

This is a very ambitious work, but on balance the results it achieves fall short of the goals it sets.

WALLACE J. THIES
Catholic University of America
Copyright © 2008 Heldref Publications

Sharansky, Natan
The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror

New York: Public Affairs
336 pp., \$26.95 cloth, \$14.00 paper
ISBN 978-1-58648-261-9 cloth
ISBN 978-1-58648-354-8 paper
Publication date: November 2004

Unfortunately, the failed policies with which *The Case for Democracy* is associated will likely lead many to avoid this rich, interesting, and well-developed work. Sharansky, a former Soviet political dissident and prisoner and a former member of the Israeli Knesset, cleverly and effectively weaves his interesting personal experiences with political theory and foreign policy in an effort to establish an argument that relates a lack of political freedom with terror. The resulting work is accessible to students, scholars, and even the motivated layperson.

Based on his experiences as a Soviet citizen turned political dissident turned political prisoner and his experiences in Israeli politics, Sharansky hypothesizes that freedom is the key component to undermining the terror and tyranny produced by fear societies (societies based on coercion rather than consensus). Theoretically, fear societies are weakened by the need to constantly repress the domestic constituency; therefore, any effort at appeasement from free societies is a welcome respite. Following this logic, free societies should put pressure on fear societies to change internally rather than try to cooperate with them for the sake of international security. The international pressure applied to the regimes in fear societies will either lead to overextension and collapse or internal reform (or some combination thereof). Sharansky examines the historical record, most closely the Helsinki Accords and the fall of the Soviet Union, and offers evidence of the causal mechanisms outlined above.

Sharansky couches his argument in terms of what he coins “moral clarity,” which is certain to alienate audiences that have a different perspective of U.S. foreign policy in the latter stages of the Cold War. For example, while many would agree with the assertion that “all people desire to be free . . . freedom anywhere will make the world safer everywhere,” fundamental disagreement with Sharansky is likely to emerge based on assertions that “democratic nations, led by the United States, have a

critical role to play” and “the world is divided between those who are prepared to confront evil and those who are willing to appease it” (17). The problem with Sharansky is not so much that he is wrong, but that his assertions have manifested into the battle cry for an unpopular war led by an unpopular administration. This is unfortunate, for Sharansky has a lot to say that is worthy of attention.

As part of his stinging and self-critical examination of Israeli leadership and politics, Sharansky clearly opposes and presents compelling arguments against the notion that Arab societies are not amenable to democratic rule. Sharansky even presents a list of dissidents from the leading autocratic regimes in the region in response to the claims that there are no supporters of freedom in these fear societies.

The Case for Democracy is likely to continue to be controversial. However, it is important to evaluate Sharansky based on the merits of all of his arguments rather than dismiss him because of ideological disagreements. Sharansky presents a compelling portrayal of the psychology of fear societies and the repression with which they maintain power, and the fundamental good represented by freedom, especially as advanced through international agreements (such as the Helsinki Accords). In contrast to the typical neoconservative rhetoric with which this work is often associated, Sharansky articulates a far better case for democracy and freedom and is not an unabashed advocate for the use of military force to achieve such objectives. At minimum, he deserves our attention because he makes a worthwhile contribution to the literature on democracy and international security and does so in an interesting and accessible fashion.

KAREN K. PETERSEN
Middle Tennessee State University
Copyright © 2008 Heldref Publications

Breslin, Beau
The Communitarian Constitution

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press
288 pp., \$50.00 cloth, \$25.00 paper
ISBN 978-0-8018-7782-7 cloth
ISBN 978-0-8018-8538-9 paper
Publication Date: March 2004

Beau Breslin finds that communitarianism is on the rise, both in philosophical and political terms. He sees the movement as having started with criticisms of John Rawls’s liberal theory by Sandel, MacIntyre, and Taylor. In reviewing these communitarian works, Breslin focuses on their argument that the self is not a creation of choice but is constituted by the communal context. These criticisms are followed by a “prescriptive” communitarian movement, among whose leaders Breslin lists Mary Ann Gelson, William Galston,

and myself. This second wave—he writes—has argued for limiting freedoms, against individual rights, and for obligations to the common good and for civic virtue.

