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Katrina Forrester. *In the Shadow of Justice. Postwar Liberalism and the Remaking of Political Philosophy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019. ISBN: 9780691163086 (hardcover, \$35.00/£30.00).

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Contents

Introduction by Samuel Moyn, Yale University	2
Review by Alyssa Battistoni, Harvard University	4
Review by Angus Burgin, Johns Hopkins University.....	8
Review by Stefan Eich, Georgetown University	12
Review by Lea Ypi, London School of Economics and Political Science	16
Response by Katrina Forrester, Harvard University	20

INTRODUCTION BY SAMUEL MOYN, YALE UNIVERSITY

In the short time it has been out, Katrina Forrester's *In the Shadow of Justice* has already made a visible mark on public discussions of the trajectory of American thought since World War II. This forum continues the reception of her transformative book, underlining its many accomplishments and increasing the likelihood that it could help close one era and open another. The forum also pushes Forrester to be more explicit about the philosophical and political consequences of her analysis. Altogether, the responses and Forrester's reply anticipate some of the quandaries that will have to be faced at a moment when so many seem to be succeeding in ushering Anglo-American political thought towards a fundamental shift.

Circling not just around the storied Harvard University philosopher John Rawls but around the generations he shaped and the era that even his bitterest critics allowed him to sponsor, Forrester's book is distinguished by the depth of its research and the elegance of its prose. And it offers an original and provocative argument: roughly, Rawls moved towards his classic *A Theory of Justice* (1971)¹ by attempting to rationalize the market-friendly tendencies of the right wing of the British Labour party after World War II, while he and his followers enjoyed their acclaim and ascendancy by inhabiting a market-correcting stance on the left of a neoliberal age that was bereft of genuine alternatives. Forrester's stance clearly benefits from the emergence of widespread hopes for the appearance of such alternatives, and her gambit is to let loose the Owl of Minerva on the Rawlsian era in part in order to provide intellectual credibility and fuel political enthusiasm for some new framework for theory and practice.

Forrester has garnered four exciting reviews, each insightful and robust, celebrating her book while also pointing beyond its achievement towards further questions. Historian Angus Burgin notes that, in part because of her ambition to trace the emergence of a whole climate of opinion, Forrester devotes little more than a chapter towards the biographical and philosophical itinerary of its principal icon. *In the Shadow of Justice* is an early study among several current and forthcoming works based on Rawls's recently opened archives; Burgin compellingly observes that there are many more narrowly philosophical matters along Rawls's early (and, for that matter, later) path that will attract historians of postwar American thought, which Forrester bypasses with her goal of reconstructing a broader academic and philosophical landscape.

After reconstructing Forrester's principal thesis, Stefan Eich, in his stimulating intervention, argues that it was as much the capacity of Rawls and his book to be untimely as to be anchored in one epoch that allowed a set of ideas nurtured in the shadow of the welfare state to survive into the ambiance of neoliberalism. Rawlsian thought was also productively ambiguous in other ways, Eich continues, and hovered somewhere between apology for the existing order and utopia for an order beyond it, and this accounts for why Forrester can both resolutely historicize it and refuse to foreclose its uses in the future, albeit perhaps in unexpected ways.

In her well-crafted response, Alyssa Battistoni asks precisely what the upshot of Forrester's book is for contemporary political theorizing. While reasonably observing that *In the Shadow of Justice* risks recapitulating the privilege of the institutions at the center of the Rawlsian revolution and ignoring recessive tendencies of thought at "lesser" institutions or even at the same ones, Battistoni probes what a future philosophy might look like. It would need, as Forrester herself observes, to reintegrate lost insights into the exploitation and power, but also reimagine the relation of the "policy" to which Rawlsian applications were often indentured to popular mobilization. (As Burgin points out, one of the histories currently unwritten is how Rawls was mobilized in more mainstream and non-mobilizational circles — and, I would add, in legal scholarship.)

Leah Ypi, in her elegant essay, has a softer spot for Rawls than others, and is anxious to avoid throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Less engaged by Forrester's historicist procedures than her fellow symposiasts, Ypi bracingly cuts to the chase of

¹ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

what might be abandoned but also saved from the wreckage of the Rawlsian era. Many of Rawls's impulses and tools remain valuable Ypi says—not least his aspiration to theorize justice in the abstract as a condition of its attainment in the concrete—even if he misapplied it to “tweak” societies that have turned out (like the global order itself) to require drastic reinvention. There is nothing wrong with justice other than the “liberal straightjacket” to which Rawls consigned it even in the course of his attempt to envision it.

In her extended and rich set of replies, Forrester appreciates the range of insights her book has provoked, and builds towards an auspicious vision of philosophy that is both further integrated into practical life and struggles and open to its role therein, citing the example of feminist theory that thrives in conjunctures rather than aiming for the empyrean.

Participants:

Katrina Forrester is Assistant Professor of Government and Social Studies at Harvard University. She is currently working on a book about feminist theories of work.

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Stefan Eich is Assistant Professor of Government at Georgetown University. His research is in political theory and the history of political thought, in particular the political theory of money and financial capitalism. His book manuscript, “The Currency of Politics: The Political Theory of Money from Aristotle to Keynes” (under contract with Princeton University Press), recovers constitutive debates about money as a political institution in the history of political thought.

Lea Ypi is Professor in Political Theory at the London School of Economics and Political Science and Adjunct Professor in Philosophy at the Australian National University. She is the author of *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency* (2012), and, with Jonathan White, *The Meaning of Partisanship* (2016), both published by Oxford University Press.

REVIEW BY ALYSSA BATTISTONI, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Katrina Forrester's superb account of the liberal egalitarian tradition masterfully puts the era of Rawlsian hegemony in perspective and represents a definitive signal of its close. (At least, so it would seem—I will return to this.) There have, of course, been many critiques of Rawlsian theory and the strain of liberalism associated with it, which in recent years have increasingly clustered around readings that emphasize Rawls as a thinker of a particular moment in history (a conclusion that was paradoxically drawn by many immediately upon *A Theory of Justice's* publication, and forgotten over the course of the next several decades).² But Forrester's book is the first to track the development of Rawls's own thought and the strain of political philosophy that commanded the field for decades after. It is a deeply impressive work, at once meticulous and sweeping, attentive and insightful regarding the details of both philosophical argument and the political changes shaping the broader world. Forrester's exhaustive research and exacting, rich arguments deserve thorough discussion, and will surely provoke it.

In this short response, however, I want to focus on what I see as the most pressing question it raises: what does the history of liberal egalitarianism teach us about how to do political theory today, and about the relationship between political theory and political practice? *In the Shadow of Justice* situates postwar liberalism not in a long history of liberal ideas, but in the specific context of the postwar decades; notably, it is a study of how philosophers responded not only to one another, but to politics. Ultimately, Forrester poses a methodological challenge to political theorists, though this makes the stakes sound drier than they are; what her book makes very clear is that the tools we use shape how and what we think, and even what we are able to. Put more pointedly, it asks what political theory should do—a question whose answer is left open by the decline of the liberal egalitarian model. What can political theorists who are concerned with and responding to contemporary political problems learn from the limitations of liberal egalitarians' attempts to do so? What does this particular history reveal about the difference between being a thinker shaped by one's times, as we all inevitably are, and a thinker who plays some role in shaping one's times, as many hope to be?

Although political philosophers in the tradition chronicled here are often characterized by their critics as woefully detached from the real world, Forrester shows them to be deeply attuned to what they call "public affairs," even sometimes appearing mercurial in responding to each new problem that appears on the horizon. The civil rights movement prompts considerations of civil disobedience; Vietnam, of just war and responsibility; decolonization, of global justice. Philosophers abstract away from the specifics of the situation, refine their intuitions, and build institutions—journals, societies—around their new ideas. Gradually, they come to ask what political problems mean for their theories and how they might be applied rather than addressing those problems on their own terms. Forrester convincingly argues that most challenges to liberal egalitarianism were thus "domesticated" and captured within its bounds.

As Forrester shows, liberal egalitarians' engagement with contemporary politics was limited to certain issues and approaches: those that were more challenging to their framework were simply not engaged. A subtle but powerful line of argument throughout highlights the ways that antiracist, feminist, and postcolonial thought were marginalized and sidelined by liberal egalitarianism. Yet the book's overarching argument that every challenge to Rawlsian liberalism was effectively contained within it rests in part on its own choice of subject matter. The paradox is that the book at times performs elements of what it critiques, reinscribing the centrality of Rawlsian approaches even as it aims to question them. Only those arguments made on Rawlsian terms—arguments made within the shadow of justice—can be part of the story of this particular lineage of political philosophy, while thought that escapes the shadow evades the scope of the book.

Of course, all books must draw boundaries around their topic, and *In the Shadow of Justice* covers an astonishing range as it is. The exclusions and failures that Forrester so thoroughly chronicles, however, also raise important questions about the organization of scholarship, and of political thought in particular, that for the most part remain implicit. The rise of liberal

² John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

egalitarianism takes place entirely within the walls of academic institutions, for perhaps the first time in the history of political thought. Yet the account of the institutional conditions that facilitated Rawls's rise is assumed more than explained; the ability of Harvard and Oxford to set the scholarly pace is mostly taken for granted. It is not particularly surprising that elite institutions were so amenable to a theoretical tradition that sought to tweak rather than overturn the order of things. It is hard to avoid wondering what kind of political thought we should expect to emerge from academia, and from such institutions in particular.

