

J

Judgment

Linda M. G. Zerilli

Judgment as a crucial issue for political theory is longstanding. What it means to have good political judgment is a topic debated by ancient to modern and contemporary thinkers as they attempt to answer that which most take to be the premiere question of politics, namely, who should rule? If good judgment is equated with superior theoretical knowledge and the ability to reason based on the grasp of universals, then an argument for Plato's "philosopher-kings" or their modern equivalents can be made (Plato 1991). But if the power to judge is viewed more as the ability to know when concepts apply than to know the concepts themselves or, further, to create concepts where they are lacking altogether, then it is not clear that knowing and acting appropriately are connected in the way Plato assumed.

Before turning to the different ways in which political thinkers have linked the capacity to judge with the question of rule, let's get a bit clearer about what is meant by the power of judgment. In philosophical terms, judgment is understood as the ability to apply concepts as rules to particulars, that is, to determine what something is by deciding whether it falls under

a certain rule or not. So, in a cognitive judgment, one judges the object before one to be, say, a table based on knowledge of the concept and the ability to apply it. But cognitive judgments, though they can be politically relevant, are not our main focus. We are more concerned with judgments of right and wrong, bad and good, just and unjust, etc. To declare a particular war wrong, one first needs to know that it is a war – hence a cognitive judgment is called for. But to declare that particular war wrong or unjust, something else is required. On what basis do we make such judgments?

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, Aristotle (2009) puts forward the idea of phronesis, which is translated into Latin as *prudentia* and which derives from *jurisprudentia*, whose task is to judge or apply a law to a particular case. In English, phronesis is normally translated as "practical wisdom." The source of later modern and contemporary accounts of judgment such as that of Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, Richard Bernstein, Ronald Beiner, and Seyla Benhabib, phronesis becomes a way of questioning the unity of knowing and acting, which constituted the core of Plato's ethics and his theory of politics. For Aristotle, by contrast with Plato, practical wisdom (phronesis) is distinct from theoretical wisdom (*sophia*). Phronesis is

The Encyclopedia of Political Thought, First Edition. Edited by Michael T. Gibbons.
© 2015 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. Published 2015 by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

knowledge of a different kind from theoretic knowledge, for it requires an ability to know how to judge and act in a particular context. It is not just knowledge of universals but knowing when to apply something universal to a particular situation. Thus practical wisdom is the ability to know how to judge and act in a concrete and, in principle, unrepeatable situation. Absent such practical knowledge, the Platonic idea of the good becomes “an empty generality” (Gadamer 2004: 312).

The Problem of Judgment

Notwithstanding their differences, what most ancient thinkers (save the ancient skeptics) share is the assumption that natural, transcendent standards of judgment exist and that they can be applied by statesmen to the unstable, contingent world of politics. It is this idea of transcontextual criteria of judgment that comes into crisis in the modern period, giving rise to what might be called the problem of judgment. For thinkers as diverse as Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin, Jürgen Habermas, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Michel de Montaigne, and John Rawls, people do not have access to natural or universally given criteria of judgment. This is a consequence of both the development of modern science, which put the reliability of the senses into radical doubt, and the modern descriptive fact of value pluralism. The idea that all individuals reasoning properly will be led to the same conclusions is no longer credible – which is not to say that it is no longer tempting; the idea of perfectly attuned minds following the logic of reason dies hard. In any case, modern and especially contemporary political theorists are writing in a context of a decayed rationalism, in which the rules for judgment are no longer obvious or given.

The decisive question is not whether these thinkers are right to highlight the loss of a natural or shared criterion of judgment but, rather, what consequences we should draw from it. Should we think about that loss as good reason to be deeply suspicious of citizens’

capacity for judgment and try to find another public standard around which citizens might orient themselves? Or might we think of it as the occasion for exercising judgment reflectively, precisely in the absence of shared criteria or rules for making sense of the particulars of public life? Is good political judgment something that can be taught and learned? Is it a form of knowledge that can be systematized into a science?

