

Interpretation

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Review Essay

The Character of Modern Republicanism

WILL MORRISEY

Ralph Lerner, *Revolutions Revisited: Two Faces of the Politics of the Enlightenment* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), xiii + 136 pp., \$19.95.

Thomas L. Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of Locke* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), x + 334 pp., \$36.00 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

Thomas L. Pangle, *The Ennobling of Democracy: The Challenge of the Post-modern Age* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), vi + 227 pp., \$36.00 cloth; \$14.95 paper.

Lorraine Smith Pangle and Thomas Pangle: *The Learning of Liberty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), viii + 350 pp., \$35.00 cloth; \$14.95 paper.

Zuckert, Michael, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), xx + 397 pp., \$39.50.

Does the new science of politics Publius invokes generate a new kind of political regime, a new republicanism? Or is it merely a new way of understanding an ancient republican tradition? Each of these studies illuminates these much-controverted questions.

Ralph Lerner's gracefully written (and elegantly published) essays invite readers to consider the duality of the Enlightenment, with particular attention to its American variant. Everyone knows the Enlightenment's *esprit de géométrie*. Lerner points to the Enlightenment's *esprit de finesse*, a spirit his own book does not lack. The political Enlightenment was a revolution that required careful planning. Once established, it did not run itself, like nature as conceived by Deists, but required persistent explanation and defense against "overt enemies without and covert enemies within" (p. vi).

America's foremost Enlightener was Benjamin Franklin. "Dr. Janus," as Lerner styles him, effected transparency, remained impenetrable. Even his works, apparently so accessible, need study to be understood. The American Plutarch presented no "exemplary lives" to ape, envy, or resent: "Franklin creates models who themselves eschew imitation and therefore encourage us to think and act likewise" (p. 11)—to rely on, to know, and to govern ourselves.

Here is no faux-Lockean selfishness: Poor Richard's maxims "all seek to connect self-respect with the helping of others."

There are dangers. Without religious zeal to inflame but also to restrain the self that replaces the soul, how shall self-government really govern, rather than merely affirm and assert, deny and negate? Habits of "industry, responsibility, and civility" (p. 17) need some motor. "By enlisting good works in the service of vanity, Franklin hopes to render self-control attractive. But this is at best a gamble" (p. 17). The question, 'What will the neighbors think?' elevates and restrains only those who care.

Unlike the French Enlighteners, the Americans—already experienced in government and no longer obsessed by religion—"chose to be unabashedly prudential" (p. 20). American republicanism is more than merely willful. There is little point in preventing one big Caligula with a horde of little ones. Otherwise, "one would only end up substituting one form of manipulation and exploitation for another" (p. 23). "The Americans' touchstone would be utility," the standard of "sober republican scrutiny" (pp. 28–29).

Every claim to public regard and support thus would be compelled to answer for itself, What good was it?—meaning (more often than not), how would it help to make life more convenient, economical, and safe? This examination process was not to deny that there were other dimensions to life beyond such calculations but to insist that high-sounding claims and grand pretensions confront this consistently deflating query. (P. 29)

How, then, to form, cultivate, and guide genuine public *opinion*, as distinguished from public sentiment? In this the "natural *aristoi* of whom Jefferson and Adams spoke without embarrassment" faced a "delicate situation" indeed. Franklin's secret society or Junto, described in the *Autobiography*, exemplifies the manner in which 'aristocrats' properly might proceed in a republican regime: "popular leadership called the cues from the fourth row, not the stage" (p. 33).

When taking the stage, such statesmen will retell American history to Americans, "fix[ing] or reform[ing] the people's predispositions" (p. 60). In so doing, prudent Americans unwittingly revive the spirit of what certain Arab philosophers call *kalam* or dialectical theology. Sensing that "the threat to the old may come as readily from those who expect too much reason in politics," too much *esprit de géométrie*, "as from those who behave as though they expect too little" (p. 62)—neo-Burkeans, imitating the master's fulminations against geometers and sophisters?—wise legislators will present their reformation "as a correction of some intervening distortion or corruption and certainly not as a case of their overruling the founding legislator" (p. 62). But the form, as distinct from the spirit, of dialectical theology will very often not appeal to commercial-republican citizens. The "more engaging method might be to tell a

story” (p. 65). Lerner devotes a chapter to each of three wise storytellers of commercial republicanism: Burke, Lincoln, Tocqueville.

Burke rows (no first or second sailings in labor-loving modern republics) with “muffled oars”; “he means to make no waves” (p. 78). Facing the furies of the French Revolution and its British sympathizers, he invokes “the principles of the Glorious Revolution and the prudence of its managers,” perhaps augmented by Burke’s own prudence. His evocations of elevating passion never carry *him* away, in contrast to some of “those modern adherents of conservatism who claim him” (rather too enthusiastically to be really Burkean) “as their spiritual forebear” (p. 81). In Burke’s version, 1688 was “a sort of defensive war” by the nation, changing not the Constitution but only a king (p. 79). This typifies Burke’s *kalam*: return to the wisdom and experience of ancestors is his refrain, *reminding* citizens, moderating their “present-mindedness and narrow focus” (p. 86).

Abraham Lincoln invokes not so much the past—after all, the past includes a dangerous compromise with slaveowners—but the present seen through a severe, critical lens. But unlike public nuisances or habitual contemners, Lincoln understands “that any speaker who would induce a people to hold a critical opinion of itself must first induce it to trust and have a good opinion of himself,” which it will not have unless convinced that he has a good opinion of them.

