

claim seems to prove the opposite (156). And while McLendon claims that “if history were contingent, [Tocqueville] would work for the restoration of the old regime,” Tocqueville explicitly rejects that possibility, not merely because he thought democracy inevitable but because he thought it enjoyed God’s favor for its superior justice (159).

McLendon does a similar injustice to Pascal, whom he lumps together with other neo-Augustinians in “embracing the most optimistic strands of thinking in Augustine and making them the mainsprings of their political thought” (84). While Pascal momentarily marvels that vices can be manipulated so as to produce an “image of charity,” his overall verdict on *amour-propre* plainly requires its complete renunciation in favor of the anguished search for God. Greater attention to Pascal might also have spared McLendon the error of supposing, with Rousseau, that any political community can “provide” or “ensure” “a dignified life for everyone” (54). For as Pascal teaches, human dignity ultimately resides in the free and dialogic relationship between God and man. To ask the political community to provide us with that dignity is to open the way for the complete political domination of the human soul, about which Augustinians such as Pascal and Tocqueville justly worry. The real danger in Rousseauan populism, from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first, lies in just this tendency to expect too much from politics.

Nonetheless, McLendon’s populism “in the best sense of the word” help us see the perils of overvaluing talent and the importance of those genuinely democratic virtues, such as “humanity, courage, and moderation,” that can be practiced by everyone (105). McLendon’s original lesson from Rousseau is one our meritocratic moment needs to hear.

–Benjamin Storey
Furman University



Ryan Patrick Hanley: *Our Great Purpose: Adam Smith on Living a Better Life*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. Pp. viii, 157.)

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To borrow a term from Adam Smith that our author usefully explicates (74–77), this is a “lovely” book. If nothing else, it constitutes a superb short introduction to the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (hereafter *TMS*), which Smith published seventeen years before the *Wealth of Nations*. In addition to an introduction and an epilogue, Hanley provides twenty-nine chapters, each

of which unfolds as a brief commentary on a memorable passage. The volume concludes with a useful guide to the Smith literature, including several long scholarly contributions from Hanley.

Twenty-six of the quotations that open chapters are from *TMS*. This is an appropriate focus for several reasons. First, Hanley's subtitle, *Adam Smith on Living a Better Life*, obliged him to highlight the book in which Smith provides a sustained meditation on what individuals can do to improve their character as well as behavior. Second, it is difficult to think of other works that explore the relationship between self and society with more precision or depth than does *TMS*. Third, by appealing to Smith's penetrating analyses of how human beings mediate between clashing perspectives, Hanley can help us counteract the fracturing of American life that social media and political polarization have aggravated (24, 44, 70, 76, 103); the virus crisis makes these lessons even more valuable. Fourth, *TMS* is less than half the length of the massive *Wealth of Nations*, and no one could dispute Hanley's praise of its readability (7, 137–38). Hanley too is a graceful writer, and the smooth flow among his chapters provides an additional gift to the reader.

Given his focus on "living a better life," and the related comparisons he draws between Smith and the ancients, Hanley wisely highlights two distinctive strands of argument. First, he provides an excellent summary of how the two main types of Smithean virtues—the "soft" and "gentle" ones, based on increasing our sympathy for others, plus the harsher (and more pagan?) ones based on "self-command"—harmonize (98–100). Second, Hanley underscores the ways that *TMS* elevates moral virtue above intellectual virtue. The most dramatic statement is Smith's well-known proclamation that "the most sublime speculation of the contemplative philosopher" cannot justify neglect of "the smallest active duty" (VI.ii.3). Along these lines, furthermore, Hanley is correct in arguing that Smith's "impartial spectator," by teaching people how to judge *and* how to act, provides a "brilliant solution to a very complex philosophical problem" (80).

Hanley does justice to Smith the philosopher in other important respects. He highlights the distinctive contributions Smith made by unearthing "systems" that show how hypercomplex matters fit together (61–62, 138), and he illuminates the ways that Smith departed from a dogmatic or rule-driven approach to moral guidance. In Hanley's words, Smith's ideal reader is not seeking "easy advice, quick fixes, and lists of rules" (2); when you think that you have "heard everything he has to say about some topic," indeed, Smith "suddenly . . . adds one last little point" that "forces you to rethink everything you thought you knew" (74).

Hanley could do much more with the last point by acknowledging the serious tensions between Smith's two books. The most dramatic clash concerns religion. Drawing upon *TMS* passages that emphasize how the love of justice impels people to believe in an afterlife, Hanley generalizes glibly about Smith's personal views. For example, the impartial spectator is but "an imperfect representative of the genuinely perfect judgment that Smith

thinks God alone possesses" (131); according to Hanley's Smith, furthermore, "God is the creator and governor of the world as well as the judge of the world" (132). Although Smith in *TMS* regularly invites us to speculate along these lines, he never argues for, or directly asserts, the reality of an after-life, and one should proceed cautiously in making proclamations about what Smith "thinks." According to *TMS*, after all, "A philosopher is company to a philosopher only" (I.ii.2).

