

talking cures for tyrants is oddly unmodern. Recent political theory has by no means neglected greatness. It has merely swapped methods of addressing it, trading the philosophical mirrors that aspire to “limitations within the soul” (p. 186) for more reliable, that is, external, remedies: constitutions, institutional checks on arbitrary power backed up by popular accountability, and an educated public opinion. Faulkner claims that the “dangers to free politics that grand ambition often poses” were “provided against by a Plato or Aristotle” (p. 199). But Plato and Aristotle provided nothing of the sort; they merely *argued* against the dangers. To *provide* against them would have required institutionalizing mechanisms to bind the great from outside their own souls. But that is precisely what this book refuses to countenance. The great are to be given wise trainers but no reins.

In treating Machiavelli, Bacon, and occasionally Hobbes as the exemplars of “enlightenment” (or, less problematically, “modern”) philosophy (pp. 9, 10, 18, 130, 178, 182, 221), Faulkner comes to judge mostly negatively the modern aspiration to tame politics through scientific knowledge, rather than qualities of soul. But this early modern trio lacked knowledge of modern constitutional and representative regimes, let alone mass-democratic ones. To take them as the paradigm moderns is to attack the aspiration to political knowledge without examining the actual knowledge to which it led. Generations of political theorists who have reflected on *both* souls and carefully gathered political experience—Hume, Adams, Publius, Tocqueville, Mill, and Weber, and their contemporary heirs—have discovered and propagated institutions unknowable to the Greeks. These include independent legislatures and judiciaries, the free press, uniform systems of private property and public provision, professional armies and police forces, and not least, the public prison, with impartial administration and limited terms. By ignoring how such institutions check and channel greatness, Faulkner ends up treating modern greatness like an absurdist play: all character, no scenery.

Faulkner approvingly cites Plutarch: “[T]he Athenian democracy could not live with Alicibiades . . . and it could not live without him” (p. 59). True. But that was Athens. A modern constitutional democracy, by design, can do both.

Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship. By Eric Gregory. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. 384p. \$45.00.
doi:10.1017/S153759270999123X

— Peter Augustine Lawler, *Berry College*

The purpose of this self-consciously ambitious, wonderfully comprehensive, and often judicious scholarly book is not to recover the thought of the “historical” St. Augustine for our time. Eric Gregory is not particularly attuned

to what Augustine really said, and he sometimes, in fact, lets the reader in on what Augustine should have said, typically from a contemporary liberal point of view. Nor is he in pursuit of theological truth or even the fundamental truth about who we are as human persons. He limits himself, for the most part, to the impact that certain parts of Augustine’s writings have had on twentieth-century political theorists. He takes for granted that liberal democracy is superior to pre-modern, paternalistic, or theocratic or non-rights-based forms of political life, and he presents himself as certain—without presenting supporting public policy analysis—that existing liberal democracies could be improved by “a kind of Augustinian *civic virtue*” that “might in turn encourage a more ambitious political practice” (p. 8). His basic thesis is that liberal concern for justice, understood as the protection of equal rights, is compatible with the loving and virtuous or charitable political pursuit of an “actual society” that is more just, egalitarian, and caring (p. 14). He claims that liberal democracy as it now exists, particularly in the U.S., is depressingly inegalitarian and depersonalizing or far too dominated by the apathetic indifference or materialistic self-absorption characteristic of capitalism. So, the new direction or “distinctive interest” of Gregory’s reconstruction of the Augustinian tradition is “in relating love of God and love for neighbor in politics” in order to develop “a *political ethic of care*” (p. 176–77).

Gregory proclaims that his ambition is to reconcile those who write in the Augustinian tradition today with modern—meaning contemporary—liberals. He writes to build a coalition on behalf of a combination of liberal justice and Augustinian love by purporting to show the Augustinians and liberals that, on the level of politics, there’s nothing over which they fundamentally disagree. Now that history has pulverized the utopian illusions of socialism or communism, it is, in fact, fairly hard to find scholars who do not want to perpetuate or accelerate the liberal devotion to personal autonomy and have government exhibit a more aggressive concern for the weak and the vulnerable. An exception here, Gregory presents, is the small group of radically orthodox or fairly Augustinian thinkers who believe that modern autonomy and Christian love are incompatible. To them he sensibly argues that there is no current alternative to liberal democracy, and he adds, much more questionably, that under the flag of his liberal/Augustinian coalition, the liberal quest for justice can be animated by the virtue of charity—or personal action based on love of particular persons—much more than it has been so far. The radically orthodox share Gregory’s criticism of the *faux* realists who depend on “a demythologized notion of original sin” (p. 9), but they will, I believe, remain more than skeptical about the plausibility of Gregory’s own demythologized notion of the virtue of charity.

