Saving Pragmatist Democratic Theory (from Itself)[1]

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ABSTRACT

Deweyan democracy is inherently comprehensive in the Rawlsian sense and therefore unable to countenance the fact of reasonable pluralism. This renders Deweyan democracy nonviable on pragmatic grounds. Given the Deweyan pragmatists' views about the proper relation between philosophy and politics, unless there is a viable pragmatist alternative to Deweyan democracy, pragmatism itself is jeopardized. I develop a pragmatist alternative to Deweyan democracy rooted in a Peircean social epistemology. Peircean democracy can give Deweyan pragmatists all they should want from a democratic theory while avoiding the anti-pluralistic implications of Dewey's own democratic theory. After presenting the arguments against Deweyan democracy and for Peircean democracy, I address a criticism of Peircean democracy recently posed by Matthew Festenstein.

0. *Introduction*

Pragmatism has been a hotly contested term since its introduction into the vernacular of professional philosophy by William James in an 1898 essay titled "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results." He used it there to name an idea espoused twenty years earlier by Charles Sanders Peirce. After praising Peirce's idea- the "pragmatic maxim"- James quickly confesses that he "thinks the principle should be expressed more broadly than Mr. Peirce expresses it." And ever since then, pragmatists have been in the business of trying to reach agreement about what pragmatism is.

Although I take myself to be some kind of pragmatist, I do not plan here to join this particular fight. I take it to be non-controversial to say that pragmatism is a philosophical program which insists upon assessing our "philosophical conceptions" by reference to their "practical results." I realize

that this formulation is likely to gain widespread assent precisely because it is nearly vacuous. But at least since Dewey, pragmatism has been associated with one particular way of cashing out that nearly vacuous commitment; the claim is that philosophy, when properly done, involves an ineliminable social and political dimension, which, when properly understood, is intrinsically *democratic*. Hilary Putnam expresses the pragmatist position when he claims that democracy is the "precondition for the full application of intelligence to the solution of social problems" (1992: 180).

According to the pragmatist, then, there is an internal connection between proper philosophy and democratic politics. I take it that this is a familiar enough pragmatist *motif* to not require extended support. But it does occasion a serious worry: If it turns out that pragmatism cannot formulate a viable democratic theory, then pragmatism as a philosophical program is jeopardized. I shall argue in this paper that, indeed, the dominant mode of pragmatist philosophy yields a democratic theory that is cannot succeed in practice. More specifically, I shall argue that, despite the renewed interest in Deweyan democracy among pragmatists and political theorists more generally, the democratic theory arising out of Deweyan pragmatism is nonviable.[2] For the pragmatist, this must constitute a serious indictment of Deweyan pragmatism. Unless there is an alternative pragmatist option that yields a viable democratic theory, pragmatism as such might have to be abandoned. Luckily for the pragmatist, there is such an alternative. I shall argue that there is a viable conception of democracy that arises out of Peirce's pragmatism, or, to be more precise, Peirce's pragmatist social epistemology. Now, it is my view that this Peircean option in democratic theory is the strongest conception of democracy available to contemporary political philosophers, but I cannot argue for this ambitious thesis here. Instead, I shall try only to sketch the basic contours of a Peircean democracy; in fact, I shall try to sketch the view in a way that does not presuppose any deep sympathy for Peircean pragmatism.[3] My aim of course is not to lay out the Peircean view in a comprehensive way, but only to point a direction in which

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[2] Dewey's political theory continues to draw a good deal of attention from pragmatist philosophers; see, for example recent books by Rogers (2009), Westbrook (2005) and Pappas (2008). It is difficult to pick up a work of mainstream contemporary democratic theory that does not make at least a passing positive reference to Dewey. See, for example, Nussbaum 2007; Bohman 2007; Dworkin 2006; Sandel 2005; Stout 2004; MacGilvray 2004; Richardson 2002; Sunstein 2001; Shapiro 2001; Young 2000.

[3] A fuller presentation of the view that presupposes no sympathies with Peirce or pragmatist at all can be found in Talisse 2009.

pragmatist political theory can develop, in light of the failure of Deweyan democracy.

