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A JOURNAL OF LITERARY AND INTELLECTUAL ESSAYS



hinc lucem et pocula sacra

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EDITOR'S LETTER

This term's CHR is unmistakably weighted in favour of the discipline of Political Thought and is duly dedicated to the memory of the late historian Istvan Hont, whose obituary Professor John Robertson has kindly allowed us to print. First off, Paul Sagar surveys how the priorities and assumptions of political justice might be swept away in the wake of ecocatastrophe and asks whether our moral tape-measures can be stretched to encompass the lofty demands of intergenerational justice. In light of an ambitious new edition of the work, Ben Slingo appraises the sovereign logic underpinning Thomas Hobbes' classic *Leviathan*. Armchair socialists are politely asked to vacate their seats as the practicalities or impracticalities of ideology are taken to task in Charles Cornish-Dale's review of Alain Badiou's *Philosophy for Militants*. James Stafford assesses the place of a neglected figure of the Scottish Enlightenment in his review of a recent work on Adam Ferguson. On the more unpredictable end of the political spectrum, Pascale Siegrist follows the meanders and false turns of anarchist theory. Completing this regiment of political thinkers, Ashraf Ahmed evaluates David Miller's attempt to upset the universalist substrata of the post-Rawlsian intellectual landscape. Those of you with a natural aversion to political argufying, fear not, as we have squeezed in a few errant disciplines here and there. Cal Revely-Calder tries to pin down the wily JG Ballard amidst the contortions and evasions of his well-honed interview technique. Reviewing Denys Turner's recent tome and fighting against the impersonal trappings of a Medieval Church doctor, Ruth Jackson peers into the shadowy biography of Thomas Aquinas. And for all of you who are dewy-eyed for the halcyon days of George W. Bush's presidency, Samuel Garrett Zeitlin offers us a not exactly topical but certainly pleasurable review of the great man's autobiography *Decision Points*. Closing the issue, but hopefully sounding no fatal death-knell, we have opted to reprint Nigel Spivey's funeral oration for our illustrious predecessor *The Cambridge Review*.

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Samuel Beckett once turned down an interview with a brief note reading "I have no views to inter". Whether or not this was accurate, it was a pessimistic impression of what might have transpired. Good interviews can be more than interments, if the interviewer has enough grace under pressure to take on their subject, and force more out of them than stock responses and wearied formulae. Under David Frost's questioning, Richard Nixon laid fewer ghosts to rest than he would have liked, and plenty of skeletons rose up in their place. Interviews become troublesome when this combative, restless sort of questioning goes missing, and the contest becomes one-sided. That doesn't make aggression nine-tenths of the law; it just means that the interview has to be forged in the space between two viewpoints, not merely one or the other. The present volume, *Extreme Metaphors*, edited by Simon Sellars and Dan O'Hara, is a good example of this, being at turns more or less sparky or dull, and how gripping you find these encounters with J.G. Ballard depends on how hot the interpersonal forge is blowing.

CAL REVELY - CALDER

KAFKA WITH UNLIMITED CHICKEN RIEV

A REVIEW OF *EXTREME METAPHORS: INTERVIEWS WITH J.G. BALLARD, 1967-2008*

FOURTH ESTATE, 2012

Ballard wrote eighteen novels and many more short stories, dealing in hallucinatory worlds, concrete landscapes, deranged professional classes and the rise of suburban nightmares. As *Extreme Metaphors* moves along, the years pass and the list of published works gets longer, which feeds the lazy tendency of interviewers to keep things general, to look for a mythic coherence through the fabrication of overarching 'themes', as if on some level these books could be distilled to a common essence, which, once isolated, would solve The Ballard Puzzle. The trouble with Ballard, in interviews, was an ability to settle into the situation and accept these truth-seekers, to find a languid ease well-hidden beneath the wildly imaginative worlds he described in his fictions and these conversations. He was good at playing the oracle. At times, his words are both beautiful and oddly stagey:

Every day millions of cells die in our body, others are born. Every time we open a door, every time we look out across a landscape - millions of minute displacements of time and space are occurring. One's living in a continuous cataclysm anyway - our whole existence takes place in the eye of a hurricane.

We might be reluctant to interrupt Ballard in full flow, but it's a useful temptation: the phrase "our whole existence takes place in the eye of a hurricane" is as smoothly composed as its meaning is disturbing, and it's moments like this that give many of the forty-four interviews a pontifical air, as if the punchiest intentions had simmered down into little more than cues, opportunities for the writer to deliver a pre-written spiel. Again: "The bourgeois novel is the greatest enemy of truth and honesty that was ever invented." Interesting, but the moment to interrogate this sentence was a moment passed up in the interview. Often, Ballard's pronouncements don't get the attention they deserve, which would have been a critical kind, whether in the pejorative or merely analytical senses of the word. He's more interesting than several interviewers gave him credit for; reverential silence isn't always the best kind of respect.

You feel like Sellars and O'Hara realise this - besides, they can't be faulted for material they didn't create - and so alongside the less lively interviews, they've set a couple of oddities. For instance, the combative Lynn Barber, who let the above passage go uninterrupted but was elsewhere quick and trenchant:

Ballard: ...the novelist, when he's writing about other people's emotions, doesn't have to know the blood pressure of the young woman who's getting excited by her lover.

Barber: Actually, you tend to put that sort of fact into your stories.

Ballard: Because I'm interested in that kind of thing..

The repartée comes to life in these rapid exchanges of fire. Or take Iain Sinclair, who turns up with his usual perplexing sagacity, seeming to know more about *Crash* than Ballard does; in his momentary hesitations and repetitions, marking time - 'yes, yeah, yes' - you can hear Ballard rushing to keep up with a critic ahead of his subject:

Ballard: I just multiplied variants on [the character's] name. Tallis and Traven and so on. But, no, I don't know where Vaughan came from.

Sinclair: He turns up in *The Atrocity Exhibition*. He was there before *Crash*.

Ballard: Does he? Yes. He was a sort of psycho. I never read my own stuff. It must have come from there. There was a connection between the two.

Sinclair: Yes, but how did he arrive the first time? If there is a first time, because I'm convinced all your work is one book.

Ballard: Well... Yes, of course it is. Of course, that's true of all readers. One doesn't want to irritate. Yes, yeah, yes.

Ballard initially studied medicine at Cambridge, intending to be a psychiatrist, before dropping out to do English in London, but he never lost his keen interest in human bodies and the minds at work inside them. The phrase 'a sort of psycho' isn't particularly precise by the standards of this lost doctor, but as well as revealing something about his attitude to his own work, it also illuminates his notion of the 'inner life', a primal and darkly-lit world too long ignored and about to resurface through

the aggressively bland conformities of consumerism. Precision would have to crumble by the psychic roadside in this brave new world, a world little better or worse than "a sort of deranged psychiatric institution".

"This author is beyond psychiatric help": the opinion of the first publisher to receive *Crash* in 1972. Pithy, and a cheery Ballard remembered thinking "total artistic success!", although it's probably a memory softened by the novel being accepted elsewhere less than a year later. *Crash* is about a group of car-crash victims who get sexual kicks from staging and enduring a series of increasingly violent road accidents; it was controversial when it first appeared in 1973, and the David Cronenberg film of 1996 breathed a predictable life back into the controversy. Ballard enjoys playing the gentleman rebel, hidden in a shabby house in Shepperton, but across *Extreme Metaphors* you can watch the *Crash* debates flare and fade time and again, and faced with stubborn, occasionally moralistic questioning, he wasn't always so staunch:

It's a cautionary tale in a sense, how I see the future. Sex times technology equals the future.

(1973)

Crash is not a cautionary tale. *Crash* is what it appears to be. It is a psychopathic hymn. But it is a psychopathic hymn which has a point.

(1995)

It has to be a cautionary tale. If not, it's a psychopathic statement.

(1996)

In a way it's a sort of psychopathic hymn - there's almost a religious dimension to it, in a peculiar way...

(2008)

This was partly a critical tease, game-playing, but partly also a self-protection racket, depending on how much unwelcome attention he was being paid. The protagonist of *Crash* was called James Ballard, and

it's no surprise that when Channel 4 sent Joan Bakewell to interview him for 'Memento', she picked up on this and blinded him with her critical acumen: "Now, this is a deeply disturbing book. Were you very disturbed when you wrote it?" Perhaps in the hope of heading off stale kinds of biographical criticism, James Ballard wasn't a name he'd use again, not even in the semi-autobiographical *Empire of the Sun*. In 2006 he refers to "narrators or substitutes for myself", as if he'd withdrawn behind a rank of Ballard mannequins and let them take the fall both inside and outside the fiction; it's a sudden insight into how he wrote his own role in the alchemy of turning visual imagination into textual narrative - a way to "rediscover the present for myself", as if his writing were a kind of private drama - but, as is frequently the case, the interviewer (Toby Litt) makes too little of these intriguing and brief thoughts.

In the end, this isn't fatal to the pleasures of reading *Extreme Metaphors*, which blossom in the difference between a live interview and the belated act of reading the results, here in 2013 or beyond. We can delay and dwell on what we think the interviewers missed, or what they picked up on. Fortunately, as Sellars points out, "this collection merely scratches the surface" of the uncollected Ballard interviews out there. The joys of reading this volume are private and page-bound, born of our giving pause to meditate on the fragments of Ballardian thought tossed up in conversation. Living beyond their contexts, which often have the slightly dulled verbal sheen of lecture-scripts, phrases like "theatre of the road", "suburb of the soul" and "glamorous apocalypse" rear up like haunting signposts. Or the savagely witty description of the worlds of *Super-Cannes* and *Cocaine Nights*: "Kafka with unlimited chicken kiev". His ghostly insights linger on because they echo something uncannily true about his future, our present, modern Western society and its discontents. "I see the future developing in one way - towards the home": spoken thirty years before social networking or smartphones, before the ability to stage social interaction in the silence of a locked room. Ballard could always be intelligent, lively and deeply unsettling: as the interviews of *Extreme Metaphors* show, he was at his keenest when someone could match his sharpness, and unsettle his self-possession.

What might contemporary Anglophone (sometimes known as 'analytic') political philosophy look like from the perspective of future generations, attempting to survive in a 'broken world' devastated by climate change? The answer of Tim Mulgan's short and provocative book is variously: baffling, irrelevant, selfish, and probably pathological.

Mulgan imagines a set of history of philosophy lectures given to students in a broken future. A world in which the basic needs of all individuals cannot be met; where unpredictable weather patterns mean not enough can be guaranteed for all; where recurring 'survival bottlenecks' mean compulsory lotteries are instituted to decide who will be permitted to go on living. These future generations look back with anger - and more than a little incomprehension - upon the selfishness of our 'affluent' age (which they think of in the sort of vague terms, following the collapse of the internet, the flooding of major cities, and general loss of knowledge, as we now think of the 'dark' ages). These lectures from the future attempt to get inside our heads: to understand how we could act so callously, could ruin things so badly.

A nice touch is how Mulgan puts his thought experiment to use in different ways. Not much of our affluent philosophy remains: John Rawls's works survive only in fragments, with only scraps of the once overwhelming commentary literature preserved in the *Princeton Codex*. Much else has to be pieced together and inferred. Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* survives intact (and the suggestion that future people might read Nozick as we now read Plato is a clever one). But broken world academics are unsure what to make of it: is this extreme minimal-state libertarianism an outlandish statement of marginal affluent views, or does it reveal the underlying pathologies of our society? More generally, from the perspective of a broken world, evaluations of philosophical approaches shift. The brutality of utilitarianism's indifference to those in the losing minority may emerge as a virtue for a world of survival lotteries, as may its insistence on hardheaded calculation. These are all interesting thoughts, as are some of the interpretations Mulgan derives from his approach (Nozick, whose position logically committed him

PAUL
SAGAR

INTER-
GENERATIONAL
JUSTICE

A REVIEW OF
*ETHICS FOR A
BROKEN WORLD:
IMAGINING
PHILOSOPHY
AFTER
CATASTROPHE*

BY TIM MULGAN

ACUMEN, 2011

to denying that anybody owns anything, emerges as putatively the most left-wing of affluent philosophers, which will be a surprise to many). Yet it is ultimately unclear exactly what sort of book Mulgan has written. The prose and content read like a beginner's introduction. But the future perspective skews the importance of rival approaches to political philosophy for somebody approaching the subject today, whilst much of what is of value here will only be apparent to those fairly well-versed in the established literature.

For Mulgan has, I take it, two aims which extend beyond merely providing a beginner's introduction - though it is quite a question how to hold them together. The first, apparently obvious (though perhaps it is not) aim is to expose the contingency and parochialism of much present political philosophy. To take the easiest example, John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* starts from the premise that society is able to meet everybody's basic needs, and the crucial questions of distributive justice relate to how to allocate the surplus fairly. Yet from the perspective of a world in which we can't meet everybody's basic needs - where lotteries determine who gets food and water - Rawls looks bemusing and irrelevant. Of course, Rawls himself wouldn't have objected: his theory was explicitly and always meant to apply only to societies specifically like ours here and now. But the point cuts deeper in many other regards. We 'affluents' tend to take it for granted that everybody has a right to reproduce, that a desirable society will allow freedom of speech, and that democracy is both the best way to secure good political government and is valuable insofar as it respects the equality of citizens, and so on. But to students in the broken world all of this is baffling. When population control is the central question of species survival, who could object to the regulation of reproduction? After the devastation of global climate change, how many reasonable people would enshrine the right to deny proven climate science? Given the abject failure of democracies to prevent climate catastrophe - in particular, their structural predilection for caring only about short-term consequences whilst pandering to the selfishness of greedy electors - how could such a system of rule ever be tolerated again?

Some contemporary political philosophers have a tendency to carry on as though, by sitting in the comfort of their armchairs and creating fantasy scenarios to test their 'intuitions', they are penetrating into the ultimate truths of morality and politics. The real world's job is to either get out of the way, or do as the philosophers say. Mulgan's thought experiment seems to expose not only the hubris of such an attitude, but also its silliness. The idea that we in our present state have reached the end point of intellectual development, surpassing the contextually conditioned nature of thought to discover the timeless or beyond contingent, may look comically unlikely when adopting Mulgan's future perspective. But more interestingly, it also implies that there is no timeless moral or political truth to be discovered, independent of context. We are creatures of our environment, and our ideas are just that: ours. Future people won't share them if their world isn't 'affluent'. If contemporary philosophers reply that we have got it *right*, even if only because we are lucky enough to live in a favourable context for the discovery of truth, they need to supply, as Bernard Williams pointed, a theory of error for why everybody else is wrong, and what exactly our truths consist in that makes them timeless. Nobody has yet been foolhardy enough to attempt that particular task.

What is surprising about Mulgan's method, however, is just how effective it is. For this sort of approach has been tried - famously, and with great prestige - in this university. The difference is that the so-called 'Cambridge School' in the history of political thought went backwards rather than forwards. The

methodological and historical writings of the 1960s and 1970s, by Quentin Skinner and John Dunn, in particular, urged the alien quality of much of even our relatively recent intellectual past. Serious historical reconstructions of what thinkers like Thomas Hobbes or John Locke were actually doing when they originally wrote their works revealed them to be engaged in often very different projects to those that would make sense to us today. (The best example remains that of John Locke: often treated as a paradigmatic modern liberal, Dunn's early work demonstrated that Locke's political thought is simply incoherent if removed from its peculiar seventeenth-century Christian context. The upshot being that much secular 'Lockean' modern political philosophy is terminally nonsensical.) Skinner has long urged recognition of the contingency of present political philosophy: past thinkers thought differently, and we can learn a great deal about ourselves, whilst doing our own thinking for ourselves, by discovering what it is that has changed, and why.

Yet beyond this university, and a few colonized enclaves elsewhere, the point has not been much heeded. Mulgan's book is exciting because the effect is powerful when the same proposition is urged from the other direction. Why, exactly, a relatively simple thought experiment set in the future appears to be more powerful than serious historical work is quite puzzling. Perhaps it is, as David Hume suggested, that the human mind runs more easily to the future than the past, because we feel like we are always travelling there. Or perhaps it is because it is actually rather hard to suppress the subconsciously Hegelian thought that past societies got it wrong because they were imperfectly attempting to be like us. Whatever the answer, Mulgan offers a vivid way to bring out the contingency and context-dependence of our present way of thinking. (Some good jokes along the way heighten the effect: from the perspective of the future, the great civilizations of India and China loom largest, whilst the tiny subset of academia that is Anglophone political theory is considered marginal and irrelevant, all but forgotten except to academic specialists.)

But there arises for this reason a potentially deep tension with what I take Mulgan's other aim to be: encouraging us, here and now, to think about the obligations we have to future people so as to avert climate change. This comes out most clearly in Mulgan's final chapter on democracy. His future lecturer bemoans affluent democracy's inability to fulfill 'obligations' to future people: failing to represent them in its decision-making processes, greedily appropriating for 'affluent' people the resources that should have been set aside for 'future' people. The message is clear: if we are, here and now, to do what inter-generational justice demands, we need to stop burning up the planet. That is our obligation.

