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Review

Wendy Brown: *Undoing the Demos. Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. Zone Books. 2015. 296 pages, ISBN 9781935408536

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Wendy Brown's *Undoing the Demos* offers an inspiring and timely theoretization of neoliberalism as well as a set of concepts that help to understand transformations that are currently taking place in Western societies. Brown does not focus on the effects of neoliberal economic policies and the growing corporate influence. Instead, she sheds light on something that, in her view, is less visible but more profound and fundamental, namely, the transformation of imaginaries and values and the way the society and human beings are understood.

Drawing on and revising Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism in his lectures on *Birth of Biopolitics* from 1978-79, Brown develops an account of neoliberalism as a normative reason, which at the moment is at the brink of becoming an all-encompassing governing rationality. Brown argues that the neoliberal reason transforms the way we conceive the state, the society, economy and the subject and the relationships between them. Its key feature is the "economization" of everything, that is, casting previously non-economic issues, subjects, and fields in an economic frame. For Brown, neoliberalism is thus more than the commitment to markets that was one of the key principles of classical economic liberalism. Neoliberalism entails the applying of market values and principles, metrics and modes of conduct into all areas of human life, including politics, to the extent that there will be left no other values and principles and no other ways to make sense of the world and one's own subjectivity.

Following Foucault, Brown's account of neoliberalism's effects focuses on the transformation of individual subjectivity. Brown updates Foucault's reflections about the neoliberal subject (*homo oeconomicus*) and human capital from almost 40 years back in view of the recent financialization of the economy. Brown argues that the *homo oeconomicus* of today is no more the subject driven by satisfying interests that Foucault described. The contemporary neoliberal subject is so subordinated to the overarching goals of macroeconomic growth and credit enhancement that its well being is sacrificed to these purposes. Whereas Foucault described the neoliberalized subject as a responsibilized entrepreneur, Brown describes it as a responsibilized capital investment. She argues the neoliberal subject must constantly invest in its own human capital in order to make itself attractive to investors and useful to the economy.

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Brown is particularly concerned with the economization of the political: the citizen and the state. Brown's point is not merely that market values and practices are being applied to politics or that politics intertwines with economy. She argues that neoliberalism converts political institutions, processes, principles and subjects into economic ones, to the extent that their distinctively political and democratic character disappears and becomes unintelligible.

The key to Brown's argument about the undoing of democracy and one of the main contributions of the book is her account of the vanquishing of the democratic and political subject (*homo politicus)* by neoliberal rationality and the *homo oeconomicus.* Brown criticizes Foucault for not paying enough attention to the subject as a political being and tracks the development of the free, self-governing and collectively acting *homo politicus* from Aristotle to Rousseau. She shows how a weakened form of this political figure still existed next to the *homo oeconomicus* in the texts of classical liberal economists such as Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, until the neoliberal rationality that insists there are only market actors in every sphere of life vanquished it. For Brown, the loss of the figure of the political subject is the most dangerous effect of neoliberalism. The idea of humans as political and democratic agents, who shape and control their lives together, is the main resource for opposing the expansion of neoliberal rationality.

Also the state, another figure of political sovereignty and a key domain for political action, has been transformed to something else altogether. On the one hand, economic principles have become the model for state conduct to the extent that the state is modeled as a financialized firm where management replaces politics. On the other hand, facilitating and serving the economy has become the main object and legitimation of the state. The goals of economic growth, steady competitive positioning, good credit ratings and keeping pubic debt at bay also determine the state's relationship to its citizens. Instead of being the source of state legitimacy and the shapers of state action, citizens as human capital are valuable to the state only as long as they support the aforementioned goals, tossed out when they become a burden.

In the second half of the book, Brown supplements her theoretical discussion with insightful analyses of contemporary American society. Through analyzing, among other things, the Citizens United decision that allowed unlimited corporate election funding and the transformation of liberal arts education, Brown sheds further light on the economization of freedom, equality, law, education and other core elements of democracy. Brown demonstrates how the neoliberal reason not only economizes these elements, but how the very principles and processes that could support democracy, such as liberal arts education or law, become themselves vehicles of economization, helping to further erase democratic subjects and political life.

Brown does not idealize liberal democracy, but sees that allowing it to be

hollowed out by neoliberal reason might lead to the loss of the whole democratic imaginary. If the key principles, institutions and subjects in actually existing liberal democracies are converted into economic ones, we may with them loose the ability to imagine more radical democratic projects.

Capital and Inequality

Although Brown, unlike Foucault, tries to integrate capital in her analysis, she does not directly connect the expansion of neoliberal rationality with the accumulation of capital. Indeed, Brown is careful not to offer capitalism as a reason for the intensifying economization.

Furthermore, Brown repeatedly distinguishes neoliberal political rationality and its effects from neoliberal economic policies and increasing inequalities and portrays her own approach as more profound. Brown's argument that even if neoliberal policies would be cancelled, neoliberal economization would still continue, contributes to the idea that the two are fundamentally separate from one another. But is this really so? An important question Brown does not ask is how the economization of the state, the society and the subject connected to the increasing power of corporations and the growing income equalities and the other "evident" effects of neoliberal policies.

