

chased 35 percent of JUUL in 2018. Nicotine use in adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and may also lead to increased risk of future addiction to other drugs. (Even the second-hand aerosols from e-cigarettes contain substances—including fine particles, chemicals linked to irreversible lung disease and cancer, and heavy metals—that are probably not safe, particularly for children). The average age when young people begin smoking, says Winsten, was 12.4 in the year 2000. (A study of data from 2014–2016 indicated an average age for cigarette smoking initiation of 12.6 years, and for e-cigarettes of 14.1 years.)

Bloom, Winsten, and CHC deputy director Susan Moses are veterans of these battles. In 2007, building on the work of other advocates, they successfully persuaded the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), which includes all the Hollywood studios, to include smoking among the criteria used to assign an “R” rating to a film. Dan Glickman, then chairman of the MPAA, had met Bloom while serving as director of the Institute of Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School, and invited him to come speak to the organization. Bloom, Winsten, and epidemiologist Jonathan Samet ’66, S.M. ’77, then at Johns Hopkins, presented the scientific evidence and consensus, after an introduction from Glickman in which he “pointed out that both his parents were smokers and both died of lung cancer,” Bloom recalls. Screenwriters raised objections over First Amendment free-speech rights, but Bloom felt that none of their concerns represented a substantive constraint on artistic freedom and cited the Supreme Court decision *Schenck v. United States*; *Baer v. United States* (1919), in which Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., A.B. 1861, LL.B. ’66, LL.D. ’95, wrote, “The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic.”

Winsten illustrated for his audience the power of the Hollywood creative community to effect social change for good by recalling its critical role in promulgating the concept of the designated driver in the 1980s, a concept CHC borrowed from Scandinavia that was rapidly adopted in the United States when writers, at Harvard’s request, incorporated the idea into scripts of top-rated television series such as *Cheers*, *L.A. Law*, and *The Cosby Show*. In 2012, the U.S.

The incidence of smoking in movies rated PG-13 (with material that may be inappropriate for children 12 and under) “has been creeping up.”

Surgeon General’s office quantified the effect of MPAA action, concluding in a report that if movies depicting smoking received an “R” rating, that would “reduce the number of teen smokers by nearly 1 in 5 (18 percent), preventing up to 1 million deaths from smoking among children alive today.”

Although there is less smoking overall in films than there was prior to 2007, says Bloom, the incidence of smoking in movies rated PG-13 (containing some material that may be inappropriate for children age 12 and under) “has been creeping up.” And, he adds, “There is more smoking per film than there used to be, and few of those films have been R-rated at the level one might have expected because of that.”

What concerns Bloom and Winsten most, however, are the new contexts in which children are socially conditioned about behavioral norms. Much has changed since 2007, from smartphones, to YouTube, to streaming services, to targeted advertising on social media. “What’s really worrisome is that there are no constraints on streaming films, which is now an increasing part of what kids watch at home; no legal constraints on JUUL other than that the manufacturer has agreed, in principle, not

to market to people under 16, or 18, or 21, depending on the state; and no constraints whatsoever on video games, where smoking has become prevalent—and in some cases is necessary in order to win the game.

The shifting media landscape notwithstanding, are there lessons that can be extrapolated from the 2007 appeal to the MPAA? Bloom and Winsten believe so. The MPAA still has enormous influence on what goes into movies and television shows, they say. Google, which owns YouTube, could restrict smoking messages from reaching children. And companies like Netflix, whose own productions reportedly depict smoking at twice the rate of other studios, they say, must also be persuaded of the imminent harm that smoking in entertainment can exert, years hence. The pair believe it is time for a renewed effort to enlist the entertainment industry’s help, beginning with an appeal to the MPAA through its current CEO, Charles Rivkin, M.B.A. ’88.

—JONATHAN SHAW

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RICH OR POOR?

