Rawls and Roles: A Tribute to Sebastiano Maffettone

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It is a delight to offer thanks to Sebastiano Maffettone for all of his contributions to our global intellectual community. What has always been so impressive about Maffettone's scholarship is not only how its clarity eases understanding of difficult topics. It is also how his work is so often oriented toward showing how truth and justice can further broader social unity. Maffettone will explain Kant's political philosophy with perfect lucidity—and in order to show how its influence on the makings of the European Union can help to strengthen its constitution.[1] He will survey the theoretical foundations of human rights—in order to show how Asian and Western societies can recognize common standards of human dignity.[2] 'Solidarity,' Maffettone once wrote, 'is based on urgency'—and in his work we feel the urgency of bringing minds together to make our world more whole.[3]

What first brought Maffettone and me together was the writings of John Rawls. For both of us, 'working through Rawls's intellectual legacy has been a life endeavor'—and so many scholars will share my admiration for how brilliantly Maffettone has illuminated this legacy.[4] Reading through Maffettone's magnificent volume on Rawls fills one with respect for his mental breadth and dexterity. Could anyone else so deftly do the textual exegesis to explain the *Theory of Justice* to *Political Liberalism* transition, *and* the technical proofs to show how maximin can be derived within two rational choice frameworks, *and* the trans-traditional comparison to illuminate what is really at stake in the Rawls-Habermas exchange?[5] As with Darwin, Marx and Freud, Rawls has been very fortunate in how gifted his interpreters have been—as we see marvelously on display in Maffettone's interpretative work.

Of course Maffettone's accomplishments are not only scholarly. He has been remarkably successful and influential in the many positions he has taken on—as a teacher, founder, president, director, dean, editor, advisor, public intellectual, and more. Indeed, the two things that most distinguish Maffettone's distinguished career are, we might say, 'his

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[1] Sebastiano Maffettone, 'The Legacy of the Enlightenment and the Exemplarity of the EU Model,' *The Monist*, 92.2 (2009), 230-257.

[2] Sebastiano Maffettone, 'Human Rights and Asian Values,' in *Human Rights and Asian Values* ed. Eva Pföstl (Rome: Editrice Apes), pp. 17-50.

[3] Sebastiano Maffettone, 'Justice as Solidarity: Between Statism and Cosmopolitanism,' in *Solidarity Beyond Borders: Ethics in a Globalising World*, ed. Janusz Salamon (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), p. 28.

[4] Sebastiano Maffettone, 'Rawls 40 years later (1971–2011),' *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 38.9 (2012), 901.

[5] Sebastiano Maffettone, *Rawls: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), pp. 189-209, 126-38, 177-88.

Rawls and his roles.' It is reflections on these two themes, and on their many mergings together, that I would like to offer as a tribute.

The Ubiquity of Roles

Let me ask you to begin by thinking of the explanatory power of the idea of a 'role' in explaining human behavior. A 'role' is system of rules which defines an office or a position or a function, with its ends and aims, rights and duties, powers and immunities, expectations and sanctions for non-performance.[6] The concept is easily grasped by extension: doctor and lawyer are roles, as are owner and friend and fan. Pitcher and catcher are roles within baseball, president and voter are roles within a democracy. Some terms have both biological and role-based meanings, such as 'mother,' and 'brother.' Even terms that at first seem to refer to the universal can on inspection reveal highly context-specific expectations of role-performance, as can be seen in what it meant to 'be a man' (or 'a real woman') in a classic Western or detective film.

Humans seem to be drawn naturally to roles, and seek roles out even in their time unstructured by the role expectations of work and school. Children play with dolls and then graduate to 'role-playing games.' Fantasies (both childish and adult) typically have strong role-based elements. Dramas are the home of roles, the weaving of role-performances into the story of a novel, film, opera, dance or play. 'Television watcher' and 'music listener' are descriptions, not roles—but what one absorbs from the screen or the speakers will typically be a narrative of role-based performances.

As Applbaum says, 'There persists a whiff of the premodern in talk about roles, making such talk suspect to liberals who have no nostalgia for societies divided into castes, estates, or classes, and who fear retreat from the idea of universal humanity.'[7] Nevertheless, role-identification has long been taken as a primary factor for modern scientific explanations of human action.[8] Social scientists now speak of 'social scripts' with which people enact their roles in specific contexts.[9] (One might think of striking regularity of the behavior of *Homo sapiens* inside supermarkets.) When one attunes one's

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[6] The *OED* offers these definitions: 'A person's allotted share, part, or duty in life and society; the character, place, or status assigned to or assumed by a person… The characteristic or socially expected behaviour pattern of any person with a certain identity or status in a particular social setting or environment.'

