

distinctively democratic concerns. The Theban Herald, the character least sympathetic to democracy in the play, is also the one to offer a view of courage close to Balot's take on democratic courage: "courage is forethought" (*Supp.* 510). More broadly, the play makes clear that *euboulia* (good judgment), including with respect to when and how courage should be exercised (see, e.g., *Supp.* 161), is a problem for all political regimes. This comes out clearly in Theseus' claim that any regime can make poor decisions when led astray by bad counsel, but can also make good decisions, too, under the right conditions (*Supp.* 235–45). Or take Herodotus's reflections on the success of Athens in the Persian war. Balot sees in Herodotus's praise of Athens as the saviors of Greece a recognition of the value of a distinctively democratic form of deliberation: "It is difficult to imagine the same scene at Sparta" (p. 96). But elsewhere in his text, Herodotus depicts scenes of counseling and decision making outside democratic contexts, such as Cyrus's war council in book I, that share in some of the supposedly distinctively democratic virtues.

I have only touched on some of what this rich book offers. I have said nothing, for instance, about the cautious but thought-provoking arguments that Balot advances concerning the intellectual debts owed by philosophy to democracy. All political theorists interested in ancient politics, the role of the virtues in politics, and democratic theory more broadly will benefit from a serious engagement with his argument. That courage is only one among the virtues, that reflection and deliberation are required for putting courage in its place within a properly ordered human life, that our emotional responses are subject to training and shaping and are amenable to reason: Balot sheds much light on these deep and engaging theses. But I am not convinced that they are distinctively democratic commitments. Greek literature and political reflection find a place for all of them outside of democratic contexts. Rather than finding democracy's distinctiveness in its focus on reflection and deliberation, perhaps we should seek it in its egalitarianism—the thought that these are problems for all citizens, not just the few.

#### **Secular Powers: Humility in Modern Political Thought.**

By Julie Cooper. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. 256p.

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— Joshua Mitchell, *Georgetown University*

One of the remarkable features in intellectual history is that once an idea takes hold, subsequent thinkers who oppose it often do so still under the shadow of what they oppose. Thus, where Plato invites us to consider that the "whatness" of a thing may be known only from the vantage point of the Eternal in which each thing that comes-into-being-and-passes-away participates, Aristotle rejects the intimation Plato offers (it can, after all, be *no more than* in imitation until the Good confers light

enough for Reason to see the Real Objects before it [*Republic*, Bk. VI, 508d–509b]), but not the question. For Aristotle, the "whatness" of a thing may be known through its *unfolding* rather than through its *participation*. Not through Platonic *methexis*, but rather through *telos*, can the whatness question be answered. And then, for the next two millennia, the parameters for understanding nature are shaped by this Aristotelian rejection of the Platonic answer but *not* the Platonic question—until Hobbes, among others under the shadow of Nominalism, declares that the world is nothing but matter in motion; that instead of a world of *qualities* of the sort that Aristotle imagined as *his* answer to Plato's daunting question, there are only *quantities* (*Leviathan*, Part I, Chap. 1, §§4–5).

To this can be added the case of the echoing responses to Hegel's idealism (through which the whole of history is comprehended under the category of the "concept")—inaugurated by Marx's purported liberation of dialectical thinking from the pious grip of German philosophy, and ending in our day with the postmodern invocation of pre- and nonrational "identity" as a strategy of resistance to the *totality* that Hegel's dialectic purportedly establishes. Rejecting Hegel's answer, these responses cannot escape his question: Might *thought* comprehend the whole—in Marx, by those in the *vanguard*; in postmodern thought, by scholars who master the conceptual pyrotechnics of "otherness"?

Julie Cooper's *Secular Power* wrestles with another enduring idea from which the West seems not to be able to escape, and by which the self-understanding of the *modern* West, in particular, has been hobbled: Augustine's antinomy between the "City of God" and the "City of Man," between Christian humility oriented by the sovereignty of God, on the one hand, and secular agency that purportedly cannot but lose its way, on the other. To be secular—is this to suffer the tragic fate of the prodigal son, who we know in advance will squander his inheritance, and who, we learn, returns home only after all the world has shown him that his confidence in himself has been pathetically misplaced? When the inheritance of "the father" has been frivolously spent, is it the fate of "the son" to feast on husks of corn (Luke 15:16)? To be secular—is this to *lack* the humility that would protect us from that fate?

Augustine's enduring antinomy, Cooper eloquently argues, lays hold of the modern world even as the modern world purports to reject the religious understanding that gave rise to the antinomy itself. The sovereign self that emerges in opposition to Augustine carries the Augustinian opposition within it, which it seems unable to expunge.