The Rawlsian Revolution

JOHN RAWLS IS to modern political philosophy, perhaps, what John Maynard Keynes is to economics. Many Harvard students and graduates will remember his 1971 work *A Theory of Justice*, mandatory reading in Bass professor of government Michael Sandel’s “Justice,” and in a number of philosophy and intellectual-history courses. Rawls famously posed the “original position,” a thought experiment in which people must decide how they would organize their ideal society without knowing what social position they will hold in it: rich or poor, man or woman, majority or minority. The late Conant University Professor trained

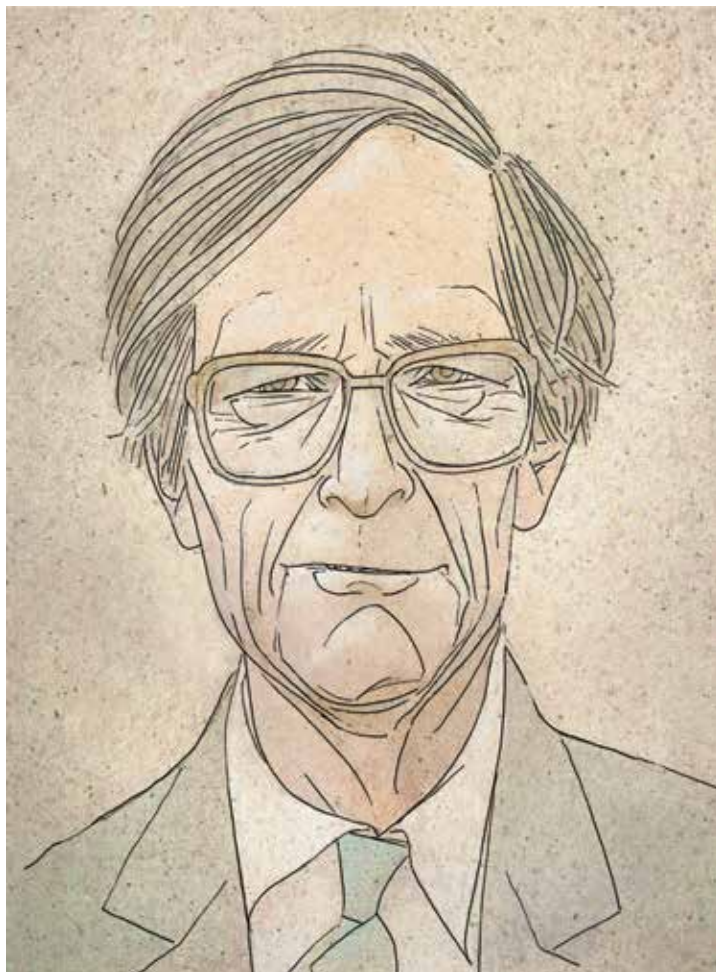
some of the most influential philosophers in the world today. But he, and the nuances of his work, are also widely misremembered, argues assistant professor of government and social studies Katrina Forrester. Her forthcoming book, *In the Shadow of Justice: Postwar Liberalism and the Remaking of Political Philosophy* (Princeton University Press), excavates the complex history of Rawlsian thought, showing how his work remade political philosophy, and how philosophers today grapple with contemporary problems in Rawls’s shadow.

To understand Rawls’s impact, it’s important to understand the state of political phi-

losophy before him. He started his doctorate in 1946, just after the war against Nazi totalitarianism had cost millions of lives and destruction worldwide, and left Eastern Europe under Stalinism. Political thinkers were concerned about state control over people's lives, and skeptical of government expansion. They focused on restraining state power, not imagining the good that government could do for people.

With Rawls, that all changed. "Rawls completely transformed how political philosophy was done, and the kinds of questions philosophers asked," says Forrester. He "showed that philosophy, which had been hard hit by the war..., could be ambitious and dream big," she continues. "He made political philosophy about finding the right conception of distributive justice—of who gets what. After Rawls, that's what philosophers focused on—not on other questions of order, stability, legitimacy, revolution, transformation, domination, oppression. They asked questions about distribution and redistribution—about...how to limit social inequality and how to justify inequalities that existed."

Although Rawls represented a departure from his time, a thinker who enabled the field to emerge from the shadow of World War II, Forrester argues that it's also crucial to understand him as a *product* of that period. In his early, unpublished writing from the 1950s, held in Harvard's archives, he shares "a skepticism of the state with anti-statists, who opposed the expansion of the state that came with the New Deal and the Second World War," Forrester explains. "He emphasizes that government should leave people alone and not control their lives, except insofar as it has to provide the minimum necessary for them to have a fair chance in life." The purpose of the state was to enforce a minimal set of rules, like contracts and traffic laws; the government as "umpire" was a popular metaphor among liberals at the time. Young



Rawls cared more about protecting property rights, Forrester noted in a lecture, than "active redistribution by a planning state."

