

Introduction

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This special issue of *Cosmos + Taxis* is devoted to David McIlwain's recently published book *Michael Oakeshott and Leo Strauss: The Politics of Renaissance and Enlightenment* (2019). This journal has been fortunate to have an international group of scholars to comment on McIlwain's book. Timothy Fuller, Stephen Turner, Wendell J. Coats, and David Schaefer represent the United States, Luke O' Sullivan is in Singapore, Scott B. Nelson is in Austria, I am living most of the time in Germany, and David is in Australia. I think that an international approach is important especially in regards to Strauss—a German who lived in briefly in France, then in England before moving to the United States. As Stephen Turner suggests below, Strauss never felt fully at home in the United States. It is to McIlwain's credit that he appears quite attuned to the nuances in Strauss' writings as well as to those in Oakeshott. Both Strauss and Oakeshott have their share of detractors, and it is a point for McIlwain and the contributors to this special issue that they have sought to understand Strauss and Oakeshott on their own terms rather than seeking to castigate them for not being modern enough. Both Oakeshott and Strauss were familiar with the history of western philosophy, so this issue has references to many of the major figures: Plato, Augustine, Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, and the Neo-Kantians are all represented here. Plus, many modern thinkers, including Carl Schmitt, J. P. Meyer, Friedrich Hayek, and Richard Rorty. Some of the contributors have focused almost exclusively on McIlwain's book whereas some others have used it as a point of departure. But I believe it safe to say that all of the contributors have found much to ponder in his book on Oakeshott and Strauss. I think it also rather safe to say that readers of this special issue will also find much upon which to reflect.

Rather than offer a brief overview of the chapters, I will close with a note of thanks. Thanks to all of the contributors who not only wrote penetrating analyses of McIlwain's book but managed to do so in a timely manner and under the extreme circumstances of the Covid pandemic. Thanks also to McIlwain for agreeing to participate in this special issue. Finally, thanks to Leslie Marsh for entrusting me the task of shepherding this special issue.