Yet things get extremely tricky. For it is clear that ideas like 'intergenerational justice' and 'obligations to future people' are both rather unusual by ordinary standards, and highly contingently conditioned by the context in which they might operate or make sense. It is possible that future people in a broken world, traumatised by the effects of climate change, will take a more selfless, less time-bound, view of justice and what 'obligations' they have to people who do not yet exist - and judge us harshly by that light. Personally, I'm dubious: it's difficult to imagine very definitely what future people will think about the ethical (too much depends on the unforeseeable), but, excepting some pretty drastic changes to basic human psychological processes, history is a good guide to the future. That is, not just even, but *especially* in a broken world, devastated populations under extreme survival pressures will care only about their actually living nearest and dearest, not about the fates of yet-to-be-born 'future people' who might never come into exist-

ence if this generation doesn't survive the winter.

More fundamentally, Mulgan's dictum of 'obligations' to 'future' people and the idea of 'intergenerational justice' are obviously *not* taken from the perspective of the imagined future world, but from sections of contemporary academic political philosophy which emphasise precisely such things today. The suggestion by the end of Mulgan's book is that future people are to count as much as present people. This is a sort of hyper-cosmopolitanism. Not only should you treat or consider everybody alive in the world today as equally and as impartially as though they were your friend or child, but you should aim to treat and consider everybody who ever will or even might exist that way. But down such a road, only madness lies. Present-focused cosmopolitanism is bad enough. It neglects the fact that at a private level it is a virtue to care more about people whose lives and fortunes are bound up with your own, rather than taking up the (impossible) impartial position of a stoic sage regarding everybody equally and making oneself miserable and unfulfilled in the process. It also neglects that, at the public level, it is *not* universal benevolence or the equal treatment of others due to the obligations we putatively owe them (and where exactly those come from, and what they consist of, is a mighty headache in itself) that allows large-scale national and international social organization, but the imperfect co-ordination of self-interest. ('Capitalism', for short - ugly and imperfect, constantly in need of regulation and improvement, but operative, and to some actualized degree, successful.) When cosmopolitans demand we abandon our real motives and practices because theory states that 'justice' (whose? on what authority?) reveals that impartiality is what is required for moral conduct, the correct response is to resist the bullying effects of the tyranny of theory.

But what Mulgan seems to be suggesting is that in fact there is an overwhelming reason why we *should* be hyper-cosmopolitans who fulfil obligations to even future people. The obligation we owe them is thus revealed, albeit via a thought experiment which aims to show that it is irrelevant that we won't actually meet them. What matters is that we can imagine the application of a universal maxim by which we did. This is science fiction meets Immanuel Kant, and cleverly deployed. But, alas, the stubborn point that will not go away is that we won't ever look these people in the eye. This is not - I should stress - to deny that what we are doing to the planet, and what we are bequeathing to future generations, is appalling. But it is to suggest that a mere recognition of that fact is not enough to generate obligations to imaginary people, nor is a well-intentioned and conscientious attempt to imagine ourselves being called to account to others as well as ourselves.

Yet here we see that there is perhaps no tension between Mulgan's suggestions after all: that his first aim was in fact not to show that all political ideas are contextually conditioned and time-bound, but only that many of our present ideas are. By adopting the future perspective, what emerge are the truly timeless political and moral truths, as generated by the impartiality of viewing things intergenerationally. But if this really is what Mulgan wants us to think, the price is too great. For the conclusion we would have to adopt is that the timelessly true demand of justice is that we treat all rational agents that ever will, or even might, exist, as morally on a par with everybody alive right now, and regulate our conduct and policies now in line with that judgement. This is the high road to lunacy; if a philosopher cannot see why, it is probably that she or he has spent too much time doing philosophy.

We, in our contextually-conditioned and psychologically limited way of thinking, for the most part simply don't conceive of obligations of justice

in the way Mulgan implies that we should. And we're not going to any time soon. Hume again: if justice weren't fundamentally an arrangement for coordinating self-interest between parties of equal power, but a timeless set of obligations we owe to other agents merely as such, then we'd have well-respected contracts with animals, and the history of European colonialism wouldn't have been the holocaust of indigent peoples that it was. The same applies to future people: even more so given that they don't exist, and all we possess in order to block present self-interest from trumping our concern for them is the weak charity of imagination. Certainly, this is a very bad thing for future generations, and there are lots of reasons why it would be a good thing if we became less selfish, less greedy, and less ostrich-like (and they are by no means all, or even mostly, to do with future generations). But we won't, and so the question arises of what the use of a philosophy which can have so limited an application can possibly be.

It is certainly true that we could all do a bit more than we do at present. And it is also true that many people give time and money to Oxfam and the like in order to help people they will never meet or know, without themselves being ethical cosmopolitans. And it is possible that our attitudes to resource and climate destruction might change for the better if we all spent a lot of time thinking about 'future people' and what we owe them (a more optimistic reversal of the observably true point that people who think everybody else is a selfish bastard tend to become themselves selfish bastards). But even so, it is astonishingly unlikely that philosophy alone is going to make the crucial difference between the current state of affairs, and what will be required to avert climate catastrophe. Hume for the final time: the empire of philosophy extends over but a few, and even then her power is very weak. As for those proponents of the tyranny of theory who insist that morality demands we relinquish everything to Oxfam until we are as poor as the worst-off, they are best ignored. For despite their protestations, it is they who are being unreasonable in insisting that you turn your life into a cypher of obligation-fulfilment, not you for insisting that it's *your* life, and that you've only got the one to live. As for the sort of philosophy that is so detached from life as to be bamboozled by its most basic and ordinary aspects, stipulating the psychologically impossible as a precondition for the genuinely moral, we might ask whether it is even philosophy at all, or just some sort of professional, high-status Sudoku.

Thinkers like Mulgan may reply that philosophy reveals that we *do* have impartial duties to future people, and that all I have revealed is my unfortunate conservatism: disreputably advocating the adaptation of preferences to tolerate evil circumstances rather than trying to change them. But is that really the case? Imagine the prospects of a political party that proposes to outlaw fossil fuels so as to fulfil the obligations we allegedly owe to future people. Again, my point is *not* that everything here and now is fine as it stands. It isn't, and I quite agree that future people are not only going to hate us, but resent us too. We would not be able to look them in the eye, precisely because we would know their resentment was justified. But this is an episode in an ongoing human tragedy, not a prelude to entry into the courtroom for the administration of transcendental justice. We are what we are. We are going to break things, some of them very badly. But then we can ask these questions forwards, too. If future people were us, now and around here, would they have done or thought any differently? No amount of philosophical speculation about 'obligations' will change the answer to that.

RUTH JACKSON

LAUDABLY
ELUSIVE

A REVIEW OF
AQUINAS; A
PORTRAIT

BY DENYS TURNER

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2013

In a careful introduction, Denys Turner announces that he has not written a book for professional theologians or philosophers. And yet, it is neither in order to hide scholarly imprecision, nor because Turner was aiming to present a particularly accessible, or diluted Thomas Aquinas, that the reader is also told to expect a *caricatured* version of our Late Medieval Dominican Father. Indeed, Turner writes clearly, beautifully, and with a respect for what he clearly anticipates will be an alert and earnest audience. The degree of difference between Thomist and Kantian accounts of reason; Thomas's debt to Aristotle; the critique of the former's Trinitarian theology from twentieth-century thinkers: these difficult themes (to name a few) are all treated in such a lucid way that it is impossible to fully believe Turner -- currently a Professor of Historical Theology at Yale -- when he remarks that he has abandoned the academic pedagogical model which frames his previous books (notably a recent study of the theologian Julian of Norwich and *The Darkness of God*, a study of negativity in Christian mysticism published in 1995). Instead, if Turner's 'portrait' of Thomas and his thought has the sharp edges and certain emphases that we are to expect from a caricature, then this, we must accept, is an inevitable part of mounting a twenty-first-century investigation into such a vast medieval intellect.

This little book is remarkably comprehensive. In his first chapter, Turner includes a description of Thomas's historical and ideological context, along with a selection of biographical details. And, by juxtaposing these two sets of information, he is able to suggest the stark, counter-cultural verve with which Thomas -- who is, by contrast, held in the collective theological imagination as the serious "Dumb Ox" of high scholasticism -- pursued his theological and academic vocation. In a particularly colourful moment, we learn that Aquinas's aristocratic family tried to tempt the young Thomas away from becoming a friar, by sending a naked prostitute into his room. (It was not that his parents found the monastic life an unreasonable occupation for their youngest son, but it was the particular Order he chose that they objected to. Indeed, unlike the affluent and long-established Benedictines, the Dominicans were voluntarily poor, only recently founded, and fashioned themselves an existence which subverted the existing power-structures of state and church). Such an urgently-staged intervention was all in vain, however, for Turner explains how "Thomas chased the terrified woman out of his room with a brand seized from the fire, and scored the sign of the cross on the locked door with the charred stick".

After such introductory biographical excursions, the book's remaining seven chapters are, however, less historical and anecdotal. They comprise interlinking studies on fundamental themes in Thomas's work: God, and Christ (naturally!) have their own sections, and so too the soul, grace, and the Eucharist. This shift away from the man and towards his texts is no accident. Turner explains how Thomas was extremely careful to hide the contours of his personality both from his contemporaries -- be they students or fellows -- and from his later readers. And this personal secrecy came despite the famously conspicuous contours of his girth (and this is a joke that the author refrains from making more than once).

For Turner, one of the reasons that Thomas left little information behind about his deeds and opinions, was because he was writing theology at a time when the discipline was going through a period of transition. By the early thirteenth century, and following the example set by Peter Lombard's *Sentences* -- a work of "dialectical promiscuity" -- we learn that in the academy to which Thomas belonged, theological doctrines were not simply transmitted according to the dictates of established church tradition. Instead, the Late Medieval University was a forum wherein these theological doctrines and the conceptual frameworks which accompanied them could be contested and debated. Importantly then, it was also a place in which the theologians themselves could teach in abstraction from their lives lived in faith. It is in this light that Turner asserts that the *Summa Theologica* is best understood as an academic text, and therefore one that we should not expect to reveal the moods or idiosyncrasies of its author, who is foremost "a *magister*, a master-compiler of the syllabus for a degree course in theology". Indeed, in his occupation as a technician and a teacher, the Thomas that Turner portrays does not write "in order to inspire devotion, but to provide a framework of limits, conceptual and doctrinal, within which alone true Trinitarian piety may be preached and practiced".

The reader may indeed be compelled by this account of what it meant to teach and write academic theology in the Late Medieval period. Nevertheless, Turner's fascination with what he perceives as Thomas's "hiddenness" -- his ability to "get himself entirely out of the way of

the act of communication" - flags up a set of familiar yet vital hermeneutical questions about the relation between an author and his body of work. And for some readers, these questions will prove to be a frustrating distraction. Is it really possible, we ask, for a teacher who is engaged in a pedagogical relationship to detach or distance himself from those written materials that he is using to teach? Does Thomas not impress himself upon his work in some way?

The complexity of this hermeneutical issue is such that the reader would of course be overly impatient - not to mention misguided - were she to approach Turner's work with the demand that he provide us with some sort of neat, incontestable solution to it. That being said, what Turner is unable to solve neatly he does in fact appear to exacerbate, by making a set of seemingly contradictory statements about how he thinks we can, or cannot, read the man Thomas out of the stuff he has created. And this starts immediately, with Turner's introductory assertion that the present work is intended to be a "portrait in outline of a man and a mind, and, insofar as it is possible, a soul".

In itself, this sweeping statement about the task of portraying Thomas's humanity in all its respects is of course pretty uncontroversial. The reader is made to expect a depiction of Thomas which is deeper and richer than merely an assessment of his corpus; a portrait which reflects not only his system, but is also rounded out with a discussion of his interests and his personality. And yet, in the space of a few paragraphs, Turner appears to problematise precisely this basic, holistically-framed task. For in a way that sets up the aforementioned motif of Thomas's "hiddenness", he goes on to establish what I would venture is a quasi-dualistic narrative of interiority and exteriority to describe our Dominican Master; a narrative whereby the "visible public teacher, preacher and theologian" is set up in contrast from the "almost wholly invisible saint". And in doing so, he seems to suggest a sort of split in Thomas's person, and to make out that there are certain 'bits' to him (whether soul, mind, or humanity) that we cannot get at whatsoever.

Indeed, Turner concretises this picture of Aquinas as a holy-author-in-seclusion - a picture which encourages us to understand his saintly, 'inner' self as something sheltered from the works that he has composed - through his casual comparison between the laudably elusive St. Thomas on the one hand, and the "ego-obsessed" Saints Augustine and Paul on the other. The latter two theologians - whose self-absorbed presentation style apparently represents the "fortunate possibility of sainthood for all" - wrote themselves prominently, says Turner, into "nearly every work of theology" that they composed. By comparison, however, our much beloved Thomas possessed "the virtue of allowing words to speak for themselves". With a style that was deadpan, lucid, and unadorned with personal affects, his writing was able to cast a light for others (to invoke a famous Thomistic maxim), rather than to shine for himself.

Trying to understand Turner's idea of a "hidden" Thomas, then, means being tugged a little this way and that on our hermeneutical question of how, from Thomas's work, it is possible to 'portray' something of the man himself. Indeed, under the frame-

work of this interiority/exteriority model, we might well expect Turner to conceive there to be a kind of intact and self-enclosed Aquinas 'behind' his work, just out of our reach. And yet, a final curiosity worth noting about Turner's book is that this image of an internal, preserved, and "hidden" soul is completely, and purposefully so, undermined by the content of his second and third chapters. For here - and with a remarkable degree of skill, and attention to detail - Turner focuses in upon Thomas's "materialism".

In fact, it is with his account of how Thomas understands human personhood, and a human's relationship to the world around her, that Turner most clearly brings his reading of the medieval theologian into contact with the corresponding discourse happening on a popular and contemporary level. By marking out Thomas as a "materialist", one of the positions he is attending to is the "dull, flat, and unprofitable materialism of today's atheistic fashion". Against this latter viewpoint (and one assumes that he has a form of biological reductionism in mind), Turner describes Aquinas's theologically-motivated materialism, whereby we understand human beings as wholly animal, and yet wholly rational in this animality. For Thomas, we learn, human knowledge both of the self and of the Creator God depends on human beings being embodied and enworlded creatures. In other words, all knowledge - no matter its object - is gained from the standpoint of one's material environment. And since in this view the human mind looks out onto nature expecting matter to "mean" something, Turner argues that Thomas's holism not only affords the material world "far more power of significance" than a worldview grounded in the methodology and expectations of modern science, it also comprises a more coherent self-world picture than those dualistic ones portrayed by various 'Platonic' or 'Cartesian'-flavoured philosophical schools, over centuries of theological debate. Indeed, on this last point, Turner is emphatic that, in Thomas's view, we humans are not split in our selves between an inner, spiritual or intellectual soul, and an outer, physical appearance. Instead, Thomas understands the human soul as the particular form of a person's existence. In other words, my soul comprises the way I am, as a rational human agent, according to my specific place and mode of being in the world.

Turner's argument over chapters two and three - which twists itself around Thomistic texts and references to myriad other theologians - is far more nuanced, and engaging, than I am able to represent here. (And this, despite its purportedly being aimed at non-specialists). However, it has hopefully become clear how Turner's book seems to contain a set of clashes between, on the one hand, his portrayal of Thomas's materialism as a holistic integration of mind and matter, and, on the other hand, his presentation of Thomas as a holy man and teacher, who is holy precisely in his detachment from the corpus he has left behind. Indeed, because Turner's work seems to be couched in the same dualistic language that he wants to subvert, the reader - depending on her assumptions and ideological allegiances - may therefore find these residual inner/outer metaphors, and Turner's allusion to Thomas's "hiddenness", a frustratingly confused centre of what is, in myriad important respects, an ornately-constructed and thoughtful book.

This is not a book review. To review Noel Malcolm's landmark new edition of *Leviathan* would be to claim an oversight no one rightfully enjoys. The textual scholarship behind Malcolm's presentation of Hobbes's English and Latin versions of the work is astonishing and hard even to comment on, while his 'General Introduction' to *Leviathan* as a literary and philosophical enterprise is of greater interest than I can communicate here. All one can do is say the book is magnificent, strain to indicate how that is so, and evoke, again inadequately, a sense of why the masterpiece here edited inspires the care, learning, shrewdness and imagination lavished on it.

Let us take the last point first and ask just why the *Leviathan* grips us so. What makes it special, next to the work of other thinkers and the rest of Hobbes's political writings? The idea most popularly understood to be Hobbesian, his word association twin, is sovereignty. There must be a supreme power in every commonwealth, one that no other power can challenge and one that cannot be divided so as to constrain itself. This sovereign power, Hobbes writes, is "unlimited": "whosoever, thinking' it "too great", wishes "to make it lesse; must subject himselfe, to the Power, that can limit it; that is to say, a greater". Who will guard the guard? Only a sovereign guard, necessarily unguarded himself and stronger than all his subordinates in a chain of regression that must end somewhere. A king may be bound by the laws, but who passes those laws? A country may have a constitution, but who makes and interprets that? If power seems to be split, one can often find a decider if one pushes the political logic far enough. And if one can't, anarchy will ensue. Failure to understand sovereignty and our need for it, Hobbes thinks, caused the Civil Wars that were being fought as he wrote the *Leviathan* in the years before 1651. The Parliamentarians blinded themselves to Charles's sovereign status, and through rebelling breached his sovereign rights in the deluded belief that he had breached their civic ones.

