



On the Occasion of a

 **CENTURY OF JOHN RAWLS**

(February 21, 1921- November 24, 2002)

Call for Papers

 **THEME : JULY-SEPTEMBER, 2021**

*Rawlsian
Engagements
with Difference*

S a m b h ā ṣ a ṇ

A Free Open Access Online Quarterly Journal of the University of Mumbai

On the occasion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's 129th birth anniversary on 14th April 2020, the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Mumbai has launched an open access peer-reviewed online journal, Sambhāṣaṇ. This interdisciplinary journal hopes to bring diverse disciplines in dialogue with each other through critical reflections on contemporary themes.

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Sambhāṣaṇ or conversation as an art of dialogue has been crucial to the development of both Indian and Western thought. *Dialogos* in Greek literally means “through word”, where one establishes relationships on the basis of conversations to initiate processes of thinking, listening and speaking with others. Thinkers such as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, David Bohm, Hans Georg Gadamer, Anthony Appiah and Martha Nussbaum have projected shared dialogue as a way of understanding the relationship between the individual and society. While Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Pandita Ramabai, Jürgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, Patricia Hill Collins and Judith Butler, to name a few, have started out anew through ruptures in conversations. The inevitability of conversation in academic life emerges from its centrality to human development and ecology. Conversations are not restricted to any single territory, but are enacted between global and the local topographies. This online journal aims at continuing and renewing plural conversations across cultures that have sustained and invigorated academic activities.

In this spirit, **Sambhāṣaṇ** an interdisciplinary online quarterly journal endeavours to:

- be an open platform, where scholars can freely enter into a discussion to speak, be heard and listen. In this spirit, this journal aims at generating open conversations between diverse disciplines in social sciences, humanities and law.
- preserve and cultivate pluralism as a normative ideal. Hence, it attempts to articulate a plurality of points of view for any theme, wherein there is both a need to listen and to speak, while engaging with another's perspective.
- act as a springboard for briefly expressing points of view on a relevant subject with originality, evidence, argument, experience, imagination and the power of texts. It hopes that these points of view can be shaped towards full-fledged research papers and projects in the future.

Framework

- This journal is open to established academics, young teachers, research students and writers from diverse institutional and geographical locations.
- Papers can be empirical, analytical or hermeneutic following the scholarly culture of data collection critique and creativity, while adhering to academic norms of integrity.
- Book reviews will also be published.
- Submissions will be peer-reviewed anonymously.
- Some of the issues will publish invited papers and reviews, though there will be a call for papers for most issues.
- There would be an occasional thematic focus.

Guidelines for Submission

- Original, scholarly, creative and critical papers with adequate references and empirical work (if applicable).
- All references to the author should be removed from the submission to enable the anonymous review process.
- There should be a limit from 4000–6000 words (for papers), 1500–2000 words (for commentaries) and 1000 words (for book reviews).
- Essays should follow the Times New Roman font in size 12 with double space and be submitted as a word document.
- All contributions should follow the author-date referencing system detailed in chapter 15 of The Chicago Manual of Style (17th Edition). The style guidelines are given below and can also be consulted on the journal webpages for quick reference.
- Authors should submit a statement that their contribution is original without any plagiarism. They can also, in addition, submit a plagiarism check certificate.

Do refer to the Style Guide ahead.

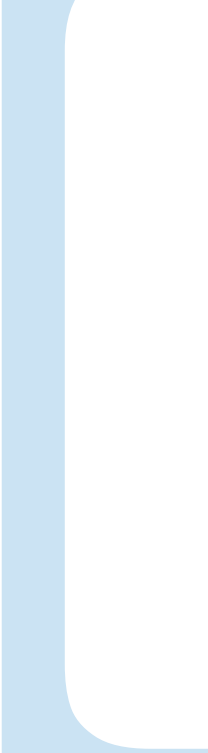


THEME : JULY-SEPTEMBER, 2021

Rawlsian Engagements with Difference

John Bordley Rawls's liberal theory has continued to influence political thought, even in the 21st century. He has the distinction of being cited by philosophers, economists, jurists and writers in the United States and across the world. His work has influenced feminist thought, normative economics and race theory, as the examples of Susan Okin, Amartya Sen, Ruth Abbey and Charles Mill reveal. His book *A Theory of Justice* (1971) changed the trajectory of political theory by introducing normativity and utopianism in analytical debates. It catalysed a long standing discussion of *justice as fairness*, Rawls's most abiding contribution is to the concept of a just society. He defends the notion of citizens who are equal and free within an egalitarian economic context through a guarantee of rights and opportunities to the least advantaged sections. His later work on *Political Liberalism* (1993) explored the notion of power and its relation to community in a democracy. It also examined freedom in relation to solidarity in civil societies that have a diversity of religions, cultures and worldviews. His *The Law of Peoples* (1999) investigated the possibility of harmonious international relations despite differences in political ideologies across the world.