Meanwhile, if political events clearly shape philosophers' concerns, the reverse question goes largely unaddressed: that is, what effect, if any, do political philosophers have on the world beyond the academy? Rawls and his disciples trained a generation of philosophers, economists, policymakers, and so on—but to what effect? If we were to periodize the era of liberal egalitarianism in political philosophy, it would stretch essentially from the publication of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* in 1971 to 2008, when the collapse of global finance cast new doubt on the enterprise of offering guidelines for distributing the spoils of a basically functional economic system. It overlaps exactly, that is, with the period of neoliberal hegemony (which, it must be said, suggests that more than ideas are at work). One need not share Raymond Geuss's scathing analysis of the Rawlsian project to wonder alongside him what to make of the fact that Rawls's theory could come to dominate political theory precisely as actually-existing economic conditions moved in the opposite direction of his recommendations.³ This is a question that should trouble all political theorists, suggesting as it does that preeminence within the field does not have much bearing on anything that happens beyond it.

The subtle but powerful argument that Forrester builds throughout *In the Shadow of Justice* is that visions of better worlds, however carefully constructed, are doomed to failure if they set aside the questions of power, domination, and history that shape the world we actually live in. Liberal egalitarians did not fail to see their visions realized because they failed to work out all the theoretical kinks. In other words, the question that we most need to answer today is not what a more just world would look like—we have plenty of ideas—but how it might be realized, a question that simply cannot be answered by philosophy.

Indeed, this history of philosophy often reads like a history of science, with similarly discomfiting effects as the search for a stable ground of truth on which to rest ethics and politics reveals only shifting terrain. Forrester argues that “Rawls sought to construct a system of objective standards for judgment that would stand without a God, or a state, to ground it” (5). He hoped to construct a system of rules that will “dull the force of class and group conflict, ideology, prejudice, and passion” (18). As Forrester suggests, many of the moves Rawls makes in the process—the substitution of “interests and institutions” for “passions, ideologies, and solidarity,” the replacement of class struggle with civil society, the prioritization of consensus over conflict—were depoliticizing ones. They render politics a matter of argument rather than struggle.

The failure of Rawls and his many interlocutors to find stable ground on which to rest political claims or reasonable bases for agreement nevertheless leaves one somewhat uncomfortably adrift: one need not agree with Rawls's set of principles per se to share his desire to ground political and normative claims in reason.

I myself entered political theory in the shadow of justice. As an undergraduate I read the debates between Rawls, Robert Nozick, and G.A. Cohen, then used Rawls to construct a theory of just disaster response for my honors thesis—an attempt to make sense of a senseless few months spent volunteering in post-hurricane Katrina New Orleans. A few months after I graduated, the financial system collapsed. Rawls didn't have much to say about that. Nor, the more I thought about it, did he have much to say about Louisiana's disappearing wetlands, the state's long neglect of black neighborhoods, or the hollowing out of federal disaster response capacity. To understand the world I began to look elsewhere.

³ Raymond Geuss, *Outside Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Yet reading *In the Shadow of Justice*, I was often reminded, somewhat to my surprise, of what I found so appealing about theories of justice upon my first encounter with them—their effort to interrogate the bases of political principles, to develop methodical arguments for the rationality of equality or justice, to build convincing normative claims—even as I was thoroughly convinced of their limits. It is one of this book’s many virtues that it manages to engender sympathy for its subjects’ aims even as it systematically reveals the flaws of their project.

So what comes next? Forrester closes by suggesting that today’s theorists consider the changes that have remade the world since Rawls’s time and “loo[k] to social theory, history, and political struggle as much as to law and economics” (278) in confronting them, and I agree—with the caveat that it seems to me that few political theorists do look to economics today, and that more probably should. At the same time, Forrester acknowledges that elements of postwar liberalism remain usable, and I agree here too. The question that remains, then, is which elements we can use, and how we can even decide without simply replaying past debates. Which ideas can time-travel, and which are irremediably products of a particular age?

This is a broader question for political theory, of course. But it is particularly pressing with regard to the liberal egalitarian tradition: although it today appears spent, I doubt that we have left the shadow of justice behind. As Forrester suggests in closing, liberal egalitarianism remains compelling in the face of a deeply unequal world. Indeed, the book’s narrative even argues that *A Theory of Justice* became totemic not *despite* but *because* it emerged at the end of the age it took for granted: as Forrester points out, although Rawls’s theory began as an attempt to set limits on state power, by the early 1970s *A Theory of Justice* looked like a “robust defense of a welfare state committed to significant redistribution,” rendering it a touchstone for liberals who were anxious about the rightward turn in politics then underway (105). I suspect that Rawls, Cohen, and others may undergo something of a revival in the world beyond the academy as a renewed left in the United States and United Kingdom seeks to give intellectual heft to arguments for equality or flesh out the details of political programs. Rawls may not have constructed a convincing total theory of politics but it must be said that the liberal egalitarian debates are useful at the level of policy.

Justice, meanwhile, is the lingua franca of many of today’s political movements. If political theorists are to engage with them, we should ask how to bring this language out of Rawls’s shadow. Let’s turn here to an example. Forrester shows how mounting environmental concern in the late 1960s and early 1970s led liberal egalitarians to develop theories of intergenerational justice and analyses of population. She argues that the fact that philosophers engaged in population debates long after they were politically defunct reveals a discipline whose inquiry was increasingly driven by its own tools—for example, interest in the status of persons and meaning of personhood. Yet it is also curious that the future was the primary frame for analyzing environmental issues: *A Theory of Justice* was, after all, published amidst growing recognition that environmental harms were already occurring. By the 1980s, the environmental justice movement was organizing against the disproportionate locating of toxic waste and polluting factories in places where working class people and people of color lived. Even at the time, that is, environmental problems clearly entailed questions of distribution across people then living, not only between present and future generations. Now that we live in what to Rawls, Brian Barry, and others was the ‘future,’ it is even more clear that many of our most pressing environmental problems differentially affect those living today—and even more frustrating that political philosophers spent so many years treating the environment as a temporally distant problem.

And yet the frequent invocations of environmental justice and climate justice by today’s activists are not so far off the liberal egalitarian model in their assumption that both environmental goods and bads should be distributed more or less equally among persons (and, in a departure from liberal egalitarianism, groups). At the same time, climate change is a deeply historical problem, and so many activists claiming the mantle of climate justice have called for climate reparations. What should we make of the fact that historically arguments for reparations have been theorized by libertarians like Nozick, and dismissed by liberal egalitarians like Barry? Does the history of these debates offer any guidance?

In short: what would it mean to take the various claims of today’s environmental and climate justice movements seriously without “domesticating” them or subsuming them to the logic of philosophy? Simply clarifying what movements mean by justice and aiming to trace the implications seems likely to lead back down the paths Forrester here traces. Perhaps we should

be more interested in how movements use the language of justice to mobilize supporters and make claims than in refining colloquial uses of terms; perhaps we should ignore the language of justice altogether and focus instead on the tactical decisions and strategies movements deploy to build power regardless of what they say.

Many political theorists have begun to do something like this, studying the thought of political actors like Mohandas K. Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. in the interest of taking seriously how practitioners of politics have thought about goals and strategies, power and principles. This seems to me an important direction for political theory, and one that Forrester points toward. Yet it will require, I think, a rather significant reorientation of political theorists' own commitments. To think about strategy and power and struggle requires thinking about specific cases, whether historical or contemporary; it requires thinking from particular perspectives about distinct objectives and how they might be achieved given a certain set of resources and constraints.

And so if we are to think more seriously about political action, political theorists might also begin to—indeed, might need to—think more seriously of ourselves as political actors, perhaps even to take more seriously the political work that our own thinking and writing does and for whom. We would doubtless be constrained by history and circumstance in all sorts of ways, some apparent to us already and others only to be revealed in time. But perhaps we would also be more honest with ourselves about that fact, and more clear-eyed about what our work can do—and what it cannot.

REVIEW BY ANGUS BURGIN, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Shortly after the John Rawls Papers were first processed in 2010, intellectual historians descended upon them *en masse*, scouring his unpublished writings for hints of his interests and influences. Nine years later, the most substantial products of those forays have begun to emerge, with the publication of Andrius Gališanka's *John Rawls: The Path to a Theory of Justice* and, months later, Katrina Forrester's *In the Shadow of Justice: Postwar Liberalism and the Remaking of Political Philosophy*.⁴ But whereas Gališanka focuses on Rawls's intellectual development, Forrester adopts a broader scope, using Rawls to explore the diminishing relevance of recent work in political theory to the felt realities of modern American life. In Forrester's telling the narrative of Anglo-American political philosophy over the past half-century is a "ghost story," with spectral figure of Rawls cast in the lead role.

There are many virtues to Forrester's approach. Despite having pursued her doctorate in the midst of the Cambridge School, she shows little interest in exhaustive reconstructions of the discursive norms of Rawls's early interlocutors, instead asking much more expansive questions about how Rawls responded (and in some ways even contributed) to the great political events of his time. In doing so she uses Rawls's career to explore the broader trajectory of the field of political philosophy, a crucial subject that intellectual historians—perhaps distracted by their ongoing fascination with the postwar social sciences—have left surprisingly fallow. Further, she shows no fear of the big questions that shadow liberal egalitarianism: why has a movement that gained such broad influence over the field of political philosophy exercised so little tangible influence over the practice of politics? And what are the implications of the increasing disjuncture between the consensual assumptions of its leading practitioners and the fractured realities of contemporary American political discourse?