Judgment in Modern Political Thought

In the view of Michel de Montaigne (1958 [1580]), uncritical reliance on custom too often guides our moral and political judgments. Wary of the Scholastic way of philosophizing, which took Aristotle as authoritative, and of a university model of science that placed disciples in a hierarchical relation to masters and did little more than confirm inherited beliefs, Montaigne called for the practice of free judgment. The freedom to philosophize, to critically judge prevailing social and political agreement, is stifled when we are bound to the task of justifying beliefs we already hold, rather than opening our minds to the infinite variety of beliefs that exist across human societies. There are no universal rules of human conduct and thus there is no way of systematizing beliefs, values, opinions, and practices into a rational whole. The endless diversity of humanity cannot be the object of a theory. To exercise free judgment, argues Montaigne, one should actively seek out other opinions, many of which can be discovered through the study of different cultures. Skepticism as practiced by Montaigne does not lead to despair at the impossibility of absolute knowledge or to retreat from the public world altogether; rather, a healthy skepticism towards received opinion encourages a joyful openness to the world. Montaigne views the very idea of absolute truth as deeply corrosive of human morals, for it leads towards an arrogant and intolerant attitude towards other forms of belief, as indeed it did in the persecution of heretics in his time.

Deeply critical of the penchant to create abstract theories that fail to take account of the myriad contingencies and particularities of human circumstances, Montaigne is suspicious not only of claims to absolute truth but also of political actors whose practice of judgment is little more than that of subsuming particulars under universal rules. Often viewed as a relativist, he does not believe that a refusal to take one's own cultural standards as the rule leads to a refusal or inability to judge at all. Rather, a comparative approach to cultures enables the judging faculty to free itself from prejudices and to develop itself as autonomous and critical.

Just this autonomy of judgment is what Thomas Hobbes (1994 [1651]) would curtail, for the power to judge in one's own case is the source of the endless conflict and threat of death that characterizes the state of nature according to Hobbes. In this pre-political and pre-moral condition, there is no transcendent standard of judgment. Each has the right to judge what is in his or her own best interest for survival: "by natural law *one is oneself the judge* whether the means he is to use and the action he intends to take are necessary to the preservation of his life and limbs or not" (Hobbes 1998 [1642]: 27; emphasis in original). There is no normative account of what it means to judge rightly in the state of nature, save what each individual deems to be necessary in his or her own case. This supreme right of each to judge produces a state of war. Thus the right to judge must be relinquished by the parties to the social compact when they agree to create a sovereign as the condition of peace. The right to judge is replaced by the duty to obey. The normative authority of the sovereign to judge in all matters may be arbitrary – it is the very creation of the sovereign that establishes what is held to be true – but it is absolute nonetheless.

Although his solution is draconian, Hobbes is not alone in worrying about citizens' power of autonomous judgment. The ambivalence with which most modern political thinkers view this power can be seen in the work of the social contract theorists who followed Hobbes,

such as John Locke. Like Hobbes, Locke argues that the move out of the state of nature into civil society is based on the relinquishment of each man's right to judge in his own case and the establishment of a public, authoritative judge. So much does he share Hobbes's concern about the destructive effects of men's private judgment on a stable civil peace that, in his early writings, Locke defends an account of absolute state power even in the case of a corrupt ruler (Locke 1967 [1660]). By contrast with Hobbes, however, Locke eventually comes to see that the capacity to judge, if replaced wholly with the duty to obey, will lead to the very anarchy and misery that obedience was supposed to contain. In his mature and surely most famous political work, *Two Treatises on Government*, Locke (1988 [1689]) argues that judgment both plays a crucial role in the development of liberal subjects whose desire is in accordance with the law and offers a crucial check on the exercise of the arbitrary power of the sovereign. Rather than divest citizens of their right to judge, he seeks to bring this all-important faculty in line with his vision of consensual government. Defining judgment as "the faculty which God has given to man to supply the want of clear and certain knowledge in cases where that cannot be had" (Locke 1979 [1690]: 653), Locke sees judgment as the faculty that enables us to find our way in the realm of the probable, as opposed to the certain, which is where human existence and especially the problems of politics are for the most part housed.

