

repression or Realpolitik like Machiavelli but by practicing moderation and seeking a stable *modus vivendi* in the spirit of Aristotle.

Although the book offers interesting insights, it also contains gratuitous and unsubstantiated *obiter dicta* such as the following: ‘We have succeeded in abolishing slavery for the most part, but at the price of making economic activity much more dominant in our lives’ (p. 18). ‘Capitalism abolished slavery by making slavishness universal. . . .’ (p. 22). Is it credible that an economic system, which has enhanced incomes, working conditions, health, longevity, and general welfare throughout the world, has made us all ‘slavish’? Does the fact that we can buy texts and commentaries of Aristotle through Amazon and use computers and the Internet to access the thoughts of myriads of scholars make scholars less free than they would have been in Aristotle’s day?

Students needing a commentary to Aristotle’s *Politics* will not find Garver’s book a reliable guide; for he often substitutes his own arguments, and even his own conclusions, for Aristotle’s. However, readers seeking a provocative presentation of a modern alternative to liberalism, inspired by a reading of Aristotle’s text, may well find the book of interest.

University of Arizona, USA

FRED D. MILLER, JR.
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The Problem of Political Authority: An Examination of the Right to Coerce and the Duty to Obey.

BY MICHAEL HUEMER. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. xxviii + 365. Price £24.99.)

We are all against theft, extortion, and kidnapping. But when the state does strikingly similar things, and these are called expropriation, taxation, and imprisonment, our estimations change. The state and its agents, we think, may rightfully do many things that individual citizens may not do. What gives them this privilege? This is what Michael Huemer calls ‘the problem of political authority’ and, in his view, such authority does not exist.

Huemer examines the central justifications for political authority: actual and hypothetical social contract theories, democratic theories, consequentialist theories, and theories that appeal to fairness. He argues that they all fail and seeks support for this by appealing to widely shared intuitions about when we are justified in using coercion to reach our goals.

Importantly, Huemer does not argue that everything that states do is done without authority. States, he claims, do have the authority to stop crimes such as theft, rape, and murder. These are also, however, things that ordinary citizens have the authority to stop and this is in line with Huemer’s overall point: that the ethical limits to what the state and its agents may do are as strict as the ethical limit to what ordinary citizens may do. On this view, if one holds that it is wrong to rob a stranger in order give money to charity, wrong to lock one’s neighbour in the basement for a year because he smokes cannabis, and wrong to put up fences to keep people from bidding on goods that one desires to buy cheaply, one should also hold that it is wrong for the state to

forcibly redistribute wealth, put drug users in prison, and impose restrictions on trade. Police officers, Huemer argues, should refuse to arrest people who have harmed no one, and in unjust trials, jury members should vote to acquit irrespective of the law and irrespective of the evidence.

If the state gives no one the right to do things that they could not rightfully do as ordinary citizens: Why are so many of us misled to believe otherwise? To explain why, Huemer makes novel use of a series of famous psychological findings. He appeals to the Milgram experiment (which shows that we are willing to do very bad things as long as an authority figure orders us); Festinger and Carlsmith's cognitive dissonance experiments (which show that if we submit to authority over time, we start believing that the authority is justified); the Asch experiment (which shows that we will often deny even what is perceptually obvious if the rest of the group denies it); and the existence of the Stockholm syndrome (our tendency to develop sympathy for those who hold us captive). These findings, Huemer argues, explain why people have come to believe in political authority even if it does not exist. For each psychological mechanism, Huemer examines under what conditions it has been found to occur and then argues that these conditions characterise individual citizens' relationship to the state. He also appeals to political aesthetics: seals, flags, uniforms, government buildings, rituals and legal language, Huemer argues, all help create the impression that the state acts authoritatively and that citizens are bound to obey.

Huemer's rejection of political authority constitutes an original argument for libertarianism, and this argument occupies the first half of his book. In the second half, he goes one step further and argues for *anarchistic* libertarianism, or anarcho-capitalism. In Huemer's view, even the things that states are justified in doing can be done better by private security and arbitration agencies.

