

even be reconciled to others” (p. 115; emphasis added). In other words, this seems to be an evaluative standard that people *share*, despite their *different* evaluative standards grounded in their diverse and conflicting conceptions of the good. If two citizens are, respectively, Catholic and Muslim, they will have different evaluative standards based on their different religious faiths, but they will also have shared evaluative standards if they agree that their state should provide them with freedom of thought and religion, allowing them to practice their faiths and live alongside each other in peace.

Vallier could, of course, respond that the diverse evaluative standards linked to each individual citizen’s own conception of the good are still necessary to guarantee the kind of social trust that is central to his account. But, again, it is not clear whether and how this response would set Vallier’s argument apart from those of Rawls or other defenders of consensus conceptions of public reason, such as the accessibility one. More specifically, as Rawls argues in his *Political Liberalism* (2005, pp. 386–87), *full* (as opposed to *pro tanto*) public justification is only realized when citizens endorse a liberal political order based on both shared evaluative standards and their diverse nonshared conceptions of the good. Furthermore, it is well known that for Rawls the justification of state rules based on citizens’ own conceptions of the good also contributes to the overlapping consensus that guarantees the stability of a political liberal order over time. Again, it is not clear how distant Vallier’s account is from the Rawlsian one, given that, like Rawls, Vallier (pp. 107–9) considers a mere *modus vivendi* unstable, and both of them seem to believe that stability requires the internalization of liberal rules based on moral reasons grounded in each citizen’s own conception of the good. Compared to Rawls’s conception of public justification, however, Vallier’s account has the significant merit of examining the connection between stability and social trust (the latter aspect does not figure prominently in Rawls’s analysis); yet it is not clear that the two accounts are significantly dissimilar.

These brief critical remarks do not detract from the quality of Vallier’s argument. In fact, I believe that, when interpreted through the lens of an accessibility conception of public justification, Vallier’s account becomes even more plausible. More generally, despite the similarities with Rawlsian consensus conceptions of public reason, the wealth of theoretical insights and empirical background information that characterize Vallier’s book render it a major new statement in the literature on public justification. I hope that the reader, like me, will look forward to the book’s sequel, in which Vallier, as stated in the epilogue (pp. 220–22), will examine more closely key liberal institutions such as freedom of association,

the welfare state, the market economy, and democratic governance.

Democracy and Goodness: A Historicist Political

Theory. By John R. Wallach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 320p. \$89.99 cloth, \$32.99 paper.
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Hundreds of books and articles on democracy or ethics appear every year. But very few attempt to bridge the two, combining an account of democracy as it has developed historically with a discussion of the ethical goals that democracies ought to pursue. The political salience of goodness, in particular, is rarely studied: John Wallach notes that only two books have appeared on this topic in the last 30 years, neither of which focused on democracy (p. 20, n23). Yet, as Wallach argues on the opening page of this ambitious, erudite, and wide-ranging book, “democracy” is often treated as self-evidently “good” (p. 1). Why—on the basis of what conceptualizations of democracy and goodness—have successive generations of self-identified democrats believed that? And how should future democracies act so as to bring democracy and goodness closer together? Wallach argues that efficacious answers to the second question require the kind of critical political judgment that can be developed by answering the first one (pp. 8, 17, 273–76). Such an understanding is what his historicization of democratic ethics seeks to provide.

What does historicizing democratic ethics entail? All three terms require commentary. Wallach’s definition of democracy stays close to its ancient Greek roots. *Demos* signified “the many more than the few,” especially (in line with Aristotle) “the many who are not rich,” and *kratos* suggested “forceful power.” Hence democracy is “a kind of political power” that enables ordinary citizens to act (pp. 2–3, 12). The word “ethics” is also Greek in origin. *Ethos* signified “character” or “way of life,” so “ethics” concerns how to live, and Wallach invokes “goodness” as the appropriate “umbrella term” for “aspirations for excellent performance and social justice in all walks of life” (p. 18). “Democratic ethics,” accordingly, are “those conceptual standards that seek to uphold or promote the goodness of a democratic order,” paying special attention to “the well-being of the collectivity as such—not individuals in their private lives” (p. 43). The central concern is how “the collective power that advantages most human beings” is “enhanced and exercised best” (p. 52). As for historicization, Wallach distances himself from the various ways that history was put to theoretical use by Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Collingwood, Foucault, and even Sheldon Wolin (whom Wallach greatly admires) in favor of what he calls “judgements about discourses of democracy and goodness in time” (p. 42). Ultimately, he seeks to use the

past “as an intellectual guide that encourages ethical and critical thought in the present” (p. 42) after the manner of Herodotus (p. 42) and Thucydides (pp. 12, 33–34).