That this characterization of the modern self-satisfied and self-interested self perdures is beyond dispute: The modern, sovereign, self, we know before being told, seeks dominion over nature, over others, and even over itself. Here is "liberal man," the figure against whom so many on the Right and Left write, who is always less and more than the textual evidence about him warrants.

In *Secular Powers*, Cooper asks the question: Might it be that Hobbes, Spinoza, and Rousseau *do*, in fact, recognize the antinomy that Augustine posited, and seek to move beyond it? These three figures are particularly good choices for study. A careful reader generally comes away from pondering their work not exactly sure how they fit into preexisting (Augustinian) categories. In Hobbes's *Leviathan*, we find the claim that kingdoms are humanly made—yet the immediate threat to such kingdoms is human pride. Here, “making” and “humility” belong together, not apart. In Spinoza, we find a rejection of humility, not so that “making” may take the place of humility but, rather, so that on account of his one-substance Monism, the opposition between them may be overcome. In Rousseau, we find recognition of the problem left in Augustine's wake, the assertion that an overcoming of the opposition is necessary—and the lingering suspicion that he alternately deflates human pride and elevates it beyond all bounds, encourages “making” in one place, and seems to render it impossible elsewhere. Cooper gives us a reason for our general unease with each of these authors: They are attempting to accomplish something immensely difficult, namely, to establish a new set of categories, on the basis of which *secular humility* may become thinkable at all.

The question Cooper asks seems especially timely. There is a growing awareness that liberal institutions cannot be sustained without citizens who possess certain traits, not the least of which is an *ethos* of humility. There is, after all, ample evidence—from nature, in society, and within ourselves—that willful and unrestrained pride does immense damage. Liberal institutions cannot work well unless there is a check on pride, from within and from without. Yet in light of the damage that religion, too, can do when it is a “fungible marker of difference” (p. 13), that outward check, which often promises to remedy the ailments of secularism, is not a viable one. The ineradicable pluralism of the world militates against it. The way forward, Cooper uneasily proposes (“uneasy” because Augustine's spell cannot be easily broken [p. 158]), is at least marked out by Hobbes, Spinoza, and Rousseau, who explore the question of whether human agency *and* humility can coincide.

The treatment Hobbes, Spinoza, and Rousseau receive in Cooper's capable and gentle hands is well worth the effort that this short but dense book requires. What is perhaps most striking about the *Secular Powers*, however, is the posture the author adopts in the light of what could be called the *impossible possibility* of overcoming Augustinian categories. The ascending hope, in the chapters on Hobbes and Spinoza, that such an overcoming may indeed be possible, is countered with a following chapter on Rousseau, where hope dims and the reader is again shown just how intransigent the difficulty is. Yet rather than despair, Cooper holds on to the hope that secular

humility is possible because it is, finally, necessary. The genealogy offered provides less of a way forward than encouragement not to succumb to inherited antinomies. Here, the humility Cooper finds in the authors she studies is matched by the quiet hope that because secular humility is necessary, the dead weight of our inheritance need not have the final word.

*Secular Powers* is written with obvious care, not just with a view to scholarly adequacy but also about the current historical moment. If I were to pose a question about the premise of the book, it would be whether Christianity—or indeed the other monotheisms—*must* be understood to establish the sovereignty of God *or* the sovereignty of man; or whether the either/or opposition is one of several possibilities actually available. This question, wrestled with for several thousand years, echoes into debates we witness today around the world, not least within Islam. Within Christianity, the either/or distinction seems to be confirmed in the confrontation between Arminius and Calvin, and between Erasmus and Luther. Augustine clearly understood the *theoretical* opposition over which these later thinkers battled; but what is perhaps most interesting is his conclusion in *City of God*, Book V, Chapter 10, namely, that *both* God's sovereignty and human free will must be accepted—the one for the purpose of right belief, the other for the purpose of right living.

One should not pretend that this puts an end to the quandary that, Cooper suggests, shows no signs of being absolved in the West, irrespective of what Hobbes, Spinoza, and Rousseau sought to put in its place. Yet out of that other, more mysterious Augustinian reading of the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom, it may be asked whether the clearing for the project of secular humility to emerge becomes possible at all.

**A Theory of Justice for Animals: Animal Rights in a Nonideal World.** By Robert Garner. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013 208p. \$105.00.

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— Steve Cooke, *University of Sheffield*

In his book, Robert Garner brings together political theory and animal rights. He does this by bringing nonhuman animals within the scope of justice. Because Garner takes justice to be that area of morality that is enforceable, the rights of animals thus become a matter for political communities and an issue for which it is legitimate to place constraints on the freedoms of citizens. His project then becomes one of describing ideal circumstances of justice, and of tracing a nonideal path toward this ideal.

Garner begins from the premise that because nonhuman animals have interests, they are worthy of moral concern for their own sakes, and, as a result, they can have rights.