Hanging Together

Difference and disagreement can be valuable, yet they can also spiral out of control and damage liberal democracy. Advancing a metaphor of citizenship that the author terms “role-based constitutional fellowship,” this book offers a solution to this challenge. Cheng argues that a series of “divisions of labour” among citizens, differently situated, can help cultivate the foundational trust required to harness the benefits of disagreement and difference while preventing them from “overheating” and, in turn, from leaving liberal democracy vulnerable to the growing influence of autocratic political forces. The book recognizes, however, that it is not always appropriate to attempt to cultivate trust, and acknowledges the important role that some forms of confrontation might play in identifying and rectifying undue social hierarchies, such as racial-ethnic hierarchies. Hanging Together thereby works to pave a middle way between deliberative and realist conceptions of democracy.

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Hanging Together

Role-Based Constitutional Fellowship and the Challenge of Difference and Disagreement

ERIC W. CHENG

Waseda University
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