Cosmopolitan Political Thought: Method, Practice, Discipline. By Farah Godrej. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 224p. $99.00 cloth, $29.95 paper.
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— Manochehr Dorraj, *Texas Christian University*

On the political front, the twentieth century witnessed two devastating World Wars, and its last three decades were marked by the outbreak of violent religious fundamentalism, ethnic and nationalist strife, nativism, backward-looking populism and tribalism. On the economic front, the rise of market fundamentalism has ushered in a new orthodoxy under which the commercialization of culture and humanistic values is now the new moral order of the postmodern era. "Greed is good" and "profit is the bottom line" seem to be the new mottos that govern the logic of our economic and cultural order. Given the resurgence of such primordial loyalties and crass commercialism, there has emerged a counternarrative that opposes both the accounts of the "clash of civilizations" and the "end of history" on the one hand, and the rise of nativist populism and backward-looking religious fundamentalism on the other. The catch word among contemporary intellectuals composing this counternarrative is cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism celebrates our common humanity, extols global citizenship, questions the Western-centric view of the world and its presumed monopoly over the truth, and humanizes the non-Western Other. In so doing, it introduces a postcolonial discourse that challenges the conventional presumptions of Western political theory and assails its sacred boundaries. As such, it is a philosophic attempt to comprehend the complexities of our globalized yet fragmented world and to chart a road map to transform it. Indeed, such daring vision is necessary if we are to avoid the violence and the bloodshed of the twentieth century and push back against the voices of bigotry, extremism, and intolerance that have invaded the public sphere and, in the process, trampled our lofty ideals. Only then are we able to create a more humane society and culture.

Seen in this larger context, the learned and erudite volume by Farah Godrej is a welcome and refreshing contribution to the existing literature in comparative political theory in general and to the subject of cosmopolitanism in particular. The major strengths of the book are twofold. First, the author's discussion of cosmopolitanism, while anchored in theories of comparative political theory, transcends them and introduces new insights into the debate surrounding the subject. For example, Godrej not only attempts to "destabilize Eurocenterism," but she also offers a new intellectual vision that is based on a synthesis of Western and Eastern thoughts and philosophies. Her critical interrogation of Western perceptions of Eastern peoples and cultures is sustained by illuminating the underlying causes of commonalities and differences that can be found across geographical divides. Second, and closely related to the previous point, the author's new synthesis is daring and thoughtful, and it is informed by the nuances of the social contexts that generate it. For example, a Eurocentric perspective of the world is supplanted by a vision of "civilizational alterity" through which a fusion of Eastern and Western thought may not only better capture the complexities of our interdependent and yet fragmented world but also may prove to be the necessary intellectual brew that can heal it. Such "border crossing," intrinsic to cosmopolitanism, not only overcomes the binary vision of "us" versus "them"—the Western self versus the non-Western Other—but also presents a definition of the self that is confined not by geography or unassailable walls of cultural authenticity, but by the universality of the human aspirations for security, freedom, and dignity. This is the premise and the promise of cosmopolitanism and Godrej's penetrating and cogent analysis makes a strong and convincing case for it.

Particularly illuminating are the author's critiques of the Western representation of Confucian and Islamic traditions and the articulation of her own alternative narrative based on an understanding of these cultures in their own historical and social contexts, which bridges the gap between the external understanding of Western scholars and the self-perception of the scholars and peoples of the East. In contrast to the monolithic depictions of Confucianism and Islam by many Western scholars, Godrej's is sensitive to the multiplicity of voices and to the glaring contradictions within these traditions, as well as to their numerous interpretations. Unlike the authors of essentialist accounts, she recognizes that religion and culture in general and Confucianism and Islam in particular are not frozen in time and space; they are ultimately what people and their struggles make them to be. As dynamic and living entities, they evolve as a result of social change and, in the process, they transform the societies within which they evolve. In this age of communication and connections, the followers of these faiths are more conscious of other traditions, yet more self-conscious of their own unique past and present attributes. Thus they traverse the identity trains of the self and the Other constantly, crossing borders in the process in order to recreate themselves. The grasp of the subtleties of this dialectic is one of Godrej's major contributions.

Godrej provides us with an intellectual and cultural bridge, challenging the reader to embrace a different notion of the self and the Other, as well as a different way of thinking about the Other. The hope is that cosmopolitan thinkers, in respecting the self-perception of the Other without imposing their Western notions of rationality or good and evil, do not succumb to the backward-looking and nativist elements that often lurk under the garb of cultural authenticity. Ambitious in its intellectual breadth and depth, and infused with a keen grasp of the politics of

our time and what they demand from engaged intellectuals who hope to make a difference in the world, this is a first-rate contribution and a passionate plea for cosmopolitanism. Students and scholars of comparative political theory will find much food for thought in this provocative, rich, and thoughtful volume.