In their diverse accounts of judgment, Montaigne, Hobbes, and Locke were responding to the problems of religious strife that accompanied the growing diversity of values in the early modern period. Deep concern about the wars of religion that indelibly shaped their thinking persists into the late modern period. Although value conflicts are no longer restricted to religious beliefs, the complex relationship between private and public judgment remains a problem for all political theorists concerned with democratic rule. Confronting the undeniable empirical fact of value pluralism, such

theorists are faced with the apparent dilemma of how to respect the diversity of opinions and beliefs while maintaining the social order required by a democratic society. If it is no longer possible, in the face of such diversity, to advance a substantive vision of the good as the standard according to which we judge competing points of view, then on what basis can public forms of judgment be established and citizens be said to judge? Surely it cannot be on the basis of what is narrowly in the interest of each, for thinking that something is normatively right (for me) does not make it right (for others). But how can one avoid subjectivism in judgments without falling back into a form of objectivism, whereby the claim to validity is based on the assumption that there are fixed features of the world that are independent of human judgment and to which such judgment must be held accountable?

Twentieth Century Approaches to Judgment

This was the central problem that concerned Hannah Arendt (1992), whose unfinished work on judgment has had a profound influence on debates in the late modern period. For her, the problem of judgment arises in the wake of the collapse of inherited criteria for judgment or what she called the final break in tradition that marked the definitive political event of the twentieth century, namely totalitarianism. Indeed, totalitarianism (which is characterized by the breakdown of inherited moral standards and common sense), Arendt argued, is the paradigmatic political event that at once calls for our critical judgment and ruptures the entire inherited framework of such judgment. How shall we judge an event that has brought to light the ruin of our categories of thought and standards of judgment, she asks.

Arendt turned for help in these matters to Kant, the first major thinker who made judgment a central topic of his work. The “power of judgment” is established in Kant’s theory as a distinct and autonomous faculty of the mind that is characterized by spontaneity and

creativity. In his view, judging is a natural ability that can be practiced but cannot be taught. It is the ability to bring particulars under rules, but there is no rule, as Kant shrewdly observed, for how to follow a rule.

Although Kant’s theory of judgment is worked out in crucial respects in the first *Critique* (published in 1781 and 1787) and the second *Critique* (published in 1788), it is the third, the *Critique of Judgment* (1987 [1790]), which had the largest influence on Arendt and many other political theorists writing on that topic. In the first part of the text, Kant attempts to answer the longstanding question of what, if any, kind of validity aesthetic judgments could have. Rejecting the idea that such judgments were rule-governed and based on the objective criteria that characterizes the cognitive and moral judgments that he had examined in his earlier work, Kant nonetheless holds that they are not merely subjective. Far from being mere preferences that make no claim on others (*de gustibus non disputandum est*), judgments of taste have “subjective validity” (Kant 1987 [1790]: §§18–22). Examples of a rule that we cannot state, aesthetic judgments cannot compel agreement with proofs but nonetheless anticipate the assent of all. The claim, “This painting is beautiful,” is different from the claim, “I like canary wine,” says Kant. It would be ridiculous to say, this painting “is beautiful to me,” for a judgment of beauty posits the assent of others. Likewise, when I say, “this war is unjust,” I state more than a mere preference. I do not mean, it is unjust to me but, rather, everyone else too ought to find it unjust. Whether everyone else does so find it is another matter.

If aesthetic judgments have an anticipatory structure in Kant’s view, this structure is quite different from what he called “determinative judgments,” which entail the application of shared concepts as rules to particulars. Aesthetic judgments are a species of what Kant calls “reflective judgments,” that is, judgments where the rule is not given and must be found. Whereas agreement in cognitive judgments is more or less guaranteed by the shared criteria governing those judgments – if you know

mathematics, you will agree that two plus two is four, lest you be accused of making a mistake – aesthetic judgments cannot compel the assent of all. There is always the possibility that someone will disagree with my judgment of beauty and no proof can be invoked to settle the dispute objectively. Each of us must judge for ourselves, yet each of us also anticipates that others will agree.