Although the book is judicious in tone, and offers sensitive reconstructions of the development and evolution Rawls's worldview, Forrester shows little affinity for his ideas. Perhaps a certain skepticism of Rawls is unsurprising for a historian. As Forrester observes, the very engine of Rawlsian social theory was powered by the assiduous "removal of history." Devout Rawlsians deliberately eschewed the "normative relevance of arguments about how inequalities came about and, with them, non-institutional claims about individual entitlements, initial endowments, and the ownership of resources" (132). Most historians do not take kindly to Rawls's suggestion that one can abstract a person's sensibility from his or her lived experience, or design political institutions without accounting for the pathway that led to them. (Indeed, although he is sometimes accused of his own form of abstract universalism, Forrester pointedly observes that Robert Nozick's account of property rights provided a much thicker historical account of contemporary institutions than that of his Rawlsian counterparts.)⁵

Forrester's critique of Rawls in this book, however, runs much deeper than an antipathy for his ahistorical sensibility. Rather, she suggests that when Rawls tested his ideals of justice against real-world experience, he proved far too deferential toward an American constitutional order that remained "limited and exclusionary" (xi). And as circumstances changed, and even the imperfect foundations of postwar liberalism began to dissolve, Rawlsians failed to adapt. "Many also continue to uphold the premise of Rawls's theory that was drawn from a postwar idea," Forrester writes: "that deep down, social life rested on the possibility of consensus and ethical agreement." Such a vision "idealized a moment from the midcentury American past when liberalism was triumphant against right and left" (xx), building a political philosophy on a state of affairs that has long since passed. As a result, as we enter our own era of political crisis — marked by political polarization, the ascendance of authoritarian capitalism, and the collapse of trust in longstanding institutions — political philosophers have found their cupboards bare. Having long eschewed appeals "to history or utopia, or to particular groups or actors as the

⁴ Andrius Gališanka, *John Rawls: The Path to a Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).

⁵ Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic, 1974).

motors of reform or revolution” (ix), they have little to suggest beyond invocations of consensual frameworks that seem increasingly illusory.

Forrester’s account of Rawls’s approach to civil disobedience, which elaborates on a theme in her *Historical Journal* article “Citizenship, War, and the Origins of International Ethics in American Political Philosophy, 1960–1975,” provides one striking demonstration of Rawls’s skepticism of political activism that challenged the foundations of an exclusionary order.⁶ Confronted by protests against both Jim Crow and the Vietnam War, Rawls seemed to revert to a presumption “that American institutions in principle approximated justice,” and that the unjust distribution of benefits was “exceptional” and insufficient “to threaten fundamental constitutional stability” (47–48). He demonstrated time and gain the postwar liberal’s faith in the capacity of America’s constitutional order to resolve its antinomies and contradictions within the terms that it had set. In Forrester’s telling, that faith became increasingly antiquated over the final decades of the twentieth century as the terms of American political consensus dissolved, and as its exclusions and inequalities grew ever more egregious. By the end of his career Rawls was philosophizing under the presumption of an institutional order that had long since dissipated.

Forrester further shows that Rawls developed the intellectual infrastructure of *A Theory of Justice* as much to critique excesses of state action as to carve out a defense of its welfare apparatus.⁷ In the early 1950s, Rawls’s emphasis on the “common rules on which people can agree,” and even the highway metaphors he used to elaborate them, were characteristic of that era’s emerging neoliberal worldview. Rawls “wanted changes to be slow and rulebound,” “worried about the discretionary powers of administrative agencies,” and sought “to limit discretion and ‘avoid arbitrariness’” (14–15). For these reasons she finds it unsurprising that Rawls briefly joined the Mont Pèlerin Society, that the public choice theorist James Buchanan saw him as a “potential fellow-traveler” (109), or that an aging Friedrich Hayek wrote as late as the 1970s that he had “no basic quarrel” (14) with Rawls’s ideas. Only as the American political landscape shifted in the 1960s and 1970s, with the breakdown of the liberal coalition and the resurgence of market-centered ideologies, did Rawls’s ideas come to seem more forceful as a defense of egalitarian redistribution than as a justification for the existing rules of the road. In Forrester’s account these origins help us to understand the challenges of Rawls’s successors in later years, as critics increasingly worried that a liberal egalitarianism based on “choice, responsibility, private property rights, and the market” (227) was conceding too much to its critics.

The resulting story is a powerful account of both the emergence of Rawls’s ideas in the heyday of the liberal consensus, and of how those origins have inflected the development and implications of his social philosophy ever since. Forrester sees little enduring appeal for a worldview premised on reasoned consensus, respect for order, and constrained statecraft in an age of fracture, repression, inequality, and environmental crisis, and is dubious of its continued hold over the most prestigious and influential venues of political philosophy.

Forrester’s narrative focuses most closely on a small community of liberal political philosophers and their immediate interlocutors, whose engagements with one another unfolded within a close-knit network of the most prestigious universities in the United States and England. She is frank about the circumscribed framework of her study. *In the Shadow of Justice*, she writes, is “the story of the triumph of a small group of influential, affluent, white, mostly male, analytical political philosophers who worked at a handful of elite institutions in the United States and Britain, especially Harvard, Princeton, and Oxford” (xvii). Liberal political philosophy in the postwar era has not attracted as much attention from intellectual historians as one might expect, and within that remit Forrester’s account is compelling and richly elaborated. She provides an especially convincing explanation of how Rawls and his followers framed their arguments in response to the major political events of the era. Readers will emerge with a much clearer understanding of how Rawls tested and reframed his

⁶ Katrina Forrester, “Citizenship, War, and the Origins of International Ethics in American Political Philosophy, 1960–1975,” *Historical Journal* 57:3 (2014): 773–801.

⁷ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

ideas within the crucible of midcentury liberalism, and how the resulting social philosophy proved persuasive to many of his peers.

In the Shadow of Justice does not, however, engage closely with the philosophical foundations of Rawlsian social theory. In contrast to Andrius Gališanka's layered analysis of Rawls's appropriations and departures from Immanuel Kant, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and the Christian religion, Forrester devotes less than 40 pages to Rawls's intellectual development. Even in these sections she dwells less on the novelty of his arguments than the trendiness of his tools. In Forrester's telling, Rawls reached into a satchel of concepts that were ready-to-hand in the postwar academy—"welfare economics, choice theory, game theory, theories of public finance, analytic jurisprudence, ethics, democratic theory, and the history of ideas"—and "squeezed" them into a form that would align with the problems he intended to solve. Her Rawls, in short, was more of an "encyclopedia" (105) than an innovator. Forrester's inattention to the underlying mechanics of Rawls's social philosophy is deliberate: she writes that her primary interest is in the "political work" his theory performed, and the "consequences" of his ideas, rather than on his placement "within the longer history of political thought" (xxii). But this narrowed emphasis leads her critique of Rawlsian social theory to focus almost entirely on its effects rather than its arguments. She asks readers to question Rawls's ideas on the basis of their interactions with the world as it is, rather than their imaginations of the world as it should be—a claim that may appeal to the empirical sensibilities of historians, but is likely to leave many Rawlsians nonplussed.

More importantly, by focusing almost entirely on conversations among those political philosophers at elite institutions who engaged most closely with Rawls, Forrester limits her ability to address the kinds of "political work" that Rawls did (and did not) perform. She says little about even the neighboring intellectual communities in the field of political theory—including Straussians, historical political theorists, and agonistic pluralists, among others. There is no substantial discussion of the relationship between political philosophy and the disciplines of Philosophy and Political Science, and how those disciplines' separate trajectories may have mediated the reception of Rawlsian ideas and (perhaps) conditioned the hiring processes that foregrounded some ideas while foreclosing others. Rawls's reception within the broader academy is almost entirely absent from the story. And while readers are given a clear sense of how Rawls was affected by political events, they emerge with little understanding of whether and how Rawls, in turn, influenced them.

Arguably, a number of Rawls's immediate contemporaries achieved a greater degree of influence over public policy in the closing decades of the twentieth century. Those who read Shadia Drury or Nancy MacLean, for instance, emerge with vivid examples of the ways in which Straussianism and public choice theory influenced people in positions of power (despite, some scholars would argue, mapping imperfectly onto the empirical realities of the postwar United States).⁸ What factors, then, led Rawls's reception outside a limited community of elite political philosophers to become a story of failure rather than success? Did Rawlsians lack the funding networks, the social and political cohesion, the public policy apparatus, or the professional pathways that would allow for such acts of translation? Were Rawlsian arguments simply too tortuous and abstract to prove appealing to communities beyond a highly trained theoretical elite? Or did Rawls's preoccupation with institutional design preclude sufficiently clear and robust contributions to pressing problems of governance? Without expanding the contextual framework of the study to address a broader range of philosophers and theorists, disciplinary developments within the fields of Philosophy and Political Science, and the points of intersection between academia and public policy, *In the Shadow of Justice* cannot fully explain the disjunct between Rawls's popularity among political philosophers and his continuing obscurity in the public at large.

