undergraduates, but more advanced readers will find it illuminating and informative.

The idea that speech can cause tangible damage to potential targets, once dismissed as nothing more than a rationalization for overarching official constraints on individual rights, is now gaining traction with the advent of new communications technologies. As these technologies become more widely adapted, emerging phenomena such as cyber-bullying will almost certainly lead to a reassessment of the basic principles that backstop freedom of speech. Such reassessment will be flawed without a full understanding of the history of how speech affects the audience, how it does (or does not) transform listeners/readers into victims, and how government has responded to these real or imagined problems. Together, *Gitlow v. New York* and *Speech & Harm* enable us to look backward for lessons that can be applied in the future.

Plato's Revenge: Politics in the Age of Ecology.
By William Ophuls. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011. 272p. $27.95 cloth, $14.95 paper.
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— Andrew Dobson, *Keele University*

William Ophuls first made an impact with his *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity,* originally published in 1977. His book appeared during what we might call the "first wave" of theorizing about "the limits to growth"—named after the groundbreaking book published by Donella Meadows and her colleagues in 1972. Ophuls's basic thesis was that the limits to growth were non-negotiable, and that the changes in lifestyle implied by this were so unpalatable that people would not submit to them voluntarily. His work was read as a resigned/enthusiastic (depending on the taste of the reader) account of the necessity for political compulsion—and he thus took his place in the pantheon of thinkers who came to be known as "eco-authoritarians." As ever, the truth is more complicated than the headline, and while Ophuls was certainly no enthusiast for the democratic route to (what we might now call) sustainability, there is a big difference between "mutual coercion" and "mutual coercion mutually agreed upon" (to paraphrase and purloin from Garrett Hardin).

Ophuls's next major work was *Requiem for Modern Politics* (1997). I think it is fair to say that fewer people noticed *Requiem* than noticed *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity*. This is not because it was worse or any less suggestive and polemical than the 1977 work, but because the context of its publication was entirely different from that of the mid-1970s. Whereas *Ecology* was a direct response to the limits-to-growth thesis at a time when there was real concern that the thesis might be true, by the mid-1990s the notion had come to seem almost absurd. These were the boom years, in which growth seemed likely to go on forever, and the environmental critique had been effectively undermined by notions such as "ecological modernization," which recognized the existence of environmental problems but argued that they could be dealt with by the more efficient use of resources. The "technological fix," in other words, so criticized in the original *Limits to Growth* report, returned in more sophisticated form, and added to the growing consensus that limits to growth represented a brief moment of hysteria that could be consigned to the dustbin of history. This was the context in which *Requiem* was published, and Ophuls—still cleaving to the limits-to-growth notion and arguing for a very particular kind of political response to it, found his arguments falling on stony ground.

Now here we are again, in 2013, with the publication of a third major monograph by Ophuls, *Plato's Revenge.* This time the context in which it is published looks more propitious: The wheel has turned virtually full circle and limits to growth is back on the agenda. In part, this is because of the credit crisis and the economic downturn that has accompanied it since 2008. In the midst of austerity and stagnant or declining rates of growth in so-called advanced economies, the idea that there might be limits to growth looks more plausible than it did 15 years ago during the boom times.

Beyond the context of austerity, though, which many will argue is a temporary (if rather lengthy) blip in the otherwise generally upwardly mobile graph of growth, we are once again getting used to thinking in terms of limits to growth. This time, though, the story is not a generalized one but a more specific one relating to the discourse of "peak oil." Peak oil is the moment at which we have used half of the reserves available to us, and some commentators suggest that we are already past that point. Given the ubiquity of oil in our daily lives, the notion that we have already used half of what is available to us, and that the rest will be increasingly difficult and expensive to extract, amounts to a contemporary restatement of the limits-to-growth idea. This is the context for *Plato's Revenge,* and it looks a lot more propitious than 1997 and *Requiem*.

Ophuls describes this latest book as "a provocative essay, not a scholarly thesis" (p. xi), and in this he is absolutely right. Keen Ophuls watchers will enjoy the provocation, and not look too closely at the detail of the picture he paints. Appropriately for the sweep of this subject matter, the author uses a very broad brush, and we do him and his work a disservice by peering at it from too close a vantage point. Political ecologists are used to citing René Descartes and/or Francis Bacon as the original sinners for their injunction to dominate nature and to apprehend it through the metaphor of a machine. The root of our problems for Ophuls is Thomas Hobbes: "[T]he economic and technological juggernaut driving us toward an increasingly chaotic and dismal future is but the physical manifestation of Hobbes's mostly unacknowledged philosophy" (p. xiii). Hobbes "severed politics from virtue," according

to Ophuls, and this "set in motion a vicious circle of moral decay that has all but overwhelmed civil society" (p. 7).

