

Not only is Grant's framework complex; the context for assessing each case is also complex, especially concerning measures of effectiveness of the incentive. Is the social science evidence clear, with causal, not mere correlational, effects of incentives shown on overall effectiveness? How should the time horizon for effectiveness be set? The upshot is that in each case, there is ample room for reasonable disagreement with the judgments reached by Grant, even on the terms of her own evaluative framework.

In the end, the major contribution of *Strings Attached* is found not in the particular judgments reached by the author about particular cases but in the compelling argument to resist the *Freakonomics* view of incentives as ubiquitous and simple features of choice situations. The deliberate deployment of incentives to alter human behavior is indeed an exercise of power, and, as such, they demand our ethical attention. Grant's orients us correctly, even if her framework for evaluating the ethics of incentives is not as powerful or as useful as she intends.

**The Responsibility of Reason: Theory and Practice in a Liberal-Democratic Age.** By Ralph C. Hancock. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011. 346p. \$95.00. doi:10.1017/S1537592714000255

— Robert F. Gorman, *Texas State University*

This serious but dense book attempts, as its title proclaims, to identify the "responsibility" of reason in the secularized liberal-democratic age. It is a difficult read, both because of the subject matter and in the way the book is constructed. It consists of the author's conference papers, previously published articles, and book reviews strung together in an attempt to achieve continuity. There is some thematic continuity insofar as questions of political theory and practice, of the relationship of reason to faith and revelation, and of the human tension between worldly immanence and transcendental longing for the supernatural constitute interwoven concerns throughout the book. While these are serious questions, *The Responsibility of Reason* lacks a clear and sustained argument.

Moreover, there are serious gaps in the sweep of political philosophers examined and a failure to deal seriously with historical contexts. Ralph Hancock seems reticent to articulate his own argument, preferring rather to refract it through critiques of other writers. This makes for a confusing argument, even a difficulty in finding Hancock's own voice amid the chorus of conflicting theorists cited. In a critique of Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* Hancock observes that "the author's erudition and breadth of intellectual sympathy are impressive [but] the book is also exasperating in its prolixity and looseness of structure" (p. 290). Ironically, the same can be said of the present book. There is much of worth here, but like prospecting, it requires lots of looking, just enough enticement to keep logging, clever moves to keep ahead of claim jumpers,

intramural sniping, promising leads that do not pan out and occasional nuggets of insight.

Hancock seems to be concerned that the loss of the sense of the sacred in political life has flattened human experience in the liberal age, thus denying the essential human longing for contact with the divine and transcendent order, while immanentizing this natural longing in an idolatry of the modern state. This is most visible in modern dictatorships, but as Alexis de Tocqueville warned, even democracies are susceptible to soft tyranny. How might philosophy and reason restore the sense of sacred wonder and answer the human longing for eternal love? Early in Chapter 1, Hancock seems to answer this question thus: "The most rigorous and responsible understanding of reason, therefore, cannot be reduced to the rule of reason grounded purely in reason itself but must be held open to the claims of God and of duties to other human beings" (p. 5). This is a serious argument, and I agree with it. However, earlier in the same paragraph, he expresses agnosticism concerning the medieval synthesis of faith and reason. So we find at the start of this book a contradiction that persists throughout, and remains unresolved. The author asserts in his preface that "intellectual excellence and moral-spiritual existence cannot finally be separated" (p. xiii). But in the end, he remains undecided whether the claims of the philosopher and the theologian can be reconciled.

Hancock is aware of the tensions and presents his book as a tentative answer to the reintegration of the spiritual longing and the political necessity of human existence. He proposes that Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* contains useful tonics for a potential cure for modern ills, including his observations about the genius of Americans for local associations (often religious in nature) that integrate both the immanent and transcendent aspirations of the soul. But local associations (parishes, monasteries, and guilds, e.g.) were a feature of medieval activity, too. Hancock's tour of the history of political thought begins with the important ideas and texts of Aristotle, Plato, and Augustine. His treatment of the Neoplatonism of Augustine, however, is unsatisfying and incomplete. Hancock largely ignores the Middle Ages and barely mentions Thomas Aquinas, arguably the greatest expositor in human history on the unity of faith and reason as complementary forms of human knowledge. Next, he reviews the works of Luther (no friend of reason), Calvin, and Machiavelli. Nearly half of the book is devoted to two lengthy chapters critiquing the postmodern perspective of Martin Heidegger and Leo Strauss's attempt to recover classical reason as an antidote to postmodernity. He returns to Tocqueville as a possible healer of modern man's flattened cosmology by restoring awareness to the human longing for love and the transcendent desire for beauty and the good. The final chapter reviews the works of John Rawls, Charles Taylor, Michael Gillespie, and Rémi Brague on serious matters of

justice, the wages of secularism, and the enduring religious quest for contact with divine transcendence.

