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Review

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George Rupp

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accessible writing style. There is also a humility in the face of these challenges, particularly from Bauman, that makes the reader feel they are part of an exploration of difficult problems that none of us have easy answers for.

–M. Scott Solomon
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George Rupp: *Beyond Individualism: The Challenge of Inclusive Communities*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. Pp. 205.)

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Beyond Individualism addresses a central problem of contemporary political theory and practice, namely, that of building sustainable and just communities in a world marked by religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity and confronted with serious threats to its ecological integrity, peace, and security. The author's thesis is that "the modern Western individualism so many of us ... know and love has led us into a global dead end" (9), a stand-off between the individualist values we readily associate with Western democracies and the values of traditional communities, such as religious integrity and obedience to the laws of God. According to Rupp, a just and sustainable global order must find a way of reconciling humanitarian and rights-based creeds with a variety of nonindividualist values and traditions, whether secular or religious in character.

One of this book's singular merits is its discussions of contemporary social problems, from global warming and migration to terrorism and war, which not only have a grounding in the experiences of real historical communities but are also based on the author's personal experiences, in particular in his roles as president of Rice and Columbia Universities and as an active member of global philanthropic foundations such as the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs and the International Rescue Committee. In contrast to some discussions of global justice, such as Peter Singer's and Thomas Pogge's, which heavily emphasize the transfer of resources from the well-off to the needy, Rupp argues that the only way to make the needy better-off is to "build local capacity on a global scale" (130). This is far more complex than transferring paychecks from the wealthy to the poor, but acknowledging this complexity is a good start to addressing the problem of poverty and inequality at its root.

While Rupp does not offer any quick-fix solutions, he does provide a survey of challenges facing communities, at both the local and the global

levels. Problems ranging from poverty and lack of education to corruption, climate change, and global terrorism are shown to be problems of building sustainable and just local communities embedded within sustainable and just global communities. Rupp favors a dialectical engagement between the particular values and traditions of local communities on the one hand, and more widely shared values of the global community on the other, in which there is genuine learning and mutual give and take.

In spite of its merits, the book does not deliver on the promise contained in its title. Admittedly, the author does offer useful observations relevant to the problem of building inclusive communities. However, the argument is quite undertheorized, and therefore some readers hoping for a broad theoretical framework that might illuminate the tension between universalist liberalism and the values of particular communities may be disappointed.

In Rupp's view, in order to rise to this challenge of building inclusive communities in a conflicted and diverse world, we must find a normative framework that incorporates the right mix of individualist and communitarian values. However, Rupp seems distinctly reluctant to explore the full extent of the tension between Western individualism and a variety of nonindividualist communities. Many communities and traditions, as the author is perfectly aware, reject values central to Western societies, such as separation of church and state, freedom of conscience and religion, and the equality of men and women in the public sphere. Rupp at no point develops a clear account of what exactly Western individualism entails, nor does he take on the objections of its detractors at any length. Consequently, he cannot help us decide which elements of Western "individualism" we ought to hang on to, and which we ought to be willing to sacrifice or redefine for the sake of community values.

Another weakness is that Rupp tends to conflate Western individualism with a sort of egoistic pursuit of self, rather than with the great achievements of Western societies such as the free market economy, the dignity of the person, rule of law, stable government, and civil society within a framework of law. He tends to underestimate the resources that the "individualist" public philosophies of Western societies can bring to their engagement with other civilizations and cultures. Indeed, it is arguably misleading to use the label "individualism" to characterize Western models of community life, since this immediately slants our reading of Western "individualism" toward anti-relational or asocial interpretations, when we know that family life, religious practice, and freedom of association are given special protection in many Western societies, precisely in light of their centrality to a meaningful human life. Seemingly "individualist" societies often contain within them acknowledgments of our sociality and the goods of community life. The division into "individualist" and "communitarian" societies or creeds is surely problematic or at least in need of careful qualification.

The author characterizes the work as "a hybrid of a memoir and a series of systematic reflections on core issues that confront all of us who seek to be

responsible both as individuals and as faithful members of the communities to which we are committed" (181). Such a format, littered with anecdotes and examples from the author's life, does not lend itself to a deep theory of community. Perhaps to expect such a theory is to expect too much from a book of this sort. Since the author does offer some "systematic reflections," he raises the expectation that there will be some theoretical advances on the core problems discussed.

As a series of memoirs and informal reflections on the problem of conflict and injustice in the modern world, this book is stimulating and enjoyable. But as an effort to articulate a philosophical ideal of community life suitable for the twenty-first century, it is disappointing. While Rupp is right in suggesting that Western individualism cannot claim a monopoly on the truth and must take seriously the claims of traditional communities, he does not do much to help us sort out *which form*, if any, of Western individualism might survive a dialectical encounter with traditional community values, and which traditional community values could withstand the test of "inclusiveness."

While we have much to learn from nonliberal and nonindividualist communities, we must know *where we ourselves stand* in order to enter a fruitful dialogue, and this is precisely the issue that this book does not do much to illuminate. Any civilization or tradition worth its salt depends on its capacity to recognize that there are certain values that its adherents consider so important that they are *nonnegotiable*. That does not mean that we have to go to war with communities that dissent from our core values. But our moral stance toward such communities will be necessarily ambivalent. Unless we articulate the fundamental values we cherish, whether these values are viewed as flowing from our "individualism," from some other "Western" belief, or from human reason or common sense, a sincere and fruitful dialogue with communities that reject the tenets of Western "individualism" will be impossible.

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Stephen Macedo: *Just Married: Same-Sex Couples, Monogamy and the Future of Marriage*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015. Pp. ix, 291.)

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Stephen Macedo aims to defend marriage as a monogamous relationship between two and only two persons as a distinctive good that liberal states