Yet this is not strictly true, and brief summative examples seem to exist even in their own chapters. As an applied theorist, for example, I have published a study of 28 years of US public engagement on LGBT equality (1987–2015) featuring an exploratory data analysis of more than 8,000 deliberative expressions across diverse domains, including sports, religion, and social groups. Through such summative conversation the US public reflected on and adopted new ways of understanding marriage, family, gender, and sexuality in a major transformation in cultural scripts and policy that is still ongoing (Edwina Barvosa, Deliberative Democracy Now: LGBT Equality and the Emergence of Large-Scale Deliberative Systems, 2018). The LGBT equality case reveals patterns in deliberative system growth, key catalysts, the social infrastructure by which a public builds a system, and specific communication practices that help participants sidestep the hazards of implicit bias and polarizing speech in easily accessible and often pleasurable ways. If this is so, a visible summative deliberative system has already emerged organically in the United States on at least one topic.

Moreover, this does not seem to be a solitary occurrence. Bächtiger and Parkinson make tantalizingly brief note of the case of public deliberation on Scottish independence in which the Scottish government “resisted the urge to design and manage the process itself [resulting in] . . . an astonishing outburst of conversation at bus stops and kitchen tables, in market squares and online forums. . . . [through which] Scots created a new understanding of what was distinctively Scottish about their approach to the state and public policy” (p. 91). As old political practices break down, democratic publics seem increasingly able and inclined to create large-scale conversations capable of decisively shifting social and political practice. Similar public-led discussions appear to be emerging in the United States and elsewhere on issues such as rape and sexual assault, gun violence, racial inequities, economic inequality, and potentially climate change. This is so even under polarized conditions, which, in the LGBT case, frequently sparked reasoned reflection across political divides.

In short, summative deliberation appears to be where the action is and additive practices may spur this to greater heights. Only time and more empirical study will tell. Although worn-out scholarly lenses might lead us to overlook these developments, this book offers a valuable framework from which we can renew informed scholarly discussion and bring together the wise and visionary minds of advocates and skeptics alike to reexamine the shifting prospects for deliberative democracy. The day may yet come when we are retrospectively grateful for the currently painful political turmoil that brings to the surface not only many elements in need of public deliberation but also the dire necessity for democratic publics to find their own way into productive conversation.

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— Alan M. S. J. Coffee, King’s College London alan.coffee@kcl.ac.uk

The purpose of this volume is to explore the various ways that republican political thought can contribute to debates about the present meaning and future shape of democracy. It achieves this aim by bringing together a series of chapters by a range of republican scholars writing from diverse perspectives, each reflecting on the relationship between republican theory and democracy from within their particular field.

The combined effect is impressive. There are 13 essays from a stellar cast of contributors that includes a great many of the figures that a reader might hope to engage with, and there is also a helpful introduction from the two editors. The essays are divided into six short sections covering the ideal of the common good, historical responses to the challenges of democratic politics, non-domination as a democratic ideal, the reciprocal influences between republicanism and democracy, the workplace and the market, and republicanism beyond the nation-state. There are no weak chapters in the volume, and the net effect is a thought-provoking collection that challenges the reader from a wide variety of (often conflicting) standpoints. Although a lot has inevitably been left out of such a short volume on a rich and fast-changing area, as I suggest later, its range of subjects and the quality of its writing mean that this book is likely to become a definitive collection for the next decade, rather like Cécile Laborde’s and John Maynor’s Republicanism and Political Theory (2008) was in the last.

No firm stance is taken either by the editors or within the volume on the question of what constitutes republicanism or what its core commitments and principles are. That is as it should be, because many of the chapters show the complexity and subtlety of thinking of republican writing even within the confines of what might broadly be taken as the Roman, rather than Athenian, or the Italian-Atlantic tradition that inform most of the essays. This much said, although a broad range of historical thinkers are invoked—often innovatively—it is noticeable that all the contributors confine their attention to a fairly safe and predictable set of canonized figures. Pettit, for example, engages with Rousseau on the common good; Daniel Kapust closely reads Sallust on inequality; Annelien de Dijn contrasts the approaches of Richard Price, John Adams, and James Madison on the problem of the tyranny of the majority; and Frank Lovett,
John McCormick, and Nadia Urbinati each take in a broad sweep of established republican authorities in making their arguments.

