

Citizenship and the Pursuit of the Worthy Life. By David Thunder. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 210p. \$85.00. doi:10.1017/S1537592715002595

— Lauren K. Hall, *Rochester Institute of Technology*

Political life is often treated as a world ethically apart from normal human interactions. It requires at least compromises and at most its own set of moral rules. David Thunder's *Citizenship and the Pursuit of the Worthy Life* is a much-needed questioning of the separability of the political from the moral, and as such it is a welcome contribution to the literature on citizenship and required reading for anyone interested in the relationship between ethics and politics. Thunder's goal is to investigate the way in which citizenship in all its forms contributes, if it does, to a broad and deep understanding of human excellence and to a "worthy life." Along the way, he makes a compelling case for the integration of public and private understandings of excellence against the "separationist" tendency dominant in political science today.

Central to Thunder's argument is the concept of "ethical integrity," which he uses as a shorthand for the active pursuit of the good (or for "human excellence" in the Aristotelian tradition). The author's discussion is not meant to be the final say in what constitutes human flourishing or the good life broadly. Instead, he prudently limits himself to a commonsensical and moderate understanding of ethical integrity that pays more attention to the method by which individuals pursue worthwhile goods than a forced definition of the end point. Ethical integrity is characterized by the attempt to integrate one's activities, desires, and dispositions (among other things) into what most people would recognize as a worthy life. Integrity in this sense is more about the process than the result. What constitutes a worthy life is left somewhat undetermined, though he argues that most people will recognize worthy lives "all things considered" and that the particulars are less important than the whole. Some may find that this approach leaves too many questions unanswered, but Thunder argues that the processes of discernment and constant renegotiation that make up a worthy life are the only ways to balance the pursuit of human excellence with respect for the myriad ways in which individuals can choose to live and flourish. He treads a careful path between relativism and absolutism and, as a result, leaves open the possibility for thoughtful disagreement, persuasion, and debate.

Thunder follows this discussion of ethical integrity with a chapter on what constitutes citizenship in a constitutional democracy. He deals both with ancient virtues like honor and magnanimity and the "bourgeois" virtues like toleration and fairness. His goal is to maintain a middle ground between idealistic (and unreachable) notions of citizenship and the conventional (and minimal) definition

of citizenship. He is largely successful in this endeavor, articulating a moderate position that recognizes both what citizenship is and what it, at its best, ought to be. He also emphasizes the multifaceted character of citizenship, the way in which citizens inhabit not only different roles but also different political communities at the same time, which is why a holistic approach is imperative.

After a "preemptive strike" against separationists like John Rawls and Reinhold Niebuhr in Chapter 4, Thunder links his discussions of ethical integrity and citizenship to a compelling argument for an integrationist approach to citizenship in Chapter 5. This chapter is the heart of the book, and he attempts two things: first, to outline what the integrationist ideal looks like, and second, how one might get there. The first part of his argument describes how one becomes a citizen, from (often) birth through habituation, evaluation, and interpretation (following the "nature, habit, and reason" trifecta of classical philosophy). He then turns to the normative argument, laying out five "guiding principles" for the ways in which to integrate one's civic engagements with one's quest for a worthy life. While none of these principles are particularly groundbreaking (they include "seek out and imitate virtuous role models"), they nevertheless could operate as a welcome playbook for a person of integrity entering public life. Thunder's argument is, as usual, less about the content of what such a worthy life would entail or the precise kinds of civic activity that would support it but is, instead, about a process by which any person of integrity might meld his public and private moral commitments.

While the book is limited by its scope to opening the door for further conversation, it is nevertheless an important work that brings attention back to long-neglected areas of thought. First, the author brings the "worthy life" back as a concept both relevant to and worthy of consideration in political discourse. Conflicts between individual character and the demands of political membership are often blithely dismissed as necessary sacrifices, without real attention paid to whether such sacrifices are justified, either morally or practically. Thunder asks us to question these conflicts and how we deal with them. Second, he asks us to consider what role citizenship broadly plays in our development as human beings. Does it help? Does it hurt? His approach requires that we take citizenship seriously as a contribution to a worthy life, but also as inseparable from our moral characters. Attempting such a separation supports cynical views about politics and public life while preventing people of integrity from pursuing politics. These alone are serious weaknesses of the separationist viewpoint. Third, Thunder resurrects the ancient virtues as components of a good life without heavy moralizing. How citizens incorporate ancient virtues like honor with modern virtues like toleration will require conscious balancing and continual adjustment, but he recognizes the importance of both. Finally, rather than

simply address the subject from the abstract normative realm, the author offers a roadmap explaining how to integrate ones deeply held ethical commitments into the broader and more complex world of civic action.

