

justice, the wages of secularism, and the enduring religious quest for contact with divine transcendence.

There is much missing here, including, most importantly, any serious engagement with patristic writers of the early Christian centuries, such as Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria, who understood themselves as philosophers *and* theologians. Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* and his *First Apology* represent the first Christian attempt to show how reason finds completion in faith, even in the "truest philosophy" of Christianity. The *First Apology* is an explicit attempt to convince pagan philosopher emperors of their unjust and unreasonable persecution of Christian believers. The only patristic writer Hancock briefly consults is Augustine, while ignoring Augustine's important commentary on the true happiness of Christian kings (*City of God*, V: 24). Hancock's expressed admiration of Aquinas is not matched by enthusiasm for consulting the Angelic Doctor's most important political treatises, such as *On Kingship*, among others, and the author is ultimately dismissive of Aquinas's demonstration of the complementarity of faith and reason, without fully engaging his argument. Thus, Hancock largely ignores the one period in the history of political philosophy that challenges the claim that there is an unbridgeable chasm between the realms of Reason and Revelation.

But is the clash between faith and reason really so clear, as Hancock and some other Straussians claim? He contrasts Christian poverty versus philosophical wealth, Christian faith versus philosophical reason, Christian "fear" and hope versus philosophical wonder, Christian belief in a personal God versus philosophical confrontation with impersonal necessity, and Christian cosmology that avers a created beginning *ex nihilo* versus philosophical belief in the material eternity of the universe. It is interesting to note that the *ex nihilo* hypothesis of the theologians has recently been confirmed by modern "Big Bang" cosmology: The universe is not eternal as philosophers and scientists alike long believed. Reason in this instance supports Revelation. Could the theologians be closer to the truth than the philosophers on the other questions, too, including the theologians' conviction that faith and reason complement one another? From Justin Martyr to the modern papacy, one finds persuasive Christian reflection on faith and reason as twin means of knowing the natural and supernatural/spiritual realities. Hancock is largely silent on this extensive tradition.

I do not think Hancock fully succeeds in demonstrating how reason can exercise responsibility in the modern democratic age through a reapplication of Tocqueville's insights on democracy in America. Political practitioners will find no clear and bulleted list of recommendations here. This book is billed as a meditation on theory *and* practice, but rarely

considers the practical. Hancock ends where he begins, in asserting a hope that human longing for love and eternal life is as important as theoretical wisdom and is too often denied in the trudging of the modern liberals and secularists in the minutiae of practical life.

When all is said and done, *The Responsibility of Reason* is, as Hancock admits, written by "a professor writing to other professors and their students" (p. xii). Although he hopes that nonacademics, "thoughtful citizens, believers and lovers" (p. xii) will also benefit, most will find the book too daunting, although many students of Strauss will find it engaging and provocative.

#### **Democratic Statecraft: Political Realism and Popular**

**Power.** By J. S. Maloy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 243p. \$85.00 cloth, \$28.99 paper.  
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— Frank Lovett, *Washington University in St. Louis*

Speaking very loosely, one might distinguish between weak or minimalist theories of democracy on the one hand, and strong or populist theories of democracy on the other. The former characterize democracy in terms of competitive elections, representative assemblies, and secure constitutional rights, and they regard its value primarily as instrumental—as a prophylactic against cruder sorts of despotism and corruption, for example. Perhaps such authors as Joseph Schumpeter, Robert Dahl, William Riker, or Adam Przeworski come to mind as representative of this approach. The latter, by contrast, characterize democracy in terms of widespread vigorous participation, direct local action, and radical social movements, and they regard its value primarily as intrinsic—as embodying a particularly excellent form of human life. Perhaps Hannah Arendt or Benjamin Barber come to mind as examples of this view. J. S. Maloy clearly falls into the second of these camps, and *Democratic Statecraft* represents an effort to contribute to the strong or populist democratic tradition. It is much less clear, however, what that contribution is supposed to be.

The four central chapters offer a reasonably straightforward survey of populist themes in the Western tradition. Chapter 3 focuses on the ancient Greeks through Aristotle, Chapter 4 on the reception of Aristotle and Renaissance political theory, Chapter 5 on the English Civil War and the early American colonies, and Chapter 6 on the politics of the Gilded Age. Thrasymachus, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Cromwell, the levelers, and the American populists are favorably juxtaposed to Socrates, Plato, More, Winthrop, and so on. Two core insights are seen as emblematic of the populist democratic tradition: first, faith in the wisdom of the multitude, and second, distrust in the capacity of elections alone to implement genuine democracy. These chapters are vigorously written. They range widely but effectively across

sources both familiar (Aristotle, Machiavelli) and obscure (George of Trebizond, D. M. Means); and they creatively deploy diverse literary and historical examples, from the legend of Jason and the Argonauts to the Sicilian Vespers to Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. In short, they make for an entertaining—perhaps even inspiring—review of the democratic tradition.

