

German bishops, the Vatican, and the Center Party did not act in unison. Pacelli did not consider the intervention of his office into the political affairs of a sovereign nation appropriate. Although many deem the Concordat as a legitimacy-giving gesture, Wolf offers a reasonable counterexplanation.

In retrospect, of course, a firmer and morally unambiguous assessment and rejection of the evils of National Socialism and anti-Semitism would have maintained and improved the Vatican's moral authority. The Vatican breathed in a thick antimodernist air that conditioned many of its attitudes. The great evils, we now know of course, were anti-Semitism and totalitarianism, not ecumenism and liberalism. Pius XI became more focused on the former evils toward the end of his papacy. In addition to the 1937 *Mit brennender Sorge*, he initiated an encyclical against racism. Wolf concludes that in the final years of his papacy Pius XI was the prophet and Pacelli the diplomat. The church needed more prophecy and less diplomacy in the opening years of the next pontificate. A lifelong diplomat, Pacelli clearly revered such bishops as von Galen, the most vocal episcopal voice against Hitlerism, but considered it unfitting to his office to issue similar prophetic denunciations.

About this silence Wolf must wait until the post-1939 archives are made public. When they are, one hopes that Wolf writes and Kronenberg translates another book like this one—accessible to beginners, yet containing new riches for those already waist-deep in the “Pius XII” wars.

—Grant Kaplan

### BACON ON VIRTUE AND THE HUMAN GOOD

Svetozar Y. Minkov: *Francis Bacon's "Inquiry Touching Human Nature": Virtue, Philosophy, and the Relief of Man's Estate*. (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2010. Pp. vii, 149. \$60.00.)

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One of the core difficulties of Francis Bacon's thought concerns the absence of any clear link between his scientific and his moral works. What do the *Essays*, for example, have to do with the *New Organon*? Much of the contemporary scholarship on Bacon aims at either deepening our understanding of Bacon's account of scientific knowledge or explaining how his moral and political reflections underpin his project of advancing modern science. In *Francis Bacon's "Inquiry Touching Human Nature,"* Svetozar Minkov takes a different tack. While Minkov is well versed in Bacon's corpus, and is therefore

equipped to investigate Bacon's political and scientific project along the lines of his scholarly predecessors, he instead takes up Bacon's moral philosophy in its own right. Minkov proposes that Bacon's technological project is secondary to his moral thought, and explores the idea that, for Bacon himself, the success or failure of his science would be determined by its contribution to human virtue and the good of humankind (5–6). In this light, Minkov offers an account of Bacon's teaching on virtue (understood provisionally as the “good condition of the soul that allows for or constitutes living well or happily;” 24), and then brings into relief the threats to virtue that the Baconian world presents.

Minkov's book proceeds to demonstrate the priority of virtue and the human good in Bacon's thought in four stages, each of which challenges a different assumption about Bacon's philosophic orientation. In the first part of the book, Minkov questions Bacon's ostensible endorsement of the active life over the contemplative life. The second part of the book delves into Bacon's nuanced account of human virtue, and rebuts the idea that the progressive character of Bacon's scientific project makes him a moral utopian. In the third part of his book, Minkov draws out the problem with reading Bacon as a materialist in matters of love. And in the fourth and final part of the book, Minkov exposes readers to the problems with a strictly bifurcated understanding of Bacon's thought (divided, that is, between his moral and scientific thought) by considering a medley of fables from Bacon's *Wisdom of the Ancients*. Through his analysis, Minkov tempts us to return to Bacon with fresh eyes, and to question whether we have carved up Bacon's thought at its true joints.

Minkov's opening reflections are oriented around two questions: Why would a philosopher of the first rank spend a seemingly inordinate amount of time dedicated to a practical project? And what is the relationship between Bacon the scientist and Bacon the philosopher? After considering and dismissing religion, glory, and charity as motivations for Bacon's works, Minkov floats the possibility that Bacon's technological project is motivated by philosophy in some respect—either by the aim to protect it, or for the sake of engaging in it, or both. Minkov acknowledges some important difficulties with these possibilities, including the fact that Bacon does not offer a clear defense of philosophy, that Bacon's understanding of philosophy is difficult to pin down, and that Bacon has (to say the least) a complicated relationship with classical philosophy, or philosophy as we know it. In this aporetic mode, Minkov concludes his opening chapter by arguing that instead of speculating on the motivations behind Bacon's thought, we ought to turn to his account of the human good more directly.