Yet though he argues for sovereignty with uncommon relish, Hobbes was not the first to do so - the custodial cliché I used to explain things comes, after all, from Juvenal: *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes* (Who will guard the guards themselves?). The popes of the late Middle Ages, their contemporaries reviving the Roman Law, the later jurists Jean Bodin and Hugo Grotius, James I with his divine right of kings: all these people noticed that someone must be in charge, and made political capital from their insight. Sovereignty seeped deep into the discourse of early Stuart Britain, so much so that a recent anthology of English political tracts, mostly written before the *Leviathan*, carries the title *The Struggle for Sovereignty*. This is not just a Hobbes thing.

So what is? Perhaps we should think about where sovereignty comes from, for Hobbes and everyone else. Where do rulers get their power over subjects? One popular answer for Hobbes's predecessors and contemporaries was God, who seems to be St Paul's choice at Romans 13:1 - "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." In the first half of the seventeenth century Catholic theologians following St Thomas Aquinas, whose 'scholasticism' Hobbes despised, made a version of this claim; so did James and the advocates of divine right kingship. They did so, as it happens, while arguing furiously with each other about just how God conferred the power, about whether he gave it first to the community at large - the scholastic position - or straight to a king - James I's. (Malcolm explains how Hobbes read about and dealt with this dispute, which rocked the Europe of his youth.)

But tracing political power to God spelt trouble for Hobbes. It was both theological and political, and the two could not be mixed in that particular way. He calls his politics a science, a 'civil science', something as rigorous and deductive as the geometry he taught in Paris to the young Charles II: one can know things about politics, among them the need for sovereign power we have seen him insist on. Hobbes's God on the other hand is precisely unknowable, and the encrustations of the conventional theology (of which more later) are worthless for just that reason. Much better to account for political life without resorting to God-talk any more than we have to. Power divinely granted, moreover, can only be used for good. When ordained by God, any sovereign embeds himself in a whole framework of moral obligations built from God's laws, and acquires not so much power as *responsibility*. Even the divine right crowd uneasily acknowledged this, and the Catholics seized on it, along with other things, to justify the Pope's interference in worldly matters. While Hobbes knew that sovereigns could do wrong, he wanted to tear down any such basis from which subjects might complain about them. For with such complaints we would be lurching, again, towards civil war.

If political power does not come from God it must come from man - man as he is before politics. Hugo Grotius pursued this line of inquiry in his book on *The Rights of War and Peace*, first published twenty-six years before *Leviathan*. He proposed that in the state of nature individuals wield the power that in a commonwealth is understood as political: they have a right to judge others, and put them to death. How the ruler gets his power is thus a straightforward problem, as natural men simply give up their right of punishment to a single, impartial arbitrator. This is close to John Locke's self-professedly 'strange doctrine' expounded later in the seventeenth century, but it will not do for Hobbes. His intention, as we have seen, is to prove the necessity of sovereign power - the political helplessness of all outside its purview and the political impotence of subjects within. To hold that *individuals* once had distinctively political rights would be to blunt

BEN
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HOUSES AND
TUBULAR
FURNITURE

A REVIEW OF
LEVIATHAN
BY THOMAS HOBBS

EDITED BY
NOEL MALCOLM

OUP, 2012
(VOL. 1, INTRODUCTION -
'GENERAL INTRODUCTION'
AND 'TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION';
VOLS. 2 AND 3, THE ENGLISH
AND LATIN TEXTS,
PLACED SIDE BY SIDE)

the point. What if they did not need to surrender those rights, given they were already using them? And what if, given they had them to start with, they kept some of them back? To Hobbes these are not happy questions.

His own "state of meer nature" and his fabulously grim assessment of our life chances within it are as famous as his theory of sovereignty: they are, indeed, its condition and its counterpoint, since it is the horror of natural anarchy that drives us to the rigours of absolute subjection - and keeps us there. As Hobbes says, "of so unlimited a Power, men may fancy many evill consequences, yet the consequences of the want of it, which is perpetuall warre [...] are much worse". Yet the state of nature is not just psychological, a bleak description of how human beings behave, but also normative: like Grotius, Hobbes shows what we have a right to do. That right extends rather far. As living creatures we want to preserve our lives, and our "right of nature" is to do anything, to anyone, which we think will further the purpose. It is not a Grotian right to punish, a political right, because only a given individual can judge his own interests and hence his own actions; it is however a right to maim, and kill, and seize goods, a "Right [...] to everything" in that no one can stop us - except of course by wielding *their own* right to everything in a gruesome juridical clash. That we are all entitled to make each other's lives nasty, brutish, and short is one reason why they are. To escape, Hobbes says, we eschew our right to everything, sometimes by contracting with everyone else to do so. His masterstroke is to keep our future sovereign out of this covenant: everyone ditches their natural right, except the sovereign who stands by watching. He still has his right to preserve himself however he chooses, but no one else has a right to place in his path. Absolute government is in business.

And its beauty lies in its minimalism - it is the political philosophy equivalent of white cube houses and tubular furniture. Everything unfurls from a single intuitive premise, that we cannot be faulted for wanting to stay alive. But a problem persists, with Hobbes's account and our own search to find what is special about the *Leviathan*. If the sovereign is just wielding his natural right to intimidate a group of people he precisely does not have a contractual connection with, do we have a proper united commonwealth, never mind the 'State' Hobbes is credited with inventing? And what is the point of Hobbes's saying all this, given he has already said it in his Latin political treatise *De cive* - first printed on a large scale only four years earlier? In fact, as Malcolm explains, the *Leviathan* goes further, and introduces a new political concept: authorisation. When we contract with all our fellows, we agree to let the (by-standing) sovereign 'represent' us, or 'bear our person'. Whatever he does on our behalf, we are the 'authors' of, and liable for. This makes opposition to sovereign power not only foolish but schizophrenic, since in resisting the sovereign we'd be resisting *ourselves*, the very actions we have authorised and meaningfully performed: the main Hobbesian thrust therefore hits home more than ever. But authorisation also gives a commonwealth a precious unity, a unity entirely dependent on the sovereign. Because the same representative bears all our persons, we subjects become in a sense a single person, bound together in a whole by the fact of our common representation. This is what Hobbes promises in the first lines of the book, and so vividly in its pictorial frontispiece: an "Artificiall Man", "that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in latine CIVITAS)". The theoretical edifice is complete.

And that is one way of parsing *Leviathan's* spell - but a limited one. It captures some of the book's technical strength, but little of its wit, its verve, its fulminating savagery, its obsessive hounding of priests, university teachers, and overweening aristocrats, its sometimes bizarre mockery of

demons, ghosts, and fairies. It neglects the whole second half of the book, Hobbes's demolition and reconstruction of Christian theology and biblical exegesis. Put differently, to ask what makes *Leviathan* so special is in part to ask what makes it so *strange*, and we have not done that yet. There is much more to be said, more than can be said here - more that pertains not just to *Leviathan* but to Malcolm's magisterial treatment of it in his introductory volume.

We can start by noticing that the sovereign, while theoretically strong, is in practice weak. This is something Hobbes has very much noticed himself. He realises, and the Civil Wars were showing, that the survival of the State depends on the willing obedience of subjects, that they cannot be kept in line by force or even straightforwardly by fear. The sovereign power "cannot be maintained by any Civill Law, or terrour of legall punishment", for without something else men take "Punishment [...] but for an act of Hostility; which when they have strength enough, they will endeavour by acts of Hostility, to avoid". The Hobbesian Commonwealth is like Tinkerbell: unless you believe in it, it will die, and so in all likelihood will you. The imagined scenario in the state of nature, all those newly subjected subjects facing their sovereign, a mere man like them, is among other things an illustration of just this point. The problem of *Leviathan*, and for the appointed sovereign, is thus a very practical problem too: how to make subjects believe?

Answering Hobbes draws on everything we have seen him say so far, for the solution is for subjects to be taught his doctrine - instructed in civil science. His work is not just a statement of truth but an instrument in the service of peace. But teaching implies a teacher, and in *Leviathan* the pedagogic burden falls on the sovereign. To be secure in his rights he must instil the ideology that justifies them. Here Malcolm, in his 'General Introduction' to the context and themes of the text, presents a thesis of great importance. Deftly, intricately, and to all appearances compellingly, he argues that the *Leviathan* speaks to this project. Hobbes, Malcolm says, does not just want to teach some subjects himself, those who happen to read his book; he wants to counsel the sovereign, and intends the book for him in particular. The sovereign, not the philosopher, is the great indoctrinator, and he is thus in need of Hobbes's help. Malcolm marshals passages from the book and equally telling historical details about the circumstances of its composition to prove that Hobbes meant the book for his own sovereign Charles II, his tutee in mathematics with whom he spent, for a while, hours most days. By the time *Leviathan* was complete Hobbes had been banished from Charles's court, and Charles's prospects of kingship seemed to have been banished altogether: the book's last chapter, its 'Review and Conclusion', refashions it as a qualified apology for the new Parliamentary regime. While he was writing the bulk of the text, Malcolm nonetheless shows us, it was the king Hobbes had in mind.

This perspective on *Leviathan* lets us join its doctrinal thrust, its civil science, to something just as much there but ostensibly very different. More than Hobbes's earlier works this text is a handbook for princes as well a treatise of abstract philosophy, with traces of Machiavelli as well as Bodin and Grotius. On Malcolm's reading this fusion makes sense, since one needs practical 'reason of state' to publicise the State's theoretical rationale. Hobbes must tell his sovereign reader how to teach as well as what to teach.

The 'how', moreover, is about dispelling misconceptions as much as preaching the truth, and here Hobbes is at his strangest and Malcolm his most exhilarating. We have seen that Hobbes's obedience to sovereign power is reasonable, a deduction from the potent and universal instinct to preserve oneself; yet throughout Europe in early modern period and especial-

ly throughout Britain in the 1640s this deduction went so often and so fatally undrawn. If what we have to do is so clear, why do so few people get it? Hobbes's awareness of this question comes through not just in his arguments but in the sensibility that saturates his text, a sensibility Malcolm captures in a virtuoso feat of literary criticism. Writing of "Hobbes's growing conviction that there was a sinister kind of strategic alliance between the philosophical errors of the scholarly world and certain deep-rooted errors of ordinary human experience", Malcolm likens it to the nineteenth-century radical William Cobbett's conspiratorial sense of a "great, shadowy system of oppression", a system which Cobbett called 'The Thing'. 'The Thing' for Malcolm's Hobbes encompasses the scholastic theology of the Catholic Church, the hierarchy of Pope and bishops that theology shills for, the delusions of the Aristotelian metaphysics that hold it all up, fraudulent readings of the Bible that seek to justify rebellion, envious yearnings for the civil life of other countries and the superstitions of simple people who are preyed on by sophisticates peddling all of the above. This 'Kingdom of Darknesse', to take the title of Part IV of *Leviathan*, is what the sovereign must smash up before the light of civil science can shine through. So ridiculous and yet so dangerous, this hydra-headed enemy is what drives Hobbes to be so rebarbative and

makes the *Leviathan* pleasurable yet alarming to read.

We might end by noting the scope of this conspiracy, and of the necessary sovereign response to it. Hobbes's subject here is not just theology and biblical scholarship but mathematics, ethics, metaphysics, natural philosophy, law, history, and psychology; not just the Church but universities, the learned societies, the printers, the Inns of Court, our relations with the Netherlands (the often envied neighbours), and the folk life of ordinary people. Among the works Hobbes wrote after *Leviathan*, pursuing his project, are a narrative of the Civil Wars, a study of the Common Law, and a castigation of Oxford mathematicians. What we are faced with, and what Malcolm evokes so well, is a sort of panoptic mania, something that would be monomania were it not about everything. The sovereign power is so precarious, and the civil science it depends on so multiply embattled, that a ruler has an interest in his subjects' whole mental life. This in turn is one last reason why Malcolm's edition is so valuable, and his approach to Hobbes seems so right. In the introduction and apparatus he places Hobbes next to courtiers, clerics, playwrights, scholars, optical illusionists, biblical exegetes and artists. For Malcolm, just as for Hobbes, everything matters.

CHARLES CORNISH - DALE

MORE BADEN -
BADEN THAN
BAADER -
MEINHOF

A REVIEW OF *PHILOSOPHY FOR MILITANTS*

BY ALAIN BADIOU

VERSO, 2012

Philosophy for Militants is very much a misnomer here, in the way that, say, *The Handbook for Rebels and Outlaws* (which this author can vouch for) certainly isn't. Anybody expecting a manifesto or a how-to handbook for the bushy-bearded, bomb-wielding *philosophe* will suspect a raw deal as soon as they handle this slim little volume (though isn't the *Communist Manifesto* all of 30 pages?), and be downright disappointed when they open it and discover that, rather than being one continuous text, this book consists of three seemingly unconnected lectures, given over a period of seven years, and glued together here for thinly disguised commercial purposes (oh, yes, not forgetting the appendix: an interview with Badiou about the recent student protests in Quebec). And they will also be disappointed when they read these disparate lectures and interviews, because they are not, as the embarrassingly teenage cover design might suggest, fully loaded with deadly idea-bullets.

Badiou, or, rather, Badiou's publishers, do have past form: the recent *In Praise of Love*, advertised as a radical rethinking of modern notions of love, touching on almost every thinker from Plato through Marx to Lacan, was in fact just a transcript of a Q&A, with a four-page introduction. Badiou: Does Exactly What It Doesn't Say on the Tin - but, then, isn't that the charm?

Alain Badiou is, of course, perhaps the most famous French philosopher of the day, a "Plato walking among us," if fellow traveller Slavoj Žižek is to be believed. The interest in Badiou lies, apparently, in the fact that unlike most French philosophers of the past x decades, he has not renounced allegiance to the biggies: Truth, Justice, Universalism, Communism; whose sunny uplands seemed to have been cast forever into shadow by a gigantic rhizomatic mass of affective bodies-without-organs. Not so! Badiou chimes, finger uplifted.

Philosophy for Militants is billed as accessible Badiou. This is true, but only formally so. There are still the trademark circumlocutions, crammed with neologisms, punning hyphenations and unlovely nouns-as-verbs, of the sort to send you scrambling in sheer frustration for your Bertrand Russell. For instance, of Marx's *Capital*, there is this:

The vast analytical constructions of *Capital* are the retroactive foundation of what [for Marx] was a pre-predicative evidence: that modern politics could not be formulated, even as a hypothesis, otherwise than by proposing an interpretation-in-subject of these astounding hysterias of the social in which workers named the hidden void of the capitalist situation, by naming their own unpresentation.

Perhaps by accessible, Verso simply means that the book is shorter than Badiou's customary 600 pages; it is accessible in the way that a playground tunnel is to the Channel Tunnel: one end is at least visible from the other.

After a few pages of this stuff, the temptation for many will probably be to give this book the Sokal-Bricmont treatment: to call it, with blithe positivist self-assurance, a piece of "fashionable nonsense" and then be done with it. Which is a shame, because there are ideas in this book

and they are... decipherable; they are also confused, hardly new, and there are from time to time unpleasant whiffs of a mouldering Stalinist-Leninism which will put most readers well off what Badiou is saying. There is no philosophical Febreze strong enough for the reek of the twentieth century's murdered millions.

The militarism that runs through this book, especially through the second half of the first essay and through the second essay itself, a paean to the heroic revolutionary soldier, is of a distinctly hokey sort. Just as Baudelaire, in *Mon coeur mis à nu*, suspected that the journalist with a predilection for military metaphors was simply trying to disguise his own rather more peaceable nature, so might one equally suspect that Badiou is trying to disguise a certain *mauvaise foi* with his unsparing enthusiasm for all things soldierly. Badiou is famously an unrepentant Maoist, has been a member of such scary-sounding groups as UCFML (*Union des communistes de France marxiste-léniniste* - FML indeed) and has all the right radical credentials; and yet, for all this, he is still the same Maoist who had inordinate difficulty repelling the not-so-formidable Stephen Sackur from the relative comfort of Broadcasting House; hardly the Long March, eh?

Badiou's completely one-sided portrayal of the soldier as a hero of liberation all but confirms the presumed charge of romantic-militarism-from-a-distance. Soldiers are, he argues in his second essay, heroic because, like all heroic figures, they pursue through their actions an infinite truth; from 1789 to 1949, soldiers, dying in their millions for The Cause, have been the anonymous vanguard of mass democratic action. Through a reading of poems by Wallace Stevens and Gerald Manley Hopkins, Badiou argues that the age of the heroic soldier has come to pass; no new heroic figure has yet come to take his place (though there is something of an unspoken gesture towards "the militant", whoever he may be, as the soldier's successor).

But was Modern Warfare's soldier really a golden figure, was his Call of Duty really so unequivocally good? What about, say, the relationship between the modern disciplined soldier and the disciplines, the modern forms of power and social control, as first described by Foucault? In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault contrasted the ideal soldier of the seventeenth century, more a warrior "who could be recognised from afar [...] bore certain signs: the natural signs of his strength and courage, the marks, too, of his pride; his body [...] the blazon of his strength and valour," for whom "movements like marching and attitudes like the bearing of the head belonged for the most part to the rhetoric of honour" - this noble warrior, Foucault contrasted with the eighteenth century's ideal, who "has become something that can be made":

out of formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated restraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit; in short, one has "got rid of the peasant" and "given him the air of a soldier."

