POLITICAL LIBERALISM, THE INTERNAL CONCEPTION, AND THE PROBLEM OF PUBLIC DOGMA

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According to the "internal" conception (Quong), political liberalism aims to be publicly justifiable only to people who are reasonable in a sense specified and advocated by political liberalism itself. One advantage of the internal conception allegedly is that it enables liberalism to avoid perfectionism. The paper takes issue with this view. It argues that once the internal conception is duly pitched at its fundamental, metatheoretical level and placed in its proper discursive context, it emerges that it comes at the cost of public dogma. The paper examines this problem and argues that a plausible response to this problem is to go beyond the internal conception and adopt a more inclusive, *dynamic* conception. But this calls for a form of perfectionism. Thus, the internal conception of political liberalism, far from showing how liberalism can be had without perfectionism, effectively *calls for* perfectionism as a remedy for its problems.

I

On the "internal" conception, as Quong calls it in his *Liberalism Without Perfection*,[1] political liberalism aims to publicly justify itself only to people who are reasonable in a sense specified and advocated by political liberalism itself. This contrasts with an "external" conception, where the constituency, or, as I shall also say, the scope, of public justification is determined on "external" grounds that do *not* depend on any of the liberal theories that stand in need of public justification, such as Rawls's *Justice as Fairness* (JF).[2] A

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[1] Jonathan Quong, *Liberalism Without Perfection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5ff.
[2] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, Erin Kelly, ed., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001);

key advantage of the internal conception, Quong claims, is that it helps to rebut the asymmetry objection.[3] One way to put this familiar challenge is this. It is a key objective of political liberalism to establish itself in a way that avoids reasonable disagreement within the scope of public justification—to ensure that it is equally acceptable by all included in that scope. Political liberalism takes it that this rules out premising justice on comprehensive doctrines and conceptions of the good, including especially perfectionism; yet political liberalism takes it, too, that it does not rule out a political and liberal view of justice, e.g., JF. But, this challenge has it, there is no asymmetry here: if there is reasonable disagreement at all, there is such disagreement also about political liberalism. The internal conception rebuts this by claiming that political liberalism aims to be publicly justifiable only to people who pass certain "threshold tests of reasonableness" (Macedo),[4] while people who pass these tests do not reject political liberalism's core commitments. Thus, the internality of political liberalism helps to fend off non-political and non-liberal critics, and especially perfectionists, while reconciling political liberalism with its own commitments to public justification and the avoidance of reasonable disagreement.

There is good reason to believe that political liberalism rebuts objections of this kind along such lines—as ably explained by Quong, and as I argued elsewhere myself[5]—but it comes at a high price if it turns on substantive threshold tests of reasonableness. How high that price is depends, amongst other things, on how much content goes into the idea of the reasonable used here. Like others, I believe the price is *too high*—so high, in fact, that the internal conception, far from showing how liberalism can avoid perfectionism, *calls for* perfectionism as a remedy for its problems. With this I refer to perfectionism in its justificatory sense. Perfectionism is often understood as a rejection of neutralism. Substantive perfectionism rejects neutrality of ends or aims. It holds that the state may fund or otherwise support some view of the good at the expense of other such views even if the favored view is reasonably contested and there is no public justification

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"Reply to Habermas", *The Journal of Philosophy*, 92/3 (1995); "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited", in *University of Chicago Law Review* 64 (1997).

[3] Quong, *Liberalism Without Perfection*, 6, 192ff.

[4] Stephen Macedo, *Liberal Virtues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 47, 71.

[5] See Thomas M. Besch, *Über John Rawls' politischen Liberalismus* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1998). Also other political liberals, such as Macedo and Larmore, secure political liberalism against objections of this type by employing special threshold tests of reasonableness. See Besch, *On Practical Constructivism and Reasonableness* (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2004), 13-60.

for it, or favoring it. Justificatory perfectionism rejects justificatory neutralism (or neutralist public justification), and so does not translate directly into any token variety of substantive perfectionism. It holds that the justification of moral-political principles may invoke some view of the good even if the favored view is reasonably contested and there is no public justification for it, or favoring it. Needless to add, all forms of perfectionism can raise strong validity-claims and take the favored view of the good to be impersonal or agent-neutral, or true, or correct, or authoritative. What I want to suggest here, then, is that while an internal conception of political liberalism is interpretatively adequate, the status of public justification in political liberalism and the content of the idea of reasonableness that public justification builds on lead to a problem of public dogma that calls for justificatory perfectionism.

Before I can outline my argument, I need to distinguish between two roles of public justification in political liberalism. Only one of them matters here. In general, public justification is a constructivist, intersubjective, acceptability-based form of justification. To say that S is publicly justifiable to reasonable people is to say that S is equally acceptable by them—or, as Rawls also puts it, that they can recognize S mutually, or reciprocally, as authoritative. In its most prominent role, this idea is part of Rawls's model of a well-ordered society—which itself is part of the "second stage" of JF. A well-ordered society is a society of reasonable people that is governed by a reasonable theory of political justice that is "a *mutually recognized* point of view from which citizens can adjudicate their claims of political right on their political institutions or against one another".[6] It is a society, moreover, in which the reasonable endorse comprehensive doctrines that are consistent with the demands of reasonableness and the priority of the point of view just referred to.[7] Within this model, public justification *supposes*, and *is enabled by*, a theory of political justice that is mutually recognized, and that thus is a "public basis of justification".[8] And as the reasonable addressees of public justification already accept the principles advanced by such a theory, the job left to public justification is to apply them to matters of basic justice. In the order of justification, it hence is a lower-order, principle-applying exercise that supposes that these principles are shared as authoritative.

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[6] Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, 9. Emphasis added.
[7] Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, 32ff; *Political Liberalism*, 133-68.
[8] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 100f; ibid. 143f, 192.

This marks the standard view of the role of public justification, and it best fits to Quong's internal conception. In his view, political liberalism aspires to be publicly justified internally in the sense that it aspires to be equally acceptable by the reasonable citizens of a well-ordered society only, given the conditions characterizing such a society.[9] However, I submit, this is not the most fundamental way in which political liberalism seeks internal justification. That JF would be widely acceptable in a well-ordered society of the sort prescribed by JF presumably matters only if there are reasons *here and now* to adopt a theory like JF. For if there are no such reasons, the fact that JF is self-selective means little. But why adopt a theory like JF? It is in answering *this* question that public justification has a second role to play. In this role, the standard of equal acceptability by reasonable people marks a constraint a theory of justice must meet to *become* a public basis of justification. And in this role it marks a key reason why Rawls advances JF as a *political* liberalism in the first place (for now, let us take a *political* liberalism to be a theory of justice that meets special constraints regarding its standards of justification, domain of application, content, and so forth).

