

focuses on other Berlin scholars, such as Jonathan Riley and William Galston, as well as on the work of Richard Bellamy, John Kekes, Martha Nussbaum, and Bernard Williams. His reading of their works is informative, even setting aside their relation to Berlin. If there is one drawback to his discussion, it is that his conceptual approach seems susceptible to the weakness of all deductive arguments. When value pluralism is defined in such a way as to lead to key components of liberalism, then one cannot help but wonder how things would look if it was defined differently, particularly if value pluralism did not involve a concern for coherence. Crowder notes this objection (136–37), but this may be a bigger problem than he allows.

As regards Lyons, he relates Berlin's arguments directly to those of Richard Rorty, Quentin Skinner, Galen Strawson, and Charles Taylor, as well as various others, such as Hume, Nietzsche, Plato, and Socrates. The sweep is impressive, and it is clear that Lyons has been thinking about these issues for a while. However, if there is a misstep in his discussion, it is the earnestness mentioned before, which leads him to dismiss much of the secondary literature as overly pedantic. This is a bit of a mistake. Lyons's final argument is reminiscent of John Gray's, and fuller treatment of Gray and other Berlin scholars would help clarify the differences between them. Nevertheless, Lyons's book is a noteworthy contribution to Berlin scholarship, and, like Crowder's, merits the attention of anyone interested in these issues.

–Jason Ferrell
Concordia University



Daniele Botti: *John Rawls and American Pragmatism: Between Engagement and Avoidance*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019. Pp. xix, 231.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670521000176

In this ambitious book, Daniele Botti argues that Rawls is not, as he claims, Kantian, but rather is best interpreted as belonging to the tradition of American pragmatism. This involves several lines of argument. Uncovering connections with pragmatism in Rawls's intellectual history, Botti argues that applying Peirce's notion of truth to ethical inquiry leads Rawls to identify principles of justice by induction, formalized in the concept of reflective equilibrium (90). Principles identified through a logical-deductive exercise (the original position) based on the options from the ethical traditions are tested

against considered convictions of our “shared moral language,” and against empirical reality, as practical propositions (140). Then Botti centers the selection of principles of justice in this pragmatic reflective equilibrium (134, 177), rather than in deliberations from the original position, as so many have understood Rawls to have done (200).

Botti explains Rawls’s characterization of his own views as Kantian, stripped of Kant’s metaphysical underpinnings, as a means to “more efficiently convey his own views,” but in this, Botti argues, Rawls “was probably mistaken. . . for the appeal to Kant’s views raised discussions that he most likely wanted to avoid” (208). It is also for strategic reasons that Rawls avoids acknowledging his debt to Peirce. Where Peirce’s notion of truth that Rawls is said to adopt is one of unanimous but provisional agreement, this understanding and use of Peirce’s notion, Botti argues, was not widely accepted. “Hence, avoiding explicit commitments even to Peirce’s views allowed Rawls to bypass discussions that he suspected would have led him into another meta-ethical impasse” (140; see also 107).

Botti also brings Rawls into a reinterpreted history of American pragmatism, and he discusses pragmatists’ interpretations of Rawls, arguing against the common view that Rawls takes a “pragmatic turn” in moving from the formalism of *A Theory of Justice* (*TJ*) to the historically embedded *Political Liberalism* (*PL*). The dominant narrative has pragmatism rising from Peirce and James in the late nineteenth century, hegemonic with Dewey in the 1920s, eclipsed by analytic philosophy in the 1950s to 1970s, and resurgent with Rorty in the 1980s. Botti argues, however, that as Rawls relaunched political philosophy and the social contract tradition in the ‘50s and ‘60s, his incorporation of “some of the core tenets of pragmatism in his methodology” (153) should place him as representing the “political line” of the ongoing, living tradition (156).

Botti’s characterization of an unpragmatic turn from *TJ* to *PL*, deepened in *Law of Peoples* (*LP*), starts with his identifying two of pragmatism’s defining features: a “method, which is democracy,” and a “universalistic thrust” (76). By “democracy,” Botti does not mean the form of government, but a “community of inquiry,” in which “everyone is entitled to participate,” and which is universalistic in being “incompatible with nationalistic or cultural limitations” (78). He takes the reflective equilibrium of *TJ* to be available to any moral inquirer, and hence democratic. In *PL*, however, Rawls apparently violates these conditions when he restricts the discussion to people of liberal-constitutional regimes who are committed to basic equal liberties (219). In both *PL* and *LP*, according to Botti, Rawls violates these conditions by turning his characterization of a society as an “isolated, self-contained, and self-sufficient unit” from a framework for the thought experiment of the original position in *TJ* into “an empirical fact and normative foundation” (225). According to Botti, because Rawls requires the moral inquirer to reason from the perspective of a liberal people in *PL* and *LP*, and, in *LP*, to come to agreement on rules of conduct for a preestablished international framework,

he excludes cosmopolitan conceptions of justice that pragmatism would consider, and bases the framework on assumptions about societies that “increasingly became immune to reflective equilibrium” (227–28).

