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Citation: 62 S. Cal. L. Rev. 1988-89

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SYMPOSIUM: THE WORKS OF JOSEPH RAZ

FOREWORD

MARTIN LYON LEVINE*

This issue of the *Southern California Law Review* is the first festschrift to examine and honor the work of Joseph Raz. The contributions to this special issue analyze particular themes or points in Raz's work. His scholarship is worthy of such scrutiny, for his seminal writings occupy a major place in contemporary legal and political theory. I am proud to have suggested this symposium to the editors of the *Southern California Law Review* and to have joined in its planning.

Future generations will no doubt share our judgment that Raz is one of the great legal thinkers of our age. As Rawls puts it, "His contribution to the philosophy of law and to moral and political philosophy is very distinguished indeed."¹ But future scholars, like contemporaries who have not worked with him personally, will also be interested in knowing more about him as a human being. Aren't we interested in knowing about the life of John Stuart Mill? The editors have thus asked me to give a personal note, writing about him and his life as I know it. In these few pages I will start with a few snapshots from an imaginary photo album of memories of him in Oxford and add the tale of his path from Oxfordshire to Southern California. I will then say a few words about his life history and close with an impression of him as a person.

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1. Letter from John Rawls to Gwyn Quillen (Nov. 10, 1987) (on file with the *Southern California Law Review*).

A PHOTO ALBUM: FROM OXFORDSHIRE TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Joseph Raz is no stranger to USC. He is now a visiting professor of law here, and he has been, since its inception, co-director of the Oxford-USC Institute of Legal Theory, which meets each summer at All Souls College.² But Oxford is his central locale; for most of the last twenty-five years he has lived and worked there, and that is where I met him. Americans who have never been there may appreciate some word pictures of him in context, so as to visualize him among those ancient college buildings.

In Oxford, and the Cotswold villages that reach west from it, the venerable colleges, churches and stone cottages set the atmosphere, making the sharpest of contrasts with the modern (and post-modern!) structures of Los Angeles. Matthew Arnold, once a student at Balliol College where Raz is a fellow, gave us the most quoted impression of Oxford: "the last enchantment of the Middle Ages . . . that sweet City of dreaming spires."³ Being in Oxford, in the year I first spent there doing research and teaching, felt like time travel, as if I had gone back centuries to when it was first built, and Raz and the others I met there were contemporaries of the buildings.

Walking through an Oxford college library one afternoon—it was Merton's, the oldest library in England, parts of which are six centuries old—Raz pointed out a medieval leather-bound book still on an iron chain, like all the books used to be kept when any book was a rare and valuable thing. The room, he remarked, was, like much of Oxford, a place used continuously for its original purpose for hundreds of years. What must it be like for an 18 year old college student, he said, to come to work in a place like this, to feel he is part of that living tradition.

2. The Institute provides an opportunity for USC and Oxford scholars to meet, collaborate, or criticize each other's work in progress. Some USC law faculty do research at Oxford each summer, and Oxford faculty are invited to come to USC as special lecturers (Donald Harris was the first), or as visiting professors (Raz is the first). USC and Oxford faculty, and a few invited guests from elsewhere, join in workshops each July at All Souls College, presenting and criticizing papers. The USC faculty also have the opportunity to consult with colleagues there during the summer and to advance their own research.

The honorary chair is H.L.A. Hart, and the host for the Institute is the Acting Warden of All Souls College, A.M. Honoré; both are also active participants. Other British fellows include Patrick Atiyah, Hugh Collins, Ronald Dworkin, John Finnis, John Gardner, Benedict Kingsbury, Nicola Lacey, Simon Lee, and Christopher McCrudden.

Fellows of the Institute from USC include Scott Bice, Richard Craswell, Ronald Garet, Catharine Hantzis, Michael Moore, Leonard Ratner, David Slawson, and Christopher Stone.