Consider Rawls's argument from overlapping consensus. For Rawls, political legitimacy is possible only if political power follows moral-political principles that are justifiable by a theory of justice that is a public basis of justification.[10] But to be *public*, such a theory must be the subject of an overlapping consensus between the reasonable comprehensive doctrines that reasonable people accept. This applies, too, *here and now*, to actual liberal regimes that are not well-ordered. Now, Rawls believes that the various traditions of normative theorizing about justice before political liberalism failed to secure such a consensus. Thus, he argues, we *here and now* need a different way of theorizing about justice, namely, one that applies a principle of toleration, or respect for reasonable disagreement, to philosophy[11] to thereby secure an overlapping consensus. This leads to the project of a political liberalism. For Rawls, no non-political liberalism can duly respect reasonable disagreement and secure an overlapping consensus. But why does such a consensus matter? It matters that a theory of justice, *T*, is compatible with the doctrines of reasonable people because its *in*compatibility with any such doctrines would entail that it is not equally acceptable by the reasonable people endorsing them. That is, to ensure that

[9] Quong, *Liberalism Without Perfection*, chapters 5 and 6.
[10] This reflects Rawls's liberal principle of legitimacy; see Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 217, 143f, 192.
[11] *Ibid,* 9f.

T is the subject of a reasonable overlapping consensus is to ensure *T*'s equal acceptability by the reasonable. But this just is what constitutes *T*'s *public justifiability*. To be a public basis of justification, then, *T* must be equally acceptable by, or publicly justifiable to, the reasonable (and, Rawls argues, this requires *T* to be a political liberalism).[12] In this role, the standard of equal acceptability by the reasonable is a condition theories of political justice must meet to *acquire* the credentials needed to qualify as a public basis of justification.[13] It thus has *metatheoretical* rank: it (supposedly) orients us away from the tradition of political thought toward the project of a political liberalism. And once we adopt this project, the next step is to select one member within the set of possible political liberalisms. Accordingly, Rawls tries to work out JF as a member of that set that stands out as attractive. The standard in question thereby operates as a standard of theory acceptance and theory construction. Theories that fail that standard are dismissed as unsuitable for the purposes of political legitimacy, while JF is from the start designed to avoid that fate.

It is in this second, fundamental role that I will address the idea of public justification and the idea of reasonableness at its core. I shall argue that once we pitch the theme of a public justification of political liberalism at its metatheoretical level and place it in its proper context, much content must be built into the idea of reasonableness at its core for political liberalism to achieve "internal" justification. But this comes at the cost of public dogma. A plausible response to this problem is to go beyond the internal conception to a more inclusive, *dynamic* conception. This, in turn, calls for a form of perfectionism. Sections 2 and 3 outline political liberalism's metatheoretical views. Section 2 identifies the content of the idea of the reasonable supposed metatheoretically; section 3 relates this to the idea of reflective equilibrium and the Original Position. Sections 4 and 5 engage the problem of public dogma. Section 4 rejects two lines of thought in political liberalism that might be put forth in response to this problem. Section 5 shows how

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[12] For accounts of the argument from overlapping consensus: see Besch, *Über John Rawls' politischen Liberalismus*, 31-67, and *On Practical Constructivism and Reasonableness*, 22-26, 35-40. See also Stephen Mulhall, Adam Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians* (2nd ed.) (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 175–184.

[13] In this second role, public justification is part of the *pro tanto* justification of political liberalism as a "freestanding" view. See Rawls, "Reply to Habermas", 144ff, and *Political Liberalism*, chapter III. Public justification here instantiates restricted trans-individual reasoning: see Gerald F. Postema, "Public Practical Reason: An Archaeology", in: *Social Philosophy and Policy* 12 (1995), 64ff, and Besch, *On Practical Constructivism and Reasonableness*, 39-43.

Larmore's contextualism allows political liberalism to evade the charge of public dogma, but at a high cost. Section 6 finally suggests that a plausible remedy for the problem of public dogma consists in a justification of the content of reasonableness, and argues that this justification must be perfectionist in form (this argument holds even if we suppose that public justification builds, or should build, on a thinner idea of reasonableness, and so is relevant beyond a discussion of political liberalism).

II

Let me start by considering what, for Rawls, a theory of political justice must be like to provide a basis for political legitimacy. To do so, he argues, it must be equally acceptable by the reasonable. And to achieve this, it must meet several requirements:

RR: T must in its entirety be consistent with what it takes to respect reasonable people as free and equal persons (the respect requirement).

TR: T must in its entirety respect reasonable disagreement, and so should avoid such disagreement at all levels of argument (the toleration requirement).

CR: T must take equal acceptability by reasonable people to be something that genuinely justifies (the constructivism requirement).

There also are requirements of limited scope, political values and of liberal content:

LS: T may apply to the domain of the political only.

PV: T must contain political values only, i.e., ideas, values, and principles that meet LS and are part of the political tradition of a Western democratic regime.

LC: T must prescribe that citizens be allocated basic liberties, rights and opportunities of special priority, and all-purpose means to make use of these things.

These are some of the features of a "political" and liberal theory of political justice that matter now. One way to render Rawls's argument is this. Reasonable people cannot equally accept a theory of justice unless it complies with what it takes to respect reasonable people. But to duly respect

each reasonable person, it must treat equal acceptability by them as a genuine justifier and avoid the reasonable disagreements that exist between them. Now, a theory of justice that meets these constraints can be liberal in content if it is limited in scope of application and contains political values only. At the core of this, then, is an idea of respect that gives rise to a constructivist view of justification and a commitment to avoiding reasonable disagreement. Political liberalism's commitment to liberal content, political values and its limited applicative scope flow from this.

