locke, for example (11.3-4 on 585 [the transcript wrongly refers to 485]). Vico’s emphasis on the bestiality and pre-rationality of early men makes it impossible that they came together into society out of choice and a compact. Moreover, these creatures needed the capacity for a certain restraint, and this is linked by Strauss to their superstitious fear, a fear which strikes the patricians harder than the plebeians (11.4). In stressing the bestial character of early man, Vico challenges Hobbes and Locke as well as the three princes. And with an eye on Aristotle, Strauss stresses that Vico’s view of man’s sociality is not that man was originally social but that a certain mechanism made him become social. Man originally lacked speech: even a simple society requires some sort of simple speech, but Vico’s man was both asocial and pre-rational (11.5).

IV. Strauss calls in his fourth topic for a special focus on the third age, that of human beings living politically; in particular, what does it mean that civil equity is identical to the reason of state? Is civil equity then identical to political utility? And how does Vico assess the two regimes that prevail in the third age, democracy and monarchy, for their ability to promote this utility?

Perhaps because Vico finds nature especially in the origins of things and perhaps also because he aspires to present a universal history, one that covers all periods of human history, his *New Science* does not focus as much on the third age as we who live in this age might expect. Strauss invites us, however, to look in particular at the age which concerns us most.

One aspect of this question is singled out by Strauss partly because he finds it difficult, namely, the relationship between civil and natural equity. He stresses that Vico's natural equity requires no special training or intellectual prowess: it is a judgment that is known naturally (12.1 on 320). It can be "known" by primitive creatures who know little. For Vico, the natural is not the perfected or elevated; it is to be associated in the first place with early men. Civil equity, by contrast, appears to be reserved "to those few who, being eminently endowed with prudence, experience, or learning, have come to know what things are necessary for the conservation of society" (320). Strauss corrects the translation in the sequel of this passage so it reads, "[Civil equity] is what in beautiful Italian is called 'reason of state.'"

The intellectual requirements of civil equity as here defined initially led the seminar to locate it exclusively in the human age, which Strauss in this context associates especially with a concern for utility (11.1 [as opposed to heroism, cf. 950-51]). Upon reconsideration, however, Strauss suggests that civil equity, or reason of state, exists also in the heroic age, even if it could not have been guided by the same conscious notion of utility or have required the same intellectual requirements for its exercise. In heroic society, the utility of society is the utility of the patricians (12.2 [cf. 38, 949-50]; the private interest of the nobles coincides with the common good of the state, but the state is a state that consists of the nobles, 15.12). (See Addendum 5.) Thus, like natural right itself, civil equity exists in different historical stages, but it is different in each: even if civil equity always means "reason of state," and even if "reason of state" may require measures of extraordinary severity in both heroic and humane times (15.11), the measures or institutions that preserve states vary and may be arrived at either rationally or without reason (12.3; 15.12). In speaking of natural right or civil equity, according to Vico, one must ask, "*Which* natural right or civil equity?" Strauss cites 109 and notes that natural right favored the people or plebeians, but he adds that Vico does not mean that there was no other conflicting natural right (12.3, top). Strauss does not say it, but I infer that this helps explain how history supplants natural right. Section III of Book IV, entitled "Three Kinds of Natural Right," helps make the variety and conflict within "natural right" difficult to miss.

Perhaps in part to underscore the importance of these differences, Strauss indicates or reminds that heroic actions include criminal actions: the heroes did not know their actions were criminal, but subsequently developed human reason shows that they were. The heroes treated

the plebeians as strangers, that is as enemies, and their piety supported their severe religious intolerance (12.2-3 on 611 [cf. 271]; see Addendum 6).

A further question raised by Strauss in his comments about the human age is whether Vico understands it to be possible that religion, which was central to his analysis of the earlier ages [e.g. 916], might become dispensable in the human age. The question seems to turn on whether or not human laws can be strong enough to control human ferocity by themselves (15.4 on 923-24; 15.5). It is not answered in the extant transcript. [Paragraph 1101, which is beyond the reach of the seminar transcript, discusses both the deterioration of the religious sentiment, which had been a stimulus to virtuous actions, and the birth of philosophy as a way of making the virtues understood, but it does not go so far as to claim that their understanding is sufficient to encourage and support their practice.]

Strauss also directs his students to the need for a more dedicated reflection on Vico's treatment of democracy and monarchy, the main forms of government in the human stage. The transcript is mostly silent on this question, but Vico's use of Roman history is clear at least in its main outlines (e.g. 29, 292). Beyond this, Strauss notes that Vico qualifies the simple schema by raising the possibility that commercial republics might be better able to prolong the period of popular liberty before succumbing to monarchy, that Vico is a bit more favorable to monarchical than to democratic jurisprudence (15.8 on 940), that there are occasional tributes to democracy (15.10 on 949), and that Vico observes one of the deceptions used by monarchy to bring liberty to an end (13.9 on 737). In a wholly different context, he notes a second technique, which involved giving new pro-monarchical content to words and offices that had previously served liberty (12.3 [cf. 996]). In a passage that is more than ordinarily interrupted by lacunae in the transcript, Strauss stresses that the legitimacy of monarchy stems from its necessity; when popular states became corrupt, "the unchecked liberty of the free peoples" resulted in the worst of tyrannies, and a monarch like Augustus had to arise [1102-4]: public utility is sovereign (15.1; 292).

Of course philosophy appears only in the human stage [e.g. 1101], and it too helps to define this stage.

V. Strauss calls for further thought on the fact that Vico's new science is given a theological form. In saying this, Strauss appears to mean not merely that Vico presents his work as the work of a Christian but that his claim to be offering a new science is intimately tied to a discovery

that divine providence is at work in the world. Vico thus calls his new science “a rational civil theology of divine providence” (9.5; 2, 342-43, 385, 366). [It is also striking that Vico often links natural right to providence (1105, 1109, 310, 584, 342, 979; cf. 978).]

I think it useful to apply what Strauss says about Vico's use of “natural right” to his use of “divine providence,” namely, that we should not assume at the outset that we know what he means by it. Augustus gave the traditional names of republican institutions a new content and thus helped subvert the republic and establish his monarchy more firmly: Strauss wonders whether Vico does not do something similar in the case of “natural right” (12.3 on 109). In any event, it is prudent to hesitate before thinking we know what so unusual an author as Vico means by “divine providence.”

The main point made by Vico and stressed by Strauss is that divine providence is shown by the way that bestial, pre-rational, asocial man is led to become civilized, rational, and social. As if by a version of Smith's “invisible hand” that operates over time, early man is led to develop gradually, through no virtue of his own, to become fit for society (4.2 and 8 on 14; 5.2-3; 6.6). To put the point more sharply, he acts in a way that eventually ends up promoting the public interest in human development even though his actions show “grievous, ugly, and cruel private vices” (38). This suggests a divine plan (342), even if it suggests a plan that operates through cruel and terrible actions and institutions. And, since this plan operates among gentiles, it does not presuppose grace. But in addition to stressing this prominent claim, Strauss also notes that since Vico presented the claim as one that still needed to be demonstrated (4.2 on 2: note “in order to show” and, below, “it will be shown,” 2). I infer from this that Strauss asks whether Vico's providence was adequately demonstrated. Or, more simply, what kind or degree of divine providence is established by the argument that shows it by tracing the development of bestial man into a creature capable of living in society? At a minimum, I think it safe to say that the providence of which Vico speaks does not notice individuals or chosen peoples and has nothing to do with Christian salvation (11.12 on 584). (See Addendum 7.) But this only clarifies Strauss's question; it does not answer it: Why does Vico's new science take this form? Does it, perhaps, make Vico seem more orthodox? Or does it rather strengthen the suggestion that his science is a rival to the tradition, that it uses its categories or form but changes the content of its teaching? Perhaps the extant transcript contains some pointers in its discussion of how Vico writes.