There are limits to the inclusiveness of even the most ambitious coalition building. By “liberal,” Gregory means liberal Democrat, and he leaves beyond the scope of the coalition of the loving the few remaining Lockean, libertarian, or classical liberal scholars, as well as lots of ordinary, unscholarly, “fundamentalist,” or unreflectively patriotic Americans. Surely a book with a more theoretical intention would have said more on behalf of the Augustinian dimension to classical liberalism. It might have also said more about an Augustinian skepticism present in modern authors from Pascal to Nietzsche to Strauss about the authenticity or effectiveness of any effort to sustain “Christian values” in the absence of Christian faith.

In my view, the continuity from Christianity to, say, Lockean liberalism is the Augustinian insight that neither natural nor civil society can account for who we are. We persons are not merely part of some impersonal natural process or part of some country or cave, but have an irreducibly free and trans-political core to our beings. Our personal love points beyond the imperfections of sinful and biological existence in the direction of a personal God who can know or care for each of us as he or she truly is. Modern liberalism begins by retaining Augustine’s insight about personal freedom and discarding his faith in the personal God. For the modern liberal, love of God, and indeed personal love in general, is for suckers. There are excellent Augustinian reasons for being suspicious of any appeal to civic virtue, just as there is reasonable doubt that personal love can and should be expressed politically. Gregory criticizes the self-proclaimed realistic skeptics, who say that all apparently charitable action—all virtuous responses to suffering—is really disguised self-interest, for carrying the idea of sin too far. And he employs that criticism against all procedural liberals (from Locke to Rawls) who restrict the domain of justice because love can so easily become politically pathological. But skeptical liberals, it seems to me, do not rely on even a demythologized view of sin; they just want to maximize personal freedom understood as autonomy or self-direction. One purpose of early modern liberalism was to free us from the debilitating delusion that sin is the cause of what ails us. A powerful characteristic of the liberal tradition is its thought that, to be delivered from evil (so to speak), we must be delivered from the illusions of both love and sin.

Some might say that the only Augustinian way to make liberalism personal or relational is to restore faith in the trans-political personal God who loves and cares for each of us as a particular being. An authentically Christian liberalism, at least in principle, points in the direction of achieving some of Gregory’s admirable vision of reconciliation. Christian liberalism—as Gregory sometimes shows in his most careful discussions of the actual writing of St. Augustine—can describe a kind of virtu-

ous perfectionism that is compatible with both personal freedom and our invincible, sinful limitations. It can reconcile love and dignity, support the feminist desire to overcome the patriarchal distinction between man and woman through personal caregiving, relativize without abolishing political life and its pursuit of justice, make us more at home in this world by showing us the true cause of our restless homelessness, and avoid the extremes of hyper-communitarianism and hyper-individualism by distinguishing between the irreducible, relational identity of a person and self-absorption. To find an example of such a Christian Augustinian liberal today, there’s no need to look further than the present philosopher-pope, and Americans might look to the philosopher-storytellers Walker Percy and Flannery O’Connor.

Most of the members of the coalition of the virtuously loving, however, join the classical liberals in not believing in a personal God. The renewed Augustinian tradition that Gregory proposes must be sensitive to this pluralism. For example, the feminists’ concerns for politicized caregiving need not be understood to have Christian roots, although the perception of the truth of Christianity did, in fact, raise the status of women and their distinctive virtues in the world. The authentically Augustinian members of the coalition “cannot expect liberals to ‘confess Christ is lord’ in order to become good lovers and good citizens.” Nor should they succumb to “the temptation” to believe that they, or Christians in general, know the whole truth about God or virtue (p. 256). They, as coalition members, cannot even claim that their view of virtue is specifically Christian, although somehow it has to remain specifically personal. For the coalition to endure, even Christology has to become merely political. It can’t depend on whether Christ was who he said he was or whether what he promised is true. At the coalition meetings, there cannot be any divisive talk about whether we really are sinful, fallen beings, or whether this biological life is all there is for particular persons. The logos that becomes flesh cannot have anything to do with the personal origin or destiny of each of us.

With the help of Richard Rorty, Gregory wants to bring Walt Whitman—who was all about the love—and John Dewey—who was all about citizenship—into the coalition. He seems inclined to agree with that great trinity that the achievements of Christianity must be historicized to provide our country with real political hope. It is true that Gregory is quick to add that a true Augustinian cannot agree with Rorty, Dewey, and Whitman when they proclaim that we have to forget about theology and eternity to avoid cruelty and achieve happiness (p. 366). But, he does believe our shared civic virtue does not depend on them. So, for Gregory, the theory of his coalition ends up being something like

Rorty's non-foundationalism or Rawls's overlapping consensus.

