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Book Review: The Spirit of Modern  
Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American  
Founders and the Philosophy of Locke. by Thomas  
L. Pangle.

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leader's obvious attraction to a soldier that the platoon leader has a "crush" on?

One solution might be to keep women out of those military jobs that place heavy reliance upon day-and-night personal bonds created by discipline and leadership, and instead to put women only in jobs that are more like civilian positions. Perhaps the current restrictions on women in combat serve as a rough substitute for this purpose. If so, then combat restrictions may survive "intermediate" constitutional scrutiny.

Instead, Stiehm repeatedly suggests a different solution: segregation by gender (pp. 204, 208), even to the point of reserving the Air Force for women (pp. 6, 237).<sup>11</sup> Most readers will find this too radical. It gives the lie to a rationale based on equal opportunity for individuals. Stiehm reasons that if some specialties are reserved in effect for men because of physical strength requirements, then fairness requires that some jobs not requiring such strength be effectively reserved for women (p. 204). Overqualification would thus become disqualification as a matter of policy.

On the other hand, if separate-but-equal is not an acceptable solution, then much of Stiehm's analysis implicitly supports limiting the female role in the military. One might have expected Mitchell's furious contentions to have been dissolved in the rational light of Stiehm's careful study. Instead, this reader is left with the uneasy feeling that there is a serious problem here: "fairness" in the context of women's opportunities in the military may be more inconsistent with efficiency than we have ever found it in other contexts.

**THE SPIRIT OF MODERN REPUBLICANISM: THE MORAL VISION OF THE AMERICAN FOUNDERS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOCKE.** By Thomas L. Pangle.<sup>1</sup> Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 1988. Pp. 344. \$24.95 cloth; \$14.95 paper.

*Robert Faulkner*<sup>2</sup>

This book will be unusually illuminating for thoughtful students of American constitutional arrangements. I say this confidently, although Professor Thomas Pangle's work says little about

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11. Curiously, she finds the need to reintegrate basic training "almost self-evident" (p. 237).

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constitutionalism and will be occasionally dismissed, in the feuds of academe, as sectarian. Professor Pangle addresses not the country's laws but its aims, especially the justice of its aims. He weighs the "moral vision" of various framers and, at greater length, of the Lockean philosophy that broadly guided them. This may sound moralistic or antiquarian. It is neither. Pangle is weighing, not recounting, and he interrogates first-rate statesmen and thinkers of comprehensive views; his book investigates family, economy, divinity, and governing, as well as the rights and goods of persons. Actually, this work is an instructive advance on the abstract and moralistic analysis that often passes these days for moral philosophy. The title is telling: "The spirit of modern republicanism."

We all know Tocqueville's remark that in the United States every political question eventually becomes a legal question. The reverse has become truer: with the modern emphasis on the malleability of the Constitution, and the overriding importance of social justice, every legal question becomes a political-philosophic question, especially among constitutional scholars. But which philosophy and which politics? And what distinguishes philosophy from a gaggle of contradictory ideological projects?

These are the questions that Pangle addresses. His intent is not simply or perhaps chiefly political. He means to show what philosophic thoughtfulness promises and demands, precisely in the confused state of mind in which Americans, *especially* thoughtful Americans, now find themselves. He would show them how "to liberate the mind from the spirit of the age" by engaging in dialogue with the "small minority" of truly thoughtful politicians and thinkers. He would show how thoughtfulness—philosophy in the old sense—is provoked precisely by the singularly theoretical basis of the American order. Pangle thus adds a voice unsurpassed in learning and reasoning power to the contemporary disputes over modern liberalism; the book manifests an unobtrusive but unusual moral seriousness as well as an obtrusive but elevated humanity. These virtues are inseparable from intellectual seriousness. Dialogue proves to require more than the sensitive openness to others' concerns which the term often connotes today. Pangle would advance Socratic or philosophic dialogue: a solicitude for penetrating opinions, combined with a sympathetic but direct cross-examination as to their justice and truth. Pangle's dialogue bestows real dignity, where it is due, while discouraging the obsequiousness and the tacit pretension that accompany "openness."

The first and shortest of the book's three parts examines several contemporary portrayals of the American order. E.S. Corwin's

old orthodoxy had supposed an historically developing constitutionalism; it missed the fundamental novelty of the framers' republicanism. Marxist commentators appreciate the novelty, but in a twisted way. While the best Marxists such as C.P. McPherson depart from the strict determinism of Marx, they remain enmeshed in a woollier but still incoherent reduction of even the best founders and thinkers to an economic and social context. Weberians, on the other hand, cannot sustain their reduction of modern profit-seeking capitalism to self-denying Calvinism or of even the congenial Franklin's work ethic to an austere Kantianism. Louis Hartz, at least, followed Tocqueville and stressed the influence of Locke and the liberal tradition; he was, however, loose and impressionistic as to Tocqueville, Locke, and liberalism.

