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The New Map of the World

Giuseppe Mazzotta

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For today's readers, the great Italian philosopher of history Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) can be startlingly relevant to the social and educational divisiveness we confront at century's end: here Giuseppe Mazzotta, one of the leading Italianists in the United States, shows how much Vico, properly read, can bring to an understanding of contemporary social problems. To explore Vico's body of thought in all its monumental complexity, Mazzotta highlights the place of poetry, or "writerliness," in Vico's educational project, which links literature, history, religion, philosophy, and politics. The New Map of the World is the first book since Benedetto Croce's The Philosophy of G. B. Vico (1911) to interpret the immense range of Vico's creativity.

Beginning with Vico's autobiography, Mazzotta explains that Vico's heroic attempt to unite the arts and sciences was meant to offer a desperately needed political unity to modern society. In contrast to past thematic studies of Vico that focus on a single one of his ideas, The New Map of the World explores the vital interaction of the issues that fascinated him: his educational and political project, his sense of the necessity for a new way of conceiving authority, and his belief in the power of poetry. Mazzotta ends by examining Vico's awareness of the tragic limits of politics itself.

Originally published in 1999.

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