Breslin reports that both kinds of communitarians won a considerable measure of public support and also have had a significant impact on public policies. He knows how to truly hurt; he claims that President Bush and Vice President Cheney are communitarians—because they support faith-based initiatives rather than value neutrality, which Breslin associates with liberalism.

Breslin is concerned that communitarians are mainly interested with social institutions, moral culture, and habits rather than with political regimes and their constitutional elements. He rises to solve this problem by arguing that communitarians are the current followers of the anti-Federalists whereas liberals are akin to modern-day Federalists. Breslin argues that a good constitution is one that stands firm and remains “objective” in the face of whatever challenges or changes the society undergoes. In his vision, a “communitarian constitution” is one that is endlessly pliable because it is subject to changes in the values of the community.

Breslin is correct that the main communitarian project is social and not political; it is indeed more concerned with society than with the state. He falls into a trap set up by the term “community” (a trap some communitarians helped to set up) by associating communitarianism with the promotion of local and residential social entities. Actually, communities are like Chinese nesting boxes—some are built into much more encompassing ones. The nation is, after all, often defined as a community invested in a state, and is best viewed as a community of communities. Loyalties and normative commitments are split among these communitarian layers, and much of our moral and political discourse is about the relative normative importance to be assigned to each level. Thus, the question of whether a community should be free to follow its religious values (e.g., using peyote in its ritual as in *Employment Division v. Smith*) or heed a national ban on the use of narcotics can be viewed as a clash not of rights, but of the values of the national community with those of a member community. The same holds for *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye v. City of Hialeah* (the “Santeria case”), *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, and many other constitutional cases.

Above all, Breslin tends to view the liberal-communitarian debate through bifocal lenses. One is either a Federalist or an anti-Federalist; either in favor of rights or communal values. However, as his interest in the Constitution should have revealed to him, we actually deal merely with various combinations of these two elements. In the same vein, the current communitarian debate is about how much weight to accord to various common goods (such as security, public health, and environmental protection)

and how much to grant to individual rights (especially to privacy). No one in his or her right mind holds that one category should be vacated for the sake of the other.

I did my best to provide a fair review of this book, although I deeply regret that the author claims that, like Michael Walzer, I hold that local communities should be the ultimate arbitrators of what is morally right. I dedicated a whole chapter in *The New Golden Rule* to argue that such a communitarian position is untenable. I hold that human rights, for instance, are universal values that all communities must honor. These communities are free to foster particularistic values and social responsibilities as long as they do not violate such universals. A sound debate focuses on how much license to give communities, and never treats them as the social entities whose values trump all others. Otherwise a Nazi community would be in the right, as well as one that lynches anybody who has a different color than that of the members.

AMITAI ETZIONI

The George Washington University
Copyright © 2008 Heldref Publications

Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth

Why Arendt Matters

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press

240 pp., \$22.00

ISBN 0-300-12044-3

Publication Date: October 2006

Reading this volume gives one the feeling of taking part in a séance where Elisabeth Young-Bruehl is channeling the spirit of Hannah Arendt to explain and even update her complex and multifaceted body of work. Although Arendt's spirit is very much alive and relevant in contemporary scholarship, she has not spawned the type of devoted discipleship characteristic of other contemporary political theorists. If someone can be said to be truly Arendt's disciple though, it is Elisabeth Young-Bruehl. Young-Bruehl is the type of disciple that Arendt would have wanted, a clear-headed scholar who unpacks Arendt's ideas for their inherent meaning, challenges their cogency if needed, and then relates them to the contemporary world. Although deeply appreciative and loving of Arendt, Young-Bruehl proves that there will never be Arendtians because Arendt's writings encourage true openness in dialogue and judgment.

Young-Bruehl was a student of Arendt's at the New School for Social Research and is most well-known in political science for her 1982 biography *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*. In *Why Arendt Matters* (a much smaller volume), Young-Bruehl does not condense or dumb down her biography. Rather, she attempts to explain Arendt's ideas and then imaginatively relate these ideas to the current state of domestic and international politics.

Young-Bruehl writes that "here, I am only going to wonder about what she might have thought, and do so by engaging—wondering about—how and what she did think, as evidenced by her writing and conversations" (15–16). In her interpretations, Young-Bruehl succeeds in doing what political theory should do—that is, combining philosophical insight with political relevance.