Maloy wants to do more than this, however. Here, confusion sets in. The historical survey of populist democratic theory is framed as a grand contest between realism and idealism, and Chapter 2 purports to offer an excursus on the meaning of “realism” in the relevant sense. Unfortunately, this reader was less sure what the author meant by realism after reading the chapter than before. Sometimes realism seems to mean what moral philosophers call consequentialism: sometimes endorsing political engagement over contemplative withdrawal; sometimes being willing to view politics descriptively rather than evaluatively; sometimes focusing on material instead of immaterial benefits or goods; and sometimes eschewing infeasible utopianism in favor of practical reform. Sometimes it just seems to mean being a moral skeptic. These are all importantly distinct topics, however, and much clarity is lost by running them all together. Maloy's attempt to digest the tangle into two main dimensions of realism does little to help; indeed, he does not definitively state which quadrant in the resulting two-by-two table represents the sense of realism relevant for his argument as a whole.

The book purports to be a defense of “realism” in democratic theory. But who are the “idealists” against whom realism must be defended? Perhaps they are the democratic minimalists, on the grounds that they have too great a faith in the efficacy of mere elections and human rights. But, one might reasonably ask, efficacy for what? Democratic minimalists typically have modest aims—reducing the risk that masses of people will die in famines, for instance. Democratic minimalists do not need much democracy because they have no lofty aims for it. In what sense, then, can they be described as idealists? Perhaps the idealists in question are other populist democrats who place their trust in mere elections and human rights to achieve the loftier aim of a genuinely democratic political community. But are there any such naive populist democrats? While I am no expert in democratic theory, it is my impression that the populist tradition never had any such faith, and indeed Maloy's historical survey reinforces rather than challenges this impression. The intended target thus remains a mystery.

Perhaps the underlying aim is, rather, to offer a robust case for strong democracy as such. If so, the author is hoisted by his own realist petard, for in declaiming ethical knowledge and embracing skepticism in the realist package, he finds himself ultimately without grounds for arguing that populist democracy is better than any

alternative. (Repeated references are made to “systemic utility” as something different from either utilitarianism on the one hand or individual interest on the other; but a more explicit definition, unfortunately, eluded this reader.) “Humans like what tastes good to them,” Maloy writes on the concluding page, and thus “real democracy isn't for everyone.” Apparently, his message boils down to this: If you want to fight for strong democracy, go for it—but be prepared to fight dirty.

Just how little practical guidance this offers is neatly illustrated by two of Maloy's own illustrations. The first relates the ending of the film *The Mission*, in which a Jesuit mission in South America is about to be unjustly attacked by overwhelming military forces. Maloy unfavorably contrasts the naive idealism of Father Gabriel, who denounces violent resistance, with the hard-nosed realism of Rodrigo Mendoza, who prepares to defend the mission by force. The second relates the dilemma faced by American populists in the election of 1896—whether or not they should moderate their radical platform and join with the mainstream Democratic party. Here, surprisingly, the author criticizes moderation on the grounds that realism would require not becoming too attached to any specific reforms that the Democratic Party might have helped the populists achieve. Considering the two illustrations together, it seems that realism is too malleable a notion to provide much helpful advice. Indeed, what is perhaps most revealing about Maloy's illustrations is that both describe hopeless causes, as perhaps strong democracy itself is in the modern world. One gets the distinct impression by the end of *Democratic Statecraft* that he protests his realism too much. Perhaps he is, in truth, an unreconstructed democratic idealist.

**Mortal Gods: Science, Politics, and the Humanist Ambitions of Thomas Hobbes.** By Ted H. Miller. University Park,

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— Julie E. Cooper, *University of Chicago*

The project of reconstructing the intellectual currents that shaped Hobbes's thought, and the ideological and scientific debates in which Hobbes intervened, has long been associated with Quentin Skinner and the Cambridge School. As practiced by the Cambridge School, the method of historical contextualization presupposes a division of labor between historical inquiry and normative argument. The crucial task for Hobbes scholarship, on this view, is to figure out what Hobbes meant to say as a participant in seventeenth-century controversies. Contextualization allows us to understand his goals as an ideological combatant, partisans of this approach contend—but it provides no traction on normative questions that preoccupy us today. Yet as Ted Miller demonstrates in *Mortal Gods*, historical contextualization need not presuppose this strict division of