children” (p. 136). For example, in a mere contract regime, alimony would be “awarded according to fault.” The partner who is at fault would have to pay money damages. If that partner turns out to be the primary caregiver in the relationship, “they could easily be left with little or no financial support” (p. 136). And if women are usually the caregivers in heterosexual relationships, a contract regime stands to harm women more than men. It is precisely this concern that may motivate some kind of status-based regime, such as “minimal marriage” or an ICGU, to address those inequalities and protect the vulnerable spouse. Yet, Chambers rejects that approach in the first part of the book as a violation of liberty.

If a contract regime values individual liberty at the expense of equality, and if a more minimal kind of status values equality at the expense of liberty, what should a marriage-free state look like? Chambers’s solution is a contract plus directive regime. That is, she alloys the contract approach with the need for default directives or rules. These directives would define particular practices, such as raising children and contributing financially to a property for a certain period of time, as triggering various rights and duties. In effect, these would be default rules that courts would apply unless the parties have opted out of them in some particular way. Chambers thinks that this kind of proposal to regulate the “domain of personal relationships” balances liberty and equality, avoiding the injustice of a status-based regime on the one hand and a mere contractual regime on the other.

Chambers supplements her philosophical argument here with concrete details about regulation and instructive examples from other jurisdictions. This reveals that her solution is not simply an abstract one but one that could actually be implemented in our society. In fact, I think she may undersell her solution. The idea of directives or default rules is not a new regime that must be created: it is a familiar feature of commercial relationships. For instance, business and corporate law already contains a wide range of directives to ensure equality. Some of these directives concern implied contracts, unconscionability, duties of loyalty and care, equity, and fiduciary obligations. These directives seek to ensure that commercial relationships, including for instance the relationships of corporate bodies to their shareholders, are not simply about maximizing liberty but also balance liberty and equality. Consider, for example, that a tenant may not waive a warranty of habitability when signing a lease. This is to ensure that the vulnerable party, here the tenant, is guaranteed by law a place to live that has, for instance, electricity, heat during cold weather, and a working toilet. This directive about habitability seeks to ensure equality in the commercial sphere.

I take Chambers’s solution as seeking to apply that framework to the personal sphere. Regulations or directives exist in the law as a way to ensure equality and protect vulnerable contracting parties. What is provocative about Chambers’s argument is that she seeks to apply these directives to our personal relationships. The idea that the law should treat relationships in the personal sphere like those in the commercial sphere is central to envisioning a marriage-free state that is consistent with justice. Chambers’s book is distinctive and important for really taking that idea seriously. I highly recommend it.

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The concept of the Anthropocene, initially proposed in 2000 by scientists Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer, posits that Earth has entered a new geological epoch, defined by humanity’s massive, pervasive influence on the planet. The Anthropocene succeeds the Holocene, a roughly 12,000-year epoch of relative ecological stability during which human civilization arose. The idea of a new geological epoch is scientifically controversial, but the concept usefully underscores humanity’s enormous, profoundly destabilizing planetary impact, strikingly exhibited by climate change and biodiversity loss.

The Anthropocene concept has generated considerable interest in the humanities and social sciences, because it breaches traditional distinctions between humanity and nature and also challenges the fundamental organization of society. With the biosphere now in ongoing flux, societies must make continuous, radical adjustments and adopt flexibilities hitherto thought unnecessary.

In this context John S. Dryzek and Jonathan Pickering offer The Politics of the Anthropocene, providing a welcome contribution to the growing Anthropocene literature in environmental political theory. Written in accessible language and offering sufficient background for the layperson, their concise volume appeals not only to environmental political theorists but also to a broader public. Moreover, the book nicely brings the reader up to date on scholarly and political debates regarding not only the Anthropocene but also global climate politics; climate, intergenerational, and interspecies justice; the meaning and value of biodiversity; the definition of sustainability; and the viability of democracy in the face of environmental challenges.

