In Injustice: Political Theory for the Real World, Michael Goodhart calls for “a paradigm shift in global normative theory.” Following Thomas Kuhn, Goodhart holds that new paradigms “allow scholars to tackle important problems that the paradigm proved unable or ill-suited to address. ... The advent and advocacy of a new paradigm ... signals that, at least in the view of some critics, it might be valuable to reexamine our basic assumptions, reconceptualize familiar problems, ask new questions, and adopt alternative ways of thinking about them” (18). That is the work Goodhart proposes to undertake in this book.

Like Kuhn, who held that there are no theory-independent facts that ground paradigm shifts in science, Goodhart holds that there no normative-independent grounds that are sufficient to support paradigm shifts in political theory. As Goodhart puts it, “appeals to the ‘facts’ ... are rarely dispositive because they are not innocent. The facts on which theorists rely are already interpretations of the world, already value laden” (62).

To support his view, Goodhart adopts a hypothetical rather than a categorical account of normative requirements, citing Phillipa Foot’s “devasting [attack] on categorical normativity” (124–25). This favors an ideological reading of conflicting conceptions of justice/injustice, where no perspective has the resources to defeat the others in a non-question-begging way. As Goodhart puts it, “When first principles (construed as hypothetical requirements) are themselves in dispute, there is little analytical philosophy can do; it is simply not equipped to adjudicate among rival conceptions” (36).

Goodhart sees his main ideological opponent as neoliberalism, an economic and political doctrine that originated in the Austrian school (Hayek and von Mises) in the years following the First World War for which liberty (as noninterference) is the ultimate value. The economic doctrine of neoliberalism is understood to promote free trade, while the political doctrine is understood to support a minimal role for the state (14). However, for Goodhart, there is no non-question-begging way to defeat the view. Rather, he thinks neoliberalism can only be defeated by the exercise of power: institutional power (laws, the judicial and political system), structural power (class relations, the organization of production and consumption), and productive power (control of the media, popular culture, public discourse) (179).

For Goodhart, the struggle between two rival conceptions of justice/injustice is something like the struggle between two sports teams, with a difference. While in sporting contests, there are external rules of fair play that both teams should abide as they struggle to prevail, in normative contests between competing ideologies, Goodhart envisions that the rules of the contest are essentially whatever each ideological community just happens
to accept for itself. Thus, to the outsider, these contests would appear to be simply no-holds-barred struggles where winner takes all.

Yet that is clearly not the way we tend to view the struggles between rival conceptions of justice/injustice. Even the opponents of neoliberalism with whom Goodhart allies himself do not usually think of the view they oppose as just claiming to be supported by hypothetical norms against which they can only oppose their own hypothetical norms, where all such norms are, in turn, supported only by ends that each competing community alone just happens to endorse.

Nor should Thomas Kuhn’s view of scientific revolutions be taken to support Goodhart’s radical view of normativity. Kuhn sought to explain why adherents of earlier scientific theories found their theories so defensible, the explanation for which he found in the theory-laden character of the facts by which those theories were supported. Yet virtually no one in the philosophy of science community today has followed Kuhn in asserting that there are no theory-independent grounds for favoring current scientific theories over their predecessors. For example, it is universally recognized today that sufficient theory-independent grounds exist to keep scientists from reverting a Ptolemaic astronomy. Thus, Goodhart’s radical theory of normativity cannot be supported by Kuhn’s theory of scientific revolutions.

Nor should Philippa Foot’s endorsement of morality as a system of hypothetical imperatives in her 1972 *Philosophical Review* article be taken to support Goodhart’s view of hypothetical normativity. This is because Foot herself came to renounce the view as an aberration from her earlier and later views. Generally, then, it is not a good idea to appeal to authorities who later come to renounce the very views for which they are cited as authorities.

Yet even if Goodhart’s radical view of normativity cannot be supported by appeals to Kuhn and Foot, could it not still be true? For this to be the case, the categorical view of normativity which Goodhart rejects would have to be mistaken. But is it mistaken?

The categorical view of normativity can be divided into two parts. The first part provides a categorical defense of morality over egoism. The second part provides a categorical defense of a particular interpretation (or interpretations) of morality over rival interpretations. Now the second part of this defense of categorical normativity is, at least with respect to defeating neoliberalism, on stronger ground than the first. This is because philosophers have not yet reached agreement that a non-questioning-begging answer can be given to the question, why be moral? Some still think that egoism and morality are equally rational views. Even so, there are philosophers today, such as Christine Korsgaard at Harvard, Stephen Darwall at Yale, and myself, who claim to have provided just such a defense of morality. The success of any one of these arguments for morality would undercut Goodhart’s hypothetical view.
With respect to the second part of the defense of categorical normativity, suppose we wanted to defend the normative conclusions that Goodhart favors, such as transformational politics (117–18), emancipatory democracy (135–38), and antislavery activism (223–24), against neoliberalism. Would it not do to show that the ideal of liberty (as noninterference) at the core of neoliberalism actually requires just such egalitarian policies? But this is just what political theorists such as G. A. Cohen, Henry Shue, Richard Norman, and myself have argued. Surely, categorical normativity is not useless if it can deliver such conclusions against the neoliberalism that Goodhart abhors.

So, while Goodhart is clearly right on target in Injustice: Political Theory for the Real World when he argues in favor of a radical egalitarian practical agenda, he seriously undermines the defense that can provided for that agenda by casting his neoliberal opponent as a participant in a competitive game against whom he hopes to prevail.

–James P. Sterba
University of Notre Dame

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In Playing Fair, Richard Dagger provides a comprehensive account of the justification of punishment as emanating from political obligations that citizens living within bounded, meaningful polities assume. As promised, he brings together political and criminal-law theory and argues that “we have a right to punish lawbreakers because we have a right to expect people to live up to their political obligations” (1). His theory is based on an attempt to balance out the burdens and benefits of living in a polity, by asking all members to do their fair share: if the polity is reasonably just, it can be considered a cooperative practice and its members may be thought of as engaging in fair play whereby breaching the “rules of the game” provides justification for punishment.

Dagger’s book is a welcome and much-needed attempt to couch the justification of punishment in citizenship obligations. He skillfully deviates from the common approach, which views criminal offenders as liable to the state, by considering them liable instead to the polity, or rather to their co-citizens: “the obligation, in other words, is owed not to some impersonal force—