

diversity of other humans in the world” (p. 7). He explains the historical and social background for diverse strands of political thought and tries his best to make the ideas and arguments of all his authors comprehensible. Watanabe does not hide his own preferences, however, and reveals his commitment to the universal value of equality, justice, and freedom. His universalist stance sometimes leads to a somewhat ahistorical perspective, especially when he deals with ancient Chinese thinkers such as Confucius or Mencius. These thinkers and their period are not the topic of his book, however, and are mainly used as illustrations of Watanabe’s central claim that people of all places and times had similar problems in organizing society and that the proposed solutions to these problems that seem to be completely disparate at first glance can be seen to share a common ground after more careful analysis. Watanabe can therefore be understood as continuing the work of two of his preferred authors, Fukuzawa Yukichi and Nakae Chōmin, in trying to show that political thinkers in the East and in the West are actually only proposing different expressions of the same universal reason and justice. However a reader might think about this project, she cannot but profit from Watanabe’s clear and fresh presentation, from all the information provided in the book and from its balanced and careful argumentation. The book is therefore highly recommendable for everybody interested in Japan’s history and political thought.

Against War and Empire: Geneva, Britain and France in the Eighteenth Century, by Richard Whatmore. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012.

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Richard Whatmore’s ambitious book is a two-track study in political extinction. At its centre it is an account of the final period of Geneva’s existence as a truly independent self-governing political entity. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Geneva was living on borrowed time. A tiny commercial republic nestled between the Swiss Cantons and the rising power of France, this walled city without significant territory had retained its independence only because the balance of power between France, Switzerland, and Savoy dictated that none could encroach upon Geneva without risking open hostility with the others. Yet as the eighteenth century progressed, Geneva found itself increasingly at risk from French interference. The rise of the modern

large-scale commercial state, aggressively expansive in its combination of fiscal and military powers, spelled doom for Europe's tiny republics. Geneva's independence couldn't last: an abortive revolution in 1782 was followed by increasing French intervention. The turmoil of the French Revolution in 1789 was followed by France's military expansion, before its eventual defeat at the hands of the British-led European alliance. In 1815, Geneva became part of the Swiss Federation, its republican independence a thing of the past.

The richness of Whatmore's book emerges in the parallel story of extinction he charts: the increasingly unworkable attempts to articulate a coherently republican political philosophy which championed the independence of small states as self-governing entities which could remain commercially prosperous, politically free, and not subjugated by the fiscal-military behemoths emerging to dominate Europe. Whatmore offers detailed investigation of live political debates at the level of pamphleteering and political engagement, employing extensive archival research to explore the development of political thought not just through great works in the "canon"—Rousseau, as well as his critics, feature heavily—but via the interplay of ideas at practical and theoretical levels. Yet the account is animated at its core by "jealousy of trade," the central item in eighteenth-century political thought.

Jealousy of trade—the title of a famous essay by David Hume, and most extensively analysed by Istvan Hont—refers to the process by which the logic of politics trumps, indeed dictates, that of economics, but also entails that there are economic limits to national politics because domestic political actors cannot simply stop economic activity of which they disapprove. If Marxism can be usefully caricatured as holding that underlying economic factors determine political events, David Hume and his friend Adam Smith held something like the opposite view. In political decision making, considerations of military strategy and sectional advantage always prove more powerful than appeals to pure economic gain—with the latter remolded to serve the dictates of the former. What made this process particularly dangerous in the eighteenth century was the innovation of public credit. Large-scale commercial states could borrow almost endlessly to fund wars of aggression, but these fiscal-military war machines would either be destroyed by the devastating wars they could now engage in, or destroy themselves by fixating upon the repayment of creditors, privileging the demands of debt-servicing over the imperative of *salus populi*.

Jealousy of trade is crucial, because it is the specter that haunts the central actors in Whatmore's account. His story is primarily told through examination of successive generations of Genevan *représentants*: citizens of the republic without full rights to sit on the magistrate councils wielding executive power, who represented grievances from below. Before 1782,

représentants tended to constitute an internal group of critics, agitating for the reinvigoration of Genevan republican life through an emphasis on civic participation, a reduction of the corrupting effects of luxury, and the centrality of Calvinist *moeurs* to good and free political life. After 1782, the *représentants* dispersed: to France, where Genevans played a central part in the Revolution; but also to Britain and Ireland, where they were frequently at the centre of public intellectual life. Exiled from a broken republic, the *représentants* advocated not only a return to Genevan republican independence, but a sea-change in the conduct of the great commercial powers. The exiles understood that there could be no future for an independent republican Geneva in a world of fiscal-military war machines intent on dominating the continent. Geneva's fate was inescapably tied to that of the great powers: if she were to survive, it would have to be with their acquiescence.

