

or with the core argument of Chapters 2 through 7. Chapter 8 may be the least original and incisive, but 9 and 10 are of considerable interest.

Chapter 9 invokes Lincoln and Madison to argue that since the Constitution is only an imperfect “means to the ends of our constitutional democracy” (p. 197), its principles may properly be violated in extraordinary circumstances in order to preserve the Republic and further those ends. Was that what the majority did in *Bush v. Gore* (2000), Fleming asks, after a lightning-fast argument to the effect that the decision did indeed violate the Constitution. His answer is even more provocative than (the brevity of) that argument: If the “Bush Five” did avert a constitutional crisis, it was only by submitting to blackmail by the Florida Republicans who threatened to cause one (p. 204).

Chapter 10 clearly states but ultimately evades a profound question about the relationship between constitutional interpretation and normative political theory. If the former is truly constrained by an imperfect constitution, then it will not always be able to reach the same answers as the perfect normative theory, which builds from first principles without constraints. Therefore, the argument goes, the proof that you are really engaged in constitutional interpretation rather than political theory should be to present an instance where the constraints of your discipline bind and leave you with normatively imperfect conclusions. But Fleming defies this demand for proof. It does not suffice to say, as he does following Lawrence Sager, that the domain of constitutional justice is only a subset of all political justice: This shows that the Constitution offers an incomplete account of justice, but it does not reveal any imperfection (leaving aside the quasi-theological claim that incompleteness is a form of imperfection). “We should aspire to interpret the Constitution so as to make it the best it can be” (p. 211), Fleming declaims, rather than reveling in its imperfections (p. 225). Such reveling may indeed be unnecessary, unwise, perverse, and perhaps even distasteful, but the challenge remains to answer the question of imperfection quietly and soberly.

**Bounded Divinities: Sacred Discourses in Pluralist Democracies.** By Fred M. Frohock. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 272p. \$69.95.

DOI: 10.1017/S1537592707072325

— John Francis Burke, *University of St. Thomas–Houston*

While authors such as Michael Perry challenge liberal thinkers such as Bruce Ackerman and John Rawls to move beyond their neutral rendering of political discourse in order to foster an ecumenical politics between secular and spiritual perspectives, Fred Frohock contends that the public discourse of liberal theory cannot grasp the supernatural basis of sacred discourses. Instead, Frohock contends that “thin” realism (p. 159), found in international rela-

tions theory, can better negotiate the tensions between secular and religious discourses in pluralist democracies: “[R]elationships between secular and the sacred, religion and politics, church and state, are settled by the great political languages of stability, efficiency, equity, and power (among other collective level terms), not the metaphors of walls and spheres” (p. 197).

The case that incites Frohock’s deliberation concerns city ordinances in Hialeah, Florida, that by prohibiting animal sacrifices, target the main ritual of Osha spirituality, a Cuban spirituality with antecedents in African Yoruba. Although lower-court rulings uphold the ordinances, largely promulgated by animal rights activists, the U.S. Supreme Court in 1993 “ruled the city ordinances unconstitutional” (p. 15) because they clearly were designed to undermine Osha practice. Although the Osha community in Hialeah prevails, its insistence upon the integral relationship between the supernatural and natural realms, the author contends, defies liberalism.

The first three chapters, therefore, differentiate the qualitative differences among religious, scientific, and political discourses and accent the imperative that the divine orientation of religion not be reduced into either of the other discourses. He specifically differentiates between the four “features of religious experience” (pp. 30–32) and the three key propositions of political life (pp. 35–36). He particularly accents the “insensate” (p. 70) and mysterious character of sacred texts. The crux of the matter remains, for Frohock, that sacred texts communicate divine truth and thus cannot be engaged from “a skeptical or dispassionate perspective” (p. 19).

The next four chapters canvass the different types of public rationalities that seek to bridge this crucial discursive divide. Assessing Rawls’s overlapping consensus approach and Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach, Frohock concludes that such liberal approaches, though well intentioned, force religious practitioners into the manner and virtues of “the good liberal citizen” (p. 111). By contrast, Frohock finds the “infinite regresses” and “recursions” (p. 113) being explored in systems theory, especially by Ernest Gellner, to be more simpatico to the otherworldly disposition of sacred discourses. In the end, though, Frohock fancies the realpolitik approach. Rather than striving for substantive consensus between discourses very much in conflict, modus vivendi arrangements enable disparate groups to come to agreement without having to concur on why they agree. Although liberal and realpolitik discourses each have their place, according to the author, when confronted by “non-negotiable commands from external realities” (p. 196), the resources of the latter are invaluable for navigating religious-political conflicts.