The modern soldier, like the factory worker, the school pupil, the patient and the convict, is the product of disciplinary power which, in the name of a more systematic control, seeks to categorise, make docile and then mould individuals, across the entire span of society. The soldier, then, is not just a heroic figure, but also one of many alike characters in a vast, diffused network of reciprocal social control. Of this, Badiou has nothing to say, presumably because he likes his heroes untainted. And, likewise, of mass conscription, military law and military hierarchy (which has until recently excluded women and still largely does), he is, unsurprisingly, also silent.

But the main idea here, which occupies the first chapter and the majority of the book, concerns the "Enigmatic Relationship Between Philosophy and Politics". Badiou's contention, rubbishing the title of the book yet further, is in fact that *there is no philosophy for militants*. Philosophy cannot legislate for action; as for the logical positivists, philosophy is more a question of working out the truth and implications of what has already been done (usually by someone else). Militants must act, first and foremost.

In support of this is Badiou's own notion of "truth" and "event", most fully developed in his other books, such as the blockbusters *Being and Event* and *Being and Event II: The Logic of Worlds*. An event, for Badiou, is a sudden appearance of genuine newness brought about by a subject. The subject names the event and practices rigid adherence to it, thereby defining its truth. These truth conditions are chosen by the subject, and do not follow from those already existing. Philosophy can only work after an event. Its questions and the conditions of its possibility are given by Badiou's four fields of politics, art, love and science, from which subjects act in their pursuit of an event.

Here there are grave problems, not only in Badiou's suggesting that events must always take the lead, but also in the very ontology proposed to ground this claim. For one thing, Badiou cannot explain the relationship of his own philosophy to events. An unabashed and self-declared Platonist, perhaps he would shrug off this criticism; others, however, will not. The later Marx, as a good historicist, could historically situate not only other economic and social theories but also his own, that is, he could explain why he had come to understand the inner dialectic of capitalism when he had. Badiou, with his notion of truth and event, cannot do the same for his own work.

Think, for just a moment, of why Marxism has risen so improbably, zombie-like, from the twentieth century's ideological graveyard, much to the chagrin of Fukuyama-ists and Foucauldians alike. To simplify just a tad, one might say that Marxism is back as a result of the financial crisis and the failure of mainstream macro-economics, not only because economics was in some sense a principal cause of the crisis, but also because of its miserable failure to predict or explain the crisis. Marxism offers a compelling structural explanation which goes beyond the more immediate satisfactions of shred-Sir-Fred banker-bashing. But whence comes the truth of this Marxist explanation? Largely from *Capital* and the early work on crises of capitalism; truth or event - or both?

Using Badiou's scheme, one could quite easily spend hours caught in a vicious and irremediable tailspin, rather like this:

The truth of (the event of) the crisis that brought about the (event of) the resurgence of (the truth of) Marxism was contained in the (truth of the) work of Marx and Engels which was later developed by other Marxists and which directly caused (the event of) twentieth century communism which was already prefigured in the (truth of)...

Truth and event, at least in Badiou's ontology, easily elide into chicken and egg. That events can run away from and confound our thinking seems eminently reasonable. Evidence for this is ample. A relevant example would be Russia in 1917: events there blew the lid off turn-of-the-century Marxism's cast-iron historical determinism, calling for new theories and new thinking to explain how a semi-feudal country had leapfrogged its way to the front of the queue of nations on their way to communism.

But, equally, that ideas must always follow action is indefensible; and, moreover, would surely be especially unthinkable to a follower of a man whose ideas inspired the greatest social upheavals, utopian experiments and mass murders in human history. Not so! Badiou chimes, once again.

With a little help from the good people at Verso, Chateau Badiou, like Chateau Žižek, is doing a mean line in repackaging old Marxist vintages as bubbly 2012 varieties, desperately in need of quaffing NOW and for the not-unaffordable price of £9.99 each; and, having drained Badiou's latest down to the bitter dregs, one is left with no new "philosophy for mili-

tants" and, as the fruitier notes disappear, little more than a lingering aftertaste of Marx's eleventh "Thesis on Feuerbach": "Philosophers have only interpreted the world; the point, however, is to change it."

Credit where credit's due, Badiou was slightly wary of the form and name these disparate pieces were going to take, as is made clear in the translator's introduction. So perhaps he can be forgiven that his words have assumed the form they have. But, even so, all is not as it seems; and it doesn't take an Ideal Proletarian, or, dare it be said, even a militant philosopher (if such a person could exist), to see exactly who's being taken for a ride, and by whom - and, just as importantly, what to do about it.

Iain McDaniel's study of the Scottish philosopher Adam Ferguson (1723-1816) is a deeply serious attempt to redefine the lasting significance of one of the most complex and elusive thinkers of the extraordinary intellectual flowering that we now think of as the 'Scottish Enlightenment'. It does so against the backdrop of a very well-established historiography that seeks to analyse Adam Smith, David Hume and their milieu as a phenomenon in the intellectual history of Scotland and Europe. Ferguson has always played a notable, if not always a particularly central, role in these histories. McDaniel's book seeks to raise his subject's profile, by shifting him to the cutting edge of a closely-related, but distinct, strand in contemporary scholarship, most closely associated with the late István Hont. This is the study of the eighteenth-century attempt to reckon with the rise of an international political economy as a species of political theory. Among the Scottish subjects of this enquiry, Hume and Smith have remained dominant; McDaniel's work reads as an impressive and well-argued attempt to make the more difficult case for Ferguson's acuity as an analyst of modern politics.

While McDaniel's book has its origins in a Cambridge Ph.D thesis, a postdoctoral stint in Munich has left him particularly well-equipped to contemplate a thinker who until the 1960s was mainly studied in the German-speaking world, as a progenitor of both modern sociology and romantic nationalism. Ferguson was at once a moral philosopher, a historian of 'civil society' in general and of the Roman Republic in particular, and a political agitator for the institution of a Scottish landowning militia. Despite his vast and varied output, there were no new English-language editions of Ferguson's masterwork, the *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), between 1816 and 1966. The emphasis in the brief, masterful account of Ferguson's thought offered by the editor of the 1966 edition of the *Essay*, the revered Cambridge historian Duncan Forbes, is on the junction between Ferguson's humanism and his incisive account of the moral and political consequences of the division of labour in commercial societies. For Forbes as for John Pocock, who signalled his own interest in Ferguson with a brief treatment in his landmark *The Machiavellian Moment* (1975), the *Essay* offered the problem of military organisation as "the connecting link between statecraft and the alienation due to the division of labour, between Machiavelli and Marx".

The central question was whether a modern state should defend itself through a landowners' militia, on the model of the small city-republics of antiquity or the English county levies, or through a professional standing army. As it happens, this was the topic of an immediate political debate in Scotland about the establishment of a Scottish militia on the English model in the years after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. Standing armies, Ferguson feared, risked the complete degeneration of the polity through either foreign conquest or domestic despotism by allowing its natural leaders to opt out of the national defence, the immediate business of patriotism. The author of the most authoritative modern account of Scottish militia debate, John Robertson, is the current holder of the professorship in the history of political thought at this university. In *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue* (1985), Robertson places Ferguson on what seems to be the wrong side of the argument, condemning him for his inability to produce a case for the revival of a Scottish martial aristocracy that could seriously undermine his rivals' prescriptions for commercial sociability and modern liberty under the Union state.

McDaniel's is necessarily a more sympathetic reading. Ferguson, he stresses, had a distinctive take on a key problem in eighteenth-century natural law: the question of how far human beings were 'naturally' disposed to live together in political societies. This informed nearly all aspects of his political thought, including his stance on the militia issue. Ferguson denied the relevance of a 'state of nature', empirically or even metaphorically, to thinking about the means or ends of collective life. Individuals always existed in society, and it was ridiculous to try and contemplate them without

JAMES STAFFORD

PATRIOTIC DISSENSION

A REVIEW OF
**ADAM FERGUSON
IN THE SCOTTISH
ENLIGHTENMENT:
THE ROMAN PAST
AND EUROPE'S
FUTURE**

BY IAIN MCDANIEL

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
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it. This did not translate, however, into support for an innate human instinct of cosmopolitan benevolence. Sociability was natural, but its scope was limited; it could only be cultivated or maintained dynamically, through groups that were defined via rivalry with other groups. "In the same way that social interactions and struggles were necessary to stimulate the faculties and virtues of individuals," McDaniel observes, "the 'rivalship and competition of nations' were necessary to 'invigorate the principles of political life in a state'". Different material bases of human association necessitated different political strategies for maintaining both the internal cohesion and external viability of political communities. Ancient equality, or 'democracy', was unsuited for modern commercial societies because the division of labour they require heightens inequality to a degree incompatible with any notion of equal participation in civic life. For Ferguson, not just Scotland, but all "commercial states needed a noneconomic elite that could serve as "an object of ambition, and a rank to which the busy aspire" ". This elite, however, could not be truly meritocratic, because the division of labour immiserated the lowest ranks of wage-earners to a degree that made them incapable of political merit. The institution of a landholders' militia, and a reform of the British system of aristocratic ranks designed to incentivise the participation of the propertied élite in national defence and break down the distinction between civil and military offices, offered one route to maintaining the political cohesion of large commercial monarchies like Britain and France.

McDaniel's elaboration of the argument of the *Essay* is not where the main weight of his reappraisal of Ferguson lies, however. Rather, his deployment of Ferguson's *History of the Roman Republic* (1783), the *Principles of Moral and Political Science* (1792) and his later, unpublished manuscripts, some dating from as late as the early 1800s, facilitates the integration of the *Essay* into a broader account of Ferguson's views on the relationship between democracy, commerce and empire. This has a certain biographical credibility: Ferguson, who lived into his nineties, was active long into the era of the French and American Revolutions, and witnessed the former's descent into Napoleonic despotism. It also focuses our attention less on Ferguson's account of the history of civil society in general, and more on his understanding of the specifics of the European states-system and its future. One of the best passages in the book is McDaniel's deftly-handled comparison of Ferguson's account of the alliance of commercial and imperial expansion with that of the Abbé Raynal, whose *Histoire des deux Indes* (1770) was one of the most powerful eighteenth-century critiques of colonialism. For Ferguson, the rise of commerce as a global phenomenon connecting societies around the world had provided a vastly expanded scope for morally corrupt individuals and states to seek to dominate others through conquest and submission. In a conceptual move that much of the 'imperial' turn in (predominantly American) scholarship in the history of political thought has failed to make, McDaniel's account of Ferguson thereby connects together the historically related problems of intra- and extra-European empire. The unnatural and antisocial behaviours of a greedy democratic mob, a scheming colonial merchant, or an aspirant European 'universal monarch' all appear to be linked. Wars of 'traffic' and conquest were the antithesis of the 'noble' wars of dissension, self-defence and patriotic rivalry that Ferguson regarded as crucial to the sustenance of human communities. By extinguishing or annexing other societies, the spirit of conquest rendered impossible the sportsmanlike conduct of the sparring, moderately endowed regional powers that Ferguson saw as key to the overall stability of Europe and the world. The consolidation of populations in the grip of a single imperial power or 'universal monarchy' reduced the capacity for human distinction by lowering the effective value of membership of an en-

larged, cheapened political community. The history of Rome, meanwhile, showed that empire and democracy could intersect unpredictably, strengthening demands for a dangerously egalitarian distribution of the spoils and creating a professional class of military leaders in conquered provinces available to quash, or support, populist uprisings against even the most successful of mixed constitutions. For most of his life, it was Britain that Ferguson saw as being most at risk from a repetition of these developments: as it happened, however, it was revolutionary and Napoleonic France that most closely approximated Ferguson's lively evocation of a neo-Roman trajectory of revolution, empire and despotism. Britain was at risk of losing the struggle against the ruthlessly effective Napoleonic machine-state unless it revived its own patriotic virtue by embracing Ferguson's 'project' for a military aristocracy, this time as part of a home-defence policy.

In spite of its title, then, McDaniel's picture of Ferguson is actually rather less Scottish than the Highlander described by Robertson and Forbes. Instead, Ferguson emerges as a strikingly original interpreter of Montesquieu's theory of a 'modern monarchy' driven by 'false honour', who sought to construct a more substantial basis for the cohesion of large, modern and commercial states. His focus was not on the revival of Scotland but the reform of Britain, and the debunking of any argument for republican equality as a route to its achievement. His insight lay in his attention to the problem of military power, and his sophisticated musings about how a modern commercial state might arrange itself, in domestic and foreign policy, to prevent a simple default to the rule of domestic or foreign force. These should be major issues in any history of modern European political thought: McDaniel's current research project is an exploration of ideas of 'Caesarism' and military government during the later nineteenth century in Germany, a trajectory that follows on nicely from this book, and demonstrates something of its ambition.

It seems possible, therefore, that this thorough and single-minded study of Ferguson might have been a different book, one which explored the problem of military government in eighteenth and early nineteenth century political thought more generally. Such an approach might have been more informative in showing Ferguson's ideas not only in the context of their available alternatives, but as an object themselves of critique and discussion. The formidable erudition McDaniel deploys here shows him to be equal to such a task. As it is, it is hard to come away from *Adam Ferguson in the Scottish Enlightenment* without thinking that there must have been something quite incredible about Ferguson's politics, even for his contemporaries (who, as McDaniel tells us all-too-briefly, were troubled by them). It certainly seems incredible to claim that republican militarism can be aristocratically domesticated in a way that neutralises its inherent impulse towards imperial expansion, so rarely detachable from Ferguson's nobler conceptions of self-defence and patriotic dissension. Then, as now, there were many citizens and thinkers who were unwilling to make the choice between democracy and stability that Ferguson seems to demand: the neo-republican welfare liberalism and federative foreign policy of Ferguson's Bernese reader Isaak Iselin more closely resembles the historical response of Europe's more successful societies to the problems Ferguson raises. The unpalatability of what McDaniel ambitiously terms Ferguson's 'reform programme' serves only to heighten the power of his deep scepticism about the durability (or desirability) of modes of collective living that closely resemble our own. This beautifully written, highly intelligent reconstruction of the nature and sources of this scepticism is a great service to scholars and citizens alike, and will hopefully be read alongside Ferguson for many years to come.

The author of *Decision Points* is graced with a fondness for superlative constructions. Meeting with the families of those who died in America's external wars was "both the most painful and the most uplifting part of serving as commander in chief", while "one of the most moving parts of my presidency was reading letters from the families of fallen service members". Superlatives are deployed to claim that war powers and protection are at the pinnacle of the responsibilities and duties of the presidency: "My most solemn responsibility as president was to protect the country", and "sending America to war is the most profound decision a President can make". Thus, "putting America on a war footing was one of the most important decisions of my presidency". On the view implicit in these superlative claims, while decisions regarding war and peace are the height of responsibility, public critique of those decisions is the corresponding height of irresponsibility: Senator Harry Reid's claim in April that the Iraq war was lost "was one of the most irresponsible acts I witnessed in my eight years in Washington".

SAMUEL GARRETT ZEITLIN

Some of the author's superlative claims take the whole of "history" as their domain. The coalition bombing of Baghdad in March of 2003 "was not only shock and awe, but one of the most precise air raids in history". The ground assault on Baghdad was no less superlative, wherein "our troops" "completed the fastest armoured advance in the history of warfare". Hurricane Katrina was not only "the costliest natural disaster in American history", but also "the costliest natural disaster in history" *simpliciter*.

On several occasions, the author designates something as the "worst" instance of its kind. Upon hearing of the first plane hitting the World Trade Centre, Bush genuflects that "that plane must have had the worst pilot in the world". While Abu Ghraib was "a low point of my presidency", the allegation that the Katrina response was tinged with racism was "the worst moment of my presidency", and "the summer of 2006 was the worst period of my presidency".

AFFABLE AND LAUGHABLE

Who is the author of *Decision Points*? The 43rd President admits that he got by with more than a little help from his friends and associates, editors, publishers, research assistants, legal advisers, and speechwriting team in the production of *Decision Points*. The reader who glances over the "Acknowledgments" section may be inclined to regard *Decision Points* as the work of many hands, and Bush states that in "writing this book" he "worked with Chris Michel", one of Bush's speechwriters from 2003 to 2008. Bush's close collaboration with his speechwriter might suggest that *Decision Points* itself may be read as a speech, as a work of oratory, albeit a work of autobiographic oratory.

A REVIEW OF DECISION POINTS

BY GEORGE W BUSH

The author of *Decision Points* pursues a variety of rhetorical strategies of self-presentation, self-justification, and exculpation. While each section of the *Decision Points* "is based on a major decision or series of decisions" during the 43rd presidency, each section also pursues its own rhetorical strategy—accentuating, defending, disavowing, or justifying the decision in question.

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In discussing Hurricane Katrina and the destruction of New Orleans, the author pursues a rhetorical strategy of legal fealty. "By law," the author writes, "state and local authorities lead the response to natural disasters, with the federal government playing a supporting role". According to the law, "only the governor could request that the federal government assume control of the emergency", and Bush presents the governor of Louisiana, Kathleen Blanco, as adamant in her refusal to make the request (even after Bush himself urged her to make it). On Bush's presentation, even when a military response to Katrina was prepared, the law prohibited its deployment:

Forces from the 82nd Airborne Division awaited orders to deploy, and I was prepared to give them. But we had a problem. The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 prohibited active-duty military from conducting law enforcement within the United States. Don Rumsfeld, speaking for many in the military, opposed sending the 82nd Airborne.