VI. Strauss's sixth question asks about the precise locus of Vico's originality, and he makes this question more precise by noting that Lucretius too presented a natural or rational account of the history of mankind. But whereas Lucretius's account was a construction, and hence could be brief, Vico was concerned to offer extensive empirical historical proof. What are the causes and consequences of this difference? Second, Lucretius describes a single process leading from bestial men in the beginning to wholly corrupt men at the end, whereas Vico's account notes that one repetition has already occurred (the return to barbarism in the Middle Ages, 972), and he expects more or even endless repetitions. But third and most important, Vico is very concerned with the mechanics of the change from one period to another, whereas Lucretius studies the stages without attention to the causes by which one leads to another. Vico, then, is eager to detect the laws that govern history, whereas Lucretius is not. Vico's "ideal history" is not a history of moral perfection but a history that takes its bearings from ideal objects, laws (9.5-6). This is a wonderful question in three parts. It is very much a question for the future, however, and is not one taken up in the extant transcript. The only times the transcript mentions Lucretius are during the posing of this question, in passing at 3.2, and in a brief but important discussion at 7.7.

VII. Strauss's final point calls for an assessment of Vico: Does he achieve his goal of establishing a social physics? Since the seminar itself is devoted to understanding Vico as he understood himself, criticism is infrequent and passing. Strauss does wonder at one point, however, whether a view like Xenophon's, which does not claim to discover a rational order at work behind history, might be more sober (9.8); this suggests Strauss is not yet fully persuaded by Vico's claim. Such other criticism as the extant transcript contains goes less to the heart of the matter. Strauss comments multiple times, for example, on Vico's peculiar manner of writing and cites Dante and Plato as possible evidence against Vico's claim that philosophers cannot write poetry (14.9-10; cf. 3.11-12).

As noted above, there is no transcript of the last seminar, so we do not know what Strauss chose to emphasize in his conclusion. For my own conclusion, I need to stress that I have focused on Strauss's reasons for turning to Vico and on the seven questions he poses as a program for more careful study; I was not able to capture here his remarks on issues that did not become sustained themes, even though these were often enlightening.

ADDENDA

1. Strauss adds the qualification that the stages themselves provide implicit norms, and what survives from an earlier stage may not harmonize with the next stage. Moreover, he suggests that since people always have political opinions, a simply descriptive political science cannot remain so in practice: every mere description will be taken over in a certain way by those who read it [as Vico himself was, first by defenders of Italian unification, later by Fascism]. Still, Strauss says, the core of Vico's teaching does not seek to offer counsel to statesmen. At another point, Strauss cautions that although each stage in history has its own nature, it does not necessarily follow that each is as good as another: there is a development, with reason and rationality coming into their own only after the brutal divine and heroic ages (14.1 [cf. 1102]).

2. Vico implies that scholars—perhaps he thinks here too of Bacon, to whose *Wisdom of the Ancients* he elsewhere refers—make a parallel error when they think that the myths surviving from early time contain great wisdom: they do not. They express rather “the doltishness and simplicity” of the first men (688). Of course Vico holds that these myths repay study for other reasons.

3. Strauss notes that Vico sees himself as addressing a religious readership, or at least a world in which religion is taken very seriously (12.4 on 629). [Vico dedicated an early version of the *New Science* to Cardinal Corsini, who he also hoped would cover the costs of its printing. And, of course, the work had to receive the imprimatur. The Inquisition was active in Naples throughout Vico's life, and several of his acquaintances were brought to trial (Vico 1963, 11-12, 34-36).]

4. A once influential work by Finetti, *Difesa dell' Autorità Sacra Scrittura contro Giambattista Vico*, apparently tried to establish Vico's violations of orthodoxy on the basis of arguments similar to those sketched by Strauss (Vico 1963, 63 and 213n65).

5. And when democracy comes to be instituted, Strauss wonders whether the private interest of individuals will coincide with the common good of the state (15.12). And will the common good of the state be of a state understood as consisting only of the people as a particular class? That the common interest, to be effective, must be common to each in particular is noted again at 11.13 and 12.6-7.

6. In this same section Strauss raises briefly the question of the relationship between natural right and the right of nations, which he says he finds obscure. He cites Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Second Part of the Second Part, Question 57, as perhaps the most important text in the tradition on this issue.

7. This is not to say that Vico's rational defense of providence necessarily excludes the possibility that the Hebrews were the beneficiaries of providence as traditionally understood (313). As noted above, Vico generally distinguishes between his history of the gentiles and the sacred history of the Hebrews, and he does not understand his rational civil theology of divine providence to be identical to the providence of the tradition.

REFERENCES

I wish to thank Professor Joseph Cropsey, the executor of the literary estate of Leo Strauss, for allowing reports to be written on these materials.

Numbers in parentheses and including a decimal point, such as (7.2), refer to one of Strauss's seminars (Strauss 1963b) and to one or more pages of that seminar, so the reference here is to the second page of the seventh seminar. When a comment by Strauss is directly linked to a passage in Vico, I add a reference to that passage like this: (7.2 on 343 [the context will indicate whether the reference is to the *Autobiography* or to *The New Science*]). References to the *Autobiography* (Vico 1963) are by page. References to *The New Science* are to the numbered paragraphs in Nicolini's edition (Vico 1928); Bergin and Fisch include these numbers in their translation (Vico 1986).

Brackets always contain material not included in the transcript but which I think might be helpful for understanding the transcript and Vico.

Strauss, Leo. 1963a. *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Genesis*.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Originally published in 1952.

———. 1963b. Transcript of course on Vico. Autumn term. Department of Political Science. University of Chicago. Unpublished.

———. 1971. *Natural Right and History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Originally published in 1953.

- Vico, Giambattista. 1928. *La Scienza Nuova*. 2 vols. Ed. Fausto Nicolini. Bari: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli.
- . 1963. *The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*. Trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- . 1986. *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*. Trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

How Lincoln Defended Himself against the Charge of Religious Infidelity

DAVID LOWENTHAL

BOSTON COLLEGE

dslow5@verizon.net

The handbill of July 31, 1846, is Lincoln's response to the charge of infidelity circulated against him by his opponent, the Reverend Peter Cartwright, in the campaign for a seat in the United States House of Representatives. Despite winning the election, Lincoln was concerned that the rumors had "succeeded in deceiving some honest men," and, in a letter of August 11, asked the editor of the *Illinois Gazette* to print the handbill, thereby giving it a much broader distribution than it had received before the election. Lincoln was thirty-seven years old at the time.

The importance of this statement bears no relation to its brevity. Coming four years after Lincoln's Temperance Address, it is perhaps the last time he allowed some public view of his general or philosophical thought and the first (and only) time he comes close to disclosing his mode of writing and the reason for it. He had been charged, as he put it, with being "an open scoffer at *Christianity*." He could have responded simply by saying that he fully believed in Christianity, that he certainly would never have scoffed at it, and that he could never himself support for office anyone who did. He might have cited the names of prominent people who could vouch for these assertions. This would have settled the matter, insofar as such a matter can be settled by the person maligned.

Instead, Lincoln takes an entirely different and most daring tack, complicating his defense by employing subtleties and equivocations and raising philosophical issues of the greatest moment that did not have to be raised at all. At the outset he concedes that he does not belong to any Christian church, but without saying why. He claims never to have denied

the truth of Scriptures, which is not quite the same as a flat affirmation of Christian belief, and does he mean denied it *openly, publicly*? He says he has never “spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general or of any denomination of Christians in particular,” but what he speaks, or fails to speak, could be quite different from what he believes, or fails to believe. What *did* he believe? Why *didn't* he belong to any church?