The non-rule-governed character of aesthetic judgments was deeply appealing to Arendt, who sought to make the faculty of judgment answerable to human plurality and to the unrepeatable events that characterize the realm of human affairs. Philosophers, seeking eternal truth, disparaged this realm as a site for developing the capacity of judgment, she argued, for everything in it was viewed as too contingent to be of any use to the quest for knowledge. In Kant Arendt found just this emphasis on the particular, which calls for our judgment in the absence of a rule. “If you say, ‘What a beautiful rose!’ you do not arrive at this judgment by first saying, ‘All roses are beautiful, this flower is a rose, hence this rose is beautiful’” (Arendt 1992: 13–14). What confronts you in a reflective judgment is not the general category “rose,” but the particular, “*this* rose.” Ronald Beiner explains:

Reflective judgment means attending to the unique qualities of the particular, to the particular *qua* particular, rather than simply subsuming particulars under some universal formula. Or, as Arendt would put it, judgment involves attending to the particular as an end in itself – that is, as a singular locus of meaning that isn’t reducible to universal causes or universal consequences. (Beiner 2001: 94)

That *this* rose is beautiful is not given in the universal nature of roses. The claim about beauty is not grounded in a property of the object, which could be objectively ascertained (as is the case with cognitive judgments); such a claim belongs to the structure of feeling rather than concepts. *This* rose is beautiful because it is judged to be beautiful.

For Arendt, political judgments are like aesthetic judgments in that they are not claims

to truth based on demonstration or proof, but are appeals to other citizens. Citing Kant, Arendt emphasizes that judgments of taste are based on “an anticipated communication with others with whom I know I must finally come to some agreement” (Arendt 1993a: 221). This anticipated agreement relies on *sensus communis*, “the very opposite of ‘private feelings,’ *sensus privates*” (222). These appeals, which anticipate the consent of others, are constitutive of a sense of political community, in her view.

Wherever people judge the things of the world that are common to them, there is more implied in their judgments than these things. By his manner of judging, the person discloses to an extent also himself, what kind of person he is, and this disclosure, which is involuntary, gains in validity to the degree that it has liberated itself from individual idiosyncracies. (221)

What one discovers in the act of judging, says Arendt, is both one’s differences with some judging persons and one’s commonalities with others. “We all know very well how quickly people recognize each other, and how unequivocally they can feel that they belong [or do not belong] to each other, when they discover [or fail to discover] a kinship in questions of what pleases and displeases” (223). Based in taste, the “it-pleases-or-displeases-me,” judging allows differences and commonalities to emerge that are by no means given in advance of the act itself. Arendt refuses to specify what values must already be in place to serve as the ground for community. Judging may well call into question my sense of political community with some citizens and reveal a new sense of community with others.

This discovery of community is not guaranteed by the kind of rule-following Arendt associates with what Kant calls a “determinative judgment,” i.e., a judgment in which a particular is subsumed under a universal (Kant 1987 [1790]: 18). The rule-following associated with determinative (logical) judgments, says Arendt, compels everyone who has the power of reason and could just as well be discovered in solitude.

Political objectivity requires not simply that one “be in agreement with one’s own self [logic’s principle of noncontradiction], but ... consist[s] of being able to ‘think in the place of everybody else,’” she writes (Arendt 1993a: 220). That is what it means “to see politically” (Arendt 1993c: 96). The origins of this political way of seeing lie in “Homeric objectivity” (i.e., the ability to see the same thing from *opposite* points of view: to see the Trojan War from the standpoint of *both* of its greatest protagonists, Achilles and Hector) (Arendt 1993b: 51). This is different from the kind of seeing that ends with the cognition of an object, which involves not seeing from the viewpoints of others, but the ability to subsume particulars under rules.

Judgment raises the problem of what deliberative democrats such as Habermas call intersubjective validity. As Jennifer Nedelsky puts it, Kant

identified the central problem of judgment: how can a judgment that is genuinely and irreducibly subjective also be valid. What does the claim of validity mean if we do not transmute the subjective into something objective – and thus lose the essence of judgment as distinct from ascertaining a truth that can be demonstrably, and thus compellingly proven? (Nedelsky 2001: 104)

How can we decide which judgments are correct if the mark of political judgments is that they cannot be adjudicated in the same manner as truth claims, that is, by means of universal criteria and the subsumption of particulars under rules?

