

than we think. In his collection of essays, Brague observes that medieval thinkers such as Dante and Aquinas understood every angel, including the fallen, as creatures of God who make themselves what they are through a free act of turning either thankfully toward God in acceptance of his creative love or away from the source of its existence toward the dream of independence. Now, in the late stages of modernity, humanity is coming to terms with the nightmarish reality of having turned toward the latter. There may be some wisdom in (re)turning to the former.

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Katrina Forrester: *In the Shadow of Justice: Postwar Liberalism and the Remaking of Political Philosophy*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. Pp. 432.)

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Katrina Forrester's eagerly anticipated book on the Rawlsian renaissance of political philosophy does not disappoint. It is fascinating, and it meets the high expectations that were aroused by her 2014 article "Citizenship, War, and the Origins of International Ethics in American Political Philosophy, 1960–1975," a careful exploration of the catalyzing effect the Vietnam War had on theorizing whose initial focus was an idealized, self-sufficient, independent society, at peace and in conditions of near consensus. There, she focused on two thinkers, John Rawls and Michael Walzer, and her thesis was that "philosophers of the nation-state unwittingly opened the door to international theories that dethroned the state—the cosmopolitan theories of justice, rights, and citizenship that have multiplied exponentially since the 1970s" (*Historical Journal* 57, no. 3 [2014]: 774). The book that developed from this study is equally meticulous while covering a greatly expanded canvas. The range of topics includes not only civil disobedience, global justice, and war, but also the proliferation of egalitarianisms, intergenerational justice, and the limits of philosophy itself. The dramatis personae are still restricted chiefly to anglophone analytical philosophers active between the end of the Second World War and today. But the list is a long one: helpful thumbnails remind the reader of contributions major and minor, from Ackerman, Anderson, and Arneson to Wright, Young, and Zinn.

Although Forrester cautions the reader that her book is not intended to be an intellectual biography of Rawls, in many ways Rawls is its protagonist. His is the “shadow.” Her aim is to expose the influence of politics on political philosophizing, and thus “to make sense of the political work of Rawls’s theory”: “To join political philosophy to its politics requires a form of intellectual history that pays close attention to the political world that philosophers inhabited and that looks to reconstruct their immediate ideological context. For Rawls, that context was the aftermath of the largest war and the most significant expansion of state control in history” (xxii). Rawls’s experience is the prism through which this context was refracted, and the spectrum of thought it revealed transfixed at least three generations of thinkers around the globe, and across many disciplines.

In Forrester’s telling, the embryonic form of Rawls’s mature view was already set out in his 1958 *Philosophical Review* article “Justice as Fairness.” On its abstract surface, it is not grossly inaccurate to characterize the argument of the article as, in her words, “a secularized liberal Protestantism” (5). Seen this way, and in the postwar context, *A Theory of Justice*—whose first draft was done in 1964—could easily be interpreted as a defense of Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society and what Rawls himself later termed welfare-state capitalism. Forrester shows that Rawls’s theory had earlier, and deeper, roots.

Game theory was one influence. Von Neumann and Morgenstern and Nash were doing pioneering work at Princeton at the same time Rawls was studying this and a range of related subjects. Rawls was especially taken by Chicago economist Frank Knight’s willingness to think about what makes for a *good* game. Knight saw a tight connection between markets and liberty, but he rejected *laissez-faire*. As Forrester reports: “The task Knight defined as the key problem of political life—‘to find the right proportion between individualism and socialism’—Rawls underlined in his copy of Knight’s *The Ethics of Competition* (1935) in three different pens” (13). Rawls, as a person, was notoriously reserved in his habits, so this is a *lot* of underlining (and pens). Throughout the book, Forrester manifests not only a comprehensive grasp of the eddies in the political and intellectual stream, but also an almost novelistic sensitivity to the significance of details, and a historian’s diligence in tracking down sources and documenting claims. To give one more example: in 1968, on Virginia economist James Buchanan’s suggestion, Milton Friedman invited Rawls to join the new, neoliberal Mont Pelerin Society. Rawls accepted. This was known. But for how long did this association last? Forrester reports that in 1971, the year *A Theory of Justice* appeared, “he allowed his membership ... to lapse” (110). Forrester can tell us this because she can cite what is found in Box 19, Folder 4 of the Mont Pelerin Society papers at Stanford’s Hoover Institution (318).

