Wittgenstein clearly did not wish to leave philosophy as it was (p. 57), and the same holds, Gunnell argues, for social inquiry. While Wittgenstein's work has implications for dealing with a variety of substantive issues, Gunnell argues that he was ambivalent about whether or not his work could or should have a practical effect (p. 210). Gunnell does argue throughout the text that Wittgenstein's work puts into question "philosophical absolutism" insofar as it involves finding reasons that "stand outside of any particular situation or conception of the world" (p. 227). For the same reasons, a Wittgensteinian approach would be critical of what Gunnell calls "a democratic metaphysics" as evident in democratic theory of the kind espoused by Habermas, who holds onto the idea that the social theorist "stands above or apart from the democratic conversation and provides the terms in which it should be conducted" (p. 227).

To further deepen these crucial insights, Gunnell would have done well to draw on the writings of other Wittgenstein-inspired political theorists such as Michael Freeden, James Tully and indeed, Quentin Skinner, who do "retrench" this idea of the social theorist and public intellectual as "standing outside of the democratic conversation." Together with other political theorists such as Glynos and Howarth, who have sought in recent years to explore in more detail the forms that social inquiry after Wittgenstein and Kuhn may take, each of these writers provides us with critical tools with which to conduct social inquiry. Freeden's morphological account of political ideologies, Skinner's genealogical accounts of liberty before liberalism together with his methodological writings (which are not mentalist in character), Tully's public philosophy in a new key, and Glynos and Howarth's social logics approach are all exemplars of what social inquiry after Wittgenstein and Kuhn looks like. Attention to these writings would have considerably enriched Gunnell's account of the possibilities opened up by a Wittgensteinian approach for each of these theorists seek to enact the approaches they outline, providing contemporary social and political exemplars of the work that Kuhn does for Gunnell in this text.

Thomas Paine and the Idea of Human Rights. By Robert Lamb. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 217p. $99.
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— Thomas W. Merrill, *American University*

This book makes the case for Thomas Paine's importance not just as a political pamphleteer, but as a thinker with a distinctive and coherent political philosophy. It also makes a methodological case (in Chapter 1) against the contextualism of Quentin Skinner, and for studying the texts of political theory as "works of political philosophy speaking across time to perennial problems." The latter—the more important thesis for the self-understanding of political theory as a subfield—is a welcome contribution to a conversation that often seems stuck in skirmishes of many decades past. Robert Lamb suggests, reasonably enough, that contextualists tend to conclude from the (true) statement that we human beings do not have metaphysical insight into "eternal problems" that all human actions and beliefs are irretrievably entangled in historical particularity. But this is a false inference, Lamb says: There may be, and in fact are, problems that continually recur in human experience across historical epochs. We do not know that these problems are eternal; all we know is that we have not yet been able to avoid them. And if some earlier thinker has something to say to teach us or at least us make us think more clearly about those problems, then obviously we would do well to listen. Lamb's point is a sensible one that political theorists would do well to heed. It says all that needs to be said in order to justify the continuing relevance of the history of political thought.

Lamb takes Paine to be primarily a moral theorist—someone who starts from normative foundations from which he or she proceeds to deduce practical consequences. Thus Lamb's substantive thesis is that Paine is a liberal theorist who takes human equality and natural rights as axiomatic truths. Lamb claims that Paine's liberalism is distinguishable from the liberalism of more frequently read natural rights or contractarian theorists such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. Indeed, Paine, rather than any of those theorists, deserves the honor of being called "the progenitor of our modern understanding of natural rights." In the ensuing chapters Lamb certainly shows that Paine's positions are closer to contemporary liberals like Rawls than are the other three. Lamb argues that Paine has a strong commitment to inalienable moral rights based on a fundamental human equality (Chapter 2); that that commitment leads to a strong preference for representative democracy (Chapter 3); that Paine does not simply hold a Lockean or libertarian commitment to the protection of private property, but is also committed to economic or welfare rights, and so to some version of distributive justice in the contemporary sense (Chapter 4); that Paine is a committed cosmopolitan in the sense that natural rights offer a universal standard for political judgment, although this does not necessarily translate into a duty or even a right of intervention on the part of liberal states in the affairs of non-liberal states (Chapter 5); and finally, that Paine's moral and political egalitarianism is supported by his natural theology (Chapter 6). Lamb's case for the unity and coherence of Paine's thought is largely successful, as is his portrayal of Paine's similarity to today's liberalism.