In the Shadow of Justice is in many ways an extraordinary book: ambitiously framed, deeply researched, vividly written, and filled with revelatory details. The shape of its narrative will set much of the agenda for future work on Rawls and the trajectory of political philosophy over the second half of the twentieth century. The issues raised here are intended only to

⁸ Shadia Drury, *Leo Strauss and the American Right* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997); Nancy MacLean, *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America* (New York: Viking, 2017).

highlight the many questions Forrester pries open but does not entirely resolve. While admiring her landmark achievement, those working in the Rawls archives can take comfort that plenty of work remains to be done.

REVIEW BY STEFAN EICH, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

The image that frames Katrina Forrester's excellent book is that of the shadow. The towering presence of John Rawls's theory of justice continues to cast its shade over much of political philosophy, and Forrester sets out to shine light on how political philosophers became, for better or worse, "conscripts" (xvii) to Rawlsian liberalism. But light breeds darkness also in another sense. In remaking political philosophy in Rawls's image, it was the theory's very success that at the same time "eclipsed" (130) Rawls's own earlier motivations and philosophical resources that had their origins in a forgotten world of mid-century ethics and ideologies.

It is the stunning intellectual achievement of *In the Shadow of Justice* that it manages to recover these debates in a manner that will alter assessments of the political valence of the remaking, but will also allow for new reflections on the future of political philosophy. Among the book's many revisionist reconstructions that will change the shape of the existing historiography on Rawls are, for example, a recovery of the young Rawls's opposition to the mid-century administrative state, of the importance of Ludwig Wittgenstein for Rawls during a crucial period during the 1950s, as well as, in a more muted manner, further evidence for the complex influence of David Hume and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel on the formation of Rawls's thought.

The book thus combines subtle philosophical reconstruction of Rawls's intellectual formation (as well as his reception) with a whole series of elegant, understated interventions in the rapidly-growing historiography on the historical Rawls. Moreover, in retracing Rawls's path, the book provides a much broader sketch of the development of Anglophone postwar political philosophy and its shifting engagement with questions of justice and equality. The book's most captivating moments are often those in which we learn something surprising not only about Rawls but also his contemporaries and his sources, which are so clinically removed from his finished text. Indeed, among the secret heroes of *In the Shadow of Justice* are Judith Shklar (in an enigmatic sense) and more straightforwardly Brian Barry, who repeatedly turns out to have the last word.

While it is well known that Rawls's theory of justice, though only published in 1971, largely took shape in the course of the 1950s, Forrester reveals a deeper political and philosophical significance to Rawls's stay in Oxford in 1952-1953. Postwar Britain turns out to have loomed surprisingly large in Rawls's philosophical and political imagination, as well as in Anglophone philosophy more broadly. One striking thread throughout *In the Shadow of Justice* is, for example, a recurrent reference to the revisionist wing of the British Labour Party as a tacit key to Rawls's politics. Rawls's distributive principles, Forrester argues, "brought philosophical order to the ideas of the Labour revisionists" (25, 118). Rawls's rule of equality, we learn, similarly corresponded with Labour revisionism in rejecting common ownership while nonetheless wanting to go beyond merely meeting needs (23).

If Forrester frames her book through the metaphor of the shadow, another captivating optical metaphor employed by her at crucial moments is that of the mirror. Even critique of the reigning Rawlsian paradigm—be it from the right or the left—ultimately served to remake political philosophy in Rawls's image as his theory produced its own "mirror-images" (xvii, 242). There was seemingly no escaping from Rawls's theory. The bind of Rawls's ideas was in turn compounded by their own mirror-like quality. As Forrester shows, each discipline, philosophical group, or political faction was at one point or another able to see themselves as they looked into the mirror of Rawls's theory—the result no doubt of Rawls's own obsessive attempt to take into account as many objections as possible while at the same time refusing to alter the fundamentals of the theory. Other aspects of this Sphinx-like quality may also have been intentional. As Forrester recounts, Rawls put forward many radical ideas but he also seemed to retract them just as quickly. In Perry Anderson's words, Rawls had produced a "delphic masterpiece" that defied any straightforward political reading.⁹

⁹ Perry Anderson, "A Culture in Contraflow—II," *New Left Review* 182 (July/August 1990), 106. As cited in Forrester, *Shadow of Justice*, 122.

But far from being a mere shadow or a passive reflection, engagement with Rawls has also been a generative process that shaped the remaking of political philosophy in the late-twentieth century. In its allusions to light, darkness, and mirrors, *In the Shadow of Justice* excels as a kind of prism that brilliantly refracts an apparent unity of light into an array of motley colors. Rawls's reception was much more than a passive reflection of existing intellectual resources or a mere adumbration that obscured alternative paths. Instead, Rawls's multi-faceted work provided ample opportunity for critical self-examination for generations of political philosophers—but also for Rawls himself, who frequently had to bow to the logic of his own theory. Like a shadow, his theory both followed Rawls and became distinct from him. But even more intriguingly, as Rawls became the lens through which to read liberal philosophy *tout court*, he himself became associated with many characteristics he had explicitly opposed.

If Forrester's book is on one level a critical history meant to replace teleological folk narratives of philosophical triumph, it is at the same time also a critical rejoinder to those who have recently seen in Rawls's *Theory of Justice* “the last gasp of a dying welfarist ideology,” as Samuel Moyn put it.¹⁰ Indeed, Forrester frames her book in the opening section explicitly as a response to this historiography. Instead, the book traces a much more perplexing genealogy of Rawls's theory. Rather than simply mobilizing historicism to put Rawls's theory in its proper historical place, *In the Shadow of Justice* marks a more subtle and paradoxical intellectual achievement. Its meticulous historical contextualism is strikingly employed to capture, for the first time, Rawls's untimeliness. To exaggerate only slightly, during the 1940s, when trust in government was at an all-time high, Rawls cultivated a pluralist anti-statism. During the 1950s, as anti-Communism pushed Cold War liberalism to the right, Rawls moved left. During the 1960s, a decade of change if there ever was one, Rawls did not change. During the 1970s, as the world entered a sense of crisis, Rawls doubled down on his insistence of having provided a theory *sub specie aeternitatis*.

How does Forrester then deal with the historical coincidence of the publication of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* and the end of the Bretton Woods system in 1971?¹¹ First, as she shows, Rawls's liberalism was never straightforwardly a defense of the welfare state. It both contains traces of Rawls's early worries about the administrative state as well as a yearning for distributive justice that could go beyond the confines of welfarism. Second, Forrester argues surprisingly and persuasively that it was precisely his untimeliness that allowed Rawls's spirit to linger instead of disappearing into the night under the wings of the owl. As a result, while *In the Shadow of Justice* portrays Rawls's work and its reception as a tale of philosophical success, it is at the same time a “ghost story” (xi). Rawls's theory lived on as a spectral presence long after its own historical conditions of possibility had passed. After all, despite changes in the world (as well as in Rawls's mind and politics), “the original parameters of his early theory remained” (116). While Rawls refused to change, it was the world that moved to the right. By the 1990s, Rawls, who had started to the right of the welfare state, found himself to the left of both reigning U.S. policy and, more surprisingly, mainstream philosophical opinion.

But if Forrester thus succeeds in employing historical contextualism precisely to illustrate Rawls's untimeliness, I cannot help but wonder whether this does not unwittingly vindicate Rawls's own insistence on continuity and the benefits of abstraction over time. After all, Rawls's ambition to gain a degree of universality—perhaps even a whiff of the quasi-transcendental—by abstracting away from historical circumstances and institutional details was, as Forrester herself suggests, to a remarkable extent successful in isolating his theory against an overall political shift toward neoliberalism. In this light it is all the more striking to find in the book's final sentence a reversion back to a more conventional contextualist truism: Rawls's theory, we are told, was quite simply “a product of its time” (279). That is, of course, necessarily the case. But in fact

¹⁰ Samuel Moyn, *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 39-40. As cited in Forrester, *Shadow of Justice*, xi.

¹¹ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

In the Shadow of Justice itself opens up a much more fascinating relationship between philosophy and time, one whose methodological implications would be interesting to unfold further.

This question about the relation of philosophy to time is intimately tied to Forrester's ambivalent assessment of the political legacy of Rawls's theory. As she shows, Rawls opted for a political move of removing political disagreement from his theory. Violence, dissent, and instability—politics plainly—were all pushed to the margins, where they eventually dropped off the page, as critics such as Charles Mills have long lamented.¹² This Rawlsian politics of depoliticization did not go unnoticed. Already at the time, critics perceived Rawls's theory as “ideology in philosophy's clothing” (David Schaefer) or “the ideology that the ‘end of ideology’ theorists of the 1950s were seeking” (John Schaar).¹³ If Forrester presents Rawls's theory nonetheless as a success, indeed one that was almost too complete, she highlights at the same time the defensive nature of Rawls's conception of philosophy as reconciliation. The importance of stability and the need for consensus expressed themselves concretely in the perceived need to engage right-wing and libertarian critics on their own terms. Unsurprisingly, it was only in response to Robert Nozick “that Rawls's followers became ‘Rawlsians’ and established the contours of the new philosophy” (129).

The paradoxical effect of the new political philosophy of justice was that despite its opening up of philosophical possibilities—including more radical interpretations—its ideological and political result was to narrow the range of available options and diffuse alternative and more radical demands. As Barry observed, “surely not since Locke's theory of property have such potentially radical premises been used as the foundation for something so little disturbing to the *status quo!*”¹⁴ Initially, Rawls invited both socialist and more conservative readings, emphasizing the abstract universalism and institutional agnosticism of his theory. But as Forrester suggests, it was ironically this seeming flexibility of liberal philosophy and the associated ability of Rawls's theory to diffuse and absorb alternatives that ended up squeezing out possibilities for radical critique. The result was a powerfully constraining, ghostly paradigm of liberal egalitarianism that contributed to the narrowing of the ideological terrain of the politics of political philosophy.

