

David Held & Pietro Maffettone, eds. *Global Political Theory*. Polity 2016. 352 pp. \$69.95 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780745685175); \$28.95 USD (Paperback ISBN 9780745685182).

Edited by David Held and Pietro Maffettone, *Global Political Theory* is a volume of 14 chapters of original work by scholars from philosophy and cognate disciplines, including political studies, global studies, and law. Forming a balanced blend of established and newer voices, the contributions cover a wide spectrum of topics. Some chapters focus on broad theoretical questions, such as human rights, global distributive justice, global political justice, and questions surrounding political legitimacy. Others enjoy issue-specific undertakings on an array of questions ranging from just war theories to territorial rights, from legitimacy in global governance to political control over natural resources, from fairness in trade and finance to environmental and intergenerational duties.

This volume is to be welcomed by students and specialists alike. It will introduce students to current themes in global political theory. For practiced specialists, it can assist in reflecting on the present state of the subject matter, and its future prospects. In an accessibly written and substantially rich introductory chapter, Held and Maffettone set the stage for this dual role. The editors highlight two characteristics of the global political theory landscape today. One is ‘a marked change in the nature and shape of political life,’ revealing a rich texture of ‘multilayered regional and global governance’ that is at the same time complex and multi-centred (2-3). Those familiar with Held’s scholarly contributions spanning across several decades would know that his work spearheaded new paths of inquiry at the interface of political studies and the study of global affairs. No longer trapped in the confines of a strictly state-centric view, many scholars of politics and governance today subscribe to a variegated view of global politics as an ‘increasing reach of political networks, interaction and rulemaking activity’ resulting from the interactions of state and non-state actors (2). There is growing interest in exploring the fragmented and multi-centric characteristics of these networks, and the promises and risks of new forms of governance. Against this backdrop, Held and Maffettone write, ‘the traditional questions of political theory gain a new inflection’ (4). This volume is dedicated to examinations of the bearing of these changes on normative political theory.

The second characteristic has to do with the ‘shape of the current debate’ (7). Global political theory, Held and Maffettone observe, operates today on a ‘cosmopolitan plateau’ (7). This catchy phrase alludes to Ronald Dworkin’s oft-cited quote: *we are all egalitarians now*. In the last decades of the twentieth century, Dworkin had noted a widely shared commitment to *equality* in mainstream English-speaking political theory scholarship, bringing theorists into a common plane of egalitarianism. For several decades after the publication of Rawls’s magisterial work *A Theory of Justice*, theorists positioned themselves in relation to Rawls’s vision of liberal egalitarianism, giving rise to a vast literature known as post-Rawlsian political philosophy. Agreeing to fight on common ground, theorists disagreed over what counts as the appropriate formulation of equality. Held and Maffettone notice a similar coalescence in global political theory around a shared commitment to cosmopolitan equality. There is implicit agreement that arguments must derive more or less deductively from an axiom of moral equality of all persons across borders (8). Disagreements are over the deductive processes of justifications for rights and duties, authority and coercion, legitimacy and democracy, the role of the state and interstate institutions, and so on. This volume reflects on the unmistakable marks of this shared normative frame.

Penned by Rainer Forst, chapter 1 is a critical discussion of the point and ground of human rights. Political theory discussions on human rights are home to two camps: one focuses on the nor-

mative core of human rights as a basis for protection of basic interests, and the other explores international and legal practices to look for standards of legitimacy in practice (22). Forst argues that the point of human rights is lost on both sides of this debate. In the spirit of Frankfurt School critical theory, Forst insists that the point of human rights is *not* normative justification deductively derived from moral premises, but rather emancipatory struggle against practices leading to systemic forms of domination (24-26). Normative reflection must be anchored in historical and sociological reflection and reconstructed on Kantian grounds (28). Giving expression to an encompassing criticism of normative justification, this contribution stands apart as it looks at the layout of the cosmopolitan plateau with a critical eye.

In spite of this critical take in the first chapter, most the contributions that follow reflect well-known perspectives that have taken root on what Held and Maffettone call the cosmopolitan plateau. In chapter 2, Michael Blake seeks an answer to the question: can statism still provide a reasonable vision for global political theory? As a proponent of statism, Blake's answer is a qualified yes. In counterpoint, Darrel Moellendorf provides a defence of moral cosmopolitanism in chapter 3. Chapter 4 is a search for a global 'political justice' by Terry Macdonald. Political justice, in Macdonald's words, is concerned with the 'design and reform of global institutions' to safeguard political order through control of power and to catalyze collective action in the pursuit of social values (75).

Chapters 5 and 6 turn to issues of legitimacy. David Lefkowitz focuses on legitimacy in international law in chapter 5. Co-written by the editors of the volume, chapter 6 is a discussion of the normative basis of legitimacy in global governance against the backdrop of the changing structure of global politics. This chapter opens the way to the issue-specific discussions that colour the next chapters.

Chapters 7 and 8, by Laura Valentini and by Seth Lazar respectively, explore just war theories. Valentini connects conceptions of just war to global justice. Lazar analyzes competing justifications of the right to life in war. Chapters 9 and 10 turn to issues of territory and resources. Co-written by David Miller and Margaret Moore, chapter 9 is an exploration of territorial rights, and a restatement of a state-based view of world politics. In chapter 10, Leif Wenar critically examines competing perspectives on natural resources. Chapter 11 and 12, respectively, focus on fairness in trade by Aaron James and on the ethical dimension of international financial integration by Pieter Dietsch.

Chapter 13, by Dale Jamieson and Marcello di Paola, is an essay on the limits of global political theory in the face of environmental crises. Its thesis is that political theory can no longer be of guidance in assigning responsibilities. It must learn to navigate an 'unprecedented social geology' (254) in the *anthropocene*, a concept defined loosely as a new era in which everything on earth is shaped by human activity. The only chapter on global environmental questions, this essay leaves the reader with little more than a feeling of defeatism in an issue-specific area where political theory's guiding influence is most needed. In the closing chapter, Axel Gosseries and Danielle Zwarthoed explore moral duties across generations. Focusing on migration policies as an area of application, they seek to show that cosmopolitan and intergenerational duties are mutually compatible.

To the extent that it mirrors the state of global political theory today, this book has much to offer. It should also inspire critical discussions about how well the debates are served by the cosmopolitan plateau. In common parlance, being told to have reached a plateau is hardly praise, but a diagnosis of stagnation. Why should it be different for scholarly debates? To be sure, a plateau is the antithesis of crisis. In scholarship, it means that a debate is not at a point of collapse; its fault lines and fissures are internal. But this also means that the broad contours are not being questioned. A plateau may seem safe, but in research and scholarship this can be symptom of a slow demise. After

all, the cycles of disputes and footnotes in post-Rawlsian political philosophy had to be broken in order to move onto new ground. So too, the cosmopolitan plateau may need be submitted to searching interrogations. This is not to deny the ideal of moral equality of all persons. It remains quintessential. Rather, it is to ask whether the broader normative frame within which global political theory proceeds today must not be questioned, expanded, and diversified, in search for newer critical perspectives and explorations of changing political agencies. It is to query whether political theory should not be confronting hard questions about diversity of agency and political authority in a fast changing landscape of world politics. Political theory is, after all, an active search for understanding the meaning of changing patterns of agency that manifest themselves at contingent historical moments. As a subject matter, it cannot afford to proceed within a theoretical comfort zone.

This volume opens a window onto the landscape of global political theory today. It can inspire students of politics and philosophy alike to probe its limitations, and prompt them to blaze new paths on yet unexplored terrains in search for the critical perspectives of tomorrow.

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