In Katrina, on his own presentation, Bush was following the law, obeying the law, and giving due deference to the law.

In discussing his decisions to implement the CIA's enhanced interrogation program (including the use of "water-boarding") and his own Terrorist Surveillance Program (TSP) without explicit congressional authorization, Bush pursues a different strategy of self-presentation, not rooted in legal niceties. This is not to say that Bush does not present his interrogation and surveillance tactics as firmly grounded in legality:

I had asked the most senior legal officers in the U.S. government to review the interrogation methods, and they had assured me they did not constitute torture. To suggest that our intelligence personnel violated the law by following the legal guidance they received is insulting and wrong.

In defending his interrogation policies, Bush emphasizes that his policies were in keeping not only with legal opinion, but with medical opinion as well:

I took a look at the list of techniques. There were two that I felt went too far, even if they were legal. I directed the CIA not to use them. Another technique was waterboarding, a process of simulated drowning. No doubt the procedure was tough, but medical experts had assured the CIA that it did no lasting harm.

But legality and the opinions of "medical experts" were not at the crux of the President's policy decisions on interrogation. Rather, independent of congressional authorization, "the surveillance program continued to produce results, and that was the most important thing", likewise, in the absence of disclosure, "the CIA interrogation program saved lives". Thus, Bush regrets that he did not have the pleasure of deploying interrogations with greater frequency: "Had we captured more al Qaeda operatives with significant intelligence value, I would have used the program for them as well". In this lamentation, Bush has constructed an interesting causal claim: for every time that the CIA interrogated someone "with significant intelligence value," lives were saved—a direct relation: more water-boarding, more safety, more lives saved. It would be worthwhile for historians to determine the veracity of this claim, and to determine whether persons who were not of "significant intelligence value" were also given over to "enhanced interrogation."

In the absence of legislation, Bush oversaw the CIA interrogation program, military tribunals for captured soldiers, and the TSP until 2006, when adverse court cases and media exposure forced him to administer the programs with legislative approval:

In retrospect, I probably could have avoided the controversy and legal setbacks by seeking legislation on military tribunals, the TSP, and CIA enhanced interrogation program as soon as they were created [...] Yet in the case of the TSP and CIA program, the risk of exposing operational details to the enemy was one I could not take until we had a better handle on the security situation.

On this presentation, sometimes legality just isn't worth the risks. Whereas in cases of internal emergency (Hurricane Katrina), President Bush emphasizes his fealty to the law, in cases of external emergency (soldiers captured in Afghanistan) Bush emphasizes his Article II powers and his responsibility to protect the people *ultra legem*, and indeed, *contra legem*.

In discussing the decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003, the author of *Decision Points* does not present himself as making a decision at all. Not all decisions are choices, and not all choices are one's own. Bush makes this point early in his memoir ("I had gone to Andover by expectation and Yale by tradition; I was at Harvard by choice"), but he makes it most often in his discussion of Iraq. In Iraq, "the choice between war and peace belonged to Saddam Hussein alone", whether America invaded Iraq "ultimately, it would be Saddam Hussein's decision to make". What did Saddam choose? "He chose war". While Iraq was a point of decision during the 43rd presidency, the author of *Decision Points* claims that it was not a decision of the 43rd President.

The author of *Decision Points* presents himself as a man affable as well as laughable. While respectful of a good mind, the 43rd President adores those possessed of good humour. "I always liked people with a good sense of humour, a sign of modesty and self-awareness". Who is presented as having such a sense of humour? Bush's father has "a wonderful sense of humour", Queen Elizabeth II has "a keen sense of humour", Winston Churchill had "a sense of humour", Bush's domestic policy advisor Jay Lefkowitz has "a dry sense of humour", Vice President Cheney shares "a dry sense of humour", Karl Rove is "funny", Bush's Chief of Staff Andy Card has "a good sense of humour", Bush's Commerce Secretary Don Evans has "a great sense of humour", and Bush does not shy away from presenting himself as endowed with such a sense of humour, indeed he and his mother "have the same sense of humour". If you aren't quite the jokester, you may get by with a good laugh: Tony Blair has "a quick laugh and a sharp wit" while Ted Kennedy's "smile came easily and of-

ten gave way to a big, warm laugh". Those who oppose the President, however, are presented as humourless and lacking in laughter. Al Gore is described as appearing "stiff, serious, and aloof", Howard Dean "was loud, shrill, and undisciplined", and John Kerry, whom Bush regarded as "a formidable opponent", is "a hard worker, a polished debater, and a tough campaigner," but conspicuously not one to elicit a laugh.

In the brief portrait of his early childhood development, the author of *Decision Points* presents himself both as an ill-starred steward of the animal kingdom and as the recipient of corporal punishment from his mother and his paternal grandfather, the financier and US Senator Prescott Bush. In his youth, Bush describes himself as "not much of a cat person", but more given to the physical torment of dogs. In one instance of revelry with canines, the young Bush presents himself as receiving discipline at the hands of his grandfather, Senator Prescott Bush: "My grandfather could be a very stern man [...] He doled out discipline quickly and forcefully, as I found out when he chased me around the room after I pulled the tail of his favourite dog. At the time, I thought he was scary". Bush's self-portrait as a humane shepherd of animal life culminates with his self-description of poisoning family pets with alcohol: "I poured vodka in the fishbowl and killed my little sister Doro's goldfish". Cruelty is a facet of Bush's self-presentation. While the author does not present himself as receiving corporal punishment from his father, the future 41st President, that role fell to his mother: "Mother was the enforcer. She could get hot, and because we had such similar personalities, I knew how to light her fuse. I would smart off, and she would let me have it. If I was smutty, as she put it, I would get my mouth washed out with soap. That happened more than once". What is absent both from the self-portraits of cruelty toward animals and the receipt of physical beatings from the hands of parents and grandparents is any further reflection on how these experiences shaped Bush's thinking on punishment and the infliction of pain. In a book which takes decision making as its explicit theme, the decision to stay or allow juridical killings is not once discussed in *Decision Points*. As governor of Texas, Bush presided over the execution of more than 150 death sentences over a period of six years. As president, Bush presided over the only death sentences carried out by the federal government in the last four decades. The death penalty as a topic, not as a decision, comes up only once in *Decision Points*, and Bush does not present himself as the one who broaches the topic, rather he casts Cherie Blair as raising the issue at a Bush-Blair family dinner:

About halfway through the meal, the death penalty came up. Cherie made clear she didn't agree with my position. Tony looked a little uncomfortable. I listened to her views and then defended mine. I told her I believed the death penalty, when properly administered, could save lives by deterring crime. A talented lawyer whom I grew to respect, Cherie rebutted my arguments. At one point, Laura and I overheard Euan, the Blairs' bright seventeen-year-old son, say, "Give the man a break, Mother."

In *Decision Points* the death penalty is a dinner topic brought up in bad taste—the death penalty is not considered as what it is: the political and juridical decision to end a human life.

A further rhetorical strategy of *Decision Points* is the effacement of the President's critics. While some opponents and rivals are ridiculed and rebutted by name, the majority of the critics of the 43rd President are left nameless within the text of *Decision Points* and quoted without source or date citations. Some critics are unnamed, but identifiable by their job description, function, or role: Hillary

Clinton is "one New York senator", Claire McCaskill is "a U.S. Senate candidate in Missouri", Scott McClellan is "the White House Press Secretary", but the vast majority of the President's critics are not only unnamed, but difficult to identify. On the one hand, this strategy has the benefit of de-personalising criticisms of the administration's policy—the policies are either helpful or unhelpful, either effective or ineffective, either good or bad, and the criticisms of those policies are accordingly apt or inapt, independent of the names attached to them. On the other hand, the effacement of critics in the text of *Decision Points*, coupled with the frequent absence of dates and sources associated with quotations, makes the work of any future historian (at one point invoked as someone to whom the book is addressed), exceedingly difficult. For example, when dealing with the quotes of opposition or media sources, Bush and his speechwriters have removed both the name of the source and the date of the criticism. A future historian approaching *Decision Points* would need an exquisite knowledge of the chronology and dramatis personae of the period and a near perfect knowledge of the media record from 2000 to 2008, before he or she could make heads or tails of how Bush treats his critics in his memoir.

A final rhetorical strategy of *Decision Points* is the book's achronological structure. "When I chose to structure this book around major decision points, I knew it would mean leaving out some aspects of my presidency". On the one hand, the thematic presentation of Bush's choices allows his decisions to be viewed autonomously. On the other hand, that same thematic presentation allows decisions to be viewed as more autonomous than they perhaps were. Decisions about going to war in Iraq and Afghanistan, rebuild-

ing New Orleans, adding a prescription drug benefit under Medicare, and cutting income taxes are presented as being quite distinct—but decisions about troop levels are not entirely removed from decisions about costs, and decisions about spending and initiating new government initiatives are not wholly divorced from thoughts about revenue and taxation. Further, the positioning of some events in *Decision Points* removes them from causal chains in which they form a link and forecloses certain forms of criticism. For example, Bush's deliberations regarding Abu Ghraib, where US military personnel abused Iraqi detainees, are presented prior to his deliberations regarding whether the US should invade Iraq and prior to his authorization of Guantanamo as a space of exceptional detention and interrogation. By placing Abu Ghraib early in his narrative, the author of *Decision Points* diverts the potential criticism that Guantanamo may have served as a model for prisoner abuse in other places, and the potential criticism that US military personnel would not have engaged in abuses at Abu Ghraib had they not been in Iraq to begin with.

Decision Points deploys a wide range of rhetorical strategies of self-presentation, justification and exculpation. Bush affects submission to the law on some issues (Katrina) and superiority to the law in others (Guantanamo), certain decisions are disavowed (Iraq), while others are amplified with superlatives (surveillance and interrogation). Bush casts himself by turns as jovial and cruel, a lover of humour and an eager tormentor of life. The narrative of the book runs forward and backward in time, leaving the reader feeling displaced and disoriented, in a directionless dream that is, by turns, a nightmare.

Reflecting on his ideas, the renowned political scientist James C. Scott admits that he has often thought: "now, that sounds like what an anarchist would argue". Many of those who have read his acclaimed 1998 *Seeing Like a State* will have undoubtedly agreed with this assessment. In his latest book *Two Cheers for Anarchism*, Scott now sets out to clarify his relationship to anarchism.

Well, not quite. Those expecting an account of anarchist theory - and its limits - are prewarned: "I do not, alas, have an elaborately worked-out argument for anarchism that would amount to an internally consistent political philosophy starting from first principles". What is new about *Two Cheers for Anarchism* is that Scott's focus now turns to the creative and emancipatory potential of bottom-up 'infrapolitics' rather than the destructive consequences of centralised 'high modernist' planning he had attacked in *Seeing Like a State*. The anarchic structure of the book consisting of 29 loose 'fragments' (associative, and sometimes repetitive, anecdotes and chains of thought) grouped into six chapters, however, hardly makes up for the implicitness of its discussion of 'anarchism'. Implicitness is not to say absence, for Scott's central themes are those of the anarchists: the attempt to assure both equality and freedom, the question of reform and revolution, the struggle to guarantee the autonomy of the individual as well as that of whole classes of society.

In *Seeing Like a State*, Scott had already acknowledged his debt to Kropotkin, Bakunin, Malatesta, and Proudhon; this same list is now expanded to include other 'theorists of anarchy' (NB *not* 'anarchists') such as Sismondi, Tolstoy, Rocker, Tocqueville and Landauer. Confining his treatment of these thinkers to quoting their most famous dictums in the preface, he refuses to engage explicitly with their thought. He instead claims that he shares the attitude "active in the aspirations and actions of people who have never heard of anarchism". Yet when this outlook is combined with a scarcity of references, arguably justified by his goal of accessibility, it sometimes becomes difficult for the reader to distinguish between Scott's ideas, the anarchist tradition and common sense intuition. Is his quoting the Tao Te Ching a nod to Kropotkin who regarded Laozi as one of the first to conceptualise the anarchistic instincts people have always expressed? Is he aware how his praise of Jeffersonian democracy echoes Tucker's? And what about the passages where he sounds a lot like non-anarchists Bourdieu or Huizinga? One is willing to suspect this is part of Scott's ingenious play, but positioning Scottism more directly in relation to anarchism might have helped to support some of his claims while at the same time pointing to some of the fundamental difficulties of his stance.

PASCAL SIEGRIST ACTS OF SUBVERSION

A REVIEW OF
*TWO CHEERS FOR
ANARCHISM: SIX
EASY PIECES ON
AUTONOMY,
DIGNITY, AND
MEANINGFUL
WORK AND PLAY*

BY JAMES C SCOTT

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
PRESS, 2012

That said, Scott does make some partial attempts to position himself. He seeks clearly to dissociate himself from certain creeds of anarchism such as the "utopian scientism" of the turn of the century as well as the types of libertarianism that tolerate, or even encourage, great differences in wealth. A further crucial difference between Scott and the bulk of classical anarchism is that Scott's critique of the state - that element which scholars such as George Crowder and K. Steven Vincent take to be the common denominator of all strands of anarchism - is a limited one; abolition is not an option, "we are stuck, alas, with Leviathan [...] and the challenge is to tame it". Like Proudhon, he sees anarchism as mutualism in the sense of non-hierarchical cooperation, rendering possible the political empowerment of 'small people'. Proudhon's famous enumeration of the state's curtailments of people's autonomy serves as the starting point for Scott's analysis of how the experience of being governed shapes people's actions and the strategies they develop to resist them (jaywalking, work-to-rule strikes, poaching, sabotage, refusing to participate in standardised tests etc.). Scott aptly broadens his claim to cover all schemes of social, environmental, and economic engineering, thereby including grand projects of corporate actors - Ford's attempt to grow a gigantic rubber plantation proves to be equally unsuccessful as 'scientific forestry' in late eighteenth-century Prussia. Against these efforts of increasing 'legibility' and thus control from above, Scott champions the efficacy of knowledge tested on the ground, developed over a long time by people whose life is directly touched by these decisions. A Danish playground, African and Andean farming, traditional multi-use neighbourhoods, a Dutch city removing its traffic lights and a garden in Guatemala, the inherent logic of activities in these spaces deserves to be followed, notwithstanding its apparent messiness; 'anarchy is the highest expression of order', to quote Élisée Reclus, another anarchist classic who somehow seems to have escaped Scott's book.

But Scott's version of the argument is somewhat different from the standard anarchist account, his criticism instrumental rather than moral. The problem with institutionalised procedures of production, learning and politics is more their lack of efficiency rather than the risk of corruption that comes with power and the inevitable formation of hierarchies. While the anarchist movement has gradually and hesitantly come to integrate trade unionist strategies in the early twentieth century, Scott's attack on organised opposition is reminiscent of Bakunin's call for spontaneous revolution. Like Bakunin, however, he provides few answers as to how the gains of the revolution - whatever they may be - are to be secured and despite his plea for small acts of subversion, larger political change from below seems impossible "unless a sudden and dire crisis catapults the poor into the streets". And what about the issue of violence? The 'urge of destruction' is cautiously absent from the book. Though non-violence might be preferable, Scott admits that "structural reform has rarely been initiated by decorous and peaceful claims". This is, in fact, more modest than it might sound. Realising that "virtually every major successful revolution ended by creating a state more powerful than the one it overthrew", his model goes something like this: the democratic state, which paradoxically tends to represent only the interests of its richest citizens, enters into crisis as inequalities become too blatant, the disadvantaged revolt, the unions and parties jump on the bandwagon and channel the protest until the elite finally makes concessions. This seems to have worked for the New Deal (whatever some anarchists might make of it) and the Civil Rights Movement, but does it always? Scott himself doesn't seem overly confident in a democratic renewal in the wake of the 2008 crisis and is strangely silent on the both the Occupy or the Tea Party movement.

I use these two rather different movements to

illustrate how Scott's position is impossible to pin down on a traditional left-right political spectrum. In attacking both big government and big business, both projects of standardising education for the sake of 'meritocracy' as well as cost-benefit analysis, he seems less concerned than the classical left-wing anarchists (to which, clearly, he feels closer than to anarcho-capitalists) about the masses' potential conservatism. He reveals how small autonomous peasants can be attached to their land against their best interests - in the form of contract farming whereby they virtually lose all independence - and defends the petty bourgeoisie in a manner almost resembling the Marxist caricature of anarchism. Hence no debate on 'property is theft'. The peasantry and the artisans may well be a base of radicalism - this had been Proudhon and Bakunin's argument in the mid-nineteenth century - but what kind of revolution will come from "the dying wail of classes over whom the wave of progress is about to roll"? Scott seems to be suggesting that the act of subversion is valuable in and of itself in spite of the ambiguity of its content. We learn that people, (especially Germans!), should practise these acts of subversion by regularly committing small acts of law-breaking such as crossing a red light when there is no car. But how do these local mini-struggles relate to a movement with - then and now - clearly internationalist ambitions? Rather than trying to save their local dialects, Chinese anarchists were fervent students of Esperanto, to give just one example. One is finally left with a feeling that Scott's pushing the impossible anarchist balance between liberty and equality in favour of liberty leaves those already in power in a fairly comfortable position. It is hard to tell whether this is his left-leaning politics makes him shy away from libertarian conclusions - would he have liked Fukuyama's praise (but also dissociation) on the back of the book? That said, Scott ends his tour with a powerful argument for the openness of history, for spontaneity and coincidence and against false historical causation.