The mystery deepens—Lincoln himself deepens it—by the introduction of a point not asserted by the accusatory rumors and wholly unnecessary to his defense against them. For the first time he tells us what he really believes, or better, what he was “inclined to believe” in early life, something he understands is called the “Doctrine of Necessity.” The name sounds formidable. The word “doctrine” suggests a worked-out set of beliefs, principles or teachings from religion or philosophy. The word “necessity” is perfectly general, suggesting a kind of metaphysical doctrine that distinguishes necessity from such things as chance or purpose, and, by contrast, meaning sheer necessity or what just has to be.

Lincoln strays further from a straightforward defense by describing the content of this doctrine, and the content seems to be much more circumscribed than the name. It is “that the human mind is impelled to action, or held in rest by some power, over which the mind itself has no control.” So the doctrine pertains solely to man, and, even then, to the human mind alone rather than to things universal, as its name suggests. What can this mean? And why is it introduced by Lincoln in the context of the accusation that he was an “open scoffer at *Christianity*”? Evidently he thinks of the doctrine as something like an alternative to Christianity and perhaps to all religion.

Lincoln gives no further help on the subject, except for adding that “in early life” he actually argued for the doctrine, but only with “one, two or three, but never publicly,” and that he has “left off” so arguing “for more than five years.” In short, he went from being very private or secretive about this activity to suspending it entirely—suspending the habit of so arguing, he says, which is not the same as ceasing to believe. But what could this doctrine mean, and why the need for such secrecy? How can the human mind be impelled to action or inaction by some power over which it has no control? The power is not identified, nor are we told whether mind means conscious or unconscious mind. The reference to its being “impelled to action or held in rest by some power over which the mind itself has no control” sounds very much like something out of a physics book, such as

the law of inertia. The word “action” sounds closer to decision-making or conscious action, but Lincoln might be giving it a much larger scope and using it to mean change—change in ideas, including those, like reminiscing or ruminating, that are not directly tied to action in the ordinary sense. Thinking might be a term applying to both.

What is this power over which the mind, in its thinking, has no control? The very idea seems to fly in the face of ordinary experience. Does not our own mental experience tell us that we are free to think and act as we please? Is this not what we mean by “voluntary action,” and is not our moral and legal thought based on this idea? Does it not also underlie the religious doctrine of freedom of the will? So the “doctrine of necessity”—which by now we see is a philosophical idea and not a religious one, as Lincoln uses it—is distinctly un-obvious and in fact defies what we all take for granted. Let us assume, to begin with, that the power causing the mind to act or not act must be either outside or inside the mind. If it is external to the mind, what could it be? Not simply the physical things outside us, because these—like scenery—do not compel the mind to act at all, even when they appeal to our desires or appetites. We see the apple and are tempted by it, but observing the wormholes we decide to wait. The apple itself had no compelling power over us. Nor is it likely Lincoln is referring to God, the highest possible external power, since in this context it would be odd not to mention God by name and since “the doctrine of necessity” has a decidedly un-religious or even anti-religious cast to it—which is probably why it had to be treated so secretly.

Our bodies are also external to our minds—even if our minds cannot exist and function without them. We immediately experience the difference between our mind and the body—let’s say our leg—of which we (by our mind) are aware as an object. In many ways our bodies can cause us to act, but by by-passing or under-cutting the mind rather than causing the mind to act in a certain way. We come closest to acting without being directed by the mind—to being controlled by some other power, including bodily appetites, limbs, nerves, muscles—when we act instinctively, or impulsively, or by sheer habit, or by subconscious motives, or are forced by external pressure to act in ways we would not choose consciously and voluntarily. In these cases we ourselves feel that our mind has been by-passed, that it is not in the driver’s seat. But Lincoln is talking about a power that causes the mind itself to act, so we must concentrate on our ordinary thinking, when we are not under these compulsive influences. Is not our conscious voluntary action caused by the mind, and isn’t it perfectly clear that our minds are free

to choose, and to will what we choose? What other power—not the external world, not God, not our bodies—could be the power over which the mind has no control that compels it to act or not act?

It may perhaps be objected that we have given insufficient consideration to external influences on the mind that come from other people—from parents, teachers, friends, books, society in general. Lincoln’s position, as we interpret it, is far from denying such influences, some voluntary, some involuntary, as among those that help form our character and thought. But the “doctrine of necessity,” as he states it, says that the mind is impelled to action or inaction by “some power” over which it has no control. These words suggest a single power always at work, even when the mind is engaging in its most voluntary or deliberate actions, its most voluntary thinking. So we must look at the mind at the moment of decision, taking it as the existing product of its original nature and all prior influences on it. And when it seems most free, and is experienced by us as most free, is when the “doctrine of necessity” will have its clearest test case.

Here is what I think Lincoln argued “with one, two or three, but never publicly.” When we make what we think are free conscious choices we do so (and overlook the fact that we do so) in a certain way because we have the particular mind we have, and over this the mind has no control. The mind does not give itself the natural power it possesses, or whatever overall characteristics it has at any given moment. The mind of Socrates chooses in a different way than the mind of Alcibiades, and at any given moment these minds cannot act differently: they have no control over their own mode of operation and its accompanying limitations. The same can be said of the perceptions, sensations, virtues and vices which enter into our choices, including the ones we consider most deliberate. For this reason a particular person can be expected to act the same way or make the same choice in the same set of circumstances (of course these are never perfectly the same). This is what we mean by a person’s character or personality or motivation. It is what Shakespeare’s plays show in every scene, and what every novelist dotes on in his plots. It is the reason Heracleitus said that character is destiny. Perhaps—and only perhaps—this is what Lincoln meant when he spoke of a power causing the mind to act or not act that the mind itself did not control.

There is another path to the same conclusion. Let us assume the opposite: that the mind is completely free to act or not act in any way it pleases.

It would then be a real option for the profligate Alcibiades, at any moment, to become a Greek Mother Theresa working in the slums of Athens. The coward could become brave, the cruel sadist a gentle lamb, the wise man foolish and the foolish man wise, the dullard a poet and the poet a wordless dummy, all by the utter freedom of their minds. Furthermore, choice or decision would become inexplicable, since all the influences on a man, including his own mental powers, would be incapable of explaining whatever decision he comes to, since they could always be overruled by his freedom of choice. And what would motivate this freedom of choice? Either something already in him, or something completely novel. In the former case, we will be able to trace his choice to something in his character. In the latter, we could not: his action would be *de novo*, and for it he could hardly be held responsible or take credit. The phrase “I did it” would become meaningless, for the “I” would be an empty constantly changeable vacuum of motivation. It would end up being more comparable to sheer impulse than to an act of deliberation. We would have reduced the human being to either an empty suit or a bundle of muscles, of which his brain might be the weakest.

This view of the mind does not mean the human being is incapable of understanding, of discovering truth, of deliberate choosing and making wise decisions. Some things we *all* know, some deliberate actions we *all* engage in wisely and well. But some truth is more difficult to obtain, some falsehood more easily fallen into, some deliberations poorly conducted and decisions less than wisely come to—all by the necessities of our individual natures at a given moment in a given situation. By his nature man is equipped to do all these things, far beyond what any other animal can. In that sense he—and this goes for every man—is much freer than they can ever be. His freedom relative to the brutes is shown every time he ponders what to do and reviews three or four options in his mind, choosing one. It is shown every time he asks himself what causes something to happen and looks for the answer, sometimes finding it. These are beyond the capacity of other animals. But he is part of nature, and if he is in some sense also above it, it is not by being outside the flow of natural processes and forces, beyond cause and effect. His mind, with all its unique powers, is still a natural object. It does think, decide and act, but not as an independent self-subsistent entity. There we have the broader implications of the “doctrine of necessity”—the features that make it more than a view of man alone and turn it into a metaphysical doctrine with the generality its name suggests. The world as a whole is a mesh of natural necessities, without which there would be unintelligible gaps in the

flow of causes and effects, and man is part of this world. It is impossible to exist without being subject to such necessities.