Pangle's most useful service to contemporary scholarship is an evisceration of the so-called classical republican school, led by J.G.A. Pocock and Gordon Wood. This school, strangely influential in the academy, traces the country's founding to a civic republicanism separable from Lockean individualism and derived from the English country Whigs (and ultimately from a long tradition going back through Machiavelli to the Roman republic and Aristotle). According to Pangle, the eighteenth century books and pamphlets that have been designated classically republican are themselves suffused with liberal doctrines of natural rights, the state of nature, and representative government. What the classical republican school means by that term is not really ancient republicanism; modern scholars see the classical version through the more democratic, institutional, and cynical lenses provided by Machiavelli and his followers. Pangle finds the root of these academic distortions in Hannah Arendt's rather Heideggerian longing for an anti-theoretical and activist politics.

In the second part of the book Pangle moves beyond contemporary rereadings to characterize the self-understanding of the founders. While theirs might seem the classical republicanism of Rome or of *The Federalist's* "Publius," the American founders thought themselves innovators; thought that the true foundations of republicanism had been laid only lately; criticized the small republics of old as petty, repressive, faction-ridden and fierce; gave priority to security and rights; and supposed that good government was in tension with republican government.

What then distinguishes the founders' republicanism? Pangle chides scholars for muddying the relevant alternatives. While Arendt, for example, stirred a Pocock or a John Diggins to revive a classical alternative, her rejection of universal standards of right is

remote from all previous understandings of republicanism, and her praise of love of glory and recognition is Machiavellian and not classical. After making these points, Pangle offers a series of brilliant little comparisons of classical republicanism with variations on the modern alternative that guided the American founders.

Aristotle, Plato, and Xenophon praise the friendship of citizens, not merely an equilibrium of interests and factions. Pluralism is not enough. Yet they also deprecate civic virtue as merely citizen virtue; it is not the full virtue of the fine man. Despite a cool awareness of the compromises and resignation that practicality may dictate, they thought republicans should esteem admirable thought and conduct. Among political philosophers, it was Machiavelli who charged the classics with fostering an unmanly spirit of resignation, and who turned toward management which leads by satisfying. Pangle explores the mixture of old and new political science in Machiavellian republicans often called classical, such as James Harrington, Henry Neville, and Algernon Sidney. He also concludes that the commercial and cautious science advanced by Montesquieu and then David Hume may be understood as a revision of a fundamentally Machiavellian worldliness. Hume, to be sure, suggests a natural moral sense or "sympathy." It is guided, however, by utilitarian and hedonistic calculations. Hume's moral sense, like Montesquieuan moderation, is suspicious of moral zeal and instrumental to security, liberty, and self-government.

According to Pangle, that is the spirit of the Franklins, Madisons, Hamiltons, and Jeffersons. While he offers subtle differentiations, he finds in general that the founders encouraged "a productive life, a busy existence and a restless uneasiness." The American was to make his own way by his work; he would incline away from looking and inquiring: away from "awe for divinity," the fine arts, and the intellectual virtues. The founders merely tolerated sects; they promoted the useful arts and sciences, de-emphasized aristocratic pride and a gentlemanly class, and fostered frugality, industry, and commercial honesty. Even the "moral sense" doctrines of Jefferson and James Wilson ended by deprecating the public and the noble. In Jefferson's doctrine, as in Hume's, the content is determined by calculations of utility and finally by happiness. According to Wilson, the moral sense is a passion directed to domestic life; public life is governed by calculation because justice is artificial. Is republican self-government, then, merely an instrument of private interests or rights, not a worthy choice for its own sake?

With this question Pangle enters upon the major portion of his

book, a reconsideration of Locke's moral teaching. No matter how often the founding generation referred to Montesquieu, Hume, and *Cato's Letters*, he argues persuasively, it was to the concepts of Locke that they turned when they recurred to "ultimate questions." Pangle gives us a searching account of Lockean doctrines on Christianity, property, the relation of morality to epistemology, moral education, and the individualistic or nuclear family.

In *Natural Right and History*, published almost four decades ago, Leo Strauss showed how Locke quietly abused biblical formulas while setting forth an anti-biblical doctrine of human needs and rights. Pangle, while not denying Strauss's insights, shows why and how Locke preserved Christianity as the vehicle of an essentially worldly rationalism. A variety of Lockean works prepared what later came to be called natural religion, deism, and liberal protestantism. Having reduced the bible to an intellectually unimpressive collection of writings by simpletons, Locke inserted the creed of natural rights into a Christianity from which he had removed emphasis upon guilt, sin, hell, heaven, Christ and, in general, otherworldly promises and punishments. Liberal Christianity, Pangle concludes, was to be less the opiate of the working classes than of the educated classes, and Locke allowed them a big dose—one of the great doses that produced the enlightened preachers and sects—while preparing a process of secularization.

