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# Deweyan Democracy, Robert Talisse, and the Fact of Reasonable Pluralism: A Rawlsian Response*

Joshua Forstenzer, University of Sheffield

*Abstract*

Over the last decade, Robert Talisse has developed a devastating argument against reviving John Dewey's democratic ideal. In his book, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy,* and in other essays, Talisse has argued that Deweyan democracy fails to accommodate Rawls' conception of "the fact of reasonable pluralism" because it is committed to a perfectionist conception of the good. In response, this article offers a Rawlsian rebuttal to Talisse by drawing on Rawls' own characterisation of perfectionism to show that Dewey's conception of the good is not perfectionist on Rawls' account and thus can reasonably accommodate the fact of reasonable pluralism. This article thus begins by exposing and explaining Talisse's argument, before articulating Shane Ralston's rejection of the Berlinian and Rawlsian filters presupposed by Talisse's argument. Then, it develops its central argument by showing that, even if we accept the Rawlsian filter, Deweyan democracy does not fail to accommodate the fact of reasonable pluralism, because it only relies on a thin (not a full) theory of the good, before considering some foreseeable Talissean objections. Ultimately, the article concludes by showing that these objections fail because Deweyan democracy does not rely on a 'full' theory of the good.

*Key Words*

Democracy, Dewey, Talisse, Rawls, Growth, Reasonable Pluralism, Perfectionism, Ralston

*Introduction*

Over the last decade, Robert Talisse has developed a devastating argument against John Dewey's democratic ideal. Indeed, most explicitly in his book, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy,*[1] and in his essays,[2] Talisse has drawn on John Rawls' *Political Liberalism* to articulate a crushing objection to the project of reviving Dewey's conception of democracy. [3] Talisse contends that Deweyan democracy has one fundamental shortcoming: namely, it fails to accommodate what Rawls calls "the fact of reasonable pluralism".

In this article, I will offer a Rawlsian defence of Dewey's democratic ideal by drawing on Rawls' broader conceptual apparatus with a special focus on his conception of 'perfectionism'. However, before I go any further, I must state that despite serious misgivings about the possibility of meeting Rawls' criterion for legitimate state action in a non-circular manner,[4] for the sake of responding to Talisse's central argument in the most comprehensive and charitable manner, I will assume throughout this article that the fact of reasonable pluralism can, at least in principle, be accommodated. Moreover, for the sake of clarity, it must be understood that for present purposes the terms 'theory of the good', 'conception of the good', and 'conception of human flourishing'

will be taken to be broadly synonymous. Furthermore, I will understand 'Deweyan democracy' as Dewey's democratic ideal as interpreted largely by the lights of his *Middle* and *Later Works*. Dewey's early articulation of his democratic ideal and those developed by some commentators who stress this early period are fairly obviously perfectionistic and thus reasonably rejectable.[5] To be clear, while there is undoubtedly continuity in Dewey's thinking about democracy, I follow Gregory Pappas in understanding there to have been significant changes between Dewey's early and his 'mature' ethical theory.[6] As a result, part of the task I am setting for myself here consists in articulating an understanding of Dewey's mature democratic ideal, fully reflecting the shift from 'absolutism to experimentalism' in Dewey's overall philosophical project.[7]

Now, with that in mind, I will show that Talisse's argument fails on Rawlsian terms, since Dewey's democratic ideal properly understood does not rely on what Rawls called a 'full' but a 'thin' theory of the good and is therefore fully consistent with Rawls' characterisation of the fact of reasonable pluralism. To show this, I will start by thoroughly presenting Talisse's case against Deweyan democracy (I); then I will present Shane Ralston's objection to Talisse, according to which he fails to evaluate Deweyan democracy in its own terms (II); subsequently, I will articulate my Rawlsian defence of Deweyan democracy against Talisse's argument (III); I will consider and reject some likely responses from Talisse (IV); and ultimately, I will show that Deweyan democracy is not reasonably rejectable in Rawlsian terms because it does not rely on a 'full' theory of the good.

*I. Talisse's Case Against Deweyan Democracy*

In order to construct his case against Dewey, Talisse proposes "the following four interlocking theses as constitutive of Deweyan democracy":

> (1) The Continuity Thesis: The democratic political order is a moral order characterized by a distinctive conception of human flourishing.
>
> (2) The Transformative Thesis: The democratic process is one in which individual preferences, attitudes and opinions are informed and transformed rather than simply aggregated.
>
> (3) The Way of Life Thesis: Democracy is not simply a kind of state or a mode of government, but a way of life.
>
> (4) The Perfectionist Thesis: Democratic states may enact legislation and design institutions for the expressed purpose of fostering the values and attitudes necessary for human flourishing.[8]

I understand Talisse's argument against Deweyan democracy to take issue with the compound effect of (1) and (4). Why? Taken together, they lend authority to the notion that the state is entitled to use its power to further a distinctive conception of human flourishing. This is problematic for Talisse. According to him, since we live under conditions of reasonable pluralism, we cannot expect all reasonable citizens to agree upon one conception of the good, hence justifying state action with reference to this controversial conception of the good would result in oppressing dissident citizens. Talisse is, of course, here borrowing from Rawls' characterisation of the fact of reasonable pluralism, which is in need of further explanation.

Rawls and the Fact of Reasonable Pluralism

Rawls' characterises "the fact of reasonable pluralism" thus:

> There is no single comprehensive philosophical, religious or moral doctrine upon which reason 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.[9]

In other words, disagreement about what Rawls calls 'comprehensive doctrines' (i.e. religious or philosophical views about the order of the world or sources of normativity) cannot be explained by mere misinformation, stubbornness, irrationality, or malice.[10] Or as Talisse puts it, "reasonable people – sincere, honest, and intelligent individuals carefully attending to the relevant considerations and doing their epistemic best – nonetheless disagree at the level of Big Questions."[11] Talisse therefore follows Rawls in claiming that we have no other choice but to accept that these disagreements are the necessary results of "the work of human reason under enduring free institutions."[12] Thus, since reasonable people disagree about the fundamental values that ought to guide the state, the state cannot justify the promotion of any one fundamental value to all reasonable members of society. For Rawls, the fact of reasonable pluralism entails that the only legitimate ideal for settling debates about constitutional arrangements and matters of basic justice is a political conception of justice which can be the object of an overlapping consensus among all reasonable citizens.

According to Rawls, in order for this political conception of justice to be the object of an overlapping consensus, it must be modular, freestanding from – or as Samuel Freeman puts it, "independent of"[13] – comprehensive doctrines. Since a political

conception of justice needs to be acceptable (or at least not objectionable) to people holding any reasonable comprehensive doctrine, it must not ultimately depend on any one of those doctrines for its justification. Instead, it must find grounds for its justification in the shared public political culture of the society from which it emerges. Rawls writes:

> Since justification is addressed to others, it proceeds from what is, or can be, held in common; and so we begin from shared fundamental ideas implicit in the public political culture in the hope of developing from them a political conception that can gain free and reasoned agreement in judgment.[14]

If a given conception of justice – call it (j) – is grounded in views found outside the public political culture, then (j) is not a political conception of justice, because it is reasonably rejectable. To put it otherwise, reasonable citizens can object to living under a state which is dedicated to promoting (j). Thus, on the Rawlsian account, the state ought to remain neutral with regard to competing comprehensive doctrines (say, (j), (k), (l), etc.), however reasonable these may be. On this view, if the state is not neutral with regard to comprehensive doctrines, it is *ipso facto* oppressive. Accordingly, to avoid state oppression, no comprehensive doctrine is permitted to play a uniquely determining role in shaping the conception of justice that will justify the operations of the state. Only a political conception of justice, which remains neutral with regard to reasonable comprehensive doctrines, can legitimately justify state action. A political conception of justice is composed of the views found at the intersection of all reasonable comprehensive doctrine, but is not composed of the views associated with reasonable comprehensive doctrines that reasonable citizens might reasonably reject. If even one

reasonable member of society has reason to object to a part of (j), then that part of (j) is not a part of the overlapping parts of (j), (k), (l), etc.; that is to say, that part of (j) is not a part of a political conception of justice, and it thus cannot justify the use of state power without being oppressive.

