

Nancy L. Rosenblum

Over the past thirty years, liberal political theory has been strenuously criticized from a wide range of theoretical perspectives, including neo-Marxist, New Left, conservative, neoconservative, libertarian, feminist, and communitarian perspectives. In response to these various challenges, liberal theorists such as John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Amy Gutmann, Richard Rorty, and Nancy Rosenblum have reassessed the fundamental assumptions and arguments of liberal theory and have kindled a renewal of liberal political thought. Today we honor the work of a scholar whose contributions to this project of reassessment and renewal have been highly distinctive, creative, and valuable.

Nancy Rosenblum earned her undergraduate degree at Radcliffe College and her Ph.D. in political science at Harvard University. She taught in the Department of Government at Harvard for seven years before moving to Brown University in 1980. In 1989, she became Chairperson of the Political Science Department at Brown. Professor Rosenblum has been a Fellow at the Bunting Institute at Radcliffe and is spending the current academic year as a Fellow at Harvard Law School.

Her writings include fourteen articles and three books, including a book on Jeremy Bentham's theory of sovereignty and the modern state and her reader on *Liberalism and the Moral Life*. *Bentham's Theory of the Modern State* offered an original interpretation of Bentham's secular, instrumentalist conception of politics and his theories of law, international politics, and government. *Liberalism and the Moral Life* presents a variety of liberal responses to civic republican claims that liberalism is indifferent to moral, aesthetic, and communal needs.

Professor Rosenblum's major work, however, is titled *Another Liberalism: Romanticism and the Reconstruction of Liberal Thought*. Conceding that liberal theory is typically legalistic, impersonal, self-protective, and instrumentalist, she constructs "another liberalism" that upholds individual rights without reducing individuals to consumers or possessive individualists. The key to this alternative liberalism is its deep historical and experiential connection to romanticism, which Rosenblum traces through a series of richly evocative discussions of Mill, Humboldt, Wordsworth, Stendhal, Constant, Thoreau and others. To repair what she calls "the communitarian failings of liberalism," Rosenblum demonstrates that a more intuitive, personally meaningful and creative liberal politics is possible in a liberalism that promotes creativity and self-expression.

Nancy Rosenblum's reconstruction of liberal theory is a project in progress. For the depth, originality, and intellectual importance of her work thus far, I recommend on behalf of the faculty of Kalamazoo College, that upon Nancy Rosenblum be conferred the honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters on Scholar's Day, 1993.