He flatters the people and gains their trust, not by catering to their present noncritical opinions of themselves and their affairs, but by bringing them with him, as equals somehow, into the problem public opinion as such. He takes them into his confidence and makes them his partners in seeking a solution for the problem of popular government. And in this he succeeds. Not the least of Lincoln’s extraordinary political achievements is his success in making general an awareness of the problem of public opinion—his nurturing of an opinion about the signal importance of opinion. A greater achievement, yet impossible without the first, is his persuading many American people to criticize and repudiate the many base opinions about political right and prudence that their base flatterers would have them basely cling to. His *kalam* is directed against the enemy within. (P. 90)

Like Burke, Lincoln points back to Americans’ heritage, the founding principles of their Declaration of Independence, as their own. Not incidentally, he points to himself as a true friend of ‘their own.’

To be sure, the revolution’s central proposition—the capability of a people to govern themselves—can no longer be treated as a matter of doubt. Its truth has been demonstrated in practice; the once “undecided experiment” is now understood to be a success. Yet the work remains strikingly incomplete. Bereft of its “noble ally,” a complementary moral revolution, the grander goal of “our political revolution of ’76” still lies beyond reach. The envisioned universal liberty of humankind demands not only the release of “every son of earth” from the

oppressor's grip but also the breaking of the fiercer bondage of reason to human appetite and passion. (P. 99)

The Old Testament of the Fathers precedes the New Testament, the new baptism, the new birth of freedom.

Perhaps the most sublime accomplishment of Lincoln's *kalam* is the way he reshapes the debate raging over the extension of slavery in the western territories into a debate over the moral foundations of popular government. In that political world of antebellum America, so rife with political theologians and theological politicians, Lincoln succeeds in avoiding the excesses of each. He neither mistakes himself for the appointed agent of the Lord of Hosts nor falls into the idolatry of treating the voice of the majority as the voice of God. By insisting on making the Declaration of Independence the central point of reference, Lincoln is able to occupy a higher but still emphatically political ground. (P. 102)

Slavery, immune to ballots, succumbed to bullets—but, crucially, also to the reminder of the reason for the Founders' bullets, without which ballots would be ineffective.

Tocqueville defends freedom against obeisance to popular sovereignty, but in a different way. Democracy can make the individual seem too small, too weak, too isolated. Neglected, democracy recapitulates the atomism of Hobbesian subjection. The French Revolution poses a different problem than the American Revolution. The French Revolution was an act of "truly heroic folly," and the actors bear no resemblance to "any Frenchman we know," several decades later (pp. 123–24). The very success of the revolution has diminished its inheritors, prey now to administrators and economists. "The self-imposed diminution of mankind, abetted by authorities intent on power for themselves and cozy slumber for the rest, bodes a world dishonorable to the species and fatal to its liberties" (p. 128). Unlike Lincoln, who must humble some of his countrymen, Tocqueville needs to rehabilitate the pride of the French.

Lerner ends with his own, Lincolnian, critique of contemporary conservatism, which "adamantly opposes theory" (p. 133). A statesman's "quiet allusion to notions of right and perfection that transcend merely national and historic bounds" (p. 133) can raise a people beyond the pettiness of modern life—the very thing conservatives rightly deplore. Lerner thus quietly points to the need of philosophy in the city, and the inadequacy of its attempted replacement by an historicism of past or future.

The Pangle trilogy offers a sweeping yet sharply focussed overview of the American regime—its philosophic origins, its educational foundations, and its moral character.

The Spirit of Modern Republicanism complements not only its successors but its predecessor, Professor Pangle's justly and widely praised first book,

Montesquieu's Spirit of Liberalism. Because “the culture of the modern West is, in large measure, the result of theory and theorizing” (p. 1), an examination of, perhaps, the two most sober modern philosophers, Montesquieu and Locke, enlightens modern political practice.

If the regime built by the American founders has three main pillars—nature or “Nature’s God,” property, and “the dignity of the individual as rational human being, parent, and citizen” (p. 2)—Locke provides its fully integrated blueprint. Although “the Founders did often seek to portray themselves and their ‘project’ as a kind of culmination of Western civilization,” they also “expressed awareness of their political modernism” (p. 8). (Could ‘modernism’ mean the culmination of Western civilization to the Founders?) Their “emphatic appeal to the God of Nature rather than to the God of Scripture” (p. 24) underlines this modernity. While we their heirs need the massive erudition of Paul Rahe to see the difference between republics ancient and modern, Publius as it were lived that distinction, feeling the tension between the need of security and the classical republican virtues of political liberty, participation, and “hornet-like militarism” (p. 46). Arendt and Pocock may or may not see the distinction, but they do not clearly present the Founders’ careful recalibrating of the balance among the elements.

Pangle criticizes the Founders for failing to give due weight to the classical idea of friendship, although it is not clear that the peroration of the Declaration of Independence, the collaboration of Jefferson and Madison, and the correspondence of Jefferson and Adams do not afford rich evidence of *some* sort of friendship at war, work, and play among the Founders. Nonetheless, he shows that the Founders encouraged citizens’ industriousness, utilitarianism, and productivity—commercial virtues, not so much the superb and martial virtues that characterize the ancient republic. A basic and radical egalitarianism, resulting in consent-based representative government securing natural rights, replaces the polity of classical-Christian virtues.

It would seem that the most theoretically minded of the Framers followed Locke in at least the following decisive respect. They tried to find the surest ground of human security and dignity in a natural, competitive self-assertion: in an individualism that is properly regulated, not so much by deference to tradition and custom, not so much by “sentiment” and conscience, as by *reason* dominating passion and sentiment through *law* that expresses indirect—but radical—popular sovereignty. (P. 127)

Does this, Pangle asks, compel the Founders “reluctantly or unwittingly, to subordinate the high in mankind, as they conceive it, to the low” (p. 127)?