Brown's main argument about inequality is that neoliberal reason effaces stratifications and power differentials, making inequalities unintelligible in the long run. As Brown's analysis of the Citizens United decision reveals, neoliberal reason does not distinguish between the rich and the poor or between firms and human beings. Whether the speaker is a homeless woman or Exxon does not matter, speech is speech. There is only capital, and whether it is big or small, human or corporate, is irrelevant to its rights and normative conduct. Neoliberal reason thus discursively erases distinctions between capital and labor, rich and poor. At the same time, it normalizes inequality through making competition the basis principle of the society and human conduct. One could argue that neoliberal rationality supports or complements capital accumulation and the inequality-creating neoliberal economic policies precisely because it takes away the concepts and understandings needed to criticize them.

Gendering Neoliberal Rationality

Brown offers an interesting discussion of the gender of *homo oeconomicus* and the effects of neoliberal reason on gender subordination. Brown's question, what happens to the theoretically and politically invisible gender subordina-

tion in neoliberal culture, has already been discussed at length in literature on feminism, gender and neoliberalism. Although Brown's answer, that neoliberalism intensifies and alters gender subordination, is not original as such, she is able to add some points to the discussion on gender and neoliberalism.

The reason Brown gives for the intensification of gender subordination under neoliberalism is familiar from other feminist literature: dismantling the welfare state and the responsibilization of individuals penalizes women, who shoulder most of care and the unpaid work that sustains human life. Brown concludes from this that the merging of the family and the individual in neoliberal discourses (e.g. Margaret Thatcher: "The society is constituted of individuals and their families") is not a sign of contradiction in neoliberal reason or a result of the merging of neoliberalism with conservative values. Rather, familialism is inbuilt in neoliberal theory and politics.

The more original part of Browns argument is that under neoliberalism the intensified gender subordination vanishes analytically. Although unpaid work and gender subordination have been mainly invisible in economic theory and politics, feminists have been able use the language of labor, production and reproduction to make it visible. Neoliberal rationality only sees competing capitals and pushes labor, production and workers off the map. This language and understanding of the society cannot make visible or explain gender subordination. Brown's concern for the intelligibility of gender inequality adds an important point to the feminist discussions about the gendered effects of neoliberalism, as well as a further argument for why feminists should be concerned about the economization of public gender equality discourses.

Challenging Neoliberal Reason

A key feature of Brown's understanding of neoliberalism as a political rationality is that it is ubiquitous. The book focuses on the dissemination and expansion of neoliberal reason, and Brown concludes that in the end there will be no outside or subjective inside to it. One is left wondering, whether the ongoing processes of economization are as straightforward and total as Brown lets us assume. A glance at policy documents in many European countries, for example in Finland, seems to confirm many of Brown's argument about the state. However, I am not as convinced that economization has been able to fundamentally transform human agency and the way we as human beings see ourselves.

Although Brown stresses the ubiquitousness of neoliberal rationality, she is not oblivious to contradictions within it. For example, in the last chapter of the book Brown analyses the rhetoric of "shared sacrifice" mobilized by political leaders to gain citizens' support for neoliberal austerity politics. Brown

shows how this rhetoric combines elements of religious and patriotic sacrifice discourses and argues that the logic of sacrifice is external to neoliberal reason and works as a supplement to it. Unfortunately Brown does not develop her idea of supplements to neoliberal reason further. Does the existence of such supplements make neoliberal reason fragile? How could these supplements be used to contest neoliberal rationality?

As regards to resistance, Brown argues that democratic values and action are the main weapons against the expansion of neoliberal reason. This means that the main argument of Brown's book, the undermining of democracy by neoliberal rationality, is at the same time an argument about loosing the hope of contesting neoliberalism. Brown does not offer views on how democratic values and imaginaries could be reclaimed before they disappear and become unintelligible. Brown's rhetoric pretty much represents the vanquishing of democracy by neoliberalism – and therefore also the disappearance of the possibility of resistance – as something that has already happened. According to Brown's narrative, it hardly was a battle at all, rather a silent surrender.

Furthermore, Brown does not gives examples of how democratic values and action have challenged or could challenge neoliberalism. Surely such examples could be found, or at least imagined. Addressing resistance would have been important, because Brown repeatedly describes her account of neoliberalism as "deeper", "more significant", "more fundamental" than the "normal" interpretations that focus on corporate power and increasing income inequality. This means that also the question of resistance would have to be rethought. Are the existing forms of resistance against state neoliberal policies or corporate power, such as the Occupy-movement or the anti-austerity movements in Europe, at all effective in contesting neoliberal political rationality, and at what conditions? What new forms of resistance would be needed? Finally, is resistance to neoliberal rationality necessarily tied to democracy? Could this rationality be contested through strategies of resignification and reappropriation or political memory?