The secret to breadth is to sacrifice depth, or to forego, as Rorty recommends, real thought about who we are—not to mention who or what God is. This able and erudite book serves best as a reminder that the amalgam of liberal secularism and Protestant or Augustinian Christianity that has always animated the American reformist tradition remains and may always be somewhat incoherent and unstable. So, it is fitting that Gregory offers an eloquent, authentically Augustinian conclusion: While “earthly politics cannot fulfill the deepest longings of a human person or community . . . [r]ights, respect, and democracy are good things, even if they are not the fulfillment of love” (p. 384).

Probably my greatest moral objection to this book is that it says so little to challenge its primary audience—American liberal academics. I agree with Gregory that the undeniable progress in the direction of justice over the past sixty years for African Americans, women, and others can't be understood without some attention to Christian love. And he does well, of course, to employ Martin Luther King Jr. to illustrate the edifying and effective rhetorical mixing of Christian love and liberal justice. But it's not at all clear that, on balance, that period of time has been good for personal love in our country.

A genuine analysis of feminism, for example, would include a candid cost-benefit analysis of its effects on the family and of the fact that politicized caregiving is hardly likely to be an adequate replacement for the personal, voluntary caregiving that has atrophied in recent years. The same sort of analysis would consider why the same feminists who speak eloquently in terms of concern for the weak and the vulnerable are so insistently pro-choice when it comes to abortion and other “life” issues. It's not so easy, after all, to reconcile personal love with the modern view of autonomy, which is too anti-natural and individualistic to be authentically Christian. A genuine Augustinian would, I think, exhibit a lot more “tough love” when it comes to the complacency of contemporary liberals regarding their own virtue and the contempt they show for the genuinely Augustinian (or evangelical and orthodox) personal faith in a personal God exhibited by so many ordinary Americans.

To say the least, it's not clear to me that a greatly expanded redistributive national government would either genuinely be motivated by love or increase the real amount of personal love in our country, but Gregory clearly writes in support of the “Yes, we can” spirit of sophisticated America today. Theoretical gentleness and practical vagueness may be indispensable features of a coalition-building book, but one downside is that that method of writing doesn't give the author much room to display his moral or intellectual courage.

The Prisoners' Dilemma: Political Economy and Punishment in Contemporary Democracies. By Nicola Lacey. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 254p. \$61.00 cloth, \$25.99 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592709991241

— Jeffrey Reiman, *American University*

In her 2007 Hamlyn Lectures, presented here, Nicola Lacey addresses “one of the most troubling empirical paradoxes of contemporary democratic criminal justice,” namely that while “we might expect liberal-democratic criminal justice to aspire to be reintegrative and inclusionary . . . in many countries, criminal justice policy has been driven in an exclusionary direction with—perhaps even because of—popular, and hence literally democratic, support” (p. 8). She has in mind the enormous increases in imprisonment in the United States since the 1970s, and (in lesser degrees) in other Anglophone nations such as England, Wales, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand—increases driven by “penal populism,” popular demand for harsh treatment of offenders.

Lacey rejects the thesis, suggested by writers such as David Garland, that harsh punishment policies are an inevitable feature of late capitalism as states lose control of their national economies in the face of economic globalization (p. 27–29). Since the dramatic increases in imprisonment have occurred in countries that have adopted neo-liberal economic policies since the 1970s, and generally not in those that have maintained “coordinated market economies”—Netherlands, Italy, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Japan (p. 44, 60, 137–38)—Lacey aims to determine how the differing economic and political structures of contemporary democracies lead to differing criminal justice policies.

Until the 1970s, contemporary democracies tended toward “penal welfarism.” Criminal justice was treated as an extension of the welfare state, with moderate punishment regimes aimed at rehabilitating and reintegrating offenders. With “the global economic changes which began in the 1970s—recession, the contraction or even collapse of manufacturing industries, the growth of unemployment and the creation of a large sector of people either long-term unemployed or employed in insecure forms of work—the consensus which had sustained penal welfarism began to erode” (p. 21–22). Crime rates went up, fear of victimization became widespread, “and the era of ‘penal populism’ was born” (p. 22)—at least in the neo-liberal countries.

The broad correlation between neo-liberal economies and harsh punishment, and between coordinated market economies and moderate punishment, leads to Lacey's central contention: Coordinated market economies build “long-term relationships and stable structures of investment, not least in education and training oriented to company- or sector-specific skills,”—and, she contends,