

sacralization of politics and totalitarian states, drawing on a rich mix of eye-witness, historical, and philosophical accounts. The fifth chapter focuses more specifically on the second half of the twentieth century. In the final chapter, he tries to identify the theoretical nature of civil and political religion in relation to other ways in which the religious and the political dimensions come together.

Although Gentile differentiates analytically and historically the two categories of political religion, the actual cases he discusses in Europe and North America suggest similarities as well as differences. Clearly, once politics becomes a form of religion, a common universal pattern emerges. In fact, no political collectivity can, arguably, maintain its unity and identity over time without creating some form of lay religion. It is hard to envisage a democracy without some form of civil religion that educates its citizens to pledge loyalty to its institutions and devotion to the common good. Yet, as the author notes, civil religion, however noble its aims and ideals, can potentially constitute a danger to democracy itself because it contains the inherent risks of tempting conformism, intolerance, and discrimination. The vulnerability of democracies to forms of democratic despotism is real. Curiously, he does not seem to have found the time or interest in explaining how and why the religion of totalitarianism failed so catastrophically. Gentile is perhaps too brief in his discussion of the various attempts to sacralize political power in the new national states that emerged from the collapse of the European and Ottoman empires. His analysis helps us to understand why, following the fascist experience, various forms of patriotic rituals remained suspect in Italy after the Second World War. Still, a reader is challenged to wonder what models of politics as religion applied to the sacralization of politics that took place both in the Italian Communist Party and the Christian Democratic Party, and what kind of civil religion applies to multinational political systems like Canada and Spain.

The book challenges social scientists to take seriously all the manifestations of sacralization of politics, which have for so long been ignored or treated with scathing contempt out of a misplaced desire to demystify. Gentile's illuminating and lucid exposition—facilitated by the excellent translation—reproposes in a novel way the question with which, many years ago, José Casanova began his book *Public Religions in the Modern World* (1994): “Who still believes in the *myth* of secularization?”

**The Trouble with Passion: Political Theory Beyond the Reign of Reason.** By Cheryl Hall. New York: Routledge,

2005. 192p. \$75.00 cloth, \$22.95 paper.

DOI: 10.1017/S153759270707020X

— Andrew Sabl, *University of California at Los Angeles*

This book argues for passion in politics: not just calm passions, that is, sentiments or interests, but “enthusiasm”

and “explicit appreciation of and commitment to something valued” (pp. 12, 7). Liberal theory, Hall argues, is wrong to regard political passions as inherently suspect, intolerant, and “opposed to both reason and justice” (p. 3). Passion in politics is inescapable, for passion and reason are not opposed but interpenetrating aspects of human thought and motivation. Beyond this, however, some passions are politically salutary: They inspire worthy political actions, especially movements for social change.

Hall begins with the display of flags after September 11. She calls on political theory to understand and value the collective allegiances then displayed—“passion for the polity” (p. 2)—without denying the dangers of nationalism or jingoism. In Chapter 2, Hall marshals a rich literature on action and motivation against the idea that passions are irrational and uncontrollable; she stresses the ways in which even the strongest passions are still cognitive and educable. Chapter 3 attacks liberalism: Liberals, according to Hall, typically denigrate, privatize, or altogether ignore passion, rarely noting its political benefits. They blame passion as such when they should be blaming the particular objects of passion: “passions that have contributed to cooperation and liberation get far less attention” than those that further war and oppression (pp. 28–29). The result is to stifle political innovation—and to promote gender inequality, because mainstream theory both denigrates passion and implicitly assigns it to women. (Chapter 6 pursues this further.)

Chapters 4 and 5 treat Plato and Rousseau as paradigm cases of theorists who respect political passion. Hall deftly traces the career of *eros* (a near synonym for her “passion”) from the *Republic* to the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*. She notes that Plato's denigration of desire in the first focuses on *epithumia*, unreasoning or animal desire. *Eros*, in contrast, can be rationally cultivated and can be directed toward noble objects such as beauty and the good—and, crucially, to the wisdom “concerned with the ordering of states and families, and which is called temperance and justice” (p. 65, citing *Symposium* 209a–b). Chapter 5 adduces Rousseau's *Government of Poland* and other works to make the claim—perhaps, in truth, a bit obvious—that Rousseau thought the passions for justice and patriotism essential to good citizenship, even while fearing the dangerous sexual passions that he associated with women. Chapter 7 closes by linking passion to political education. Hall calls for education in “working with our passions” (bringing to mind, though she does not cite, Martha Nussbaum's *Therapy of Desire* [1994]) and “developing a passion for democracy itself” (p. 127). The latter means an attachment not to particular countries or constitutional orders but to democracy as “process”: “practices . . . through which citizens work to take account of each others' perspectives . . .” (p. 130).

