reflection and good deliberation—precisely what practical wisdom or judgment is really all about? And if, as he indicates, reflection and deliberation are supplementary to, hence, different from and irreducible to, the neural relays and brain maps of memory, learning, intuition and affect, then it is hard not to wonder just how helpful neuroscience really can be.

I think I can point to the exact location at which the tensions in Thiele's account become fully evident. Chapter 5 pursues "the riches of narrative"—the importance of stories—from the perspective of neuroscience. Thus, "[n]eural mapping is best understood as a narrative accounting" (p. 205). The narrative of consciousness is "synaptically formed," as a result of which the "self is generated" as a kind of "fabricated character" in a story. Of course, the individual does not write this story. While the story "allows the impression that an I is in control" (p. 206), hence "produces the wonderful sensation that our self is in charge of our destiny" (p. 209), the "impression" and the "sensation" are only that—happy illusions. But then, precisely on page 224, the focus of the chapter suddenly shifts to an account of narrative and the moral life as understood by, inter alia, Alasdair MacIntyre, Richard Rorty, Michel Foucault, Henry James, and any number of other philosophers, social theorists, and literary artists. Despite what Thiele says, it seems unlikely that these people are really talking about the same thing as the neuroscientists. When MacIntyre says "I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?' " (p. 226), it is hard to escape the sense that he is thinking about something utterly different from, indeed largely unrelated to, the kind of "narrative" that describes "the development of [the brain's] neural relays . . . as the organism grapples with its environment" (p. 205).

If these two perspectives on narrative—the neuroscientific and the literary—share anything, it would seem to be a kind of antirationalism. On the one hand, it is in the findings of neuroscience, as invoked by Thiele, that "reason truly displays its slavish relation to passion" (p. 171). On the other hand, he embraces the message of, among others, Nikos Kazantzakis's famous protagonist Zorba, an "earthy man with a lust for life and an appetite for dance [who] does not read much . . . [c]ertainly no philosophy," but whose wisdom is said to surpass by far that of his erudite boss (p. 239). Once again, Thiele wants to resist the inference, to "strike a balance" between art and analysis, between the nonrational and the rational (p. 257ff). But again, the insistence seems unconvincing. For striking a proper balance cannot be an account of prudence or practical wisdom, since the very possibility of finding, recognizing, and embracing such a balance presumably presupposes, is unthinkable without, a kind of practical wisdom that must be, as a result, independent of and prior to the balance itself.

Representative Democracy: Principles and Genealogy.
By Nadia Urbinati. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. 326p. $45.00.
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— Shannon Stimson, *University of California at Berkeley*

Nadia Urbinati begins her new book, *Representative Democracy: Principles and Genealogy,* with the observation that while we call certain contemporary western governments "democratic," any historical glance at their political institutions will as readily show that they were "designed to contain rather than encourage democracy" (p. 1). She takes as one "main point of reference" (p. 9) for her argument, Bernard Manin's claim in *The Principles of Representative Government* (1997) that the practice of contemporary democracy is still constrained by the fact that "there has been no significant change in the institutions regulating the selection of representatives and the influence of the popular will on their decisions in office" (p. 229, n. 2). For many, this view of unchanged institutions simply reflects either the more defensive observation that modern governments continue to need Schumpeterian neutralizing restrictions on participation or, conversely, the critical claim that modern democracy continues to fall short of an ideal (or perhaps idealized) Athenian standard of direct self-rule. On both of these views, Urbinati notes, representative democracy is seen as an *oxymoron* (p. 4). However, she quite forcefully disagrees, and what is more, she believes both the times and contemporary democratic theorizing are on her side.

Urbinati's very interesting book references a growing body of work of those contemporary democratic theorists such as Jane Mansbridge and the late Iris Marion Young, who have "rediscovered" representation and who offer various versions of the position that "political representation is both necessary and desirable" to democratic participation and that "democracy and representation are complimentary rather than antithetical" (p. 4) (Jane Mansbridge, "Rethinking Representation," *APSR* 97 [2003], 515–28; Iris Marion Young, "Deferring Group Representation," in Ian Shapiro and Will Kymlicka, eds., *Ethnicity and Group Rights,* Nomos 39, 1990). However, Urbinati's thesis is stronger still: "First, that representative democracy is neither an oxymoron nor merely a pragmatic alternative for something we, modern citizens, can no longer have, namely direct democracy; and, second, that it is intrinsically, and necessarily, intertwined with participation and informal expression of 'popular will' " (p. 10). This linkage of political representation to participation and the informal expression of sovereignty, which Urbinati takes to be one of continuous judgment rather than of periodic, decisionist voting, is what consciously distances her argument and conclusions from that of Manin, who sees the uniqueness of representative government deriving precisely from elections rather than from representation per se (p. 9).