## The Fact of Reasonable Pluralism and Deweyan Democracy

Crucially, Talisse believes Deweyan democracy to be a comprehensive doctrine and not a political conception of justice. Why? Talisse contends that Deweyan democracy is a comprehensive doctrine with the ambition of using the state apparatus to realise its particular conception of the good. Talisse writes: "The Deweyan view is driven by a distinctive conception of human flourishing according to which the participation of citizens in democratic community is both the necessary condition for and essential constituent of a properly human life."[15] He continues, "the Deweyan democrat seeks to reconstruct the whole of society in the image of her own philosophical commitments, she seeks to coerce people to live under political institutions that are explicitly designed to cultivate norms and realize civic ideals that they could reasonably reject."[16] Furthermore, to explain by way of analogy why this is problematic, Talisse offers the example of Joe the utilitarian:

> Joe thinks with Mill that the Greatest Happiness Principle (GHP) is 'the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions.'[17] Consequently, he thinks that any question of public policy or institutional design is decisively answered by the GHP. Suppose Joe also thinks, again with Mill, that a system of weighted voting, in which 'graduates of universities' are given 'two or more votes'[18], best satisfies the GHP. Further stipulate that Joe is correct that weighted voting is required by the

> GHP. The fact of reasonable pluralism is the fact that utilitarianism is not the only reasonable moral doctrine that free citizens might adopt; one may reject utilitarianism without thereby revoking one's fitness for democratic citizenship. In order to be legitimate, public policy must be justifiable to all citizens, even those who oppose utilitarianism as a moral theory. Consequently, Joe's utilitarian reasons could be reasonably rejected; they are hence insufficient to publicly justify weighted voting.[19]

Thus, Talisse contends that the Deweyan democrat is in a position analogous to Joe the utilitarian, because her conception of human flourishing (or 'growth', but more on that soon) is analogous to the GHP: Deweyan democrats take growth to be the "ultimate appeal on all ethical questions."

To be clear, it is not so much that Talisse believes Deweyan democrats to be closet tyrants wanting to curtail the political rights of individuals; it is rather that Talisse believes Deweyan democrats to be discursive tyrants, since they hold that fostering growth is the one true goal of genuine democracy and they require, according to Talisse, that others agree to this goal as a precondition for engaging in democratic discussions. Talisse further specifies that, even if the Deweyan view of democracy were true, it would still be illegitimate to appeal to it in public deliberation, because other reasonable members of society can reject that view. Indeed, on the Rawlsian account, the truth of a moral doctrine is independent of its capacity to be the object of an overlapping consensus serving as the basis for public justification. Talisse explains:

> The Rawlsian insight is that in order to be legitimate, public policy must be justifiable by reasons that meet a standard higher than truth; publicly justifying reasons must be not reasonably rejectable. The fact of reasonable pluralism means that no comprehensive doctrine is beyond reasonable rejection; therefore, reasons, such as Joe's, which derive from a single comprehensive doctrine – again, even a reasonable one – cannot publicly justify. In order to

> publicly justify weighted voting in a democratic society, Joe must appeal to reasons that even non-utilitarians could accept.[20]

In other words, Talisse contends that Dewey's conception of democracy is not an appropriate social ideal because people can legitimately reject some of its core philosophical commitments (that is, its conception of the good) without being said to be 'unreasonable' or 'failing at democracy'. According to him, although Deweyan democracy is reasonable, it demands of other participants in democratic deliberation that they recognise that Dewey's conception of the good can serve as the basis for political justification. This, in turn, is unacceptable to Talisse, since the fact of reasonable pluralism entails that reasonable people disagree about what is the ultimate goal of moral action. Talisse thus concludes that Deweyan democracy is reasonably rejectable and oppressive.[21]

As I made clear at the outset of this article, it is precisely this contention that I intend to dispute. A number of responses to Talisse focus on demonstrating that his alternative Peircean conception of democracy fares no better than Deweyan democracy in accommodating the fact of reasonable pluralism.[22] While those criticisms may have their merits, I intend to defend Deweyan democracy by showing that, on Rawls' account of perfectionist conceptions of the good, the conception of the good held by Deweyan democrats (growth) is not perfectionist. However, in order to provide more context before offering a substantive argument to that effect I will rehearse Shane Ralston's defence of Deweyan democracy against Talisse's objection on the grounds that it fails to evaluate Deweyan democracy by its own standard of pluralism.

## *II. Filtering out the Filters: Ralston's Response to Talisse*

In 'Deweyan Democracy and Pluralism: A Reunion', Shane Ralston argues that Talisse fails to treat Deweyan democracy on its own terms.[23] Ralston argues that Talisse interprets Deweyan democracy through three filters: Isaiah Berlin's ontological value pluralism, John Rawls' legitimacy principle, and the dichotomy between procedural and substantive conceptions of democracy. While Talisse eventually abandons both the procedural/substantive dichotomy and the use of Berlinian value pluralism to articulate his criticism of Deweyan democracy,[24] I think we can ignore the former but not the latter in explaining Ralston's reply to Talisse. That is why I will address Ralston's characterisation of the Berlinian and then the Rawlsian filter.

### The Lens of Berlinian Value Pluralism

According to Berlin, "individuals select their values from among a universe of competing possibilities."[25] This means that, on this view, human ends are incommensurable and potentially mutually exclusive. Berlin concludes from this that any attempt at harmonising these competing goods is a mistake: "Intractable value conflicts therefore become an unassailable fact of human moral life."[26] This view presupposes that values pre-exist the process of moral inquiry and that the process of moral inquiry merely consists in establishing a preference ranking among "a catalogue or ontological schema

of accepted values."[27] Ralston points out that, on the Deweyan account of valuation, the picture is far more dynamic: "logic is always prior to ontology. Since logic is a theory of inquiry, any shared values must first undergo collective investigation and experimentation before being settled 'over and above board', that is, as the products of social inquiry."[28] In other words, for Dewey, the process of inquiry is existentially prior to any ontological claim about the existence of values or about their incommensurability and incompatibility. This means that it is not so much the case that Dewey is committed to the notion that all values will definitely be rendered fully harmonious; it is rather the case that he is committed to the idea that we must pursue such harmony to the extent that we can achieve it through the process of inquiry. Ralston concludes from this that "Deweyan democracy does not offer a 'comprehensive worldview' or unitary system of values, but rather a way, among many others, to reconcile different and often-times conflicting value orientations into a 'mode of associative living'."[29] This entails two things: (i) Deweyan democracy does not offer a final picture of the moral world towards which we ought to strive; and (ii) Deweyan democracy is a method for negotiating conflicts of value that emerge from within the flow of human life.

