

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

be autonomous is to be self-critical in a way that can unveil power relationships and release one's capacity for creativity—to govern oneself differently, despite dominant norms. So while autonomy does not liberate us from the effects of power, self-governance can either bring us in line with the law or enable us to understand and then resist power by recognizing our contingency and imagining ourselves differently (pp. 16–17).

Rasmussen delves into this paradox by considering autonomy as an activity rather than an end, a dynamic *practice* of obeying “law” and of exercising “creativity” rather than a static goal toward which one strives, or a capacity of human beings that can be encouraged or stifled. Autonomy is not the *end* of political life but a *means* to it, through which we “may cultivate different ways of relating to ourselves and others” (p. 170). And via these practices and relationships, subjectification results (p. 4). Thus, at the same time, subjects are constituted—are effects of power—and subjects act, actively creating their subjectivity either in line with, or in resistance to, power. The sense of autonomy as an effect of law is evoked most sharply in the author's discussion of drug testing laws. She describes the result of drug testing in both the workplace and obstetrical practices as a demand for and production of certain behaviors from citizens; it is the behaviors or actions, and not the individual's sense of self, that constitute “autonomy.”

Rasmussen presents four case studies that illustrate the effects of thinking about autonomy as simultaneously limiting and creating practice in a political regime that both venerates and requires autonomy as the goal of the subject of power. Her first two case chapters illustrate autonomy's law function by unpacking efforts to regulate bodies by encouraging youth physical fitness, reining in teen sexuality, and punishing drug addiction. Children are *potential* subjects, addicts *failed* ones; both need to be governed through the law of autonomy so that they can make good, or better, choices. Both cases illustrate that “autonomy and productivity” are on the “good” side of the citizenship ledger while “addiction and pleasure-seeking” are decidedly not (p. 63).

The final two cases explore the creative potential of autonomy as resistant self-governance. The chapter on rethinking the definition and status of “animals” pushes readers to evaluate how the historically shifting understanding of human–animal relations entails a contingent understanding of what it means to be human (pp. 98–99). Since “animals” are defined by what they lack in relation to “humans,” rethinking that power relationship might allow us to see other potential forms of autonomous subjectivity. In the final case chapter, on extreme sports and fitness, Rasmussen argues for the creative potential of mastering the will to autonomy. Extreme exercise addicts are “addicted to autonomy,” subverting the point of autonomy while simultaneously reveling in their sense of control (pp. 159–60).

While all four cases are provocative and helpfully illustrative of autonomy as practice, the most tightly and persuasively argued chapter is the one on drug addicts. Autonomy involves controlling the body; introducing foreign substances into one's body is a form of alienation—a profound loss of control (p. 64). The discussion of the denial to subjects of control over their own bodies and how it denies their selfhood fills in the outlines of the argument suggested in Rasmussen's treatment of teen sexuality. Since political standing is granted when one makes good choices, if someone has already violated his or her own personal autonomy, then he or she is considered “already violable” (p. 70) and thus has no legitimate claim to political autonomy, that is, political standing.

In this chapter Rasmussen begins to unpack her understanding of the relationship between personal and political autonomy. The book would have benefited from a bit more such elaboration. In the physical education and teen sex chapter, for instance, she writes that “girls are not considered to be future citizens [so] they do not need to learn how to govern themselves and thus patriarchal control over their bodies and their choices is no problem for democracy” (p. 50). In what sense are girls today not to be considered future citizens? Perhaps linking the “already violable” nature of the addict to the tortured history of marital rape and cultural rape myths—in which a female is considered already violable through her act of initial consent—could flesh out for the reader the nature of girls' future sexual citizenship status and autonomous practices.

Rasmussen's most provocative chapter is the one that rethinks the status of animals vis-à-vis humans. Her argument here is rife with rich radical political potential, albeit not always fully realized. In this chapter, she makes Foucault whole. Rather than governmentality or an ethic of care, we get autonomy as both law and creative resistance. Legally and politically, “animal” and “human” have been defined in relationship to each other, with one significant purpose of this boundary being to mark who is autonomous—or whose actions can be figured as autonomous practice—and who is excluded from autonomy: animals out, adult humans in (pp. 100–101). In this regard, we might say that our treatment of animals in political theory mirrors our anthropocentric treatment of them in political practice: To use “animal” as a boundary line for “autonomy” tells us something about *ourselves* (p. 103).