Nowhere does the *Wealth of Nations* even hint that a creating, governing, or judging God exists. The book appeals instead to the authority of an author-free "nature." And Smith's longer book, though it highlights church history and the contributions religion can make to character formation, exudes a cynicism that echoes Machiavelli, Hume, and Voltaire (the only authors that its section on religion [V.i.g] quotes or paraphrases). The *Wealth of Nations*, moreover, presents grand overviews of societal development, nature, and human nature without mentioning God even once. Although the education section (V.i.f) offers a friendly reference to "the Deity," this deity is a pagan one that exists alongside other "parts of the great system of the universe," and Smith proceeds to denounce the "debased" Christian philosophy that emphasized rewards and punishments in "a life to come."

Hanley touts how *TMS* can speak to our "secular age" (133–34), which could presumably absorb even more from the *Wealth of Nations*. P. J. O'Rourke's popularizing volume *On "The Wealth of Nations"* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2007) likewise overstates Smith's religiosity, but provides even less detail than does Hanley.

The grimmer posture the *Wealth of Nations* takes toward religion may also compromise its contributions to "living a better life." Hanley (on 38–39) does discuss a section in which Smith laments the grave threat that economic progress poses to the "intellectual, social, and martial virtues" of "the great body of the people" (V.i.f). This concern, however, can be obscured by the numerous passages where Smith identifies "interest," "improvement," progress, or bettering one's condition with benefits that are economic. The development of roads, canals, and navigable rivers, Smith proclaims, is the "greatest of all improvements" (I.xi.b); "the compleat improvement and cultivation of the country" is the "greatest of all publick advantages" (I.xi.l); a populous society is a "great society" because it facilitates the division of labor and technological progress (I.viii); and a "person who can acquire no property, can have no other interest but to eat as much, and to labour as little as possible" (III.ii).

To his credit, Hanley highlights some antitranscendence themes in *TMS* that Smith conspicuously extends in the *Wealth of Nations*. With a nod to both Platonic forms and Christian revelation, Hanley notes that, for Smith, the outlook that guides a wise and virtuous man is "very much a thing of our world 'down here'"; Smith's ideal emerged from "careful observation of and induction from the things of this world" (107).

Within the popularization and inspiration genre, Hanley's main rival is *How Adam Smith Can Change Your Life* (Portfolio/Penguin, 2014), a delightful mass-market volume by Russ Roberts that likewise focuses on *TMS*. Although Roberts does much more to link Smith's two books, he too tends to neglect Smith's dark side: the grimmer atheistic world that the *Wealth of Nations* presents, but also the ways that the "invisible hand" chapter of *TMS* (IV.1) highlights human frailty. Despite the enormous things that our "industry" and ingenuity have done to transform "the whole face of the globe," we remain vulnerable to "the winter storm." COVID-19 is an obvious candidate.

–Peter Minowitz
Santa Clara University



Jeffrey Metzger: *The Rise of Politics and Morality in Nietzsche's "Genealogy": From Chaos to Conscience*. (London: Lexington Books, 2020. Pp. xii, 179.)

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In *The Rise of Politics and Morality in Nietzsche's "Genealogy,"* Jeffrey Metzger carves out a niche in the increasingly crowded field of scholarship on Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* by focusing on the second essay, which he argues has received the least attention. Metzger succeeds on two fronts: first, he provides rigorous textual analysis of Nietzsche's tangle of arguments in this essay and, second, he offers a detailed defense of the idea that Nietzsche has a metaphysical conception of the will to power and uses this term more or less interchangeably with "life" and "nature." In doing so, Metzger opposes the prevailing tendency to restrict the will to power to a psychological thesis and generally minimize its role, a view he attributes to Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter (8). Against this interpretation, which emphasizes the relative scarcity of the term "will to power" in Nietzsche's published works, Metzger joins others, such as Nadeem J. Z. Hussain and Tom Stern, in arguing that Nietzsche's omnipresent references to "life" in his mature work should be construed as references to the will to power. This book should therefore have a broad appeal for scholars of Nietzsche.

Metzger tackles the main themes of book 2 of *The Genealogy* systematically, providing illuminating analyses of promising (chap. 1), justice (chap. 2), and the emergence of politics and the formation of bad conscience (chaps. 4–5). He attempts to weave Nietzsche's often haphazard train of thought into a