There is, however, no mention in the volume of a single woman writing as a republican before Hannah Arendt. Neither are any nonwhite historical figures cited. This is both a shame and a missed opportunity. There is now considerable momentum behind the move to recognize, recover, and restore the contributions to the history of republican thinking from writers outside of traditional groups, with this process particularly well advanced in the case of women. Mary Wollstonecraft, for example, is now widely accepted as having made a significant contribution to republican thought (Alan Coffee, “Mary Wollstonecraft, Freedom and the Enduring Power of Social Domination,” European Journal of Political Theory 12 (2), 2013; Lena Hallidenius, Mary Wollstonecraft and Feminist Republicanism, 2015). She is, however, but one of many, with the revolutionary period at the end of the eighteenth century alone providing many others, such as Catharine Macaulay, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Olympe de Gouges, and Sophie de Grouchy. Each wrote innovatively and influentially on themes of voice, inclusion, representation, and equality that lie squarely within the concerns of this volume. Similarly, African American writers in the nineteenth century frequently drew on the republican themes of the American, French and Haitian Revolutions; they include Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, Anna Julia Cooper, and James McCune Smith, among many others.

Almost every chapter in the book engages with Philip Pettit’s work at some point, even if critically. Again, this is to be expected, because Pettit’s scholarship represents by far the most extensively worked-out account of neo-republicanism and has overwhelmingly set the agenda for contemporary debate within the field. Nevertheless, the lack of theoretical diversity in the volume shows in the way that contributors respond to Pettit. A great many theoretical problems in republicanism ultimately come back to its central tension, based on its being an account of the self-governing individual in a self-governing community. At some point, all republicans must identify a criterion by which they can establish the acceptable limits of coercive force that is consistent with individual freedom. The criterion must be sufficiently narrow to leave individuals free to pursue their own ends while being substantial enough to serve as the basis for real-life laws that are both stable and acceptable to the population. This represents the distinction between arbitrary (illegitimate, dominating) and nonarbitrary (legitimate, nondominating) power.

 Broadly speaking, identifying this criterion can be approached in two ways. The most common approach by far in the literature is to accept that a process of public reason based on shared standards and values can in principle establish and administer a set of nonarbitrary laws. The task, then, is to determine how we should give specific content to the criterion of nonarbitrariness and whom we should trust to administer this process. Should we, for example, follow the popular will or turn to a set of appointed guardians of the constitution? Do we have most to fear from the tyranny of the majority or from an unaccountable minority? These questions are taken up by de Dijn, McCormick, and Urbinati, with the latter two entering into a spirited and useful exchange on representative democracy. A concern of McCormick’s is the unconstrained power of wealth, a theme that ties in with Kapust’s contribution. (For their part, Lovett and Niko Kolodny engage at a more abstract level with the question, asking what is the relationship between republicanism and democracy and what is the essential harm of being under the rule of others, respectively.)

Republicans may, however, question the operation of public reason itself. To do so represents a second level of republican inquiry into the criterion of arbitrariness. This is a necessary approach to take where the social and cultural preconditions for a free republic and a democratic system have not been met and must first be addressed. A key concern of Wollstonecraft’s in this context, for example, is that if women’s perspectives are not reflected in the baseline of cultural attitudes, values, beliefs, and practices that inform public debate, then women can have no chance of making a rational case for their rights to equal citizenship, something that is required for both republican freedom and democracy. This is not a peripheral matter for republicans but something both theoretically and practically essential to their framework. However, only one chapter in the book directly addresses this issue, with the rest of the first eight chapters focused on the operation of institutions that are successfully governed by public reason (following Pettit’s lead on this). Lida Maxwell navigates this second level of inquiry by making the unrepulican case for codpendence as a sometimes necessary and valuable condition for marginalized people to contest prevailing social norms, but without engaging with the ample available resources written by women and minority group members from within the republican tradition. The chapter is excellent and provocative, nevertheless, and so my comment is not aimed at Maxwell so much as at the overall balance of the volume.

