

he does lean on some well-established Straussian interpretive strategies. For example, some of his claims do not exactly depend on, but are assisted by, assumptions about the “structure of the *Treatise*” as a key to its meaning, such as the precise positioning of the Socratic allusion (p. 17, 35) in the conclusion to Book I, or the textual ordering of Hume’s *Essays* (p. 186). There are also claims about authorial intentions that are somewhat overplayed in a manner invited by some of Strauss’s methodological writings. Merrill thus refers to “the fact that Hume had to downplay, disguise, or downright lie about his heterodox views” about religion (p. 10), and yet—whatever the status of Christian orthodoxy in Britain at his time of writing—it is certainly not a *fact* that Hume *had* to do any such thing. Nevertheless, on the whole, the book actually emerges as a fine exemplar of just how fruitful some Straussian tropes can be when treated as useful heuristics rather than as hard rules for interpretation.

Merrill argues provocatively that Hume’s Socratic allusion holds the key to understanding the entire intellectual project of the *Treatise*: It expresses the view that philosophers must enter “into an alliance with ordinary citizens” (p. 26), rather than seek any other-worldly detachment in their reasoning, and should conceive of enlightenment as the self-awareness that emerges through a questioning activity that takes popular opinion seriously instead of attempting to stand above it. Although it might seem far-fetched to place such interpretive weight on a single remark, through an impressively dogged and detailed analysis, Merrill shows how his reading makes sense, and how it inspires Hume’s conception of enlightenment as an ultimately *personal* project of self-understanding that is nevertheless bound up with a distinct political vision.

Each chapter offers textually scrupulous, penetrating analyses of Hume’s idea of enlightenment and its consequences for the relationship between philosophy and politics. Following a detailed discussion of the Socratic allusion, the second chapter skilfully explains both the grounds of his “seeking” rather than “destructive” scepticism in the *Treatise* (p. 58) and his turn towards “human nature in all its manifestations” as the gateway to proper philosophizing (p. 60). The third and fourth chapters cover the best-known aspects of Books II and III of the *Treatise*, such as Hume’s view of moral psychology and motivations, and his ideas about justice, rights, and the status of the virtues. Throughout these discussions, Merrill displays a thorough command of Hume scholarship, and is carefully attuned to various interpretive debates over the identity of his moral thought, though most of the direct critical engagement with other commentators is confined to the footnotes.

After guiding us carefully through the *Treatise*, Merrill then spends the final two chapters connecting its concerns with those of Hume’s *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*. These are perhaps the most original and compelling

sections of the book, where we see the normative political payoff of Hume’s idea of enlightenment. Merrill explores the philosophical roots of Hume’s critique of religion, which is ultimately really only a “symptom” caused by an erroneous commitment to philosophical truth, one that views “the Platonic philosopher-king [as] the appropriate model for political society” (p. 146).

The normative vision that then emerges is of political liberalism and philosophical pragmatism. Within Hume’s thought, the securing of individual liberty takes priority. For him, the fact that wise laws and political institutions are the best way to protect individual freedom implies the rightness of republican government (pp. 137–138), because it secures the rule of law that is, in turn, necessary to enable commerce (p. 147). In order for the liberal commercial republic envisioned to flourish, it needs also to be cherished by the very middle-class individuals whose creation it assures (pp. 169–171). And, crucially, as Merrill emphasises, these are the very “honest gentlemen” whose opinions Hume thinks must be the starting point for meaningful philosophical reflection, and consequent self-knowledge, in the first place. The unpacking of a coherent theory across the *Treatise* and the *Essays* is another virtue of this valuable addition to Hume scholarship, which illustrates just how philosophically illuminating the historical analysis of political thought can be.

**The Biopolitics of Gender.** By Jemima Repo. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 218p. \$49.95.  
doi:10.1017/S1537592716002218

— Jennifer Denbow, *California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo*

This is a groundbreaking work. Jemima Repo has written a genealogy of gender that upends common approaches to gender in feminism. Her main argument is that gender is an apparatus of power that is wielded to regulate life and govern bodies and populations. The book starts with a critique of Judith Butler and ends with a positive appraisal of radical feminist Valerie Solanas’s *SCUM Manifesto*. Throughout, Repo’s arguments are scholarly and provocative, and they left this reader unable to think about gender in the way I had before reading the book.

The most dense and theoretical part of *The Biopolitics of Gender* is the introduction, which situates the book in a wide-ranging field of literature. Repo’s engagement with and challenge to Butlerian thought is perhaps the most theoretically significant. She argues that Butler dehistoricizes gender and deploys Foucaultian thought without attention to biopower. Repo’s aim is to restore biopower to understandings of sex and gender through a genealogy of gender akin to Foucault’s genealogy of sexuality.

