

of his arguments ever floundered. This book is not an encomium to his work, to be sure, yet the promise of *Unsettling the World's* subtitle is only partially realized. There is little by way of a bidirectional engagement between Said and political theory in *Unsettling the World*, even if the most intellectually and politically enabling track is to make every engagement into a two-way street. Morefield's, however, is one-sided. In her book, "political theory" does not talk back in any substantial way, even if *Orientalism*, for instance, constitutes a brilliant yet deeply flawed construction. So does *Culture and Imperialism*, albeit far less so. *Orientalism* famously combined wonderful insights with wildly misguided generalizations and wonderfully simplified anachronisms. And yet, although in Morefield's book one reads scathing pages on liberalism's narcissism, there is no real critical engagement with Said's work. Said is used as a standpoint to criticize variations of political theory. Aspects of his work are thus compellingly reconstructed and rendered, but they are not critically engaged—not even sympathetically so. The contrast then is the more striking: scathing on one side, tepid on the other. A critical middle voice, as it were, is not at hand in these pages. When it comes to Said, Morefield, one of the fiercest critical voices in the field, comes across as subdued.

This has become common enough in the field these days, especially in relation to figures that are considered Others, and it would be wrong to tax Morefield too harshly for it. Genuine criticism is not only increasingly rare in this ever-depoliticized field but is also often considered improper or impolite. Many an effort to decenter canons and discourses, moreover, ends up staging one-sided engagement. It is as if the Anglophone scholar of political theory is wary of opening a genuinely dialectical engagement between political theory and the figures invoked; that is, an engagement that consists of mutual critical interrogation. Still, the question remains: Should we now add Said to the pantheon of saints alongside, say, Saint Frantz? That would be a mistake. No less than Fanon, Said's work is not bereft of the intelligible contradictions, lacunas, and hesitations that define truly august minds. Perhaps there is another way of dealing with Said that requires neither peripheral acknowledgment nor straightforward acclimation: one can choose to read him in the same critical spirit that he read Conrad, Foucault, or Derrida. That is, at any rate, my Said: the subtle yet vigilant but also fierce reader of texts. One could also honor his memory by engaging him in the same spirit. But doing so requires knowing his work first.

Unsettling the World not only makes central aspects of Said's intellectual itinerary known for political theorists but also shows its potential by how Morefield presents encounters of Saidian notions with others that dominate the field. In doing so, Morefield has truly delivered on the promise of her book by showing the relevance and

importance of Said's work for political theory. In *Unsettling the World*, Morefield has written not only an important contribution to Said studies but also an important work of political theory in its own right. It shall remain an unavoidable point of departure for any future engagement with Said, the challenges his oeuvre presents and the vistas that it opens, as well as its limitations.

Plutarch's Prism: Classical Reception and Public Humanism in France and England, 1500–1800. By

Rebecca Kingston. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 444p. \$135.00 cloth.

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The subject of this impressive book can be stated concisely: it examines the reception of the writings of Plutarch (around 45–120 CE) in France and England from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. A native of Greece, Plutarch lived under the Roman Empire and authored *Lives*, a work that paired an account of the deeds from childhood to death of an outstanding leader of Greece with a counterpart from Rome, as well as moral essays that were collected and known as the *Moralia*. The details of this reception under the deft guidance of Rebecca Kingston make for a complex and fascinating story indeed.

Kingston's story of the reception demands that she follow the translation of Plutarch's works first from his Greek into Latin and then into the vernacular. The translators themselves directly affected how Plutarch was received through the revisions they made, the dedications they appended, and, of course, their ability and intention to capture the true subtlety of Plutarch's Greek and his nuanced approach to the lives of military and political leaders whose virtues could readily slide into vices. Jacques Amyot's translation of the *Lives* into French in 1559 is a "major watershed in European cultural life" (p. 242). Intended first for the French king, this translation would have a long influence not only in France but also in England. Thomas North, who produced the immensely influential translation of the *Lives* in English, worked not from the original but rather from Amyot's French. North's rendering in English was a source for William Shakespeare's plays devoted to the characters of Plutarch's *Lives*, and pieces of North's own phrasing would be immortalized, for example, in the moving poetry of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

That reception becomes even more complicated when one recognizes that various writings, now considered spurious, were for centuries regarded as Plutarch's. One such writing is a letter purportedly written by Plutarch to Emperor Trajan that suggests that Plutarch had served as his tutor, falsely enhancing his legacy as the educator of the sole ruler of the empire. Another such case is an essay titled "On the Education of Children" now believed to be misattributed but

that many important thinkers believed to be Plutarch's, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau (p. 386n.39). Kingston follows the life of the reception of this essay because "pseudo-Plutarch" is, for this scrupulous scholar, "no less important to understanding the tradition of reception" than the genuine works (p. 209).