This matters, Forrester says, not just because "the most influential political philosopher of the late twentieth century isn't always who we think he is," but also because it displays just how different today's political reality is from that of Rawls's era: "The main worry for many liberals then was the expanding state; today it's the weakness of the state in the face of the dominance of corporations." Although Rawls came from a tradition that

was wary of government, Forrester notes, "today his moderate schemes for redistribution... look very radical.... This in itself shows how far to the right our politics has moved since the mid twentieth century."

Much of *In the Shadow of Justice* turns on this final point: on how effectively or not Rawlsians have responded to neoliberalism, the loose concept that describes the rise of privatization, austerity, and deregulation all over the world since the 1970s. "Rawls himself grew quite worried about the rise of marketization," Forrester says. Her analysis deftly makes sense of what might seem to a lay reader to be a paradox of the Rawlsian revolution. If Rawls was one of the most influential thinkers of the last century (Forrester notes that he "had a substantial influence on professional elites, from lawyers to policymakers"), then why have his social-democratic ideas remained so marginal in actual politics?

Part of the answer, she writes, is that "much debate [in political philosophy today] still takes place in the shadow of a set of ideas that reflect the assumptions of a different age." Concretely, she says, this means that "in the 1960s when the liberal philosophers who made Rawls essential reading at all universities came of age, the assumption was that the civil-rights movement would bring racial equality and desegregation. Things were getting better—and the reformism at the heart of political philosophy reflected that. Today, it's not at all clear things are getting better." Societies face climate change, in-



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creasingly short-term and precarious types of work (see “How U.S. Companies Stole American Jobs” July-August 2017, page 10), “as well as new and persistent forms of inequality. Our questions are also different: the political and economic instability that has followed the financial crisis of 2007-08 means that the worth of capitalism and the possibility of socialism are on the political agenda in ways they haven’t been for decades.” The Rawlsian tradition hasn’t provided a path to *realizing* its goals of redistribution, and in an age of dramatic inequality, Forrester says, that is no longer enough. It also has little to contribute to newly urgent questions, such as the future of work, which has been unsettled by radical shifts in contingent labor and automation. “Should we characterize the data we provide to Facebook as a form of work?” Forrester asks. “What do philosophers think of as the big political puzzles of our time? The answer should not be the same as ‘what Rawls thought.’”

—MARINA N. BOLOTNIKOVA

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CANCER BEATERS

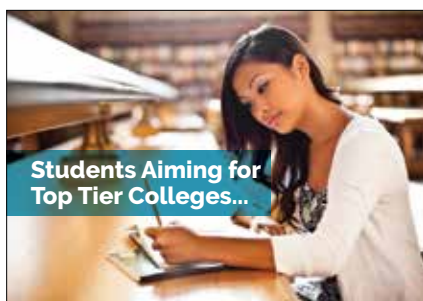
Are “Super Responders” Special?

AS A MEDICAL STUDENT in the 1980s, Isaac “Zak” Kohane heard stories—from patients, mentors, and colleagues—of nearly miraculous recoveries from cancer. A patient given weeks to live instead survives for years. An experimental drug works exceptionally well—in only one patient. Or, most controversially, a patient rejects chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery, and somehow lives. As a trainee, Kohane found many such stories quite literally unbelievable. “Frankly,” he says, “I assumed that they didn’t really have a cancer.”

Now Nelson professor of biomedical informatics at Harvard Medical School (see “Toward Precision Medicine,” May-June 2015, page 17), Kohane not only believes

these stories, he’s seeking them out. A year ago, he began a project to find “exceptional responders” to cancer treatment—those who have beaten the cancer odds many times over—in order to figure out what makes them special.

He was inspired initially by a very different group of patients. Since 2014, Kohane has coordinated a nationwide program to study and aid patients whose affliction with rare, undiagnosed diseases mark them as statistical outliers. “Outliers, by definition, are interesting,” he explains, because they are different from everybody else, “so there are things to be learned. By finding these outliers, we have been able to make breakthroughs both for the patient but also scientifically,” diagnosing more than



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