inevitably arise has less to do with whether they have a shared conception of the good and more to do with what sorts of relationships, practices, and institutions they have in place.

Given the political impact of MacIntyre's antiliberalism, it matters what particular practices and communities his assessment of our ethical and political life was grounded in. And it matters if his idea of tradition has ever existed anywhere outside of ideal theory or theology. Perreau-Saussine wrote *Alasdair MacIntyre: An Intellectual Biography* twenty years ago, when a liberal framework of rights and freedoms could still be taken for granted as the ideal of governance in much of Europe and the United States. No longer. Perreau-Saussine's conclusion, then, that "liberalism only lasts if we periodically counter it with our objections"—a conclusion intended to temper MacInytre's own—now strikes me as too meager. The objections rule the day. The criticism of liberalism has been met with the embrace of authoritarianism, the diminishment of the rights and freedoms of many, and the expansion of the power and wealth of a few. And these changes are justified in the name of a "tradition," a nation narrowly conceived, and a "common good" that is not good at all for the vast majority of people. If MacIntyre is the moral philosopher of the moment, as so many of his eulogists insist, then so much the worse for us.

—Molly Farneth

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David Graeber, *Pirate Enlightenment; or, The Real Libertalia* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2023), 175 pp.

According to this interesting and admittedly speculative history, the Betsimisaraka Confederation—an alliance of Malagasy clans headed by a war chief named Ratsimilaho—"fus[ed] together political models and principles derived from the pirates . . . with the existing political traditions of the coast" of Madagascar in the eighteenth century. The factual basis for this speculation is that some Golden Age pirates settled on the coast of Madagascar, conducted business there, took Malagasy wives (Ratsimilaho himself was the son of a European pirate father and a Malagasy mother), and otherwise became deeply embedded in local life. It thus seems plausible that Ratsimilaho and his comrades may have been familiar with institutions of pirate governance.

Yet, if we follow the author and conclude that Ratsimilaho and his comrades had those institutions in mind when they formed the Betsimisaraka Confederation, what stands out is not how much of pirate governance they seem to have adopted but rather how much of it they seem to have rejected. For example:

Whereas pirate crews popularly elected and deposed their war chiefs (captains) at will, according to Graeber the Confederation's war chief was permanent and hereditary.

Whereas pirate crews instituted laws concerned largely with protecting the crew's members against one another, Graeber says nothing about Confederation-made laws concerned with protecting the Confederation's clans against one another.

Whereas pirate crews elected officers (quartermasters) to enforce their rules, Graeber refers to no Confederation rule-enforcing officer at all. (Perhaps this authority fell to Ratsimilaho? But if so, the Confederation combined war-chief and rule-enforcement powers in one office, whereas pirates divided them.)

Whereas pirate crews made important collective decisions by majority vote, according to Graeber the Confederation made such decisions by consensus.

The only commonalities that *Pirate Enlightenment* identifies between pirate governance and that of the Betsimisaraka Confederation are participatory decision-making and the use of oath rituals. Suffice it to say, roughly the same governance overlap may be found between pirate crews and, for instance, the Iga *ikki* in Sengoku-era Japan.

As for the Betsimisaraka Confederation's participatory governance, it can be accounted for without speculation about borrowing from pirates. Voluntarily formed military alliances between politically autonomous groups, like the alliance between the clans that formed the Confederation, often give such groups voice in alliance decisions for the simple reason that a group is unlikely to join or remain in a voluntary military alliance in which it has no say. If the Confederation's participatory governance was indeed informed by pirate governance, I therefore suspect that the information was superfluous: Ratsimilaho and his comrades would have gotten there just the same in ignorance of pirate governance.

—Peter T. Leeson

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Libera Pisano, *The Exile of Language: German-Jewish Philosophical Challenges of Linguistic Autochthony* (Brill, 2025), 287 pp.

Very few philosophical investigations nowadays manage to convey political messages without taking an explicitly political stance, but Pisano's study is one of them. Through the work of five German Jewish thinkers, she succeeds in outlining a "diasporic philosophy of language" that can help us resist the resurgence of authoritarianism, nationalism, and idolatry in the twenty-first century. Our