

Mitchell is especially critical of experiments in “socialism” in countries like Iraq under Saddam Hussein that brought great cruelty and suffering, destroyed much of the old order, and rendered society dependent upon a powerful state and tyrannical ruler. He is also concerned about the temptation of people with no democratic traditions or weak ones to turn to a strong dictator in order to avoid anarchy and chaos.

His solution lies in finding a middle path that will build upon and modify existing religious traditions and social practices over time, while introducing democratic reforms. For example, Mitchell suggests that a constitutional monarchy might be the best path for countries like Qatar and Saudi Arabia to take on the road to democracy, a position held by many of his Arab students.

The last section of the book contains an epilogue with a sharp critique of American foreign policy and the State Department for not investing in learning more about the culture, history, and religion of the Arab world before launching wars of liberation and for assuming that the overthrow of a dictator like Saddam would be in itself sufficient to install democracy.

*Tocqueville in Arabia* is not without flaws. Mitchell’s summing up of the forces shaping the generation formed by the 1960s is based largely on his personal recollections as a child rather than on the historical record. Georgetown students do not represent a microcosm of American students, nor do the 24 students he taught in Qatar represent more than the thinking of a small group of privileged Arabs. Generalizations about American and Arab students on the basis of such a small and skewed sampling must be taken with a grain of salt.

Despite these caveats, the book provides an excellent demonstration of the ways in which Tocqueville’s modes of analysis and insights can be updated to shed more light on major issues confronting democratic societies like our own and those in the making. It also offers the basis for a genuine conversation between conservative and liberal readings of Tocqueville concerning the future of democracy in the twenty-first century and the validity of alternative paths to the preservation of freedom.

**Bourgeois Liberty and the Politics of Fear: From Absolutism to Neo-Conservatism.** By Marc Mulholland.  
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— Jeremy Jennings, *King’s College London*

“How beastly the bourgeois is.” This is the title of a poem by D. H. Lawrence, and I could not help but think of it as I worked my way through Marc Mulholland’s account of bourgeois liberty from the seventeenth century to the present day. Lawrence’s mockery of this “fine specimen” in “God’s own image” is pitiless. Let the bourgeois be faced, Lawrence wrote, “with another man’s need, let him come

home to a bit of moral difficulty . . . and then watch him go soggy, like a wet meringue.” Mulholland seems of a similar mind, for the central proposition of his monograph is that the attachment of the bourgeoisie to civil and political liberties is only skin deep. When the going gets tough—when, in particular, the bourgeoisie are faced with the radical demands of “proletarian democracy”—they cut and run into the arms of the authoritarian state, conveniently forgetting their previous commitment to the principles of constitutional government. Hence, the author observes, the historical charge that the bourgeoisie are betrayers of liberty.

The book begins with a fine illustration of this bourgeois mentality. Mulholland quotes Heinrich Heine’s comment in 1842 that the politics of the bourgeoisie were “motivated by fear” (p. vii). Mulholland might easily have cited many examples to prove the point. In the June Days of 1848, for example, Alexander Herzen came across the arch-liberal Alexis de Tocqueville, rifle in hand, on his way to help put down the workers’ rebellion. Read the correspondence of Hippolyte Taine and you see with what relish he applauded the slaughter of the Communards in 1871. On this account, the politics of bourgeois fear was responsible for the defeat of the European-wide revolutions of 1848, the illiberal unifications of Italy and Germany after 1860, the “liberal failure of nerve” before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the turn to interwar fascism, and the maintenance by the West of military dictatorships during the Cold War. As Mulholland states, it is this narrative that he sets out to examine (p. vii). And, of course, this narrative is, in essence, a Marxist narrative.

It follows that those who have never found this narrative to be compelling might find Mulholland’s study to be of little or no interest. The numerous references to staid capitalism, monopoly capitalism, militarized capitalism, cartel capitalism, and other variants of capitalism might leave such readers feeling slightly punch-drunk. So, too, they might find the numerous glib *marxisant* generalizations—Benjamin Constant is reduced to the status of “constitution-monger,” for example (p. 28)—to be rather irritating.

By way of consolation, there are some interesting insights along the way, and Mulholland’s text is undoubtedly broad in scope, beginning with the transformation of absolutism in seventeenth-century England and ending with the recent financial crash or “Great Recession.” Here, it is surprising how relatively little attention is given to the French Revolution. It was this event, and especially the blood-letting associated with the Jacobin Terror, that arguably gave birth to the politics of bourgeois fear and that remained the nightmare for bourgeois liberals throughout the nineteenth century. Only the Bolshevik Revolution managed to dislodge it from its much-deserved prominence in the catalog of bourgeois horror stories. If nothing else, the French Revolution showed that the bourgeoisie were right to be frightened of what

the masses might do if ever they got their hands on the wheels of power.