## The Lens of Rawlsian Reasonable Pluralism

Ralston then turns to Talisse's use of Rawls:

> Talisse filters Deweyan democracy through Rawls's notion of reasonable pluralism at the expense of ignoring Dewey's analogous, though comparably richer, principle of growth. Instead of an overlapping consensus between

> otherwise divergent worldviews, the ethical principle of growth recommends that individuals and groups cultivate those experiences that will liberate their potentialities.[30]

If to Talisse this principle of growth is overly constraining, Ralston explains that it is nothing more than a principle of problem solving, according to which "citizens should become increasingly adept at individual and group problem solving"[31] by developing their capacities for problem solving – whatever they may be. In other words, Deweyan democracy is, at its heart, an injunction to become better problem solvers. The only clear specifications made by Dewey about how we might go about following such an injunction consist in pointing out that education (in the widest sense of the word) and the actual practice of collective problem solving are good places to start. On this reading, the outcomes of the process of problem solving are left undetermined by Dewey. Or, as Matthew Festenstein puts it:

> The precise form in which this ideal is to take political shape is up to the individuals themselves, in the specific circumstances in which they live. Dewey is explicitly agnostic about the forms which the ideal might take: what is ultimately required for the formation of a democratic public is 'a kind of knowledge which does not yet exist', and, in its absence, 'it would be the height of absurdity to try to tell you what it would be like if it existed'[32].[33]

To underline the open-ended nature of his ideal, Dewey further writes that "[d]emocracy is the faith that the process of experience is more important than any special result attained, so that special results achieved are of ultimate value only as they are used to enrich and order the ongoing process."[34]

Ralston explains that this seems a far cry from advancing a state-sponsored worldview; "[i]nstead, it is merely to restate the fact that humans are naturally problem-solvers; to observe that humans who are citizens of democracies confront common problems; and then to infer from the fact and observation that the challenge for democratic citizens is to become better collaborative problem-solvers."[35] Ralston adds that in comparison, Rawls' demand that all democratic deliberation be made in the language of (or in a language translatable into) public reason is far more stringent than Deweyan democratic deliberation, where "fair procedures […] permit reasonable citizens, distinct groups and state agents […] to disagree without resorting to violence."[36]

Ralston goes on to articulate what he sees as Dewey's deliberative standard of inclusion in deliberation. Ralston contends that Dewey offers two criteria: "the first pertains to the plurality of interests held in common by different groups. […] The second question concerns whether groups are open to readjusting their ways of associating."[37] Thus, for Dewey, the process of problem solving necessarily involves two steps: first, the individuals who form part of a group must identify shared interests; and, second, they must "propose novel and flexible ways of associating in order to address their shared problems."[38] Deweyan democracy thus only demands that citizens be prepared to revise the forms of association in which they participate for the sake of finding improved forms of communal living. Thus Ralston writes, "Dewey's procedure for addressing the fact of pluralism might be called the 'mutual interest and associative flexibility standard of inclusion'."[39] This, Ralston claims, is a method for resolving social problems, not a

"state-sponsored worldview – a procedure for negotiating, though not permanently resolving, the deeply divisive and sometimes intractable differences between peoples and groups beholden to competing forms of life."[40]

Dewey does indeed offer his own pluralist procedure for addressing the fact of reasonable pluralism. Moreover, I agree that Deweyan democracy is a method for solving social problems, not a comprehensive conception of the good with the ambition of taking control of the state apparatus. Ralston therefore understandably rejects the approach of interpreting Dewey through a Rawlsian filter. Although I appreciate the force of this move, Talisse's project demands, rightly or wrongly, that pragmatism make itself more 'pragmatically' relevant by dialogically engaging with contemporary arguments in political philosophy. In order to respond to Talisse on his own term, and hopefully convince him of the error of his ways, it behooves us Deweyan democrats to thoroughly consider Deweyan democracy through the Rawlsian filter. My contention is that, even from this perspective, Deweyan democracy meets the challenge posed by the fact of reasonable pluralism, since it relies on a thin and not a full conception of the good.

## *III. Rawls Revisited: Deweyan Democracy as Political Liberalism*

In both a *Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism*, Rawls relies on a distinction between 'full' and 'thin' theories of the good. 'Full' theories of the good consist in fully worked

out accounts of conceptions of the good life, while 'thin' theories of the good consist in accounts of what moral agents minimally require in order to realise full conceptions of the good. Or, as Samuel Freeman puts it, a full theory of the good "incorporates the idea of final ends that are worth pursuing for their own sake,"[41] while a thin theory of the good "does not set forth any specific ends as rational to pursue for their own sake."[42] Thus, a full theory of the good responds to the question: "What is the ultimate goal of human life?", while a thin theory of the good responds to the question: "What ends is it rational to pursue no matter what we believe to be the ultimate goal of human life?"

According to Rawls, a political conception of justice comprises a thin conception of the good but stops short of embracing any full theory of the good, since such full theories of the good are not appropriate objects for an overlapping consensus among reasonable citizens under the conditions of reasonable pluralism. Nevertheless, Samuel Freeman explains:

> As Rawls uses these terms, interests can be 'supremely regulative' or 'fundamental' and of 'highest order' without being final ends, pursued for their own sake. For example, our interest in self-preservation is of the 'highest order', according to Hobbes, but that does not mean that self-preservation is one of the final ends we pursue and which give our lives meaning. It means rather that it is an essential interest that must be fulfilled if *any* of our final ends and pursuits are to be realized. It is in this sense that it is an essential good.[43]

Thus, one might say that Rawls' thin conception of the good points to goods that are of the highest value, without seeking to articulate any final moral good (*summum bonum*). That is to say, thin theories of the good identify goods that are of the highest value in

the same sense that Rawls speaks of certain interests being of the "highest order"[44], they are worthy of pursuit whatever other goals we may hold.

In order for Talisse to have shown that Deweyan democracy is reasonably rejectable and that it therefore fails to countenance the fact of reasonable pluralism, he needs to have shown that Deweyan democracy is irrevocably wedded to a full and not a thin conception of the good.[45] I contend that he fails to do so and that a more accurate interpretation of Deweyan democracy will demonstrate that it only requires a thin theory of the good that identifies goods of the 'highest value' in the Rawlsian sense. As mentioned previously, Deweyan democracy is wedded to a specific conception of the good called 'growth.' Once the distinction between thin and full conceptions of the good is established, all I need to show is that growth is a thin not a full conception of the good. In other words, I need to show that growth establishes general ends that are rational to pursue no matter what our more specific life goals might be and remains largely agnostic about what final or ultimate life goals we ought to adopt. If I can show this, it then follows that Deweyan democracy is capable of countenancing the fact of reasonable pluralism. But to do this, I need to explain precisely what Deweyan growth involves.

According to James S. Johnston, Deweyan growth has three broad meanings: firstly, growth is the continued life and development of a biological organism; secondly, growth is the capacity to make intelligent judgments; thirdly, growth is the capacity to develop intelligent habits of action by learning from past experiences and judgments

and adapting ensuing actions in light of such a process of learning.[46] This means that 'growth' is defined by the development of certain capacities that serve one's more general capacity to solve problems. In other words, the development of capacities that enable intelligent problem solving ought to be understood as being of primarily instrumental value, since they are of ultimate value in their enabling the solving of problems.

