

Serpents in the Sand: Essays on the Nonlinear Nature of Politics and Human Destiny.



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vidual health. He sees the drains and sewers built by the Victorians as "a strategy of indirect government" that freed "the city of the detritus that should be external to it" and thereby established it as a vital and natural order (pp. 114–5). Ian Hunter stresses the contingency of school reform. His genealogy works critically against idealist liberal-democratic conceptions such as Amy Gutmann's as well as against Marxist notions of schools as vehicles for the reinscription of the interests of the dominant class. Hunter's basic claim is that the school system emerged piecemeal through exchanges between a state conception of the school as a tool of social government and a Christian emphasis on spiritual discipline. Rejecting efforts to establish liberalism through its separation from feudalism, Alan Hunt provides a nuanced account of sumptuary law. Pat O'Malley examines changes in the management of risk from welfare liberalism to late or advanced liberalism.

Given that the editors highlight the importance of technology and expertise for liberalism, the way liberal government is able to refrain from direct intervention in the lives of citizens to the extent the experts and technologies become authoritative, I was disappointed that the anthology lacked chapters on the computer and communication technologies so rapidly coming to frame experience for many at the turn of the millennium. The chapter that comes the closest to addressing these issues is Andrew Barry's fascinating account of the importance of the telegraph for liberal government. Whereas the more familiar Foucauldian (or paranoid) analysis stresses the place of communication technologies amid practices of surveillance, Barry articulates the growth of popular means of communication with liberalism: "If liberalism was suspicious of excessive State intervention and of the capacity of government to act, an effective communication and information system enabled the public authorities to judge the minimum level of action necessary" (p. 128). For Barry, communication technologies like the telegraph made possible the virtual community, the public sphere, that was/is the liberal state. Consequently, his conception of this public sphere is attuned to the effects of technology. Not only does he draw attention to the limited ability of the telegraph "to inscribe the reality of . . . distant events," but also he points out its influence on the contents of messages ("the telegraph was limited by its capacity to transmit only the shortest messages") and the norms of behavior of the lay public who followed developments in wireless technology ("non-scientists came to expect themselves to embody the self-discipline of science") (pp. 133–5).

These essays can be frustrating, resembling the techniques of accounting and audit Rose finds in advanced liberalism: They are "simultaneously modest and omniscient, limited yet apparently limitless in their application to problems as diverse as the appropriateness of a medical procedure and the viability of a university department" (p. 54). Accordingly, one wonders whether they are theory or history (a question that has, as Colin Gordon explains, plagued the British reception of Foucault). Nonetheless, altogether they are thoughtful and provocative, raising issues relevant to anyone interested in liberal government.

Serpents in the Sand: Essays on the Nonlinear Nature of Politics and Human Destiny. By Courtney Brown. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995. 175p. \$34.50.

L. Douglas Kiel, *University of Texas at Dallas*

In any discipline it seems increasingly rare to read a book that genuinely challenges, edifies, and inspires. Courtney Brown's

important recent work is an example of that rarity. It is a shame that this review must be categorized within a subfield of political science, for Brown's book speaks to the entire discipline. While its title may suggest biblical references to human nature and the character flaws of the politically ambitious, it instead refers to the nonlinear and dynamic nature of evolving political reality and its interaction with a malleable environment.

In this reviewer's experience, Brown makes the first comprehensive effort to apply the emerging field of nonlinear dynamics to political evolution. His proclaimed task is to present a nonlinear *Weltanschauung* that directly challenges the dominant "linear" world view. This dominant world view, which sees relationships between variables as largely stable and consistently proportionate in their outcomes, is seen by the author as the result of efforts to ease analysis and simplify computation at the cost of discounting the real complexity in human systems. Our reliance in political science on optimization models, such as linear regression, serves to confirm overly simplistic views of relationships in the political realm that taint our analyses and diminish the value of policy recommendations.

As a subfield of the sciences of complexity, nonlinear dynamics examines both the internal and contextual elements that both energize, enervate, and alter system dynamics. Brown thus seems to see as his task the development of analytical models of political dynamics that incorporate historical and cultural milieus but also include the nonlinearity that is an essential element of the human realm. He accomplishes his task in a convincing manner that should awaken many political scientists to the value of appreciating both the nonlinear nature of political evolution and the related methods that can enhance our view of the complexities of that evolution.

Brown's chapters, which are extensions of some of his previously published works, are used to display the multiple dynamics that nonlinearity may generate in political systems. These temporal dynamics range from stability to chaos to catastrophe for political systems. His analysis of voter rationality within the context of the individual's social context evidences nonlinearity in attitudinal change. An analysis of Lyndon Johnson's 1964 electoral landslide over Barry Goldwater reveals the nonlinear and contagious effects of multiple nonlinear interactions. Brown's assessment of the fall of the Weimar Republic shows that the nonlinear National Socialist shock to an already unstable system led to systemwide catastrophe. In a chapter of current interest to students of public policy, Brown reveals the complex periodicities and pseudorandom (chaotic) dynamics in environmental damage generated by alternating partisan control of electoral structures and regulatory systems.

Brown does not want his work to be seen as an essay in methodology. Yet, in order to reveal the weaknesses of linear regression in capturing political complexity, in light of the relative strength of nonlinear regression methods, he devotes a sizable portion of the book to the development and results of his modeling efforts. This comparative analytical approach is actually a plus in this book, as Brown shows the richness of the political landscape that can be explored using nonlinear regression methods. It is worthy of note that these comparative analyses may be demanding reading for those who are not methodologically sophisticated. The method of plotting data on phase diagrams can be challenging for those not accustomed to the graphical data presentation widely used in nonlinear dynamic analysis. A more extensive detailing of nonlinear systems theory and associated methods of nonlinear dynamic analysis would have resolved these issues for

some readers. Brown, however, does a very effective job of conveying the need for and the value of the method he espouses.