Lincoln says he was inclined to believe this “doctrine of necessity” in “early life.” He does not say he no longer believes it, or, if he no longer does, what replaced it. He admits to having sometimes “tried to maintain this opinion in argument,” but with very few people, and never publicly. Five years before (which is well beyond his early life) he completely dropped this “habit” of arguing—why he does not say. But again, neither does he say he no longer believes the argument true. In these few sentences, Lincoln shows how much he was aware, from the beginning, of the dangers of the philosophical quest.

He had to know his opinion was threatening to religion and capable of arousing public ire. He had to know that it could spell instant death to the career of an ambitious public man. Five years before would have brought us back to 1841, when he was still in the Illinois legislature. As his political ambitions began to grow, we can imagine that there came a point when he would no longer risk even semi-private discussions with “one, two or three.” In one final daring burst of concealed risk-taking, he wrote this Handbill to free himself from the charge of infidelity, at the same time that he gave indications verifying the charge more fully than those who made it could possibly have known.

Lincoln mentions, as if by afterthought, that “this same opinion” (the doctrine of necessity) is held by several of the Christian denominations. He must be thinking of the belief called “predestination,” according to which all things that happen have been pre-ordained by an all-knowing and all-powerful God. He seems to be reaching out for traditional allies, but only a moment’s thought is needed to see that the more important function of this remark is to make sure we observe the differences between traditional religion and the doctrine Lincoln has argued, in which God and all other elements of Christian belief have no place and go unmentioned. He also knows most Christian denominations have shied away from predestination in order to retain some place within God’s overarching providence for human free will and responsibility—again, views Lincoln’s doctrine modifies considerably.

Lincoln ends by saying he does not think he himself could be brought to support for office a man he knew to be “an open enemy of, and scoffer at, religion.” Supporting such a scoffer would “insult the feelings, and

injure the morals” of the community. Lincoln’s use of the word “religion” rather than “Christianity” could not be accidental. It is religion society needs, not Christianity as such, and a person who realizes how indispensable religion is to society would not scoff at it. Lincoln has understood this for some time. Anyone so cautious as to cease discussing radical doctrines with even “one, two or three” people would be sure not to declare them publicly. He would never openly scoff—perhaps, out of respect for feelings, not scoff at all. By his mode of writing, Lincoln was able to avoid openly scoffing while raising issues that would encourage the kind of independent thought he might have deemed essential for American statesmanship. Consider what Lincoln said at the end of his Perpetuation Speech, sixteen years earlier. To preserve our political institutions we need, most of all, “reason, cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason.” Not only is reason needed to devise the instruments of our preservation—including a “political religion”—but to do so it must first understand the nature and needs of a society founded on reason. The political context in which our religions operate, that of a primarily secular liberal society, is not one they would have created on their own. That is why religion itself cannot provide the intellectual basis for American statesmanship, and why the statesman, for independence of mind, has to understand fully the rational alternative represented by the “doctrine of necessity.”

Nancy du Bois Marcus, *Vico and Plato*. Emory Studies Vol. 8, New York, Washington, Baltimore, Bern, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001, xiii + 261 pp., \$57.95.

MARCO ANDREACCHIO

marcoandrecchio@ymail.com

Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) is renowned in our day as the father of historicism. Why then would the Institute for Vico Studies at Emory University authorize the publication of a book claiming that, far from being a historicist, Vico is a philosopher in the tradition of Plato and Aristotle? The apparent contradiction involved in a center of studies promoting historicism's synthesis of history and philosophy and at the same time inviting a reading of its spiritual father as a Platonist at heart, is only apparent. The fact that there have been at least as many readings of Plato as there have been of Vico invites the suspicion that a historicist appeal to Vico's Platonism will be sustained by a historicist reading of Plato, not to speak of a historicist reading of historicism itself. The suspicion in question is reinforced by a careful reading of Nancy du Bois Marcus's otherwise most eloquent study, *Vico and Plato*.

Marcus presents two general theses concerning Vico: the first is that he was not a historicist; the second is that he is the first philosopher to have given a fully non-allegorical account of language. But Marcus is arguing against "historicism" only to the extent that it "den[ies] to human beings... even [the capacity to] grasp the idea of transcendent truth or wisdom in any timeless sense" (3). Marcus retraces her understanding of historicism to both Vico's critique of skepticism and Carl Page's critique of historicism (the latter published under the supervision of Stanley Rosen and Donald P. Verene, Marcus's own mentor; cf. Page 1995, *inter alia* xii, 43-44, 154-55). The historicism Marcus disapproves of turns out to be a teaching compelled to reduce its own grounding intuition or "sense of history" to the particularities of history: Marcus is decisively opposed to a historicism forgetting itself in

its own subject matter. Yet, ultimately Marcus reads Vico as upholding the identity of (1) truth and the idea thereof, and (2) timelessness and the sense thereof. Clearly, Marcus does not reject all forms of historicism.

While the historicism Marcus distances Vico from is one claiming the ultimate reduction of human reason to historical contingency, the one Marcus's Vico remains father to is elegantly represented in Page's apology of Hegelian historicism: "history does not lend its actuality to reason, but reason lends its own actuality to history"—"where reason is understood as the elucidating activity of human intelligence" (Page 1995, 202 and 49). Human thought casts its light into the darkness of history, both in spite of that darkness and because man has nowhere else to turn but to history.

Marcus's second thesis is directly dependent upon the first; her contention that authentic (not conceited) philosophy refuses to seek a meaning beyond multi-layered literal speech depends upon her understanding of historicism (145). Claiming to distance herself from Leo Strauss's teaching concerning "exoteric" books (5), Marcus comes to associate that teaching with the habit of reducing the "letter" of speech to historical or contextual particularities, or "social conditioning" (5-6): what Marcus disapproves of in Strauss's teachings is their supposed tendency to *historicize* meaning. This may seem strange in consideration of the fact that Marcus calls for appropriating Vico for universal interests—as she claims he had appropriated Plato for his own purpose (195).

Marcus's appropriation of Vico aims at understanding philosophy/reason within the broader horizon of a historical unfolding leading from the "philosophical conceit" (cf. e.g. 87, 91, where philosophers are indistinguishable from generic scholars) of imagining an "ideal" world behind the physical one, to a new eloquence humbled by Augustinian theology into discovering that the ultimately real world is that of the historical-poetic practice of fabricating ideal/nominal attributes having no true referent outside of poetizing itself. The intellectual journey begun by Socrates and leading in our modern times to the progressive manifestation of "the signs of barbarism of reflection," is part of a greater historical-poetic journey throughout which Socratic philosophy gradually frees itself of its intellectualistic conceit, yielding to the poetic and heroic embodiment of its essence—*fantasia*, or imagination unmediated by reflection (cf. 28, 66ff., 72, 95, 101, 115-18, 121, 126ff., 232). Marcus sees Vico as the first unequivocal embodiment of a universal eloquence that, not "slight[ing] the power of the imagination" in favor of an "intellectual focus," finds in W. B. Yeats its emblematic spokesman

(8, 235). “Vico’s unique Platonism” is confirmed by his pointing to the future generations Plato himself lived his “moral courage and balance” for; Vico is a Platonist in the sense that he approximates the ideal of eloquence Plato had sought to incarnate in his own lifetime (125, 147, 232).