[7] Arthur Applbaum, *Ethics for Adversaries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 47.

[8] In sociology, for example, leading twentieth century theorists of roles included George Herbert Mead, Robert K. Merton, and Irving Goffman.

[9] R. C. Schank and R. Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals, and Understanding* (Hillsdale, N. J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1977); M. Minsky, *The Society of Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985); Howard Gardner, *The Mind's New Science: A Study of the Cognitive Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

observational skills to role-identification and role-performance, one will find that one sees roles everywhere, every day.

Role normativity

Goffman's assertion that the self is nothing but an assemblage of roles tends to make moral theorists uneasy.[10] Kateb pinpoints the source of the discomfort while meditating on the evils done by leaders of powerful organizations, 'Much of the time,' Kateb says, 'fidelity to role or function isolates the person from moral sense.'[11] Kateb's worry, certainly justified, is the loss of a critical perspective on roles—the loss of a role-independent point of view from which one's own or one's society's roles can be subject to normative scrutiny.

Once the reality of a critical perspective is assured, however, we are quite comfortable in citing our roles as constitutive of our selves. Asked who they are, most will respond that they are a citizen of some country, a member of some profession, situated within the particular relationships of their family, a supporter of some institution or team, and so on. It is not only that we see nothing wrong with identifying ourselves with our roles in this way. Outside of atypical cases (as with relatives of notorious men[12]) we tend to affirm our role-identifications as proper, to take pride in and satisfaction from our particular parts in such social formations. Freud's two necessities for meaningful human life, love and work, are for us almost completely structured by the specific roles that we occupy and make our own.[13]

The great virtues of a good system of roles are the excellences it encourages and the productivity it generates, through the division of labor. The labor thus divided is partly the labor of economic production. Yet roles also divide our labor in all social domains: in cultural production, health care, governance, education and child-rearing, and everything else. Roles in a society like ours have reached a very high degree of articulation (the HTML coder, the pediatric gastroenterologist, the wide receiver, the ethnoentymologist, the oboist, the assistant to the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs). When all goes well, this specialization is redeemed by the meaning found in one's chosen

[10] Irving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor, 1959).

[11] George Kateb, *Human Dignity* (Cambridge. MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 83.

[12] E.g., Najwa bin Laden et. al., *Growing Up bin Laden: Osama's Wife and Son Take Us Inside Their Secret World* (London: St. Martin's, 2009).

[13] It is commonly held that Freud, asked about meaningful human life, replied to an interviewer something like, 'Love and work—that is all there is.' Verifying this quote's authenticity, however, is difficult; so let us say that the thought is often attributed to Freud.

specialized activities, as well as by the opportunities offered by the richness of the larger society. As Rawls says,[14]

> It is tempting to suppose that everyone might fully realize his powers and that some at least can become complete exemplars of humanity. But this is impossible. It is a feature of human sociability that we are by ourselves but parts of what we might be. We must look to others to attain the excellences that we must leave aside, or lack altogether. The collective activity of society, the many associations and the public life of the largest community that regulates them, sustains our efforts and elicits our contribution. Yet the good attained from the common culture far exceeds our work in the sense that we cease to be mere fragments: that part of ourselves that we directly realize is joined to a wider and just arrangement the aims of which we affirm. The division of labor is overcome not by each becoming complete in himself, but by willing and meaningful work within a just social union of social unions in which all can freely participate as they so incline.

Because our roles partly constitute our identities, it is not surprising that the major dramas of most people's lives turn on their role-performance. Typically a person's greatest anxiety, as well as her greatest pride, will center on her success in gaining entry to a role and then in meeting the standards of success of that role. Finding a good husband and being a good mother; getting a good job and doing a good job; being a good scholar, and colleague, and teacher—we know what these things mean in our lives.

The emphasis here has been on how much of our plans and identities, aspirations and accusations, pride and worry are based on roles. If we say that the 'moral' is what concerns right and wrong, good and bad, virtuous and vicious, then most of the substance of our daily moral lives is role-based. Our morality is mostly role morality.

Putting it that way raises the question of the relation between role-based norms and universal, non-role-based moral rules such as the prohibitions on killing and coercion and deception. One might suspect that perceived underperformance in a role, often because of the demands of another role, is what most people feel most guilty about—more so than they feel guilty about the transgression of rules like those regarding killing and coercion and deception. Still, one might hope that the universal moral rules receive less daily attention because they are a constant across all roles: one might hope that universal morality sets the framework within the dramas of role-performance are to take place. While that is often correct, our own moral judgments do not in fact give automatic priority to universal over role-based norms.

