UC Berkeley
UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

**Title**
Liberalism after Pluralism: The Independence of Political Theory

**Permalink**
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/60x3s0n1

**Author**
Yumatle, Carla

**Publication Date**
2010

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

# Liberalism after Pluralism: The Independence of Political Theory

By

Carla Yumatle

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Shannon Stimson, Co-Chair
Professor Wendy Brown, Co-Chair
Professor Samuel Scheffler
Professor Niko Kolodny

Fall 2010

Abstract

Liberalism after Pluralism: The Independence of Political Theory

by

Carla Yumatle

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Shannon Stimson, Co-Chair
Professor Wendy Brown, Co-Chair

This thesis examines the scope and possibilities of liberal thinking in a post-Enlightenment and pluralistic era. It draws upon three liberal philosophers—Isaiah Berlin, John Rawls, and Richard Rorty—who offer alternative ways of re-accommodating liberalism in the shadow of pluralism. The dissertation argues that Rawls's "comprehensive liberalism" and Rorty's "reductive liberalism" face important limitations in their attempts to integrate pluralism into liberal thought. Building upon an exegetical analysis of the three thinkers, this dissertation offers, instead, a defense of a "minimalist liberalism"—a liberalism à la Berlin that is capable of accommodating a plural view of values, of the social practices that lodge them, and of ourselves as carriers of those values. Minimalist liberalism bears an "elective affinity" with pluralism, where "elective affinity" is understood as a normative and historical reinforcing connection between liberalism and pluralism on account of their reciprocal capacity for inclusiveness. The implication of this analysis is that minimalist liberalism must curb its own scope and ambition, and it requires for its justification a sharper yet more multifaceted independence of political theory from moral reasoning than either Rawls or Rorty suggest.

## Table of Contents

**Acknowledgments** iv

**Introduction** 1

**Chapter I**
**Moral and Political Theory: Can Rawls Keep Them Independent?** 5

I. The Transition from the Kantian to the Political Description of the Person 7

II. The Dubious Grounds of Society as a Fair Scheme of Social Cooperation 15

III. Can The Conception of The Person Be Shared by All Other Moral Theories? 17

IV. Another Comprehensive View 19

V. Corollaries 22

**Chapter Two**
**Isaiah Berlin's Anti-Reductionism: in the Move from Semantic to Normative Perspectives** 25

I. Against Semantic Reductionism: Verificationism and Phenomenalism 26

II. From Semantic to Normative Anti-Reductionism 28
- A. Incommensurability 28
- B. Plurality and Conflict 29
- C. Anti-Metaphysical and Historical View 32
  - *Is Berlin A Moral Realist?* 35
- D. Incompleteness 39
- E. Incomparability 42

III. Conclusion 44

**Chapter Three**
**The "Elective Affinity" between Liberalism and Pluralism: A Weberian Approach to Isaiah Berlin's Political Theory** 45

I. Laying the Ground: Resemblances between Weber and Berlin 45

II. The Elective Affinity between Protestantism and the Spirit of Capitalism 49

III. Elective Affinity: A Reinterpretation 51

IV - Value Pluralism and Liberalism: Alternative Readings 55
A. The Indeterminacy Argument 55
B. The Naturalistic Fallacy Argument 59
C. A Lingua Franca of Minimum Moralities 62

V. From Value Pluralism to Liberalism: A Weberian Reading of Berlin's Proposal 65
*Liberalism of Choice: A Readjustment between Moral and Political Theory* 66

**Chapter Four**
**Rorty's Pragmatic Liberalism: A Reductionist View of the Political** 72

I. The Privatization of Politics: Keeping Foucault at Arm's Length 74

II. Aestheticized Liberal Politics: Turning Weber on His Head 80

III. Dualism Back Again: Private vs. Public Self 86

IV. Hope vs. Critique 89

V. Conclusions 93

**Chapter Five**
**A Third Way? Liberalism after Pluralism: Minimalist not Comprehensive or Reductive** 95

I. Three Liberal Strategies 96
A. Comprehensive Liberalism: John Rawls 96
B. Reductive Liberalism: Richard Rorty 102
C. Minimalist Liberalism: Isaiah Berlin 104

II. Conclusion 108

**Chapter Six**
**The Independence of Liberal Political Theory** 111

I. Moral and Political Theory Entwined: Comprehensive Ethical Reasons in the Justification of a Liberal State 113

II. Moral and Political Theory Sundered: Historical Pluralism 116

III. Moral and Political Theory Sundered: No Necessary and Sufficient Moral Conditions for A Liberal State 117

IV. Moral and Political Theory Sundered: A Liberal State Not A Liberal Polity 118

V. Moral and Political Theory Sundered: The Political Broader Than The State 123

VI. Moral and Political Theory Sundered: Legitimacy not Justice 126

**References** 131

**Bibliography** 160

**Acknowledgments**

The process of writing this dissertation has been enhanced, and the usual difficulties and obstacles involved in the process mitigated, by the wisdom and intellectual guidance, the emotional poise and the collective willingness to cooperate of the members of my committee, Shannon Stimson (co-chair), Wendy Brown (co-chair), Samuel Scheffler, and Niko Kolodny. I am grateful to all of them for making this endeavor more intellectually challenging and yet more fulfilling and worthwhile than it would otherwise have been.

Shannon Stimson's unswerving and consequential support during all my years of graduate school has been the backbone of this undertaking. Simply knowing that she wholeheartedly supported me sustained me even when I would see no way forward. I cannot thank her enough for the unconditional encouragement, judicious direction and intelligent criticisms that she gave me before and during the dissertation writing process. As the first reader of every draft of my work, she invariably read the worst version of everything that I wrote. And she did that with a critical eye but also with generosity and intellectual kindness. Beyond the bountiful theoretical suggestions and critiques that I received from her, she never failed to respond soundly and immediately to the many—too many—emails, phone calls and requests that I made over these past years. The awareness of that categorical support has been reassuring and gratifying, and kept me going.

Wendy Brown's close reading of my work has been priceless. Benefiting from her ideas, suggestions and critiques was a gem for my own intellectual growth. As the critical mind from outside the liberal debates, she jolted me out of my intellectual comfort zone at many points in the dissertation argument. It is an auspicious pending assignment to do justice to all of the brilliant suggestions that she made to this work. I also want to thank Wendy for her evenhanded intellectual attitude—swallowing, and yet reading so scrupulously, so many pages on liberal thought must have been a feat for her for which I am very grateful. Finally, my thanks go to Wendy for unhesitatingly knowing when to demand more and when to yield, not only during the dissertation process but over the years that preceded it. At one important moment, not only did she yield but also came to my support unreservedly—I am very thankful to her for that too.

Samuel Scheffler's participation on my dissertation committee is something that I have wanted before starting graduate school, and something that I will now always cherish. His comments, in particular on the first three chapters of this dissertation, were as incisive as they were eye-opening and helpful. The written criticisms as well as the suggestions that he laid out over an influential lunch in New York helped me set the framework of this dissertation. My gratitude goes to Sam also because he saw how important it was to me that he stayed on my committee even when he moved from the Philosophy Department at Berkeley to New York University.

Niko Kolodny's patient reading of the entire dissertation produced very valuable and constructive comments that he shared both in written form and in a meeting at Cambridge. His critical observations, some of which require tracing the thread of the argument throughout the entire work, will certainly improve the augmented version of the manuscript that will follow this dissertation.

I am happily beholden to Guillermo O'Donnell and David Collier, whose crucial support at a decisive crossroads a very long time ago I will never forget. Their intervention in a very long chain of causal events eventually made this dissertation possible. I thanked them back then, and thank them now and always.

I am also very grateful to two very good friends of mine: Diana Kapiszewski and Alex Gourevitch. Diana has accompanied this endeavor since early on in graduate school when we shared an office at Berkeley. Ever since then her support and committed advice, our long and genuine conversations, the sighs, and the reciprocal trust have become hallmarks of a dear friendship. I thank her for always being there, and more recently for taking the time to read and edit Chapters 5 and 6 and the Introduction of this dissertation and for offering unconditionally to do much more.

It has been a privilege to discuss many of my thoughts with Alex Gourevitch over the past two and a half years while we were both teaching in the Social Studies program at Harvard University. I acknowledge his valuable contributions twice in this dissertation, and I also thank him for editing Chapter 4. I am especially thankful, however, for his unwavering encouragement reflected in actions, words, affection and the many exquisite chocolate treats that he and his wife Tal brought to my office on many solitary Sundays of hard work.

I am indebted to Anya Bernstein, the Director of Studies, and Richard Tuck, Chair of the Social Studies Committee at Harvard University. Not only did they give me an invaluable opportunity to teach in a program from which I have learned a lot, but upon my request they were also willing to modify my teaching schedule so I could finish the dissertation. They, together with a group of comradely colleagues, made the process of writing this manuscript more pleasant and certainly more edifying.

I want to offer my gratitude to two students of mine at Harvard University, Eliza Lehner and Arjun Ramamurti. Unbeknownst to them, their presence in my life during the final stage of crafting this dissertation unfaltering reminded me of the value of what I do. Knowingly, they both persistently poked me to finish. Their loyalty and genuineness are too big to acknowledge.

My thanks go also to Josh Cherniss for his very helpful comments on Chapter Two, and to Shalini Satkunanandan, Kerstin Haase, and Yves Winter for commenting on drafts of the argument that never made it to the final version of this dissertation. Sanjay Narayan graciously helped me with the final administrative steps of the filing process.

A heartfelt and enormous thanks goes to my mother, Dina Glembosky, the family juggernaut, as well as to my stepfather, Alberto Gioannini, my intellectual influence, my father, Antonio Yumatle, the family cacique, and my beloved siblings, María Gioannini and Sebastián Yumatle. They, together with my nephews, nieces and siblings-in-law, have been an irreplaceable source of strength, laughter, hugs, kisses, joshing, and solace. I especially would like to single out my mom and my siblings who helped me, at a key point, to gain perspective and see beyond the glass darkly so that I could make the decision that finally allowed me to finish the dissertation. I greatly thank them for their empathy, clarity, steadfastness and motivation.

On the family front my thanks also go to Susana Orcajo and to my family-in-law for many years of immense warmth, affection, and support.

Finally, I want to thank the person who lived the making of these pages with me. This dissertation, and much more, go hand in hand with sixteen years of love, truthfulness, and enterprise that I have shared with Sebastián Mazzuca. His vision, brilliance, and companionship kept me steady whenever I wobbled during years of graduate school and beyond; and his presence in my life has had a vast positive impact on the person I have come to be. I dedicate this dissertation, and much more, to him.

## Introduction

This thesis comprises an extended effort to understand the scope and possibilities of liberal thinking in a post-Enlightenment and pluralistic era. In an effort to do so, I draw upon three liberal thinkers—Isaiah Berlin, John Rawls, and Richard Rorty. These three thinkers tell us a lot about the re-accommodations of liberalism in light of the Enlightenment's demise. In particular, they have much to say about one of the many causes of the Enlightenment's wane—the emergence of pluralism—and its potential incorporation to the liberal ranks. Isaiah Berlin was the first to alert us to the enduring importance of pluralism and its corrosiveness to a rationalistic and systematic view of politics. John Rawls, in turn, recognized the importance of pluralism for his liberal project to the extent of rethinking his original views and providing a new articulation of the basis for liberalism to make it more acquiescent to the plural condition of social life. Rawls is a towering figure in this dissertation not only because of the invaluable contribution of his thought but also because he moves the discussion forward by conceding that the impact of pluralism requires a rearrangement of the division of labor between moral and political theory in the justification of liberalism. Finally, Richard Rorty is a central figure in any analysis that examines the conditions of possibility of practical thinking after the Enlightenment. Rorty is probably the most anti-Enlightenment contemporary liberal thinker. His pragmatic liberalism not only attempts to incorporate the pluralistic view but it intends to do it without philosophical foundations. Rorty jumps further away from the Enlightenment than any other liberal thinker while defending a liberal view that sides with a plural vision of political life.

An important effort of this dissertation, however, is to move beyond the exegesis of the seminal works of Berlin, Rawls and Rorty, and to offer a defense of a "minimalist liberalism"—a liberalism that is capable of incorporating and buttressing a plural view of values, the social practices that lodge them, and ourselves, as carriers of those values.

In Chapter One, I consider the philosophical strengths and weaknesses of Rawls's liberalism as a case of "comprehensive liberalism." I argue that despite Rawls's move from *A Theory of Justice* to *Political Liberalism*, his liberalism stays Kantian and thus less susceptible to the pluralism that motivates the shift.

Chapter Two argues that Berlin's value pluralism is more historical than it is usually conceived to be and this makes it more responsive to a liberal view. The chapter examines the "moral realist" readings of Berlin and argues, instead, that Berlin's pluralism entails ethical objectivity without moral realism.

Chapter Three reinterprets Berlin's proposed relation between liberalism and pluralism as one of "elective affinity," which against most mainstream readings of his work, puts liberalism and pluralism on the same side. Berlin's liberalism with its limited focus on negative freedom granted by the state is less dependent on some of the moral assumptions that imperil the relationship between liberalism and pluralism. The comparative analysis of the thinkers undertaken here indicates that Berlin's liberalism, labeled here "liberalism of choice," is the most amenable to pluralism. Although Berlin still clings to an enlightened idea of a sovereign individual with his emphasis on choice, his liberalism points to the viability of a minimalist liberalism, which I defend in full in Chapter Six.

Chapter Four argues that Rorty's pragmatic liberal theory is a case of "reductive liberalism"—a liberalism that shrinks the political to the boundaries of a Millian principle. Any claim that does not see eye-to-eye with that liberal standard is for that reason marooned in the private realm. Hence, Rorty's pragmatic liberalism admits of pluralism only by making it a private matter.

After examining, in Chapters One through Four, the internal strengths and weaknesses of each thinker's endeavor to integrate pluralism to the liberal mind, Chapter Five offers a systematic comparison of Rawls's Kantian liberalism, Rorty's pragmatic liberalism, and Berlin's liberalism of choice. Based on the respective analyses of each thinker's thought in the previous chapters, Chapter Five categorizes Rawls's as a "comprehensive liberalism," Rorty's as a "reductive liberalism," and Berlin's as a "minimalist liberalism." Chapter Five draws upon the comparative analysis of the authors and offers additional evidence of Rawls's comprehensiveness by claiming that his liberalism extends from a conception of the state to a conception of the social order writ large, and that its focus on justice constantly beckons a comprehensive and systematic liberal ethos that goes against the pluralism it intends to incorporate. In addition, the chapter argues that whereas Berlin's liberalism is closer to a minimalist liberalism that will be defended in this dissertation both Rawls and Rorty's attempts to redefine the boundaries of moral and political theory to make liberalism more amenable to pluralism fail. For they both ultimately equate that divide with a permanent, liberal understanding of the public and private realms inuring their liberalism to pluralism. Indeed, pluralism disrupts the internal and external frontiers between the public and the private, the partial and the impartial and calls for a more nuanced and complex relation between morality and politics.

The contours of a workable association between moral and political theory in a pluralist aegis are described in Chapter Six, the last chapter of the dissertation. This chapter argues for the independence of liberal political theory from moral reasoning. It claims that while minimalist liberalism, the liberalism that can incorporate and coexist with pluralism, is more porous to ethical personal views than Rawls and Rorty admit, in curbing its scope and goal minimalist liberalism also hives off moral theory. Minimalist liberalism does not provide a full explanation of the political, and does not impose an impartial moral thinking as the only way to understand the dynamics of political power. This puts liberalism apart from moral theory and side by side with a more conflictive and plural description of politics.

It might be useful here to offer a synoptic glimpse of the argument before the dissertation proceeds. Minimalist liberalism's three core features are the following. First, minimalist liberalism's relationship with pluralism could be described as an "elective affinity"—a form of association famously introduced by Max Weber. Elective affinity, for Weber, involves a random historical encounter of two different forms of social action (economics and religion) that due to their distinctive complementariness tend to reinforce each other. Elective affinity entails, in Weber's view, a conscious and perceptible coexistence of ideal and material interests manifested in the social order over time, and one that significantly had previously been absent. I reinterpret the Weberian sociological account as a normative and historical idea, and claim that this is the type of relationship that draws minimalist liberalism and pluralism together on account of their mutual capacity for inclusiveness. This normative connection does not point to an exhaustive or

systematic relationship between system of ideas and it does not explain the origin of liberalism or pluralism but their mutual reinforcement. Unlike the emphasis on choice that Chapter Three argues lies underneath the Berlinian elective affinity between pluralism and liberalism, minimalist liberalism sees pluralism and liberalism coming together based on their being inclusive doctrines. Minimalist liberalism has an elective affinity with pluralism due to their capacity for inclusiveness and for expanding the legitimate basis of the state. In other words, liberalism is more inclusive when it incorporates pluralism and minimalist liberalism provides the framework within which pluralism can thrive. Minimalist liberalism dispenses with many of the weightier moral assumptions characteristic of the post-Enlightenment liberal ethos, and concerns itself with problems of legitimacy, understood as a minimum threshold for inclusiveness. This, rather than a justification based on a moral conception of the person, makes liberalism a feasible political theory in a post-Enlightenment era. Minimalist liberalism is morally and politically unassuming in that it recognizes that most of the complex and broader political problems that affect the social order writ large cannot be solved from the exclusive view of a liberal ethos but are open instead to the struggle of political forces as well as of numerous interpretive perspectives. In this sense, minimalist liberalism is more receptive to pluralism. Indeed, it succeeds the advance of pluralism because its moral and political goal is curbed. Hence, against mainstream interpretations, this dissertation defends a liberalism that dovetails with, rather than being hobbled by pluralism.

Second, the integration of pluralism into liberalism wears down by attrition the characteristically liberal demarcation between public and private spheres. Pluralism tampers with the existence of firm and permanent dichotomies and thus makes the liberal frontiers between private and public more protean. This has an inimical effect to most other forms of liberalism that rest on unyielding internal and external distinctions between the state and civil society, the private and the public self. Minimalist liberalism, instead, is a conception of a limited state that takes in the Foucaultian insight that politics disperses beyond the state. Hence, minimalist liberalism, as a political theory that concerns itself with the limited state, cannot and does not intend to fully explain the political phenomenon in its totality. For this reason, it does not need to pander to an uncompromising distinction between the private and the public, both outside and within the individual. Minimalist liberalism does not attempt to fully articulate the political phenomenon and consequently does not need to stake out once and for all the limits that put the political and the private apart. A fixed province of private life is not forever sequestered in an apolitical space.

Third, and in tune with the reshuffling of the public/private divide, the incorporation of pluralism forces minimalist liberalism to redraw the relationship between moral and political theory on which it stands. While minimalist liberalism entails a minimalism about moral assumptions, and in this sense incorporates some ethical reasoning, it also presupposes a more multifaceted interaction between moral and political theory. Other forms of liberalism usually juxtapose the cleavage between moral and political theory at the same intersection as the dividing line between the private and the public. In embracing pluralism and thus wearing down the internal, fixed allocation of public and private reasons, minimalist liberalism admits of a more fluid interaction between ethical and political reasons that does not run along the private and the public boundaries. Minimalist liberalism avows that a certain degree of "ethical

comprehensiveness" is unavoidable. Yet, minimalist liberalism distances itself from moral thinking in that its central way of understanding politics is not via the citizens' moral intuitions or, more importantly, through moral, impartial thinking. Rather, its concomitant feature is the steady awareness that at the origins of any social institution lies a struggle for political power and resources, no matter how impartial and fair liberal institutions become. Minimalist liberalism incorporates the post-Nietzschean lesson that impartial ruling still involves domination, and the latter cannot be grasped by the same impartial reasoning that buttresses it.

Minimalist liberalism includes moral assumptions in its own justification and factors in ethical reasoning in its understanding of politics. However, minimalist liberalism demurs at moral theory in that: it presupposes that impartial moral thinking by itself evades rather than exposes problems of political power. Likewise, minimalist liberalism parts company with moral theory in that it supervenes upon history; it presents itself as a conception of the state rather than a theory of the social order writ large; it does not attempt to provide a full explanation of the political; and its main focus is the legitimacy of the political order, not its justice. Hence, minimalist liberalism is strongly pluralistic not because liberalism and pluralism necessitate each other but because their historical encounter has facilitated their reciprocal reinforcement: the characteristic divisions of the public and the private, the moral and the political are centrifuged by the force of pluralism into a more minimal liberalism that expands its inclusiveness to better accommodate the plural condition of political life.

Thus, the dissertation starts off with both an acknowledgment of Rawls's achievement in decoupling moral theory from many other philosophical areas and an assessment of his endeavor to accommodate moral and political reasoning in a way that hews to pluralism. The dissertation ends by suggesting a more severe split between moral and political theory than Rawls defends as the result of a workable affinity between a minimalist liberalism and pluralism.

## Chapter One
## Moral and Political Theory: Can Rawls Keep Them Independent?

It has long been maintained that our modern political life has been shaped by the claims of rationality, individualism, progress and universalism of the Enlightenment project. This has generally been understood to mean, very roughly, that politics responds to rational, universal principles, which emanate from each individual understood as a sovereign, autonomous agent. In much of the philosophical and critical literature surrounding the character and aims of liberal political thought through most of the twentieth century, reference to a globalized Enlightenment project stood both at the forefront of such arguments and under sustained attack on numerous fronts.[1]

One blow to the Enlightenment project was the emergence of a pluralistic worldview that begun to take shape with the rise of the Romantic Movement. Today, the acceptance of pluralism as an aspect of our social condition is only one cause among many that have made the Enlightenment project run aground. This putatively larger worldview, however, does not live or die alone. The strong convergence of the assumptions undergirding the Enlightenment, liberalism and modernity, makes it almost a forlorn attempt to break with the shibboleths of any one of these visions without relinquishing them all. After all, liberalism, like the Enlightenment that is thought to have spawned it and the modern process that harbors it, centers on the ideals of rationality, individualism, universality, and progress. Hence, breaking with the Enlightenment's moorings seems to go hand in hand with the weakening of liberalism's appeal. In other words, the Enlightenment's demise and the recognition of the plural character of values and social practices have a detrimental impact on the ascendancy of liberalism as well.

One first attempt to adjust a full-blooded Enlightenment liberalism to the plural condition of contemporary social life is offered by John Rawls's "political liberalism." The move from *A Theory of Justice* to *Political Liberalism* intends to offer a liberalism that can appeal to the variegated comprehensive views hemmed in under the rubric of "reasonable pluralism." This transition from a Kantian to a political liberalism induces Rawls to rethink the boundaries between moral and political theory as well as the limits between the private and the public spheres, within and outside the individual. In this sense, Rawls's endeavor offers an illuminating case to assess the possibility of a post-Enlightenment liberalism as well as the extent of the independence of political theory from moral theory required by the incorporation of pluralism.

In his earliest work, Rawls successfully argues for the independence of moral theory from the philosophy of mind, semantics, and epistemology. Following a similar path, Rawls's restatement of "justice as fairness" in *Political Liberalism* aims at disentangling, this time, moral from political philosophy.[2] This chapter argues that, unlike the previous attempt at isolating moral philosophy, this later project fails, for it does not attain a political philosophy unrestrained from the ties of a comprehensive moral view. Moral and political philosophy remain entangled in the "wrong way" under the constraints of political liberalism. In other words, although Rawls casts about for a free-standing political theory that is not conditional on any particular philosophical doctrine, his political liberalism rests on such view. In particular, the original Kantian grounds of moral personality creep into the political justification of political liberalism putting at risk the epistemological and theoretical constraints of Rawls's later work. The comprehensive

interpretation of the moral person collides with the political stance and evinces that, despite Rawls's attempt at discipline separation, he holds onto a Kantian conception of the person that does not pass successfully Rawls's own political test, which reinforces the kind of connection between moral and political theory that he intends to break.

The trigger to set political philosophy free from the restrictions of a moral comprehensive view is the "congruence argument" between the virtue of justice and the conception of the good outlined in the third section of *A Theory of Justice*, which Rawls later came to see as a wrong stance.[3] Roughly, Rawls argues that acting justly is both an intrinsic and supreme good and consequently an important building block in our conception of the good.[4] The recognition of the centrality of reasonable pluralism to present-day societies induced Rawls to rethink this conflation of a comprehensive good based on the value of moral autonomy and the conception of justice that regulates the basic political institutions in pluralistic contemporary social orders.

Yet, despite Rawls's best efforts, this project of establishing the independence between moral and political philosophy fails. The role assigned to political philosophy under the limits of political liberalism remains overwhelmingly moral in two senses: it remains fettered by a comprehensive moral view and is presented as a branch of ethics. The argument below offers three criticisms of Rawls's transition from a comprehensive to a political conception of justice. First, it claims that the conceptions of the person and society preserve their Kantian basis under the political account of justice as fairness (Sections I & II). Second, it casts doubts over how the conception of the person, which originally is presented as the distinctive feature that distinguishes moral theories, now is introduced as a centripetal point of agreement among them (Section III). Third, even if the two prior objections were wrong (that is, if moral and political theory do not remain roped in the wrong way because Rawls actually jettisons the Kantian elements of the moral personality and the latter could indeed work as a unifying template among comprehensive moral views), in approaching the problem of legitimacy from the conceptual and theoretical lenses first envisioned to address problems of justice, Rawls remains wedded to a comprehensive view. For the required accommodation of public and private values that political liberalism imposes amounts nonetheless to a comprehensive view. In either case, Rawls's political conception of justice does not achieve the moral abstinence that he claims but rather continues to be "comprehensive" (Section IV).

These criticisms leveled against Rawls's morally laden account of justice signal a more relevant problem only adumbrated in the final section of this chapter, namely, the controversial (although widely shared) understanding of political philosophy as the handmaiden of moral theory. For if the argument above is correct, there are two possible corollaries. On the one hand, the argument could suggest resuming the path of *A Theory of Justice*. On the other hand, the conclusions invite us to rethink the relation between moral and political philosophy in light of the truth of pluralism. Because *Political Liberalism* rightly incorporates the problem of legitimacy in a plural era as a major political concern, I reject the former alternative and suggest instead abandoning a highly moralized conception of the person as a starting point of political theory (Section V).

**I. The Transition from the Kantian to the Political Description of the Person**

Justice is tethered to freedom; freedom rests on autonomy; autonomy is tantamount to the exercise of the moral capacities—moral capacities that remain equally prominent in the Kantian and the political conception of the person. After the alleged disposal of the Kantian perspective as the justificatory ground for the decisions of the major social and political institutions, Rawls, nonetheless, stands for the exact same description of the person introduced in *A Theory of Justice*. At the core of both the Kantian and the political versions of justice as fairness lies the same portrait of the moral person with the same relevant traits and capacities. This is puzzling. Although we are called to appreciate them in a different light, that is, in terms of the widely shared political values characteristic of democratic societies, the salient attributes of the person remain unchanged in both liberalisms—Kantian and political. Rawls relentlessly reminds us that the justification for those traits and their relevance have shifted from a Kantian endorsement to a political predicament. Yet, given that the requirements of the theory change so fundamentally, it is surprising that the shift of justificatory grounds bears no impact on the description of the person that is the source of the principles of justice. Indeed, Rawls's conception of the person remains Kantian all along.

A conception of the person (called variously "moral agent," "human nature," "philosophical anthropology," etc.) lies either implicitly or explicitly at the center of any moral and political theory. It expresses our salient features as social beings—inclinations and motivations that are part of our permanent semblance in social and political interaction. Divergent accounts of the person emphasize alternative features of our condition as social and political animals and indicate in turn a distinct set of traits that have to be protected, cultivated or kept at bay by the policies and institutional arrangements that structure civil society. The portraits vary according to the innate, moral, and cognitive faculties that are claimed to be distinctively human and perceived to be enriching or detrimental to our social condition.

Rawls's conception of the person, introduced in *A Theory of Justice*, is defined in terms of moral and universal capacities. The Rawlsian agent is silhouetted based on her moral psychology rather than on historical, cultural, political or economic grounds. The capacity for a sense of justice, in particular, has an overriding place in this description. We harbor a latent sense of justice that defines us above anything else, which is ultimately fully developed at the end of a three-stage path of moral development when the potential sense of justice blossoms into a settled morality of principles.

In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls describes citizens as free in three ways. They are capable and willing to form, revise, and rationally pursue a conception of the good. They are self-authenticating sources of valid claims capable of taking responsibility for their ends, and act from principles of justice chosen in a situation of fair representation. They are equal, on the other hand, because they embody the moral powers to the same degree.[5] Freedom, in turn, is realized with the permanent exercise of the two moral powers, i.e. the capacity for a conception of the good and the capacity for a sense of justice.[6] The latter honors fair terms of cooperation by understanding, applying and being moved by an effective desire to act from the principles of justice. In the political version of the person,

this capacity becomes substantively linked to the idea of the "reasonable," that is, the willingness to propose and abide by fair terms of cooperation and to acknowledge the "burdens of judgment" and their consequences.[7] The capacity for a conception of the good, on the other hand, enables agents to form, revise and rationally pursue such a conception, and hence it is related to the "rational," that is, the power to judge and deliberate about means to ends and about ends themselves.[8]

Especially characteristic of the Kantian view, Rawls asserts, "is its conception of the person as reasonable and rational, and fully autonomous."[9] This remains equally important for the political account. Citizens are reasonable and therefore fully autonomous, for they are free to pursue their conceptions of the good in harmony with the fair terms of social cooperation; fully autonomous citizen act from principles of justice chosen in a situation of fair representation defined by a baseline of equality among free persons.[10] They are, on the other hand, rationally autonomous as the result of exercising their capacity to form, revise and pursue a conception of the good, in addition to deliberating about these ends, and being motivated to secure their higher-order interests associated with their moral powers.[11]

Rawls ascribes to persons two corresponding higher-order interests in furthering and exercising these moral powers and a third one in advancing their determinate conceptions of the good that they have at any given time.[12] Moreover, the exercise of the two moral powers is experienced as good, for Rawls endorses the Aristotelian principle that "other things equal, human beings enjoy the exercise of their realized capacities (their innate or trained abilities), and that this enjoyment increases the more the capacity is realized, or the greater its complexity."[13] In short, persons are regarded "as both free and equal, as capable of acting both reasonably and rationally, and therefore as capable of taking part in social cooperation among persons so conceived" in both versions of justice as fairness.[14]

The importance of the conception of the person in Rawls's theoretical apparatus cannot be overestimated. The conception of the person shades the rest of the theory, and it may, for that reason, compromise the edifice of political liberalism. For one, Rawls's approach to political theory is presented early in his work as a kind of Kantian constructivism. The main idea of the constructivist approach is to connect the conception of moral persons as free and equal to the first principles of justice: "what distinguishes the Kantian form of constructivism is essentially this: it specifies a particular conception of the person as an element in a reasonable procedure of construction, the outcome of which determines the content of the first principles of justice."[15] Once the emphasis moves away from the Kantian basis, Rawls redefines constructivism as a political task, "a view about the structure and content of a political conception."[16] In both cases, constructivism involves a procedure that connects a specific conception of the person with the principles of justice so that most of the elements in the theory are colored one way or the other by the assumed description of the moral personality. In other words, the link between the conception of the person and the principles of justice is, in both accounts, one of logical and substantive nature that stamps a disposition on the entire theory.

In addition, the conception of the person is the element that tells moral theories apart. Accounts of personal identity or the meaning of the moral terms fall short, according to Rawls, of providing enough guidance into the differences among moral structures. Rather, the central element of discordance and separation among competing moral theories is their differing conceptions of the person. In short, moral theories are distinct due to the conception of moral agency that they harbor.

Likewise, primary goods, the priority of liberty, and the kind of rights and duties attached to citizens all hark back to the conception of the person from which they spring. For instance, Rawls points out the striking difference between a Kantian doctrine and the utilitarian view regarding the problem of interpersonal comparison for questions of justice, and argues that this comparison depends on the conception of the person embraced by each doctrine. According to justice as fairness, interpersonal comparisons for purposes of political justice are made in terms of citizen's index of primary goods that reflect their needs as citizens: "While the determination of primary goods invokes a knowledge of the general circumstances and requirements of social life, it does so only in the light of a conception of the person given in advance."[17] Primary goods are the things that rational persons require to realize their moral faculties; they are what persons need in their status as free and equal citizens, and as normal and fully cooperating members of society over a complete life.[18] If the conception of the person preserves significant Kantian elements, then primary goods are things that persons require to foster Kantian capacities and highest order interests, rather than what free and equal citizens need to support their political claims when questions of justice arise.

Liberties and their lexical priority, on the other hand, are the necessary social conditions for the adequate exercise of the two moral powers; they facilitate the pursuit of a rational plan of life. Parties do not conceive themselves as inevitably bound by particular interests but as free persons capable of revising and altering their final ends. The priority of liberties is tied to the acceptance of the moral powers. If the latter cannot indeed be justified on political grounds, then the priority of liberty too rests on a Kantian basis.

The conception of personhood allies with the principles of justice by means of a procedure of construction. Insofar as the moral portrait of the person remains Kantian, and despite the turn to political foundations, the procedure and the first principles of justice keep a substantive bond with that comprehensive view. If Kantian presuppositions prevail, they would certainly bedevil the rest of the alleged non-comprehensive, political structure. And yet, Rawls begins with the same conception of the person, sticks to the same procedure, and obtains the same principles of justice regardless of the foundational view that give them support.

**II.**

According to *Political Liberalism*, this description of the moral agent mirrors the citizen of modern democracies. Does it? On the eve of the political turn, Rawls highlights the absence of a philosophical psychology or a metaphysical doctrine of the self rooted in the conception of citizen as free and equal.[19] Rather, as a political view, justice as fairness

entails a normative conception of the person as a basic unit of thought, deliberation, and responsibility.[20] However, his ideal of the moral person is not uncontroversial from a political perspective. The sense of justice, the motivation to act out of principles, and the fulfillment derived from the realization of one's autonomy occupy a paramount place in both liberalisms, Kantian and political. Since each of these notions and their accompanying claims are substantively closed to a Kantian vision of the moral world, the exact resemblance of the person in both liberal accounts of society remains striking. Yet, Rawls provides no convincing argument as to why the outcome is immune to its justification, that is, how we obtain the exact same portrayal of the citizen irrespectively of whether it rests on Kantian or political grounds.

That persons are endowed with two moral capacities is basically a Kantian understanding of the moral agent, not a political view of a democratic citizen. The capacity for a sense of justice, in particular, is assumed to be the distinctive feature of persons seen from a political eye. From a Kantian perspective—a universalizable moral theory that links the fulfillment of our condition as free persons to the autonomy derived from acting in accordance to the right principles (of justice)—this is an uncontroversial point; from a political perspective, however, persons can be characterized in numerous ways, and the capacity for a sense of justice does not occupy, in principle, a privilege position.[21] With equal force, other prominent descriptions of persons have paraded the history of political thought. To name just a few, self-interest, sympathy, altruism, will to power, skepticism, pity, vanity, political sociability, *deinos*, sin, freedom, capacity to choose, cognition, labor, action, communal tendencies, phobias, interpretative understanding, the potential to be the manifestation of an overarching mechanism and other candidates have played a major role in defining features of political anthropologies, all of which call for philosophical grounding. Why does a capacity for a sense of justice occupy a preferred position *from a political perspective*? Why should we take on its face value that this capacity is the salient feature of democratic citizens from a political point of view?[22]

In fleshing out the moral sensibility of the reasonable person, Rawls distinguishes three kinds of desires: object-dependent; principle-dependent; and conception-dependent.[23] The first kind is oriented towards an object or state of affairs for its fulfillment (glory, wealth, status, sleeping, etc.). The second kind "cannot be described without using the principles, rational or reasonable as the case may be, that enter into specifying that activity."[24] Principles can be, to borrow from Kant, hypothetical or categorical, but the desires are fulfilled in acting in accordance with them. The last kind of desire relates to the possibility of articulating in a rational and reasonable conception the principles we are willing to abide by. The predominant place that the sense of justice occupies in Rawls's political theory springs from an inclination to favor principle- and conception-desires over the object-desires as the right motivational set in the minds of citizens of constitutional democracies, and this bias in turn derives from the remnants of his old Kantian endorsement and not from an accurate appraisal of the prevailing public values of democratic societies. The range of motivations that mobilize political animals spreads widely, and object-desires and strategic considerations (principles of the first

kind) do not occupy a trivial place. This remains true even if we circumscribe our search to modern constitutional democracies. Rawls claims that principle- and conception-dependent desires become elements in people's motivational sets because they are learned from the public culture.[25] This may be true, but that does not make them the overriding motives in citizens' minds.[26]

Rawls adumbrates a path for moral development—a decisive process for the acquisition of a sense of justice. However, this does not take us far in explaining the philosophical prominence of the capacity for justice in the political account of the person. Rawls outlines a hypothetical process of moral psychology that stretches from accepting the familial authority to the endorsement of principles of association to the conformity to principles of justice.[27] This does not, nor does it intend to prove the independent force of that moral capacity. For Rawls admits that this proposed moral development does not spring from scientific evidence but rather from a political conception of the person and an ideal of citizenship that put autonomy and the sense of justice at the core of their description. The path toward moral development is meant to be a stylized account of moral formation in a well-ordered society regulated by the two principles of justice and serves to argue for the stability of such a society—not for the predominant force of the sense of justice or for its actual acquisition in contemporary constitutional democracies. As such, it does not explain the significance attached to that capacity or its actual motivational force.

The point here is not that other social values outshine justice—to the contrary, the latter plays a fundamental role as a social bond in contemporary societies. Yet, if social cohesion presupposes justice, it is because of its shortage within us, and not, as Rawls claims, because of the predominant role of our capacity for justice. Justice, as a social construction and imposition, comes to placate our natural and primordial drives against others. We are not gentle creatures who are desperate to pursue justice, but rather complex beings whose constitution is torn apart by conflicting demands—we are receptive to justice but we also are aggressive beings; we are reason and instinct, and more often than not our instinctual drives are stronger than reasonable considerations. If Rawls indeed digs into history and in the contemporary democratic culture instead of standing on an assumed Kantian idea of the person, then it becomes clearer that justice is not a natural capacity but rather one that compensates for our nature. The relevance of justice as an individual virtuous capacity rests on scarce historical grounds.

The command to develop our own moral capacities, equally central to both versions of Rawls's liberalisms, calls for political justification as well. Rawls pictures parties in the original position as moral agents who choose social arrangement according to whether they do or do not develop citizens' moral capacities. Citizens' rational and reasonable autonomy is echoed in the decisions of parties who act as representatives of free and equal persons.[28] Parties consider citizens' higher-order interests; they are concerned with advancing the best outcome for the persons they represent, and they adopt principles accordingly. Unless we take for granted these higher-order interests, parties would not be motivated to foster the moral capacities. The unquestioned inclination to order their decisions according to whether they ameliorate the moral

faculties remains unshaken as long as we accept the axiomatic existence of the higher-order interests.

This assumption, however, brings Kant into the picture once again. For like Kant in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, who asserts that moral perfection "consists objectively in fulfilling all one's duties and in attaining completely one's moral end with regard to oneself," Rawls claims that the representatives hold an obligation to develop their moral powers.[29] From the Kantian perspective, the connection between higher-order interests, freedom and equality is almost an analytical truth; from the political perspective, however, the postulation of these higher-imperatives as essential constituents of political agency remains unwarranted. Rawls moves swiftly, but without any political justification, from a conception of free and equal citizens to the postulation of higher-order interests despite the fact that equality and freedom can be cashed out in various ways that do not involve reference to higher- moral order capacities.

The centrality of the capacity for a sense of justice moves to the center stage another value controversial from a political point of view. "Full autonomy," Rawls states "is realized by citizens when they act from principles of justice that specify the fair terms of cooperation they would give to themselves when fairly represented as free and equal persons."[30] He claims, in addition, that full autonomy is attained by "affirming the political principles of justice and enjoying the protections of the basic rights and liberties; it is also realized by participating in society's public affairs and sharing in its collective self-determination over time."[31] Although Rawls defends the idea of autonomy on account of its political rather than ethical worth, the significance and justification of this value bedevils the political asceticism that he struggles to obtain.

The above description of full autonomy lends itself to a twofold interpretation—a narrow and a broad account. The broad interpretation of the ideal, the one that includes not only reaffirmation of the political principles of justice but also participation in the public forum, does not fair well under the political rendition. For too many collective expressions fall within its boundaries turning it into an amorphous value vulnerable to be realized in ways that sit at odds with the rest of the theory.

The narrower account that boils down to obedience to the principles of justice faces the problem that autonomy, even understood in the political sense, does not rank highly in the value preferences of many citizens in democratic societies. Indeed, other democratic goals compete for political relevance (especially if, in the private realm, persons remain indifferent to this value). Without the Kantian premises, it remains unclear why autonomy is so highly esteemed. This assumed appreciation can only spring from the primordial role that the capacity of justice and its correspondent higher-order interest occupy in the entire structure—about all of which I have already explained my reservations.

Moreover, the narrow interpretation of autonomy does not stand by itself, for the rationale of the connection between autonomy and justice is left unaccounted for. Lacking a Kantian support, the relation between obeying principles of justice and autonomy breaks apart. Rawls draws a strong connection between two elements: acting autonomously, he argues, is "acting from principles that we would consent to as free and

equal rational beings"; citizens translate their higher-order interest to guard the capacity for a sense of justice into the capacity to act out of principles that they self-imposed.[32] Granted a Kantian approach, this relation may not be contentious, but as soon as the latter is jettisoned, the relation between a sense of justice, principled action and autonomy begins to falter. Without further argument, it is unclear why obedience to principles of justice would make me autonomous.

A structural and irredeemable connection between justice as fairness and Kantianism comes out on top of all the above affinities between Rawlsian political liberalism and the comprehensive moral outlook. I refer to the relation between morality and rationality: no other moral theory ties moral reasoning to rational capacities as Kantianism does, and Rawls's political liberalism follows these steps. The political version of justice as fairness enlists this strand in claiming that the fulfillment of our rational capacities makes us moral.

The crafting of a just society, according to Rawls, begins in the original position, an idealized device that isolates two features of human personality: rationality and higher-order interests to pursue a conception of the good and to abide by the requirements of justice. No "anthropological" elements in the Kantian sense filters into the construction. Emotions of any kind, virtues of any type, experiences past, present and future play no role in the foundational constitution of political morality. Political theory results from the exercise of practical rationality divested from all empirical traits. Rawls himself admits that the original position is a rendition of the categorical imperative but without its metaphysics. Yet, regardless of its intended naturalism, the original position ties morality with rationality in a way that is alien and at odds with most of the other moral and political theories. How can political liberalism speak to the many comprehensive views that do not postulate an excluding link between morality and rationality?

Two examples come to my mind. First, sentiment based moralists: how much room does political liberalism make for, say, Smitheans? Smith's followers make for an interesting example for despite their staunched commercial liberalism they find no place in political liberalism.[33] At least one of their two main sources of normativity—self-interest rightly understood and moral sentiments—are barred from the foundations of their political creed. Smith defends a sentimentalist virtue ethics in which sympathy, not reason, plays the fundamental role as the capacity to measure the rightness or wrongness of our actions and emotions. Sympathy, for Smith, is a fellow-felling that allows us to share other's motives by projecting ourselves into her emotional and motivational context. Although sympathy, unlike pity, involves some cognitive aspect, it is via emotional imagination that we access the other person's motivation. When we project imaginatively, we "become in some measure the same person with" the person with whom we sympathize.[34]

Sympathy rather than reason gives us access to the rightness or wrongness of the emotions—what Smith calls the "propriety" or "impropriety" of the other person's emotions. Smith states that "when the original passions of the person principally concerned are in perfect concord with the sympathetic emotions of the spectator, they necessarily appear to this last just and proper, and suitable to their objects; and on the contrary, when, upon bringing the case home to himself, he finds that they do not

coincide with what he feels, they necessarily appear to him unjust and improper, and unsuitable to the causes which excite them. To approve of the passions of another, therefore, as suitable to their objects, is the same thing as to observe that we entirely sympathize with them."[35] Hence, the "impartial point of view," for Smith, is mediated by our capacity to sympathize with the other person's situation. Yet, sympathy and the knowledge of the specific circumstances, motivations and causes that excite the emotion are banned from the original position.

How strong is the political component in political liberalism if those who share in their institutional arrangement are excluded for not partaking in their moral foundations? Smitheans are excluded because political liberalism's start-up ostracizes any liberal thinkers whose moral reasoning is intrinsically based in forms of sentiments. Smitheans cannot even locate themselves in the starting point of the grounding process: the Kantian structural fetters, the original position from which Rawls crafts the basis of a just society, shut them out from the very beginning.

Opponents to systematic moral theory—from non-rational intuitionist to romantic liberals to pluralists to critical theorists—would also object the ride to the original position. For their stance against systematic, structured morality involves the view that many of the elements overridden by the original position are an inseparable part of our moral and political experience and reasoning. More specifically, the origin of political liberalism is a non-starter for other liberals, in particular those who boast about the conflictive, erratic and unordered character of our ethical life. The problem with the original position, for them, is precisely that we do not live in the original position: the stylized moral world that springs from it just vanishes in thin air. The marriage between morality and rationality precludes problems of conflict from the outset.

Stuart Hampshire, for instance, is one such liberal who believes that politics and morality cannot be fully grasped by a strictly rational perspective.[36] He states that "the two distinct and complementary functions and forms of thought, imagination and intellect, should always be considered as equals in the context of ethics and politics."[37] For him, the picture "of a possible harmony under the governance of reason is carried through the Christian centuries and persists in the philosophy of the Enlightenment, and it persists in contemporary liberalism also…the king in his castle and the peasant in his hovel are one, in their common humanity, in virtue of the overriding superiority of rational moral principles that king and peasant may both implicitly recognize."[38]

A political morality that fastens itself to rationality so tightly may admit of issues of political power and conflict only as working assumptions, not as problems to be theorized. Hampshire acknowledges this central point for the understanding of politics when he claims that "Machiavelli and Hobbes famously insisted that political conflicts are not finally and reliably resolved on a rational level by adversary argument, because they normally also bring with them a struggle for power in the state or in the society, which often overwhelms the rational procedures."[39] As soon as passions, instincts, interests and drive are brought into the picture, Rawls cannot build up a political theory that assumes that an inclination towards justice is the paramount constitutive feature of human beings. As Bernard Williams puts it, political liberalism implies "a contrast

between principle and interest, or morality and prudence, which signifies the continuation of a (Kantian) morality as the framework of the system."[40] In short, political liberalism cannot welcome these other moral and political theories, and once again, liberals of all kinds are ostracized from a liberal political theory that claims to order political values at the top.[41]

**II. The Dubious Grounds of Society as a Fair Scheme of Social Cooperation**

"The fundamental organizing idea of justice as fairness, within which the other basic ideas are systematically connected, is that of society as a fair system of cooperation over time, from one generation to the next."[42] Indeed, the assumption of the two moral powers attached to political agents springs from a conception of citizens "as normal and fully cooperating members of society over a complete life." Part of their nature "(within the political conception) is their having the two moral powers that enable them to participate in fair social cooperation."[43] Thus, the account of free and equal citizen capable of pursuing a conception of the good and contributing to and honoring the constraints of social cooperation for mutual benefit, arises from this fundamental ideal of society. If indeed Rawls succeeds in tethering this foundational description of society, whence all the other notions originate, to the political values of democratic cultures, then his conception of the person may meet, after all, the political constraints of his late liberalism.

Yet, this too is a controversial notion. Rawls believes that "social cooperation is not merely coordinated social activity efficiently organized for some overall collective end." Rather, he argues, "it presupposes a notion of fair terms of cooperation which all participants may reasonably be expected to accept over the course of a complete life."[44] Justice as fairness does not regard members of society simply as rational persons with the pursuit of aims and interests but as moral persons who can cooperate for mutual advantage over a complete life.[45] The rationale of this account, under the political view, is its predominant endorsement in the public culture of liberal democracies.

First, one could wonder about the critical force of such starting point. For to say that liberal democracies harbor a liberal understanding of society and cooperation is merely a definitional truth. It is also an ambiguous statement, for exactly what element of the democracy does this harboring—individuals, cultures, or constitutions? Indeed, this position begs the question of justification for it does not explain why we need to endorse and foster that conception of society unless it also assumes from the outset that the pursuit of liberal values is a worthwhile enterprise. This latter claim, however, would collide with the political foundations of Rawls's theory. In view of the centrality of this understanding of society to the rest of the theory, this self-supposition of liberal values cannot go unattended, for it is both uncritical and question-begging.

Second, Rawls's assessment of the prevalent conception of society in present-day democracies may be an overstatement for other conceptions prevail with equal force in public democratic cultures. Accounts of society centered on efficiency, utility, procedure, merit, participation, solidarity, tradition, virtue, power or national identity also boast great weight in contemporary democracies. Along with these competing interpretations of the social and political structure, utilitarian, egotistic, existentialist, aristocratic,

perfectionist, communitarian, post-structuralist, conservative, socialist, and religious visions of the subject, to name a few, share their place with the Kantian perception of the person in the public arena of democratic orders.

The insistence that the Kantian ideal of the person and society (or, more unobjectionable, that an ideal of the person invested with higher-order moral powers), together with its critical and specific faculties of choice and self-knowledge, reigns over other understanding of the person neglects the spread of many other ways of self-, social and political understanding of personhood and social cooperation that rise in opposition to the Kantian account—from Hegel onwards—in current democratic practices. One cannot have it both ways: claiming that liberalism accommodates, like no other political order, numerous ways of living, and that the Kantian account, or a portrait very similar to Kant's, wins over others and should make for the basis of social and institutional design.[46]

Rawls recognizes that utilitarianism has historically been a prominent part of democratic thought. He claims, in addition, that it can become a supporting doctrine in an "overlapping consensus" on a political conception of justice for a constitutional regime.[47] Both utilitarianism and Kantianism articulate common sense judgments, ideas and values available in democratic political cultures to reconstruct their conception of the person. Justification starts from premises acknowledged by everyone as true or as "acceptable to us for the purpose of establishing a working agreement on the fundamental questions of political justice."[48] How then does a political approach to justice begin with a description of society so akin to Kantian liberalism when other comprehensive views prevail with equal force in the public sphere?

On the face of it, it is in principle possible to fashion a vastly different account of both society and personhood out of the widespread values of constitutional democracies. In other words, there is no indication that Rawls engages in an exhaustive analysis of the relative influence of competing accounts of society in current political orders. If the source of political liberalism is the values steeped in the democratic public cultures we may well start with a utilitarian account of society from which the moral powers of persons are much harder to derive. The problem is not only, or mainly, about the relative importance of one or the other conception of society in the current collective consciousness. It is, more fundamentally, one of compatibility at the level of foundations.

Moreover, agreeing on Rawls's initial understanding of society does not settle the question. For the citizen equipped with two moral powers *could* issue from Rawls's notion of society, but not necessarily. Persons conceived as free and equal and capable of thought and judgment, with a capacity to draw inferences, assess conflicting evidence as well as to balance competing substantive considerations are also enabled to cooperate over a complete life—no further assumption is required. Freedom and equality do not need to be traced to higher moral capacities.

This does not, nor does it intend to, undermine the attractiveness of Rawls's conception of society, but it lays stress on the influence of a specific comprehensive view on the fundamentals of the theory. Justice as fairness is not substantively neutral and relies on more than procedural values such as impartiality, consistency in application of all general principles, equality of opportunity for all parties and so on, which does not

conflict with the political justification.[49] However, Rawls's conception of justice rests on ideals of the person and society, among other ideas of the good, that exceed the limits of political liberalism. This ultimately threatens the non-comprehensive, ascetic grounds of his theory.

Rawls's justificatory approach is a complex tier structure among moral principles, background theories and considered moral judgments.[50] The discussion above calls attention to the fact that the theory of the person and of the role of morality in a well-ordered society implicit as background theories in Rawls's work can be disputed from a political point of view. If this is so, then it is unclear why other moral theories would endorse a conception of justice that assume characterizations of the person and society that are at odds with their own background theories. Doubts can be cast on the ideals of persons and society from where Rawls begins—not as being wrong or unappealing, but as substantively biased for any political conception of justice. When it comes to utilitarianism (as Rawls reminds us), or Marxism (as Daniels suggests) or any political theory that emphasizes conflict or emotions, the presence of alternative theories of the person and society is inevitable. And when it comes to disagreement at that level then, as Daniels puts it, "it is not clear just how much increase in tractability will result."[51] Yet, we face this intractability only if liberalism or any political theory is thought to begin or be founded in an ethical conception of the person, which Kantian liberalism does.

**III. Can The Conception of The Person Be Shared by All Other Moral Theories?**

Some could argue that indeed no such Kantianism varnishes Rawls's political liberalism. Others could hold instead that even if political liberalism were a Kantian liberalism disguised in a cloak of political values, the comprehensive view could be easily shrugged off.[52] Let's assume, then, that the argument above is wrong, and that there is no Kantian residue in Rawls's account of moral personality. Let's assume that the two moral powers and the conception of society as a fair scheme of cooperation are attributes that spring from and are grounded in contemporary political culture. Rawls argues in his earliest work that philosophy of mind does not exhaust moral explanation; instead, the hinge point that earmarks moral theories lies in their understandings of moral personality. Rawls now proposes, however, that the conception of the person act as a template upon which all moral structures can converge regardless of their own comprehensive understanding of moral agency. He argues that all moral theories nurture a political, albeit moral, account of the person that works as a module within their larger structure that also includes a comprehensive account of the moral agent. *Comprehensive* rival accounts of the person mark moral theories out while the *political* portrait, Rawls's proposal of the agent endowed with two moral powers, functions as a public juggernaut that brings all reasonable comprehensive views together. Now, if the conception of the person is the crossroad where all moral doctrines branch out and it decisively affects the respective conceptions of justice, how come political liberalism requires that all moral theories come together under the same description of the person?

In establishing the independence of moral theory from philosophy of mind, Rawls argues forcefully that any moral structure remains underdetermined if we were to focus on

the conception of personal identity that it harbors. Typically, moral theories subscribe to the same account of personal identity derived from the philosophy of mind. Utilitarianism, Kantianism and intuitionism, to name a few, all agree on the widely accepted theory of personal identity; "and so the variations between them are accounted for not by this subject but by the distinctive principles and conceptions of the person embodied in the corresponding moral theories."[53] Philosophy of mind does not exhaust moral explanation; on the contrary, it falls short of accounting for the differences among moral views. Instead, the hinge point that earmarks a moral theory lies in its understanding of moral personality.

If conceptions of the person is what tells theories apart, why would all theories now agree on the same account of the moral agent? How would this be possible without changing itself into a contending moral theory or into a moral theory different from itself? In short, how is it that the conception of the person turns from being the distinctive feature of each moral theory to the common ground where all theories meet? Rawls faces here, I believe, a problem of feasibility for not all moral theories could bend to this requirement. Utilitarianism and intuitionism are two cases in point.

