framing would have been most welcome and provided a good addition to this otherwise excellent contribution.

In terms of tradition (or perhaps even counter-tradition), Shapiro's work supplies an instructive contrast to dominant approaches in the field of cultural studies focused on content and reception. Although there is much work in cultural studies and elsewhere focused on content and meaning, this book's attention to form provides a studied and useful contrast. Shapiro's close attention to the structuring significance of form leads him to the essential insight that "what [an aesthetic object] contributes is less its 'meaning' than the unsettling impact of the way it constructs a micro-world of associations" (p. 6). The centrality of this attention to the politics of compositional form, together with the nimble deployment of Rancière's insights into equality and disruption, allows *Aesthetics of Equality* to delineate an alternative and productive trajectory for the political study of culture.

A Commonwealth of Hope: Augustine's Political Thought. By Michael Lamb. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022. 448p. $39.95 cloth.
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In *A Commonwealth of Hope: Augustine's Political Thought*, Michael Lamb offers a compelling and timely defense of the virtue of hope, presenting Augustine as a significant resource for those who seek to foster political community today. Joining a set of political theorists who seek to push back against Augustine's otherworldly, antipolitical reputation, Lamb makes a strong case that Augustine held a far more nuanced attitude toward political life than is often assumed. By engaging with Augustinian realists, Augustinian communitarians, and democratic critics of Augustine, Lamb offers a major contribution to the work of rehabilitating Augustine as a vital interlocutor for those seeking to promote good citizenship today.

Given how damaging the modern binary of optimism and pessimism has been to civic life, Lamb's central argument is that Augustine's conception of virtuous hope can enrich our political imaginations and help us avoid cycling between presumptuous optimism and despairing pessimism. What is more, by focusing on the aspirations that members of a political community can share, he offers a way through the tensions that constrict political collaboration today. Although Lamb's argument is squarely rooted in Augustine's texts, his vision is also inspired by contemporary concerns. Deeply interested in fostering civic collaboration across differences, Lamb presents an Augustinian vision that encourages "convergence around common goods without assuming neutrality or requiring citizens to deny their religious commitment," citing Jeffrey Stout as a particular inspiration in this effort (pp. 270, 258). Like Eric Gregory, he makes the case that Augustine's posture toward politics has more resonances with contemporary thinkers than is often assumed, drawing connections, for example, between Augustine's "default and challenge structure of reasoning" (p. 75) and Cass Sunstein's model of "incompletely theorized agreements" (p. 186). For Lamb, Augustine's theory of virtuous hope offers a viable alternative to a Rawlsian public reason model. If citizens cannot share dominant ends, they can perhaps share civic hope—and work together to foster a culture imbued with that virtue.

Lamb's argument proceeds carefully and incorporates an impressive swath of Augustinian texts. He begins by making the astute observation that too much of the twentieth-century tradition of interpreting Augustine's politics has been read through Luther. It also has been insensitive to Augustine's rhetoric and focused on a too-narrow set of texts. By addressing these deficiencies to a political science audience, Lamb provides a real service to the field.

A Commonwealth of Hope proceeds in three parts. The first focuses on hope as a virtue that counters both presumption and despair. In it, Lamb lays out Augustine's theology of hope, anticipating his later application of its scaffolding to the civic virtue. Notably, by fleshing out hope's position as the middle term between faith and love, he foreshadows his later contention that civic hope can be the most fruitful meeting point for citizens with ostensibly different faiths and loves; shared hopes can perhaps make apparent loves that diverse citizens did not know they shared. Significantly, Lamb also pivots from an understanding of Augustinian faith as propositional to what he calls relational faith, as more to do with trust in persons than assent to dogma. Although I am not sure Augustine would separate or oppose these, Lamb's distinction will become important to his argument later, when he applies the structure of Augustine's theory of hope to politics: if faith is about trusting in one's fellow citizens, and faith is the source of hope, then civic trust is a necessary foundation for civic hope.

In the second part, Lamb turns to the rhetoric of hope. Here, Lamb appeals to Pierre Hadot's insight that ancient philosophical texts cannot be read as if they were communicating "abstract propositions" because they were designed to shape, lead, and eventually transform their readers (p. 119). Showing the diverse rhetorical methods that Augustine uses to "instruct, delight, and move" (p. 122) his audience, Lamb provides strong evidence that the *City of God* is not an antipolitical treatise. Perhaps the most significant aspect of Lamb's intervention here is his focus on *City of God*'s book 22. Showing how major interpreters of Augustine have plucked one of its most negative passages out of context, he places the passage within what he calls Augustine's "structure of encouragement" (p. 148). By revealing the arc of Augustine's rhetoric, which is designed to challenge both presumption and despair, Lamb helps

contemporary readers interpret negative passages properly. He also deftly shows how Augustine's tactic of bringing his readers "into hell and out again" (p. 148) is firmly rooted in his pedagogy of hope. This part of the book is truly exemplary—the highlight of what is a rigorous, careful, and insightful study throughout.