Rawls’s quest for the right balance between individualism and socialism is illuminated by Forrester’s account of Rawls’s sojourn in Oxford on a Fulbright in 1952–1953. Under the 1945–1951 Labour government led by Clement Attlee, Stafford Cripps, Nye Bevin, and other determined socialists, the

major means of production in Britain had largely been made the property of the nation. Because these nationalizations were not confiscations, the prewar social and economic inequalities remained, and from a shop-floor perspective, the management of industry left laborers as powerless as before. Out of office, Labour leaders and intellectuals were divided about the path forward (and back into power). As Forrester recounts, “Thanks to the ties between philosophers and the British Labour Party, Oxford was not only the crucible of language philosophy but also aflame with debates about inequality” (18). It was as witness to, if not an active participant in, these high-table disputes that Rawls’s mature philosophy took form.

The crux of these debates was public ownership of the means of production, to which Labour was committed under Clause IV of its constitution. The so-called Labour revisionists were “leading a ‘modernizing’ push to drop the commitment to nationalization and public ownership ... and foreground a concern for ‘social equality’ and ‘social justice’” (19). Although these debates had yet to reach their highest pitch, they enabled Rawls to see “what political work his ideas might do” (21). After his return to teach at Cornell, Rawls “kept abreast of the British debates” (21), and, in Forrester’s account, it was here that we should mark the beginning of his mature work on justice. As she summarizes, “Rawls brought philosophical order to the ideas of the Labour dissenters” (25).

One of her many discoveries is what Forrester has learned about Rawls’s conception of property-owning democracy, one of the five ideal regime-types made prominent in §§41–42 of Rawls’s *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (2001). Labour economist James Meade is credited for the term, and commentators have puzzled over the manner and degree of Meade’s influence. Forrester’s excavations in the John Rawls archive at the Pusey Library at Harvard uncovered proof that Rawls had independently made use of the phrase over a decade before Meade’s 1964 employment of it. At that time, Rawls’s fixation was on stably “balancing ‘freedom’ and ‘order’” and “how to balance the need to reward effort against the risk that winners would accumulate too much” (16). Put differently, the problem is how to reward contributions to society without allowing those rewards to accumulate in a way that warps the game to favor previous winners.

It is impossible to itemize in the short space of this review the many ways in which this is an *interesting* book. There is no single, philosophical “big move,” and there are a few summarizing paragraphs that struggle to formulate an insight that never quite emerges. Even so, for those who need to understand how we have arrived at our current political predicament, Forrester’s book deserves a place alongside Mark Blyth’s *Great Transformations* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), Stephanie Mudge’s *Leftism Reinvented* (Harvard University Press, 2018), and Quinn Slobodian’s *The Globalists* (Harvard University Press, 2018) on the shelf of must-reads. One substantive caveat: because Forrester’s beat is “liberal egalitarianism” and “the philosophy of public affairs,” I think she ought to have explored the ways Rawls’s difference

principle played into the rhetorical hands of the Right. (On this, see Mark R. Reiff, "The Difference Principle, Rising Inequality, and Supply-Side Economics: How Rawls Got Hijacked by the Right," *Revue de philosophie économique* 13, no. 2 [2012]: 119–73.)

And what of the "political work" Rawls's thinking was meant to enable? Forrester concludes hopefully. In conditions of a pluralism ever more unreasonable than the reverse, "the Rawlsian vision looks no more capable of fully making sense of the current conjuncture than it did during the crises of the 1970s. ... At another level, however, the distributive arrangements demanded by liberal egalitarianism ... might offer institutional blueprints for the recent revival of socialist aspirations ... that have taken many by surprise" (277). The old mole, history, ever burrowing from within? Anyway, it is up to this century's Rawlsians to finish the house that Jack began.

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