All this depends on how reasonableness is understood. This idea is here *politically basic*: it marks the fundamental standpoint that political liberalism appeals to, and that guides its search for a theory of justice that suits the purposes of political legitimacy. And to meaningfully guide this search, the content of this idea must be at hand as authoritative prior to the adoption of any of the theories that are being assessed in terms of their acceptability by the reasonable—including JF. Now, what content this idea has is contested. Sympathizers tend to argue that it is thin in content and so can be inclusive in scope of application and appeal. Critics often insist that it is thick in content and so is exclusive in scope of application and appeal. Elsewhere, I argue that it is thick, or substantive, and so I side with the critics.[14] Here is why there is reason to see it as substantive.

There is content that Rawls explicitly builds into this idea, and there is further, implicit content that must be part of this idea if political liberalism is not to be self-defeating. As to explicit content, reasonable people maintain a sense of justice and a conception of the good; they are committed to being able to justify their actions and institutions on grounds they and others like them cannot reject, and to follow terms of cooperation that are as acceptable to them as they are to other reasonable people: they recognize the burdens of judgment, respect reasonable disagreement and take this to require that such disagreement be avoided in the justification of moral-political principles; they believe that society should be a fair system of cooperation. The list continues. More important is content of the second, implicit type. Much of what Rawls says builds on the idea that reasonable disagreement rules out equal acceptability by the reasonable: if S is the subject of reasonable disagreement, then S is not equally acceptable by reasonable people. This applies, as well, to the argument from public justification to political liberalism. Now, there is disagreement about the

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[14] See Besch, *Über John Rawls' politischen Liberalismus*, 69ff and *On Practical Constructivism and Reasonableness*, section I.14.

ideas reflected in RR–LC. E.g., perfectionists dispute that a theory of political justice must meet CR and TR, comprehensive liberals dispute LS and PV, and anti-liberals reject LC. This disagreement either is reasonable— i.e., disagreement that can arise between reasonable people without impugning their reasonableness—or it is not. If it is, political liberalism will not qualify as equally acceptable by reasonable people. Hence, it would fail its own standard of public justifiability, and so be self-defeating. But Rawls does not conclude this. He takes it that a theory of political justice, if it meets RR–LC, *is* publicly justifiable. But then he must construe such disagreement as *not reasonable*. And this amounts to building a commitment to the ideas reflected in RR–LC into the idea of reasonableness that public justification builds on. Hence, this idea of reasonableness is substantive—it is a thick value concept.

Not least, reasonableness must also be *reflexively stable*. That is, building a commitment to RR–LC into the idea of the reasonable that political liberalism sees as politically basic may not be the subject of reasonable disagreement. Thus, it needs to be supposed that the reasonable accept (i) that equal acceptability by people *who are reasonable in this sense* justifies, and (ii) that *only* such people need to be included on equal footing in the scope of public justification, or the "legitimation pool".[15] In this sense, reasonableness must be "insular".[16] (For simplicity's sake, I shall below refer to this idea of the reasonable as the idea of reasonableness*.)

III

To set the stage for a discussion of the issue of public dogma, to which I shall turn shortly, let me relate the above to the idea of reflective equilibrium and the Original Position. This will indicate how an internal view of political liberalism of the sort suggested here coheres with more general things Rawls says about the acceptability conditions of theories of justice and with JF's internal justificatory work.[17]

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[15] See Marilyn Friedman, "John Rawls and the Political Coercion of Unreasonable People" in Victoria Davion, Clark Wolf (eds.), *The Idea of a Political Liberalism* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 23.

[16] David Estlund, *Democratic Authority* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 55f.

[17] I provide a more detailed account of the issues discussed below in my *Über John Rawls' politischen Liberalismus*, chapter IV.

Take reflective equilibrium first. It evidently (and prominently) plays a metatheoretical role: JF is from the outset designed to achieve reflective equilibrium. For Rawls, any theory of justice "to be acceptable, must accord with our considered convictions, at all levels of generality, on due reflection, or in what I have called elsewhere "reflective equilibrium"."[18] A theory, *T*, is in reflective equilibrium with a set of views, *S*, only if the members of *S* are well-considered, *S* is internally coherent, and *T* coheres with *S*.[19] How does the criterion of reflective equilibrium (CRE) relate to public justification and the role of the reasonable*? Much here depends on the *standpoint* from which reflective equilibrium is to be sought. Rawls singles out the standpoint of "you and me"[20] as the one from which any theory of justice must be assessed. The test of reflective equilibrium accordingly tests how well a theory

> as a whole articulates our more firm considered convictions of political justice, at all levels of generality, after due examination, once all adjustments and revisions that seem compelling have been made. A conception of justice that meets this criterion is the conception of justice that, so far as we can now ascertain, is the most reasonable for us.[21]

Now, this oscillates between a reading that undermines political liberalism and a reading that supports it. If "you and me" and "us" refer to truly everyone affected by political liberalism's principles, including anti-constructivists and anti-liberals, we should conclude that political liberalism will *not* achieve reflective equilibrium with the considered convictions of *each* of "us". The internal conception of political liberalism would hence *collapse*. But if "you and me" and "us" refer to reasonable* people only, a political liberalism, and perhaps JF, *can* be a reasonable* theory for "us" (and trivially so). Thus, charity asks us to read the above passage as *supposing* reasonableness*. It is from the standpoint of the reasonable*, and so from the point of view of their commitments, that reflective equilibrium is to be sought.

[18] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 8.
[19] See Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 8, 28, 45; *Justice as Fairness*, 30ff; *A Theory of Justice*, 20f, 48-51; Norman Daniels, "Wide Reflective Equilibrium and Theory Acceptance in Ethics", in *The Journal of Philosophy* 76 (1979); "Reflective Equilibrium and Archimedean Points", in *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 10 (1980); "On Some Methods of Ethics and Linguistics", in *Philosophical Studies* 37 (1980); Joseph Raz, "The Claims of Reflective Equilibrium", in *Inquiry* 25 (1982); and James Griffin, "How We Do Ethics Now", in *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 35 (1993).
[20] For this and the quotation below: see Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 28.
[21] Ibidem.