3. M. ARNOLD, *ESSAYS IN CRITICISM* (1865).

What must it be like for Raz to be a professor in such a place? Raz's Balliol is seven centuries old, some say the oldest college in England, and has been one of the greatest since Jowett became Master a century ago. Balliol has supplied more faculty to Oxford and more students who earn firsts on final examination than any other college; its graduates include Arnold, Adam Smith, Toynbee, Julian and Aldous Huxley, and the current King of Norway (who is now an honorary member, Raz mentioned once, revealing pardonable interest). What must it be like for an immigrant from Israel, I thought, to feel he is part of that living tradition?

Oxford is international; it attracts some of the very best students from all over what was once the British Empire. And it is a place where greatness rubs your elbows. I remember, for example, an auditorium in the Schools building filled to overflowing, one cold afternoon, with people come to hear John Rawls deliver the H.L.A. Hart lecture. Ronnie Dworkin introduced Rawls by saying one of the world's great political theorists had come to give honor to another. That was a gracious turn of phrase, but it hardly did justice to the occasion, for there in the room with Rawls and Hart were Dworkin, himself, John Finnis (now appointed to an Oxford chair), and Joseph Raz. And, it being Oxford, by coincidence there were simultaneous competing lectures in nearby buildings, one by the U.N. Secretary General and one by the Chinese Communist leader.

I first met Joe (or Jo, which he also uses) when sitting in on the Oxford legal theory seminar that he was teaching with Finnis and John Borgo, a former USC law professor. But I did not get to know Joe personally until one evening when I passed him on Holywell Street, a street of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century houses, on the way to the law library. He stopped me to talk, and we started arranging meetings. He and Penny and Martha and I might have dinner, or perhaps drive up to Stratford to see the Royal Shakespeare Company.

But usually Joe and I would meet once a week or so for lunch. Perhaps because Oxford is a loose confederation of small, independent colleges, the custom is that academics meet over lunch, usually at the senior common room of one's college, though sometimes at a pub. Each college has its own traditions: at Balliol, you pick up your food yourself at the side and then sit at long tables; fellows have numbered silver napkin rings. After lunch, fellows and visitors go into the new senior common room, a tall, sunny, modern room with lots of glass, overlooking the garden quadrangle, the host pours coffee from a silver service, and there is more conversation in comfortable chairs.

After lunches, Joe would have me join him during his usual walk. Sometimes we would stroll in the wonderful vast garden of St. John's College, in whose "charined seclusion" Henry James also walked with a friend, who remarked: "Mightn't one fancy this the very central point of the world's heart, where all the echoes of the general life arrive but to falter and die?"⁴ In that garden, I recall, in answer to a question, he said how much he learned reading other scholars. Another day, in answering a question, he spoke of how he usually moved on to a new topic once he had written something about it, rather than continuing in a dialogue with his critics, as Ronnie Dworkin does. (The reply article he has contributed to this issue is thus something of an exception for him.) Joe's Oxford walks were important to him, and it is hard elsewhere to find such pastoral scenes in the center of a city, though at USC he might have the County Rose Garden across the street, or the stroll across campus to the column from ancient Troy.

The walk I remember best was at Wytham. At the close of my year, he chose for our lunch spot the White Hart pub in Wytham, a lovely little stone-built village on the outskirts of Oxford. Its church was started 500 years ago; the Wytham Abbey, no longer the seat of the Earls of Abingdon, is now used by Oxford for housing; the village has a handful of stone cottages, no shops, and the White Hart. Joe is hardly a drinker and did not care that the pub has Oxfordshire's best selection of single malt Scotch whiskey. On a sunny Sunday there might be traditional morris dancing in the pub's courtyard, but that day Cat Corlett and his Ancient Men were nowhere to be seen.

Joe began suggesting ways to get me back to Oxford, starting with the idea of a jurisprudence institute with me as president. The ideas were fun, but I thought them impractical. After lunch, Joe took me for a walk through the Wytham Great Wood, starting a mile north of the village along a dead-end track. You are supposed to have a pass to walk in the wood, now owned by the University as a field station for scientific research; Joe has one of those passes, for the wood is a place he loves for his walks. There we talked about possible ways to build links between the USC and Oxford law faculties.