Scott does not draw on the traditional anarchist solutions to these dilemmas (perhaps for fear of re-introducing an authoritarian element): propaganda, education and science. Kropotkin's attempts to produce a reading of Darwinism capable of countering social Darwinist interpretations of evolution and his positivistic ambition to change society by unravelling its laws are surely 'utopian scientism' from a contemporary perspective - but Scott seems to have little to offer beyond nostalgia for the loss of corner shops, which he sees as benign sites of social interaction, in face of the challenges and promises of technological development. But, once again, he is more prudent than that and always hints at the possible benefits of progress, undergirded by his very convincing case revealing the deeply political nature of seemingly neutral 'scientific' policies.

Nonetheless, Scott seems to have become the victim of his uneasiness with 'modernism' (wasn't it called *high modernism* in *Seeing Like a State?*), on which the discussion is fairly dated. He appears more concerned with Vietnam, Reagan and Thatcher than Iraq, Bush and Obama (though he briefly plays with the fantasy vision of Condoleezza Rice getting all Yale faculty staff to sport beanies totalling up the number of times they have been cited - a dig at the vulgar quantification of academic achievement). A discussion of the anarchistic opportunities presented by the internet is missing. But presenting Scott's views as mere parochialism would not do justice to his overall goal of resist the depoliticisation of the public sphere by reintroducing a profoundly human element. Institutions are to be judged by the kind of human beings they foster, what he calls their 'Gross Human Product' or GHP. The best exhibitions and war monuments are those which incite people to interact with them and refrain from prompting a clear message; it was personal contact with

Jewish refugees and not principles that inspired the inhabitants of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon to resist their German occupiers. GHP cannot be measured, of course, for Scott has convincingly illustrated how easily even originally sensible measures can be perverted and there is little control over what such quantifications actually measure. This sense of humanity can only be fostered by the sort of mutuality he champions, debate can never be replaced by 'the administration of things'.

Though Scott's kaleidoscope of touching stories, challenging thoughts and well-chosen examples

is at all times diverting and often mind-blowing, this panoply of loose ideas remains connected to a strong underlying argument. He is radical but hardly polemical, utopian but deeply rooted to the ground. Yet at the same time, his approach also allows him to skate lightly over some of the many contradictory impulses anarchists have had to struggle with - so as much as Scott adds interesting new perspectives and illustrations to the anarchist tradition, he is more successful at introducing new twists to the many loose ends left behind by Bakunin and others, rather than making a start at untangling them.

ASHRAF
AHMED

UNIVERSALISM
AND NEO-
AUGUSTINIANISM

A REVIEW OF
*JUSTICE FOR
EARTHLINGS:
ESSAYS IN
POLITICAL
PHILOSOPHY*

BY DAVID MILLER

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Political theorists are largely a neurotic bunch. Intellectual insecurity is an occupational hazard and a good deal of current political theory is about political theory. This isn't necessarily a bad thing; one mark of serious and insightful scholarship is disciplinary self-awareness. The alternative - meandering and disorganized rumination on politics - is arguably much worse (no doubt, there are those who think political theory remains just that despite its constant auto-critique). Within contemporary 'meta-political theory', there are at least two strands. The first, a distinctly American phenomenon, is concerned with defending the place of theorists within political science departments. These defences take various forms, from modest arguments about the persistence of value judgments in even the most blandly quantitative research to more ambitious claims for the explanatory power of political theory. The first strand, however, is interesting because of its insight into the peculiarities of American social science and the increasing emphasis on data analysis. At its core, this strand is an expression of political theorists' survival instinct, who find themselves a lonely minority in departmental struggles over scarce resources. There seems to be less anguish about the importance and place of theory in politics departments across the Atlantic, in both Britain and on the continent, where theorists and political scientists cohabit departments with considerably less acrimony than they do in America.

The second form of 'meta-political theory' is transatlantic and involves scholars who have been trained in both American and British politics and philosophy departments. The argument here concerns the very purpose of political theory: whether it is supposed to generate a form of knowledge and how this knowledge, if it can indeed be generated, is supposed to inform our behaviour and structure our institutions. While these are not exclusively modern questions, as any reader of Plato or Aristotle can confirm, most political theory today takes its cue from Rawls, who is thought to have provided the first contemporary answer to these problems. Indeed, one fashionable interpretation of the last forty years of political theory is to see it as a series of responses and revisions of Rawls. As is usually the case, the quality of these responses has varied tremendously, with some philosophers - Robert Nozick, Tim Scanlon, G.A. Cohen - developing inspired theories of their own, while others have merely written derivative extensions of Rawls' magisterial work. Similarly, meta-political theory of the second kind is primarily concerned with justice, a natural consequence of Rawls' seminal claim that "justice was the first virtue of social institutions".

David Miller's *Justice for Earthlings* is set in this post-Rawlsian landscape, as Miller self-consciously positions himself against Rawls and his interlocutors, particularly G.A. Cohen. The book comprises a collection of essays, the majority of which are extensions and revisions of conference talks and lectures, capped off by a short, but helpful introduction, where Miller lays out the motivations for his book. Put briefly, Miller is troubled by a two aspects of contemporary theories of justice, which he labels "universalism" and "neo-Augustinianism". He oddly does not introduce these terms in his introduction, defining "universalism" in his second essay, 'Two ways to think about Justice', and reserving "neo-Augustinianism" for his last essay, 'A tale of two cities; or, political philosophy as lamentation'. Their strange placement in the book understates the terms' importance, since they represent much of what Miller finds wrong in contemporary theories of justice. Miller's work is also combative and, at times, polemical and his views on justice are defined largely by what they are not. It is therefore instructive to define these terms before moving on to his less methodological, and more substantive, essays.

First, Miller labels Cohen's work along with Rawls' theory as "universalist". By this, Miller means that these theories present justice in the form of abstract principles by reference to which we can determine the justice of a given state of affairs. It's clear, then, that "universalism" describes many current theories of justice currently on offer; Rawls' theory hinges on the protection of rights and his famous 'difference principle', while Cohen's idea of justice demands that advantages and disadvantages arising from luck, a notoriously capacious concept, be equalized. Universalist theories are distinguished by the constancy of their principles and their supposed indifference to contextual factors, insofar as justice is concerned.

Miller's second term of art, "neo-Augustinianism", is an obvious reference

to the philosophy of the Church doctor. For Augustine, the sort of justice achievable in the here and now will always be impoverished by comparison with the perfect justice of the City of God. While Miller acknowledges that Augustine still urged individuals to abide by earthly laws and for magistrates to strive for justice, the former insists that the permanent distance between earthly and divine justice is deeply worrying. Miller maintains that contemporary theories of justice, in particular Cohen's, exhibit a similar gap between perfect justice and feasible justice. These theories of justice, on Miller's view, set the standards of justice so impossibly high that no feasible form of social organization could be called fully just.

The cardinal sins of "universalism" and "neo-Augustinian", then, shape Miller's own project, which he dubs "contextualism". Against "universalists", Miller argues that justice is "contextual" in that it varies in different circumstances. Justice doesn't involve the application of a single master or master set of principles to every context, but rather the invocation of different principles in different circumstances. Thus, depending on the situation, need, equality, or merit might have priority. The *might* is instructive, however, because it points to the flexibility and ambiguity of Miller's theory. Miller's contextualism is partly the result of a well-worn skepticism towards "universalist theories", whose guiding principles seem "arbitrary". Our ordinary moral convictions, Miller argues, don't square with conceptions of justice, like that of Cohen's, which rest on a single principle, such as equality. Contextualism thus offers a way out, since it accommodates the variability in our ordinary intuitions about justice. More importantly, contextualism allows for different conceptions of justice depending on our "shared understandings" of moral concepts, a notion that Miller borrows from Michael Walzer, who is an important presence in the book.

Miller's contextualism has various consequences and he quickly anticipates possible counterarguments. Among the responses Miller is most anxious to foreclose is the charge of relativism. The accusation of relativism has the following structure: if principles of justice are context-dependent and moral vocabularies diverge accordingly, then justice simply becomes whatever any given society takes it to be and justice turns out to be a conceptual cipher. Miller recognizes the seriousness of the charge and tries to show that, even across societies, moral concepts are similar enough that objectionable outcomes such as racial subjugation would be outlawed by any internally consistent conception of justice. It isn't entirely clear, however, if Miller's defence is successful. His treatment of the issue is limited to a page or two, in a work spanning ten essays and two-hundred and fifty pages. Even if Miller's theory of justice is sufficiently expansive so as to resist a concrete formulation, a lack of an extended defence of his own theory is a serious flaw in the book. In other books, such as his *Principles of Social Justice*, Miller does more defensive work, but *Justice for Earthlings* is principally a critique of Rawls and Cohen and, to that extent, contextualism is not put forth as persuasively as it might have been. It remains to be seen if contextualism is a viable alternative to thinking about justice and Miller's presentation of the book as an argument for his own views is a bit misleading. Instead *Justice for Earthlings* might better be read as powerful indictment of contemporary theories of justice, more at home with recent "realist" arguments offered by the likes of Raymond Geuss and Bernard Williams, among others.

Miller's contextualism also involves a greater willingness to engage with "facts", or the findings of contemporary social science. Indeed, Miller's breadth of reading, familiarity with the relevant social science, and fluent usage of said research is very impressive and is an excellent example of a successful mar-

riage of theory and empiricism. In "Social justice in multicultural societies", for instance, Miller draws on experiments comparing the relative weights different ethnic groups place on need and merit, when allocating resources in order to highlight what he takes to be the contextual and constant features of social justice. Elsewhere, in an essay titled "Equality of opportunity and the family", Miller cites differing schools of developmental psychology to highlight the difficulty in determining the effect of the family on equality of opportunity. Miller concludes that essay by stressing the importance of empiricism in the development of just social policy. Miller's point is well-taken and it is widely acknowledged that there is a lot of empirical groundwork that needs to be done before a "Rawlsian" or "Cohenian" social policy can be realized. It is, however, far from clear that facts should play a determinative role in conceiving of justice in the first place. Miller tries to argue otherwise in his first essay, "Political philosophy for Earthlings", and takes aim at Cohen's claim that facts are only morally relevant because they reflect basic moral principles that are fact-insensitive. Miller offers alternative ways of understanding what it means for a fact to "ground" a principle, which he terms "evidential" and "presuppositional" grounding. Put roughly, Miller's argument is that facts can lend "ground" or support principles by virtue of their setting the terms for moral salience. To take Miller's example, the fact of human self-consciousness is what makes liberty intrinsically valuable; if human beings were constituted otherwise, say like dogs, liberty would be morally meaningless.

Miller's position isn't absurd. In fact, on some readings, Hume holds a very similar understanding of why moral propositions are meaningful. Hume, however, after much serious thought, provided meaningful, if contested, answers to the principal questions of meta-ethics: 'How, if at all, are moral statements meaningful?'; 'What do we mean when we say things are good or just?'; 'What is the source of our moral motivation?'; 'And what is the moral division of labor between reason and the passions?' Miller simply doesn't provide an answer to these questions, conceding they are "fundamental questions about the nature of justice and about moral epistemology". But it is precisely because these questions are so fundamental that answering them is crucial to a persuasive theory of justice. Miller is not alone in this failing; G.A. Cohen similarly failed to justify his strong moral realism and it is ironic that Miller ends up closer to Cohen, the arch-villain of his book, than to Rawls, whom he criticizes more gently than Cohen. It is doubly ironic, then, that Cohen and Miller's mistakes underscore a signal virtue of Rawls' work, his attempt to bypass meta-ethical questions by way of his constructivism. Rawls' constructivism has admittedly suffered intense scrutiny, but it represents his awareness that either a political theorist either has to provide an answer to basic metaethical questions or justify their irrelevance. Rawls' constructivism was a systematic attempt to do the latter.

Miller's remaining essays address various issues in global justice, including the moral significance of boundaries and the problem of compliance in non-ideal circumstances. The latter problem, taken up in the antepenultimate and penultimate essays, concerns the responsibility to do one's fair share when others shirk their duties. Miller navigates the problem with considerable grace, laying out the different strategies individuals can adopt and the different moral considerations weighing in their respective favours. Although his conclusions are tentative, they necessarily have to be. It is difficult to determine the extent of one's responsibilities without an appropriate grasp of the stakes, costs, and time frame involved. What is striking, moreover, is that these essays are entirely exercises in moral philosophy, involving the sort of intuitionism that Miller had

criticized in the work of Cohen, and lack any of the social science that informed earlier essays in the book. Miller's ability to move between disciplines is certainly expert, but the sharp contrast between the middle and latter third of the book may leave readers doubtful of any unifying methodology to his work.

Justice for Earthlings is a book with numerous strengths. In addition to those mentioned above, Miller's prose is enjoyable to read. This is not faint praise. Political theory can often be a labour of love, as readers slough through the writing in search of interesting ideas. Rawls' stilted prose and Cohen's precise but ponderous language are ample evidence of that fact. Miller's writing is, by contrast, light and crisp, despite the occasional references to *Star*

Trek and his unfortunate choice of title and he maintains that clarity throughout the book. Miller's book is also a good point of entry for readers who have a rough idea of the development of political theory post-Rawls, but would like an update on theories of justice in the past decade. This is a somewhat selective group of readers, but then again, Miller is a leading political theorist writing for fellow professionals. A final assessment of *Justice for Earthlings*, like with all judgment, depends on the reader's expectations. As a stand-alone 'theory of justice', it is disappointing, with many ideas under-defended and many paths neglected; as an intelligent critique and overview of the field, it is a valuable piece of scholarship.

Outside of Cambridge, it is widely believed that there is a 'Cambridge School' in the history of political thought. Within Cambridge, the existence of such a 'school' is much less obvious. Agreement on the scholars who should be associated with it, or on its distinctive intellectual characteristics, would be hard to come by. Among recent practitioners of the subject, Istvan Hont, Reader in the History of Political Thought in the Faculty of History and Fellow of King's, embodied this disjunction more sharply than anyone. To colleagues (including this writer) who work in the field he cultivated - one which extended over the whole of European political thought from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries - he is the reason why Cambridge has been the reference point for original and creative enquiry. Yet few of them would have regarded Hont as representative of a 'Cambridge' school, and any who ventured so to think of him would have been brusquely disabused of the notion by Hont himself. He was not 'of' Cambridge by background and intellectual formation, and he never allowed his long tenure of a University post here to domesticate him, institutionally or intellectually. At the same time, he believed passionately in the importance of his subject, and in the responsibility of Cambridge historians to uphold this, and to take the lead in the subject's pursuit and propagation. The combination of denial and affirmation was often infuriating, to colleagues within as well as outwith the history of political thought, in Cambridge and beyond; but it was, as I shall try to show, the key to his quite remarkable contribution to the subject, and to the study of history more generally.

Istvan Hont was born in Hungary in April 1947, of secular Jewish parents, and educated in Budapest at the King Stephen I Gymnasium. Russian was compulsory, and Istvan learned it; but he never afterwards used it, although he was a good linguist, who read German, French and Italian. On leaving school he did a year of national service in the Hungarian army (1964-65), and then began to study Electronic Engineering at the Budapest Institute of Technology, completing Part I of the degree in 1968. Even if engineering was not to be his future, these were far from wasted years. Amidst all his scholarship, Istvan was a lifelong car enthusiast, devouring auto magazines and freely advising colleagues on what they should be driving. But in 1968 he changed course, switching to History and Philosophy at the University of Budapest. Winning a Prize Studentship in 1970, he completed his MA in 1973, and proceeded immediately to the Dr Ph., which he gained in 1974. His doctoral thesis, supervised by Professor Éva Balázs, was on 'David Hume and Scotland'. He was appointed a Research Officer in the Institute of History in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a post which required membership of the Communist Party. There his duties included making summaries of the *Economic History Review*, which then occupied the place in historical studies now held by *Past and Present*; he thus acquired his encyclopaedic knowledge of modern economic and social history.

In this position, he was also asked to act as driver and guide to Michael Postan, Professor of Economic History at Cambridge, during a visit by Postan to Budapest. It was a crucial connection. Postan detected the young Hont's frustration, and subsequently encouraged and helped him to come to England. In 1975, Istvan and his wife Anna visited England, and just as their Hungarian 'exit' visas were due to run out, took the brave decision to seek leave to remain in the United Kingdom. Re-starting his academic career here was not easy; Anna, a sociologist, was unable to continue hers, and instead learned computing in order to provide them with an income. Istvan went first to Oxford, where he resumed his study of the Scottish Enlightenment and Hume's political economy under the supervision of Hugh Trevor-Roper. He also attended Sir John Hicks's classes in the history of economic thought, laying the foundations for his interest in the history of political economy. He clearly appreciated Hicks's free-wheeling style of teaching, expounding the ideas of the great economists, but also setting them in con-

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IN MEMORY OF
ISTVAN HONT
(1947 - 2013)

text. In 1977 he was appointed to the Research Fellowship in Intellectual History at Wolfson College, Oxford. A year later, however, he moved across to King's College, Cambridge, to direct the newly-established Research Centre project on 'Political Economy and Society 1750-1850', along with Michael Ignatieff.

