One of the suggested indicators of the adherence of a post-communist country to natural law is tolerance to nontraditional sexual orientations. In other words, if local legislation is not harsh on gays and lesbians, then the country evinces signs of successful transition. If domestic legislation is influenced by clerics, conservatives or former communists and, as a result, is unsympathetic to gays, the country's political reform is not a success story. Tolerance here is equated with the do-no-harm principle of natural law.

I often discuss interesting readings with my students. When I raised this issue in a political science class, one student responded, "How can natural law be used with reference to homosexuality, which by itself is not so natural," reveling that the notion of natural law is not generally equated by the average person with tolerance and individual autonomy.

Stretching the no-harm principle to encompass tolerance to gays and lesbians contradicts the condemnation of homosexual relations by the Roman Catholic Church, whose contribution to the articulation of natural law is undeniable. To address that, Ramet divorces natural law from Divine law and conceptualizes it more in line with Richard Hooker and John Locke. In other words, she makes two natural law postulates central—the broadly understood "do-no-harm principle and the moral equality of all persons."

In my view, linking natural law to the success or failure of democratic transition makes sense. But it is hard to prove that there is a cause-and-effect relationship. What is more, I am almost certain that, because of their communist backgrounds, the constitution drafters in, say, Poland, the Czech Republic or Slovakia, the main countries that provided empirical data for the book, had any idea of natural law.

The majority of the chapters collected in this book were published previously either as journal articles or book chapters, which makes this book a little bit disjointed, but a strong introduction and an elaborate conclusion tie these somewhat jumbled parts together in a reasonably coherent manner.

Quite common for this kind of work are overgeneralizations. The conclusion in chapter 3, for example, that asserts that "with the exception of the Czech Republic and Slovenia, the post-communist societies of Eastern Europe have not been building liberal democracies at all ... [but rather] plutocratic-colonial structures" (32) is not substantiated by empirical evidence. In fact, abstract philosophizing is sparsely illustrated by quotes from constitutions; by no means is the evidence presented sufficient to discern patterns and regularities.

The author is a master of prose and conviction. The colourful vocabulary combined with a jaunty style make for enjoyable reading.

In general, this work is without doubt an interesting contribution to democratic theory, and students of transition, political reform, system legitimacy and political philosophy will be richly rewarded by reading this work.

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The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria
David Art
Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006, pp. xvii. 231, appendices and index
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David Art's book begins with a central premise, that public deliberation and debate normatively frame and shape politics. Furthermore, his argument regarding how postwar Austrian and German elites dealt with their Nazi past differently, with profound consequences for their respective political cultures and systems of party competition,

reveals an intuitive and well-argued Hegelian assumption, that ideas matter deeply in politics. This is not a simple case study that balances the impact of ideas against structures or institutions. Rather, Art builds his analysis methodically, with careful attention paid to historical detail and specificity and with an interdisciplinary swath that cuts across comparative political science, explanations regarding historical memory, theories of public policymaking and media studies. In essence, Art seeks to provide a multi-layered chain of reasoning as to why right-wing extremism has been a successful feature in post-Cold War Austria yet all-but-aborted in post-unification Germany, rooted in how each state's elites have dealt with their pasts very differently, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s.

Challenging what Art calls "assumption of fixed interest" (14, n. 3), rationalist theories of politics that downplay the role of public debates, he chronicles how the "culture of contrition" developed in Germany over the course of key events and their contested meanings, such as May 8 as a "day of liberation," Ronald Reagan's controversial visit to Bitburg, the famous "historians debate" and the Goldhagen phenomenon. The roles of public intellectuals such as Jürgen Habermas and political statesman, such as former German president Richard Von Weizsäcker, are detailed—particularly so because they are powerful elite voices influential in the convergence of public opinion toward a politically correct and somewhat ritualized discourse of contrition regarding the Holocaust.

Similarly, Art recounts the development of a "victim culture" in Austria, stemming first from its initial postwar exercise in identity construction as "Hitler's first victim" and continuing with, and perhaps most well-represented by the debate over, the past of former UN Secretary-General and former Austrian president Karl Waldheim. Whereas debate converged in Germany and a broad consensus developed on the Nazi past and how it ought to be usefully and respectfully articulated in the public realm, debate in Austria became increasingly polarized. As a result, Jörg Haider's Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) exploited this opportunity with spectacular electoral success (measured by the standards of the European extreme right), eventually landing themselves into the corridors of power in coalition with the more traditional centre-right Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) in 1994.

Whereas Germans have had considerable public and elite reinforcement of the ideas of ordinary German complicity in the Holocaust, Austrians were continually deluded into believing *The Sound of Music* version of Austrian history, a myth predicated on the (non)existence of a generation of Captain Von Trapps patriotically and heroically resisting the Anschluss in 1938.