This last sentence, however, might seem rather contentious even to the most ardent Deweyan. Why? Because Dewey offered a rather complex account of the relationship between means and ends. Indeed, he does not draw a staunch ontological separation between the two, claiming that "means and ends are two names for the same reality."[47] Yet, this is not to say we cannot distinguish means from ends. Rather, as Naoko Saito puts it:

> In Dewey's view, a distinction between means and ends is not metaphysical, but functional. […] Ends function as a means by serving as the perspective from which we anticipate the next act. In turn, a means is the name for the next immediate action to be taken as temporary end.[48] 'Means are means; they are intermediates, middle terms'.[49] Ends are being reconstructed at each moment of action. 'Ends grow.' They are not static points, and cannot be 'located at one place only'[50]. Rather, ends are 'ends-in-view' that represent a whole series of acts[51]: 'the terminal outcome when anticipated […] becomes an end-in-view, an aim, purpose, a prediction usable as a plan in shaping the course of events'[52]. […] Thus, paradoxically '[e]nds are literally endless'[53]; ends are open-ended. […] As Dewey says, 'travelling is a constant arriving'[54].[55]

Moreover, since Dewey stresses that "it is not the satisfactoriness of [an] activity which defines [said activity]; the definition comes from the structure and function of subject-matter"[56], it is this same functional definition that I draw upon to argue that we ought to understand the capacities for intelligent problem solving as being primarily of

*instrumental* value rather than consummatory. In other words, I contend that we must understand 'growth' not in relation to its consummatory character (i.e. the satisfaction we derive from developing our capacities to solve problems), but its functional or instrumental capacity to help in the task of solving problems intelligently.

Yet, here already the critic beckons: What exactly is meant by 'intelligent' problem solving? The intelligent character of problem solving consists in solving present problems in a manner that enables, or at the very least does not impede, future problem solving. Thus, the function of growth on this account is to enable us to develop capacities that not only solve existing problems but that put us in good stead to solve both present and future ones. The upshot of this is that growth cannot point to an ethical finality because "[t]he business of reflection in determining the true good cannot be done once and for all […] It needs to be done, and done over and over and over again, in terms of the conditions of concrete situations as they arise"[57]. Thus, on this account, the process of growth is never fully completed, because it is the nature of the human condition to always encounter new problems. This means that the concrete goals that growth enables us to further are unspecifiable in advance. All Deweyan growth requires of us is that we pursue the development of the habits of action that enable the process of intelligent problem solving, while seeking to avoid those habits that would hinder it. As mentioned previously, Dewey remains largely philosophically agnostic about particular solutions to particular problems. In fact, the Deweyan account is even agnostic about the singularity or plurality of 'good' solutions to problems. It is also agnostic about whether or not there is a 'perfect' solution (that is, one upon which

we cannot improve) to any one problem. It allows such specifications to be made *a posteriori*, leaving it to actual inquirers to ascertain, since it is the iterated process of inquiry – and it alone – which ultimately establishes whether or not a solution to a particular problem can be intelligently improved upon.

Therefore, at a general level, Deweyan growth enables us to ascertain that certain habits of thought and action are to be preferred to others for the sake of intelligent problem solving. That is to say, for example, that the general goal of problem solving informs us that truth-telling is preferable to lying, that logical thinking is preferable to wishful thinking, that conscious decision-making is preferable to knee-jerk reaction, etc. Growth therefore does not consist in the furthering of pre-established ends or life goals; it consists in the development of certain capacities that it is rational to want to possess given the fact that intelligently solving problems is necessary, whatever other ultimate goals groups or agents may wish to pursue. Therefore, Deweyan democrats must hold that intelligent problem solving is of the 'highest-order' in the same sense that – to summon Freeman's words – "our interest in self-preservation is of the 'highest order' […] but that does not mean that self-preservation is one of the final ends we pursue and which give our lives meaning. It means rather that it is an essential interest that must be fulfilled if *any* of our final ends and pursuits are to be realized."[58]

But the critic may well further ask: Does the 'intelligent' character of solving problems covertly reintroduce a contentious prescriptive normative agenda? In other words, the critic may well worry that, despite my claims to the contrary, intelligent

problem solving actually reflects a substantive political project aiming at the development of a reasonably rejectable conception of the good. That would mean that growth secretly aims towards a good beyond itself. However, if we were to ask Dewey, "What is the ultimate goal of growth?" I think Dewey's answer would be that "growth aims towards growth itself" – meaning that growth aims towards a greater development of our capacities to intelligently solve problems. I therefore think we should follow Ralston in understanding that growth does not "aim at some ultimate end"[59] beyond itself; agents may well pursue further ends beyond growth, but growth is not in the business of identifying what such eventual ends ought to be. Rather, as Welchman puts it:

> The putative end of human action, the good life [that is, a life of growth], cannot be conceived of as a discrete thing, event, quality, or state. It must be instead conceived of as a series, a series of challenges overcome giving rise to new challenges. Each new end is a new construction, the outcome of a process of investigation and discovery of the materials and opportunities of one's circumstances, subject to eventual confirmation.[60]

The most demanding prescription we can derive from Deweyan growth, I contend, involves a commitment to the pursuit of what Axel Honneth calls an "inclusive good"[61] which requires that we "foresee consequences in such a way that we form ends which grow into one another and reenforce one another"[62]. On my account, this means that a solution to a problem is 'intelligent' if and only if that solution both resolves the problem at hand by the lights of those who experience it and does not inhibit future problem solving. My contention is that all reasonable problem solvers (including Talisse) would agree to this constraint, upon reflection.

Thus, if we now return to the Rawlsian conceptual apparatus, it should be clear that growth is a thin conception of the good precisely because it radically under-determines which ultimate ends citizens may wish to pursue. To put it another way: under conditions of reasonable pluralism, in order for Deweyan democracy to be reasonably rejectable, reasonable citizens would have to reject the idea that the capacities that further intelligent problem solving are an essential good, worthy of pursuit no matter what ultimate life goals they hold. Yet, reasonable citizens, in virtue of their very reasonableness, would not reject such an idea. Recall that for Rawls, the object of an overlapping consensus merely requires that all reasonable citizens value a common value, without requiring that they value said value for the same reasons (since those reasons can be derived from their respective comprehensive doctrines). My contention is that growth, and thus Deweyan democracy, requires that all reasonable citizens value intelligently solving problems, not that they all value intelligent problem solving for the same reasons. Therefore, if all reasonable citizens value intelligent problem solving, Deweyan democracy can be the object of reasonable agreement under conditions of reasonable pluralism.

In summary, although Deweyan democracy relies on a particular conception of the good (namely, growth), it fails to be reasonably rejectable on the Rawlsian account because growth is a thin and not a full theory of the good. Thus, it only calls for the development of capacities that enable continuous intelligent problem solving. Such a goal is of the highest order only in the sense that it is necessary (in a manner analogous to continued existence) for the furthering of any other human goals. This is consistent

with Rawls' characterization of political doctrines (which are legitimately used to publically justify) within conditions of reasonable pluralism. It therefore follows that Deweyan democracy does not fail to accommodate the fact of reasonable pluralism.

## *IV. Some Potential Talissean Replies*

In response to this argument, I believe that Talisse could emit the following replies: (i) Deweyan growth simply is a perfectionist theory of the good and it is thus reasonably rejectable; (ii) Deweyan growth is reasonably rejectable because it identifies shared experience as the ultimate moral good; and (iii) any version of Deweyan democracy which is not reasonably rejectable fails to be appropriately Deweyan.