In his thirteenth chapter, Pangle turns to the heart of Locke’s political teaching: the space between Locke’s first and second treatises, a space properly filled by the prudent thoughts of Locke’s careful reader. Such a reader Pangle most assuredly is. It is in the exegesis of Locke that Pangle’s firm intellectual finesse

comes forth most tellingly. The number thirteen comports symbolically with a certain religious heterodoxy and, sure enough, here Pangle considers Locke's critique of Filmer, "a masterpiece of forbidding boredom" (p. 137), as an indirect commentary on the Bible. To put it in a phrase (which Locke deliberately never does), Locke replaces obedience with consent, authoritative patriarchy with rational contract. Consent exists between and among humans; one does not *consent* to the commands of the omniscient and omnipotent God. "Is there any way in which 'natural freedom and equality' can be said to express an authentically biblical conception of man?" Pangle asks (p. 139), as he points instead to Hobbes while moving toward Locke's discussion of property. The right to property sanctions the enterprise of acquisition, a milder Machiavellianism, which resides somewhere due south of a reasonable Christianity. "Locke substitutes for God's ownership of man the ownership of each individual by himself" (p. 160). Human government replaces the charitable Church, protecting the property rights that enrich public and private charity, helping to make the widow's mite become the widow's endowment.

Lockean morality shares Aristotle's eudaimonism, but is much simpler, founded upon self-evident perceptions of pleasure and pain. As seen in the scarcity of the state of nature, Nature's God gives his creatures the most meager materials out of which they "must *construct* . . . a rational psychological order and objective rules of social behavior" (p. 181). This is the objectivism of mental abstractions, rather like geometrical forms; no more than Kant does Locke claim to know essences. We know only abstractions, from which we deduce laws, the first of which, as in Hobbes, is the *summum malum*, the fear of violent death—a master passion rather than a master thought. Virtue and vice derive not from some soul hierarchy but from praise and blame, both founded upon self-preservative passion—as is "admitted, quietly, by the old philosophers themselves" (p. 93), in Locke's opinion. In *this* sense, a Lockean founding does amount to the culmination of Western *thought*, as distinguished from Western belief.

The great difference between Locke's situation and that of Socrates and Plato would appear, then, to be that Locke lives under the dispensation of a religion that is hospitable to reason and philosophy. Or is the difference not rather this: that Christianity, while it *is* not, nevertheless *can be made* more hospitable? Is the difference between Locke's and Socrates' situation not that Locke is a more politic, a greater *political* philosopher—that he vastly surpasses the ancients in his understanding of how to manipulate and transform popular and priestly religion so as to open it to enlightenment and rationality? (P. 196)

Perhaps: but Pangle also faults Locke for precisely the thing Christianity and Judaism most firmly address, the need to come to terms with the spirited or 'thumotic' aspect of the human soul. Pangle sees that Rousseau and Nietzsche fill this need by attempting to ennoble man. (The 'bourgeois' moderns want to 'tame the prince'; the anti-'bourgeois' moderns want to ennoble him, some-

times [e.g., Marx] when ‘the prince’ is the people. Machiavelli smiles at all of them, preferring to teach his students to *use* the man, *use* the beast, *use* the lion, *use* the fox.)

Reason does not rule so much as it regulates or intelligently channels the passions. The fox alerts the lion. Such instrumental reason seems incongruent with Locke’s own life, Pangle contends. “[O]ne cannot help but feel that Locke has mysteriously left out of his account of human action his own action as a philosopher” *and* his civic-mindedness (p. 269). In a sense, Locke’s famous individualism is not strong enough; it is among the ancients that the philosopher exhibits “a capacity to stand alone” (p. 273). Socialized rationality or utility will not cultivate such character. Only in dialogue with “moral and religious authorities,” Pangle suggests, “can the philosopher demonstrate, to himself above all, why it is proper, why it is right, why it is just, that he devotes himself to a life of uncompromising thought” (p. 274). A too-reasonable Christianity cannot serve as such a dialogic partner. It is too ready to greet the philosopher with vacuous affability. Jerusalem plus Athens should not add up to Miami Beach. (Fortunately for philosophy and Christianity, they do not; “faith retains a stubborn, inexpugnable core of resistance to the victory of modern rationalism” [p. 216].)

In conclusion, Pangle writes,

... we may rightly assert that what distinguishes American patriotism, in the sense of setting it apart from and above most previous forms of patriotism, is the sternness of its challenge to the *minds* of citizens old and young. American life does not impose moral tests as harsh as those imposed by earlier, and in many ways nobler, republics; it does not require as frequent or as regular sacrifices of life, property, private liberty, and ease; but it calls each and all of us to an intellectual probity, to an education in the great texts of political philosophy, to a quest for self-knowledge as a people, that is perhaps unprecedented. (P. 279)

With this, Pangle turns to American education.

What if leading intellectuals in commercial republics reject Locke? What if natural right, the state of nature, the social contract, even Kant’s categorical imperative, no longer command reasoned assent? Pangle addresses this problem in *The Ennobling of Democracy*. Modern higher education in many American universities is now (notoriously) dominated by doctrines collectively known as ‘postmodern.’ ‘Postmodern,’ he writes, means “the state of being entangled in modernity [i.e., “trust or faith in scientific reason” as an authority, not merely as an instrument], as something from which we cannot escape but in which we can no longer put, or find, faith” (p. 3). This does not mean that postmodern writers have no faith. On the contrary, they are very often apostles of “philosophic dogmatism” (p. 5).