If methodologically this sounds rather trite and suspect, careful attention ought to be paid to the nested logic of Art's approach. He not only argues that public debates create and consolidate frames of reference for the population as a whole, but that these debates produce shifts in public opinion that can be measured and have considerable impact in shaping subsequent debates, actions, and events. Measuring such changes or "critical junctures" in discursive space is a tricky enterprise; however, it is one that Art tackles with perhaps the best available precision. To quantify the scope and intensity of the debates he covered, he examined the most widely circulating and influential tabloids in Germany and Austria—*Bild, Die Zeit* and *Krone Zeitung*. He further interviewed more than 170 politicians, intellectuals, civic activists, and journalists in both countries and liberally weaves his findings into the overall narrative. Finally, he carefully critiques and finds wanting existing alternative hypotheses on the emergence of the far right, drawing from scholarly literature in political science and history, particularly over the last ten years—an area of focus that will be of particular interest to comparativists who study extreme and populist politics across Europe.

If anything, Art's analysis can be extended further. Although his conclusion surveys electoral results in the last twenty years in other EU states such as the Nether-

lands, Sweden and France, he might also consider applying his methodology to the post-Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, one can analyze a similar "contrition frame" developing in Poland, particularly measured by the elite response to Jan Gross's *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*. Such a widely accepted discourse of responsibility is noticeably absent in many public debates in both Hungary and Romania.

Significantly, Art sees his work—in keeping with his "ideas matter" thesis—as making a contribution to the analytical and political tool-kit still under construction on how to "tame" or at least effectively marginalize the far right. Insofar as latent and indeed blatant anti-Semitism, anti-immigration sentiment and racism more generally are corrosive of the democratic body politic in Europe and elsewhere, his contribution is both timely and welcome. He convincingly illustrates how debates do affect decisions and outcomes. After all, as Art notes in his conclusion, the Nazi Party was dramatically assisted in its rise to power by the support of the German Communist Party (KPD) whose mistaken calculus saw a hastened revolution and united front against fascism; a conservative print media that made Hitler an avuncular and familiar figure; and key sectors of civil society whose recruitment into the networks of National Socialism embedded the party within German communities and provided an aura of historical continuity and respectability. But one can also learn from the past, as demonstrated by the swift and marked pan-EU reaction to the ÖVP-FPÖ government in Austria, which delegitimated and undermined the coalition at the outset.

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Marianne et les colonies. Une introduction à l'histoire coloniale de la France
Gilles Manceron
Ligue des droits de l'Homme, Coll. La Découverte Poche, 2003, 318 pages
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Par l'histoire coloniale et politique, l'auteur cherche à faire comprendre pourquoi les citoyens français, dont les représentants avaient voté la Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen en 1789, ont eux-mêmes ratifié, par la loi référendaire du 13 avril 1962, l'amnistie pour les nombreux crimes commis dans les colonies françaises.

Pendant cinq siècles, l'Occident a colonisé et asservi des peuples. En 1642, Louis XIII encouragea l'esclavage pour la culture des plantes tropicales. Colbert organisa la traite négrière et prépara le Code noir, promulgué en 1724 par Louis XV. L'esclave est dans les chaînes, marqué au visage de la fleur de lys et fouetté. S'il tente de s'enfuir et qu'il est repris, on lui coupe les oreilles; la seconde fois, on lui coupe les jarrets et la troisième fois, c'est la mort. Du Tertre ou Bossuet voient dans l'esclavage un moyen de hâter les conversions. Mais les Dominicains espagnols Bartolemo de Las Casas et Francisco de Vitoria se dressent contre la colonisation et l'esclavage mettre plusieurs ne tardent pas à les suivre : Edmund Burke, Fénelon, Marivaux, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot et les encyclopédistes, puis de Condorcet, Olympe de Gouge et d'autres.

L'article premier de la Déclaration votée en 1789 se lit comme suit : «Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droit...». Pour les planteurs, c'était inacceptable. Le 15 mai 1791, sous la pression du Club de l'Hôtel de Massis, Louis XVI mit son veto au projet de loi interdisant l'esclavage. La Convention l'abolira sans indemnité le 4 février 1794, mais depuis 1791, elle n'était plus maîtresse de la situation face à l'insurrection à Sainte-Domingue.

Napoléon finit par envoyer Richepense et 3 600 hommes qui massacrèrent plus de 10 000 personnes à Pointe-à-Pitre et rétablirent l'esclavage à la Guadeloupe; et le général Leclerc avec 23 000 hommes à Saint-Domingue, où il mourut. Rochambeau,