



Traveling Back: Toward a Global Political Theory

By Susan McWilliams

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We live in a global age, an age of vast scale and speed, an age of great technological and economic and environmental change, in conditions our ancestors could hardly have imagined. What does this compression of geographical and temporal scale mean for our political thinking? Do we need new modes of political thought or a new kind of political imagination? How might we begin to develop a truly global political theory?

Against the common belief that we need a wholly new political theory for our global age, Susan McWilliams argues that the best foundation is already behind us and can be found by *traveling back*. In doing this -- revisiting the history of political thought with a mind to the questions accompanying globalization -- it becomes clear that the greatest tool for understanding our "new world" lies in one of the *oldest* themes in Western political theory: travel. Since the beginnings of Western political thought -- the ancient Greeks referred to travel as *theoria* -- political theorists have used images of travel to illuminate the central questions of globalization; where travel stories appear, we find serious reflection about how to live in cross-cultural and interconnected political conditions. Here we find attention to the contingency of political identity, to hybridity, and to the threats of colonialism and imperialism. We even find self-critical questioning about the dangers that face political theorists who want to think globally.

In *Traveling Back*, McWilliams uncovers the rich travel-story tradition of political theorizing that speaks directly to the problems of our age. She explores why this travel-story tradition has been so long neglected, especially in this time when we need its wisdom, and she calls for its rediscovery. In order to move forward toward a global political theory, as McWilliams eloquently demonstrates, we must first learn to travel back.

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Editorial Review

Review

"In this rich, elegant, and fascinating book, Susan McWilliams asks us to recall the Greek *theoros* -- the theorist-traveller who journeyed to other lands then returned home to describe the institutions and habits that he saw there, and the reasons and principles behind them. Ever since, she maintains, travel and the imagination of travel has been an important source for thinking about political possibility... With a tour through works about travel, works by traveling theorists, and works imagining theoretically interesting travel -- from Herodotus through Montesquieu and Tocqueville to DuBois and Baldwin, among others -- she shows how much can be learned from travel and its theorists. She challenges how we have thought about the methods and boundaries of political theory at the same time that she lets us see familiar kinds of theory in new ways. This is a very fine piece of humanistic scholarship." --Jacob T. Levy, Tomlinson Professor of Political Theory, McGill University

"Susan McWilliams succeeds marvelously at making the familiar unfamiliar. Theoretically incisive and poetic, this elegantly written book makes a forceful case for 'traveling back' through the Western tradition." -
-Anne Norton, Professor of Political Science and Comparative Literature, University of Pennsylvania

About the Author

Susan McWilliams is Associate Professor of Politics at Pomona College.

Users Review

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Mariano Smith:

The publication with title *Traveling Back: Toward a Global Political Theory* includes a lot of information that you can find out it. You can get a lot of benefit after read this book. This specific book exist new expertise the information that exist in this reserve represented the condition of the world today. That is important to yo7u to find out how the improvement of the world. This kind of book will bring you with new era of the the positive effect. You can read the e-book in your smart phone, so you can read that anywhere you want.

Linda Christopher:

The reason? Because this *Traveling Back: Toward a Global Political Theory* is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap it but latter it will jolt you with the secret the item inside.

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