### *(i) The Problem of Perfectionism – Growth as a Teleology Without an End*

One might worry that Talisse would lend little credence to my argument so far because, on his understanding, Deweyan growth simply is a perfectionist conception of human flourishing and as such it is reasonably rejectable. Now, there are two obvious senses of 'perfectionism' we might consider: (a) Rawls' definition and (b) a more general understanding of the concept. Let us consider these in turn.

(a) Rawls offers a rather narrow and eccentric definition of 'perfectionism'. Indeed, according to him, perfectionism consists in the belief that we have a duty "to develop human persons of a certain style and aesthetic grace, and to advance the

pursuit of knowledge and the cultivation of the arts."[63] Or as Freeman puts it, perfectionism consists in "ethical positions which incorporate the principle of perfection, and maintain that the achievement of human excellences in art, science and culture constitutes the human good."[64] Rawls writes that the principle of perfection is "a teleological theory directing society to arrange institutions and to define the duties and obligations of individuals so as to maximize the achievement of human excellence in art, science, and culture. The principle obviously is more demanding the higher the relevant ideal is pitched."[65] According to Rawls, perfectionism cannot form the basis of a political conception of justice because we cannot expect reasonable citizens to agree upon what constitutes human perfection: perfectionist ethical ideals are, by definition, full and not thin.

I contend that Dewey's conception of growth fails to fit Rawls' definition of perfectionism. Although Dewey is committed to the idea that his conception of growth can direct social institutions and define duties and obligations while also requiring the development of human capacities in the arts, science, and culture, it is not perfectionist because such development does not constitute human flourishing *per se*; it merely enables it, since human flourishing is ultimately constituted by developing the capacities for intelligent problem solving. To explain further: in order to fulfil Rawls' definition of perfectionism, Deweyan growth must maintain that the achievement of human excellences in art, science, and culture *constitutes* the human good. Thus, in order for an ethical theory to be perfectionist in these terms, it must maintain that such human excellences constitute the human good. This is a sufficiency claim: it means that on

Rawls's account a perfectionist theory of human flourishing is subsumed by the development of discrete human excellences in the arts, sciences, and culture. I contend that Dewey's conception of growth cannot be committed to this view, because, for Dewey, such developments are always seen as being of value *because* they enable future problem solving. To put it otherwise, although Dewey was one to encourage the development of human capacities in art, science, and culture and although his conception of growth demands that these capacities be furthered, Dewey does not hold the view that the human good is subsumed by the achievement of human excellence in art, science, and culture. Ultimately, in my view, what constitutes or subsumes the human good for Dewey is a capacity to resolve problems intelligently: the fact that developing human capacities in the arts, science, and culture is a necessary part of developing human capacities to solve problems intelligently is entirely incidental. Therefore, growth is not a perfectionist ethical ideal as specified by Rawls because it does not value the development of a pre-given list of cultural excellences for its own sake; rather it only values them in so far as they enable the development of capacities for intelligent problem solving. Yet, Talisse may well intend to associate Deweyan growth with a wider notion of perfectionism.

(b) A more commonly held view of ethical perfectionism consists in the belief that the realisation of human capacities, broadly construed, constitutes human flourishing – not achieving human excellence in specifically cultural terms.[66] And this may seem more problematic for my argument, as Deweyan growth certainly requires the development of human capacities. However, it is still the case that for Dewey, the

development of human capacities and the fostering of certain types of human relationships are, functionally, primarily necessary means for resolving problems. They do not, in and of themselves, constitute the human good in any other sense than that they are themselves solutions to existing problems. On this instrumentalist account of Deweyan democracy, capacities are valuable only insofar as they resolve existing problems and/or enable solving future problems. To speak somewhat oxymoronically, growth can be understood as a teleology without an end – it affirms the need for humans to develop in certain ways in order to become judicious problem solvers, but it does not specify to what end this process ought to drive other than the preservation and expansion of the process of becoming more capable and judicious problem solvers itself. It is thus teleological only in that it points to the development of certain capacities, but not truly teleological in that it eschews providing a *telos,* a final endpoint towards which this development is ultimately supposed to drive. Campbell claims that when Dewey writes,

> [g]rowth itself is the only moral 'end', [h]e is using the term 'end in the following sense: 'The end is no longer a terminus or a limit to be reached. It is the active process of transforming the existent situation. Not perfection as a final goal, but the ever-enduring process of perfecting, maturing, refining, is the aim in living.'[67] […] [G]rowth is not the patterning of life after some 'presupposed fixed schema or outline' of what it is to be a person.[68] 'No individual or group will be judged by whether they come up to or fall short of some fixed result, but by the direction in which they are moving.'[69] Moral growth 'does not mean, therefore, to act so as to fill up some presupposed ideal self'[70].[71]

Writing more generally, Philip Kitcher addresses the worry that this notion of pragmatic progress might "eschew […] teleology at the front door" while letting "it sneak in again through the rear,"[72] by asking: "Can we make sense of the notion of a situation as

problematic, without presupposing a goal? After all, to speak of a problem is to recognize a goal, to wit relief from the source of the trouble."[73] In the last analysis, the reply proposed by Kitcher, consists in insisting on the absence of a fixed or pre-given wished for final goal:

> The alleged 'goal' is local, something that could well cover any number of incompatible alternatives, unranked from the present perspective. Once the goal has been achieved – relief obtained – people will move on to address other difficulties, including, perhaps, problems generated by the solution itself. There is no envisaged final state, but an unpredictable sequence of local adaptations.[74]

Thus, growth does not require valuing the development of capacities either for its own sake or for the sake of achieving some ultimate finality (telos). Growth aims for the development of the methods of intelligent problem solving for the sake of intelligently solving problems. Intelligently solving problems, I maintain, is a goal which reasonable citizens would agree to upon reflection. Or to put it in Rawlsian language, the development of capacities for intelligent problem solving constitutes a thin conception of the good required for – not an impediment to – the pursuit of reasonable full conceptions of the good.

*(ii) The Problem of Shared Experience – Associated Living as a Democratic Means*

At the beginning of this article, I ventured that Talisse found two theses associated with Deweyan democracy particularly problematic, namely, the 'Continuity Thesis' (1) and the 'Perfectionist Thesis' (4). But textual evidence also suggests that Talisse might find

the 'Way of Life Thesis' (3) problematic in its own right. This thesis consists in the notion that democracy is not simply a kind of state or a mode of government, but a way of life. In other words, what Talisse might take to be reasonably rejectable about Deweyan democracy is that it is committed to a conception of growth that identifies 'shared experience' (or associated living) as the ultimate moral goal. Indeed, when Talisse goes on to present his positive account of Peircean democracy, he writes:

> For example, to believe, with Dewey, that 'shared experience is the greatest of human goods'[75] is to take it to be true that shared experience is the greatest of human goods, and to take this to be true is to be committed to the idea that the best reasons, arguments and evidence would confirm it.[76]

I think we can thus understand Talisse to be committed to the view that Deweyan democracy is reasonably rejectable because it is committed to a conception of growth where 'shared experience' is the ultimate moral goal.

