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## Rawls Well That Ends Well: A Response to Welch and Ly

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A RESPONSE TO Theodora Welch and Minh Ly (2017), “Rawls on the Justice of Corporate Governance,” *Bus Ethics J Rev* 5(2): 7–14, <http://doi.org/10.12747/bejr2017.05.02>

### ABSTRACT

Welch and Ly register three objections to my argument that the Rawlsian paradigm offers no resources for formulating a normative theory of corporate governance. In this brief response, I note that while I agree with the first of these objection, I don’t think it poses any serious trouble to my argument; the other two objections, on the other hand, I am less convinced by. I then offer two alternative strategies for bringing Rawls to bear on business ethics, which don’t involve trying to apply his principles of justice to the corporation. Finally, I conclude with a reflection on why people are so insistent on talking about Rawls in the first place.

**IT TURNS OUT** that writing a piece urging business ethicists to stop writing about Rawls is, predictably, something of a mug’s game. My *Business Ethics Quarterly* article (Singer 2015) argued that Rawls did not, and Rawlsians cannot, conceive of the corporation as a part of the “basic structure” of society, without betraying or undermining Rawls’s political conception of justice. I therefore argued that we business ethicists, who put such institutions at the forefront of our analyses, would do well to put away our copies of *Theory of Justice*. This has

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