The six years of the project established Hont's reputation as a scholar of uncompromising intellectual purpose. He and Ignatieff organised a series of ground-breaking conferences, which not only recast the history of political economy but transformed understanding of its wider intellectual context in moral, social and political thought. The first conference, in 1979, brought together Duncan Forbes (Reader in the History of Political Thought and Fellow of Clare, who claimed not to have set foot in King's for over a decade), Nicholas Phillipson, John Pocock, Franco Venturi and Donald Winch, along with younger scholars; the second, in 1984 assembled a much larger cast, including John Dunn, James Moore, Judith Shklar, Quentin Skinner, and Richard Tuck, as well as the leading German intellectual historians, Hans Erich Bödeker and Reinhardt Koselleck, the latter the principal exponent of *Begriffsgeschichte*. But it was Hont who set the agenda, in the first with his paper on the 'Rich country - poor country problem', and in the second with early versions of his papers on Natural Law, Pufendorf, and Adam Smith.

What Hont christened the 'rich country - poor country problem' in eighteenth-century Scottish political economy concerned the development prospects of countries which lagged behind richer neighbours, as Scotland then lagged behind England. The issue was whether the poor country would be able to take advantage of its poverty, in particular its lower wage costs, to achieve a competitive advantage over its neighbour, and in due course catch it up. The question engaged all the major economic thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, David Hume, James Stewart, Adam Smith and several others; their foil was the sceptical English economist, Josiah Tucker, who argued that England would retain its advantage. But Hont's point was that the Scots were neither of one voice nor simple economic nationalists: both Hume and Smith recognised that the rich countries would indeed retain their advantages, through their capacity for manufacturing innovation and an intensifying division of labour. Nevertheless, poor countries should keep their nerve: only through entry into the international market place could they improve their absolute position, even if they might never catch up altogether. Already, Hont had pinpointed what would be a leitmotif of his analysis of eighteenth-century political economy: securing the benefits of commerce and of commercial society was not for the faint-hearted.

An essay on this theme was Hont's own contribution to the volume which eventually resulted from the first conference, *Wealth and Virtue. The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, published by the Cambridge University Press in 1983. But by that time he had added a second strand to his interrogation of Scottish thought, which he brought to the fore in the volume's introductory essay, co-written with Michael Ignatieff, on 'Needs and justice in the *Wealth of Nations*'. The essay argued that Smith's great work should be read as the culmination of an intensifying critique of Scholastic Natural Law's concept of distributive justice. It was a critique from within natural jurisprudence: Smith was the heir of Grotius, Pufendorf and Locke. But his was the definitive answer to Aquinas: only a system of competitive markets in food and labour, not charity informed by the principles of distributive justice, would guarantee adequate subsistence to the labouring poor. The importance of the Natural Law tradition for the political thought of the Scottish Enlightenment had previously been signalled by Duncan

Forbes; Hont demonstrated just how Smith had responded to it, over-turning one of its central tenets.

As his papers to the second conference revealed, however, Hont conceived of the natural law tradition as the key not only to explaining the *Wealth of Nations*; it would also provide the historical connection with the political economy of Marx. Briefly there surfaced in these conference contributions, which were never published, a constant but usually submerged dimension of Hont's intellectual agenda: the need to settle accounts with Marx and his followers. There was nothing simplistic or crudely political in this: Hont never identified with right-wing critiques of Marx and Marxism. His register was that of intellectual-historical scholarship: only at this depth would Marxism's theoretical limitations be exposed and understood. In these papers, Smith was set between Pufendorf and Marx; Marx's failing was to have missed the extent to which classical political economy was a response to the larger moral and political issues explored in the Natural Law tradition. In particular, Marx had failed to grasp why modern commercial society was so successful a response to the Hobbesian problem of man's natural aversion to society: it was precisely self-interest, the willingness to labour and the propensity to exchange, which had drawn man into, and now kept him within, an ordered, economically viable society. The first part of this argument would be published, three years later, as 'The language of sociability and commerce: Samuel Pufendorf and the theoretical foundations of the "Four Stages Theory"', in a volume on *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Anthony Pagden (Cambridge, 1987). But the missing second part, taking the argument up to Marx, would never appear in print.

The King's Political Economy Project ended in 1984, and Hont spent the following academic year as a Simon Fellow at the University of Manchester. In 1986 he was appointed to an Assistant Professorship in Political Science at Columbia. He spent the next three years in the United States, one of them (1987-88) as a Visiting Member of the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton. He was always attracted to the direct, vigorous style of academic exchange he found there, which was so suited to his own seriousness of purpose; he also appreciated the theoretical edge given to the historical study of political thought at these and other US institutions. Although his return to Cambridge in 1989 would prove to be definitive, there was no guarantee of this at the time. He would hold visiting appointments at Harvard in 1999 and 2000, and was appointed to a tenured position there, only for the offer to be withdrawn at the insistence of a President determined that new appointees must be under fifty.

He returned to Cambridge to succeed Duncan Forbes as the lecturer in the History Faculty primarily responsible for eighteenth-century political thought, for the first three years as a University Assistant Lecturer, then as University Lecturer, and belatedly, from 2008, as Reader in the History of Political Thought. It was an appointment with major implications for the development of the history of political thought at Cambridge. Duncan Forbes had played a key role in the revival of this subject at the University, through his Special Subject on 'Hume, Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment', whose takers had included Quentin Skinner and John Dunn (as well as many others later to practise intellectual history - a prosopography of Forbes's classes would tell us a great deal about the development of the field in the second half of the twentieth century). But for reasons yet to be properly explained, Skinner and Dunn had chosen to make the seventeenth century the focus of their initial, transformative scholarship; and from there Skinner would go further back still, identifying the 'foundations' of modern political thought in the Renaissance. Forbes had continued to lecture, defiant-

ly and idiosyncratically, on the Scots and on Hegel, but never associated himself with the methodological or historical claims of those former students, now his colleagues. Hont certainly did not return to Cambridge in 1989 to join a 'school'; rather he would exploit the freedom which Forbes had preserved for himself. But he did renew the agenda which he had mapped out in the course of the King's College Project on Political Economy, and had since deepened and extended by study and teaching in America: he now asserted, as Forbes had never wished to do, that eighteenth-century political philosophers and economists had laid many of the intellectual foundations of the modern commercial world.

He did so first of all by his teaching. When Hont returned to Cambridge, the status of the history of political thought was asserted principally through lecturing - a great deal of it: he would later speak wistfully of the years when a single paper, covering political thought from 1700 to 1890, was the subject of over a hundred lectures. He was no less demanding a lecturer than a scholar, expecting undergraduates to reach above their heads, sometimes high above them, to grasp his arguments. He spoke best without notes, but with extensive hand-outs of textual quotations; he conveyed utter conviction, but at a level of complexity which pre-empted dogmatism. No-one could hear a lecture by Hont without realising that she or he was being told something important, something which it was important to try to understand. As an undergraduate supervisor, first impressions were similarly uncompromising; but if the student responded, and made the effort to engage, so would he. He was endlessly generous in reading essays, even those written simply as exam practice, a task most supervisors find less than rewarding.

Increasingly, a second strand of his teaching was devoted to graduates. With Quentin Skinner, Richard Tuck, Anthony Pagden, Gareth Stedman Jones and later Annabel Brett, he played a major part in the establishment of the M.Phil. in Political Thought and Intellectual History. This immediately commanded an international reputation, and became the History Faculty's most successful M.Phil., while also involving colleagues in Politics and International Relations. The classes in which Hont introduced the new graduates to the study of a selected text, most recently Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, were famous for taking no prisoners. Students who imagined that an internship in a management consultancy had given them a fair grasp of Adam Smith needed to be summarily disabused of their misapprehension: they were now at Cambridge, where the bar for beginning the study of Smith (or Hobbes, or Hume, or Kant) was set higher than anywhere else. Such rigour ensured, however, that those who responded to the demands of the M.Phil. would be well-prepared for the PhD.

At this level too, Hont was a famously demanding supervisor. But this was not dirigisme: intellectual independence had the highest value in his estimation of a doctoral student, and those who possessed it flourished. Initially he talked a student through the bibliography and the crucial questions at stake in a topic, often for hours at a time; later he would read and re-read drafts of the thesis, with the same patience and attention he gave to undergraduate essays, but necessarily taking even more time. Some of his students extended and deepened his own studies of Scottish thinkers; but many took Hont's insights elsewhere, into French, German and Italian thought. Increasingly also they took their investigations forwards in time, into the early nineteenth century. Among the earliest of these doctoral students were Béla Kapossy and Richard Whatmore; more recently Isaac Nakhimovsky, Iain McDaniel and Sophus Reinert (among many others) have joined them in an enquiry in which Hont was always a close and supportive collaborator, but never sought to be the director.

The final dimension of Hont's higher pedagogy was the weekly Seminar in Political Thought and Intellectual History. In its most recent incarnation, this was very much his model of a research seminar, at which graduate attendance, both M.Phil. and Ph.D., was expected. Recognising the possibilities of new technology, Hont instituted a website where papers would be made available in advance, creating the opportunity for a formal Comment as well as for extended discussion of the paper during the seminar itself. His standard was that of the best American schools, below which Cambridge should by no means fall: here too, he saw no need to take prisoners when a speaker failed to address critical questions.

Meanwhile, during the 1990s, Hont had steadily advanced his own scholarly agenda, with articles on neo-Machiavellian political economy and the 'economic limits to national politics' at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, on the intellectually-vexed issue of public credit, and David Hume's apparently alarmist response to its growth in Britain in particular, and on conceptions of the nation-state and nationalism in the later eighteenth century and during the French Revolution. Long articles in form, each of these was worth a book, treating its subject with an originality which transformed understanding of its significance. Not all his projects reached publication: this was particularly, and regrettably, true of an extended collaborative enquiry, conceived with Hans Erich Bödeker and Keith Tribe, and soon involving scholars from across Europe, into the early definition and teaching of political economy in the universities.

Eventually, the major articles of the 1980s and 1990s were collected in a single volume, *Jealousy of Trade. International Competition and the Nation State in Historical Perspective*, published by Harvard University Press in 2005. In effect, however, this was two books in one: an invaluable collection of previously-published articles, but also a new book, framed by a long introduction on the theme of 'jealousy of trade'. The phrase was adapted from the title of one of David Hume's economic essays, and pointed to the way in which commercial competition had exacerbated the rivalry hitherto fostered by political 'reason of state': between modern commercial nations, wars of empire and conquest in pursuit of markets and resources were almost inevitable. The interest of eighteenth-century political economy lay in the sophistication of its attempts to make sense of this development. Some, such as Montesquieu, had seen commerce itself as the cure: *doux commerce* would temper national rivalry. But this reading of political economy, endorsed by Albert Hirschman in his brilliant, influential *The Passions and the Interests. Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph* (1977), was found wanting by Hont. To him Hume and Smith had gone deeper, demonstrating not just that poor countries might never overhaul rich ones, but that national emulation in commerce was ineradicable. The challenge was not to eliminate it, but to check misguided 'jealousy' in trade, and ensure that rivalry was conducted without malice, avoiding the premature resort to war. To Hont this was just as much a challenge for the modern, post-1989 global economic order as it had been for the eighteenth century: *Jealousy of Trade* was an intervention in contemporary politics as well as in historical scholarship.

By the time the book was published in 2005, new projects were already in hand. One, begun in the late 1990s, was a complete re-thinking of the standard narrative of the eighteenth-century 'luxury debate'. Hitherto it had been assumed that Mandeville and Hume had successfully legitimated luxury, leaving only Rousseau and his followers unconvinced. Hont argued that the crucial text in reviving the issue had in fact been Fénelon's *Telemachus* (1699), which had projected a 'balanced' economy of country and town as an anti-

dote to luxury; a further critical intervention was Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* (1748), which ensured that the arguments of Mandeville and Hume would fail to persuade Continental European readers living in large, agriculture-based monarchies. Regrettably, this was another of Hont's projects of which only the first half reached publication, in a long chapter in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought* (2006); this stops abruptly short of Montesquieu. But seminar papers and conversation, not least with his close colleague in King's, the French historian Michael Sonenscher, have made it possible to grasp the main findings of the project's missing second half.

A second project picked up the threads of Hont's earlier work on sociability, and explored the theme anew in the thinking of Rousseau and Adam Smith, two thinkers often thought antithetical, but whom Hont believed should be seen as closely related, arguing differently over common ground. This project was the subject of the Carlyle Lectures in Oxford in 2009 and of the Schiller and Benedict Lectures delivered respectively in Jena and Boston a year later; since a text exists of the Carlyle Lectures, it is possible, though far from certain, that with editing the lectures can be published.

By the summer of 2011 it was clear that Istvan's health, already uncertain as a result of diabetes and a heart operation, was deteriorating. Over a period of months he was diagnosed with a rare blood condition, which dramatically reduced his immunity. Determination and persistence on the part of Anna secured treatments from University College Hospital in London as well as from Addenbrooke's, but Istvan's ability to work was increasingly disrupted.

Nevertheless in the Michaelmas Term of 2011 he pressed ahead with what was to be his final project, a seminar for Ph.D. students, co-directed with Duncan Kelly, on 'The cultural history of the history of political thought'. The suggestion of a 'cultural' history was little more than ironic; Hont was dismissive of the reductive tendency of much recent cultural history. Instead, the seminar set out to explore the construction of the history of political thought by its major exponents since the late nineteenth century, when it had been established as central to both the Cambridge History Tripos and the Oxford School of Modern History. The seminar's 'canon' of historians of political thought was unexpected, running from J.C. Bluntschli through Friedrich Meinecke, Carl Schmitt, Michael Oakeshott, Leo Strauss, John Rawls and Michel Foucault, before ending with 'the Cambridge School', identified for this purpose with Quentin Skinner, John Dunn and John Pocock. As Hont and Kelly proceeded to explain, the modern history of political thought was by no means born in Cambridge, of purely English or even Anglo-American parentage. Oakeshott, Strauss, Rawls and Foucault were particularly commended as historians of political thought (and sharply distinguished from their followers, the Oakeshottians, Straussians, Rawlsians etc.) But the conclusion to the series was no less unexpectedly eirenic.

There was no coherent 'Cambridge School', Hont confirmed, for the simple and obvious reason that its supposed members agreed on very little, while the early forays into methodology had been polemical, ways of asserting the presence of a new generation of young scholars. What there was, nevertheless, was a profound disagreement over the history of the idea of the state in Europe since antiquity. In very different ways, the same question had been at the heart of the enquiries of Dunn, Skinner and Pocock, as it had been of those of their Swiss, German, French and Anglo-American predecessors. The need to answer the question was the reason why the history of political thought came into existence, and why it had stood, and should remain, at the heart of all historical study, above all in Cambridge. Defiantly ignoring his illness, Hont never

suggested that the seminar should be taken as his legacy. But there can be little doubt that he intended it to be so. It was his injunction to his colleagues and to the current generation of graduate students in the History of Political Thought to maintain their predecessors' focus on the state, and to continue to insist on its central importance to historical understanding.

Hont's perspective on the history of political thought was not without its limits: like almost all Cambridge exponents of the subject until very recently, he ignored religion, assuming that modern political thought was secular, beginning with Hobbes, and omitting the 'irredeemably Christian' Locke. The lack of interest in theology marked his treatment of Natural Law in particular, prompting Jim Moore's genial remark that his account of Pufendorf was 'the Istvanian heresy'. But Hont was ready to learn: in his final years, even theology was absorbed - sometimes with unexpected results, as when he asked a baffled seminar speaker to address the matter of James Mill's soteriology. But this was characteristic. Hont always possessed the curiosity of a good historian, combining it with seriousness of philosophical purpose. Together, these were what it meant to study the history of political thought at Cambridge. If he always remembered and insisted that he was not 'of' Cambridge, being formed elsewhere, he was nonetheless fiercely committed 'to' Cambridge, and to the indispensable role of the history of political thought - of thinking about the state - to the study of history in this University.

Istvan Hont died on 29 March 2013, after months of ever-increasing difficulty, whose implications he persisted in denying, even as he depended on the devoted attention of Anna. A memorial meeting will be held in King's College early in September; a colloquium in his honour and memory will be organised under the aegis of the History Faculty's Political Thought and Intellectual History Subject Group some time in 2014.

Major Publications

Wealth and Virtue. The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment, edited with Michael Ignatieff, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): contained their joint introductory essay, 'Needs and justice in the Wealth of Nations' (pp. 1-44), and Hont's own contribution, 'The "rich country - poor country" debate in Scottish classical political economy' (pp. 271-316).

Jealousy of Trade. International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005) (contained all his major articles from the contributions to *Wealth and Virtue* up to 2005). Awarded the J. David Greenstone Book Award of the American Political Science Association, and the Joseph J. Spengler Best Book Award of the History and Economics Society, in both cases for 2005

'The early Enlightenment debate on commerce and luxury', in Mark Goldie & Robert Wokler (eds), *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 379-418.

'The "rich country - poor country" debate revisited: the Irish origins and French reception of the Hume paradox', in Carl Wennerlind and Margaret Schabas (eds), *David Hume's Political Economy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 243-323.

'Adam Smith's history of law and government as political theory', in Richard Bourke and Raymond Geuss (eds), *Political Judgement. Essays for John Dunn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 131-171.

