

decisions even in the face of opposition (164). Wright might have added that the tensions of distributive justice—the allocation (and reciprocal acceptance) of burdens for the common good—are at their heaviest in politics, most prominently in times of war. Likewise, the stakes of distributive justice are also higher in politics, as the enforcement of these burdens involves not the intangible sanctions of family or religion but the sword of the state. Governments do not simply delineate which side of the road to drive on; they also dictate which lands will be expropriated for a new highway. One could thus argue that only in politics can one develop and manifest the greatest exercise of practical wisdom. By further exploring the character of authoritative force, Wright might shore up the quality of the distinctly political goods on offer.

Indeed, the distributive justice of politics includes a further qualitative difference from private life: in politics one makes sacrifices not for a few proximate friends but for innumerable distant fellows. This observation might help to inform the question that lingers in the background of Wright's work: What is the value of natural political virtues in the face of higher philosophical or theological virtues? Wright points out that citizenship provides an "extension of the natural love of home" by which individuals can be drawn outside their own—a defense of particularity and the nation endorsed even by Mill (156–57). For example, Wright points out that political kinship provides an outlet for church action even to out-group nonmembers (166). Perhaps such natural charity for a now-larger in-group paves the way toward the supernatural love of out-group enemies. But such a line of speculation is beyond what can be expected in one book. In any case, Wright vindicates a politics that should at least render citizens—whatever their disputes over law—less disposed to view one other as enemies.

–Jeremy Seth Geddert
Assumption College



Michael P. Federici: *The Catholic Writings of Orestes Brownson*. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. Pp. ix, 440.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670520000030

The relation of Roman Catholicism to the American order has from the country's founding been fraught with mistrust, anxiety, and not a little

incomprehension. For in spite of its aversion to having an officially established church, some sort of Protestant (or in our current age, post-Protestant) consensus has ordered its most important and formative educational, cultural, and political institutions. Even as Catholics have joined the mainstream of American culture, making up a majority of the Supreme Court, for example, there remains a sense of incongruity that usually just lurks under the surface but pops up in surprising and sometimes rather unpleasant ways.

So it is always refreshing, and even a bit shocking, to go back and read one of the nineteenth century's most original, most Catholic, and, provocatively, most *American* thinkers, Orestes Brownson. Brownson was born in 1803 in Vermont and over the course of his life traveled through Presbyterianism, Universalism, Transcendentalism, Unitarianism, and socialism before converting to Catholicism in 1844. Federici's well-edited volume here collects a number of Brownson's writings from this last period, offering an excerpt of his autobiography (*The Convert*) and other writings in which Brownson works to relate his Catholic faith to American constitutionalism, the Civil War, and much else between the years 1856 and 1874. What emerges from Brownson's pen is a profoundly optimistic picture of American politics, even amid the devastation of the war, an optimism driven by the idea that the founders built, to borrow a phrase, "better than they knew" and that Catholicism promised a means of fixing what ailed the country.

For my part, then, perhaps the most striking of Brownson's essays that Federici includes in the book is his "Beecherism and Its Tendencies" (1871), where Brownson rails against the evangelical Protestant movement centered around Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, the famous abolitionists and evangelists. Brownson accused them of offering up "a purely subjective faith" (355) that denied, if only sometimes implicitly, claims central to Christianity, including the Trinity, the Incarnation, regeneration, atonement, and much more. Their error, he supposed, lay not in some misshapen version of Protestantism but in their Protestantism *simpliciter*, for on Brownson's account, they were driven to these views by the fact that their religious faith was deeply, maybe essentially, democratic (cf. 368). That is, "Beecherism" moved according to what was popular, and what was popular was the mob, not reason or virtue, and certainly not Christ or the church militant.

Brownson's invective toward the Beecher family's purported manifold heresies reflected his concurrent antipathy toward what one of his later essays calls the "Democratic Principle" (1873). He was committed to the idea that democracy properly understood was merely the unconstrained will of the majority, a view that he himself once held (394) but came to reject out of his close-up exposure to electoral politics and his conversion to Catholicism (and his subsequent recognition of human sinfulness). Democracy in this sense was inevitably tied up in an irrational subjectivism that ended up denying natural rights, natural law, limits on material consumption, and

the like. So on Brownson's account, to the degree that American democratic order was Protestant and thus committed to the "Democratic Principle," it was doomed to failure.

