a genuine understanding of mind will take psychology well beyond the bounds of consciousness.

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On Rawls: A Liberal Theory of Justice and Justification

Focusing on John Rawls' major works, A Theory of Justice (1971, revised 1999) and Political Liberalism (1993, expanded 1996), Robert Talisse attempts to distil Rawls' well-known political philosophy project into an 84 page introductory volume - certainly a difficult endeavour.

The book is divided into three main sections; the first provides a preliminary sketch of classical and modern liberalism, and Rawls' place within the tradition. The second section is devoted to explaining Rawls' theory of justice as fairness, and the third section outlines Rawls' complementary framework of political liberalism.

I found Talisse's handling of Rawls' work on the whole to be reasonable and fairly inclusive. His writing is clear and concise, and he does a great job of incorporating a good survey of the most noted positions and ideas from the history of political philosophy and contemporary thinkers who have affinities with, and diverge from, Rawls' conception of justice. Overall, Talisse provides an accessible springboard for individuals interested in Rawls' project and its importance to philosophy.

Unfortunately, I found Talisse's treatment of Rawls' notion of fair equality of opportunity as a principle of justice to be wholly inadequate. Admittedly, the principle of fair equality of opportunity is not a difficult one to explain, however, receiving only one paragraph, individuals new to Rawls' work will fail to appreciate the importance this principle has on the structural underpinnings of many societal institutions. For instance, Norman Daniels' work Just Health Care (Cambridge University Press, 1985) has extended Rawls' ideal theory of justice to the health care setting using the principle of fair equality of opportunity, which, in my mind, establishes both the theoretical and practical robustness of Rawls' work.
I also found the treatment of Political Liberalism was too short — although Talisse did cover the most important concepts, such as the fact of reasonable pluralism, overlapping consensus, and the idea of public reason, he did not approach the Kantian constructivist basis in Rawls’ political theory that provides the notion of objectivity that is important to Rawls’ project. Talisse also did not satisfactorily deal with the success (or failure) of Rawls’ incorporation of his theory of justice as fairness into his new political liberalism framework — an important aspect that individuals new to Rawls’ work need to be exposed to. Let me finish by saying that while A Theory of Justice has been a monumental contribution to political and moral philosophy, the importance of Political Liberalism (especially those ideas and concepts that have a marked similarity with pragmatism) is often not given sufficient treatment in works on Rawls at an introductory level.

Although this book, as with other titles in the Wadsworth Philosophers Series, have been written with the needs of undergraduates and the general public in mind, I still found Talisse’s volume to be a good introduction to Rawls’ most important concepts, but with the proviso that its contents should be used as a means to explore the deeper complexity and richness of Rawls’ project and its relationship with contemporary liberalism and political theory. I know that as an undergraduate when I first encountered Rawls, this primer would have been quite helpful, and at under a hundred pages, individuals new to Rawls’ work can gain an adequate grasp of key concepts in an afternoon over coffee.

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Deledalle was a student of Herbert Schneider and winner of the 1990 Herbert Schneider Award. This book is an excellent introduction to American philosophy from Samuel Johnson and Jonathan Edwards to Sandra Rosenthal and Susan Haack. This third edition has a section on recent philosophers (1976-1996), including Cavell, Rorty, Goodman, Putnam, Rawls, and Nozick. New also are treatments of Afro-American, Native American, and feminist philosophers and of Rorty’s relation to European philosophers, including Apel, Habermas, Derrida and Foucault. This edition also has a summary of John McDermott’s The Culture