

For this reason, proponents of various nonliberal forms of democracy (deliberative theorists, and proponents of ant/agonistic democracy, for example) will want to show how accounts like Urbinati's use myths, symbols, and narratives, including her powerful legitimating stories from the ancient Greek and Roman world, that produce the liberal subjects she assumes as the normative lynchpin of her argument. For liberals and nonliberals alike, however, this book is a useful and powerful reminder to be alert to the potentially depoliticizing consequences of any move to refigure democracy, however democratic it may at first seem.

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Adam Adatto Sandel: *The Place of Prejudice: A Case for Reasoning within the World*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. Pp. 288.)

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The term “prejudice” carries largely pejorative connotations, signifying an unreflective narrowness of mind and sentiment, an obstacle to clear understanding and wise judgment. Thus the elimination of prejudice and its manifestations is widely and variously embraced as a worthy intellectual and political objective, as if a world unmoved by prejudice would be preferable to one swayed by it. Yet according to Hans-Georg Gadamer the common stance of modern thought since the Enlightenment has embodied a “prejudice against prejudice” — a preconception or prejudgment that preconceptions and prejudgments are ill founded and are improper guides to thought and action. Self-consciously following Gadamer, Sandel seeks to “elaborate and defend [a] situated conception of judgment” that properly understands the ineluctable and ultimately fruitful role of prejudice in thought and action (3). In rehabilitating prejudice, Sandel sketches an alternative basis for judgment that draws breath from the most profound habits of heart and mind.

Sandel traces the modern distrust of prejudice to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century valorizations of the self-possessed mind whose independent use of reason is the standard of true thought and right action. From Francis Bacon and René Descartes we have inherited the view that knowledge, whether in the natural sciences or in abstract philosophy, depends solely upon the illumination of the objective world by the detached rational subject, unaffected by the contingencies of subjective desires, the accidents of environment, and the preconceptions inculcated by external authorities. Thinkers such as Adam Smith added to this epistemological doctrine an ethical dimension, insisting that prejudice distorts ethical judgment. Yet it was Immanuel Kant who offered the purest and most comprehensive statement of the case against prejudice, claiming that prejudice not only separates thought and judgment from truth, but also subjugates the will to

contingencies beyond its control and thus undermines freedom. So successful was the case against prejudice that it effectively set the terms in which tradition and sentiment could be discussed. Thus one finds even Edmund Burke's defense of prejudice cast in terms of the binary opposition between reason and prejudice developed by its critics.

Gadamer, Aristotle, and above all Martin Heidegger supply the resources with which Sandel crafts a situated alternative to the detached model of thought and judgment bequeathed by the Enlightenment. Drawing upon Heidegger's account of Being-in-the-World, Sandel argues that thought and judgment are never in fact detached, but are instead always enveloped by a world into which the individual is thrown. This world presents itself as a meaningful totality of equipment and relations that provides both the occasion and context for thought, judgment, and action. An individual can adopt a self-consciously detached perspective upon this horizon, viewing the world and its contents as an object (as philosophy and the sciences often do), but in so doing one nonetheless remains within the world, enveloped by the horizon one scrutinizes. Sandel thus argues that the distrust of prejudice and the embrace of detachment are themselves the prejudices common to modern thought, and indeed prejudices that substantially misconstrue the phenomenology of everyday life. The influence exerted by givens such as family, community, religion, profession, and locality are not the obstacles to truth and freedom, but elements of the contextual totality in which the individual exists as knower and agent.

Sandel explores this situated view of judgment through discussions of history, moral judgment, and rhetoric. Appealing to Gadamer, Sandel challenges historicism's imperative that we bracket our prejudices in order to understand the past, arguing that our unavoidable preconceptions and prejudgments supply a bridge between bygone ages and our own, enabling the past to acquire a living significance that might shape our understanding and inform our judgment. Aristotle's account of ethical life provides a robust study of situated judgment, according to which one's "comprehensive 'situation' or 'life perspective'" supplies the intelligible but ineluctable horizon against which the good life is understood and pursued (187). Sandel concludes with analysis of political speeches by Lyndon Johnson, Abraham Lincoln, and Frederick Douglass to demonstrate how rhetoric recognizes and addresses its audience as situated, sketching a mode of political discourse that eschews the ideal of detachment without abandoning reason giving. From his deep exegesis of Heidegger to his analysis of political rhetoric Sandel advances the fundamental claim that "we always judge and understand from within our life circumstance" (9). We can understand the horizon that we inhabit critically, adopting a number of different perspectives upon it, but we can never altogether bracket or abandon the world in which we are situated as knowers and doers.

As a tract of philosophical exegesis and argument, Sandel's work merits significant appreciation. Although sometimes slow to develop, the

appropriation of Heidegger rests upon a lucid and encompassing reading of *Being and Time* that is painstaking in its analysis and attentive to the complex interrelation of concepts relevant to the account of understanding and agency Sandel constructs. Upon this carefully built foundation rests clear and deliberate argument that, even if it elicits disagreement from the reader, is unlikely to elicit misunderstanding. Yet the work's capacity to inform the practices of judgment is somewhat less promising. While Sandel offers a compelling abstract account of how judgment is necessarily informed by prejudice, he articulates little basis upon which to judge or criticize any given prejudice. Relying upon a literary analogy drawn from Gadamer, Sandel suggests that legitimate prejudices enable us to make better sense of the world, while illegitimate prejudices do not. What is unclear, however, is how to judge which prejudices make better sense of the world. Do the prejudices of the monist make better sense of the world than those of the pluralist? Could we show that the prejudices of the egalitarian are legitimate while those of the racist are not? While Sandel makes a strong case for the inevitability of reasoning from our prejudices, he offers scant description of how doing so might lead to meaningful conversation or even conversion.

Furthermore, Sandel sets his robust and essentially hermeneutical defense of situatedness against a static and one-dimensional characterization of the prejudice against prejudice. He demands that we attend to the world of meaning within which individuals find and enact themselves as thinkers and doers, yet (apart from a fairly standard gloss on the context of Burke's defense of prejudice) the modern tradition of detachment is presented and dismissed with no attempt to understand why Enlightenment thinkers inveighed against prejudice. If, as Sandel suggests, all thought is situated within a context inclusive of prejudices, then it would surely serve our understanding of even flawed theories to consider the situation and prejudices that shaped them. Yet rather than attempting to understand how the prejudice against prejudice emerged as a meaningful stand taken in a meaningful world, Sandel sets it up as a delusion to be overcome. Such a treatment of detachment may serve the argumentative purposes of the book, but it exemplifies a lack of hermeneutical generosity and a selective blindness to the situatedness of judgment that he valorizes.

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Susan McWilliams: *Traveling Back: Toward a Global Political Theory*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xii, 240.)

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Susan McWilliams's *Traveling Back: Toward a Global Political Theory* presents a broad-ranging survey of the trope of travel in Western political thought.