In Chapter 1, the author begins by looking to the site in which gender was first “deployed into the sexual order” (p. 24): postwar psychological research on hermaphroditism.

John Money, an American medical psychology and pediatrics professor, introduced the concept of gender in his 1950s studies of intersexed children in order to argue that one aspect of an individual's sex was his or her learned gender. Understanding gender in this way allowed for the management of life by manipulating the behaviors of children and parents to uphold the sexual order. The importance of this concept is that gender "expand[ed] and multipl[ied] the access points of power to the body, rendering it more elastic and malleable and hence, more governable" (p. 24).

The book's genealogy moves from Money to psychoanalyst and physician Robert Stoller in Chapter 2. Stoller headed the Gender Identity Research Clinic in Los Angeles, and his research on transsexuality led to findings that are reflected in commonplace understandings of gender today. Stoller both split sex from gender (whereas Money saw gender as an aspect of sex) and coined the term "gender identity." Stoller's contribution was decisive as "[t]he biology/culture split and psychoanalysis were crucial tools that extended the reach of the biopolitical apparatus of gender" (p. 51). Now both culture and individual psyches could be targeted in order to regulate sexual behavior.

At the end of Chapter 2, the issue of race directly enters Repo's argument. She notes that Stoller's patients were mostly white and middle class, and his attention was on controlling the postwar white nuclear family. Repo concludes, interestingly, that this genealogy reveals that gender "was squarely an apparatus to tame, normalize, and regulate White, middle-class children and parents" (p. 74).

This insight about the racial and class origins of gender is important for the author's analysis in Chapter 3 in which she considers early, mostly Anglo-American, feminist deployments of gender. As she establishes, "feminist gender theory was modeled on a certain raced and classed biopolitics of sex in postwar America" (p. 76). Repo also examines the diverse ways in which these thinkers tied Money's and Stoller's ideas about gender to power and used them to serve feminist purposes. Feminists used the concept of gender to counter biological determinism and show how women's subordination was connected to socialization.

In Chapter 4, Repo examines demographics research from the late 1960s through the 1980s to show how gender became crucial to attempts to control populations. She argues that "the entry of gender into demography would transform population control into an explicitly liberal project about equality between the sexes and women's rights" (p. 106). Demographers argued that population rates could be controlled through altering gender roles. Repo points, for example, to American demographer Kingsley Davis, who recommended such policies as shortening paid maternity leave, raising taxes on families with children, and legalizing abortion in order to

limit reproduction. Davis saw traditional gender roles and divisions of labor as things to be manipulated in order to manage fertility and promote economic development.

One thing that Repo does not spend much time considering in Chapter 4 is how gender was being deployed in different demographic contexts. She mentions in passing that "[t]here was a widening gulf in the way in which demographers examined Western 'developed' countries and non-Western 'undeveloped' societies" (p. 120), and that this gulf had implications for the extent to which they thought that individuals could be seen as rational reproductive agents. This seems like a rather significant aspect of demographers' deployment of gender and its biopolitical implications, but Repo does not fully explore it.

Had Repo examined this aspect of demographic research, it would have nicely set up her analysis in Chapter 5. In this chapter, she traces contemporary gender equality policy in the European Union to the demographic concern with altering gender roles in order to manage the population. She demonstrates that EU policymakers saw an opportunity to manage women's labor and, thus, the need for immigration and immigrant labor through gender equality policies, such as parental leave, child care, and tax benefits for parents. Importantly, the European Commission noted such things as "Measures to facilitate work-life balance can have a positive impact on fertility" (quoted on p. 145), and "rigid gender roles can hamper individual choices and restrict the potential of both men and women" (quoted on p. 146). Such references show that policymakers, in neoliberal fashion, viewed individuals as rational self-managers. In this context, then, gender equality policy became a mode of neoliberal governmentality.

After Repo had spent the majority of the book examining American texts, her turn to Europe in this penultimate chapter is somewhat curious. While it is certainly a fascinating and important case study, it leaves the reader wondering how American policymakers have employed gender biopolitically. This would be an especially interesting question given the poor record of the United States on issues like maternity leave. This observation relates to a general question that the book must leave open: How would this genealogy differ if different sources had been used? Or another example: How would a genealogy that placed gender's entanglement with issues such as transnational population control and immigration at the center have differed? These questions reveal less about the shortcomings of this book and more about its importance. As Repo rightly makes clear, a genealogy necessarily provides a selective and fragmentary account. One of the great contributions of *The Biopolitics of Gender* is that it has laid the theoretical groundwork for other genealogies of gender.