When understood in a historical context, Vico helps us see that the essence of Platonism transcends Socratic intellectualism: what is significant is not so much the history of philosophy, as the powers underlying philosophy and using philosophy to overcome the illusory opposition between reason and imagination through a divinely providential “speech given in so many different ways” (102, 110, 233ff.). What is most significant—what truly makes history—is *fantasia*, vindicating itself through the failure of the intellect to rise above figures of speech. The failure of the intellect serves as argument for the triumph of the imagination understood as a building-block of humanity. As the history of philosophy ends in the history of the imagination, the essence of philosophy is revealed in a new eloquence—“flower of wisdom” and true face of *humanitas*—for which “the image of God...is the potential of all human beings” realized in the exertion of our power of transformative speech (56 and 68). If the image of God is our collective potential, God himself is none other than the collective realization of *fantasia* in speech: “the final perfection of the knowledge of the truth is the eloquent speech of this truth” (57; cf. also 233). The truth in question is the *fantasia* of humanity, a power hidden within us, the vocal realization of which constitutes the goal of education (50-56, 68, 72, 108). The linguistic world of the imagination is the backdrop against which the true Platonist “acknowledges [his] responsibility...to cooperate with providence for the good of the human race” (233)—where providence is none other than a universal eloquence emerging out of the ashes of “esoteric” intellectualism.

From the perspective of Marcus’s teaching, it is not enough to deny esoteric or philosophical meaning to poetry (as Vico is claimed to have done, in spite of his allegorical readings of the Bible; Vico denied merely *human* wisdom to early poetry—i.e. he distinguished between unwise poets and revelation); one must also deny any esoteric meaning to philosophy itself (ignoring Vico’s unconditional rejection of the reduction of metaphysics to physics; compare Vico 1711 to *De Antiquissima*, IV.2) insofar as *both* poetry and philosophy—both Homer and Plato—find their place within the historical unfolding of the universal eloquence Marcus’s age is finally able to appreciate (compare 91 and 232ff.). Vico’s “New Science” represents only the third stage of a philosophical journey leading from Plato’s first philosophy

of history, marking a move from the *mythos* of a pre-philosophical poetic age to a poetic *logos* of “likenesses” (compare 155-56, 183 and 204); to Augustine’s recovery of the philosophical significance of history—*contra* the naïve conceit of the neo-Platonism that will be inherited by Pico della Mirandola (Chapters 1-3)—conceived theologically through pious shame speaking in the allegedly “prideful, inquisitorial tone” of “rigid, sweeping [or] absolute judgments” (Chapters 4-6, esp. pp. 91 and 136-37); to Vico’s philosophical appropriation of Augustine’s providence, i.e. Vico’s bringing about a “transformation of philosophy” by being “humbled by a broader perspective on philosophy as one part of the human world and history” (146); and finally to the intuition Marcus espouses concerning the ultimately symbolic character of Vico’s “universal history”—or rather, the historical/concrete self-realization/actualization of universal eloquence, of which Vico had supposedly seen himself as the first lonesome expression (140-45, 147, 155-56, 221-22).

Thus according to Marcus, the history of philosophy begins with Plato and ends, not with Vico’s nominal intimations, but with the eloquent wisdom of Marcus’s own age (cf. *inter alia*, 155, 175, and 196ff.): the history of philosophy does not end in a mere philosophy of history—Vico’s supposed “original contribution” (73)—but with the self-realization of a history open to the imagination (compare 155 and 232, in complete tacit agreement with Badaloni—see Vico 1971, xlvix-xlvx; for evidence that Vico is fully aware of the alternative invited by Marcus after her modern teachers and rejected by Vico himself, cf. Vico 1710, Ch. I.1 and Ch. II.3, discussing the distinction between most *certain* divine science and incomplete human science). At the end of philosophy, we find an age characterized by a wisdom the expansion of which is a direct expression of the actualization of humanity’s potentiality. The last age is characterized by the universalized practice of a religious-like eloquence (140 and 145), through which and in which we may all partake in the joyous experience of its inspired and inspiring providential speakers (235).

It is in the light of the last age that Marcus promises to understand her authors without need for any “esoteric” dimension to their texts. The stated assumption underlying the promise in question is that the quest for the esoteric fails to take what is exoteric with the seriousness it deserves: what is serious is the “letter” of the text (5); the literal meaning is the true meaning (28). Against the grain of Vico’s own arguments, Marcus teaches that the true element of speech is not hidden within the certain

because what is certain is already becoming true, or rather it is the true in the making: in reality the so-called “hidden” is its self-disclosing.

Marcus’ teaching is fully compatible with her lack of concern with serious attempts to understand Vico as he understood himself (143); what is more important to her is finding fruitful ways to use Vico’s “geometric” science to understand ourselves, where self-understanding is equated to self-making (cf. Plato, *Republic*, 527a-528a): philosophical self-knowledge is nothing other than self-crafting into the image of virtue (a prudent synthesis of piety and wisdom). More important than understanding one’s author as he understood himself is finding in the author encouragement or inspiration in the exercise of imitating “the divine” in one’s speech before the largest possible audience (144). The speech in question consists in an eloquence producing images (figures of speech) to be confronted intuitively, without the mediation of reflection: Marcus’s audience is invited to approach the “letter” of her book through the pre-reflective *fantasia* of children—to dive into the depths of sensory experience without relying on any reflective power, reenacting in speech the birth of reason, so as to finally re-emerge onto the plane of rational discourse with an original understanding of its origins or roots (156). Reason is retained, but only once our experience has confirmed it to be grounded in pre-reflective imagination (124ff.). Then and only then—in the recognition of *fantasia* as the true heart of reason—will we be able to make fruitful use of Vico’s Science. While Vico, no less than Aristotle, identifies the middle term of thought, or the center of *hermeneia*, with the *reason* of things (Vico 1710, Ch. VII.5: *ratio* = *argumentum* = *medius terminus*), Marcus asks us to identify the middle term of Vico’s science with a topic produced by the imagination, or more simply with *fantasia* (118). The middle of extremes is no longer a reason hidden above particulars, but a certain image or the “making” thereof (compare 80 and 235).

The alleged mistake of earlier philosophy had consisted in trying to understand the earlier stages of humanity in light of higher stages; Marcus’s Vico wants us to understand the higher in light of the admittedly, though not unqualifiedly, lower. Far from being self-sufficient, the lower—*fantasia*—waits to be completed by/in philosophy (95, 101, 115, 122, 124, 126, 198, etc.). Again we meet a deviation from Vico’s “letter,” which tells us that philosophy completes the development of man, not of poetry or the imagination (and then, the development stops with the Platonic discovery of the true in human “ideations”; cf. Vico 1744, concluding paragraph of Bk. IV, and Cristofolini 2001, 85-92). Against Marcus’s reading, the “letter” of

Vico tells us that the true foundation or root of philosophy is our essential *nature*, not poetry and the imagination, which make up merely the trunk of the tree of knowledge through which stems philosophy (28): the trunk of a tree is not its roots, not to speak of the soil nourishing it. Nor is an “embryo” its own seed (95-96). Marcus takes a radical move against Vico’s own arguments when she teaches, “The *New Science* confirms authority with reason and grounds reason with authority” (121; compare, e.g., Vico 1720, Chapters LXXXIII and XCIV). Having imaginatively replaced a political reason grounded in nature with a historic reason grounded in the authority it confirms, Marcus proceeds to “extend” Vico’s “letter” into meaning that not nature but a new poetic wisdom must be the guide of man.