To make his case for private security and arbitration, Huemer starts by presenting a line of game-theoretic arguments against Hobbes' view that self-interested agents of equal strength will end up in violent conflict unless subordinated to a sovereign. In Huemer's view, the cost of violence, the fear of retaliation, and the benefits of cooperation will lead self-interested agents of equal strength to live in peace. What leads to violent conflict, he argues, is great differences in strength, and this is precisely what characterises the relationship between the state and its citizens. Huemer further argues that since states are monopolies, they can do a very poor job without being punished, and by appeal to public choice theory and to Bryan Caplan's work on the futility of voting, he argues that a citizen's ability to control her government is next to non-existent.

If, instead of having a state, we had competing private security and arbitration agencies, Huemer suggests that we would have more efficient bureaucracies, better protection against criminals, and fairer arbitration. He discusses several objections to this proposal and offers thoughtful and original replies.

Not all of the replies are equally convincing. Huemer argues that disputes among citizens will not escalate to armed conflicts between security agencies because '[i]t is highly improbable that a dispute between two clients would be worth this kind of expense' (p. 234). True as this might be when cases are considered in isolation, it seems that security agencies might rationally spend significant resources on setting an example, as this might scare off competing agencies in the future. Moreover, though it is true that security agencies will fear armed conflicts with each other, the fear might often lead not to fair arbitration but to the stronger agency coercing the weaker to

yield. Huemer's argument against aggressive cartels and protection agencies serving criminals is also incomplete, the main reason for which is that he does not discuss mafias. In what ways does a mafia differ from a Huemerian security agency? And why do mafias behave the way they do if Huemer is right that security agencies will not defend criminals and will not themselves be aggressors? There might well be convincing answers to these questions, but Huemer does not offer them. Huemer could also have profitably discussed how his form of anarchism relates to other anarchisms, especially socialist anarchisms. Sadly, however, Bakunin and Chomsky are only mentioned in passing.

The book's arguments are clear and easy to follow, and the language is straightforward and unpretentious. Huemer could have made clearer early on how his overall argument flows (the analytic table of contents, while informative, is too detailed to give an overview), but the book is still easily readable. It is also a page-turner: Huemer covers a lot of topics per page, and though his treatment of some is a bit rushed (this is especially true of redistribution, prostitution, taxation, and drugs), what he says is often original and always interesting. He handles well the challenges of methodological pluralism.

In addition to being a solid scholarly work, Huemer's book will work well as assigned reading in classes on political philosophy. It is bound to spark debate, and its inclusion would help remedy the sad fact that anarchism is often either ignored or put aside without serious engagement. This is a pity, for even if one rejects his conclusions, Huemer makes it clear that anarchism is a sophisticated theory that deserves careful consideration.

University of Oslo, Norway

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OLE MARTIN MOEN

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Developing Deontology. New Essays in Ethical Theory. EDITED BY BRAD HOOKER. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pp. 124. Price £17.99/€21.60.)

The book *Developing Deontology* is a collection of six papers previously published in the journal *Ratio* (vol. 24, issue 4, 2011). Most of them make a significant contribution to ongoing debates; taken as a whole, they offer a snapshot of the range of philosophical work being done on justifying some important moral themes for anybody who accepts ethical generalism and the importance of common morality.

The first paper is Michael Smith's 'Deontological Moral Obligations and Non-Welfarist Agent-Relative Values'. Smith tries to ground two universal and abstract moral obligations on the base of transcendental considerations about Humean reasons. He argues that Hume was right that all reasons are truth-supporting considerations, but he was wrong that no intrinsic desires are required by reason. Agents are required by reason to have certain intrinsic desires because, without them, they could not robustly possess and fully exercise their rational capacities (pp. 8–9). These considerations also extend to all rational agents: fully rational agents must desire to do what they can to help rational agents have the required capacities to believe for reasons and to be instrumentally rational (pp. 7–8). These desires form two corresponding moral obligations: agents are morally obliged not to interfere with any rational agent's exercise