Another of the book's significant contributions comes in the final chapter when Repo examines the possibility of having a feminist theory without gender. This is where she turns to the *SCUM Manifesto* and argues approvingly that it is an example of feminist theory that does not make recourse to gender. Once we understand gender as an apparatus of power, it becomes imperative that feminists question its emancipatory potential. Repo argues that feminists would do well to suspend their reliance on gender, which has undermined the more radical promise of feminism because "feminist gender theory must be understood as always already entangled in the liberal governmentalities that it seeks to contest" (p. 161). By the end of her book, it is difficult not to agree with this conclusion.

**The Socratic Turn: Knowledge of Good and Evil in an Age of Science.** By Dustin Sebell. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. 232p. \$39.95.  
doi:10.1017/S153759271600222X

— Joel Alden Schlosser, *Bryn Mawr College*

Dustin Sebell's *The Socratic Turn* begins by both defending and attacking political theory. On the one hand, Sebell takes the side of political theory against its more scientifically-minded colleagues, suggesting the importance of political theory as a potential science on its own terms. Yet on the other hand, Sebell asserts that political theory has failed in an essential way by relinquishing inquiry into "values," agreeing with empiricists that facts must stand apart as the proper subject of political inquiry. This promising, if paradoxical, overture to *The Socratic Turn* leads Sebell back to the figure who occupies the entirety of Sebell's book: Socrates, the "founder of political philosophy" who famously turned from an early interest in natural science to inquiry about justice pursued among his fellow Athenians. Sebell focuses his monograph almost exclusively on the five Stephanus pages of Plato's *Phaedo* in which Socrates describes his intellectual development (roughly 96a–100e). This concentrated attention allows Sebell to work through the text with extremely fine-grained detail. The conventional account of the Socratic Turn generally follows Cicero's poetic rendition: Philosophy once dealt with phenomena of the natural world; Socrates distinguished himself by calling philosophy down from the heavens into the *polis*. Cicero's description ostensibly comes from Plato's *Phaedo*, where Socrates describes what appears as a two stage process: Socrates was initially keen on the wisdom of natural science but then found these lacking; this disappointment turned Socrates to investigate human opinions about the good and the beautiful. Sebell's analysis does not displace this conventional story but complicates it in three parts: highlighting the limits of natural science in giving an account of its basic categories; showing the difficulty of scientific teleology (and teleology *in toto*); and elaborating the necessity of the Socratic Turn to examining

opinions about justice in light of the limits of natural science. For Sebell, this step-by-step approach to Socrates' intellectual development (as described in the *Phaedo*) shows the error of separating political science from political philosophy and the urgency of returning to something like the Socratic project.

Sebell first turns to the problems young Socrates discovered in natural science. Materialistic natural science attempts to confirm that nothing can come without a cause. This approach fails, however, when one inquires about ultimate causes. The heterogeneity of the world, in particular its distinct classes and kinds of beings, is, in Sebell's words, "demonstrably noetic in origin" (p. 13). In other words, Socrates' investigations lead him to see the primacy of form for an account of the causes of the world. Yet this form is separate from the material things under investigation. Something immaterial appears to put together distinct beings from separate parts, to count or calculate. "Only a mind can do this" (p. 69).

The turn to mind brings Socrates to the question of teleology. Anaxagoras, on Socrates' account, had argued that "in fact mind (*nous*) is both the orderer and the cause of all things" (97b8c2; p. 75). Natural science had promised a teleological account of the universe, that things came to be to serve a final cause. Yet Anaxagoras's account, as Socrates investigates it, prompts skepticism about this assumption. The materialistic approach of understanding beings "from below" failed but so too does the teleological approach of understanding beings "from above." Teleology still relies on assumptions about the nature of things, namely that they follow an order of the mind (p. 83). When Socrates takes this account to the nature of the good, however, Anaxagoras's account cannot show how *nous* constitutes particulars. The search for the cause of the whole, a search that animated the young Socrates' first investigations, ends in failure.

The failure of natural science to respond to Socrates' desire to know the causes of the whole prompts the Socratic Turn. Socrates' "second sailing" begins from the insight that the accounts of natural science preempt choice. The accounts of the natural scientists, therefore, come into conflict with the idea that human beings can choose to be just. People living in society must examine their opinions about justice—they must figure out how, in Josiah Ober's words, to go on together—and natural science does not help here. Yet the mode of questioning with which Socrates began and which led Socrates to see the inadequacies of natural science also shapes the path upon which Socrates embarks with his turn. Seeking to uncover contradictions within definitions or hypotheses, a task that Socrates first pursued with respect to natural science, forms the substance of the dialectical approach that Socrates now brings to human opinions.

While *The Socratic Turn* does not detour in any radical way from the conventional account of Socrates'