

events. Lars Mjøset's chapter on Iceland amusingly punctures the pretensions of one Hayekian public intellectual whose efforts are shown to be largely superfluous while Rupperecht provocatively argues that Russia's rapid privatization of state resources was driven not by the strength but the weakness of neoliberals, who had to make deals with well-connected elites to gain support for marketization.

If the book has a flaw, it is its ironic lack of biographical information about its contributors, which would allow us to better trace this burgeoning network of excellent anti-neoliberal scholars.

On the Politics of Kinship. By Hannes Charen. New York: Routledge, 2022. 192p. \$160.00 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S1537592722003413

— Rita Koganzon , University of Houston
rkoganzon@uh.edu

In this intervention into long-standing theoretical debates within liberalism, Marxism, and feminism over the justice of the family, Hannes Charen fleshes out a variety of critiques of the “traditional,” or state-sanctioned, nuclear family from several disciplines—anthropology, history, philosophy, and political theory. Though he accepts these critiques, Charen nonetheless resists the conclusion that the family must be altogether abolished, attempting instead to distinguish and rescue some of the traditional family's relations and purposes by reconceptualizing them under the more flexible and emancipatory rubric of “kinship.”

Charen describes his method as a “series of theoretical vignettes or frames, which, taken together, form a kind of conceptual collage” (p. 12). The result is a wide-ranging consideration of a number of thinkers and works. It meanders as a single, cohesive argument but it could be grouped under some broad themes. The first is a critique of historical, theological, and anthropological accounts of kinship arrangements that have the effect of naturalizing and sanctifying the traditional, patriarchal family even when they set out to document or even promote alternatives. Here, Charen addresses the anthropological tradition of Morgan, Levi-Strauss, Mead, and more recent scholars like David Schneider. He also examines moments of anti-traditionalism within the Western tradition, like Thomas Müntzer's peasant rebellion and the French Revolution. The second is a critique of the legal foundations of the family rooted in Roman law, the modern distinction between public and private, and the modern conception of sovereignty. In these sections, Charen's targets are Cicero, Kant, and Luther. The third broad theme is the relationship between kinship and practices of caring for and memorializing the dead, bringing in Heidegger and Laqueur.

Family abolition is an old—if not altogether ancient—theme in political theory. It was perhaps most famously and at least most concretely proposed by Friedrich Engels in the *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), and that proposal launched efforts to work out its meaning and details, along with critiques of the critique from feminists, queer theorists, and other schools of critical theory. But centuries before Marx, Plato and Aristophanes had already imagined it as a conceptual possibility, and almost the entire history of political thought has at least flirted with it, from early modern state-of-nature theorists to modern nationalists. It is not easy to break new ground in this argument, and many of Charen's concerns are now canonical ones—the family as a site of primordial discipline and seedbed of governmentality, as upholder of the neoliberal economic order and of a sexualized division of labor, as boundary between the recognizably human and the animal or monstrous. These critiques have been extensively elaborated by others—Foucault, the Frankfurt School, Heidegger, Agamben, Butler—and Charen ably summarizes their arguments.

Much of the book is a weaving together of these threads of previous critiques, though Charen also digresses into targets that seem arbitrary or at least underdeveloped—a passage from Hobbes here, a jab at the US Department of Health and Human Services there. Numerous points are raised and abandoned to create a canvas of only partially articulated impressions. One difficulty with this method is that Charen relies heavily on historical sources to develop his case for the deep and pervasive roots of the “family myth” in Western thought, but his engagement with the historical sources themselves is somewhat shallow. He devotes, for example, a substantial part of the second chapter to Luther's and Calvin's theologies of inner grace, but cites only Herbert Marcuse's critique of them, never actually referring to their own writings. Later, he associates Kant with the basis of the public/private distinction in Western statecraft, but there is no historical evidence for such an origin, and much evidence to suggest its origin is much older and even ancient (e.g., Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, 1979; Jean Elsh-tain, *Public Man, Private Woman*, 1981). He draws on a line from Hobbes to show that modern suburban “family is the state writ small” in its patriarchal absolutism, but the line is a decontextualized misreading; Hobbes emphatically denies private fathers absolute power within the commonwealth (p. 125).

Another difficulty arising from Charen's vignette-based approach is an underdefended evidentiary standard. Social scientific studies demonstrating the evolutionary superiority of monogamous, or nuclear, or in any way traditional families are cast aside as “racist and misogynistic” or “dogmatic,” and social science itself is condemned as “at once ‘reaffirming the cultural foundations of the state’ and

justifying the—inevitably racialized, sexualized, and nationalized—production of poverty and lack, and the attendant brutalizing tactics of correction” (p. 126). Nonetheless, Charen effusively praises Sarah Hrdy’s studies of alloparenting in early humans, suggesting that they definitively demonstrate that “there is no biological-evolutionary, natural, or pragmatic basis for the nuclear family” (p. 77). It may well be that Hrdy’s social science is more rigorous in some way than that of the other anthropologists or social scientists he condemns, but Charen does not explain how, and the reader is unfortunately left to question whether the significant difference is that Hrdy’s research supports his political conclusions while other social science does not.