The White Hart pub lunch and the stroll in Wytham Wood bore more fruit than I expected. Later that fall, Scott Bice and the USC law faculty responded to the idea of a joint program with Oxford faculty with such enthusiasm that they took immediate steps to establish an Institute.

4. W. JAMES, *THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM* (1875).

They thought that the idea fit USC, which over the last twenty-five years has evolved into an innovative and inter-disciplinary school. Scott suggested "legal theory" as a broader scope for the Institute than "jurisprudence". Joe agreed to be co-director, and the other senior Oxford jurisprudence faculty warmly supported the project: Herbert Hart accepted the honorary chair, Tony Honoré has been our host at All Souls, John Finnis gave the first paper, and, in different years, Ronnie Dworkin and Patrick Atiyah agreed to respond to USC papers.

The opening dinner for the Institute was in Balliol's old senior common room, a wood-paneled chamber which opens into the front quadrangle, parts of which are five centuries old. It was as distant from Los Angeles as any USC law school dinner ever held, but for that room it must have been a typical occasion: a visiting dean of a faculty, this time USC; an appellate judge from a former British colony, this time an American awaiting news on his possible selection for the Supreme Court; and a group of academics from Oxford and the far reaches of the English speaking world. Scott Bice's remarks touched on the same contrast which struck us all: USC is old for an American law school, but in that place one counts in centuries.

Each July my colleagues and I now return to Oxford for the meetings of the Institute; there scholars from Oxford, USC or elsewhere in Europe or America present current work and receive critiques. Quite similar to USC's law faculty workshops, the Institute still has a tone of its own. It is not just meeting in Tony Honoré's set of vast rooms, a faculty office that strikes an American as fit for an earl; nor is it the break midway in the discussion while tea is brought in. There also seems to be an Oxford style in academic seminars, in which some of the junior scholars hold back, allowing themselves one sharp sally—probably carefully prepared—and even some of the senior scholars may permit themselves only their best broadside, perhaps released late in an afternoon's colloquium. But Joseph takes to these occasions in a style more like USC's intellectual exuberance. At each key point in the discussion, he is in the fray. A quick comment will highlight the problem with someone's carefully thought-through position; at the next turn in the discussion, again he has a penetrating observation. All this makes him a wonderful partner for an afternoon's study of hard issues and helps make the Institute intellectually invaluable for its participants.

RAZ'S LIFE STORY

Let me now turn from these Oxford images to a few words of biography. Raz's grandparents might have known those of Hart and Dworkin, Yoram Shachar points out; the families of all three of these Oxford legal theorists were Eastern European Jews. Joe's parents were immigrants to British Palestine; he is a sabra born there March 21, 1939, and he grew up there. His Jewish heritage and Israeli roots remain very important to him; he retains dual British-Israeli citizenship and returns there each year, but he is not religiously observant and can be critical of Israel. After serving in the army, he took the M. Jur. at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1963. H.L.A. Hart met Raz while lecturing in Jerusalem during his first visit to Israel. Herbert remembers talking to Joe, "He spotted a mistake I had made in an argument in a written piece I showed him. He was absolutely right; I was astounded. I altered the piece to correct the mistake. I was tremendously impressed with him, and we discussed his coming to Oxford."

Joe did go up to Oxford to University College, one of the original Oxford colleges. He worked under Herbert, who had in the previous few years published *Causation in the Law* and *The Concept of Law*. As a graduate student, "he was wonderful," Hart recalls. Raz attended lectures by a number of faculty, which are optional for Oxford students. John Finnis remembers one difficult and dull lecture series at the time which was attended at its start by many students, but which ended with an audience of only two—Finnis and Raz. Tony Honoré and Anthony Kenny examined Joe's D. Phil., which was awarded in 1967. Herbert told me, with good humor,

His thesis, what became *The Concept of a Legal System*, was tremendously difficult. I had to put wet towels around my head whenever he turned in a piece, which he did with great regularity. It was a brilliant piece of work. In turn, I did manage to spot one mistake of his, some calculation. I learned a lot from him, as I always did.