There is much missing here, including, most importantly, any serious engagement with patristic writers of the early Christian centuries, such as Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria, who understood themselves as philosophers *and* theologians. Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* and his *First Apology* represent the first Christian attempt to show how reason finds completion in faith, even in the "truest philosophy" of Christianity. The *First Apology* is an explicit attempt to convince pagan philosopher emperors of their unjust and unreasonable persecution of Christian believers. The only patristic writer Hancock briefly consults is Augustine, while ignoring Augustine's important commentary on the true happiness of Christian kings (*City of God*, V: 24). Hancock's expressed admiration of Aquinas is not matched by enthusiasm for consulting the Angelic Doctor's most important political treatises, such as *On Kingship*, among others, and the author is ultimately dismissive of Aquinas's demonstration of the complementarity of faith and reason, without fully engaging his argument. Thus, Hancock largely ignores the one period in the history of political philosophy that challenges the claim that there is an unbridgeable chasm between the realms of Reason and Revelation.

But is the clash between faith and reason really so clear, as Hancock and some other Straussians claim? He contrasts Christian poverty versus philosophical wealth, Christian faith versus philosophical reason, Christian "fear" and hope versus philosophical wonder, Christian belief in a personal God versus philosophical confrontation with impersonal necessity, and Christian cosmology that avers a created beginning *ex nihilo* versus philosophical belief in the material eternity of the universe. It is interesting to note that the *ex nihilo* hypothesis of the theologians has recently been confirmed by modern "Big Bang" cosmology: The universe is not eternal as philosophers and scientists alike long believed. Reason in this instance supports Revelation. Could the theologians be closer to the truth than the philosophers on the other questions, too, including the theologians' conviction that faith and reason complement one another? From Justin Martyr to the modern papacy, one finds persuasive Christian reflection on faith and reason as twin means of knowing the natural and supernatural/spiritual realities. Hancock is largely silent on this extensive tradition.

I do not think Hancock fully succeeds in demonstrating how reason can exercise responsibility in the modern democratic age through a reapplication of Tocqueville's insights on democracy in America. Political practitioners will find no clear and bulleted list of recommendations here. This book is billed as a meditation on theory *and* practice, but rarely

considers the practical. Hancock ends where he begins, in asserting a hope that human longing for love and eternal life is as important as theoretical wisdom and is too often denied in the trudging of the modern liberals and secularists in the minutiae of practical life.

When all is said and done, *The Responsibility of Reason* is, as Hancock admits, written by "a professor writing to other professors and their students" (p. xii). Although he hopes that nonacademics, "thoughtful citizens, believers and lovers" (p. xii) will also benefit, most will find the book too daunting, although many students of Strauss will find it engaging and provocative.

**Democratic Statecraft: Political Realism and Popular Power.** By J. S. Maloy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 243p. \$85.00 cloth, \$28.99 paper.  
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— Frank Lovett, *Washington University in St. Louis*

Speaking very loosely, one might distinguish between weak or minimalist theories of democracy on the one hand, and strong or populist theories of democracy on the other. The former characterize democracy in terms of competitive elections, representative assemblies, and secure constitutional rights, and they regard its value primarily as instrumental—as a prophylactic against cruder sorts of despotism and corruption, for example. Perhaps such authors as Joseph Schumpeter, Robert Dahl, William Riker, or Adam Przeworski come to mind as representative of this approach. The latter, by contrast, characterize democracy in terms of widespread vigorous participation, direct local action, and radical social movements, and they regard its value primarily as intrinsic—as embodying a particularly excellent form of human life. Perhaps Hannah Arendt or Benjamin Barber come to mind as examples of this view. J. S. Maloy clearly falls into the second of these camps, and *Democratic Statecraft* represents an effort to contribute to the strong or populist democratic tradition. It is much less clear, however, what that contribution is supposed to be.

The four central chapters offer a reasonably straightforward survey of populist themes in the Western tradition. Chapter 3 focuses on the ancient Greeks through Aristotle, Chapter 4 on the reception of Aristotle and Renaissance political theory, Chapter 5 on the English Civil War and the early American colonies, and Chapter 6 on the politics of the Gilded Age. Thrasymachus, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Cromwell, the levelers, and the American populists are favorably juxtaposed to Socrates, Plato, More, Winthrop, and so on. Two core insights are seen as emblematic of the populist democratic tradition: first, faith in the wisdom of the multitude, and second, distrust in the capacity of elections alone to implement genuine democracy. These chapters are vigorously written. They range widely but effectively across