Brownson remained convinced, though, that it was not so doomed and that what America needed—indeed, what America was built for—was to be encompassed by "high-toned Catholic public opinion" (411). For Brownson was a kind of Catholic integralist, convinced that American liberal democracy could only function well if its public culture converted to Catholicism and embraced the moral and political truths that only the Catholic faith seemed to embody. Brownson's integralism, though, was no paean to a lost union of throne and altar; indeed, he expresses some dismay at the coercively confessional states in Europe (even if he somewhat romanticizes the Catholic and harshly criticizes the Protestant ones). Rather, Brownson is convinced that the American order is defined by a separation of church and state and an elevation of duties to God over the state. But this only makes sense, he thinks, in light of a distinctively religious claim about the superiority of "spiritual" power over the temporal. American democratic politics can work, but only if rightly understood, and "rightly" means here, according to Brownson's Catholic lights.

Reading Brownson's Catholic writings is perhaps especially bracing in our own day. As someone who teaches at a college founded by one of the Beecher family's abolitionist collaborators, I can see the ways in which Protestantism can indeed get so wrapped up in a kind of subjective sentimentality that it becomes "populist" in the worst sort of way, being "blown about" by every moral, intellectual, and political fad that comes down the pike. But insofar as we might think this subjectivist individualism a problem, it is far from just a "Protestant" problem; it is a problem that crosses denominations, confessions, faiths, everything. It is, I think, a democratic problem, one that Tocqueville presciently identified as "individualism," the soft disdain for public life and the turn to intimate, material pleasure as the hallmarks of, if not the good life, at least the comfortable one.

Insofar as the Catholic Church offered something of an alternative that was not much taken up in the America of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, though, it is exceedingly difficult to see how it might be an alternative today. Riven by internal conflicts, weakened by what is now a global sexual abuse scandal, and having been at least partly reconciled to modernity, what has the church to offer? Further, among our American Catholic intellectuals, furious debates have broken out about whether the American liberal democratic order is even worth supporting, never mind saving. Integralism is back, but it is not Brownson's.

Reading Brownson is indeed bracing, and Federici's volume is well worth the time, if only to remember a day when intellectual life in America grappled with our deepest moral, intellectual, and theological questions with an optimism, indeed faith, that the American project had much to offer both its own inhabitants and the world. It is also worth the time as an occasion to

reflect on whether that project has promise still or is just remembered from times gone by.

–Bryan T. McGraw
Wheaton College



Nomi Claire Lazar: *Out of Joint: Power, Crisis, and the Rhetoric of Time*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019. Pp. ix, 264.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670520000108

Out of Joint is an important book which returns temporality to political thought. Political power is commonly understood more as a territorial than as a temporal principle. From the eighteenth to the twentieth century the world-wide growth of nationalism put emphasis on territorial boundaries as constitutive of both national and popular sovereignty – sometimes in a paradoxical fashion, as when the British denied imperial citizenship to Indian subjects on the ground that citizenship could only be a national-territorial claim even if India was not or not yet a nation! In later times of globalization, it was again the question of territorial sovereignty and border porosity that became critical in the context of the circulation of labor, commodity, and capital. In today's postglobalization era, once again, territorial claims are in contention in debates about cross-border migration of political and economic refugees and the issue of data location. In all this concern about spatial rights and territorial proprietorship, the question of time gets subsumed, if not entirely lost. It is for this reason that this book must be extensively read and engaged with.

In recent times, temporality has been discussed mostly in the contexts of modernity and colonialism. Political scientists have critiqued the modern ideologies of progress, modernization, and development, anthropologists the temporal othering of so-called primitive and backward peoples, historians the universal ancient/medieval/modern periodization system that flattens out historical differences across the world. There is also well-known work on the rise of clock time as a disciplinary mechanism in early modernity and on the acceleration and telescoping of time in the contemporary media and data worlds. *Out of Joint* is distinctive in that it does not confine itself to the modernity question. Instead it seeks to show how temporality is constitutive of political power as such, that is, political power across diverse histories and