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In the middle chapters of the book, Urbinati carefully surveys the traditions of representation in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emmanuel Sieyes, and the Marquis de Condorcet, elucidating three conceptions of representation (juridical, institutional, and political) drawn from the eighteenth century that in turn can be used to conceptualize democracy as direct, electoral, or representative (p. 21). This exegetical task allows her to "disaggregate" and to identify exactly who should be understood to be the "demos" in the application of these differing conceptions of representation and, thereby, to elucidate the differing forms of political presence at work in each understanding. Although juridical and institutional theories of representation "emerge and were shaped before the democratic transformation of society and the state" and thus remained "essentially impermeable to it," Urbinati argues that the same may not be said of the conception of political representation as developed in the writings of Condorcet and traceable in the work of John Stuart Mill. Here she finds the genealogy of a modern conception of political representation that identifies the exercise of sovereignty with a *complex political process* (p. 5), which shifts the focus of representation from a sovereign as "ontological collective entity" to "sovereignty as an inherently plural unifying process" and calls our attention to the necessary functions both of ideology and of partisanship in politics (p. 227).

Representative Democracy consolidates and deepens Urbinati's previous reflections on this topic (e.g., "Representation as Advocacy: A Study of Democratic Deliberation," *Political Theory* 28 [no. 6, 2000]: 758–86; *Mill and Democracy: From the Athenian Polis to Representative Government,* 2002). As in her past considerations, Urbinati refuses to dichotomize representation and participation as two distinct, "alternative forms of democracy" and sees them instead as related forms of action, "constituting the *continuum* of political action in modern democracies" and activating various forms of aegis on the part of citizens ("Representation as Advocacy," p. 765). This way of seeing them would seem important. Urbinati is not claiming to offer a *new* conception or theory of representation. She is proposing a new way of *seeing* one that already lies at hand, or rather, she is proposing that we "stretch the meaning of representation and see it as a political process and an essential component of democracy" (p. 10). In this way, Urbinati draws on the earlier and definitive work of Hanna Pitkin on the ordinary language of representation as a second point of reference (after Manin) for her argument, by reconsidering Pitkin's claim that we understand government as representative, "not by demonstrating its control over its subjects but just the reverse, by demonstrating that its subjects have control over what it does" (*The Concept of Representation,* 1967, p. 232). However, for Pitkin herself, such a demonstration is simply not sufficient to draw any direct link between political representation and democracy. To her credit, Urbinati clearly recognizes this (p. 10). However, in Pitkin's most recent published reflections on the "uneasy alliance" of representation and democracy, her reservations concerning even the potential for such a link appear, if anything, to have grown more fierce: "I am painfully aware of the irony of writing today as an American on—of all things!—democracy and representation. I mean where in the world has representative democracy had a better chance than in America, where its beginnings were so promising and the conditions so favorable? And look at it now!" ("Representation and Democracy: Uneasy Alliance," *Scandinavan Political Studies* 27, [no. 3, 2004]: 335–42, 342).

Urbinati makes an intriguing and almost breathtakingly buoyant argument in *Representative Democracy* that the theoretical and practical tools (i.e., judgment, influence, censure) of political representation *as* democracy are available to us now if we have the perspective to see them correctly. She argues persuasively that neither partisanship nor ideological debate are the necessary enemies of this process, although certainly deception, propaganda, and the powers of electronic surveillance (which are not among the topics of her analysis) may well be. What remains to be seen is whether the political times are with her, and that is a question others will have to answer.

AMERICAN POLITICS

The Transformation of Plantation Politics: Black Politics, Concentrated Poverty, and Social Capital in the Mississippi Delta. By Sharon D. Wright Austin. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006. 247p. $65.00.
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— Jeffrey M. Berry, *Tufts University*

The title of Sharon Wright Austin's new book is intended to be ironic. As the author persuasively demonstrates, there has been no transformation of politics in the Mississippi Delta, and the area's wealthy white elite continues to dominate politics there. The lack of significant change is disappointing, as the Delta's poverty rate is more than three times the national average, and four counties in the area have higher infant mortality rates than some Third World countries.

When poverty and hunger in America were "discovered" in the 1960s, the despair in the Mississippi Delta moved forward, front and center, into the American consciousness. Senators Robert Kennedy and Joseph Clark toured the area, followed later by physicians who documented shocking levels of malnutrition. Hearings were

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