By the 1980s, as Forrester recounts in one of her many archival marvels from Rawls's correspondence, Rawls himself had become suspicious of the way in which political philosophy had been remade in his image. As he put it in a letter to H.L.A. Hart in 1985: “I am at the moment persuaded that the aims and methods of much current political philosophy are misconceived” (245). Instead, Rawls surprisingly expressed his basic sympathy for Bernard Williams's skeptical stance toward much of liberal political philosophy. Forrester herself appears at times to share Williams's assessment. But instead of pursuing a historicist ideology critique, she pulls her punches. Has it become a ghost from a different age that haunts us? Or has it successfully achieved universality through abstraction? Forrester writes carefully and with self-conscious ambiguity about the fate of the Rawlsian project.

While more than once invoking the ghostly presence of seemingly dead ideas, Forrester at the same time hints at the ways in which the very capaciousness of Rawls's theory might allow for future reevaluations. Precisely by having become decoupled from a reality to which it once offered an immanent critique, Rawls's theory as utopia is presented as still offering underappreciated radical resources. “The beauty of Rawls's theory,” Forrester explains, “was that its arguments could be put to radical ends and admit a more demanding egalitarianism than he might himself have advocated” (138). More surprising

¹² Charles Mills, “‘Ideal Theory’ as Ideology,” *Hypatia* 20:3 (2005), 165-184.

¹³ David L. Schaefer, “Ideology in Philosophy's Clothing: John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (1973). As cited in Forrester, *In the Shadow of Justice*, 118; John H. Schaar, “Reflections on Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*,” *Social Theory and Practice* 3:1 (1975), 59. As cited in Forrester, *In the Shadow of Justice*, 119.

¹⁴ Brian Barry, *The Liberal Theory of Justice: A Critical Examination of the Principal Doctrines in “A Theory of Justice” by John Rawls* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 50. As cited in Forrester, *In the Shadow of Justice*, 123.

and perplexing here is Forrester's concluding allusion that one such productive possibility might consist of Rawls's refusal to engage with the anti-foundationalist philosophical developments of the last forty years (278).

Instead of firmly committing to one or the other interpretation, *In the Shadow of Justice* thus ends on the tantalizing note that Rawls's theory might be understood as both utopia *and* ideology. How a critique of ideology can proceed without salvaging the utopian aspiration of philosophy is of course an open and complex question. It is one that other strands of twentieth-century philosophy—not least critical theory—have grappled with intensely. The entwined, mirror-like fate of ideology and utopia would moreover not have come as a surprise to Karl Mannheim and others who have long insisted that the two concepts reflected inverse sides of the same problematic relation of political conflict to unconscious thought.¹⁵ For Mannheim, there was one way to determine what ought to be regarded as truly utopian and what was merely ideological. This was time itself and whether the ideas had been realized.¹⁶ According to Forrester, it might still be too early to tell.

¹⁵ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 36.

¹⁶ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 184.

What is living and what is dead of the philosophy of Rawls?

Writing in 1907 on “What is living and what is dead of the philosophy of Hegel,” the Italian liberal philosopher Benedetto Croce concluded with a reflection on how *not* to engage with philosophical thought. Each significant contribution to theory, he explained, is both shaped by the circumstances of its production and advances our understanding of those circumstances. Yet, for its analysis to be constructive, interpreters must avoid two, equally limited, modes of engagement. The first is what we might call intellectual deference. No sensible person, Croce wrote, should wish to engage with a philosopher either “as a servile and obsequious follower, who professes to accept every word of the master, or in the sense of a religious sectarian who considers disagreement a sin.”¹⁷ The second is intellectual negligence: the first condition for resolving to accept or reject someone’s theories, he warned, is “to read his books: and to put an end to the spectacle, half comical and half disgusting, of the accusation and the abuse of a philosopher by critics who do not know him, and who wage a foolish war with a ridiculous puppet created by their own imaginations.”¹⁸

Nobody in postwar political thought has been the subject of deference and negligence more than John Rawls, the twentieth century philosophical giant in whose shadow most contemporary liberal political theory has developed. His theory of justice, the circumstances of its making, and the conversations it encouraged and thwarted, are the subject of Katrina Forrester’s excellent recent monograph. Nobody can accuse her of either “waging a foolish war on a ridiculous puppet” or “accepting every word of the master.” Her own reading of Rawls is far from deferential. She illustrates how making space for liberal egalitarianism was a loss as much as a gain for political philosophy. It led to the abandonment of paths taken “at other times and places” such as thinking about political change by “appealing to history or utopia” or to “particular groups or actors as the motors of reform or revolution” (ix). It is also far from negligent. To show how much of contemporary normative writing in political theory is nothing if not Rawlsian exegesis, she makes an unprecedented exegetical effort, examining not only Rawls and his interlocutors’ published work but also letters, syllabi, conference papers, and research notes. With the help of that material, Forrester persuasively shows how the intellectual origins of Rawls’s theory are in the anti-interventionist and state-sceptical outlook characterising post-war liberal thought, sharing both its focus on stabilising rules of social cooperation and its hostility to agonistic expressions of organised political agency.

Her discussion of Rawls’s engagement with the civil rights movement and his account of civil disobedience is an eye-opener in that regard. Forrester illustrates how, as the post-war liberal consensus broke down, Rawls and Rawlsian theory adapted to the emergence of a new neoliberal order by taking different turns: sometimes ignoring forms of injustice that did not fit the diagnostic apparatus of the theory, sometimes acting as the only critical lens through which philosophers analysed circumstances that had in the meantime become remarkably dissimilar from the ones that had inspired their writing. The result was a kind of intellectual schizophrenia; the less philosophy could capture of the world that had shaped its categories, the more disinterested it became in it. This in turn generated a series of dualisms dominating contemporary philosophical discourse and with the help of which philosophers could justify why they were interested in some questions but disinterested in others: ideal versus non-ideal theory, normative desirability versus empirical feasibility, legitimacy versus justification.

If there is one single lesson to be drawn from Forrester’s book it is how much the rigidity of these dualisms prevented a more critical engagement with some of the most important questions of the time: from the relation between economic crisis and state legitimacy, to the links between liberalism and empire and race, to the exclusion of gender from the public sphere. After reading her reconstruction, one is naturally left with the question Croce asked about Hegel: what is living and what is dead

¹⁷ Benedetto Croce, *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel?* (London: Macmillan, 1915), 217.

¹⁸ Croce, 218.

in the philosophy of John Rawls? Is it possible to remain a Rawlsian whilst being aware of the historical and political limitations of Rawls's thought?

I started with Croce because, to my mind, the most persuasive answer to the question of the relationship between uncovering historical limitations and fidelity to a particular body of work is the one Croce gave in answer to the question of whether he was a Hegelian. He was one, he argued, but only in the sense that “no thinker and no historical movement of thought come to pass without bearing fruit, without depositing an element of truth, which forms part, consciously or no, of living modern thought”.¹⁹ If Croce was right, and if Forrester is right, we can accept that Rawls was a product of his age, but also treat him as a philosopher who deposited some elements of truth to our understanding of the world. But what were those elements? Are there parts of Rawls's analysis that survive the limitations of the context of their production? And if so, which? What philosophy of politics can we develop once we learn about the politics of philosophy? If contemporary political philosophy could stop moving in the shadow of Rawls, and stand, rather, on his shoulders, how would it go forward? Forrester's book does not try to answer these questions. Fair enough. She adopts the perspective of the historian rather than the philosopher. For historical research to be rigorous and illuminating, too much emphasis on truth might turn out to be an obstacle. But suppose Croce (and Hegel) were right that there is both history and the philosophy of history, and that, relatedly, there is a politics of political philosophy but also a philosophy of politics. And suppose that perspective enables us to reflect on truth not as a product but as a process through which progressively plausible theories and methods are revealed, and implausible ones are discarded. What, if any, elements of truth understood in that way has Rawls contributed? In what follows I want to advance three, necessarily sketchy, suggestions.

The first one focuses on Rawls's aim. His theory centres on the primacy of justice as “the first virtue of social institutions”²⁰ and his ambition was to defend a particular conception of justice, justice as fairness, that could act as a regulative ideal on the basis of which to think about the organisation of the basic structure of society. Yet as Forrester's book shows, Rawls's view of justice was too wedded to a liberal juridical framework which ends up unduly prioritising certain sites of social change embedded in consensual politics (e.g. the constitution and related legal documents) and restricting, even if not entirely eliminating, those that take a more antagonistic form.

But is it possible to preserve the focus on justice whilst putting the apparatus to a more critical use? I think it is, and that this requires distinguishing more clearly between the problem of justice and the problem of rights, and preserving the critical focus on justice to scrutinise further the historical, economic and political context of rights' production and enactment. In particular, I think it is important to retain Rawls's Kantian focus on the relation between justice, impartiality, and the imperative of avoiding arbitrary uses of power whilst redeploying his tools in a theory that, instead of seeking to reform the liberal state, takes aim at it. On this alternative, critical use of justice, the theory of justice is not institutionalised top-down, as with Rawls's analysis, but bottom-up.²¹ Or, to put it differently, the principles of justice are at the service of a critical social theory that helps us analyse the individuals and groups in society that are disempowered by the liberal state, to assess their claims, to uncover the historical patterns that have led to their exclusion, and to reflect on future political processes that enable an effective exercise of their political agency. If we proceed that way, we might discover that liberalism and democracy come apart rather than supporting each other. And we might reflect more productively on the question of alternatives to liberalism rather than schemes for rescuing it.