In part I, Kingston reviews what is known of Plutarch's life and offers accounts of his writings (including an overview of Lycurgus, Numa, Alexander, Caesar, Antony, and Phocion from the *Lives*); examines the differences between the thought of Plutarch and Cicero, whose writings had a greater and earlier impact on the education of European elites; and provides accounts of the history of the pseudo-Plutarch, the recovery of Plutarch's writings in Western Europe, and their reception in Renaissance Italy. Parts II and III examine the reception of Plutarch in France and England during the Renaissance and then in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively. A far from exhaustive list of the works that Kingston examines highlights the richness of the book: Cicero, Desiderius Erasmus, Thomas More, Jean Bodin, Michel de Montaigne, Thomas Hobbes, Shakespeare, Pierre Corneille, Jean Racine, Jonathan Swift, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

In the process of relaying this vast and complicated story of reception, Kingston identifies a tradition that she terms "public humanism," which she sees as a salutary and enduring possibility for those who participate in and think about political life. Struck by the contemporary currents of thinking that disdain politics, which she sees arising from both the Right and the Left, Kingston aspires to foster renewed appreciation for the political realm, in which individuals engage their talents and their virtues to serve the public good. Plutarch, read in the right spirit, provides the prism through which one can come not only to a healthier regard for public service but also a deeper concern with practical politics, as well as with the effect of politics on the virtues themselves. She describes this approach as distinctive in its pragmatism about the compromises that political life sometimes demands; a participant in the tradition offers "moralism with a realist edge" (p. 112).

On Kingston's account, this tradition is particularly well defined through translation of and reflection on Plutarch's writings in sixteenth-century France where they "offer[ed] a conversation on the unique role and specific ethos of public life in reference to either kings in high office or those working within a monarchical administration" (pp. 98–99). She traces the development of this approach to politics through an examination of the writings of Geoffroy Tory, Guillaume Budé, Erasmus, and Claude de Seyssel. By contrast, on her depiction, England's general reception of Plutarch in the sixteenth century is not as conducive to such thinking. There Plutarch's *Moralia* tended to capture commentators' attention, thus fostering moral thinking frequently removed from considerations of the public realm

(p. 204). Even in France public humanism was overshadowed later in the century by concerns deriving from the religious conflict, and by the eighteenth century, public humanism was in full retreat at the hands of Abbé de Saint-Pierre, the Abbé Mably, and Rousseau.

Because the "major thrust" of her "argument is that Plutarch served as a source through which early modern political thinkers could reflect on very practical questions of virtue politics" (p. 9), Kingston is in conversation with James Hankins's important book *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy* (2019). Hankins presents the Italian humanists as fundamentally concerned with the teaching of virtue to rulers and citizens of any regime—whether ruled by one, the few, or the many. Thus, both scholars examine the effect of the classical tradition on the thought of the Renaissance and look beyond the focus on republican liberty that has dominated generations of scholarship on the Renaissance and its legacy. Kingston herself recognizes these shared concerns but sees the development of French public humanism as an important variant of virtue politics—one that diverges from the "largely individualistic ideals of virtue politics" (p. 98; emphasis in original).

At times, a focused account of the development of public humanism is sacrificed for the exhaustiveness that Kingston conscientiously provides of the range of reception of Plutarch's works. But that very exhaustiveness holds treasures. A reader of this book cannot help but come away with a deeper appreciation for how exceptionally important Plutarch was for the development of modern thought in France and England. In the process Kingston brings to light hitherto unrecognized facets of the writings of some of its central figures. Surprises abound. For instance, one learns that Hobbes's famous encapsulation of the state of nature in *Leviathan* as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" found its origin in the language of the translation by Philemon Holland of an essay by Plutarch that also treats the transition of human beings from a wild state to a civilized one (pp. 302–3; emphasis in original). Some of the most memorable formulations in English drama and philosophy are modifications of Plutarch in the vernacular. Such discoveries are just a few among the many treasures this book unearths.

Foundations and American Political Science: The Transformation of a Discipline, 1945–1970. By

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Political scientists rarely study the influence of wealthy elites on politics, much less their influence on the science of politics. The growing literature on the history of American political science is no exception. Although