

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

POLITICS AND PASSION: TOWARD A MORE EGALITARIAN LIBERALISM. By Michael Walzer. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. 2004. Pp. ix, 184. \$25.00 (cloth). Does the standard world view of liberal theory bear any resemblance to the reality in which we live? In this thought-provoking and insightful account, Michael Walzer suggests that prevailing liberal theory misconceives the real world and the emotional connections among its inhabitants. Rather than treating society as composed of freely choosing, unrestrained actors, Professor Walzer describes a world in which people are born into numerous involuntary associations that pervasively affect their identity, values, and social standing. Equality within and among these groups presents a challenge to the underlying assumptions of liberal theory. In a similar vein, the liberal vision of cool, rational “deliberation” among autonomous individuals underestimates the importance of social conflict and the vital role played by passion in political discourse. Taking aim at the elevated status traditionally accorded to reasoned argument, Professor Walzer notes his “ambition to blur the line between reason and passion: to rationalize (some of) the passions and to impassion reason” (p. 126). By failing to account for these social realities, the book argues, liberal theory obstructs rather than assists those concerned with achieving meaningful equality. Ultimately, however, Professor Walzer’s aim is not to abandon liberalism but to reform it. He hopes to present a revised liberal theory that “is politically more engaged, sociologically more informed, . . . psychologically more open” (p. xii), and — perhaps most importantly — fundamentally more egalitarian.

DNA AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: THE TECHNOLOGY OF JUSTICE. Edited by David Lazer. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 2004. Pp. xviii, 414. \$27.00 (paper). DNA evidence has led to the reversal of dozens of wrongful convictions and has aided in thousands of successful criminal investigations. Yet many critics have reservations about the current use of DNA evidence, including concerns about accuracy and privacy. This book, which developed out of a 2000 conference on the future of DNA evidence sponsored by the Department of Justice, pursues the dialogue among scientists, lawyers, and policy-makers interested in addressing these difficult issues. As an introductory essay by Justice Stephen Breyer explains, courts are best able to approach problematic areas when they can draw on a robust conversation between experts from all the relevant fields. The remaining essays consider three aspects of DNA use in the law: One set of commentaries explores how DNA evidence is weighed at trial (p. 97) and in post-conviction appeals that might establish innocence (p. 114). In a second colloquy, ethicists and lawyers debate the proper balance be-

tween privacy and security in the creation of DNA databases and their use in criminal investigations. A third and particularly provocative pair of chapters considers the potential intersection between law and behavioral genetics, and probes the question of how the law should respond if scientists were to identify genetic “causes” of criminal behavior. This fascinating compilation of essays establishes that although genetic technology may have cracked many a tough case, the criminal justice system is still some way off from cracking the tough legal questions raised by DNA evidence.

ONE ELECTORATE UNDER GOD?: A DIALOGUE ON RELIGION & AMERICAN POLITICS. Edited by E.J. Dionne, Jr. et al. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. 2004. Pp. xv, 239. \$17.95 (paper). God is not dead after all. Faith and religion are alive and well in — and can prove beneficial to — modern American politics. This collection of essays, comprising the third volume in the Pew Forum Dialogues on Religion and Public Life, explores the nexus of public policy and religious faith. The collection reads as a conversation among a varied and impressive group of scholars, practitioners, politicians, and journalists, and is “based on a simple proposition . . . : Religious voices and insights rooted in faith have a great deal to contribute to our public deliberations about politics and public policy” (p. 2). Former New York governor Mario Cuomo and Congressman Mark Souder anchor the conversation, offering insights they have gained as public officials and men of religious conviction. Cuomo, a Catholic and political liberal, offers a basic proposition: “[S]ome of the fundamental propositions common to all religious convictions actually enrich, instead of inhibit, public service” (p. 18). Souder, an Evangelical Protestant and political conservative, agrees with Cuomo’s confluence of the moral and political and contends that it is unfair to make public officials and citizens “check [their] beliefs at the public door” — “[t]he challenge is to find ways to continue to allow personal religious freedom in America . . . while working through the differences” (p. 23). Elaborating upon these offerings, a host of voices offer probing and imaginative ideas about the intersection of faith and public policy; among these commentators are Paul Begala, David Brooks, Martha Minow, Ramesh Ponnuru, and Gary Bauer. This stimulating and ambitious collection should prove engaging for any reader concerned with the state of the American polity and the American soul — and whatever interrelation exists between the two.