

non seulement sur l'étude des personnes en elles-mêmes, mais également sur la compréhension des rapports et des liens entre les individus et leur contexte externe.

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The Political Philosophy of Benjamin Franklin

Lorraine Smith Pangle

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Benjamin Franklin, Lorraine Smith Pangle writes, “is and has always been the most American of Americans” (1). Virtually all Americans revere Franklin as a founder of their distinctive civilization and many Americans also believe, as Professor Pangle insists, that “[h]e embodies the best of what we [Americans] are and what we aspire to be” (1). The primary purpose of Professor Pangle’s fine, stimulating and innovative book is to enhance our knowledge of Franklin by reconstructing and systematically exploring his political philosophy, and thereby contribute to a better understanding of what America is and what the American way of life means.

That Professor Pangle’s project is important will be denied by no one who is familiar with Franklin’s reputation as “*philosophe*, savant and legislator” or who recalls that he is frequently described as “the American Socrates.” Professor Pangle not only appears to accept these estimates of Franklin but even suggests that on many important questions “the possibility remains that Franklin is right and Plato and Socrates are wrong” (221). At the centre of her analysis is her reconstruction of Franklin’s account of democratic citizenship, a topic which she believes has been unduly neglected. Franklin, that is, has been identified too exclusively with the bourgeois leanings of *Poor Richard’s Almanack* and *The Way of Wealth* and too little attention has been paid to his account of the virtuous citizen. “So successful,” she writes, “was the voluntarism Franklin spearheaded that in the next century Alexis de Tocqueville ... found in the device of secular, voluntary associations a quintessentially American solution to the social problems that beset every society” (94–5). In Professor Pangle’s book, Franklin’s political philosophy is first extracted from his voluminous writings, and then expounded in a way that justifies Turgot’s description of him as the man who “snatched lightning bolts from heaven and scepters from tyrants” (185).

But does the way of life recommended by Franklin deserve to be placed near or at the very pinnacle of what the tradition of political philosophy has to offer? Professor Pangle appears to believe that it does, and her main reasons for so believing are revealed in her replies to two of Franklin’s most influential critics—Max Weber and D.H. Lawrence. Weber identified Franklin’s list of thirteen virtues with capitalism as a calling and worried about a world in which wealth was pursued for its own sake. Lawrence complained that Franklin undervalued the irrational side of life. Part of Professor Pangle’s reply to Weber is that the accumulation of wealth was not, for Franklin, “a duty in the Kantian sense, an end in itself” (18). If Weber underestimates the breadth of Franklin’s vision, Lawrence fails to appreciate his “spirit of capacious sympathy with humanity” (221). Franklin, Professor Pangle suggests, may even have a deeper understanding of ultimate questions than Plato and Socrates, if his views are read through the lens provided by Aristophanes in *The Birds* with its recognition that “there is in the healthy human soul no fundamental yearning for God” (221).

Franklin emerges from Professor Pangle’s book not only as the quintessential American and a key figure of the Enlightenment but also as a very great political philosopher. The latter claim has not been made for him before. Part of the difficulty

with it is that Franklin often stops short of articulating the many important political positions that Professor Pangle seems to attribute to him. In a comparison of Franklin and Tocqueville, for example, she writes: “Franklin provided no such far-reaching and theoretical diagnosis of the problem as Tocqueville’s, but almost instinctively he grasped and addressed it” (97). Similarly she insists: “Of the American Founders and perhaps of all Americans, Franklin has unrivalled insights into the human soul, ... both in terms of its profound suitability for republican self-government and in the careful cultivation that is nevertheless necessary if that potential is to be realized” (3). This statement claims a great deal for Franklin. It also brings into question the coherence of American political and constitutional thought, at least for those schooled in the enduring teaching of *The Federalist*. The authors of *The Federalist*, especially Madison in number 10, are concerned not with soulcraft but with statecraft, and insist that a free and democratic society of the kind envisaged by the US Constitution can flourish even in the absence of genuinely virtuous citizens if political institutions are properly designed and if the conditions for social pluralism exist.

If Franklin eventually joins the ranks of the truly great political thinkers, as Professor Pangle thinks he should, Americans will certainly have one more reason to celebrate their contribution to modernity. But if this happens, Americans may also experience some difficulty in choosing between the political wisdom of Franklin and Madison and in knowing what their unfinished constitutional experiment in freedom and democracy means for themselves and the rest of the world.

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Les relations internationales du Québec depuis la Doctrine Gérin-Lajoie (1965–2005)

Stéphane Paquin (dir.)

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Le volume dirigé par Stéphane Paquin offre un bilan des relations internationales du Québec quarante ans après l'élaboration de la doctrine Gérin-Lajoie. Comme nous le rappelle Paul Gérin-Lajoie lui-même en avant-propos, cette doctrine s'est avérée «l'un des éléments majeurs de la grande transformation de la société et de l'État québécois au cours des années 1960, qu'on a appelé la Révolution tranquille» (15). Le volume rassemble 19 articles écrits par d'anciens fonctionnaires et diplomates, des politiciens, des constitutionnalistes, des politologues et des dirigeants d'organismes non-gouvernementaux. Ils sont classés en cinq sections et quatre annexes.

La première section du livre, «La Doctrine Gérin-Lajoie», comporte quatre chapitres. L'article de Stéphane Paquin cherche d'abord à revoir l'histoire du cadre juridique qui module les relations internationales du Canada, afin de démontrer l'importance des «impératifs de coopération entre le fédéral et les provinces» (29). Le gouvernement fédéral a développé trois stratégies en matière de négociation d'ententes internationales afin de prendre en compte le cadre constitutionnel canadien : le recours aux clauses fédérales, la limitation de la portée des accords à ses seuls champs de compétence et le développement de mécanismes de consultation avec les gouvernements provinciaux. Daniel Turp soutient quant à lui que la doctrine Gérin-Lajoie a grandement contribué à l'élaboration d'un droit québécois en matière de relations internationales, particulièrement en ce qui concerne le consentement du Québec aux engagements internationaux et la participation de celui-ci aux organisations internationales. Nelson Michaud conceptualise la distinction entre les relations internationales et la politique étrangère afin de conclure que le Québec, à travers la doctrine