Most people do believe that it can be appropriate for a wife to deceive her husband in order to keep a devastating truth from him, for example that his mother was unfaithful. We also see in our professional literature from Machiavelli onwards the problem of dirty hands for political leaders. Many judge it acceptable for a state official to order serious

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[14] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice (TJ)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 529.

coercion of even an innocent person who has knowledge of a threat to the community. The perennial nature of this topic shows that there is no accepted prioritization between the role-norms of officials and universal norms like the prohibitions on killing, deception and torture. Dirty-hands questions are now found the ethics literature of many other occupations (lawyers, police, etc.), which shows that uncertainties surrounding the prioritization of role norms and universal moral norms are not confined to politics.[15]

The most striking prioritizations of role-based over universal moral norms occur in military contexts. For example, in 1991 A.D. hundreds of humans traveled from North America to the Persian Gulf, where they succeeded in their intention of killing thousands of other humans. The thousands of humans who were killed posed no threat at all to the killers, and posed no special threat to any third party. That is—American air force pilots traveled to the Gulf where they killed thousands of Iraqi soldiers. And this was months after Iraq had successfully installed in Kuwait a puppet regime that was about as coercive as the Kuwaiti regime it displaced. It seems not to have occurred to most people at the time to condemn these American humans as murderers of those Iraqi humans, although strictly by the rules of interpersonal morality it is hard to judge otherwise. Apparently most of us believe that the rules of universal morality and of roles qualify each other quite intricately.

These kinds of examples recall Kateb's warning that, 'Much of the time, fidelity to role or function isolates the person from moral sense.' And it is, again, essential to maintain a critical perspective on role normativity. Nevertheless, when we take an honest inventory of our own daily motivations and evaluations, we find that much of our sense of what we and others should do, minute to minute, is nothing but 'fidelity to role or function.' Roles entwine our selves densely with relations and expectations, often highly demanding and highly fulfilling. The most active 'moral' pressure on our daily reasoning comes not from conscience, understood as a response to completely general moral demands. What mostly drives us is conscientiousness, a desire to perform our roles well.

Roles and Justice

What does any of this have to do with justice? Let me first just assert a thesis about rights, and then say a good deal more about Rawls.

Most of the rights we have, we have as role-bearers. Let me make that case quickly. Our roles come with 'directed' duties. Directed duties are strict duties (duties to perform a specific action) that we owe to specific others.[16] Think of what you owe to your students,

[15] E.g., Deni Elliott, ed. *The Ethics of Asking: Dilemmas in Higher Education Fund Raising* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1995).

[16] A strict duty requires one to perform a specific action, while a 'broad' or 'wide' duty requires one to have a certain end (such as helping others) that may be achieved through various actions. See Christine Korsgaard, 'Natural Motives and the Motive of Duty: Hume and Kant on Our Duties to Others,' *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice* 1 (2009): 9-36, 13.

what you owe to your colleagues, your husband, your children. These directed duties come with our roles: these are duties that we have *qua* teacher, colleague, wife, mother, and so on. As a teacher, one owes it to one's students to mark their written work promptly and fairly. Much of what we owe to others we owe because of our roles, and (turning the relationships around) much of what we are owed by others—as colleague, husband, and so on—we are owed because of our roles.

Many directed duties are enforceable, and (I will just assert here) enforceable directed duties correlate to the paradigmatic right, the claim-right.[17] Think of what you are owed as an employee, as an author, as an owner, as a patient, as a purchaser, as a citizen. These are enforceable duties directed toward you because of your roles: these are your role-based claim-rights. We do also ascribe claim-rights to entities not as role-bearers but simply under some natural-kind description: so babies and animals have claim-rights, and humans have claim-rights as well. Yet if we catalogue the claim-rights that we will ascribe to any person at a given level of generality, their role-based claim-rights will outnumber their natural-kind claim-rights significantly.

Therefore, insofar as justice is understood as the fulfillment of rights, justice will be heavily bound up with roles. If justice is taken as giving each person his due, this will primarily mean securing each person's role-based rights. There is, in addition, the 'justice system,' wherein role-bearers do their role-based duties in giving what is due to those accused of crimes.[18] So roles define much of the system of criminal justice as well. It might be thought that there are, in addition, what Rawls calls 'duties of natural justice': non-role-based duties not to be cruel, to help, to treat with respect, and so on.[19] But, as it is commonly understood, justice is not primarily natural justice—it is social justice plus criminal justice. Justice is mostly the fulfillment of role-based rights, and the execution of role-based duties.