My main argument proceeds in four steps. First I sketch the basic contours of Deweyan democracy. Then I argue that later Rawlsian insights concerning the fact of reasonable pluralism render the Deweyan model of democracy unacceptable as an ideal for contemporary democratic societies. Third, I sketch a view of democracy based in Peirce's social epistemology and argue that it embodies many of the attractive features of Deweyan democracy without inviting the later Rawlsian objections which undermine the Deweyan view. Finally, I respond to a criticism recently proposed by Matthew Festenstein (2010).

1. *What Deweyan Democracy Is*

The core of Deweyan democracy can be stated as follows. Deweyan democracy is *substantive* rather than proceduralist, *communicative* rather than aggregative, and *deep* rather than statist. I shall take these contrasts in order. Deweyan democracy is *substantive* insofar as it rejects any attempt to separate politics and deeper normative concerns. More precisely, Dewey held that the democratic political order is essentially a *moral* order, and, further, he held that democratic participation is an essential constituent of the good life and a necessary constituent for a "truly human way of living" (LW11: 218).[4] Of course, democratic theorists differ over the question of what democratic participation consists in. Dewey rejects the idea that it consists simply in processes of voting, campaigning, canvassing, lobbying, and petitioning in service of one's individual preferences; that is, Dewey held democratic participation is essentially *communicative*, it consists in the willingness of citizens to engage in activity by which they may "convince and be convinced by reason" (MW10: 404) and come to realize "values prized in common" (LW13:71).[5] Importantly, Dewey thought that such communicative processes

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[4] References to Dewey's work will be keyed the *Collected Works*, which are divided into *Early*, *Middle*, and *Later* works. Citations employ the standard formula: (Volume number: page number); hence "(LW11: 218)" indicates *Later Works* volume 11, page 218. On the necessity of democratic participation, compare Campbell, "Participation in a community is essential to a fulfilled human existence because such participation makes possible a more diversified and enriching experience for all members" (1998: 24). See also Campbell 2005 and Saito 2006.

[5] According to Dewey, the "heart and guarantee of democracy is in free gatherings of neighbors on the street corner to discuss back and forth what is read in uncensored news of

were fit to direct not simply the basic structure of government, but the whole of social association. In fact, Dewey held famously that democracy is a "way of life" (LW13: 155) rather than a kind of state or a collection of political institutions (LW2:325). On Dewey's view, democracy is a mode of social organization that "must affect all modes of human association, the family, the school, industry, religion" (LW2:325). In this way, Deweyan democracy is *deep*. It is meant to reach into and affect the whole of our lives, both individual and collective; it provides a social ideal of human flourishing or the good life, what Dewey called "growth" (MW12: 181).

Deweyan democracy is therefore a species of *perfectionism*. As he sees the self as inherently social, and the good as a matter of self-realization, Dewey held that "Democracy and the one, ultimate, ethical ideal of humanity are . . . synonyms" (EW1:248).[6] However, unlike other forms of perfectionism, which hold that the project of forming citizens' dispositions is a task only or primarily for the state, Dewey's perfectionism is, like his conception of democracy, *deep*; that is, on the Deweyan view, the perfectionist project of realizing human flourishing is a task for *all* modes of social association (LW2:325). Consequently, Dewey held that "The struggle for democracy has to be maintained on as many fronts as culture has aspects: political, economic, international, educational, scientific and artistic, and religious" (LW13: 186). He saw the task of democracy to be that of "making our own politics, industry, education, our culture generally, a servant and an evolving manifestation of democratic ideals" (LW13: 197). For Dewey, then, *all* social associations should be aimed at the realization of his distinctive vision of human flourishing.

2. *An Objection to Deweyan Democracy*

John Rawls's conception of the "fact of reasonable pluralism" (1996: 36) is at this point so well known among political theorists that it does not require

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the day" (LW14:227).

[6] On the social self, Dewey holds that "The idea that individuals are born separate and isolated and are brought into society only through some artificial device is a pure myth"; he continues, "No one is born except in dependence on others . . . . The human being is an individual because of and in relation to others" (LW7:227). Dewey also holds that "society and individuals are correlative, organic, to one another" (MW12:187). Contemporary Deweyan democrats maintain this commitment; see Boisvert 1998, 54f.; Green 1999, 6; Stuhr 1998, 85; Fesmire 2003, 11; and Colapietro 2006, 25.

extended comment. Basically the idea is this: There is no single comprehensive philosophical, religious, or moral doctrine upon which reason, even at its best, converges. That is to say, there is a set of defensible and reasonable comprehensive moral ideals such that each ideal is fully consistent with the best exercise of reason but inconsistent with other members of the set. Consequently, despite "our conscious attempt to reason with each other" (1996: 55), agreement at the level of fundamental moral, religious and philosophical issues is elusive. Importantly, Rawls contends that reasonable pluralism "is not a mere historical condition that may soon pass away" (1996: 36), but "the long-run outcome of the work of human reason under enduring free institutions" (1996: 129). The very liberties secured in a constitutional democracy give rise to reasonable pluralism.