For a young man to be Hart's protégé was to be at the center of jurisprudential thought. Herbert and Joe are still "great friends"—each summer Raz is a house guest at the Hart place in Cornwall. Honoré too takes pride in his early recognition of Raz's excellence, yet initially he encountered something of a language barrier. Tony recalls,

His English was not terribly good at that time. Joseph has only gradually acquired real fluency in writing and speaking English. He now writes, many think, in a rather powerful and glowing way. But it has taken time, and lots of people have found his work difficult, not just

because of its intrinsic difficulty, but because of the fact that his home language is Hebrew.

Joseph returned to Israel in 1967 to be a lecturer at the Hebrew University faculty of law and department of philosophy. In 1970 he was made senior lecturer, with tenure, but rather than stay there, he took an extended leave and once more went to Oxford. He says he has never at any time decided to move permanently from one place to another, but somehow has fallen into moves. For two years, on leave from Jerusalem, Joe was a research fellow at Nuffield College, one of the modern colleges, founded (by William Morris who built the MG and became Viscount Nuffield) as a base primarily for graduate students and faculty in social science. The college is somewhat outside the Oxford mainstream, and he was probably lonely there. He published *The Concept of a Legal System* in 1970, choosing a title which echoes Hart.

In 1972 Kenny sounded out Hart about a Balliol fellowship for Raz. "I had no doubt about his brilliance," Herbert recalls. Raz was appointed a tutorial fellow of Balliol College, a major step in his career, taking a permanent position at one of the most prestigious Oxford colleges. The title "fellow" signifies he was a regular faculty member, while "tutorial" illustrates his duties; like most Oxford faculty, he spent almost half his hours teaching students one or two at a time in weekly meetings. As most Oxford college tutors are nowadays, he also was a lecturer on the Common University Fund, doing what Americans recognize as normal classroom teaching. He was a member of the sub-faculty of philosophy as well as the faculty of law.

While at Balliol, he completed *Practical Reason and Norms* in 1975, *The Authority of Law* in 1979, and a second edition of *The Concept of a Legal System* in 1980. He became co-editor with Tony Honoré of the Clarendon law series, monographs on legal theory and theoretical introductions to fields of law, published by the great Oxford University Press.⁵

In 1985, the University authorities created an *ad hominem* chair for him, as professor of the philosophy of law. He modestly says that at Oxford no one makes any special distinction between fellows and professors; the switch in status even had a negative impact, as he had to move from the college-owned house he occupied as tutorial fellow of Balliol. The chair was nevertheless a signal honor: chairs at Oxford are rare, and filled after a world-wide competition; there are many faculty and few

5. He has served on several philosophy and jurisprudence editorial boards: previously for *Ethics*, currently for *Law and Philosophy* as well as *Ratio Juris*.

professors. Rarer still are chairs created *ad hominem*, like his, to honor an individual.

He published *The Morality of Freedom* in 1986. The book was acclaimed as the year's "best book in politics"⁶ and "best book in democratic or liberal theory,"⁷ and Neil McCormick's review in the *Times Literary Supplement* compared him to Mill.⁸ In 1987 he was elected a fellow of the British Academy, bringing special satisfaction to Honoré, who chairs the law section of the Academy, and who recalls with happiness his connection with such other steps in Joe's career as his D. Phil., his fellowship at Balliol, and his *ad hominem* chair.

An appendix lists Raz's published works in English; it does not include all the languages into which his works have been translated. He has gone to many parts of the world to lecture or be a visiting professor.⁹ He is appreciated in many countries and by scholars of many different persuasions.

