

Introduction and Comments

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We live in a time when fanaticism seems to have permeated politics across the globe. It seems especially crucial, therefore, that we understand fanaticism and its vicissitudes in specific contexts. It also seems imperative that we begin “at home,” as it were, by exploring how fanaticism has operated on American terrain and how it has informed our own politics. Joel Olson initiates this analysis in our lead article by attending to the words and actions of prominent Abolitionists in nineteenth-century America and the zeal with which they sought the demise of slavery. Olson offers a provocative argument regarding the role of fanaticism in democratic politics and, in so doing, prompts us to re-assess our own understandings of zealotry.

In the second essay in this issue Deborah Boucoyannis strikes a similarly challenging stance. She insists that “liberals” take their own intellectual heritage seriously by exploring how the concept of “balance of powers” with its attendant focus on interests and equilibrium informs our understanding of international relations. Boucoyannis argues that such exploration sustains a revitalized Liberalism while chastening varieties of Realism that seemingly dominate thinking about international affairs.

In the next essay Sarah Binder, Anthony Madonna, and Steven Smith use a recent episode of intense procedural conflict in the United States Senate to discuss larger matters of institutional change, or its absence, and constitutional politics. They ask why, in the Senate, minorities retain the power via filibuster to hold the remainder of the body hostage. They argue that the persistence of this power is a direct result of institutional factors rather than the contingent policy preferences of Senators.

The next two articles each propose that political scientists revise common practices in the discipline. Kevin Clarke and David Primo urge upon us a more pluralist understanding of the uses to which we put formal models. They argue that a preoccupation with “theory testing” obscures the considerably wider range of things we actually use models for in our research. The pluralism that Clarke and Primo endorse retains a central role for models in social scientific reasoning while providing, on their account, a

richer appreciation for their uses. Given the methodological controversies that have beset the discipline in recent years, and especially the manner in which settlements to those controversies have found their ways into our institutions and practices, this methodological counsel seems especially well taken. Jonathan Kstellec and Eduardo Leoni direct our attention to the ways we present the empirical data we use in our research. They argue that political scientists typically rely on tables to present quantitative evidence and suggest that instead we might rely more extensively on graphic displays of various sorts. Kstellec and Leoni are especially persuasive to the extent that they demonstrate how to transform a variety of tabular presentations into graphic displays.

This issue closes with a disagreement. I previously have suggested that one of the functions that I hope *Perspectives on Politics* might serve is to help us refine our disagreements, thereby making them more productive. In 2005, Larry Bartels published a provocative paper here entitled “Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind.” In this issue Arthur Lupia, Adam Levine, Jesse Menning, and Gisela Sin take issue with Bartels. They re-examine the data Bartels used as a basis for arguing that political heterogeneity leads to differences in the ways that citizens process information and make judgements. In that sense they offer what they feel is a more complex and nuanced assessment of American citizens and their capacities. The issue closes with a brief reply from Bartels who, unsurprisingly, remains unpersuaded by his critics. I leave it to readers to reach their own assessments. I will say only that this is the sort of engagement from which the discipline can only benefit. Over the next several issues I hope to publish more such exchanges.

I hope readers will note that we include in this issue a list of those among our colleagues who have refereed manuscripts for *Perspectives on Politics* over the past year. This may appear to be a purely perfunctory recognition. I want

to dispel that notion should you entertain it. Journals like *Perspectives* rely very heavily on the willingness of individuals to take time from their own teaching and writing and research to offer assessments of manuscripts their peers

submit for possible publication. Without that willingness the editorial process can quite literally grind to a halt. The individuals listed on page 873 have my gratitude. You owe them yours as well.

Notes from the Managing Editor

Forthcoming

The following articles and essays have been scheduled for publication in a forthcoming issue of *Perspectives on Politics*.

Clement Fantovic. “The Political Theology of Prerogative: The Jurisprudential Miracle in Liberal Constitutional Thought.”

Daniel Lipson. “Where’s the Justice? Affirmative Action as Diversity Management in Post-Civil Rights America.”

Desmond King and David Rueda. “Cheap Labor: New Politics of ‘Bread and Roses’ In Industrial Democracies?”

Ronald F. King and Thomas S. Langston. “Narratives of American Politics.”

Keally McBride. “State of Insecurity: The Trial of Job and Secular Political Order.”

Gary Miller and Norman Schofield. “The Transformation of the Republican and Democratic Party Coalitions in the U.S.”

Kristen Monroe, Amy Alexander, Ted Wrigley, and Saba Ozyurt. “Gender Equality in Academia: Bad News from the Trenches, and Some Possible Solutions.”

Elizabeth J. Perry. “Chinese Conceptions of ‘Rights’: From Mencius to Mao—and Now.”

Ingrid van Biezen and Michael Saward. “Democratic Theorists and Party Scholars: Why They Don’t Talk to Each Other, and Why They Should.”