This suggests we see CRE and public justification as integrated components of Rawls's metatheoretical stand. It is plain why CRE cannot stand alone. The reasonable* can differ in their considered convictions, and so a theory that is in reflective equilibrium for some might not be so for others. In other terms, while meeting CRE might be part of what constitutes *personal* justification—my being justified in accepting *T* might depend, too, on whether *T* coheres with my considered convictions—it does not entail *interpersonal*, public justification. The standard of public justification still reserves a key role for CRE. The view that *T*, to be publicly justifiable, must be equally acceptable by reasonable* people leaves open *in what way T* must be acceptable by each reasonable* person for this to count toward the justification of *T*. To have a meaningful degree of determinacy, public justification must build on a view of the conditions of authoritative acceptance. And it seems to be CRE's role to go some way toward providing that. For Rawls, a theory of justice, to be publicly justifiable, must be acceptable by each reasonable* person in a way that meets CRE: reflective equilibrium is a condition of public justification. Accordingly, he takes it that achieving public justification entails achieving reflective equilibrium.[22]

Turning now to the Original Position (OP), it introduces two additional ideas of the reasonable. OP is designed to model how reasonable and rational people deliberate on matters of basic justice. JF argues that such deliberators are bound to select a set of substantive principles and values which are then used to specify, amongst other things, an ideal of the good citizen—construed a reasonable and rational person (as supposed by OP) who embraces reasonable principles and values (as arrived at through OP).[23] The first additional idea of the reasonable is the one supposed by OP. It reflects the Kantian idea of a person, seen as a free and equal agent capable and willing to prudently advance her good within the bounds of impartiality. The second additional idea of the reasonable marks an ideal of the good citizen as specified by applying the Kantian idea of the person and the principles and values arrived at in OP. The citizens of JF's well-ordered society are reasonable people in this second, rich sense.

How do these two ideas relate to reasonableness*? I submit they are complementary parts of a reconstruction of the self-conception of reasonable* people. This reconstruction can lead the reasonable* to revise their pre-theoretical views of the implications of reasonableness*. But if they

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[22] See *Justice as Fairness*, 29 and 31; Rawls, "Reply to Habermas", 141, n. 16.
[23] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 11f, 16ff, 22-28, 66-82, 94, 97f.

do not believe that JF captures their self-conception well, it is JF that must be revised if this is what, upon reflection, their self-conception calls for. We saw earlier that Rawls is committed to the view that reflective equilibrium is to be sought from the standpoint of the reasonable*, and thus from the point of view of the commitments of reasonableness*. For Rawls, a theory of justice is acceptable only if it coheres with "our" considered convictions—where "our" refers to the reasonable*. If JF mismatches these convictions, "we" decide from "our" point of view whether to revise them or JF. Thus, if the argument from OP has implications that mismatch the self-conception of the reasonable*, then the reasonable* decide *from the standpoint of their self-conception* whether to revise JF or that self-conception. Revisions here can go both ways, but only if this is consistent with that standpoint and its defining commitments.

If this is so, JF is not a critical, Kantian approach that offers OP as a vantage point from which to critically judge the self-conception of the reasonable*, as some suggested.[24] Rather, JF is a reconstructive approach that offers OP to help the reasonable* clarify their self-conception—while any suggested revision of that self-conception is assessed from the standpoint of that self-conception. It is hence tempting to think of the reasonable* here as Aristotelian *phronimoi*. They are entrusted with the expertise to judge when JF is to be revised, and it is their expertise that JF is tasked to reconstruct and to which it must measure up. In this light, Rawls's metatheoretical stand appears more Aristotelian than Kantian, while his overall approach starts to look like a form of "Aristotelian constructivism".[25]

IV

Recall that Rawls's metatheoretical stand does not suppose a well-ordered society—a society of reasonable people that is effectively governed by a mutually recognized reasonable political and liberal theory of justice. Within

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[24] See Gerald Doppelt, "Is Rawls' Kantian Liberalism Coherent and Defensible?" in *Ethics* 99 (1989), and "Rawls' Kantian Ideal and the Viability of Modern Liberalism" in *Inquiry* 31 (1988). For a discussion of this Kantian reading: see my *Über John Rawls' politischen Liberalismus*, chapter V.1.

[25] See Mark LeBar, "Aristotelian Constructivism", in *Social Philosophy and Policy* Vol. 25 (2008), especially 192ff. That Rawls's metatheoretical stand looks Aristotelian (rather than Kantian) once we consider the role and content of reasonableness* and the limits of reflective equilibrium has rarely been seen.

this framework, it might be unproblematic to take it that JF is a basis for political legitimacy if it is equally acceptable by the reasonable*. Things are different in actual contexts, where political liberalism's commitments are contested. But, I suggested, it is to such contexts that Rawls's metatheoretical stand applies. It is here and now that reasonableness* is seen as politically basic and that JF is said to provide a basis for political legitimacy if it is equally acceptable by the reasonable*. But here it *is* problematic to posit reasonableness* as basic and to restrict the scope of public justification accordingly. Intuitively, reasonableness* cannot be treated thus since it is in need of justification, while this justification must be more inclusive in scope than political liberalism allows. Once we place Rawls's metatheoretical stand in its proper context, political liberalism, it seems, turns into public dogma—or, in Campos's terms, a "secular fundamentalism".[26]

Political liberalism stands or falls with the problem of public dogma. That it faces this problem has often been noted. Concerns about its justificatory limitations are present from the early stages of Rawls's political turn.[27] And yet, political liberalism does not respond to this problem in either of two self-suggesting ways—the first asks for a revision of the project of a political liberalism, the second suspends it. Given that in actual social contexts, *Ca*, many people are unreasonable*, but granting that political liberalism is publicly justifiable to the reasonable*:

A. In *Ca*, a political liberalism *can* provide a basis for political legitimacy: to provide a basis for political legitimacy, a theory of justice (i) needs to be equally acceptable only by people who are right-minded in such matters, and (ii) it can be shown that only reasonable* people are right-minded in such matters.

B. In *Ca*, a political liberalism, despite its equal acceptability by the reasonable*, *cannot* provide a basis for political legitimacy: to provide such a basis in *Ca*, it would have to be equally acceptable by other people, too, but it is not so acceptable.

