**The Postmodern Marx.** By Terrell Carver. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999. 240p. $55.00 cloth, $19.95 paper.

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Two main features of this remarkable book deserve special mention. The first is its attempt to reflect on Marx's texts in the light of present social and political concerns. This is the reason for "postmodern" in the title. The present is not seen by Carver as organized around a unified perspective but as a true plurality: He does not take refuge in any ready-made coherence or in easy labels. The complexities of the present are projected into the Marxian text—or, rather, rediscovered in it—so that they lead to its authentic deconstruction. One ends with the feeling that there is much more to be found in the texts of Marx, despite their anachronisms and limitations, than conventional wisdom would have us believe.

The second important feature is that the Marx Carver finds at the end of his exploration is also plural. A great deal of literature has tried to discover the "true" Marx, but we get from Carver a fascinating unveiling of the multiplicity of the Marxian text, of the various discursive sequences whose unity results from contingent articulations rather than from any underlying univocal principle. Seen from this angle, the work of Marx appears as a sort of microcosm in which we find, in nuce, all the potential and often contradictory trends of the history of Marxism in the century following the founder's death. Being partly inside and partly outside that history, Carver sees this multiplicity of crossroads already operating in the founding gestures of Marx himself and gives a penetrating analysis of its constitutive dimensions.

In the introduction Carver states the different paradigms, both theoretical and political, that have governed the reading of Marx's texts. Later, he successively analyzes the role of metaphor in theoretical writing, the link between Marx's approach and the idealist philosophy immediately preceding him, the shortcomings of the rational choice reading of his texts, the framework of his political economy approach, his conception of communism, the main dimensions of his political theory and strategy, the interpretative strategies to be found in the translations of his work, his relations with Hegelian philosophy, and even those aspects that Marx did not touch: women and gender.

Carver is very much aware of the main contemporary developments in textual analysis: from rhetoric to deconstruction in its Derridean version and from the hermeneutics of a Gadamer or a Ricoeur to the contextualism of Quentin Skinner and the Cambridge School. The traces of these methodological approaches (or, rather, of these reading practices, given that the notion of "method" would be very much contested by some of these currents) can be found everywhere in Carver's book, and their employment is always careful and rigorous. Carver has written a work that can be considered a model of contemporary textual analysis.

**Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, and Contestations.** By John S. Dryzek. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 195p. $29.95.

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John Dryzek identifies the "deliberative turn" in democratic theory in the past decade and wishes to "establish what a defensible theory of democracy would look like" (p. 2). The fundamental features of the theory he develops are: a critical hostility to what he takes to be liberalism's view of democracy as simple interest aggregation; a subsequent defense of deliberative democracy's educative and transformative potential; and an argument for distancing deliberative democracy from the state and formal voting mechanisms and emphasizing instead the democratic importance of a plural, politicized, and vocal civil society.

In elaborating these ideas, Dryzek hopes to reinvigorate a radical critical theory that he fears has become too closely allied with liberalism in the past few years. This allows him to distinguish, on the one hand, between what he takes to be the full critical potential of deliberative democracy and, on the other hand, conventional liberalism, rational choice theory, and the work of "difference" democrats. Having carved out the terrain of his own theory, he then applies this theory to the consideration of two interesting and important cases: the democratic potential in international politics and the relationship between democracy and Green politics. Throughout, he is deeply concerned with what he calls democratic "authenticity," or "the degree to which democratic control is engaged through communication that encourages reflection upon preferences without coercion" (p. 8).

There is much to like about and learn from this small but densely argued volume. At the most general level, all scholars interested in the relationship between democracy and voluntary organizations in civil society will find important food for thought. Although Dryzek focuses primarily on politicized organizations in civil society rather than the whole range of voluntary associations (Greenpeace, say, rather than Robert Putnam's bowling leagues and choral societies), he makes a strong case for thinking that many such organizations may make their greatest contributions to democratic deliberation by maintaining their independence from the state, by viewing their contribution to democracy as flowing from the deliberation they stimulate in the polity more generally rather than the degree to which they either share formal political power or aim primarily to influence the outcome of elections.

This idea allows Dryzek to offer a novel argument about the role of an international "civil society" in promoting transnational democracy. The model he has in mind is of networks of organizations, perhaps like those working and demonstrating in recent years against free trade, or the universe of international environmental organizations. In the course of making these arguments, Dryzek discusses social choice theory, the recent liberal turn of critical theory (most notably Habermas), and "difference" theory, all of which will be welcomed by theorists in these fields as well as by those involved with debates about "public reason" and the proper constraints on political debate (Dryzek defends a moderately broad understanding of these constraints).

As in most richly argued and thoughtful books, there is much with which to quarrel. I shall mention three of the main issues that may generate discussion. First, a strong case can be made that Dryzek's portrait of "liberalism" is much too narrow and constrained. We should not forget, for example, that one of the most important "deliberative" democrats was John Dewey, perhaps the dominant liberal voice from the first half of the twentieth century in the United States. It is true that for much liberal political theory democracy is narrowly construed as the aggregation of interests. This by no means exhausts the liberal literature or position, however, as works from John Stuart Mill to Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson demonstrate. Nor do all liberals "fail to recognize . . . that getting constitutions and laws right is only half the battle" (p. 21)—one need only think of liberal feminism, such as that developed by Susan Moller Okin, to see how unpersuasive this claim is. Critics will suspect that Dryzek's liberalism comes dangerously close to being a straw man. More generously, others may suggest that his constrained



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