As do other social scientists interested in applications of nonlinear dynamics to society, Brown believes that his emergent perspective may lead to a convergence of the sciences, much akin to that of the ancients. While some analysts may consider such notions the extremity of wishful thinking, one must recognize that a greater appreciation for the nonlinearities in the political world is likely to produce a political science more adept at making statements about what truly is stable, linear, unstable, and nonlinear in the social realm. The essential point is that since the human realm is highly nonlinear, political science must do a better job of incorporating the fundamental dynamics of human social interaction.

Abiding by Brown's recommendations for incorporating nonlinear analyses into political research presents a considerable challenge to most political scientists. Brown admits that developing nonlinear models is time consuming both in human labor and for high-speed computers. The psychic cost for some of moving from independent, linear, and mechanical models of people and social systems to contextual, nonlinear, and living systems models may also be wrenching. Brown's urgings, however, are not an arrogant attack against an entrenched status quo, but instead represent the language of new discovery asking others to participate in new forms of exploration.

Brown is asking for nothing less than a Kuhnian shift in political and social science. Such shifts inevitably take time. The next generation of political scientists, all of whom should be required to read Brown's works, may learn better than their predecessors to capture the nonlinear and complex realities of evolving political systems. This process of generational improvement is, of course, a basis for the evolution of the discipline. Perhaps the larger question raised by Brown's work is whether, like most pioneers, he receives multiple arrows in the back, in this case, arrows of neglect, or the acclaim he deserves for attempting to push research in politics to a new and much richer domain.

Gender Is Not a Synonym for Women. By Terrell Carver. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996. 133p. \$35.00.

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Terrell Carver proposes to redress a deficiency of major proportion in contemporary political theory. While crediting feminists for introducing "gender" into the political theory lexicon, Carver argues that a gendered perspective on men has not as yet been sufficiently developed. Rather, feminist efforts to recuperate and refigure the role of women in political theory have proceeded with reference to a suspect background figure, "the monotonic, monolithic, and yet paradoxical degendered male as other" (p. 119). Just as females are not the only sex, women are not the only gender. Furthermore, just as feminists have worked to specify women further in terms of race, sexuality, class, and other constitutive and contested markers of identity, oppression, and resistance, so, too, do we need to look for "alternative and suppressed masculinities" (p. 8). "Masculinity" in the singular simply will not do as a covering law generic term for all or most men (and some women) and their behavior.

Carver distinguishes gender-critical analysis from gender analysis simpliciter in order to establish a crucial methodological difference among various theoretical invocations of gender. Absent the notion of "critical," gender analysis risks

"capitulating to the universalizing and naturalizing narratives that construct the gendered world and insulate it from political challenge" (p. 36). Carver employs "a mild form of postmodernism" (p. 119), along with insights generated by the sociology of masculinities, to render "men and their masculinities more varied in terms of domination and subordination within the male group, as well as with respect to women" (p. 119).

To the extent that a cursory conception of men informs feminist constructions of women, "strange things happen" in feminist work. "Woman" is defined as nonmale, "that is, as womb-having" (p. 9), and men disappear from the scene. A conception of women as womb-having risks reinscribing the naturalized, essentializing, and reductionistic terms of traditional femininity, while the disappearing act recapitulates a previous and all-too-familiar absence: "Men's reproductive capacities and parental roles also tend to disappear in feminist theory, just as in traditional political theory these roles are generally forgotten" (p. 9). As long as we persist in forgetting that these roles have been forgotten, reproduction will continue to be mapped onto women, and men will be let off the hook.

Carver's working definition of gender as "the ways that sex and sexuality become power relations in society" (p. 120) and his attunement to the interdefinition of sex and sexuality with class, race/ethnicity, and other phenomena are deployed consistently, persuasively, and innovatively throughout the five essays in this collection, which is unusual and eclectic by mainstream political theory standards. It includes a literature review of feminist theories of politics and postmodern theories of gender; a critical rereading of Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*; a biographical study of Engels that pays close attention to his relationships with women; a reinterpretation of the scandal surrounding the rumor of Marx's illegitimate son; and an interpretation of the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings, where, as Carver observes, private man was forced to go public against his will. The collection as a whole also enacts Carver's prescriptions for relaxing the form and broadening the content of political theory so that it is more directly engaged with cultural materials that are all too often taken for granted. Among those "commonalities of the lifeworld shared by theorists, classic authors, and political actors" (p. 121), men and masculinity/ies are particularly "normal" and "obvious" and therefore worthy of subversive attention by political theorists.

In his cross-grained readings for men and masculinity/ies (which is to say that his readings are never on sympathetic behalf of the masculinity/ies that he pursues), Carver comes up with a number of interesting and provocative findings. For example, Engels's classic text, "while appearing to be a history focused on women" (p. 40), leaves men in the driver's seat of history. Furthermore, it exculpates conventional notions of masculinity by figuring men as natural sexual predators. Carver argues that the feminist pedigree enjoyed by *The Origin of the Family* merits critical reassessment.

Conventional commentary in political theory ignores biography altogether or treats it as a background footnote to the classic texts. In his biographical essay on Engels, Carver works in the opposite direction, from the lifeworld of the author to the classic (and not-so-classic) texts. Using an interpretive frame of masculinity, gender politics, and sexuality, Carver pays close attention to Engels's sexual politics and practice. The point is not to discredit Engels's political theory on the basis of a demonstrated "contradiction" between his professed political beliefs and his bourgeois heterosexual masculine behavior with respect to his working-class lovers, but to rewrite the narrative of political theory so