DR NIGEL SPIVEY

A VALEDICTION FOR THE CAMBRIDGE REVIEW, 1879-1998

THE CHR IS GRATEFUL TO DR SPIVEY FOR GRANTING PERMISSION TO REPRINT THIS ABRIDGED VERSION OF HIS EDITORIAL IN THE FINAL 1998 EDITION OF *THE CAMBRIDGE REVIEW*

...there did exist the residual something about Cambridge that many a solemn alumnus has tried to define. I see this basic property as the constant awareness one had of an untrammelled extension of time. I do not know if anyone will ever go to Cambridge in search of the imprints which my soccer boots have left in the black mud before a gaping goal or follow the shadow of my cap across the quadrangle to my tutor's stairs; but I know that I thought of Milton, and Marvell, and Marlowe, with more than a tourist's thrill as I passed beside the reverend walls.

VLADIMIR NABOKOV

'You cannot step into the same river twice.' How many dons must have reached for that handy Pre-Socratic nugget over the years? Trusty old solace: it will serve me well enough now. I come to bury this journal, and I will praise it without mourning. It has no future to speak of; but it has a past worth celebration. Longevity alone is not a virtue: to the men who founded *The Cambridge Review* on a hot bee-loud day in 1879, the phrase 'a good innings' would surely have been prompted by the total of 119 years of existence as a journal. We do not match the *Spectator*, of course; but think of some we have out-batted: names of such fallen as the *Adelphi*, the *Criterion*, the *Edinburgh Review*, *Encounter*, *Horizon*, the *Listener*, *Scrutiny*. (Or if not fallen, then the utterly transmogrified, such as *The Granta*.) An editor who declares the end of a periodical enduring a century plus need feel no murderous shame; more amazement, to have lasted so long.

You cannot step into the same river twice because (as Herakleitos also observed) all is flux. The flow of *The Cambridge Review* over the past century has not been continuous and steady: quite apart from various tinkering with its format and scope and regularity of appearance, there have been divers occasions when the *Review* has come close to closure. For those curious or indignant to know precisely why the Editorial Board took the decision to cease publication with this number, the answer is no secret: despite world-wide mail-shots and further efforts by the University Press to broadcast the *Review*, the fact remains that its constituency is gone. Each year in recent memory, subscriptions have declined. But before the cry goes up for a new patron, let us be straight. To lose money on the *Review* is not a novelty: the loss is even arguably tolerable. To lose readers however - down to a dwindling number of several hundreds - is more conclusive. It seems in Cambridge we are not talking to ourselves, let alone to others.

Considering the toppled columns of Murry's *Adelphi*, Eliot's *Criterion*, Connolly's *Horizon* and so on, I make one pledge: not to indulge the trope of militant barbarism as a cause of this journal's demise. In fact I would abstain from any apocalyptic diagnosis of the declining readership of the *Review*. John Casey, outgoing editor in 1979, saw the *Review* tenuously playing 'its own small part in the defence of culture against the philistines'. Perhaps, by now, 'philistinism' is so much upon us that I simply cannot recognise its tribal dominion. But the *Review's* particular end is surely no generic terminus. Before too long, over coffee or some stronger brew, hatched from some creative huddle of questing minds, another 'intellectual', 'cultured' or even 'academic' journal will be born in Cambridge; quite possibly relying upon Gutenberg craft. It is in a spirit of shrugged insouciance, therefore, that I here offer a personal retrospective of the *Review's* performance since 1879.

What follows is not an official history - which will surely be undertaken, by someone doctorate-bound - nor does it constitute a selection of the most durably notable contributions published by the *Review* over the years. That sort of anthology has been twice collected. In 1898, Messrs Macmillan and Bowes published *The Book of the Cambridge Review*, featuring adroit *belles Lettres* and parlour verse from the first eighteen volumes; and in 1970 an assemblage of *Review* essays and poems compiled by Eric Homberger, William Janeway and Simon Schama was published by Jonathan Cape under the title *The Cambridge Mind*. The latter carried a dedication to Bertrand Russell; asserted the *Review's* twentieth-century status as mirror or even messenger of 'some of the most valuable and important achievements of Cambridge scholarship'; and justified its title with a claim to identify common characteristics of 'the Cambridge Mind' ('a rigour of logical analysis; an uncompromising exercise of sceptical enquiry; a commitment to verification rather than imaginative construction').

At the risk of being too imaginative to belong to Cambridge, I have elected to take an editor's cut through the history of the *Review*. This is what archaeologists would call a section; a representative dig through the strata and striations of the journal. I have taken little account of canonical greatness: everyone already knows that Cambridge since 1879 has teemed with distinguished scholars, of whom most have at one time or another placed copy with the *Review*. In fact my swipe through the decades has been more or less at random. Where desirable I have added my own commentary. Otherwise I leave the *Review* to deliver its own testimony of worth.

I. Prehistory and origins

There were forerunners. Not the first, but one whose existence is documented, was *The Student of Oxford*, produced in 1750, and broadening to become *The Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany*, to which Dr Johnson delivered some copy. Successive efforts at Cambridge were short-lived: the *Reformer* of 1776, followed by the *Snob*, then the *Gownsmen*; later (amongst dozens of others) the *Light Blue*, the *Light Green*, and the *Tatler in Cambridge*. William Morris and friends set up the *Oxford and Cambridge*, but it lasted less than a year. The *Cambridge Review* was mooted by a gathering of dons in the rooms of J. G. Frazer at Trinity, and launched in October 1879. Edited by A.V. Arnold, A.W.W. Dale and W. Hillhouse, and printed by Mr Fabb of Paradise Street, it sold some 1,200 copies (price sixpence) in a few days. But its founders can have had little faith for a fore-score annual run and more, despite their manifesto, which went like this:

To expect neither too much nor too little is what we would ask of our readers. Not too much, for amongst the many claims of busy Cambridge life the editing of this journal will be a serious and difficult task; not too little, for it rests with our readers themselves to make the Review what it should be - a fair representative of the life and thought of the University.

It may perhaps seem at first sight that our efforts are on too wide a scale to be successful; that in trying to please all parties we are likely to satisfy none. It may be pointed out that there meet in Cambridge men interested in religion and in philosophy, in literature and in art, in political and in social science, in outdoor sports and evening entertainments. But it is too general, not too special interests that we appeal; and it is in the full persuasion that the forming of such interests are among the most important objects of University training that we wish to introduce an additional force to assist in developing and sustaining them.

We ask that none will throw aside what they find here as uninteresting till they have read it, or as flippant till they have thought over it. We ask all then to join with us in this labour heartily and loyally; to let us hear of the last scheme of University reform, and the next men who shall represent us on the waters of Father Thames; of scientific researches and antiquarian explorations; of College debates and Utopias pictured by solitary fire-sides; of the quips of the breakfast table, and, if needs be, of the grumbling at the hall dinner. And if in these and other ways we may continue to rely on support being as generously accorded to us as hitherto it has been, we are confident that we shall have every reason to be content with the success of our venture, and our readers with its usefulness.

II. The Early Years

Editorship of the Review has never been considered a full-time occupation, though in practice it must often have seemed so. It has also remained a largely honorary post - which may explain why there has been such a succession of editors. Among the many names of the early cohort are those of Israel Gollancz and Walter Headlam in 1886, J.E. McTaggart in 1893, and F.M. Cornword in 1899.

Contents of the late Victorian Review evoke not a complacent university, but undoubtedly a cosy place. News from the colleges was supplied on a weekly basis. 'The peacock at King's has laid an egg', readers learned; 'Mr Sheppard's cold is much better.'

III. The Great War

When Rupert Brooke and his generation were pitched into khaki in 1914 it became the melancholy duty of the Review's printer (still Mr Fabb of Paradise Street) to scan the national newspapers for Cambridge casualties. The elegiac tone that settled on the pages of a previously whimsical journal may be judged by just one double-page spread in the issue of 11 October 1916:

Russell-Smith, H. F. St John's, Rifle Brigade, Captain.

Hugh Francis Russell-Smith, who died of wounds on 5 July 1916, was born in 1887, and was the second son of Mr H Russell-Smith, of Heathside, Potters Bar. He was educated at Rugby and St John's, of which college he was a scholar. He obtained a second in Part I. Classical Tripos in 1909 and a first in Part II. of the Historical Tripos in 1910. In 1911 he obtained the Thrilwall prize for a dissertation on "The Theory of Religious Liberty in the Reigns of Charles II. and James II," and was elected an Allen scholar. He was elected a Fellow of St John's in 1912, and was appointed a lecturer in political science. Captain Russell-Smith married in 1914 Dorothy Willetts, the eldest daughter of Dr and Mrs Edward Tait, of Highbury, and leaves one son.

IV. Entre deux guerres

V.C. Clinton-Baddeley recalls his term as editor:

At midnight on Monday, May 3, 1926, the General Strike began. Every branch of the public service was instantly affected, and the press in particular was seriously crippled. *The Times* struggled out with an issue of four pages; *The Guardian* produced two sad pages of type-written matter; all the other weeklies appeared in grotesquely attenuated shapes. All the University papers appeared - the *Granta* consoled for the loss of its innards by a cyclostyle appendix gallantly and laboriously produced by the editor himself and his devoted colleagues. To *The Cambridge Review* is reserved a special distinction. In 47 years - even during the war - it had never failed to appear. On Friday, May 7th, 1926, it was a little late perhaps

- it was not out till tea time - but the remarkable thing was that it appeared at its full size and with an elaborate illustrated supplement into the bargain.

Looking back on it, it was a strange, exciting time. The University authorities acted with great good sense; and the undergraduates had the unique experience of indulging in an excitement in which they played a positively useful part. For their work was useful; 1,041 of them assisted in maintaining the "essential services". A few got badly hurt in riots, but many more returned with funny stories. It was also a humorous time; never had the amateur pundits of Cambridge been more pompous or prejudiced.

The actual strike number was something of a tragedy. It had been lovingly prepared as rather a "star" issue. This good seed fell upon rather stony ground - there was 2,000 less people in Cambridge to buy for one thing. If it is not bad form to end up on a commercial note, I cannot help remarking that there are some of those issues still unsold.

Fighting stuff. But what else would we expect from the chaps Cambridge - despite the loss of innocence in Flanders - continued to produce?

The literary profile of the Review undoubtedly gained prominence during the inter-war years. With the ferocious development of literary criticism at the Cambridge of F.R. Leavis and others, a young poet was trialled hard. The serious Cambridge game of 'practical criticism', whose pioneer exponent, I.A. Richards, was already using the Review as a forum for marking the canons of literary taste.

The years between the wars were the heyday of the Review. The contributing names of Keynes, Collingwood, Kitson Clark, Trevelyan, Oakeshott, Russell, Wittgenstein, Dampier, Needham, Priestley, Eliot may now resound as so many Dead White Males, but in their time sufficed to indicate the diversity of intellectual interest and consistency of 'clout' carried in the pages of the Review.

V. World War Two

Publication of the Review was temporarily suspended on 7 June 1940 with this announcement:

Even if at the end of this longest in prospect of all Long Vacations something recognisable as University life comes back to Cambridge, lack of paper or other difficulties may well make it impossible to resume publication. But members of the University have to say good-bye provisionally not only to the Review but also a way of life which most who have known it have found very much to their taste and perhaps even to the habits of mind therein formed; for these too may depend for survival on what happens during the coming months. As a Journal of University Life and Thought, the Review takes leave of its readers with the hope that the parting from these things will not be final.

The end, however, was not so close. In 1942 Fellows at Emmanuel wagered bottles of claret on Montgomery's success at El Alamein. The Review published rolls of honour among the war dead of Cambridge: but it also showed that it took more than a demonic alliance of European fascists to daunt those young men whose lives were measured by Fairbairns, Lents and Mays:

In the late summer of 1943 four of us who were gathered together in Cairo decided to seek the hospitality of one of the Egyptian Rowing Clubs to see how boating on the Nile compared with the Cam.

When the time for our outing came only three of us managed to assemble at the Cairo Rowing Club and an Egyptian member was persuaded to make up a fourth.

With a turbaned Arab cox in charge we launched a four into the thick muddy water...

VI. Postwar to Warhol

Far beyond Cambridge - but launched by Cambridge-raised technology - nuclear warheads were proved. Cambridge itself seemed to remain the place that Nabokov found in 1919: a haven for chaps, if not muddied oafs. Those who (rightly) deplore the snail's progress of female advancement at Cambridge may take some comfort from the tone of relentless masculinity evident in the pages of the post-war Review. Young readers then are today's administrators; so who can be surprised by their bewilderment over two genders sharing brains? A woman might take a cigarette from her beau; she would never smoke a pipe, the tool of real cognition. Indeed editions of the Review in the fifties routinely carried advertisement testifying to the role of tobacco in fumigating 'University life and thought'.

Could the Review move with the Beat Generation? As Erwin Schrödinger puzzled some of the paradoxes in the relationship of mind and matter, a contributor known only as 'Broken Idol' strummed some sort of rebellious tune in the Review of 8 November 1958, defining the 'Idol for the Undergrad':

IDOL FOR THE UNDERGRAD

The guy you pills want to act like is me. I tell you, it's me. I don't go in for mock-modesty: I leave that particular kind of self-praise for the dons and the Etonian clevers. I really am the intellectual Elvis, the Presley with the Einstein I.Q. I'm the prole with the social gloss, the bad-taste boy with the good-taste contacts, the functional kid who does things among a society of Doltittles. I'm acceptable by what I do, not say. I don't joke much; I act more. Take my tip, and be more like me, and you'll wear success like your crew-cut.

I mean, take a look at the leader-figures, the undergrad heroes, round this joint. They're a real sight for the blind. They come in four sizes: Footlight Fairies, Etonian clevers, Broad-bummed Blues, and Fixers of the Future. The Footlight Fairies have public little exhibitions of their sensibility and private jokes; they sit in their decorous cliques, sipping their dishes of tea and giving each other the gas in dulcet undertones and black overcoats; they simple adore any beautiful worshipper who joins them, to add variety to their gossip and make their nice, vice ring into a still more delicious, vicious circle.

The Etonian clevers are a step up from them; but only a short step. They're thin as rakes, have mops of long hair which looks like weeds, and cultivate their pretty gardens with poppycock and the 100 blossoms of Mao Tse Tung. But though they look and talk dead fragile, they don't break that easily. They'll break you first. They don't have conversations, they win them. But just because they talk quick doesn't mean they talk sense. You may be slower on the funny, but I'll bet you're sounder on top. I tell you, a joke's no answer to a fact, and the fact is, the Eton-and-King's manner is on the down and out. It's the Tough-and-Prole that's on the up and coming.

As for the Broad-bummed Blues, the only height they ever reached was calling themselves the Hawks Club. If you have to kill yourself Sporting Around, for god's sake don't mention it where anyone can hear you. Remember Harry Ford's dictum, "Those who are ill get killed by taking exercise. Those are well don't need to."

Lastly, the Fixers of the Future, who were born with a ballot-paper in their hand, not a rattle. My first thermodynamic law is, the smaller the puddle, the slimier it is. Keep out of politics and committees here, if you want to keep any illusions and be employable later. One term in the Union, and you'll find it's a division, if not three lousy armies of ambitious nonentities marshalled behind some egoistic and flatulent balloon of self-deceived importance.

Well, there you are kids. Having shown you that your idols have feet of goddam mud, I'll try and give you another Golden Kid to worship. And that Golden Kid is me. I'm the future, the comer, the knocker on the door, the power to be. I work. I do my job. I show up my essays on time, paint my sets, write my reviews play my jazz-piano, and give the gas to my friends.

This is your free time, your good time, your time to question; so do things, get on with your job, make a fuss. And leave the pleasures of eating well, dressing well, being humorously polite, idling, and fiddling for later.

Ten years later the 'Tough-and-Proles' got on the Review. They proclaimed 'Bloody Revolution':

It amounts to revolution, even down to the classic inevitability of it all. A series of far-reaching editorial changes, inescapable we believe, have been made in the Review.

These innovations represent a major watershed in the history of the magazine. During the last few years we have become increasingly isolated, considered by most to be one of the last outposts of Cantabrigian Victorianism - a relic, a skeumorph, a last-ditch stand by traditional donnery and country parsons. This has done us enormous damage. Our traditional audience no longer exists, and that is why in recent years the Review has become a minority magazine. The old recipe was there, but the guests were at another banquet. The magazine had lost its *raison d'être*.

Sporting fixtures, sermons - what place for them in a 'journal of dissent'? Cohn-Bendit's face glowered down from the Review's pages, now set in rather Bauhaus typography. True, Cambridge itself did not tinkle deafeningly with breaking glass - not much more than usual for a Friday night in town at closing-time - but the Review pledged allegiance with the intellectual mobs elsewhere around the globe. Fervour for the world's redemption did not, however, bring a rise in circulation for the Review.

VII. Coda

'Caviare to the General': that was how Derek Brewer, outgoing editor of the Review in 1986, described the Review's fate or function. He had not heeded the warnings of previous outgoing editors (John Casey, Noel Malcolm et al.) that the Review existed precariously; nor, I suppose, were Derek Brewer's caveats properly registered by his successors Ruth Morse and Stefan Collini. In my own turn I harboured editorial optimism. For six months of each year (I reasoned) the lecture-halls and seminar-rooms of Cambridge crackle with the discourse of unusually ingenious minds. Who could fail to pack a journal with a fraction of such intellectual energy, and not have something worth attention and shelf space?

As I pledged: no whimpers of cultural collapse here. I pitch the Review into the river of flux.

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