The fact of reasonable pluralism entails the corresponding "fact of oppression" (1996: 36). If reasonable pluralism is "the inevitable outcome of free human reason," then "a continuing shared understanding on one comprehensive religious, philosophical, or moral doctrine can be maintained only by the oppressive use of state power" (1996: 36). To simplify: Where minds are free, pluralism prevails; where pluralism does not prevail, minds are not free.

When the facts of reasonable pluralism and oppression are considered in light of the core democratic commitment- which we shall call the Legitimacy Principle- that the exercise of coercive political power is legitimate only if it is justifiable, at least in principle, "to every last individual" (Waldron 1993: 37), the result is that that any political order which is premised upon the truth of a single comprehensive doctrine- even a perfectly reasonable and democratic one- is oppressive. It is oppressive because it coerces reasonable citizens in the service of a comprehensive moral, philosophical, or religious ideal that they could reasonably reject. Accordingly, Rawls draws the radical conclusion that "no comprehensive doctrine is appropriate as a political conception for a constitutional regime" (1996: 135). Therefore, if by "community" we mean "a special kind of association, one united by a comprehensive doctrine," a "well-ordered democratic society" cannot be a community, (1996: 40).

However, it is clear that Deweyan democracy is committed to the claim that proper democracy is a community in precisely this Rawlsian sense. That is, Deweyan democrats envision a political world in which "all modes of human association" (LW2:325) are organized around Dewey's comprehensive moral doctrine. As Dewey's comprehensive doctrine is a species of perfectionism, he naturally sees democracy as an ongoing, and never completed, project of cooperatively and experimentally realizing his view of

human flourishing.[7] Accordingly, Deweyan democrats see proper democracy as a matter not simply of how a society or group makes its collective decisions, but rather of *what it decides*. The Deweyan thought is that, in a proper democracy, collective decision should increasingly reflect a social commitment to principles, policies, and institutions that further Deweyan growth; consequently, the degree to which a given society is *not* directed towards the realization of Deweyan flourishing is the degree to which that society is failing at democracy.

This point deserves emphasis. To repeat: The Deweyan view is that human association of any kind is properly- that is, *democratically*- organized only when it are directed towards the realization of "growth" as understood by Dewey. Accordingly, any association that seems to *not* be so directed is failing at democracy. Consequently, whether a given mode of social association is democratic is, according to the Deweyan, a matter of *what policies it enacts* rather than *how it makes its collective decisions*. This perhaps explains why the literature on Deweyan democracy is so laden with thick institutional and personal prescriptions concerning what democracy *must* be or strive to become.[8] Curiously, many of these prescriptions are presented in the form of *commands*. We are told that if democracy is to have a future at all, we must become more Deweyan, and that *real* democracy must be devoted to realizing Deweyan aims, and so on.

The problem with all of this is that the commitments constitutive of the Deweyan democratic ideal can be reasonably rejected. Insofar as the Deweyan

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[7] Dewey describes human flourishing as a condition in which each individual "feels [the community's] success as his success, and its failure as his failure" (MW9:18).

[8] An exhaustive examination of the Deweyan democracy literature cannot be attempted here, so I will limit myself to only a few sources. Describing Deweyan democracy as "the culture of a whole society in which experience is engaged in its power of fulfillment of life through cooperation and communication," Thomas Alexander claims that "*if democracy is to have a future*, it must embrace an understanding of the deepest needs of human beings and the means of fulfilling them" (1998: 17, my emphasis). John Stuhr claims that Deweyan democracy presents a "demand" for "different personal conduct and far-reaching cultural reconstruction- deep changes in habits of thought and action, patterns of association and interaction, and personal and public values" (2003: 55). He concludes that "we must each seek to expand democracy . . . . We must realize in thought and action that democracy is a personal way of individual life . . . , and we must rededicate our lives to its realization- now" (2003: 64). Finally, James Goulinlock describes Deweyan democracy as a "more or less specific ordering of personal dispositions and modes of conduct that would be operative in all forms of interpersonal experience"; he continues that "Political democracy, *when it is real*, is but an instance of this more generic form of life" (1999: 235; my emphasis).