[26] Paul F. Campos, "Secular Fundamentalism," in *The Columbia Law Review* 94/6 (1994).
[27] E.g., see Campos's paper (previous footnote), and Jean Hampton's early criticism of Rawls's political turn, in her "Should Political Philosophy Be Done Without Metaphysics?", *Ethics* 99 (1989), and Hampton, "The Moral Commitments of Liberalism" in David Copp, Hampton, John R. Roemer (eds.), *The Idea of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Political liberalism rejects B, seems to endorse A.i, but does not commit to A.ii. To provide the sort of justification A.ii calls for, political liberalism, I take it, must increase in depth and scope: it needs to provide a justification of the content of the reasonable* (depth) that addresses on equal footing at least some unreasonable* people (scope). We have in effect seen in the last section that CRE and arguments from OP cannot provide this as they already suppose the authority of reasonableness* and an accordingly limited scope of public justification. But how else does political liberalism deal with the problem of public dogma? In this and the next section, I shall consider this matter, starting with two ways in which political liberalism suggests to address unreasonable* people.

Rawls concedes that the unreasonable* should be reasoned with, but suggests that this be done by arguing "from conjecture". Arguments from conjecture are *ad hominem* arguments that pursue a unidirectional aim of convergence. We argue from conjecture if "we argue from what we believe, or conjecture, are other people's basic doctrines, religious or secular, and try to show them that, despite what they might think, they can still endorse a reasonable political conception that can provide a basis for public reason."[28] Now, such arguments can attach positive value to the acceptability of a political conception by the unreasonable*. Let us grant, too, that they can be part of what, in *some* sense of the word, can be said to "justify" a political conception—at least in a weak, convergence sense of the notion. But Rawls does not claim that JF is a basis for political legitimacy only if is acceptable by the reasonable* *and* can be shown to be acceptable by the unreasonable* by arguing from conjecture. He claims that JF is such a basis if it is equally acceptable by the reasonable*—while its acceptability within wider scopes is valued on other grounds. Arguments from conjecture, then, are not part of the kind of justification through which a political conception earns its credentials as a basis for political legitimacy—namely, public justification (in its metatheoretical role). Thus, if arguments from conjecture do not lead unreasonable* people to accept a reasonable* political conception, this does not provide reasons to reject or revise it. At most, it confirms their unreasonableness*.

Next, consider "buck-passing". As Quong observes, political liberalism does not justify to people who are unreasonable in its sense why their acceptance is not necessary for public justification, but delegates this task to them: it passes the buck of justifying the importance of reasonable*

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[28] Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited", 786.

acceptability and the corresponding restriction of the scope of public justification, to the unreasonable*.[29] Now, buck-passing, as a way of addressing the unreasonable*, is consistent with attaching positive value to the acceptability of a political conception by them. Let us grant, too, that it may in *some* sense of the word be part of what "justifies" a political conception. But, again, it is not part of that kind of justification that a theory of political justice needs to provide to be a basis for political legitimacy: Rawls does not claim that JF is a basis for political legitimacy only if it is acceptable by the reasonable* *and* can be supported by the comprehensive doctrines endorsed by the unreasonable*, as found out through passing the justification buck to them. He claims that JF is such a basis if it is equally acceptable by the reasonable*. Like arguments from conjecture, buck-passing at best is a litmus test for unreasonableness*. If Betty passes the buck to Paul, but his comprehensive doctrine fails to support the importance of reasonable* acceptability, this can only confirm that Paul, or his doctrine, is unreasonable*.

Does this alleviate the problem of public dogma? This is not so. True, these strategies are ways to discursively address the unreasonable*. But the problem at hand, or a key aspect of it, is not that the unreasonable* are not being addressed. Nor is it the problem that no positive value is attached to the acceptability of a political conception by them. Nor is it the problem that the way in which they are being addressed cannot be said to be part of what "justifies" a political conception. Instead, the problem is that the unreasonable* are being accorded a standing that significantly differs from the standing of the reasonable*: the unreasonable* are recipients, but not also authors, of public justification. Let me put this in terms of a distinction between a *constitutive* form and a weaker, consequential, or *derivative* form of discursive standing. In general, where we accord to others discursive standing, we take it that actions, practices, or policies—or (inter)activity, widely conceived—that affect them should be based on grounds they could accept. Different forms of such standing can be distinguished depending on what relationship, if any, we take to hold between the goodness and the acceptability of such grounds. Where Betty accords to Paul constitutive discursive standing, she takes it that activity that affects him should be based on grounds he could accept, but takes it, as well, that the goodness of these grounds is at least partly constituted by their acceptability by Paul. Where she accords to him derivative discursive standing, by contrast, she takes it

[29] See Quong, *Liberalism Without Perfection*, 236ff.

that activity should be based on grounds he could accept, but rather than taking their goodness to depend on their acceptability, she takes their acceptability to at least ideally derive from, or be a consequence of, a proper appreciation of their goodness.[30] To mark this contrast, let me speak of *discursive respect* where we accord the strong, constitutive form of discursive standing. Applied to the case at hand, then, in political liberalism the reasonable* enjoy discursive respect. The acceptability of a political conception by them constitutes its credentials. But the unreasonable* at most enjoy derivative discursive standing. The acceptability of a reasonable* political conception by them does not count toward its public justification. And where they cannot accept such a conception, this does not count against it, but is taken to reflect their unreasonableness*.[31]

In short, arguments from conjecture and buck-passing strategies do not overcome the problem of public dogma. At most, they shift the issue.

V

There is something else that political liberalism has to offer in response to the charge of public dogma. Larmore has suggested a view of "rational belief" (as he puts it) that makes an often-overlooked contribution in this context.[32] It allows political liberalism to deflect the charge of public dogma—yet, we shall find, at an implausibly high cost.

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[30] Derivative standing is related to "ideal" unanimity: see Thomas Nagel, *Equality and Partiality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 33f. It is also related to "normative consent", i.e., the consent that, we believe, others should give and would give if they were reasonable. See Estlund, *Democratic Authority*, 10.

[31] I elaborate on these kinds of discursive standing in Besch, "Diversity and the Limits of Liberal Toleration", in: Duncan Ivison (ed), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Multiculturalism* (London: Ashgate, 2010) and Besch, "Reflections on the Foundations of Human Rights." Unpublished manuscript; accessible at http://philpapers.org/rec/BESROT.

[32] Charles Larmore, *The Morals of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), parts I, III. Larmore's views have a special place in political liberalism. While he continues to hold many of his earlier views on public justification and rational belief, his views seem to have changed to make room for an arguably perfectionist grounding of public justification (or "rational dialogue", as he calls it, and with it a standard of neutrality) that is more aligned with the sort of revision an internal conception of political liberalism needs, or so I shall suggest. See Larmore, *The Autonomy of Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), parts I, III, and his *Vernunft und Subjektivität* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2012).