Pangle agrees with Strauss that Locke's is a dynamic and acquisitive reinterpretation of property. He enriches Strauss's account by comparing Locke's with other philosophic understandings, such as Cicero's view that holding property is a temporary trust like occupancy of a seat at the theater. He shows how the prominence of property in Locke's thought is connected with the prominence of the self; Locke treats property as something the individual has power to destroy. In Locke's view, acquisition is a form of domination; unlimited acquisition is justified by the fundamentally unlimited neediness—unblessedness—of the human condition.

No student of Locke's moral teaching can afford to miss Pangle's exploration of the relation between the *Two Treatises* and the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Again, he is indebted to, but does not hesitate to differ from, Strauss's analysis. Pangle explores the passions in terms of the *Essay's* language of "simple modes" of pleasure, elaborates Locke's enigmatic promise of a deductive theory of morals, shows the Lockean suspicion of imagination and thus poetry (it makes a "madhouse" of the mind), and exhibits Locke's fundamental fear of the desire for power and domi-

nation and his fear of moral opinion and conscience. Morality, in the strict sense, is uncivil as well as unknowable. Has any other commentator noticed that the terms "moral," "morality," "moral virtue," and "ethics" do not occur even once in the *Second Treatise of Civil Government*? A fundamental desire for life, or an uneasiness at the prospect of death, prompts Locke to make the "preservation of society" the star of his civil morality. The foundation of socialism is close to the foundation of individualism. A Lockean concern for others is calculated, however; *eros* is absent from Locke's account of human nature.

Locke foreshadows Rousseau and the socialists in dwelling on the management of custom. Political education by doctrine is to be supplemented by moral education through childhood accustoming. Locke was the first philosopher to devote an entire treatise to education, Pangle points out, and his account of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* supplements Nathan Tarcov's *Locke's Education for Liberty*. The natural inclination to dominate must be managed by praise and by inculcating a sense of shame, and countered by strong measures when obstinacy is involved. The positive virtues include "breeding," which is reinterpreted by Locke into civility or compliance with the wishes of others, and a practical aptitude at accounts and even trades; Locke was less interested in instilling Christian righteousness or aristocratic nonconformity than in shaping a businesslike and inoffensive individual useful to himself and to others.

Pangle is original in unfolding the *Second Treatise's* plan for a gradual but radical reformation of the family. Locke thinks the patriarchal family the root of oppression, and proposes instead the rational or calculated family. He makes consent the link of father and mother (or perhaps of fathers and mothers, since he does not exclude polygamy), links parents to their children obscurely (probably by the additional labor gained), and children to their parents clearly (by hope for inheritance). Pangle's whole discussion is illuminating, not least to Americans now wrestling with their liberation from the nuclear family.

As to government specifically, Pangle clarifies several implications of the foundational role of consent: the priority of public opinion and majority rule, the right of the majority to rebel, and the prominence of intellectuals who know the rational doctrine. Unfortunately, Pangle's general conclusions here are not up to his standard. Lockean republicanism seems both more authoritative and more popular than he suggests. While the legislative power is superior as of right, the executive has its own and prior necessity rooted in the individual's power to execute the law of nature, that is, to

punish those who endanger him or others. Then too, the Lockean legislative power seems more democratic than Pangle allows; one cannot separate it, as he would, from the representative function in which everyone, perhaps even the "meanest," can participate by election. I would also quarrel with Pangle's plausible suggestion that the Lockean executive is one man chosen for life; this does not fit with Locke's occasional allusion to the possibility of a plural executive and his emphatic subordination of the executive power as in principle ministerial to the legislative. Locke shows signs of anticipating parliamentary government, a mixture of a popular legislature with a ministerial cabinet of considerable discretion.

These difficulties with respect to Locke's constitutionalism are of secondary importance to Pangle's theme of Locke's moral vision. Does Locke succeed in establishing the moral dignity of the rational individual? While not accusing Locke of an amoral vision, Pangle observes Locke's preoccupation with life and the self, and wonders how that can justify sacrifice of life and account for experiences of self-transcendence. Can Locke justify his own devotion to the benefit of humanity and to philosophy? While Pangle imputes to Locke the devotions of a philosopher, in the old-fashioned sense of one devoted to knowing, he also notes the absence from Locke's teaching of any *eros* for knowing and of questions about the worth of philosophy. That puts in question the status of philosophy, and also of reason as the moral touchstone of conduct. Yet Locke has "not explained, or explained away, or demonstrated, his own escape from the experiences of self-transcendence."

With this difficulty Pangle closes a book that realizes to a remarkable extent its unusually noble aspiration: "to recover for modern liberals and citizens of liberal democracy something of the greatness, excitement, and challenge" in the intrepid thinking of Locke. By recovering the founder of liberalism as a thinker worth arguing with, he shows us a way between Babbitry and the *Village Voice*, between thoughtless complacency and thoughtless revolt.