The dilemmas faced by the European Left in the years following the Paris Commune fare much better in Mulholland's analysis. Should the workers go it alone or should they temper their demands so as not to frighten off the bourgeoisie? This was the big question that dominated the deliberations of the Second International. Either way, and as the author points out (p. 130), the advances in military technology after 1870 were such that it was doubtful that a revolutionary attack against state power would succeed. Socialists also recognized that it was very unlikely that a mass citizen army would be subverted from within. For once, the bourgeoisie looked to have nothing to fear.

This proved far from being the case in the twentieth century. As Mulholland shows, the Soviet Union succeeded in completely destroying bourgeois civil society. How the bourgeoisie responded is teased out in considerable detail. He cites Herbert Hoover in 1919 to the effect that intervention against Bolshevism amounted to "re-establishing the reactionary classes in their economic domination over the lower classes" (p. 171). Being prepared to be won over by Hitler or Mussolini was another reaction. Still another was the development by the likes of Walt Rostow of the reassuring modernization thesis that saw the transition and "take-off" of traditional agrarian societies into mass industrialized consumer societies as a guarantee of future political stability. In brief, for all the internal and external threats, bourgeois civil society survived. Indeed, as Mulholland comments (p. 259), "bourgeois status became the only existing ideal to which one might realistically aspire." With the collapse of the Soviet bloc there remained only a "glad new morning for bourgeois revolution" (p. 296).

Most obviously, this book has to be read as a contribution to debates about the continuing relevance or otherwise of Marxist categories and modes of explanation. To that extent might it be usefully read alongside Neil Davidson's *How Revolutionary Were the Bourgeois Revolutions?* (2012). Both grapple with a similar set of questions of central interest to Marxist scholars, and both do so with considerable expertise and erudition. Mulholland's conclusion therefore is not unimportant. In his view (pp. 303–4), the "broad picture" of the "tragic destiny" of a bourgeoisie torn between a struggle against absolutism and aristocracy, on the one hand, and the radical demands of the working-class movement, on the other hand, is given credence by the evidence. But, he argues, there are "significant qualifications" that need to be made to this picture. These, in order, are as follows (pp. 304–7): The will to political power was never a bourgeois characteristic; bourgeois support for authoritarianism was not always in reaction to challenges from the Left; even as bourgeois radicalism declined, there remained many opportunities for liberal-socialist cooperation; interwar fascism was not merely an artifact of bourgeois disillusion with liberty;

there are no modern political parties or governments that are purely bourgeois; and the bourgeoisie relates indirectly to its vanguard. The latter amounts to saying that in the eyes of some of their admirers, the "bourgeois revolution is too important to be left to the bourgeoisie" (p. 307).

There is, of course, one final qualification or conclusion to the picture presented by Mulholland: "[T]he balance struck between bourgeois liberty and democracy can only be considered partial and provisional" (p. 308). In other words, the politics of bourgeois fear might yet return.

**Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World.** By Ella Myers. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013. 232p. \$84.95 cloth, \$23.95 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592714001406

— Sara Rushing, *Montana State University*

In her book, Ella Myers deftly weaves together multiple traditions of thought, including care ethics, existential phenomenology, and democratic theory, to challenge trends in contemporary political theory and advocate putting care for the world at the center of our analysis. This compelling project is sure to resonate with scholars who have an affinity both for the critical and ethical impulses of postmodern political thought and for the constructive and activist spirit of democratic theory.

Myers begins with the recent turn to ethics in political theory, which she sees as potentially problematic but "critically participates in, rather than rejects outright" (p. 9). Specifically, she sympathizes with the quest for an animating spirit to enliven democracy, but sees the ethos emergent from the therapeutic and charitable ethics offered by Michel Foucault and Emmanuel Levinas, respectively, as unsuitable for that task. Care for the self and care for the Other are not guaranteed to tip the scales toward care for the world, and in fact these approaches may "enervate rather than enrich associative action by democratic citizens" (p. 11). Myers thus sets out to articulate an alternative ethical grounding for democracy, focusing on "contentious and collaborative care for the world" (p. 2).

Following an introduction, Chapter 1 addresses Foucault, and secondarily William Connolly. Myers argues that while the "seemingly linear route from purposeful efforts at self-crafting to the creation of new and different kinds of subjectivity is intuitively compelling" (p. 33), the shift from the micropolitics of the self to the macropolitics of the world is precarious: "Why assume the turn inward will give way to a turn outward?" (p. 43). Chapter 2 focuses on Levinasian ethics, which "does little more than gesture toward the importance of . . . politics" (p. 62), and also examines Simon Critchley and Judith Butler's deployments of Levinas, which "fail to account for the difference between charity and democracy, wrongly supposing that