

Upendra Chidella, Parameshwar Rama Bhat and Vikram Singh Sirola, *In defense of liberal-pluralism* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

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Diversity of opinions, claims and actions are an undeniable fact of any society. There were many books devoted to the discussion of the ways in which diversity should be treated. Kantian and Neo-Kantian philosophers appealed to universality of reason and higher-order values, Rawls appealed to equality and justice. The authors of the book claim that both arguments are not enough to provide a background for the interpersonal framework, they see a solution of the problem in liberal-pluralism which essentially combines Kantian and Rawlsian arguments. They argue that the key to the problem is reasonability which should be based on principles of equality, justice, rights, fairness, cooperation, reciprocity, and tolerance.

The starting point of their speculation is that pluralism is one of the most essential conditions of the multi-agent context. The authors made an interesting attempt to accommodate plurality within the framework of liberal theory, coming to the conclusion that it is necessary to free pluralism from the charges of moral insignificance (p. 251). According to them, liberalism as it is described by Kantian and Neo-Kantian moral philosophers violates the plurality condition with reference to universality of the rationality, values, higher-order principles, and impartiality.

The first chapter of the book is an introduction to the main problems of interpersonal framework. It provides an analysis of the conflicts connected with the choice, life-projects, value-claims and multiple rationalities preparing a reader for possible solution which is liberal-pluralism. The main statement of the chapter is that plurality should be the central concern of moral philosophers and that morality has to be understood with respect to multiple rationalities. The nature of interpersonal framework is discussed in the second chapter, "Understanding the Interpersonal Question." Their speculation touches upon the conflict of rights, freedoms and interests of an individual and others in multi-agent context examining theories of Kymlicka, Raz, Gewirth, Nozick and Dworkin. The main contribution here is that self-actualization as such cannot avoid agent-relative choices and values.

In the third chapter, "A Critique of Moral Foundationalism" the authors discuss the incapability of unconditional morality to handle interpersonal conflicts. The authors provide an alternative way of approaching morality in the interpersonal framework; they argue that moral principles should value moral differences, acknowledging the existence of rights of others in the context of agent-recipient relationship. This part of the book essentially repeats and develops ideas expressed in the first two chapters. The fourth chapter, "Justificatory Liberalism: Impartiality and

Reasonableness," which is the most satisfactory and challenging part, examines Kantian and Neo-Kantian perspectives on interpersonal conflict resolution. The authors critique the Kantian principles of impartiality, neutrality as unreasonable. Instead they propose to base morality on the principles of cooperation and fairness.

In the fifth chapter, "Justificatory Liberalism: The Limits of Proceduralism," the authors elaborate on relationship between liberalism and pluralism. In this part they turn to concept of toleration and claim that it is an act of promoting justice which helps to handle interpersonal conflicts (p.210). The last chapter, "Moral Pluralism," looks for rational basis to resolve all differences from the point of critique of Universalistic morality. It gives a general description of liberal pluralism as well as an extensive analysis of theories of Kekes, Plaw, Sen and Berlin.

On the whole, the book presents an innovative approach to interpersonal conflict and introduces an interesting solution to the conflict based on liberal-pluralism. The authors argue that to handle the conflict it is necessary to turn to a liberalism which acknowledges the importance of multiple rationalities, considers principles of basic liberties and substantive freedoms. Their perspective on conflict resolution proposes to keep "substantial pluralism as a persistent condition, where minimal objectivity is not put outside the pluralistic moral framework" (p. 27).

The emphasis on multiple rationality has an extreme importance in the context of multiculturalism as a feature of modernity. Nowadays in situations of integration of immigration population, indigenous peoples, especially modern Western countries, experience some difficulties with finding a way to treat the diversity. Thus, the innovative liberal pluralistic approach could be seen as a possible way of looking at the modern heterogeneous societies. The innovative, fresh and interesting approach, proposed by the authors, perfectly accords with modern development of human rights protection; it also goes hand in hand with today's Western discourse over minority representation or immigrant population policies.

Together with extensive and fresh critique of modern moral philosophies, the book provides deep and adequate critique of Kantian philosophy. The critique rests not on the surface of Kantian moral philosophy, but questions the very basis of Kantian moral principles: its universalistic approach to rationality. Moreover, the book provides a very sophisticated critique on the classic liberal theory which, during a long time, was considered to be the very philosophical foundation of modern Western ethics. The success of the book is that the authors not only diagnose problems within previous theories, but also propose their own alternative and innovative theoretical solutions which perfectly suit modern liberal trends and the struggle for human rights all over the globe. Thus, the theory proposed in the book could be perceived as potentially applicable.

On the other hand, the approach presented in the book could be seen as an ambiguous one. First, the book provides an extensive critique of classical moral philosophy and the only solution they come up with is a combination of different elements of classical moral theories of Kantians, Neo-Kantians and Rawlsians. Second, the solution of problems occurring within the interpersonal framework which is based on principle of plurality of moral values could be criticized for its simplicity. Third, arguing for wrongness of universality *per se*, the authors insist on liberal-pluralism as universal moral value for the modern society which could be seen as contradictory to their original motive which was to overcome Kantian universalism. Moreover, some practical examples and less abstract way of speculation could have made the book more accessible for broader range of readers.

Summing up, the book is a challenging theoretical speculation on liberal-pluralism with the main emphasis on value claims, plurality, public and private morality. It also suggests the possibility of applications for political philosophy where certain implementations of the theory in practice are considered. The book is worth reading for senior students in ethics, philosophy, political philosophy or normative political theory; for people less advanced in the topic it could be hard to read and too abstract to get the main points. Overall, the book is well-written and a prepared reader can easily follow the main ideas. Despite the missing explanatory elements, people interested in moral philosophy, political theory and ethics will find the book very interesting, stimulating and useful reading.

Larbi Touaf and Soumia Boutkhil (eds.), *The World as a Global Agora: Critical Perspectives on Public Space* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).

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Public spaces have for centuries played an important role in the formation and development of societies, both as a physical space for gathering and debating, as well as a symbolic notion representing the core values of democracy. Such places have developed in a way that reflects the beliefs, public values, as well as the culture and a sense of community for the inhabitants of many areas. Public spaces remain a crucial concept in many developed and developing societies, as well as a vital component of the more traditional communities around the world. Nevertheless, as our ever more globalizing and liberalizing planet continues on its path of economic commercialization, privatization and subtle fragmentation, public spaces begin taking on new appearances. As public spaces form and deform under the influence of the present day media and information technology, they seem to morph into a