Which brings us to a direct proof of the importance of roles to justice. Justice, as we know, is the first virtue of social institutions.[20] And Rawls defines an institution as 'a public system of rules which defines offices and positions with their rights and duties,

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[17] See Leif Wenar, 'The Nature of Claim-Rights,' *Ethics* 123.2 (2013), 202-29.

[18] 'Person accused of a crime' is a description, not a role. But within the criminal justice system, such a person may at certain points take on roles that are defined by highly specific rights and duties: for example, the accused may become a defendant or a prisoner.

[19] See *TJ*, secs. 19, 51. Notice that Rawls's argument for an interpersonal natural duty of mutual aid in sec. 51 is intended to work only within the confines of one's own society. The natural duty to aid across borders, which Rawls does not present an argument for, is to be discharged through the conduct of one's nation toward other nations (sec. 19). My impression is that Rawls gave up on duties of natural justice after *TJ*: the only reference to 'natural justice' in his theoretical work that I can find thereafter is a brief reference to HLA Hart's account of the rules of natural justice in the description of a decent hierarchical society (John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples (LP)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 65).

[20] *TJ*, p. 3.

powers and immunities, and the like.'[21] So just society is one in which social institutions are well-ordered. That is, a just society is one in which 'offices and positions' are well-ordered. That is: a just society is one in which roles are properly defined. Justice is the first virtue of a public system of roles.

A theory of justice is essential in order to provide the critical perspective on role normativity that can assure us that many of our roles are not only compelling to us, but also good. Rawls's principles of justice will be realized by defining and delimiting certain roles, and coordinating them with respect to each other. The roles thus defined and delimited will be, for example, those of employer and employee, seller and purchaser, judge and journalist. Employers will be required not to discriminate in hiring for the sake of equal opportunity; owners may have to pay taxes to support the realization of the difference principle; husbands may have to split their paychecks with their wives for the sake of the political equality of women.[22] As Maffettone puts it, 'the basic structure comprises the institutions that can provide a proper social background and keep it immune from the natural tendencies to erode background fairness.'[23]

The most elaborately defined role in a well-ordered democratic society will be the fundamental role of 'citizen.' Much of justice as fairness details citizens' rights and duties, powers and immunities: as speakers, as voters, as job-seekers, as office-holders etc. The theory defines, delimits and coordinates all of these sub-roles of citizens so as to realize equal basic rights and liberties, fair equality of opportunity and the difference principle. When these roles are properly defined, justice will be realized by each person performing his role-based duties and successfully claiming his role-based rights.

Rawls's principles of justice are instantiated by defining and delimiting *particular* roles: those of the society's basic structural institutions. As examples of basic structural institutions, Rawls mentions the political constitution, property and other dimensions of the economy, and the family.[24] There has been much discussion on what features should be understood to make the basic structure the subject of justice: its coerciveness, its pervasive impact on citizens' lives, and so on.[25] Here I will go with the broader thought that what is distinctive about the basic structure is not that it is coercive, or that it has

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[21] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, revised edition (*TJ* rev.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 47-48.

[22] John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 167. See Maffettone's discussion of the political equality of women in justice as fairness in *Rawls*, pp. 30-33.

[23] Maffettone, *Rawls*, p. 29.

[24] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 258.

[25] See, for example, Andrea Sangiovanni, 'Global Justice, Reciprocity, and the State,' *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 35 (2007), 3-39.

pervasive impact, but that its institutions are pre-conditions for the existence of any society and especially a modern one. [26]

For any social group to continue over time there must be rules for limiting personal injuries, and for making control over resources predictable, and for generating stable expectations regarding reproduction and child-rearing. Any authority that has enough power to enforce such 'private law' rules will also have enough power to dominate most areas of individuals' lives (their religious practices, their personal communications, etc.). So there must also be 'public law' rules regulating the relations between the authorities and those subject to their authority (which will include rules regarding how offices of authority are to be filled). These rules are the ones that are essential to social life—every society must have them in some form to reproduce itself. This is why they are basic structural. Even when these rules are highly elaborated, in societies like ours where social cooperation is extensive, they retain their character as the rules that make this productive social cooperation possible.

