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(Review) Gender Is Not A Synonym for Women,  
by Terrell Carver; and (Review) Gender Power,  
Leadership, and Governance, ed. Georgia Duerst-  
Lahti and Rita Mae Kelly.

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**Comments**

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Gender is Not a Synonym for Women. by Terrell Carver; Gender Power, Leadership, and Governance. by Georgia Duerst-Lahti; Rita Mae Kelly

Review by: MaryAnne Borrelli

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“Cult of Equality” (167) pursued to this day by an activist judiciary. Readers familiar with Harry Jaffa’s frequent refutations of Bradford may draw their own conclusions regarding Lincoln’s “usefulness to contemporary egalitarians” (166), and the argument that connects Lincoln to the Fourteenth Amendment and thus to judicial activism by “Platonic guardians” engaged in “nationalistic social engineering over unenumerated rights” (ibid.) can be punctured by anyone possessing a smattering of either history or logic.

This book, in short, is animated by an ideological impulse fundamentally at odds with the framers’ understanding of their experiment in constitutionalism (which was Lincoln’s understanding too)—an impulse that impairs the force of the sometimes sound arguments DeRosa makes against “creative jurisprudence.” That the author is unhappy with the Constitution, and not simply with its latter-day judicial distortion, is revealed in his final chapter, in which he proposes that constitutional rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court be reversible by the action of a majority of the “chief judicial officials” of the various states (192). For contemporary adherents of the cause that justly lost a debate in 1788, and of that which justly lost a war in 1865, this book may be welcome. But for the rest of us it’s just whistlin’ Dixie.

Matthew J. Franck, *Radford University*

*Gender Is Not a Synonym for Women.* By Terrell Carver. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996. Pp. 133. \$35.00.)

*Gender Power, Leadership, and Governance.* Edited by Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelly. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1995. Pp. 305. \$47.50 cloth, \$17.95 paper.)

In recent years, a debate about sex differences has been escalating. Do women and men have different policy priorities? leadership styles? political ideologies? Terrell Carver, Georgia Duerst-Lahti, and Rita Mae Kelly believe these queries are premised upon a mistaken understanding of the human political experience. Drawing upon the work of postmodern feminists, these authors/editors focus upon the gendered nature of power relationships. Weighing the influence of sex, race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality within the genders, they avoid essentialist formulations of “man” and “woman.” And in so doing, they provide challenging reinterpretations of classic works in political thought and of institutional developments in the United States.

Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelly argue that the meta-ideology of masculinism infuses virtually every aspect of politics in the United States. This belief system centers its view of human nature upon men, grants men greater credibility, and advantages men in the allocation of power. It values aggression, autonomy, and the hierarchical ordering of power. As the dominant ideology, it is presumptively valid. However, its implementation remains a matter of choice

for each citizen and officeholder. Men who resist its inscriptions will lose their favored status, and women who assimilate to its practices may enhance their circumstances. By presenting gender as an ideology and genders as internally differentiated, Duerst-Lahti and Kelly reveal the complexities of power at the personal and national level.

Masculinism is investigated through eight case studies. Two studies examine each of the four aspects of gender power, namely, individual understandings, institutional manifestations (formal power), interpersonal relationships (informal power), and social-symbolic implications. Presented in this order, the “stakes” of gender power increase as the reader progresses through the volume. Within each pairing, political scientists examine different levels and branches of government. Individual conceptions of gender are considered first by Cheryl Simrell King, whose survey of state bureaucrats suggests that compulsory masculinity places greater constraints upon female than male managers. Karin L. Tamerius, using standpoint analysis to investigate the legislative activities of male and female Representatives in the 101st Congress, demonstrates that women’s life experiences make them more likely to cosponsor, speak for, and sponsor bills relating to “women’s” issues. In the second unit, Noelle Norton also examines the U.S. House of Representatives, utilizing detailed legislative histories to show how committee members continue to control the legislative process. She indicates how this institutional practice has excluded women from reproductive policy making. Meredith Ann Newman evaluates the gendered implications of the systemic differences between Florida’s regulatory, distributive, and redistributive agencies. Each presentation is complete in itself. Future research topics abound, however, such as questioning the relationship between Newman’s organizational typology and King’s revelations about compulsory masculinity, or the effect of Norton’s committee analysis upon the individual initiatives identified by Tamerius.

In the third unit, the authors demonstrate the ways in which formal power is qualified by the informal power of interpersonal relations. Lyn Kathlene conducts a discourse analysis of Colorado legislative hearings, revealing the interplay of sex and gender in speech. Kathlene demonstrates that seating arrangements—which may or may not facilitate the exchange of verbal and nonverbal cues among women members—may significantly affect women’s participation. Thus her findings reinforce those of Tamerius (gender-specific communication influences women’s later participation in mixed sex groupings) and nuance those of Norton (establishing a power hierarchy among committee members). Rita Mae Kelly then investigates patterns of sexual harassment in the agencies of five different states. Her survey finds that harassment distracts women from fostering leadership skills, causing them to concentrate upon acquiring a narrow policy expertise and managing interpersonal relations. Comparing agencies, Kelly observes that women are more often harassed in the redistributive agencies, where they are closer to the top of their hierarchies and yet also, according to Newman, granted less respect within the wider executive branch.

