

Bent Flyvbjerg with its own emphasis on case studies and provisional, limited theorizing. Seeing how the versions of these concepts inherited from the tradition specifically compare to contemporary analogues would help make the case for the continuing usefulness of Western political thought that McWilliams wishes to support.

More broadly, McWilliams's argument contains within it a tension that the book never fully addresses. On the one hand, her examples emphasize particularity, historicity, and contingency, thus suggesting an approach to political theorizing that is always contextual and situational—a political theory that most resembles a kind of practical wisdom rather than political philosophy. Yet at the same time, McWilliams subtitles her book *Toward a Global Political Theory* and frequently speaks of theory in general terms, as if it were not limited by place and time. Does McWilliams wish to offer a less theoretical political theorizing, something akin to what various critics of liberal theory such as Bernard Williams, Raymond Geuss, James Tully, James Scott, and Bent Flyvbjerg have in different ways propounded? Or is this “global political theory” a more refined theory, one that incorporates concepts such as “the other within” and “in-betweenness” but remains committed to developing a complete theoretical vision of political life—and thus a critique internal to the liberal theory that McWilliams both criticizes and promotes?

McWilliams's most suggestive examples, which come at the end of the book, point toward yet a third possibility, one that may well hold the most promise of accomplishing her ambitious agenda. In her conclusion, McWilliams describes the *ilustrados*, Filipinos who traveled abroad to educate themselves before returning to the Philippines and winning their freedom from colonial rule. McWilliams compares these travelers to those who left New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina only to return years later, ostensibly wiser from their travels. With these examples, McWilliams offers the most concrete instances of travel's political significance, that is, of how the politics of travel really begin upon the traveler's return. Both of these examples show concrete instances of practical political theorizing rooted in a particular set of circumstances. If McWilliams indeed seeks to build on her revival of the practice of *theoria*, this may be the place to start.

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Nicholas Wolterstorff: *The Mighty and the Almighty: An Essay in Political Theology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. vii, 181.)

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The title could be confusing. The term “political theology” is not used in the traditional sense described by Varro, in which political theology, creation of the city for civic purposes, is set against the mythical theology of the poets

and the natural theology of the philosophers. Nor is it used in its contemporary sense, reinterpreted by Carl Schmitt (who brought the term back into use), to refer to the theological presuppositions, whether conscious or not, of political theories. As the author himself explains, political theology “is not a branch of theology but a species of political theory, namely, *theological political theory*” (112). The work therefore offers an analysis of the way in which a Christian ought to evaluate the authority of the state (the Mighty) in relation to divine authority (the Almighty)—hence the title, borrowed from a lecture given by Madeleine Albright (vii). The task consists, more specifically, of reformulating the standard question raised since the time of the Early Church Fathers, that of the relationship between the two powers, spiritual and temporal, potentially conflictual, by applying it to the contemporary context formed of liberal, pluralistic, and secular democratic societies.

The author begins (chap. 1) with the speech made by Polycarp (second century CE) to the proconsul who threatens him with martyrdom if he does not renounce his Christian faith, quoting a poem by John Berryman. Polycarp proclaims both his Christian faith and his loyalty to the emperor, while emphasizing that the latter has no authority to dictate his faith. Wolterstorff asks two questions based on this account: (1) May a Christian, who is subject to divine authority, also recognize the authority of the state, and under what conditions? (2) To what extent is the state able to legislate on religious matters? He responds positively to the first question (chaps. 2–10), by drawing attention to the fact that the state is willed by God, under certain conditions, and forms part of his providential plan; he then addresses the second (chaps. 11–15), relating the authority of the state to its own legitimate domain, with reference to the theory of reciprocal limitation of “spheres” advanced by Abraham Kuyper.

The work in question is that of a theologian. It is structured around a commentary on the celebrated text of Saint Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, XII and XIII. This commentary, in chapter 9, forms the core of the work. The preceding chapters expound what might be termed an “exclusive” theory in the sense that the loyalty of the Christian toward the authority of God is said to *exclude* acknowledgment of any other authority in this world. At the very most, according to this theory, the Christian may submit externally to political power, or rather refrain from resisting it, without recognizing it in all conscience as a true authority—this more or less standard position, assumed by theologians from Augustine to Pascal and Karl Barth, is attributed in this case to the Anabaptist and pacifist theologian, John Howard Yoder in his work *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit agnus noster* (Eerdmans, 1972). In opposition to this, Wolterstorff makes a series of distinctions between the different meanings of authority (chaps. 4–6), in order to demonstrate that the state imposes a conscientious obligation on the Christian, as a form of order belonging to the providence of God. However, contrary to the argument made by Calvin at the end of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the ruler does not impose an obligation simply by exercising its power (by exercising what Wolterstorff calls

his “positional” authority) (chap. 7). His authority exists in relation to the purpose that God has ascribed to it, namely *to curb wrongdoing*. The state to which Paul accords moral authority is thus a *rights-protecting state* and a *rights-limited state* (92–93). Wolterstorff sides with Milton, by acknowledging the right of the Christian citizen to resist when civil government exceeds the role given to it by God.