This connects to the second important contribution of Rawls's work: his method. The three elements central to that method (reflective equilibrium, the original position and the idea of public reason) are sometimes seen as in tension with

¹⁹ Croce, 217.

²⁰ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, revised ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 3.

²¹ For a longer discussion of how this might be done, see especially my *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), especially chapter 2.

each other. Yet what is common to all of them is the commitment to justification, understood as a practical capacity on the basis of which we can judge the authority of certain moral, and political norms. Rawls's method was an effort to respond to scepticism about the validity of norms but without falling into the dogmatism of taking intuitions as authoritative. Politically this is hugely relevant: it enabled Rawls to acknowledge fundamental disagreements without succumbing to radical relativism. To defend his theory, he proceeded inductively (as is the case with the analysis of how considered judgments support moral principles), deductively (as is the case of the proceduralism characterising the original position) and historically (as is the case of his appeal to public reason).²² His coherentist project of justification continued a methodological tradition that shared important features with both Kantian constructivism and with Hegelian dialectics (where the latter is understood as a historicised form of constructivism). In both cases, scepticism and dogmatism were two essential moments in the process of reflexive validation of reason, through the limitations of which we can vindicate its capacity for justification.

Yet Rawls also departed sharply from the kind of critical metaphysics required to uphold this stance. Instead of reason, he chose to focus on the relation between the reasonable and the rational, and on an understanding of the well-ordered society as a "game" of social cooperation with which players would be willing to engage only after devising fair rules. Instead of being historicised, liberalism ended up reified. It assimilated freedom and equality and discarded as beyond the remit of justice all alternative efforts to appropriate these ideas for purposes that were critical of liberalism. In the name of a disjunction between the ideals of liberalism and the reality of its institutions, liberals ended up hegemonizing the claim to interrogate liberalism's problematic legacy and co-opting most alternative traditions of thought (witness the fate of analytical Marxism).

To vindicate what is still valuable in Rawls's method, we need to move beyond its liberal straightjacket. We need to replace the metaphor of cooperative games with a vision of society able to incorporate the demands of those that are not interested in playing the liberal game but in fundamentally changing its rules. We need to see that method in continuity with a critical tradition in which liberalism is only one of the many stages in a philosophical analysis of history that focus on the development of *human* freedom. That, I think, requires a theory of freedom *beyond* liberalism, and an effort to rethink (and possibly reinvent) the philosophy of history beyond its traditional attachment to liberal (and colonial Western) sites. But what form should these non-liberal and anti-colonial theories and demands take to still be considered *just* and justified? Can Rawls's method be stretched that far?

This question can be partly addressed by turning to my final point, which is about the scope of Rawls's enquiry and the problem of global justice. As Forrester points out, thousands of pages were written to ask whether the scheme of social cooperation on which *A Theory of Justice* was based could be extended to the world at large. Rawls's own answer was, as is well-known, negative. When he came to replicate the framework of *A Theory of Justice* in *The Law of Peoples*, the result was frustrating, even for those who had followed Rawls up to that point.²³ He explained how participants of the global original position were representatives of 'peoples' and ended up with a list of requirements of justice which more or less overlapped with the functional commitments of existing international legal institutions. But how could Rawls be blind to the colonial heritage of the liberal international order and the way it undermines rather than expressing *human* freedom?

Yet Rawls's answer to the problem of global justice was a predictable, if disappointing, result of the restriction of a moral constructivism of persons to the constructivism of 'citizens' and the reduction of 'practical' reason to 'public' reason. And Rawlsians' rebuttal was an equally problematic return to the assertion of the primacy of liberalism (this time writ large) without asking the fundamental question of the compatibility between global capitalist markets and the egalitarian promises

²² For a discussion of how these three elements come together, see T. M. Scanlon, "Rawls on Justification," in Samuel Freeman, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 139-167.

²³ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, cit. and John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

of the liberal state, or without taking the Rawlsian challenge of reflecting on which regime types (e.g. property-owning democracy, liberal socialism etc.) could feature in a global analysis of the problem of egalitarian justice.

In my view, to ask these questions in the right way, we need to return to a historicised constructivist method but move beyond the attempt to anchor the demands of reason either to the endorsement of community norms (as with the communitarian position) or to the overlapping consensus of citizens in a pluralistic society (as with the standard Rawlsian view).²⁴ In both cases practical reason becomes unable to accommodate the demands of those who end up excluded, either because they rebel to community norms or because they oppose the liberal institutional project, including its extension to the international realm as understood by Rawls. But is it possible to return to the Kantian version of constructivism where public reason is understood as “the public in the strict sense, that is, the world”?²⁵ What sites, institutions, forms of agency and modes of historical analysis (and, yes, philosophies of history) should that project prioritise to articulate the public demands of justice in a way that does not lead to the exclusions Forrester rightly underlines? The historical analysis she develops in *In the Shadow of Justice*, has given us extremely valuable tools to understand how serious these exclusions are. But it is important to take her account on board in a constructive rather than sceptical (or realist) mode. Reflecting on what is valuable in Rawls’s thought is a crucial part of the effort to remedy its limitations in the future, to move not in the shadow of justice, but on the shoulders of the giant that Rawls was.

²⁴ For a critique of liberal public reason, see my “A Sufficiently Just Liberal Society is an Illusion,” *Res Publica* (forthcoming).

²⁵ Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?” in Mary J. Gregor, ed., *Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1784]), 38.

RESPONSE BY KATRINA FORRESTER, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

I am extremely grateful to Alyssa Battistoni, Angus Burgin, Stefan Eich, and Lea Ypi for taking the time to engage with *In the Shadow of Justice* so closely and for their invigorating responses, to Samuel Moyn for his generosity in introducing the forum, and to Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins and Diane Labrosse for commissioning and editing the discussion.

I want to start off on a personal note. I did not set out to write a book about John Rawls. I was never taught Rawls's theory as an undergraduate (I studied history) and I first encountered Rawls through Raymond Geuss's critiques of liberalism.²⁶ That encounter was generative: I was sympathetic to Geuss's position, yet when I later read Rawls I not only admired him as a philosopher (it's hard not to) but found Geuss's political picture limited. It seemed there was more to say about Rawls understood as ideology, and I wondered if it could be said by understanding Rawls as history. But doing intellectual history also tends to breed sympathy with the actors studied. A number of the probing comments in this forum are therefore correct to note my ambivalence about my book's subjects. I am caught between the pull of sympathetic reconstruction demanded of historians of political thought and the ideology critiques of the critical theorist, as well as the combination of admiration and aversion for philosophers that are typical of historians. I am also guilty of both the sympathy and hostility born from a degree of identification with my subjects (as an academic teaching in the same elite institutions), as well as the hopes and frustrations that come from inhabiting a corner of the academic universe that was in part created by them.

I have tried to put all these ambivalences to productive use. The contributions to this forum engage me precisely on the terrain of those ambivalences and draw out the conceptual concerns which undergird the book—ideas about time, history, abstraction, utopia, ideology, and their meaning for political thought today. With these themes in mind, in what follows I focus on the stakes of the history I tell, and its limits. I then discuss what political theory and political philosophy might look like outside the shadow of justice.

In the Shadow of Justice is a history of the transformation that took place in political philosophy in the second part of the twentieth century. It tries to situate the rise of a certain form of liberal political philosophy—that encompassed Rawls, Rawlsianism, liberal egalitarianism, the philosophy of public affairs, and applied ethics—against the backdrop of the political and economic transformations of the post-Second World War order (with a particular focus on the U.S. and the UK). The success of this liberal political philosophy can seem ironic or tragic when set against the shift from welfarism to neoliberalism.²⁷ As Battistoni and Eich helpfully clarify, I push against this reading, for a few reasons. The story of a stark break in the 1970s obscures the earlier origins of neoliberalism and creates a false golden age of New Deal or postwar welfarism (before the corruption of capitalism).²⁸ If that story is rejected as wrong or too simple, we cannot see the rise of Rawlsianism as simply ironic or tragic. Something more complicated is going on: the rise of liberal egalitarianism intersects in complex ways with the broader history of neoliberalism, and the welfare state's consolidation, legitimation, and fracturing. As Eich emphasizes, the story I tell is therefore one of untimeliness.