Moral theories regard persons differently and prize different aspects of their nature, "so although every conception employs criterion of identity that recognizes the results of the philosophy of mind, each may specialize its criterion to fit the requirements of a particular moral order and conception of the person."[54] Utilitarians, for instance, defend a "container" version of moral personality at odds not only with Rawls's account of the person but also with his own moral psychology and his account of the reasonable person. Rawls describes this conception in the following terms: "persons are, so to speak, holders for such experiences. It does not matter who has these experiences, or what is their sequential distribution among persons."[55]

Given this incompatibility, how come political liberalism requires that all political theories share in the same understanding of political agency? That this is an unfortunate demand is evidenced by the fact that Rawls never succeeds in showing that utilitarianism would have strong reasons to join the overlapping consensus. Indeed, the explanation that Rawls provides to show why utilitarianism would partake in an overlapping consensus is one by "approximation" on grounds of limited knowledge of both social institutions and of ongoing circumstances. Utilitarians would also consider the complexity of legal and institutional rules as well as the simplicity necessary in guidelines for public reason.[56] Interesting enough, none of the reasons that would move utilitarians to accept justice as fairness refer to Rawls's own conceptions of the person and society. How does utilitarianism come to endorse a conception of the person that puts the sense of justice as the main trait of our humanity?

Likewise, some moral structures advocate for a *moral* conception of the person that is sparser than Rawls's *political* conception. Would they be willing to adopt a political conception of the person, purportedly more anodyne and more inclusive, that actually denotes more narrowly and is more stringent than the moral conception they stand for? Take, for example, rational intuitionism. Imposing the political account of the person upon it and demanding that it become part of an overlapping consensus requires that

intuitionists endorse a more substantive political understanding of the person than the moral account of agency that they defend.

Political constructivism, according to Rawls, rests on a complex conception of the person possessing the two moral powers outlined above. This is needed "to work out the idea that the principles of justice issue from a suitable procedure of construction."[57] This stands in sharp contrast with the intuitionist understanding of the person. For rational intuitionism "does not require a fuller conception of the person and needs little more than the idea of the self as a knower."[58] Constructivism, then, involves an understanding of the moral and political person that is more loaded and connotes more intensively than the intuitionist understanding of agency. Thus presented, agreement on moral and political terms would work more easily the other way around, for if, in light of reasonable pluralism, political agreement is what really matters, the thinner description of moral agent should take precedence over the morally stringent account. At any rate, it is difficult to pinpoint the motivations that the advocates of the more meager understanding of practical personality would have to endorse a more substantive account of political agency.

If moral theories come apart on grounds of their different accounts of moral personality, they cannot partake in an agreement that presupposes at its core a Kantian conception of the person. Rawls wants to argue that heavily loaded moral ideas work as a focus of widespread agreement for political argument, but neither the original position, nor the conception of the person endowed with two moral powers are inclusive candidates to achieve that goal. For one could think of more general, more inviting and less loaded regulative ideas that could work as a focus of encounter. Instead, Rawls sticks to the same Kantian conception of the person and proposes it as the consensual magnet for all other moral theories. The result of this is not an overlapping consensus that reflects the weighty pluralistic character of contemporary democracies, but a transfiguration of all other moral structures into Kantianism.

**IV. Another Comprehensive View**

Let's now assume not only that there is no comprehensive Kantian residue in Rawls's political liberalism (Sections I & II) but also that the conception of the person can work as a centripetal force (Section III). We now face a problem of compatibility for political liberalism then requires yet another divide—one between public and private self—that amounts to a comprehensive view. This, in turn, does not sit well with the comprehensive asceticism of political liberalism. This requirement introduces some incongruences between the political constraints and the requirement that all moral theories admit of this internal division.[59] Although Kantian morality may accommodate dichotomies more readily (between the noumenal and the phenomenal; autonomy and heteronomy; objective and subjective grounds of practical legislation, and so on), not all comprehensive views lend themselves to such a split.

This proposed division of labor requires a dichotomy between the public and the private self that may not apply to all comprehensive moral doctrines and thus cannot work as an aseptic alternative for political agreement. Rawls wants to argue that the

comprehensive views that cannot accommodate this sharp division are unreasonable. This criterion, however, would exclude a vast majority of the existent worldviews, for although many of them would admit of this divide, not all of them would bend to the requirement that their private views be excluded from the discussion of public affairs. The relation between unreasonableness and the acceptance of the burden of judgments calls for more extensive explanation than the one Rawls articulates. Cautiousness as to whether there is something definitively true is not tantamount to accepting the burden of judgments. A citizen could act in politics the same way as a falsificationist does in science—she could keep an open and receptive mind to assess evidence and arguments that challenge her own beliefs and be willing to adjust her views and actions accordingly. In the meantime, however, she continues to affirm her thoughts and existence by acting upon her (true) beliefs. Accepting that she may be wrong does not lead her to suspend judgment on the true character of her statements. John Stuart Mill knew this path all too well.[60]

More important, this requirement takes political liberalism to a dead end, for it requires a particular accommodation between public and private values that amounts to a comprehensive view. The political version of justice as fairness involves a wholesale arrangement of the public personality and its relation to private values that amounts to a comprehensive moral outlook, a liberal one.

Public and private realms have been accommodated next to each other in the history of political thought either in harmonious or conflictive terms. One current of thought believes that the division and confrontation between these spheres are ineliminable and sees politics as the mechanism that wrestles with this conflictual boundary and the impossibility of wide-range reconciliation. The awareness of the unavoidable tension resulting from this chasm puts conflict at the core of this tradition. The second strand claims that the split can be healed, creases ironed out, and that whatever the political conflict consists in, it should never cut that deep. Rawls's reconciliatory answer to the problem of politics enlists this latter tradition.

Like Plato, Aquinas, Rousseau, and Thomas Nagel, among others, Rawls believes that the reconciliation between the public and private self can be achieved.[61] Although the strategies differ among these philosophers they all come together in thinking that the solution to the Janus-faced political problem is to achieve harmony between the two sides. At the other extreme, Aristotle, Augustine, Machiavelli, and Hobbes, to mention a few, are aware that the good man and the good citizen are different beings who hardly ever come to terms with each other, and that this is a fundamental in politics. For them, the criterion for being a good citizen is different from goodness in action. The elimination of this conflict would imply the end of politics, which in itself is nothing good or bad, but simply impossible. Thus, the unremitting existence of political action.

The reconciliatory strategy, in turn, admits of two possibilities. On the one hand, Plato, Aquinas and Rousseau argue that the good man and the good citizen should harmonize in both the inside and the outside realms. Good men bring their moral imperatives to the public forum to be complemented with those of the political entity. Politics is the public space of encounter where good men convene and acknowledge their attachment to the political association. This process of reciprocal recognition is also one

of improvement, whereby the good person reunites with the good citizen. Politics is the enlightening process by which the aggregation of good persons engenders a legitimate body politics. The identification between the individual and the political community is wholesale: the soul matches the city; individual autonomy is an element of the general will; *beatitudo* comes only after the right participation in the earthly political life.

On the other hand, unlike Plato, Aquinas and Rousseau, both Nagel and Rawls claim that the reconciliation between the good person and the good citizen comes about by means of the politics of separation instead of reunion. Rawls lays out two different kinds of division. His theory presupposes, first, a split between individual and society that takes the form of a "division of labor between two kinds of social rules, and the different institutional forms in which these rules are realized."[62] That is, an institutional division of labor between the basic structure on the one hand and the rules applying directly to individuals and associations to regulate particular transactions on the other. "If this division of labor can be established, individuals and associations are then left free to advance their ends more effectively within the framework of the basic structure, secure in the knowledge that else where in the social system the necessary corrections to preserve background justice are being made."[63] In addition, Rawls argues for a divide that runs inside the individual between impartial political reasons that should always outshine comprehensive ones whenever questions of fundamental justice arise. Nagel, in turn, sees the political problem as one of reconciliation between two standpoints, the individual and the collective within each individual. The political problem centers on not the relation between the individual and society, but around the individual's internal division between the personal and the impersonal sides.

In these two cases the search for legitimacy implies a divided self that retains and heals the discord from within. Harmonization becomes a private affair, and private life is repelled from the public arena. A schismatic soul comes to terms with itself without reuniting in the political sphere so that politics turns to be not the aggregate of good persons, but the conglomerate of their impartial side. Unlike the other reconciliatory view, Rawls and Nagel envision an accord between the soul and the city not based on identity but on separation. The city is the venue for impartial citizens; the soul stays crowded with both the partial and the impartial views. The body politic is homogenously impartial, but the individual carries the burden on her shoulders—she must be on her mettle to cope with a divided self. The impartial or the political and the partial or comprehensive should come to terms in private by acknowledging their different fields of application.

This proposal portrays a simplified moral psychology. It pigeonholes human experience into a twofold pattern of awareness—emotions (and their correspondent actions) that fall on the partial or the impartial side. Each of them has a distinctive realm of application: partial or comprehensive emotions apply to close relationships, and impartial or political ones to institutions. The point of the political tradition that puts conflict at its core is that emotions do not relate unequivocally to the public and the private sphere and that politics is the process that channels the long-standing conflict that results from that.[64]

In a way, Rawls and Nagel offer the most demanding solution of the three alternatives. For one of the strategies admits of the irreparable existence of political struggle, and it entertains a conception of the person that assumes conflict as part of her existence. For this line of thought, politics is the way to find partial solutions to an ongoing conflict that brings about irreparable losses. Alternatively, a second strand argues that politics has a healing component and that whatever conflict arises from the interaction of individuals could be overcome by subsuming them in right manner to the encompassing and more accomplished political community. Politics, in this case, is the reconciliatory and enlightening path that runs from the city to the individuals.

Nagel and Rawls's suggestion, however, is biased towards a conception of the person who is capable of thinking overridingly in impartial terms when it comes to political decisions. The clear-cut stipulation between the partial and the impartial makes it easier for them to think that the former side takes over when political matters are at stake. Despite their claims, politics under this view does not seem to contribute too much to this effect. A political (as opposed to comprehensive) conception of the person is proposed as the focus of consensus among different moral doctrines. The discussion above is intended to show that the unequivocal distinction of a divided self and its corresponding emotions is more Kantian than anything else. The reconciliatory strategy based on a divided moral personality entails a political conception of the person that puts it too close to a distinctive comprehensive view. If so, a question remains to be answered: how come the political conception of the person that is supposed to be common ground to all moral theories is, on the face of the requirement of a split personality, so characteristically Kantian?

**V. Corollaries**

Why would one assume that whereas moral theories do harbor a distinct account of moral personality, political theories actually share the same account of the person? Which assumed understanding of the relation between moral and political theories supports this stance? Indeed, any sketchy comparative examination of alternative political theories suffices to observe the nature and extent of the disagreement over the political anthropology they embrace. Typically, each of them advances a unique and vertebral description of political agency—meaning, an account of the relevant faculties of the subject that affect the interaction, scope and transformative impact of politics upon the agent. Political theories too, not unlike moral theories, branch out depending on the political anthropology that they champion. Aristotle, Augustine, Hobbes, Rousseau, Smith, Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault, and Habermas advocate for drastically different political understandings of the person. In the same vein that Rawls distinguishes moral theories apart on grounds of their conception of the person, political theories part company based on their political anthropology.

In addition to the problem of justice, *Political Liberalism* introduces the concern for a legitimate order in the age of pluralism. With that in mind, Rawls rehearses an incipient separation between moral and political theory expanding the justificatory basis of the latter and shrinking the effects of the comprehensive dimension of morality in the

foundations of liberalism. This chapter argued that this attempt at discipline separation falls short of the requirements imposed by pluralism on the justification of any legitimate political order. Given the constraints of pluralism, Rawls's political theory remains yet too moral. In his work, political theory is subsumed to moral theory in at least two ways. First, and most obviously, in the sense that political theory begins with a moral conception of the person. That is, that political reasoning originates in a moral description of the subject uncontaminated by political interaction; that politics rightly understood mirrors and embraces a moral, unpolluted beginning. This reading carries most weight in *A Theory of Justice*.

Second, for Rawls, moral philosophy predominates over political theory in the sense that the former has the prerogative to set the boundaries of difference: there are many moral worlds but only one political. While moral worldviews embrace distinct conceptions of the good, different perspectives of the person, competing accounts of human flourishing and perfection, politics boils down to one understanding of political agency—what makes us different comes from our moral experience while politics acts as a passive container of consensus. Politics is a satellite component of morality, a focus of agreement among broader moral structures, a derivate activity that both presupposes and is limited by moral reasoning. Plural views, and together with them the bulk of our identity, remain under the sphere of morality; the nature and scope of politics is mapped out in a debate that springs primordially from comprehensive moral accounts. Against this view some believe that politics may be a transformative activity, a sphere with its own logic, an engine of difference and disagreement that responds to nothing else but to itself (a position that should not be reduced to some sort of Machiavellism). This latter view admits of moral, aesthetic, religious, customary reasons and motivations, but they are understood as being entangled and mingled in the dialectics of politics. In short, unlike this position, Rawls postulates that the autonomy of politics is both bequeathed and restrained by moral theory. This interpretation prevails in *Political Liberalism*.

An extensive debate about the implications of reasonable pluralism to questions of political legitimacy has split the waters among scholars: some argue that political philosophy should aim at a thin constitutional consensus; others claim a consensus on a broader substantive conception of justice. Kurt Baier and Stuart Hampshire have endorsed, on very different bases, a limited consensus on procedure. Yet, Joshua Cohen has argued, intelligently and persuasively to my mind, in favor of the elusiveness of that distinction.[65] This chapter suggested that the relevant debate fundamentally lies not on that divide but on Rawls's own proposal to set the boundaries between moral and political theory. His suggestion of the divided self, a tentative solution to the problem of legitimacy, indicates a possible division of labor between the two disciplines—an answer that is ultimately unsuccessful due to its unavoidable ties to a comprehensive view.

The conclusions of this chapter hint at both deepening and severing the relation between moral and political philosophy.[66] On the one hand, it suggests that moral reasons, creeds, beliefs and interests are an unavoidable part of the public debate—and there is nothing regrettable about that. On the other hand, the paper also signals a disciplinary separation sharper than the one defended by Rawls on grounds of the

continuing perdurance of pluralism. The latter weakens the prospects of doing political philosophy starting from a highly moralized conception of the person to an extent that is not sufficiently acknowledged in *Political Liberalism*.

Against the ideal and highly moralized political theory prevalent in contemporary normative debates, many thinkers have argued that given the nature of political phenomena political theory needs to move history, conflict, and power to the center stage. Without pronouncing on the virtues and shortcomings of those arguments, this chapter contributes to that view from a new angle. It argues that the existence of pluralism in either incarnation—as a meta-ethical theory of the nature of values or a sociological account of reasonable disagreement—drives a wedge on the division of labor between moral and political theory. The truth of pluralism calls for a minimalism in morality (not achieved in *Political Liberalism*) in the foundations of a liberal order. Insofar as Rawls's liberalism remains comprehensive, it cannot incorporate the pluralism that motivates the reshaping of his original liberal view.

If this chapter emphasizes one dimension of the ethical comprehensiveness of Rawls's political liberalism—its Kantianism—Chapter Five, builds upon the comparative analysis of the three thinkers, and brings to the fore other ways in which his political endeavor slides into a comprehensive view. Before doing that, the following two chapters examine the strengths and pitfalls of another liberal strategy to incorporate pluralism to its ranks. Chapter Two offers an analysis of Isaiah Berlin's value pluralism and Chapter Three provides a reinterpretation of how pluralism and liberalism work in tandem in his political theory.

## Chapter Two
## Isaiah Berlin's Anti-Reductionism: in the Move from Semantic to Normative Perspectives

Before examining whether Isaiah Berlin succeeds in defending a post-Enlightenment liberalism that incorporates a pluralistic vision of our normative experience, this chapter analyzes the character of Berlin's value pluralism. For only after acknowledging the deeply historical (as opposed to ethically realist) roots of his pluralism, it becomes clearer how liberalism and pluralism reinforce each other in his political theory. This chapter traces the roots of Berlin's anti-reductionism to his earlier writings. In so doing, it brings to the fore key dimensions that shed light on the morphology of his pluralistic views. Chapter Three builds upon this analysis and offers an interpretation of how pluralism and liberalism chime with each other in Berlin's work.

Reflecting upon Berlin's intellectual career, Alan Ryan claims in reference to Berlin's earlier writings that he "wrote several deft, acute, and accurate essays on the logical positivists' favorite pieces of analysis…but although these showed great philosophical talent, they did not offer any insights into what else he might do."[67] Berlin may not have known at that time where else his thoughts were leading him. In hindsight, however, one can unearth many of the fundamental features of his late value pluralism in his early writings about meaning. This does not mean, as Ryan rightly suggests, that one can understand Berlin's ethical thought if one pays exclusive attention to his early writings. It does mean, however, that his late pluralism displays more layers, depth and complexities if one interprets it from a holistic perspective that covers his entire work. For only then it comes to the surface that Berlin's ethical pluralism rests on views about semantics and ontology as well.

Against the standard reading of Berlin's thought that drives a wedge between his early and subsequent work, this chapter offers a coherent interpretation of Berlin's corpus.[68] It suggests that his late normative anti-reductionism has roots in the early works on meaning, semantics and truth, and that his ethical and political thought presupposes the same anti-reductionist drive present in his early work against logical positivism. Berlin's anti-reductionist objection to verificationism and phenomenalism in the realm of semantics evolves into a normative anti-reductionist commitment embodied in the value pluralism of his later work. Moreover, the unity of concerns shared by Berlin's early and late work offers a solid basis on which to deflect some current moral realist readings of his value pluralism.

Berlin's critique of logical positivism raises complex issues that go well beyond the scope of this chapter. Without entering fully into the details of those debates, and certainly without attempting to adjudicate between the contending parties, I will try to convey in a general way some of the main themes of Berlin's critique of positivism, so as to demonstrate their broad affinity with his mature value pluralism and anti-reductionism in ethics.

**I. Against Semantic Reductionism: Verificationism and Phenomenalism**

The principle underlying the idea that "Homer cannot coexist with Dante; nor Dante with Galileo" is present in Berlin's early writings in the form of an objection both to the conflation of categorical and hypothetical statements, and to the imposition of one excluding criterion of meaning applicable to all kinds of proposition. Underlying his later, more developed position—pertinent to the realm of ethics—that we cannot reduce Homer to Dante or find a single overriding criterion to assess the relative value of both in all contexts, one finds the same anti-reductionist viewpoint that Berlin develops in his early critical arguments against the logical positivists' endorsement of an overriding standard of meaning and a pristine form of proposition to which all others must approximate. This section briefly outlines Berlin's early anti-reductionist thought about meaning, which stands as the antechamber of his later value pluralism. The nature of the connection between these two periods is further developed in the remainder of the chapter.

The "Oxford philosophy" school was the first to rise against positivism, objecting to the reduction of ordinary language to a scientific model. This strand of philosophy, which studied the function of words based on the ordinary use of language, recognized, in Berlin's words, "the rich ambiguity of language, and difference of verbal uses, the inevitable ambivalence of words, and the dependence of inter-woven complexes of words on different angles of vision of reality."[69] Although Berlin did not participate in that tradition, he too believed, in the early stages of his intellectual career, that positivism imposed a stern and distorting criterion upon the meaning of our propositions.

Berlin identifies two semantic problems underlying the reductionist attempts of the logical positivists. First, they impose the verificationist criterion as the sole standard of meaning to test all statements.[70] Berlin finds this misleading and distorting for not all meaningful propositions can be measured against the same excluding criterion. Although one cannot verify conclusively yesterday's rain, the sentence "It rained yesterday" is not for that reason meaningless. "The translation feels wrong," Berlin holds "[o]ne does not usually mean by the sentence 'It rained yesterday' the present empirical evidence for it, not even the total sum of such evidence…It follows that either all propositions save those about the immediate present are meaningless; or that meaning cannot depend on conclusive verifiability."[71]

Moreover, according to Berlin, some general propositions such as "all S is P" are only falsifiable, and could not be verifiable given their unlimited universal character. Some positivists tried to overcome the latter challenge by treating these instances as rules or prescriptions that could be operationalized into statements measurable against the verificationist criterion. Berlin explains: "[t]ake a general proposition: 'All men are mortal' and a particular proposition: 'Socrates is a man' then 'Socrates is mortal' would follow, that might be verifiable by his death."[72] Yet, this does not content Berlin either for, in his view, it implied that general propositions were not descriptive or empirical—a position that he finds puzzling. This operationalization, according to him, distorts, rather than translates, the original statement to be verified. Hence, for Berlin, verification cannot exhaust meaning, "imperfect verification does not mean that their meaning was somehow imperfect."[73] If anything, the relation is the reverse: intelligibility entails verification. The principle of verification, for Berlin, can only be applied consistently and meaningfully to just a portion of empirical knowledge and beliefs.

Berlin dismisses, as a second semantic conundrum, the positivists' endorsement to the phenomenalist analysis, the road companion of verificationism.[74] The core idea underlying phenomenalism is to translate "the propositions about material objects into propositions about data of observation and introspection."[75] Berlin finds this project wholly unsatisfactory. To achieve the transformation of all statements into introspective data, phenomenalism requires the conversion of all categorical statements into hypothetical ones, which ultimately travesties the original propositional meaning: "No direct translation from categoricals into hypotheticals is, as a general rule, and as our language is today ordinarily used, a correct analysis of, or substitute for them."[76] Phenomenalism converts past categorical statements into hypothetical, empirical datum language about the present to make it amenable to the verificationist method. Berlin contends, however, that categorical propositions cannot be reduced "to other logical forms without doing apparent violence to normal usage" as they tend "to direct attention to…things and events in a way in which other kinds of expressions do not."[77]

In Berlin's view, the phenomenalist transmutation yields an unacceptable outcome—the elimination of the difference between past and present. The conversion of categoricals about material objects into hypotheticals with a built-in intermittent and dispositional structure collapses past and present experience. Berlin finds this unsuitable for to claim that verifiable propositions are concerned with the present always presupposes a distinction between past, present and future. If one says that one cannot "refer to anything unless I can establish the meaning of the variables of my language in terms of what I am actually experiencing here and now…I become unable to refer to the past or the future or to the experiences of others…that way lies the kind of verification theory of meaning which has more than once been shown to lead to an extravagantly solipsist analysis of meaning of words, ending literally in nonsense."[78] In lieu of an incomprehensible metaphysical account of the world that the phenomenalist eagerly tries to avoid, they bequeath instead a world of experience severed from important areas of meaning.[79]

Berlin's objection to the phenomenalist conversion of categorical statements into sense datum hypothetical ones is part of his broader denunciation of a fallacy that in his view has pervaded the history of philosophy: the "desire to translate many prima facie different types of proposition into a single type."[80] From Aristotle to Descartes to Russell, Berlin holds, all have favored one type of proposition over others and have subsequently tried to convert the defective statements into the preferred kind. Usually, the chosen candidate depicts a special kind of clarity, transparency and certainty in their relation to reality absent in alternative dubious, confusing forms of expression. Philosophers have consistently picked up a type of proposition that in their view possesses an epistemological or logical virtue lacking in all the rest, and have thus attempted to carry out a wholesale translation of all other statements into the meaningful and pristine ones. According to Berlin, verificationism and phenomenalism usher a kind of dualism whereby propositions are divided into "straightforward and problem-raising, tractable and troublesome, good examples of their kind and eccentric or degenerate species requiring special remedial treatment, good and bad, sheep and goats."[81] Berlin draws attention to the central misapprehension involved, namely, "the belief or assumption that all propositions must in principle be either translatable into, or at any rate in some way connected with, the approved type of sentences…or else suffer from defects which must

either be explained away or palliated by special logical 'treatment.'"[82] In short, Berlin's writings on semantics and truth evince a sensitivity to reductionism, an acknowledgement of the irreducibility of propositional meaning, a plea for the coexistence of multiple criteria of meaning, an anti-dualist call, and a celebration of the multifarious, plural and open-ended character of meaning.

**II. From Semantic to Normative Anti-Reductionism**

The kernel of Berlin's thought—that not everything can be understood, measured or described in terms of something else without loss—originates in his early writings as a semantic impossibility to use verificationism as the sole standard of meaning and phenomenalism as the solipsistic process of converting all experience into present sense data conveyed in hypothetical statements. Verificationism presupposes one single valid method to verify the meaning of all statements; phenomenalism demands a translation of every proposition into one form of grammatical statement that renders them verifiable. Berlin vigorously opposes the impetus to reductionism that drives both positions. This anti-reductionist thrust burgeons into his later pluralistic ethical view and splinters into the incommensurable, plural, conflicting, historical, anti-metaphysical and comparable character of values. All of these components of his value pluralism hark back to his discussions about propositional meaning with logical positivists.

**A. Incommensurability**

If incommensurability alludes to the lack of a single standard that can accurately measure all items under consideration then meaning incommensurability stands as one of the criticisms that Berlin raises against the verificationist assessment of propositions. To be sure, Berlin does not express it in those terms, but meaning incommensurability rests behind the argument that propositions take different forms and cannot be gauged against one excluding criterion of verification. Incommensurability is in turn the most fundamental idea of Berlin's late value pluralism.

Berlin does not convey his rejection of verificationism in terms of incommensurability. Nevertheless, his account of meaning— that meaning takes various forms; that although propositions cannot all be verified or made verifiable they can yet remain intelligible; that only complementing criteria can shed light on the universe of language; and that the collapse of diverging kinds of propositions into one preferred type necessarily precludes areas of our meaningful discourse—evokes the idea of incommensurability at each step of the argument.

In Berlin's early work, no hard and fast criterion exists to elucidate the meaning of all kinds of proposition. Although not unfathomable, meaning cannot be exhausted by looking into it from the preeminent precepts of the verificationist standard. Logical positivists, in Berlin's view, overlook that more than simple verification is at stake in making sense of the entire range of our meaningful experience. Propositional meaning is richer, more complex, more elusive. "All human beings are mortal," "Columbus was blond," "The book is on the table," "If I am in the room, I see the book on the table," "It rained yesterday" are all meaningful statements that, for Berlin, cannot be accounted for exclusively by their degree of verifiability.

Incommensurability in ethics refers to the impossibility to arrange all values in accordance with an excluding ethical imperative that applies to all contexts and for all

times. One single common ethical currency or criterion cannot play a satisfactory role in elucidating, measuring, and ordering our ethical experience exhaustively. Is justice overall better than loyalty? Does equality come before freedom? Does a good Samaritan lead a better life than a highly ambitious entrepreneur? Is benevolence more valuable than integrity? In his later work, Berlin suggests that no single standard can gauge and provide a definitive answer to these questions. Values are meaningful, and yet they are too rich, too textured, too conflictive, too many, too contradictory, too fragmented to rank them in a universal ordering and an atemporal grid. Hence, the claim that no paramount standard of evaluation could account for our meaningful experience is one that, according to Berlin, applies equally well to values as to propositions, and to ethics as well as to semantics.

Meaning, for Berlin, cannot be grasped by the reduction of language to basic units testable against the verificationist criterion. Rather, Berlin borrows from Austin and foreshadows the later Wittgenstein when he states that meaning is actually related to the adequate recognition of the appropriate use of language, the recognition of when a word rightly applies to a certain context.[83] This understanding of meaning embedded in social practices and ordinary usage does not lend itself to the pulling apart of language to measure it against an exclusive criterion. "The development of language," Berlin holds, "is to a large extent the development of metaphors, and to attempt to discriminate between the metaphorical and non-metaphorical use of words, where metaphors are either embedded in normal speech, or a source of genuine illumination, would be absurdly pedantic, and, if pushed to extremes, unrealisable."[84] This view of language as a social construction that grows out of its ordinary use would travel through Berlin's subsequent account of values understood as unavoidable lenses that spring from history and ordinary experience. One sole standard would not serve to arrange all the pieces of the set in either case.

In both cases, ethics and semantics, we lack a sole deciding standard of ordinal evaluation or common currency that could rank all values or propositions in an order of ethical preference or could make meaning transparent and uncontroversial once and for all. Neither utility (to name just one example) nor verification can play the role of a common scale of units to which values and propositions could be accurately translated. Verification cannot function as a common scale of units to which propositions can be translated. Both meaning and evaluation depend on a variety—a plurality—of different criteria. Do I draw more utility from keeping a friend or from earning one million dollars? In the absence of a common denominator to which they can be reduced, propositional meaning and meaningful ethical experience escape the ordering matrix of an exclusive standard of evaluation. Thus, the rejection to one and only one discerning parameter to measure all instances of a set is a central piece in the account of incommensurability and a continuous thought that stretches from Berlin's earlier to later writings. In both, the realm of propositions and the realm of values, as Berlin puts it in his early work "there is no single criterion of meaning and no single method or set of rules for testing it."[85]

**B. Plurality and Conflict**

Propositions are plural, irreducible and conflicting. Against the reductionist attempt behind phenomenalism, Berlin maintains that categorical statements about the past

cannot be translated to hypothetical propositions about the present without loss. This call for pluralism, antireductionism and the acceptance of conflict and residual meaning becomes a building block in his value pluralism as well.

Everything significant, according to the phenomenalist, can be translated to one pristine and favored grammatical structure. The hypothetical statement about the present substitutes the categorical proposition about the past. Yet there is something irredeemably wrong about this replacement, according to Berlin, for the only way in which present statements make sense is by resorting to an idea of the past. The present cannot co-opt the past without eroding its own significance, in the same way that hypothetical statements cannot monopolize the propositional grammatical structure without slipping down to their own evisceration. Meaning rests on plural and irreducible dimensions. An all-present propositional world, holds Berlin, overwrites statements about the past and it cripples its own condition of possibility.

Propositions are plural and irreducible—and so are values. In both cases, something is inexorably lost in the translation (if it can be carried out at all). In the same way that statements are plural, diverse, various and irreducible to one single format (present, singular and hypothetical) without loss, values are plural, numerous, conflicting and cannot be reduced to one another or to a dominant end sitting atop of the hierarchical structure.

If an all-present propositional world cannot stand by itself, perfect liberty cannot coexist with complete equality, pure modesty cannot persist with superlative over-achievement, and neither could make sense without the contrasting comparison of the wide range of competing values. A similar objection that Berlin raises against the reduction of categorical statements into hypothetical ones stands behind the idea that friendship cannot be translated into money, that prudential considerations cannot be turned into moral ones and that values display their full meaning against the entire arch of normativity—if the present without a past crumbles, so does the idea of freedom without the notions of oppression, equality, uniformity, repression and so on. In short, Berlin's disagreement with phenomenalists grows into the related normative belief that values are conflicting and plural and cannot for that reason be translated or reduced to one another without a residue. The worth and rationale of propositions and values depend on the ongoing contrastive force with other items of their kind.

The vision of Berlin's "hedgehog" errs in this precise way; she fails to recognize the incommensurable, plural and conflicting character of our values. Her mistake resides in subsuming all values to a higher, harmonious, completed entity. The monist or hedgehog thinks and feels from the vantage point of an overarching structure in terms of which all other components should be understood for certainty and unity's sake. One idea, one standard, one benchmark accommodates all the constitutive parts of the system, the meaning of which turn to be colored and determined by their position in the organizing structure. On the contrary, the pluralist view, the "fox's" eyes, embraces contradictory, random values and ends, connected only at times and on empirical and historical rather than on logical grounds. Values are not understood in terms of a dominant end or organizing principle.

Many thinkers to whom Berlin is attracted offer revealing insights into the demand for anti-reductionism, the persistence of the many over the one, that has troubled him from the very early stages of his career. Berlin's fascination in Tolstoy's work with

the struggling and unsolved incarnation of both the hedgehog and the fox is a case in point. It remains within Tolstoy himself an unresolved dilemma between seeing the real life in light of the lived experience of individuals including the infinite specificities of emotions, textures, speeches, thoughts, tastes, insights and so on—a manifold of experiences that defies translation into one inclusive historical narrative—and the search for causes; the ability to understand reality in its own color, the chaotic, at times random, at times illuminating but always innovative and spontaneous turmoil of the ordinary day-to-day reality and the belief in inexorable historical determinism. Berlin admires Tolstoy's struggle to solve the pervasive duality between the fox and the hedgehog—a duality that Tolstoy recognizes as a feature of reality and that Berlin sees it rooted in Tolstoy himself. Where others find no more than confusion, Berlin perceives a glimpse of genius and bravura in the unclear conclusion that Tolstoy provides as a solution to his dilemma—a stern determination, although ultimately unsuccessful, not to succumb to the easy way out of the hedgehog. Tolstoy incarnates a "passionate desire for a monistic vision of life on the part of a fox bitterly intent upon seeing in the manner of a hedgehog."[86] If early in his career Berlin argues that hypothetical statements are not interchangeable with categorical ones, later he endorses the fox's view that "Homer is not a primitive Ariosto; Shakespeare is not a rudimentary Racine."[87] Thus, the logical positivists and the phenomenalists are the hedgehogs of Berlin's intellectual early days.

Berlin calls into question two fallacious strategies that either logical positivists, idealists or realist metaphysicians deploy to favor the simple, straightforward, good kind of proposition that reports a direct acquaintance with the world: the deflationary and inflationary approaches.[88] The former reduces all propositions to a selected type certified as genuine. The inflationary route takes, not surprisingly, the exact reverse path beginning with the same assumption about genuine categorical propositions but concluding instead that other kind of statements (hypothetical, general, about the past or the future, etc.) are perfectly valid, intelligible, descriptive propositions unjustly suspected of being defective only because they are mistakenly seen as concerned with the same entities than those of the favored propositions, when they are not: "This doctrine maintained that hypothetical propositions, for example, were not at best partly categorical, partly not propositions at all, but that they were perfectly good propositions on their own right, but concerned with a special class of entities—'hypothetical facts,' or 'real possibilities,' or 'essences,' or the like."[89] Berlin claims that both strategies, however, reveal the same fallacy—a forced assimilation of all propositions to a given type—and the same equally fatal theory of truth—the correspondence model.[90] Berlin brushes aside the dualism underlying these two strategies—a rebuttal that later evolves into a rejection of the dichotomous organization in the domain of values and his consequent endorsement of the multifarious, complex, plural and conflicting sides of normativity.

The persistent dualism between good and bad forms of propositions that Berlin originally spots as spreading through the semantic discussions is not unlike many of the distinctions permeating moral and political philosophy, which he later condemns. In many contemporary ethical and political theories, the dualist strategy remains intact, namely, setting up a distinction, usually a dichotomous one (the rational against the irrational self; political against moral reasons; the impartial against the partial side; the universalizable against the parochial; harmony against conflict; the reasonable vis-à-vis

the truth, etc.) to then bring the flawed component of the pair closer to the virtuous one. The wretched are assessed solely in terms of the proximity to the ideal component of the dichotomy, and what cannot be coupled in the right manner is for that reason discredited. Berlin's resistance to the dualist strategy of the positivist concludes in a fragmentation of values that ushers a form of politics that cannot rest consistently on a dichotomous normative ordering.

**C. Anti-Metaphysical and Historical View**

The empirical, historical and anti-metaphysical presuppositions of Berlin's value pluralism, like many other major features of his ethical stance, date back to his writings against positivism. Berlin's turning back on the sense data and atomist fact reductionism that vouches for the ultimate constituents of reality (defended by A. J. Ayer and Bertrand Russell respectively) eventually metamorphoses into an opposition to the view that we can find moral values as ultimate components in the normative realm that are awaiting for discovery and impinge upon the person as a passive moral agent. By the time he turns towards the study of ethics and politics, this prevalent credence against the ultimate constituents view transmutes into a sort of Kantianism that claims that we see and understand the world through the lenses of the "human semblance," a historical portrait of human agency. He also comes to believe that rational moral argumentation is not the prerogative of the moral realist.

According to Berlin, logical positivists commit a case of the "Ionian fallacy" in trying to find the ultimate constituents of reality "and since the world consists of these basic ingredients, language cannot do better than mirror them—reproduce the 'structure of reality.'"[91] Positivists believe also that the propositions that describe the ultimate features of the world—sense data or atomic facts—enjoy *ipso facto* a privileged status, a stance which Berlin also disapproves: "[t]his is indeed a metaphysic with a vengeance, without any of the virtues of the more interesting metaphysical systems..."[92] The correspondence theory of meaning, the theory of truth that goes hand in hand with this ontological view, presupposes a symmetrical correlation between words of pristine propositions and the final components of reality. The rejection of what Berlin construes as a strange ontology stretches into the later writings about morality and politics when he argues that all that we can know and claim something about lies in our experience. For him, there is no room in the universe for "queer" moral entities—"For the only thing which convinces in matters not capable of proof" he argues "…is a direct appeal to experience, a description of what we think right or true which varies with what our audience has itself in some sense, however inarticulately, known or felt."[93] Historical awareness is all that there is and all that words can express.

In tune with his early call against the "ultimate constituents" view and the idea that language serves the purpose of reproducing the deep structure of reality, Berlin develops an idea of objectivity that is more the result of a historical and normative constructivism than an upshot of the intrinsic nature of values. "Out of the timber so crooked as that from which man is made nothing entirely straight can be built"—Berlin reminds us, quoting Kant in support of the idea that no hard and fast universal moral criterion could be drawn out from human nature.[94] Berlin does extract nonetheless something "straight" and permanent from the crooked timber of humanity. After taking the cultural pulse of human action across ages, Berlin concludes that we can outline a

semi-permanent depiction of what it means to be a person—what he calls the human semblance—that enables rational argumentation among different views. Although open, undecided and loose this conception is composed by multiple and permanent concepts and categories that have sprung from and organized human experience. Because of its enduring nature, this cluster of categories makes rational argumentation possible providing a common formal condition from which to assess questions of value. Because of its open nature, it lays the basis for anti-reductionism and lends support to pluralism in the normative domain.

Ethical argumentation is not about a random clash of fancy preferences but, on the contrary, involves a process of rational, well-grounded discussion. Berlin's pluralism is not about competing tastes and preferences, all at the same level, each with its own value attached, which cannot be compared to one another. Moral matters can be rationally assessed, moral judgments can be true or false, discussion about values and forms of life is imperative and inescapable, and as the result of all of these some ultimate ends can be integrated with one another if only temporarily. Insofar as men and women are endowed with imagination, they can conceive as meaningful a value system different from theirs. They can see other human beings engaging in different practices, make sense of those values, understand and communicate them because they share in the experience of being a person. Fueled by opposing comprehensive views, persons disagree, object, antagonize and go to war; and yet, they can recognize the others' forms of life as a human pursuit. "That is why pluralism is not relativism—the multiple values are objective, part of the *essence of humanity* rather than arbitrary creations of men's subjective fancies."[95]

Value objectivity remains possible within his pluralist outlook because the nature of values and the pursuit of them is "part of what it is to be a human being, and this is an objective given…there are certain values, and only those values, which men, while remaining men, can pursue."[96] Distinctively human values are multiple and diverse but not infinite, they elicit an awareness of what means to lead a human life absent in animals or inanimate things, and bring in the possibility of human understanding even under the arch of competing or antagonistic ways of life. "Objectivity of moral judgment seems to depend on (almost to consist in) the degree of constancy in human responses," Berlin argues, "a minimum of common moral ground—interrelated concepts and categories—is intrinsic to human communication."[97]

Hence, the realm of value is the realm defined by our humanity, a conceptual scheme that we cannot help but recognize if we are to act in accordance with the idea of a person as we conceive it today; we understand the limits of our humanity through the web of these categories. This categorial framework is a central and less variant feature of our historical experience that makes communication possible; widespread and stable ways in which we think, decide, perceive and judge.[98] These concepts and categories are then unavoidable, without them we would lack the equipment to understand ourselves. Because outside them we cannot grasp the meaning of human actions they are binding and imposing, and because of that they turn out to be semi-permanent or considerably more stable than other features of the empirical world, thus providing an objective basis for argumentation among persons.

Berlin's Kantianism lies in his continuous effort to make us aware of the most ingrained and intimate categories through which we comprehend our lives. Unlike Kant, however, Berlin sees these categories as historical rather than a priori. Indeed, when it

comes to explaining the origin of these categories, Berlin is closer to Durkheim than to Kant. Berlin, like Durkheim, accepts the social origin of the normative concepts—"the solid frames that enclose all thought…the armature of intelligence" as Durkheim calls them[99]—and reject aprioristic arguments about their existence. Moreover, they both sustain that if at any given moment human beings do not partake in these categories, any communicative agreement would break down.[100] The objectivity that Berlin invokes relates to the terrain of values historically created by persons' actions and thoughts that enable and limit our reciprocal interactions. For the early Berlin, propositional truth, pace logical positivism, is not reached simply by establishing a relationship between language and reality; for the late Berlin, our entire interaction with the world remains mediated by our normative and social constitution.

If Kant makes Berlin run afoul of the idea that truth hinges on the ultimate constituents of reality, Vico brings the historical flux into Berlin's account of objectivity. Vico holds that there is a single, continuous consciousness which belongs to all, "and that we understand the past of the human race as a man understands his own individual past, by a kind of cultural memory, by an awareness more or less dim, but capable of being stimulated by the use of imagination and the discovery of concrete evidence, of the condition from which we emerged, stretching into the most distant past."[101] For Vico too, according to Berlin, "there is a common human nature, otherwise men in one age could not understand the literature or the art of another, or, above all, its laws…"[102] Berlin reformulates this idea by stating that the relatively constant complex of concepts and categories that outlines our human portrait functions as a kind of collective memory that stretches into the past and provides the conditions for some empathetic recognition of others' experiences in different places and time.[103]

Berlin's Kantianism—the belief in the internal constitution of values that mediates between our experience and the world—harks back to his rejection of logical positivism, its ontological view about ultimate constituents of the world, and a correlative correspondence theory of truth that establishes that propositions must properly reflect the exact anatomy of reality. Vico, on the other hand, guides Berlin's historically laden version of objectivity that rests on the claim that persons have historically partake in the same categorial fabric: "…there must be common language, common communication and, to some degree, common values, otherwise there will be no intelligibility between human beings. A human being who cannot understand what any other human being says is scarcely a human being; he is pronounced abnormal."[104] The early cry against the logical positivist account of truth and their search of the ultimate constituents of the world as either sense-datum experience or atomic facts resonates later on with Berlin's anti-metaphysical and historical constitution of the human mind shaped by the normative lenses through which we approach our surroundings. For in both his early and subsequent writings, Berlin waves aside the relevance of the ultimate components of our existence—either as sense experience or objective facts of the world—and with it goes Berlin's early and late dismissal of the correspondence account of truth as the theory of meaning that accompanies that ontological structure of reality. "Logical perfection," for Berlin, "should be exposed as stemming from a false theory of meaning, accompanied by its equally counterfeit metaphysical counterpart—a view of the universe as possessing an 'ultimate structure,' as being constructed out of this or that collection or combination of

bits and pieces of 'ultimate stuff' which the 'language' is constructed to reproduce."[105] This opposition to this metaphysical view would be a piece of his ethical view.

***Is Berlin A Moral Realist?***

Encouraged by Berlin's defense of truth in ethical discourse many scholars have claimed that he holds some kind of moral realism. Charles Taylor and Thomas Nagel emphasize the enduring, commanding, non-contingent aspect of Berlin's account of values. Taylor holds that Berlin "stated the conflict of goods as though it were *written into the goods themselves*".[106] He also attaches some kind of moral realism to Berlin since he views "these goods as in some way imposing themselves, as binding on me, or making a claim on me. Otherwise the conflict could be easily set aside. Or at least, the conflict would turn out to be one in me, something that I could straighten out if I could just achieve some harmony in my goals."[107] Nagel, on the other hand, argues that values are not just the attitudes of groups or individuals—they are real values that provide reasons for actions. Nagel states that, for Berlin, the realm of value cannot be reduced to the psychological sphere, and that "in many cases values can conflict *noncontingently or essentially*."[108] Likewise, for both John Gray and George Crowder, Berlin's thesis of incommensurability of values is part of a realist meta-ethical position.[109]

The quotes by Taylor and Nagel above highlight the independence of the logic of values—their absolute and imposing character, their autonomy from the logic of facts, and their incontestable reality—which puts Berlin in a realistic suit that may not fit him properly. There is a reality of values, according to this interpretation, that works mind-independently, and acts upon us unbendingly. This account left us groping regarding the origin of these values and thus can hardly explain why values operate the way they do. Those claims dwell on the incoherence of the idea that, if properly understood and accommodated, all rational ends can be fully satisfied. Yet, these explanations, as they stand, leave unclear where these quasi-permanent values come from, they put Berlin in the camp of an objective realism that leaves no room for human intervention in the construction of that objectivity and it overlooks the link between these values (or categories) to his idea of human semblance. While they shed helpful light on the relationship between values among themselves, they say little about the grounds for the imposing character of these values or the rationale for their existence. Since Berlin distrusts so wholeheartedly any form of metaphysical or ontological overindulgence and he clings so resolutely to ordinary experience as the only source of moral awareness, it turns out important to come to terms with the source of these values and not only with their imperative, non-contingent binding force. Berlin shrugs off the ontological account that posits ultimate constituents of reality. Yet, without any further elaboration, these statements insinuate that values are entities hanging somewhere in the universe ready to act upon persons—a stance that Berlin deserts since his early works.

Taylor acknowledges that the work of Bernard Williams is a difficult case to class as he, in his view, is neither a realist nor a non-realist thinker. The argument that follows intends to support that we can claim at least that much about Berlin's ethical thought.[110] His ethics grows out of the recognition of Hume's legacy—that is, that ethical statements are neither subjective nor objective, that value statements are sui generis, and that the subjective-objective distinction does not apply to them properly.[111] Thus, Berlin states that "normative statements fail to be subjective not in the sense that they might have been

objective, but in the sense that they are wholly different form the kind of statements (or beliefs or thoughts) to which the distinction between subjective and objective applies."[112]

Realism in ethics has been defined in many ways. Robert Arrington's realism holds that moral claims describe moral facts and as such they have truth values depending on whether they accurately depict the moral facts or not.[113] Michael Smith claims that moral realism is the metaphysical view that moral facts exist, the psychological part of which is cognitivism, that is, "the view that moral judgments express our beliefs about what these moral facts are, and that we can come to discover what these facts are by engaging in moral argument and reflection."[114] Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, alternatively, proposes a more extensive definition that denotes more and connotes less: the claims in question are literally true or false (cognitivism), and some of them are literally true (non-error theory).[115] Under the latter, more flexible criterion there are only two ways to be an anti-realistic: to be a non-cognitivist or to hold that the claims of the disputed class, despite carrying truth-values, are none of them true. Since Berlin endorses both that moral claims carry truth-values and that some of them are true, we should examine why it is uninformative to call him a moral realist.

The usual terms deployed in the discussion on moral realism are almost alien to Berlin's writings. He never argues, for instance, that moral language expresses moral beliefs and thus reports facts. Nor does he endorse a robustly metaphysical realism that postulates the existence of mind independent moral facts. Yet he does maintain that moral claims are truth-assessable and thus enlists a cognitivist position. He argues that in holding moral beliefs and engaging in moral argument we seek evidence for our opinions. We can alter other people's attitudes and behavior through rational moral argument and not, as the non-cognitivist would hold, because moral claims express emotions (emotivism) or because they serve as universalizable commands (prescriptivism). Not only does Berlin treat moral claims as assertions that carry truth-values but also holds that some of them have the truth-value true. Hence, unlike some anti-realists, who embrace an "error theory" conceding that moral claims have truth-values while denying that at least some of them are true, Berlin holds both a cognitivist stance and that some of the moral claims are true.[116]

The first pitfall of the moral realist version of Berlin's pluralism is that it bypasses the sui generis and historical account of objectivity at the heart of his ethical theory, which differs sharply from the objectivity that moral realists and realists about truth usually advocate. Second, the moral realist reading entails an inattention to history and the historical construction of reality pervasive in Berlin's work. Berlin's idea that values are "intrinsically incoherent" that if "some of these values prove to be incompatible, they cannot—conceptually cannot—coalesce" is borrowed indeed from Vico's profoundly historical understanding of cultures each with its own ideals, ends and standards most of them at variance with each other.[117] The third weakness lies in overlooking the kind of practical reason at stake in Berlin's pluralism. Berlin's ethical theory "lies at the heart of a truly historical study," which involves the use of imaginative insight, what he calls the "sense of reality," without which "the bones of the past remain dry and lifeless."[118] I will address each of these three problems in turn.

Berlin argues that values do not properly *act* upon us, as the realist reading goes, but *constitute* us. As self-interpretative beings, we cannot conceive ourselves and our circumstances outside our value-clad minds. We do not know what it means to live in an

amorphous world stripped of these organizing notions that filter our vision and understanding. We envision our lives as being fair, unjust, courageous, brute, magnanimous, benevolent, virtuous, mean, perverse, generous, gracious, brave, bald, intrepid, innovative, resentful and so on—multifarious categories that percolate from our historical experience. For Berlin, what we normatively know depends thoroughly on the worldview that organizes our practical reasoning. There is no "out there despite what we think," no "mind-independent reality." Thus, in recognition of the aftermath of the Romanticism, Berlin maintains: "This seems to me to have led to something like the melting away of the very notion of objective truth, at least in the normative sphere."[119]

Berlin believes that our normative order is circumscribed by the boundaries of meaning resulting from an unremittingly long historical process that yields a certain conception of the person. Berlin's objectivity refers not to the normative order of things—values do not come arranged in a certain way—but to the mind-dependent categories through which we approach our lives. Objectivity is not an attribute of the world but of the set of values through which we arrange the world. Objectivity is not a built-in feature of the outside realm but an ingrained arrangement of our minds, a feature that conditions and facilitates claiming something about the world *we* experience, the world as it is for us. It is precisely the realist objectivity (that the world is organized in a certain way no matter what we think about it) that Berlin's mind-dependence approach to the normative structure (that we get to know the world filtered by the horizon of the human semblance) emasculates. Berlin's pluralism of value entails a mind-dependency in our relation to the world that undermines and collides with the conception of objectivity usually endorsed by moral realists. Instead, Berlin supports a non-realist kind of objectivity that rejects the metaphysical independence of values while buttressing the objectivity of moral discourse.[120] "If Hume is right," Berlin holds, "at any rate in maintaining that normative statements cannot be describing entities called values which exist in the world, which have independent being in the sense in which things or events or persons can be said to do—because the notion of such objective values proved, upon examination, to be unintelligible—then he is in effect implying (though he never himself saw this clearly enough) that ethical statements are in principle different in the way they are used from logical or descriptive statements, and the distinction between subjective and objective may turn out to not apply to them at all."[121]

Likewise, the moral realist reading deflates the importance of history in Berlin's accounts of values. Berlin salutes many aspects of Vico's work—the genealogical understanding, the role of imagination, insight, empathy and sympathy, the futility of compressing ways of thinking into one evolving pattern, the view that events are different from actions, that history, because we make it, is less opaque than the natural world, and that knowledge of ourselves (how we think, act, communicate, judge, suffer, strive, enjoy, create, imagine) is not only different from but also more fundamental than any other kind of knowledge.[122] Hence, for Berlin, political normative thinking is not a discussion about and among values; it is an examination of values embedded in social practices, institutions, rules, and expectations. Despite truth playing some role in Berlin's justification of normative beliefs, their assessment remains tentative and uncommitted in virtue of their relation to a political reality from which they cannot disengage. Bernard Williams puts this idea thus: "no abstract or analytical point exists out of all connection with historical, personal, thought: that every thought belongs, not just somewhere, but to

someone, and is at home in a context of other thoughts, a context which is not purely formally prescribed. Thoughts are present to Berlin not just, or primarily, as systematic possibilities, but as historically and psychologically actual, and as something to be known and understood in these concrete terms."[123]

The source of values, for Berlin, are persons themselves—persons as we have come to see them through historical time.[124] Here, once again, Berlin's Kantianism surfaces with all its intensity. His description of Kant's important dictum—that a value is made a value "by human choice and not by some intrinsic quality in itself, out there" and that "Values are not stars in some moral heaven, they are internal, they are what human beings freely choose to live for, to fight for, to die for"—faithfully reflects his own position as well.[125] Value-concepts are intertwined with our historical self-perception and comprehension of the world we inhabit, and they evolve along with our historical development. The moral realist reading of Berlin's pluralistic ethics sidelines that, for him, truth is historically and socially embedded, that values are historical creations, and that the objectivity that facilitates rational moral argumentation percolates from a relentless historical understanding of our most ingrained human features. That values are historical does not tarnish their compelling and imposing character—an aspect of values in Berlin's thought that is usually mentioned as proof of his realism. The importance of values in the conduct of life, Berlin claims, "is not diminished or altered by a clearer realisation of the confusion about their logical status. They remain as important or unimportant as before, but are neither subjective nor objective: they are *sui generis*, to be assessed by methods appropriate to them…"[126]

The realist account of Berlin's ethical theory overlooks, finally, the kind of rationality that he embraces as the proper mode of practical reasoning. There is no theory for tea-tasting, Berlin claims.[127] Few other words in his writings evoke so pungently what is involved in the indefinable capacity that he calls the "sense of reality." This faculty plays a pivotal role in Berlin's thought, for it alone, granted a generic human character, allows delving into the past and across cultures to carry on a rational assessment of values without being swayed by the commands of formal, empirical or universalizable thinking. This skill is a form of practical reasoning that puts Berlin apart from both relativism and realism.

The practical reasoning that can wrestle with the open character of our experience and yet guide our intuitions is a sense of reality—a historical sense that eludes any perpetual rule thinking about that reality that can never be left too far behind. The sense of reality is an inscrutable capacity—not because it is lofty, mysterious or obscure but for the opposite reason that it penetrates too deep in our experience. At times, Berlin calls it "judgment" and fleshes it out as the empirical knack to weave together independent concepts and general presuppositions.[128] At others, he describes it as "our capacity for understanding the habits of thought and action that are embodied in human attitudes and behaviour…what is called knowledge of life."[129] Influenced by Vico and Weber, Berlin claims that the sense of reality (Vico's *fantasia* and Weber's *Verstehen*)—which in all cases I understand as an unfathomable amalgam of intuition, comprehension, imagination, remembrance, foresight, empathy, reciprocal expectations and so on—is the proper way of making human life intelligible, and could never be replaced or conflated with deductive or inductive methods.

Berlin finds a disposition towards this capacity in a wide variety of thinkers all of whom display a historical sense and mistrust the formal and abstract categories of science as the only tool to dig in the meaningful structure of human life. Thus, in discussing Joseph de Maistre's work and its resemblance to Tolstoy's, Berlin finds in common a way of thinking that he expounds as "a sense of what fits with what, of what cannot exist with what; and it goes by many names: insight, wisdom, practical genius, a sense of the past, an understanding of life and of human character."[130] Despite their differences, de Maistre and Tolstoy both reject the totalizing abstract narrative and the "iron laws" of sciences to explain the relation of things, events, actions and the texture of human life. Both, consequently, champion some kind of Aristotelian practical wisdom, a natural knowledge that serves to navigate the difficult waters that separate the multitude from the unique and the embracing structure that organizes it. The sense of history is that elusive virtue that can interpret the "flow of reality." "This inexpressible sense of cosmic orientation," says Berlin "is the 'sense of reality,' the 'knowledge' of how to live."[131] The open character of this account of practical reasoning, its attachment to context and circumstances, and its malleable and evolving nature sit at odds with moral realism that purportedly requires a sharper faculty that discerns right from wrong decisively and permanently. If, as the realist claims, there is a mind-independent moral reality, moral truths should be accessible to human knowledge as a form of discovery.[132] Yet, this differs from Berlin's account of how we get to know how to lead a good life.