In practice, this means that as well as developing a large-scale historical narrative—examining the discourse and deeds (or *logos* and *erga*, as Wallach puts it) of successive democracies from the ancient Greeks to the present (disappointingly not including republican Rome, called a *demokratia* by near contemporaries such as Cassius Dio)—each of the five core chapters features “a kind of hermeneutic loop between present, past and future” (p. 6). That is to say, each chapter moves from the present to the past and back again, the better to model the kind of ethical and critical thinking that Wallach hopes to inspire.

Thus described, the project may sound eyebrow-raisingly ambitious, and Wallach admits that he “covers an amount of ground not usually allowed for one book” (p. 11). Yet the book is made manageable not only by the similar structure of the core chapters but also by Wallach’s selectivity with his material. Democracy has been taken to be many good things, but he pursues only five—variously described as “versions” (p. 7), “constellations” (p. 49), or “conceptual practices” (p. 274) of goodness—treating them as “gauntlets through which democratic ethics have been centrally constituted for us” (p. 8). These five gauntlets are virtue (Greek *arete*, chap. 2), representation (chap. 3), civil rightness (a combination of equal opportunity and meritocracy; chap. 4), legitimacy (chap. 5), and human rights (chap. 6). Each “illustrates a kind of political goodness that emerge [d] at distinct historical periods in which democracies reach [ed] for new ethical sanctions to foster their well-being,” and each, Wallach argues, remains relevant today (p. 49).

Each excursus is illuminating, whether one agrees with all of Wallach’s interpretations; I myself disagreed with his accounts of both Aristotle and Hobbes (so a significant portion of his story) and wished that he had made more supporting textual evidence available. The final chapter, on human rights, is perhaps most successful in integrating discussion of a particular ethical “guidepost” (in this case the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) with theoretical discourse (exemplified by John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, Amartya Sen, and Seyla Benhabib, among others) and the actions of actual democracies (from “humanitarian” military interventions to the French regulation of headscarves). It is a significant achievement to do all this while developing a coherent argument for the semidetached relationship that ought to obtain between democracy and particular forms of goodness if either is to maintain its critical bite, as well as assessing the problems that arise when democracy and goodness are either collapsed into one another or categorically opposed.

The five forms of democratic goodness that Wallach explores are puzzling in one respect: they do not all refer to the same kind of thing. Most importantly, only one—virtue—is (at least potentially) an attribute of a human

agent. Representation, legitimacy, civil rightness, and human rights are attributes of a political system, not of a person or people. And this matters, because human action—specifically “demotic agency”—is at the heart of Wallach’s argument (pp. 7, 14–17, 43–44, 273). It is what *demoi* do that allows us to judge their ethical orientations and that makes a historical approach to democratic ethics valuable and even possible. As Wallach argues, “citizens cannot express solidarity mostly in imaginations. Their commonality and potential for democratic activity takes place in the forum, on the streets, in the presses, amid legislative activity” (p. 51, cf. p. 251). Yet in representative democracy, as Wallach emphasizes, the *demoi* does not in fact do very much (pp. 13, 51, 101, 109–10, 227). Whereas ancient *demoi* acted every time they assembled to make a decision, modern *demoi* typically look on while a select few make decisions on their behalf. Indeed, as Wallach points out, a significant feature of electoral representation is that it transposes the expected location of political virtue from the *demoi* to its representatives (pp. 99, 105, 107). Demotic virtue becomes unnecessary precisely to the extent that the *demoi* is no longer, in practice, the primary political agent.

Given that representative democracy does not seem likely to vanish any time soon, what are the prospects for demotic agency? The probability of climate catastrophe, if nothing else, calls for collective action on an unprecedented scale. But the political mechanism through which multitudes of individuals used regularly to be transformed into what Hobbes, in *Leviathan*, called “one Person” (quoted on p. 114, although differently interpreted)—namely, mass assemblies of the ancient Greek and Roman kind, which could, through majoritarianism, develop a single will and thereby act collectively—has fallen into disuse. Wallach joins John Dewey in asking for “more democracy”: that is, for “increasing the authoritative power of democratic citizenship” (p. 226), “bringing demotic power closer to the state,” and “putting maximum pressure on the few” who have precipitated our current crises (p. 269). Without overstating the impact of a single theoretical contribution, he also hopes that future democratic discourse and deeds (*logos* and *erga* again) may be improved by attending to the material presented in this book. Let us hope that he is right.

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In her 2008 book titled *On the Side of the Angels: An Appreciation of Parties and Partisanship*, Nancy Rosenblum noted that political parties have historically been the