However, I think this also is a mistaken understanding of Deweyan democracy. To support this claim, let us consider the wider context in which Dewey's words cited by Talisse first appear. In the relevant passage in *Experience and Nature*, Dewey writes:

> Communication is consummatory as well as instrumental. It is a means of establishing cooperation, domination and order. Shared experience is the greatest of human goods. In communication, such conjunction and contact as is characteristic of animals become endearments capable of infinite idealization; they become symbols of the very culmination of nature. […] If scientific discourse is instrumental in function, it also is capable of becoming an enjoyed object to those concerned in it. Upon the whole, human history shows that thinking in being abstract, remote and technical has been laborious; or at least that the process of attaining such thinking has been rendered painful to most by social circumstances. In view of the importance of such activity and its objects, it is a priceless gain when it becomes an intrinsic delight. Few would philosophize if philosophic discourse did not have its own inhering fascination. Yet it *is not the satisfactoriness of the activity which defines science or philosophy; the definition comes from the structure and function of subject-matter.* To say that knowledge as the fruit of intellectual discourse is an end in itself is to say what is esthetically and morally true for some persons, but it conveys nothing about the

> structure of knowledge; and *it does not even hint that its objects are not instrumental*.[77]

Here, Dewey explains that scientific and philosophic discourses can be experienced as ends in themselves but are functionally instruments that help in attaining further goods. Philosophy and science may provide a certain enjoyment (that is their consummatory character), but it is their instrumental capacity to help in responding to problems that provide their functional definition.

On my account, the Deweyan democrat ultimately ought to understand shared experiences in the same way that Dewey values artistic and scientific capacities: namely, shared experiences are functionally defined by their instrumental capacity to further intelligent problem solving. Shared experience, according to Dewey, is what enables us to assess which habits of thought and action are more fertile than others because it enables communication, critique and learning.[78] Yet, shared experience is not itself the goal of rightful action. As we have seen, intelligent problem solving is the goal of rightful action. Shared experience happens to be a necessary condition for the process of valuation, judgment and learning that enables intelligent problem solving. Thus, in response to Talisse, we should understand the value of 'shared experience' as primarily instrumental, since particular types of shared experiences will enable the development of intelligent problem solving better than others.

Thus, on this account, Dewey's claims to the effect that growth or shared experience are the ultimate moral goods come down to claiming that "the ever-enduring process of perfecting, maturing, refining" our goals and values is the highest

value (i.e. one without which valuing other values is impossible) in human life. Consequently, the only general injunction we can derive from Deweyan growth is to develop our capacities for intelligent problem solving for the sake of solving problems intelligently. This is reminiscent of the sentiment found in the phrase Peirce thought should be written on every wall in the city of philosophy: "Do not block the way of inquiry".[79] Moreover, it is a far cry from claiming to have solved the problem of establishing what lies at the end of that path. And yet, Talisse needed to show that growth requires that all reasonable citizens share a common belief in a singular controversial endpoint of human flourishing. Short of such a point of fracture amongst reasonable citizens, Talisse cannot show Deweyan democracy to be anything more than a democratic ideal resting on a thin theory of the good.

*(iii) Hollowing Out Deweyan Democracy – Hypotheses and Translatability*

In his response to Elizabeth Anderson's criticisms of his views, Talisse claims that versions of Deweyan democracy that reduce Dewey's conception of growth to intelligent problem solving fail to preserve anything distinctly Deweyan about Dewey's democratic ideal. He writes:

> Perhaps Anderson's version of Deweyan democracy is even more restrained than I have allowed. She may say that she claims only that democratic communities should address their social problems by pooling information and other cognitive resources from their diverse citizenry in a way that gives a proper hearing and full consideration to all points of view, with the expectation that all collective decisions are but provisional stopping points in a continuous process of self-correction. Again, this view is compelling. But is it distinctively Deweyan? There is nothing here that Madison, Mill, Popper or even Russell would have rejected; furthermore, Cass Sunstein [80] endorses

> precisely this picture, and although he sometimes refers approvingly to Dewey, he is not a Deweyan democrat. Anderson's more restrained version of Deweyan democracy is not distinctively Deweyan. Can pragmatism offer no distinctive and viable political theory?[81]

In other words, Talisse argues that understanding growth as the mere pursuit of ever more intelligent methods of solving problems constitutes an abandonment of the Deweyan project altogether. If I am to read Talisse as charitably as possible, I must take Talisse to understand Dewey's views on how to actually improve intelligent problem solving in concrete situations (for example, Dewey's accounts of progressive education, community formation, or democratic industrial relations) to truly constitute Deweyan democracy and to hold that those views are reasonably rejectable.

Therefore, to support my argument to the effect that Deweyan democracy essentially consists in intelligent problem solving, I need to account for the more particular and controversial claims about democracy occasionally made by Dewey. In short, I think these views are best understood as hypotheses that seek to respond to concrete problems, as attempts at participating in situated intelligent problem solving. To put it in Deweyan terms, they aim to secure 'ends in view'. Therefore, I do not take them to constitute Dewey's democratic ideal. Instead, I think Deweyan democracy consists in the wider process of intelligent problem solving itself. Why do I believe this? Because the more particular views expressed by Dewey that Talisse points to as being reasonably rejectable are no more constitutive of Deweyan democracy than Mill's proposals in favour of public and weighted voting constitute Mill's democratic ideal. In both cases, we can distinguish the concrete proposals, attempts at offering actionable

social or political advice, from a broader ideal. Instead of this broadness being problematic, I contend that it suggests that Deweyan democracy is, at least in principle, capable (as much as any other conception of democracy) of being politically neutral in the manner required by Rawls' account of political liberalism.

Yet, even if one wanted to reject my reading of Dewey and root Deweyan democracy in his more controversial views (which I have argued are situated hypotheses for action) this may not be as problematic as Talisse thinks it to be. Why? Because on Rawls' final account of public reason, he proposes this important proviso:

> Reasonable comprehensive doctrines, religious or nonreligious, may be introduced in public political discussion at any time, provided that in due course proper political reasons – and not reasons given solely by comprehensive doctrines – are presented that are sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines introduced are said to support political arguments made in the language of sectarian doctrines (such as those offered by religious or philosophical views) are permissible so long as they are translatable into public reasons.[82]

Leif Wenar explains this point further thusly:

> So President Lincoln, for instance, could legitimately condemn the evil of slavery using Biblical imagery, since his pronouncements could have been expressed in terms of the public values of freedom and equality. Thus even within its limited range of application, Rawls's doctrine of public reason is rather permissive concerning what citizens may say and do within the bounds of civility.[83]

This means that on the Rawlsian view, even Dewey's more controversial hypotheses would be permissible in public debate so long as they can be translated into the language of public reason, which understands citizens as free and equal people seeking to live under a stably ordered political order. In other words, the controversial individual views derived from Dewey's extensive writings on democracy do not have to be

abandoned just because they are reasonably rejectable. They merely need to be translatable into the more general language of public reason to be receivable in public discourse. Ultimately, in order for Talisse to have truly shown that even the most controversial views he associates with Deweyan democracy have no place in civic discourse, he needs to have shown that no such translation can be carried out. He has not yet done so and the burden of proof continues to lay with him.

