anyone who sticks with him will be rewarded. Glouberman's interpretation is a substantial and considerable contribution to Descartes studies.

RICHARD A. WATSON

Washington University

Jean Hampton. *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. Pp. xii + 299. $42.50.

In *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* Professor Hampton undertakes an "extensive examination" of Hobbes's argument, primarily as stated in *Leviathan,* for the institution of an absolute sovereign. Hampton, however, is concerned to accomplish more than "a description or explication" of Hobbes's political philosophy. Rather, it is her intention to develop a "rational reconstruction" of Hobbes's argument. Only if one seeks "to get the best possible statement of Hobbes's argument for absolute sovereignty will one be able to understand where and why that argument fails" (2). By providing us with an understanding of why Hobbes's argument fails Hampton hopes "to shed light on the general structure of all social contract arguments." More specifically, by indicating the source of the failure of Hobbes's social contract argument Hampton hopes to help us understand "what structure a social contract argument must have if it is to succeed." In this way, it is argued that "the principal reason for studying Hobbes's work is that doing so will improve our understanding of social contract theories generally" (3).

Hampton's understanding of Hobbes's argument, and why it fails, is based primarily upon a distinction between what she terms "alienation" and "agency" social contract theory. Hobbes, Hampton argues, is a proponent of "alienation" contract theory. According to this account the ruler is instituted when the people *surrender* their power to him. In these circumstances subjects, when authorizing the sovereign, renounce their rights to all things. Thus, Hampton claims, "there is no doubt that Hobbes considers authorization to be an act of enslavement, and the resulting commonwealth to be a union of slaves (albeit willing slaves) within the will of their master" (122). Hampton opposes her own "alienation" interpretation of Hobbes's argument to the "agency" interpretation favored by David Gauthier. On the "agency" view the ruler's power is only *loaned* to him. The relationship between sovereign and subject is that of agent and principal, rather than master and slave. "Whereas slaves, when they surrender their right of governing themselves, become mere instruments of their master's will, subjects who authorize their ruler only lend their rights to him and thus never lose their self-rulership" (116). The "agency" model, therefore, represents the sovereign as the instrument of the *subjects'* wills. This interpretation, Hampton maintains, cannot be rendered consistent with the text. In particular, contrary to what is suggested by the agency model, Hobbes clearly rejects the suggestion that the sovereign is in any way subject to the will or judgment of his or her subjects. To interpret Hobbes along these agency-model lines is to fundamentally misrepresent his position as that of a Lockean Whig.

Hampton believes that there is a problem with Hobbes's argument that has been little recognized in recent years by Hobbes scholars, but which is nevertheless "so

serious that it renders the entire Hobbesian justification for absolute sovereignty invalid" (197). Given Hobbesian psychology, no subject is able to do what is required to create an absolute (i.e., unconditional and permanent) sovereign. More specifically, a subject's obedience to the sovereign is conditional on the sovereign's commands not threatening the life of the subject. That is, Hobbes must expect a subject to disobey any command by the sovereign that would threaten his own bodily survival. Moreover, the subjects are the judges of this question. This means that such people are incapable of letting the sovereign determine their every action. By taking this position Hobbes "makes the subjects the judges of whether or not to obey *any* of the sovereign's laws" (201). Clearly, therefore, Hampton suggests, Hobbes is forced to say that an absolute sovereign reigns at his subjects' pleasure and this, obviously, is not "genuine enslavement at all" (202).

Hampton argues that the failure of Hobbes's argument reveals fundamental difficulties with the alienation model in social contract theory. The structure of the social contract argument itself "puts pressure not only on Hobbes but also on any other contractarian political theorist to abandon the idea that genuine 'alienation' of one's power to the sovereign is justified" (258). That is, given that contractarian theory suggests that we view governments as created by people for a reason, this puts "overwhelming pressure on a theorist to say that a ruler is merely 'hired' (not made a permanent master) for this reason [e.g., self-preservation]" (263). In this way, contractarian methodology itself forces such a theorist to reject the "alienation" model in favor of the "agency" model. Finally, there is an even deeper reason, Hampton suggests, why this methodology forces any theorist using it to advocate an agency relationship between ruler and people. If, as the theory suggests, the state is our creation, "then it is extremely unlikely that we should, given our individualistic interests and the private reasons governing our actions, alienate our power to it" (264). This, says Hampton, would mean giving up our roles as creators and maintainers of the state, and it does not seem that there is any reason a group of individuals could have to want to do this.

Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition is an important and valuable contribution to the study of Hobbes's political philosophy. Throughout this work one acquires new and illuminating insights into Hobbes's argument and its contemporary significance. I have, however, two critical comments to make. The first concerns a matter of substance, and the second concerns the manner in which the book has been presented.

(1) As I have indicated, it is fundamental to Hampton's interpretation that Hobbes understands the sovereign/subject relationship as essentially a master/slave relationship. On this important issue it seems to me that Hampton is rather careless. In chapter 20 of *Leviathan* Hobbes addresses this issue directly and he is very careful to distinguish between a master/servant and a master/slave relationship. Moreover, Hobbes argues in some detail that the relationship of sovereign to subject is that of the former and not the latter. This crucial distinction is almost entirely ignored by Hampton. Her very brief remarks in a footnote (120–21) do not do adequate justice to Hobbes's remarks on this subject given that they have a direct bearing on her interpretation. In my view, contrary to what Hampton suggests, this involves more than a verbal point. Indeed, I believe that in ignoring Hobbes's remarks on this subject Hampton has clearly misrep-

resented Hobbes's position and makes it more difficult, in consequence, for the reader to get an accurate picture of how Hobbes would have set about answering his Lockean critics.

(2) Many of Hampton's interesting and perceptive observations get lost or obscured in a text which is, I believe, much too long. This would be a better book if it were shortened or compressed. Futhermore, throughout this work Hampton employs the techniques and jargon of modern game theory. Despite Hampton's remarks (137), I am not convinced that this technical apparatus is strictly necessary or helpful. Its use could certainly have been curtailed. Finally, in order to keep the number of pages down the publisher has used a typeface which is much too small and makes reading a work of this length and complexity more taxing than it should be.

Hampton's study cannot be recommended as a helpful guide for students who are fresh to Hobbes's political thought. (An exception to this is her first chapter, which is an especially interesting discussion of the psychological and ethical foundations of Hobbes's argument.) Nevertheless, as should be clear from what I have already said, it is essential reading for all those who are seriously concerned to come to grips with Hobbes's social contract theory. Hobbes scholar and political theorist alike will learn a great deal from it.

PAUL RUSSELL

University of British Columbia

Daniel E. Flage. *Berkeley's Doctrine of Notions: A Reconstruction Based on His Theory of Meaning*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1987. Pp. 226. $29.95.

For the reviewer of any hermeneutic work about a classical philosopher the first, and the last, questions must be: "How much, and how, does it improve our understanding of the mind of the master?" In the present case the answers are, sadly, "Not much" and "Mainly by emphasizing the importance of Berkeley's distinction between positive and relative notions." Dr. Flage starts by explaining that he will "be concerned with the nature of notional knowledge, the ontological analysis of notions, and the relations between notions and ideas in Berkeley's metaphysics" (1). Yet, surely, for Berkeley himself only the third of these ever constituted a central concern. Even there Flage is at small pains to reveal what for Berkeley rather than for Flage was the main problem.

Chapter 1, "Abstraction," contends that Locke had many predecessors as an abstractionist. But since we are never told by what criteria this creature is to be identified, and since Berkeley famously allows that there are senses in which we can all truly be said to be able to abstract, it remains unclear how many of those predecessors are involved with Locke in a common catastrophe.

Chapter 2, "Possibility and Impossibility," must appall those sharing Berkeley's own commitment to speaking with the vulgar. Is it really necessary, or even possible, to elucidate his luminously expressed thoughts through pages from which the tortured reader has continually to refer to an appendix listing no less than fifty-five different propositional functions?