In the context of modernity’s widespread value pluralism, this question takes on particular urgency, for it raises the threat of relativism and decisionism. A critic of Arendt’s turn to Kant’s third *Critique* for its rejection of truth criteria, Habermas argues that without these we would have no way to adjudicate competing claims. The problem is not the plurality of claims as such, which is a mark of a democratic society, but the absence of a procedure according to which one could judge their validity. Needed is a procedure according to which we can decide on a rational rather than a decisionistic basis. Writes Habermas:

The limits of a decisionistic treatment of practical questions are overcome as soon as argumentation is expected to test the generalizability of interests, instead of being resigned to an impenetrable pluralism of apparently ultimate value orientations. It is not the fact of this pluralism that is here disputed, but the assertion that it is impossible to separate by argumentation generalizable interests from those that remain particular. (Habermas 1975: 108)

Public reason, as it is elaborated in a “discourse ethics” and grounded in certain universal ontological assumptions about the intrinsically rational and rule-governed structure of human communication, becomes Habermas’s answer to the threat of relativism and decisionism that he associates with the collapse of transcendent criteria of judgment in the context of modernity’s irreducible value pluralism.

Rawls resists positing what he calls Habermas’s comprehensive “philosophical analysis of the presuppositions of rational discourse” and restricts himself rather to articulating the limited idea of the “politically reasonable” (Rawls 1995: 139). Like Habermas, however, Rawls is equally concerned with defending democratic values that reflect more than the convictions of his political culture and that can instead, as Habermas puts it, “lay claim to some sort of normative binding force” (Habermas 1995: 124). On what basis can liberal-democratic values be defended? Though both of these thinkers reject an objectivist conception of truth as a way of grounding political judgments, they nonetheless seek ways of circumventing the threat of decisionism and relativism that they associate with the otherwise commendable loss of a transcendent standard of judgment.

Judgment and the Question of Objectivity

The problem, in short, is how to rethink objectivity once transcendent criteria have collapsed in the face of modern historicist presuppositions about value-centered judging. Once we see that judging is not possible from an abstract point of view, devoid of human subjectivity

and interests (as Kant first argued); once we see, further, that “the ways in which human minds conceptualize and apprehend reality are plural and not single, and that culture and language appear to play a major role in shaping categories we recognize,” as Martha Nussbaum describes the challenge to the “Kantian consensus” in her essay “Political Objectivity,” then we seem to “focus increasingly on the relativity of all judgments to a conceptual scheme, and on the human and cultural-historical character of conceptual schemes” (Nussbaum 2001: 884).

The idea of a conceptual scheme as a way of thinking about value-centered judging has been at the heart of many debates in philosophy, anthropology, philosophy of science, and linguistics. The basic idea, derived from a certain reading of Kant, is that what we know of the world is based on our ability to process external stimuli through concepts given by the understanding. Insofar as concepts are seen as culturally and historically derived, people living in very different cultures might well judge the same empirical stimuli differently. As Donald Davidson, explains:

Conceptual schemes, we are told, are ways of organizing experience; they are systems of categories that give form to the data of sensation . . . There may be no translating from one scheme to another, in which case the beliefs, desires, hopes and bits of knowledge that characterize one person have no true counterparts for the subscriber to another scheme: what counts as real in one system may not in another. (Davidson 1973–4: 5)

In Davidson’s well-known critique, the very idea of conceptual scheme relativism is incoherent. The condition of recognizing a putatively alternative conceptual scheme is our ability to translate it into our own language. But if we are able to so translate it, then we cannot really maintain that it is an *alternative* conceptual scheme. Davidson condenses this point into what he calls the “principle of charity” that guides radical interpretation – our attempt to interpret a completely unknown language. Making sense of someone means treating him or her as a rational agent. We try

to optimize agreement between ourselves and those whom we try to interpret by taking for granted that they hold true beliefs.

Powerfully challenged in Davidson’s essay is a picture of the relation of language and world that takes language to comprise a scheme of concepts that organizes an otherwise unstructured world. According to the picture, the scheme of concepts can be understood independently of the world to which it can give structure. On this view, judgment is seen as employing concepts to shape what is otherwise meaningless experience. The problem with this way of thinking about the exercise of judgment, as the philosopher John McDowell has argued, is that our concepts seem to be “spinning in a frictionless void,” as if they were in no way answerable to the way things actually are in the world (McDowell 1996: 11). We do better to think about experience as always already conceptualized, rather than as raw material awaiting conceptualization. The capacity to judge, in other words, is always already in contact with the world, not an imposition of form on it. This is the true insight of Kant, argues McDowell.

