

Finally our author considers what Walzer calls the 'supreme emergency' – the situation in which one is desperately fighting an evil regime and feels that any means necessary must be used, even the killing of civilians. Zupan admits that one may kill an innocent to save that person from a fate worse than death, but that such conditions would hardly justify the bombing of civilians (pp. 129–130). In other words, Dresden was a war crime, as was Nagasaki. The conclusion is that nothing can truly justify the violation of personal autonomy, not even the war on terror, which is dealt with briefly in the book's epilogue.

This is a hard-hitting book which strikes at the sort of consequentialism that can seemingly justify almost anything. It reminds us of John Finnis's contention that in a consequentialist/proportionalist world 'the lives of each of us depend on everyone judging, at every moment, that in the circumstances no greater good would be achieved, or greater evil avoided, by killing us' (*Understanding Veritatis Splendor*, edited by John Wilkins, London: SPCK, 1993, p. 70). Against this sort of morality, we are protected by the Kantian doctrine that we are autonomous beings, never to be used as means, only as ends, and it is this insight, according to Zupan, that the war convention recognises. He makes a convincing case, and a timely one; nor does he fall into the trap that usually bedevils Kantianism, namely arguing a principle which entails intolerable consequences. Did Dresden or Hiroshima really shorten the war and save lives? Put like that, the question answers itself.

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Theology, Political Theory, and Pluralism. By Kristen Deede Johnson. Pp. xii, 276, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, £50.00.

How are we to live together in the midst of our differences? Johnson, an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Hope College, Michigan, exposes inadequate answers from two major streams within modern thought, then considers Augustine as a possible resource for a more balanced and helpful perspective, before edging her way towards what she calls a theology of public conversation. This is a meticulous, reliable, authoritative, constructive and important contribution to the growing literature on the relationship between religion and politics, at a time when there is some concern about the capacity of western liberal democracies to cope with a renaissance of (diverse) religious expression in the public square.

Here we have a fruitful conversation between theology and political theory. Key thinkers engaged with include the three 'Johns' – Locke, Rawls and Milbank, two 'Williams' – Connolly and Cavanaugh, supported by Richard Rorty and Chantal Mouffe, before Augustine is quarried for deeper and more enduring resources for understanding the relationship between theology and political theory. Johnson offers a way 'beyond tolerance and difference' (as the sub-title says).

Political liberalism is examined first. Liberalism champions tolerance and puts a strong emphasis on protecting freedom, but it pays insufficient attention to the aims and attachments of individuals and the constitutive role played by communities in developing and sustaining identity. It fails to deal adequately with particularity and difference, relying too much on a universalising form of individualism. The reliance on overlapping consensus and a public form of reason that is independent of substantive and comprehensive beliefs tends to disconnect us from prior beliefs and commitments; thus the belief of nobody in particular is expected to sustain the rules of the political game that everybody must play. Toleration then can slide too easily into indifference; instead of forbearance to prevent what we disapprove of (because of our commitments), we simply care too little to interfere. The trunk of commitment from

which the branch of tolerance grows has withered, thereby greatly reducing how much 'weight' the 'branch' can 'carry'. Johnson insightfully shows that John Rawls' defence of political liberalism relies too much on the model of a law court and too little on the model of deliberative assemblies. Hence he seems to allow too little room for people to learn from each other, to be persuaded by the arguments of others, to change their minds, or even, to put it more strongly, to be converted to the viewpoint of the other. He leaves the positions that people take up too often where they are, rather than show how they might be modified. In contrast, David Hollenbach argues that religious convictions and political ideas can transform each other, with reciprocal interaction (p. 75).

A group of post-Nietzschean political thinkers are examined next – and also found wanting. While valuing their insights – for example, into the inevitability of conflict and the all-pervasive presence of power-play – Johnson finds that they do not provide resources for promoting unity and harmony. They emerge from her analysis as better equipped to recognise and appreciate difference, in contrast to universalising liberals, who seem blind to our specificity and particularity; but in the end they provide a bleak outlook for the prospects of joint action, common endeavour and real community in a pluralist society. One of the central figures whose political thought is explored by Johnson is William Connolly. He advocates the need for twin virtues, agonistic respect and critical responsiveness. The first displays respect for constituencies (different from those we belong to) that are already established in our society, while the second displays sensitivity and concern for marginalised, oppressed, or undervalued groups. In the end, Johnson finds these admirable virtues are not buttressed by a substantial enough understanding of who we are, how we belong together, why diversity can be cherished, why we should collaborate and the means by which we overcome our differences.