The primary new contribution of the book to this old debate over the justice of the family is in Charen’s positing of kinship as a substitute for the conventional conception of the family. Charen argues that the family as we understand it—traditional, nuclear, monogamous, state-sanctioned—insupportably narrows the possible human forms of mutuality and collective life, but that a breaking down of the family’s traditional boundaries can restore these collective possibilities. Indeed, such restoration is our only choice, since the “political ontologies” which are both supported by and support the traditional family are collapsing from their own contradictions. Kinship, as Hegel recognized, arises from impulses not naturally hospitable to the logic of the state and so contains the potential for “resisting the coercive structure of the modern state and the atomistic economic rationale it relies on” (p. 154). This potential can be recovered by detaching the practices of kinship from the enclosing force of the family. Such detachment ought to be guided by an understanding of our relation to death, since it is our bodily fragility and ultimately our mortality that impels us to interdependence and into kinship relations in the first place. Charen proposes that we turn to “indigenous ontologies,” according to which “kinship is not limited to human relations,” for our model (p. 164).

One might wish for a clearer picture of what such a kinship-based society might look like, and how these practices would be more than reflexive negations of every existing Western family practice. But Charen’s book opens a door to the imagination of such alternatives.

Apocalypse without God: Apocalyptic Thought, Ideal Politics, and the Limits of Utopian Hope. By Ben Jones.

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 225p. \$99.99 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S1537592722003358

— Charles H. T. Lesch, *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*
Charles.Lesch@mail.huji.ac.il

ISIS, QAnon, Putin: as Ben Jones remarks at the beginning of his fascinating and intrepid study, “[a]pocalypse, it seems,

is everywhere” (p. xi). A political theorist’s natural response to apocalypticism might be to dismiss it—as an eruption of the irrational, a response to inequality, or a coping mechanism for social change. Jones takes a laudably different path. Even beliefs as outlandish as end-times prophecies should be taken seriously. They speak to something deep in our nature. We might even learn from them.

One reason is historical: key figures in the history of political thought, Jones reveals through original readings of Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Engels, engaged closely with eschatology. They recognized its psychological potency, rhetorical appeal, and destructive—and sometimes creative—potential. A second, more surprising reason, is normative. Supporters of liberal democracy should grapple with apocalypticism for its insights, not only its dangers (see Alison McQueen, *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times*, 2017). In particular, ideal theory—the branch of contemporary political philosophy that seeks to outline the best society—can find in apocalyptic thought “resources to navigate persistent challenges” (p. 17).

This is an ambitious and inventive book. Jones tackles an impressive range of subjects; he demonstrates dexterity at several methodologies, including the historical-contextual and philosophical-analytical; and, notably, he seeks to integrate the two, applying insights drawn from past thinkers to contemporary problems. This latter effort is especially praiseworthy given the unfortunate trend toward scholarly siloing. Combined with Jones’s striking thesis about the relevance of religious ideas, what emerges is a rare and courageous effort at doing a genuinely interdisciplinary political theory.

Commendable, too, is Jones’s care in analyzing religion’s influence on political ideas. Wisely taking caution from Shklar and Blumenberg (pp. 25–27), Jones notes that labeling an idea “apocalyptic” or “secularized”—arguing, for example, that Marxism is a reimagined Christian eschatology—can serve as a rhetorical cudgel, a way of dismissing it as irrational without judging its merits (pp. 137–40). Jones responds with a rigorous methodology: if we want to argue that a thinker was inspired by apocalyptic texts, we need clear evidence of influence, not only structural parallels or linguistic echoes (pp. 36–38, cf. Voegelin, Löwith, Cohen).

Jones marshals his methodology in three “historical case studies” which are also the book’s strongest chapters. He offers a nuanced reading of how Machiavelli both criticized and admired the friar Girolamo Savonarola’s blend of Christian apocalypticism and pagan views of an “Eternal City” (pp. 68–70). He argues that Hobbes sought to retain some version of apocalypticism in a diminished form—“an ideal that keeps hell at bay” (p. 117). And he uncovers Engels’s interest in the preacher and revolutionary Thomas Müntzer, revealing that Engels saw history, in its cunning, as playing out behind Müntzer’s back: even as he sought to realize God’s kingdom, Müntzer was