On Thinking Institutionally by **Hugh Heclo.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 220pp., £18.99, ISBN 978 0 19994600 6

This work addresses the 'modern impasse' created by a culture of individualism and a multitude of institutional scandals in American life and politics: the 'fundamental distrust of institutions' (p. 11). Having set out the problem, Hugh Heclo argues that the view of institutions primarily as 'barriers and weights that impede our personal journeys toward meaning' (p. 35) is not only misplaced but dangerous. He argues that institutions are valuable, representing 'inheritances of valued purpose with attendant rules and moral obligations ... [a] socially ordered grounding for human life' (p. 38). Rejecting the general culture of anti-institutional absolute freedom, he argues that such a position in fact leaves us 'perplexed, burdened, and looking for some fixed points of reference' (p. 39). Although institutions can be enchaining, they also serve to enable. It is in this context that Heclo argues for 'institutional thinking'.

The term institutional thinking constitutes a 'respect in depth' for institutions (p. 89). It is cast as a middle ground between 'thinking in organizational or bureaucratic terms' (p. 90) and utopianism, or revolutionary zeal. A 'person thinking institutionally has entered into a pre-existing normative field' (p. 98), 'thoughtfully taking delivery of and using what has been handed down to you' (p. 98). Second, tasks are 'infus[ed] with value beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand' (p. 101). Third, institutional thinking involves expanding one's time horizons, with individuals 'living an implicated life, always both inheriting and bequeathing' (p. 109).

Heclo draws on a variety of current and historical examples to make his case, also utilising recurring sporting analogies. These methods make a book intended for a general and student readership relatively accessible, while the detail of the argument will be of interest to those heavily involved in the study or practice of politics. The work is very US-centric, and it is a shame that more connections were not made with developments in the rest of the world – though the book equally constitutes an excellent primer for the outsider on aspects of American political history.

A nagging doubt for this reader concerns the apparently inherently conservative nature of 'thinking institutionally'. However, Heclo convincingly addresses many potential dangers of, and challenges to, his position (ch. 5), recognising that 'to live in a world of nothing but institutional thinking would be a monstrosity' (p. 183). Ultimately, Heclo's argument for the 'countercultural act' (p. 181) of institutional thinking is in turn interesting, challenging and invigorating.

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Luck, Value and Commitment: Themes from the Ethics of Bernard Williams by **Ulrike Heuer and Gerald Lang (eds).** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. 338pp., £40.00, ISBN 978 0 19 959932 5

Bernard Williams notoriously remarked that, in their professional capacities, philosophers are not like scientists. Whereas scientists can always contribute useful data, philosophers risk simply getting in the way: blocking progress by generating noise and misunderstanding. Accordingly, only those who are very good at philosophy should bother doing it; only they will make worthwhile contributions.

How might Williams have received this collection? It is difficult to say. On the one hand these essays are of extremely high quality, and there can be no doubting the philosophical prowess of the (sometimes highly prestigious) contributors. On the other, the collection is organised specifically around 'themes': on individual issues and ideas found in Williams' work but explored separately by each author. And there tensions arise.

With the exception of Gerald Lang's discussion of 'speciesism', these essays all centre on what might be called Williams' middle period: his writings from the late 1970s and 1980s, principally *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* and the papers collected in *Moral Luck*. Contributors generally focus on specific passages or papers from Williams, before developing their own preferred position. This sometimes leads to striking lacunae. Brad Hooker and Philip Pettit, for example, seek to defend consequentialist ethical theory from Williams' criticisms, yet do not address his most forceful claim: that because ethical theory cannot understand the interplay of theory and practice, it is doomed to incoherence. More generally, the emphasis on individual themes generates little sense of Williams' overarching ambitions. With the important exception of Susan Wolf's considerations on having 'one thought too many', Williams' understanding of the 'morality system' receives

little attention, despite being a central concern connecting his ideas on reasons, moral luck, moral knowledge and ethical theory – the principal themes around which this collection is organised.

Furthermore, the overall tendency of this collection is orthogonal to Williams' urging in his later work: that philosophy be practised as a 'humanistic discipline' concerned with the breadth of human knowledge and experience, rather than prioritising refined technical analysis in a scientistic mode. That claim, of course, is itself highly controversial. Those who disagree with Williams' vision of what philosophy should be like will most likely receive these essays doubly well: as high-quality analyses of specific topics, originally raised by Williams but appropriately singled out for detailed examination. Those who hope for a more humanistic discipline, however, may feel that something important is missing.

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Framing Democracy: A Behavioral Approach to Democratic Theory by **Jamie Terence Kelly.** Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012. 157pp., £24.95, ISBN 978 0 691 15519 7

Jamie Terence Kelly argues in this work that 'just as in economics and law, normative democratic theory must begin to pay attention to the picture of human choice described by empirical psychology' (p. 1). Specifically, the text focuses on judgement-based theories in which citizens are understood to be seeking the common good. Kelly is anxious to point out, however, that the 'behavioural approach' referred to in this book is *not* that usually associated with Skinner *et al*. and 'behaviouralism'. Rather, Kelly takes for granted humans' 'internal mental states' – as do many psychologists, economists and other social scientists – and focuses unreflectively on their implications for democracy.

Thus this brief book describes a 'behavioral approach to normative democratic theory' (p. 1). Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the role of 'framing effects' and their largely negative role in democratic decision making. Chapter 2 organises extant theories of democracy according to the author's judgement taxonomy. Chapter 3 – the core of the book – makes a case for the key advantage of the behavioural approach to democratic theory, namely as 'a way to reconcile nor-

mative claims about democracy with troubling empirical evidence regarding the epistemic abilities of citizens' (p. 4). In chapter 4 the theory is applied to minimalist and maximal theories of democracy, and finally chapter 5 considers the institutional implications of the behavioural approach to democratic theory on media, constitutional review and public education.

Political scientists who are sympathetic to empirical approaches to democracy may find Kelly's 'behavioural approach' theoretically promising. However, those familiar with the criticisms of social science by thinkers including Peter Winch will inevitably question the practical value (and even the *possibility*) of a behavioural theory of democracy for improving democratic practice in specific cultural contexts – let alone generally. And affecting democratic practice is ultimately what Kelly seeks to accomplish. But despite the author's attempt to 'lessen the gap that currently exists between philosophical theories of democracy and practical problems regarding the design of institutions in democratic societies' (p. 124), the larger issues of democracy as a human practice and its *practical* relation – if any – to political theory and meta-theory are problematically absent from Kelly's otherwise recommendable book.

Overall, *Framing Democracy* is well written and logically organised. Scholars and graduate students interested in the literature of democratic theory will find much to debate in this thoughtful monograph.

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Freedom after the Critique of Foundations: Marx, Liberalism, Castoriadis and Agonistic Autonomy by **Alexandros Kioupkiolis.** Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 276pp., £60.00, ISBN 978 0 230 27912 4

Freedom after the Critique of Foundations is a rigorous work of political theory with due diligence paid to theoretical consistency and ontological clarity. Alexandros Kioupkiolis sets out a philosophical and political perspective as profound as it is intricate. To achieve its aim, the book's argument is split into three parts, each of which identifies and appraises one of three paradigms of freedom: essentialist, liberal and agonist.

In the first and second parts, through insightful discussions of figures such as Marx, Kant and J. S. Mill,