Pangle readily agrees with postmodernists in finding modern or Enlightenment rationalism inadequate. To remedy this, he points readers not to the in-

tenser Machiavellianism of today but to “the political rationalism of Socrates” (p. 6). “By reappropriating classical civic rationalism, we may be afforded a framework that integrates the politically most significant discoveries of modern rationalism into a conception of humanity that does justice to the whole range of the human problem and the human potential, in a way and to a degree never achieved by modern rationalism” (p. 7). Classical rationalism considers the common good, conspicuously absent from the individualism of the moderns and the anarcho-communalism of the postmoderns.

Pangle refers to Machiavelli in this book, but not too often. It is useful to recall the radicalism of the Florentine’s project. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli advises: do not *be* virtuous; do not *be* vicious; *use* your virtues; *use* your vices. Do not be a human or a beast; use the human, use the bestial. Use fox and lion, each according to your own ‘necessity.’ Pull back from all those things by which men define themselves—station, beliefs, thoughts, qualities—and put them to ‘your’ use.

Who or what is this new ‘you’? Evidently he is not the spirit of the Prince of Peace, whose lukewarm friends and hot enemies imperil those who imitate His example. The Prince of War, the man of hot, thumoerotic passion, will for the first time inspire, or rather inspirit, an army of followers who will remain equally hot, equally loyal to the new Prince, even as they may attempt to rebel against him.

The ‘ennobling’ of this new prince, begun by Rousseau and continued by a train of earnest Germans, spiritedly rejects the tamed new prince of Montaigne, Locke, Montesquieu. In so doing, Kant also nobly and ‘modernly’ rejects the eudaemonism, the orientation toward the good, that characterizes classical rationalism. He hopes to convert Machiavellian *libido dominandi* into the lofty spirit of the noumenal, which—after the ignoble concatenation of phenomena called ‘history’ has done its dirty work—will fortuitously deposit the reins of government into the immaculate hands of the noumenalists. Meanwhile, “to make happiness our standard is . . . to surrender our humanity, our freedom and rationality, to . . . deterministic and historical or merely subjective [i.e., psychological] forces.” “Now,” Pangle asks, “is this true” (p. 12)? Pangle doubts it. In so doubting, he turns first to the latest manifestation of this project, postmodernism.

Among postmoderns, Jean-Francois Lyotard proves a useful beginning specimen, precisely because he sees the modern core of postmodernism. Postmodernism rebels against Hegelian transcendentalism, a modern rationalism culminating in a (worldly) metaphysic, which in turn encourages dangerous political ‘totalitarianism.’ Postmoderns seek the *intensity* of existence, an openness to ‘the divine’ nonrationalistically glimpsed. But in so saying, Lyotard refers readers to Longinus on “the sublime.” Sublimity, Longinus says, cannot be maintained unless it “arouses, in and with elevation, sustained critical wonder and rational thought” (p. 28). Lyotard does not follow Longinus down

the classical-philosophic path “because his unquestioned historicism convinces him that classical rationalism is but the first step on the way to [Hegelian] life-destroying finality” or the “end of history” (p. 29).

Heidegger takes another, and far more impressive, historicist stab at overthrowing modernity. If the scientist can be brought to see that his knowledge is within himself—a fallible, mysterious, ‘perspectival’ being—then a neoreligionist sense of “awe or dread” at the technological power wielded by this questionable being may free man from his self-bewitchment (pp. 38–34). Heidegger is not the first German to look to the East for arms against the monotheistic, rationalist West; one need only recall Schopenhauer’s *Fourfold Root* or Nietzsche’s esteem for *The Laws of Manu*. But Heidegger is the first German philosopher who claims that philosophy is finished. Unfortunately, Heidegger and his followers, including Richard Rorty, who seeks to tame the Heideggerian prince by yoking him to the Deweyan ox, “appear to have no experience of . . . Socratic political philosophizing,” whereby science “stands or falls with a relentless dialectical cross-examination of our opinions as to the just” (p. 50). Post-modernism reproduces the thumotic spirit of politics (and sometimes the thumocratic spirit of tyranny) without the governing spirit of philosophizing logos—to say nothing of the governing spirit of Christian Logos.

A tamed Heideggerianism may have an unfortunate practical result: “one possible version of European unity that hovers before us on the horizon” is “a Swedish California from the Urals to the Atlantic,” a Shower Curtain, “administered by a bloodless bureaucratic Areopagus” staffed by listless Last Persons (p. 81). Pangle rejects the Nietzschean ‘cure’ for such anemia as insufficiently guarded against fascism, turning instead to the not-so-Lockean liberalism of Montesquieu. Montesquieu’s thought intersects with the “three reservoirs of human depth—love of country, religion, and art” seen in the newly liberated nations of central and eastern Europe (p. 87). If “the womb of human nobility is reverence” (p. 88), the reconstitution of liberalism may find there resources foolishly and hastily discarded by the older commercial republics.

In so seeking, the new liberals would rethink the liberal understanding of rights. Rights as mere commitments, willed cultural artifacts, depend upon the most ‘tyrannical’ or arbitrary aspect of the soul. “Republican self-government” (p. 43), to be republican and genuinely self-governing, had better not sing of the triumph of the will, ‘bourgeois’ or ‘noble.’ To govern oneself, as Lincoln saw, popular sovereignty needs principles beyond itself. “To what extent does the republicanism of the Founders declare its independence from classical republicanism, and to what extent does it still hold in reserve a sustaining, if tenuous lifeline anchored in that ancient vision” (p. 102)?