democrat seeks to reconstruct the whole of society in the image of her own philosophical commitments, she seeks to create social and political institutions that are explicitly designed to cultivate norms and realize civic ideals that her fellow citizens could (and in fact do) reasonably reject. Hence Deweyan democracy is an ideal that must deny the fact of reasonable pluralism; it must deny that non-Deweyans could be reasonable. For this reason Deweyan democracy is oppressive in Rawls's sense. Accordingly, Deweyan democracy is an inappropriate ideal for contemporary democratic societies.

In response, Deweyans might appeal to the hackneyed injunction to dismiss "problems of philosophers" and attend only to the "problems of men" (MW10: 46); they will claim that the concept of reasonable pluralism is an artifice of a philosophical approach that is not properly attuned to real-life conditions, and conclude from this that the objection I have raised cuts no ice.

But the fact of reasonable pluralism is a markedly evident aspect of modern life. One finds in newspapers and magazines, on television programs, on blogs and list-servs, and in the public square proponents of reasonable moral and political views that differ fundamentally from, and are opposed to, the commitments that are presupposed by Deweyan democracy. Moreover, all of the most pressing moral and political controversies of the day feature a plurality of reasonable positions formulated in terms of a wide variety of reasonable moral doctrines. With regard to any persistent moral dilemma, one can find compelling arguments on *many* sides of the issue. To dismiss the fact of reasonable pluralism is to retreat from our actual experience of our social and political world.

Since Deweyans are committed to the idea that the worth of a philosophical view is to be judged according to the depth of its connection with real-life problems and conditions, I take the argument that Deweyan democracy cannot countenance the fact of reasonable pluralism to be especially damaging. The upshot of the argument I have deployed is that Deweyan democracy fails *on its own terms*; it must reject a salient trait of current experience. Consequently, pragmatists should bid farewell to Deweyan democracy.

This is a disturbing result. Given the way in which Deweyan pragmatism conceives the relation between philosophy and politics, that it cannot supply a viable theory of democracy means that Deweyan pragmatism is a philosophical failure as such. When we add to this the consideration that neither Peirce nor James wrote systematically about political philosophy, the trouble deepens. Could it be that pragmatism can provide no sustainable political vision? If so, pragmatists have sufficient reason to abandon their

view and take up something new. My aim in the remainder of this paper is to provide a pragmatist alternative to Deweyan democracy, and thus to save pragmatist political theory from itself.

3. *A Peircean Alternative*

The very idea of a Peircean conception of democracy may seem strained. Yet, as I have argued elsewhere at length (Talisse 2003; 2007), Peirce's essay on "The Fixation of Belief" is best read as ultimately promoting a social epistemology according to which norms of proper inquiry entail democratic political norms. The key to Peirce's "Fixation" essay, I contend, is the thesis that there are norms internal to belief itself. Peirce holds that *in order to assess oneself as believing that p, one must assess oneself as being properly responsive to the relevant evidence, arguments, and reasons.* To recognize of oneself that one is in the habit of behaving as if *p*, but is not appropriately responsive to the relevant reasons, is to no longer be able to assess oneself as *believing* that *p*; rather, one must see one's commitment to *p* as a kind of *symptom*, a strong indication of one's lack of epistemic control. This is why the first three of the four methods of belief fixation that Peirce examines fail: they are unsustainable once one assesses oneself as following them.

But let me change gears here. I do not want to invite controversy over textual interpretation. So let me state the argument quickly and in decidedly non-Peircean terms.

There are two features of belief that are of special relevance to Peircean pragmatists. The first can be stated in a way owing to G. E. Moore (1942). He recognized that statements of a particular form, when understood as first-personal epistemic assessments, have a certain paradoxical nature. To wit:

(M) *I believe that it's raining, but it's not.*

What is paradoxical about this statement is that although it may, of course be true of you, *you can't believe it to be true of you.* That is, to assess as false a belief that you hold is (typically) to dissolve the belief. When we believe, we aim at truth. To show that a belief is false is (typically) to *defeat* the belief.