So the basic structure defines the rules that all societies must have, and that is why it is the first subject of justice. These rules will be effected mostly through making rules for role-bearers: for political office-holders, for property owners, for employers, for family members, and so on. A particular theory of justice like Rawls's will set out principles that shape these roles in particular ways. Rawls's theory says: amongst all the rights and duties defining the roles of state officials, state officials must not interfere with minority religious practices. Amongst all the rights and duties defining the role of employer, employers when hiring must not discriminate on racial grounds. Amongst all the rights and duties defining the role of husband, husbands must split their paychecks with wives, and so on.

Rawls's theorizing brings out why roles are a primary—and perhaps the primary—subject of justice. And let me go further in highlighting the importance of roles to justice by noticing how prominently roles figure into Rawls's arguments in favor of his specific conception of justice, particularly in *Theory of Justice*. The two thoughts I would like to convey here are, first, that Rawls's arguments for justice as fairness in *Theory* rest to a great extent on the possibilities for humans to have a good life; and, second, that roles are central to Rawls's vision of what a good life is.

The case for justice as fairness in *Theory* often turns on the possibilities for the members of society to lead a good life. Because of his later 'political turn,' we sometimes forget that in *A Theory of Justice* Rawls felt perfectly comfortable in beginning sentences with words like 'What men want is…'. There is a distinctive philosophical anthropology behind Rawls's case for justice as fairness, which can be heard as a kind of rhythmic line below all of the familiar melodies describing the veil of ignorance, maximin and the four-stage sequence. *Theory* is concerned with how to arrange basic institutions so as to

[26] I take this line of reasoning about the basic structure from Samuel Freeman, *Rawls* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 101-02.

provide for all members of society the opportunity to lead a good life. And the two main conditions for a good life that basic institutions can help to provide are, first, a secure sense of one's own worth, and second, meaningful work.

A secure sense of one's own worth is required for the successful execution of almost any rational life-plan; and the successful pursuit of a rational life-plan is definitive of a person's good.[27] Basic structural institutions affect self-worth by the ways in which they distribute the social bases of self-respect, which Rawls says is perhaps the most important primary good. In the section 'Some Main Grounds for the Two Principles of Justice,' Rawls says that one main ground for the two principles is that 'public recognition of the two principles gives greater support for men's self-respect.'[28]

We teach our students that the difference principle is the principle that regulates the distribution of the primary goods of income and wealth, and our students get the impression that 'distributive justice' is primarily about the distribution of resources like income and wealth as such. However Rawls in *Theory* often 'looks through' distributions of income and wealth to see their implications for deeper matters such as individuals' sense of their own worth. Consider for instance how self-worth figures into this description of the aim of satisfying the difference principle:[29]

> The difference principle would allocate resources in education, say, so as to improve the long-term expectations of the least favored. If this end is attained by giving more attention to the better endowed, it is permissible; otherwise not. And in making this decision, the value of education should not be assessed solely in terms of economic efficiency and social welfare. Equally if not more important is the role of education in enabling a person to enjoy the culture of his society and to take part in its affairs, and in this way to provide for each individual a secure sense of his own worth.

Wealth and income are primary goods within justice as fairness, yet Rawls treats the desire for wealth and income with great suspicion. He seems to want to ensure first that each citizen's sense of his own worth is secured as far as is possible by basic structural institutions. Only then can the desire for wealth and income be allowed any scope. Rawls is so uneasy about the desire for wealth and income because of its potential to generate status hierarchies that threaten citizens' sense of self-worth.

Rawls is here very Rousseauian. Social systems in which self-worth is tied to position in status hierarchies are bad for all—for both rich and poor, 'winners' and 'losers.' To achieve a just and good society, Rawls says, 'Great wealth is not necessary. In fact, beyond some point it is more likely to be a positive hindrance, a meaningless distraction

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[27] *TJ*, sec. 63.

[28] *TJ* rev., p. 155

[29] *TJ* rev., pp. 85-86. See Maffettone's judicious reflections on this passage in *Rawls*, pp. 80-81.

at best if not a temptation to indulgence and emptiness.'[30] Once justice is achieved, Rawls says, a society's rate of real saving can—and probably should—fall to zero.[31] In a just society each person only wants more money, as far as he does, to pursue his (non-positionally-defined) life plan—not as a status marker.

