analysis of how American culture delineates a "matrix" that reflects the interaction of myth, religion, and ideology. The author goes to great lengths to demarcate the differences and connections among these rich and powerful concepts. In the process, he does an admirable job articulating a fundamental liberalism that is at work in America. Thus, he offers a powerful development of the Hartz thesis and takes on those critics who see that theory as fraught with failings. Indeed, Rogers Smith's *Civic Ideals* (1997) and *Cultus Americanus* provide the materials for a high-minded debate about how American politics was shaped in the past and how our history continues to shape the present. This book will be of interest to those interested in American political history and thought, religion, and politics, as well as to theorists in general.

Gilchrist opens his book with a discussion of the liberal consensus and its critics. At its base, this debate concerns the question of diversity. Is the United States a country that reflects a fundamental diversity in its culture—a reflection of its rich and controversial history of expansive immigration, slavery, and its treatment of indigenous people? If this is the case, that diversity is the hallmark of American life, then how has that shaped its politics and self-understanding? For critics on this side of the discussion this usually means that Americans' exceptionalism is a facile and unhelpful way to approach politics, because such approaches tend to minimize diversity and place Americans in a kind of political and philosophic straightjacket that hides us from ourselves. Furthermore, such theories tend to downplay racism and discrimination as significant factors in our history. On the other side of the debate are those who see a great deal of agreement about certain central questions, admire the way new groups are integrated into a culture, and admire how America, in so many ways, looks quite different from other modern democracies. Yet, in defending the notion of a consensus, those who champion the ideal have opened themselves to withering critiques, as various exceptions and unexplainable events intrude upon the consensus theory.

Gilchrist seeks to refurbish the older consensus theory by recognizing that diversity exists; however, "that American diversity does not entail contradictory belief systems" (p. 2). Instead, diversity is at the surface and "American culture can be seen as a complex but unified structure that contains internal diversities within a single universe of Americanism" (p. 2). To appreciate this, we need a renewed and deeper understanding of what political culture means. To gain that we need to acknowledge that culture is a reflection of the interaction of myth, religion, and ideology. Each of these distinct forces work together (sometimes contentiously work) to create a culture that harmonizes what it means to be an American.

To get to this point, Gilchrist writes a dense and philosophically rich chapter heavily influenced by Ernest Cassier. Cassier's notion of man as a "symbolic animal" provides a starting place to think about how diversity may reflect a union of people who use and understand those symbols and as such create a culture that forms both individuals and societies. Gilchrist first works to explain what myths mean. Myths are symbols that emerge out of common experiences and articulate higher truths that are timeless and ahistorical. Thus, the mythic America is revealed when Washington becomes Moses and the 13 colonies are seen as the 13 tribes of Israel. The mythic is seen in concepts like Manifest Destiny and the West. However, the mythic is not enough and it necessarily leads to the religious. Religion proves a deeper argument about "the meaning of man, society, and the political" (p. 29). Yet, the mythic remains as part of the "unseen social fabric" (p. 26). However, these two ideals need and nurture each other. Finally, ideology emerges as politics moves to center stage and there is a need to explain important political concepts to a mass of people in some rational form. Ideology is not philosophy but a set of ideas that can easily be communicated to a broad range of citizens. After laying out these ideas and showing how they interact, persist, and shape each other to create a common culture, Gilchrist spends the bulk of the book showing how this process works in America.

This is a rich and thoughtful book, and it adds greatly to the scholarly debate about culture and America. Yet, there are some weaker aspects to the text. Gilchrist certainly provides concrete historical examples to illustrate his points; yet, he often seems more intent on jousting with other political scientists and historians. One would have preferred more examples to show how his theory explains actual history and a bit less critiquing of rivals. Second, his argument about the fundamental consensus in American politics runs into its biggest challenge with regards to the North-South divide that led to the Civil War. Gilchrist does an admirable job showing how John C. Calhoun and others really represent a liberalism that was, at some level, at one with Northern political views. Yet, it does beg the question: If such a basic agreement can lead to slavery in one part of the nation, does a cultural consensus exist? I do not want to dismiss Gilchrist's argument out of hand, but this is a point that his critics may seize upon.

When read in its entirety, *Cultus Americanus* represents an impressive effort to revitalize the idea of the liberal consensus and a nuanced and subtle essay about the meaning and importance of political culture.

Patriotism and Other Mistakes. By George Kateb. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006. 464p. $35.00.
DOI: 10.1017/S1537592707070910

— Don Herzog, *University of Michigan*

Readers of George Kateb's previous work will recognize the author's familiar voice in this collection of papers from the last 17 years or so. By turns earnest ("I know that I

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preach," [p. 12]) and cavalier ("I know I am being arbitrary," [p. 125]), Kateb is intent on plumbing the pernicious irrationalities that seduce us away from his favored stance, democratic individuality. His approach is literary, freewheeling, elliptical. Theorists fond of analytic philosophy will be impatient with how blurry and peremptory his claims can sound. Still, his is an instructive sensibility.