The second feature of belief is the impossibility of what Bernard Williams calls "deciding to believe" (1976). I ask you to try to believe that I right now have exactly 27 dollars in my left pocket. Go ahead. Try. Notice what your trying consists in: you are trying to give yourself a *reason* for thinking that it is true that I have exactly 27 dollars in my pocket. That is, you are trying to

convince yourself that in believing that I have exactly 27 dollars in my pocket, you wouldd be appropriately responding to reasons. In short, when we believe, we aspire to be responsive to reasons. We cannot take ourselves to believe willy-nilly or at random. Of course, many of our beliefs are random. But the first-personal perspective is crucial: we do not *assess* ourselves in this way. And when we come to realize of a belief that it was derived willy-nilly, we (typically) see it as a clear symptom of epistemic failure; accordingly, we see fit to take epistemic action: we revise, or withdraw belief, or suspend judgment, or deceive, or confabulate. And so on.

In short: when we believe, we aim to believe what is true. And the way we aim to believe what is true is by believing in a way that responds to our evidence and reasons. As epistemic agents, then, we are bound by two norms: truth and responsiveness. Now, a lot needs to be said here about famous (infamous?) results concerning the deep irrationality of human beings. I cannot take these up here. For now, let me state what makes this view of belief a *pragmatist* view: The norms of truth and responsiveness are *internal* to our practices of belief. They are not parachuted in from the lofty heights of some philosophical conception. They *inhere* in what we do, how we think, and how we communicate. More importantly, they specify what it takes to be epistemically above-board; they specify our epistemic commitments and form our conception of epistemic responsibility.

An epistemic argument for democracy follows intuitively from this conception of epistemic agency. One should endorse a democratic political order because only in a democracy can one live up to one's epistemic commitments. That is, if being a believer commits one to aspiring to truth, and if one aspires to truth by responding appropriately to reasons, then responsible believing calls us to the social enterprise of examining, exchanging, testing, and challenging reasons. It follows that one can satisfy one's commitments *qua* believer only within a political context in which it is possible to be a free inquirer. Inquiry requires that characteristically democratic norms obtain; in order to inquire, there must be norms of equality, free speech, a freedom of information, open debate, protected dissent, access to decision-making institutions, and so on. Moreover, since the project of responsiveness involves testing one's beliefs against the broadest possible pool of reasons, experiences, and considerations, inquiry requires more radically democratic norms, such as participation, inclusion, and recognition.

Additionally, the Peircean argument carries a number of institutional entailments. If inquiry is to commence, the formal infrastructure of democracy must be in place, including a constitution, courts, accountable

bodies of representation, regular elections, and a free press. Also, there must be a system of public schooling designed to equip students in the epistemic habits necessary for inquiry, and institutions of distributive justice to eliminate as far as possible material obstructions to democratic citizenship. In addition, democracy might also require special provisions for the preservation of public spaces, the creation of forums for citizen deliberation, and the like.[9]

Peircean democracy shares many features with the Deweyan view. To wit: Insofar as it begins from a view of what it is to believe and inquire *properly*, we can say that Peircean democracy is *substantive*. As it sees democratic politics as involving social processes of reason-exchanging, Peircean democracy is *communicative*. Given that it endorses social institutions that aim to enable proper inquiry among citizens, we can say that Peircean democracy is *deep*.

However, there is a crucial difference between the two views. Whereas on the Deweyan view the democratic order is justified in terms of an overarching moral ideal, the Peircean view relies upon no substantive *moral* vision. The Peircean justifies democratic institutions and norms strictly in terms of a set of substantive *epistemic* commitments. It says that *no matter what one believes* about the good life, the meaning of human existence, or the value of community, one has reason to support a robust democratic political order of the sort described above simply in virtue of the fact that one holds beliefs.

Since the Peircean conception of democracy does not contain a doctrine about "the one, ultimate, ethical ideal of humanity" (EW1:248), it can duly acknowledge the fact of reasonable pluralism. Peircean democrats can recognize that there are many distinct and epistemically responsible moral visions that are compatible with democratic politics. Accordingly, Peirceans understand that questions of how our schools, workplaces, and churches should be organized, what our communities should look like, and what constitutes good citizenship are *not* questions that can be settled by appealing to democratic theory as such; they are instead questions to be pursued experimentally and discursively *within* a democratic politics. What counts for Peirceans is not the proximity of a given democratic outcome to a substantive moral vision of the ideal society, but rather whether the outcome is the result of properly democratic processes of reason exchange.