Rawls's early work (*Theory of Justice*) engaged with politics from a philosophical standpoint. It also significantly brought out the normative question as a key analytic theme at a time when such a question was dismissed as "dead" (Peter Lazlett), "conventional residue" (Robert Dahl) or "lacking substance" (Brian Barry). These claims assumed that the problems of politics have been resolved and there was nothing left for the political philosopher to do! Rawls on the contrary proved that there was plenty for Western political philosophy to do on the normative front, especially because societies were stratified by class and gender. He interrogated questions of justice, fairness and impartiality (the veil of ignorance) in societies divided by the chasm of differences. He suggested that one place oneself in the position of others to comprehend and diffuse the risks of poverty and inequality, while envisioning a world with job guarantees, material well-being and an education that cultivates based on the rule of law. Rawls identified the liberty principle with the basic freedoms, and the difference principle as promoting affirmative action where social inequalities can exist only if all positions are open to all and they benefit the least advantaged within society. In his later writings such as *Political Liberalism* and *Basic Structure as Subject* Rawls engaged with the thorny challenge of diversity manifesting through cultural and religious differences: how can those from diverse backgrounds think and imagine together to arrive at the reasonableness of overlapping consensus, pluralism and public debate? Political communities have to get past accidents of birth in caste, class, race and gender. This mandates engaging with Rawls's normative questions about justice and cultural differences.



However, Rawls's normative questions are fraught with tensions given that he has not engaged with gender, race, disability or caste. He has not engaged feminists in a sustained way, despite his own commitment. Anita Allen has argued that Rawls subordinates racial justice to economic. His veil of ignorance does not permit awareness of social differences of gender or race. He mentions the contingencies of class, natural endowments or luck, but does not consider race or gender or caste or disability as contingencies. Rawls's reasons for not including race and gender as analytical categories in his work were guided by his quest for an ideal theory. Yet Okin and other scholars have reconfigured Rawls's theory in gender sensitive ways. Martha Nussbaum has argued that Rawls's emphasis on contract between equals leaves out social justice among unequal partners such as disabled, unequal nations and nonhuman beings. She introduces the notion of capabilities as a remedy. However, non-Western contexts have also led to diverse receptions of Rawls work. Bhiku Parekh has, for instance, defended multiculturalism as an alternate to Rawlsian liberalism. Amartya Sen critiques what he terms as Rawls's "transcendental institutionalism" for working out just principles applicable to society in advance without contextualising them. Rudolf Heredia, in contrast, has argued for affirmative action and other policies pertaining to the socially disenfranchised sections of Indian society through a Rawlsian framework.

On the occasion of a century of Rawls (1921–2002), and fifty years of his influential work *A Theory of Justice* (first published in 1921), Sambhashan invites **research papers** (5000–6000 words) or **commentaries** (2500–3000 words) or **book reviews** (1500–2000 words) on works engaging with Rawls for its third quarterly 2021 issue (July–September 2021 volume 2, issue 3).

Scholars are welcome to write on any theme in Rawls's work, such as liberal theory, freedom, equality, reasonableness, overlapping consensus, in so far as it has a focus on the problem of difference. Contributions responding to Rawls from the perspective of caste, class, race, gender, religion and postcolonial contexts are especially welcome. So are comparative studies that engage with Rawls from the perspective of thinkers such as Ronald Dworkin, Jürgen Habermas, Babasaheb Ambedkar, Susan Okin, Nussbaum, Abbey, Parekh, Heredia, Sen and others.



**Contributors are requested to send in
an abstract by August 15, 2021
and their full papers by September 21, 2021.**

Author-Date Referencing is given below according to *The Chicago Manual of Style*:
(Chapter 15, 17th edition)

A) BOOKS

- Book references should be listed at the end of the paper as “Works Cited” in alphabetical order.

Single Author:

Carson, Rachel. 2002. *Silent Spring*. New York: HMH Books.

Dual Authors:

Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. 1997. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Verso.

Multiple Authors:

Berkman, Alexander, Henry Bauer, and Carl Nold. 2011. *Prison Blossoms: Anarchist Voices from the American Past*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

B) JOURNAL ARTICLE

- List should follow alphabetical order and mention the page range of the published article.
- The URL or name of the database should be included for online articles referenced.

Anheier, Helmut K., Jurgen Gerhards, and Frank P. Romo. 1995. “Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography.” *American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 4 (January): 859–903.

Ayers, Lewis. 2000. “John Caputo and the ‘Faith’ of Soft-Postmodernism.” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (March): 13–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002114000006500102>

Dawson, Doyne. 2002. “The Marriage of Marx and Darwin?” *History and Theory* 41, no. 1 (February): 43–59.

C) NEWS OR MAGAZINE ARTICLE

- List should follow alphabetical order and need not mention the page numbers or range.
- The URL or name of the database should be included for online articles referenced.

Hitchens, Christopher. 1996. "Steal This Article." *Vanity Fair*, Accessed on June 8, 2019.
<https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/1996/05/christopher-hitchens-plagiarism-musings>

Khan, Saeed. 2020. "1918 Spanish Flu cure ordered by doctors was contraindicated in Gandhiji's Principles". *Times of India*, Accessed on January 3, 2021.
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/75130706.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Klein, Ezra. 2020. "Elizabeth Warren has a plan for this too." *Vox*, Accessed on December 15, 2020.
<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/4/6/21207338/elizabeth-warrencoronavirus-covid-19-recession-depression-presidency-trump>.

D) WEBSITE CONTENT

- Website content can be restricted to in-text citation as follows: "As of May 1, 2017, Yale's home page listed . . .". But it can also be listed in the reference list alphabetically as follows. The date of access can be mentioned if the date of publication is not available.

Anthony Appiah, Kwame. 2014. "Is Religion Good or Bad?" Filmed May 2014 at TEDSalon, New York. Accessed on April 10, 2019.
https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question

Yale University. n.d. "About Yale: Yale Facts." Accessed May 1, 2017.
<https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/yale-facts>.



Do read the previous issues of the journal
<https://mu.ac.in/sambhashan>

Publisher

Office of Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Mumbai, Mumbai-400 032 .

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Authors interested in writing are welcome to submit their articles to the following email

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