Marcus would be mistaken to believe that Vico’s text confirms her claim. Quoting the established English translation of Vico’s second *Oration*, she concludes that Vico teaches that “human beings differ from all other creatures in that wisdom, not nature is our guide” (54). This conclusion is not confirmed by the “letter” of Vico’s text, which states that “[while] the remaining creatures [or created things] follow their own [private] nature, the true man is to follow wisdom as guide” (*reliqua creata suam cuiusque naturam, homo vero sapientiam sequatur duces*). Marcus’s translation misses two cardinal qualifications: one is that the nature in question is private, i.e. considered from the standpoint of self-love; the other is that Vico is speaking specifically about the *true* man, for whom wisdom is nothing but nature. The importance of these qualifications is brought to light by Vico’s own text, as soon as it presents wisdom *allegorically* as the law ordained by God for humankind, where to study wisdom is really to follow nature (*Lex, igitur, quam Deus humano generi sanxit, sapientia est. Si sapientiae studiis animum adiungamus, naturam sequimur*: “Therefore the law God sanctioned for humankind is wisdom. If we apply the soul to the study of wisdom, we follow nature”; Vico 1700). Service of divine authority proceeds by following nature in its intelligible form, where God is presented as “perfect reason” (*perfecta ratio*; *ibid.*). The true man follows wise Nature, while everyone else follows his own impulses, *unless* these impulses are bent by the counsel of law, in the aspect of which Nature appears as our shared nature (*nostra natura*), betrayal of which condemns us instantaneously to delusion (*fraus*).

In spite of the “letter” of Vico pointing directly to the conclusion that the true man follows Nature itself while other men follow it merely in the civil form of law, Marcus glosses over the “letter” to conclude

that all men are to follow their poetic self-made wisdom. Here, man's nature is assumed to be an "ideal" potentiality to be realized or actualized in or as history (42, 52-57; though Vico himself never speaks of nature as either an "ideal" or a "potentiality"): our nature is what we make of ourselves, namely an *image* of perfection or virtue. That is why "we must have sufficient power to transform ourselves. We must believe we can change ourselves" (56). In order to support her call to arms, Marcus again relies on a misleading rendering of Vico's text; but the rendering's faults are most telling. Following the established translation of Vico's *Oration II* (published with an introduction by Verene), she writes that,

Vico encourages his audience to "take refuge in the sanctuary of wisdom," and to "obey the law of nature which commands each one of us to be true to himself"... He concludes that "it is within our power because it is indeed within us. It is for our well-being because it is indeed within nature." (56-57)

This rendering contains key terms alien to Vico's Latin text—most notably the here mutually dependent "true" and "power"—and it replaces the original referent of *facilis* and *benigna* (rendered respectively as "in our power" and "our well-being," rather than as "easy" and "benign")—namely *nature* in the aspect of law—with *us*. Rather than an excited and enthusiastic (49) injunction "to be true to himself," Vico's careful reader finds a call for coherence (*sibi constare*; cf. Plato, *Republic*, 554e and 586e4-587a1). The difference may seem subtle, but subtlety is all that really matters in philosophy: Vico is speaking of a conforming of the will/spirit (*animo*) to the mind/reason (*mens*), or to what Mathew Arnold would call "our highest nature." The shift brought about by Marcus is one leading from Vico's benign and rational nature to the sense-certainty of self-made men.

Beyond the old Vichian "letter"—often read as betraying the philosopher's ignorance, mental confusion or both (cf. *inter alia*, 9, 17, 159-69, 190-91, 208, 221-23)—Marcus's new spirit calls for a "genuine sense of one's freedom and dignity, a sense of the greatness of humanity at its best," but these are only *senses*—not the substance of what is supposed to be sensed: "the final perfection of the knowledge of the truth is the eloquent speech of this truth, so that others also will see the good and want to pursue it," though by now we know that what is meant by truth is nothing but what we become in speech, and that our perfection depends entirely upon our success in making people see and want our figures of speech (*ibid.* and 235; compare 57 and 155).

It is a peculiarly modern devaluation of nature that compels Marcus to overestimate the senses, as if they had direct access to truth. Again, Vico's text is appealed to by glossing over its letter. According to Marcus, Vico holds that philosophy (reflection) is to return to the *fantasia* (philosophy's alleged heart; 28-30, 118) of the first barbaric men because in their imagination there could be no deceit, since all deceit derives from powers of reflection the first men, as children, were not yet capable of (29; consider however Plato, *Republic*, 536e). Marcus quotes one passage that *seems* to confirm her thesis, but does not quote other two that contradict it (Vico 1744, "On Elements," XLVII and XLIX), namely that the habit of feigning or lying and with it "allegories" were already present among the first men, as they are among children (117). What modernists allege to be the confusion of classical philosophy/reason is *not* dispelled by returning to a primitive *fantasia*, because while *fantasia's* lies are not yet "ironic," they remain nonetheless untrue (as *arcana*). Evidence that any primordial imagination or mythic thought (cf. Cassirer 1955) is incapable of sustaining reason as its "authentic" or "unconcealed" ground is already found in the child's utterance, as that of the prehistoric brute, which is not free from the deceit we desire to overcome *by nature*.

While the allegories of the first poets are more naïve than those of sophisticated peoples, the first remain nonetheless masks (*personae*) of what their makers felt to be external to their senses. The difference between naïve and sophisticated liars is secondary: the naïve is really convinced that what is real is physical, whereas the sophisticated has already begun attributing to bodies the properties of names—his "reality" is a mixture of the senses and reflection: while retaining the self-love of the naïve, the sophisticated deprives himself of simplicity. The sophisticated return to *fantasia* reminds us of Seneca's "grown-up children," who, having lost their childhood, remain nonetheless puerile (Vico 1700, second half).

While what the first men saw in *fantasia* were discrete bodies "filled with divinity," what Marcus invites us to see through the recovery of a pre-reflective imagination (the one Vico warns we can only intend—i.e. divine or *indovinare*, as in Vico 1744, "On Method"—reflectively, but not recover as our own), is a *world* (115) of symbolic bodies beyond all discrete figures of speech and their supposed "ideal" referents (the true ideal is history itself: 197-98). On the other hand, what Vico intends or surmises in *fantasia* is the root of the illusion wherein we imagine truth in the "external" guise of the certain, or nature in the guise of law. Again, whereas the first men

of *fantasia* felt themselves to be subject to divine fate, and Marcus calls us to subject ourselves to the forces of history, Vico argues that the only real obstacle to man's thought and understanding is *opinion* (Vico 1707: *Mentis autem poenas ob originis vicium inflictas diximus esse opiniones*). We are thus confronted with three positions: on account of the first, we are saved by a god or gods; on account of the second, we are saved by our power to joyously share the sight of and will for a world of symbolic forms we make in speech; finally, with Vico the question of salvation is postponed or bracketed (cf. e.g., his division of gentile and sacred [hi]stories) for the sake of discovering the true nature or essence of authority, whether authority be named divine, human, or merely symbolic.

