

encyclopedias, book catalogs, and other modes of diffusion of ideas, but there is no survey of the recently growing study of correspondence networks. The coda on Rousseau is a bit underdeveloped; much more has been said elsewhere about Spinoza's reception in the period 1750–1800, and one area for future research would be Kant's Spinozism. But any such matters of detail would only confirm the overall message of this book: Major sectors of English-language political theory and history of political thought have been missing a great deal of what was important in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it can be found here.

Lincoln's Sacred Effort: Defining Religion's Role in American Self-Government. By Lucas E. Morel. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000. 251p. \$70.00 cloth, \$23.95 paper.

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Lucas Morel presents an excellent survey of Abraham Lincoln's frequent use of biblical language and allusions. Yet, Morel fails the significance test he sets for himself (pp. 1–2): Did Lincoln frequently use such language merely because it was the most common vernacular of his time; the vernacular with which his audiences would be most familiar? Or did he also frequently use such language because he thought that the right ordering of the relationship between religion and politics was critical to the maintenance of a democratic regime and that he actually had something important and original to say about that relationship?

I agree with Morel that the latter is probably the correct answer; he does not show that it is the correct answer. This is far from a personal failure on his part, as he probably does the best he can with the available evidence. The problem is that so little evidence is available. In essence, Morel stretches that evidence into a set of arguments that Lincoln *might* have made about the proper relationship between religion and politics. He shows considerable ingenuity in developing these arguments, but it must be emphasized that he is the one who has developed them, not Lincoln.

Perhaps a useful comparison is between Lincoln and Thomas Hobbes. In both cases, scholars have engaged in extensive speculation about their personal religious beliefs and whether they were atheists or, at most, tepid theists. In both cases, a lack of evidence has fueled this speculation. The two cases appear very different, however, once we move beyond the question of personal religious beliefs and begin to look at their views on the relationship between religion and politics. Much more evidence is available for Hobbes than for Lincoln. Morel tries to analyze Lincoln's views on the relationship between religion and politics as if Lincoln had written something equivalent to parts III and IV of *The Leviathan*. But of course he did not.

In making this comparison, my intention is not to stress the difference between analyzing the works of a philosopher and a statesman so much as it is to emphasize the difference between analyzing Morel's chosen topic and other possible topics in Lincoln's works. The writings and speeches of Lincoln can bear a fairly high level of analysis on such subjects as democracy and slavery, as has been shown by, among others, Harry Jaffa, who is mentioned so prominently by Morel (pp. ix, 14). They simply cannot bear the same level of analysis on Morel's chosen topic. There is a very good reason that, as Morel claims (p. 11), such a book has never been written before.

The one possible exception to Lincoln's relative silence on the relationship between religion and politics is his famous Lyceum speech of 1838 (chap. 2). Yet, as Morel emphasizes,

the political religion of that speech is not really a political *religion* but, rather, a civil disposition of obedience to law that religion then might be used to foster (pp. 8–9, 14–5, 31–2). Lincoln understands the relationship between religion and politics in this speech quite narrowly. But Morel is also very interested—and claims Lincoln is as well—in that relationship more broadly defined to include the ways in which politics should accommodate religion (chap. 3), in which religion might be misused politically (chap. 4), and in which religion teaches men the limits of politics as well as of religion itself (chap. 5). It is on these more strictly religious topics that Lincoln says so little and Morel says so much.

This gap is especially yawning in chapter 4, which is the weakest of the book. (Chapter 5, which deftly but still too expansively for my taste analyzes Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, is the strongest chapter.) In chapter 4, Morel analyzes Lincoln's temperance address of 1842 and elaborates one of the major motifs of his book: The abolitionists were Lincoln's exemplar for the political misuses of religion (pp. 9–10, 26, 125–6, 140). Yet, the abolitionists were not Lincoln's explicit targets in this address; self-righteous temperance reformers were. Furthermore, even when the abolitionists were Lincoln's explicit targets, as in his celebrated 1858 campaign debates with Stephen A. Douglas, his attacks seem grounded much more in political expediency than in personal disdain for either the principles or tactics of the abolitionists. However moderate Lincoln's own antislavery principles and tactics may have been, they eventually coalesced with those of the abolitionists (pp. 175–80). There is a large measure of truth to Wendell Phillips's gloss on Lincoln's victory in the 1860 presidential election: "Lincoln is in *place*, Garrison is in *power*" ("Lincoln's Election," in Wendell Phillips, *Speeches, Lectures, and Letters*, 1864, p. 305; emphasis original).