She turns to Augustine as a (relatively) neglected political thinker, as a writer who offers resources to enhance our political thinking and practice. If political liberals appear, in this book, as hopeful but unrealistic, and if post-Nietzschean political theorists emerge as more realistic but less hopeful, Augustine comes across here as a hopeful realist. The key to Augustine being more helpful is his insight into due order and dependence on God as our guide, rather than domination of others. If we perceive, along with Augustine, the fundamentally relational nature of reality, linking God, humanity, animals and nature, (with all things dependent on God) and if we are appreciative of the hierarchy of goods in which each good has its proper place, then there is a chance that we will learn to love the world's goods in the right order of priority and in the right way. Augustine relativises our approach to politics, without diminishing our engagement: the earthly city is not the ultimate hope nor is it the primary frame of reference for Christians; it should not be looked to for the realization of peace, justice and love (pp. 168–9). On the other hand, far from Christians shunning political activity, they should bring certain perspectives and virtues to its conduct, without trying to mistake the political realm for the heavenly city. 'For Augustine, the Christian brings to political involvement a right understanding of the provisionality and contingency of contemporary arrangements, a proper source for humility, the grace to counter the lust for power that dominates the earthly city, and a knowledge of the God-intended order of the universe that provides a point of critique and challenge' (p. 230). Only in the context of acknowledging God as the source and goal of our existence and that of all other people, however similar or different to us, will we have a chance of combining hope and realism, of being committed to but not swallowed up by our world, of avoiding the twin temptations, either of abandoning political engagement, on the one hand, or of (self-defeating and for others destructive) utopianism, on the other hand. Johnson's retrieval of Augustine as a resource to enrich contemporary political thinking suggests a humble confidence that comes from trust in God's providence. Instead of relying on a form of

toleration that slips into indifference, or of bemoaning the endless and inevitable nature of conflict between irreconcilable differences, Christian engagement in politics should be marked by love, humility, hospitality and openness to grace (p. 247).

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Natural Law Liberalism. By Christopher Wolfe. Pp. x, 269. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, \$75.00.

The text of Christopher Wolfe's *Natural Law Liberalism* mixes political theory and practical politics. Wolfe is really speaking of the American experiment in politics when he speaks of 'liberal democracy', and there is a tone of apology in many of his statements, as if he has to constantly reassure his compatriots that he approves of the experiment.

Liberal democracy offers people a measure of freedom, prosperity and well-being that no other form of government seems able to provide as consistently. Whatever the faults of liberalism – and liberal democracy, like every other form of government, has its own characteristic weaknesses – it is by far the best game in town, and we should want to preserve it. (p. 3)

Wolfe also has an American penchant for bringing religious views into the public realm and makes it clear that he includes the faithful among his readers.

The first part of *Natural Law Liberalism* contains a critique of contemporary liberal theories. Wolfe discusses the arguments of a number of well known theorists: John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Joseph Raz, Stephen Macedo, and others. There is a general focus on the attempt to derive a theory from a point of naive and abstract neutrality, without a substantive moral position. Wolfe argues that this is a negative stance, nothing more, and that the usual reliance on a rational process of deliberation is not enough to produce a workable politics.

Liberals like Amy Guttmann and Dennis Thompson try to finesse the issue by positing a certain reciprocity in fundamental political views.

... there is a moral requirement that when citizens make moral claims 'they appeal to reasons or principles that can be shared by fellow citizens' who share their commitment to finding fair terms of social cooperation. (p. 45)

Wolfe argues, with good reason, that this strategy is unrealistic. At a multitude of intersections, in formulating public policy and making political decisions, we are forced to decide between competing moral or substantive views. This requires an underlying normative view.

Most of the critique is directed against 'anti-perfectionist' liberals. This refers to the view that it is not possible to judge definitively between different views of the good life. Wolfe's initial attack is on 'exclusionism', a liberal view that would rule any direct appeal to 'people's deepest moral and religious convictions' 'out of order' in political discourse and decision making. (p. 56) At its simplest, this merely introduces a secular bias into the political order, which favours 'sectarian' liberalism, 'with its assumption of the priority of reason over claims of revelation' (p. 47).

Wolfe then moves to a discussion of autonomy, canvassing the views of Ronald Dworkin and Joseph Raz. Dworkin's abstract and rather self-indulgent scheme