The final two sections of the volume look beyond the traditional scope of democratic theory, examining first the world of the workplace and second the transnational and global context. In the section on work, the contributors apply republican principles to the workplace, a matter that has until very recently been largely overlooked in the contemporary literature, even if there are notable historic antecedents. Oppressive work environments, even those that appear to be contractual and voluntary, are a pressing...
social concern that test the republican reliance on the notion of nondomination. Alex Gourevitch defends an unconditional right of all workers to strike, Elizabeth Anderson looks for ways to restructure the workplace to disperse power in accountable ways, and Robert Taylor favors a market-driven approach based on exit possibilities. This is an area of increasing republican focus, and these essays serve as an excellent gateway into that literature. Finally, beyond the nation-state, Richard Bellamy uses the European Union as a case study to argue for an association of republican states built around their own demos, whereas Stuart White examines the power of networked activism found in movements like Occupy Wall Street to combat oligarchy and reshape domestic politics in similar and linked ways across national boundaries. These final sections nicely round off a volume that contains both history and abstract theory in practical and transformative ways that are forward looking and liable to appeal to even nonrepublican readers.

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— Emily C. Nacol, University of Toronto
emily.nacol@utoronto.ca

Are Markets Moral? invites comparison to other recent books that explore the moral implications of markets (for example, Michael Sandel, What Money Can’t Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets, 2013; and Debra Satz, Why Some Things Should Not Be for Sale: The Moral Limits of Markets, 2010). Somewhat surprisingly, however, the essays here (save for John Tomasi’s “Economic Liberties and Human Rights” and Steven Lukes’ “Getting and Spending. We Lay Waste Our Powers: On the Expanding Reach of the Market”) do not directly engage Sandel’s or Satz’s worries about commodification, the creep of market logic, and the persistent challenges of inequality and corruption that threaten market relations. The title Are Markets Moral? is thus misleading. Instead, Arthur Melzer and Steven Kautz’s volume takes up a much broader set of questions: Is capitalism, and its institutions and relations, good for us? Which features of capitalism are the most supportive of human freedom and development, and which are the most challenging to them? Is capitalism morally attractive compared to the alternatives? If so, what kind of capitalism do we want to endorse, and how should it be situated among other goods that we value? These questions certainly invite careful attention to markets as a key feature of capitalist political economies. But they are capacious enough to draw our attention to other facets of them: contracts, private property, entrepreneurship, labor relations, production, money, investment, and savings. At the expense of a more focused conversation about the morality of markets, marketization, and commodification, Are Markets Moral? instead asks us to think more widely about whether capitalism—of which markets are just one aspect—is compatible with human flourishing. Most of the book’s essays come down in favor of capitalism, either on its own terms or in comparison to other forms of political economy, but as Arthur Melzer helpfully details in his introductory essay, the sense that it is “morally disruptive” persists and serves as an important framework for all of these pieces (p. 9).

This book’s major appeal is that it generates lively conversation among its contributors about whether and how capitalism disrupts moral life. Some of these exchanges are explicit and direct, such as Lukes’ engagement with John Tomasi’s Free Market Fairness (2012), an argument for free-market democracy that Tomasi extends in his essay for Are Markets Moral? Lukes and Tomasi have a vigorous disagreement about whether the “private economic liberties of market society”—articulated as the personal rights of individuals to decide how to work, own, spend, invest, and save—should be prioritized in democratic society. Tomasi argues for the intrinsic personal moral value of these rights and the inherent value of the “familiar work-a-day virtues associated with economic liberties” by ordinary people (p. 25). Tomasi’s point is that economic decision making is simultaneously unremarkable and urgent: everyone makes decisions about how to work, spend, and save, but “such decisions constitute among the most distinctive forms of taking responsibility for one’s own life, and doing so in light of one’s own dreams, values, and character” (p. 26). For their role in individual self-authorship, economic liberties have inherent value and must be safeguarded. Lukes, in contrast, questions whether the behaviors Tomasi highlights are “manifestations of freedom or of a growing subjection” to the totalizing processes of marketization and commodification (p. 71). While taking Tomasi’s arguments for economic liberty seriously, Lukes questions what he takes to be their grounding assumptions: (1) that individuals can be “independent ‘self-author[s]’ untouched by ‘background...institutions, laws, and norms,’ as well as ‘luck’”; and (2) that “market freedom renders market actors free from coercion and domination,” even as many of them experience forms of poverty, economic loss, and under- or unemployment (pp. 80–81). Per the first point, Lukes also suggests that markets mold economic actors’ desires and capabilities, which might also unsettle the picture of them as wholly self-directed beings (p. 81). In briefly interrogating these assumptions, Lukes challenges Tomasi’s argument for economic—or market—freedom as a human right. The stakes of the debate between Tomasi and Lukes are high: their exchange presses readers to consider the scope and value of economic freedom in comparison to other kinds of freedom and