

and sociality is to be commended (p. 42), for instance, whereas Habermas's misuse of Mead comes in for special censure (pp. 56–58). Yet surely either such upshot reifies and re-inscribes the traditional, determinate notion of authorship otherwise chipped away by *The Politics of the Book*. Where, then, does appreciating the distributed agency and materiality involved in bookmaking get us? Why is either feature of the bookmaking process important?

Notably, *The Politics of the Book* is invested in bringing highfalutin theorizing back down to earth. Carreira da Silva and Brito Vieira reject the idea of “‘theory’ as an abstract, disembodied, purely cognitive affair” (p. 12). To some extent, *Political Vocabularies* shares in this aim: Condren cautions that political theorists are frequently so preoccupied with the “grander” part of the world of language and ideas that they make unreliable “guide[s]” to the “whole” (p. 168). Theory tends to be too narrow an enterprise, ignoring the body in favor of the mind or the many in favor of the few. Yet insofar as *The Politics of the Book* leaves the significance of its own intervention opaque, it exacerbates the unfortunate perception that theory is irrelevant. Given its view of politics as a battle over language and written at a time when theory is all too often already marginalized, this has the curious effect of undermining the very project *The Politics of the Book* frames itself as advancing.

### **Strategies of Justice: Aboriginal Peoples, Persistent Injustice, and the Ethics of Political Action.** By

Burke A. Hendrix. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. 320p.

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A familiar question in political philosophy has to do with the nature of political obligation: How do we reconcile the autonomy of the individual (or the group) with the authority of the state? And in moral philosophy, along similar lines, we ask, What do we owe each other, and in what circumstances do our moral obligations change and why? In this deeply interesting and fine book, Burke Hendrix develops a subtle variation on these two philosophical questions in relation to the political situation of Aboriginal peoples in the United States and Canada today. Hendrix asks, What are the ethics (the plural is important here, as we will see) of political action for those who are subject to the structural and persistent injustice associated with colonialism? The approach he takes—signaled in the title of the book—is one that focuses on highly contextual, incremental, piecemeal, and “cautiously experimental” (p. 271) modes of political action. Along the way, Hendrix provides an acute reading of a range of major issues in contemporary political philosophy, including ideal and

non-ideal theory, Rawlsian egalitarianism, and historical injustice; he also engages extensively with leading contemporary Aboriginal political theorists. A significant achievement of *Strategies of Justice* is the way it provides readers coming from Anglo-American political theory, as well as those from Native American and Aboriginal studies programs, with a clear and informative interpretation of some of the leading arguments in their respective fields.

The central question of Hendrix's book is this: In conditions of long-standing and persistent injustice, what are those who are suffering from these injustices normatively permitted to do to protect their most urgent moral interests? This question applies to a wide range of different contexts, including African Americans, migrant workers, and others. However, Hendrix's focus is on Aboriginal peoples in Canada and the United States, and he discusses a wealth of rich material in developing his response. What makes the case of Aboriginal peoples particularly hard is the depth of injustices they face. The very institutions that are supposed to be delivering justice are themselves deeply compromised by colonialism; this includes those institutions through which liberal egalitarians typically think justice ought to be provided. The long-standing effects of colonialism end up “channeling” patterns of debate and political action in particular directions, and Aboriginal “word warriors” (borrowing a term from Anishinaabi philosopher Dale Turner) must navigate these channels with great care and self-awareness about both the dangers and benefits that might come in doing so. We can only really appreciate the nature of these injustices, Hendrix argues, if we take a radically bottom-up approach to political theorizing more generally. Instead of seeing politics from the perspective of a political master architect (à la Rawls or at least early Rawls), we need to start with the perspectives of particular political agents and the inevitably constrained choice sets within which they operate. Ideal theory, except as a kind of open-ended meta-process for clarifying normative values and tacit presumptions, is otherwise deeply problematic as a philosophical approach for these profoundly non-ideal circumstances.

Hendrix's answer to the question of what victims of persistent injustice can do, in short, is that they have “permissions” for certain kinds of political action that are not available to others who do not face similar injustices. The more serious the injustice, the greater the latitude for action that departs from existing normative standards. “Permission” is the key idea here. What it *does not* mean is permission in the sense of action that is allowed or tolerated by the state or the majority culture. Rather, building on examples from Rawls, Tommie Shelby, and others, it refers to a normative space and category of action within which it is morally permissible for individuals (and groups) to act in ways that might otherwise be considered wrong or as violating established normative standards.