The author surveys arguments for extending rights to animals, noting that doing so would profoundly challenge our understanding of subjectivity, since granting legal rights is a political process that acknowledges autonomy and creates subjectivity. She is rightly critical of this approach, arguing that giving rights to animals requires depoliticizing them by shoe-horning them into existing categories—we must make animals human, which ignores their very animal nature. But rather than following this

line of analysis to argue for respecting animals by acknowledging what Donna Haraway calls their “significant otherness,” Rasmussen slips back into thinking about what animals can do *for humans* when she proposes that rather than abandoning rights discourse, we should give it new life by changing the meaning of “human” (p. 125). The point of animals in her argument is thus to help us think about how to call into question the background conditions required for rights claiming by, and autonomy for, humans (pp. 126–27).

In this wide-ranging and ambitious work, there is one hiccup in the otherwise smooth flow of Rasmussen’s argument. Throughout her discussion, “autonomy,” “freedom,” and “agency” are used interchangeably. Because autonomy is not clearly differentiated from the other constitutive terms of her argument, it sometimes seems as though autonomy is everything all at once, which can make it difficult to keep track of the way it operates and the level of analysis at which we are looking. Autonomy as a matter of the political subject’s ontology is the author’s primary concern, but autonomy is broader than political being, and sometimes she appears to be examining that broader context, too. For example, she writes that “[a]utonomy is not only a given characteristic of subjects; it also must be actively cultivated by outside expertise and must be continually practiced by individuals” (p. 58). But the construction of autonomy as “a given characteristic of subjects” seems like a tautology, since subjects are, on her account, those who demonstrate autonomy, while those who fail to do so do not get to become subjects of the law (or mature agents). This implies that not all people possess the capacity for autonomy. So what is the non-tautological theory of autonomy that can help us pull this apart? Are “bad” or “immature” subjects nonautonomous, on her view, or are they practicing a different form of autonomy?

Despite these quibbles, however, for its careful teasing out of autonomy and subjectification in new and provocative cases, and for simultaneously critiquing and rehabilitating autonomy, *The Autonomous Animal* will spark heated and productive discussions among scholars of liberal, post-foundationalist, and feminist theories.

Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical

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— Rodrigo Chacón, *Harvard University*

The animosity between Hannah Arendt and Theodor W. Adorno is legendary. Yet this edited collection—the first systematic comparison of their thought in English—reveals their deep affinities. At its best, the comparison uncovers a new breadth and depth to their thinking. It provides valu-

able resources for revitalizing critical political theorizing in a global age, and dynamizes their respective contributions through a critical comparison with dominant paradigms of social and political philosophy—from Kantian universalism to liberalism and postmodernism.

The leitmotif may be that “the problems we face cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them” (Einstein). These problems are unprecedented—to wit: massive displacements and migrations that have fueled a generalized sense of “homelessness” (p. 238); a reification of cultural forms that has made meaningful communication less rather than more likely; a crisis of experience, which has made us lose touch with “what things mean” (p. 9); and an obsolescence of such traditional standards as nature and history, which have become intertwined in the chiasmus of a “natural history” (p. 253). The contributions assess the ways in which Arendt and Adorno responded to these problems, which were also the lived experiences that compelled them—and should compel us—to “think what we are doing.”

The volume consists of 11 chapters divided into three parts: i) “Political Modernity, Theory, and Philosophy,” ii) “Legacies of Totalitarianism,” and iii) “Political Theory in Exile.” As the editors explain, the central contribution of Arendt and Adorno may be their unique ways of defending particularity and plurality without sacrificing universality. What follows is an attempt to show why this matters through a selective reading of chapters that bear on four problems.

The first problem is the institutionalization of freedom in the modern world, with contrasting answers demonstrating the potential of an Arendtian critique of Adorno (Dana Villa) and an Adornian elucidation of Arendt (Jay Bernstein).

Arendt and Adorno sought to defend plurality against “identity philosophies” (p. 81). Politically, this meant for Arendt that “[i]f men wish to be free, it is precisely sovereignty they must renounce” (“What is Freedom?” in *Between Past and Future*, 1993, p. 165). Similarly, for Adorno, an emancipated society would be one in which “people could be different without fear” (*Minima Moralia*, 2005, p. 103). Yet, as Villa argues, their “difference-affirming” utopias diverged on a key point. Arendt imagined a world in which “through acting and talking together, plural individuals articulate their perspectives on common things more precisely and more richly” (p. 96). In contrast to Arendt’s *political* utopia, Adorno conceived of a world that would no longer stand “under the law of labor” (*Minima Moralia*, p. 112). In the Adornian utopia, moreover, what remains of alienated subjectivity would be restored from the memory of “a loving and protective bourgeois family” (p. 89). Villa traces Adorno’s retreat from the political into the private to his (paradoxically) totalizing critique of the “total society,” which effaces key distinctions emphasized by Arendt among the state, the economy, the public realm, and the mass media.