The authors’ argument is twofold: (1) the institutions we have inherited from the Holocene are mired in a pathological path dependency favoring ecologically destructive outcomes, and (2) a politics of the Anthropocene must emphasize reflexivity, “the capacity of structures, systems, and sets of ideas to question their own core commitments, and if necessary change themselves”
(p. 17). They focus on ecological reflexivity, which entails “the incorporation into human institutions of better ways to listen to ecological systems” and “an ability to rethink what core values such as justice, sustainability, and democracy mean in the context of an active and unstable Earth system” (p. 39). Ecological reflexivity “responds to signals from the Earth system, and has the foresight to anticipate potentially catastrophic changes in the system” (p. 18).

Dryzek and Pickering’s discussion of path dependency effectively illuminates how the state and the market systematically frustrate attempts to address environmental problems. Both are Holocene institutions that “take for granted the presence of the non-human world and the ecological systems in which human societies are embedded”; they regard the natural world largely as a resource (p. 24). The authors argue, “States typically have a priority for economic growth that subordinates ecological concerns, and a preoccupation with sovereignty that impedes global collective action. Capitalist markets for their part are equally addicted to material growth” (p. 30). The pathological path dependency of states and markets involves “feedback mechanisms that systematically repress information about the condition of the Earth system, and systematically prioritize narrowly economic concerns” (p. 23). Despite supposed innovations such as green capitalism, the basic contours of the system do not change, and fundamental threats like climate change or biodiversity loss go unaddressed.

Environmentalism itself also reflects Holocene thinking, seeking “some baseline condition of environments or natural systems that can be preserved, conserved, or restored.” By contrast, “in the Anthropocene, the condition of the system is constantly moving. We cannot rewind ecosystems back to a state untouched by humans” (p. 9). Environmental policies must “cultivate conditions for flourishing into the future rather than returning to the past” (p. 9).

Given the dynamic nature of the Anthropocene and of reflexivity itself, “no institutional solution may be stable for very long” (p. 11). Consequently, the authors reject the idea of “designing institutional blueprints,” because “it is more productive to think about changing fundamental institutional dynamics, starting from where we are now” (p. 48). They do offer some modest institutional and policy recommendations. They deemphasize actors, like the nation-state, international organizations, or corporations, that have either perpetuated or failed to address our ecological crisis (p. 54). Instead, they tout alternative political pathways, including the increasing role of networked subnational units, such as municipalities, in initiating climate action (pp. 54, 143–45).

In developing the concept of ecological reflexivity, they also instructively reevaluate core political and environmental concepts, particularly justice, sustainability, and democracy. They land in somewhat familiar territory, given Dryzek’s own long-standing theoretical engagements, by advocating a deliberative democratic approach (pp. 128–50) “responsive to signals from the natural world” (pp. 17, 112–14). They envision a formative sphere including experts and ordinary citizens and also nonhuman nature (pp. 72, 131–36, 145–49). This sphere “can be thought of as the sum of activity encompassing the creation, questioning, and development of principles for collective action” (p. 128).

This is a highly recommended volume. However, inevitably with any such ambitious project, Dryzek and Pickering fall short at times, specifically on two points. First, they take an excessively top-down perspective. On the one hand, they answer a key critique of the Anthropocene concept, advanced by Giovanna Di Chiro (“Environmental Justice and the Anthropocene Meme,” in Teena Gabrielson, Cheryl Hall, John Meyer, and David Schlosberg, eds., The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Political Theory, 2016). Di Chiro argues that the concept presents a top-down view of humanity as an undifferentiated planetary actor and insufficiently recognizes how our environmental crisis is largely the fault of the world’s affluent, especially in developed nations, who have exploited not only nonhuman nature but also vast populations of human beings. Dryzek and Pickering rightly argue that the Anthropocene concept can recognize differences in responsibility and also incorporate justice (pp. 58–81). They also emphasize the key role of marginalized, vulnerable populations in the formative sphere and point to promising grassroots efforts in developing countries (pp. 136–38). However, a kernel of Di Chiro’s critique remains. Dryzek and Pickering focus on ecological reflexivity at a global scale, driven by experts and international organizations, particularly with regard to deliberations around climate change, sustainability, and biodiversity. Although they laud grassroots and municipal movements as subverting pathological path dependency, they accord less coverage and depth to these diverse, bottom-up efforts and their potential for generating new political pathways.