This book has many virtues. It is generous toward a variety of views, unafraid to quote radical feminists and

Straussians on the same page. It acutely disaggregates crucial concepts that are often grouped together. Hall points out that the Enlightenment turn to “sentiments,” defined as “calm passions” and often thought safe for politics, is too quick: “[F]eelings can be mild without being calm, calm without being moderate . . . even feelings that are mild *and* calm *and* moderate are not necessarily gentle, thoughtful, equitable, or just” (p. 18). Similarly, Hall takes many feminist writers to task for jumping from the fact that *eros* is often despised, and associated with women, to the assumption that it is automatically good. People have often been passionate about “things that were not good for them and/or others,” and the common response that bad forms of *eros* can be dismissed as “distorted” or inauthentic does not persuade (p. 116). Finally, Hall consistently anticipates and rebuts objections, to a degree that has become rare.

Some weaknesses remain. Hall’s critique of “liberal” theory is too broad: John Rawls is the *only* liberal theorist whose work she treats at any length (and quite well). Hall dismisses Madison, Hamilton, Locke, and Smith based on a few, uncharacteristically rationalist, lines from each. Her claim that liberals consider reason “the sole source of universalist, impartial moral behavior (particularly for those who follow Kant)” (p. 24, citing Thomas Spragens, *The Irony of Liberal Reason*, 1981), is in fact true *only* of those who follow Kant. Many liberals do nothing of the kind. They claim that liberals’ slight passion could not survive an engagement with Mill’s “Pagan self-assertion,” Tocqueville’s discussion of “reflective patriotism,” or Hamilton’s “love of fame, the ruling passion of the noblest minds”—yet these are all, surely, liberal giants.

As for Plato and Rousseau, Hall assumes too quickly that their treatments of political passion can be easily adapted to serve *democratic* politics (by which she means participatory democracy [p. 122]) and democratic education. She quickly rejects Rousseau’s account of the legislator (pp. 85–86), but suggests no other way of addressing the Rousseauian problems that the legislator solves: Radically reforming our passions is a project that requires extraordinary insight, near-inhuman impartiality, and a deliberately sharp separation between the authority that establishes laws, mores, and civic education and the power that rules the resulting regime. The task that Hall associates closely with democratic self-rule is precisely the one that Rousseau insisted must not, for the sake of our freedom and equality, be joined with such rule.

As for Plato, his discussion of *eros* focuses on different ways of pursuing *immortality*—some people do so through procreating, others through pursuit of wisdom. However, Hall denies that the idea of justice is “unchanging, universal”: It is rather “a humanly constructed ideal that can only be (imperfectly) approached through the human activity of politics” (p. 68). Though this may be right, justice so understood seems an unlikely object of intense passion.

If we did come to love it, this could not be for Plato’s reasons: There is nothing immortal about it. Hall’s social constructionism undercuts her philosophical eroticism.

Finally, while Hall believes that a certain kind of political education can inculcate the right sort of passions, and continually appeals to education as the way of avoiding dangerous passions, she says little—unlike Plato and Rousseau—about what such a scheme would look like: how, concretely, a new scheme of education would engage human psyches reliably and in ways she would welcome. Hall is confident that something about how humans are constituted (she refuses to use the word “nature”) guarantees that passions ruthlessly repressed will return (p. 130): but she seems oddly confident, given this, that nothing in our psyches prevents a radically democratic redirection of our passions’ objects. Nor does Hall tell us (again unlike Plato and Rousseau) how we could prevent political education’s being taken over by her political enemies rather than her friends, by the partisans of religious and national passion as opposed to self-fashioning and democratic interaction.

This book is thus more successful in explaining the importance of political passions than at explaining how and why we can hope to radically redirect them. If we cannot eliminate passion from politics, we still need to think through exactly how reason and passion might be better educated (or not), and which political institutions, practices, or even individuals can or cannot feasibly be made the objects of our deepest affections.

**Writing the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Pragmatism and Historical Inquiry.** By Jonathan B. Isacoff. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006. 216p. \$70.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.  
DOI: 10.1017/S1537592707070211

— Maurice J. Meilleur, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Jonathan Isacoff argues that American political scientists, and in particular international relations researchers, should be much more self-critical about their historiography. Political science, he claims, is afflicted by a stubborn “positivism” that leads case-study, qualitative researchers (like Kenneth Waltz) and large-n, quantitative researchers (like J. David Singer) alike to treat historical data as if they are value-free and unchanging. This historiography blinds researchers to the normative and theoretical biases of their theories—especially a bias toward system-structural explanations for international conflict—by screening out data that contradict those theories. Moreover, subsequent revisions to the historical record undermine their findings, leaving research that is empirically disengaged and irrelevant to political experience.

Instead of replacing positivism with a “postmodern,” thoroughgoing historical constructivism and relativism, Isacoff argues for a historiography informed by the pragmatism of John Dewey. This historiography would seek