## *Conclusion*

In sum, I have presented Talisse's argument according to which Deweyan democracy is reasonably rejectable, because it relies on a controversial conception of the good that could not be the object of reasonable agreement under conditions of reasonable pluralism. I then presented Shane Ralston's response, according to which Talisse unfairly evaluates Dewey's pluralist credentials through a Berlinian and a Rawlsian theoretical filter. I then went on to argue that, even if we accept the Rawlsian challenge, then we ought to evaluate Deweyan democracy from within the wider Rawlsian framework. Furthermore, I argued that from within this framework, in order to show that Deweyan democracy fails to accommodate the fact of reasonable pluralism, Talisse needed to have shown that it is committed to a full (as opposed to thin) theory of the good. However, I have shown that Deweyan growth is, in fact, a thin conception of the good merely committed to the goal of intelligent problem solving. Since all reasonable citizens can reasonably be expected to be committed to the goal of intelligent problem

solving, Deweyan democracy can thus be the object of reasonable agreement within circumstances of reasonable pluralism. I then considered three potential replies: (i) Deweyan growth is a perfectionist ethical ideal; (ii) Deweyan democracy demands that we value shared experience; (iii) in order for Deweyan democracy to remain Deweyan it must be committed to controversial views and is thus unfit for public discussion. In response, I argued that growth is not a perfectionist ethical ideal – neither as Rawls understands it nor under a broader conception of perfectionism. I then argued that Deweyan growth merely requires that we value shared experience in so far as it enables intelligent problem solving. Furthermore, I argued that Deweyan democracy properly understood does not rely on controversial theses, but only relies on a thin theory of the good that can plausibly be the object of agreement among reasonable citizens under circumstances of reasonable pluralism. Finally, I argued that Dewey's democratic ideal is distinguishable from more concrete positions he has adopted with reference to his ideal and that, on the Rawlsian account, other more controversial views one might associate with Deweyan democracy only need to be translatable into the language of public reason to be permissible within public discourse. Understood within this wider Rawlsian framework, I have shown that Deweyan democracy is not reasonably rejectable.

* This article has seen many shapes and developments over the years. I am therefore indebted to many kind and thoughtful people for their help, challenge and critique, not least of whom is Bob Talisse himself who has been remarkably gracious and thoughtful in our extended conversations (in both Reykjavik and Sheffield). I owe

him my deepest thanks for genuinely trusting in the weight of the strongest argument (which may well ultimately fall in his favor – fallibilism *oblige*). More generally, I am grateful to all who attended the 2009 Nordic Pragmatism Conference in Iceland (especially Brendan Hogan, Richard J. Bernstein, Judith Green, and David Hilldebrand for inspiration and encouragement), attendees and facilitators at the various iterations of the Sheffield postgraduate seminar where I gave early versions of this paper in 2007 (with special thanks to Jenny Saul, Graeme Forbes, Heather Arnold, and Jules Holroyd) and 2013 (with special thanks to Sam Waters, Katharine Jenkins and Jan Kandiyali), as well as to Bob Stern, Chris Hookway, Chris Bennett and Matthew Festenstein for their thoughtful challenge and encouragement at crucial times. I must also thank Leif Wenar for first introducing me to *Political Liberalism*. Finally, I am deeply indebted to Cornelis de Waal and two anonymous reviewers for their truly excellent questions and comments. The strength of the argument herein is largely an expression of the degree of careful consideration and critique it has received from so many careful minds. It goes without saying that any remaining weaknesses are entirely my own responsibility.

[1] Robert Talisse, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy*, (London: Routledge 2007).

[2] Robert Talisse, 'A Farewell to Deweyan Democracy: Towards a New Pragmatist Politics', (Social Science Research Network 2007); 'Saving Pragmatist Democratic Theory (from Itself)', *Etica & Politica / Ethics & Politics,* Vol. 12, No. 1 (2010), pp. 12-27; and 'A Farewell to Deweyan Democracy', *Political Studies*, Vol. 59, No.3 (2011), pp. 509-526.

[3] Though less uniquely directed at Deweyan democracy, Talisse builds on this Rawls inspired argument to reject many pragmatist understandings of democracy in both *Democracy and Moral Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009) and *Pluralism and Liberal Politics* (New York: Routledge 2012).

[4] For a convincing argument to that effect see Leif Wenar, 'Political Liberalism: an Internal Critique,' *Ethics*, Vol. 106, No. 1 (1995), pp. 32-62

[5] Reasonably rejectable accounts of Deweyan democracy typically emphasise the what is perceived to be the moral goal of democracy (i.e. the development of 'personality' as self-realization) at the expense of the broader goal of solving collective problems. See Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Co. 1995); Matthew Festenstein, 'Pragmatism and Liberalism: Interpreting Dewey's Political Philosophy', *Res Publica*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1995) – especially when he equates growth with a simple teleology of 'self-realization' see p. 167 – and *Pragmatism and Political Theory*, (Cambridge: Polity 1997), p. 47; Gert J. J. Biesta, 'Democracy and education revisited: Dewey's democratic deficit,' in S. Higgins and F. Coffield (eds.), *John Dewey's Education and Democracy: A British Tribute*, (London: Institute of Education Press 2016), pp. 149-169.

[6] Gregory F. Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics: Democracy as Experience*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2008), see especially pp. 289-90. This is expressive of a shift I think is reflected in Robert Westbrook's account of Dewey's democratic activities from around the time of World War I onwards in *John Dewey and American Democracy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1991), from p. 286 onwards.

[7] On the shift from absolutism to experimentalism, see John Dewey, 'From Absolutism to Experimentalism', *LW* 5, pp. 147-160. In this context, I take this experimentalist interpretation of Deweyan democracy to be largely consistent with those put forward in: Hilary Putnam, 'A Reconsideration of Deweyan Democracy', *Southern California Law Review*, Vol. 63, No. 6 (1989-1990), pp. 1671-1698; James Campbell, *Understanding Dewey: Nature and Cooperative Intelligence* (Chicago: Open Court 1995); Richard J. Bernstein, 'Dewey's Vision of Radical Democracy' in *The Pragmatic Turn*, (Cambridge: Polity 2010). These interpretations share the view that solving collective problems intelligently is what Deweyan democracy aims towards as its highest goal.

[8] Robert Talisse, 'A Farewell to Deweyan Democracy' (2011), p. 509-10.

[9] Robert Talisse, 'Saving Pragmatist Democratic Theory (from Itself)' (2010), p. 16.

[10] Robert Talisse, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy*, p. 34.

[11] Ibid. p. 80.

[12] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism,* (New York: Columbia University Press 1993), p. 129.

[13] Samuel Freeman, *Rawls* (London: Routledge 2007), p. 332.

[14] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 100-1.

[15] Robert Talisse, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy*, p. 44.

[16] Ibid. p. 45.

[17] J.S. Mill, 'On Liberty', in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. John Gray, (New York: Oxford University Press 1991), p. 15.

[18] J.S. Mill, 'Of the Extension of the Suffrage', in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. John Gray, (New York: Oxford University Press 1991), p. 336.

[19] Robert Talisse, 'A Farewell to Deweyan Democracy' (2011), p. 513.

[20] Robert Talisse, 'A Farewell to Deweyan Democracy' (2011), p. 513.

[21] Robert Talisse, *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy*, p. 45.

