Editorial

This issue of *Theoria* departs somewhat from the more conventional 'issue-oriented' character of the journal, with its concern to delineate, interpret and to theoretically apprehend major political, social and economic trends, tendencies and events. The focus in this 'self-reflective' issue is on aspects of the nature, and current state, of political science and political theory as intellectual projects that render possible the sustained, systematic reflection on these trends, tendencies and events.

The articles that follow have two major thrusts. The first is a critique of current approaches to political science that acknowledges and embraces the importance of normative ideals, as well as empirical work, in the field. The second is an examination of the interactions between individual agents, and how those interactions can be understood to establish 'common wholes'. Specifically, the social and economic interactions between individuals within isolated societies, as well as the interactions between states on a global level, are examined. Taken together, the articles have a 'Janus-faced' character to them, looking backwards on the one hand to the reclamation and remarshaling of the rich resources within the traditions of political thought from the times of classical antiquity to the present, and looking forward on the other, to their deployment in addressing the challenges of our times. In doing so, they remind us that political science cannot be disconnected from a concern with justice and virtue, and that the empirical analysis of political action and institutions that does not embrace the meaning of the 'human good' is without moral point or political resonance.

In 'Political Theory and Political Science: Can this Marriage be Saved?' one of the discipline's notable practitioners traces its contentious post-war American history, a history that saw the emergence of an impasse between distinct camps. Terence Ball uses the playful imagery of a rocky marital partnership to acknowledge the serious debates that arose with the behaviouralist revolution and its orientation towards logical positivism and the quest for a scientific study of political systems. Scholars of politics who hoped to model their research on 'hard' sciences such as physics advocated an empiricism that embraced measurement and quantification, one that separated facts from values, the empirical from the normative. Political theory

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was accused of being little more than a history of ideas, a reflection on concepts (state, citizen, social contract, rights) that prescribed how people *should* behave rather than observed how they actually *did* behave. Advocates of theory countered with the view that the variability and social nature of language and meaning precluded the application of a neutral or natural law to human behaviour. It was, they insisted, naïve to believe that there could be analysis free of normative content and assumption, devoid of theoretical presuppositions.

Of course, in addition to philosophical differences, these divisions of method and analysis corresponded to currents within the American political scene. On the one hand was a post-war conception of American history as characterized by consensus rather than conflict, which some scholars felt heralded not only an 'end of ideology' but (with Peter Laslett) the death of political philosophy. On the other hand, the rise of civic movements in the 1960s and 70s to promote equal rights and to oppose the Vietnam War did much to establish that conflict and change were vital features of American political life—reason indeed for an orientation towards the theoretical and historical, rather than the scientific.

Ball also attributes the revitalization of political theory to the contributions of émigrés from post-war Europe, particularly the writings of German-Jewish thinkers such as Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt. Their critique of a liberalism which had shown itself grossly insufficient to dissuade the terrors of holocaust, and their insistence on situating political discussion not only in history but in conceptions of civic action, freedom and political responsibility, was important in renewing the raison d'etre of political theory.

Ball writes from the 'theory side' of this rocky 'partnership' and suggests that the furious debates that appeared to be jeopardizing the 'marriage' of political studies were in fact much more a benefit to political theory than a disadvantage. Ultimately, the question Ball poses in his title frames a broader and more serious concern: that the discipline, through its professionalization and increasing specialization, has become disengaged from the political. His 'marital therapy' is in fact a plea to American political studies to regain a focus on the pertinent issues and conflicts at hand—global warming, the 'war on terror' and its attendant practices of torture, detention, and loss of civil liberties, for example—for these are *our* 'dark times' and they demand both empirical and moral voices from the American academy.

Christian Fuchs and John Collier argue that political theory has assumed methodological individualism, similar to the atomistic

mechanism that prevailed in physics. This leads to an aggregative and linear political theory centred on individual actions serving individual interests. Similar trends developed in economics from the time of its origin as a separate science. Today, through game theory, the same formalization has been applied to both economic and political theory, with only the values and circumstances differing from one domain to the other. However, in physics it has been discovered that the corresponding atomistic methodology is inadequate for complex systems, and that one must allow for open, self-organizing systems that cannot be reduced to linear combinations of their components. Fuchs and Collier argue that this sort of open dynamical systems theory be extended to political theory as well, with results that diverge quite strongly from the ideals of much contemporary political theory.

Indeed, Fuchs and Collier proceed to classify several competing current approaches to political theory and its relation to economics, and indicate how some recent versions, notably Hayek's and Luhmann's models, try to deal with complexity, but (unsuccessfully) use closed autopoietic systems models. Against this they argue for understanding politics and economics as complex systems that enjoy a certain *interactive autonomy;* that is, while each has a degree of autonomy from the other, each also interacts with the other as an environment. Central here is the notion of systems as self-organizing and mutually connected, i.e., each system has its own logic of operation, but its continued existence and development requires that it is open, mutable, and receives inputs from other social systems.