Leo Strauss and the Conservative Movement in America: A Critical Appraisal. By Paul Edward Gottfried. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 194p. $90.00.
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— Timothy Fuller, *Colorado College*

Readers interested in the character of American conservatism and in the debates over the role of Leo Strauss and his students in the conservative movement will want to read this book. Paul Gottfried here adds another chapter to his previously published analyses of conservatism in America, characteristically situating the analysis in the larger context of modern intellectual history.

The book has two broad concerns. Gottfried's first aim is to understand Strauss's thought by engaging his writings comprehensively, and by reviewing the expanding range of commentaries on Strauss and the "Straussians." Gottfried has substantial disagreements with Strauss, but he shows understanding of the arguments he opposes. He invites a dialogue with Strauss's advocates, whom he thinks should be more willing to engage and, without pulling his punches, avoids strident attacks on Strauss which do not advance careful thinking. Gottfried has strong opinions but he is also a careful scholar.

His second aim is to criticize from the perspective of the old right, from the angle of that traditional conservatism which distinguishes itself from libertarians and neoconservatives. Gottfried regrets that this perspective is neglected in contemporary debates. He sees that it is marginal given the prevailing character of American politics, but he also thinks that its proponents have important things to say; they deserve a hearing among those who pursue serious thought in detachment from the felt urgencies of the politics of the moment. He says, "I myself am sympathetic to the outcast group in question and shall admit to having a professional interest in their critical assessments" (p. 72). Thus the book is both about Strauss and about contemporary American conservatism. Gottfried connects them in his strong critique of Neoconservatism; in practical politics, he argues, Strauss's thought lends support to the neoconservative persuasion. "From the standpoint of the older republicanism, Lincoln, FDR, and other Straussian heroes were dangerous centralizers and levellers. . . . [I]t is the Straussian concept of liberal democracy, with its succession of world-historical warrior-leaders, that has come to reshape the establishment Right" (p. 111). And "The Straussians have pulled off an equally enterprising feat by assuming a certain right-wing style without expressing a right-wing worldview" (p. 115).

Contrary to what is widely believed, "Strauss became an American thinker, indeed an American booster, despite his German past" (p. 7). At the same time, Strauss retained a "profound preoccupation with his Jewishness" which "runs through Strauss's life, and it is evident well before Strauss was forced to flee from Nazi tyranny" (p. 19). Gottfried thinks that Strauss was not "conservative" or "traditionalist." Rather, he became a Zionist and later a "Cold War liberal" and knew that these did not imply a return to or renewal of some classical and ancient political alternative. Gottfried convincingly rejects the allegation that Strauss was secretly a Nazi or Fascist. He argues that Strauss's early regard for Nietzsche's diagnosis of modernity did not lead him to support the German nationalist right. One can separate Nietzsche's diagnosis of the dangers of modernity from whatever prescriptions for them he may have entertained. "Strauss was fascinated by what he considered to be dangerous" (p. 148).

Gottfried's Strauss is not nostalgic for antiquity but sympathetic in the 1930s to the center left in Germany. Once in America, Strauss embraced liberal democracy while distinguishing what he thought its better from its worse tendencies: "[N]either Strauss nor his disciples have expressed any desire to restore an ancient political society" (p. 56). In fact, "they indicate a strenuous effort to make the ancient Greek thinkers look like forerunners of the present age" (p. 57). His criticism of the modern liberal order was from within as a friendly critic who clearly defended the West. Gottfried takes seriously Strauss's critique of Nietzsche, Weber, and Heidegger, and of relativism and nihilism. Thus Strauss gained a popular following in the Cold War period beyond his considerable accomplishments as a scholar. What is really at stake is different and competing conceptions of the right order for us moderns. "Neither Strauss nor his disciples, contrary to what their critics on the left and their adulators on the right may choose to believe, belong to the 'right,' except in their defense of Israel" (pp. 69–70).

Gottfried then turns to a critique of Strauss's prodigious scholarship. Strauss is well known for his critique of historicism in the course of defending "natural right." As Gottfried sees it, what this really meant was that Strauss "opposed not historically based thinking but the rejection of a permanent human nature and the primacy of Reason" (p. 42). Gottfried defends the traditionalist regard for custom and inherited practice, and defends Edmund Burke against Strauss's attack on Burke at the end of *Natural Right and History* (1953). Gottfried also warns Christians, especially Catholics, that Strauss's defense of Reason proclaimed a dichotomy between "political philosophy" and "political theology" and elevated Reason over Revelation. Strauss distanced himself from the traditional justifications for liberal democracy—for instance