evidence, and thus the truth of those positions ultimately hinges on matters of belief. Consider the case of free will. Scott maintains that the Savoyard Vicar's reasoning begins with a phenomenological account of freedom that closely resembles Rousseau's discussion from the *Discourse on Inequality*, but the Vicar then goes further and "adopts metaphysical dualism" to counter materialism (171). It is at least plausible, however, that Rousseau thought that what Scott calls the phenomenological account of freedom presupposed metaphysical dualism all along, which would explain why even in the *Discourse* he associated this freedom with the spirituality of the soul and insisted that it cannot be explained by the laws of mechanics.

There is much more that could be said on this subject, of course, as on the many other aspects of Rousseau's philosophy upon which Scott advances deeply insightful and thought-provoking interpretations. One of the many successes of *Rousseau's God* is that it shifts the burden of proof onto those who think that the Vicar does represent Rousseau's own views. Anyone wishing to defend that interpretation henceforth should either respond to Scott's forceful challenges or conclude that Rousseau was inconsistent on topics of central importance to his thought.

–Robin Douglass
King's College London, England, UK

Emily Finley: *The Ideology of Democratism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xii, 218.)

doi:10.1017/S003467052300061X

Can a majority of voters will something undemocratic? Both journalists and academics—such as Nadia Urbinati in *Me the People* (Harvard University Press, 2019) and Jan Werner-Müller in *What Is Populism?* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016)—have claimed it can in the wake of recent populist developments like the 2016 Brexit Referendum and the election victories of parties like Hungary's Fidesz and Poland's Law and Justice. For such a claim to be coherent, democracy must be more than simply than what the majority decides: it must be synonymous with good government, with justice, or with pluralism. But if that synonym is left unclear, it becomes hard to evaluate what the alternative form of rule being proposed would be. In practice this means that judges, bureaucrats, or even monarchs step in to govern in the people's name but against their expressed will.

In her debut monograph, Emily Finley offers a critical account of why elites are prone to dismiss the people in the name of democracy, but does not address the possibility of excessive deference to the people. Following

Irving Babbitt (1865–1933), she identifies in Western and American political imagination a simultaneous rationalism (stemming from Bacon) and romanticism (stemming from Rousseau) that she calls "democratism." Democratism assumes "that the people's will, *properly expressed*, is a normative ideal toward which historical democracies must strive" (7, italics original). The romantic starting point is the belief that the intentions of the many are naturally benevolent; after experiencing the imperfect decisions of actual democratic majorities, the rationalist solution is technocratic intervention. In the central chapters of the book, Finley traces this ideology's role in the deeds of Presidents Thomas Jefferson and Woodrow Wilson, as well as its development and Christianization by Jacques Maritain. She then attributes the failures of the foreign policy vision of neoconservatives to the characteristic errors of democratists in interpreting a historical progression to democracy that makes it both inevitable and yet always around the corner.

For Finley, our contemporary confusion about popular rule has deep roots in Rousseau's concept of the general will. In saying that the people's truest, deepest desire is always correct if a Legislator eliminates all partial interests and all the corruptions of socialization, Rousseau paradoxically made almost all actual verdicts of elections and legislatures suspect because they involve self-interested actors. He also opened the door for political elites to evaluate and interpret the people's decisions. Finley argues that this concept is derived from eighteenth-century theological debates about the perfect, pure will of God, whose will and intellect are identical and who thus cannot err. Reading the *Emile*, Finley observes, "That the tutor must guide and cultivate the child's supposed natural inclination towards spontaneity and authenticity . . . reflects one of the overall tensions within democratism" (14). The tutor manipulates his pupil in order to preserve his natural, pride-free psychology. Similarly, democratic politicians must manipulate the citizenry to preserve its freedom and equality. In her chapters on Jefferson and Wilson, Finley notes many episodes in which these presidents' theoretical commitment to the freedom and equality of all human beings yielded in practice to cruel authoritarianism. She attributes this not to personal hypocrisy, but to a contradiction within their governing philosophy.