In underlining the profoundness of the transformations caused by neoliberal rationality, Brown ends up offering a pessimistic description of the contemporary condition and very little hope for a different future. Brown leaves the tasks of formulating strategies of change and resistance to the reader. This is not an easy task. As Brown herself notes on the last pages of the book, there is a sense of "civilizational despair" and surrender in the Left already. If we take Brown's analysis on the effects of neoliberal rationality to be correct, this sense is only likely to intensify.

Review

Ioannis D. Evrigenis: *Images of Anarchy*. Cambridge University Press. 299 pages. ISBN 9780521513722.

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Hobbes's philosophy remains an important area of research in political theory and the history of political thought. Like many classics, Hobbes's philosophy is rich and multidimensional and it is therefore no wonder that different decades see scholars come up with their own interpretations and find new aspects of Hobbes. Hobbes's philosophy is also full of paradoxes, discontinuities, and weird formulations that continue to confuse his readers. It is indeed interesting how Hobbes's seemingly clear-cut, simple, and convincing philosophy is often shown to be full of tricks, hoaxes, and clever rhetoric. Besides the qualitative characters of his work, which almost beg for new readings, new analyses also grow from the different theoretical and methodological positions of the readers, as well as from the need to challenge previous readings that are considered to be somehow incomplete. In contemporary Hobbes studies, every scholar needs to position and even confront herself in relation to earlier research in order to push forward her own, unique interpretation. This is, of course, typical of all research done in the field of classics.

Ioannis D. Evrigenis works as a professor of political science at Tufts University, Boston, USA. His research on "The Rhetoric and Science in Hobbes's State of Nature" titled *Images of Anarchy* is no different in this sense. It aims to challenge the so-called "humanist/scientist" reading of Hobbes's philosophy, which is based on a clear separation between Hobbes's humanist education, including his upbringing, and his "scientific" or Euclidian turn with the political philosophy connected to it. Quentin Skinner is perhaps the most important representative of the humanist/scientist interpretation with his monumental *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, published in 1996. Skinner and other historical and contextual scholars have more or less dominated the English speaking European Hobbes scholarship for the last couple of decades, and they have been of major importance also in both continental and American Hobbes studies. There are many reasons to criticize the humanist contextual interpretations, with one of the most important being, at least in my understanding, the tendency to neglect the importance of the theory of material ontology and especially the concept of motion, even though Skinner and other scholars do occasionally touch upon the theme. However, the depth and clarity the contextual school have presented Hobbes research with is profound and it is not easy to challenge their interpretation. In his book, Evrigenis tries none-

theless to do exactly this – and he partly succeeds. However, his own interpretation is methodologically so close to the interpretations he positions himself against that one cannot really speak about a paradigm shift. Instead, Evrigenis continues in the footsteps of the humanist, historical and contextual perspective, but he offers some new insights and new interpretations on questions that have thus far drawn perhaps too little interest.

Evrigenis argues that Hobbes's conception and idea of the state of nature has so far been wrongly interpreted. Against so many other Hobbes scholars, who claim that Hobbes's state of nature was only an abstract description of a human society without sovereign power that never really existed, Evrigenis argues that Hobbes consciously created a vision of this state of human suffering as something that really had existed and even continued to exist in his own time. In short, Evrigenis argues that for Hobbes's coeval readers the state of nature was true and that Hobbes used the concept in exactly this sense. Thus, Evrigenis aims to point out how several images of anarchy, that is, (mostly) linguistic visions of the state of nature, were meant to convince the readers not only theoretically but also practically by bringing in mind what they already knew. According to Evrigenis, Hobbes changed and enlarged his conception of the state of nature during his writing career according to the criticism he encountered, and he aimed to construe a reliable picture of the horrors existing outside the realm of politics, that is, the state. Thus, Hobbes was indeed a rhetorician, cleverly building a rhetorical vision that could convince the majority of his readers by reminding them of the aspects of the state of nature that they were already familiar with, having encountered it in other sources. Following from this argument, Evrigenis shows that the purported division of Hobbes's work into "humanistic" and "scientific" phases collapses or at least loses its importance, since Hobbes was systematic with his rhetorical method from the beginning to the end. Thus, what Evrigenis manages to show, at least, is that things were much more complicated than simple division to "humanist" and "scientific" phase seem to suggest.

Evrigenis states that Hobbes was always highly interested in persuading his readers and he claims that Hobbes's "method" started already with his translation of Thucydides. From Thucydides, Hobbes found an interesting way of convincing the reader by writing in a way that allows the events to speak for themselves. Through Thucydides's writing, the reader can almost feel that she is witnessing the events of the Peloponnesian wars herself. Evrigenis claims that Hobbes saw something similar in Euclid's mathematics: the reader sees the demonstration unfolding, which gives them a reason to believe. Both of these methods diminish the role of the "middlemen", that is the interpreters, possibly also demagogues, and educated agitators, to the minimum. According to Evrigenis, Hobbes utilised this way of writing and building up persuasion in all of his texts. The argument for the state of nature is the best example of this,

since it simply states the following: look into your self, examine your self (*nosce teipsum*), be truthful, and you will find out how the potentiality for behaviour typical in the state of nature exists within you (human nature) and hence, it may exist and it has existed all over the world. Evrigenis states that throughout his career Hobbes's ultimate aim was to persuade people to peace, and for this end he chose to use different images of anarchy that all correspond with the concept of the state of nature.