I find Botti’s characterization of Rawls as a pragmatist problematic in two respects. First, Botti draws his defining features of pragmatism not from the work of Peirce, James, and Dewey, but from critics of Rorty, and the pragmatism they define seems broad enough to accommodate many modern philosophers. Second, Botti fails to acknowledge Kantian ideas that are central to Rawls’s philosophy, such as the priority of the right over the good and the ideal of autonomy. The structure of Rawls’s theory of justice actually is, as Rawls often asserts, Kantian, and the original position actually is more central than reflective equilibrium to his selection of principles of justice.

Botti’s extensive archival research “was guided by the narrow question about textual and contextual connections between Rawls’s thinking and American pragmatism” (xiv). This is a narrow basis for identifying Rawls’s intellectual debts and relation to the wider tradition. It appears that Peirce, James, and Dewey identified no central principle for pragmatism such as utilitarians have done with utility maximization (whether average or total). Besides democracy (of views) and universalism, the other features that define pragmatism according to Botti are (1) a notion of thinking as activity stimulated by perplexity and doubt; (2) a problem-solving attitude informed by a provisional, not final, notion of solution; (3) a real-world problem-solving attitude informed by a multidisciplinary vocation; (4) a nonfoundational epistemology—whether implicit or explicit; and (5) a low-profile notion of truth, which is fallibilist yet nonskeptical (76). Given that Botti defines nonfoundationalism as maintaining “that none of the components of an argument, taken in isolation, should be seen as serving as ultimate foundation for it” (77), it seems that J. S. Mill, Marx, and Nietzsche could qualify as pragmatists, and perhaps Kant as well.

Botti demonstrates that as a young scholar, Rawls engaged significantly with “the American tradition,” but when Rawls aims, in *TJ*, to “offer an alternative systematic account of justice that is superior . . . to the dominant utilitarianism of the tradition” (*A Theory of Justice* [Harvard University Press, 1971], vii), it is Kant’s theoretical resources that he employs. Where, by the categorical imperative, one should act only in accordance with that maxim through which one can at the same time will that it become a universal law, in the original position principles of justice are chosen as though one does not know one’s place in society (*TJ*, 12). According to Rawls, both are derived “from the desire to express most fully what we are or can be, namely free and equal rational beings with a liberty to choose” (*TJ*, 256). Just as for Rawls social and economic inequalities must be to everyone’s advantage (*TJ*, 60), so for Kant principles of right constrain incentives absolutely. Rawlsian guidelines for progressive income taxes, guaranteed health care, and educational institutions that mitigate natural and social inequalities must be consistent enough with reflective equilibrium, but they are not

derived from reflective equilibrium; at least Rawls does not so derive them, nor does Botti show how this might be done.

Rawls says that his main aim in *TJ* “is to present a conception of justice which generalizes and carries to a higher level of abstraction the familiar theory of the social contract as found, say, in Locke, Rousseau, and Kant” (11). Where he reasons with principles congenial to pragmatism, these principles are also familiar from other philosophical traditions. When he locates his theory in the philosophical tradition (e.g., *TJ*, 11–53, 122–26), he makes no mention of pragmatism. His theory may be consistent with pragmatism in some respects, but I think it a mistake to call Rawls a pragmatist.

–Paul Clements
Western Michigan University



Lucy Cane: *Sheldon Wolin and Democracy: Seeing through Loss*. (New York: Routledge, 2020. Pp. viii, 222.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670521000231

In this excellent book, Lucy Cane gives us an overview of Wolin’s whole career, stretching from two essays of his on Richard Hooker and David Hume culled from his doctoral dissertation done under the supervision of Louis Hartz at Harvard in the late 1940s to his last published works, *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* (Princeton University Press, 2008) and (with Christopher Hedges) “Can Capitalism and Democracy Co-exist?” (*The Real News Network*, Oct./Nov. 2014). The great advantage in viewing the Wolin corpus holistically is that one sees more sharply than was previously possible the continuities, discontinuities, elisions, and circumventions that mark the work. For example, one is able to emphatically see that the central category of “the political” in Wolin’s thought is Heideggerian in inspiration and Arendtian in implementation. “The political” in Wolin is an invented phenomenological category fashioned to capture what has been lost with the advent of modernity: the face-to-face contact with other people, and the sense of belonging to a community consisting of other people driven by the same concerns and plagued by the same anxieties as ourselves.

According to Cane, Wolin was convinced early in his career that the radical individualism and personal isolationism bred by liberalism was a key factor