Raz is "in a real sense the continuer of Herbert Hart's intellectual tradition in legal philosophy," Tony Honoré said to me, "but one who has reached out beyond Hart (as Herbert himself would certainly wish) to develop his own line about the relations of law and morality and the idea of freedom in a pluralist tradition." Herbert modestly says, "He corrects a lot of my mistakes." Hart adds, "He remains on the positivist side, as contrasted with Ronnie Dworkin. We do have differences. I believe the rule of recognition can authorize the judge to use moral criteria as a derivative rule. I am not convinced by his argument that that is inconsistent."

6. W.J. MacKenzie Prize, 1986, awarded by the British Political Science Association.

7. Elaine and David Spitz Prize, 1986, awarded by the Conference for the Study of Political Thought.

8. McCormick called the book "as significant a new statement of liberal principles as anything since Mill's *On Liberty*." McCormick, *Access to the Goods*, *Times Literary Supplement* 599 (June 5, 1987).

9. He has been visiting professor at the Rockefeller University philosophy department (fall 1974), Australian National University (August 1977), the University of California, Berkeley, Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program (spring 1984), University of Toronto law faculty (September 1987), Yale University law school and political science department (fall 1988), and USC Law Center (currently). He has also made academic visits to numerous countries: Argentina, Mexico, the United States, Canada, Finland, Sweden, Norway, West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, France, Spain, and Israel. Famed legal philosophers, it seems, do not do all their work in lonely ivory towers, but get to visit many interesting places.

PERSONAL NOTES

Having given some Oxford images and a brief biography of Raz, let me finish with some notes about the kind of person he is. Joe dresses simply and drives an old car. He wears open shirts, like many Israelis. Sometimes he can be seen in his office barefoot. His black beard is long, and sometimes wild. He has few hobbies—computers (he imagines he could earn a living showing colleagues how to cope) and photography (he shows an aesthetic gift for striking landscapes). If he had a lot of money, says Yoram Shachar, he would just buy more books—or maybe it would be a better camera; he really doesn't do much non-philosophical reading, except for the *New York Review of Books*. He also enjoys modern prints (he collects Hayter) and records and tapes. In Oxford, he lives quietly with his son, to whom he is devoted. He likes space and enjoyed the enormous living room of his Balliol house, which he decorated sparsely with no clutter and just a few elegant chairs and rugs.

He is usually quiet, speaking softly, with a characteristic little laugh. When teaching his seminar, he speaks little, but then trenchantly. A student says, "A wonderful teacher. He makes you use words concisely and exactly, by his example." In lectures to large classes, he is clear about difficult ideas, and modest in presenting his own. And sometimes in conversation, talking about some incident of daily life that has captured his imagination—like accompanying a friend to traffic court—he is an animated and voluble raconteur. He has many friends, all over the world, with whom he keeps in touch by letter and by phone.

A colleague's secretary says, "People keep coming by to meet him and talk to him. He's like Socrates, isn't he?" But he himself is a modest man. Taking a visitor into another Oxford college, he introduces himself simply as a fellow of Balliol College rather than as a professor. And he is somewhat shy. He pretends that students wanting to register for a seminar with him are a burden rather than a tribute. He is also risk-averse, wanting to pin down arrangements in advance, and worrying about bureaucratic mishaps of immigration authorities or university officials.

He is good-natured as to fellow academics: welcoming visiting colleagues to his seminar or his home, loath to pass judgment, and supportive to former students who seek help in their careers. He can also be enthusiastic about those who deserve high praise and, sometimes, in a trusted moment, will bestow a sarcastic word to dismiss the errors of those who deserve scholarly scorn.

His son Noam is at the center of his personal life. Joe spends a lot of time doing things with him, and made sure that Noam was educated in music as well as art.

"He is a person of very equable temperament," says Honoré, "happy to listen to criticisms and respond to them, and with normal moral standards. There is no one who is less of a *prima donna* than he is. I think of him as a hundred percent scholar, yet friendly and cheerful and interested in people."

What would he be if he were not a philosopher? His closest friend says, "It is impossible to think of him not being a philosopher."

The contributors to this special issue join me in saluting Joseph Raz as a deep scholar, a stimulating colleague, and a warm friend.

APPENDIX: THE WORKS OF JOSEPH RAZ

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