presuppose one who acts with particular providence, to demonstrate to the secular leftist how rooted to the Bible their own experience of reality is.

Two substantive concerns can be raised. First, Ledewitz's claim that "this life is really all there is for us" was already rejected within liberalism itself when J.S. Mill in his *Autobiography* explained the cause of his depression as the result of asking whether he could be genuinely happy if all his desired social reforms could be implemented. His resounding answer, "no," is one reason he was haunted by religion until the end of his life. Similarly, Alexis de Tocqueville points out democratic man's restlessness is due to his realization that he cannot find genuine happiness in the seventy or so years allotted to him. Reality bursts the bounds of mortal life.

Second, Ledewitz exaggerates when he claims the secular consensus collapses because political life is "a quest for the deepest truths of the meaning of human life" (55). While the deepest truths burst the categories of the secular consensus, I would qualify his claim that while political life *raises* life's "deepest truths," it does not *settle* them. Ledewitz's reliance on judgment in history, which he sees as a continuation both of Biblical and progressivist (from John Dewey) principles, leads him to exaggerate what politics can achieve. While religious democracy can provide the advantages of enabling people to live fuller lives than in the cramped conditions of the secular consensus, it should also enable people to recognize the inherent limitations of what politics, as practised by imperfect mortals, can achieve. The greatest advantage of religious democracy should be its recognition that the city of God differs radically from the earthly city. Ledewitz provides ample evidence demonstrating how, at this moment, exponents of the secular consensus need this reminder from the religious. But his justification of religious democracy needs this reminder as well.

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The Political Theory of Recognition: A Critical Introduction
Simon Thompson
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It is truly unfortunate that Hegel never saw the extent to which political theory has become fixated upon his idea of "mutual recognition." Given that Hegel himself argued that such philosophical insights generally come too late in any case, this misfortune is probably deserved. Yet he certainly would have been impressed with contemporary output on the subject of recognition: "It seems," notes Thompson, "as if every form of political action which is not exclusively economic or redistributive in character, and which involves issues of identity and difference in however indirect a manner, is considered to be a struggle for recognition" (160). Thompson's project is critically to assess three prominent theories of recognition (those of Charles Taylor, Nancy Fraser, and Axel Honneth) "in order to determine which one of them—or which combination of elements from different theories—is the most coherent and convincing" (196). True to the style of critical theory, this is not a debate as much as it is a discussion. Thompson presents quite penetrating criticisms of all three theories, which ought to make the authors grateful that he is actually sympathetic to their cause and not intent on destroying it. The analysis is in the hermeneutical tradition ("If my reading of Honneth is right ..."), and Thompson is scrupulously fair not only in his criticisms but also in his attempts to "reinterpret" their arguments in order to save them from their critics (including each other).

This is not a book for beginners. It is a clear articulation of complex ideas and complicated writings, but one should have a good grasp of the basics (Hegel would be helpful) before opening the cover. The structure and procedure are intricate: Thomp-

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son does not dispatch each theorist in turn (as one might find in a PhD thesis) but rather extracts certain ideas or themes from each theorist and uncurls them to see how well they hold up to his probing. A lesser theorist could not have succeeded with this line of inquiry, but the clarity of argument and the lucidity of the writing allow this approach to work. The niceties of “interpretation” may cause some frustration and impatience on the part of certain readers; the discussion over the fine distinctions between “critical” and “deconstructive” (100) may be teeth-grindingly pedantic to some. The same audience may become exhausted by the discursive approach (is Fraser’s criticism of Honneth accurate? Is Honneth’s portrayal of Fraser fair? And what of Butler’s and Olson’s critiques of Fraser, or Honneth’s account of Habermas or Dewey on representation?) It can begin to feel like a Russian novel with a cast of thousands. Yet (especially for those who *are* inclined to such an approach) Thompson’s treatment of these commentaries is vastly informative. There are those of us who would favour a more direct approach (“I argue *x*”) rather than a discursive one (“How should we evaluate what Fraser has to say about Honneth’s view of *x*?”), but there is nonetheless much to say for enjoying the scenery at times rather than simply cutting to the chase. In this case, Thompson’s investigation of the relationship between recognition and redistribution (chapter 5) and recognition and democracy (chapter 6) are particularly good and worth making the journey through the long discussion of “recognition as respect” versus “recognition as esteem” (which seems to depend a great deal upon an arbitrary distinction between what one means by “respect” and “esteem”).

Thompson’s incisive analysis of the claim by Taylor, Fraser, and Honneth that “a non-sectarian justification for their particular model of democracy can be provided” (151–58) is particularly worthy of a close and careful reading, especially as this claim—that democracy can incorporate different groups which hold distinct values, without depending upon “liberal” principles—is the most demanding and perplexing problem facing those who tout “deep diversity”.

This is, then, an edifying read for patient people. It does exactly what the author intends: to spell out the strengths and weakness of three exceptional theories of recognition. But where, in the end, does this leave us? Do these theories of recognition really give us enough to make radical changes to concrete political institutions or do their weaknesses make them too inconclusive? Thompson addresses this almost begrudgingly in a concluding chapter that is a verbose page-and-a-half long. It seems this is something we must determine for ourselves. But he gives us some very good tools for doing so.

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La dynamique du pouvoir sous la Ve République. Cohabitation et avenir des institutions

Antonin-Xavier Fournier
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Rares sont les mémoires de maîtrise publiables et encore moins nombreux ceux qui sont publiés. L’ouvrage d’Antonin-Xavier Fournier constitue donc une exception à la règle, mais une exception amplement justifiée par sa qualité. Basée sur une revue de littérature de près de 200 livres et articles spécialisés, cette étude porte essentiellement sur le phénomène de la cohabitation gauche-droite à la direction de l’État français. Ce phénomène relativement rare, qui n’a été observé que pendant neuf années sur un demi-siècle, n’en constitue pas moins l’une des grandes originalités du régime semi-présidentiel français.

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