

domestic and international politics. As with Morgenthau, the author seeks to explain the grammatical problems of Beitz who does not overcome the disjunction in the dualistic IR picture of domestic and international politics.

The third and final concept is the “binary universality” of Walzer. This theoretical aspect on universal ethics comes through communitarian lenses. For Walzer, despite his particularistic notions in IR, universality indeed exists: first is the “thin” universality of strangers, and second is the “thick” universality of members. Basically, this binary characteristic of Walzer’s universality – thick and thin – refers to the question of when and how should certain countries intervene in other countries in order to preserve a just global order. What the author suggests is that Walzer’s grammar is entrapped by his own wishful thinking – his desire to fatten up the thin. Again, as in Morgenthau’s and Beitz’s case, it is just the theoretical desire to see a universal ethic function in a state-centered conception.

By specifically focusing on American scholarship and avoiding the international law tradition in IR, the author intentionally does not want to enter a theoretical discussion, but narrows her study exclusively to “language games”. Pin-Fat constantly reminds us that her objective in this book is not to offer her theoretical view on the subject, not to deal with the three IR scholars intellectually and that this book is not about seeking the proper concept of universality at all. Even so, her in-depth reading of three distinct approaches offers much more to the study of ethics and universality in IR than just a simple deconstruction of the grammar. By deconstruct-

ing the three scholars’ metaphysics, the book opens many new perspectives. Thus, this book is at the same time satisfactory and disappointing for being too short; it should have encompassed a larger body of literature in IR scholarship.

Petar Popović

University of Donja Gorica

Review

Jon Meacham

**Thomas Jefferson:
The Art of Power**

Random House, New York, 2012, 800 pp.

Jon Meacham, author and executive editor at Random House, has earned a reputation with books on American and British political history, which include *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation* and *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship*. He won the Pulitzer Prize for his account of the life of the seventh US president *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*. Although neither a historian nor a political scientist (he is a journalist with a degree in English literature, earned at the University of the South), Meacham has a good feel for meticulous archival work, but also for political analysis and contextualization. His new book is a complex and profound political biography of Thomas Jefferson, a man often surrounded with mystery and controversy and a political leader whose

words are often quoted and misquoted in contemporary American daily politics in order to add weight to a particular argument or agenda.

Meacham's oeuvre is based on research in London, Paris, Washington, Philadelphia and Virginia archives and on Jefferson's large correspondence, collected by Princeton University Press as *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. The book is divided into nine parts containing several subsections, which amounts to a total of 43 chapters. Each part covers one phase of Jefferson's life, but also depicts one of his many faces and roles – revolutionary, governor, congressman, envoy, philosopher, opposition leader and president. The focus of this biographic account is, as the subtitle *The Art of Power* suggests, Jefferson's ability to shape the world around him according to his own ideas and will. While politicians act and philosophers reflect, he managed to do both at once. As Meacham clearly shows throughout the whole book, in Jefferson's persona the thinker and the politician cannot be separated one from another.

The first part tells a story of the birth and youth of Thomas Jefferson, a privileged son of a respected Virginia planter. Meacham devotes much ink to the way the state capital Williamsburg shaped Jefferson's worldview. Here he attended the College of William and Mary and was introduced to the Scottish Enlightenment by Professor William Small. The author shows how Jefferson as a young attorney spent a lot of his time reading books on British history and hence developed ideas on personal liberties of Englishmen being under threat in America due to unjust actions undertaken by the Crown.

The second part narrates the American Revolution and Jefferson's crucial role in the Continental Congress. In the shadow of his mother's death, Jefferson, urged by John Adams, drafted the seminal text that would become the Declaration of Independence, the first political document to put the ideals of the Enlightenment into practice.

In part three Meacham spins a story of Jefferson as governor of Virginia, drawn apart by his simultaneous efforts at building a democratic society in his home state, caring for his family and battling the redcoats. The death of his wife Patty in 1782 marked a strong caesura in his life.

Part four shows Jefferson as envoy to France, working towards transatlantic stability at the Paris peace commission as well as a congressman frustrated with the ineffectiveness of the national legislature of the early Union.

The fifth part gives an account of Jefferson's encounter with the culture and philosophy of Europe, as well as his firsthand experience of the French Revolution. For the rest of his political career, he will remain a strong supporter of France. Here Meacham depicts his deep contradictions and inner struggles. While he praised the spirit of liberty, at the same time he could not find the strength to deal with slavery at home, going so far as to have a relationship with his late wife's enslaved half-sister Sally Hemings and never granting her manumission.

In part six the author depicts Jefferson in his role as first secretary of state and his personal clashes with the secretary of treasury Alexander Hamilton. Jefferson's opposition to Hamilton's financial plan and the strengthening of central govern-

ment according to British template became the seed of partisanship in America.

Part seven puts Jefferson in the position of the leader of the opposition to Federalists policies which he perceived as a sure return to British monarchism. While vice president, he stressed the importance of the sovereignty of individual states and voiced his belief in the rationality of the people as the true governors and stakeholders in politics.

The eighth part covers Jefferson's presidency (1801-1809). As president, he did do away with the Federalist centralizing policies, yet it was precisely him who laid the foundations for a strong American government. His time in office will be remembered for a doubling in territory (Louisiana Purchase) and an incentive to exploration (Lewis and Clark Expedition).

The final part revisits the theme of Jefferson as a polymath immersed in thoughts on history, aesthetics, religion and human nature. Until his death on the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Indepen-

dence, Jefferson remained optimistic about the future of the young nation and a firm believer in the rational capacities of the people meant to govern themselves by themselves and for themselves.

Meacham wants contemporary America, bitterly divided along partisan lines, to draw lessons from the Founding Fathers' era. He portrays Jefferson as a man of compromise, yet a true believer in the Republic, in citizen virtues and in liberty. Americans often idealize the Early Republic in an attempt to escape the problems of today by praising the achievements of yesterday, yet have much to learn from both the success and failure of their predecessors. Meacham's new book is an extensive, yet very rewarding read which shows that history is truly life's teacher and that true power lies in the ability to transform oneself, read the signs of a changing world and valiantly meet any challenge that may arise. These are the lessons which could be of great use to today's leaders on both sides of the Atlantic.

Višeslav Raos
Political Science
Research Centre Zagreb