The Pauline text limits the activity of the state to the struggle against wrongdoing. Nothing is said regarding the cooperative function of the state (98, 114), and the positive benefits that it can bring to mankind. The view of the state presented by Saint Paul, as Wolterstorff convincingly explains (101–2), is a protectionist one, as opposed to the perfectionist conception inherited from Aristotle. As a consequence of this purely protectionist role, the state has no legitimate authority over the religious conscience of individuals (chaps. 11–15). It can no more advocate one religion to the detriment of others than forbid or discourage religious practices (including education and proselytism), as long as these do not undermine individual security. Wolterstorff adopts a communitarian position of the type proposed by Charles Taylor, contrasting the secular models of America and France (124), and condemning (174–75) the ban introduced by the latter relating to the wearing of the Islamic veil as well as (in a somewhat strange example) the ban, ratified by the High Court of Justice of England, preventing an allegedly conservative and homophobic family from adopting a child.

The project described by Wolterstorff is ambitious, since it seeks to provide a theological foundation for the Rawlsian model. It comes close, in this regard, to the religious perspective, recently highlighted, of the thought of Rawls (see J. Rawls, R. A. Adams, J. Cohen, T. Nagel, *A Brief Inquiry into the Meaning of Sin and Faith—With “On My Religion”* [Harvard University Press, 2010]). This project naturally lays itself open to the charge of anachronism: it is doubtful whether Saint Paul, writing in the first century CE, had in mind the precise political model of a democratic, liberal, secular, and pluralistic society prevailing (at least intellectually speaking) at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. This anachronism is undoubtedly recognized to a certain degree by the author, and it makes his writing often stimulating to the reader. It does, however, also imply a shift in meaning. On page 90, accordingly, a significant shift occurs. Paul did indeed write that “rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad” (Romans 13:3). From this, Wolterstorff draws the conclusion that “to wrong someone is to deprive her of something to which she has the right, a legitimate claim. And to deprive her of something to which she has the right or a legitimate claim is to treat her unjustly.” Is that really what Paul intended? It assumes the existence of entirely secular notions of “right,” “legitimacy” and “justice,” which are not employed by the apostle, and whose existence would be categorically denied by Saint Augustine in book 19 of the *City of God* (see R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* [Cambridge University Press, 1970]). It is therefore difficult to

consider the following propositions as being equivalent: (1) the function of the state is to curb wrongdoing and (2) the function of the state is to protect subjective natural rights and its authority is limited by those rights.

More generally, it is legitimate to question whether the model instituted by Wolterstorff does not hark back to the theses of liberal Christianity, in the tradition of Ernst Troeltsch. Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West* (Vintage Books, 2008), cited from page 1 of the introduction, gives a very clear treatment of the criticisms that have been made by the “crisis theologians” with regard to the politico-social construction of Christianity, while quoting the judgment offered by Reinhold Niebuhr: “un Dieu sans colère a conduit des hommes sans péché dans un Royaume sans jugement par une consolation sans croix” (248). Karl Barth, in the second edition (1922) of his own commentary on The Epistle to the Romans (Clark, 2014), highlighted the radical disproportion between the social justice implemented by men in the present world and the divine justice promised for a future transcending time and history, located beyond human order. A work such as that by Johannes Baptist Metz (*Theology of the World*, 1973) attempted to elaborate a social project in relation to this “eschatological reserve”—a project not unlike that extolled by Karl Barth himself. From this point of view, the “theory of justice” expounded by Rawls does not constitute an extension or image of divine justice in this world: one has to choose between them.

Wolterstorff’s book is indeed no stranger to this project: referring precisely to Barth, the former is careful to distinguish (129) between (political) justice and (theological) justification; he refers, as does Metz, to the theology of Vatican II (131); in particular, the whole of the second part of the argument (chaps. 11–15) seeks to condemn the various forms of alienation of human beings caused by a political power attempting to reconstitute itself as a religion. It nevertheless remains true that the interpretation of Romans 13 presented by Wolterstorff appears to conceive theology and politics from a conciliatory perspective, rather than considering their relationship from the standpoint of radical opposition.

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James V. Schall, SJ: *Political Philosophy and Revelation: A Catholic Reading*. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of American Press, 2013. Pp. xiv, 281.)

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James V. Schall, SJ, wrote on an astonishing variety of topics over a distinguished academic career that spanned fifty years and included over thirty books and several hundred articles and essays. All the while his heart was focused on his devoted students and readers, who were invariably touched