The sense of history helps us navigate the unsettled waters of experience that are too permanent, too stable, too obvious, too encompassing as well as those that are too ephemeral, too particular, too unique. The sense of history is an indefinable perception, an imaginative insight capable of delving into and communicating a form of life. It displays the virtue of preserving this knowledge in its own right; its thoughts and language are its own and defies any attempt of translation and assimilation into other forms of expression and understanding. It avoids the reductionist fallacy that Berlin denounces from the early stages of his writings: "There is no substitute for a sense of reality."[133] Yet, "how we perform such acts of identification and attribution it is almost impossible to say."[134] The sense of reality, the practical judgment and insight that intervenes in knowing our friends, in perceiving that which is ungraspable by words, in being aware of the invisible, in inspiring acts of art is, like the dimensions of reality that it comprehends, indefinable. "To try to analyse and clearly describe what goes on when we understand in this sense is impossible."[135]

In short, Berlin's pluralism does not align properly with moral realism on grounds of the empirical, historical, mind-dependent and open-ended character of his accounts of objectivity and practical reasoning—all features that in an inchoate form lie at the heart of Berlin's opposition to the new metaphysics ushered in by the strategies of the logical positivists. Hence, even if we could technically fit Berlin's thought under some definition of realism, we would end up with an uninteresting case of a moral realist and with an interpretation of Berlin's ethical view that hides his objection to some theoretical issues since early on in his career.

**D. Incompleteness**

Postulating the existence of a privileged kind of proposition that purportedly maintains a direct relation to the world serves, according to Berlin, another purpose which he finds

unpalatable and spurious in both his early and late work. "Plainly," he states, "one of the most powerful of philosophical stimuli is the search for security."[136] This pursuit of security leads to the fatal consequence of believing "that there must be a group of propositions, tested and found indestructible, which forms the minimum gold reserve without which intellectual currency cannot be exchanged."[137] Berlin's view now and then is the obverse—that both meaning and ethical experience alike remain always open and undecided, cannot be caged into one grammatical structure or social form and that some degree of uncertainty is thus ineluctable in our forms of expression and the perception of ourselves and our surroundings. Thus, the resistance to settle with propositions that could be "dry, dull, [and] uninformative" for the sake of "unassailable certainty" transmutes into a refusal to accept sealed and utopian systems of thought that purportedly solve value conflicts in favor of moral and political clarity and certainty.[138] Instead, Berlin encourages not to severe normative thought from the social fabric where it develops—an invitation to uncertainty, under-determination and incompleteness in the realm of value.

Berlin denies the possibility that all ethical questions have one and only one correct answer, that there is a path towards attaining one single truth and that all ethical truths must be compatible with each other—he simply distrusts the search for universal certainty in the form of a self-contained system of thought. Politically and morally, he objects to the possibility of an "ideal society" whereby all great values can be realized simultaneously. No theoretical system can accommodate in a fixed-hierarchical way political, aesthetic and religious values once and for all. "One of the intellectual phenomena which made the greatest impact on me," he says echoing his early thought against logical positivists, "was the universal search by philosophers for absolute certainty, for answers which could not be doubted, for total intellectual security. This from the very beginning appeared to me to be an illusory quest."[139]

Instead, Berlin turns to history (via the history of ideas) to conclude that unavoidably the expression of human life can take many forms, that humans organize their societies differently, that persons seek a wide variety of values and find expression in a wide range of them at different times, and that these manifestations are vital expressions of authenticity. Berlin stands against the possibility of "final objective answers to normative questions, truths that can be demonstrated or directly intuited, that it is in principle possible to discover a harmonious pattern in which all values are reconciled, and that it is towards this unique goal that we must make; that we can uncover some single central principle that shapes this vision, a principle which, once found, will govern our lives."[140]

At any given point in time, competing models, paradigms or worldviews integrate the web of categories differently and thus interpret the world in their own way. The existence of these models is, like the categories to which they are linked, unavoidable—for all description as well as explanation involves some model in terms of which the describing and explaining is done.[141] Thus, dissent lingers as long as the categories are juggled in various ways by distinct higher-order views of the world. While these competing models—each with its internal consistency and explanatory force—set the tone for disagreement, the stable and widespread categories provide the common ground for the rational assessment of the competing worldviews. For this reason, Berlin claims both that disagreement furnishes the fabric of the world and that rational evaluation of this disagreement is possible—the categories provide a sufficiently continuous ground to

constitute a common world shared among those who advance competing interpretations of their lives.

The permanence of endless contestation derives from the fact that at any given time these comprehensive views accommodate only a limited arrangement of values. None of them provide a full description of human experience without loss of meaning, or embrace simultaneously in a consistent way the entire web of categories that define us as persons. Achieving final agreement on ultimate ends remains impossible not at the level of political theory (indeed, the unavoidability of political theory proves that accommodation of values is always provisional), but as a burden upon any consistent outlook that presupposes the conception of person as we understand it today. The possibility of some normative arrangement is not ruled out by Berlin as he even concedes the prospect of some sort of value accommodation.[142] Rather, his most decisive point is that however we interpret values we cannot provide a full description of human experience, and this failing on the part of our worldviews invites endless contestation.

Any given framework remains just that—one possible outlook that makes sense of our lives—if only because a comprehensive viewpoint is never truly comprehensive. To the extent that justified beliefs depend on the normative understanding of the world and the latter, in turn, on the substantive and always varying conceptual and categorial scheme that defines us as human beings, the attainment of truth is always provisional and historical. That is why Berlin insists on the ineluctability of political philosophy, as any comprehensive view implies a committal attitude open to endless challenge because it always yields an incomplete description of the conception of the person and the world. Any model or paradigm "mechanistic, organic, aesthetic, logical, mystical, shaped by the strongest influence of the day—religious, scientific, metaphysical or artistic"—always entails a loss.[143] It follows from this that it is inconsistent to advance a systematic, complete political theory: "the need to choose, to sacrifice some ultimate values to others, turns out to be a permanent characteristic of the human predicament."[144]

Berlin's early skepticism about semantic certainty transmutes into a related dismissal of ethical systems that boasts value completeness: "no doctrine that has at its heart a monistic conception of the true and the good and the beautiful, or a teleology according to which everything conspires towards a final harmonious resolution—an ultimate order in which all the apparent confusions and imperfections of the life of the world will be resolved—no doctrine of this kind can allow variety as an independent value to be pursued for its own sake; for variety entails the possibility of the conflict of values, of some irreducible incompatibility between the ideals, or, indeed, the immediate aims, of fully realised, equally virtuous men."[145]

Incompleteness and uncertainty are features that cut across Berlin's entire work. In the realms of meaning and ethics, according to him, the past, the future and the absent are unavoidable elements that filter into the system and inject uncertainty and incompleteness to the whole. Berlin's position that claiming something meaningful, or true or false or even interesting about human values and the world involves a historical comparison, an assessment and awareness of our past and present experiences, replicates the early observation against logical positivist that in order to describe something one needs necessarily to call in what is absent (past or present) and therefore theoretically dubitable: "To say anything significantly about the world," Berlin argues in his early writings, "we must bring in something other than immediate experience…namely the past

and the future, and absent objects, and other persons, and unrealised possibilities, and general and hypothetical judgements, and so forth. And if these, because we cannot certify them as certain, are cut away, in the end literally nothing will be left."[146]

"Logical perfection" aims at security and completeness. The idea of ameliorating either meaning or experience by translating it to a better instance of its kind is, according to Berlin, a torturing process based on a logical or historical or normative fallacy that leads necessarily to a distorted account of meaning, morality or politics. "We cannot speak without incurring some risk, at least in theory," he states in reference to the positivist task "the only way of being absolutely safe is to say absolutely nothing; this is the goal towards which the search for 'fundamental' propositions asymptotically tends."[147] For Berlin, completeness and absolute certainty come with a high price in both the realms of meaning and ethics.

**E. Incomparability**

The notion of incomparability is a close relative to that of incommensurability, and yet it does not play a role either in Berlin's semantics or ethics. Indeed, in both areas the cry for incommensurability is also a cry for comparability. The resistance to reductionism brings in the idea that different statements need each other—they may be irreducible and incommensurable but they are comparable. We make sense of present statements because we compare them with past propositions. Meaning is a universe of interrelated difference that entails comparisons among its constitutive elements. A similar idea traverses Berlin's ethical thought when he suggests that practical reason works on grounds of the comparisons among incommensurables.

Without explicitly saying so, Berlin rejects the idea of incomparability in both the realms of value and semantics. Unlike the idea of incommensurability, which he openly endorses, one has to put statements side by side to realize that the notion of comparability is equally seminal in his work. In his ethical writings, the silenced idea of comparability looms large when Berlin analyses the boundaries of meaningful communication. Berlin believes that ethical communication faces limits—the limits of the human semblance. For beyond that terrain, normative assessments fall apart. The difference between these two scenarios is that only within the former comparability holds. In other words, comparability is a necessary condition of a sound account of meaning in language and ethics.

Berlin speculates about how settled and definitive the boundaries of our conception of the person are, that is, how the semi-permanent web of categories and values can alter over time: "we can ask ourselves to what degree this or that change in them would affect our experience. It is possible, although *ex hypothesi* not easy, to conceive of beings whose fundamental categories of thought or perception radically differ from ours; the greater such differences, the harder it will be for us to communicate with them, or, if the process goes further, to regard them as being human or sentient; or, if the process goes far enough, to conceive of them at all."[148] He further believes that what they are, how flexible, how liable to change, and under what impacts are empirical question insufficiently explored.[149]

Changes, in any case, are liable to happen either as a result of radical upheavals in the empirical world or through dissociation from reality on the part of individuals, that is to say, madness.[150] In other words, the categories can undergo a change due to an assault

from reality, a dramatic change in the empirical world that render them obsolete. Alternatively, because these categories are internally connected to our ordinary conception of person, they are in turn useless to evaluate practices that are conceived as mad.

It may happen, Berlin surmises, that others' practices cease to make sense to us to the extent that one cannot even disagree with their way of acting or pass judgment on their way of living. Members of an alien culture can recognize others' values as part of a project of leading a human life: "if I say of someone that he is kind or cruel, loves truth or is indifferent to it, he remains human in either case. But if I find a man to whom it literally makes no difference whether he kicks a pebble or kills his family, since either would be an antidote to *ennui* or inactivity, I shall not be disposed, like consistent relativists, to attribute to him merely a different code of morality from my own or that of most men, or declare that we disagree on essentials, but shall begin to speak of insanity and inhumanity."[151] Once again Durkheim comes into view. For Durkheim too claims that "society cannot abandon these categories to the free will of particular individuals without abandoning itself," and the immersion in these intellectual and moral lenses fends off the pathological cases. "What happens when a mind openly departs from these norms of all thought?" Durkheim asks. "Society no longer considers that mind human in the full sense of the word, and treats it accordingly."[152] Likewise, Berlin believes that the human semblance marks the frontier of rational communication. More bluntly, beyond the human semblance there is no room for meaningful comparison among statements.

Berlin cites the epic of Gilgamesh (as well as the ethical and metaphysical edifice of the Egyptians and the Incas) as an example of an obsolete narrative incapable of describing the portrait of the person as we experience it today. The story of Gilgamesh framed in its half divine and half human terms (among other alien, fantastic and eccentric features) still speaks to us. It opens, in its fantastic fashion, a world of values that remain mostly relevant for us—power, friendship, endurance, shortcoming, angst, victory, achievement, and deception. Yet, Enkidu, fashioned out of clay by a goddess, is far away from our conception of person; and Gilgamesh with his immense and unmatchable heroic status does not sit any closer to our human and finite condition. The story brings to the surface values that both we humans and half-divine, colossal creatures share, and thus still bears moral significance to our contemporary eyes. Yet, the agents involved, and the relevant circumstances have been transfigured so dramatically that normative assessments between them and us cease to be comparable. Humans and Enkidus make not a case of incommensurability but one of incomparability.

When the human semblance crumbles to that extent, when the conception of the person veers so considerably from our own, the comparison on ethical questions comes to a halt. There is no relevant situation in which we could meaningfully ask whether Gilgamesh or oneself is right for there is no value with respect to which a sensible evaluative comparison can be made between both. The fact that Berlin would point to incomparability as the limit to ethical discussion implies that his value pluralism rests on comparable, and yet incommensurable values. This is important because, as Ruth Chang argues, there is good reason to think that justification of choice depends on the comparability of the alternatives.[153] In Berlin's thought, incommensurability requires comparability. In this regard too Berlin's ethics is a sequel to his semantics.

**III. Conclusion**

The thematic continuity and consistency of Berlin's early and late thought are not without significance even when, as Ryan argues, one could not have foreseen Berlin's subsequent work based only on his early writings. For in addition to bringing to the surface the thematic affinity and sensibility to reductionism and monism across his work, the analysis of the coherence of his whole system of thought illuminates the genetic origins of his late ethical claims. That is, the fact that his views on ethics grow out of his views on meaning carries strong implications for the understanding of his late pluralism. For if a continuous thread of anti-reductionism, historicity, anti-metaphysics, conflict, incompleteness and incomparability stretches throughout his thought, it means that Berlin's pluralism rests on more sweeping grounds. Indeed, his pluralism harks back to his early stance on semantic and ontological issues—views which, as this chapter has argued, color his ethical position. Berlin's pluralism is an account of ethics that presupposes a specific account of meaning and social reality. His plural account of ethics stands on a view of semantics and metaphysics as well.

## Chapter Three
## The "Elective Affinity" between Liberalism and Pluralism: A Weberian Approach to Isaiah Berlin's Political Theory

The justification of liberalism on value pluralist grounds is one of the many services that Isaiah Berlin's thought has provided to political theory. It has also been the subject of significant critique by others. Opponents and defendants of the association between value pluralism and liberalism have equally cast doubt on the character of the connection at stake between them. Although he later changed his views, Crowder ignited the debate by challenging the logical (and otherwise) relationship between them.[154] From then onwards, much has been written dissecting the kind of link that could meaningfully relate them both—searching into historical, conceptual and logical connections. Even the supporters of the pluralistic version of liberalism faced trouble in nailing down the specifics of the association. Berlin himself does not clear much the ground when he claims that "Pluralism and liberalism are not the same or even overlapping concepts…I believe in both liberalism and pluralism, but they are not logically connected."[155] That no strictly causal relationship between them holds, should come to no surprise to anyone, for Berlin's major anti-reductionist legacy is the understanding that there are no necessary and sufficient conditions in the realm of value.

In the discussion that follows, a reinterpretation and a defense of Berlin's proposal is offered. Against various critiques of Berlin's value pluralist approach, I uphold the connection between value pluralism and liberalism by pointing to the "elective affinity" that is at work between them (Sections III & V). Before presenting my own reinterpretation of his work, I lay the background for the discussion by highlighting additional common ground between Berlin and Max Weber's thought (Section I). I then briefly outline the role of elective affinity between Protestantism and capitalism in Weber's work (Section II), and survey and criticize alternative readings of Berlin's proposal between liberalism and value pluralism (Sections IV). Finally, in arguing for an elective affinity between liberalism and pluralism, I draw further implications for the status between moral and political theory in the justification of a liberal order. I claim that the awareness of pluralism and its relationship to liberalism set more stringent limits to the encroachment of moral theory on the justification of a political regime and that Berlin's liberalism, which I label the "liberalism of choice," recognizes these restrictions (Section V).

Chapters Five and Six will argue that Berlin's liberalism of choice is, among the three liberal strategies explored in this dissertation, the most amenable to pluralism. In this sense, his liberalism is the closest to the "minimalist liberalism" defended in this work. However, the elective affinity between minimalist liberalism and pluralism, unlike the one underlying Berlin's political theory, is based not on the significance of choice but rather on their mutual capacity for inclusiveness and expansion of the legitimate basis of the state.

### I. Laying the Ground: Resemblances between Weber and Berlin

This section presents some common ground between Weber and Berlin as a preamble to the argument that a Weberian elective affinity holds between liberalism and pluralism in Berlin's work. Berlin and Weber share views on social understanding and meaning

attribution, historical change, value incommensurability, the limits of metaphysical rationalism, the possibility of rational and objective understanding, and the limitations of value justification.

To begin with, both Berlin and Weber defend a version of "emphatic imagination." They claim that human beings attribute subjective meaning to their and others' actions and their surroundings, and act in accordance to that evaluation. Social action is behavior that always has subjective meaning attached graspable by other human beings. For both, this process of understanding involves rational and empathic interpretation. "I can grasp what you want to say" Berlin holds, "without using experimental methods to establish what your gestures or words are meant to, or in fact convey: we recognize such 'understanding' as different from scientific or common sense 'knowing'; that's what Dilthey called 'Verstehen' as different from 'Wissen.'"[156] They both concur in that some form of empathy plays an important role to understand the actions and meaning of others. "When we claim to understand people who have a culture very different from our own," Berlin holds, "it implies the existence of some power of sympathetic understanding, insight…empathetic imagination."[157] Berlin's "interpretative imagination" and Weber's "verstehen" are cognate terms.

Likewise, Weber and Berlin both hold that the *full* "imaginary experience" of the same kind of action is helpful for the clarity of understanding, but not a necessary condition for meaningful interpretation. As Weber puts it, "one need not have been Caesar in order to understand Caesar." Recapturing an experience, he claims, "is important for accurate understanding, but not an absolute precondition for its interpretation."[158] Still Berlin and Weber are like-minded in believing that the more drastically different from our own many ultimate ends or values are, the less likely it is that imaginary participation in them would succeed.

In addition, both thinkers are rationalist not in the sense that there is a preconception in favor of rational elements in human interaction, but in that reason plays a role in social communication. In Weber's sociological theory, grasping the "intended meaning" of the actors, which involves an account of both the subjective meaning and the meaning context of the action, is carried out with the help of reason, not mere emotions.[159] Berlin, on the other hand, explains the outreach of moral communication as one based on rational as well as intuitive and empathetic elements all of which aid to make sense of the historical experience of others. The intuitive knack that he calls the "sense of reality" deploys all those features to bring "a past age to life" despite the evanescence of human experience.[160] The idea of intuition should not call for confusion: "we do not mean a magic eye able to penetrate into something that ordinary minds cannot apprehend; we mean something perfectly ordinary, empirical, and quasi-aesthetic in the way that it works…a direct acquaintance with the texture of life…a highly developed discrimination of what matters from the rest…it is what is variously called natural wisdom, imaginative understanding, insight, perceptiveness…as opposed to the markedly different virtues—very great as these are—of theoretical knowledge.."[161]

Meaning is always subjective but according to Weber and Berlin it can be approached from an objective basis—albeit their understanding of objectivity differs enormously. Weber is a sociologist with scientific aspirations and believes that objectivity is possible by means of ideal-type analysis (although this presupposes subjective processes of meaning attribution and interpretation). Starting from raw

historical experience, the sociologist's ideal types achieve the highest degree of meaning integration about a specific kind of social action which then serves as a tool to approach and explain historical evidence and collective phenomena. Berlin, on the other hand, is a normative thinker whose account of objectivity involves the idea of "human semblance," a sort of Kantian epistemological interpretation of how our ethical experience is colored by of an organizing fabric of concepts and categories, the origin of which is social and historical, that filters the comprehension of the array of human conduct in history. These value-concepts are universal, objective and semi-permanent in virtue of their historical presence in our constitution and their degree of success in forming a coherent and enduring description of ourselves.[162] Yet, despite their agreement on objectivity, Berlin and Weber are at one in abhorring any kind of metaphysical fantasies, any objectively correct meaning in the metaphysical sense.

Although rational components feature in Berlin and Weber's accounts of normative and sociological understanding, respectively, for both reason faces important limits. Weber theorizes about a process of "rationalization" that shoves the modern life into the highly disenchanted and bureaucratic "iron cage" characteristic of our times. His rationalized world alludes to the prevalent role of instrumental rationality (as opposed to value-rational and non-rational actions) in modern life. This emptiness is precipitated by conflicting, erratic, intentional and non-intentional individual and group actions that leads to a predominance of instrumental rationality and a scientific understanding of our lives. In principle, he argues, one can "master all things by calculation…One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits…Technical means and calculations perform the service."[163] Although Berlin does not recount our current condition in such glooming terms, he sees the rationalistic Enlightenment project as a suffocating cage that kindled the romantic reaction. Weber's disenchanted world dovetails with Berlin's view of the metaphysical rationalist, stifling monistic project of the Enlightenment.

Hence, they both share the view that a thoroughly rational interpretation of the world is misleading and expunges our lives from value and meaning. They both alert us to the dangers of rationalistic interpretations of the world.[164] For Weber, the process of "disenchantment" strips the world of its magical significance and produces a fragmentation of value spheres increasingly distinct from one another, which ultimately leads to a prevalence of scientific rationality that can contribute to a partial understanding of our surroundings but cannot solve the problem about ultimate meaning. [165] Berlin does not provide such an exhaustive explanation of modernity, yet he sees in the Enlightenment project and in any monistic interpretations of the world the risk to amputate our ethical experience. The Romantic era rescues us from a simplified and crippled existence wherein values are mutilated to fit a rational scheme. In short, Weber and Berlin provide a similar explanation of the oversimplification of the world of values based on an overexpansion of a rationalistic *mentalité*.

Berlin's value pluralism and Weber's "polytheism of values" spring from this secular conception of the world wherein the harmonious arrangement of values under God's dictums or a dominating rational criterion collapses on value incommensurability.[166] According to both, values entail irreconcilable and incommensurable conflict with each other. Weber's polytheism points to the fact that each of the value-spheres that characterizes modernity is organized on excluding ultimate

criteria regarding meaningful social action that do not reach out to other spheres. Each field, religion, art, sexuality, economy, science and politics, is justified through irreconcilable ultimate values. Berlin's value pluralism, on the other hand, is an offspring of the historical process of value formation—a relentless, although not infinite growth of values precipitated by the sustained redefinition, interpretation, elucidation and clarification of human beings' surrounding settings, the cultural and ideological commitments and the concepts that we deploy to express them, which results in the demarcation of a generic human semblance. Berlin's pluralism acknowledges the constant change in the endorsement of our preferred categories and values through which we comprehend the world and it recognizes that those values cannot be conceived altogether in a consistent fashion such that any worldview implies a tragic choice. Hence, his pluralism admits no translation without loss, no excluding criterion to measure value conflicts for good, no common token to compensate among values without sacrifice.

Berlin and Weber equally endorse the view that when it comes to ultimate meaning, there are no ultimate answers. They fall short of providing or believing in a definitive, objective, scientific solution regarding the purpose and meaning of a worthwhile life. For Weber and Berlin ultimate *Weltanschauungen* clash and ultimate choices have to be made, although Weber commits himself to ungrounded choices in the realm of value in a way that Berlin does not.[167] Yet, Berlin could comfortably utter Weber's words: "the ultimately possible attitudes toward life are irreconcilable, and hence their struggle can never be brought to a final conclusion. Thus it is necessary to make a decisive choice."[168]

The disbelief in dominant end kind of explanations brings to the fore the overwhelming importance of historical experience in both thinkers. As Weber puts it, "'Scientific' pleading is meaningless in principle because the various value spheres of the world stand in irreconcilable conflict with each other…If one proceeds from pure experience, one arrives at polytheism."[169] Berlin also falls back on the ordinary resources of empirical observation and ordinary human knowledge.[170] His pluralistic creed too ensues from the lessons of historical explorations. Pluralism is the correlate in the realm of value of the mosaic of human experience in history; it is the conceptual decantation of the historical and variegated forms of human life. As argued in the prior chapter, his value pluralism, although not a mere sociological account of disagreement of beliefs, is not a meta-ethical version of moral realism either. His value pluralism is historical. Like Weber, he too arrives at pluralism proceeding from pure experience.

Finally, Weber and Berlin embrace an understanding of history that stands in between history as a totally erratic development, on the one hand, and as an unfolding of a big narrative and predictable causes, on the other. Neither believes that reality can ever be grasped as a complete whole once and for all. For Weber, the process of meaning attribution is an individual, ongoing process, steady at times and disarrayed at others, and even our widespread, rationalized modern condition must be read as the result of the chaotic and clashing encounter of individual actions. For Berlin, reality is too complex, too varying and changeable, too crowded, too diverse, too subtle, too big, too mysterious, too ancient and too innovative, too evanescent to be completely at reach of our understanding. It always remains at least partially inscrutable. This reminds us that any possible value arrangement fails to apprehend or convey the entirety of the human world—inexorably some gold nuggets will pass through the filter.[171]

In short, these two thinkers participate in an understanding of our individual modern condition framed in a secularized, rational process that opens up to an awareness of the fragmentation, plurality and incommensurability of value while also casting doubt on the possibility of reason to provide final solutions to problems of meaning, which although objective ultimately cannot be grasped unless we resort to empathetic imagination. This extensive shared background suggests that these thinkers may also partake in the same understanding of the relationship among values incarnated either in forms of social action (Weber) or system of ideas (Berlin). Section III expands on the extent of this additional source of agreement, namely, that Berlin's association between pluralism and liberalism is a case of elective affinity, the Weberian idiosyncratic account of causal relationship between ideal types of social action. Before doing that Section II provides a brief outline of the idea of elective affinity in Weber's work.

**II. The Elective Affinity between Protestantism and the Spirit of Capitalism**

Weber postulates a very distinctive case of causal connection, an "inner relationship" between the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.[172] According to Weber, other forms of capitalist organizations took place before the rise of the protestant ethics.[173] Yet, unlike modern capitalism, traditional forms were almost exclusively characterized by a non-methodical greed for wealth. In this sense, Weber distinguishes two forms of capitalism mutually opposed: "one of them, the 'robber capitalism' tied completely to politics, is as ancient as all the military states known to us, while the other is a specific product of modern European man."[174] Modern capitalism features a systematized and rigorous working ethics absent in the previous incarnations of capitalist economic organization. Unlike traditional forms, modern capitalism is geared towards maximum efficiency as a result of a highly rationalized, systematic economic production. The organization of the productive forces together with a long-term goal of ever increasing productivity and profit were absent in the past. If enjoyment of gain was the end of prior modes of capitalist production, the modern type aims at a sustained accumulation of wealth and maximization of efficiency based on the systematization of profit by modern book-keeping methods, and rational organization of the means of production, in particular, free labor.[175]

These distinctive features of modern capitalism, according to Weber, stem from a well-established Protestant ethic that sees rigorous, methodic and successful work as an indication of predestination. The unconditional, sustained and ardent compliance to the work ethic led, according to Weber, to the disenchantment of modern life in which pleasurable and sensuous enjoyment are drastically reduced.[176] Under this comprehensive view, frivolous enjoyment of money, ostentation for its own sake and other kind of unproductive leisurely activity are perceived as deviations from salvation. The immersion in worldly actions and a detachment from sensual life results from the idea that the latter has "no use toward salvation."[177] Protestant asceticism "turned with all its force against one thing: the spontaneous enjoyment of life and all it had to offer."[178] This in turn roots a "disillusioned and pessimistically inclined individualism."[179]

The idea of the "calling," "an obligation which the individual is supposed to feel and does feel towards the content of his professional activity," forms the basis of the social ethic of capitalistic culture and flows directly from this religious worldview.[180] Under the protestant worldview, a man without a calling "lacks the systematic,

methodical character which is…demanded by worldly asceticism."[181] Protestantism concentrates exclusively on systematic and productive work installing a new form of asceticism, a worldly asceticism: "The moral conduct of the average man was thus deprived of its planless and unsystematic character and subjected to a consistent method for conduct as a whole."[182]

Ultimately, however, modern capitalism ceases to function on grounds of the religious ideas that gave rise to it: "today the spirit of religious asceticism…has escaped from the cage. But victorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations, needs this support no longer."[183] After having reinforced a spirit that characterizes and gives origin to modern capitalism, the now mechanical working of the capitalist mode of production dispenses with the commitment to the religious beliefs and rests on a legal rational form of domination.

Weber presents this relationship between the protestant ethic and modern capitalism as one of elective affinity. Weber's thesis of the elective affinity between a set of religious ideas—the Calvinist Protestantism—and the spirit of modern capitalism invokes a paradoxical explanation by connecting a highly rationalized system of economic production to the non-rational commitment of religious values.

As is well known, Weber borrows the term from Goethe's novel, *The Elective Affinities*. The novel recounts the story of a recently married couple, Eduard and Charlotte, who invites Eduard's friend and Charlotte's niece, Ottilie, to their country estate. The elective affinities come to surface when Eduard falls in love with Ottilie and Charlotte with Eduard's friend. Goethe, in turn, takes the term from chemistry, in the context of which it indicates the "chemical designation of the process wherein different substances united with one another break out of their union in favor of another...Whenever two substances which have some inclination to combine with one another are combined with one another and a third which has more affinity for one of the two is added, then it will combine with that one and exclude the other." [184]

The meaning of the term, in Weber's work, is far from clear, but one can safely claim that it alludes to a relationship of reinforcement, rather than determination, between structural forms of social action that are compatible in their material and ideal interests.[185] Reciprocal adequacy does not mean that social phenomena follow from one another under the determination of a causal law.[186] Rather, the affinity between two structural arrangements of social actions is given by the internal adequacy of their overall intended meaning. If "ideal types" are sociological heuristic tools with a high degree of consistency and adequacy of meaning, affinity between two forms of social action entails a substantive connection in their overall intended meaning.

The religious ideas and economic interests of the social actors maintain an internal integration of subjective meaning based on the preeminent role of a systematic, rational and methodic form of conduct prevalent in both. A rigorous religious worldview triggers off a deeply entrenched work ethics that ultimately connects and reinforces an instrumental rational mode of capitalist production oriented to the accumulation of wealth, which in turn provides the context in which protestant beliefs root and substantiate.

These two social arrangements could or could have not met. What elective affinity postulates is that if two like elements meet, they would mutually bolster one another to the detriment of other forms of association in virtue of the high degree of

adequacy of subjective meaning between ideal and material interests of the structural forms of social action involved. Presumably, a relationship of elective affinity pivots on an "economic ethic"—the practical impulses for action which are founded in the psychological and pragmatic contexts of religions and other inner factors—favorable to the perdurance of the social phenomena constitutive of the association.[187] In short, the elective affinity between two structural forms of social action does not allude to the causal relationship of determination characteristic of nomological explanations or to a logical sequence, or to a historically necessary outcome. Rather, elective affinity refers to a relation of reinforcement and compatibility between two different forms of social action based on their overall adequacy of meaning between ideal and material interests of the actors involved.

One of Weber's central concerns across his work is how forms of domination—political and economic—acquire autonomy and develop their own logic regardless of the values that give origin to them. This is a central theme in his work (which he owes to Nietzsche) and a key insight to understand the implications of a relationship based on an elective affinity. For one of the terms in the elective affinity relationship carries always the possibility of breaking away from the social and ideal substratum that explains its reinforcement and stability. The social and material phenomenon that consolidates out of elective affinity remains in tension with the social basis that explains it to the extent that it may set loose by itself guided by a logic of its own. Thus, although Protestantism and capitalism hold an elective affinity at some point in history, later on capitalism carries on independent of the religious ethic that was the basis of the formation of its spirit and consolidation.

It remains unclear whether the potential independence of one of the social phenomena of the elective pair, and the corresponding tension between the parts of the association, acts to the detriment of the ideal basis that helps to its development. Thus, Weber denies any elective affinity between the ideal interests of democracy and the material interests of capitalism for "the only question one can ask is how all these things [democracy and freedom] can 'possibly' survive at all in the long run under the rule of capitalism."[188] The fact that democracy's development and survival are not aided by the material interests of capitalism points to the absence of an elective affinity between both, which suggests that any association that would ultimately hurt one of its components cannot be one of elective affinity. On the other hand, the independent logic of capitalism and the encroachment of instrumental rationality does suggest that the religious basis that helped to its reinforcement may be at risk in the long run.

**III. Elective Affinity: A Reinterpretation**

One of the virtues of the elective affinity approach between value pluralism and liberalism is that it displaces the discussion from a focus on how they necessarily relate to one centered on how the favoring relationship works if they meet at all. The connection between liberalism and pluralism is not strictly historical, logical, or psychological. Historically, liberalism does not originate from a value pluralist perspective but from the need to accommodate religious disagreements to put an end to bloody confrontations, and logically value pluralism and liberalism may survive without their reciprocal support. Yet, if the relation between them is one of elective affinity, the kernel of this association does not turn so much on how one follows from the other, but rather on how, if they meet

at all (as they did with the rise of the modern awareness of pluralism), they reinforce each other. How, once they interrelate, pluralism favors liberalism rather than hinders or radicalizes it.

Elective affinity, as stated above, does not refer to a historically necessary, logical or causal relationship in the sense of strong determination. It involves a random historical encounter of two different forms of social action that due to their distinctive complementariness tend to develop to a degree and quality absent before they first meet. Elective affinity entails a persistence of the ideal and material interests over time in a way that would have not been possible absent the interdependence.

Yet, if "likes attracts like"[189] they also compete with each other for their own subsistence. As Emile Durkheim, following Darwin, has taught us, "two organisms vie with each other more keenly the more alike they are. Having the same needs and pursuing the same purposes, they are everywhere to be found in a state of rivalry."[190] Likeness may make for rivalry as much as cooperation depending on the form of coexistence the partner elements develop. Elective affinity too, based on strong compatibility, involves persistent tensions that need to be averted. Indeed, elective affinity represents a strong case of complementariness and reinforcement that in triggering off the development of the ideational, social and material forms involved in the association to an extent absent before their encounter it also awakens the risks of detachment or colonization.[191] Elective affinity, I want to argue, presupposes an initial form of "mutualism," a symbiosis that is beneficial to both elements involved, that may persist on time or one of the constitutive elements could become either independent of the original association, a case of "commensalism," or detrimental to it, "parasitism."

The latter case, however, should be treated with caution. Weber's objection, mentioned above, to attribute an elective affinity between democracy and capitalism indicates that, for him, the absence of survival or persistent weakening in the long run of one of the terms in the cementing partnership does not respond to the logic of elective affinity. However, the undermining of value rational forms of social action (as well as affectual and traditional) and the escalation of instrumental rationality, that is, the colonization of value commitments (religious and others) by end rationality (the capitalist order backed up by a bureaucratic legal order) could be seen as the ultimate development of the Protestantism-capitalism affinity and thus a case of parasitism. Even so, however, ascendancy of instrumental rationality does not indicate in Weber's work that such hegemony rests on the exploitation of value commitments or on their total eradication (after all religion, art, and sexuality are, according to Weber, value-spheres that persist by themselves). This seems to be more a case of commensalism whereby one social form becomes stronger and autonomous regardless of the destiny of the other than an instance of parasitism. Hence, parasitism, although a logical possibility in a relationship based on strong resemblance and correspondence seems not to fit well with the Weberian connotation of elective affinity.

Elective affinity in social sciences stands for a peculiar form of causality.[192] The causal explanation at stake is not one that establishes necessary and sufficient conditions that determines the emergence of a social phenomenon. It is not about how one isolated dependent variable (education, economic development, political parties) determines the origin of an outcome. Rather, it explains how two multivariable social arrangements work in tandem for their mutual bracing. In short, elective affinity does not explain the

emergence or origin of a phenomenon but its strengthening, stability and continuance; and it does not explain that stability on grounds of one isolated variable but multiple and complex ones.

We are concerned here, however, with elective affinity not as a sociological association but as a normative one. Extrapolated to the normative realm where the enterprise of justification (rather than explanation) takes center stage, elective affinity between two sets of ideas takes a very idiosyncratic form as well. Elective affinity denotes mutualism basically between ideas rather than material and ideal interests and serves normative rather than explanatory purposes. As in the case of social explanation, elective affinity between structural arrangements of ideas does not presume that one could not exist without the elective pair. Nor does it imply that one provides all the necessary sociological, historical, logical and evaluative grounds for the other. Elective affinity does not add up to laying the foundations of a comprehensive view: one set of ideas does not work as the premise for the other. Elective affinity does not refer to a set of loosely connected normative premises, intuitions, principles, and values that lend the foundational ground to a fully developed normative outcome. That elective affinity between two arrangements of ideas holds is not tantamount to saying that one normatively follows from the other necessarily. Elective affinity does serve the purpose of a normative justificatory approach that does not entail necessity or exhaustiveness. Although Berlin does not quite achieve this, as will be argued below, elective affinity does away with the kind of justification in political theory that begins with a complex moral account of the person as the premise from which a substantive political order follows.

If justification in political theory is "a matter of the mutual support of many considerations, of everything fitting together into one coherent view," then elective affinity between two value arrangements does not work as a justificatory approach for a normative arrangement.[193] Justification in political theory refers to the set of reasons that support a specific arrangement of substantive political values, institutions and policies. This is usually carried out by different justificatory attempts by articulating some set of moral and meta-ethical assumptions, including centrally a conception of the person (or political anthropology), an account of truth or objectivity in the realm of value, a viewpoint about the role of morality in political associations, an understanding of history and its impact on human constitution, and an account of practical rationality—all of which are conceived against the background of empirical conditions that make them viable. Usually, different political theories put forward rival interpretations of these components at the justificatory level arguing for a very strong normative bond between these cluster of assumptions and the political order that follows. The link between reasons and substantive outcome is one of normative inference from loose premises to a systematic theory, whereby the character, sustainability, adequacy and consistency of the outcome is determined by the kind of reasons provided in its support.

Elective affinity between two value arrangements in the field of political theory, alternatively, turns not on a set of loosely connected moral intuitions, principles and reasonable stipulations that substantiate a fully developed account of a political community, where absent those initial moral considerations the account does not follow. The connection centers on the strong complementariness between two well-developed, autonomous system of ideas and their reciprocal reinforcement and long-term stability

that can only be explained in terms of the nature of the relationship. This type of justification does not result in a programmatic and comprehensive normative validation of outcome of the association. In short, elective affinity in the normative realm involves prior independence of the ideational constitutive elements of the association, a long-term stability of the pair based on their compatibility which is unattainable absent their interdependence (mutualism), and the persistent potential danger of commensalism due to the fact that the interaction is the result of two previously self-contained systems of thoughts that gain strength with their continuous association.

The affinity between liberalism and democracy offers some glimpses into how elective affinity works in the normative realm and thus into how it applies to the relationship between liberalism and pluralism. In both cases, the issue turns on whether and how the reciprocal interaction validates each other rather than on the logical or historical character of the association. "Liberal democracy" does not denote a pair of inexorable companions. Whereas liberalism is a modern theory of limited state power, democracy is a political doctrine of inclusion that seeks insertion of popular power into the state.[194] Democracy organizes power in a horizontal dimension providing wider participation in the political process to the population, and liberalism is a vertical technique of control of political power.[195] Democracy entails substantive egalitarian ideas that could be at odds with a liberal doctrine of a limited state. However, in its procedural version a democratic regime establishes rules of access to state power that, in principle, opens political participation and public offices to all citizens. In this sense, democracy converges with the liberal ambition of equality under the law and equality of rights. While the substantive egalitarian democratic ethos remains in tension with liberalism, its formal and procedural version—a demand for political equality in the forms of access to state power—intersects with the liberal view.[196] On the one hand, procedural democracy centers on the equal distribution of political rights which is a fundamental tool for the defense of liberal civil rights. On the other hand, freedom of speech, association and other fundamental civil rights are key parts of the clog for the correct functioning of democracy.[197]

Liberalism and at least one form of democracy have been both bolstered by their reciprocal relationship. Arguably, neither arrangement of ideas, incarnated in their respective forms of political organization, would have lasted that long in time had they not been complemented by each other. Although their encounter was a historical fortuitous occurrence and they both paired before and after with other companion ideas and political orders, liberalism and democracy have limited and buttressed each other in such a way that their mutual subsistence has been reinforced and extended. The partnership between them has promoted their stability and endurance over time which would have been unlikely in the absence of such relationship. Road companionship, however, does not imply foundational justification. Many of the reasons that lay the normative soundness of liberalism are independent of democracy and the other way around.

A relationship of this sort, I believe, is the kind of mutually favoring connection that Berlin has in mind when he argues for the internal relationship between value pluralism and liberalism. Value pluralism, as an account of values distilled from human actions throughout history, together with its correlated modern sociological awareness of disagreement of beliefs, holds an elective affinity with liberalism. Value pluralism does

not work as a foundational coherent whole to liberalism. It does not sum up the philosophical foundations for a liberal order. These two worldviews indeed strengthen each other in such a way that, like the chemical substances, pluralism and liberalism break out of their union with other forms of political organization and corresponding value arrangement in favor of one another. The modern recognition of the incommensurability of value and its corollary acceptance of alternative ways of life work in tandem with a liberal regime in such a way that they affect and accommodate each other, they favor one another, they promote their continuity and stability.

It is important to identify the distinctive constitutive elements of these two worldviews that would warrant the talk about elective affinity between them. Thus, in the same way that the methodical, rigorous, ascetic Protestant ethic falls into place with the efficient, success-seeking capitalist mode of production, the affinity between value pluralism and liberalism should be traced to particular elements within both. Section V argues that, in the case of Berlin's political theory, the role of choice pins down these two structural sets of ideas. Chapter Six makes the case, however, that the elective affinity between pluralism and liberalism should be traced not to the significance of choice but rather to their mutual capacity for inclusiveness and expansion of the legitimate basis of the state. But before proceeding with that exposition I survey and criticize alternative readings of Berlin's proposal in the following section.

**IV - Value Pluralism and Liberalism: Alternative Readings**

Many scholars have read the relationship of pluralism and liberalism as one of philosophical foundations and have deemed the emphasis on choice as something problematic. Some, like George Crowder and Jonathan Riley, although inspired by Berlin's insights, advocate significantly reformulated proposals to make the justificatory relationship work. Others, like John Gray and John Kekes, believe that value pluralism signals a dead end for the liberal project.[198] This section examines these arguments and rejects two of the major and most recurrent criticisms leveled against Berlin—the indeterminacy argument and the naturalistic fallacy argument. It also criticizes these proposals on grounds of their feeble presupposition of a universally shared minimum morality. By showing where their arguments go wrong, I intend to highlight how choice does not work as the necessary and sufficient philosophical ground for liberalism but as one of the key element on which elective affinity between pluralism and liberalism rests.

**A. The Indeterminacy Argument**

George Crowder, together with John Gray, John Kekes, and Michael Sandel, argues that if all values are equally ultimate, then freedom of choice cannot enjoy a privileged status.[199] If pluralism brings about an argument in favor of value indeterminacy, then choice cannot come out on top of all other values. Gray, in particular, emphasizes that Berlin values the capacity to choose above anything else, and believes, however, that granted the truth of value pluralism, choice and its cognate idea of negative freedom cannot take precedence over everything else. "To hold that only liberal ways of life are valuable," claims Gray "or that they are always more valuable than illiberal ways of life, is to ascribe to freedom of choice a pre-eminent value that is undefended and implausible—especially if the truth of value-pluralism is assumed."[200] Against Berlin, Gray argues that negative liberty can be only one good among many.[201]

Indeed, Gray's suggestion that, granted the truth of pluralism, no value whatsoever can come before others ushers the end of any grounded substantive moral or political reasoning with universal scope. He sentences the death of the liberal project based on its unattainable universality. Value pluralism and liberalism are rival doctrines precisely because the former challenges the universal ambition of liberal morality. According to this viewpoint, Berlin defies his own creed because he conceived freedom as universally paramount and overriding among all values, whence he derives the soundness of liberalism.

Kekes too claims that Berlin's argument fails because he regards rights as the overriding values, and "what is incompatible with pluralism is overridingness *per se.*"[202] The problem lies in the universal and overriding character of liberalism's normative grounds. Neither negative liberty nor individual autonomy has preeminence over other values: "If strong pluralism is true, then no value can be given a unique priority amongst the ingredients and conditions of the human good…This truth subverts liberal moralities which accord a unique primacy to some good such as negative liberty or personal autonomy."[203]

One of the drawbacks of the indeterminacy argument is that it does not take to heart some central elements in Berlin's political theory. For one, it overlooks that, for Berlin, choice is not so much a value as a capacity, and not so much any capacity as an inextricable one—an entrenched and fundamental organizing faculty for human experience. According to Berlin, choices cannot be severed from the conception of the person that history has bestowed upon us. The historical teachings demonstrate that, as long as we remain human, choices cannot be eradicated from our lives; we cannot conceive of a meaningful life without our capacity to choose. As Berlin puts it, "Choices can be agonizing, but unavoidable in any world we can conceive of."[204] In this sense too Berlin is a committed Kantian: "Man is man, for Kant, only because he chooses."[205] They are united in claiming that "Men are choosers of acts."[206]

Berlin's argument implies the recognition that, not unlike reason, the capacity to choose is an architectonic feature in human experience. It organizes, shapes, structures and provides meaning to our thoughts and actions. It is a condition of possibility of human life. To think of a person without this capacity means to conceive of a truncated human being, not in comparison to a fancy metaphysical account featuring fully developed human faculties, but in relation to a historical understanding of what means to be a person. Reason and choice distinguish us from other species of being, they make possible a practical and theoretical growth that marks the decisive complexion of our species. More than an argument that ranks choice over other values, this stance acknowledges the inconsistency of any account of the human semblance cut off from this capacity. Reason and choice are the two faculties that mold our entire structure of thought—practical and theoretical—and part of our emotional demeanor. This faculty is an ingrained feature of our humanity and the condition of possibility of a meaningful value experience. Value pluralism, for Berlin, is of a piece with the view of a human being who reads and organizes the world through the prism of value concepts. Persons cannot disentangle from the capacity to choose, precisely because this faculty allows the arrangement of these categories, and shapes, in that manner, our own forms of life.

Moreover, the argument about value indeterminacy wrongly ranks choice with all other values when indeed the capacity to choose is a faculty without which the world of

values would shade away—human life would vanish. The detractors of the centrality of choice fail to notice that the latter is a precondition for value pluralism—not one other value to be ranked along others. Choices have created values; they are engines of values over time.[207]

This point has been deflated in Gray, Crowder and Kekes' exegesis because they all launch their criticisms from within a moral realist perspective of value pluralism. For instance, the thesis of incommensurability of values, the cornerstone of value pluralism, is, for Gray, part of moral realism—a meta-ethical position that he calls "objective pluralism," which "limits the scope of rational choice among goods, affirming that they are often constitutively uncombinable and sometimes rationally incommensurable."[208] The realist reading of value pluralism sees values as objective, universal, diverse, incommensurable and frequently incompatible standing independently of human experience. This, in turn, keeps off the ranking of values precisely because pluralism imposes non-overridingness of any one value over others. This stance admits of only a contextualized kind of thinking that could attach priority to some values in a contingent fashion.

The moral realist reading of value pluralism turns a blind eye to a fundamental element in Berlin's own pluralist view, namely, that his pluralistic account of the nature of values is the offspring of a historical understanding of the person. Berlin's statements about the character of values cannot be detached from the unceasing decanting of human action throughout history. Although Gray acknowledges that Berlin's pluralism is "the result of historical and anthropological inquiry," he does not develop the implications of this assertion.[209]

Berlin does not believe that values hang out awaiting discovery but are rather the product of human choices across history. Values are creations, choice creations, so that without choices, the realm of values withers away. Pluralism for Berlin is not about value entities, the origin and perdurance of which are dissociated from human beings. Moral realism has traded on the strong imposing character of values in Berlin's ethical thought to detach values from human actions. It has construed, from that aspect, a universe of values that stand by themselves and make the fabric of ethical objectivity. Yet the imposing quality of values should not be confused with their origin and persistence, which actually lies on the relentless exercise of human choices and actions in history. Once this historical dimension of Berlin's pluralism is acknowledged, choice emerges as the condition of possibility of values, a constitutive element of pluralism, not as an unwarranted value priority over others. The priority to choose is not an unsupported decision that contradicts the pluralist premises that prohibits the primacy of any one value.

If choices create values, rather than simply discover them, freedom to exercise that choice is not an arbitrary pick among equal values floating out there. Under this view, some degree of freedom becomes absolutely necessary. In the absence of freedom, an historically grounded value pluralism becomes senseless. In the absence of freedom, no argument that presupposes value pluralism, as Berlin understands it, could get off the ground. They both stand and fall together.

There is nothing in Berlin's political theory beyond the realm of humanity. Values are not out there; we bring them to the world. His values are human values; his description of the person is a historical one; pluralism is of a human making. The genesis

of values thus harks back in Berlin's thought to the capacity to choose, which in turn must be shielded with some degree of freedom. It does not breach any assumption of his pluralist stance to claim that we need some freedom to honor the account of a person that generates and inhabits a world of conflictive and incommensurable values. To put it bluntly, without freedom, no choice; without choice, no meaningful human life; without human life, no value pluralism. Some degree of freedom is necessary to keep our choices and the possibility of a plural world breathing.

Assuming that choice, as my remarks above suggest, does not fall into the trap of the indeterminacy argument, one could still wonder about the normative relevance of this capacity for the relationship between pluralism and liberalism. The capacity to choose after all certainly existed before the plural character of values was established as part of our modern awareness. If this is so, what does the recognition of value incommensurability add to the normative significance of choice and how do both in turn contribute to the relationship with liberalism?

Human beings have always exercised their capacity to choose. However, at a particular historical juncture—the clash between the Enlightenment and the romantic worldviews—our understanding of the logic of values changed to the extent that it revamped the normative relevance of choice. Berlin's pluralistic approach is fastened to this historical time. On the one hand, the period that preceded and followed the French Revolution altered the categories and concepts which were then taken for granted. In his view, our own conception of the person owes more to this period than to any other time. Hence, Berlin claims that this epoch "was singularly rich in original conceptions; they transformed our world, and the words in which they were formulated speak to us still."[210]

On the other hand, he acknowledges the seminal importance of the romantic repercussions: "The great achievement of romanticism…was that, unlike most other great movements in human history, it succeeded in transforming certain of our values to a very profound degree."[211] Only after romanticism people would harbor doubts as to who comes first Frederick the Great or Torquemeda:

*In the eighteenth century there would have been no doubt. Frederick the Great clearly comes above a religious madman. Today, however, people would suffer from certain doubts, because they think that idealism, sincerity, dedication, purity of heart, purity of mind are qualities preferable to corruption, wickedness, calculation, egoism, mendacity, the desire to exploit other people for one's own benefit, of which these great State-founders were undoubtedly guilty… we are children of both worlds…We give so many marks for consequence, so many marks for motive, and we oscillate between the two*.[212]

We owe to romanticism, Berlin holds, "the notion that a unified answer in human affairs is likely to be ruinous, that if you really believe there is one single solution to all human ills, and that you must impose this solution at no matter what cost, you are likely to become a violent and despotic tyrant in the name of your solution, because your desire to remove all obstacles to it will end by destroying those creatures for whose benefit you offer the solution."[213] This historical juncture ushered "an appreciation of the necessity of tolerating others, the necessity of preserving an imperfect equilibrium in human affairs, the impossibility of driving human beings…into the single solution which possesses us, that they will ultimately revolt against us, or at any rate be crushed by it."[214] The clash of these overpowering worldviews marks a turning point, a transformation of outlook, whence the awareness of value pluralism emerges and the normative implications of choice turn significantly more salient—as both the originator of values and as the faculty

that constantly shift the selection of categories or values that color our—now we learn—necessarily limited and incomplete current worldview. The capacity to choose has been always part of the human constitution, but it is only after romanticism—when the awareness of the incommensurability of values finally hits home—that choice acquires a new normative significance. This historical and normative perception of choice is entrenched in Berlin's account of value pluralism.

And yet, if choice is so significant, why not maximize the capacity to choose? Why settle for a mere recognition of its normative significance once we realize the plural and incommensurable character of values? For Berlin, a political community involves relentless adjustments, concessions and disagreements over moral and political issues and economic interests—including what counts as a right and the degree of freedom that a community is prepared to tolerate and defend. Berlin's defense of a liberal order entails a variety of liberalisms characterized by different sets of rights that are agreed on and settled in a contextualized manner. That some degree of freedom must be guaranteed for a plural discussion to take place, does not mean that freedom to choose (in the form of fundamental liberal rights) trumps other values necessarily in every single conflict. Berlin does not espouse the maximization of freedom; he does advocate for a significant degree of freedom that grants the opportunity to exercise choices. For any maximization of freedom involves necessarily the curtailment and rationing of other values, and Berlin's perception of the incommensurable character of values implies that to a large degree these decisions are political and contingent ones. The extent of freedom that he defends as a basis for a liberal order is a condition without which the plural description of the person with her capacity to choose would be suffocated. As he puts it: "…negative liberty is also such that in its absence other values collapse also, because there is no opportunity to practise them, there are no opportunities, no constellation of diverse values—in the end, no life."[215]

**B. The Naturalistic Fallacy Argument**

Crowder portraits Berlin's justification of liberalism as one that springs from cherishing choice. Crowder's Berlin states that if values conflict, and are plural and incommensurable, then we must *value* the freedom to choose: "His more explicit argument is that pluralism gives us a reason to value choice."[216] Crowder, however, objects to this argument as an instance of a naturalistic fallacy. From the fact that people must make hard choices, Crowder claims, it does not follow that we must value such choices or the freedom to make them: "that something is unavoidable it does not follow that it is desirable."[217]

To avoid the alleged naturalistic fallacy, Crowder restates the argument in the following terms. Pluralism, he argues, imposes hard choices on us, to cope with them we need to develop certain virtues (in particular personal autonomy) harbored and fostered by liberal politics: "liberalism promotes the virtues required for coping successfully with the exigencies of choosing among conflicting incommensurables." According to him, he thus avoids the naturalistic fallacy because the argument "passes not from necessity to value but from necessity to necessity."[218] Personal autonomy is required to face the hard choices that pluralism imposes on us, and liberalism is the political order that best promotes that virtue.

Crowder's indictment of naturalistic fallacy mistakes Berlin's recognition of the necessity of choice for an argument that celebrates choice. As noted above, Berlin acknowledges the philosophical significance of choice as both the headspring of values and the capacity without which we would be unequipped to alter our comprehensive views, which given the incommensurable status of values becomes a necessary feature of our current conception of the person. If we want to remain human, as we now understand this idea, we need to provide room for this capacity, whence it follows the need to live in a political milieu that provides some room for its exercise. Yet, nowhere in his arguments does Berlin claim that choice lifts the moral quality of our lives *necessarily*. Rather, he acknowledges its inevitable and ineradicable permanence given our own perception of human experience: "The necessity of choosing between absolute claims is then an inescapable characteristic of the human condition."[219] His pro-choice argument rests on the claim that to do otherwise, that is, to impede choice altogether, is to truncate our humanity.

An argument that elevates choice implies that there is a prima facie superiority of any outcome that is self-chosen—and yet this is not Berlin's argument. To value choice above all else implies that any decision fares better than others for the mere fact that is self-imposed. That is, the sheer act of choosing adds consequence to our actions. This view usually sees choice intrinsically connected with some set of highly esteemed moral faculties such as self-command, personal autonomy, self-rationalization or self-realization that purported enhance and elevates the act of choosing. Yet, none of these or related virtues figure prominently in Berlin's thought. Indeed, he does not tether choice to any other moral value or higher faculty that, according to him, needs to be nurtured.