The fourth and final section on social-symbolic developments first provides a content analysis of *New York Times* coverage of 1992 as “the year of the woman.” Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Dayna Verstegen apply an analytic typology drawn from Hannah Pitkin’s conceptions of representation (as formal, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive), in order to reveal how a media event constructs gender. Mary Ellen Guy then turns to the experiences of a single elite woman—Hillary Clinton—to see how one person may dictate a reassessment of gendered mores. Guy suggests that Clinton’s policy activism has been less revolutionary in its extent than in its public nature.

As even these brief summaries demonstrate, the authors are conducting detailed analyses of how political officeholders understand and practice their gendered identities. Meriting further investigation are the processes which the editors describe as re-gendering and trans-gendering, which occurs when a profession is entered by those who were previously excluded. Re-gendering occurs when there is resistance to the diversification, as new members are reminded of their gendered unfitness. Women managers, as Newman indicates, may be placed in “women’s issues” agencies, with their discretionary power constrained by detailed guidebooks. Trans-gendering happens when the former outsiders are accepted into the profession. Thus, as Tamerius suggests, members of Congress may have similar voting records because one gender educates the other(s) to its concerns; however, the consistent willingness to use formal and informal power to invigorate masculinist practices suggests that re-gendering will be the more common practice in the public sector, a point deserving of consideration by those tracing institutional change.

Terrell Carver begins with this presumption. His research “reinforces the feminist critique of masculine violence, domination, and privilege” (4) and “explore[s] (just a little) the ways that men are divided (and perforce united) by class or race/ethnicity” (7). His commentaries upon the gendered nature of political theory, his revisionist interpretation of Friedrich Engels’s *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), and his critical evaluation of biography as a genre deserve careful consideration. Though not an expert in legislative or media politics, Carver also gives an interesting content analysis of *New York Times* coverage of the Hill/Thomas hearings.

Carver argues that political theory is not so much centered upon men as it is “non-womb-centered,” ignoring family and other relations that are as important to men as they are to women. He then turns to Engels’s *Origin of the Family*, which one might presume to disprove such assertions. Carver, however, demonstrates that this work fails to examine men critically as “the agents of domination” (40) and thereby reproduces the oppression of women. Such a reinterpretation gains additional credence when, after reflecting upon the politics of biography, Carver presents Engels as suppressing and marginalizing the women in his life. Utilizing Engels’s private correspondence, Carver shows that Engels—rather than viewing women as an oppressed class—distinguished among

women according to their socioeconomic circumstances. He then responded to each in the manner dictated by prevailing conventions. Servants were objectified, lovers were established in separate, distant residences; and family members were protected. A parallel discussion of Freddy Demuth, reputed by some historians to be Marx's illegitimate son, further illustrates the problematic nature of biography: Carver's analysis uncovers the "complicity that develops between scholarship and mythmaking" (99). In the final substantive chapter, Carver turns to Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas. Noting that language is used to construct and impose identities, Carver concludes that the hearing was a complex narrative that became a war of images.

Carver's discussion of Engels testifies to the former's expertise. His analysis, however, owes less to the insights of postmodern feminists than of radical feminists; he is less interested in analyzing men as an internally differentiated category than in tracing men's use of power to exclude and oppress women. Thus, there is comparatively little consideration of the ways in which Freddy Demuth's circumstances illustrate the harm men do to one another. Similarly, the ways in which race entered into popular and elite perceptions of Clarence Thomas is set aside as Carver highlights instead the ways in which Thomas prevailed over Hill.

This application of postmodern and radical feminist thought to U.S. political practices and enduring works in political thought constitutes a significant contribution to our learning. Duerst-Lahti, Kelly, and Carver stimulate a researcher's imagination with new topics and methodologies; and their work is recommended to all political science scholars. A comprehensive understanding of the relationships between men and women, as expressed in their social and political behaviors, can only enhance our understanding of institutional and governmental developments.

MaryAnne Borrelli, *Connecticut College*

*From Art to Politics: How Artistic Creations Shape Political Conceptions.* By Murray Edelman. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pp. 162. \$18.95.)

Extending the themes of his earlier influential work, Edelman argues that art is the fundamental mediator of human experience. We owe the terms of political discourse, the meanings we attach to political events, and, in brief, whatever we "see" in politics, to the images and narratives, symbols and rituals, uses of space, and "plot patterns" that originate in artistic construction. Whether knowingly or not, we choose from among models supplied by art to confirm our biases, change our opinions, focus attention, create coalitions, and crystallize enmities. Since neither artist nor audience lives in a political vacuum, our choices are "driven by ideology"; based on our own life experiences or prior expectations, we "read meaning into" the art we find. Art is thus an integral element in the