[22] See for example: Matthew Festenstein 'Unravelling the Reasonable: Comment on Talisse', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2009), pp. 55-59, and 'Pragmatism, inquiry and political liberalism', *Contemporary Political Theory*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2010), pp. 25-44; Mark H. van Hollebeke, 'Through 'Thick' and 'Thin': Concerns About Talisse's Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2009), pp. 80-89; Colin Koopman, 'Good Questions and Bad Answers in Talisse's *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy*', *Transactions of the Charles Sanders Peirce Society*, Vol.45, No.1 (2009), pp. 60-4; Michael Bacon, 'The Politics of Truth: A Critique of Peircean Deliberative Democracy', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol. 36, No. 9 (2010), pp. 1075-1091. Of course others also attempt to defend Deweyan democracy on its own terms. See for example: Michael Eldridge, 'Why a Pragmatist May Be a Pluralist', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2005), pp. 119-122; Melvin L. Rodgers, 'Dewey, Pluralism, and Democracy: A Response to Robert Talisse', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2009), pp. 75-79. Others still, raise other problems for Talisse. For example, Michael Sulllivan and John Lysaker in 'You talking to me?', *Transaction of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2005), pp. 137-141, worry about the use of Talisse makes of crucial concepts relating to pluralism, and Cheryl Misak claims, in 'Pragmatism and Pluralism', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2005), pp. 129-135, that Talisse is mistaken to claim that all Deweyans fail to be pluralists.

[23] Shane Ralston, 'Deweyan Democracy and Pluralism: A Reunion', *Social Philosophy Today*, Vol. 25 (2009), pp. 223-240.

[24] In Talisse's *Pluralism and Liberal Politics* (New York: Routledge 2012), he takes issue with Berlinian pluralism and takes issue with its use as a first-order moral lens (see especially chapters 2 and 4).

[25] Shane Ralston, 'Deweyan Democracy and Pluralism: A Reunion', p. 226.

[26] Ibid. p. 226.

[27] Ibid. p. 227.

[28] Ibid. p. 227.

[29] Ibid. p. 227.

[30] Ibid. p. 228-9.

[31] Ibid. p. 229.

[32] John Dewey, *The Later Works - Volume 2,* in *The Collected Works of John Dewey: The Early Works, The Middle Works, The Later Works*, 37 Vols., J.A. Boydston (ed.), (Carbondale (Illinois): Southern Illinois University Press 1969-1990), p. 339 Following convention, from here on the *Early Works* will be abbreviated as *EW*, the

*Middle Works* as *MW*, and the *Later Works* as *LW*, each followed by the volume number.

[33] Matthew Festenstein, *Pragmatism and Political Theory*, (Cambridge: Polity 1997), p. 9.

[34] John Dewey, *LW* 14, p. 228-229.

[35] Shane Ralston, 'Deweyan Democracy and Pluralism: A Reunion', p. 229.

[36] Ibid. p. 230.

[37] Ibid. p. 231.

[38] Ibid. p. 232.

[39] Ibid. p. 231.

[40] Ibid. p. 232.

[41] Samuel Freeman, *Rawls*, p.471.

[42] Ibid. p. 472.

[43] Ibid. p. 299 – emphasis in original.

[44] John Rawls, 'Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory', in *Collected Papers*, S. Freeman (ed.), (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press 1999), p. 312.

[45] Of course, one may insist that Talisse just needs to show that Deweyan democracy constitutes a comprehensive doctrine. Rawls writes in *Political Liberalism,* p.13, that a comprehensive doctrine outlines "what is of value in human life" and includes "ideals of personal character, as well as ideals of friendship and of familial and associational relationships, and much else that is to inform our conduct". However, my contention is that, in order to show that Deweyan democracy is a comprehensive doctrine, Talisse needs to show that Dewey's theory about what is of value in human life is substantive enough to be reasonably rejectable. Moreover, since I contend that Dewey's conception of the good (i.e. growth) is the fullest expression of what Dewey takes to be of value in human life, I will focus in this essay on demonstrating that growth itself is not reasonably rejectable.

[46] James S. Johnston, *Inquiry and Education: John Dewey and the Quest for Democracy*, (Albany: State University New York Press 2006), pp. 106-7.

[47] John Dewey, *MW* 14, p. 28

[48] John Dewey, *MW* 9, p. 113

[49] John Dewey, *MW* 14, p. 28

[50] John Dewey, *LW* 10, p. 63

[51] John Dewey, *MW* 14, p. 155 & *LW* 1, p. 88

[52] John Dewey, LW 1, p. 86

[53] John Dewey, *MW* 14, p. 159

[54] John Dewey, *MW* 14, p. 195

[55] Naoko Saito, *The Gleam of Light: Moral Perfectionism and Education in Dewey and Emerson,* (New York: Fordham University Press 2005), pp. 75-6

[56] John Dewey, *LW* 1, p. 158

[57] John Dewey, LW 7, p. 212

[58] Samuel Freeman, *Rawls*, p. 299 – emphasis in original.

[59] Shane Ralston, 'A More Practical Pedagogical Ideal: Searching for a criterion of Deweyan growth', *Educational Theory*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (2011), p. 360. Furthermore, in seeming anticipation, Naoko Saito writes in *The Gleam of Light*, p. 5: "To the question, 'What is the criterion of growth?' [Dewey's] answer is the 'principle of the continuity of experience'. This we might call growth without fixed ends."

[60] Jennifer Welchman, *Dewey's Ethical Thought*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1995), p. 191.

[61] Axel Honneth, 'Between Proceduralism and Teleology: An unresolved conflict in John Dewey's Moral Theory', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1998), p. 701.

[62] John Dewey, *LW* 7, p. 210.

[63] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, revised edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999), p. 289.

[64] Samuel Freeman, *Rawls*, p. 476.

[65] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 285-6. It is worth noting that this is actually a rather idiosyncratic definition of perfectionism, since most perfectionists do not usually focus on producing "excellence in arts, science, and culture." They usually prefer to emphasise the more generic importance of realising the capacities of

individuals, but not specifically in order to create great artists, scientists, or citizens. I am very grateful to Robert Stern for pointing out this line of reflection.

[66] See, for example, Thomas Hurka, *Perfectionism*, Oxford Ethics Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[67] John Dewey, *MW* 12, p. 181. Also see *MW* 9, p. 55.

[68] John Dewey, *EW* 4, p. 43.

[69] John Dewey, *MW* 12, p. 180.

[70] John Dewey, *EW* 4, p. 49.

[71] James Campbell, *Understanding John Dewey: Nature and Cooperative Intelligence*, (Chicago: Open Court 1995), p. 135-6.

[72] Philip Kitcher, 'Pragmatism and Progress', *Transactions of the Charles Sanders Peirce Society*, Vol. 51, No. 4, The Idea of Pragmatism (Winter 2015), p. 480

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

[75] John Dewey, *LW* 1, p. 157.

[76] Robert Talisse, 'A Farewell to Deweyan Democracy' (2011), p. 520.

[77] John Dewey, *LW* 1, pp. 157-158 – Italics added.

[78] See, for example, John Dewey, *MW* 12, pp. 197-198.

[79] Charles Sanders Peirce, 'The First Rule of Reason', in *The Collected Works of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Volume 1, eds. C. Hartshorne and P. Weiss, (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press 1931), p. 135:"Upon this first, and in one sense this sole, rule of reason, that in order to learn you must desire to learn, and in so desiring not be satisfied with what you already incline to think, there follows one corollary which itself deserves to be inscribed upon every wall of the city of philosophy: Do not block the way of inquiry."

[80] Cass Sunstein, *Republic.com,* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press 2001) & *Why Societies Need Dissent* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 2003).

[81] R. Talisse, 'A Farewell to Deweyan Democracy' (2011), p. 519.

[82] John Rawls, 'The Idea of Public Reason Revisited', in *John Rawls: Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 1999), p. 591

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