²⁶ Raymond Geuss, *History and Illusion in Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Geuss, *Outside Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) and Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008)

²⁷ Samuel Moyn, *Not Enough* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

²⁸ For some of the many histories that unsettle the story of a stark break, in a variety of different ways, see Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Judith Stein, *Running Steel, Running America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); Gabriel Emmet Winant, "Crucible of Care: Economic Change and Inequality in Postwar Pittsburgh, 1955-1995," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University (2018); David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-Century History* (London: Allen Lane, 2018); Amy C. Offner, *Sorting out the Mixed Economy: The Rise and Fall of Welfare and Developmental States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

This untimeliness does not mean this is a story of pure contingency. An ironic view suggests that the rise of liberal egalitarianism is contingent; denaturalizing the Rawlsian apparatus thus reveals roads not taken. In the book, I do point to certain roads not taken—in debates about civil disobedience, responsibility, reparations, dependency theory (I do not think, though, that all of these roads are today desirable or open to us). Yet I want to be specific about where the contingency in the broader story lies. Rawls developed his theory of justice in the 1950s. It bore the marks of the postwar ideology of liberal consensus. But he did not publish his book until 1971. That was lucky timing: in the meantime, all the canonical texts of postwar liberalism were attacked in the 1960s. Not Rawls. His theory was unpublished, and it survived that turbulence unscathed. In a moment of political disorder, Rawls's theory provided a sense of philosophical order and the basis for a new consensus, at the very moment when other liberal theories were challenged. The contingent date of publication turned out to be crucial (and the fact of wide circulation in draft, without publication, turned out to be vital to the reception of *A Theory of Justice*, and the view of its publication as a major philosophical event). Yet if Rawls's theory is read as a political intervention—and, when writing the history of political thought, it seems to me entirely permissible to treat as political interventions philosophical texts that were not understood by their authors as primarily political—then its politics do not seem contingent (nor are they particularly mysterious). Moreover, Rawls's thought is untimely, but its rise to dominance is secured, as Battistoni puts it, “not *despite* but *because* it emerged at the end of the age it took for granted.”

In the Shadow of Justice is, in this sense, an effort to understand how philosophical events relate to epochal change. It raises questions about, in Eich's terms, how philosophy relates to time. So how should we understand the relationship of liberal political philosophers to the politics of their time? It is worth restating here that the book tries to chart the development not only of Rawlsianism, but the intimately related rise of what I describe as the “philosophy of public affairs” (xviii). These two distinct but interconnected parts of political philosophy exemplify the different ways in which philosophers have related to their current political moment. They also have distinct though interlocking legacies and trajectories.

At one level, there is a story of continuity and of the long-lasting Rawlsian framework (that, once consolidated, moves in and out of relevance as political circumstances change). As Eich notes, Rawls's move to abstraction in this respect worked in his favour: it gave his theory staying power. Any critique of Rawlsianism would have to concede that this abstraction in part secures its resilience. And today, this resilience may yet allow for another Rawls revival: as Battistoni notes, Rawls may yet still provide much for left-liberals. Eich is right to note my deliberate ambivalence on what the future holds: if Rawlsianism can be said to have performed the function of ideology in the post-1970s era, it is probably too soon to tell if it can serve as a utopian horizon in the post-2008/2016 one (if these are indeed different eras; it is probably too soon to tell that too).

Then there is the other level. Battistoni underscores my argument that it is not that liberal political philosophers do not engage with current political problems, but that they have responded to political “events” in a particular, rapid-fire way, and in accordance with their own distinctive view both of what counts as politics and of what counts as a public affair of philosophical interest. If Rawls's abstractions and his approach to political theorizing were developed in the immediate postwar, the manner of political engagement typical of the philosophy of public affairs was set in the Vietnam years.²⁹ There are two different stories here: the former is one of philosophical slowness and the construction of resilient abstractions; the latter of fast-paced, rapid responses to everyday problems. I have struggled to characterize adequately that latter temporality.³⁰ But this duality does capture the two ways that political philosophers come to respond to politics (and it solidifies as the dualism of normative theory and applied ethics/the philosophy of public affairs, or later sometimes as ideal and non-ideal theory). As Ypi emphasizes, it is one of many dualisms that come to shape the character of political philosophy. One of the questions I want to raise about contemporary political theory is whether this dual approach is the right framework through which to engage current politics today. I will come back to this below.

²⁹ Cf. William Ruddick, “Philosophy and Public Affairs,” *Social Research* 47:4 (1980): 734-748.

³⁰ In the book I refer to Sewell's account of “eventfulness,” though that doesn't map precisely. See William H. Sewell Jr., “The Temporalities of Capitalism,” *Socio-Economic Review* 6:3 (2008): 517-537.

In focusing on these questions about the relationship of political philosophy to politics, I have downplayed other aspects of the history of Anglophone liberal philosophy. Burgin focuses on them. He notes that I understate Rawls's specialness, describing his theory as encyclopedic. This is in line with my emphasis on the ideological character of aspects of Rawls's theory, but I would not want to disregard its enormous innovations. Yet Burgin is right that I have not showed in detail how my readings of the early Rawls should reshape our understanding of *A Theory of Justice*. This will be the challenge facing the newest sector of what Brian Barry already in 1973 termed the "Rawls industry"—the study of the "historical Rawls," to which my book is one contribution.³¹ There is a huge amount of fascinating work both new and forthcoming, by Kenzie Bok, Andrius Galisanka, Joel Isaac, and Brandon Terry, among others, who will see to this task.³²

Rather than reinterpreting particular arguments within Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, I have focused on its political effects. The objections to *In the Shadow of Justice*'s limitations in this regard are thus more pressing. Battistoni and Burgin note there are material, particularly institutional, circumstances that I assume rather than interrogate—notably, the dominance of the philosophy done in elite institutions across the discipline of Anglophone political philosophy as a whole. I concede this point: I hope that others will establish how this dominance was secured beyond the gatekeeping journals.³³ My book aimed more at intellectual history than reception history, and I did not trace comprehensively all the corners Rawls ended up (in syllabi, think tanks, across the disciplines). Nor did I move beyond the universities. I share Burgin's hope that others will write the history of the liberal think tanks and research centers where Rawlsians may or may not have had influence (and which, relative to the think tanks of the right, have been understudied). In particular, I suspect there is an interesting history to be told about the ethics centers and policy centers that, as I discuss briefly in the book, were built alongside the philosophy of public affairs.

This leads to another objection of Burgin's: that I do not tell the story of academic political theory beyond Rawlsianism or chart the reception of Rawls in political theory (rather than political philosophy). I tried to tell parts of this story: building on the work of John Gunnell and others, I suggest that the rise of Rawlsianism itself produced a bifurcation between the new political philosophy (housed largely but not exclusively within philosophy departments) and the older U.S. political theory (its practitioners housed within political science departments and self-defining through their opposition to behavioral political science).³⁴ But those distinctions were unstable: political philosophers came to identify as such often as a way of indicating a sympathy with Rawlsianism (a self-designation used by those in political science departments and law schools, as well as philosophy departments). In chapter 8, I suggest that political theory, in turn, consolidated its disciplinary character, in part, in response and opposition to Rawlsianism.

Battistoni implicitly makes a further suggestion: that in my focus on Rawls I overstate the dominance of Rawlsianism. It may be that it was not hegemonic but merely dominant in particular elite institutions. There is an additional point here: I am aware that in centering Rawls I may not only overinflate his role in political philosophy, but I may have also replicated or entrenched existing exclusions. By relegating many at the margins of political philosophy to my footnotes, I may have

³¹ Brian Barry, "Just Men and Just Laws: Rawls on the Just Constitution," APSA roundtable, in "APSA roundtable on TJ (September 1973, New Orleans)," Box 24, Folder 10, John Rawls Papers.

³² For recent and forthcoming special issues see Mark Bevir, "John Rawls in Light of the Archive: Introduction to the Symposium on the Rawls Papers," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 78:2 (2017); Andrius Galisanka, *John Rawls: The Path to A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019) and on the "historical Rawls" coinage see Sophie Smith, Teresa Bejan, Annette Zimmerman, "The Historical Rawls," *Modern Intellectual History* (forthcoming).

³³ For work in this vein see for example, on the dominance of Harvard Ph.D.s on postwar analytical philosophy, Jonathan Strassfeld, "American Divide: The Making of 'Continental' Philosophy," *Modern Intellectual History* (published online 2018): 1-34.

³⁴ John G. Gunnell, *The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of an American Vocation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

performed an act of silencing and marginalization myself.³⁵ In a reverse move, I have also perhaps misleadingly coded as marginalized those who were merely not in the most elite institutions (but whose work—or subject position—may not have the characteristics of a marginalized or heterodox theory). I concede the force of these objections too. However, I suspect that these are part of the risks of trying to trace a hegemonic formation. Though I did not give as much room to excluded theories as I might have in this project, I nonetheless tried to be attentive to where liberal political philosophy was itself shaped by those it marginalized. I hope that others will give more room to the excluded; I have learned a great deal from Sophie Smith’s forthcoming work on the silencing of feminist philosophers by Rawlsianism, which will be an essential and vital contribution to this line of inquiry.³⁶ Beyond this, many twentieth-century traditions of political theory still await their historians.³⁷

So what does all this mean for political theory today? Battistoni suggests that perhaps we might not expect much more from political thinkers in elite institutions, since their interests (at least the interests of those with stable jobs) cut against radicalism. Perhaps, then, the logic that the book traces—of domestication, diffusion, and absorption—captures the tendency of all well-intentioned elite political theory in liberal societies. *In the Shadow of Justice* might thus be read as a case study in the sociology of elite intellectuals and the production of legitimating ideology, rather than a discrete intellectual history of a philosophical movement. It could certainly be read in this way. In this sense, the study of the “historical Rawls” may be the next chapter in the reproduction of an intellectual elite (it has not escaped my notice that the centers for it so far are Oxford and Harvard via Cambridge). And yet I do not think this leads necessarily to fatalism. There are always ideological cleavages and fault-lines to be exploited. We may not expect much from progressive professors in elite institutions, but we might expect more.