Since the French Revolution, liberals have been horrified by the bloodshed Rousseau's principles stoked. They have looked for ways to refute it in theory and check it in practice. But *The Ideology of Democratism* has little to say about this other "ism," even though Patrick Deneen's *Why Liberalism Failed* (Yale University Press, 2017) has sparked much discussion. The perennial liberal concern about populism is that government by the people easily becomes tyranny of the majority, as charismatic politicians stir up crowds against those perceived as outsiders. The historical record of ostensibly democratic regimes, from American race riots to European pogroms, from the expulsion of settlers in decolonizing states to terror attacks on Christians in

democratized Iraq and Egypt, bears out James Madison's worry in *Federalist*, No. 10 that "measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority." Aristotle two millennia earlier wrote that democracy must be guarded from devolving into the tyranny of the many poor against the few rich. One need only care about individual rights to have this worry; one need not have the democratist's ideological commitment to an infallible popular will. Today, as the authorities in India look the other way at "communal violence" against Muslims, it is hard to deny the relevance of this perennial worry, and of the conclusion that moderating elites of some kind who wield institutional checks and restrain the mob are needed.

Without addressing this objection head-on, Finley does contrast democratism with what she takes to be a healthier, more moderate view of the benefits of rule by the people. She commends Aristotle, Cicero, Madison, Hamilton, Adams, Burke, Orestes Brownson, Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, and Heinrich Rommen. These authors did not endorse an absolute majoritarianism, but what she calls "republicanism" (even though many self-described republicans have claimed inspiration from Rousseau), distinguished from democratism by its account of leadership, education, and history. For republicans, "the people . . . are perpetually prone to making unwise decisions given the morally cleft nature of the human psyche. There, an enlightened leadership class defined foremost by its *moral* superiority is needed to elevate the popular will toward its highest expression" (26). Democratists rely on elites who claim to be, not wiser or better, but rather more knowledgeable about how to achieve the people's true intent. They therefore struggle to account for cases when a leader believes the people's will to be unjust or imprudent. But the republican views politics as full of temptations to exercise power badly, and thus conceives of education as character forming through habituation, not just as instilling correct beliefs. Whereas democratists think of democracy as universally desirable and historically inevitable, republicans treat it as contingent, fragile, and contextual. The result is elites that are more both more realistic and more moderate.

The Ideology of Democratism does much to untangle the mutual accusations of elitism and populism that both the Left and Right have constantly made in the past decade, but it offers less guidance for how a friend of democracy should think about both the vices of the people and the virtues of their rule. Finley shows that both progressive democratists and conservative republicans accept some elite restraints on democracy. The interesting questions then become, What sort of elites will serve this function, and how will their role be justified to the public? Tocquevillians trust that the habits gained through everyday self-governance will make good citizens. But politics—in foreign policy, in public finance, in jurisprudence—also involves decisions removed from ordinary experience. Wise leaders will neither

condescend to the people nor flatter them. *The Ideology of Democratism* warns effectively against the former.

–Luke Foster
University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA

Christopher Peys: *Reconsidering Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness: Arendt, Derrida, and Care for the World*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020. Pp. xxxii, 163.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670523000591

Christopher Peys proposes to "resuscitate" the practices of forgiveness and cosmopolitanism and show how they can be forms of political action that advance justice, inclusion, the overcoming of polarization, and the reconstruction of political orders in which civic friendship is wounded (xx). These practices, which he roots in the thought of Hannah Arendt above all, can elicit a "dilation" of politics (145), he argues, in a time of intractable division, violence, and exclusion.

Peys's endeavor is a constructive one, a labor of hope. His arguments for the practices are secular ones—he asserts forgiveness as a "distinctly *non*-'messianic' and *non*-transcendental form of action"—yet he describes them as "miraculous" and as capable of bringing about new beginnings and transformations that would not be possible by the logic of ordinary political processes and concepts (38, italics included). The times call for such practices. Peys writes of polarization in the United States, for which there is ample evidence, both in political language and in rigorous academic studies, and of forms of exclusion towards minorities and foreigners. He might have discussed also the rise of nationalism in India, Hungary, and Russia as well as the tens of societies that have sought to overcome the divisions of civil war and dictatorship in the past half century. It is in these settings that forgiveness has emerged in political practice and scholarly thought and that cosmopolitanism, inclusion across borders and boundaries, has come to be proposed—the two practices whose rationale Peys wishes to develop and whose possibilities he wishes to plumb.

Peys begins his argument by engaging the thought of Jacques Derrida, the theorist who examined the two concepts together in his book of 2001, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. Derrida held that forgiveness, inescapably of Roman Catholic origins, was now on the rise. Indeed he could point to a wave of academic literature, grants, truth commissions, and programs to promote forgiveness in business and other civil-society institutions (8). Forgiveness, though, Derrida argued, is subject to aporias, or inner contradictions. First, forgiveness is only pure or true when it is unconditional, pure gift, yet will always be subject to conditions in actual practice (11–12). Second,