



norms and conceptions of justice and order underpinning the international system. The US today, he argues, is showing 'evidence of breaking free from traditional constraints that served its interests so well in the past' (p. 310), and while the US continues to see its actions in terms of *hegemonia*, much of the rest of the world increasingly sees them as domination. American policy today, he suggests, shows increasing signs of a *hubris* that Thucydides might easily have recognized and warned against.

In this context, Lebow's study is as timely as it is subtle. Realism continues to be the dominant rhetoric of policy-making (and of much of academic International Relations), and not just in the United States. By recovering a more sophisticated form of Realism, one of the most significant achievements of *The Tragic Vision of Politics* lies in its potential to challenge facile claims often made in the name of Realism itself, and to provide a foundation for a more properly realistic approach to the challenges of contemporary politics.

This is a book that deserves the widest possible audience: it should be at the top of the list for students of politics and International Relations. Philosophically sophisticated, historically erudite, and compellingly argued, *The Tragic Vision of Politics* represents one of the most significant contributions to International Relations and political theory of recent years. While it is today all too common to refer to works as 'landmark' studies, this is a book that deserves the title.

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Michael Oakeshott on Hobbes: A Study in the Renewal of Philosophical Ideas

Ian Tregenza

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In analysing Carl Schmitt's *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, the main challenge for an interpreter would probably be to convince the reader that this work by Schmitt provides an insight into Hobbes's *Leviathan* and not simply a window on Schmitt's political thought.

In analysing Michael Oakeshott's writings on Hobbes, the challenge that Tregenza sets for himself is somewhat different: he aims at convincing the reader that these writings by Oakeshott do not simply contribute to and enrich



our understanding of Hobbes — a view that is widely accepted — but also, and more importantly, reveal the development of Oakeshott's own political thought. The main claim that Tregenza makes in this book is that Oakeshott's work on Hobbes enables us to reconstruct a systematic interpretation of Oakeshott's own philosophy. Tregenza's claim that Oakeshott 'wrote substantially more on Hobbes than any other philosopher or political thinker' (p. 2) is strictly true if 'wrote' is interpreted as 'published'. If, on the other hand, the above is taken as evidence of the pre-eminence of Hobbes in Oakeshott's thinking, there is room for doubt. Some of his closest and most reliable students maintain that Hobbes was not Oakeshott's favourite political philosopher, as he preferred Augustine and Montaigne. The fact that little of Oakeshott's predilection for Augustine is found in print may be due to the fact, related to me by Patrick Riley, that Oakeshott once burnt in his back garden the materials of a monograph on Augustine on which he had spent years of research. Thus, Tregenza's main claim that Oakeshott's work on Hobbes is the necessary key to access the very core of Oakeshott's philosophy is more controversial than Tregenza concedes. Indeed the suggestion that 'Hobbes is, or at least became, Michael Oakeshott's seventeenth century alter-ego' (p. 210) may be a bit of an exaggeration.

Having said this, I am sympathetic with Tregenza's milder claim that by examining the essays on Hobbes that Oakeshott wrote at different stages in his career 'it is possible to mark the changes in his readings and indicate the way they reflect certain changes in his own theory' (p. 2).

Tregenza organises his discussion in five chapters, one introduction and a conclusion. First, Tregenza examines the philosophical systems of Oakeshott and of Oakeshott's Hobbes (Chapter 1). Then he argues for the convergence of Oakeshott's theories of agency and authority with the way these come to be interpreted in his readings of Hobbes (Chapters 2 and 3). Here Tregenza claims that Hobbes's 'nominalist theory of volition is reworked in the light of the Hegelian 'Rational Will' tradition'. Although Tregenza's argument on 'Will, Agency, Individuality' (Chapter 2) has its merits, it did not fully satisfy my curiosity about the presuppositions and implications of Oakeshott's famous claim that Hobbes never had a satisfactory or coherent theory of volition. The Ariadne's thread that runs through all these chapters and keeps them together is the attempt to demonstrate that important aspects of Oakeshott's thought, such as the modal and sceptical conception of knowledge, the theory of civil association and the critique of rationalism, are all present in his writings on Hobbes.

Questions about the validity of Oakeshott's reading of Hobbes are also touched upon by Tregenza, but only briefly and with the main aim of highlighting and analysing the distinctive features of Oakeshott's interpretative glasses. We are told that sometimes Oakeshott's interpretation is 'inadequate'



and comes at the price of overlooking some of Hobbes's explicit and unambiguous claims. In most cases, however, Tregenza maintains that Oakeshott brings to the light ideas that are in Hobbes' text, if somewhat hidden. The brief treatment of the (slight) differences between Oakeshott's Hobbes and Tregenza's Hobbes should not surprise as Tregenza himself states in the Introduction that 'this is a work principally about Oakeshott and only derivatively about Hobbes' (p. 7).

In conclusion, this is a fine work on Michael Oakeshott. The discussion of Oakeshott's ideas is interesting, intense, original, and balanced. Although Tregenza does not hide his sincere and deep admiration for Oakeshott, whom he refers to as one of the most original political philosophers of the 20th century, he has the great merit of refraining from making the excessive claims that are associated with the 'Oakeshott cult'.

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Imagining the State

Mark Neocleous

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The aim of the book is to explore the political imaginary associated with the state form. This is an interesting project, highlighting the importance of the fundamental rhetorical motif that helps to give meaning to the state. The book contains four chapters and a Coda. The first chapter, 'The Body of the State', deals with the analogy between the human body and the body of the state, and the long tradition of the body metaphor in political thinking. It then examines the construction of the social body as a feature of the modernization of society. The third section investigates the 'dirty body' — using examples ranging from the fascist political imagination to 19th century sanitary reform to the US foreign policy of containment. At the end of the first chapter Neocleous propounds the view that 'far from being a universal metaphor' the 'corporal metaphor is an ideological tool aimed at achieving good order and locating sovereignty' and that the 'corporeal model is a dead end for any critical politics of radical transformation' (p. 38).

Chapter 2 examines the 'The Mind of the State'. Under this heading Neocleous advances the case for the idea of reason of state as a rationality of