Berlin never shies away from expressing skepticism about what he takes to be an overrated idea of autonomy. In part, his objection to the idea of "positive freedom" lies in the attempts to tie this notion to higher order capacities. Positive freedom, according to Berlin, is guilty of the fallacy of reductionism as it collapses numerous values in the form of an internal moral capacity of the subject that should be cultivated. Valuing choice, I believe, implies precisely a commitment to any such higher faculties, which Berlin clearly distrusts. If Berlin wants to stay away from the fallacy that, in his view, has undermined Western philosophy, then freedom of choice cannot spring from the internal moral powers of the subject. This commitment would call for the relentless cultivation of those moral faculties and the subsequent maximization of freedom. It would command the overriding pursuit of freedom of choice to enhance forever more the inner capacity that conforms the normative grounds for its justification. This, as argued above, would in turn neglect the plural account of human semblance from where all begins.

Instead, freedom, for Berlin, refers to an outer, *inter homines* state. His defense of "negative freedom" tries to redress the internal connection between choice, freedom and higher order powers. Indeed, negative freedom entrusts a very unassuming role to choice. Negative freedom does not allude to how we choose, not even to the actual choosing, but to the possibility of choosing: "The freedom of which I speak is opportunity for action, rather than action itself. If, although I enjoy the right to walk through open doors, I prefer not to do so, but to sit still and vegetate, I am not thereby rendered less free."[220] We need to have the opportunity to choose—how we choose or why we choose remain immune to Berlin's pro-choice arguments. It is hard to see what is so celebratory in this account of choice.

An alternative candidate that could vouch for the exaltation of choice in Berlin's thought is the existentialist ideal of radical self-making. Given Berlin's approving observations on aspects of the Romantic Movement, this is worth exploring. Yet, he believes that the veneration of choice for its own sake is caught in the grip of irrationality. In this sense too, Berlin takes the romantic lesson very seriously. The atrocities that grew out of the movement were in part justified by the exaltation of a creative self; anything was allowed and encouraged insofar as it was the manifestation of the person's originality, the creation out of the *inner domus*. Indeed, Berlin dismisses the heirs of the romantic era for precisely that endorsement: "To the extent to which there are common values, it is impossible to say that everything must be created by me; that if I find something given, I must smash it; that if I find something structured, I must destroy it in order to give free play to my unbridled imagination. To this extent romanticism, if it is driven to its logical conclusion, does end in some kind of lunacy."[221]

Choice is not related to an unleashed or unlimited will. In order to communicate, human beings "are forced to recognise certain common values, certain common facts, to live in a common world…to this extent romanticism in its full form, and even its offshoots in the form of both existentialism and Fascism, seems to me to be fallacious."[222] Nihilistic self-making, the crowning point of valuing choice for its own sake, is rejected under Berlin's pluralist outlook.

Berlin's argument for choice calls upon the ineluctability of choosing. Choice makes our lives possible by creating and perpetuating value. Berlin's choice is not attached to the quality of outcomes or to the virtues of its motivation. Rather, sheltering the capacity to choose stands in virtue of it being the precondition for value. Choice does not make an action necessarily more valuable in the same way that breathing does not make our life more worthwhile. The modern awareness of value pluralism has brought a compelling case against its suppression—but how we choose, when we choose, and whether we choose are not part of Berlin's case for its protection. For choice to be treasured in the sense that Crowder's argument assumes, it has to be linked to higher virtues or powers that turn choices into worthy outcomes. But choices in Berlin's view are necessary, not necessarily valuable. "One chooses as one chooses, neither life can objectively be called superior to the other. It is a matter of what one wants to do and be."[223] Herein lies the difference between acknowledging the necessity of choice and valuing choice.

Finally, Crowder also examines the argument that Berlin actually advocates choice "because it symbolizes my moral status as a human being."[224] This interpretation, however, foists an unwarranted moral load in Berlin's argument. His pro-choice stance is divorced from the view that relates the dignity of persons to their rational capacities. It is not in this sense that Berlin is a Kantian. Our moral dignity or moral experience does not boil down to our rational constitution. When it comes to our moral make-up, Berlin summons other faculties as seminal factors to our ethical development. Imagination, creativity, empathy and other capacities take center stage in Berlin's account of ethical experience. Indeed, his entire theoretical edifice rises against the idea that reason (and rational choice) is the exclusive pillar of our moral development.

Berlin believes that men and ideals should be regarded as sufficiently valuable, "as ends in themselves, very much as Kant recommended, though not perhaps for one of his explicit reasons—not because they are rational beings (whatever may be meant by

that)—but really for his other reason, that men are ends in themselves because they are the sole source of all morality, the beings for whose sakes alone whatever is worth doing is worth doing…"[225] For him, a person deprived of choice is an inconsistency, more than an immorality. The dignity of our humanity may be on the line as long as our humanity is preserved, and Berlin's defense of choice comes to reflect the latter rather than the former.

In any case, the natural fallacy argument is not as consequential as it seems at first sight. Berlin's account of the person, like that of any other political theorist, does not originate in the teachings of biology. The interpretation of the human semblance, a historical rendering of the person as furnished with value categories through which she interacts with the world, is precisely just that—an interpretation. The necessity of choice stems from a historical reading of the process of value creation and their incommensurable status. In this sense, neither Berlin nor any other political theorist (including Crowder) begins from a natural fact. It is an interpreted historical fact. Indeed, in political theory, the sequence from necessity to necessity that Crowder takes pride in is a rare case.

**C. A Lingua Franca of Minimum Moralities**

Unlike Gray, Crowder and Riley believe that liberalism follows from value pluralism, yet they all come together in presupposing some kind of minimum moral threshold in their defense of a political order. Crowder claims that he elaborates on a Berlinian objectivity that assumes that certain values bolster or guarantee a minimum of human flourishing necessarily. Riley, on the other hand, derives liberalism from a thin consensus on moral values that sets limits to an otherwise unbridled pluralism. Finally, Gray surmises that a core of watered-down liberal values wards off any political order that assumes the truth of value pluralism from cruel treatment. All of these positions that stand on an assumed worldwide communion in moral beliefs face problems that Berlin's defense of a liberal political order avoids. For in all cases, this moral Esperanto is axiomatically postulated, and nothing too firm could come out of moving sands.

Gray's view of value pluralism that suggests that no value can ever take precedence universally falls short of living up to its own standards.[226] For Gray too gives, according to his own measures, unwarranted priority to "peaceful stability" as the most relevant value in contemporary societies. "Agonistic liberalism," Gray's own interpretation of a liberal order, does not embody universal aspirations and obtains endorsement on grounds of historical contingency, not universal rationality.[227] Gray rejects the argument that liberalism is a rights-based theory that remains unaffected by the truth of value pluralism, and proposes instead a liberalism based on a form of "modus vivendi."[228] Although modus vivendi, like any other political norm, articulates a conception of the good, it departs from other forms of rationalist liberalisms in that it is a political project, not a moral ideal.[229] Yet, the same argument that Gray poses against Berlin's defense of liberty can be pushed back against his universal vindication of peaceful coexistence and modus vivendi. On which grounds, given the truth of value pluralism, can we endorse peaceful coexistence as a core value that trumps all others?

To secure non-violent social interaction peaceful coexistence and the possibility of a *decent* modus vivendi, Gray has to smuggle a value platform, a minimum core morality that applies universally and establishes a threshold of human decency, what he

calls a "universal minimum morality."[230] Gray does not expand on the content of this minimum common moral denominator. He limits his remarks to asserting that the content of the universal moral limit "overlaps with that of liberal morality in that both proscribe such practices as genocide and slavery; but it underdetermines liberal morality in that it does not dictate distinctive liberal freedoms of the press, religion or autonomous choice."[231] But where does this minimum moral floor come from? How does Gray guarantee its persistence without negative liberty? And if a degree of negative freedom is always necessary to some extent, on which grounds does he criticize Berlin?[232]

Crowder, on the other hand, defends the objectivity of certain universal, plural, conflictive and incommensurable values such as the satisfaction of survival needs (food and shelter), friendship, other forms of intimacy, justice, liberty and equality based on the fact that "these things make any human life go better than it would otherwise, even if particular individuals or groups do not recognise this."[233] He holds that pluralism, unlike relativism, maintains that some universal values are beneficial to any human life regardless of the particular cultural context.[234] He refers to this as a Berlinian kind of objectivity.

However, Berlin's account of objectivity, grounded in the cornerstone idea of "human semblance," scarcely falls back on a substantive agreement of moral values. As argued in the prior chapter, the idea of human semblance does not involve a moral universal consensus over worthwhile values across time. Rather, it entails a historical account of our epistemological make-up. It comprises a configuration of semi-permanent categories through which we understand the world, which in turn provides the platform for reasoned and meaningful communication across time and cultures. This has little to do with an overlap of values that are meant to be beneficial to human life. These categories are objective and universal not because they are advantageous to anyone (indeed the inventory includes all the categories that come to mind when we think of human action and thinking) but rather because they have endured over time, are constitutive of our conception of person and provide the conditions for rational moral communication.

Human communication presupposes this categorial net, including the values that express and cast light on the dark side of our experience, not only those that contribute to our flourishing. To think of a human being entails bringing notions such as "society, freedom, sense of time and change, suffering, happiness, productivity, good and bad, right and wrong, choice, effort, truth, illusion" into play.[235] "Wrongness," "sense of time," "suffering," etc. do not allude to human goodness. These concepts are universal and objective nonetheless because they organize our practical and theoretical reasoning and attach meaning to the world. "There is a world of objective values," Berlin states "forms of life differ. Ends, moral principles, are many. But not infinitely many: they must be within the human horizon. If they are not, then they are outside the human sphere."[236] The objectivity that he invokes is the terrain of values historically created by persons' actions and thoughts that result in the conception of the person that we embrace today.

The argument from value pluralism to liberalism advanced by Berlin presupposes the notion of human semblance, not as a set of values to be harbored, but as a cluster of numerous, incommensurable, universal, diverse and sometimes incompatible categories that cannot be accommodated altogether in any one comprehensive outlook. Although Crowder acknowledges at some point that Berlin's human horizon establishes a threshold

of meaningful interaction as opposed to a normative consensus, he immediately rushes to restates this idea as a substantive like-mindedness that provides support for liberalism: "Whether conceived as horizon or core, Berlin's universal values are likely to be so general or abstract that most human societies would satisfy them, including many highly illiberal societies. Could Berlin respond by making his account of moral universality 'thicker' or more demanding, so that it would be satisfied by fewer non-liberal societies?"[237] But this need not concern Berlin. For him, the affinity between pluralism and liberalism does not emanate from a normative accord but from the significance that both attach to choice.

Riley's Berlin, on the other hand, is a liberal rationalist that sees practical reason as an imperfect mechanism to resolve ethical and political conflicts. Despite these limitations, the freedom to choose, encircled by "a minimum core of human rights," does not extend to illiberal choices.[238] The radical romantic choice that pretends to create everything anew "must be restrained by some common ethical and political norms that are accepted as given…this common horizon is something that can be discovered by rational methods...the scope of pluralism must be limited by a common moral horizon such that the elements of the horizon are reasonably held to take precedence when they conflict with any other ideals and values created by men."[239]

The unfeasibility of the radical romantic choice, however, does not lie in the fact that practical reason knits a consensus on common, universal standards that cannot be trumped as Riley suggests. The impracticability of the unleashed romantic choice is, in Berlin's thought, far more profound. As noted above, Berlin snubs the euphoria for unrestrained choice as one verging on lunacy. Such an attitude ignores the epistemological barriers that this kind of choice presents. If we construe everything anew, if we smash all the value categories that bond us, communication breaks down. What the radicalized romantic choice stance fails to see is that choosing presupposes a widespread categorial framework that renders it meaningful in the first place: we cannot total our assumed categorial system and start ex nihilo. The grid of values is a condition of possibility, not a substantive consent on universal virtues; it is the equipment without which we cannot make sense of the world. Fanatical choice pulls the rug from under its own feet.

Riley draws upon Berlin's defense of a certain set of human rights to substantiate his position.[240] Although Berlin advocates for a set of such rights along with some sort of welfare state, this is not the assumed platform from which he defends liberalism.[241] Riley overestimates the strength and implications of Berlin's scattered claims to the effect that almost any culture that has ever existed defends some set of human rights based on certain goods that are in the interest of all human beings. The universal endorsement of moral ideals is not part of his account of objectivity but presupposes that defense. That is, we can come to agreement around minimum set of human rights because we all partake in a shared categorial structure that facilitate objective ethical communication. In other words, the extension of some minimum of basic rights to everyone across cultures is the result of liberalism, not its justificatory basis. Liberalism based on value pluralism does not undermine itself from within not because it presupposes a moral overlap of core liberal values but because it protects the possibility of choice with some degree of negative freedom—a choice that has the potential to be rational and reasoned based on the objectivity provided by our cognitive constitution in the ethical realm.

**V. From Value Pluralism to Liberalism: A Weberian Reading of Berlin's Proposal**

The main limitation of the above reinterpretations of Berlin's work falls within a broader one, namely, to understand the relationship between value pluralism and liberalism as a justificatory strategy that presupposes that value pluralism warrants (or fails to warrant) full normative rightness to a liberal order. The elective affinity approach advanced in this chapter points instead to a relation that shore liberalism and pluralism up and perpetuate them (mutualism) while postulating that potential tensions persist (commensalism and parasitism) between them. That is, it defends a mutual relation that does not presume to provide exhaustive, systematic and permanent moral (or otherwise) reasons that confer normative warranty on each of them. This relationship, instead, ultimately subverts the viability of the justificatory approaches to liberalism understood as the provision of a complete range of reasons in favor of a legitimate political order.[242]

Prevalent justificatory perspectives in political theory begin with a set of moral principles, assumptions, and conceptions of the person and derive a political order from them. Politics is the offspring of morality in the sense that the substantive political arrangement is deemed right if it adjusts to the moral principles and the foundational, moral conception of the person that give it rise. In other words, the political order grows out of pillars about individual moral agency and the goal of which lies in protecting and assisting the moral capacities and conditions from whence it springs. Most of the thinkers discussed above trade on Berlin's argument and offer their own accounts of the relationship between liberalism and pluralism with this kind of justificatory model in mind. For them, value pluralism as a meta-ethical description of the nature of values lays the ground for the foundation of a liberal political order which provides the political conditions that facilitate the development of the initial moral conditions that emanate from the incommensurability of values.

But perhaps Berlin never envisioned the relationship between liberalism and pluralism in this foundational way. He never refers to value pluralism as providing the exhaustive philosophical grounds for liberalism. He does detect an important supportive relationship between both worldviews. He situates the emergence of the awareness of value incommensurability at a point in history when liberalism was well established. And yet Berlin believes that the new perception about the character of values would reinforce the liberal case as the political order that attaches the same significance to the capacity of choice. His is not an attempt to lay out comprehensive pluralist foundations of liberalism but to find complex, various and incomplete connections (an elective affinity) between both.[243]

Why does choice acquire such a significance for Berlin? As argued above, value pluralism attaches a new normative dimension to the significance of choice of which we were unaware before the rise of the Romantic Movement—a normative weight that does not depend on its connection to the internal moral capacities of the agent or on deeming choice the overriding value against some evaluative benchmark. Choice is the source of incommensurable values and the condition of possibility of the continuance of a plural existence. This strengthens the case for negative freedom and the liberal order, which purportedly allows for the most extensive influx of value arrangements. Liberalism given its accentuation on choice and negative freedom is the regime most amenable to value pluralism and the social actions that presuppose it. The affinity between the structural

arrangement of liberalism and the implications of value pluralism in Berlin's thought comes down to the following: whereas value pluralism would cease to exist if choices were eliminated, liberalism fulfills its most distinctive goal—the limitation of political oppression by setting limits to state power—by allowing as many citizens as possible to freely exercise their choices.

To assert that an elective affinity, as opposed to a programmatic justificatory relationship, holds between value pluralism and liberalism indicates as well that value pluralism does not grant complete legitimacy in the normative sense to liberalism. If liberalism does not follow from pluralism then other additional reasons can come in support of a liberal order. Moreover, pluralism constantly disrupts the liberal frontiers, and in that sense, the reasons to see the ruler's commands as valid remain always open to challenges.

The foundational view of liberalism, usually connected to a voluntary agreement of the terms of social cooperation among the members of the political community, involves, first, the idea that the political order emerges out of that compact, and, second, a tighter correspondence between the moral presuppositions of that contract (the conception of the person, the account of practical rationality, etc.) with the elements and goals of the political order that follows. This unreserved agreement evinces a tight correspondence between the foundational moral elements and the structural arrangements and policies of the political order. Politics thus become heavily moralized in the sense that each structural political element that mandates obligation of its citizens is tethered to the moral faculties and the agreement of the individual. Hence, philosophical grounds for liberalism confer legitimacy to the political regime by assuming widespread agreement over the political obligations imposed on the citizenry and the limitations on those who wield the monopoly of coercive power.[244]

The elective affinity between value pluralism and liberalism, alternatively, does not lay grounds for the emergence of the political regime and it requires a loose and imperfect bond between its constitutive elements and those of liberalism. In the same way that elective affinity as a causal mechanism in sociology does not explain the emergence or origin of a phenomenon but its stability (and potential unleashing) and it does so on the basis of multiple and complex variables, elective affinity extrapolated to the normative realm would not account for the foundation of liberalism but for its strengthening and stability on unsystematic historical, political and normative grounds. Value pluralism does not bestow normative legitimacy on a liberal order as the one that the social contract tradition claims to confer.

***Liberalism of Choice: A Readjustment between Moral and Political Theory***

The elective affinity approach carries important implications at three levels. First, it sets limits to the liberal project. The liberalism that could claim affinity with value pluralism is a more limited political undertaking. It becomes, in the tradition of Judith Shklar, a political theory strictly about the limitation of state power that claims very little about the moral development of the individuals that inhabit the liberal political community.[245] Second, and consequently, the affinity between value pluralism and liberalism calls for a new division of labor between moral and political theory as supporting reasons for a liberal order. Third, the awareness of value pluralism and its interaction with liberalism

could potentially shake the basis of the foundational justificatory approach to a liberal order.

Berlin's value pluralism emerges as the by-product of a historical reconstruction of the agonistic conflicts among values, and it sees choice as a precondition for the generation and maintenance of a normative world. On the other hand, the liberalism that ties with value pluralism restricts itself to guaranteeing a realm for choice with widespread applicability. "Liberalism of choice," as I would like to label Berlin's liberalism, hardly mingles with other substantive moral and political ideals; liberalism under the aegis of value pluralism can only vouch for the protection of choice. The affinity between value pluralism and liberalism lies on their exhortation to protect the capacity to choose as the precondition of a meaningful life.

Whereas value pluralism sits at odds with a full-fledged account of the liberal ethos—a fixed structure of fundamental rights that protect personal autonomy and the moral fulfillment of the individual—it dovetails with a limited version of liberalism. The liberal order that stems from value pluralism does not conclusively settle on any moral and political problem beyond the maintenance of some degree of negative freedom. Liberalism based on pluralism curbs its aspirations. Its only universal claim is the preservation of room for the possibility of practical and theoretical deliberation—not its actual fulfillment. Hence, although value pluralism and liberalism reinforce each other, this tandem sets important limits to the scope and purpose of a liberal order. Unlike many other liberal arrangements, liberalism of choice does not pronounce on many substantive goals that have traditionally concern the liberal project.

Liberalism, under this account, ceases to be the regime that accounts for liberation, it does not favor the development of inner and higher moral powers, it does not lend itself as a road map for moral development, nor does it provide the template for a fix hierarchy of basic rights around the globe.[246] Liberalism of choice determines simply that a sphere for choice need to be respected, and it makes a strong case to protect a wider rather than a narrow realm of freedom to exercise this capacity: "The best that one can do is to try to promote some kind of equilibrium, necessarily unstable, between the different aspirations of differing groups of human beings—at the very least to prevent them from attempting to exterminate each other, and, so far as possible, to prevent them from hurting each other—and to promote the maximum practicable degree of sympathy and understanding, never likely to be complete, between them."[247] Beyond this negative realm that safeguards this faculty, liberalism of choice does not endorse any other major form of moral or political perfection. The affinity between value pluralism and liberalism entails setting a universal threshold of human decency by guaranteeing the possibility of choice. Beyond that limit, "we must engage in what are called trade-offs—rules, values, principles must yield to each in varying degrees in specific situations."[248]

Issues such as the understanding and overhauling of other forms of oppression that take place beyond and in spite of the securing of a legal system, the meaning of true freedom, the kind of public discourse a community wants to sustain, the hierarchy of fundamental rights, the fairness of the alternative economic distributions, the cultural values that should be fostered, the virtues to be cherished, interpretations as to what should count as a right, descriptions of the virtuous life, the boundaries between public and private, the preference of the accomplished and examined life over the unexplored one, accounts of moral development, the limits of private property—these are all

momentous problems that fall outside the kind of liberalism that value pluralism reinforces which remains instead open and vulnerable to cultural, political, and historical considerations. As Bernard Williams has put it, "the business of reaffirming and defending the plurality of values is itself a political task."[249]

In short, liberalism of choice is in many moral areas, about which predominant versions of liberalism have a say, an insubstantial political theory. It does not seal off these issues from the political process by gobbling them up as part of its justificatory grounds. These problems are thus not solved from the excluding vantage-point of a liberal morality that centers on personal autonomy, natural rights, or the virtuous life. Liberalism's business, under this account, is to protect a significant realm for choice that allows for the possibility of generation and re-accommodation of values. Liberalism of choice falls back to a political theory that sets basic limits to state power without looming as a full-fledged moral outlook. This liberalism is significantly more conflictive than others in the same family; it is also more modest in its substantive achievements but universal in its scope.[250]

The above thoughts, if correct, could bear important implications to the foundational project in political theory. In *Political Liberalism*, John Rawls shows pioneer awareness to the fact that reasonable pluralism in contemporary societies requires an adjustment between moral and political theory in the justification of a liberal society. He thus offers new "political" grounds for liberalism. Oriented in the right direction, the Rawlsian shift, however, falls short of its own breakthrough. First, the nature and scope of the liberal order that Rawls champions in *Political Liberalism* remains exactly the same as the one defended in *A Theory of Justice* whose justificatory reasons were presumably different and where reasonable pluralism plays no decisive role. Second, Rawls's proposal for the reaccommodation of the division of labor between moral and political theory does not carry the day. Third, Rawls passes over the potential blow that the existence of pluralism can strike to the social contract justificatory strategy to a liberal regime.

The "political liberalisms" defended by Rawls and Charles Larmore suggest that there is no such affinity between value pluralism and liberalism.[251] For Larmore, "Liberalism does not draw its rationale from an acceptance of pluralism, nor must it seek to promote its virtues."[252] The self-understanding of liberal thought should be, for him, "the recognition that reasonable people tend naturally to disagree about the comprehensive nature of the good life."[253] The mistake has been to conflate both, reasonable disagreement and value pluralism. Whereas the latter is a meta-ethical position about value the former refers to the sociological fact of disagreement: "Doctrine and reasonable disagreement about doctrine can hardly be the same thing."[254] Value pluralism, according to Larmore, being a controversial doctrine about value is too narrow a foundation for liberalism and goes against the original spirit of this political theory, namely, to find inclusive principles of association that can be accepted by reasonable people who hold competing and antagonistic views of the good. Rawls, on the other hand, sees value pluralism as one reasonable doctrine among others that partakes in the overlapping consensus that is ultimately justified on more inclusive political grounds articulated by public reason. Their position suggests that insofar as one admits the truth of value pluralism one would endorse a liberal order, but liberalism does not proceed

from value pluralism but from more inclusive, political grounds. If this is the case, there could be certainly no elective affinity between the two theories.[255]

Let's assume for a moment that, as Larmore and Rawls suggest, value-pluralism and political liberalism compete at the level of justification of a liberal polity to offer exhaustive reasons in its support. Even so it is not clear that political liberalism wins this round, as several problems loom large on this view.

Rawls' attempt to inch forward towards a political liberalism acknowledges the central problem of a legitimate order in a plural era: political liberalism building upon reasonable disagreement apparently lies on thinner, across-the-board grounds for social cooperation. However, no existent version of political liberalism has proved to carry out this inclusiveness all the way down. As I argue in Chapter One, Rawls' *political* liberalism is heavily infused by *Kantian* assumptions—from a loaded Kantian conception of the person, to a Kantian assumption of the role of justice to a Kantian moral methodology. The initial minimum political morality expands into a Kantian moral theory as the basis of coercive state power. In addition, political liberalism requires other highly controversial assumptions, chief among them the bracketing of truth on moral and political matters, and the imposition of a strict divide between public and private that comes down to a split personality difficult to embrace by everyone.

Furthermore, despite Larmore's and Rawls' warning about the narrowness of value pluralism as justificatory grounds for state power, *A Theory of Justice* was conceived as an alternative to monisitic and teleological accounts of morality like utilitarianism. Its pluralistic theory of the good stands against "dominant end" type of explanations, which presuppose a common denominator for the sake of which we make our moral choices.[256] If *Political Liberalism* does not completely undo the steps of its predecessor, then it is hard to see how value pluralism is not entrenched in political liberalism as well. [257]

Moreover, Larmore's warning against deploying a controversial philosophical doctrine about the nature of values as the basis of a liberal political order pales if we consider that liberalism of choice does not exclude alternative liberal justifications as long as they too defend individual freedom: "A good cause can have more than one friend."[258] After all, as the political doctrine of a limited state, the protection of freedom lies at the core of all liberal variations—from the most substantively comprehensive and ambitious to the slimmest and most procedural versions. Elective affinity between value pluralism and liberalism does not preclude additional support from competing philosophical justifications. It implies, however, that value pluralism not only acts as a magnet to liberalism in a way that other justificatory approaches do not, but also that the self-perception of contemporary liberalism is better accounted for by value pluralism in an epoch where disagreement of beliefs is extensive, sustained and welcome. The elective affinity between pluralism and liberalism of choice indicates that the former makes a more effective case for the liberal cause in the age of disagreement of belief, not that it is the only basis of support.

Finally, political liberalism falls in an awkward trap. Assuming that reasonable disagreement indeed grows into a more encompassing justification for liberalism, this approach alarmingly yields a very parochial role for this political theory—exactly the opposite to its original aspiration. Political liberalism starting from the sociological fact

of reasonable pluralism has little to offer to other societies where disagreement of beliefs is not welcome in the first place.[259] So much for liberalism's inclusiveness.

The upshot is both a regrettable limitation and a regrettable overexpansion. On the one hand, political liberalism thus understood is ill prepared to address the societies that need it most—those where a minimum level of decent respect for human life and social interaction are not guaranteed. In this sense, political liberalism fails to fulfill its chief role in great parts of the globe. The true target of liberalism—to avoid blatant and arbitrary cruelty on human lives and guarantee a minimum basis for social cooperation—slips through its fingers. Instead, political liberalism turns inwards and mingles with political and moral problems that are actually beyond its declared primary goal. Political liberalism starts off with attention to the search for terms of peaceful cooperation but slips into the pursuit and accomplishment of the good Kantian life. Political liberalism incorporates in its justificatory platform lifelong controversial issues that, granted the fact of reasonable pluralism, should be left open as part of the political process in the context of any legitimate regime.

Rawls and Larmore argue that value pluralism is a too narrow and exclusive doctrine to work as a justificatory basis for a liberal political order. Ultimately, it is the liberalism of choice that in demanding a much slimmer intervention of moral into political theory incorporates fewer controversial issues as elements in its justificatory approach and achieves widespread applicability. As a result, most of the weighty and long opened moral problems that concern the thriving of political communities become fodder of a political process that can boast a minimum moral decency for human beings granted by the limits of liberalism of choice. Measured against a standard of inclusiveness and degree of controversy, liberalism of choice displays an important advantage over political liberalism: it requires much less intrusion of moral theory in the foundations of a liberal order.

The suggestion of this chapter, however, is that the relationship between value pluralism and liberalism is one of elective affinity, not foundational justification. The elective affinity approach suggests, unlike the foundational one, that there are no exhaustive reasons for a political order captured nicely in the expression that "A good cause can have more than one friend." This means in turn that the problem of legitimacy can never be solved from an exclusive moral perspective.

Rawls realized that given the fact of pluralism moral and political theory needed to part ways to certain extent, and that this would have an impact on the justificatory reasons to liberalism, an awareness that is built in a troubled fashion in the dual justificatory approach in *Political Liberalism*—the combination of the "original position" and the "overlapping consensus." The former still represents a strong case of justification that derives a political order from exhaustive moral premises; the latter is a normative effort to make room for the existence of pluralism. Yet, this is an unsuccessful attempt that wavers between acknowledging the fact of pluralism and overwriting it. I will pursue this point further in Chapter Five.

If justification in political theory involves exhaustive normative reasons in support of a legitimate political regime, one of the potential consequences of value pluralism given its intrinsic avoidance of a permanent ranking of values is that there is no such room for philosophical justification for a liberal order. Since there are no value standoffs, value pluralism may disrupt the foundational project in political theory with

the implication that problems of legitimacy cannot be accounted for an exclusive moral perspective and remain open-ended to political vicissitudes.

This chapter has defended Berlin against many of his critics. It has argued that choice, in his thought, has to be situated in the context of a pluralism that we have come to accept as a historical development. Choices, as sources of values, are a concomitant aspect of that pluralism; we cannot conceive one without the other. Berlin believes that liberalism can accommodate more options than other political regimes, and that therefore liberalism and pluralism, although not necessary companions, readjust and reinforce each other and prolong their continuance over time. Thus, this chapter argues, he offers a new way of justifying liberalism on grounds of a normative elective affinity with pluralism.

However, Berlin's elective affinity between pluralism and liberalism rests heavily on the idea of choice and this makes his position vulnerable to the multiple criticisms that have been lodged against the assumptions underlying the idea of individual sovereign choice. [260] Chapter Six argues, instead, that the elective affinity between pluralism and liberalism lies not with choice but with their mutual capacity to make the political order more inclusive.

## Chapter Four
## Rorty's Pragmatic Liberalism: A Reductionist View of the Political

Like John Rawls and Isaiah Berlin, Richard Rorty puts pluralism at the center of his pragmatic liberalism. His pragmatism, which articulates an "anti-representationalist" view of truth and beliefs, "anti-foundationalism" in knowledge, "anti-essentialism" of reason, and a Darwinian understanding of human beings stretches across his liberal political theory that embraces as well what he calls "philosophical pluralism."[261] Like Rawls and Berlin, Rorty also offers an arrangement between moral and political theory that accommodates pluralism or, as he would put it, that gives more room to freedom rather than truth as the goal of social organization. The Rortyan division of labor between "private irony" and "public solidarity" reflects a new organization between the moral, the political and the aesthetic that intends to be receptive to a pluralism that results from the historical encounter of the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement. This chapter argues that Rorty's pragmatic liberalism, although compelling on many other fronts, rests on a demarcation between the moral, the political and the aesthetic that is too problematical to offer a persuasive political alternative to the existence of pluralism. In this sense, although Rorty is the most anti-Enlightenment thinker examined in this dissertation, he does not offer a liberal alternative that can incorporate pluralism and stand beyond the Enlightenment worldview.

Rorty's innovative and audacious liberal political theory gives with one hand what it takes back with the other. Starting from a Darwinian idea that we are very clever animals capable of changing our own evolution, Rorty compellingly condemns foundationalist, essentialist, overly normative, and rationalist justifications of liberal democracy. Yet, his "aestheticized liberalism" reintroduces through the rear door views about the subject, politics, power and critique that are controversial in light of both the philosophical arguments that he intends to overcome and those he intends to endorse.

Rorty's political philosophy shows exceptional mastery of both the analytical and continental traditions, and his "poeticized liberal polity" reflects concern, respect and engagement with issues raised by both strands of thought.[262] On the one hand, he veers away from the foundationalist and representationalist ambitions of analytical philosophy by denying that the function of philosophy consists in providing argumentative reasons for evaluative hierarchies.[263] Pragmatism sees philosophy not as the form of thinking that "mirrors" or represents the world properly, that is, not as an encounter with the outside world independent of a linguistic chosen description, but as a way of "coping" with reality.

In turn, pragmatic political philosophy does not represent the inner nature of human beings. Thus, it should steer clear of the Kantian question "What is man?" and turn instead to the Darwinian one "What sort of world can we prepare for our greatgrandchildren?"[264] It should not provide "philosophical foundations" but only "philosophical articulation" of utopian visions.[265] Rorty's "postmodernist bourgeois liberalism" is the attempt to defend the institutions and practices of the "rich North Atlantic democracies" without using philosophical (Kantian) grounds.[266] Liberal democracy can now do without the philosophical principles of the Enlightenment that once gave rise to it. Instead, the pragmatist defense of liberal democracy rests on the historical awareness that the contingency of language and selfhood cohere better with its

institutions than with other available alternatives.[267] Under this view, literary criticism rather than rational philosophical argumentation does a better job in conjuring up the inspiring utopias that liberalism requires.

It will be argued that in applying a form of critique proper of the art sphere, i.e. literary criticism, to politics, Rorty neglects the pluralistic premise from which he begins and comes back to a process of unity that he initially attempts to disarticulate. The central concern with language that Rorty laboriously develops in other areas of philosophy actually works against his argument when it comes to political theory, and, consequently, "the political" never attains complete expression in his liberalism (Section II).

Beset with the problematization of the subject that is characteristic of the post-Nietzschean philosophy, Rorty suggests a defense of liberal democracy that requires an accommodation between the public and the private self, between our concern for solidarity and our engagement with ironic self-mastery. This dual division of the person, however, disguises more than it solves. While his aestheticized politics marks a turning point with respect to the foundational grounding of politics, ultimately it returns back to it. The aestheticized political project that Rorty advocates—an assumed acceptance of a liberal politics at which we should hardly look obliquely and askance, with an ironic twist—eschews more than answers the critical aftermath of post-Nietzschean philosophy. In privatizing the post-Nietzschean critique, Rorty travesties Foucault's understanding of the subject and political power, dodges rather than addresses the post-Nietzscehan critique of a political power that justifies itself on universal principles, and embraces (somewhat surreptitiously) an untainted conception of the person antecedent to the political relations of which she is part. In short, the arbitrary divide that Rorty draws between the private and public allows him to sweep aside a key strand of political critique into the private realm of self-making. This solution brings Rorty too close to the Enlightenment tradition that he sets to disarm (Section I). Moreover, the dual break up of the person sits uneasily with many other strands in Rorty's pragmatism (Section III).

Rorty argues that although objects are causally independent of our beliefs and desires, the truth about them is not. "We need to make a distinction between the claim that the world is out there and the claim that truth is out there."[268] Planets and atoms are not our creation and would still exist even if human beings did not; mental states do not determine any of the physical changes that occur in the universe. Truth, on the other hand, is an attribute of language, which is a human creation. "Truth cannot be out there—cannot exist independently of the human mind—because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false."[269] Yet, language, according to Rorty, does not represent the world of atoms and planets that exist independently of our mental dispositions. Lacking an independent test for the accuracy of these representations, it does not make sense to explain the relationship between nonlinguistic and linguistic items in terms of mirroring. Instead, language consists in "a set of tools rather than a set of representations," an exchange of marks and noises, carried out in order to achieve specific purposes.[270] In other words, language helps us cope with reality.[271] "Coping" becomes the intellectual hinge in Rorty's political theory as well. Political ideas are right insofar as they help us cope with our normative experience. The final section of this chapter (Section IV), examines how much critical bite remains in a pragmatist political

theory that rests so decisively on our "ethnocentric" condition to flesh out the idea of coping and yet excludes the disquieting voice of the private ironists.[272]

**I. The Privatization of Politics: Keeping Foucault at Arm's Length**

In one stroke, Rorty applauds and dismisses that strand in political theory critical of the Enlightenment understanding of politics and morality. Although he recognizes the value of the post-Nietzschean tradition, found in particular with Heidegger, Foucault, and Derrida's, which has misgivings about the liberal understanding of the person understood as a pristine subject untouched by political power, ultimately Rorty leaves Foucault's criticisms of liberal politics intact and unaddressed.[273] His proposed twofold unfolding of the self, who looms dividedly over the public and private realms, marks a return to the same view of an unimpaired subject that the Foucaultian tradition criticizes. Overall, despite Rorty's turn to post-Nietzschean critiques of liberal politics, he does not come to grips with one of their main enduring legacies, namely, that any kind of ruling—including universal, general and rational liberal principles—entails a form of domination that, while reinforcing legal impartiality and fundamental rights, also puts freedom at risk. The discussion below (Section III) expands on the viability and consistency of the binary account of the self that Rorty champions. This section addresses the shortcomings of Rorty's "aestheticized politics" in light of the thinkers he intends to confront, in particular, Foucault.

Rorty's political theory fashions the figure of the "liberal ironist," a split individual who exercises her ironic thinking in private and doles out solidarity and hope in public. On the one hand, the ironic person features "radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses"; she acknowledges that her present vocabulary can "neither underwrite nor dissolve these doubts"; and she does not "think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others."[274] The public persona, on the other hand, is a liberal in the sense that she deems cruelty the worst thing we can do. Rorty acknowledges the paramount importance of the "ironist" strand of political thought that has denounced the constraints imposed by liberal democracies absent in other forms of political organization. Ultimately, however, Rorty claims that the ironists complain too much. For the most part, Rorty's Foucault has no social hope, cultivates aloofness, and cynical detachment.[275] Indeed, Foucault and others do not gauge properly the decrease in pain and suffering achieved by liberalism, which compensates for those other limitations.[276] Rorty, together with Jurgen Habermas, argues against Foucault that the socialization of the modern individual in liberal democracies involves a gain of freedom greater than its loss. The Solomonic solution that Rorty envisages consists in acknowledging the significance of the ironist critical stance while making it a private affair. In his view, the ironists have a lot to say about the making of the self—a fundamental but private concern—but nothing to contribute to the political improvement of liberal democracy. Thus, Rorty declares that "[w] hereas Habermas sees the line of ironist thinking which runs from Hegel through Foucault and Derrida as destructive of social hope, I see this line of thought as largely irrelevant to public life and to political questions."[277]

Rorty holds that a consensus around liberal democracy is the result of a long historical process that originated with Plato and was followed up by the Enlightenment. This moral and political narrative based on rationality, universality, dualism and

essentialism has been an alluring and powerful story that has helped to cement the liberal and democratic beliefs characteristic of most contemporary industrialized societies. Rorty sees this consensus as a historical given that should be embraced and celebrated. However, this enlightened story about ourselves and our socialization, once the engine of modern progress, has now become a straightjacket for our moral and political development—it has outlived its usefulness.[278] The Enlightenment language does not help us "cope" anymore. The process has been stalled and we need to substitute this "final language" for one that unleashes once again the forcefulness of hope, which, according to Rorty, is the proper task of political philosophy.

Rorty's description of the current consensus around liberal politics as a gradual historical development that has brought about an enlargement and reinforcement of freedom on fundamental areas of human development is quite uncontroversial. More difficult to accept, however, is his proposal that political philosophy's main goal consists in the incitation to hope. To be sure, the normative, historical and empirical thinking involved in political theorizing aims at improving the process of socialization and acculturation along with its impact on individual freedom and growth—whatever meaning one attaches to these pivotal ideas. Yet, the evaluation of current social and political conditions for the sake of human improvement does not always come free of radical critique. Although more will be said later on in this chapter about the extent to which pragmatism has a critical bite as a political theory, it is important at this point to highlight the fact that Rorty's unconditional endorsement of hope as the main task of political philosophy relegates critique, and in particular radical critique, to a second level and it makes it too easy for him to readily shelve the case of the ironist theorists as a private affair. If, by definition, political affairs and political thinking hover around hope, those ironists who address issues about political despair and oppressing, stultifying forms of political normalization are a fortiori excluded from the political discussion. This gerrymandering of political and private terrains, however, silences rather than addresses head on the ironist view. It also robs them of their own share in the hope endeavor, for not all of the political theorists enlisted in the post-Nitzschean tradition indulge in views about political angst and melancholy for their own sake. Many of their radical critiques conceive of the re-accommodation of political terms with their own vision of political freedom and individual self-assertion in mind.

Tacitly admitting that much, Rorty reads Foucault and others as thinkers mainly concerned with self-creation, personal autonomy and authenticity—all of which speak to hope quite distinctly. However, Rorty's private/public contrivance aligns theorists according to the degree of hope that they attach to liberal democracy and the extent to which their thought bears political significance. Since, according to Rorty, Foucault's ideas runs afoul of liberalism and his project refers to personal self-enlargement, rather than political action, Rorty cages his and other post-Nietzschean theorists once and for all in the private sphere.

Rorty's private/public divide evokes, in loose parallel, Isaiah Berlin's distinction between positive and negative freedom.[279] For Berlin, the positive accounts of freedom that take us down and deep into the inner metaphysical processes of either self-abnegation, self-realization or self-rationalization do little to clarify the negative conception of freedom that refers to the outside realm and the constraints and impositions that take place in the political interactions among persons. Yet, even under this sharp,

unyielding conceptual distinction, Berlin does not go as far as to claim that the upshots of the internal ruminations concerning positive freedom are completely indifferent or inimical to the political process. He does hold that accounts of positive freedom are too equivocal and too private for profitable use in the understanding of political freedom but he does not shut these voices out of the political arena. Rorty, however, states this and more—he believes that the ironist critiques amount to no more than positive accounts of freedom that are only relevant to our private self-making and should have no incidence in the makings of liberal democracies. "[T]he desire to be autonomous is not relevant to the liberal's desire to avoid cruelty and pain," Rorty remarks.[280]

Anyone who endorses liberalism à la Shklar would partially agree with that statement—liberalism does not concern itself with moral projects of self-development. Yet, Rorty's claim comes across as an easy way to dispose of the haunting spectrum of Foucault and others whose works elaborate not only on enhancing ways of caring of the self but also on many forms of modern political suffering that Rorty also is eager to minimize.[281] Although Rorty rightly wants to sunder the moral project of achieving personal autonomy from liberalism's cause, Foucault does not make a right target in this regard, for he is not the private thinker concerned only with positive freedom that Rorty creates. Somewhere in the process of his construal, Rorty misses all the sources of political oppression that Foucault unravels. Rorty gestures only incidentally at these when he acknowledges that the ironist thinkers, in unmasking forms of suffering that have been otherwise neglected, do more than seek projects of self-enlargement, but for the overriding part, Rorty's Foucault is not in the business of understanding politics, and at any rate, his bleak and somber diagnosis about liberalism cannot and should not mesh with the hopeful project of enforcing liberal democracies.[282] Rorty celebrates the historicist and self-creative drive in Nietzsche, Heidegger and Foucault, but hives off their views on socialization on the grounds that those views are antithetical to us.

Vast trends of criticisms have challenged different aspects of Foucault's work, and it is outside the scope of this section to settle those disputes. Instead, the argument focuses on Rorty's description of Foucault as a thinker concerned with private self-making, on his endorsement of Vincent Descombes's pronouncement that Foucault indulges in the Nietzschean project of personal enhancement that begets, if anything, an anarchist politics.[283] Rorty argues that Foucault's politics acts as an instrument of private moral concerns about radical self-making and that, for that reason, it has dismaying results.[284] The argument in this section takes issue with Rorty's command to "*[p]rivatize* the Nietzschean-Sartrean-Foucaultian attempt at authenticity and purity, in order to prevent yourself from slipping into a political attitude which will lead you to think that there is some social goal more important than avoiding cruelty."[285] It follows Nancy Fraser's lead when she claims that "the social movements of the last hundred or so years have taught us to see the power-laden and therefore political character of interactions which classical liberalism considered private…Marxist theory, have taught us that the economic is political…feminist theory, have taught us that the domestic and the personal are political…a whole range of New Left social movements, as illuminated by Gramscian, Foucaultian and…Althusserian theory, have taught us that the cultural, the medical, the educational…is political."[286]

The political reach of Foucault's work is sweeping, if anything too sweeping. One cannot help wondering how Rorty marshals Foucault's political concerns to turn him into

an ironist thinker only perturbed by the enhancement of personal authenticity. Foucault's analysis of political phenomena is imbibed in the Marxist teaching that behind the formal masquerade of rights, the working of power—economic or political—reveals its own logic of oppression or exploitation. For instance, Foucault examines the legal system—a central political contrivance of modern times—and claims that the less repressive, legally constrained, subdued and humanizing the legal framework of punishment has become on the surface, the more productive, normalizing, controlling and disciplinary it has become beneath the surface. And the more we enforce, perpetuate and exclusively focus on the legal apparatus that regulates "normalizing detention," the more unnoticed goes the shaping of the modern individual's inner motivations based on continuous and efficient surveillance.[287] The sustained humanist reform in criminal law hides an intrusive psychological control over the "soul" and body, and the overriding attention to the legal system that protects the modern individual as a bearer of rights refracts our understanding of how that subject comes to be shaped as a political actor. The process of normalization of "disciplinary society" takes place despite and in virtue of the system of formal equality that organizes it. "Bio-power" expands itself via the control of both populations and the human body neutralizing the equality under the law by applying disciplinary technologies that unevenly affect some more than others.[288] Rorty tries to hide the sun with his hands when he glosses over these and other political overtones of Foucault's work.

Against Marx and Weber, Foucault de-institutionalizes power relations. His disciplinary society directs attention to a kind of power—a ramified and polymorphous web of transmitters of technical knowledge—that dodges the visibility of institutionalization. The "micro-management" of punishment silently shapes "docile bodies," which in turn produces an emaciated body politic.[289] Foucault does not examine the body or the soul in isolation but rather stresses the invisibility of the political power that constructs them. The same invisibility that is at work in the system of confession that purportedly confronts powers by speaking the truth (the "repressive hypothesis") equally retrofits bio-power with information that reinforces the application of the disciplinary technologies.[290] In this sense, Foucault enlists an important tradition in political thought, trailblazers who identified emerging social actors of their times whose functioning, partially hidden, partially in the open, reveal more about power and domination than meets the eye—capital for Marx, the social for Mill and Tocqueville, bureaucracy for Weber, and bio-power for Foucault.

None of this is terribly political for Rorty, presumably because it remains unconnected to the sources of suffering, cruelty and pain delimited by the Millian harm principle that pragmatist liberals care about. Rorty argues that liberal democracies contain the mechanism for their own improvement: a free press, free universities and enlightened public opinion that determine sources and subjects of suffering.[291] Yet, this artificial mapping out of the political leaves the Foucaultian concerns intact since, on the Foucaultian account, all of this is smoke and mirrors. Rorty's defense of liberalism congeals an understanding of the dynamics of political power that is not up for discussion. Power is still seen as repressive, coercive state violence that circulates from the top down only limited by a citizenry endowed with fundamental rights, which participates in systems of knowledge and truth that speak to power. No source of suffering that results from alternative accounts of political power that challenges the "juridico-discursive view" bears, for that reason, public significance.[292]

In trying to recover liberalism as a political project without moral foundations, Rorty ends up silencing too much that remains political all the way down. The ostracism of alternative views of political power, wrongly disguised as projects of personal autonomy, is a far-fetched solution to a real problem—the moralization of liberal politics. That liberalism should not concern itself with comprehensive projects of moral fulfillment does not imply that the entire political discussion should be shrunk solely to concerns encircled by the Millian principle. By staking out the entire political sphere within the boundaries of liberal politics, Rorty entrenches forms of suffering that cannot be detected with liberal tools. For the harm principle stands, in some regards, as the target of a major critical strand of thought that stretches from Nietzsche to Marx to Weber to Foucault, namely, that a political order that rests on universal, rational principles entails nonetheless a form of domination that cannot be explained by resorting to those general reasons that contribute to the reproduction of that order. Modern forms of power are based on reasons that in virtue of their universal and impartial character hide the form of domination that they come to limit and justify in the first place. Pace Kant, universal reasons, they claim, do not wash away domination. Foucault contributes to this position by emphasizing the variegated forms of rational, general techniques that make disciplinary society effective. For instance, the general application of "hierarchical observation," "normalizing judgment," and "the examination" contribute to the rationalization, compartmentalization and objectification of places, actions, and knowledge that ultimately disarm the individual, a phenomenon that cannot be properly understood only by reference to the objectifiying order that they arrange.[293] Once Rorty delimits the political by recourse to cruelty defined in terms of the harm principle, then he cannot disavow the public voice of those who challenge that conception of cruelty.

Rorty wavers between the claim that Foucault is a private thinker concerned with problems of self-realization and the claim that Foucault *should* be a private, ironist thinker involved only with personal self-making: "I wish that Foucault had been more willing to *separate* his two roles—more willing to separate his moral identity as a citizen from his search of autonomy…We should not try to find a societal counterpart to the desire for autonomy."[294] The problem, Rorty holds, lies on Foucault's attempt to mold politics in accordance with the private model of self-overcoming and self-invention. This reading, however, implies that Foucault could even conceive an "autonomous" individual detached from the political power that shapes her subjectivity. Rorty holds that despite Foucault's awareness that "the self, the human subject, is simply whatever acculturation makes of it, he still thinks in terms of something deep within human beings, which is deformed by acculturation."[295] Yet, the disarming of a logic of domination invisible to the liberal eye and the subsequent political reformulations for the sake of a freer society that Foucault propounds do not presuppose an ideal, politically untouched, autonomous individual whose starting point is ex nihilo self-creation.

Under this description, Foucault conceives of the individual detached from a political context that always falls short of fulfilling her self-creative powers. That Foucault, like Weber, takes note that any form of political organization entails forms of domination, does not mean that he embraces an account of the subject independent of the political logic, superior to it and always corroded ex post by the political process. Rorty derives an overshadowing Foucaultian anarchism propelled by an urge for individual self-realization from misleading premises. He believes that Foucault cuts loose the

individual from the political process—an individual ignited by an overweening moral urge for self-creation who thus cannot properly partake in social and political bonds that require the obedience to reciprocal moral obligations. Only if one assumes that starting point, a self-absorbed individual preoccupied by her self-making independently and against the political order that she inhabits, does the dismal anarchist of Foucaultian politics follow.[296] Otherwise, as Rorty himself recognizes: "[a] sense of human subjectivity as a centerless bundle of contingencies, of the sort which both Foucault and Dewey share with Nietzsche, is compatible with *any* sort of politics, *including* liberal politics."[297]

In discussing the modern condition, Foucault defines the legacy of the Enlightenment as a "philosophical ethos" that splinters into two related dimensions: the work on oneself and the response to one's time.[298] The former takes a dandyish, existentialist approach to self-fashioning; the latter urges for a vigilant, critical, non-transcendental, contingent, underdetermined and genealogical attitude to what we experience as unbearable in our current situation.[299] I have been arguing that Rorty sidelines Foucault's political dimension of his assessment of the shaping of modern subjectivity by wrongly severing these two strands as if one could make sense of Foucault's thought by focusing on the Baudelairean experiment to the exclusion of the critical, ineluctably political aspect.

Foucault agrees with Kant that modernity offers us the possibility to leave behind immaturity, understood as the incapacity to rely on our own understanding to guide our actions. For both, Kant and Foucault, Enlightenment is a "way out" of immaturity.[300] They part company, however, in their understanding of the role, scope and conditions of possibility of reason. According to Foucault, Kant liberates reason from the metaphysical ropes but saddles it again with an epistemological burden. Foucault, instead, believes that maturity consists in the recognition that reason cannot ground itself on universal, ahistorical principles. Maturity is an ethos, an ironic, critical attitude towards our current condition (which in Foucault's work should be always read as a political condition) that opens up new forms of action and expression. Reason can justify itself only in a nonessentialist, contingent way. In this sense, Foucault turns interpretations of Nietzsche upside-down. From this perspective, Nietzsche erupts as the interpreter who takes the Enlightenment to its right consummation rather than as its more acerbic detractor. If modernity is understood as a self-assertive, affirmative, creative, ironic, joyful attitude the contingency of which works as the only stratum on which reason can stand by itself, then Nietzsche as the exponent of the "transvaluation of values" becomes the voice who understood modernity better than anyone else. It does not follow from this, however, that Foucault endorses Nietzschean politics. The genealogical examination of the current social condition is an open-ended invitation to break with traditional forms of political suffering that does not necessarily strike the lugubrious chord that Rorty suggests.[301] Indeed, in terms of the degree of hope and joyfulness, Foucault's Baudelarian, aestheticized attitude, as will become clear shortly, does not differ that drastically from Rorty's own political aesthete. If Foucault is not a thinker who concerns himself only with privatized self-creation, he is not necessarily the bleak, anarchist theorist that Rorty portrays him.

As with Rawls, who also insists in portraying a Janus-faced citizen, Rorty cannot adhere to this split personality without challenging some of his own beliefs. Rorty holds

that the glue holding liberal society is a "consensus that the point of social organization is to let everybody have a chance at self-creation."[302] This stern divide—the public as the arena where suffering is minimized and the private as the domain of self-invention—presupposes, against Rorty's heartfelt beliefs and against everything that Foucault has argued for, that the individual stands independently of politics, a private self untarnished and untouched by political struggle, and that our understanding of self-creation holds no relation with the political organization of society. This is an untoward upshot for a philosopher who respects the post-Nitetzschean tradition so highly.

One thing is to claim that *liberalism* concerns itself with the limitation of state power to prevent basic forms of suffering. That is, that liberalism should not engage with discussions about the flourishing of the person, autonomy, and positive freedom. Another thing, however, is to reduce the entire political realm that expands far beyond the enforcement of fundamental rights, only to liberal vocabulary. Rorty rightly tries to rescue liberalism by detaching it from comprehensive versions loaded with moral foundations. He ties the liberal tradition to its historical origins and aligns it with Shklar's minimalist account. However, Rorty ultimately defends a reductionist view by making the political coextensive with the boundaries of liberalism. Both strategies—the expansive or comprehensive and the reductive one—end up characterizing the political merely as a struggle of rights. If the comprehensive accounts of liberalism make sense of political power from the perspective of personal autonomy, inner faculties of the self, and moral flourishing that work as the proper grounds for fundamental rights, the reductive account that Rorty offers reduces political argument also to a legal discussion that, although not grounded in moral foundations, is divested of the political struggle by compressing all political considerations that do not see eye-to-eye with the harm principle into the private forum. As Rorty puts it: "In a liberal society, our public dealings with our fellow citizens are not *supposed* to be Romantic or inventive; they are supposed to have the routine intelligibility of the marketplace or the courtroom."[303]

This approach introduces two different kinds of problem in Rorty's political thought. On the one hand, Rorty showcases a political arena that, while void of moral philosophical foundations, remains a political carcass void of politics and full of legal, aesthetic, and cultural criticism. Section II addresses this issue. On the other hand, the privatization of politics challenges from within one of the fundamental thoughts that runs throughout all of Rorty's writings, namely, that the realm of possibility in the human condition can never be exhausted or cast in bronze. The permanent privatization of thinkers whose main task is to call into question the realm of possibility in the process of socialization and acculturation goes against Rorty's own belief and casts doubt on the viability of his project. For, as he claims, "the realm of possibility is not something with fixed limits; rather, it expands continually, as ingenious new redescriptions suggest even more ingenious re-redescriptions. Every purported glimpse of the boundaries of this realm is in fact an expansion of those boundaries."[304] Section III of this chapter examines the latter problem.

