

all, then the disagreements that concerned him would not arise.) Likewise, Locke attacked Proast's claim that doctrinal truth could be known. But whether it can be known or not, it remains a political fact that rulers who are authorized to impose doctrinal truth will impose what they take it to be—and that would remain a political fact even if, on a view-from-nowhere account, doctrinal truth could be known. Even after reading Wolfson's careful treatment, in the course of which he makes some telling points in favor of his view, one may still have queries about the claim that Locke's advocacy of toleration rested on a demand for a change in "religious worldview" (p. xv), defined in terms of attitudinal and epistemic change, as distinct from a recognition of the fact of pluralism, and of what it means for politics. In making a very important debate more accessible to readers, Wolfson's book will sharpen discussion of the basis and justification of a crucial political value.

Sreedhar ends by pointing out, interestingly, that Hobbes's resistance rights were more generous than those acknowledged by many contemporaries, and even than those defended by later liberals. It cannot be said, however, that Hobbes favored a right to religious freedom, the prime example of the (supposed) conscience-type right that would undermine political order. The sovereign may impose, and subjects must accept, religious uniformity, if that is what order (in the sovereign's judgment) requires. Locke himself had held exactly that view in 1660, arguing (in the work now known as the *Two Tracts on Government*) that political authority comprehended a power to establish religious observance. Why he abandoned that view for the idea of toleration is a key question, and reading the debate with Proast may suggest that foremost in his mind was his recognition that, given the deep nature of religious attachments, imposing conformity was far more likely to provoke rebellion than to foster order. As Wolfson notes (p. 36), the fear of heresy gives way to the fear of the damage caused by persecution. Both of the books under review lead us to think about that issue of political judgment, and about what it should mean for the justification of political authority. For Hobbes, political judgment acts as a prudential constraint on sovereign power, while for Locke, it acts as a limit to the powers that rulers should have in the first place.

Democracy and Moral Conflict. By Robert B. Talisse. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 216p. \$93.00 cloth, \$39.99 paper.
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— Michael E. Morrell, *University of Connecticut*

Robert B. Talisse's *Democracy and Moral Conflict* addresses what he calls the problem of "deep politics." In democracies there is a plurality of moral doctrines "that conflict with each other but nonetheless individually meet some rather loose conditions for minimal plausibility" (p. 13). This gives rise to a paradox in that democratic legitimacy

requires justifying decisions to all citizens, but because of moral divisions, there is also disagreement regarding what justification requires. Given this paradox, democracies face the problem of justifying their existence to those for whom the outcomes of democratic politics violate some fundamental moral value they hold.

Neither viewing democratic politics as a civil war by other means nor adopting a pragmatic approach that sees democracy only as a *modus vivendi* is satisfying because both create commitments that can evaporate in the face of changing circumstances or power relations. Theories of democratic proceduralism are also unpersuasive because they unrealistically presuppose that citizens can see their "deepest moral and religious commitments as *wants, preferences, and interests*" and "are willing to view their commitments as *fungible* items that can be exchanged and bargained with" (p. 27, emphasis in original). John Rawls's public reason approach, what Talisse calls the politics of omission, is also unconvincing because requiring citizens to bracket off their comprehensive doctrines when entering the public sphere will likely generate instability and "create social conditions under which extremist groups can flourish, grow, and become more extreme" (p. 62). Of even more importance, Rawls and those who have extended or modified his theory, such as Charles Larmore, Jeffrey Stout, and Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, must always fall back on a presumption of a common commitment to some moral principle to ground their democratic theories. These principles are in need of justification, but since this is impossible given deep moral divides, these theories cannot provide a good reason for citizens to maintain their democratic commitments.

As an alternative, Talisse develops an argument grounded in a theory of "folk epistemology" that he bases upon the "epistemic commitments that can be plausibly expected to be shared among persons deeply divided over moral and religious fundamentals" (p. 79). Five principles constitute his theory: 1) To believe some proposition, *p*, is to hold that *p* is true; 2) to hold that *p* is true is generally to hold that the best reasons support *p*; 3) to hold that *p* is supported by the best reasons is to hold that *p* is assertable; 4) to assert that *p* is to enter into a social process of reason exchange; 5) to engage in social processes of reason exchange is to at least implicitly adopt certain cognitive and dispositional norms related to one's epistemic character. The implication of these five principles is that anyone who is committed to being an epistemically proper believer must be committed to democracy. Since all citizens are committed to their beliefs, regardless of the content of their moral commitments, they must also commit to democracy. Talisse calls the theory he derives from this folk epistemology "dialogical democracy."

Democracy and Moral Conflict is a well-written book that should be accessible to a variety of readers. It elucidates an interesting argument that provides a justification for democracy that escapes some of the criticisms aimed at

other theories, and as such, should be of interest to political theorists and philosophers. Yet there are two related issues that cause me some concern.