Thus, the *Images of Anarchy* tells the story of the development of the conception, vision, and argument of the state of nature in Hobbes's philosophy. It is divided into four episodes, nine chapters, a prologue, and an epilogue. In the first episode, titled "A Græcian", the story starts with Hobbes's early interest in and translations of Thucydides's *Peloponnesian Wars* and Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. In these works, Evrigenis finds the original source of Hobbes's political thought and his method of writing and of convincing his readers. Evrigenis does not analyse Hobbes's controversial early writings that are either historical and connected to ancient Rome (*Horae Subsecivae*) or theoretical and mathematical (*A Short Tract on First Principles*). It is true that these two texts are not part of Hobbes's collected works and they are in many ways problematic, yet there has been lots of speculation regarding their role in Hobbes's development. Especially the *Short Tract* has for a long time been a source of debate concerning whether or not Hobbes had some understanding of physics and mathematics already in the 1620s. Personally, I do not see these two texts as relevant, especially in relation to the overall argument of Evrigenis's book, yet he could have offered more than one comment on these works and the discussions related to them, or at least explained why he chose to exclude the texts from his analysis. However, in the present form, Evrigenis's story starts with Thucydides and Aristotle and he argues that Greek thought was always the most important for Hobbes. From Greek thought, Hobbes also found the main ideas on winning the reader over.

The second part, titled "A Devotion to Peace", consists of analyses of Hobbes's three major political texts, *Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan*. The reading is chronological and Evrigenis aims to show the development of the concept of the state of nature in these three texts. His main argument is that Hobbes did not simply have a "scientific phase" that started from his reading of Euclid's *Elements*, "accidentally" in some gentleman's library as has been told us by Hobbes's biographer Aubrey, and then grew into a natural philosophy and a new model of political science in the *Elements of Law* and *De Cive*. Following from this conclusion, Evrigenis also argues that Hobbes did not "return" to his original humanist and rhetorical path in the *Leviathan*, as has been claimed for example by Skinner, since the Aristotelian rhetorical strategy, which aimed to persuade his readers to agreement, order, and peace, was there all the time.

Evrigenis shows that Hobbes sought to build his political philosophy on

unobjectionable foundations that could convince the reader without having to enter into long debates on whether the principles the philosophy was built on were true or not. The state of nature and the anarchy connected to it worked as this sort of a rhetorical image that had a very strong power of persuading the readers to take Hobbes's side. Instead of being distant or difficult to Hobbes's coeval readers, the image of the state of nature appeared as something highly objective and easy to believe. Thus, the state of nature was not fabulous but historical, a sort of "brute fact", for Hobbes's contemporaries. No wonder, states Evrigenis, that Hobbes wanted to use this sort of image since his aim was to raise the true passion, that is, the fear of death, in his readers. However, as he points out, Hobbes did not immediately succeed in doing so, causing him to develop the concept further in his later political texts by constantly adding new definitions and characterization to it. As was stated above, Evrigenis argues that Hobbes learned from feedback and critique and that he amended his works to better meet the readers' concerns. In short: Hobbes had political aims with his writings and for this purpose he composed both "humanist" and "scientific" argumentation that was captured in to the prism of the state of nature.

The third episode, "Images 'Historical or Fabulous'", starts with an analysis of the role of the *Book of Genesis* in Hobbes's political philosophy. This chapter analyses in an interesting manner the question of the "first rebellion" in Paradise. Evrigenis shows how Hobbes's contemporaries connected the question of the state of nature to these fabulous events and how they criticized both Hobbes's analysis of and his comments on the *Genesis*. Evrigenis states that moving from the *Elements* to the *Leviathan*, Hobbes was increasingly convinced that religion was the most important political question and at the same time, the amount of references to and analyses of the *Bible* in his work grew equally. Hobbes was critical towards religion, but Evrigenis states that he did not try to subvert the authority of the *Bible*, as some scholars have claimed. Instead, with his treatment of the *Genesis* Hobbes tried to show that the awful state of nature is a condition inherited by humankind following Adam's lapse, and for this reason it is never that far away, even in the most cultivated societies. Thus, Hobbes tries to remind us that the danger of falling back to the state of nature constantly haunts every society.

After this chapter, Evrigenis considers the influence of Epicureanism on for Hobbes, concentrating especially on the importance of Lucretius. Like the chapter on the *Genesis*, this chapter also offers a new and interesting reading for those who are already familiar with Hobbes's main political works. Even though the question of the influence of Epicureanism on early modern political thought and philosophy, and on Hobbes, has already been studied and discussed quite comprehensively in earlier research, this part of Evrigenis's book is a very pleasant and inspiring read. He offers an interesting comparison between Hobbes's political thought and Lucretius's work *De rerum natura*. He

also points out Lucretius's connection to Thucydides, since in the end of *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius discusses the plague that destroyed Athens. The description of the plague in Athens is a perfect example of the state of nature, which includes one of the most interesting aspects of the state of nature, that is, the loss of basic ceremonies (burial for example), basic understanding of language, meaning of words etc. In short, with the plague, humanity itself seems to vanish and the society seems to collapse into civil war. This was something Hobbes referred to when he wrote about the state of nature.