Where does this leave us? Morel provides some very interesting speculations about Lincoln's views on the proper relationship between religion and politics, but he stretches the evidence beyond what it can bear.

Worlds of Difference: European Discourses of Tolerance, c. 1100–1550. By Cary J. Nederman. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000. 157p. \$40.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

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This book is novel, attending more to the history than to the logic or morality of tolerance. It propounds, against the popular grain, a significant presence for tolerance in medieval Europe. Cases are made for Abelard, Marsilius, and others as significant exponents. The result provides students with an opportunity briskly to explore work too often ignored. If this study hits methodological sandbanks, it is hoped that will not deter others from voyaging in premodern times and in non-European waters.

Nederman takes aim at two key notions: The doctrine of tolerance is exclusively modern, and, more narrowly, tolerance is the lineal progeny of "liberalism." He is right to target the second, but he has invented the first. He is right to counter the view that "the Christian Middle Ages has [sic] *nothing whatsoever* to contribute to our understanding . . . of tolerance" (p. 3, emphasis added). Except that only one of four whom he "counters" arguably takes this view. A traveller who is construed to claim "there is no water *whatsoever* in the desert," is proved wrong by the little rain that will eventually fall. An observer who claims that no medieval writer can "readily" be conceived to oppose tolerance, or that medieval

religious intolerance was the “norm,” is not to be translated to mean: The Middle Ages have “nothing whatsoever” to contribute to tolerance.

That aside, the substantive question must turn not round whether there is any evidence for tolerance in the medieval past but round the type, volume, and significance of that tolerance. The author dismisses the claim by Ole Grell et al. that “religious intolerance was the norm throughout the Christian Middle Ages” (Ole Grell, Jonathan Israel, and Nicholas Tyacke, eds., *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England*, 1991, p. 3). Yet, he later endorses Moore’s view that intolerance was the norm in the Middle Ages: The “decided trend” was the “enforcement of orthodox faith against a range of medieval dissenters.” The “Roman Church . . . pursued a systematic policy of imposing a unified set of Christian beliefs.” The “Church took direct aim at . . . religious difference, heresy, Judaism, intellectual dispute.” One may add that it is questionable how far this intolerance “culminated in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215” (p. 11). After all, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486) was the decisive, authoritative handbook—commissioned by Rome and used all over Europe by Catholics and Protestants alike—governing the examination, torture, and execution of “witches.”

The author’s counterargument to assertions that support the prevalence of medieval intolerance slips from the idea that proponents like Grell and Tierney are simply wrong to the idea that this intolerance “depicts only part of the terrain” (p. 11). Nederman thus hovers between two claims. First, intolerance was not the norm. Second, intolerance was the norm, but not omnipresent: “Not every medieval thinker was entirely comfortable with repression” (p. 25). It becomes the author’s settled view that not everyone, after about 1100, favored torture, forced conversion, and dogmatic theology, or, after 1492, the abject enslavement of the newly encountered “Americans.” This in turn raises the question: What sense of tolerance is being deployed to make this sort of response relevant?

Nederman’s basic stipulation for “tolerance” is the idea of accepting “a multiplicity of ways of life,” a diversity “of beliefs or doctrines” (pp. 1–2). The larger the net, the bigger the catch. If tolerance equals diversity, we are not likely to run short of tolerance, even in the Middle Ages. Nederman does not dispute the persistence of persecution. He says expressly there was persecution, heaps, but that “persecution did not halt dissent.” Theologians did not stop reading Aristotle when the Church ordered them to (p. 15). “Heretics flourished even in the face of inquisitorial procedures” (p. 16). “Excommunication was unlikely to carry much weight [since] heretics were relatively unconcerned” about whether they were killed or not. It “is simply incorrect” to assume, because the Church made “war on heresy,” that it succeeded in “stifling all religious dissent” (p. 17). “Careful investigation of the historical record shows that forms of religious diversity, at an intellectual as well as a practical level, subsisted throughout medieval Europe” (p. 12).