Perhaps the most important contribution Thunder's work makes is that he challenges the orthodoxy of the Rawlsian and realist separationists. His use of the phrase "all-things-considered," while awkward at times, underscores the complex and often intuitive nature of our judgments about human morality broadly and suggests the difficulty with which we parse and separate spheres. While much of what he says about integrity and the worthy life at times boils down to common sense or prudence, as he persuasively argues, such common sense is often missing from our discussions of what we owe ourselves (and our souls) in the public sphere. By attempting to formalize what we mean by commonsense understandings of human excellence, he supports an intuitive and compelling argument for integrating our moral lives.

Citizenship and the Pursuit of the Worthy Life has very few weaknesses, and the ones it does have are mild. The author tends to do too much apologizing for what he does not deal with in the book, and his explanation of his debts and departures from Aristotle tend toward the repetitive. But Thunder's contributions to our understanding of ethical integrity are original, and his critique of perhaps the dominant standpoint in political science make this book important reading for anyone, theorist or otherwise, who cares about how political life impacts the character of those who engage in it.

The Republic of the Living: Biopolitics and the Critique of Civil Society. By Miguel Vatter. New York: Fordham University Press, 2014. 403p. \$125.00 cloth, \$32.00 paper.

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In this book, Miguel Vatter articulates a highly theoretical, postmodern argument of enormous depth and breadth. He deeply penetrates the original and evolving understandings of biopolitics to articulate an innovative extension of the possibilities built into that modern phenomenon. Vatter also composes his argument via the thought of an impressive, diverse array of Western political philosophers. In doing so, he both extends our current understanding of biopolitics and offers intriguing insights into the thought of Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, Hannah Arendt, and many, many more. Ultimately, he constructs a vision of biopolitics that is both enslaving and liberating, a biopolitics that controls and manages human life but also provides an avenue to freedom, which is both republican and cosmopolitan.

For the uninitiated, biopolitics refers to a phenomenon in modern society in which political power moves beyond the traditional juridical role of establishing limits and punishments to actively managing humanity—both the

behavior of individuals and populations. This transformation and expansion of political power that Michel Foucault first identified and discerned as beginning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, represents, according to Vatter, a "shift from politics to police . . . marked by the invention of an entirely new set of 'political sciences,' which today form the core of our social sciences" (p. 2). In biopolitics, punishment becomes management and the statistician replaces the sword. In modernity, pervasive and compelling normativity supersedes the boundaries of the legal. Thus, Foucault points to the totalizing impact of biopolitics with ominous terms in which the juxtaposition of capitalist imperatives and rational liberal ideology combine to manage every aspect, political and civil, of human life. The possibility of freedom and spontaneity is subsumed by the diffuse but all-encompassing forces of biopolitics in which, as Foucault described in his 1978–79 lectures, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2004): "An omnipresent government, a government which nothing escapes, a government which conforms to the rules of right, and a government which nonetheless respects the specificity of the economy, will be a government that manages civil society, the nation, society, the social" (p. 296). Power and knowledge come together in biopolitics to form a stifling network of normalizing techniques of human management.

Nevertheless, Vatter finds an affirmative edge in Foucault's biopolitics. For Vatter, as for thinkers Antonio Negri, Giorgio Agamben, and Roberto Esposito, biopolitical power not only totalizes coercion and squashes freedom; it also holds the potential for resistance, freedom, and spontaneity. But unlike other proponents of an affirmative biopolitics, Vatter denies that the relationship between life and law in an affirmative biopolitics is necessarily antinomial "as if the nondomination of life . . . must entail the exclusion of law" (p. 4). Tracing "scant" (p. 5) but significant evidence in Foucault's writings, Vatter perceives revolutionary republicanism as a potentiality in biopolitics in which the normative power of biopolitics becomes the basis of the rule of law and is "reappropriated by peoples organized in the political form of communes" (p. 4).

So, Vatter's affirmative biopolitics is "commune-ist," historically grounded in material reality which, at least in potentiality, connects power to politics and law in a life-affirming power-knowledge dynamic. In this way, the author's understanding of biopolitics is both negative and affirmative, and in my reading, appropriately echoes the other many paradoxes found in Foucault's work, paradoxes which reverberate from one of Foucault's central insights: Human beings are created through truth regimes (episteme), which they themselves create. In Foucault's words (*The Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 63), "The new governmental reason needs freedom; therefore, the new art of government consumes freedom. It consumes freedom, which means it must produce it. It must produce it, it must organize it." Vatter shifts our attention from the