

and texts, it is, for example, not at all clear why Augustine deserves the attention Elden devotes to him (pp. 102–111). The search for predecessors to “territory,” in other words, is reduced in some places to merely what Elden himself revealingly terms a “mining” (p. 256) of texts for mentions of territory or of related terms. At other points, the reader is offered discussions of generally important thinkers who actually had little of interest to say about connections between people, place, and rule. Where there are some broad “resonances,” as for example in chapter 9 between the ideas of René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, Isaac Newton, and Leibniz on “space as extension,” on the one hand, and the idea of territory as the extended manifestation or setting of sovereignty, on the other, Elden often simply leaves it to the reader to make the connection.

This combination of a rather splayed-out and somewhat disconnected corpus of texts and a light interpretive touch insufficient to tie it together is superseded as the chapters progress with a denser and more compelling narrative. Even in the early chapters there are quite masterful passages, such as the account of Augustus’s thinking on *Imperium* at the end of chapter 2. Later chapters turn up such gems more frequently, for example in Elden’s very discerning and pertinent account of the rediscovery of Roman law in chapter 7, or the culminating section on Leibniz as a thinker of territory at the end of chapter 9. By this point it is clear that Elden has in fact provided a sweeping and very useful historical backstory to our modern, mostly unreflective use of the term “territory.” This backstory will certainly have an impact in political geography, international relations, and the history of political thought.

What Elden has not done with this book is to engage current debates on territory from the range of theoretical perspectives available to him. In addition to his historical erudition, Elden is also very widely read in current critical theories of power. To a significant extent, the explicit engagement takes place in his *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty* (2009), which should be seen as a kind of companion volume. Between the two works, the interested reader receives a one-stop overview of the concept of territory unlikely to be matched anytime soon.

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KAREL PLESSINI. *The Perils of Normalcy: George L. Mosse and the Remaking of Cultural History*. (George L. Mosse Series in Modern European Cultural and Intellectual History.) Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014. Pp. x, 284. Paper \$34.95, e-book \$24.95.

George L. Mosse was a prolific scholar whose nearly two dozen books on topics ranging from fascism to bourgeois culture, the history of European sexuality, and the First World War continue to populate graduate reading lists in modern European history. A much admired teacher whose students are today among the most influential scholars in their field, Mosse has re-

ceived an unusual amount of attention for a historian. Apart from a 2004 edited volume and multiple journals essays dedicated to his life and work, two book-length studies of Mosse’s work have appeared in Italian. Mosse’s memoir, published posthumously in 2000, also fills in various details about his intellectual trajectory.

Karel Plessini joins this already dense field with his study of “the inner development” (p. 197) of Mosse’s thought. *The Perils of Normalcy: George L. Mosse and the Remaking of Cultural History* is not a traditional biography. Although Plessini apparently had access to Mosse’s papers in Madison, Wisconsin, readers will find few details in this book about Mosse’s private and professional life that Mosse did not disclose himself in his memoir. Focusing primarily on Mosse’s published essays, lectures, and books, Plessini has produced a comprehensive survey of Mosse’s *oeuvre* that rarely goes beyond the interpretative signposts Mosse left for his readers.

Plessini’s chapters—ordered chronologically for the most part—trace the three phases of Mosse’s intellectual development. In his works on early modern thought and in his first explorations of the cultural precursors of fascist and Nazi politics, written during the 1940s and 1950s, Mosse remained squarely within the field of the history of ideas. In a second phase, during which *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (1964) appeared, Mosse broadened his scholarship to include the notion of ideology as a cultural formation that helps build political consensus. His most mature scholarship finally turned to the analysis of symbols and their function within society and politics, incorporating new methods of visual history into his work.

Although Mosse changed the methodology and focus of his studies over the course of his lifetime, certain central concerns and commitments remained. As Plessini argues, based on Mosse’s own statements about his trajectory, Mosse continuously reflected on the difficulties of acting ethically in a world of power politics. This concern is evident in his early work on the Christian Divines’ attempts to incorporate Machiavelli and his later work on the roots of fascism. Plessini compellingly shows how the dialectics of ethics and realism played out in Mosse’s writings in multiple variations over the decades. He charts the tension between Mosse’s commitment to rationalism and his awareness of the power of irrationalism in mass society, as well as Mosse’s criticism of the exclusions created by bourgeois norms of respectability even as he conceded that these were necessary for the creation of social cohesion.

Plessini, who generally defends Mosse against his detractors, also shows the limits of Mosse’s ability to sustain these contradictions. Mosse himself acknowledged that his emotional attachment to a liberal Jewish identity and to the state of Israel made it hard for him to apply his critique of nationalism to Jewish and Zionist thought. Mosse was a pioneer in the critique of integral forms of Jewish nationalism but defended Jewish patriotism and humanistic nationalism. Plessini convincingly suggests that Mosse’s notion of “the true mission

of Judaism,” a term he used to refer to the distilled, unproblematic aspects of Jewish tradition, “was nothing less than an attempt to find a solution to the ‘eternal problem’ of the relationship between ethics and politics” (pp. 165–166).