Marcus tells us to be using Vico's "letter" to reveal the true nature of philosophy as the fulfillment of the imagination: out of the first men's primitive habit of treating sensory attributes as reality itself and of saying what they saw, emerges philosophy as the attribution of supra-sensory meaning to words. Philosophers are supposed to be addicted to positing a world of intelligibility behind or above the world of the senses. Marcus reads Vico as rejecting philosophers' epistemic pretension as exemplary of "the conceit of the learned," or *la boria de' dotti* (although Vico's arguments are explicitly directed against Epicurean "physicalists" who want to ground appearances in "historical" man-made certainties: conceited is the voyeur who feeds on self-projected exteriorities alone—Plato's "false philosopher" who pretends to replace science with myth-making; Vico 1710, I.4; compare Vico's defense of Plato's *ordinem rerum naturalium intelligentem*, in *Vici Vindiciae*, XV). Yet, Marcus wants to defend Plato from the presumed Vichian imputation of conceit, by emphasizing the poetic character of Platonism (poetic philosophy, or rather philosophical poetry; 155-56): Plato's mythologizing tells us that in him philosophy had already begun to realize that there is no ideal beyond the real or sensory world (175, 177, 183, 189, etc.)—for while "the ideal [is] more real than the corporeal" it is not more real than the rhetorical construction of history (153ff.). Vico surpasses Plato by discovering that reality is neither merely sensory, nor merely rational, but a mixture of both reason and the senses (103, 190, 193ff.): "Plato freely extends the familiar qualities of physical bodies to the soul's operations, but he does not explore as Vico does the necessity of [the] dependence on myth as the origin of philosophy" (230). Vico was the first philosopher to fully realize that the soul's operations *are* the qualities of physical bodies: the attributes of the physical world are now understood as figures of speech mirroring the

modifications of our “eloquent” minds, where our minds are but the power to produce potentially inspiring images.

While the deluded mind produces *phantasmata* (presumably not *phantasma*; 204) through mere *fantasia*, the “heroic mind” produces *eikones* or “likenesses” (ibid.), “stir[ring] the passions of the audience to endure the difficult path of making oneself human through self-governing and self-knowledge” (218). The ultimate *eikon* is the image of the philosopher joyously personifying virtue and experience (205, 235): the “philosophical hero” is “the living presence of memory, the recollection of the origin pitted against the end” (233). The heroism of Vico’s *mens* is a poetic mixture of humanity and divinity, “of pagan mythology [and] of Christian mythology” (233)—a mixture pointing to something more primitive, more primordial than mythology. Vico’s *Science* is not so much a treatise as an oration (69) invoking a heroic imagination synthesizing the desire of pagan heroes (immortalized in the figure of Socrates) and the humility of Christian “fallen” men. The result of this synthesis is a life form that “acknowledges the responsibility of the philosopher to cooperate with providence for the good of the human race”—a responsibility fulfilled in “the giving gifts to the human race” (233). The new hero must blend the philosopher and the theologian “*in his life*” (147; cf. Vico 1744, last paragraph of Bk. II; compare Strauss 1997, 117).

REFERENCES

- Cassirer, Ernst. 1955. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. 2: Mythical Thought*. Trans. Donald P. Verene and John M. Krois. New Haven: Yale University Press. Originally published in 1925.
- Cristofolini, Paolo. 2001. *Vico Pagano e Barbaro*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS.
- Page, Carl. 1995. *Philosophical Historicism: The Betrayal of First Philosophy*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Strauss, Leo. 1997. *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*. Edited with an introduction by Kenneth Hart Green. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Vico, Giambattista. 1700. *Oratio I*. Electronic edition by L. Pica Ciamarra, in “Laboratorio dell’ISPF,” I, 2006, www.ispf.cnr.it/ispf-lab. English edition in Vico 1993.

- . 1707. *Oratio VII*. Electronic edition by L. Pica Ciamarra, in “Laboratorio dell’ISPF,” I, 2006, www.ispf.cnr.it/ispf-lab. English edition in Vico 1993.
- . 1710. *De Antiquissima Italorum Sapientia ex Linguae Latinae Originibus Eruenda*. English edition in Vico 1988.
- . 1711. *Risposta di Giambattista Vico all’Articolo X del Tomo VIII del “Giornale de’ Letterati d’Italia.”* English edition in Vico 1988.
- . 1720. *De Uno Universi Iuris Principio et Fine Uno*. English edition in Vico 2000.
- . 1744. *Principi di Scienza Nuova di Giambattista Vico d’intorno alla comune natura delle Nazioni*. English edition: Vico 1984.
- . 1971. *Opere Filosofiche*. Edited by P. Cristofolini with an introduction by Nicola Badaloni. Firenze, Italy: Sansoni.
- . 1984. *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*. Translated by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- . 1988. *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of Italians: Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language*, including the Disputation with the *Giornale de’ letterati d’Italia*. Trans. Lucia M. Palmer. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- . 1993. *On Humanistic Education (Six Inaugural Orations, 1699-1707)*. Trans. Giorgio A. Pinton and Arthur W. Shippe. Introduction by Donald P. Verene. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- . 2000. *Universal Right*. Trans. Giorgio A. Pinton and Margaret Diehl. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopoi.

Michael Burleigh, *Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics, from the Great War to the War on Terror*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007, 557 pp., \$ 27.95.

JÜRGEN GEBHARDT

UNIVERSITY OF ERLANGEN-NÜRNBERG

jngbhar@extern.lrz-muenchen.de

For most historians, from the Russian Revolution in 1917 to the downfall of the Soviet empire in 1990, the history of the twentieth century is characterized by the struggle between democracy and dictatorship. Western—that is, liberal—democracy was pitted against dictatorial regimes of varying totalitarian persuasions. At times, even the notion of totalitarianism fell into disrepute. While it is admitted that “religious” or “pseudo-religious” factors sometimes played a role, the prevalent opinion is that secular forces alone shaped the politics of this violent age.

The book under review is written from a different perspective. It argues that the clash between religion and politics lies at the foundation of modern European history. In *Sacred Causes*, Michael Burleigh sets out to explore the religio-political conflicts from World War I to the terrorist present. This work is, in fact, a sequel to Burleigh’s *Earthly Powers* (2005), which, as the preface of that study informed us, addresses the “politics of religion, and the religion of politics, broadly construed, in Europe from the Enlightenment to the Great War.” There, Burleigh also promised “a second, entirely free-standing, volume” to “link these themes to the totalitarian religions and beyond.”

But the reader of *Sacred Causes* will soon discern that this volume is not “entirely free-standing.” It builds on the preceding extensive study of the nineteenth-century world of ideas. This is also true for the conceptual framework of Burleigh’s in-depth study of the far-reaching changes

of European religious cultures that challenged the public status of ecclesiastic Christianity in society, revolutionized the spiritual order throughout European civilization, and culminated in twentieth-century totalitarianism. In *Earthly Powers*, Burleigh introduced the concept “political religion” in order to describe the essentially religious nature of totalitarian regimes and traced its origins back to the French Revolution and its Jacobin executioners. Burleigh pointed to contemporary observers of the event like Tocqueville who were aware that they were witnessing a new type of revolutionary religion that most certainly prefigured the shape of things to come. Burleigh’s point of view brought a different reading of the history of European secularization to the fore. It would seem that the metamorphoses of religious culture play a significant role in the process of secularization: traditional religion in retreat is confronted by a re-spiritualization of the public realm through new modes of inner-worldly religiosity.

Burleigh’s two volumes reveal the ambivalence of European secularization: the consecration of the profane and the profanation of the sacred. But his thesis differs from similar historical accounts insofar as his narrative identifies not only the cultural and political consequences of secularization, but also elucidates how the emergent political religions relate to “Christianity during a time of fitful rather than remorseless secularisation” (as he puts it in *Earthly Powers*). The notion of “political religion” evolved in the twentieth century. The accession to power in Russia, Italy, and Germany of ideological mass-movements evoked a unified analysis of the religious phenomena in question and engendered the notion of “political religion” that, as Burleigh notes, was the initial focus of *Sacred Causes*.

Burleigh musters an impressive number of thinkers who, from 1917 onward, reflected on the religious implications of the totalitarian phenomenon. The most important ones on his list came from various intellectual persuasions and diverse professional backgrounds: the heterodox leftist Franz Borkenau, the classical liberal Raymond Aron, the Catholic Waldemar Gurian, and the Protestant Eric(h) Voegelin. The latter’s 1938 essay on political religions, and his later writings as well, have exerted some influence on Burleigh’s conceptual approach to totalitarianism.