The Genevan republicans fell back upon two main hopes, for which they agitated alternatively. Either Britain could keep France in check on the continent and guarantee small-state independence whilst exercising her naval prowess to expand commercial empire *outside* the mainland. Or the great powers would have to abandon jealousy of trade altogether, pursuing peaceful economic policies without the distorting imperative of reason of state. Historically, the first option more or less came to pass—but too late for Geneva, and in any case Britain's strategic interests left it unmoved by the plight of Europe's small states. The second hope was a pipe-dream: if perpetual peace was the precondition for small state republican independence in theory, in practice the pacification of Europe followed devastating total wars that obliterated the independence of small republics and the conditions in which they could exist.

Against War and Empire, in both style and content, will primarily be of interest to historians. But there is a great deal to be learnt by political theorists if they are willing to move beyond the confines of academic compartmentalization. Whatmore's examination of Rousseau's relationship with Geneva's politics and politicians constitutes not only the best study of the topic to date but illustrates the treacherous terrain political theory enters when meeting political practice. Whilst Rousseau clearly stated in *Du contrat social* that democracy was a form of government fit only for gods, he was nonetheless assailed by Genevan conservatives for his dangerous promotion of democratic rule. Yet Rousseau was by no means the most radical of the Genevans: radical *représentants* found Rousseau insufficiently reformist in his *Lettres écrites de la montagne*, and agitated for more thoroughgoing democratic reforms, taking power away from the magistrate bodies. Rousseau himself despaired of both sides, frustrated by the way his ideas were used and abused in practice. The lesson from Whatmore's account is stark: once political ideas

get out into the world, nobody, least of all their authors, can control them. This raises the challenge of what political theory is *for*. Whether ideal or non-ideal in orientation and endeavour, the existence of the real-world and its impact upon the unexpected afterlife of a theoretical position—as illustrated by Rousseau’s Genevan reception—suggests that theorists should think not only about the “input” factors when shaping their theoretical edifices, but also how their theories might be subject to appropriation by non-theorists, and what that might mean for their status *as* theories. Similarly, with regards to a related debate gaining particular attention at present: “realism” in political theory should focus, precisely, on more than just the construction of theory, at least if the endeavour is to constitute (as many claim it should) more than a set of abstract reflections without bearing on practice.

Whatmore’s study is instructive regarding the necessary facts of modern political reality. Those who seek a republican revival would do well to pay attention. In addition to well-known criticisms of republican projects—that historically they have necessarily been small-scale and reliant upon homogenous, materially equal populations, sustained by a disenfranchised slave class—Whatmore reminds us that small European republics were typically *not* democratic, and certainly not on any model of representation upon which we now rely, both practically and intellectually. Genevan political liberty proved unsustainable in the face of two inevitabilities: intrusion of international relations into domestic politics, and the imperatives of commerce and economic competition. These factors extinguished Genevan republicanism. Small state republics disappeared from Europe due to profoundly powerful causes. It will take much more than theory to bring back their values, even assuming we should want to.

There is a wider lesson. Hume and Smith did not see jealousy of trade as ending with the eventual pacification of Europe, should one power eventually emerge to dominate it. Rather, the predicament of warring commercial states would be relocated to a global level. Europe has been pacified. But, to use Smith’s language, the progression was unnatural and retrograde: Germany, twice defeated in total war, increasingly assumes dominance via command of the European Union, a political-economic mongrel entity which in the short term risks precipitating rather than alleviating crisis, as Germany’s domestic political pressures exacerbate a tendency to forget the original pacific intent of economic, not political, union. As for the long term, have we escaped jealousy of trade? It is naive to think so. Which again raises questions of political extinction. With a deep democratic deficit in the EU, and the imperatives of global trade and military bellicosity in the context of shrinking natural resources and a devastated climate, what is to say that yesterday’s

commercial behemoths won't be tomorrow's Genevas? If so, are we any better placed than the *représentants* to cope?

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