Second, Dryzek and Pickering put perhaps excessive faith in conceptually driven change through actors like “discourse entrepreneurs” (pp. 18, 105) while seemingly discounting structural barriers and the strong political response needed to overcome them. They acknowledge that pathological path dependency “works in part through impersonal structural forces” (p. 29), but see such structures potentially giving way to “formative agents” who “give form to what justice, sustainability, and related concepts should mean in practice” (p. 105). They list various types of formative agency, but emphasize “the use of language in creating and questioning meanings” (p. 109). “Ideas underpin institutions” (p. 109), they say, and can also motivate social change (p. 110). Yet the authors emphasize the dangerous situation we face, including the potential for “catastrophic shifts in the Earth system”
Michael J. Faber’s book, *An Anti-Federalist Constitution*, offers a detailed conceptual account of the ratification of the United States Constitution from the perspective of the Anti-Federalists. In the midst of a contemporary moment of “Founders’ Chic,” Faber offers a timely and important reminder that the development of the United States as a political unit did not begin with the genius of a Philadelphia convention and a popular ratification of its work: even in that initial moment of constitutional creation, dissent and opposition shaped the constitutional settlement that emerged. Perhaps even more significantly, Faber shows convincingly that the opposition itself was shaped by contestation over the Constitution, weaving democratic, rights-based, and institutional concerns into a productive challenge to the Philadelphia document. As such, Faber’s study does much to bring insights developed in the course of conversations between the fields of American Political Thought and American Political Development to bear on the now-enriched subject of Anti-Federalism following the path-breaking work of the *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution* and Pauline Maier’s recent powerful historical account of ratification, *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787–1788* (2010).

Faber identifies the purpose of the book as “an effort to rehabilitate the Anti-Federalists. . . to restore their thought to the respect it deserves” while identifying and explaining “the Anti-Federalist ideology that emerged from the ratification debates” (p. 2). To do so, he proceeds in three parts. The first section of the book (two chapters) provides a conceptual framework for understanding Anti-Federalist thought. The second, by far the longest section of the book—stretching to 15 chapters—explores the development of Anti-Federalist thought over the course of ratification. The third section (the final two chapters) attempts to model an alternative Anti-Federalist constitution and then assesses the legacy of the Anti-Federalists.

It is in the first two sections that Faber makes his signal contribution to the study of the Anti-Federalists. The book makes two interventions here that work to revise the long-standing smear on the Anti-Federalists that they were, as Cecelia Kenyon famously put it, “Men of Little Faith.” The first highlights the complexity of Anti-Federalist thought by presenting the opposition to the Constitution as comprising three distinct strands: a Democratic Anti-Federalism suspicious of the aristocratic pretensions of the Federalists, a Rights Anti-Federalism that feared for individual liberties under the new Constitution, and a Power Anti-Federalism that sought to protect the prerogatives of the states under a new continental regime. The suggestion here is that only the first—Democratic Anti-Federalism—was ultimately committed to the preexisting Articles of Confederation; the other two strands accepted the need for a strengthened central government, but challenged the plan that emerged from Philadelphia in 1787.

The second intervention is to show that these three strands, and thus Anti-Federalism itself, were not static over the course of 1787–1791, but evolved and interacted in response to the events and arguments brought forth by the ratification process. As Faber puts it, “The Anti-Federalist position, as much as it was unified by the eventual ratification, developed organically from various unconnected and sometimes conflicting proposals” (p. 47). Moreover, as the detailed study of the period indicates, the precise balance and trajectory of Anti-Federalism varied from state to state in accordance with events, local political considerations, and each state’s understanding of its place within the wider ratification process and the eventual union. Such a rich study goes far in convincing the reader of the weaknesses of treating political thought as a static entity, unconnected with the politics of the day. Instead, Faber harnesses the close attention to history associated with American Political Development to expand our understanding of the Anti-Federalists. This in itself makes the book an important contribution to our understandings of the American Founding and to American Political Thought more generally.

Nevertheless, the book could do more to situate itself within the wider discussion of political thought during the Founding and in the early Republic. The context of that wider discussion offers the possibility of enhancing and sharpening some of the book’s contributions. Faber’s study builds on and acknowledges a canon of Anti-Federalist study that emerged in the early twentieth century with and from the Progressive analysis of the Founding offered by Charles Beard. But it is less successful in locating its own conceptual analysis of Anti-Federalist...