In a just society, a person's secure sense of self-worth will not derive from possession of positional goods like greater wealth and income. Rather a person's sense of self-worth will be secured by one of that person's most important roles: her role as citizen. Just institutions proclaim the equality of citizens publicly, on their face. Equal basic rights and liberties say that all citizens are equal. Fair equality of opportunity declares that citizens are equal regardless of social class. The difference principle allows inequalities only insofar as these can be seen to be good for all. Just institutions provide each citizen with a basis for self-respect that is so secure that citizens will not need to try to gain more self-respect through acquiring positional goods. Consider this passage on the priority of liberty:[32]

[30] *TJ* rev., pp. 257-58.

[31] *TJ* rev., pp. 257-58; *JF*, p. 159. In *Law of Peoples*, Rawls says that the idea that economic growth must go on forever is just capitalist ideology. *LP*, p. 107.

[32] *TJ* rev., pp. 543-45; see also pp. 477-78. On p. 547 Rawls considers the 'feudal' or 'caste' means of securing self-respect for all persons, which does not rest on equality, but rejects these because they require false beliefs about the fixity of the basic structure.

> [Members of a well-ordered society] take little interest in their relative positions as such. As we have seen, they are not much affected by envy and jealousy, and for the most part they do what seems best to them as judged by their own plan of life without being dismayed by the greater amenities and enjoyments of others. Thus there are no strong psychological propensities prompting them to curtail their liberty for the sake of greater absolute or relative economic welfare. The desire for a higher relative place in the distribution of material means should be sufficiently weak that the priority of liberty is not affected.
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> Of course it does not follow that in a just society everyone is unconcerned with matters of status. The account of self-respect as perhaps the main primary good has stressed the significance of how we think others value us. But in a well ordered society the need for status is met by the public recognition of just institutions, together with the full and diverse internal life of the many free communities of interests that equal liberty allows. The basis of self esteem in a just society is not then one's income share but the publicly affirmed distribution of fundamental rights and liberties. And this distribution being equal, everyone has a similar and secure status when they meet to conduct the common affairs of the wider society. No one is inclined to look beyond the constitutional affirmation of equality for further political ways of securing his status.

The institutions of a just society define the role of citizen, and in doing so secure for each person, as far as possible through the basic structure, a sense of their own worth. A secure sense of one's own worth is the first condition for a good life. Once this first condition for a good life is secured as far as feasible by one's status as an equal citizen, one can pursue a second condition for a good life.

The second condition for a good life is successful performance of one's social roles, and particularly of one's work-related social roles. Consider Rawls's argument in favor of one aspect of fair equality of opportunity:[33]

> The principle of open positions expresses the conviction that if some places were not open on a basis fair to all, those kept out would be right in feeling unjustly treated even though they benefited from the greater efforts of those who are allowed to hold them. They would be justified in their complaint not only because they were excluded from certain external rewards of office such as wealth and privilege, but because they would be debarred from experiencing the realization of self which comes from a skilful and devoted exercise of social duties. They would be deprived of one of the main forms of human good.

As with the principle for distributing wealth and income, Rawls here 'looks through' the primary good being distributed to something deeper. Here the internal rewards of office—the skilful and devoted exercise of the duties of a job or post—are at least as

[33] *TJ* rev., p. 84.

important as the external rewards of wealth and privilege. These internal rewards, Rawls says, are one of the main forms of human good.[34]

As above, where we saw justice as fairness aiming to secure self-worth by crafting the role of equal citizen, here the theory aims to further the self-realization of each by opening professional and occupational roles to all. Just institutions are designed to support a good life for all citizens, and they do so by partly by defining and giving access to meaningful work-based roles.

'What men want,' Rawls says, 'is meaningful work.' The full passage is, 'What men want is meaningful work in free association with others, these associations regulating their relations to one another within a framework of just basic institutions.'[35] What men want is confidently and skilfully to perform their chosen roles—to do their jobs well—and to do so in ways that affirm each other.

Which brings us back to the remarkable career of Sebastiano Maffettone. Maffettone has confidently and skilfully performed his many chosen roles so well, and has done so in a multitude of ways that affirm us all. When we celebrate him, we celebrate not only a life that is well-lived. We celebrate a man whose work across many his roles has been to show how truth and justice can further broader social unity—and who personifies in all of his roles the urgency of bringing minds together to make our world more whole.

[34] Recall also the passage above, where Rawls describes the division of labor, 'The good attained from the common culture far exceeds our work in the sense that we cease to be mere fragments: that part of ourselves that we directly realize is joined to a wider and just arrangement the aims of which we affirm. The division of labor is overcome not by each becoming complete in himself, but by willing and meaningful work within a just social union of social unions in which all can freely participate as they so incline.'

[35] *TJ* rev., pp. 257-58.