To the ancients, “freedom in the republican sense entails some meaningful degree of self-rule” (p. 106), the rule of the active citizen, ruling and being ruled in turn in accordance with *isonomia*. (‘Being ruled’ is to “know how to obey—not as a slave, under compulsion, but as a free citizen, animated by an

inner and voluntary obedience” [p. 106]). Inner and voluntary obedience at its best is prudent, a teaching Adams and Jefferson restate when they write of natural aristocracy (p. 107), “qualified by the principle of popular consent” (p. 108). What Adams and Jefferson cannot invoke, as the classical republicans could, is civil religion. But they did see around them a prophetic religion whose sects could be brought to tolerate one another and whose convictions could lend what Washington called “indispensable supports” to morality and virtue. (There are, as Washington saw, some souls that can sustain virtue without religious support; the classics understood philosophy as a way of self-governing life that includes a careful refusal to raise questions indiscriminately about the foundations of the city’s laws. To readers modern and postmodern, Pangle offers a tantalizing glimpse at this philosophic life, and of the rebirth of classical rhetoric that it would entail. On this last point, as we have seen, Lerner gives an account of modern examples similar in principle but ampler.)

To the moderns, following Machiavelli, natural right becomes natural rights: security, liberty, and the pursuit of self-defined happiness. Prudence becomes calculation; duty becomes mutual self-defense of self-interest narrowly conceived. Some moderns, however, propose what amounts to a significant widening of citizenship rights. Precisely by liberating the “reasonable, and thus natural, love of gain,” Locke and Montesquieu would enable families (not only individuals) to acquire the necessary economic basis for citizen participation, sharply restricted in antiquity (p. 142). The right to the fruits of one’s own labor—one of the moral scourges of Lincoln’s rhetoric against slavery—significantly and effectively widens the class of citizens.

In the United States, the founders did not provide for the education of citizens in the federal constitution, although they did thereby provide a structure for the exercise and refinement of citizens’ virtue. Such men as Jefferson, James Wilson, Washington, Benjamin Rush, and Noah Webster moved to establish institutions of civic education. In so doing, “they tended to return again and again to two sources for guidance and inspiration: the classical republics and Protestant Christianity” (p. 151). No attempt to reconstitute the ancient polis, or to constitute a “Christian Sparta,” could now fulfill the classical criterion, prudence. Pangle turns to a discussion of civic-educational possibilities today.

He contrasts classical civic education with Locke’s new, ‘privatized’ education of the gentry, which aims at “an enlightened self-interest grounded in rational self-control” (p. 167). Benjamin Franklin, so Lockean in nearly every way, re-‘publicizes’ education; in his academies students will learn rhetoric again, but this time it will be the journalistic rhetoric of which his own was colonial America’s best-remembered example. Jefferson also commends a public-spirited education.

The specific civic spirit aimed at by Jefferson and other educational theorists among the founding generation involved, of course, both a passionate patriotism and a

sense of fraternity or solidarity with fellow citizens in past and future generations, as well as the present one; but both the patriotism and the fraternity were of a new sort, deeply planted in the soil of personal and property rights of individuals. Love of country was to be love, not simply of the land and people and traditions, but love of the carefully articulated principles of political theory Americans drew from Locke and Montesquieu, mingled with reverence for the heroes who were most clearly dedicated to those specific principles. Care for one's fellow citizens was to express, not so much selflessness or even self-transcendence, as the rational understanding that the rights of each depended on the rights of all. (P. 174)

One of the most notable features of American public education, particularly as conceived by Emma Willard in accordance with Rush's principles (and Jefferson's), was the primary education of boys and girls by women functioning as "moral teachers and exemplars" (p. 179). In this sense the equal rights of the Declaration of Independence found their civic expression in relation to women very early on.

Despite the example of Jefferson's university, American higher education, traditionally the province of male teachers, has fared less well than primary education (which it has often influenced only to corrupt with absurdities). For the reform of higher education and a return to the *rational* judgment of science, only a return to Socratic common sense and dialectic will do. Common sense reminds scientists of the humble origins of their investigations; dialectic prepares souls for glimpses of the underlying principles or assumptions of scientific thinking. Teaching astronomy is a good, scientific thing, but what if the heavens are impermanent? To consider that question, the student needs cosmology. And to judge whether any science really is good, the scientist needs more than science. These are the concerns raised by Socrates and Heidegger alike. "But the profound meditations of Nietzsche and Heidegger will always be reduced to fashionable chatter unless and until their thought is grappled with at the high level at which they present it"—a level to be achieved only after "a liberal education in the Socratic spirit" (p. 199)—a spirit that is really "Socratic *eros*" (p. 218).

Lorraine Smith Pangle and Thomas Pangle return to the theme of American civic education in *The Learning of Liberty*. If Americans today are "uncertain" about "what the proper goals of education are" (p. 6), they are only responding to "an outcome of unresolved tensions imbedded in the Founders' own conceptions of education, of republicanism, and of human nature" (p. 7).

The Founders had to rethink the European-style educations they had received. The Europe of hereditary nobility and established Christian churches habituated men to honor, hierarchy, and the glory of (some) men and God. At its best, as in the writings of Richard Hooker, this education defended young souls against fanaticisms religious and atheistic. At its worst, it did not. In the Founders' time and place, Anglicanism had become entangled with Toryism. It was from the dissenting Protestants that the revolutionists found encourage-

ment. Benjamin Rush, for example, evinces a “somewhat incoherent” combination of Christianity and Enlightenment—not therefore bad, but not adequate, either.