Kateb reviles the abstract phantoms on behalf of which people wreck their—and others'—lives. Patriotism, he asserts, "is a readiness to die and to kill for what is largely a figment of the imagination" (p. 8). Nations "are fiction: their bonds tend to degenerate into kitsch, which favors crime and aggression" (p. 324). Even Thomas Hobbes is not enough of an individualist: He "tries to see through everything except national feeling. He cannot shake free of the sickest of all sick political thoughts, the abstract we. To want nationhood . . . is to *want* war and death" (p. 324). In his crusade against sanguinary phantoms commanding self-immolation, Kateb sounds like Max Stirner, who is curiously absent here. Instead, Kateb appeals to Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau (he imagines that few theorists read them [p. 245]), also to Friedrich Nietzsche. He summons us to our better selves and demands that we pursue the rigorous business of becoming who we really are, while being respectful of others pursuing the same lonely quest: no "herd" (pp. 27, 324) affiliations for him.

Let us face facts: In the name of patriotism and nationalism, people cheerfully shower in gruesome torrents of blood. Kateb heaps disdain on religion and masculinity, too. However, I see no argument here for thinking such ideals necessarily pernicious. Indeed, some will play "gotcha!" and insist that Kateb boasts his own ardent constitutional patriotism. He prizes democracy, constitutionalism, and the rule of law. He is furious with the Bush administration for betraying these precious ideals and contemptuous of their intellectual allies (p. 83). He is anyway leagues away from this dry self-mockery: "Nature," declares Emerson in his "Spiritual Laws" (*Essays: First Series* [1841]), "will not have us fret and fume. She does not like our benevolence or our learning much better than she likes our frauds and wars. When we come out of the caucus, or the bank, or the Abolition-convention, or the Temperance-meeting, or the Transcendental club, into the fields and woods, she says to us, 'So hot? my little Sir.'" All these causes, including those officially dear to Emerson, are suspect. Kateb does not go so far.

Similarly, Kateb rails against war, but does not bite bullets, if you will forgive the phrase, by telling us which if any wars are worth fighting and why. He notices that "only war could end" slavery (p. 258). It is easy enough—too easy, because they were also fighting for family and friends, not invidious abstractions but concrete individuals—to condemn the Confederate soldiers, loyal to a wretched cause. What about the Union soldiers? Should the North have fought? More generally, was bloodshed warranted in the struggle against slavery? In "A Plea for Captain John Brown," Thoreau lampoons his fellow Americans as mechanically trudging through the motions of life. He ecstatically embraces the putative martyr and his little band: "These men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live. . . . It is the best news that America has ever heard." I surmise that Kateb would discard Thoreau's ecstasy as necrophilia. Regardless, Kateb does not admire those soldiering in a worthy cause. "If I am told that what I cherish and benefit from depends on the willingness of others to risk death and to die," he says airily (p. 330), "all I can say is that I must admit to living exploitatively."

Kateb wants to secure a moral or political individualism by underwriting it with an analytic individualism. He thinks, that is, that once we agree that only individuals are real, we will rouse from our dogmatic slumbers and get on with the difficult business of living our own lives. This call to demystifying arms shows up already in his introductory essay, which suggests that the essays collected here are united in attempting to uncover three dreadful motivations. First come aesthetic values, the search for the beautiful or the sublime, not in works of art but in society itself. There is no reason, insists Kateb, to think that a society can be apprehended as a unified artistic whole—and so ideologues and totalitarians try desperately to turn it into one. Second come existential values, in particular the desire to secure a Promethean "human stature" by steamrolling over what should be our ultimate moral commitment to "human status" or dignity. In their wake comes, third, an anti-instrumental stance, leading us to prize action for its own sake, or for what it displays, as against the ends it realizes. This unholy trinity, he thinks, and not any purported social forces, illuminates how and why our politics founders so spectacularly. Similarly, he later asserts that "to a great extent," understanding political disasters means understanding the "motivations" of leaders and followers (p. 385). That, he says, is moral psychology.

I do not suppose that Kateb means to mimic Margaret Thatcher, who once announced "there is no such thing as society," nor that he is aping his allegedly hard-headed colleagues' affinity for methodological individualism and microfoundations. Regardless, it is confusing to set moral psychology over and against social context or even to portion the terrain between them. Each depends on the other. Racism cannot be "aversion to the color and/or the facial features of others" (p. 65), lest your aversions to suntans or acne qualify. Totalitarianism cannot be "explained . . . as a fanatical response to the crisis of meaninglessness" (p. 338). Kateb occasionally concedes the importance of social context (pp. 245, 274). I fear that such concessions remain undigested, arguably indigestible, in his focus on motivations.