The third and the last part of episode three deals with America and especially the imagery of the savages of the new world that was distributed in Europe. Evrigenis analyses texts such as Montaigne's essay *Des Cannibales* and Hariot's *Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*. The latter also included many engravings of savages by Theodor de Bry. With the analysis of these texts and pictures, Evrigenis aims to show how Hobbes's contemporaries saw America and its population. He also notes that Hobbes must have been aware of this, since he had been interested in maps of the new world ever since his years of study in Oxford and he was later involved in the Virginia Company. Evrigenis states that Hobbes took these stories and pictures very seriously and saw it beneficial for his own cause to refer to the de Bry style of engravings in the frontispieces of his books. Evrigenis also points out that even though his reference to the savage life of Indians in the *Leviathan* was short, it made the effects of the state of nature appear very vivid for his readers.

The last episode, "A Science of Rhetoric", contains only one chapter, titled "All Things to All People". This chapter focuses on Hobbes's relation to science and the scientific revolution. Like the earlier chapters on Hobbes's three main political works, this chapter slightly repeats previous research and does not offer anything considerably new for the readers of Hobbes's philosophy. However, the chapter is an important part of Evrigenis's book, since it offers him the possibility to elaborate his argument in relation to earlier research on Hobbes and to present some new arguments in favour of his main thesis. Evrigenis seems to state, to put it simply, that the state of nature was a crucial part of Hobbes's method of persuading the reader to take his side, that is, to accept absolute sovereignty and peace. To do this, Hobbes had to develop and correct the concept of the state of nature continuously, a story that Evrigenis tells us. Hence, rhetoric was an integral part of Hobbes's philosophy from the beginning and Evrigenis seems to suggest that there has been too much fuss about Hobbes's scientific phase and about his scientific political thought altogether.

In the "Epilogue", Evrigenis goes through his general argument and states, following Kinch Hoekstra, that Hobbes used many different methods in convincing his readers of the necessity of peace. The rhetoric of science was but one part of this play, since he had to convince different sorts of readers. However, the concept of the state of nature was much larger than just a fabulous

picture of a society without sovereign power. The state of nature was a constantly renewed and elaborated idea that described the breakdown of all order, the law, but also the meaning of words, habits, and customs. Hobbes knew that the state of nature was perhaps the most effective way of making a reader to subscribe to his views and for this reason he kept elaborating and developing the concept throughout his career.

Professor Evrigenis offers us interesting research on the development of the concept of the state of nature in Hobbes's philosophy, and the book is very pleasant to read. Evrigenis uses the original sources widely and he offers enough references to earlier research. However, he could have engaged even more with earlier research, since the topic of the state of nature is obviously one of the most commented and studied conceptions in Hobbes's philosophy. Another minor fault of the book is that it does not really have an analysis of the *Behemoth*, which is one of the most interesting political texts by Hobbes and which would have been relevant in relation to the topic in many ways. In addition, like many other contemporary researchers, Evrigenis writes a lot about Hobbes's attitude towards natural philosophy, but he does not really analyse Hobbes's scientific texts. Like many others, he is busy to make Hobbes mainly a political philosopher and a rhetorician, yet we should bear in mind that the biggest part of his corpus consists of something else than purely political philosophy and that his efforts in physics and mathematics were sincere.

I am also not entirely convinced that Evrigenis's point of view to Hobbes's idea of the state of nature is completely new. This sort of understanding of the role of the state of nature in Hobbes's philosophy may have guided many Hobbes scholars and readers before. However, in contemporary Hobbes research, it is rather difficult to say anything completely new and still stay on the sound side, since he is one of the most studied political theorists of the early modern era. If one still wants to do research on Hobbes, one way of offering something new to the readers is to make good and profound readings of topics that seem simple, but for some reason have not been subjected to subtle research. The state of nature is definitely one of these basic concepts, which everyone knows and comments upon, but only few of the commentators have really sought to understand what it really is about and, especially, how it is used and (re)constructed in Hobbes's political philosophy. Evrigenis's book is good work in this sense and it will surely be useful for both students and researchers of Hobbes's political philosophy.

Review

Anthoula Malkopoulou. *The History of Compulsory Voting in Europe: Democracy's Duty?* (1st edition). Routledge. 2014. 198 pages. ISBN 9781138021976.

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In Europe, the practice of compulsory voting has been fading over the recent decades as it has been progressively abandoned in several countries (e.g. the Netherlands, Italy, all states in Austria and most cantons in Switzerland etc.). However, it is clearly not a defunct concept since, as Anthoula Malkopoulou reminds us in her new book (p. 3), it remains in effect in a number of European nations: Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, France (senatorial elections), Luxembourg, Lichtenstein, Switzerland (the canton of Schaffhausen). Moreover, shortly after the book was published, French deputies voted, in contrast with the pan-European trend, on yet a new legislative proposal on its introduction for elections to the National Assembly. Malkopoulou thus deals with a topic that is highly relevant for present-day politics. She intends to propose a 'bridge between present and past discourses on compulsory voting' (p. 10). To that end, she reviews and analyses 'intellectual debates and the conceptual history of compulsory voting in *its longue durée*' (p. 3).