Overall, Frohock’s analysis is provocative, though the number of discourses he traverses will deter some readers. Unfortunately, the Osha case is the only extensive

application he provides, and ironically, the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in favor of this community was justified on liberal grounds. In terms of *modus vivendi* arrangements, the 1998 Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement (p. 156) that he cites is actually a dispute between historically intractable political communities, not one exemplifying religious–secular discord. The inclusion of many more actual illustrations would make his argument much more persuasive.

In turn, Frohock does not capture the plurality of religious perspectives vis-à-vis politics. While Frohock rejects the depiction of Osha as syncretic (pp. 7–10), much of Latino theology points to the syncretic character of Latin American and Caribbean spiritualities (e.g., see Orlando Espin, *The Faith of the People*, 1997). More importantly, natural law and Perry's ecumenical approaches contend that diverse spiritualities are not necessarily monistic in their engagement of each other or in intersecting with secular perspectives—and thus, mutual transformations can ensue.

Whereas the Osha controversy is a free exercise case, how would the combination of liberal and *realpolitik* approaches that Frohock suggests handle establishment issues in which “nonnegotiable commands” (p. 196) superimpose themselves onto a pluralistic body politic? Given the connection Michael Mann draws between organic democracies and genocide (*The Dark Side of Democracy*, 2004) and Max Weber's insight on the comprehensive character of organic ethical systems such as Puritanism and types of Islam (“On the Tension Between Religion and Politics,” in H. H. Geertz and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, 1973), how do *modus vivendi* approaches not only thwart atrocities committed in the name of God but also rationally justify such deterrence? Frohock is clearly aware of these issues—“utterly intolerable actions” (p. 171)—but again needs to provide more concrete clarification.

Moreover, the historical liberal tradition is helpful in this regard. As Andrew Murphy has pointed out (*Conscience and Community*, 2001), a *modus vivendi* politics was quite commonplace in the Reformation debates over toleration and religious dissent in seventeenth-century England and America. Both the proponents and opponents of toleration argued their stances from Christian dispositions, a complexity on toleration that gets lost in neutral liberalism.

Ultimately, Frohock's very stimulating argument has an Augustinian feel: His contrast between sacred and secular discourses recasts “the two cities” distinction in a lateral, as opposed to hierarchical, direction. And Augustine is certainly an intellectual antecedent to international relations realism. Does Frohock's *realpolitik*, though, really give any more comfort to either the believer or the nonbeliever than the liberal paradigm does? Once clear-cut rights give way to *modus vivendi* arrangements, the

divine truth articulated so well in Frohock's exegesis easily becomes just another competing perspective in the politics of power relations. Moreover, the basis on which the state deals with, say, the Osha community becomes more contingent and ambiguous.

Nevertheless, Frohock's attempt to inject a practical rationality into thin realism that draws upon liberal, *realpolitik*, and potentially other perspectives is both fascinating and promising. He needs now to move his argument from the level of meta-discourses to actual illustrations. Both political and religious scholars concerned with the intersection of religious and secular narratives in pluralistic societies should read this text.

#### **Gandhi's Philosophy and the Quest for Harmony.**

By Anthony J. Parel. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 240p. \$75.00.

#### **Postmodern Gandhi and Other Essays: Gandhi in the World and at Home.**

By Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. 272p. \$45.00 cloth, \$18.00 paper.

DOI: 10.1017/S1537592707072337

— Sankaran Krishna, *University of Hawai'i at Manoa*

It is perhaps fitting that a political leader who chose to title his autobiography “The Story of My Experiments with Truth,” should himself be regarded today as an open text, one worthy of continuous reinterpretation as times change. Mohandas Gandhi was an unusual political leader in too many ways: in his emphasis on nonviolence and truth-force (*Satyagraha*) as instruments of political change during the decades dominated by world wars, genocide, and imperialism; in a relentless refusal to separate ethics from politics but possessed of an uncanny sense for the political jugular of his much stronger opponents; in the crafty use of emerging media to outflank the colonial regime alongside his ready sense of humor and quick repartee; in his ascetic lifestyle and sartorial tastes; and in the eclectic and truly universal range of philosophical and intellectual sources of his thought. He was an early critic of modern industrial civilization during the era of its hegemonic sway, and saw little point in independence if all it meant was Indians gaining sovereignty to do unto themselves what alien rule had been doing to them in the name of modernization.

In the first two essays in *Postmodern Gandhi and Other Essays*, Lloyd Rudolph presents a compelling case for Gandhi as a postmodern thinker *avant la lettre*. He shows how, as early as 1909 in his book *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi anticipated key ideas that would later be coalesced into definitions of the postmodern. For instance, his “refusal to privilege modernism's commitment to the epistemology of universal truths, objective knowledge and master narratives” (p. 4), and his emphasis on the contingency of both our knowledge of the world and the partial nature