The classics might well have criticized the Founders for too quickly and easily assimilating the moral to the expedient in their thinking; the Founders thereby failed to recognize the depth of the attachment that they still felt for nonutilitarian virtue and failed to ponder sufficiently the powerful hold that morality has on the human heart altogether. They thus never fully understood the problematic character of that attachment, and the consequent tendency of man’s moral feelings, when not cultivated by a careful education, to be alternately weak and dangerously explosive. The ancient philosopher might thus censure the Founders for having taken virtue a bit too much for granted, for having assumed that, at least in an attenuated form, it could always somehow be counted upon as a kind of necessary concomitant of political freedom. (P. 41)

With respect to the classics, the Pangles unearth a valuable gem in the Roman Catholic writer Charles Rollin, whose *The Method of Teaching and Studying in the Belles Lettres* was translated into English in 1770 and praised by the ecumenical Dr. Franklin. It is Rollin who commends the study of Xenophon, among others, and it is fascinating to imagine a work such as the *Memorabilia* being read by college boys in colonial Pennsylvania.

The Pangles’ discussion of Lockean education brings out the increased attention to education that Locke requires. If human minds are blank slates, with “practically no mental or spiritual natural inclinations which may serve as moral guidelines” (p. 59), then early childhood education matters more than previous writers had thought. Moreover, human malleability opens new vistas of human perfectibility. “Human beings are by nature almost pure potential” (p. 59), which is of course the Machiavellian point. But in America, this tamed Machiavellianism usually came in baptized form, as in John Witherspoon’s 1765 “Letters on Education.” Christian Lockeanism or Lockean Christianity did not neglect Lockean civility, a substitute for Christian humility and charity that opposes pride without having much recourse to God. With Franklin, American education took its decisive Baconian turn, but one that sought not “to leave classical education wholly behind,” particularly the classical emphasis on developing “the capacities appropriate to an economically independent and politically public-spirited member of society” (p. 89). “Americans turned from the secondhand, ornamental or scholarly, study of classic texts to a reenactment—in a wholly new setting, and with a much-changed script—of a portion at least of the civic spirit those texts depicted” (p. 89).

The greatest of the Founders who was also a great educator was Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson was no mere modern ‘institutionalist,’ supposing that a nation of devils might prosper if well channeled. Not only does he provide, in Virginia, for civic education of ordinary citizens; not only does he cultivate the

natural aristocrats: “one of the principal aims of the education of the few is to awaken in them a self-knowledge that will allow them to recognize their own dependence, for moral decency and dignity, and in the long run for liberty and security, on the checking and wary watchfulness of the less wise majority of their fellow citizens” (p. 111). No Hegelian bureaucrats, no ‘progressive’ Brains Trusters, no ‘best and brightest’ technocrats could impress the Sage of Monticello. If Jefferson at times relies too much on citizen self-reliance and worries too little about citizen self-restraint, there are less optimistic Founders (his friend Madison, for one) to correct him.

New England’s counterpart of Jefferson (in education if not in politics) was Noah Webster. While *The New England Primer*, published in 1690, had impressed upon children a lively sense of their own mortality (“I in the Burying Place may see/ Graves shorter there than I”), Webster “makes more attempt to appeal to childhood’s delights” (p. 135), replacing the *Primer*’s Calvinist catechism with a “Moral Catechism” that attaches duty to self-interest in an eminently Lincolnian manner. Supplementing the Moral Catechism, in 1790, was Webster’s “Federalist Catechism,” packed with wholesome lessons on the new Constitution and the republican government it established—“the first American civics test” (p. 136). The Pangles caution that Webster’s texts serve Adeimantus better than Glaucon; the project of taming Puritan spiritedness inclines him too much to pedestrianism. *Liberal* education need not apply. Webster is no Virginian, perhaps because New England thumos inclined more to fanaticism than gentrification? As for Jefferson himself, he acknowledged in a letter to Adams that American self-reliance (and democracy, one might add) can go so far as to reject all education not quickly and easily appropriated by just about anyone.

The Pangles carefully discuss Jefferson’s University of Virginia. Academic freedom, yes; absolute academic freedom denigrating the very political foundation of academic freedom, republican government, no. Read the Tory Clarendon, by all means, but not early on in college, before better principles (including those of the Declaration of Independence and *The Federalist*) have rooted. If anything, Jefferson may have been too cautious, “run[ning] the risk of turning burning issues into dead dogma and leaving students with beliefs that are mere opinions” (p. 173). That is, political sectarianism can easily recapitulate the errors of religious sectarianism.

The Pangles do not neglect nonschool institutions that educate: the churches (recognized in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787), the laws, political institutions, publishing, libraries. They also cite George Washington as an educator by example: the honored man who deserves honor by really living honorably. Republican honor lacks the splendor of aristocratic honor, but it excites more gratitude by its attention to “the practical needs of the people” (p. 244).

On moral education, the Pangles recur to Jefferson, whose notion of the “moral sense” must not be taken as facile confidence in uncultivated human nature. On the contrary, Jefferson warned against romantic novels as profoundly

antierotic, “numbing . . . the soul to pleasures of a more rational or a more sublime nature,” leaving the reader “insensitive to the quiet happiness of marriage between good-hearted, sensible partners” (p. 326, n. 10). To the Jeffersonian duality of head and heart—a duality proposed, it might be added, in a letter to a married lady who needed a certain sort of encouragement—the Pangles add Aristotle’s tough-minded acknowledgment that virtue does not invariably yield personal happiness. This, I suspect, Jefferson well knew, but preferred not to discuss. Aristotle gives the comprehensive teaching.

The Pangles end their book by reconsidering Franklin in light of his early hero, Socrates. Franklin abandoned the practice of dialectic because it made him too many enemies. This illustrates the difference between most commercial-republican politicians and some philosophers. As for the Pangles, in this book they make more genial company than the harsher Socratics, without dissolving into the oceanic affability of a Franklin.