**II. Aestheticized Liberal Politics: Turning Weber on His Head**

Rorty follows Max Weber's steps, without quite acknowledging so, in reading the language of modernity as one where instrumental rationality reigns and freedom and values wilt. Rorty recasts this idea by linking the Enlightenment, foundationalist

justification of liberal democracy with the scientific project. It is against this background that Rorty's turn towards art and, in particular, literature as the right mode of political theorizing acquires full meaning. If Weber wagers on the charismatic leader as the actor who in resorting to value rationality could breach the chain of predetermined goals and become a potential gateway to freedom, Rorty summons literary characters as carriers of inspiration and hope who could inject new values in the political sphere. Ultimately, however, Rorty turns Weber on his head and fashions a political arena denuded of politics.[305] Rorty's "poeticized politics" attempts to redress the Weberian foreboding about the decline of freedom in modernity but instead passes over it by propounding an aestheticism of politics that eschews the problem that Weber foresaw.

Rorty's call for the poetization of politics in contemporary societies intends to offset the yearning for rationality, understood as the abidance to antecedently settled criteria for success.[306] The moral foundational principles of liberalism have been acted as fetters to our political imagination: "We need a redescription of liberalism," Rorty urges "as the hope that culture as a whole can be 'poeticized' rather than as the Enlightenment hope that it can be 'rationalized' or 'scientized.'"[307] He calls for a redescription of our polity that avoids immuring it within atemporal, universal, rational principles. The insistence of the foundationalist project on building an impartial vantage-point, "the God's eye point of view," has been accompanied by a dualist perspective that assumes that moral values can be discovered if one abides by the correct principles, as well as by a an essentialist understanding of human nature purportedly captured by those same universal standards of action.[308] Acting in accordance to those principles has not consummated but emaciated our freedom, Rorty argues, and he urges us to slough off this characterization of ourselves and replace it by one that puts the poet rather than the true-seeker on center stage.

Rorty reveals a twofold attitude towards the process of secularization: he wants secularization along with de-divinized enchantment. On the one hand, his poeticized culture, his fight against method, his bemoaning of rationality understood as antecedently determined methods for action, his inclination towards humanities, and his emphasis on freedom rather than truth as the regulative social goal indicate that his main concern is to revamp freedom in a rule-following culture with the injection of values triggered by literary imagination. "An ideal liberal society," Rorty holds, "is one which has no purpose except freedom."[309] We need to drop the scientized project of the Enlightenment and envision a political theory that instills hope and inspiration. For him, a liberal utopia is a "*poeticized* culture."[310] In this sense, novels and utopias serve this purpose well as they expand our imagination and inculcate values, rather than scientific rationality, as part of civic education. As Rorty puts it, "reason can only follow paths that the imagination has broken."[311]

Rorty lists three ways in which we can add a new belief to our previous web of beliefs: perception, inference and metaphor. If perception and inference leave our language unchanged ("[t]hey alter the truth-values of sentences, but not our repertoire of sentences"), metaphors change language, and the realm of possibilities. "A metaphor is…a voice from outside logical space, rather than an empirical filling-up of a portion of that space, or a logical-philosophical clarification of the structure that space. It is a call to change one's language and one's life, rather than a proposal about how to systematize either."[312] Art and its metaphors help navigate the arid process of secularization by

breathing hope, inspiration, and sympathy into a principled world. It awakens ends in a world of means. In clear endorsement of Dewey's position, Rorty states that he "shares the typically Romantic idea that the artist's activity is less ancillary and more autonomous than anyone else's, that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world, the proper successors to priests and sages."[313] In short, the poet opens for Rorty what the charismatic leader promises for Weber—the possibility of freedom.

On the other hand, Rorty wants to further the process of secularization that Weber warned us about. Indeed, Rorty believes that his democratic utopia is possible only under conditions of secularization: "[l]ike the rise of large market economies, the increase in literacy, the proliferation of artistic genres, and the insouciant pluralism of contemporary culture," the philosophical superficiality and light-mindedness aestheticism that he promotes, "helps along the disenchantment of the world. It helps make the world's inhabitants more pragmatic, more tolerant, more liberal, more receptive to the appeal of instrumental rationality."[314] This call for instrumental rationality misleadingly suggests that Rorty hankers for fewer values, more means-to-end rationality, and more method when instead he is actually invoking the aesthetic judgment as the right kind of social reasoning under modern conditions of secularization: "I should argue that in recent history of liberal societies, the willingness to view matters aesthetically…has been an important vehicle of moral progress."[315] Hence, Rorty embraces the process of secularization insofar as we can neutralize the accompanying religious disenchantment with a light-minded, joyful, joshing attitude regarding our moral and political commitments. Literary criticism, under this view, acquires preeminence within the high culture of democracies and gradually occupies the "cultural role once claimed (successively) by religion, science, and philosophy."[316]

Rorty's cultural approach to politics (and philosophy) is not without virtue. He makes an eloquent case for the force of storytelling as a powerful instrument for social change. Literature, art, and movies feature strengths and advantages absent in arid, abstract, rationalized theorizing. They reach out to the general public, they incite and mobilize, they stir up inspiration and awaken empathetic imagination, they articulate in a moving, engrossing way, pressing social problems, they enter the minds via emotions but call upon reason, oftentimes they arouse action, and, finally, they invent new languages and disrupt and expand the current conditions of expression and self-understanding. Aware of these virtues, Rorty summons the poets that Plato expelled; his cultural criticism is an ode to the thinking of Homer but also Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, and beyond them Twain, Shakespeare, Yates, Nabokov, Whitman, Orwell, Dickens and thousands of other writers, filmmakers, and poets. Rorty's "poeticized political philosophy" reminds us that, to name but one example among thousands, Dante's *Divine Comedy* had a massive impact not only on the intellectuals of his time but also on poets, blacksmiths, peasants, and politicians, and on all the ensuing generations years down the road. It is a comedy, a literary piece, with theological, moral and political significance that was chanted by agricultural workers and read by erudite scholars and politicians alike and helped shape the moral worldviews of generations. Rorty calls our attention to the fact that, again, to name one example among many, Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird" might be one of the most widely read books in American schools and, together with Robert Mulligan's film version, probably one of the most important vehicles of social awareness about segregation in America.

Rorty's literary utopia rests on a sentimentalist approach to human experience. He opposes the Platonic/Kantian tradition not only in deflating questions about essence and the transcultural nature of human beings, but also in decentering the importance of rationality. Rorty substitutes knowledge by sentiment.[317] His utopian liberalism seeks to develop a sympathetic feeling, an imaginative empathy grown out of novels and storytelling: "By 'sympathy' I mean the sort of reactions Athenians had more of after seeing Aeschylus's *The Persians* than before, the sort that whites in the United States had more of after reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin* than before, the sort we have more of after watching television programs about the genocide in Bosnia."[318] Rorty's Humean approach does a remarkable job in battling the idea that "reason is 'stronger' than sentiment, that only an insistence on the unconditionality of moral obligation has the power to change human beings for the better."[319]

Yet, for all its virtues, some problems and unaccounted issues persist under Rorty's proposal of cultural criticism as political critique. First, the idea that literary criticism is all that we need in highly complex democracies is far-fetched. For it is difficult to come to terms with the idea that a utopian narrative of "poets" and "revolutionaries" would offset the deeply entrenched political and economic struggles of advanced industrialized societies. The "radically poetic character of individual lives," Rorty holds, is the background against which agreement on political issues should be achieved.[320] But although inspiration could be a hugely important component of the public discourse in liberal democracies, it cannot exhaust it. Literature is always a piece of art, not a political manifesto or a political explanation or a normative appreciation of difficult dilemmas. "Solidarity" makes a fine general ideal to orient the body politics, but cannot by itself organize social action in the midst of highly bureaucratized, internationalized, corporatized, and technologized mass societies.[321] The idea that political struggles in contemporary democracies can be appeased by citizens transposing into various characters and narratives of self-enlargement sounds unrealistic. Pragmatist liberal political theory becomes a proxy for an inspirational novel that deflates rather than recreates politics. In Rorty's ideal liberal community, the political is diluted in literary narratives and politics ends up vanishing as an inconspicuous activity.

Our political sphere, Rorty argues, overflows with theory—we have too much of that already. To appreciate the significance of problems such as the reluctance of the American middle class to pay their taxes to revert the illiteracy of black poor population or the CIA support to exploitative oligarchies in LA, we do not need more theory.[322] Philosophy should now turn to utopias, inspiration, and redescriptions that motivate action and social change. The problem, however, may not lie so much with theoretical thinking per se but with the kind of theory involved in the understanding of those political problems. If foundational moral philosophy will not do the work, literary criticism by itself would not do it either, whereas social theory, political science and historical awareness may contribute to their command.[323]

Charles Guignon and David Hiley have suggested that we read Rorty's moral and political theory as writings that make explicit "the moral and social commitments that have motivated his critique of epistemology-centred philosophy from the outset."[324] The argument advanced here, on the contrary, presupposes the reverse path, that is, that Rorty's views on theories of truth, philosophy of language and mind, and epistemology spill over into his political theory. The priority that literary language enjoys in his

pragmatist liberalism springs from his antecedent views on these other areas of philosophy. In the attempt to deflate reason and rehabilitate sentiment and mantle the political with meaning and values, Rorty goes too far in relying on literary language as the paramount tool to make sense of *all* forms of social action. This turns to be the second drawback of his aesthetic political theory.

Rorty portrays humans as fully interpretative beings, rejects the dualist divide between reality and mind, challenges the representational account of the world and asserts that we cannot get ahead of our linguistic interpretation of reality.[325] When it comes to politics, the predominance of language does not lag behind: politics, for him, becomes one more narrative among a sea of narratives. Rorty moves from a plausible statement that "[n]othing can serve as a criticism of a person save another person, or of a culture save an alternative culture—for person and cultures are, for us, incarnated vocabularies" to the belief that literary language provides the adequate tools to cast our political selves.[326] In a roundabout way, Rorty makes the same mistakes for which he criticizes realist philosophers, who attach priority to the physical science over other kinds of language, except that Rorty gives precedence to literary vocabulary over other forms of languages. Although Rorty wants to avoid, rightly to my mind, the idea "that philosophical reflection has a natural starting point—that one of its subareas is, in some natural order of justification, prior to the others,"[327] he, like Heidegger and Derrida before him, reifies language by making literature the arch-perspective from which we apprehend the world, in this case, our political experience. [328]

Rorty wavers uneasily between deconstruction and synthesis. At the deconstructive end we find a call against foundations, a defense of numerous vocabularies, a description of the self as a centerless web of beliefs and desires, a divided personality between public and private, and the idea that reality as social construction renders the idea of truth independent of the social terms in which we express it meaningless. At the unification end we find that literary language can act as the only vocabulary in which we couch all forms of social interactions. In defending both positions, Rorty moves from disruption to unification in one stroke.

Important arguments have been raised about the untenability of a political theory that does not give proper room to guiding general principles as the justificatory basis for social action.[329] Jean Elshtain, in particular, emphasizes how the rescuers who saved Jewish lives during the Second World War couched in general moral principles the reasons that motivated their actions. She also discusses in passing the case of the Argentine "Madres de plaza de Mayo," as an additional example of how human rights ideals oriented their resistance.[330] The latter case, however, lends itself to pinpoint not so much the strength of general moral principles in political theory but the lacuna of another aspect in Rorty's work, namely, the absence of an account of the political. This, indeed, is the third shortcoming of Rorty's political-thinking-as-literary-criticism, that is, that the political never makes its way to his poeticized polity.

Although some of the self-narratives of Madres de Plaza de Mayo currently invoke the language of human rights (especially, "Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo-Línea Fundadora," a spin-off from *Madres* after an internal rift in 1986), most of them did not do it at its inception and do not do it now. At the beginning, the story of *Madres* was almost a private event. Their search was a personal hunt to recover one of the most intimate and meaningful relationships that a person can develop in a lifetime. They were

bonded by a profound empathy among mothers looking for missing sons and daughters. In this sense, Rorty is right: this act of justice can be recast in rather parochial, even familial terms of loyalty, and their motivation for justice was as strong as the relationship with the victims close.[331] As many years later Hebe de Bonafini (the most paradigmatic and nowadays most radicalized of all *Madres*) said: "*Madres* has socialized maternity, we are everyone's mothers." As time passed, however, the movement that begun as a private case of entrenched, private loyalty turned into a political movement of resistance. "Aparición con vida" was the cry of mothers in despair turned into political actors against a military state that was implementing savage terrorist techniques over its citizenry.

Today, much of the language that characterizes the discourse of an important strand within *Madres* is neither private nor principled nor literary but strictly political. Some of them understand their fight as one of permanent revolution and political opposition, and define themselves as enemies of a political establishment that they see as repressive and economically exploitative. Their fight usually displays a strong confrontational dimension although they make for an active and important political actor who contributes to the recovery of an endangered political memory by fighting to strike down amnesty laws. They are also the main responsible persons for the retrieval of the grandchildren of their missing children. They own a university ("University of Struggle and Resistance"), a press and a radio station, they keep the "Marchas de la resistencia" active, and they take stance on many of the current political problems. Yet, their history, their bodies, their white headscarf, their public presence, and their voice represent and are the product of a historical political struggle of opposition. They do not speak strictly morality or literary utopias; they speak politically which for them (as for most other political actors) involves confrontation—a confrontation that in virtue of being shaped by force is only tangentially and partially receptive to moral and literary reasoning.

It is this language that one sees missing in Rorty's poeticized polity. For all that Rorty prioritizes literary criticism and remonstrates against the foundationalist projects of politics, he still reads the political as a subtype of the moral. The literary language that he invokes to understand the political is as moralized as it is aestheticized. He maps out the political as a problem between a concern with *morality* as social justice and a concern with *morality* as ethics of the self. For Rorty, human beings are torn between the democratic moral identity that buttresses our relations with others, and the moral search for private autonomy that can strain those social ties.[332] The problem of the political boils down to an opposition between moral obligations to other human beings and the moral obligation to become who you are.[333] This invites the same moralized understanding of politics against which initially he seems to inveigh. Nowhere in this description does the political stand by itself. It is, instead, diluted in a moral and aestheticized perspective. Rorty oscillates between urging to subsume philosophy to politics and wanting to make philosophy a branch of literature.[334] The predominance of the latter view puts his literary polity too close to morality again and gets the account of the political relationship off on the wrong foot.

In trying to detach himself from comprehensive liberalism, Rorty falls back again, despite himself, to its same logic. For if comprehensive liberalism relies on moral foundations and a moralized conception of the person as the right lenses to understand the political, Rorty resorts to literature and utopia as the proper narratives to make sense of politics. Neither project accounts for the political in its own light. Both stretch a single

criterion of reasoning—moral or literary or a mixture of both—across other forms of social action.

Importing the criterion from one form of action to another neglects one of Weber's central teachings about modernity—that no excluding standard can meaningfully span over the fragmentation of competing value spheres.[335] Each life-sphere (religion, science, politics, economy, sexuality and art) harbors its own ultimate ends, value-commitments and criteria. This means that actions across value-spheres remain incommensurable. Neither morality nor literature nor economics enjoys the prerogative of translating political action. Rorty, however, aspires to find one form of discourse (literary criticism) as the social bond in modern democracies. The idea that the latter could coalesce the political and acts as a fulcrum between the private and public realms reintroduces back again the project of complete, unitary vision in political philosophy that Rorty rejects. This discloses the permanent tension in Rorty's political work begotten by his hankering for both secularization and enchantment; naturalism and anti-scientism.[336]

Despite Rorty's endorsement to a plurality of ways of life that cannot be ranked once and for all by one single criterion or make commensurable to one another, he also claims that all valuable ways of life must be couched in one single vocabulary—a liberal aestheticism that deflates any form of contestation that speaks a different language. In concluding that one single vocabulary applies equally well to art, morality and politics, Rorty jettisons along the road a premise that he initially defends—the existence of incommensurable values and the truth of pluralism—and brings back in through the rear door one philosophical aspiration that he wants to disarticulate—the Platonic unity.[337]

In the attempt to disarm the foundational project that clouds politics with morality, Rorty turns more private, and more aesthetic. He addresses the Foucaultian thematic of power, which is political, by privatizing it, and the Weberian problem of rationalization, which is political as well, by poeticizing politics. In searching for freedom and values under conditions of secularization, Rorty ends up conjuring an aestheticized account of politics. Starting from Weber's warning of rationalization that sits atop a deep-seated understanding of the political as the domain of interactions that presuppose the monopoly of legitimate coercive power as a last resort, Rorty ends up recreating an utopian political community that builds upon literature as its main source of insight and vision. Whereas Weber problematizes the extinction of freedom and democratic politics within the confines of capitalist societies and articulates dim prospects of reversion that stay acutely aware of the pervasiveness of political domination, Rorty begins with a political concern and fantasizes with a liberal utopia the citizens of which become more literati than political actors.

**III. Dualism Back Again: Private vs. Public Self**

Rorty's pragmatic approach intends to disarticulate the essentialist perspective that in his view has mined the history of philosophy. Yet, despite its anti-dualism and anti-essentialism, Rorty's political theory rests on an untenable dualistic divide between the public and the private person.[338] This internal partition of the self does not chime with the overall tone of his anti-compartmentalizing philosophy, nor does it sit well with his account of the person as a centerless web of beliefs and desires.

"My defense," says Rorty, "turns on making a firm distinction between the private and the public."[339] The divide between the ironic private self and the public self inclined to solidarity reverts, in Rorty's view, the foundational project initiated by Plato that provides philosophical, exhaustive reasons for a political order that cultivates a harmonious united self. Plato, and all those who follow him in this project, was wrong in articulating a theoretical unity out of two distinctly oriented sides. According to Rorty, there is no single vision that holds these two views together: "The closest we will come to joining these two quests is to see the aim of a just and free society as letting its citizens be as privatistic, 'irrationalist,' and aestheticist as they please so long as they do it on their own time—causing no harm to others and using no resources needed by those less advantaged."[340] The Platonic project of unity between the private and public self entails, according to Rorty, the stipulation of a common and perennial human nature. On the contrary, his liberal ironist, who deems cruelty as the worst thing we can do, takes a nominalist and historicist view about her central beliefs that avoids the essentialist picture.[341] Rorty's project drops the ambition to bring the public and private together under one single theory, it sees these two dimensions of human beings as incommensurable and yet attributes to both equal significance.

The first chapter of this dissertation has argued, among other points, that Rawls's divide between the public and private does not succeed for it contrives an internal arrangement of beliefs, desires and emotions that does not correspond with how partial and impartial considerations inform, interact and entangle with each other in normal life. For the same reasons, Rorty's proposal cannot carry the day. The problem does not turn only on whether the cohesiveness of our beliefs is at all possible under this view, that is, whether one could live as a Millian during the day and as a Nietzschean at night.[342] The problem lies as well with the characterization of how our beliefs interact with each other, as if we proceeded to think along columns, one public and one private, one creative and one nominalist, one existentialist and one skeptic, which never mix.

No matter how Rorty characterizes essentialism—at times, he constructs it as the Platonic drive to cast about for a harmonious union of the self, at others, he identifies the essentialist view with the erection of dualist divisions such as appearance/reality, mind/body, language/fact, essence/accident—he always enlists himself in the antiessentialist camp.[343] Yet, it is unclear how the unyielding division between private and public ways of thinking, desiring, and expressing ourselves falls so apart from the essentialist distinctions that Rorty abhors. After all, his uncompromising unfolding of the self does not find historical, anthropological or empirical support. That Rorty looks for accommodation, not synthesis, does not get him off the hook if the accommodation that he defends is contrived, imposed, indelible and compartmentalizing, all of which makes it as essentialist as the cohesive view.[344]

Embracing the split personality exposes Rorty's political theory to internal tensions as some important aspects of his thought do not dovetail well with the splintered view of the subject. For instance, Rorty defends, on the one hand, the ironist's take (especially Derrida's and the late Heidegger's) for its relentless insistence that current conditions and narratives never exhaust the realm of possibilities: "the realm of possibility expands whenever a new vocabulary is invented, so that to find 'conditions of possibility' would require us to envisage all such inventions before their occurrence."[345] Rorty believes that all human beings "carry about a set of words which they employ to

justify their actions, their beliefs, and their lives," which he calls a "final vocabulary," in the sense that they are the ultimate resource of justification.[346] The latter cannot itself be justified, so, as noted above in Section I, the ironist expresses radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses.

Yet, Rorty does settle with a final vocabulary—the irrevocable description of the double-headed persona. Rorty's entire political theory depends on an unalterable portrayal of human beings as cleaved by a deep internal chasm that defines our normative and emotional demeanor, which forecloses alternative redescriptions of our condition and possibilities. In other words, the specious divide between public solidarity and private irony within us sounds too much like the kind of ossified vocabulary that Rorty unsparingly criticizes and tries to avoid at each turn. The ironist thinkers understand the idea of expanding the realm of possibilities as something unconstrained. Rorty, however, determines upper handedly that they open up new possibilities only in the private realm, "possibilities only incidentally and contingently relevant to liberal social hope," when indeed nothing in the ironist thought impedes it from disrupting the artificial boundary between the public and the private that Rorty fabricates.[347]

An ossified vocabulary rears its ugly head again in the assumed priority that Rorty attaches to liberal democracy over our private aspirations. Rorty argues that solidarity makes up only for the public side of our lives and that it has no automatic precedence over our private ambitions to sublimity and to self-creation.[348] Yet, his demand to privatize the projects of authenticity and self-expression (discussed in Section I) to avoid putting at risk liberal democracy premises the argument on claims that should be part of the discussion and automatically settles in favor of the public self.

Similarly, casting in bronze a private and a public self sits at odds with Rorty's captivating description of human beings as centerless webs of beliefs and desires that suggests, on the contrary, that any fixed compartmentalization of those beliefs reflects some sort of metaphysical, essentialist stipulation. Human beings are, for Rorty, "nothing more than sentential attitudes—nothing more than the presence or absence of dispositions toward the use of sentences phrased in some historically conditioned vocabulary."[349] There is no center of gravity behind a constantly shifting network of beliefs and desires: "This network is not one which is rewoven by an agent distinct from the network…Rather, it reweaves itself, in response to stimuli…"[350] Rorty does not conceive of a faculty, say reason, as paramount among others that organizes our beliefs and desires. Moreover, Rorty does not feature human beings as equipped with specialized faculties oriented to determinate objects. Accordingly, he criticizes the account of the self that pigeonholes the epistemological, the moral and the aesthetic capacities and suggests instead that we are a web of idiosyncratic beliefs and desires. Relying on Freud, Rorty manages to move from the idea of the self as a "well-ordered system of faculties" to one as a "tissue of contingencies."[351] He pragmaticizes Freud when he claims that he "makes it possible for us to see science and poetry, genius and psychosis—and, most importantly, morality and prudence—not as products of distinct faculties but as alternative modes of adaptation."[352] Despite all this, his unrelenting separation between the private and public self, the creative, existentialist personality, on the one hand, and the detached and evenhanded one, on the other, leaves little room for the convergence and interaction of the aesthetic, moral, prudential, and epistemological considerations along with the free-flow dynamics of our beliefs and desires that usually intertwine in the public and private

arena alike. Although he endorses a centerless view of the subject and negates the idea of specifically oriented faculties, he ends up embracing a dualist conception wherein the capacity for creation is sharply distinguished from the capacity for social justice.

In analyzing Freud's revolutionary achievements, Rorty argues approvingly that under his new view of the self, maturity consists in an "ability to seek out new redescriptions of one's own past—an ability to take a nominalistic, ironic view of oneself." Freud let us see "alternative narratives and alternative vocabularies as instruments for change, rather than as candidates for a correct depiction of how things are in themselves."[353] This exercise of self-redefinition, however, is cut short with the internal, immovable partition that Rorty postulates. Rorty focuses on how a centerless conception of the person as an idiosyncratic web of beliefs, desires and needs opens up new possibilities for the private project of self-enlargement, but he overlooks that this account of the agent also potentially disrupts the twofold arrangement of the person that he embraces. His portrait of the subject as a network of sufficiently coherent, complex and internally consistent beliefs and desires does not necessarily comport with the marked partitioning of the self that he also advocates.

Finally, some dissonance lingers between the claim that truth is related to overall coherence, that we cannot step outside ourselves to assess our judgments, that only other cultures, other persons, other beliefs stand as the reference against which we can asses any of our other convictions, and the statement that the self is sharply divided in halves that do not relate to each other. "The interesting question," Rorty maintains, "is not whether a claim can be 'rationally defended' but whether it can be made to cohere with a sufficient number of *our* beliefs and desires."[354] Rorty's rationality does not hinge on the existence of a universally shared human trait, but on the possibility of making one's web of belief coherent and structured.[355] "It would be good," Rorty speculates, "to hook up our views about democracy, mathematics, physics, God and everything else, into a coherent story about how everything hangs together." This holistic process, Rorty continues, "has nothing to do with the Platonic-Kantian notion of grounding."[356] Reweaving a net of beliefs to fit them in a coherent whole is all anyone does. If this is so, it remains unclear what we should make of a split personality that does not procure a sense of coherence for itself. We do not know how and if these two portions of the agent relate to each other, whether they hold any kind of conversational relation or rapprochement and whether their potential interaction is based on reasons or causes.

**IV. Hope vs. Critique**

Rorty lambastes foundationalist projects in political theory and instead attributes to the latter an inspirational cause that translates in what Richard Bernstein has aptly called "inspirational liberalism."[357] Political philosophy should incite hope and inspiration by means of utopias and narratives. In this transition, from political theory as the facilitator of rational, exhaustive, permanent and universal philosophical grounds to one that concerns itself with narratives and redescriptions, Rorty imparts compelling criticisms against the foundationalist aspirations of political philosophy and offers cogent and refreshing reasons in support of a more contingent, open-ended, on the surface, and naturalist form of social criticism. Some questions remain open, however, regarding the critical strength and scope of Rorty's pragmatism: to what extent should political theory

lend itself to an inspirational rather than a critical enterprise? Or to put it in terms more amenable to Rorty's project, to what extent inspiration acts as a valid source of critique?

Philosophy, according to Rorty, does not provide neutral grounds to adjudicate among positions. No philosophical area enjoys natural prerogatives over others. From this point of view, the exercise of striving for philosophical moral justifications for a political order is doomed to failure. A liberal society "needs an improved self-description rather than a set of foundations" and should call "true" whatever the upshot of free and open encounters are.[358] Justification in political theory is "a matter of historical comparison with other attempts at social organization—those of the past and those envisaged by utopians."[359] Justification builds upon accepted familiar premises: "They cannot be preceded by presuppositionless critical reflection, conducted in no particular language and outside of any particular historical context."[360] Rorty draws upon the contingency of language bequeathed by Davidson and Wittgenstein and the contingency of the self envisaged by Freud and Nietzsche as the more useful vocabulary to characterize current liberal democracies: "These accounts do not ground democracy, but they do permit its practices and its goals to be redescribed," a redescription that is "more like refurnishing a house than like propping it up or placing barricades around it."[361]

Conversely, the foundational approach assumes that reasons and arguments could be found prior to these discussions. Rorty sees in hindsight that the foundationalist language of the Enlightenment was only one set of metaphors that helped galvanize a liberal order which has now exhausted itself. The Enlightenment vocabulary with its reliance on science, an activity which has receded to the background of cultural life due to the impossibility of mastering all the languages in which science is conducted, has lost relevance. Rorty puts it thus:

*Christianity did not know that its purpose was the alleviation of cruelty, Newton did not know that his purpose was modern technology, the Romantic poets did not know that their purpose was to contribute to the development of an ethical consciousness suitable for the culture of political liberalism. But we now know these things, for we latecomers can tell the kind of story of progress which those who are actually making progress cannot. We can view these people as toolmakers rather than discoverers because we have a clear sense of the product which the use of those tools produced. The product is us—our conscience, our culture, our form of life. Those who made us possible could not have envisaged what they were making possible, and so could not have described the ends to which their work was a means. But we can.*[362]

Today, art and utopian politics stand at the forefront of culture and thus have the power of motivation. Hence, liberal politics' self-description should be couched in those terms.

A first concern adumbrated in Section II regarding the pragmatist approach refers to the degree that literary criticism amounts to political critique. That discussion has cast reservations over the propitiousness of addressing political conflict through the aesthetic lenses of literature, films and poems. At most, literary vision can endow us with moral acuity, making us more perceptive of ethical diversity, more aware of our sense of belonging, more in tune with a sense of enlargement propelled by the encounters with other contexts, other constraints, other traditions, other problems. It can make us more emotionally perceptive, intellectually sophisticated and morally empathetic but it can never apprehend the complexity and degree of intensity and confrontation of political interaction. As an inadequate tool to illuminate what is at stake in a political relationship, literary-based liberalism cannot provide the critical force that political theory should dispense.

If the literary dimension of Rorty's liberal political theory is at once far-reaching and inadequate as the basis for political criticism, its pragmatist side also raises some questions. For how much room for critical action and thinking can be accommodated in a pragmatic view that claims that a set of social actions, beliefs or institutions is right because it works? A vocabulary is right, Rorty holds, if it helps to cope, meaning that it avoids cruelty or contributes to the attainment of happiness. In principle, the naturalistic, Darwinian idea that nothing else lies behind language than our attitudinal disposition to cope with our surroundings for our own benefit is a penetrating and subversive stance. Rorty's wholesale naturalistic view of language and social practices is a highly valuable aspect of his work. And yet, there is a tendency of pragmatism to slide into functionalist explanations that puts at risk its critical bite.

In the social sciences, a debate over whether functionalism can indeed offer causal explanations of social phenomena remains open. Functionalism purportedly explains a phenomenon on grounds of its beneficial consequence. A widely common example is, for instance, the explanation of the rain dance in a preliterate society by reference to its positive effects on the reinforcement of group identity.[363] The critics wonder, however, how a phenomenon can be explained in terms of its consequences rather than its causes. Two, among other, persistent questions about the validity of functional explanations center on the existence of a causal mechanism that could significantly relate the phenomenon and the consequences that purportedly explain it and on the impossibility of identifying such mechanism before we even know how it works.[364]

Darwin's theory of evolution solves this circularity by explaining the distinctive anatomical traits of animals in terms of their contribution to survival. The casual mechanisms are, in this case, explicit—the beneficial features of the animal work because they help to cope in an adverse environment facilitating a comparative advantage that gives the animal a differential rate of survival. In Rorty's pragmatism, however, things get more complicated. He argues that a vocabulary exists not because it represents the world properly or gets us closer to how the world is or provides us the kinds of representation that the world would give of itself if it could.[365] Knowledge, for Rorty, relates to coping with reality, not representing it: it is not a matter of "getting reality right," but a matter of "acquiring habits of action for coping with reality."[366]

When it comes to his political theory, the exercise of distinguishing when a social practice works and when it helps us cope becomes muddier. A social practice works depending on its degree of success in reducing cruelty and pain. What counts as suffering or as a reduction of pain remains difficult to discern. Clitoridectomy, for instance, works for certain women as it reduces the pain of being a perpetual outcast in a community, but it also impairs bodily functions. If functionalism in the social science faces challenges to elucidate *how* exactly the phenomenon and its consequences relate to each other, the functionalist aspect in Rorty's pragmatism comes up against the problem of answering *why* a particular practice is deemed to cope. Since superiority is, for a pragmatist, "always relative to the purpose something is being asked to serve," it is not always obvious that certain practices exist because they work in the sense of reducing suffering or because they are the result of oppressive power relations.[367]

Numerous and important objections have been raised against Rorty's pragmatic social criticism along these lines. Some have claimed that Rorty wrongly minimizes the

importance of general principles in the organization of our moral beliefs. Universal moral principles have historically oriented our ethical behavior in ordinary but also exceptional circumstances such as the holocaust. Moreover, the liberal democracy that Rorty defends, according to this view, grows out of foundationalist approaches and the language of universal human rights.[368] Others have protested that Rorty's pragmatism is relativistic or merely descriptive or not critical enough as a form of political criticism.[369]

Rorty can defuse some of these objections. As noted in the long quote above, for instance, Rorty accepts that the vocabulary of Enlightenment rationalism has been fundamental for the emergence of liberal democracies and yet he argues that the idea that we need foundational principles is part of the ladders which were once indispensable but have now become encumbrances.[370] What before was understood as foundations today we see as one more description among others. He also recognizes the seminal importance of general moral principles in organizing ethical life, although he reverts the terms of the discussion and sees them not as philosophical foundations for our actions but as "reminders" of our moral practices.[371] Moreover, Rorty offers an answer as to why these principles, if they cease to act as foundations, are nonetheless consequential for us: "We remain profoundly grateful to philosophers like Plato and Kant, not because they discovered truths but because they prophesied cosmopolitan utopias—utopias most of whose details they may have gotten wrong, but utopias we might never have struggled to reach had we not heard their prophecies."[372]

Likewise, Rorty may remain unfazed by the point that his pragmatism lacks critical strength, for he does argue that the way to discern whether something helps to cope or is instead the product of political oppression is by engaging in open-ended, undistorted conversation à la Habermas. Instead of relying on universal, transcendental principles, as Habermas does, he believes that truth results from an "ethnocentric" perspective that draws upon examples.[373] "'Distorted communication,'" Rorty argues, "is a relative term—one given sense by contrast with a proposed alternative communication situation, the disclosure of an alternative social world."[374] In lieu of the universal principles, Rorty resorts to the Rawlsian form of normative critique called "reflective equilibrium," between "our old moral principles (the generalities we invoke to justify old institutions) and our reactions to new developments, our sense of the desirability or undesirability of various recently disclosed possibilities."[375]

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to properly examine all of the important objections raised against Rorty's form of criticism and his potential responses.[376] It remains unclear, however, how Rorty squares together all the different aspects that amount to his cultural criticism. For if, on the one hand, Rawlsian reflective equilibrium and Habermasian discourse ethics give precedence to reason as the right faculty to account for our moral judgments, Rorty, instead, wants to decenter reason and call for sympathy as the proper emotional response to our moral deliberation. Likewise, although Rorty views some of the principles that he adopts as remainders rather than foundations more should be said as to how he complements his Millian defense of the harm principle with the utilitarian strand in his thought, and the same goes with respect to the latter and his staunch pluralism. Also, despite his anti-foundational stance, his command to avoid pain and suffering that runs throughout his political theory, more than a remainder, apparently acts like a foundational imperative that organizes all other elements in his

thought. Finally, although coping and coherence may fit well together, as noted before, they may not work well with his portrayal of the split agent.

Assuming, however, that all of these parts and pieces work at best together, Rorty's strong anti-representationalism debilitates the critical force of his political theory. As Gary Gutting has argued, "Rorty acts as though his rejection of representationalism forbids all talk of accuracy or distortion, even in a political context far removed from philosophical theory…There is a common sense distinction between the way things are and the way the interests of an exploitative regime represent them. The fact that this distinction does not translate into a substantive philosophical theory of truth does not…eliminate the practical force of the distinction."[377] Rorty rebuffs human nature as the starting point of political theorizing. He believes that, like in any other area of philosophy, progress in political theory comes about not by representing a deeper reality—the human nature—but by coping with our surroundings. This in turn makes him suspicious of any political view that postulates that things are not as they appear to be, that is, that ideology, or subliminal forms of political, social or economic oppression may be at work in a particular political context.

Rorty ejects the ironist thinkers from the political forum precisely on grounds that their call for self-creation presupposes the existence of an inner, pre-social nature which political power distorts. He, instead, remains on the surface and calls for hope as the right vehicle of social change. Yet, "the political," having originated in and being constantly reshaped by power relationships, cannot do without the hidden, confrontational, manipulative, strategic and controlling dynamics—a logic that hope alone cannot disentangle. When it comes to politics, Rorty should draw back from his conclusion about anti-representationalism in other areas of philosophy, for a distinctive feature of the political is that it conflates elements that are the obverse of one another—ruling is for all by the few; principles always meet the limit of prudential considerations; consensus is backed up by force; the fencing off of political institutions is effaced by a trickling down of political power to other areas of society. It is precisely this complexity that many ironist thinkers capture, rather than the account that Rorty attributes to them that splits asunder politics and human nature.

In manipulating the boundaries of political discussion Rorty's pragmatism staves off the inquiry about why his, as oppose to many other possible utopias, works. Why this one in particular has succeeded and why it should stay with us. If the pragmatic view rests on no other critical recourse than comparing languages, histories, cultures, stories—which in principle seems a rather valid form of social criticism—it becomes all the more imperative that certain languages, like the radical ironist's, are not excluded from the public arena. In privatizing the ironist strand in political and ethical thought—those who challenge the final languages of the time—Rorty arbitrarily determines the scope of critique of his pragmatist liberalism. Liberalism, if anything, is criticized only from the inside, from the already assimilated point of view of public solidarity. And, hence, what amounts to suffering is predetermined by the liberal view, and pluralism has, at this point, been assimilated into liberal politics.

**V. Conclusions**

Rorty's pragmatist political theory, an articulation of his Darwinism, anti-representationalism, anti-foundationalism, anti-essentialism, and pluralism, leads him to

endorse a liberalism devoid of philosophical moral foundations and shot through with inspirational literary utopias. He defends a liberalism (à la Shklar) the main purpose of which is to avoid blatant cruelty rather than to further virtuous, autonomous agents. His own poeticized liberalism, however, features a sharp partition of the subject that, in addition to being unfeasible, reduces the entire political sphere to a discussion of cruelty exclusively understood in liberal terms. As Nancy Fraser puts it: "Rorty makes non-liberal, oppositional discourses non-political by definition."[378] Like the comprehensive moral foundations of liberalism that he intends to disband, Rorty's literary liberalism makes the political coextensive with a liberal ethos that excludes all political claims that do not speak the same vocabulary that is determined from the outset. Morality cuts transversally the division that Rorty visualizes—the aesthetically private and politically public areas coalesced by a literary language—milking out the political verve from the public sphere.

Acknowledging the pluralist challenge, however, could have lead to a minimalist account of liberalism, rather than a reductionist one, which does not determine beforehand interpretations of political conflict. Rorty holds that philosophy should help citizens to "balance the need for consensus and the need for novelty."[379] His liberalism of poets, as radical, disruptive, creative, and path-breaking as it can be on many fronts, paradoxically, in discouraging the ironist novelty, undermines the pluralism that it tries to accommodate.

The analysis of each individual thinker, Rawls, Berlin and Rorty, provided in the past four chapters of this dissertation suggests that Berlin's liberalism, despite its vehement emphasis on choice and individual sovereignty—an undercurrent of rationalism in his thought that clings to the views that his pluralism erodes—is the most receptive to pluralism. Ultimately, the minimalist liberalism advocated in this dissertation is a variant of Berlin's pluralistic liberalism.

The following two chapters outline the contours of a minimalist liberalism, a different way of cashing in on the pluralist promise. Chapter Five offers a comparative analysis of the three thinkers with a focus on a problem on which Rawls puts the finger, namely, that the accommodation of pluralism within the liberal project forces a subsequent accommodation between moral and political theory in the justification of liberalism. It will be argued that the division of labor between the two disciplines that either Rawls or Rorty advocate does not vouch for a pluralistic liberalism. The final chapter of the dissertation adumbrates an alternative form of that relationship that makes the minimalist liberalism defended in this work inviting to pluralism.

## Chapter Five
## A Third Way?
## Liberalism after Pluralism: Minimalist not Comprehensive or Reductive

Max Weber accurately foretold the jarring role of pluralism within the vast process of modernity. On Weber's account, modernity, characterized as a worldview driven by a homogenous call to reason, is at the same time a fractured worldview of incongruous value spheres that are incommensurable with one another. Eventually, Weber tells us, polytheism as the unbecoming byproduct of a massive reorientation towards rationality, heralds the breakdown of the epoch that gave rise to it. A maimed modernity then drags with it the ideals of the Enlightenment (a belief in secularization, individualism, universalization, a sense of progressive history, and adherence to scientific rationality) together with the political theory that supervenes upon it, liberalism. This broad-canvas account implies that pluralism strikes a death blow to liberalism. How could liberalism, a narrative so entangled with both the Enlightenment and modernity, survive polytheism?

John Gray, for instance, complains that "liberal political philosophy proceeds as if the Enlightenment project had not failed, or could be saved in some more restricted form."[380] Gray believes that the Enlightenment and liberalism are inextricably linked to each other and that the demise of the former implies the downfall of the latter.[381] This dissertation suggests another view. Liberalism can in fact find its way in the context of a crumbling modernity seized by an uninhibited pluralism. The absorption of pluralism, however, holds in check the ambitions of liberalism.

The previous four chapters have explored different liberal strategies to accommodate the problem of pluralism understood either as a meta-ethical theory of value or as a sociological account of disagreement of beliefs. John Rawls, aware of the "fact of pluralism" resulting from the free use of reason throughout time, offers a political version of liberalism. Chapter One argues that this incarnation of a liberal order remains too comprehensive to properly incorporate the plural character of ethical and political life.

A second, bookend chapter (Chapter Four) examines Richard Rorty's pragmatic liberalism, which purportedly emerges from the ashes of modernity and the Enlightenment project. His reductive liberalism infelicitously equates the entire domain of the political with a Millian liberalism exclusively concerned with the lessening of cruelty. Rorty cordons off the political behind the "harm principle," ejecting to the private realm in one stroke every voice that challenges the liberal understanding of cruelty. This invidious manipulation of boundaries that equates the entire phenomenon of the political with a reductive liberalism buries the pluralism that his pragmatic view is supposed to incorporate.

Between these two versions of liberalism, chapters Two and Three explore Berlin's liberalism, a hybrid combination of Enlightenment intimations and Romantic intemperate self-expression. His liberalism, although somewhat crippled by an acritical endorsement of choice, offers a minimalist iteration of the liberal state that accommodates pluralism and avoids a blanket liberal theory that orchestrates the social order at large and determines all that there is to say about the political.

The conclusion of these four critical, exegetic studies is an argument that liberalism after pluralism survives insofar as liberal theory dramatically curbs its

aspirations. Liberalism cannot be comprehensive (Rawls) or reductive (Rorty), but has to be minimalist (à la-Berlin). Minimalist liberalism, as I would like to call it, draws back from its Enlightenment ambitions. In preview of what is to come in the following chapter, it will be argued that liberalism presents itself as a conception of a limited state, not a liberal polity; it sheds light on only a portion of political phenomena—the aspects that emanate from the state; it is ill-prepared to understand the whole breath of the political struggle; it rests on historical contingency rather than on necessary and sufficient moral conditions; and its main concern is legitimacy rather than justice. Taking pluralism seriously thus means to hold back liberalism's aspirations and scale down its domain of applicability from the entire social order to the state. Liberalism does not encompass the entire political order, and does not exhaust the domain of politics. Pluralistic liberalism cannot exhaust the boundaries of the political, and should present itself as a political doctrine of one institutional component—state authority—in a more complex, broader political order, which cannot be completely grasped by liberal thinking.

If the awareness and incorporation of pluralism markedly impact the shape of liberalism, this also affects the role that moral theory has in the justification of a liberal state. Although Berlin led the way in directing attention to the implications of normative pluralism for the justification of liberalism, Rawls perceptively followed his lead and further specified the problem as one that requires readjustment between moral and political theory. According to Rawls, under conditions of pluralism, liberalism cannot be comprehensive, meaning that it cannot rest on a systematic moral worldview that includes ideals of character and personal relationships. This dissertation argues that the severance of moral and liberal political theory is more wounding than Rawls envisions, but also more complex. For if, contrary to what Rawls claims, comprehensive views unavoidably percolate in the justification of the liberal state, moral theory is relinquished as the adequate platform from which to make sense of the political. Hence, the existence of pluralism drives a wedge in the division between moral and political theory in the justification of liberalism. In other words, pluralism limits the extent to which moral theory provides grounds for a liberal political theory.

The section that follows offers a recapitulation of the thinkers examined in prior chapters highlighting how their liberal proposals either smother or reinvigorate value pluralism, and whether their rearrangement between moral and political theory is a persuasive one. The discussion of the features of minimalist liberalism, the liberalism that is viable under the aegis of pluralism, and an explanation of the subsequent readjustment between moral and liberal political theory are deferred to the final chapter.

## I. Three Liberal Strategies

### A. Comprehensive Liberalism: John Rawls

John Rawls has reshaped and revitalized the discussion within liberal political theory not once, but twice. He first stirred up the liberal debate by offering a systematic theory of justice that combined two equally important, although competing, strands of thought within the liberal tradition—the classical and the modern conceptions of the liberal state. Rawls's political theory recovers, on the one hand, the contractarian tradition characteristic of the classical liberal thinkers who focus on political obedience as the main subject of their political doctrine. The goal of classical liberalism is to define, based

on a moral account of the person, the limits of legitimate state power that can obtain political obedience from free and equal rational individuals.

In addition, Rawls's theory of justice reclaims a modern version of liberalism, the Enlightenment account, the aim of which is to provide not only a conception of a limited state but also a more encompassing account of a liberal order, that is, a demarcation of the legitimate use of state power tied to a conception of the moral fulfillment of the individual in its double role as a citizen and as a private person. It has become commonplace to identify this expansion of the concerns of liberal theory with the work of John Stuart Mill and his idea of "progressive being." For Mill, the "harm principle" wards off individual "self-preservation" so that each citizen can develop the "permanent interests of man," "self-development" and "individuality."[382] Rawls continues this tradition by making justice rather than legitimacy and political obedience the main focus of his liberal theory. His augmented liberalism implicitly points to the non-viability of thinking the problem of political obedience without considering the broader idea of a "well-ordered society," a social order where everyone nurtures a sense of justice and acts upon it. This kind of society, rather than the narrower focus on the structure and functions of the state, becomes the kernel of a liberalism that expands its boundaries to include pronouncements on morality and social psychology as proper grounds for politics. Although both traditions—the classical and the modern—back up their political findings with moral theory, modern liberalism expands its area of application into the articulation of society as a whole including ideals of the person, practical reasoning, and moral and social development. The central liberal political problem changes from "*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*" to how the liberal state fits into a just social order.

Rawls combines both traditions—the classical and the modern—in one thoroughly systematic liberal view that determines that political obligation is a byproduct of a just society. The well-ordered society understood as the result of an agreement among free and equal rational persons who see themselves as members of a "a fair system of cooperation" becomes the regulative idea that includes descriptions of the central social and political institutions but also the ideal of a citizen who displays the right moral attitudes towards those institutions.

Rawls stirred up the liberal debate once again when he later acknowledged that justice as fairness as couched in *A Theory of Justice* overlooks a profound and pervasive social phenomenon: the fact of pluralism. "The fact of reasonable pluralism" is, for Rawls, "the fact of profound and irreconcilable differences in citizens' reasonable comprehensive religious and philosophical conceptions of the world, and in their views of the moral and aesthetic values to be sought in human life."[383] Many, like Isaiah Berlin, trace the historical source of the plural character of social life to the Romantic reaction against the Enlightenment, but Rawls explains the fact of pluralism as the result of the exercise of free institutions and as the outcome of normative, evaluative, conceptual, social, theoretical and empirical sources of disagreement that he calls the "burdens of judgment."[384]

In the attempt to accommodate the fact of pluralism within the boundaries of liberalism, Rawls explains away an assumption that has undergirded most varieties of classical and modern liberalism alike, namely, that the liberal state stems from a comprehensive moral view about the person. Rawls fathoms that if a liberal order wants to preserve its imperative of inclusiveness, it cannot rest on the narrow Kantian outlook

that he previously defended. Taking seriously the plural character of modern societies entails shaking off the comprehensive moral basis of the just society that he vindicated before. Given the fact of pluralism, a liberal just society cannot prioritize one moral view over others and should stand instead on political reasons that any citizen, regardless of her moral creed, could endorse.

While Rawls continues to understand liberalism's as providing an expansive account of a social order that establishes parameters of justice rather than political legitimacy, he does refashion his political liberalism in a way that the well-ordered society can be seen as a "freestanding" political ideal. The distinction, claims Rawls, "between a political conception of justice and other moral conceptions is a matter of scope: that is, the range of subjects to which a conception applies and the content a wider range requires."[385] A moral conception is *general* "if it applies to a wide range of subjects." It is *comprehensive* "when it includes conceptions of what is of value in human life, and ideals of personal character, as well as ideals of friendship and of familial and associational relationships…" He argues that a conception if *fully comprehensive* "if it covers all recognized values and virtues within one rather precisely articulated system" and *partially comprehensive* "when it comprises a number of, but by no means all, nonpolitical values and virtues and is rather loosely articulated."[386] Hence, political liberalism differs from a comprehensive one on the basis of its scope and content. Incorporating pluralism in the liberal family means that the actors and institutions that are affected in a liberal order and the basis for their organization should be political rather than comprehensive.

The incorporation of the new premise—the existence of reasonable pluralism—in Rawls's original version of "justice as fairness" occasions significant readjustments in his work. First, it affects the kind of justification on which liberalism can draw. Pluralism drives a wedge between moral and political theory reconfiguring the boundaries and purpose of each as the basis for a liberal project. Rawls had embarked on a similar project in the past. *A Theory of Justice* offered not only a new appreciation of the liberal social order but also a bracing understanding of the independence of moral theory. According to Rawls, moral theory could leap well ahead without solving first the corrosive controversies that were more pertinent to philosophy of mind, semantics, and epistemology. His liberalism was fastened to an autonomous moral theory standing on its own feet. *Political Liberalism* resumes this task with a view to establishing the independence, this time, of political theory. The latter could not play a subservient role to moral theory, that is, it could not simply be the applied version of moral theory. "[J]ustice as fairness," claims Rawls, "is not a comprehensive religious, philosophical, or moral doctrine—one that applies to all subjects and covers all values…Neither political philosophy nor justice as fairness is, in that way, applied moral philosophy. Political philosophy has its own distinctive features and problems."[387]

Morality can no longer provide general and comprehensive practical reasons for political life. Political liberalism remains moral in the more restrictive sense that it articulates ideals and principles concerning social interaction that pattern rights and duties, that is, reciprocal fair expectations that we owe to each other as members of the same political community. Yet, none of these moral considerations can derive from a comprehensive moral view that covers values that fall outside the political. Liberalism cannot stand as the political piece of a broader understanding of the good life, a

dependent module that fits a more extensive outlook about the meaning of a life worth living. The political conception of justice is freestanding, that is, it is not tied to a specific comprehensive view.

Second, the assimilation of pluralism to the liberal outlook and the subsequent disciplinary demarcation affect not only the reasons that lie behind liberalism but also the substantive content of liberalism, the institutional arrangements, actors and policies that are affected. Political liberalism is a moral (non-comprehensive) conception of justice worked out for a political subject, the basic structure of society of a constitutional democracy, and its content is expressed in terms of certain fundamental ideas implicit in the public political culture of a democratic society.[388]

Third, the centrality of pluralism within the liberal project marks a shift in the main problem to be addressed: it swings back from justice to legitimacy. If lasting and pervasive disagreement characterizes the social fabric of contemporary societies, then the problem of political liberalism centers on finding widespread justificatory grounds for the use of coercive power amenable to a citizenry that remains divided by profound disagreement. A liberalism of this stripe now combines the major concern of *A Theory of Justice*—the articulation of a just society—with the more circumscribed problem of political legitimacy in a plural society.

In short, the incorporation of pluralism to liberal theory has an impact on three levels: justification (the kinds of reason that can support a political order in a pluralistic era), scope (the kinds of actors that are affected by liberalism) and goal (the final purpose of liberal political theory). While Rawls alters and chips away at the Kantian basis of his liberalism on all these levels, ultimately, his political liberalism slides back into a comprehensive liberalism that wears down the pluralism that it intends to integrate. Rawls's embrace of the phenomenon of pluralism, his awareness of its impact on political legitimacy, and his vision to buoy liberalism by cutting it loose from a systematic moral outlook all take the liberal discussion a step forward by taking up the challenge addressed at no small length in Berlin's work and by rethinking the proper boundaries of political judgment.

Chapter One of this dissertation, however, argues that despite orienting the liberal discussion in the right direction, Rawls may not succeed in justifying liberalism on political grounds for it remains unclear whether he can offer a political version of liberalism that dispenses with the Kantian support that infuses his previous work. The argument developed in Chapter One refers basically to how Kantianism still taints the conception of the person around which political liberalism pivots and thus threatens the comprehensive abstinence that Rawls wants to obtain. The two moral capacities of the person, the centrality of justice, the esteemed prominence of autonomy, the emphasis on ethical consistency, and the association between morality and rationality are only some aspects lingering behind a political liberalism overshadowed by a monotonously Kantian reasoning. In other words, the chapter argues that Rawls faces looming problems on at least one of the dimensions mentioned above affected by the acknowledgement of the fact of pluralism—the justificatory level. If Kantianism still plays a crucial role in his political liberalism, then he cannot achieve the independence of political theory that he proclaims and thus cannot properly accommodate pluralism within his liberal view. At the level of justification, political liberalism rests on comprehensive grounds.

Assuming, however, that Rawls could redress this problem, his political liberalism remains comprehensive in relation to the other two dimensions: its scope and goal. As mentioned above, Rawls states that the distinctive feature of political liberalism is its scope, that is, the range of subjects to which it applies, and that justice as fairness is political precisely because it is a conception shaped for the basic structure of society, a strictly political target. In contrasting political liberalism with comprehensive views, Rawls makes reference to utilitarianism. Unlike political liberalism, Rawls argues, utilitarianism is a comprehensive view because the principle of utility holds for "all kinds of subjects ranging from the conduct of individuals and personal relations to the organization of society as a whole as well as to the law of peoples."[389] Yet, political liberalism is also widely encompassing. Its scope, the main dimension on the basis of which Rawls defines the political character of liberalism, is much more sweeping than Rawls admits.

Indeed, Rawls's political liberalism spreads out beyond the political structure. Political liberalism remains entangled in the Enlightenment liberal tradition by requiring for its own survival the shaping of other crucial areas of the social order—from models of citizenry to ideals of moral development to paradigms of growth in social psychology. Loyal to this way of understanding liberalism, that is, as a political theory that extends beyond the limited structure and functions of the state into a vision of a social order as a whole, Rawls's political theory imprints its liberal ethos in corners of society that extend well beyond the basic political institutions. His political liberalism elevates ideals of citizenship, offers a right path for the development of the social psychology of the individuals that includes the proper role of associations—familial and social—provides a model of right political judgment, and indeed reaches the structural cognitive and moral organization of individuals by imparting a distinctive way in which we can engage with the political debate. Most of these areas fold into what is traditionally acknowledged as the private sphere, and they require the previous acceptance of a comprehensive view to sustain themselves. And political liberalism cannot survive without them. Political liberalism is, as its prior Kantian incarnation, a blanket liberalism which constantly threatens its own goal by necessitating the organization and orchestration of private areas for its own existence. In this sense too political liberalism is comprehensive.

The untoward, wide-ranging side effects of Rawls's political liberalism collide with its presumed limited political scope. Political liberalism encroaches on "the soul" of individuals to sustain "the city." It requires for its own survival that individuals think and engage in political affairs in a particular way—impartially and in a truth-limbo. Political liberalism, in reaching the practical and cognitive reasoning of individuals, oversteps the province of the limited state and fans out into the organization of the social order at large. Rawls's initial premise consists of drawing a stern line between political and non-political actors and reasons. However, he internalizes that divide into the private forum of each citizen, which imperils his attempt by mutating from political to blanket liberalism. In demanding a specific binary arrangement between the private and the political, the partial and the impartial, the truth-seeker and the truth-abstinent, and consecrating ethical and political consistency, Rawls suffocates the internal pluralistic character of individual thought which he wants to preserve in the first place.[390] At the level of scope, Rawls's political liberalism also gnaws away at the pluralism that gives rise to it in the first place.