To put this in context, let us begin by considering the structure of dogmatism. As far as reasoning with others is concerned, dogmatism is or involves (culpable and non-accidental) ways of failing to properly respond to challenges (objections, rejections, or other expressions of disagreement or doubt) that are, or are seen to be, *relevant* or *qualified*:

> D. Other things being equal, and given opportunity and resources, it is dogmatic not to respond to a challenge to a view we already endorse, *S*, by supporting *S* on the basis of as yet uncontested grounds or by bypassing controversy about *S*, *if* the challenge in question is such that it constitutes positive reasons to doubt *S*, or to put *S* in need of justification.

When are challenges such that they raise a need to justify views that we already endorse (say, in a given context, and given a certain subject matter, opportunity and resources)? Different answers to this question are possible, and they will lead to different views of the conditions of dogmatism. Such differences aside, where we do attribute dogmatism to others, this draws on an answer to this question, albeit often a tacit and rudimentary one. The same holds for the charge of public dogma. On a natural understanding, this charge supposes that disagreement about the content or role of reasonableness* is relevant or qualified to raise a need to justify political liberalism's views on the matter (so that reasonableness* cannot be politically basic and political liberalism must increase in depth). Yet political liberalism might suppose a different view of the conditions of dogmatism. In particular, it might suppose a view of these conditions according to which challenges raise a need to justify reasonable* views only if they already comply with the requirements of reasonableness*. On such a view, unreasonable* challenges do not raise that need. Nor does a rejection of views that are reasonably* non-rejectable (and are known to have this status) put them in this need. But if this need does not arise, public dogma does not occur. This, I submit, signposts how political liberalism deflects the charge of public dogma.

Let us take a closer look at Larmore's "contextualist" view of rational belief. At the core of this view, which he applies to all beliefs, widely conceived, is the following idea:

> L1: No existing belief stands as such in need of justification.[33]

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[33] Larmore, *The Morals of Modernity*, 11, see also 39.

This "key principle" comes together with two "cognitive norms":[34]

> L2: Any existing belief of ours is in need of justification "only if we uncovered some positive reason, based on other things we believe, for thinking that the belief might be false."

> L3: To justify a proposition "is not simply to give some true premises from which the proposition follows, but instead to give reasons that dispel doubt to the effect that the proposition may be false"

L1 is innocuous: it is plausible to claim that our beliefs are not in doubt, or need justification, just because we hold them. But what puts them in this need? And what does it take to "dispel doubt"? Drawing out an implication of L2, Larmore claims that a "good reason for us to doubt, and so to raise the question of justification, must be one that is good by our own light, for it must be supported by other beliefs of ours." [35] He adds that where we assert things as true, we take them to be true for everyone, but

> we can still claim that someone has missed a truth without our having to suppose that we must be able to justify to him the change of perspective that would make this truth accessible to him. In such situations, we then take for granted simply that we have no positive reason (and that is something we ought to judge by the light of our own perspective) to question our standards and take seriously his contrary ones.[36]

If you object to my belief, *S*, then from my perspective this puts *S* in need of justification only if your reasons to do so are good by *my* standards, or are supported by *my* other beliefs. Otherwise I may browbeat you. This applies to all beliefs,[37] including beliefs about justification. Thus, even if you reject my policy on browbeating, I may browbeat you if your reasons to do so are not supported by my other beliefs. But suppose your reasons to reject *S* are supported by my other beliefs. I still do not need to examine whether *S* is justifiable *to you*, but whether *S* is supported by *my* other beliefs.[38] Now, one of my other beliefs may be that I owe discursive respect to you in matters regarding *S*. If I believe this, I have reason to respond to your rejection of *S* by examining whether *S* is justifiable to, or acceptable by, you. But if I do not believe this, I do not need to examine whether *S* is justifiable to you. Instead, I may, again, browbeat you.

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[34] For this and the following: see *ibid*, 59f.

[35] *Ibid*, 63.

[36] *Ibid*, 208.

[37] *Ibid*, 11.

[38] *Ibid*, 62.

This view relativizes an agent's epistemic commitments, including reasons to doubt existing beliefs, to the doxastic context of the beliefs held by the agent. And in this sense it is a form of contextualism.[39] Let us predicate this on the perspective of reasonable* people, thereby factoring in the content of reasonableness*. The result seems to be this:

> L4: Unless challenges to reasonable* views comply with the requirements of reasonableness*, they do not constitute a need to justify reasonable* views.

> L5: Where the need to justify reasonable* views arises, reasonable* people do not need to justify these views on grounds and by means that are equally acceptable by the unreasonable* as well.

Two remarks are in place. First, observe how this interlocks with CRE. For Rawls, we have seen, a theory of political justice must be acceptable by the reasonable* in a way that meets CRE. Of course, this applies to matters of theory acceptance rather than discursive interactions with the unreasonable*. But there is an obvious congeniality between CRE and Larmore's view. Larmore would have each reasonable* agent assess the acceptability of a theory of justice by the light of the beliefs and standards actually endorsed by the agent. Rawls, too, relativizes matters to the doxastic context of reasonable* agents, but adds that these beliefs and standards must be well-considered and coherent. Still, both take it that it is from the perspective of the reasonable* that things may be judged.

More important now, Larmore's contextualism allows political liberalism to evade the charge of public dogma. From the standpoint of reasonableness*, a need to justify the content and role of reasonableness* does not arise; from *this* standpoint, it is not dogmatic not to justify these things to the unreasonable*. But this is a pyrrhic victory: while it allows political liberalism to evade that charge, it *compounds* the problem. This contextualism effectively seals off, or immunizes, public justification against all challenges that do not comply with the requirements of reasonableness*. But, it seems, at least some unreasonable* challenges raise a need to justify reasonable* views, especially challenges to those reasonable* views that express the content and the exclusionary role of reasonableness*. For want

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[39] *Ibid*, 11, 96.

of a better term, we might dub this the problem of the *hermeticality* of public justification.[40]

Larmore's contextualism might not compound matters if it is not premised on reasonableness*. Suppose we replace all references to reasonableness* in L4 and L5 with references to a commitment to consistency. This might render public justification *structurally* hermetic, but not objectionably so. Any practice of reasoning with others needs to abide by some discipline of consistency. Whatever draws the line between commitments that can and that cannot be rejected reasonably, a commitment to consistency is of the second variety. And if we premise Larmore's contextualism on such baseline commitments, this does not seem to lead to a problematic form of hermeticality. Once we move beyond such baseline commitments, however, things quickly change. And we seem to have strayed too far away from baseline commitments if we premise Larmore's contextualism on reasonableness*. For, it seems, some commitments of reasonableness* can be rejected reasonably. Thus, the culprit here is not contextualism, but the idea of the reasonable* that it is premised on.