Nederman plainly assumes that, by locating diversity, he demonstrates tolerance. But, of course, diversity no more establishes tolerance than intolerance; diversity is a formal condition for both. When there is no notable diversity, there is no remarkable Other to despise—or with whom to be tolerantly reconciled. Diversity is consistent with despotism; and the failure to extirpate difference does not demonstrate tolerance.

The author is too little attentive to definitions and time-frame. What is true in general is true as well for the particular figures investigated. Consider two of the least familiar of the

writers Nederman treats. First, in the twelfth century William of Rubruck is sent by the King of France to the Mongol court as a missionary. His job is to win over the alien to the one true faith. Instead, William observes an array of ethnic and religious diversity, fully tolerated by the Great Khan, a toleration which is “in many ways a source of frustration to William.” Why? Because there can be no “inclination toward conversion” where the Khan sanctions diversity (p. 57). One may view William as tolerant because he is intelligent and apprised of the impossibility of securing conversions. But, unlike Nederman, one may also take the view, overall, that William is less a significant tolerator than a supple but failed proselytizer.

Second, Las Casas may be Nederman’s strongest case of a significant tolerator, an exponent of racial (not ideational) tolerance, and an interesting contrast to William. But does Las Casas (d. 1566) really belong in this company? Nederman slots him as a “medieval author” (p. 119), as opposed to Bodin (d. 1596), who is assigned to “the Reformation” (p. 36). In fact, they both belong to the Reformation. Is it just to claim that injustice has been done to “medieval writers” when one cites, as a major exemplar of their virtues, a contemporary of John Hawkins and John Calvin—and so dubiously “medieval”?

As for Abelard and Lull, they are primarily concerned with rational and respectful debate among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The emphasis is on reason rather than revelation. Although rational dialogue possibly “requires that one respect the integrity” of one’s interlocutor (p. 37), it may not. (Cannot firm enemies join in rational debate, as in courtrooms and boardrooms?) For John of Salisbury, “mortals can know very little” (p. 50). But this makes him more a fallibilist than a true skeptic; what he does not doubt is the existence of God and related notions. Marsilius opposes crusading and denies the church authority to excommunicate. Yet, Catholicism is for him the one true faith, and “heretics and other infidels . . . are to be shunned” (p. 79). The best case for medieval religious tolerance may be Nicholas of Cusa, who seeks respect for divergent faiths. Even he assumes rational argument in the end will reveal the superiority of Christianity over all other faiths (p. 88). There is little in any of these men to match the audacity of Bodin’s *Colloquium Heptaplomeres* (c. 1593).

The author’s task would have been more challenging under a tighter, apter stipulation. For example, if we read “tolerance” as “accepting or putting up with items (behaviors) to which we object (disapprove),” then there are three consequences. First, no agent can tolerate everything. For *A* to tolerate *x* implies (i) *A* has the power not to tolerate *x*, plus (ii) *A* is intolerant of whatever undermines *x*, given (iii) that *A qua* tolerator is to be conceived as having the capacity to resist such undermining, else s/he cannot (properly) be said to tolerate. Second, we should expect to find cases of tolerance, both as thought and practice, in any era or region, including medieval Christendom, given a reasonably extensive body of evidence. It is not conceivable that any people or epoch should altogether exclude the possibility of some actors sometimes putting up with behaviors or beliefs to which they object. Thus, the residual questions that historians must answer relate to type, volume, and significance of tolerance. Third, formulated as above, one does not think to derive tolerance exclusively from “liberalism,” any more than from “socialism,” “anarchism,” “Christianity,” or “Islam” (consistent with the position taken by Nederman).