Rawls struggles to present an antiseptic liberalism untouched by private concerns that focuses on the political defined by the boundaries of the basic structure, the reach of which is hemmed in by the neutrality of the state. Rawls holds that the state regarding issues concerning constitutional essentials should not favor any particular comprehensive view.[391] Justice as fairness is neutral in terms of its aims, in other words, the state secures equal opportunity to advance any permissible conception of the good without favoring any particular one. Although some comprehensive conceptions will survive and others die out, the liberal state does not need to compensate or counteract this because it does not exclude comprehensive views on arbitrary or unjust grounds. If this is correct, then an internal tension hampers political liberalism. On the one hand, it reduces the political to the idea of state neutrality (however defined) and, on the other, it stands as a blanket political theory that aims at articulating and organizing ideas that tame the ethical pluralism within each citizen. The point here is not about justification as raised above; that is, the problem lies not in whether the split personality is a distinctively liberal view of the person. What makes Rawls's political liberalism comprehensive at the level of scope is that in order to work the political must be sustained by a specific orientation of the private. This in turn, requires meddling with aspects of the social order out of bounds to the liberal neutral state. In terms of its scope, political liberalism radiates to areas that by its own assumptions should be left unsullied.

Finally, the pluralist basis of political liberalism is put at risk by a residual ambivalence in terms of its goal—an unresolved combination of a concern with justice and a concern with legitimacy. Rawls acknowledges that if disagreement of beliefs is a lasting and pervasive feature of modern life, this impinges on the kinds of valid reasons for authority that liberalism can offer. Rawls defines the liberal principle of legitimacy as the principle that sets the limits on the proper exercise of state power *when it is in accordance with the principles of justice* which free and equal citizens could endorse.[392] Indeed, the principle of legitimacy together with the guidelines of inquiry of public reason share the same basis as the principles of justice: "the parties in the original position, in adopting principles of justice for the basic structure, must also adopt guidelines and criteria of public reason for applying those norms. The argument for those guidelines, and for the principle of legitimacy, is much the same as, and as strong as, the argument for the principles of justice themselves."[393] Rawls, however, realizes that justice and legitimacy cannot be lumped together. "Legitimacy," he argues, "is a weaker idea than justice and imposes weaker constraints on what can be done."[394] He ultimately stays the course and focuses on the broader problem of justice. As will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter, that justice is the right goal of liberalism accords with Rawls's understanding of what constitutes the proper task of political philosophy, namely, to reconcile the citizens with the social order they inhabit.[395] Against this background, justice makes a more suitable goal for his liberalism. It remains unclear, however, whether liberalism can achieve that ambitious end without undermining its own political basis. In making justice and reconciliation the proper task of liberalism, Rawls may be forced to defend a more expansive liberalism than its political basis allows. If liberalism is going to be receptive to the problem of pluralism, its main goal may have to be restricted to political legitimacy instead.

**B. Reductive Liberalism: Richard Rorty**

If Rawls remains comprehensive in his solution to pluralism, Richard Rorty becomes reductive. Rorty believes that pragmatist liberalism is the right response to many ills of philosophical thinking—foundationalism, moralism, rationalism, and essentialism—and to one welcomed development in the exercise of free reasoning—pluralism. Pragmatist liberalism is, in tune with Rorty's other philosophical positions, anti-essentialist, anti-foundationalist, anti-representationalist, aestheticized, and pluralistic.

Rorty defines pluralism as the view that "there is no actual or possible object of knowledge that would permit you to commensurate and rank all human needs."[396] Although, for Rorty, pluralism is woven with pragmatism, he reveals awfully little as to how exactly pragmatism blends with pluralism.[397] Purportedly, his rejection of the correspondence theory of truth, "the theory that true beliefs are accurate representations of a pre-existent reality," and his anti-essentialism, that things are to us what we say about them, make pragmatism an ally of pluralism.[398] Under this view, truth understood as one and unchangeable is a languishing idea that should be replaced by a more practical notion that refers to a rule for successful action. Pragmatism forsakes the project of defending a coherent, seamless description of reality and fosters instead plurality over unity. Moreover, Rorty's misgivings about the scientific way of defining rationality as laying down criteria for thought and action in advance, and his concern with injecting values and ends in a secularized world also tips the scale in favor of pluralism. For "[i]t is characteristic of democratic and pluralistic societies to continually redefine their goals. But if to be rational means to satisfy criteria, then this process of redefinition is bound to be nonrational."[399] Hence, I surmise, that the contingency of language and selfhood advocated by Rorty makes pragmatism and pluralism road companions.[400]

Rorty's liberalism does not pivot on a universal account of the person or human nature and is detached from broader projects of moral development. No comprehensive view or universal description of human capacities lies behind the strength of liberalism: "Pragmatists are entirely at home with the idea that political theory should view itself as suggestions for future action emerging out of recent historical experience, rather than attempting to legitimate the outcome of that experience by reference to something ahistorical."[401] In this sense, more than any other liberal thinker, Rorty cleaves the union between moral and political theory. In particular, he bursts asunder the idea that moral theory provides the grounds and set the limits to properly understand political phenomena. Except for one thing—his pragmatic liberalism gravitates towards one predominant moral universal aim, the reduction of harm and cruelty. This surreptitious insinuation of moral theory in his political outlook puts in evidence that, as will be discussed below, the relationship between moral and political theory is less coarse grained than Rorty (and Rawls) acknowledges.

Pragmatic liberalism stakes out its boundaries with one goal in mind: the avoidance of cruelty. On one side of the divide, the private one, irony reigns; on the public side, solidarity rules. In the private realm one is allowed to unravel any form of self-expression, which is kept in check in the public sphere where we all agree upon certain terms of cooperation that hold cruelty at bay. The chapter on Rorty's work argues that ultimately his split between public and private, and the accompanying accommodation between the moral, the political and aesthetics, is ultimately arbitrary and unsustainable and that it stifles the pluralism that Rorty intends to preserve.

Pluralism is undercut by three reasons. First, the fixed allocation of private irony and public solidarity, determined by stipulation at the outset of his argument, forecloses rather than confronts a long-standing strand of critique that originates with Nietzsche and continues today. This exclusion is telling because those disbarred from the political scene have persistently objected to the hidden sources of suffering of late modern forms of political ruling. Since Rorty puts the reduction of cruelty at the basis of the justification of political power, the arbitrary gambit that exiles those who have denounced forms of cruelty characteristic of the liberal order for so long, holds a stranglehold on the pluralistic spirit of his pragmatic liberalism. Rorty maintains that the division between the political and the private in terms of the Millian harm principle facilitates the consecration of everyone's private projects. In that sense, I surmise, pluralism is alive and well. Yet, this arrangement of the polity robs too many of their political voice, and thus pluralism boils down to the expression of wayward private behavior. To demarcate in the name of pluralism such a restrictive sphere of the political is at variance with the significance and consequences of the phenomenon of pluralism. Rather than embracing the problem, Rorty cages the demon.

Second, the pluralist spirit is quieted by Rorty's aestheticism that covers all forms of social action. The reliance on literary language as the über-language most suitable to address political problems in contemporary societies collides with one of the most important premises of pluralism: that forms of social action cannot be translatable into one same currency. Pluralism may act as a form of attrition to modern forms of social order due precisely to the latter's dependence on instrumental rationality to account for divergent forms of social action. Rorty replicates that problem when he offers literary criticism as the prominent reasoning to understand political and social action at large. The proposal assumes what pluralism gainsays: that different tokens are not always translatable to each other or cannot be measured against one criterion without residue. In casting an aesthetic veneer on politics, Rorty not only has his back turned on this problem but also presupposes a wan form of political confrontation that minimizes the implications of pluralism.

Finally, Rorty's strained parceling between the private ironist and the public solidary self goes against one of the most antiessentialist and pluralist features of his thought, that is, the view of the person as a centerless web of beliefs and desires. On the one hand, his anti-realist position, namely, that inquiry is not a matter of "finding out the nature of something which lies outside the web of beliefs and desires," shores up his pluralist outlook.[402] On the other hand, his unrelenting portioning of the self chokes it off.

As a result of banning the ironist thinkers from the public arena, Rorty offers a reductive account of the political that remains off limits to anyone who intends to cast doubt on the restricted conception of cruelty that upholds his pragmatic liberalism. Rorty stands behind the trenches of a liberalism that does not admit critique of the core value that sustains it. The chapter on Rorty directs attention to the tradition that runs from Nietzsche to Foucault to today's radical political theory that persistently denounces a biased understanding of liberal harm. Rorty's slim and unassailable account of liberalism is ultimately equated with the entire realm of the political. Hence, pluralism is guaranteed only by means of its privatization. This undermines the pluralist ethos that drives Rorty's pragmatic liberalism.

Although Rawls and Rorty understand the character of pluralism differently—as a sociological phenomenon and as an account of values, respectively—they both display an amenable attitude towards it. They both believe that acknowledging the existence of pluralism results in some sort of redefinition of the boundaries between moral and political theory. Rawls sees the retrieval of the independence of political theory as a natural continuation of the autonomy of moral theory that he reclaims in his earlier works. Rorty's decoupling of moral from political theory is congruous with an antifoundationalist principle that runs throughout all of his writings, namely, that no area in philosophy can work as the basis for other realms; no area of knowledge can enjoy the incontestable foundational prerogative.[403]

Both projects, however, face problems in shouldering the burden. Rawls political liberalism slides into a comprehensive liberalism that is thus more morally entangled than the goal he sets for himself: a liberalism that assists and is assisted by Kantian preconditions infringes on many areas that in his own terms lie outside the political, and cultivates an ambitious final goal—justice—that strains the limits of the more modest political basis that lends it support. Eventually, political liberalism remains within the Enlightenment project—a rationalist political theory that spills over and beyond the state and provides a road map for the social order as a whole. To the other extreme of Rawls, Rorty defends not a comprehensive but a reductive account of liberalism, one that shrinks the entire dimension of the political to the boundaries of a limited Millian principle. He reduces the political to the limits of a liberalism based on an account of cruelty that does not admit evaluation. He makes the frontiers of the entire political arena coextensive with this interpretation of liberalism so that any non-liberal discourse becomes a fortiori private. Rorty too ends up reading the political as strictly a moral problem—the private refers to the obligations that we hold to ourselves, the public to those that we owe to others—with a sprinkle of a playful, joshing attitude of poetic thinking. Despite their distancing from moral theory, both solutions—the reductive and the comprehensive—ironically depend on a very Kantian understanding of the use of public and private reason.[404]

Neither political nor pragmatic liberalism can keep true to its promise. The former oversteps its limits to gobble up the social order; the latter pulls the political back to make it coextend with a fortified slim liberalism. In both cases, the political is sustained only if the private is arranged in certain ways, an arrangement with a Kantian flavor that leaves moral theory as the basis of political theory. In both cases, mapping out liberalism with the entire realm of the political is unsuccessful and it works against the pluralism that they defend.

**C. Minimalist Liberalism: Isaiah Berlin**

One of the many services that Isaiah Berlin has bequeathed to political theory is to awaken an awareness of the relevance of pluralism for liberal political thought. For him, a conception of human being that stops with the Enlightenment fails to perceive the creative and disruptive attributes that the Romantic Movement adds to that description. His political theory has been from the outset an attempt to show the strengths of liberalism in the face of a conception of the person that embraces both the Enlightenment and the romantic sides and rests on reason and emotion alike to make sense of a social world the value fabric of which can never be experienced all at once. Although his

liberalism is the closest version of the minimalist liberalism defended in the next chapter, the latter departs from Berlin's attention to choice, as well as from his belief in starting the reasoning of politics from a description of the person. Instead, minimalist liberalism puts emphasis on the elective affinity that combines liberal and pluralistic trends on account of their reciprocal expansive inclusiveness that had not been possible without their mutual reinforcement.

Pluralism is an account of the character of values historically conceived. Human action and ideas have developed a vast array of values that arrange themselves by relations of opposition, complementariness and parity in an extensive and bountiful normative arch. Pluralism makes plain that not all of these values can be accomplished at once—some values exclude others; the social space is never ample enough to include and experience them all at once; many of them are untranslatable into others; and they cannot all be seamlessly measured to assess trade-offs among them. This has an impact on the Enlightenment political project which asserts that reason could find neat arrangements of values that remain long-standing. Enlightenment liberalism marks the apotheosis of this way of thinking by providing an understanding of the uses of political power that rests on a full normative arrangement that demarcates the conditions of a life worth living—a normative cosmology of pruned values that are compressed to fit the set.

This picture is disrupted by the Romantic Movement that elevates creation rather than discovery, flux rather than permanence, disruptive self-creation rather than ethical consistency, difference rather than semblance, emotion and spontaneity rather than reason, ex-nihilism rather than tradition. The value of pluralism, according to Berlin, lies with its disclosing a seminal dimension of human experience hidden by the Enlightenment. After the Romantic Movement, liberalism, Berlin believes, cannot remain the same if we want to honor the conception of the person that has developed historically to this day of which pluralism is a constitutive aspect. Berlin's liberalism based on the idea of negative freedom captures this shift. For him, accounts of positive freedom include in a characteristically rationalistic fashion visions of life rather than spaces and opportunities for action. Conceptions of positive freedom have a centrifugal and a centripetal force: they delve deep inside into the individual determining the right internal conditions for freedom and they outspread in the manifestation of the correct kind of action. Accounts of positive freedom predetermine paths for self-realization that align many values at once that are made to harmonize. In this sense, positive freedom neglects pluralism.

Negative freedom, on the contrary, concerns the absence of human obstacles to possible choices and activities.[405] It consists in not being prevented by others from choosing as I do.[406] "The extent of my social or political freedom consists in the absence of obstacles not merely to my actual, but to my potential choices—to my acting in this or that way if I choose to do so. Similarly absence of such freedom is due to the closing of such doors or failure to open them, as a result, intended or unintended, of alterable human practices, of the operation of human agencies."[407] In this sense, negative freedom never fiddles with the internal moral capacities of the person but focuses instead on the political space and opportunity for action not screened out by others. Likewise, negative freedom does not designate a path of right action; it does not even designate the consummation of action itself: "If, although I enjoy the right to walk through open doors, I prefer not to do so, but to sit still and vegetate, I am not thereby rendered less free. Freedom is the

opportunity to act, not action itself."[408] Despite the various and valid criticisms against the significance of choice in Berlin's work, his negative conception of freedom has the many merits of alluding to an inter hominem external and political world, of reminding us of the potential perils of state power, of cautioning that considerations about freedom ultimately always collide with other valuable ends, and of being a central component of a limited liberalism that does not intend to explain the totality of a capillary functioning of power and politics.

Berlin's pluralism is an account of the nature and logic of values. Yet, this assessment stems from a historical understanding of how values have been created, experienced and perceived. Everything for Berlin, including the character, logic and nature of values, originates in historical experience. Indeed, his famous distinction between positive and negative freedom also has historical roots. Berlin asserts that "[t]he freedom which consists in being one's own master, and the freedom which consists in not being prevented from choosing as I do by other men, may […] seem concepts at no great logical distance from each other—no more than the negative and positive ways of saying much the same thing." He hastens to add that it is historically that the positive and negative notions of freedom have developed in divergent directions.[409] The juxtaposition between logic and history, independent character and history pervades Berlin's understanding of values across the board. Chapter Two stresses this point by making a case for the historical, rather than meta-ethical and realist, dimension of Berlin's pluralism.

Unlike Rawls and Rorty, Berlin does not put the relationship between moral and political theory at the center of his examination. Indeed, he does not thematize this relationship in the same way they do. When Berlin remarks on how ethics and politics work in tandem, his main concern is not whether moral comprehensive views can play a role in the justification of liberalism or whether morality should act as the foundation for politics. His target is the advocates of a purely empirical study of politics. It is in this context that Berlin claims that one of the tasks of political philosophy is to examine the ends of life, social and collective human purposes, which makes political philosophy "moral philosophy applied to social situations."[410] That political theory is "simply ethics applied to society…" means, for him, that political philosophy is shot through with normative assessment as well as with reflection on empirical constraints. Political theory is about "values, about the goals of social existence, about what men in society live by and should live by, about good and evil, right and wrong."[411] He distances himself from those who believe that political theory carries no normative weight at all.

Despite placing side by side ethics and politics in this way, Berlin's liberalism, unlike Rawls's, rests on a morally underdetermined view of the person (he believes that the boundaries of the "human semblance" are vulnerable to change), does not assault the moral demeanor behind the citizen, and does not impart a permanent systematic value arrangement that affects the polity at large. Unlike Rorty's liberalism, Berlin's grasps the political phenomenon on its own terms, not from the perspective of a poeticized language. Unlike both Rawls' and Rorty's liberal theories, Berlin does not demand an internally fractured moral disposition towards public and private affairs.

Although Berlin does not command the maximization of personal freedom to the detriment of all other values, his liberalism stands on a presumption in favor of freedom from the state, that is, in favor of preserving a minimum space for personal action from

state political interference. "What then must the minimum be? That which a man cannot give up without offending against the essence of his human nature. What is this essence" What are the standards which it entails? This has been, and perhaps always will be, a matter of infinite debate."[412] In short, liberalism is the conception of a limited state that recognizes that in a plural world personal freedom from state action is a necessary condition for the continuance of human life as we understand it today. Chapter Three makes the case for a reinforcing relation between Berlin's liberalism and value pluralism on account of a relationship of elective affinity based on the role of choice that bounds them together.

As the quote above shows, Berlin's belief in freedom does rest, however, on moral presuppositions and on a conception of the person. For him, the boundaries of the minimum threshold for freedom are shifting: "conceptions of freedom directly derive from views of what constitutes a self, a person, a man."[413] At the same time, he holds that freedom of choice is not intrinsic to the notion of a human being: "it is an historical growth, an area bounded by frontiers."[414] A space for potential action and thinking safeguarded from the state is the only way in which those boundaries can be disrupted and redescribed. He puts it thus:

*[I]f we are not armed with an a priori guarantee of the proposition that a total harmony of true values is somewhere to be found…we must fall back on the ordinary resources of empirical observation and ordinary human knowledge. And these certainly give us no warrant for supposing…that all good things, or all bad things for that matter, are reconcilable with each other…Indeed, it is because this is their situation that men place such immense value upon the freedom to choose; for if they had assurance that in some perfect state, realizable by men on earth, no ends pursued by them would ever be in conflict, the necessity and agony of choice would disappear, and with it the central importance of freedom to choose.*"[415]

Hence, Berlin does not begin with an untarnished moral value—choice—and derive negative freedom from it. His starting point is not monistic, as with Rorty's cruelty, or comprehensive, as with Rawls's Kantian person. Rather, he begins with the recognition of a complex, labyrinthine world of values—a historical legacy of human endeavor—that acts as a pressing normative contingency when it comes to thinking about the limits of political state action.

Berlin's liberalism does not rest on the idea of choice as a capacity that endows dignity to human experience. Instead he sees choice as a necessary component that keeps pluralism alive. And pluralism is worth preserving in turn because it has revealed significant aspects of the human demeanor, which remain concealed under the Enlightenment description. Hence, if we want to honor the conception of the person as we understand it today, then politics ought to allow for the exercise of choice.

Of the three authors examined in this dissertation, Berlin's liberalism is the most receptive to pluralism. It does not bind the moral and political altogether too neatly, and, for the most part, does not see politics as a detachment from morality. Insofar as his liberalism is reconstructed in a Millian vein—a defense of freedom based on individuality for which choice is a central component—or as the result of a realist meta-ethical view—moral values are incommensurable and ready to be discovered—or as a paramount defense of freedom as the sequel of an essentialist understanding of the person as chooser, then his political theory is less inviting to pluralism. The chapters on his work propose an alternative reading, a more historical approach emphasizing the importance of value diversity and incommensurability as a self-constituted human process that, if

genuinely accepted, puts imperious limits on the principle of political organization of the state. Like most other kinds of liberalism, Berlin's presupposes some conception of the person and articulation of ideas that amount to a comprehensive view, but the historical embeddedness of these ideas makes his liberal outlook more accepting than others.

Berlin's liberalism translates a belief in the almost unfathomable normative constitution of human life into the limited structure of state power. This path, rather than an exaltation of the practice of some internal moral capacity, characterizes more accurately Berlin's support of the liberal state. Because Berlin puts emphasis on the options rather than on consummation, his liberalism is about the guarantee of non-interference rather than a defense of a "general theory of the good life." If pluralism is behind the idea of personal freedom, then liberalism cannot be a blanket doctrine that makes a liberal ethos the predominant lenses through which we understand politics as a whole. Liberalism offers a conception of the limited state that guarantees some degree of personal freedom given the pluralistic texture of human life. His liberalism turns more moral and less political, however, in that he admits, but does not explore, the implications that the threshold of freedom is always the result of the clash of social and political forces. He does remind us, though, of the dismal consequences for human experience of neglecting the presumption in favor of state non-interference.

To summarize, unlike Rawls and Rorty, Berlin does not fix boundaries from the outset between morality and politics and does not require internal divisions of the person that predispose her in a certain way towards public affairs. His defense of freedom is not previously defined, and is tied to an acceptance of the value complexity of human life. His liberalism is concerned with only a very limited aspect of the political: the structure of rights sanctioned by the state in protection of personal freedom in view of the historical fact that the more options are extinguished the more truncated a human life is. His liberalism, unlike Rawls's and Rorty's, does not assume to be an exhaustive account of the entire political phenomenon.

Nevertheless, although Berlin does not offer a complete system of reasons in support of liberalism and provides instead a new way of justifying the liberal project, his focus on choice, and his view that conceptions of freedom and politics derive from a conception of the person keep his liberalism within the boundaries of the Enlightenment and vulnerable to many criticisms that range from communitarianism to agonistic democratic theory to critical theory (mentioned at the end of Chapter Three). The minimalist liberalism defended in the next chapter forgoes Berlin's emphasis on choice and puts emphasis instead on the elective affinity between liberalism and pluralism on grounds of the expanded inclusiveness that they achieve when they interact with each other.

**II. Conclusion**

The three thinkers examined in this dissertation agree on three things. They all accept the significance and prevalence of pluralism (either as a sociological fact or as a meta-ethical account of the nature of values) for any understanding of social action. Second, they go hand in hand in believing that the truth of pluralism in either or both variants affect the way in which liberalism can be justified. Third, they avow that the grounds for a liberal state cannot impose full-blown ideals of the person and society for that clashes with the pluralism that instigates their liberalisms.

Rawls acknowledges the plural condition of our beliefs and thus contrives a new division of labor between moral and political theory that attempts to accommodate it. I have argued that his political liberalism remains comprehensive on different levels and thus cannot embrace pluralism properly. The analysis of his works shows that even in its political iteration, Rawls's liberalism remains comprehensive not only because it carries weighty Kantian overtones, but also because the breath of his liberalism covers aspects of the social order that stretch way beyond the state into ideals of the person, society and public inquiry. In this sense his political liberalism is still, to borrow from Nancy Rosenblum, "a theory of the moral life."[416]

Induced by both his pragmatism and pluralism, Rorty offers a liberal order without foundations that requires an aestheticism of politics and the reduction of the political to the narrow limits of liberalism staked out by the Millian principle. I have claimed that his proposed division of the moral and the political chips away at the pluralism he initially cherishes by disavowing and debarring from politics those who critique the liberal understanding of cruelty. Rorty's starting-point is the historical success of liberalism in reducing cruelty, which he underwrites as enough justification to make liberalism and the political coextensive secluding to the private realm everyone who assails that understanding of harm. His liberalism is reductive, as opposed to comprehensive, in the sense that it shrinks the political to a mere consideration of liberal cruelty repelling every other consideration or critique as private. The identical relation between liberalism and the political that Rorty plants by assumption relegates pluralism to a private matter and forecloses the conflict of values as a political phenomenon. For Rorty's reductive liberalism, pluralism becomes a private affair.

Finally, Berlin spearheaded the discussion and consequence of pluralism by directing attention to the value pluralistic and historical composition of our social practices. From this premise springs a liberalism of state non-interference to safeguard the potential exercise of choice. Because Berlin does not demarcate in stone the boundaries of morality and politics within the citizen and believes that liberalism's orbit refers to the guarantee of some threshold of non-intervention by the state, his liberal theory does not exhaust the limits of the political. In this sense, it leaves the door ajar for the idiosyncratic political conflict that reshapes the functions and powers of state action. Liberalism's purpose, however, is to subject that political struggle to a presumption in favor of freedom to keep pluralism breathing. Berlin's liberalism, at least the version thereof that I am defending here, is the less metaphysically overcommitted. His liberalism is minimalist in the sense that it determines a presumption in favor of freedom without hammering out once and for all the domain of applicability of the state, it does not orchestrate the various elements of a social order and does not preen itself on providing necessary and sufficient moral and political conditions for its own justification. His liberalism is institutional and justified on ethical but open, historical grounds.

If the three political philosophers embrace pluralism and grant that its incorporation to political reasoning introduces higher levels of disagreement and conflict, they approach political and ethical confrontation in diverging ways. The seclusion of pluralism into the private realm that both Rawls and Rorty advocate seriously misrepresents the political nature of the disagreement that results from pluralism. The constraining character of Rawls's politics with respect to its underlying pluralism has been noticed by many critical thinkers. Bonnie Honig, for instance, claims that "Rawls

sees no *positive* connection between politics and pluralism…What if genuine pluralism is a *casualty* of the public-private distinction that Rawlsian justice postulates as the *condition* of pluralism's possibility?" This same question could be posed equally compellingly to Rorty's vision. Rawls and Rorty's attempts to arrange morality and politics in a plotted pattern ultimately subdue rather than take in the pluralism that instigates their political theories.

For Rawls, as for John Dewey before him, the conflict can be appeased by the exercise of proper rules of inquiry. "Public reason," a form of inquiry based on public shared guidelines that set out the limits of private and public reasons, the partial and impartial, mitigate the possibility of disagreement by demarcating the terrain of reasons that can be potentially acceptable to all.[417]

Rorty, on the other hand, manages the conflict by relegating it to the private life of the individual and by aestheticizing the social order. As with Rawls, the public person is decoupled from the private persona, and "the city" mirrors this distribution of "the soul." If Rawls calls upon diverse internal moral capacities of the individual and thus construes an expansive account of liberalism, Rorty resorts to a one-dimensional idea of cruelty and concocts a reductive liberal order. In both cases, the artificial insulation of public and private reasons and emotions leads them to pyrrhic victories. They begin with a concern with value conflict which is drawn to a close with a stern allocation of values and reasons that stultifies pluralism's potential. Conflicts are straightened out from the outset, and pluralism loses its sting.

Berlin's liberalism, on the contrary, does not tamper with pluralism to make it a private matter, but sees it as a source of disagreement the resolution of which is part of political confrontation. For him, value conflict is not eliminable, nor should we try to eliminate it. The harmony that is achievable is always one in practice, not theory.[418]

The three thinkers believe that liberalism can meet the challenge of pluralism. Rawls and Rorty attach this challenge to a redescription of the relation between moral and political theory. The main problem that they face is that their division between morality and politics, partial and impartial reasons, hinges upon an allegedly unalterable distinction between the public and the private—a boundary which pluralism constantly threatens to wear away. [419] Both Rawls and Rorty believe that political theory relates to a public, impartial self and moral theory to a private, partial self. That their alignment between moral and political theory remains unsatisfactory is put in evidence by the fact that Rawls needs to claim that the political-public-impartial realm is also moral and by Rorty's claiming that the political-public-impartial realm rests on a Millian view. They both fail to notice that the relation between moral and political theory only orthogonally overlaps with the partial and impartial perspectives and that the division between the private and the public spheres inside and outside the individual is less unalterable than they assume. The incorporation of pluralism to the liberal justification of the state involves a more complex interaction between moral and political theory, which I will examine in the next chapter.

## Chapter Six
## The Independence of Liberal Political Theory

The acceptance of pluralism has implications for the liberal project. Indeed, pluralism alters the kind of liberalism that is defensible in modern conditions of value complexity and incommensurability. The exegetical analysis of the works of John Rawls, Richard Rorty and Isaiah Berlin suggests that the comprehensive and reductive versions of liberalism are less amenable to pluralism than Berlin's liberalism of choice. The answer to value pluralism, this dissertation suggests, is not a comprehensive or reductive liberalism but a minimalist one, that is, a more unassuming, more institutional, more circumscribed, more historically grounded liberal state.[420]

Minimalist liberalism makes its own the concern of the liberalisms defended by the three thinkers discussed in this dissertation, namely, that pluralism is a feature of modern life which forces a rethinking of the ways in which liberalism can viably justify itself. In addition, minimalist liberalism accepts another assumption tightly knitted into at least two of the liberal strategies explored in this dissertation, that is, that the acceptance of pluralism requires rethinking the relationship between moral and political theory as components of liberalism's own justification. Unlike the versions articulated by Rawls and Rorty, who divide the moral and political worlds, the private and the public spheres, way too cleanly picking and choosing the kinds of moral and political reasons that can be brought to the public debate, minimalist liberalism assumes that the divide between moral and political theory is multifaceted and complex.

On the one hand, moral reasons do play a part in the defense of liberalism. The endorsement of pluralism in either or both of its variants, the concern around safeguarding at least a minimum space for individual freedom, the significance of choice, and other ethical considerations that lie at the core of minimalist liberalism are moral views that are not neutral with respect to any comprehensive view. In this sense, minimalist liberalism presupposes an amalgam of moral, political and historical reasons for its own defense. Hence, one could say that minimalist liberalism leaves some casualties on the roadside by steadfastly holding a presumption in favor of freedom to avoid stymieing the human plural condition. From this perspective, minimalist liberalism entails some degree of "ethical comprehensiveness" and it belies the contemporary liberal attempts at state neutrality in any of its forms.

At the same time minimalist liberalism drops the hand of moral theory in denying the possibility that necessary and sufficient moral conditions lie at the justification of a liberal state. Minimalist liberalism flies in the face of any form of liberalism that postulates an exclusive bijective relation between morality and politics. The social contract tradition within liberal political theory is a case in point as it sets up a moral baseline from which the political order is a necessary detachment. The relationship minimalist liberalism has with pluralism—an ethical and historical view about values and their connection to human action—is one of normative and historical reinforcement, an elective affinity, and not one of logical or rational necessity.

Moreover, the endorsement of pluralism does not take liberalism too far into the orchestration of the social order. Minimalist liberalism shapes a vision of the limited state not ideals of the citizen or a just society. Minimalist liberalism's domain of applicability boils down to a fragment of the political phenomenon. It delimits certain rights as basic

freedoms in the name of pluralism. Hence, in terms of its scope, minimalist liberalism is morally much less ambitious. It is not a blanket political theory with expansive moral reach that delves deep into the interstices of individual moral reasoning. Minimalist liberalism protects basic rights to freedom as the precondition for a plural order, as a lock-in agreement based on the historical denouement of plural human practices. It does not exhaust the political discussion and is vulnerable to a political confrontation that pushes and redraws its own boundaries.

Finally, minimalist liberalism distances itself from an unduly ambitious moral goal that many liberal incarnations have made their own: the search for a just society. Minimalist liberalism calls into question the quest for justice as the proper objective of liberalism and focuses instead on political legitimacy. The search for, and achievement of justice is a broader social phenomenon that involves more than an exclusive liberal view of social and political agency, and it cannot be devised on grounds of moral, exhaustive reasons to the exclusion of political and historical practices.

This chapter directs attention to the features of minimalist liberalism suggesting that the relationship between moral and political theory that undergirds it is more labyrinthine and yet more restrictive than the one that dominates Rawls's political liberalism. Its complexity derives from the fact that the moral and political divide cannot be seamlessly overlapped with the private and public distinction. Yet, as argued in Chapter Five, this is exactly what Rorty and Rawls do when they equate the moral and political realms with the private and public spheres. Once they argue that morally comprehensive outlooks, that is, those that involve personal projects of self-development and accounts of the meaningful life, sit outside the political, they have depleted all that they have to say about the relationship between moral and political theory. Moral and political theory, however, overlap only tangentially with the private/public divide.

The reasons that catalyze the rethinking of moral and political theory do not perfectly accord with and are not dispelled by juxtaposing them with private and the public reasoning. For instance, whereas Rawls and Rorty argue that private reasons never make it to politics, minimalist liberalism presupposes that this is inevitable and part of the political process. Whereas they argue that politics is about moral obligations to which we hold each other, minimalist liberalism displaces moral theory in favor of an understanding of the political ensconced in the power relations that shape it. Insofar as the relationship between moral and political theory is not read as the divide between public and private under another name, then the double-headed aspect of politics—its normative and power sides—reveals itself in a more nuanced and complex fashion.

Rawls and Rorty's approach to liberalism reduces the normative dimension of the political—and all the complexities that normative assessment carries for the understanding of politics—to the impartial reasons of the partial and impartial dichotomy. Indeed, their attempt to detach moral and political theory is carried out from within moral theory itself. In contrast, moral and political theory densely intertwine under the umbrella of minimalist liberalism insofar as ethical reasoning plays a part in its justification. Yet, minimalist liberalism relinquishes moral reasoning in favor of historical awareness. It does not present itself as an account of an entire social order but rather a conception of the limited state. It does not assume to explain and exhaust the dynamics of the political and power relations from a normative liberal perspective. It stands against the idea that there are necessary and sufficient moral conditions for the justification of a liberal state,

and its main focus is political legitimacy rather than justice. I take up each of these in turn below.

**I. Moral and Political Theory Entwined: Comprehensive Ethical Reasons in the Justification of a Liberal State**

The justification of any political order and, more specifically, the reach of state action, ineluctably allude to ethical reasons. In this sense, Rawls, Rorty and Berlin are in agreement. Moreover, other thinkers such as Raymond Geuss, otherwise very critical of the moral imposition on political phenomena, also endorse that much.[421] Hence, Berlin claims that political theory is not about the causal relationships between political variables but rather it involves broad ethical considerations. Rawls argues that the political conception of justice is moral in the sense that it articulates certain ideals, principles and standards.[422] Rorty states that the study of politics involves an appreciation of the moral considerations that we owe to others.

Moral theory, however, is involved in the justification of a liberal state in an even a deeper way. The broad ethical considerations just mentioned that interweave with political phenomena could be of different sorts—comprehensive or impartial. Rawls's efforts to make political theory independent rest on not bringing comprehensive ethical reasons to public debates. He believes that the ethical values that we should draw upon to illuminate and justify public affairs are political (impartial) values alone. In other words, the ethical reflection that we bring to shed light on the dynamics of politics is a form of strictly morally impartial reasoning. In Rawls's view, then, the political boils down to impartial ethics.[423] However, Chapters One and Five of this dissertation have suggested some ways in which Rawls fails to accomplish this task.[424]

More relevant to our discussion here, however, is the fact that the very attempt to sever comprehensively moral (personal) from political (impartial) reasons in order to achieve the independence of political theory injects political liberalism with moral reasoning. For in demanding that citizens bring only impartial reasons to the justification of a liberal order, Rawls needs to tinker with the practical reasoning of individuals by digging deep into their ethical thinking. It requires a specific orientation towards the public and the private that builds upon moral theory—indeed upon a Kantian way of understanding practical reason. Hence, no sooner does Rawls split moral from political theory than they become more intertwined than before.[425]

Alternatively, Rorty, Berlin and the minimalist liberalism defended here stand for a more porous divide between comprehensive and impartial ethical reasons that could mingle with the understanding and justification of political positions. For them, the skein of personal and impartial moral reasons remains more or less intact, as they are more accepting of the comprehensive overtones of the ethical considerations that play a part in the political. Rorty openly endorses a Millian approach to defend his pragmatic liberalism, and Berlin avows that negative freedom depends on a conception of the person who experiences a world of values that cannot be lived all at once, whence the ethical significance of choices is derived. Minimalist liberalism, in accepting the normative grip of pluralism and consequently the protection of freedom as an individual attribute, sides with an ethical view that cannot be considered thoroughly impartial. Insofar as minimalist liberalism relates to value pluralism and other strong normative ideals political and moral theory stay allied.

The analysis of Rawls's work suggests that dispensing with moral personal outlooks, visions, ideals, and principles in the assessment of a social order is a highly trying enterprise. If ethical and normative thought provides grist for political judgment, then it becomes highly unlikely that one could skirt comprehensive views altogether. Impartiality is never the starting-point of political process, but rather an ideal that political circumstances approach asymptotically through the pull-push of political struggle and interchanges of ideas. The idea that we can stand from nowhere to justify the actions of the state fails to understand the political on its own terms.

A lesson that runs from Augustine to Friedrich Nietzsche to Sigmund Freud to Karl Marx to Max Weber to Michel Foucault—namely, that institutions or principles of morals and social organization that today stand as exemplars of fairness find their origins in painful and cruel practices—could be singled out as the golden rule of political phenomena.[426] Political arrangements, no matter how inclusive and impartial they become in the process, hardly ever begin with fair moral considerations about others' moral condition. "In a great number of cases," holds Weber, "the emergence of rational association from amorphous social action has been due to domination and the way in which it has been exercised."[427] Almost any major process of political inclusiveness falls within that rule—whether considering the history of state formation in both Europe and Latin America, the reconstitution and nationalization of the American army, the democratization of electoral rules and power-sharing reforms, the rise of welfare states in America, Latin America and Europe, or the extension of social and political franchise. All originate and were put in motion by the sheer political force of the actors involved.[428] No matter how impartial and inclusive, state institutions grow along the way, their origins and development are largely related to the political assessments of the relative power of the intervening actors, whose overriding considerations are not impartial, but grievances of exclusion.

In this sense, a political theory that requires that the starting point of political reasoning be morally impartial considerations about others is not only too exacting, but also distorts the phenomenon that it intends to grasp. Raymond Geuss may have this precise point in mind when he claims that "modern politics is importantly about power, its acquisition, distribution, and use…politics is not exclusively or in the first instance about our individual or collective moral intuitions."[429] Forms of domination based on universal impartial principles may or may not continue to cater to the political conflict that lies at their origin—the forces of exclusion, oppression and power—but moral considerations about the dignity of persons by themselves cannot fully capture the latent political forces that keep social arrangements alive and changing. Whether it is Augustine pointing to the bandits pulling the strings behind the earthly power, Nietzsche unmasking the resentment latent behind modern morality, or Freud denouncing the instinctual cost of socialization; whether it is Marx disclosing the process of primitive accumulation, exploitation and inequality behind the formal equality of the free-market and the state, Weber alerting us to the undemocratic risks and the weight of domination behind rational and universal legal orders, or Foucault exposing the working of power underlying systems of truth—all are jarring reminders that the vestiges of those origins are still at work in current orders of domination that rest on universal and impartial reasons.[430] In neglecting the divisive political forces that lie behind the impartial order, the examination

of political power from the exclusive perspective of a moral discourse of impartiality feeds the political domination that it is supposed to address in the first place.

It remains a conundrum that liberalism, a political theory that originates with a deeply nestled awareness of the threat of coercive power, becomes moralized to the extent that it loses sight of the political problem that instigates it. Liberalism begins with a concern for power that is only forgotten and diluted in a moral language that does not recognize the causes, motivations and orientations of the actors involved in the political conflict. Bernard Williams puts his finger on the problem when he argues that the starting point of the moral version of liberalism (the liberalism that stands on moral foundations) is an ethically elaborated account of the person rather than the political question of securing order, protection, safety and trust. Chapter One of this dissertation argues against the liberal project that puts the description of the person as the central element from which political reasoning begins.

The political dimension of social action is one of the most indefinable aspects of social theory, indeed almost impossible to disambiguate. Weber, Carl Schmitt, Foucault and many other social theorists have identified an ineluctable cluster of concomitant features of the political. Although Weber sees the jurisdiction of the political as one demarcated by the state—an assumption rightly challenged by Foucault and one that minimalist liberalism also rejects as argued below—he does capture some traits of the nature of the political—that middle ground that stands uneasily between pure consensual agreements and sheer manipulation or destruction. In this, Weber is aided by his distinction between "power" and "domination." For him, politics is not only about power—the ability to overcome and neutralize any resistance by others to the realization of one's own interests (material or ideal), that is, the probability of imposing one's will against the will of others.[431] Rather, politics also pertains to relations of domination, "the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons."[432] The state is pivotal in political dynamics because it is the compulsory association that organizes domination by means of legitimate violence.[433]

Weber anticipates Foucault in perceiving the indiscriminate influence of domination: "Domination in the most general sense is one of the most important elements of social action…Without exception every sphere of social action is profoundly influenced by structures of domination."[434] Domination differs from mere power in terms of its stability and its impact on structuring inequalities among social groups. Violence, prevalent in both relations of power and domination, is however more diffused, widespread and hidden in orders of legitimate domination. "Owing to the drastic nature of its means of control," Weber perceptively claims, "the political association is particularly capable of arrogating to itself all the possible values toward which associational conduct might be oriented; there is probably nothing in the world which at one time or another has not been an object of social action on the part of some political association."[435]

Grappling with the phenomenon of politics, according to Weber, means grappling with the "ethical paradoxes" that result from the "diabolic forces lurking in all violence."[436] Politics cannot be grasped from the principled, impartial perspective of morality, the "ethics of conviction," but instead should be approached from the "ethics of responsibility," a view that recognizes the demons attached to the fact that "the tasks of politics can only be solved by violence."[437] The distance between these outlooks—the

ethics of responsibility and the ethics of conviction—is not aptly captured by the difference between consequentialist and deontological ethics, as Charles Larmore suggests, which once again draws the political to the moral well.[438] The difference between the two lies in that only the ethics of responsibility can see through the paradoxes that even legitimate orders of domination—that is, those political orders where everyone holds reasons to obey—operate by means of violence that often cannot be avoided and often times endangers, rather than mirrors, the moral structure of the soul.[439] Hence, politics cannot be properly understood from the perspective of the practical reason that examines the paradoxes of the soul—the same soul that is usually imperiled by political action.

The ethics of responsibility—a form of political judgment attentive to the unintended consequences of political action, as well as the demons that lie behind the violence that supports it, the unfathomable contingency in which it takes place, the vulnerability and limited conditions of those who wield and enact political strategies, the historical mutability of the conditions where power is exerted, and the shifting alignments of the visible and hidden exclusions inevitable in any form of social organization—may also be oriented by personal ethical views. In this sense, morality and politics intersect. Yet, political judgment is left in tatters when supplanted by an impartial moral perspective.

The intersection between moral and political theory examined in this section, however, wanes as we consider the dimensions explained below.

**II. Moral and Political Theory Sundered: Historical Pluralism**

Against the vast majority of thinkers who read Berlin's value pluralism exclusively as a meta-ethical position about values, Chapter Two makes the case that historical awareness of human practices and their impact on the realm of value is a cardinal aspect of Berlin's pluralistic outlook. Historical experience—in particular the contrasting events and worldviews of the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement whence our perception of the modern person arises—is taken as the main source of the understanding of the character of values. History rather than meta-ethics is the building block of value pluralism. The value pluralism that cuts across minimalist liberalism is drawn from the historical spring, not from meta-ethical realism. If this argument is sound, then minimalist liberalism musters its strength more from historical awareness than from detached moral thinking.

A historical sense undergirds the perception of the origin, character and logic of values. Together with the elaboration of what it means to be a person for us—an understanding that can be acquired only historically—comes an appreciation of the significance of values in our lives—how they countervail, exclude, conflict with, reinforce and erode each other. Whatever we know about the nature of values we owe to our historical perception of human experience. Experience is all that there is and all that words can express. Bernard Williams brilliantly captures this idea and more:

*One who properly recognises the plurality of values is one who understands the deep and creative role that these various values can play in human life. In that perspective, the correctness of the liberal consciousness is better expressed, not so much in terms of truth—that it recognises the values which indeed there are—but in terms of truthfulness…To try to build life in any other way would now be an evasion, of something which by now we understand to be true. What we understand is a truth about human nature as it has been revealed—revealed in the only way in*

*which it could be revealed, historically. The truthfulness that is required is a truthfulness to that historical experience of human nature*.[440]

Minimalist liberalism stands on the idea that the way in which human beings have crafted their practices and social interactions historically, and the values they attached to them, carries weighty ethical implications. A value pluralist of this stripe understands the idea of value incommensurability as a historical-ethical fact. Despite Larmore's complaints, presented in Chapter Three, to the effect that pluralism is too narrow a meta ethical theory of value to properly work as the justificatory basis for liberalism in an era characterized by sharp disagreement of beliefs, this ethical position is a vastly more historical worldview than he admits, and in that sense significantly more inclusive.

**III. Moral and Political Theory Sundered: No Necessary and Sufficient Moral Conditions for A Liberal State**

The social contract tradition within liberalism rests on the idea that a hypothetical benchmark that levels the moral condition of the individuals entering the compact necessarily yields a just liberal political order. Morality provides down-the-line justificatory reasons for politics. This implies two things: that politics is the epigone of morality—the latter stating the constraints and possibilities of social interaction—and that politics follows from morality in a logical, rational way. The acceptance of pluralism does away with this justificatory strategy. Accepting pluralism implies that there are no necessary and sufficient conditions for the justification of a liberal state, neither moral nor political. Legitimacy is then always an open, ongoing process.

The point that pluralism obstructs the possibility of complete systematic theory in the realm of ethics was made long ago by Bernard Williams.[441] Pluralism also corrodes the viability of defending a liberal state on the grounds of systematic or exhaustive ethical values. The defense of elective affinity, outlined in Chapter Three, as the right normative and historical connection between pluralism and liberalism challenges the contractarian tradition and foundational projects alike that offer a complete description of both the ethical values and the political outcome that results from them or attach epistemological priority to any one area of knowledge over others as part of the justificatory strategy. Minimalist liberalism presupposes an open-ended approach to justification. The elective affinity between minimalist liberalism and pluralism is a relationship of reinforcement based on normative, sociological and historical reasons. It is an historical and contingent connection developed over time, and it does not preclude other reasons that can be drawn in their support. We might say that the elective affinity between pluralism and liberalism involves the random historical encounter of two different set of ideas lodged in forms of social action that due to their distinctive complementariness tend to develop to a degree and quality absent before they first meet. This elective affinity entails a persistence of ideal and material interests manifested in a social order over time in a way that would have not been possible absent the interdependence. Value pluralism disrupts the foundational project in political theory with the implication that problems of legitimacy cannot be accounted for from an exclusive moral perspective and remain open to political vicissitudes. This endows political theory with more autonomy from moral theory.

John Rawls's "overlapping consensus" steers tentatively in that direction—a historical, inclusive, political (to a limited extent), ongoing and potentially growing consensus in support of a liberal order. His consensus around liberal institutions grows apace from within an amalgam of clashing worldviews not all of which uphold a liberal

ethos. Citizens who affirm liberal rules do not need to adopt a liberal conception of the person, or cherish a strong sense of autonomy, or promote individuality, or believe that universal rules make them free. I have argued in Chapter One that, despite hinting at the right direction, Rawls's overlapping consensus does not prosper. The uneasy pairing of the original position and the overlapping consensus turns the latter into a fifth wheel. The original position requires many premises that the overlapping consensus needs to waive (for instance, a Kantian conception of the person, and a strong presumption in favor of rationality as the right capacity to scrutinize our moral condition). Whereas the original position seals the discussion about the terms of social cooperation overlapping consensus suggests that disagreement on key aspects of social life would persist among the intervening discordant participants. This latent discord, however, is defused by the exacting constraints of "public reason." The overlapping consensus is poised uneasily between the other two legs of Rawls's justificatory approach—the original position and public reason—disrupting the whole triadic structure. For whereas overlapping consensus tempers the currency of a liberal comprehensive view, the original position confirms it; whereas the reasoning behind overlapping consensus tends not to foreclose the question of political legitimacy, the original position implies that there are necessary and sufficient moral conditions to justify a liberal order; and whereas overlapping consensus leaves the door ajar for pluralistic disagreement, public reason tends to tame it. Moreover, overlapping consensus acts as a juggernaut of agreement but only at the level of moral ideas. Hence, the overlapping consensus does not help to abate the moral imprint on political thinking criticized above.

The defense of elective affinity as the right normative connection of reasons in support of a liberal state suggests that problems of political justification remain always open and can never be conclusively resolved. This weakens the idea that the right moral preconditions could provide enough justificatory support for political institutions, and that politics is an outgrowth of morality. Minimalist liberalism does not solve the problem of legitimacy it simply provides political tools for an open-ended process of inclusiveness (more on this below in point 6).

**IV. Moral and Political Theory Sundered: A Liberal State Not A Liberal Polity**

The domain of applicability of minimalist liberalism is the state, and not the social order at large, and this reduction of scope severs or at least dramatically reduces the connection between moral and political theory prevalent in contemporary liberal theory. In restricting its scope, minimalist liberalism requires less support from moral theory as it requires less from the moral predispositions of its citizens. In narrowing its scope to the paramount political institution of society, it focuses on the uses of violence that cascade in subliminal forms to other types of social action. Yet, this retreat into the state also indicates that liberalism cannot elucidate more than a subset of the political.

The expansion of liberalism—from a liberal state to a liberal order—has been an ongoing process instigated at the level of ideas and historical circumstances over centuries. Liberalism is a conception of the limited state, and its central feature is commonly stated to be its association with constitutional government. This liberal core conception has contracted or expanded depending on the various incarnations that liberal political theory has taken. In particular, after the Enlightenment, liberalism has extended

its scope assembling under the liberal umbrella other broader social goals absent in the classical versions of liberalism.[442]

Since the inception of classical liberalism a focus on constitutional government has been its definitional feature, yet after the Enlightenment liberalism undergoes an expansive change such that it requires more than the guarantee of a constitutional state to safeguard freedom from government.[443] The Enlightenment begets a worldview that sets the human race against a rational, sustained and continuous background progress in the arts, politics and sciences.[444] Although Enlightenment thinkers vary immensely in their views about personhood and society, most of them develop universal moral standards (many, but not all, based on reason) that function as the normative benchmark against which to assess the moral and cultural stage of individuals and social institutions.[445] Liberalism, instilled by this grand vision of social progress and political action, was swept into the trend and expanded its grounds and scope. The liberal progeny of this *Weltanschauung* incorporates the avid ambitions of the time and becomes a political doctrine within a broader philosophy of history. With the Enlightenment, political thinking becomes universal, and liberalism with its emphasis on rationality and individualism stands out as the paragon of political judgment. What has heretofore been a political doctrine with limited practical aspirations that focused on the state as the political agent that could bring together conflicting religious views within one territory, turns after the Enlightenment into a political theory with historical purpose, the domain of applicability of which was the world at large. Liberalism now calls upon a rational kind of citizen who engages in a form of universal moral reasoning, and sees social interaction as an instance of that world reasoning. Liberal politics counts on this rational, self-making agent to reach truces between the private and the public spheres by means of the universality of law.

Immanuel Kant's political theory is a paradigmatic case of this historical outlook and it heralds the tensions between the internal and external capacities of the person, and the moral account of politics that later become ingrained in the ensuing versions of liberalism. Kant, like many liberals after him, defends a dual conception of freedom. Freedom is, on the one hand, positive. It is the self-enactment of one's law, the capacity to obey only the law to which the citizen consented for himself (although consent, in Kant's thought, is a regulative ideal). In other words, freedom is an ideal of political autonomy. On the other hand, Kant defends a negative conception of freedom insofar as the "principle of right" delimits areas of personal liberty compatible for all: "Right is the restriction of each individual's freedom so that it harmonizes with the freedom of everyone else."[446] This yields an account of freedom from the state the origin of which is a free will that imposes its own laws to itself. Kant sees politics as an outgrowth of morality: the principle of right acts as the test for universalizable political freedom in the same way as the categorical imperative safeguards the limits of moral freedom. In turn, freedom is tethered to the movement of historical progress—the idea of "unsocial sociability"—that allows the development of the internal moral capacities of the individual by a process of social antagonism.[447]

Hence, when John Gray defines liberalism in terms of its individualism (the moral primacy of the person), universalism (moral unity of the human species), egalitarianism (equal moral status) and meliorism (corrigibility of all social and political institutions) he must be referring to the Enlightenment rather than the earlier iterations of liberalism.[448]

The momentum towards a more expansive liberalism continues well into the twentieth century. From the progressive individuality of W. V. Humboldt and John Stuart Mill to the social liberalism of T. H. Green and L. T. Hobhouse to the pragmatic reformism of John Dewey to the Kantian (and as I argue in my chapter) the political liberalisms of John Rawls—they all take liberalism a step further into the crevices of a social order that has been gradually molded and understood from a liberal doctrine that asks increasingly more from the social order and the individuals that it shapes.[449]

This expansive trend at the level of ideas that has been many decades in the brewing eventually materialized with the events that follow World War I. The disarming of the remaining monarchies—the Austro-Hungarian, the Russian, the German, and the Ottoman empires—gave rise to the nation-state order, as we know it today. The modern state became a powerful machine of mobilization, taxation, and production regulating numerous aspects of social life that were immune to political reach until then. The growth of the welfare state is one of the latest steps in the same direction. Liberal political theory absorbed many of these historical and political changes by drawing into liberalism's orbit concerns about distributive justice.[450] Thus, today's liberalism has diversified its concerns and ramified its scope. Alan Ryan comments on this phenomenon thus: "The liberalism that has triumphed, then, is not an intellectually rigorous system, manifested in its only possible institutional form. It is an awkward and intellectually insecure system, committed to democracy tempered by the rule of law, to a private enterprise economy supervised and controlled by government, to equal opportunity so far as it can be maintained without too much interference with the liberty of employers, schools, and families."[451] In this process of aggrandizement liberalism has resorted increasingly more to moral theory to justify its actions drawing upon an elaborated conception of the person that goes increasingly inward to justify external political interactions among persons. As a result, liberalism ceases to designate only the limited structure of the state and, as Ronald Beiner contends, begins to characterize a form of social order.[452]

This dividing line between pre- and post-Enlightenment liberalisms has become by now a platitude. Still Pierre Manent expresses this same idea with a new spin. He claims that liberalism after the French Revolution bears little resemblance to its pre-nineteenths century version for nineteenth century liberalism is based on a "*third man*, different from both proprietor and citizen…After the Revolution, the men of the nineteenth century no longer lived merely in civil society or the state, they lived in a third element that received various names, usually 'society' or 'history.'"[453] The expansive drive of liberalism that this chapter scrutinizes is the continuous attempt by liberalism to make sense of Manent's "third man." Liberalism has expanded its scope and breadth by including ideals of the good life that involve political but also private dimensions of the person, and it has made "society" and sometimes "history," not simply the state, its orbit of relevance. This post-French Revolution liberalism aims at justifying not only the state, but also the life of this third man that hovers agonizingly between the state and civil society.