Michael Zuckert’s *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* is a major work of scholarship that should go a long way toward settling longstanding disputes concerning the philosophic character of modern republicanism. Along with Paul Rahe’s magisterial *Republics Ancient and Modern* (with which Zuckert engages in occasional friendly controversy), this book should stand as a permanent guidepost to those who seek to understand the dominant regime of our time.

The theme is “Locke’s coming to dominance within those traditions of Anglo-American thought that have come to be called Whig, and about the immense practical and theoretical significance of that event” (p. xv). With a degree of precision remarkable in one who ranges so widely, Zuckert shows exactly how Locke’s philosophy differs from that of his predecessors, and how that philosophy decisively influenced writers who came after him.

Zuckert begins by defining the crucial difference between natural and conventional right. That difference is the essential difference between the English Bill of Rights and the American Declaration of Independence. “The English rights are very old, but they are not natural” (p. 11); they are the ancient legal rights of Englishmen. American rights are natural, and bear a striking resemblance to those seen in Locke’s state of nature—that “rationalist mytho-poetic account of the human situation in general” (p. 18).

Locke worked in an England wracked by civil war. The Reformation that had challenged the Christian Aristotelianism of the Roman Catholic Church left England without a clear solution to the theologico-political problem. New and radical doctrines “emerged and vied with each other for supremacy” throughout the seventeenth century (p. 30). James I exercised his royal prerogative to enter the joust, with his *Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, published in 1598. King James argued for the divine right of kings by advancing a Protestant version of Aristotelian organicism. He held regicide to be not merely criminal but suicidal, the monarch being the head of the body politic. This argument by analogy

instances the traditional Christian doctrine of similitudes, which holds that nature and politics are similarly ordered. (Procedurally, this resembles 'anagogical' Bible reading, whereby Old Testament persons and events are held to parallel and prefigure New Testament persons and events.)

The sobering implication of Jamesian divine right may be seen in James's appropriation of Aristotle's master-slave relationship to describe king-subject relations. This "amounted to a relegation of the community to the status of natural slaves" (p. 38). Jamesian patriarchalism politicized the Aristotelian relationship of parents to children. Further, the king conceived as 'a little God' departs from Aristotle considerably, when God is conceived as Creator. In this manner James 'baptizes' the pagan philosopher without much regard to such Christian teachings as "the truth shall make you *free*." Whereas Catholic theologians had moderated the divine right of kings in deference to the diviner authority of the Pope, Protestant writers had no such worries and could wax much more severe. Robert Filmer's thought maximizes this severity by excommunicating the moderating influence of the heathen Aristotle and in effect nearly sweeping aside natural right altogether. After all, "God is not bound even by his own ordinations" (p. 47), civil or natural.

The 1640s saw the rise of parliamentary contractarians, many of them Puritans. Contractarianism replaced the early parliamentary doctrine of "the ancient constitution," whereby the conventional rights of English king, commons, and peers were said to exist for the sake of "the most comprehensive human good, complete virtue" (p. 56). The dominance of Charles I from 1629 to 1640 "had proven the ancient constitution to be more or less a failure," circumvented by the king by the grace of constitutionally granted prerogatives, notably the prerogative not to call Parliament into session. In the 1640s, parliamentary contractarians eventually asserted the opposite extreme: parliamentary sovereignty. But they asserted sovereignty not on a natural-right basis but on the foundation of divine right mitigated by the doctrine of the Fall. The American Founders' Creator-God endows His human creatures with unalienable rights; John Milton's Creator-God endows His human creatures with His image. Miltonian Christians derive whatever authority they have *from* their free obedience, their willingness to act in accordance with their true nature insofar as their fallen nature does not block them from so doing. No human monarch, therefore, can rightly set himself up as God, even a little God. More radically, according to Zuckert the Americans affirm the Lockean "decision to understand human mortality and needfulness not as a fallen or derivative quality but as the ground for foundation, as the real endowment supplied by the Creator" (p. 92). This is unquestionably true of Hobbes, whose strictures on the *summum malum* are well known; it is less clear with respect to the Americans. It is an argument Zuckert promises to make in a subsequent book.

The Stuart Restoration ended parliamentary dominance, temporarily. The controversies of the 1660s centered on a Parliament no longer seeking the one true Protestant politics. By the late 1670s, the Whigs appeared as an identifiable

political group. The Whigs played the same role the Puritans had played, but they played it very differently; “more moderate and more rationalist modes of political thought” prevailed (p. 97). But early Whig rationalism was not Lockean rationalism. The Earl of Shaftesbury was Locke’s patron, not his student. The early Whigs looked not to the young Locke, but to the mature philosophy of Grotius, recognized by them as ‘the master of Whig thought.’ Grotius appeals to the laws of nature, of nations, and of God as standards beyond the positive law of any nation. Grotius teaches no right of revolution, but he does espouse a right of resistance to tyrants.

Zuckert carefully explores Grotian political philosophy, beginning with an illuminating comparison of it with the Christian Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas. “Grotius paralleled the achievement of Thomas” by “develop[ing] a Protestant version of the law of nature” (p. 119)—something Protestantism desperately needed, given its unstable tendency to run to uncompromising political extremes. The “entirely undoctinaire” Grotius’s right to resistance distinguishes itself in its Aristotelian prudence and moderation: “the existence of a right to resistance and of limits on rulers are matters to be ascertained under the constitution or original contract or civil law of each individual polity” (p. 124). Grotius’s natural law emphasizes voluntarism-contractarianism to an unprecedented degree.