At this stage, you might ask about the option of civil disobedience or even revolution: Aren't these the obvious normative and political tools to turn to in these circumstances? For Hendrix—and here is where the book is particularly interesting—they are not, because they are either too restrictive or too dangerous, especially given the relative position of Aboriginal peoples in the US and Canadian political systems. Civil disobedience, for example, is too restrictive, because it limits the political actor to appealing to the sense of justice of their fellow citizens (assuming they are seen as fellow citizens) and returning them, as it were, to the ideals underpinning the institutions meant to uphold justice. But the problem, as we saw earlier, is that those very institutions—whether they be the courts, parliament, or the welfare state—meant to deliver justice are so deeply shaped by colonialism that they cannot escape its grip. And so, we need other, more subtle and experimental forms of political action that lie prior to (and perhaps beyond) civil disobedience and revolutionary action. Chapters 3–6 offer an account of what these actions might be: they provide a rich set of discussions exploring different forms of political actions and “permissions” that Aboriginal people might take against prevailing institutions and norms, including “speaking untruth to power” in deliberative forums (chap. 3), justified lawbreaking (chap. 4), focusing on self-help and care over and above duties to others (chap. 5), and forms of political experimentation with a view to future generations (chap. 6).

One deep question the book raises and does not really answer is the extent to which a resolutely non-ideal, contextualist, and incrementalist approach to political action really does offer the appropriate set of tools for dealing with the enormity of the continuing effects of colonialism. Hendrix is a respectful and careful critic of both Aboriginal political theorists who have offered radical alternative visions for political action (chap. 6) and of normative liberal political theorists who have tried to identify overarching principles that might serve to underpin a kind of postcolonial liberalism (chap. 2). These critiques are well made, but they left me wanting a sharper sense, then, of what duties non-Aboriginal people have—for example, in light of the normative permissions said to follow from the analysis of the deep injustices characteristic of Canada and the United States today—other than a negative duty of not interfering with those actions and remaining open to experimentation. Hendrix suggests non-Aboriginal citizens should not insist on fully worked-out alternatives or expect that there will not be disagreement and shifting positions within Aboriginal politics about appropriate political action and strategies. This seems exactly right. But how are our natural duties to support just institutions transformed in the course of these interactions, and what are the political consequences of the transformation of our self-understanding,

both individual and collective—imperfect and incomplete as that will be?

Hendrix says toward the end of his book that he hopes to have brought debates about the persistent injustices faced by Aboriginal people into the broader ambit of philosophical inquiry, as well as providing some discursive tools for helping bridge principles of political action found in Aboriginal political theory with Anglo-American political theory. The book is admirably successful on both counts.

**The Complexity of Self Government: Politics from the Bottom Up.** By Ruth Lane. New York: Cambridge University Press,

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Do political systems shape citizens, or do citizens construct political systems? This question rests just under the surface of many political analyses. Ruth Lane has provided an insightful and useful argument for increased attention to a bottom-up approach—beginning with individuals in a family, community, and society—and examining the formation and impact of their political behaviors. Lane provides a broad introduction to complexity theory, game theory, and social psychology as perspectives on the construction and maintenance of political systems.

Lane's core argument is that complexity theory—expressed in the form of game theory—provides an important method for political scientists to conceptualize and assess political behaviors and the extension of those behaviors into more formal structures and systems of political decision making. It is an argument for a micro perspective on politics rather than a macro perspective, to borrow an economic metaphor. Through the skillful discussion of a series of examples ranging from Plato to Nelson Mandela, Lane argues that politics originate at the micro level and drive the macro level. She also acknowledges that macro-level political systems may influence individual choices and behaviors, creating a system with multiple feedback loops.

In her introductory chapter, Lane acknowledges that complexity theory—a term that she uses frequently throughout the book—is “best described as a method rather than an actual theory” (p. 21). Lane uses the concept of a lattice as the foundation for complexity theory and provides a helpful introduction to early scholarship in this arena and in game theory. For readers who encountered the work of Conway, Epstein, Axtell, and Schelling in graduate school a few decades ago, Lane provides a readable and refreshing summary and integration of the foundations of game theory and its extension into complexity theory. No mathematics is needed to follow her basic arguments.