The first chapter of the book tackles the concept of compulsory voting from the perspective of contemporary democratic theory. The author shows that the compulsion to vote is principally opposed in the name of freedom of thought, liberty to participate, better representation of the unequally distributed political interest, or preference for more direct forms of political participation. On the other hand, the proponents of compulsory voting advance in particular the need for substantive (not only *de jure*) political equality, which leads to greater legitimacy and more equal public policies, and the positive impact on citizens' political awareness. Most of the arguments find counter-arguments and, as the author notes (p. 36), the debate is thus 'very much open-ended today'. Yet, Malkopoulou advances one extra claim in favour of mandatory electoral participation, which is its potential contribution to democratic consolidation and stability through political moderation. According to this interpretation, those who abstain when voting is voluntary possess moderate political views. Their participation, induced by the compulsion to vote, can thus electorally weaken ideological extremes that are dangerous to democracy. Malkopoulu believes that this is 'perhaps the most important effect of compulsory voting' (p. 34), which 'has justified the introduction of the principle in various historical contexts' (p. 37) as the remainder of the book aims to demonstrate.

Chapter 2 reviews the practice and debates on compulsory democratic participation from ancient times to early modern history. It reveals that the very origins can be traced back to the Athenian democracy where, in some cases, citizens were compelled to participate. From the Late Middle Ages onwards, the practice reappeared in self-governing municipal communities, where it was 'a critical element fostering political inclusiveness, internal unity, and the effectiveness of acting directly, which sustained the communities' claim to local power and autonomy' (p. 55) from central authorities. For similar reasons, compulsory participation was likewise adopted in larger entities such as some of the Swiss cantons or, later on, German states. Somehow counter-intuitively, it was also espoused by the proponents of the concept of voting duty, which was developed in particular in 18th-century France. They argued that the vote should be limited to a few privileged citizens (aristocrats or, later, competent bourgeois), who could make enlightened political choices and for whom participation was, at the same time, a social imperative. Therefore, compulsory participation, which is usually seen as a means of inclusiveness, was then an integral part of a clearly exclusionist argument. From the perspective of the central thesis of the book, political moderation motivated the adoption of the compulsion to participate both in Antiquity (cf. Solons' law against neutrality, p. 50) and the Middle Ages (cf. its adoption in the French City of Toulon, p. 56-57)

Chapter 3 and 4 focus on the French parliamentary debates on compulsory voting in the 19th and early 20th centuries (up to the end of the Fifth Republic). Most of this period was characterized by a conflict over the form of the French political regime between royalist and/or conservative forces on the one hand and republican forces on the other. Curiously enough, the two camps espoused the idea of compulsory voting for quite similar (if not the same) reasons. Conservative groups opposed the adoption of universal suffrage, which extended the right to vote to more radical social strata, and saw the voting compulsion as a means for neutralising its effects. They thought that abstainers were moderate in their political outlooks and that forcing abstainers to participate would boost the conservative electoral support. As for republicans, they also believed in the abstainers' moderation and expected that their participation could contain both right-wing populism and left-wing extremism. In the same vein, both republicans and conservatives argued at different points in time that voting was a duty to the community or a public (not private) right, that the voting compulsion could achieve 'accurate' representation, and that it would have pedagogical effects. In particular republicans argued that compulsory voting would politically educate citizens and integrate them in the (new) republican political regime. Despite these striking similarities in the ideological discourses advanced by the two principal political camps, compulsory voting has paradoxically never been adopted in France for the elections to the lower house of the French Parliament (the National Assembly).

Chapter 5 turns to Greece, country that has practiced compulsory voting in national elections since the adoption of the Constitution of 1911 to the present day. The author suggests that the Greek debate can be divided in three stages. The first one lasts until the end of the Second World War and bears numerous similarities with the French case. For instance, as in France, the pro-compulsion republican forces wanted to bring moderate voters to the polls, to ensure 'true' representation, and to counter political extremism and election boycotts. At the same time, in contrast with the French case, Greek republicans were successful in rendering voting compulsory and this despite the opposition by conservative and royalist forces that refused the principle until the mid-1940s. One of the reasons may be that, as Malkopoulu notes, the Greeks could refer to the Antique (and thus 'national') origins of the principle in the Athenian democracy and invoke the tradition of compulsory voting in municipal elections (practiced since 1833). In the second phase (1945-1974), the ruling right-wing majority not only embraced the principal of compulsion (to which it was originally opposed) but even harshened the sanctions for abstention, which were formally in existence since 1926. The objective was to deprive the outlawed Communist Party of one of its political tools (election abstention), and to boost political legitimacy of the incumbent political regime. The latter goal was particularly important for the military dictatorship that ruled from 1967 to 1974. Its demise and the following democratisation marked the beginning of the third phase (1974-) in which the principal of compulsory voting was upheld as continuation of the pre-authoritarian policies but the sanctions for abstentions were gradually removed. Besides a more global transformation in political culture, the removal seems to be due to both ideological and pragmatic reasons. First, centrist and left-wing parties denounced the repressive use of the compulsion to vote in the post-war period (i.e. the second phase). Second, constitutional lawyers criticized the unconstitutional character of (some) of the sanctions. Third, most of the sanctions were practically impossible to enforce, which resulted in large-scale amnesties (even in non-democratic times). Last but not least, the principal political parties successfully mobilised their voters through alternative mechanisms such as party system polarization and clientelism.