"We move in this third element of 'society' or 'history' like fish in water," claims Manent, "and even consider the notion of 'culture' to be incontrovertible. Consequently, atheists as well as Christians today run the risk of being blind to the internal necessity of this variety of nineteenth century religion, which, too religious to be genuine politics, too political to be true religion, reveals the extreme precariousness of the 'third man' whom

we have become."[454] Political power grows into society and liberalism follows its lead by delving into the inner personal stronghold of the citizen. Francois Guizot, according to Manent, is a typical case of a liberal theorist who strives for the expansion of political power into society: "[r]epresentative power that understands its position must know how to seek, *within society*, the means of governing it." Guizot wanted "government to consider society not as an enemy but as a partner."[455]

At the current crossroads of history and ideas, liberalism is torn apart by three centrifugal tendencies. As an heir of the Enlightenment, liberalism naturally imbues the social order and moral dispositions of the citizens with a liberal ethos; as a political theory that trails behind the historical facts of aggrandizement, radiation, fragmentation and complexity of political power, liberalism storms the social order in a ham-handed way that inadequately explains the political phenomenon that it intends to justify. The liberal leak into social and personal hiatuses is carried out from the moral perspective criticized above that fails to understand the political phenomenon on its own terms. And, finally, as a political theory of the post-Enlightenment that recognizes the imperious force of pluralism, liberalism-cum-moral theory demands personal orientations from its citizens to uphold the liberal state, which collide with the recognition of pluralism that liberalism labors to incorporate.

Aware of the challenges that pluralism poses for liberalism, Rawls draws back his liberalism to a more confined place. He advocates a liberalism that is said to be political in light of its subject (the basic structure of society), its justification (it is freestanding) and its content (drawn from the fundamental ideas in the public culture). I have argued in Chapter One that Rawls does not reap the benefits from his political liberalism on account of the ethical comprehensiveness that it requires (that is, the justification of political liberalism is not freestanding). Indeed, I have argued above that moral and political theory blend with each other insofar as some degree of comprehensiveness is inevitable in the justification of any liberalism (point #1). And Chapter Five highlights the problem that is relevant for the present discussion, namely, that Rawls's liberalism requires a spatial comprehensiveness that spills over into the basic structure of society leaking into the internal moral dominion of the citizens. That is, its scope, though purportedly circumscribed to the basic structure, overextends to the entire social order.

The pillar of Rawls's ideal of public reason is a partitioned citizen capable of engaging in political discourse only on grounds of unsullied political (impartial) considerations. The fact that liberalism determines with such precision the internal compass of its citizens attests to the comprehensiveness of a political doctrine that stretches far beyond the organization of the limited structure and powers of the state. Indeed, the liberal citizen comes about as the result of a staged developmental social psychology kindled by an incremental structure of moral authority.[456] Liberalism of this stripe is a political theory turned into a full-blooded moral theory that defends a limited state assisted by a specific form of social order whereby everyone holds the same moral inclinations towards questions of basic justice and constitutional essentials. To defend the constitutional regime—"one in which laws and statutes must be consistent with certain fundamental rights and liberties… a constitution (not necessarily written) with a bill of rights specifying those freedoms and interpreted by the courts as constitutional limits on legislation"—Rawls needs to step outside the state and align the internal reasons within the citizen.[457]

If many other post-Enlightenment thinkers like T. H. Green and L. T. Hobhouse further an important range of social liberal virtues, Rawls follows Kant in indirectly relating the liberal state to the internal capacities of the individual.[458] Since Rawls defends a state with limited powers and functions, imparting a liberal ethos is partly carried out by the state and partly by society itself. This is the purpose of the educational role of the political conception of justice once it achieves the publicity requirement. Unlike procedural democracy, justice as fairness instills the public political culture by means of judicial decisions helping to mold a conception of equal citizenship: "the greater educational role of a political conception in a constitutional regime may later alter its political sociology so as to favor it over procedural democracy…The idea behind the educational role of a political conception of justice suitable for a constitutional regime is that by being embedded in political institutions and procedures, that conception may itself become a significant moral force in a society's public culture."[459]

Likewise, that liberalism has evolved from a theory about the state to a philosophy about social cohesion broadly understood is evidenced by Rawls's understanding of the role of political philosophy. Like the social antagonism of Kant's philosophy of history that eventually leads us to a state of perpetual peace, for Rawls too political philosophy has a reconciliatory role.[460] Political philosophy should try to reconcile us with the profound disagreements that vex contemporary social orders, in particular the fact of pluralism.[461] This ambitious project involves bringing together many aspects of social life that are harmonized by a moral sense of the citizenry. Rawls's liberalism is comprehensive not only or mainly because it is Kantian but also because it has moved away from a theory of the state to a theory of society—a way of living that covers a wide range of aspects of social cohesion—a society that needs to further liberal virtues to make his liberalism viable. This magnifies an internal tension in Rawls's liberalism—being a blanket liberalism upheld by a neutral state—which will be addressed in the section below.

Berlin disrupts the standard picture of liberalism that has been long maintained since the rise of the Enlightenment. He is one of the first liberal political theorists to bring liberalism home by focusing on the garantiste structure of the state and the enforcement of negative freedoms. His minimalist liberalism is an unassuming political theory about the limitations of state power that remains silent regarding broader problems of social cohesion. Minimalist liberalism is a conception of a constitutional state based on a presumption of freedom the exclusive concern of which is to determine areas of potential individual action if pluralism is going to be preserved. This is the limited view of liberalism that others, like Sartori, defend: "[L]iberalism deals with political freedom—freedom *for* the citizen *from* state oppression—and that if this is forgotten or deemed of no importance, liberalism is forgotten."[462]

Minimalist liberalism recoils from the ambitions of Enlightenment liberalism and its sense of universal progress. It is not, as many have called it, a "general theory of the good life."[463] Pluralistic liberalism does not defend freedom on the grounds that life necessarily gets better under its auspices; it defends freedom as the only way of preserving human life as we understand it today—as the embodiment and creative source of values not all of which can be manifested in one worldview. Taking pluralism seriously requires giving up on liberalism understood as a political theory the orbit of which is the broader problem of social cohesion. It lies beyond liberalism's task to solve

conclusively the problem of social and political divisiveness. Liberalism in the limited sense understood here has achieved most of its goals. In this respect, though not others, I agree with Sartori when he claims that "[l]iberalism has depreciated, after all, as a result of its success."[464]

**V. Moral and Political Theory Sundered: The Political Broader Than The State**

Minimalist liberalism stands on the following reasoning: if liberalism is a conception of the state, and political power and forms of domination transcend the state by affecting many other forms of social action, then liberalism is not well-equipped to shed light on the political phenomenon writ large. In other words, when it comes to understanding politics, liberalism is not the only game in town.

If minimalist liberalism does not intend to provide a full regimentation of the entire social order (point #4), then it cannot presume to offer a full explanation of all political phenomena. As a conception of a limited state, minimalist liberalism does not share in the aspiration of political exhaustiveness held by every other version of liberalism—pre- and post-Enlightenment—that presuppose that the state determines the boundaries of politics relegating economics, cultural and social life to a pristine civil society the stratum of which is anything but political. Minimalist liberalism, instead, does not assume the prerogative of the political but those aspects relating to the constitutional state.

Both Rawls's comprehensive liberalism and Rorty's reductive liberalism offer a conception of a liberal order that purportedly charts the full extension of the political realm. If comprehensive and reductive liberalisms are overexpansive in the sense of requiring for their own survival a taxing orientation towards public affairs from their citizenry, at the same time they reduce politics to state authority. This bolsters the idea that liberalism, as a conception of a limited state, and the political are coextensive. Rawls's liberalism in particular conceals an internal tension between two tendencies in his political theory. On the one hand it overstretches into the private souls of the citizens by demanding a specific disposition towards the political, it construes the terms of political adjudication prior to political confrontation, and it imprints justice as the cardinal virtue of society and as the backbone value from which politics fans out. On the other hand, however, once his liberalism has been lodged in so many aspects of social life, it turns its back against it and retreats to the confines of state action where it purports politics resides.

Rorty too defends a liberalism that exhausts the understanding of politics. It reduces the whole phenomenon of the political to the liberal state by ejecting everyone (or at any rate the internal side of everyone) who does not see eye to eye with the harm principle. Hence, for Rorty, liberalism, the state and politics end where the harm principle ends.

State neutrality, which Rawls despite some reservations endorses, is an important element of the view that politics starts and ends with state action and that a fortiori a conception of the limited state explains all that there is to say about politics in a social order. The principle of political neutrality has been defined in many different ways, but it basically states that a liberal state cannot favor any one conception of the good over any other.[465] Hence, citizens could support liberal institutions without being liberal. "Liberal

neutrality," says Jeremy Waldron, "may be seen as a generalization of religious toleration into the realm of ethical choice generally."[466]

The view of the state as the political floodgate turns a deaf ear to at least two criticisms launched by Marx and Foucault and echoed later by contemporary critical theory. To begin with Marx, one of his most fundamental insights about the state is that behind its postulated neutrality it actually sanctions the divisiveness of civil society. [467] Whereas a liberal perspective sees the state as securing equal opportunities to advance permissible conceptions of the good, a non-liberal view exposes that behind the state's supposed universality all the real divisions in civil society remain intact. Whereas from a liberal point of view state neutrality is theorized as religious or ethical toleration, from a non-liberal perspective it is perceived as the state's consolidation of the conditions that make social divisiveness possible. Marx's point is that the acclaimed universality, impartiality and detachment of the state from society means the detachment of itself from religion and economics, but not the detachment of the citizens from the forces of religion and economics that affect them. In that sense, state neutrality underwrites structural inequalities that lurk behind the system of formal equality.

The Marxist view holds that the state sanctions a set of rules and social relationships that protect and preserve the capitalist class society as a whole (at least in one of the two current Marxist interpretations of the state). The democratic, universal, impartial process to gain access to state power does not make that institution neutral to its citizenry. For the state survives not only on the basis of democratic preferences but also on the revenue derived from the private accumulation that it needs to guarantee and safeguard.

To bring Marx in here does not imply an endorsement of his theory of the state as an instrument of the ruling class or his account of freedom as "human emancipation." Rather, by doing so I hope to highlight that state neutrality in any of its meanings flies in the face of the idea that the state always underwrites some form of social order beyond the constraints of political society, and that the idea of an independent and unvarnished civil society detached from the state is an analytical distinction that does not illuminate adequately the functioning of political power. Indeed, the very complex interweaving between state and civil society has been articulated by other non-Marxist thinkers, such as Charles Taylor.[468] This complexity is overlooked when liberalism, under the pretense of state neutrality, neglects to see the pervasive range of state ramifications and postulates that politics ends where civil society begins. That the state does nothing to favor any particular comprehensive view rather than another does not mean that in leaving things intact the political impact does not surpass the boundaries of the basic political institutions.

Furtively, comprehensive liberalisms admit that much and that is why they oscillate between state neutrality (point # 5) and the orchestration of the social order writ large (point #4). Reductive liberalism too leaves the relationship between state and civil society undertheorized. Rorty's view that the radical critiques about self-development should be shunned from the political realm and be left vigorous but caged within the private sphere, assumes that the liberal state is fair to its members and that it can insulate itself from their critique.

This view of politics hemmed in by the state is one that libertarianism also champions. Libertarianism appears as a seeming retreat from the overextended versions

of liberalism to its more modest concerns about the limited structure of state power and the enforcement of negative freedom. Friedrich von Hayek, for instance, claims that the liberal conception of freedom is freedom under the law which limits the freedom of each so as to secure the same freedom for all. Liberty, for him, is the absence of arbitrary coercion.[469] The "watch-dog" libertarian state has only one consideration in mind—the guarantee of negative freedom—and it recoils from acting as an enabling agent of moral development or a facilitator of its pre-conditions. Libertarians advocate various forms of political association—from anarchism to a minimal night watchman state—that at most provide security, the administration of justice, national defense, and enforcement of contracts. Eric Mack and Gerald Gaus depict libertarianism along the following lines: it is normatively and ontologically individualist and anti-holist; takes freedom as the core value (with private property and free market as background conditions); defends the spontaneous order of knowledge and decision making; restricts coercion to blocking infringements upon the rightful claims of individuals; believes that legitimate coercion lies in the rights of private individuals; and shows skepticism about the virtues of coercion.[470]

However, with important qualifications, it could be said that libertarianism is less a political than an economic doctrine. Unlike liberalism, the starting point of which is a concern with political freedom to achieve political equality, libertarian politics is a byproduct of a description of the person as *homo economicus*. Its attention to political freedom is harnessed by an overriding concern with economic freedom. With the exception of thinkers such as Adam Smith, Friedrich von Hayek and Robert Nozick whose works include moral and political premises that are as weighty as the economic ones, libertarianism does not share the concern of political liberalism—the limitation of state power in view of an account of the person that unfolds in the moral, cultural, political and economic spheres alike. If comprehensive liberalism sees society as a moral order, libertarianism conceives it as a "market society."[471] This difference of concerns has made the history of liberalism and libertarianism overlap only intermittently.

In any case, unlike minimalist liberalism, libertarianism, together with the other versions of liberalism, draws a sharp line between state and civil society, reducing the political to the state. Hayek, for instance, argues that the general rules that delimit the boundaries of freedom "must be general rules of individual conduct, applicable to all alike in an unknown number of future instances, defining the protected domain of the individuals, and therefore essentially of the nature of prohibitions rather than of specific commands…What thus makes an act of coercion arbitrary is that it serves a particular end of government, is determined by a specific act of will and not by universal rule needed for the maintenance of that self-generating overall order of actions."[472] Beyond this threshold, civil society emerges where the economic sphere takes a predominant place. "Liberalism merely demands that so far as the state determines the conditions under which the individuals act it must do so according to the same formal rules for all."[473] If this condition is fulfilled, the political problem is, according to Hayek, solved. As with Rorty and Rawls, the political is reduced to the limits of the liberal state, and the problem of political domination is solved with the enforcement of general laws.

The idea that political power can be fenced in within the limits of state action and that therefore a proper understanding of state law is tantamount to an understanding of the functioning and jurisdiction of the political has been famously called into question by

Foucault. His description of the capillary basis of political power challenges this view.[474] After Foucault, power not only disperses and ramifies trickling down to civil society by carriers that may not be necessarily political. It also, and for that reason, becomes a capillary rather than a purely intentional phenomenon.[475]

Bonnie Honig criticizes Rawls on a similar basis. She objects to the overemphasis of the voluntary aspect of politics and the state-centered vision of the political in Rawls's work. She claims that "Rawls problematically disempowers citizens by reconciling them without remainder to the juridical authority of the state…Rawlsian rationalism is not a benign and agreeable means to institutionalize a private realm pluralism but a betrayal of a deeper (more disagreeable?) pluralism that mires these liberals in a politics they never quite celebrate, though neither do they condemn it tout court."[476] Liberal state neutrality underwrites an account of the political that presumably does not stream down to civil society. For both comprehensiveness and reductiveness assume that liberalism as a conception of the state can offer a complete explanation of political power. Minimalist liberalism, instead, claims a more modest aim for itself by informing only an aspect of the political. Not only does it leave more room to legislative compromise as many other thinkers have suggested but it also precludes understanding our political condition solely from the perspective of a liberal ethos.[477] Hence, regarding the understanding of political conflict, minimalist liberalism is not the only game in town.

**VI. Moral and Political Theory Sundered: Legitimacy not Justice**

The extension of the activities of the state into increasingly broader areas of social and economic life strains the traditional accounts of liberal legitimacy and tends to blur the distinction between legitimacy and justice. In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls argues that "[j]ustice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought."[478] This concern about justice is later complemented with a concern about legitimacy in *Political Liberalism*. However, the focus on justice, as opposed to legitimacy, aggravates the internal tensions of liberalism under conditions of pluralism. Indeed, liberalism is better suited to address questions of political legitimacy rather than justice.

Although the processes of globalization and internationalization in all areas of social action have whittled away the powers of the national state, the latter still remains the paramount politically accountable institution. Hence, most discussions of legitimacy still hover to a great length around the modern state. The state, according to Weber, is a compulsory political organization the origins of which hark back to a process of political expropriation. Its most specific feature is the use of legitimate violence within a territory.[479] The "state is a relation of men dominating men…" claims Weber.[480] He distinguishes forms of domination that appeal for their continuation to material, affectual or ideal motives (a constellation of interests) from forms of legitimate domination.[481] The state is a relation of domination "supported by means of legitimate violence."[482] While legitimacy imposes constraints on domination, it also endows it with stability. Those who are ruled see the ruler's indictments as valid and thus have motives for compliance and allegiance. The Weberian legal rational form of domination characteristic of modern liberal democracies draws its legitimacy from the fact that its commands are part of a general, universal, impartial system of rules and norms; each command is part of a broader system of the rule of law.[483]

After Weber, legitimacy has been defined either normatively or sociologically in numerous ways.[484] From a normative point of view, the idea of legitimacy focuses on the moral judgments that one can make about the accepted rules. Just to mention a few examples, John Scott, claims that "[p]ower is legitimate because it is accepted as being right, correct, justified, or valid in some way. This legitimacy flows from the internalisation of significant cultural meanings and an identification with those who are seen as their guardians or guarantors because of the positions that they occupy through election, appointment, or some other accepted procedure."[485] Gianfranco Poggi claims that the legitimacy of political institutions means that "they can assume, in their routine operations, that subjects or citizens will comply with the orders of political authorities on the basis not only of unreflecting habit or of fear of punishment, but also of a willing disposition to obey, motivated by a sense of obligation and of moral self-respect."[486] According to Raymond Geuss, to ask about the legitimacy of the state is to ask about the warrant of state institutions to command and why individuals should obey.[487] Seyla Benhabib claims that "[p]ower is a social resource and a social relation in need of legitimation. Legitimacy means that there are good and justifiable reasons why one set of power relations and institutional arrangements are better than and to be preferred to others. Conceptions of legitimacy consist of normative arguments, defending the justice and fairness of a particular set of institutions, relations, and arrangements."[488]

Rawls defines the principle of legitimacy as the political power exercised "in accordance with a constitution the essentials of which all citizens as free and equal may reasonably be expected to endorse in the light of principles and ideals acceptable to their common human reason."[489] As mentioned in the prior chapter, for Rawls, the principles of justice, the guidelines of public reason, and the principle of legitimacy all result from the same argument: "the argument for those guidelines, and for the principle of legitimacy, is much the same as, and as strong as, the argument for the principles of justice themselves."[490] He does acknowledge, nonetheless, that legitimacy is a less demanding ideal than justice.[491]

The normative account of legitimacy has been intensified and expanded by both the secularization of the world and the enlargement of the state to areas that were until recently the proper realm of tradition or the market. Hence, William Connolly, referring to Jürgen Habermas's work, explains that he "believes that the extension of the state into more and more areas of economic and social life…helps to render the conventional character of existing rules and norms more visible, and thereby amplifies pressure on the state to legitimate the specific rules and policies it enacts."[492] The comprehensive account of liberalism with its focus on justice can be seen as a response to this phenomenon of state overextension. Roughly speaking, justice seems to be coterminous with an account of legitimacy that expands to address the demands of an overstrained state that expands into the social order.

However, the Habermasian-Rawlsian view that puts emphasis on ideal conditions of allegiance tends to trim away the political content of legitimacy overemphasizing the universality and impartiality of the rule of law to the detriment of the self-legitimating effects of political power. Indeed, this charge has been levied against many versions of deliberative democracy as well that overdo the consensual, rational aspect of politics while underplaying the more unsavory effects of a genuine pluralistic account of politics.[493] Chantal Mouffe, for instance, objects to deliberative models of democracy that

"they identify the democratic public sphere with the discursive redemption of normative validity claims. It is clear that what is missing…is the dimension of the political."[494] For Mouffe, these views of politics limp along in denying its conflictual dimension—the fact that "any social objectivity is ultimately political and that it has to show the traces of exclusion that governs its constitution."[495] In short, legitimacy is always based on some form of successful power, a fact that is constantly explained away by rationalistic models of legitimacy that intend to close the gap between the latter and rationality.[496]

On the contrary, Weber never neglects that the mechanics of violence and power underlie systems of legitimate domination. In Weber's account, this stretches from the origins of state autonomy with the expropriation of the means of violence (as opposed to the means of production) to its current legal rational form when elites (for instance, technocrats who do not own the means of administration) tend to become a special status group with a grip on policy. Thus, the rational legal order tends to unleash forms of self-legitimization under the logic of universality.

In shaping political authority, legitimation tends to hide the coercive dimension of power. As Poggi claims, it "greatly facilitates the workings of political institutions, relieving them to an extent from the burden of having continually to monitor the conduct of subjects or citizens, to frighten them or cajole into submission."[497] The tradition that runs from Weber to Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto but also to Robert Michels and C. Wright Mills constantly reminds us about the elitist dynamics of political power and its autonomy behind the impartiality of the law, all of which fades away in the conflation of legitimacy with justice as the proper political basis for state organization. This is not to say that legitimacy masks the coercive power behind the state. Indeed political legitimacy introduces a normative order to the legality of the state, a normative arrangement of the rule of law. Yet the transformation of liberalism from a constitutional theory of the state to a comprehensive account of justice tends to overdo the universal, liberating character of the rule of law to the detriment of the political dynamics of exclusion behind the law. To understand how economic, ideological and political domination act via the universal and rational aspect of the law, one cannot just look into the universal aspects of the legal system, let alone from the perspective of ideal conditions.

The point raised in Chapter Five, namely that the division of labor between moral and political theory does not neatly coincide with the public and private divide, can be brought home by examining the disagreement between Seyla Benhabib and Bruce Ackerman over models of legitimation. Ackerman's "conversational restraint" on public discourse prevents, among other important things, that citizens bring their deepest, private moral disagreements to the public arena.[498] Benhabib argues skillfully against Ackerman that the conversational restraint that he imposes on public discourse rests on "a questionable moral epistemology" and "implicitly justifies a separation between the public and the private that is oppressive to the concerns of certain groups."[499] She powerfully claims that "the reprivatization of issues that have become public only generates conceptual confusion, political resentment, and moral outrage."[500] Alternatively, Benhabib advocates for a "discourse model of legitimacy," an unlimited public conversation restricted only by Neurath's boat condition and constitutional guarantees of free speech.

While Benhabib rightly deracinates the intransigency of the liberal public/private divide by showing how it could inure us to situations of shame and humiliation, her

discourse model of legitimacy, like Habermas's, understands power structures from an overdone moral perspective that transmogrifies political power into moral argumentation. Benhabib holds on to the idealizing presuppositions of communicative action for the reciprocal and mutual recognition of validity claims that lends unduly attention to the ideal conditions that bound moral agents as participants of a discursive community. The pluralism and conflict that Benhabib allows by loosening up the private/public distinction, is subdued by a moral approach moored to a universal, reciprocal, symmetrical, rational understanding of power.[501]

George Kateb defies Habermas and denies that there is a legitimation crisis. For him, this would involve "deep and widespread feelings and opinions marked by disaffection from or hostility to the constitutive principles" governing democracy.[502] Connolly in turn takes issue with Kateb who "seeks to return to a conception of legitimacy in which the orientation of citizens to the constitutional principles of the state are definitive. He is unimpressed, apparently, with the claim that the politicization of broad areas of life, the extension of conscious coordination of social life, and the entanglement of the state in all corners of life, enlarges the scope of legitimacy."[503]Although issues of legitimacy have been complicated on many fronts, minimalist liberalism follows Kateb's adherence to constitutional representative democracy as the right normative order for the legality of the state. Liberalism with its focus on personal freedom and political equality still offers today a normative arrangement of the legal order that, although constantly and rightly challenged by many, has equally adapted to demands for greater inclusion. Liberalism in its minimalist version provides a normative organization of the state legal structure that guarantees a minimum basis for inclusiveness and is able to accommodate demands for greater social inclusion. I suspect that this is what Rorty has in mind when he claims that liberalism contains the institutions for its own improvement.

Inclusiveness I believe is the kernel of political legitimacy. Indeed, Weber's famous threefold typology of legitimate domination could be understood as an expansion of the reasons and motives that induce compliance. The traditional form of domination appeals to the validity of a particular tradition and past which only a few share. The charismatic order of legitimate domination remains always poised between tradition and legality; it is unstable and casuistically dependent on the ascriptive qualities and grace of the leader who not everyone follows. The rational legal order, however, derives its validity from a legal order that applies universally to all.[504] Liberalism, and its alliance with a constitutional order, meets the challenge of political legitimacy by always securing a minimum threshold of inclusiveness that is in principle capable of adapting to further expansion. Indeed, the relation of elective affinity between pluralism and liberalism (and democracy) introduced in Chapter Three in relation to Berlin's work rests, in the case of minimalist liberalism, to a great extent on their reciprocal capacity to include and expand that inclusiveness. Liberalism without pluralism is less inclusive and thus its legitimate basis more restricted.

Now, what brings us together—liberal constitutionalism—cannot also elucidate and explain what tears us apart. Hence, liberalism can only provide a threshold for inclusiveness, a minimum legitimate baseline understood as an open process, but cannot serve as the exclusive language that accounts for the political struggle of exclusion nested in any political community. Indeed, the boundaries of inclusiveness and the relation

between liberal rights and universality have been criticized by many and constantly challenged from Nietzsche to feminist, Marxist and post-structuralist theories.[505]

Because comprehensive and reductive liberalisms rely only on liberal reasoning to account for political struggles, they fail to grasp the bias, distortions and exclusion that liberal orders harbor. While Rorty notices liberalism's capacity to adapt he fails to recognize that what is left in the shadows of the universality of the law cannot be brought to light save for the intervention of the critical voices that he privatizes. Liberalism cannot be understood as a totalizing narrative of politics, which the focus on justice constantly invites.

Although the comprehensive account of liberalism neglects these challenges and the reductive account quiets them, minimalist liberalism may contain the possibility of an adaptive inclusive response to these critiques insofar as it understand rights not as the foundation or indicators of individual sovereignty but as the best instrument to crystallize historical expectations of reciprocal interactions that open the gates to inclusiveness. As long as liberalism is significantly curbed, does without the Enlightenment rationalism that induces it to its own expansion and insulation, and does not stand as the only authoritative moral discourse from which we can make sense of political conflict, it can stand for a minimum threshold of rights understood as historical products of pluralistic social and political conflicts that lend themselves to inclusiveness.

One of many of Rawls's important insights in *Political Liberalism* is to acknowledge that after pluralism liberalism cannot stand on the same feet. He recognizes, against his own previous views, that liberal political theory and moral philosophy cannot keep the same terms of association, for the inclusiveness and legitimacy of liberalism call for a redefinition of the ties between moral and political theory. Yet, that is not all that needs to be recognized. What remains to be attended to is the observation that any reconceptualization of this relationship and of the independence of political theory is necessarily much harder to obtain if justice remains the first goal of liberalism.

**References**

[1] The reference to one Enlightenment, as opposed to individuated, contextual national Enlightenments, has been the subject of an extended challenge and debate associated with the work of J. G. A. Pocock. Drawing upon a critical analysis of the work of Edward Gibbons, Pocock argues that "we can no longer write satisfactorily of 'The Enlightenment' as a unified and universal intellectual movement." J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Vol. 1: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13.
[2] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
[3] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971).
[4] Samuel Freeman, "Political Liberalism and the Possibility of a Just Democratic Constitution," *Chicago-Ken Law Review* 69, no. 3 (1994).
[5] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 29-34, 72.
[6] Ibid., 302.
[7] Ibid., 49, 54-55, 81.
[8] Ibid., 50.
[9] John Rawls, "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory," in *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 323.
[10] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 77-9.
[11] Ibid., 74.
[12] Ibid, John Rawls, "Social Unity and Primary Goods," in *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 365.
[13] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 364.
[14] Rawls, "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory," 306.
[15] Ibid., 304.
[16] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 89.
[17] Rawls, "Social Unity and Primary Goods," 367.
[18] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 75-76.
[19] John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical," in *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 395. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 29.
[20] Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical," 397, fn. 15.
[21] Bonnie Honig has taken issue with the predominance of the sense of justice from a very different angle. She argues against the Rawlsian idea that only the sense of justice reveals what the person is rather than her contingent talents and attributes. Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, *Contestations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 140.
[22] William Galston, among others, has questioned the predominant role of the capacity for justice in Rawls's political theory in William Galston, *Liberal Purposes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[23] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 82-86.
[24] Ibid., 82.
[25] Ibid., 85, fn. 33.

[26] The centrality of the conception-desires in Rawls's description of the person has been carefully examined by Leif Wenar in his "Political Liberalism: An Internal Critique," *Ethics* 106, no. 1 (1995): 49-50.
[27] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 453-79.
[28] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 72-6, 305.
[29] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 196.
[30] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 77.
[31] Ibid., 77-78.
[32] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 516.
[33] For an extensive discussion on the kind of politics that Smith advocates see Murray Milgate and Shannon C. Stimson, *After Adam Smith : A Century of Transformation in Politics and Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), chap. 2.
[34] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1982), 9. This is particularly the case when grief and joy are involved. In these situations, sympathy acts with immediacy and without need of knowledge of the particulars of the situation. Resentment and anger, on the contrary, require knowing the circumstances that elicited the emotions. In this case, sympathy "does not arise so much from the view of the passion, as from that of the situation which excites it." Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 12.
[35] Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 16. The same goes for the effects of the action. Merit and demerit indicate the relation between the sentiment and its effects. If the action produces gratitude, then the action has merit and deserves reward.
[36] See also Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), chaps. 4 and 6. Williams argues against the systematic, theoretical structure of ethical theories, and their attempt to see the world from outside, *sub specie aeternitatis* as well as their tendency to found ethical thought in the category of the person. Other liberalisms such as Nancy Rosenblum's "romantic liberalism" would also object to the original position as the proper way of understanding our political condition. See Nancy L. Rosenblum, *Another Liberalism : Romanticism and the Reconstruction of Liberal Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987).
[37] Stuart Hampshire, *Justice Is Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), xi. See also Stuart Hampshire, *Innocence and Experience* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), and Stuart Hampshire, *Morality and Conflict* (Oxford, England: B. Blackwell, 1983).
[38] Hampshire, *Justice Is Conflict*, 22.
[39] Ibid., 66.
[40] Bernard Williams, *In the Beginning Was the Deed* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 2.
[41] Samuel Scheffler has argued that utilitarians too would be excluded from the original position. He claims that from the perspective of political liberalism the original position has to be construed as modeling some "weakly and widely shared" political ideas from where the two principles of justice spring. Yet, many of the arguments elaborated from the artificial construction are against utilitarianism. It is quite unclear, Scheffler claims, "how utilitarianism can be included in an overlapping consensus on principles of justice,

since it rejects the fundamental ideas that serve as premises in the arguments for those principles, as well as the arguments themselves" in Samuel Scheffler, "The Appeal of Political Liberalism," *Ethics* 105, no. 1 (1994): 9, 10.
[42] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 15.
[43] John Rawls, "The Priority of Right and Ideas of the Good," in *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 467. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, §3.
[44] Rawls, "Social Unity and Primary Goods," 365.
[45] Ibid., 385.
[46] Some reinterpretations of Rawls's liberalism try to loosen this tension by redefining the Kantian basis as a meta-value. Yet, this is not Rawls's own position, but a reinterpretation thereof. See Gerald Doppelt, "Is Rawls' Kantian Liberalism Coherent and Defensible?," *Ethics* 99, no. 4 (1989).
[47] John Rawls, "The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus," in *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 433-34.
[48] Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical," 394.
[49] Rawls, "The Priority of Right and Ideas of the Good," 458-59.
[50] Norman Daniels, "Reflective Equilibrium and Archimedean Points," in *Equality and Liberty*, ed. Angelo Corlett (London: Macmillan, 1991), Norman Daniels, "Wide Reflective Equilibrium and Theory Acceptance in Ethics," *Journal of Philosophy* 76, no. 4 (1979).
[51] Daniels, "Wide Reflective Equilibrium and Theory Acceptance in Ethics," 264.
[52] Others, like Peter Railton, have argued that Kantianism and utilitarianism are philosophical doctrines that can accommodate pluralism. See Peter Railton, "Pluralism, Determinacy, and Dilemma," *Ethics* 102, no. 4 (1992).
[53] John Rawls, "The Independence of Moral Theory," in *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 296.
[54] Ibid., 297.
[55] Ibid., 298.
[56] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 170.
[57] Ibid., 93-94.
[58] Ibid., 92.
[59] John Kekes has raised important criticisms against the liberal imperative of the divided self in John Kekes, "Liberal Double-Mindedness," in *Morality, Reflection, and Ideology*, ed. Edward Harcourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Michael Walzer has examined liberalism's art of separation from a broader perspective in Michael Walzer, "Liberalism and the Art of Separation," *Political Theory* 12, no. 3 (1984).
[60] Jurgen Habermas and David Estlund, among others, have redeemed the role of truth in political argumentation. See David Estlund, "The Insularity of the Reasonable: Why Political Liberalism Must Admit the Truth," *Ethics* 108, no. 2 (1998), Jurgen Habermas, "'Reasonable' Versus 'True,' or the Morality of Worldviews," in *The Inclusion of the Other* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1999).
[61] Thomas Nagel, *Equality and Partiality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
[62] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 267.

[63] Ibid., 269.
[64] This position is inspired by Samuel Scheffler's analysis and defense of Rawls's account of the basic structure of society as primary and its implications to accommodate personal values and the values of political morality. Although the criticism offered here is only tangentially related to that debate, it builds upon Scheffler's general intuition that the internal distinction between the personal and impersonal standpoints is "incongruous with the psychologically unified character of our reactive responses to individual and institutional misconduct" in Samuel Scheffler, "The Division of Moral Labour," *The Aristotelian Society* LXXVIII (2005): 246.
[65] For debates on procedural and substantive values see Kurt Baier, "Justice and the Aims of Political Philosophy," *Ethics* 99, no. 4 (1989), Joshua Cohen, "Pluralism and Proceduralism," *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 69 (1994), Stuart Hampshire, *Innocence and Experience*, Stuart Hampshire, *Justice Is Conflict* (Princenton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), Stuart Hampshire, "Liberalism: The New Twist," *The New York Review of Books* (August 12, 1993).
[66] Bernard Williams examines the proper relation between moral and political theory in Bernard Williams, *In the Beginning Was the Deed*. Raymond Geuss and Charles Larmore too provide arguments on this topic in Raymond Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), and Charles E. Larmore, "What Is Political Philosophy?," unpublished manuscript (2009).
[67] Alan Ryan, "Isaiah Berlin: Political Theory and Liberal Culture," *Annual Review of Political Science*, no. 2 (1999): 16.
[68] An important exception to the mainstream reading of Berlin's work that sets his early and late work apart is Jamie Reed who has forcefully argued for some of the points I raise in this article, in particular that an anti-reductionist thrust cuts across Berlin's *oeuvre*. Jamie Reed, "From Logical Positivism to 'Metaphysical Rationalism': Isaiah Berlin on the 'Fallacy of Reduction'," *History of Political Thought* XXIX, no. 1 (2008).
[69] Isaiah Berlin and Ramin Jahanbegloo, *Conversations with Isaiah Berlin* (New York: Scribner's: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1991), 152.
[70] Isaiah Berlin, "Verification," in *Concepts and Categories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 12-31. Verificationism is the view that determines the meaning of assertions by means of their verification.
[71] Ibid., 16.
[72] Berlin and Jahanbegloo, *Conversations with Isaiah Berlin*, 154.
[73] Ibid., 154-55.
[74] This method translates expressions describing material objects into sets of sentences about actual or possible sense experience (i.e. capable of being studied by empirical methods) by real or possible observers. Isaiah Berlin, "Empirical Propositions and Hypothetical Statements," in *Concepts and Categories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 32-55.
[75] Berlin, "Verification," 13.
[76] Berlin, "Empirical Propositions and Hypothetical Statements," 43.
[77] Ibid., 45.
[78] Ibid., 52.

[79] Phenomenalists mean by experience actual or possible data as are provided by observation and introspection. See Berlin, "Verification," 13.
[80] Isaiah Berlin, "Logical Translation," in *Concepts and Categories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 57.
[81] Ibid., 58.
[82] Ibid., 79.
[83] Reed explains more thoroughly Berlin's conception of language. See Reed, "From Logical Positivism to 'Metaphysical Rationalism': Isaiah Berlin on the 'Fallacy of Reduction'," 116.
[84] Berlin, "Logical Translation," 80.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 493.
[87] Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 38.
[88] Berlin, "Logical Translation," 56-80. I am grateful to Josh Cherniss for clarification on this point.
[89] Ibid., 65.
[90] Ibid., 68.
[91] Ibid., 76.
[92] Ibid., 77.
[93] Isaiah Berlin, *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 13. The idea of "queer moral entities" was introduced by J. L. Mackie in his *Ethics : Inventing Right and Wrong*, *Pelican Books : Philosophy* (Harmondsworth ; New York: Penguin, 1977), 38-42.
[94] Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, 48.
[95] Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 12, italics added.
[96] Ibid., 12.
[97] Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (London, New York Oxford U.P., 1969), xxxii.
[98] Isaiah Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist?," in *Concepts and Categories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 164.
[99] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 11. Durkheim's argument, unlike Berlin's, is about the social origin of religious representations.
[100] Durkheim states that if "men did not agree on theses essential ideas, if they had no homogeneous concept of time, space, causality, number, and so on, then any agreement between minds, and therefore all common life, would become impossible." Ibid., 18-19.
[101] Berlin, *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought*, 218.
[102] Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 8.
[103] Vico's deepest belief, says Berlin, "was that what men have made, other men can understand…Because our ancestors were men, Vico supposes that they knew, as we know, what it is to love and hate, hope and fear, to want, to pray, to fight, to betray, to oppress, to be oppressed, to revolt" Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, 60, 61.

[104] Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism,* 145.
[105] Berlin, "Logical Translation," 80. Foreshadowing L. Wittgenstein's account of language in *Philosophical Investigations*, Berlin holds that "words mean, not by pinning down bit of reality, but by having a recognised use, i.e. when their users know how and in what situations to use them in order to communicate whatever they may wish to communicate; and for this there are no exhaustive formal rules." Berlin, "Logical Translation," 79-80.
[106] Mark Lilla et al., *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin* (New York: New York Review Books, 2001), 117, italics added.
[107] Ibid., 113.
[108] Ibid., 106, italics added.
[109] George Crowder, *Liberalism and Value Pluralism*, *Political Theory and Contemporary Politics* (London; New York: Continuum, 2002), 3, John Gray, "Agonistic Liberalism," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 12, no. 1 (1995): 118, John Gray, *Isaiah Berlin* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 72, John Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism* (New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2000), 6. Iain Mackenzie also argues that one of the arguments that Berlin purportedly deploys in defense of value-pluralism is the endorsement of the existence of a priori moral categories, which involves a sort of moral realism. Yet, Mackenzie argues that "there are strong tendencies within Berlin's work towards meta-ethical non-realism, despite his claims to the contrary." See Iain Mackenzie, "Berlin's Defence of Value-Pluralism: Clarifications and Criticisms," *Contemporary Politics* 5, no. 4 (1999), 333.
[110] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self : The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 59.
[111] Berlin, *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought*, 260-65.
[112] Ibid., 263.
[113] Robert L. Arrington, *Rationalism, Realism, and Relativism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 120.
[114] Michael Smith, "Realism," in Peter Singer, ed., *A Companion to Ethics*, *Blackwell Companions to Philosophy* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell Reference, 1991), 34.
[115] Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, *Essays on Moral Realism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 5.
[116] Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 35-49.
[117] Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, 65.
[118] Ibid., 69.
[119] Ibid., 57.
[120] For a defense and explanation of this form of non-realism, see Michael Rosen, "Must We Return to Moral Realism?," *Inquiry* 34 (1991): 189. Indeed, Rosen argues that Charles Taylor is closer to non-realism than he would be willing to admit, which dovetails with my criticism of Taylor's realist reading of Berlin.
[121] Berlin, *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought*, 263.
[122] Ibid., 216-22.

[123] Bernard Williams, "Introduction" in Isaiah Berlin, *Concepts and Categories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), xii.
[124] Charles Larmore holds, on the contrary, that Berlin has held on to the conviction, "affirmed in the Agnelli Prize speech, that 'there is a world of objective values,' ends and ideals whose worth we discover, not create" (Charles Larmore, "Review: *The Sense of Reality*," *Boston Review*, December-January, (1997-98)). Yet, Berlin never states there or anywhere else that values are discovered. Indeed, in reference to the service rendered by romanticism, Berlin alludes in particular to "the doctrine that forms its heart, namely, that *morality is moulded by the will and that ends are created, not discovered*" (Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, 237, emphasis added.). Berlin conceives this as a benefit rather than as something to condone or abhor. He applauds the legacy that Schiller, Goethe, Humboldt, Herder, Vico and others bequeath to the first half of the 19th century, that is, "the notion that the ends of morals and politics are not discovered but invented" and that the laws that human beings follow "are a way of being and acting, and not objective, independent entities inspectable in isolation, by themselves" (Berlin, *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought*, 176-77.) Moreover, as I argued in the prior chapter, Berlin's objectivity refers to the domain circumscribed by the idea of a human semblance, the terrain of values historically created by persons' actions and thoughts. Objectivity of value brings to mind a historical process that begets a relatively defined conception of the person rather than a metaphysical province that lends itself to discovery.
[125] Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 72-73.
[126] Berlin, *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought*, 264-65.
[127] Isaiah Berlin, *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and Their History* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), 50.
[128] Isaiah Berlin, "The Concept of Scientific History," in *Concepts and Categories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 116.
[129] Ibid., 128.
[130] Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 485.
[131] Ibid., 489.
[132] Rosen, "Must We Return to Moral Realism?," 189-90. Rosen argues that, for Taylor, "moral reasoning contains, ultimately, no criteria beyond what we can come to accept as the best interpretation of our lived experience" and that the debate about such interpretation may be open-ended (Ibid.). This, according to Rosen, highlights the non-realist dimension of Taylor's thought. The same can be said about Berlin's.
[133] Berlin, *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and Their History*, 35.
[134] Ibid., 19.
[135] Ibid., 24.
[136] Berlin, "Logical Translation," 77.
[137] Ibid., 78.
[138] Ibid., 77.
[139] Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 4.
[140] Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, lv-lvi.

[141] Isaiah Berlin, "The Purpose of Philosophy," in *Concepts and Categories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 10.
[142] Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 12.
[143] Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist?," 154.
[144] Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, li.
[145] Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, 57.
[146] Berlin, "Logical Translation," 78.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Berlin, "The Concept of Scientific History," 135.
[149] Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, xxxii.
[150] Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist?," 166.
[151] Ibid. Berlin criteria to settle the boundaries of ethical comprehension are contentious. The idea that there is such a thing as a human semblance that establishes the line between rational and mad behavior remains vague, and he does not draw clear consequences from it. At some points he censures the Romantic Movement for taking pathological, violent forms which went too far for human toleration (Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 13). In the same vein, Berlin also condemns some forms of nationalism, the most extreme of which are unspeakable and cannot be squared within his idea of pluralism. He also claims, however, that Nazi values are detestable but not insane. Hence, how pathological a web of actions needs to be to fall outside the province of human understanding remains an unsettled issue. And, moreover, the notion of madness itself—its meaning and implications in each different epoch—is an entire unsettled issue in itself, which makes it a very poor benchmark to distinguish meaningful from nonsensical communication, for the limits and definition of madness itself need constant vigil. Be as it may, it is clear that ethical communication can break down, and I want to suggest that this are instances of value incomparability.
[152] Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 19.
[153] Ruth Chang, *Incommensurability, Incomparability, and Practical Reasoning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 3.
[154] George Crowder, "Pluralism and Liberalism," *Political Studies* XLII (1994).
[155] Berlin and Jahanbegloo, *Conversations with Isaiah Berlin*, 44.
[156] Ibid., 79.
[157] Ibid., 37.
[158] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 5.
[159] Ibid., 9.
[160] Berlin, *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and Their History*, 25.
[161] Ibid., 46.
[162] Berlin, *Concepts and Categories*, 164. “There is a world of objective values,” Berlin states “Forms of life differ. Ends, moral principles, are many. But not infinitely many: they must be within the human horizon. If they are not, then they are outside the human sphere” (Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, 11).
[163] Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. C. Wright Mills and H. Heinrich Gerth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 139.
[164] Weber, *Economy and Society : An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, 7.

[165] Max Weber, "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. C. Wright Mills and H. Heinrich Gerth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 331-58, Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 138-43, Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. C. Wright Mills and H. Heinrich Gerth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 281-82.
[166] Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 147.
[167] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. C. Wright Mills and H. Heinrich Gerth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 117.
[168] Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 152.
[169] Ibid., 147.
[170] Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, 168.
[171] Another side convergence is that both pay attention to the role of religious ideas—Weber concentrates on how Calvinism propels capitalism, and Berlin studies how romanticism stems from pietism. See Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, 55.
[172] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner, 1976), 45, 91.
[173] Ibid., 19. Weber illustrates this point with the cases of Babylon, Ancient Egypt, China, India and medieval Europe.
[174] Max Weber, "Suffrage and Democracy in Germany," in *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassman and Ronald Spiers (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 89.
[175] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 18-21.
[176] Ibid., 23-25. Weber is nonetheless aware of the influence of material factors in the explanation of Western economic development. Some of the additional factors that he mentions are: the development of the city, the double entry book keeping, the deterioration of the feudal relations of labor, etc.
[177] Ibid., 105.
[178] Ibid., 166.
[179] Ibid., 105.
[180] Ibid., 54, 154, 161, 166. Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," 117, 120, 134.
[181] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 161.
[182] Ibid., 117.
[183] Ibid., 180-81, 54.
[184] Goedeke quoted in Richard Herbert Howe, "Max Weber's Elective Affinities: Sociology within the Bounds of Pure Reason," *The American Journal of Sociology* 84, no. 2 (1978): 373, 374.
[185] My understanding of "elective affinity" has greatly benefited from helpful conversations with Sebastián Mazzuca. For the interpretation that elective affinity involves both ideas and interests see C. Wright Mills and Hans Heinrich Gerth, "The Man and His Work," in *From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology*, ed. and Hans Heinrich Gerth C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Pres, 1958), 62.
[186] Treiber claims that elective affinity "stands for an intellectual construct for producing easily comprehensible connections, which are to be changed into causal relations if possible…[an] adequacy at the level of meaning…is then conceived as a causal relation

and tested" in Hubert Treiber, "Elective Affinities between Weber's Sociology of Religion and Sociology of Law," *Theory and Society* 14, no. 6 (1985): 811.
[187] For the idea of "economic ethic" see Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," 267-68.
[188] Max Weber, "On the Situation of Constitutional Democracy in Russia," in *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassman and Ronald Spiers (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 69.
[189] Howe, "Max Weber's Elective Affinities: Sociology within the Bounds of Pure Reason," 367.
[190] Emile Durkheim and W. D. Halls, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Free Press, 1984), 208.
[191] I have profited from discussions with Alex Gourevitch on this point.
[192] Weber himself calls "elective affinity" a form of causal chain. He states that "the influence of certain religious ideas on the development of an economic spirit, or the *ethos* of an economic system. In this case we are dealing with the connection of the spirit of modern economic life with the rational ethics of ascetic Protestantism. Thus we treat here only one side of the *causal chain*." [my emphasis] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 27.
[193] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard Univeristy Press, 1999), 507.
[194] Norberto Bobbio, *Liberalism and Democracy* (London; New York: Verso, 1990), chap. 3.
[195] Ibid., chaps. 3, 6-7.
[196] Ibid., chap. 8.
[197] Ibid., chaps. 8, 13.
[198] Michael Kenny also criticizes the viability of the relationship in Michael Kenny, "Isaiah Berlin's Contribution to Modern Political Theory," *Political Studies* 48 (2000). Avery Plaw, on the other hand, defends a limited compatibility between them, in Avery Plaw, "The Limited Compatibility of Liberalism and Pluralism: Against the General Incompatibility Thesis," *International Journal of Politics and Ethics* 2, no. 4 (2002).
[199] Gray, *Isaiah Berlin*, Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and Its Critics* (New York: New York University Press, 1984). Although John Kekes argues for the incompatibility between pluralism and liberalism on grounds of the latter's commitment to overridingness of fundamental procedural values that can never sit at ease with the fluidity of values embedded in pluralism, he also provides a persuasive rejoinder to Sandel's challenge that pluralism prevents unwavering commitments to values. He believes that pluralism can be enlarged to include a distinction between primary and secondary values. He also argues that incommensurability and incompatibility are the causes of conflict but are unrelated to what we can do with those conflicts and that unflinching integrity to our own values does not rest on everyone else sharing our values (John Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 92-98, chap. 11). Kekes's argument is tailored to derive conservatism instead of liberalism out of pluralism. Thus, his otherwise illuminating reasons in support of pluralism are not meant to buttress Berlin's defense of freedom of choice.

[200] Gray, *Isaiah Berlin*, 152. Against the rational choice assumptions of liberal thinking, Gray endorses a radical choice approach. Gray, "Agonistic Liberalism," 114. Radical choice confronts us with ultimate, incommensurable values that cannot be harmoniously combined for they are rationally incomparable. Yet, he ultimately maintains that "Even where choice is radical and central in such ways in the formation of cultural identities, nothing follows as to the value of the activity of choice." Gray, *Isaiah Berlin*, 160-61.
[201] Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 32.
[202] Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, 203.
[203] John Gray, "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 6, no. 1 (1998): 19. Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 32.
[204] Berlin and Jahanbegloo, *Conversations with Isaiah Berlin*, 143.
[205] Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, 69.
[206] Ibid., 72.
[207] Hence, when Gray holds that "Often enough, the forms of life so chosen are ones in which choice-making is accorded no special significance" he should also acknowledge that those forms of life that devalue choice are nonetheless the product of certain choices. Gray, *Isaiah Berlin*, 160-61.
[208] Gray, "Agonistic Liberalism," 118, Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 6. Yet, for Gray, incommensurability "need not be an impediment to practical or moral reasoning" (Gray, "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company," 27). Unlike relativist and subjectivist perspectives, Gray holds that we can make meaningful choices among incommensurable values (Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 48). Although Crowder endorses the indeterminacy argument and the moral realist interpretation of value pluralism, unlike Gray, he does not believe that pluralism leads us to the end of ethical argumentation with universal implications.
[209] John Gray, "Pluralism and Toleration in Contemporary Political Philosophy," *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 325.
[210] Berlin, *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought*, 16.
[211] Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, 139.
[212] Ibid., 141.
[213] Ibid., 146.
[214] Ibid., 147.
[215] Berlin and Jahanbegloo, *Conversations with Isaiah Berlin*, 151.
[216] Crowder, *Liberalism and Value Pluralism*, 78, 81-82.
[217] George Crowder, "Pluralism, Relativism and Liberalism in Isaiah Berlin," (Hobart: University of Tasmania, 2003), 5. Crowder, "Pluralism and Liberalism," 298. Crowder, "Pluralism and Liberalism," 298.
[218] Crowder, "Pluralism, Relativism and Liberalism in Isaiah Berlin," 13.
[219] Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, 169.
[220] Ibid., xlii.
[221] Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, 145.
[222] Ibid., 146.
[223] Berlin and Jahanbegloo, *Conversations with Isaiah Berlin*, 45.
[224] Crowder, *Liberalism and Value Pluralism*, 82.

[225] Berlin, *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought*, 206.
[226] Albert Dzur also criticizes Gray's defense of minimal morality. See Albert W. Dzur, "Value Pluralism Versus Political Liberalism?," *Social Theory and Practice* 24, no. 3 (1998): 388-89.
[227] Gray, "Agonistic Liberalism," 114.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 25.
[230] Gray, "Agonistic Liberalism," 129. Gray, "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company," 20.
[231] Gray, "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company," 33.
[232] Similar questions can be asked to Kekes who requires that the state "has no *overriding* commitment to any particular value, be it procedural or substantive" (Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, 211. John Kekes, *A Case for Conservatism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University press, 1998)). The state should guarantee the conditions of both some primary values that constitute a minimum requirement of all good lives, and additional secondary values that are also required beyond that minimum to lead good lives. Yet, it is unclear who and how selects which primary and secondary values should be protected by the state.
[233] George Crowder, "Two Value-Pluralist Arguments for Liberalism," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 2 (2002): 459.
[234] Ibid.: 460.
[235] Berlin, *Concepts and Categories*, 166.
[236] Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, 11.
[237] Crowder, "Pluralism, Relativism and Liberalism in Isaiah Berlin," 12.
[238] Jonathan Riley, "Interpreting Berlin's Liberalism," *The American Political Science Review* 95, no. 2 (2001): 284. Jonathan Riley, "Defending Cultural Pluralism: Within Liberal Limits," *Political Theory* 30, no. 1 (2002): 69.
[239] Riley, "Interpreting Berlin's Liberalism," 285, Riley, "Defending Cultural Pluralism: Within Liberal Limits," 78.
[240] Riley, "Interpreting Berlin's Liberalism," 291-93.
[241] To the questioning as to how he believes in human rights given their universality, Berlin replies that they are universal not in virtue of a rational insight as Riley's quote above indicates. "If you ask why we believe in human rights," Berlin holds "I can say because that is the only decent, even tolerable way human beings can live with each other, and if you ask what is 'decent,' I can say that is the only kind of life which we think that human beings should follow, if they are not to destroy each other. These are general truths, but this does not assume something unalterable. I *can not guarantee anything against change*" (Berlin and Jahanbegloo, *Conversations with Isaiah Berlin*, 114, emphasis added).
[242] This does not mean that the engagement with the search of reasons in support of a political order should or could be dropped. For a persuasive case on this point see Pratap B. Mehta, "Pluralism after Liberalism," *Critical Review* 11, no. 3-4 (1997): 514-15.
[243] Michael Walzer provides an inspiring reading of Berlin's work that eschews unconvincing systematization see Michael Walzer, "Are There Limits to Liberalism?,"

*New York Review of Books* 42, no. 16 (1995). As Walzer himself points out, Berlin and Bernard Williams suggest that the formal style with which Crowder examines the relationship between value pluralism and liberalism is not the most adequate to the subject matter. See Isaiah and Williams Berlin, Bernard, "Pluralism and Liberalism: A Reply," *Political Studies* XLI (1994): 309.

[244] Jeremy Waldron summarizes this longstanding tradition: "a social and political order is illegitimate unless it is rooted in the consent of all those who have to live under it; the consent or agreement of these people is a condition of its being morally permissible to enforce that order against them." Jeremy Waldron, "Theoretical Foundations of Liberalism," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 37, no. 147 (1987): 140.

[245] In this, as well as in other important regards, liberalism of choice is a close companion to Judith Shklar's "Liberalism of Fear." See Judith Shklar, "Liberalism of Fear," in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[246] Cf. Crowder, *Liberalism and Value Pluralism*, 163.

[247] Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, 47.

[248] Ibid., 17.

[249] Bernard Williams, "Conflicts of Values," in *The Idea of Freedom: Essays in Honour of Isaiah Berlin*, ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 221.

[250] Gray's "agonistic liberalism" and Richard Bellamy's democratic liberalism are also variants of a contested liberal polity. See Richard Bellamy, *Liberalism and Pluralism Towards a Politics of Compromise* (London: Routledge, 1999), chaps. 4-5, Richard Bellamy, *Rethinking Liberalism* (New York: Pinter, 2000), chap. 10, Gray, "Agonistic Liberalism."

[251] Charles E. Larmore, *The Morals of Modernity*, *Modern European Philosophy* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Rawls, *Political Liberalism*.

[252] Larmore, *The Morals of Modernity*, 153.

[253] Ibid.

[254] Ibid., 154.

[255] William Galston claims, however, that "the considerations adduced in favor of value pluralism are not definitive. But there are domains of inquiry in which it is unreasonable to reject less than conclusive propositions. The exclusion of valid but reasonably rejectable claims would eviscerate practical philosophy." William A. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 45.

[256] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Original ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2005), 548-54.