VI

I take it that it is not a proper remedy for the problem of public dogma to devise new ways of addressing the unreasonable* that do not accord to any of them the discursive respect enjoyed by the reasonable*. Nor is it a remedy to evade the charge of public dogma in ways that lead to problematic forms of hermeticality. If there is a remedy, it seems, it is what is self-suggesting to begin with. Political liberalism needs to subject its idea of the reasonable* to a justification that addresses on equal footing (some) unreasonable* people. Of course, this line of criticism is neither new, nor uncommon. The reason why it matters now is the problem it has in tow. If it is conceded that the commitments of reasonableness* are in need of justification, the door is open for a wide range of possibilities—including public and non-public forms of justification. And there is reason to believe

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[40] As far as I can see, the fact that political liberalism is subject to a problem of hermeticality has rarely been seen. Still, given the content political liberalism builds into reasonableness* and its strategy to deflect the charge of public dogma, this problem directly flows from what Estlund calls the "insularity" of reasonableness*. See Estlund, *Democratic Authority*, 55f.

that political liberalism here needs to invoke non-public, perfectionist considerations.

Suppose we reiterate a commitment to public justification here, while premising public justification on a view of discursive respect that does not restrict that respect to the reasonable*. A *more inclusive* public justification must draw on a *more inclusive* idea of the reasonable, if any: namely, one that is *wider* in scope of application and appeal, and that hence abstracts from, or "brackets", many commitments that are the subject of controversy within the *then-extended* scope of discursive respect, including the commitments of reasonableness*.[41] Before I consider what content such an idea may have, let us note that this moves beyond an internal conception—without adopting a Quong-type *external* conception.[42] We do not need to determine the boundaries of public justification's scope on prior, independent grounds. All that we need now is a justification, public or not, that is *more inclusive* than political liberalism allows and that addresses on equal footing *not only* the reasonable*. This leaves open what boundaries that scope has, and on what grounds it is to be determined; thus, this marks a conception of political liberalism that is not external, but rather *dynamic*.

What content may an idea of the reasonable have that fits the purposes of a more inclusive public justification? It may at least involve what is entailed by the meaning of the word "reasonable" (as it is used in relation to moral-political agents). Following Moore, as far as this meaning goes, reasonable people are committed to a practice of reason-giving, or justification; and they take it that others are worthy of reason-giving and moral consideration.[43] Note that this implies little. A commitment to a practice of reason-giving is not a commitment to *constructivist* practice of reason-giving, or justificatory reciprocity, or public justification. And a commitment to showing others moral consideration is not a commitment to according them *discursive respect*, rather than derivative discursive standing. There may be other, similarly trivial commitments that may go into a suitably inclusive idea of the reasonable—they might not be entailed by the word "reasonable", but are typically present where the word applies. E.g., the reasonable exercise "basic capacities of reason", seen as involving a

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[41] O'Neill elaborates on abstraction as a matter of "bracketing" contested predicates or commitments in *Toward Justice and Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 38ff, and "Abstraction, Idealization and Ideology", in J. D. G. Evans (ed.), *Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[42] See Quong, *Liberalism Without Perfection*, 5f.

[43] Margaret Moore, "On Reasonableness", *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 13/2 (1996), 171.

commitment to (some degree of) coherence, reasonability and criticality.[44] They also possess "executive virtues" that enable us to do as we say and to act in ways aligned with our beliefs.[45] Less trivial is another element: reasonable people place positive value on agreement. It is not easy to capture this element, but perhaps we may say that the reasonable place positive value on what they see as reasoned convergence in judgment between what they regard as relevant other people. Thus, they tend to prefer solutions that are the subject of such convergence over similar solutions that are not. Again, this entails little. Even together with the other elements of reasonableness, it leaves open what justificatory rank reasonable people accord to agreement, whose agreement they value, how deep the agreement is that they value, or what considerations trump or nullify that value.

Now, any such idea of the reasonable leaves political liberalism in a pickle. Many reasonable people (so conceived) reject the commitments of reasonableness*. We saw earlier that these include commitments to views like the ones below—I shall now state them by using "φ" to refer to some idea of the reasonable, in this case reasonableness* (e.g., "φ-people" refers to reasonable* people, "φ-views" to reasonable* views, etc.):

(i) Equal acceptability by φ-people justifies and only φ-people need be accorded discursive respect for the purposes of public justification: non-φ-people may be accorded derivative discursive standing only.

(ii) Only φ-challenges constitute a need to justify φ-views; where the need to justify φ-views arises, φ-people do not need to justify them on grounds and by means that are equally acceptable by non-φ-people.

(iii) φ-disagreement should be respected and therefore be avoided in public justification.

(iv) A theory of political justice should be liberal in content, while only applying to the domain of the political and invoking values that are part of the political tradition.

If "φ" refers to reasonableness*, (i) cannot coherently be accepted by reasonable people who reject constructivist public justification. (ii) is not acceptable by reasonable people who take it that reasonableness* leads to a problematic form of hermeticality. (iii) is not acceptable by reasonable anti-

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[44] Larmore, *The Autonomy of Morality*, 143.
[45] Macedo*, Liberal Virtues*, 275.

neutralists. As to (iv), there are, I take it, reasonable forms of comprehensive liberalism, anti-liberalism, and political anti-traditionalism. But if this is so, then (i)–(iv) are not publicly justifiable to reasonable people.

Note that the issue here is not that the idea of the reasonable employed in assessing (i)–(iv) is *too thin*. To the contrary. Its lack of content is part of its virtue, given a more inclusive scope of public justification and the specter of public dogma and the problem of hermeticality. The issue is, rather, that the sphere of commitments within which (i)–(iv) take a normatively selective stand is a sphere of deep and persistent reasonable controversy. Accordingly, any idea of the reasonable that is rich enough in content to allow us to claim with any cogency that (i)–(iv) are equally acceptable by "reasonable" people, or even "reasonably" non-rejectable, brings back a problem of public dogma and a problematic form of hermeticality.