The book is organized into four main sections. The introduction offers up an overview of Arendt's relevance, specifically focusing on the controversy over her phrase "the banality of evil" and her relationship with Martin Heidegger. Amazingly, over the course of this small book, Young-Bruehl touches on most of the major aspects of Arendt's writings and clears up many misunderstandings about her concepts. The first chapter focuses on totalitarianism, the second chapter on human action, and the third on the thought process (corresponding to Arendt's books *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *The Human Condition*, and *The Life of the Mind*), all the while relating her ideas to recent and contemporary world events. Obviously, no one should expect to agree with all of Young-Bruehl's interpretations of Arendt or of recent political developments. I would contend that Young-Bruehl, a practicing psychoanalyst, overemphasizes how Arendt's ideas relate to emotions and the inner workings of the mind, neglecting Arendt's stress on the public realm and the limited importance of the mind in directly affecting political events.

If one can fault the book for something, it would be that it is far too brief. Often the references to actual political events could be fleshed out much more. This could have been a tome that served as the definitive work on Hannah Arendt. Although much else has been written on Arendt, it always seems to miss what she is saying in some fundamental way, or it uses her work as support for some other preconceived argument. In the end, however, it is hard to completely fault Young-Bruehl when her book leaves one wishing that she had written more. As of now, *Why Arendt Matters* stands as the indispensable book for anyone interested in Hannah Arendt.

AARON D. HOFFMAN

Bellarmino University

Copyright © 2008 Heldref Publications

Hirschmann, Nancy J., and Kirstie M. McClure, eds.

Feminist Interpretations of John Locke

University Park: The Pennsylvania State

University Press

352 pp., \$35.00

ISBN 978-0-271-02953-5

Publication date: February 2007

This book forms part of the series Re-reading the Canon, edited by the philosopher

Nancy Tuana, which consists of anthologies of essays about canonical (all male, so far) philosophers written by feminist philosophers or philosophers willing to interpret these canonical authors through a feminist lens. This anthology focuses primarily on Locke's political writings, although one of the essays delves into his medical writings on midwifery, and two of the essays rely heavily on his remarks on language in his "Essay on Human Understanding" to shed light on political and economic matters. The editors of this book are Nancy Hirschmann, the distinguished feminist political theorist at the University of Pennsylvania, and Kirstie McClure, a feminist political theorist at the University of California, Los Angeles, and author of a previous book on Locke's theory of rights.

The book begins with three classic feminist appraisals of Locke from the late 1970s to early 1980s: articles by Mary Shanley on the marriage contract, Teresa Brennan and Carole Pateman on the public/private distinction in Locke's liberalism, and Melissa Butler on the liberal roots of feminism in Locke. A very useful afterword essay, written specifically for this volume to bring the reader up to date on these feminists' current appraisal of Locke's ambiguous contribution to feminism, follows each of these articles. Although it is impossible to summarize these rich articles in this short review, it is fair to say that most of the thinking on Locke's connection to feminism concerns a central ambiguity: on the one hand, Locke considers women to be endowed with the reason necessary for political equality with men, yet, on the other, he subordinates women to their husbands within the family. Jeremy Waldron's essay, "Locke, Adam, and Eve," interestingly argues—via Locke's theological interpretations in the *First Treatise*—against Pateman, writing that this is a fundamental inconsistency in Locke that shows his basic ambivalence about women, rather than some fundamental patriarchalism.

Whereas roughly half of the essays begin from the mainstream interest in Locke's contractarianism, giving this a feminist reading, the other half begin from specifically feminist interests. Terrell Carver's "Gender and Narrative in Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*" illuminates the different forms of masculinity that Locke elevates or assails. The essay contributed by Hirschmann critiques feminist omissions of class analyses in Locke, although the essay by Joanne Wright on midwifery and wet nurses belies this neglect. Carol Pech's bizarre article on what she calls Locke's fetish about money and Linda Zerilli's article about the rhetoric of compact offer more heat than light in this reviewer's opinion.

This book is written for Locke scholars and feminist theorists, and would be very useful for those who have an interest in the