But although Burleigh follows Voegelin in his conceptual vocabulary, he refrains from a systematic discussion of the issue of religion. Voegelin critically re-examined the traditional terminology, re-framed the interface of politics and religion, and probed the anthropological roots of the religio-political complex. Burleigh, however, works with the notions of political religion and civil religion without further conceptual clarification.

When he writes (122) that the “totalitarian regimes mimicked the soteriology and rituals of the churches,” he remains elusive on the question of whether we are dealing with authentic articulations of human religiosity (as Voegelin indicated) or with mere surrogates of traditional, that is, Christian religiosity.

As Burleigh explains in the preface, *Sacred Causes* searches for a middle ground between a history of Christianity and a history of modern times in which “culture, ideas, politics and religious faith meet in a space for which I cannot find a satisfactory label.” Thus he settles for a “coherent history of modern Europe primarily organised around issues of mind and spirit.”

The issues at stake center, first, on the totalitarian political religions and, second as well as more generally speaking, on the predicament of Christianity in the twentieth century. Involved here are the responses of the churches to the evolving political religions, the role of the churches in postwar European politics, the cold war, and the breakdown of communism. Three chapters present the author’s rather skeptical view of Europe’s present and possible future. They offer a dismal portrait of the European state of affairs, but lack coherence because they are more or less based on the author’s political and intellectual likes and dislikes.

Sacred Causes begins with the impact of World War I on the mind and spirit of the European nations. In order to illustrate the traumatic experience of this war, Burleigh skilfully surveys the construction of war memorials commemorating the millions of dead throughout Europe. This sets the stage for the drama of apocalyptic and redemptive politics in Germany and Italy, whose political regimes and social forms had been undermined by the Great War. The cultural climate of the time is exemplified in the imaginative productions of artists and writers, such as the famous documentary drama *The Last Days of Mankind* by the Austrian Karl Kraus. Particular attention is given to the troubled German mind and its spiritual unrest exemplified by an upsurge of major and minor prophets of political messianism, which confronted the political and moral agency of the German churches in the Weimar republic.

In what follows, Burleigh combines a chronological approach to European history from 1917 to 1990 with a synchronic narrative that offers a comparative view of the developments and events taking place on the European continent. The narrative begins with a comprehensive and quite instructive analysis of the rise and consolidation of totalitarian political religions in Russia, Italy, and Germany. Burleigh then shifts his attention to

what seems to be the centerpiece of *Sacred Causes*: the churches in the age of the dictators. It is primarily the Catholic Church whose policies are the subject of an extensive and somewhat heated interpretation—especially in regard to the Church’s attitude toward authoritarian regimes in Spain, Portugal, and Austria—toward the German satellite regimes like Vichy France, Croatia, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania; and, last but not least, toward Italian and German totalitarianism. Burleigh sets out to rebut what he thinks is the prejudiced and one-sided account of the role played by the Catholic Church in these years. “In fact,” he claims (212), “relationships between the [Catholic and other] Churches and the totalitarian political religions were infinitely complicated and require considerable effort to reconstruct.”

Indeed, the richly textured and highly engaging analyses correct many a misjudgment on the part of mainstream historians; but Burleigh overdoes his defense of the Vatican and papal policy. Strangely enough, the fundamental political stance of the ecclesiastic establishment is mentioned only in passing and never discussed in depth. Off and on, we get a glimpse of the nature of Catholic politics: in “inter-war Europe most Catholic politics was conservative, and subject to a gravitational pull towards the authoritarian and anti-parliamentary right” (153). Burleigh also speaks of a “predilection for a politics that was cool or hostile to liberal democracy” (217) or refers to the Church’s “lukewarm...attitudes towards individual liberty, democracy and popular sovereignty, which it associated with Jacobin mobs” (164). A deep-seated distrust of all modern politics and thought marked the ecclesiastic hierarchy; it derived from the historical experience of the revolutionary upheavals of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and the ensuing conviction that the Catholic Church was the last bulwark of a divinely decreed moral order of things in this world.

It is true that the “Church had spiritual goals which took precedence over evanescent temporal governments, regarding whose precise forms the Church professed a lofty indifference” (160). But it is equally true that the Church lent support to regimes that displayed a mere semblance of the order compatible with the teachings of the Church. This authoritarian bias cannot be explained by anti-clerical violence in Russia or Spain. Rather, it is the expression of a longstanding political theology that first came to light in Cardinal Faulhaber’s response to Konrad Adenauer at the Katholikentag (national meeting of German Catholics) in 1922. When Adenauer called for loyalty to the democratic republic, Faulhaber, a staunch authoritarian and monarchist, denounced the revolution as high treason and based on

perjury that would forever be scarred by the mark of Cain. Catholic anti-revolutionary fervor did not cause a Catholic turn to rightist totalitarianism, as Burleigh rightly observes, but it did undermine the legitimacy of constitutional regimes. Only in the aftermath of the totalitarian experience did European Catholicism and the Papacy follow the example of American Catholics and turn away from the legacy of authoritarianism and reconcile themselves to the principles of “Western democracy.”

Burleigh is less sympathetic when he comes to German Protestantism. It represented the national culture of the fallen German empire and was, therefore, more shaken by the radical political and cultural changes that took place in Germany. Only a minority of liberals and religious socialists supported the republican regime. Split up into regional churches of different denominational persuasions and lacking a uniform political organization, the national-conservative and “völkisch” oriented factions within the Protestant churches were tempted by the National Socialist promise of national renewal and thus compromised with what seemed to them to be a restoration of national order. Burleigh points out that the attempts to Nazify Protestantism failed, but he underestimates the activities of the anti-Nazi Confessing Church. However, both Catholic and Protestant Churches were silent on the persecution and ultimate murder of Jews and failed to rise to active political resistance.

Burleigh’s not always impartial chronicle of the fateful clash of Christianity and totalitarian political religion contributes to our understanding of twentieth-century politics—even if one must criticize his persistent disapproval of historians whose views differ from his own.

A review of the chapters dealing with the present condition of European culture and politics or the threats of Islamic terrorism is difficult because, while expressing strong opinions, they do not come under the head of historiography in the strict sense. This also holds true for the excursion into the “Irish troubles” that, despite being rich in facts, displays an anti-Irish bias and therefore foregoes the chance of clearing up one of the most perplexing cases of politicized religion in present-day Europe.

Sacred Causes is not a dispassionate account of the subject. Indeed, its style and argument call forth critical comment and provoke controversy. But it serves to remind us that there is no politics without religion and no religion without politics: the one blends into the other.

Interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Subscription rates per volume (3 issues):

Individuals \$29

Libraries and all other institutions \$48

Students (four-year limit) \$18

Single copies available.

Payments: in U.S. dollars and payable by a financial institution located within the U.S.A. (or the U. S. Postal Service).

Subscribe online at www.interpretationjournal.com.

New Subscription Order Form

(not to be used for renewals—current subscribers will be billed annually)

YES! Please send me *Interpretation*

Name _____ Payment enclosed

Address _____ Please bill me

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ I am a student

Country (if outside U.S.) _____ Air Mail

Gift Subscription Order Form

YES! Please send a gift subscription of *Interpretation* to:

Name _____ Student

Address _____ Air Mail

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Country (if outside U.S.) _____

Gift from _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Recommendation to the Library

I recommend that our library subscribe to *Interpretation, A Journal of Political Philosophy* [ISSN 0020-9635] at the institutional rate of \$48 per year (3 issues per volume)

Signature _____ Date _____ Payment enclosed

Name _____ Please bill me

Title _____

Interpretation, Queens College, Flushing, New York 11367-1597, U.S.A.