

on my projects, yet this gives me no guidance as to my relationship to the projects of others; that is, if or when they should be given priority over mine. When it is identified with autonomy, reason tends to become merely instrumental rationality.

Religion, meanwhile, is reduced to a motive for good (autonomy) and optimistic action—aid in overcoming our self-doubt and avoiding any passive dependency on God—as Susan Meld Shell shows in her chapter on Kant’s *Religion within the Boundaries of Bare Reason*. By contrast, if faith is a personal relationship with God rather than a mere ideal toward which to strive, the reduction of all laws to self-legislation to the exclusion of God-given laws might be unnecessary. The former views personhood as essentially relational and is the antithesis of the modern project of autonomy (a project that finds political expression in the notion of sovereignty, on which Michael Allen Gillespie provides an excellent meditation in one chapter). If the use of reason—naming, questioning, freely choosing—is a search for a harmful autonomy and inherently rebellious, then is there not a need for God-given law as a limit on reason?

In the chapter by Leon Kass, a fine philosophical interpretation of Genesis, reason is shown in the biblical account of creation to develop in just this unruly way, even prior to the Fall. It is not clear, however, that we must accept Kant’s gnostic interpretation of the Fall as being man’s *rising* to true human nature; we might say instead that free choice, as lack of obedience and the flaunting of justice, results in the expansion of our desires beyond what is good for us and in fact leads to our tragic domination by a tyrannical master passion. Reason can have a limit in faith without being untrue to itself, as Pope Benedict XVI emphasized during his journey to the United States.

This is an extraordinary volume, with many other rich contributions from wide-ranging philosophical authorities besides those mentioned here. It deserves to be read by those who contemplate moral and political questions.

—Philip J. Harold

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## Justice: Rights and Wrongs

**Nicholas Wolterstorff**

Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008 (393 pages)

“Human beings, all of them, are irreducibly precious” (361). So asserts Yale philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff in his treatise supporting a “theistic grounding” of human rights. Wolterstorff is both a first-rate philosopher and a Christian, and he concludes that God’s love for all people bestows worth on them, and, thus, “natural human rights are what respect for that worth requires.”

This sounds simple, but the book is not—neither in its reasoning nor in its breadth. Wolterstorff patiently leads the reader through an intellectual genealogy of concepts of justice and rights, concluding that secular bases for human rights are inadequate.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first, *An Archeology of Rights*, Wolterstorff begins by identifying “fundamentally different ways of thinking about justice” in Western intellectual history. Those two ways are *right order* and *inherent natural rights*. The former is the notion that a rightly ordered society will be just: “justice is present in society ... insofar as the society measures up to whatever is the standard for the rightly ordered society” (28). For the Greeks, that order was *dike*, and disruption of that order was injustice. When individuals act unjustly, the moral violation is against what is right. This right-order view (*eudaimonism*) is best represented by Plato’s *Republic*.

Wolterstorff calls the second viewpoint *inherent rights*. This is the constellation of ideas that posit that somehow human beings by their nature possess rights. Of course, there are numerous competing theories about the content and context of such inherent rights.

Thus, the first third of the book is an intellectual history from Plato and Aristotle through William of Ockham, Gratian, and the Decretalists to contemporary philosophers such as Oliver O’Donovan and Stanley Hauerwas. The primary purpose is to expose the nuanced debate between these two narratives of justice. While doing so, Wolterstorff points to inconsistencies and the logical outcomes of various philosophical positions. One interesting example is a terse discussion of John Rawls that demonstrates that Rawls’ early discussion of justice is rooted in inherent rights theory but that by the time Rawls completes *Political Liberalism* his articulation of rights has clearly changed (15–17).

A key claim in following chapters is that the inherent-rights view is firmly rooted in both the Old and New Testaments. Wolterstorff devotes an entire chapter to how we should understand the notion of justice in the Old Testament. Although the Pentateuch focuses largely on legislation, and thus could be construed as the right-order approach, Wolterstorff argues that two key themes running throughout the Old Testament make the narrative one of inherent rights. The two themes demonstrate God’s love of justice: “God holds human beings accountable for doing justice, and God himself is committed to justice, both in the sense that God does justice and in the sense that God works to bring it about that human beings treat each other justly” (89). These themes help us understand why the God of the Old Testament was angry over injustice: because injustice was wrongdoing against God (depriving him of that to which he has a right) or against his creation (i.e., other human beings) (93). For Wolterstorff, this is the key to acknowledging that human beings have moral worth and thus have inherent rights.

Wolterstorff’s chapter that considers justice in the New Testament is critical for those who operate from a Christian worldview because he concedes that many Christian thinkers believe that the New Testament dispenses with *justice* in favor of *love*. Wolterstorff quotes Stanley Hauerwas’ famous, “justice is a bad idea for Christians” and the view that the New Testament’s injunctions to love and forgiveness make justice obsolete. Wolterstorff counters this in several ways, perhaps the most important being a careful consideration of the Greek-to-English translation of the New Testament. Interestingly, the Greek prefix for justice, *dik*, is utilized over three hundred times in the New Testament. As noted earlier, this is the term commonly used by Greek thinkers such as Plato and

Aristotle for *justice*. Strangely, however, in English translations of the New Testament, the word is usually translated as “right” or “righteousness” instead of “just” or “justice,” resulting in some conceptual confusion for English readers. Wolterstorff goes on, in his New Testament analysis, to demonstrate the ways that Jesus’ teaching and ministry were narratives about justice, from the announcement of his ministry, to his parables, to his identification with those unjustly accused and condemned. The point, for Wolterstorff, is that the New Testament clearly has a strong justice narrative not only in the Pauline writings (especially Romans) but in the Gospels as well.

The second part of the book, *Fusion of Narrative with Theory*, follows Augustine in breaking with classical right-order theory by introducing the love of God into our understanding of morality and justice. Wolterstorff describes how Augustine’s concept of God’s love for humanity as “attachment” is key for our understanding the natural moral order and the inherent worth of human beings.

The third part, *Theory: Having a Right to a Good*, considers contemporary accounts of rights, such as Kant’s argument that the human capacity for rationality is a sufficient criterion for recognizing human dignity or Ronald Dworkin’s idea that humanity inherently recognizes the sacredness of life. In the end, Wolterstorff goes beyond even the historical Christian idea that humanity’s creation in the image of God (*imago dei*) provides a rationale for rights, instead concluding, “If God loves, in the mode of [Augustinian] attachment, each and every human being equally and permanently, then natural human rights inhere in the worth bestowed on human beings by that love. Natural human rights are what respect for that worth requires” (360).

In the end, I have two recommendations. Philosophers should read this important and erudite book that will generate considerable debate; I think it a must-read for Christian philosophers. My second recommendation is for the author and/or publisher. The fundamental conclusions, which are reached in the final chapters after an exhausting 330 pages, need much wider distribution in the form of an article targeting a wide audience of both scholars and interested laity.

—Eric Patterson

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## A Shared Morality: A Narrative Defense of Natural-Law Ethics

**Craig A. Boyd**

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos, 2007 (272 pages)

This book represents another contribution to the ever-increasing literature on natural law. Craig Boyd has offered a thoughtful, engaging, and interdisciplinary study that should prove to be a stimulus to further scholarly reflection on this topic. Boyd’s broad purpose is to defend a particular version of natural law in the face of several contemporary objec-