Grotius defends natural law against the classical conventionalism of Carneades and the modern thumeroic appeal of Machiavelli. In order to do so, he needs to show the link between natural and conventional right, describing in turn the *jus naturale*, the *jus gentium*, and the *jus civile*. According to Roman writers, men share the *jus naturale* with all animals, the *jus gentium* with all men, the *jus civile* with fellow citizens. Grotius redefines *jus gentium* as law among peoples, ‘international’ law, not as human commonality. Grotian *jus gentium* thus depends upon *will*, just as much as *jus civile* does. But human beings (contra Carneades and Machiavelli) are naturally social and political animals; they *will* not merely their individual self-interest but some conception of the *common* good. Further, *human* knowledge uniquely lends itself to formulation in speech and action in terms of *laws*. Humans *generalize*. Their laws are not akin to the laws of gravity or of instinct. Grotian contractarianism expresses man’s natural sociality. On the other hand, Grotius conspicuously fails to point beyond political and social contract to a transpolitical philosophic quest; not incidentally, he does not commend Aristotelian distributive justice, only commutative justice. Grotius teaches that a coat belongs to the boy who owns it, not to the boy it fits. “Nonobligatory counsels do not qualify as law, even though they may point to what is right or good” (p. 140). *Obligation* defines law. This is “a drastic shrinkage of natural law” (p. 142). Right is the possession of its holder; here Grotius anticipates Lockean right-as-property. In so doing, he intends to defend natural law against its ‘realist’ critics, ancient and modern, who dismiss it as a castle in the air. The “shrinkage” makes convention no longer

contrary to nature but “an obligation derived from nature” (p. 147). “Compact, contract, promise, and related modes of voluntary engagement set the terms for, facilitate, and even make possible much of the social life of beings who are rational” (p. 147). Therefore, “not the socially contentious and ever-interpretable Bible, nor a vague and indeterminate nature, but empirical or historical reality is the locus for searching out most authoritative obligations” (p. 148).

At this point, Zuckert pauses to remark the limitations of the less precise scholarship of those who run together Aristotle, Machiavelli, and the Whigs in order to assert the existence of an ‘Atlantic republican’ tradition embodied in Harrington. Zuckert shows that Shaftesbury and the other Whigs were Grotians, not Harringtonians.

In his *Questions Concerning the Law of Nature*, Locke presents “a deep and thoroughgoing critique of the Grotian natural law doctrine” (p. 187). “Where Grotius had daringly said that the law of nature would be even if there were no God, Locke insists that God is simply indispensable to the law of nature” (p. 188). Building on the reliable scholarship of the late Robert Horwitz and others, Zuckert then shows that Locke proceeds very tortuously but very far toward questioning the existence of God. Further, the more Grotius leans on voluntarism and nature *together*, the more dubious is his claim to find *obligation* in nature. Not even Aristotelian teleology quite does that. To Locke, by contrast, “not tradition, not innateness or inscription, not self-evident principles of reason, not natural inclinations—none of these constitutes a promulgation of the law of nature” (p. 196), which is “the manifold of effective causes” (p. 203). (If so—and I think Zuckert is right—where does this leave the Lockeanism of the Declaration of Independence?)

Lockean natural law owes much of its real-world effectiveness to the scope it provides to human executive power. Nothing else so clearly links Locke to Machiavelli, and so separates him from Grotius. Executive power in Locke involves deterrence, a factor that “in effect repeals the proportionality requirement” seen in Thomistic writers and initially asserted by Locke himself. Locke’s state of nature is unsocial. Human beings are property whose owners and defenders are not gods or kings but themselves. Self-ownership is the true ground of Lockean natural rights. Natural rights are “unalienable,” not in the sense that one has no right to give them away but in the sense that one *has* that right: according to Locke, I may preserve my life or throw it away, because it is unalienably my property. As for slavery, I may choose to become a slave but I may also revoke my choice.

Labor, not contract, supplies the beginning of property. (If men had needed consent to gather acorns, they would have starved). Labor resembles the executive power; when it comes to self-preservation, just do it. (One might add: if labor is property and human rights are property, then man is self-created; as Zuckert says, nature for Locke is so inchoate and niggardly that “the divine workmanship” may be said to lack “inherent character.” It “is not a ‘world’” [p.

265].) The invention of money enriches man precisely because money cuts him loose from natural poverty. (Perhaps it is this 'self-creating' capacity of money that so exercises those who condemn usury.) The Lockean self essentially resembles the Machiavellian self: acquisitive, executive, utilitarian. As in Machiavelli, "the self must both be present and stand outside any, and therefore all, of its experiences" (p. 281). "Self is emphatically not soul" (p. 281). The self is a concatenation of pleasure and pain, but mostly it is property, "that form of consciousness that posits itself as owner and master of itself," a Machiavellian "empty center of consciousness that contains all its appearances" (p. 285). This Machiavellian core always threatens to break free of its 'bourgeois' shackles. "[T]he Lockean moral orientation is not so unrelievedly bourgeois as it is sometimes taken to be" (p. 318).

How could these radical subtleties possibly play into politics in the real world? It is hard to suppose that many political men made it very far down Locke's labyrinthine pathways. Zuckert reminds his readers that few men had to. A 1709 Whig pamphlet, *Vox Populi, Vox Dei*, cribbed from Locke, became a bestseller. And of course there was *Cato's Letters* in 1723, that brilliantly readable set of essays that manages to combine spirited polemic with "pacific but not pacifist" commercial republicanism, "public spirited but not public at core" (not unlike a Virginia gentleman, serving his country but longing for his plantation), "egalitarian but not levelling" (p. 319). Cato makes Locke even more immediately and popularly a voice for human freedom.

The Americans partake of Locke, deeply. They remain something more than Lockeans, still attached, to some degree, to the classics and to the Bible. Most of all, they leave room for the prudent implementation of classical and Biblical principles by citizens not entirely captivated by Locke. These books show how this can be done, in academic life.