The first relates to the move away from having reasons to support a belief toward a commitment to subjecting that belief to the critical scrutiny of *all* who may challenge it. Talisse recognizes the obvious objection that many people already believe they know the truth, and they are precisely those who contribute to the problem of deep politics (p. 139). They are “truth-knowers,” not “truth-seekers.” He responds by positing that even those who know the truth still need to know all relevant moral and nonmoral facts and are epistemically dependent upon others; they thus require a reliable social epistemic system to make moral judgments. Since a reliable social epistemic system requires democracy, “even those who take their own moral doctrines to be beyond revision and not in need of examination or justification” should endorse democratic politics (p. 143).

Yet this argument goes only so far. Truth-knowers could admit to needing a reliable social epistemic system, but because they know the correct source of truth, it logically follows that they should—and they probably would—attempt to establish a social epistemic system only with others who also acknowledge this source. Talisse responds by referring to Cass Sunstein’s work on group polarization, which provides evidence that groups of like-minded individuals tend to take more extreme positions after deliberation. If those who know the truth interact only with other true believers, they are likely to move toward a more extreme position, which will not then be the truth; the only way to maintain true belief is to engage with those who disagree.

It is difficult to see how this argument would persuade those who believe they know the truth. Consider people who believe that abortion is murder because God has revealed this. In what way, they might ask, will being open to the arguments of others have any positive epistemic effect on their belief? Being open to others might open the door only to deceptive and immoral influences. As another example, it is hard to see how white supremacists would agree that they should engage in reason giving with members of other races who, by definition, are epistemically unfit. Valuing the truth of their beliefs might persuade people that they need to engage with others, but only those others whose epistemic fitness is evident.

The second related issue concerns Talisse’s claim that he is presenting an epistemic rather than a moral justification. In his discussion of *Mozert v. Hawkins*—the much-discussed court case involving a group of parents who wanted to exempt their children from reading materials that promoted values contrary to their religious beliefs—the author maintains that the folk epistemic argument would respond to plaintiff Vicki Frost 1) by pointing out that she cannot believe that the word of God as found in the Christian Bible is the totality of her beliefs because the Bible does not say “*The word of God as found in the Chris-*

tian Bible is the totality of Vicki Frost’s beliefs” (p. 181; emphasis in original); and 2) by arguing that the existence of controversies over biblical interpretation demonstrate the need for Christians to subject their beliefs to critical public scrutiny. Thus, “Frost’s positive epistemic commitments must *support* critical engagement with opposing doctrines *for the sake of* developing the epistemic capacities that enable her children to better apprehend and maintain belief in the truth” (p. 183; emphasis in original).

Are people like Frost going to commit to democratic principles based upon the position that believers must be open to the arguments of morally repugnant others in order to be epistemically proper? For many believers, what to believe and how to test beliefs are moral, not simply epistemic, issues. Many people view a holy text as the only test of moral truths, and if the outcomes of democratic politics clash with those moral truths, I am not sure that pointing out their proper epistemic commitments should convince them that democratic principles override their deepest moral commitments.

Hobbes and the Law of Nature. By Perez Zagorin. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. 176p. \$29.95.
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There are three main ways of reading Hobbes’s political writings: as political philosophy, written for the ages; as political commentary, tackling the controversies of the time; and as political advice, offering practical suggestions to current or future sovereigns. Unusually, Perez Zagorin’s high-quality book tackles all three.

Hobbes’s political philosophy is the main focus. Zagorin, a historian of early modern political thought, clearly and concisely compares Hobbes’s natural law theory with that of his predecessors (pp. 5–28, 32–38, 46–50). This highlights Hobbes’s originality very effectively. In particular, Zagorin insists that Hobbes does not follow Grotius as much as some scholars have argued (pp. 18–20, 24–26, 139–40, 146). He is less convincing in rejecting the view that Hobbes’s natural law theory is based purely on self-interest and is not therefore a moral theory (pp. 47–48, 100–11, 145). He is right that Hobbes’s theory includes “a large body of moral values and virtues,” including peacefulness and benevolence, which “would have to be part of any true system of morality, irrespective of its underlying philosophic perspectives” (p. 48). But these are compatible with self-interest, as Zagorin himself accepts (pp. 102–3). So, more is needed to show that Hobbes offers not only “a system of morality” but also “a *moral theory*” (pp. 47–48).

Hobbes’s political commentary, engaging in the controversies of his time, gets less emphasis from Zagorin. One important but frustrating contribution is his challenge to Quentin Skinner, who has argued that Hobbes changed his account of liberty partly to oppose republican ideas (*Hobbes*