[257] Crowder reviews Larmore and Rawls's proposals and concludes that "the idea of reasonable disagreement turns out on inspection to depend on that of value pluralism" (Crowder, *Liberalism and Value Pluralism*, 165). As indicated above, Crowder defends a universal and perfectionist liberalism based on pluralistic premises. Although my understanding of the implications of Berlin's value pluralism for a liberal order departs drastically from Crowder's who incorporates the emancipation and flourishing of the autonomous individual as one of the central themes of liberalism, he nonetheless provides

some illuminating reasons as to why value pluralism is not more controversial than disagreement of beliefs as a justificatory basis for a liberal political order. He believes that theories of rights such as Rawls and Larmore's are equally subject to the burdens of judgment. Second, he argues that two of the itemized burdens of judgment presuppose value pluralism liberalism (Crowder, *Liberalism and Value Pluralism*, 163-71). William Galston too claims that three of the burdens of judgment overlap with aspects of value pluralism. See Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice*, 46.

[258] Berlin, "Pluralism and Liberalism: A Reply," 308.

[259] Scheffler, "The Appeal of Political Liberalism," 18-22.

[260] John Gray, for instance, criticizes the role of choice in liberal theory, which assumes it is the capacity that explains cultural difference. For him, identities are not elective. "In the real world of human history…cultural identities are not constituted, voluntaristically, by acts of choice: they arise by inheritance, and by recognition. They are fates rather than choices." (John Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 124.) Wendy Brown notices how the fact that subjects are constructed by power relations erodes the notions of agency as sovereignty. She states that "power constructs human subjects and does not simply act upon them…does not simply contain or limit them…" (Wendy Brown, "Power after Foucault," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, ed. John S. and Honig Dryzek, Bonnie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 66.) Charles Taylor argues against the assumption of self-sufficiency underlying liberal doctrines in favor of choice. He holds that choice is a capacity dependent on a society of certain kind, and this constitutes proof that we need to sustain and belong to that society. (Charles Taylor, "Atomism," in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).) He also argues that negative freedom, in particular in its Hobbesian crude account, is indefensible because it does not make room to the basic value of self-realization underlying the post-Romantic civilization, which we inhabit, and as soon as we include an idea of self-fulfillment then the connection with inner faculties is inevitable. Freedom involves, for Taylor, some qualitative discrimination of motives. Charles Taylor, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty," in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 219.

[261] Rorty's views stretch over many philosophical areas including epistemology, theories of truth, and philosophy of mind. It is completely beyond the scope of this chapter and dissertation to pronounce over the merits of his position in those areas. I am not assuming the soundness of his claims in those fields when I examine how they play out in the realm of political theory.

"Anti-representationalism" in Rorty's work is, roughly, the position that our beliefs are habits of action rather than representations of the external world. Linguistic expressions are not representations of non-linguistic items. Anti-representationalism states that we lack an impartial point of view from which to assess those representations. It is thus tied to our ethnocentric views produced by acculturation. In addition, Rorty's anti-representationalist does not claim that the relation between non-linguistic and linguistic items is one of causality or determination. See for instance, Richard Rorty, *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*, *Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge, UK ; New York:

Cambridge University Press, 2007), 34. Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, *Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Introduction.

"Anti-foundationalism" is the view that, roughly again, justification of my beliefs amounts to the provision of good reasons for that belief. Rorty's anti-foundationalist denies that either sensory experience or conceptual insight plays any privileged role in the justification of our beliefs. See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 155-64.

"Anti-essentialism" is the view that there is no such thing as the way the thing is in itself independent of any linguistic description of the thing. See Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, *Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Introduction.

A "Darwinian" conception of human beings as used in Rorty's thought means that we are very clever animals capable of using language and thus describe things. Darwinians understand language not as a third element between subject and object, an element that represents reality, but as a tool for coping with objects in efficient ways. See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York, N.Y.: Penguin, 1999), 64-65.

"Philosophical pluralism" is the doctrine that "there is a potential infinity of equally valuable ways to lead a human life, and that these ways cannot be ranked in terms of degrees of excellence, but only in terms of their contribution to the happiness of the persons who lead them and of the communities to which these persons belong." See Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, 268.

[262] Thomas McCarthy argues that Rorty shows an unparallel command of both traditions in Thomas McCarthy, "Private Irony and Public Decency: Richard Rorty's New Pragmatism," *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 2 (1990): 358.

[263] Richard Rorty, "Rationality and Cultrual Difference," in *Truth and Progress, Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 193.

[264] Richard Rorty, "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality," in *Truth and Progress, Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 175.

[265] Richard Rorty, "Thugs and Theorists," *Political Theory* 15, no. 4 (1987): 569.

[266] Richard Rorty, "Postmodernist Bourgeois Liberalism," in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 198.

[267] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 197.

[268] Ibid., 4-5.

[269] Ibid., 5.

[270] Ibid., 11, 19, 22. Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, 50, 65.

[271] Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, 3.

[272] "Ethnocentrism" stands against "universalism" as it refers to a particular ethnos, a loyalty to a particular socio-political context. In Rorty's case, that context refers to developed liberal democracies. See Richard Rorty, "Justice as a Larger Loyalty," in *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York:

Cambridge University Press, 2007), 55. Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, Introduction.
[273] For another criticism on Rorty's public/private divide see, McCarthy, "Private Irony and Public Decency: Richard Rorty's New Pragmatism," 362-67.
[274] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 73.
[275] Richard Rorty, "Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism," in *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 13-14.
[276] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 63.
[277] Ibid., 83.
[278] Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), xiv.
[279] Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty*, ed. Isaiah Berlin (London, New York: Oxford U.P., 1969), 118-73.
[280] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 65.
[281] See for instance, Rorty, "Rationality and Cultrual Difference," 194.
[282] Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, 236.
[283] Richard Rorty, "Moral Identity and Private Autonomy: The Case of Foucault," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers*, ed. Richard Rorty (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 193.
[284] Ibid., 194-96.
[285] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 65.
[286] See her remarkable article, Nancy Fraser, "Solidarity or Singularity? Richard Rorty between Romanticism and Technocracy," in *Reading Rorty*, ed. Alan Malachowski (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990), 312-13.
[287] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 16-22.
[288] Ibid., 222, Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 22, 26, 137-43.
[289] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison*, 138.
[290] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 3-4, 23-25, 59, 109, 140, 144-48.
[291] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 63.
[292] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 6, 82.
[293] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison*, 170-71, 177, 184-91, 216, 224.
[294] Rorty, "Moral Identity and Private Autonomy: The Case of Foucault," 196. Unless otherwise notice, italics are in the original.
[295] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 64.
[296] For an extensive interpretation that challenges the idea that genealogical studies lead us necessarily to anarchism, see Wendy Brown, "Genealogical Politics," in *The Later Foucault*, ed. Jeremy Moss (Londong: Sage, 1998).
[297] Rorty, "Moral Identity and Private Autonomy: The Case of Foucault," 197.
[298] Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 41-42, 46-47.
[299] Ibid., 46-47.
[300] Ibid., 34.

[301] Ibid., 39, 41.
[302] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 84.
[303] Rorty, "Moral Identity and Private Autonomy: The Case of Foucault," 196.
[304] Richard Rorty, "Truth and Freedom: A Reply to Thomas Mccarthy," *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 3 (1990): 639.
[305] For a different critique of Rorty's "aestheticized pragmatism," see Richard Richard Bernstein, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward," *Political Theory* 15, no. 4 (1987).
[306] Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism without Method," in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, ed. Richard Rorty (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 75, Richard Rorty, "Science as Solidarity," in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, ed. Richard Rorty (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 36-37. Richard Rorty, "Inquiry as Recontextualization," in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, ed. Richard Rorty (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 95.
[307] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 53.
[308] Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 13.
[309] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 60.
[310] Ibid., 65.
[311] Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism and Romanticism," in *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 105.
[312] Richard Rorty, "Philosophy as Science, Metaphor, Politics," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 12, 13.
[313] Rorty, "Rationality and Cultrual Difference," 199.
[314] Richard Rorty, "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, ed. Richard Rorty (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 193.
[315] Ibid., 193-94.
[316] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 82.
[317] For Rorty's proposal on the relation between reason and sentiment, justice and loyalty see Rorty, "Justice as a Larger Loyalty."
[318] Rorty, "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality," 180.
[319] Ibid., 181.
[320] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 67.
[321] For Rorty's assessment of "solidarity," see Ibid., chap. 9.
[322] Rorty, "Truth and Freedom: A Reply to Thomas Mccarthy," 642.
[323] On this point see also Thomas McCarthy, "Ironist Theory as a Vocation: A Response to Rorty's Reply," *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 3 (1990): 654.
[324] Charles Guignon and David Hiley, "Biting the Bullet: Rorty on Private and Public Morality," in *Reading Rorty*, ed. Alan Malachowski (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1990), 339.
[325] Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, xx, xxxix, xl, xliii.
[326] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 80.
[327] Ibid., 83.

[328] According to Rorty, neither Derrida nor Heidegger take a naturalistic approach to language and see it as a set of tools. See Richard Rorty, "Heidegger, Contingency, and Pragmatism," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers.* (Cambridge U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Richard Rorty, "Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers.* (Cambridge U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[329] Richard Bernstein, "Rorty's Inspirational Liberalism," in *Richard Rorty*, ed. Charles B. Guignon and David R. Hiley (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 130-31, 135-37. Jean B. Elshtain, "Don't Be Cruel: Reflections on Rortyan Liberalism," in *Richard Rorty*, ed. Charles B. Guignon and David R. Hiley (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 142-44. McCarthy, "Private Irony and Public Decency: Richard Rorty's New Pragmatism," 367-70. Rorty's answer to McCarthy on this issue in Rorty, "Truth and Freedom: A Reply to Thomas Mccarthy." McCarthy, "Ironist Theory as a Vocation: A Response to Rorty's Reply." Norman Geras, *Solidarity in the Conversation of Humankind : The Ungroundable Liberalism of Richard Rorty* (London ; New York: Verso, 1995), chap. 1. Matthew Festenstein, *Pragmatism and Political Theory : From Dewey to Rorty* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), chap. 5.
[330] Elshtain, "Don't Be Cruel: Reflections on Rortyan Liberalism," 152-56.
[331] See Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 190. Rorty, "Justice as a Larger Loyalty."
[332] Rorty, "Moral Identity and Private Autonomy: The Case of Foucault," 193.
[333] Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 13.
[334] Rorty, "Thugs and Theorists," 572. Rorty, "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy."
[335] Weber, "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions," 331-57, Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 147.
[336] For Rorty's "naturalism," see Rorty, "Pragmatism without Method," 65, 74. Although Rorty endorses a naturalist position which roughly claims that everything that occurs in space and time is linked to a web of causal relations, he does not endorse "reductionism" that requires explanatory unity as well as causal unity. His naturalism applied to ethics indicates that ethical values can be tied to nothing else than a web of beliefs and desires.
[337] Habermas raises a related point when he argues that Rorty and Derrida overgeneralize one linguistic function (the "capacity for world-disclosure") at the expense of the "problem-solving" one. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity : Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 206-07. For Rorty's reply to Habermas see Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 66-69.
[338] Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, xix, 47, 50, 55-69.
[339] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 83.
[340] Ibid., xiv.
[341] The ironist is a nominalist and a historicist as she thinks that nothing has an intrinsic nature or real essence. Ibid., xv, 74.
[342] Ibid., 85.
[343] Rorty, "Inquiry as Recontextualization," 99.
[344] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 68.
[345] Ibid., 125.

[346] Ibid., 73.
[347] Richard Rorty, "Habermas, Derrida, and Philosophy," in *Truth and Progress, Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 311.
[348] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 194.
[349] Ibid., 88.
[350] Richard Rorty, "Non-Reductive Physicalism," in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth, Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 123.
[351] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 32.
[352] Ibid., 33.
[353] Richard Rorty, "Freud and Moral Reflection," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers*, ed. Richard Rorty (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 152.
[354] Rorty, "Truth and Freedom: A Reply to Thomas Mccarthy," 640.
[355] Rorty, "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality," 171.
[356] Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 168. Rorty, "Pragmatism without Method," 76.
[357] Bernstein, "Rorty's Inspirational Liberalism," 124-38.
[358] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 52.
[359] Ibid., 53.
[360] Ibid., 54.
[361] Ibid., 44, 45.
[362] Ibid., 55-56.
[363] Michael Martin and Lee C. McIntyre, *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 345-47.
[364] Ibid., 345.
[365] Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 194.
[366] Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 1.
[367] Rorty, "Rationality and Cultrual Difference," 195.
[368] Elshtain, "Don't Be Cruel: Reflections on Rortyan Liberalism," 152. Thomas McCarthy has also argued that “whatever the sources, our ordinary, nonphilosophical truth-talk and reality-talk is shot through with just the sorts of idealizations that Rorty wants to purge.” McCarthy, "Private Irony and Public Decency: Richard Rorty's New Pragmatism," 360.
[369] See, for instance, Ian Shapiro, *Political Criticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 45-52. Steven Lukes, *Liberals and Cannibals : The Implications of Diversity* (London: Verso, 2003), 36, Stephen Macedo, *Liberal Virtues : Citizenship, Virtue, and Community in Liberal Constitutionalism* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1991), 25-34. Bernstein, "Rorty's Inspirational Liberalism.", Charles Taylor, "Rorty and Philosophy," in *Richard Rorty*, ed. Charles B. Guignon, and David R. Hiley (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 158-80. Hilary Putnam, "Richard Rorty on Reality and Justification," in *Rorty and His Critics*, ed. Robert B. Brandom (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).
[370] Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 12.
[371] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 59.

[372] Rorty, "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality," 173.
[373] Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 173.
[374] Rorty, "Habermas, Derrida, and Philosophy," 320. For the application of the same reasoning to the international realm see Rorty, "Justice as a Larger Loyalty."
[375] Rorty, "Habermas, Derrida, and Philosophy," 322.
[376] For a sympathetic interpretation of Rorty's work and a full analysis of all these and other criticisms see Michael Bacon, *Richard Rorty: Pragmatism and Political Liberalism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), chap. 2.
[377] Gary Gutting, *Pragmatic Liberalism and the Critique of Modernity*, *Modern European Philosophy* (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 38.
[378] Fraser, "Solidarity or Singularity? Richard Rorty between Romanticism and Technocracy," 315.
[379] Richard Rorty, "Grandeur, Profundity, and Finitude," in *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 85.
[380] John Gray, *Liberalism*, 2nd ed., *Concepts in Social Thought* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 86. See also Wendy Brown, *Politics out of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), chap. 1.
[381] Gray, *Liberalism*, 86.
[382] John Stuart Mill and Gertrude Himmelfarb, *On Liberty*, *Penguin Classics* (Harmondsworth ; Baltimore [etc.]: Penguin, 1974), chaps. 1-3, John Stuart Mill and George Sher, *Utilitarianism* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1979), chap. 5.
[383] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*. John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3.
[384] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 54-58.
[385] Ibid., 13.
[386] Ibid.
[387] Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, 14.
[388] By "basic structure" Rawls means the "main political, social, and economic institutions, and how they fit together into one unified system of social cooperation from one generation to the next." Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 11.
[389] Ibid., 13.
[390] For a similar criticism against Bernard Williams's ethical thought, see Bonnie Honig, "Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home," *Social Research* 61, no. 3 (1994). Honig defends the idea of "dilemmatic spaces" that characterizes a subject positioned on "conflictual axes of identity/difference such that her agency itself is constituted by and daily mired in dilemmatic choices and negotiations…These dilemmatic spaces vary in intensity and gravity, but none is untouched by conflict and incommensurability." Honig, "Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home," 568, 569.
[391] He denies that justice as fairness is procedurally neutral, that is, justified only by reference to neutral values such as impartiality, consistency in application and equal opportunity or neutral in its effects or influence, that is, that the state compensates or cancels out the effects of policies that make more likely that individuals accept any particular conception of the good rather than other. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 191-95.
[392] Ibid., 137, 217, 393. Italics added.

[393] Ibid., 225.
[394] Ibid., 428.
[395] Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, 3-4.
[396] Rorty, *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*, 30.
[397] Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, 268.
[398] Ibid., 269. Rorty wants to erase the picture of the self "common to Greek metaphysics, Christian theology, and Enlightenment rationalism: the picture of an ahistorical natural center, the locus of human dignity, surrounded by an adventitious and inessential periphery." He believes that the effect of "erasing this picture is to break the link between truth and justifiability." Rorty, "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," 176.
[399] Rorty, "Science as Solidarity," 37.
[400] For arguments against the compatibility between pragmatism and liberalism, see Robert Talisse, "Can Democracy Be a Way of Life? Deweyan Democracy and the Problem of Pluralism," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 39, no. 1 (2003). Robert and Aikin Talisse, Scott, "Why Pragmatists Cannot Be Pluralist," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 14, no. 1 (2005). Robert and Aikin Talisse, Scott, "Still Searching for a Pragmatist Pluralism," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 41, no. 1 (2005). For a critical response in favor of a pluralist pragmatism, see Cheryl Misak, "Pragmatism and Pluralism," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 41, no. 1 (2005).
[401] Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, 272.
[402] Rorty, "Inquiry as Recontextualization," 96.
[403] See, for instance, Richard Rorty, "Is Natural Science a Natural Kind?," in *Obectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, ed. Richard Rorty (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[404] Immanuel Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?," in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977 [1784]).
[405] Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, xxxix-xl.
[406] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 131.
[407] Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, xl.
[408] Ibid., xlii.
[409] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 131-32.
[410] Berlin and Jahanbegloo, *Conversations with Isaiah Berlin*, 47.
[411] Ibid., 58.
[412] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 126.
[413] Ibid., 134.
[414] Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, xxxvii.
[415] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 168.
[416] Nancy Rosenblum, "Introduction," in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1989).
[417] For an extensive view on inquiry and pluralism, see Isaac Levi, "Conflict and Inquiry," *Ethics* 102, no. 4 (1992).
[418] For a similar position on the matter see Bernard Williams, "Conflicts of Values," in *The Idea of Freedom: Essays in Honour of Isaiah Berlin*, ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Bernard

Williams, *Moral Luck* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self; Philosophical Papers 1956-1972* (Cambridge [Eng.]: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

[419] For extensive debates about the public/private distinction see Maurizio Passerin d'Entrèves and Ursula Vogel, *Public and Private: Legal, Political and Philosophical Perspectives* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2000). Jeff Alan Weintraub and Krishan Kumar, *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, *Morality and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). S. I. Benn and Gerald F. Gaus, *Public and Private in Social Life* (London New York: Croom Helm; St. Martin's Press, 1983).

[420] Although inspired in Berlin's political theory, the liberalism defended here is referred instead as minimalist liberalism of which Berlin's pluralistic liberalism could be a suitable version. Since I interpret Berlin more historically and less meta-ethically, and explain away the role of choice as the mainstay of liberalism—two interpretations that may somewhat depart from Berlin's writings—I use another term.

[421] Raymond Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 1.

[422] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 11, fn. 11.

[423] Rawls is not alone in this undertaking. Philosophers, such as Thomas Nagel, Charles Larmore, Samuel Freeman and others also enlist in this view. See, for instance, Nagel, *Equality and Partiality*. Thomas Nagel, "Moral Conflict and Political Legitimacy," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 16, no. 3 (1987). Charles E. Larmore, "What Is Political Philosophy?," (Philosophy Department, Brown University, 2009). Larmore, *The Morals of Modernity*. Freeman, "Political Liberalism and the Possibility of a Just Democratic Constitution." Samuel Freeman, "Public Reason and Political Justifications," *Fordham Law Review* LXXII, no. 5 (2004).

[424] Other thinkers have argued against the usefulness of the comprehensive/non-comprehensive distinction. Gerald Gaus, for instance, from a very different perspective defended here, claims that the distinction between comprehensive and non-comprehensive liberalism is not very useful as it tends to group together varieties of liberalism that entail markedly different degree of ethical comprehensiveness. Gerald F. Gaus, "The Diversity of Comprehensive Liberalisms," in *Handbook of Political Theory*, ed. Gerald F. Gaus and Chandran Kukathas (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 2004).

[425] Ronald Beiner makes a somewhat related point when he claims that "[w]hile it is indeed true that liberalism aspires to privatize the good, it really cannot be done, because this very attempt at privatization already expresses a larger, global conception of what the good is." Ronald Beiner, "What Liberalism Means," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 13, no. 1 (1996): 199.

[426] These range from the state institution to commands of Christian morality to the process of socialization and internalization of a conscience to systems of truth.

[427] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 941.

[428] I thank Alex Gourevitch and Sebastián Mazzuca for directing my attention to some of these historical examples. See, for instance, Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State : The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), chap. 7.

Sebastián Mazzuca, and Robinson, James, "Political Conflict and Power Sharing in the Origins of Modern Colombia," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 89, no. 2 (2009). Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers : The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992).

[429] Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, 96-97.

[430] Bernard Williams makes a somewhat related point when he claims that political convictions determine political positions, "which means, for one thing, that we acknowledge that they have obscure causes and effects." Williams, *In the Beginning Was the Deed*, 13.

[431] Max Weber, C. Wright Mills, and Hans Heinrich Gerth, *From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 180. Power is "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" Weber, *Economy and Society*, 53.

[432] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 53.

[433] Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," 78, 82-83.

[434] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 941.

[435] Ibid., 902.

[436] Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," 126.

[437] Ibid.

[438] Charles E. Larmore, *Patterns of Moral Complexity* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 144-45.

[439] For a related and more elaborated position that draws on Machiavelli, not Weber, see Brown, *Politics out of History*, 27.

[440] Bernard Williams, "Introduction," in *Concepts and Categories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), xviii.

[441] See his bibliography cited in the prior chapter.

[442] Many interpreters highlight the centrality of constitutional government for liberalism. John Gray states that "[t]he *sine qua non* of the liberal state in all its varieties is that governmental power and authority be limited by a system of constitutional rules and practices in which individual liberty and the equality of persons under the rule of law are respected." (Gray, *Liberalism*, 72-73.) Likewise, Alan Ryan remarks that "what liberalism is always committed to is constitutional government," adding that "whatever liberalism has been concerned with, it has been concerned with avoiding absolute and arbitrary power." (Alan Ryan, "Liberalism," in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), 307, 298.) He also claims that liberalism is anti-theocratic ("The advocacy or denial of toleration as a matter of right divides the liberal and the non-liberal more sharply than anything else"), and, more broadly, he argues that liberalism presupposes that "no single good defines successful self-creation, and that taking responsibility for one's own life and making of it what one can is itself part of the good life as understood by liberals." (Ryan, "Liberalism," 299, 304.) Norberto Bobbio holds that "[l]iberalism refers us to limits both in the power and in the functions of the state." (Bobbio, *Liberalism and Democracy*, 11.) Giovanni Sartori, for his part, claims that classical liberalism is "the theory and practice

of the juridical defense, through the constitutional state, of individual freedom, of individual liberty." (Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, 1987), 380.) Anti-absolutism is, for Sartori, the force behind liberalism: "Liberalism *has* curbed absolute and arbitrary power; it has defeated the circularity of despair expressed by the query, Who controls the controllers?; it has freed man from the fear of the Prince; it has, indeed, liberated man from plunder and dread (force-related dread, to be sure)." (Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*, 383.) Nancy Rosenblum also defines liberalism as a "political theory of limited government, providing institutional guarantees for personal liberty." She adds that its central political thesis is an opposition to political absolutism and arbitrariness. (Rosenblum, "Introduction," 5.) For the concept of constitutionalism see Shannon Stimson, "Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, ed. Bonnie John S. and Honig Dryzek (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 321-23.

[443] The etymological and political praxis of liberalism do not necessarily coincide with the origins of liberalism as a political theory. At the level of ideas, the origins of liberalism as a political doctrine have been variously traced back to Locke, Hobbes or Machiavelli. Interpreters who track down the origins of liberal theory to John Locke tie the idea of a limited state to the principle of toleration among divisive religious disagreements. Others, like Pierre Manent, go even further back and link liberalism with the early-modern European political force that distances itself from a still consolidated Catholic Church. Richard Tuck, alternatively, states that natural rights political theories of the 16th and 17th centuries emerge as an alternative to the disintegrating religious unity. See Pierre Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994). Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories : Their Origin and Development* (Cambridge [Eng.] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[444] See, for instance, Marquis de Condorcet, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of Human Mind* (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion Press, 1979).

[445] Hume, who did not embrace a progressive philosophy of history, is an exception in the Enlightenment tradition.

[446] Immanuel Kant, "On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, but It Does Not Apply in Practice'," in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 73.

[447] Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 44, 45, 47, 50.

[448] Gray, *Liberalism*, xii, 86.

[449] Wilhelm Humboldt, J. W. Burrow, and Paul Avrich Collection (Library of Congress), *The Limits of State Action*, *Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics* (London,: Cambridge U.P., 1969). L. T. Hobhouse and James Meadowcroft, *Liberalism and Other Writings*, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge [England] ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1994), Mill and Himmelfarb, *On Liberty*. John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York,: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1935). Immanuel Kant and Hans Siegbert Reiss, *Kant : Political Writings*,

2nd, enl. ed., *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[450] Ryan too finds "modern liberalism" exemplified by "the assault on freedom of contract and on the sanctity of property rights represented by the welfare legislation of the Liberal government before World War I, by Roosevelt's New Deal between the wars, and by the explosion of welfare state activity after World War II." Ryan, "Liberalism," 294.
[451] Ibid., 309.
[452] Beiner, "What Liberalism Means," 192.
[453] Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, 81.
[454] Ibid., 83.
[455] Ibid., 96. In Guizot's words: "friends of the new France…have a government, the government of revolution, to found. To succeed, something other than instruments of warfare and theories of opposition is needed." Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, 96.
[456] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 462-78.
[457] Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, 145.
[458] Thomas Hill Green and A. C. Bradley, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 5th ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon press, 1929).
[459] Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, 120-22; 145-47 at 147.
[460] Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace," in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977 ), 108-14.
[461] Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical," 3-4.
[462] Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*, 380.
[463] Gaus, "The Diversity of Comprehensive Liberalisms," 102.
[464] Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*, 389.
[465] The literature on liberal neutrality is vast. Defendants of liberal neutrality include John Rawls, Bruce A. Ackerman, *Social Justice in the Liberal State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). Bruce Ackerman, "Neutralities," in *Liberalism and the Good*, ed. R. Bruce Douglass, Gerald M. Mara, and Henry S. Richardson (New York: Routledge, 1990). Nagel, *Equality and Partiality*. Larmore, *The Morals of Modernity*. Ronald Dworkin, "Liberalism," in *Public and Private Morality*, ed. Stuart Hampshire (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978). Peter de Marneffe, "Liberalism, Liberty, and Neutrality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 19, no. 3 (1990). Will Kymlicka, "Liberal Individualism and Liberal Neutrality," *Ethics* 99 (1989). For further discussion in favor and against neutrality, see also Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1986), chaps. 5 and 6. George Sher, "Liberal Neutrality and the Value of Autonomy," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 12, no. 1 (1995). George Sher, *Beyond Neutrality : Perfectionism and Politics* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Robert E. Goodin, Andrew Reeve, and Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom. Liberal Political Theory Specialist Group., *Liberal Neutrality* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1989). Thomas Hurka, *Perfectionism*, *Oxford Ethics Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), chap. 11. Michael J. Sandel, *Public Philosophy: Essays on Morality in Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

[466] Jeremy Waldron, "Liberalism, Political and Comprehensive," in *Handbook of Political Theory*, ed. Gerald F. Gaus and Chandran Kukathas (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 2004), 92. Many liberals have lambasted the idea of liberal state neutrality. William Galston, Richard Bellamy and Brian Barry are only a few. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice*, chap. 4. Richard Bellamy, *Liberalism and Pluralism: Towards a Politics of Compromise* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1999), 99-100. Brian Barry, "How Not to Defend Liberal Institutions," *British Journal of Political Science* 20 (1990). Barry, for instance, argues that the only people who can defend liberal institutions are liberals. He holds that "for someone to be prepared to say 'Homosexuality is wrong but that's just my private opinion', he or she must already have swallowed a large dose of liberalism." He states that "[t]he conclusion at which I arrive is," he claims "that a liberal outlook is not only a sufficient condition for supporting liberal institutions but is also…a necessary condition." Barry, "How Not to Defend Liberal Institutions," 8-9, 10, 11.
[467] Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York Norton, 1978). Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 530-31.
[468] Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 204-24.
[469] Friedrich A. Von Hayek, *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and the History of Ideas* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1978), 133. Hayek states that "although there are strict limits to the degree of material equality which can be achieved by liberal methods, the struggle for formal equality, i.e. against all discrimination based on social origin, nationality, race, creed, sex remained one of the strongest characteristics of the liberal tradition." Hayek, *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and the History of Ideas*, 142.
[470] Eric Mack and Gerald F. Gaus, "Classical Liberalism and Libertarianism: The Liberty Tradition," in *Handbook of Political Theory*, ed. Gerald F. Gaus and Chandran Kukathas (Thousand Oaks, California: 2004), 116-18. They add more attributes than here listed.
[471] For the idea of "market society" see C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 48.
[472] Hayek, *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and the History of Ideas*, 135.
[473] Ibid., 141.
[474] As Wendy Brown puts it, "[s]overeignty is especially troubled by ever more intricate yet disseminated forms of social power—what Michel Foucault identified as the proliferation of disciplinary and regulatory discourses in our time. Amid the variety and complexity of speech and institutional practices that not only position but form us, the self-made, autonomously willing, sovereign subject all but vanishes. How is it possible to sustain the conviction that we devise and purse our own ends when we are so patently the effects of such powers?" Brown, *Politics out of History*, 11.
[475] The focus on concerted agency, Brown claims, has obscured "the significance of power's dispersion, circulation, and microphysical mechanics, its often automatic rather than intentional workings, and its detailed imbrication with knowledge, language, and thought." (Brown, "Power after Foucault," 65.) Brown holds that "[o]n the one hand, power has been discerned in relations among words, juxtapositions of images, discourse

of scientific truth, micro-organizations of bodies and gestures, in social orchestrations of pain and pleasure, sickness, fear, health, and suffering. On the other hand, these discernments have undermined conventional formulations of power—those that equate power with rule, law, wealth, or violence." (Brown, "Power after Foucault," 66.) Foucault's understanding of power has "attuned us to the *circuitries* of power and governmentality between, for example, the state and the social, the scientific and the political, or the carceral, the pedagogic, and the medical." (Brown, "Power after Foucault," 75.) In short, according to Brown, Foucault objects to accounts of power that reduce it to rule and law, repression, and tangibility. Brown, "Power after Foucault," 67.

[476] Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, 159, see also 151-52.

[477] Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake*, chap. 3. Bellamy, *Liberalism and Pluralism: Towards a Politics of Compromise*, chap. 5. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice*.

[478] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 3.

[479] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 54. Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," 78, 82.

[480] Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," 78.

[481] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 213.

[482] Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," 78.

[483] Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," 294-96.

[484] An important strand of modern constitutionalism, as Shannon Stimson has noticed, draws attention to the political dimension of the rule of law focusing more on the empirical understanding of the reasons for obedience. As opposed to the normative positions, the political account acknowledges that the rule of law "may only come to have prescriptive force if the most numerous or powerful politically believe the law to be on their side." Unlike the normative understanding of the rule of law, this political model understands it "as a matter of strategic bargaining over the distribution of power." The relevant question for this strand of thought is "why will the powerful choose to restrict themselves by law?" (Stimson, "Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law," 325.) This strand of thought is related to what Geuss calls "de jure authority" in the sociological sense. Raymond Geuss, *History and Illusion in Politics* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 40-42.

[485] John Scott, *Power*, *Key Concepts* (Cambridge ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 20.

[486] Gianfranco Poggi, *Forms of Power* (Cambridge Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 82.

[487] Geuss, *History and Illusion in Politics*, 35. Geuss claims that legitimacy ultimately rests on a cluster of reasons (habit, reciprocal expectations, solidarity, some benefits, etc.), which outweigh disobedience. See also Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, 34-37.

[488] Seyla Benhabib, "Liberal Dialogue Versus a Critical Theory of Discoursive Legitimation," in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 143.

[489] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 137, 217, 393.

[490] Ibid., 225.

[491] Ibid., 427.

[492] William E. Connolly, "Legitimacy and Modernity," in *Legitimacy and the State*, ed. William E. Connolly (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 13, Jurgen Habermas, "What Does a Legitimation Crisis Mean Today?," in *Legitimacy and the State*, ed. William E. Connolly (New York: New York University Press, 1984).
[493] See for instance Seyla Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy," in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).
[494] Chantal Mouffe, "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?," *Social Research* 66, no. 3 (1999): 746. See also Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London ; New York: Verso, 1993), Introduction, and chaps. 1, 3.
[495] Mouffe, "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?," 752. She asserts that the "inherently conflictual aspect of pluralism, linked to the dimension of undecidability and the ineradicability of antagonism is precisely what the deliberative democracy model is at pains to erase." Mouffe, "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?," 756.
[496] See also Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy : Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).
[497] Poggi, *Forms of Power*, 82.
[498] See Bruce Ackerman, "Why Dialogue?," *Journal of Philosophy* 86, no. 1 (1989).
[499] Benhabib, "Liberal Dialogue Versus a Critical Theory of Discoursive Legitimation," 148.
[500] Ibid., 149.
[501] For a similar account see Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity : Twelve Lectures*, *Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 274, 89.
[502] George Kateb, "On the 'Legitimation Crisis'," in *Legitimacy and the State*, ed. William E. Connolly (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 180.
[503] Connolly, "Legitimacy and Modernity," 15. Wendy Brown argues in a similar vein that "The fiction of the autonomous, willing, reasoning, rights-bearing subject convened by modernity is articulated in liberal democratic constitutions and a host of other liberal institutions…In late modernity, none of these requirements is met easily, given a globalized economic order, unprecedented migrations of peoples across national borders, and relatively new forms of social power that increasingly undermine the notion of the self-made and self-directed individual or state subject." Brown, *Politics out of History*, 10.
[504] Kateb notices the alliance between legitimacy and law when he claims "[t]he elementary fact is that the word is derived from the Latin word for law." Kateb, "On the 'Legitimation Crisis'," 180.
[505] See, for instance, Brown, *Politics out of History*, 9-10; 12-13. She claims that "the ostensible universality of the state and of liberal civic-political culture has been exposed not only as bourgeois but as relentlessly raced, gendered, and sexed—as shot through with stratifying and subject-producing social powers." (Brown, *Politics out of History*, 13.) Brown adds that "liberal universalist and progressive principles have been challenged by the anti-assimilationist claims of many current formations of politicized 'differences,' including those marked by ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and race; by a political ethos promulgating *agonistic* social relations associated with these cultural

differences, as opposed to a model of pluralistic conflicting interests on the one hand, or of general social harmony on the other; and by the patently mythical nature of a progressive political worldview hat presumes steady improvement in the general wealth, felicity, egalitarianism, and peacefulness of liberal societies." Brown, *Politics out of History*, 20.

**Bibliography**


Ackerman, Bruce. "Neutralities." In *Liberalism and the Good*, edited by R. Bruce Douglass, Gerald M. Mara, and Henry S. Richardson. New York: Routledge, 1990.

———. "Why Dialogue?" *Journal of Philosophy* 86, no. 1 (1989): 5-22.

Ackerman, Bruce A. *Social Justice in the Liberal State*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

Arrington, Robert L. *Rationalism, Realism, and Relativism: Perspectives in Contemporary Moral Epistemology*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Bacon, Michael. *Richard Rorty: Pragmatism and Political Liberalism*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007.

Baier, Kurt. "Justice and the Aims of Political Philosophy." *Ethics* 99, no. 4 (1989): 771-90.

Barry, Brian. "How Not to Defend Liberal Institutions." *British Journal of Political Science* 20 (1990): 1-14.

Beiner, Ronald. "What Liberalism Means." *Social Philosophy and Policy* 13, no. 1 (1996): 190-206.

Bellamy, Richard. *Liberalism and Pluralism: Towards a Politics of Compromise*. London; New York: Routledge, 1999.

———. *Liberalism and Pluralism Towards a Politics of Compromise*. London: Routledge, 1999.

———. *Rethinking Liberalism*. New York: Pinter, 2000.

Benhabib, Seyla. "Liberal Dialogue Versus a Critical Theory of Discoursive Legitimation." In *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, edited by Nancy Rosenblum. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.

———. "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy." In *Democracy and Difference*, edited by Seyla Benhabib. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Benn, S. I., and Gerald F. Gaus. *Public and Private in Social Life*. London New York: Croom Helm; St. Martin's Press, 1983.

Berlin, Isaiah. *Concepts and Categories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

———. "Does Political Theory Still Exist?" In *Concepts and Categories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

———. "Empirical Propositions and Hypothetical Statements." In *Concepts and Categories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

———. *Four Essays on Liberty*. London, New York Oxford U.P., 1969.

———. "Logical Translation." In *Concepts and Categories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

———. *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

———. "The Concept of Scientific History." In *Concepts and Categories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

———. *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997.

———. *The Power of Ideas*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.

———. "The Purpose of Philosophy." In *Concepts and Categories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.
———. *The Roots of Romanticism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999.
———. *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and Their History*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997.
———. "Two Concepts of Liberty." In *Four Essays on Liberty*, edited by Isaiah Berlin. London, New York: Oxford U.P., 1969.
———. "Verification." In *Concepts and Categories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.
Berlin, Isaiah and Williams, Bernard. "Pluralism and Liberalism: A Reply." *Political Studies* XLI (1994): 306-09.
Berlin, Isaiah, and Ramin Jahanbegloo. *Conversations with Isaiah Berlin*. New York: Scribner's: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1991.
Bernstein, Richard. "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward." *Political Theory* 15, no. 4 (1987): 539-63.
———. "Rorty's Inspirational Liberalism." In *Richard Rorty*, edited by Charles B. Guignon and David R. Hiley. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
Bobbio, Norberto. *Liberalism and Democracy*. London; New York: Verso, 1990.
Brown, Wendy. "Genealogical Politics." In *The Later Foucault*, edited by Jeremy Moss. Londong: Sage, 1998.
———. *Politics out of History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
———. "Power after Foucault." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, edited by John S. and Honig Dryzek, Bonnie. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
Chang, Ruth. *Incommensurability, Incomparability, and Practical Reasoning*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.
Cohen, Joshua. "Pluralism and Proceduralism." *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 69 (1994): 589-618.
Condorcet, Marquis de. *Sketch for a Historical Picture of Human Mind*. Westport, Conn.: Hyperion Press, 1979.
Connolly, William E. "Legitimacy and Modernity." In *Legitimacy and the State*, edited by William E. Connolly. New York: New York University Press, 1984.
Crowder, George. *Liberalism and Value Pluralism*, *Political Theory and Contemporary Politics*. London; New York: Continuum, 2002.
———. "Pluralism and Liberalism." *Political Studies* XLII (1994): 293-305.
———. "Pluralism, Relativism and Liberalism in Isaiah Berlin." 1-21. Hobart: University of Tasmania, 2003.
———. "Two Value-Pluralist Arguments for Liberalism." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 2 (2002): 457-73.
Daniels, Norman. "Reflective Equilibrium and Archimedean Points." In *Equality and Liberty*, edited by Angelo Corlett. London: Macmillan, 1991.
———. "Wide Reflective Equilibrium and Theory Acceptance in Ethics." *Journal of Philosophy* 76, no. 4 (1979): 256-82.
Dewey, John. *Liberalism and Social Action*. New York,: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1935.
Doppelt, Gerald. "Is Rawls' Kantian Liberalism Coherent and Defensible?" *Ethics* 99, no. 4 (1989): 815-51.

Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
Durkheim, Emile, and W. D. Halls. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: Free Press, 1984.
Dworkin, Ronald. "Liberalism." In *Public and Private Morality*, edited by Stuart Hampshire. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
Dzur, Albert W. "Value Pluralism Versus Political Liberalism?" *Social Theory and Practice* 24, no. 3 (1998): 375-92.
Elshtain, Jean B. "Don't Be Cruel: Reflections on Rortyan Liberalism." In *Richard Rorty*, edited by Charles B. Guignon and David R. Hiley. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
Estlund, David. "The Insularity of the Reasonable: Why Political Liberalism Must Admit the Truth." *Ethics* 108, no. 2 (1998): 252-75.
Festenstein, Matthew. *Pragmatism and Political Theory: From Dewey to Rorty*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 2nd Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
———. *The History of Sexuality*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
———. "What Is Enlightenment?" In *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.
Fraser, Nancy. "Solidarity or Singularity? Richard Rorty between Romanticism and Technocracy." In *Reading Rorty*, edited by Alan Malachowski. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990.
Freeman, Samuel. "Political Liberalism and the Possibility of a Just Democratic Constitution." *Chicago-Ken Law Review* 69, no. 3 (1994): 619-68.
———. "Public Reason and Political Justifications." *Fordham Law Review* LXXII, no. 5 (2004): 2021-72.
Galston, William. *Liberal Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Galston, William A. *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
Gaus, Gerald F. "The Diversity of Comprehensive Liberalisms." In *Handbook of Political Theory*, edited by Gerald F. Gaus and Chandran Kukathas. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 2004.
Geras, Norman. *Solidarity in the Conversation of Humankind: The Ungroundable Liberalism of Richard Rorty*. London ; New York: Verso, 1995.
Geuss, Raymond. *History and Illusion in Politics*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
———. *Philosophy and Real Politics*. Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008.
Goodin, Robert E., Andrew Reeve. *Liberal Neutrality*. London; New York: Routledge, 1989.
Gray, John. "Agonistic Liberalism." *Social Philosophy and Policy* 12, no. 1 (1995).
———. *Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age*. London; New York: Routledge, 1995.
———. *Isaiah Berlin*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996.

———. *Liberalism*. 2nd ed, *Concepts in Social Thought*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.
———. "Pluralism and Toleration in Contemporary Political Philosophy." *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 323-33.
———. *Two Faces of Liberalism*. New York: New Press; distributed by W.W. Norton, 2000.
———. "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 6, no. 1 (1998): 17-36.
Green, Thomas Hill. *Prolegomena to Ethics*. 5th ed. Oxford,: The Clarendon press, 1929.
Guignon, Charles, and David Hiley. "Biting the Bullet: Rorty on Private and Public Morality." In *Reading Rorty*, edited by Alan Malachowski. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1990.
Gutting, Gary. *Pragmatic Liberalism and the Critique of Modernity*, *Modern European Philosophy*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
Habermas, Jurgen. "'Reasonable' Versus 'True,' or the Morality of Worldviews." In *The Inclusion of the Other*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1999.
———. "What Does a Legitimation Crisis Mean Today?" In *Legitimacy and the State*, edited by William E. Connolly. New York: New York University Press, 1984.
Habermas, Jürgen. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987.
Hampshire, Stuart. *Innocence and Experience*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.
———. *Justice Is Conflict*. Princenton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.
———. "Liberalism: The New Twist." *The New York Review of Books* (August 12, 1993): 44-47.
———. *Morality and Conflict*. Oxford, England: B. Blackwell, 1983.
Hayek, Friedrich A. von. *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and the History of Ideas*. London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1978.
Hobhouse, L. T. *Liberalism and Other Writings*, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*. Cambridge [England]; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
Honig, Bonnie. "Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home." *Social Research* 61, no. 3 (1994): 563-97.
———. *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, *Contestations*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
Howe, Richard Herbert. "Max Weber's Elective Affinities: Sociology within the Bounds of Pure Reason." *The American Journal of Sociology* 84, no. 2 (1978): 366-85.
Humboldt, Wilhelm. *The Limits of State Action*, *Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics*. London: Cambridge U.P., 1969.
Hurka, Thomas. *Perfectionism*, *Oxford Ethics Series*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
Kant, Immanuel. "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose." In *Kant: Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

———. "On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, but It Does Not Apply in Practice'." In *Kant: Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Perpetual Peace." In *Kant: Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
———. "What Is Enlightenment?" In *Kant: Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Kant, Immanuel. *Kant: Political Writings*. 2nd, enl. ed, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Kateb, George. "On the 'Legitimation Crisis'." In *Legitimacy and the State*, edited by William E. Connolly. New York: New York University Press, 1984.
Kekes, John. *A Case for Conservatism*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University press, 1998.
———. "Liberal Double-Mindedness." In *Morality, Reflection, and Ideology*, edited by Edward Harcourt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
———. *The Morality of Pluralism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.
Kenny, Michael. "Isaiah Berlin's Contribution to Modern Political Theory." *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 1026-39.
Kymlicka, Will. "Liberal Individualism and Liberal Neutrality." *Ethics* 99 (1989): 883-905.
Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso, 1985.
Larmore, Charles E. *Patterns of Moral Complexity*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
———. *The Morals of Modernity*, *Modern European Philosophy*. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
———. "What Is Political Philosophy?", 1-31: Philosophy Department, Brown University, 2009.
Levi, Isaac. "Conflict and Inquiry." *Ethics* 102, no. 4 (1992): 814-34.
Lilla, Mark, Ronald William Dworkin, Robert B. Silvers, and Aileen Kelly. *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin*. New York: New York Review Books, 2001.
Lukes, Steven. *Liberals and Cannibals: The Implications of Diversity*. London: Verso, 2003.
Macedo, Stephen. *Liberal Virtues: Citizenship, Virtue, and Community in Liberal Constitutionalism*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1991.
Mack, Eric, and Gerald F. Gaus. "Classical Liberalism and Libertarianism: The Liberty Tradition." In *Handbook of Political Theory*, edited by Gerald F. Gaus and Chandran Kukathas. Thousand Oaks, California, 2004.
Mackenzie, Iain. "Berlin's Defence of Value-Pluralism: Clarifications and Criticisms." *Contemporary Politics* 5, no. 4 (1999): 325-37.
Mackie, J. L. *Ethics : Inventing Right and Wrong*. Harmondsworth ; New York: Penguin, 1977.
Macpherson, C. B. *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

Manent, Pierre. *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.
Marneffe, Peter de. "Liberalism, Liberty, and Neutrality." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 19, no. 3 (1990): 253-74.
Martin, Michael, and Lee C. McIntyre. *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994.
Marx, Karl. "Critique of the Gotha Program." In *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York: Norton, 1978.
———. "On the Jewish Question." In *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York Norton, 1978.
Mazzuca, Sebastián, and Robinson, James. "Political Conflict and Power Sharing in the Origins of Modern Colombia." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 89, no. 2 (2009).
McCarthy, Thomas. "Ironist Theory as a Vocation: A Response to Rorty's Reply." *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 3 (1990): 644-55.
———. "Private Irony and Public Decency: Richard Rorty's New Pragmatism." *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 2 (1990): 355-70.
Mehta, Pratap B. "Pluralism after Liberalism." *Critical Review* 11, no. 3-4 (1997): 503-18.
Milgate, Murray, and Shannon C. Stimson. *After Adam Smith : A Century of Transformation in Politics and Political Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. Harmondsworth; Baltimore: Penguin, 1974.
Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1979.
Mills, C. Wright, and Hans Heinrich Gerth. "The Man and His Work." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by and Hans Heinrich Gerth C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Pres, 1958.
Misak, Cheryl. "Pragmatism and Pluralism." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 41, no. 1 (2005): 129-35.
Mouffe, Chantal. "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?" *Social Research* 66, no. 3 (1999): 745-58.
———. *The Return of the Political*. London ; New York: Verso, 1993.
Nagel, Thomas. *Equality and Partiality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
———. "Moral Conflict and Political Legitimacy." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 16, no. 3 (1987): 215-40.
Passerin d'Entrèves, Maurizio, and Ursula Vogel. *Public and Private: Legal, Political and Philosophical Perspectives*. London; New York: Routledge, 2000.
Plaw, Avery. "The Limited Compatibility of Liberalism and Pluralism: Against the General Incompatibility Thesis." *International Journal of Politics and Ethics* 2, no. 4 (2002).
Pocock, J. G. A. *Barbarism and Religion, Vol. 1: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764*. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
Poggi, Gianfranco. *Forms of Power*. Cambridge Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

Putnam, Hilary. "Richard Rorty on Reality and Justification." In *Rorty and His Critics*, edited by Robert B. Brandom. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
Railton, Peter. "Pluralism, Determinacy, and Dilemma." *Ethics* 102, no. 4 (1992): 720-42.
Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971.
———. *A Theory of Justice*. Rev. ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard Univeristy Press, 1999.
———. *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001.
———. "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical." In *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, edited by Samuel Freeman. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.
———. "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory." In *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, edited by Samuel Freeman. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.
———. *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
———. "Social Unity and Primary Goods." In *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, edited by Samuel Freeman. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.
———. "The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus." In *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, edited by Samuel Freeman. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.
———. "The Independence of Moral Theory." In *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, edited by Samuel Freeman. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.
———. "The Priority of Right and Ideas of the Good." In *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, edited by Samuel Freeman. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.
Raz, Joseph. *The Morality of Freedom*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1986.
Reed, Jamie. "From Logical Positivism to 'Metaphysical Rationalism': Isaiah Berlin on the 'Fallacy of Reduction'." *History of Political Thought* XXIX, no. 1 (2008).
Riley, Jonathan. "Defending Cultural Pluralism: Within Liberal Limits." *Political Theory* 30, no. 1 (2002): 68-96.
———. "Interpreting Berlin's Liberalism." *The American Political Science Review* 95, no. 2 (2001): 283-95.
Rorty, Richard. *Consequences of Pragmatism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.
———. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
———. *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, *Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Freud and Moral Reflection." In *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers*, edited by Richard Rorty. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Grandeur, Profundity, and Finitude." In *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
———. "Habermas, Derrida, and Philosophy." In *Truth and Progress, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

———. "Heidegger, Contingency, and Pragmatism." In *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers.* Cambridge U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality." In *Truth and Progress, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
———. "Inquiry as Recontextualization." In *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, edited by Richard Rorty. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?" In *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers.* Cambridge U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Is Natural Science a Natural Kind?" In *Obectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, edited by Richard Rorty. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Justice as a Larger Loyalty." In *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
———. "Moral Identity and Private Autonomy: The Case of Foucault." In *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers*, edited by Richard Rorty. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Non-Reductive Physicalism." In *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, *Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. *Philosophy and Social Hope*. New York, N.Y.: Penguin, 1999.
———. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.
———. *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*, *Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
———. "Philosophy as Science, Metaphor, Politics." In *Essays on Heidegger and Others, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Postmodernist Bourgeois Liberalism." In *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Pragmatism and Romanticism." In *Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
———. "Pragmatism without Method." In *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, edited by Richard Rorty. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Rationality and Cultrual Difference." In *Truth and Progress, Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
———. "Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism." In *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, edited by Chantal Mouffe. London; New York: Routledge, 1996.

———. "Science as Solidarity." In *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, edited by Richard Rorty. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy." In *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*, edited by Richard Rorty. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
———. "Thugs and Theorists." *Political Theory* 15, no. 4 (1987): 564-80.
———. "Truth and Freedom: A Reply to Thomas Mccarthy." *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 3 (1990): 633-43.
Rosen, Michael. "Must We Return to Moral Realism?" *Inquiry* 34 (1991): 183-94.
Rosenblum, Nancy. "Introduction." In *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, edited by Nancy Rosenblum. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1989.
Rosenblum, Nancy L. *Another Liberalism: Romanticism and the Reconstruction of Liberal Thought*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987.
Ryan, Alan. "Isaiah Berlin: Political Theory and Liberal Culture." *Annual Review of Political Science*, no. 2 (1999): 345-62.
———. "Liberalism." In *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, edited by Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993.
Sandel, Michael J. *Liberalism and Its Critics*. New York: New York University Press, 1984.
———. *Public Philosophy : Essays on Morality in Politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005.
Sartori, Giovanni. *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, 1987.
Sayre-McCord, Geoffrey. *Essays on Moral Realism*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988.
Scheffler, Samuel. "The Appeal of Political Liberalism." *Ethics* 105, no. 1 (1994): 4-22.
———. "The Division of Moral Labour." *The Aristotelian Society* LXXVIII (2005): 229-53.
Scott, John. *Power*. Cambridge ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.
Shapiro, Ian. *Political Criticism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
Sher, George. *Beyond Neutrality: Perfectionism and Politics*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
———. "Liberal Neutrality and the Value of Autonomy." *Social Philosophy and Policy* 12, no. 1 (1995): 136-59.
Shklar, Judith. "Liberalism of Fear." In *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, edited by Nancy Rosenblum. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.
Singer, Peter, ed. *A Companion to Ethics*, *Blackwell Companions to Philosophy*. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell Reference, 1991.
Skocpol, Theda. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992.
Skowronek, Stephen. *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1982.

Stimson, Shannon. "Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, edited by Bonnie John S. and Honig Dryzek. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
Talisse, Robert. "Can Democracy Be a Way of Life? Deweyan Democracy and the Problem of Pluralism." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 39, no. 1 (2003): 1-21.
Talisse, Robert and Aikin, Scott. "Still Searching for a Pragmatist Pluralism." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 41, no. 1 (2005): 145-60.
———. "Why Pragmatists Cannot Be Pluralist." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 14, no. 1 (2005): 101-18.
Taylor, Charles. "Atomism." In *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
———. *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.
———. "Rorty and Philosophy." In *Richard Rorty*, edited by Charles B. Guignon, and David R. Hiley. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
———. *Sources of the Self : The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.
———. "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty." In *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
Treiber, Hubert. "Elective Affinities between Weber's Sociology of Religion and Sociology of Law." *Theory and Society* 14, no. 6 (1985): 809-61.
Tuck, Richard. *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development*. Cambridge [Eng.]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
Waldron, Jeremy. "Liberalism, Political and Comprehensive." In *Handbook of Political Theory*, edited by Gerald F. Gaus and Chandran Kukathas. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 2004.
———. "Theoretical Foundations of Liberalism." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 37, no. 147 (1987): 127-50.
Walzer, Michael. "Are There Limits to Liberalism?" *New York Review of Books* 42, no. 16 (1995).
———. "Liberalism and the Art of Separation." *Political Theory* 12, no. 3 (1984): 315-30.
Weber, Max. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. 2 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
———. "On the Situation of Constitutional Democracy in Russia." In *Political Writings*, edited by Peter Lassman and Ronald Spiers. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
———. "Politics as a Vocation." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by C. Wright Mills and H. Heinrich Gerth. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
———. "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by C. Wright Mills and H. Heinrich Gerth. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
———. "Science as a Vocation." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by C. Wright Mills and H. Heinrich Gerth. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
———. "Suffrage and Democracy in Germany." In *Political Writings*, edited by Peter Lassman and Ronald Spiers. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

———. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Scribner, 1976.
———. "The Social Psychology of the World Religions." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by C. Wright Mills and H. Heinrich Gerth. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
Weber, Max, C. Wright Mills, and Hans Heinrich Gerth. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.
Weintraub, Jeff Alan, and Krishan Kumar. *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, *Morality and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
Wenar, Leif. "Political Liberalism: An Internal Critique." *Ethics* 106, no. 1 (1995): 32-62.
Williams, Bernard. "Conflicts of Values." In *The Idea of Freedom: Essays in Honour of Isaiah Berlin*, edited by Alan Ryan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.
———. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.
———. *In the Beginning Was the Deed*. Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005.
———. "Introduction." In *Concepts and Categories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.
———. *Moral Luck : Philosophical Papers, 1973-1980*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
———. *Problems of the Self; Philosophical Papers 1956-1972*. Cambridge [Eng.]: Cambridge University Press, 1973.