In the concluding chapter, Malkopoulou points out four types of arguments that, according to her, 'appear constantly across time, space and ideology' in the debate on compulsory voting. First, the vote is perceived either as a right or duty or combination of the two. Interestingly, history shows that either conceptualisation can be used both to support and oppose compulsion. The duty to vote can be seen as moral (and not necessarily legal), which entails voluntary voting, and the right to vote can be conceptualized as social (and not private), which allows for compulsory voting. Another argument is the 'universalisation thesis', which perceives the compulsion to vote as a complement to universal

suffrage and as a means to politically educate or integrate excluded groups. Similarly, the 'representativeness thesis' contends that compulsory voting ensures true and accurate representation of society in its entirety. The last argument is highlighted throughout the book: compulsory voting may mobilise politically moderate citizens and thus thwart populism and extremism.

Malkopoulou's work can be praised on many grounds. By drawing upon primary sources (mostly parliamentary debates), the author unearths a lot of new information and artfully combines the competences of a historian and political theorist. Thanks to its impressive temporal and geographic scope, the text reveals a number of unexpectedly constant features of the discourses on compulsory voting that have kept re-emerging in the course of democratic history. As many of them remain relevant today, this allows to put in perspective the contemporary debates and, therefore, to achieve the main objective declared by the author. Moreoever, Malkopoulou's contribution is not only about discourses. Among other things, the text reveals how the practice of compulsory voting and arguments in its favour travelled across borders. For instance, the successful adoption of the practice in Belgium influenced the pro-compulsion advocates both in France (p. 86) and Greece (p. 140). The book also shows how different political camps often adapted their position on the voting compulsion in reaction to the changing context. This reminds that political actors tend to be pragmatic and that ideology is, in many cases, a means and not an end in itself.

The aforementioned merits notwithstanding, there are also a few elements that deserve a more critical scrutiny. For example, the author could have devoted slightly more attention to the historical arguments *against* compulsory voting and adopted a more comparative perspective. The most problematic point is that Malkopoulu seems to adhere to the central claim that she identified in the historical debates and that pertains to the benefits of compulsory voting in terms of political moderation. At several instances in the book, she regrets that this aspect is weakly present in the current debates on compulsory voting (p. 18, p. 37). For two reasons, this regret may be misplaced. First, as the author herself rightly notes, the principle of political moderation is regularly invoked by political actors defending compulsory voting in Belgium or France (p. 34). In the latter country, a number of politicians keep asserting that the election compulsion would help contain the radical right (in particular the National Front). Second, the whole argument is empirically wrong. Political science studies have repeatedly shown that abstainers' political preferences, in most cases, hardly differ from those who cast a ballot. In addition, abstainers usually represent a very small share of the electorate. In most national elections that currently record moderately high voter turnout, full participation achieved through compulsory voting is thus not likely to bring any significant change in terms of election results. It is true that the impact could be greater in

elections in which a large share of the electorate stay home such as elections to the European Parliament. However, given that those who abstain are generally less educated, less politicized and more critical of the political class as a whole, their participation would not benefit moderate political forces but, on the contrary, the extremes and populists. In fact, the empirical branches of political science show that the moderation argument, which has been echoed throughout the history as Malkopoulu convincingly demonstrates, is (and probably has always been) a fallacy.

On the whole, the book is however an excellent piece of research. It will be warmly welcomed by all scholars interested in the issues of representation and participation in general and compulsory voting in particular.

Review

Quentin Skinner, *Forensic Shakespeare*. Oxford University Press. 2014. 384 pages. ISBN 9780199558247.

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Anyone who had the pleasure of hearing, as I did, Quentin Skinner deliver any part of the 2011 Clarendon lectures – on which *Forensic Shakespeare* is based – will recall the force of Skinner's typically compelling style of presentation. How could passages from Cicero's *De inventione*, displayed in power-point alongside familiar speeches from Shakespeare, fail to persuade an audience of the connection Skinner sought to demonstrate, particularly when the case was being made with such rhetorical grace and efficiency? Even in its 'silent' book form, the central claim of *Forensic Shakespeare* – that, in a set of "forensic plays," Shakespeare composed a number of major speeches "according to a set of rhetorical precepts about how to develop a particular case in accusation or defence" – appears inseparable from the effectiveness of Skinner's own style of argument.