For Fuchs and Collier the problems of modernity find their solution in the appeal to open and self-organizing systems. Currently, modern society is dominated by the logic of accumulation and competition in all subsystems—a logic that stems from the economy. With post-Fordism the structural coupling between the economy and the state is becoming more rigid in the direction where the economy influences the state system. As a palliative to this trend, Fuchs and Collier look to grassroots social movements. Noting that the concept of self-organization is closely related to the ideas of self-determination, self-management, and the reduction of heteronomy and centralized authority, grassroots social movements are the embodiment of an authentic form of self-organization that could serve as a model for the participatory design of society.

Patrick Giddy makes an eloquent and persuasive plea for modern societies' profit-maximizing and self-interested values to be more explicitly understood and conceptualized within a wider depiction of

human flourishing as found in the Aristotelian ethical tradition. In 'Does character matter? Guardian values in an age of commerce', he draws on Jane Jacobs' recent work, which contrasts a guardian ethic, or 'territorial way of behaving'—with its values of loyalty, honour, discipline and respect for tradition, among other things—with a commercial ethic, or 'trading way of behaving'—with its values of openness, honesty, trust and thrift. Rather than treating the two syndromes as utterly incompatible, as Jacobs tends to do, Giddy argues that it is important for 'all these competing values [to] find their place on the same page', and that we should attempt to both 'hold to the limited nature of the commercial syndrome, and keep in mind the larger picture'.

Proposing that everyday goals in business, the professions and the world of work should be moderated by an overarching moral vision, which 'impresses upon the individual the need to consider also the quality of their act, not just its output', he offers a series of illuminating examples, drawing on recent issues of public import in South Africa but equally of international relevance, to show 'how the ethic of individual self-determination within the bounds of fairness (the ethic associated with trading) is not an absolute one but needs to be balanced by an idea of the exigencies (however these are understood) surrounding the idea of achieving a *common* life, the concern of the guardian ethic'. Asserting that 'character does matter', he concludes by showing how, as in the case of adversarial advocacy in the legal profession, questions of 'virtue' require more emphasis than is presently found in an applied and professional ethics obsessed with 'fairness'.

Roger Deacon's article brings the work of 20th century sociologist Norbert Elias to bear on the process of globalization. As Deacon himself points out, Elias' work predated the debates on globalization and dealt primarily with mediaeval Europe. However, Elias' methodology (sociogenesis) and his focus on the process of 'civilizing' yield much that could benefit contemporary analysis of the phenomenon of globalization. Deacon shows that Elias' approach offers new categories of analysis with which to both explain the effects of globalization and indicate how international interdependence fosters both control and resistance, both democratization and radicalization, and both integration and disintegration. One of the features of the modern world are the series of apparently countervailing tendencies noted by so many commentators: the disintegration and strengthening of the nation-state; increasing centralization coupled with individualization; interventionist human rights discourses and the prevailing incidence of

war. Viewed through an Eliasian lens (privileging as it does a long view of history), these trends reveal striking continuities with analyses of much earlier processes of nation formation, and suggest that what we are experiencing are not contradictory and unpredictable forces, but rather the 'civilizing process' on a global scale. The implication of this analysis is that there are signs for cautious optimism about a long-term tendency towards a pacification of the planet. However, in the interregnum, while the mechanisms and institutions of global governance are consolidated, social science needs new categories of analysis to explain simultaneous processes of integration and disintegration, to disentangle democratization and liberation, and to recognize that interdependence need not curtail agency. Deacon suggests in the concluding section that Elias' work offers the explanatory power to do just that.

In 'Realistic Idealism: An Aristotelian Alternative to Machiavellian International Relations', Pedro Tabensky develops a critique of political realism in International Relations (IR). He marshals Aristotle to argue that the tendency amongst IR realists to assign relatively minor importance to ethical ideals in their analysis of the international political domain itself rests on a robust ethical ideal. Their failure to acknowledge this is an instance of their lack of realism. Their principled allergy to ideals makes them deny the ideals that underpin their own discourse as well as blind to the proper and coherent ideals that ought to be informing their analyses of the international domain. They are therefore unable to properly criticize the current state of international affairs or mourn the loss of a better state of affairs. Tabensky thus criticises IR realists for being unrealistically pessimistic and ultimately incoherent.

He claims that, for IR realists, the international arena will always be a place where a battle of wills, informed by the logic of power, is fought. He grants that it may be true that the international political domain is a place where such battles are fought, but this alleged infelicitous situation does not in and of itself entail the normative pessimism informing their assessments of the international domain, and it does not entail the recommendations offered by IR realists, particularly relating to balance of power concerns. He builds his argument upon Aristotle's observations regarding the fact that humans are active creatures, whose activities are defined in relation to a functional ideal, an ideal of operation. As we can only properly understand what an eye is by knowing the ideal that defines eyes—proper vision—so too we can only properly identify the movements of the international politi-

cal arena in relation to ideals that ultimately define this arena, ideals that stem from a proper understanding of the human person. Using this Aristotelian teleological technique of analysis, he shows that ideals are a constitutive part of the international domain and he recommends an alternative to political realism, namely, realistic idealism (or idealistic realism). A realistic idealist, he maintains, takes seriously the fact that values or ideals are an aspect of the world we live in, and thus would analyze international relations with a sense of who we are, and hence of where we ought to be heading.

THE EDITORS