In the next chapter, therefore, Minkov begins to explore Bacon's account of virtue and the human good. Minkov explains the nuances of Bacon's account in contrast to a number of classical teachings, including those of Aristotle and Xenophon. He focuses in particular on Bacon's charge that Aristotle does not offer insight into the action required for attaining virtue. His reading points to the fascinating possibility that Bacon did not embrace unequivocally the

distinction between active and contemplative virtue. Despite his nuanced and subtle analysis, however, Minkov's concluding remarks in the section revert to standard categories. As he writes, "we now have reason to think that what looks like a Baconian defense of the active life in the name of the common good, will prove, upon examination, to be a defense of the contemplative life in the name of the individual good" (39). Although his analysis promises to challenge old assumptions about Bacon, in this context, Minkov relies on the simple reversal of a standard conceptual scheme that does not capture the range of possibilities that he uncovers in Bacon's thought.

When Minkov turns to his most direct analysis of Baconian virtues, however, his subtlety comes to the fore. The remainder of his analysis is informed by a careful reading of Bacon's rarely studied text *Of Tribute*, which contains a series of speeches that offer insight into Bacon's views on fortitude, courage, justice, love, and knowledge. Minkov draws on the first speech in *Of Tribute* (which is an encomium on fortitude as "the worthiest virtue") to inquire into Bacon's views of the relation between courage and wisdom. Does Bacon think that fortitude, something akin to (although not the same as) courage, is the most fundamental of virtues? In a fascinating analysis that explores Bacon's fable "Orpheus, or Philosophy" and his comments on Julius and Augustus Caesar, Minkov brings fortitude into relief as strength of mind. This strength may be disconnected from prudence, but when coupled with truth, especially the truth about our mortality, it emerges as essential to philosophic wisdom. For Bacon, Minkov argues, philosophic wisdom is ultimately more fundamental than fortitude, but fortitude provides the strength to see the mortal condition clearly and respond to it free from the intellectual distortions caused by fear.

Having brought fortitude into the foreground alongside Bacon's understanding of wisdom, Minkov delves into what is, in my view, the most valuable argument of the book. Since Bacon's scientific project provides for the relief of man's estate, and potentially for relief from immediate fears of our mortality, why does fortitude figure so prominently in Bacon's thought? Does not the Baconian project relieve us of the need to place a premium on fortitude in the face of our mortal condition? Minkov contends that Bacon's account of the virtues reflects Bacon's keen awareness that, far from relieving us of a need for qualities like fortitude, the new world that his project will advance necessitates both heightened strength of mind and more adaptable virtues. Furthermore, Minkov argues, questions concerning human mortality in the world of Baconian science present the greatest challenge to philosophic virtue. The project necessarily heightens human hopes in the direction of immortality, and in so doing compels us to reformulate the classical philosophical stance toward mortality. Minkov therefore strives to demonstrate that Bacon advances a vision of virtue that includes a new kind of intellectual and psychological flexibility that allows us to respond well to the variations on human mortality that the Baconian world generates.

After conveying the depth of thought that Bacon presents on the question of virtue and human mortality, Minkov turns to demonstrate Bacon's philosophical depth on love. The penultimate chapter of the book challenges the idea that Bacon holds a reductionist understanding of love. By offering commentary on the speech in praise of love in *Of Tribute*, the "state-sponsored chastity" of the *New Atlantis*, the seemingly cynical view of love in the *Essays*, and the cosmology of love in *Of the Wisdom of the Ancients*, Minkov systematically conveys that Bacon offers a comprehensive vision of love that spans the nature of the passion itself, its problems for politics, how it can be directed for cultivating the species as a whole, and its cosmological manifestations.

Minkov's final chapter also aims to demonstrate the expansiveness of Bacon's philosophical vision through readings of a selection of fables from the *Wisdom of the Ancients*. His readings are limited in their scope and, at times, appear to be speculative. While he offers us such tantalizing possibilities as the idea that for Bacon, political philosophy, in alliance with technological science, is more fundamental than natural science and metaphysics (131), his assertions warrant further explanation. This latter tendency is disappointing, since Minkov points out, rightly in my view, that Bacon's myths have a great deal of philosophical depth that could be worked through to substantiate his case for Bacon's profound understanding of virtue and the human good.

Nevertheless, Minkov's work makes a strong case that Bacon's thought "cannot be reduced to the effects of Bacon's political and technological project" (135). It does so primarily by exposing us to a number of works, including *Of Tribute* and *The Wisdom of the Ancients*, that typically are treated narrowly (for the sake of elucidating Bacon's scientific project) or not at all. Minkov's analysis of Bacon's reformulation of human virtue is the strongest part of his work, and shows that Bacon had an account of virtue that he honed against the backdrop of a philosophical understanding of classical virtue, and a profound understanding of the challenges to human happiness that his new world would present. In the spirit of Bacon, Minkov provides starting points for a far more expansive intellectual project.

—Natalie J. Elliot

### CRITICAL RATIONALITY

David Ingram: *Habermas: Introduction and Analysis*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010. Pp. 384. \$65.00. \$26.95, paper.)

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In an age characterized by an abyss between the rejection of truth by skeptical postmodernists and the adoration of truth either by religious fundamentalists