Yet Lamb's choice to read Paine as a moral theorist is not without its drawbacks, such that a partisan of context and circumstance might have reasonable objections. For one thing, Lamb's approach tends to take much of the drama out of Paine's thought—drama necessarily

connected to the French Revolution: the indignant denunciation of the injustices of the ancien regime before the bar of natural justice, followed by a bitter and morally complicated trajectory from liberalism to terror and eventually Napoleon. Let us grant that reducing thinkers to their historical circumstances simply is a mistake; does it follow that the consequences of a thinker's thought are irrelevant for understanding the meaning of that thought? Lamb's focus on Paine's moral philosophy (a focus that is admittedly encouraged by Paine himself) allows him to avoid facing up to the Burkean riposte: Moral philosophers all too often become moralists who are oblivious to the destructive passions that may be unleashed in any genuinely revolutionary moment. Was Paine guilty of that? one wonders. The Burkean riposte may not have been true about Paine but the methodological point cannot, I think, be avoided: Moral philosophy is not enough. Political context and circumstance matter.

Lamb's treatment of Paine's moral philosophy does not go far enough in another respect as well. Lamb's Paine is concerned with moral foundations without treating the foundations as questions or objects of inquiry, with axioms rather than asking why we should think the axioms are true. Thus Glaucon's question (Why should we think there is a genuinely natural or universal moral obligation, rather than a merely conventional or consequentialist one?) never appears in this book. Nor do those darker thinkers, Nietzsche and Marx. This defect is perhaps especially apparent in Lamb's theological chapter, where it is not quite clear whether we are to take Paine's deism as providing a genuine foundation for his moral commitments or as merely the expression of those commitments. Lamb's Paine suggests that an unbiased inspection of the world reveals the truth that God exists and cares about morality. But it is not clear that Lamb thinks that, and there are certainly many modern thinkers before and after Paine who say that nature is harsh and inhospitable to human beings, hardly any evidence of divine beneficence at all. It is of course possible that Paine thought of his deism not as strictly true, but as providing an indispensable cover for what he saw as most important, establishing a regime of natural rights—he may have seen deism as a civic religion to replace Christianity. But this raises a serious question for Lamb: Is Paine's deism actually a foundation for his egalitarianism, or it is merely a supplement? And if it is merely a supplement, what is the foundation for Paine's egalitarianism? Or ours?

Whatever the answer to these questions, these remarks suggest a supplement or extension of Lamb's sensible methodological point. Lamb is correct to think the perennial character of certain problems across historical epochs makes the history of political theory worth doing, not just for what it says about the past but what it might say about our present, and correct also to say that normative problems are among the most important of such problems. If we wish to understand politics, we cannot avoid trying to understand normative issues, if only to understand what political actors think they themselves are doing. Yet to stop there would get things badly wrong. There are after all harsh realities that put limits on our moral expectations of the world, realities that give considerable weight to those who say context matters. And of course we know too much to overlook the questionableness of foundations. One can imagine another political theory that would be at once more sensitive to the presence of aporia and more cognizant of the particularity of historical context (i.e., of politics) without losing the focus on the primacy of the normative issues. On this view, the appropriate partner of political theory would not be moral philosophy, but political science.

Cities at the Edge of the World: Using Utopian and Dystopian Stories to Reflect Critically on our Political Beliefs, Communities, and Ways of Life. By David J. Lorenzo. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. 225p. $30.99.
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— Robert C. Pirro, *Georgia Southern University*

In *Cities at the Edge of the World*, David Lorenzo takes a Goldilocks approach to the topic of utopian and dystopian literature. Discussing Thomas More's *Utopia* (ca. 1515), Henry Neville's *Isle of Pines* (ca. 1688), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), Evgenie Zamyatin's *We* (ca. 1921), and George Orwell's *1984* (1949), this work is neither an "encyclopedic overview of either genre," nor an "in-depth" exploration of "utopian or dystopian temperament or philosophical stance" (p. 4). The approach rather is "to grapple with the message of each story," thereby allowing "us room to investigate, compare, contrast, think about, and generally explore the questions these stories generate" (p. 4).

In quick succession, the introductory chapter offers a justification of the title of the book ("utopian and dystopian stories often describe endings" (p. 2)), defines and contrasts utopian and dystopian stories ("utopias emphasize the point that problems can be overcome by common sense, while dystopias argue for the application of an often ironic sensibility to undermine the complacent acceptance of dangerous trends" (p. 7)), plots More and company along a spectrum measuring the extent to which an author considers human nature "completely hardwired," at one extreme, or "completely programmable," at the other (p. 9), and gestures to some contemporary problems ("gross inequalities of wealth and income. . .deindustrialization, uneven development, boom and bust cycles" (p. 11)).

In each chapter, analysis of a single text proceeds rather ploddingly from a discussion of "Story" to a discussion of "Contexts and Problems" to a discussion of "Themes" to a discussion of "The Good Life/Life in Dystopia and