What of the content of political theory? Burgin writes that I have an “antipathy” to Rawls’s “ahistorical sensibility” (on this view, the trouble with Rawlsianism was its abstraction; even Robert Nozick has a “thicker” historical orientation). There are certainly a number of points in the book where I discuss critically the place of appeals to history within political theory, but I do not mean to contrast abstraction with history in this particular way—nor by an appeal to history do I always mean an appeal to a “thicker” account of “lived experience.” I did not want to argue that all political philosophy ought to be historical or attentive to experience. As I describe in the book, this particular critique “from history” was one leveled at Rawlsians (and liberal philosophers more broadly) in the 1980s—both by communitarian theorists (and communitarian-inspired cultural and intellectual historians) who appealed to experience, as well as to romantic narratives of American democratic development (260), and by more minimalist liberals who appealed to “contingency” and looked to history as a bearer of warnings (as the late Rawls himself also did) (266-7). I do not see a solution to the limits of liberal political philosophy in becoming more historical in *this* way.

If there is a compelling critique from history, it is not one that contrasts historical experience and particularity with abstraction or systematicity in general, but rather a critique of liberal egalitarianism in particular for its lacks of a historical consciousness of (and arguments from) histories of accumulation, exchange, domination, exploitation, and institutional power. (Parenthetically, by way of contextualizing myself: it is no surprise that I make this point at a moment where historians are writing about capitalism, empire, and labour, with a more institutional focus; contrast these with the cultural histories of a previous generation of historians (from which communitarian theorists took inspiration and which they

³⁵ This may be further entrenched by my own publishing choices: I published an account of how liberal philosophers engaged with and rejected demands for reparations for slavery in a separate chapter, but only dealt with this briefly in the book. See Katrina Forrester, “Reparations, History, and the Origins of Global Justice,” in Duncan Bell, ed., *Empire, Race, and Global Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 22-51.

³⁶ Sophie Smith, “Okin, Rawls and the Politics of Political Philosophy,” (unpublished paper, 2017).

³⁷ For existing accounts see Emily Hauptmann, “A Local History of ‘the Political,’” *Political Theory* 32:1 (2004): 34-60; Tony Burns and James Connelly, *The Legacy of Leo Strauss* (Exeter: Imprint, 2010).

inspired) that tacitly associated history with experience.) I would add that, more broadly, there is also a critique that can be levelled at analytical political philosophy in general for its lack of reflexivity about its own place within history (a reflexivity widely expected of much social theory after critical theory, poststructuralism and postcolonialism). But an appeal to history by political theorists can mean a variety of things; as Ypi suggests, it might also entail a re-engagement by liberal egalitarians with the philosophy of history. One of the things I hope my book suggests is that we need not reduce the role of history in political theory to a critique of abstraction in the name of experience.

This leads to a broader question: is it desirable, or even possible, to abandon Rawlsianism and its conceptual vocabulary of justice? Ypi makes a case against doing so, and Battistoni also suggests reasons for caution. First, to respond to Ypi: I could not have asked for a more rewarding response from a political philosopher who wants to, as she puts it, stand not in Rawls's shadow, but "on his shoulders." She argues that many of the aspects of Rawls's theory that I argue are tied to postwar liberalism and shot through with its exclusions and limitations—its vision of society, understanding of justification, and the broader apparatus of the theory (the basic structure, public reason)—can be disaggregated from the theory of justice. Justice can become a tool of critical social theory. Political philosophy can move beyond the Rawlsian "reification" of liberalism and its liberal "straitjacket." Doing so will involve new characterizations of society, new philosophies of history and freedom, the divorce of justice from rights, and alternatives to public reason. I don't share Ypi's Kantian inclinations, but I have learnt much from her work to date and I am excited to see this possible future for political philosophy play out.³⁸

From a philosophical point of view, Ypi argues that altogether reinventing the wheel is unnecessary. It also seems difficult to do. As I point out in the book, there are practical reasons why philosophers continue to go back to Rawls: the publishing pressures wrought by adjunctification and the incentive structures of the neoliberal university hardly create the conditions for cross-disciplinary pollination and rebuilding philosophical systems from the bottom up. Battistoni points to another reason why abandoning justice theory may be undesirable. Justice is the "lingua franca" of many social movements. Activists and organizers, like egalitarian philosophers, contrast justice with humanitarianism: movements for reproductive justice, racial justice, and environmental justice demand what is owed (rather than asking for good-will reforms) and use the vocabulary of justice to designate this radicalism. Maybe a new cleavage is opening in which Rawls will be taken up not just by left-liberal policymakers, but also social movements. Again, only time will tell. Battistoni also helpfully points to what political theorists might learn from and offer those movements: by exploring questions of strategy, as well as the ethics of the oppressed (in these areas, I have learnt much from the work of Karuna Mantena, Alex Gourevitch, Brandon Terry, Erin Pineda, Tommie Shelby, Shatema Threadcraft, and others).³⁹

But what of the role of political theorists? Do I mean to say that all political philosophers should go to the barricades, to embody the relevance of egalitarianism to social movements? I would be delighted if they did, but no, I don't think that is how political philosophy earns its legitimacy. Battistoni's probing comments about the need for political theorists to think of ourselves as political actors raises the specter of an old debate about the responsibility of intellectuals that was live when analytical philosophers came to political problems in the era of the Vietnam War.⁴⁰ Their answers to that debate were often appealingly humble yet quietist (that philosophy is, in the end, just philosophy). But other traditions of theorizing have been less satisfied with that response. The feminist tradition is particularly instructive. We now take the personal to be political,

³⁸ Lea Ypi, *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³⁹ Karuna Mantena, "Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Nonviolence," *American Political Science Review* 106:2 (2012): 455-470; Erin Pineda, "Civil Disobedience and Punishment: (Mis)reading Justification and Strategy from SNCC to Snowden," *History of the Present* 5:1 (2015): 1-30; Alex Gourevitch, "The Right to Strike: A Radical View," *American Political Science Review* 112:4 (2018): 905-917; Brandon Terry, *The Tragic Vision of the Civil Rights Movement* (forthcoming); Tommie Shelby, *Dark Ghettos: Injustice, Dissent, and Reform* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); Shatema Threadcraft, *Intimate Justice: The Black Female Body and the Body Politic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁴⁰ Noam Chomsky, "The Responsibility of Intellectuals," *New York Review of Books* (23 February 1967).

so isn't the philosophical political, too?⁴¹ Feminist theorists have long engaged social movements and spurred conceptual innovation in dialogue with them: take the concepts of sex work, emotional labour, sexual harassment, marital rape, intersectionality, gender (the feminist canon is filled with philosophers and theorists, across the disciplines, who have in different ways conceived their theories as forms of political action: Catherine MacKinnon, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Judith Butler, Hortense Spillers, Arlie Hochschild, Nancy Fraser, among others).

In practice, therefore, exploring the political role of the theorist and the politics of philosophy can mean a variety of things. The relation of theory to practice has been re-interrogated over the last decade in various debates that have spawned vast literatures (about political realism or non-ideal theory in political philosophy, or about education, decolonizing the curriculum, and the politics and theory of everyday life, as in Sara Ahmed's influential work).⁴² The tradition of critical theory, as Eich reminds us, has also long been committed to theorizing the relation of theory to politics. But political philosophers in the egalitarian tradition have for so long prioritized the normative above the "empirical" that it is sometimes hard to remember that it is possible to use philosophical tools in other ways. As Ypi suggests, both within and outside of that tradition, there is much philosophical work to be done characterizing society in politically, and empirically, sensitive ways (it is already being done: I think here, both within and outside egalitarianism, of recent and forthcoming work by Chiara Cordelli on the privatized state, Adom Getachew on decolonization, David Lebow on neoliberalism, and Charles Mills on the racial state).⁴³

All this work involves abstractions, and a division of labour. I want to close by suggesting that where we draw that division is worth interrogating, especially if one worries that the distinction between systematic normative theory and "public affairs," of Rawlsian political philosophy and public policy, is not the most desirable one. A division of labour from a different intellectual tradition may be helpful here. In my new research, I've been looking at Marxist feminist debates about work and feminist demands from the 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁴ As Lise Vogel puts it in her retrospective on the domestic labour debates of that period, many feminists then saw the importance of developing an abstract conceptual lens to understand society (hence theories of social reproduction, in post-Althusserian mode).⁴⁵ But many also took seriously the need for conjunctural analysis (now most famously associated with Stuart Hall's reading of Gramsci, but practiced by many feminist theorists, from Juliet Mitchell to Angela Davis).⁴⁶ Mapping the political questions raised in particular conjunctures might well generate distinctive philosophical puzzles. We could do worse than start from where that tradition left off.

⁴¹ Cf. Lorna Finlayson, *The Political is Political: Conformity and the Illusion of Dissent in Contemporary Political Philosophy* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).

⁴² Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

⁴³ Chiara Cordelli, *The Privatized State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019); David Lebow, "Trumpism and the Dialectic of Neoliberal Reason," *Perspectives on Politics* 17:2 (2019); Charles Mills, "The Racial State" (forthcoming).

⁴⁴ On feminist demanding see Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

⁴⁵ Lise Vogel, "Domestic Labor Revisited," *Science & Society* 64:2 (2000): 151-170.

⁴⁶ Stuart Hall, *Policing the Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1978); Juliet Mitchell, *Women's Estate* (London: Verso, 1970); Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (London: Vintage, 1981).