By drawing upon decidedly *epistemic* commitments, the Peircean view avoids the dilemma between substance and pluralism occasioned by Deweyan democracy. The Peircean pragmatist does not propose a moral ideal for all of

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[9] I'm thinking here of the kinds of policies endorsed by Cass Sunstein to ensure deliberation among persons of different opinions; see Sunstein 1996; 2001; 2003. See also Ackerman and Fishkin 2004.

society, but rather an analysis of proper *epistemic* practice. The Peircean then recommends a political order in which disputes between conflicting moral visions can be conducted in an epistemically responsible way. Hence the Peircean pragmatist offers a far more modest politics than the Deweyan. Whereas Dewey thought that getting democracy right meant getting the whole of moral philosophy right, the Peircean leaves open the dialectical space for substantive disagreements about deep moral and social questions within democracy. In this way, Peircean democracy is substantive and deep, but not hostile to the pluralism of substantive moral doctrines.

Someone might object to the distinction I have invoked between moral and epistemic commitments. The objection has it that just as Deweyans expect everyone to converge upon a common substantive moral vision, Peirceans expect everyone to adopt a single (pragmatist) epistemology. The objection continues that Peircean epistemology is at least as controversial as any moral philosophy; and so both the Deweyan and the Peircean views commit the same error of denying reasonable pluralism. Deweyan democracy denies it at the level of moral commitments, and Peircean democracy denies it at the level of epistemic commitments.

This objection is mistaken. The epistemic commitments that lie at the core of Peircean democracy do not constitute a comprehensive epistemology in their own right, but rather state a set of principles that are consistent with any well-developed epistemology. Internalists, externalists, foundationalists, coherentists, and so on all agree that beliefs aim at truth, and that when we believe, we take ourselves to be responding to reasons, argument, and evidence. Accordingly, the four Peircean commitments identified above represent an attempt to make explicit the epistemology that is implicit in our existing epistemic practice. They are the commitments we have in virtue of the very fact that we are believers; they are not *optional*. Furthermore, since contestation itself presupposes norms of reason-responsiveness and truth-aiming, the Peircean commitments are not reasonably contestable.

Peirceans and Deweyans are therefore *not* in the same boat. The substantive moral ideal that drives the Deweyan program is, indeed, reasonably rejectable; hence Deweyan democracy runs afoul of pluralism. This in turn jeopardizes the whole of Deweyan pragmatism. The Peircean epistemic commitments, by contrast, are robust enough to support a case for democratic politics, but are nonetheless modest enough to recognize the legitimacy of deep disputes over fundamental moral ideas. Hence the Peircean can offer what the Deweyan cannot, namely, a substantive conception of democracy that is consistent with a due appreciation of reasonable pluralism.

4. *A Recent Critic Considered*

My arguments against Deweyan democracy and in favor of Peircean democracy have generated a good deal of criticism. My critics fall roughly into two categories: those who seek simply to correct my understanding of Deweyan democracy, and those who object to my Peircean proposal. Many critics of the former sort tend unwittingly to present a conception of Deweyan democracy that renders it even more subject to reasonable rejection than the view I present as Deweyan democracy; they thereby confirm my criticism. Other critics of the former sort contend that my argument is question-begging because it appeals to a "foreign standard" (Ralston 2008: 630) in evaluating Deweyan democracy. I find this line of response unpromising since it seems committed to the view that all valid criticism is *internal* criticism; yet, of all philosophical schools, pragmatism is perhaps most vehemently committed to the claim that criticism can come from anywhere, and should be actively sought out, especially from those who do not share one's fundamental commitments. As I said above, the criticism of Deweyan democracy draws upon a salient feature of experience, not the standards of some foreign philosophical program. In any case, I would like to conclude this paper by considering an objection that falls into the latter category of criticism.

In a recent paper on "Pragmatism, Inquiry, and Political Liberalism"," Matthew Festenstein (2010) argues that Peircean democracy "presupposes a specific moral epistemology" which like other "religious, moral and philosophical views" should be "discounted by political liberalism as bases for the use of state power" (2010: 38). Festenstein correctly anticipates my reply that since the epistemic norms in question are both internal to belief and first-personal, the norms are not reasonably rejectable. Here is another way to put the point: There is no reasonable pluralism with respect to the epistemic norms upon which the Peircean view is based; therefore those norms may be appealed to in political justification.