In part, this is because the five elements of the Ciceronian *ars rhetorica* – *inventio, dispositio, elocutio, pronuntiatio,* and *memoria* – remain essential tricks of the scholarly trade, of which Skinner is a master. With skill and panache, Skinner anticipates his audience's objections, makes a compelling and well-supported case for his argument; and he supplies ample evidence for his claims, so as to better force our remembrance.

The first effect produced by *Forensic Shakespeare* in this reader was, I confess, a kind of embarrassment for various editors of Shakespeare's work – those who produce the editions of the plays that are widely sold and taught. How

is it possible, I wondered, that such a manifest 'source' for such a large piece Shakespeare's art had (with a few exceptions) gone so unnoticed for so long? Skinner is, of course, highly regarded for his influential studies of early modern political theory and the importance of classical rhetoric for Renaissance thought. Perhaps Skinner simply had the advantage of erudition and training in the relevant fields, and was thus well positioned to point out what Shakespeare's editors had missed.

The sense of embarrassment deepens when one recalls that Shakespeare's historicist editors have themselves written book-length studies on, for instance, the Ghost's speech in *Hamlet* without noticing the importance of these rhetorical sources for what the Ghost says; or, biographical sketches of Shakespeare's childhood and professional life, without observing what Skinner calls Shakespeare's "classical and humanist" allegiances – which, Skinner demonstrates, must have been formed in Shakespeare's days as a schoolboy in Stratford.

If nothing else, at any rate, Skinner's study will henceforth be an indispensable reference for scholarly editions of the plays. And this alone is a worthy and commendable achievement. There is something poignantly self-deprecating about Skinner's opening expressions of gratitude for the existence of online concordances and new databases for Shakespeare's work. While these tools are of course convenient and useful, such innovations too often blind us to the vital need for a thorough scholarly preparation, for the study of Latin and foreign languages, for thoughtful consideration. There is no substitute for steeping oneself in the intellectual and cultural climate of whatever period one is studying. And Skinner has once again written a work that demonstrates the indispensability of that kind of preparation (not to mention the "rare book rooms of the great libraries") – whether for the adequate study of Shakespeare, or any other work from the past. (In an era when Shakespeare companies are commissioning 'modern translations' of Shakespeare's work, this kind of reminder is apparently needed.)

Given the generosity and scope of the achievement, it may seem churlish to register anything other than gratitude. Nevertheless, following upon the praise just given, I want to specify one point on which, I thought, Skinner might have insisted with greater force. And I want to do so in order to call into question his opening distinction between what he calls the "interpretation" and the "explanation" of texts (2).

As mentioned, Skinner's aim in *Forensic Shakespeare* is expressly to "say something about the dynamics of Shakespeare's creative processes by way of excavating the intellectual materials out of which these passages are constructed." However, in the end, that "something" turns out to be a rather modest conclusion: Shakespeare "assembled" major speeches in his "forensic plays" "according to" rhetorical precepts that he had learned as a boy, and which he continued to study in his adult life.

Yet, I think, everything Skinner has written (throughout his career) actually leads to, and thus *requires*, a much more ambitious conclusion – one that Skinner might have stated thusly: Shakespeare *could not have written* these speeches, and *could not have become* the dramatist we study, *without* the kind of training in the *ars rhetorica* that his work demonstrates.

Put another way: not only is an awareness of Shakespeare's reliance on classical rhetoric necessary for 'us' – once we concede the requirement of an adequate familiarity with the linguistic and intellectual climate in which Shakespeare wrote, for any serious engagement with the plays. This awareness was also historically necessary for Shakespeare *himself* – for the composition of *that* body of dramatic work. If Skinner is right, in other words, then Shakespeare too had to 'wrestle with' the fruits of his own rhetorical training, in order to become the kind of dramatist that he became. And 'wrestling with Shakespeare's own wrestling' just *is* part of what it must mean for us to "explain" Shakespeare today – where explanation entails, as Skinner puts it, "determining why the works… possess their distinctive characteristics." After all, Shakespeare's use of classical rhetoric in his dramas is not merely the expression of blind instinct, passive transcription or ingrained habit. Rather, Shakespeare's 'use' of that source (like his use of any source) must be seen as evidence of some reflective assessment of that source's importance. And it is precisely *that* reflective assessment on Shakespeare's part that we are interested in.

Skinner goes out of his way to offer a caveat to his study: that he is engaged in "explanation," not "interpretation." But I fail to see the difference. Both the interpreter and the explainer must answer the same question: Why did Shakespeare write *that*? The gold standard for any *explication de texte*, after all, must be whether the interpreter can explain the use of *those* words.

Explanation and interpretation are not the end of the story, of course. We might go on to ask whether Shakespeare's plays teach us anything, whether we can still learn from them, or turn to them for help with our own questions, today. But, in the course of asking these latter questions, we will still invariably find ourselves trying to understand why Shakespeare composed *those* speeches thusly. We cannot arrive at an understanding of what Shakespeare might teach us today without some understanding of why he wrote in this way, rather than another. These are not separate questions. Between the understanding of Shakespeare and the assessment of Shakespeare's value – between explaining and interpreting – there can be no division.

Is this not, in fact, a central lesson of the *trivium*?