Although *The Perils of Normalcy* gives readers the most comprehensive account of scholarship by and about Mosse to date, the book’s analytical innovations are more limited. Missing is a contextualization of Mosse’s writings within broader historiographical discussions. Others, for example, have considered Mosse’s work in comparison with that of social historians who had fundamentally different agendas or other German émigré scholars who explored the culture, religion, and politics of Europe in an attempt to understand the catastrophe that led to their displacement. While Plessini mentions such attempts to compare Mosse’s work with that of his peers, he rarely incorporates them into his analysis. More importantly, he does not offer his own vision of where Mosse fits into the history of twentieth-century thought. Doing so would have allowed Plessini to move further beyond his otherwise thoughtful explanation of Mosse’s own sense of his achievements.

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DAVID SCOTT. *Omens of Adversity: Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2014. Pp. 219. Cloth \$84.95, paper \$23.95.

This thin book by anthropologist David Scott consists of four meditations, or perhaps confessions, on the concepts of tragedy, time, memory, and justice as they pertain to the ambivalent legacies of the Grenada Revolution (1979–1983). The very structure of Scott’s book is itself a play on these concepts, beginning as it does with a prologue, entitled “Aftermaths,” the epigraph for which is excerpted from Saint Augustine’s *Confessions*: “The future diminishes as the past grows, until the future has completely gone and everything is past” (p. 1). Scott’s confessions are obviously not of a kind with Augustine’s struggle to come to eschatological terms with the coming end of time and its world; instead, Scott is concerned with a time that begins after the end of history, or rather after the end of a historicist or progressive sense of temporality.

In Scott’s reading, a strong sense of history or historicist temporality had underwritten the absolute truths that tragically propelled the well-intentioned actors of the Grenada Revolution on a collision course whose remains (or lack thereof) left a gaping fissure in Grenadians’ (and Scott’s) collective sense of time. The past is no longer prologue but instead “a wound that will not heal” (p. 13). For Scott and “my [Anglophone] Caribbean generation,” this wound is “world-historical” albeit in the sense that time is now “out of joint” with history or historicist temporality (pp. 15, 12). Indeed, Scott’s confessions themselves are notably “out of joint” with the events they describe, most of which

transpired decades ago under the previous regime of historicity.

Scott’s discussion of tragedy relies upon A. C. Bradley’s revision of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s theory of tragedy, wherein “tragic collision” among “absolute” political actors unrestrained by the otherwise necessary virtues of “modesty and responsibility” produces catastrophe. The author’s apprehension of time after history favors Walter Benjamin’s baroque notion of time as the haunting of an unredressed injustice. He then queries the displaced “memory” that remains of tragedy’s haunting aftermath, noting that the generation with actual memories of the events remained, in Freudian terms, “melancholic,” whereas the next generation, here embodied by a group of Grenada students who investigated the crimes of the brutal political assassination of Maurice Bishop and the “disappearing” of his body, followed by the U.S. invasion, found new means for “the work of mourning.” Scott exercises Freud’s distinction in the sense that the melancholic turns inward whereas the mourner seeks to turn the objects of “postmemory” (the displaced memory of the previous generation that must now be imagined and questioned [p. 121]) into a search for justice and, perhaps, a basis for “forgiveness.” The author closes his confessions precariously with Hannah Arendt’s fragile notion that forgiveness is linked to political “promising.”

Although Scott’s meditations on the elements of post-socialist or, perhaps, post-historicist “time” are intensely personal and inscribed within his own struggle to apprehend the meaning of the Grenada Revolution, scholars struggling with similar questions and concepts will find here food for thought.

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RUTH A. MILLER. *Snarl: In Defense of Stalled Traffic and Faulty Networks*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013. Pp. vi, 210. Cloth \$60.00, e-book \$50.00.

What can we learn from traffic jams, like the notorious week-long Chinese blockage in 2010? Ruth A. Miller leaps beyond the obvious points that expectations of mobility can be stymied and that transportation networks are built on unreliable assumptions about human behavior. Her argument is far broader and more abstract: the traffic jam is “democratic politics as usual” (p. 157) and “it makes life both materially and legally possible” (p. 158). It reveals the value of immobility and the “opportunity to rewrite constitutional history as a nonhuman, nonorganic story” (p. 16). The book aims to enrich “posthuman” political theory by grounding it in the sordid reality for which “purely human political theories” (p. 158) fail to account. *Snarl: In Defense of Stalled Traffic and Faulty Networks* is not a work of history but rather an argument about the importance of history to political theory. The relevant history, therefore, is of a particular sort: the nonhuman history of an “automotive [or mechanical] public sphere.” Previous attempts to delineate a “nonhuman” or “posthuman” politics have emphasized mobility and communication,