This is especially bad news, the author says, because we long ago left behind the idea that it might be the responsibility of the state to cultivate virtue. Ophuls calls this idea a "classical conception of the polity—that the state has a duty to make men and women virtuous in accordance with some communal ideal" (p. 16). Now we have the state as a referee: "[I]t keeps the peace and relegates morality to the private sphere" (p. 16). Once the state is delegitimized as a promoter of virtue, we are left with only civil society, and because the ethics of civil society is only ever the ethics of its members, the consequence of Hobbes's determination to sever politics from morality comes home to roost with a vengeance in the form of a corrupted civil society.

Ophuls is in favor of a virtue approach to politics, allied with a sense of community bound together by a common understanding of virtue. Both virtue and community are out of favor in mainstream thinking and mainstream politics, dominated as these are by variations of Rawlsian liberalism. In public policy, financial incentives and behavioral economics ("nudge") dominate the field, and individualism rather than communitarianism rules the roost. Here, too, then, Ophuls is swimming against the mainstream tide, though what the mainstream has not noticed is that the tide itself may be turning, and he might at last be swimming in the right direction.

The author's preference is for an ethically homogenous society, and he is dismissive of societies weighed down by legislation, agreeing with Tacitus (p. 14) that "The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws." The morality of a society is thus in inverse proportion to the number of laws it has. Virtue is vital, he says, since "[s]elf-seeking individuals, unrestrained by virtue, seize opportunities to bend the law to their own selfish ends, and this behaviour requires yet more legislation to close the loopholes, and so on ad infinitum" (p. 14). No polity can exist for long as just an alliance of self-interested individuals, he writes, and the ties that bind liberal societies together are not strong enough either to guide us in the "closed world" circumstance of constrained growth or to contain the centrifugal forces that such a world might unleash.

So Ophuls's ethics must be one that makes sense in a closed world in which infinite economic growth is recognized to be both impossible and undesirable.

Where is this ethic to come from? Ophuls eschews the messy democratic route of working out an ethic through inclusive participation and dialogue, and goes instead for a version of natural law based on principles derived from systems ecology, particle physics, and depth psychology (p. 8). These, according to the author, reveal an "immanent moral order" (p. 8). But what of those who misunderstand, misinterpret, or simply refuse to accept the messages that emanate from systems ecology, particle physics, and depth psychology? What, in other words, of dissenters, of those who question the truth as revealed by experts' reading of these three streams of thought and practice? Virtue, he says, is as much a matter of the heart as of the mind. Some might have access to the revealed truth through reason, but this is for the specialist. "The rest of us," he says darkly, "need stronger medicine" (p. 17).

For all the clarity of Ophuls's analysis of our predicament, there is a profound tension at the heart of the political aspects of this thought. On the one hand, he favors "a fundamentally limited, Jeffersonian, republican form of government" (p. xii). But he knows that "a limited government compatible with wide personal liberty requires a virtuous people" (p. 18), and he is not at all confident that people can cultivate the required virtue without considerable help. So although he claims that "[w]e require a new moral, legal and political order that cannot be imposed from the top down but that must instead percolate up as the consequence of an intellectual and moral reformation" (p. 132), he does not really believe in bottom-up potential. Much more common in *Plato's Revenge* (such an apt title) is this kind of sentiment: "Will [people] dispel their ignorance of systems behaviour and enthusiastically embrace the ecological worldview, including the ethical mandates of humility, moderation, and connection that follow inescapably from that worldview? Unfortunately the question practically answers itself" (p. 130). Ophuls's skepticism regarding our capacity to reach the appropriate ethical conclusions and put them into practice leads him—as it has done throughout his 40 years of thinking about postgrowth society—to a politics of aristocracy. As he says, "elites are inevitable" (p. 99).

Ophuls is one of the few thinkers who has taken on the task of working up a political theory for the "closed world" that surely awaits us, and whose beginnings are already with us. For this we should be grateful, and his work will always be an ineluctable point of reference. But the holy grail of a political theory that respects material limits to growth *and* satisfies our enlightenment hankering after a democratic polity has thus far eluded him—as well as the rest of us.

The Autonomous Animal: Self-Governance and the Modern Subject. By Claire E. Rasmussen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. 232p. $75.00 cloth, $25.00 paper.
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— Carisa R. Showden, *University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

The starting point for Claire Rasmussen's analysis is that whatever their differences, Immanuel Kant and Michel Foucault offer a similar view of autonomy as a paradox. On the one hand, to be autonomous is to govern oneself in a way that conforms to limits, or "laws," and demonstrates control over the self in a way that brings one into alignment with dominant norms. On the other hand, to