The final third of Lamb's project focuses on the politics of hope, and it is here that the upshot of Lamb's earlier analysis becomes apparent. Fundamentally, Lamb is at pains to defend Augustine against an "otherworldly, antipolitical, and exclusivist" reputation (p. 265). For Lamb, Augustine's "participationist ontology" and "inaugurated eschatology" provide strong rebuttals to the first charge: because it is possible to love temporal goods properly, as long as one's loves are rightly ordered, Augustine is not the otherworldly figure he is purported to be (p. 264). Neither is he antipolitical: because Augustine uses rhetoric to help his readers avoid both presumption and despair, there is good reason to reevaluate the significance of his well-known "antipolitical" moments. In part III, Lamb bolsters this claim by offering evidence of Augustine's own political engagement from his correspondences. Presenting an Augustine who encouraged others to participate in civic life, admired virtuous patriots, and worked to promote justice and peace in his role as a bishop, Lamb offers a compelling model of hopeful citizenship.

Lamb's desire to address the charge of exclusivism, however, propels him into difficult territory. Insofar as this charge implies that Augustine should sever human goodness from the love of God, lest he leave non-Christians outside the realm of virtue, it is unclear to me exactly how it can be resolved while remaining faithful to Augustine's theological vision. Augustine does not present the two loves as "poles on a continuum of virtue," but as fundamentally different postures toward reality, even if they sometimes generate similar actions (p. 195). Accordingly, although I appreciated Lamb's attempts to carve out space for "genuine" but "incomplete" virtue among pagans, I found myself wishing for more clarity as to when he was presenting Augustine's views and when he was going beyond them (p. 236). I also found myself wondering whether less of Augustine's theological framework needed to be sacrificed to show that he urges citizens to "forge unity in plurality and seek concord around common goods" (p. 270). Perhaps it would be possible to make this case without addressing the charge of exclusivism head-on—or by using immanent critique to interrogate the charge's presuppositions, as Augustine does so often (p. 270).

Nevertheless, I was appreciative of Lamb's careful demonstration that the call to work with others for earthly peace is "faithfully Augustinian"—as is the call to see the good in the other (p. 249). In showing this, *A Commonwealth of Hope* is a welcome intervention in a fraught political climate. More than this, it is a timely rehabilitation of a figure who sought to engage well in political life, even as he had his sights set on the eternal city.

Tocqueville's Dilemmas, and Ours: Sovereignty, Nationalism, Globalization. By Ewa Atanassow. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022. 272p. $39.95 cloth.
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Can contemporary democratic regimes weather the political storms generated by illiberal nationalist and populist movements? In this elegantly written and insightful book, Ewa Atanassow urges us to see these threats to liberal democracy as the latest manifestations of democracy's inherent "dilemmas" or what she describes as the "tensions" and "conundrums" (p. 10) that plague modern popular governments. The questions that motivate this study are not new. By approaching them as "timeless questions of modern politics" (p. 6)—or as the book's pithy title indicates, enduring *dilemmas* that originated in the early nineteenth century and persist through the present—Atanassow hopes to secure liberal democracy's future by returning to its past.

For this task, *Tocqueville's Dilemmas, and Ours* foregrounds Alexis de Tocqueville's writings on sovereignty and global affairs. As both a "complex" and "ambivalent" (p. 10) observer of American democracy and a French statesman, Tocqueville was attuned to what Atanassow calls the central dilemma of democratic life: the "tension between the universal scope of [its] principles and the particularity and limits of any political attempt to realize them in practice" (p. 3). Democracies are built on the principle of human equality. But because we live in a world of diverse cultures and societies, our political practices often run afoul of such universalist, egalitarian aspirations. According to Atanassow, virtually all the dangers that democracies face, from swelling nationalist sentiment to the resurgence of autocratic rule, showcase the broader conflict between the universal and the particular. When viewed in this light, Tocqueville's questions are our questions. The Frenchman's answers likewise transcend his time. Much more than an antiquated figure in the history of political thought, Atanassow's dilemma-driven Tocqueville is a guide for committed liberal democrats in the twenty-first century. His insights anchor the "nondogmatic," "ambivalent," and "nonideological" liberalism (pp. 4, 6) that the author aims to reconstruct in the struggle to save constitutional governments.

By placing the theme of dilemmas front and center, the book's three main chapters offer fresh readings of Tocqueville's work—an impressive feat given the extensive literature on *Democracy in America* (1835/1840). Each chapter moves from political theory to a single "case study" (p. 19), revealing how Tocqueville tackled real-world controversies: the nullification crisis in Jacksonian America (chap. 1),