For political theorists, the intricacies of these philosophical debates about the nature of judgment may seem extrinsic to the subject matter of politics. But to the extent that such debates bear on the question of what it means to speak about a shared or common world as the basis for judging, philosophical accounts can certainly be relevant. That said, the central questions for political theory remain unanswered by most philosophical accounts of judgment, for these tend to concern themselves with discerning stable features of the judging faculty itself, whereas what matters for politics is the ever-changing, contingent context in which judgments are made.

Judging as a Democratic Practice

When Isaiah Berlin writes that the mark of good political judgment is the ability to “grasp the unique combination of characteristics that constitute this particular situation – this and no

other,” he highlights the irreducible importance of an ability to respond to what is specific and unrepeatable in any context (Berlin 1998: 45). Like Arendt, Berlin sees the capacity to judge without reliance on universal standards as crucial to democratic societies characterized by widespread value pluralism. And though he does not turn to Kant in these matters, Berlin clearly shares Arendt’s view that the kind of judging ability at stake in politics is not based on “laws to be discovered, rules to be learnt” (40). The misguided tendency to think of good political judgment on the model of a science, he argues, is symptomatic of the way in which the methods of the natural sciences have come to define what counts as rational behavior. But this approach deprives political judgment of its subject matter, which is human action, for it treats such action as subject to the same laws as natural occurrences, whereas action is characterized by contingency. The idea that there is one kind of rationality suited to all forms of human endeavor is the legacy of “monism – the ancient belief that there is a single harmony of truths into which everything, if it is genuine, in the end must fit.” This “enemy of pluralism” can never generate good political judgment, for it is indifferent to the particular (Berlin 2001: 14).

Berlin’s advocacy of pluralism has been seen as defenseless against relativism in judgments, but he is quite adamant that his comparative approach does not reduce to the view that every opinion, practice, or belief is just as good as any other. There are certain values that are objectively human for Berlin, values that cannot be breached without violating the human in his view. Leo Strauss famously accuses Berlin of not acknowledging the dogmatic bottom line of his pluralism; the value of negative liberty is not just one among many values for Berlin, argues Strauss, it is an absolute value for which Berlin takes a final stand (Strauss 1989). Whether or not Strauss is right in his reading, what becomes clear in Berlin’s work is that judgment arises as a problem for political theorists in response to the loss of transcendental criteria, and this problem admits of no easy answer in the context of modernity’s value pluralism.

Contemporary liberal-democratic theory remains ambivalent towards each individual’s capacity to judge (Zerilli 2005; Garsten 2006; Yack 2006; Casson 2011). Indeed, the problem of judgment can rightly be said to haunt liberal-democratic thinkers. On the one hand, the future of liberal-democratic regimes depends on the good political judgment of citizens, for without the continual vigilance that such judgment enables, tyranny can easily take hold. On the other hand, this dependence of liberal democracy on the practice of citizen judgment rests uneasy with most of its advocates, for lurking in the background they see each citizen secretly desiring and perhaps actively seeking to be judge in his or her own case. If liberal-democratic government relies on the habits and dispositions of its citizens and not just on the supposedly universal truth of liberal-democratic principles (Casson 2011), then there is no way around judgment as a crucial quotidian practice of civic life. Returning to the earlier connection between the capacity to judge and the question of political rule, we might say that at stake in learning to judge critically and reflectively, that is, in the absence of transcendent criteria of judgment, is the fundamental idea of democracy as rule by the people. Where that practical truth leads depends on the thinker, but most are deeply cautious at best.

SEE ALSO: Arendt, Hannah (1906–75); Aristotle (384–322 BCE); Berlin, Isaiah (1909–98); Habermas, Jürgen (1929–); Hobbes, Thomas (1588–1679); Kant, Immanuel (1724–1804); Locke, John (1632–1704); Montaigne, Michel de (1533–92); Nussbaum, Martha Craven (1947–); Rawls, John (1921–2002)

References

- Arendt, H. (1992) *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, ed. R. Beiner. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Arendt, H. (1993a) “The Crisis in Culture.” In H. Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: Penguin Books, pp. 197–226.
- Arendt, H. (1993b) “The Concept of History.” In H. Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: Penguin Books, pp. 41–90.