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Both the referents and the enabling conditions of individual mental states are richly sociological. Rousseau famously argued that you cannot experience indignation without the concept of wrongful injury. More concretely, if you chafe at being mistreated as a junior faculty member or wonder sadly why your dissertation committee demands that you write like a Bulgarian bureaucrat about to flunk English as a second language, your mental states depend on the existence of universities, of tenure, of (indefensible) norms of scholarly prose, and so on. Yes, those mental states have family resemblances to some available without those social conditions. But only family resemblances.

So, too, for enabling conditions: Kateb labors mightily to show that a deep Western "anger at the world" (p. 206) drives modern technology. Maybe that is in the mix, though I am inclined to doubt it. It cannot be nearly enough: Something must be said about the state of scientific knowledge, of engineering techniques, of mining and manufacturing, and of markets. (Kateb might pause to wonder how he can make sense of "the West" as an analytic category.)

Individualism itself has a characteristic social structure. It depends on the demise of ascriptive roles and the rise of elective ones and on other arrangements too. Without the likes of marriage for love, labor markets, Protestant theology, geographic mobility, and enough wealth and architectural innovations to offer privacy at home, it would not be possible for anyone to think the thoughts, celebrate the possibilities, and adopt the stances that Kateb does. So society cannot be the opposite of democratic individuality.

Alas, then, that the occasional arresting insights studding these papers do not begin to yield a satisfactory defense of the quirky individualism Kateb has been championing for some time.

Feminist Thinkers and the Demands of Femininity: The Lives and Work of Intellectual Women. By Lori Jo Marso. New York: Routledge, 2006. 240p. $ 95.00 cloth, $24.95 paper.
DOI: 10.1017/S1537592707070922

— Regina F. Titunik, *University of Hawaii at Hilo*

This elegant book explores the memoirs, private correspondence, and other self-revelatory writings of prominent feminist thinkers with a view to disclosing their struggles to live feminist lives while contending with conventional gender norms. The socially constructed standards of proper femininity that encumbered these women are what the author terms "the demands of femininity." According to Lori Jo Marso, the demands of femininity vary "in terms of race, class and historical and cultural location" (p. 30), but notwithstanding their malleable content, these normative representations constitute constraints to which all women are subject under patriarchal conditions.

While the personal lives and thought of a number of feminist intellectuals are discussed in this work, four feminist thinkers are given foremost consideration: Mary Wollstonecraft, Germaine de Staël, Emma Goldman, and Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvoir is the dominating presence in this book insofar as her thought both receives sustained attention and articulates the theoretical position that underlies the exposition as a whole. Marso's idea of the demands of femininity mirrors Beauvoir's concept of the "eternal feminine." The latter is an expression Beauvoir derived from Goethe's *Faust* and used to designate an essentialist ideal of femininity in terms by which women are defined. Subsumed under the category of eternal feminine, women are designated as passive, resigned, immanent, and object-like and thus denied the capacity to act as free, self-creating subjects. This notion of a fixed feminine essence, though mythical in Beauvoir's view, has very real consequences; the myth induces women to accept subjection and forgo the travail of living freely.

Following Beauvoir, Marso sees women as controlled by socially produced categories that are purported to be real. Marso, however, conceives of her project as an advance on Beauvoir's work insofar as the idea of "the demands of femininity" encompasses recognition of the variability of constructs of femininity over time and across cultures (although Beauvoir also recognized the historically differing ways in which women are defined to a greater extent than Marso acknowledges). Apart from this amplification of Beauvoir's ideas to account for variations connected with "historical expectations about race, class and sexuality" (p. 15), Marso substantially shares Beauvoir's existentialist view of free female subjects struggling against the confines of their material situation and the social conventions that are factors in that situation. These social conventions and expectations shape women's experience of the world and their desires. Irrespective of how historically varied these representations of women may be, the effects of living with social definitions that one has not created are the same. Marso, following Beauvoir, sees the demands of femininity as circumscribing women's freedom to be self-defining subjects. This view, however, begs the question of whether the valorization of self-creating freedom as the "highest good" (p. 28) does not also represent an unreflective acceptance of a specific historically and culturally created standard.

In examining the lives of feminist thinkers, the author reveals that although these women endeavored to transgress norms of femininity, they were unable to successfully free themselves from conventional standards. Not only were they constrained by contemporaneous demands of femininity but they also accepted and embraced these standards to a surprising extent. Marso presents fascinating material that shows these canonical feminist thinkers capitulating to the gender roles that they intellectually abjured and compromising their aspirations to live in feminist ways. Mary Wollstonecraft, for example, was reduced to needy despondency by her unrequited love for Gilbert

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