**Contents**

1 Introduction 1
   1 Adjudication and its troublesome phenomenology 1
   2 Methodology 6
   3 Road map 7
   4 Delimitations and caveats 8

**Part I The stability of rightness. Giving primacy to theory**

2 A stabilizing approach to adjudication 13
   1 Introduction 13
   2 The morality of adjudication and why philosophy needs to come in 13
   3 A stabilizing approach to adjudication. Legal commensurability and adjudication as applied moral theory 22
   4 Stability explained 33
   5 Do I overstate the stabilizing character of legal commensurability? 37
   6 Conclusion and how to proceed 41

3 On reason’s hope. Normative theories of political morality and their potential stabilizing function for adjudication 43
   1 Introduction 43
   2 On (the stabilizing effect of) normative theories of political morality 44
   3 The role of adjudication. Returning the compliment 50
   4 Conclusion 52

4 The Fragility of Justice I. Rawls’ Theory of Justice as moral background theory of law and adjudication 54
   1 Introduction 54
   2 Rawlsian justice. Kantian with an Aristotelian twist 55
      2.1 Protecting ‘noumenal selves’ 55
      2.2 Concrete needs also count: an Aristotelian twist 60
   3 Rawls’ conception of adjudication. A version of a stabilizing approach 64
   4 Conclusion 67

5 The Fragility of Justice II. Rawls’ residues of justice and their bearing on adjudication 68
   1 Introduction 68
   2 Rawls’ residues and their bearing on adjudication 68
4.1 Three dimensions of justice 196
4.2 Empty situational justice? On thick and thin concepts 198
5 Social critique, moral progress and the (remaining practical) role of philosophy 203
6 Conclusion 206

Part II The instability of rightness. Giving primacy to practice

9 Adjudication without foundation. A postmodern approach 209
1 Introduction 209
2 Adjudication as honouring the (call of the) Other 210
  2.1 Postmodern ethics 210
  2.2 Postmodern adjudication 212
3 Taking postmodernism seriously? Pros and cons of a postmodern approach 219
4 Conclusion 224

10 The Fragility of Rightness I. A virtue-ethical conception of adjudication 226
1 Introduction 226
2 A virtue-ethical conception of adjudication 227
  2.1 Judicial virtues and giving primacy to the particular 227
  2.2 The relation to the equity tradition 240
  2.3 The role of codified rules and codified principles 242
  2.4 Developing the judicial virtues 244
  2.5 Legal Rightness 249
3 Political legitimacy and respect for the Other 253
4 Conclusion 257

11 The Fragility of Rightness II. The judge as a civic friend 258
1 Introduction 258
2 Civic friendship 258
3 The judge as a civic friend 261
4 Does civic friendship apply to all areas of law? 263
5 The destabilizing character of adjudication: a first explanation 266
6 Conclusion 267

12 The Fragility of Rightness III. Tragic choice as a legal concept 269
1 Introduction 269
2 Interlude. The ‘tragic’ and (practical) philosophy 270
3 Tragic legal choice. A tentative sketch 275
3.1 Conflicting judicial commitments
  3.1.1 Conflicting commitments to fundamental rights 275
  3.1.2 Conflicting commitments to law and values of political morality 284
  3.1.3 Conflicting commitments to law and the concrete embodied Other 288
  3.1.4 Conflicting commitments due to epistemic uncertainty 291

3.2 Moral remainders and tragic responsive reactions 293

4 Tragic legal choice in practice. Arguments for and against 298
5 The Fragility of Rightness and the rule of law 302
6 Conclusion 304

13 Concluding summary and some practical implications 306
  1 Concluding summary 306
  2 Some practical implications 310

Bibliography 314

Samenvatting 330
  De Breekbaarheid van Rechtspraak. Het primaat van de praktijk 330

Acknowledgments 345