Thus, political liberalism is caught in a web of precarious dependencies. To respond to the problem of public dogma, a justification of the commitments of reasonableness* is called for. If this justification is to be public in form, it must build on a suitably inclusive view of discursive respect. Thus, it must draw on a suitably inclusive idea of the reasonable, one that brackets many commitments that are contested within the then-extended scope of discursive respect—including commitments to constructivism, neutralism, liberal content, and so forth. By bracketing these commitments, this idea will set the bar low enough to qualify many existing controversies about them as "reasonable". But it will then set the bar low enough, as well, to disable the claim that these commitments, despite existing controversies about them, are equally acceptable by "reasonable" people, or even are "reasonably" non-rejectable. And with this, it disables, too, the claim that these commitments are publicly justifiable. If that is so, a suitably inclusive view of discursive respect calls for an idea of reasonableness that undermines a public justification of the basic commitments of political liberalism. Importantly, this problem is not specific for reasonableness*, or political liberalism for that matter. It is more general in nature: the normative structure described by (i)–(iii) can build on a variety of ideas of the reasonable. A problem of the sort just described arises, as well, if we premise this structure on a less substantive, yet still relevantly contested idea of the reasonable—e.g., one tied to a commitment to constructivist public justification and justificatory neutralism, but not also to liberal content, political values, and so on; or, less substantive still, one tied to constructivist public justification only. Any of these commitments is

the subject of controversies that, on a suitably inclusive notion, can count as "reasonable". If their public justification builds on a view of discursive respect that calls for a correspondingly inclusive idea of the reasonable, then, they will not be equally acceptable by, or publicly justifiable to, the "reasonable".

Note that we cannot escape this result by tweaking the standard of public justification in such a way that the commitments of reasonableness* can be said to be publicly justifiable even though many reasonable people cannot accept them. This requires we jettison the demand of *equal* acceptability and (re)calibrate the idea of acceptability. E.g., (i)–(iv) are accept*able*, or *could* be accepted, by anti-constructivist and anti-neutralists, but in the counter-factual sense that they would not have to reject (i)–(iv) if they abandoned whatever views make (i)–(iv) unavailable to them. But such tweaking holds little promise. First, it re-introduces a two-class system of discursive standing like the one in the background of arguments from conjecture and buck-passing strategies (see above), and so re-iterates the problem of public dogma. Only a subset of the reasonable would here enjoy discursive respect, i.e., those not rejecting (i)–(iv). Everyone else would at most enjoy derivative discursive standing. Second, tweaking cuts both ways. If (i)–(iv) count as publicly justifiable even though reasonable people cannot coherently accept these claims, this hold, too, for their opposites, non-[(i)–(iv)]. And this would effectively render public justification redundant. Finally, third, even if a tweaked standard selects (i)–(iv) and not non-[(i)–(iv)], it is not clear what this accomplishes. Tweaking is either itself reasonable, or it is not. If it is not, a successful application of the tweaked standard to (i)–(iv) achieves nothing. If it is, then whatever makes it reasonable to salvage (i)–(iv) by tweaking that standard, rather than the successful application of the tweaked standard to (i)–(iv), is what grounds (i)–(iv). Again, public justification becomes redundant.

We are now in a good position to consider whether a plausible political liberalism can avoid perfectionist considerations. The above quite trivially suggests that this is not so. Recall here that this refers to justificatory perfectionism. Justificatory perfectionism holds that a justification of moral-political principles may invoke a view of the good even if this view is reasonably contested and there is no public justification for it, or favoring it. Still, justificatory perfectionism can raise strong validity-claims, or take the good in question to be impersonal, agent-neutral in status, or a true, correct, or authoritative good. The above suggests that political liberalism needs to

endorse justificatory perfectionism—nearly by default. It cannot plausibly eliminate from its horizon the task of justifying the commitments of reasonableness*. But, we have seen, a public justification of these commitments is disabled (and this holds, too, for views that are similar in overall form, but treat a less substantive, yet relevantly contested idea of the reasonable as basic). If political liberalism is to avoid the conclusion that the virtue of reasonableness* lacks authority, it needs to concede that these commitments are in need of a *non-public* justification. It needs to concede, that is, (i) that these commitments are the subject of reasonable disagreement and so are not equally acceptable, or publicly justifiable, within an appropriate scope of discursive respect, so that (ii) their authority is not a function of their equal acceptability, but must rest on other, non-public grounds. This rejects (justificatory) neutralism—at this level of justification at least—and it sets the stage for justificatory perfectionism.

What we need, as well, is a sense in which the object of this non-public justification is or involves a view of the good, or a more or less structured set of value judgments about what it is good to be or do. Turning, then, to the most self-suggesting candidate, political liberalism evidently is committed to the view that being reasonable* is a good of some sort or other—again, nearly by default. It is, of course, not obvious on what grounds it may be claimed to be a good, and what type of good it is, or would be—i.e., whether it is an impersonal, moral good, or an instrumental good that serves some purpose or other, or both. But these things mark precisely the kind of considerations that a non-public justification of the basic commitments of political liberalism needs to address. If that is so, then political liberalism quite deeply depends on (justificatory) perfectionism.[46]

I conclude, therefore, that in the world as it is, outside the context of JF's well-ordered society, we should reject a political liberalism that comes

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[46] As an anonymous referee pointed out, it is an open question whether a non-dogmatic variant of political liberalism could still be truly "political"—rather than, say, a liberal view of justice that is *post-political* or *hybrid* in seeking equal acceptability without rejecting all forms of perfectionism. But we may leave the question of labels to political liberals. Larmore's more recent work embraces the possibility of a hybrid view, see his *The Autonomy of Morality*, parts I, III; and there are other, post-political forms of liberalism that seek to avoid reasonable disagreement in political justification but do not shy away entirely from considerations that, in some sense, are perfectionist: see, e.g., Robert Talisse, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 2007), chapter 4, and his *Democracy and Moral Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), chapter 5.

without perfectionism: for it could be had only at the cost of public dogma and a damaging form of hermeticality.

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