Festenstein suspects that the Peircean epistemic norms are indeed reasonably rejectable. Festenstein correctly attributes to me the view that to reasonably reject a claim is to reject it for reasons rather than simply dismissing or ridiculing it. I claim, then, that the very idea that coercion must be justified by means of reasons that are not reasonably rejectable embeds a commitment to the norm of reason-responsiveness; hence that norm is not reasonably rejectable. Festenstein sees an ambiguity, however, in the norm of

reason-responsiveness. He holds that one might reject p for a reason but yet fail to reject p for a reason that is responsive to others' reasons. Festeinsten claims that I am committed to the view that to be reason-responsive is to be responsive to *others'* reasons. He argues that this is a "question-begging" conception of reason-responsiveness, and surely one that could be rejected for reasons.

But here is where the first-personal component of the Peircean view is crucial. Although it is possible for one to believe that p on the basis of reasons that do not respond to the reasons of others, it is not clear that it is possible to assess one's belief that p as being epistemically proper once one recognizes that one's reasons are non-responsive. Consider these self-assessments:

(a)   I believe that p, but I am unaware of what competent opponents say about p.

(b)   I believe that p, but whenever I state my reasons for p, otherwise intelligent, sincere, and competent people are unmoved.

(c)   I believe that p, but I always lose fairly-conducted argumentative exchanges with competent interlocutors who reject p.

Again, such assessments are consistent with maintaining the belief that p. Indeed, it is easy to find cases in which someone believes that p despite having no idea what competent opponents say; and it may be easier to find cases in which belief that p seems to *strengthen* in the face of a lost argument. But uninformed and tenacious believers most frequently accompany their beliefs with stories designed to dismiss or malign those who disagree. That is, no one takes himself to be a tenacious or uninformed believer; rather, when we believe, we take ourselves to be responding not only to the reasons that move us, but also to the reasons of those who believe otherwise.

Festenstein finds this kind of reply unconvincing. He holds that it is possible to believe that p and yet not take oneself to responding to reasons. To make the case, he considers a fundamentalist who simply defers to a religious authority. He imagines someone who "takes her preferred source of instruction to be authoritative, but her doing so is not necessarily on the basis of the reasons [. . .] presented in support of this epistemic authority"; Festenstein adds, "She may simply accept that this source is authoritative" (2010: 39).

I confess that I'm not sure what Festenstein is proposing. Does the fundamentalist accept that her guru is epistemically authoritative for reasons

other than those that are offered in support of that authority? Does the fundemantalist hold that the guru is authoritative, but not *epistemically* so? Has the question of source and nature of the guru's authority simply not occurred to her? It seems to me that these questions matter. And here are two other crucial questions: Does she believe that the reasons explicitly offered in support of the guru's epistemic authority *fail*? Does she believe that the pronouncements of her guru are *false*?

So it is hard to know what to make of the case. But it is important to notice that Festenstein has moved from first-personal to third-personal assessments. It seems to me easy to invent cases involving caricatured fundamentalists and other figures supposedly at the epistemic margins. But the fact is that fundamentalists most frequently take themselves to believe for reasons; indeed, they're often very eager to produce their reasons. In any case, Festenstein's appeal to the fundamentalist instantiates a trend among those who object to the fixation view, namely, that of providing examples of *other people* who believe without taking themselves to have reasons. I contend that such cases are rare, and those who fit the description are plausibly regarded as in the grip of some kind of psychosis. So I wonder if Festenstein is willing to cite a belief that *he* holds but does not take himself to have reason to hold. In the meantime, it seems to me that Peircean democracy survives Festenstein's critique.

To conclude: Drawing on Rawlsian insights, I have sketched an argument against Dewey democracy. As I mentioned, I consider this a *pragmatic* argument, one which Deweyans ignore at the cost of rendering their view impotent to address salient features of contemporary political experience and thus irrelevant. It seems to me that any attempt to repair Deweyan democracy will require a rejection of significant features of the view; in order to make Deweyan democracy consistent with the fact of reasonable pluralism, one must omit Dewey's appeals to shared experience, the Great Community, and much else that is distinctively Deweyan about the view. I have suggested in this paper that there is another way forward for the pragmatist: Peircean democracy. Admittedly, I have here only sketched the view, and much more needs to be said about the Peircean alternative. The filling out of the view is a considerable task, to be undertaken in future work.

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