- Arendt, H. (1993c) *Was ist Politik?* ed. U. Ludz. Munich: Piper Verlag.
- Aristotle. (2009) *The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. D. Ross, trans. L. Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Beiner, R. (2001) "Rereading Hannah Arendt's Kant Lectures." In R. Beiner and J. Nedelsky (Eds.), *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics: Themes from Kant and Arendt*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 91–102.
- Berlin, I. (1998) "On Political Judgment." In I. Berlin, *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and Their History*, ed. H. Harvey. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, pp. 40–53.
- Berlin, I. (2001). "My Intellectual Path." In I. Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, ed. H. Harvey. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 1–23.
- Casson, D. J. (2011) *Liberating Judgment: Fanatics, Skeptics, and John Locke's Politics of Probability*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Davidson, D. (1973–4) "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 47, 5–20.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (2004) *Truth and Method*, trans. J. Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall. London: Continuum.
- Garsten, B. (2006) *Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Habermas, J. (1975) *Legitimation Crisis*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1995) "Reconciliation Through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's Political Liberalism," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 92 (3), 109–31.
- Hobbes, T. (1994 [1651]) *Leviathan*, ed. E. Curley. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Hobbes, T. (1998 [1642]) *On the Citizen*, ed. R. Tuck and M. Silverthorne. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. (1987 [1790]) *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W. S. Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Locke, J. (1967 [1660]) *Two Tracts on Government*, ed. P. Abrams. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Locke, J. (1979 [1690]) *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Locke, J. (1988 [1689]) *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. P. Laslett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McDowell, J. (1996) *Mind and World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Montaigne, M. de (1958 [1580]) *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. D. M. Frame. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Nedelsky, J. (2001) "Judgment, Diversity, and Relational Autonomy." In R. Beiner and J. Nedelsky (Eds.), *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics: Themes from Kant and Arendt*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 103–20.
- Nussbaum, M. (2001) "Political Objectivity," *New Literary History*, 32 (4), 883–906.
- Plato. (1991) *The Republic of Plato*, ed. A. Bloom. New York: Basic Books.
- Rawls, J. (1995) "Political Liberalism: Reply to Habermas," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 92 (2), 132–80.
- Strauss, L. (1989) "Relativism." In T. L. Pangle (Ed.), *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 13–26.
- Yack, B. (2006) "Rhetoric and Public Reasoning: An Aristotelian Understanding of Political Deliberation," *Political Theory*, 34 (4), 417–38.
- Zerilli, L. M. G. (2005) *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Further Reading

- Arendt, H. (2003) *Responsibility and Judgment*. New York: Schocken.
- Benhabib, S. (2003) *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Ferguson, K. (1999) *The Politics of Judgment: Aesthetics, Identity, and Political Theory*. Lanham, MD: Lexington.
- Ferrara, A. (2008) *The Force of the Example: Explorations in the Paradigm of Judgment*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Habermas, J. (1994) "Hannah Arendt's Communications Concept of Power." In L. Hinchman and S. Hinchman (Eds.), *Hannah Arendt, Critical Essays*. Albany: SUNY Press, pp. 211–30.

- Habermas, J. (1996) *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- McClure, K. (1996) *Judging Rights: Lockean Politics and the Limits of Consent*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Rawls, J. (1993) *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Steinberger, P. (1993) *The Concept of Political Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tetlock, P. (2005) *Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Abstract

Judgment as a crucial issue for political theory is longstanding. What it means to have good political judgment is a topic debated by ancient to modern and contemporary thinkers as they attempt to answer that which most take to be the premiere question of politics, namely, who should rule? If good judgment is equated with superior theoretical knowledge and the ability to reason based on the grasp of universals, then an argument for Plato's "philosopher-kings" or their modern equivalents can be made. But if the power to judge is viewed more as the ability to know when concepts apply than to know the concepts themselves or, further, to create concepts where they are lacking altogether, then it is not clear that knowing and acting appropriately are connected in the way Plato assumed.

Keywords: citizenship, democratic theory, foundationalism, judgment, pluralism, political theory