



Can Value Pluralists be Comprehensive Liberals? Galston's Liberal Pluralism

Robert B. Talisse

Department of Philosophy, Vanderbilt University, 111 Furman Hall, Nashville, TN 37240, USA.
E-mail: robert.talisse@vanderbilt.edu

In this paper, the author engages William Galston's recent attempt to revive the Berlinian project of developing a comprehensive theory of liberalism from value pluralist premises. The author's argument maintains that, despite Galston's attempts, the value pluralist in fact has no resources with which to recommend a liberal political order over a variety of illiberal regimes, and that, further, Galston's own justificatory strategy is indistinguishable from the later Rawls's noncomprehensive, 'political' liberalism. Although the argument engages the work of Berlin and Galston in particular, the primary aim is to preserve the intuition, common to Rawls, Brian Barry, Ronald Dworkin, and John Gray, that value pluralism is inconsistent with comprehensive liberalism.

Contemporary Political Theory (2004) 3, 127–139. doi:10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300136

Keywords: liberalism; pluralism; value; William Galston; Isaiah Berlin

To be a pluralist with regard to some domain of opinion, *D*, is to propose a particular thesis about substantive disagreements within *D*; specifically, it is to maintain that certain disagreements within *D* are permanent and intractable even among fully reasonable and rational persons who sincerely attend to all possible data and every consideration relevant to *D*. Accordingly, there are a variety of issues about which one may be a pluralist. For example, James (1977) was a pluralist about metaphysics and Rescher (1995) is a pluralist about epistemic justification; one can easily envision pluralist options in other areas.¹

I am presently concerned with the pluralist thesis with regard to morality. Specifically, I shall be concerned with William Galston's recent attempt to derive a substantive theory of liberalism from a version of moral pluralism. I shall not engage the question of the plausibility of moral pluralism, but rather the implications of moral pluralism for liberal political theory. A brief review of the leading features of both moral pluralism and liberal theory will help to show how extraordinary is the project of basing liberal commitments upon pluralist foundations. The subsequent argument will engage Galston's pluralist liberalism. However, as Galston takes himself to be reviving a central theme in Isaiah Berlin's work, I will briefly examine Berlin's argument in 'Two Concepts of Liberty.' Although the argument targets Galston in particular, the



over-riding aim will be to raise the suspicion that the very idea of a comprehensive liberalism based upon moral pluralist premises is incoherent.²

Varieties of Pluralism

In keeping with the rough definition advanced above, moral pluralism is fundamentally the thesis that certain moral disagreements are intractable. Typically, moral pluralists fix upon the idea of 'ways of life' (Gray, 2000b, 86; Galston, 2002, 27) or, in Rawls's (1996, 13) terms, 'comprehensive doctrines' as the focus of their pluralism. That is, the moral pluralist maintains that there are some set of claims about the good life in which each claim is inconsistent with other members of the set, but fully consistent with all the relevant data and the best employment of human reason. Consequently, moral pluralism is the thesis that the persistence of certain moral disagreements is not due to human irrationality, stubbornness, or wickedness. The moral pluralist contends that there is nothing, in principle, deficient in our efforts to reason with and understand each other; lack of moral consensus has a different source.

What, then, is this source? In addressing this question, moral pluralists divide into roughly two camps. One version of moral pluralism offers an epistemic account of the persistence of moral dispute. A good example of epistemic moral pluralism is found in the later work of Rawls. Appealing to what he calls the 'the burdens of judgment',³ Rawls (1996, 56) contends that wide moral consensus is unattainable because human rationality, even at its best, cannot decide questions that admit of the kinds of complexity characteristic of fundamental moral questions. That is, the complexities of the subject matter of moral decision are responsible for the fact that a number of conflicting moral claims are fully consistent with the best evidence and fullest employment of our rational capacities.

Of course, Rawls's pluralism leaves open the metaphysical questions begged by the burdens of judgment. Are moral disputes rationally undecidable due to some fact about values? Do the limitations of our moral epistemic powers owe to moral ontology? For reasons I shall identify shortly, Rawls offers no explanation of the proposed complexity of moral questions.⁴ We might then say that epistemic moral pluralism is shallow pluralism, and shallow pluralism is incomplete pluralism; as many of Rawls's critics have noted, it requires backup from a more robust account of the subject matter of moral disagreement.⁵

Hence we may identify a second type of moral pluralism. Unlike the epistemic moral pluralist who eschews metaphysics, the 'value' pluralist offers a substantive metaphysical thesis that explains the persistence of moral disagreement. According to the value pluralist, the moral facts are themselves in conflict; consequently, there are a number of true moral propositions that



nonetheless do not form a consistent set. This fact about values accounts for the inability of human reason to reach moral consensus; to expect wide moral consensus among persons is unreasonable.

The value pluralist thesis has many significant ramifications.⁶ First among these is that the very idea of a life manifesting every good available to humans is incoherent. This is not simply to say that different goods compete for our limited attention and resources, such as when I must decide to contribute a given sum of money either to the arts or to the homeless (Nagel, 2001, 105–106). It is rather to say that, even given infinite material, temporal, and epistemic resources, the manifestation of certain actual goods precludes the manifestation, and even the pursuit, of others; as Dworkin (2001, 78) has put it, the value pluralist claims that ‘values conflict...even if we get all the breaks’. Further, if the moral universe consists of a number of distinct and competing goods, then there is no *summum bonum*, no single or highest good, and no common measure by which goods can be ranked or prioritized. Hence, there are varieties of human flourishing and a plurality of human goods, and no way to make them commensurate or to resolve rationally conflicts among them.

Liberalism and Pluralism

Let us turn now to the tradition of political theory known as liberalism. Although liberalism is a complicated doctrine admitting of wide variation, we may say generally that liberalism is a style of political theory that emphasizes individual liberty and views the state as a coercive institution whose principal purpose lies in the protection of individuals from interference with their liberty from other individuals and from other states.⁷ On a dominant interpretation of these commitments, the liberal holds that the legitimate state is necessarily committed solely to maintaining negative liberty.⁸

Traditionally, liberal political theorists sought to provide a philosophical proof for the liberal political order. The goal was to devise a demonstration of the legitimacy of the liberal state that could win the consent of those living under it, despite the fact that such individuals were not required to subscribe to a common religious, metaphysical, or moral authority. Theorists hence sought after a universally undeniable and self-evident foundation upon which to ground the liberal state. Familiar candidates for this foundation include the Lockean natural rights doctrine, the Kantian view of autonomous agency, Mill’s hedonist conception of value, and the theory of rational choice in the early Rawls. The hope was that, despite important differences of opinion and ways of life among individuals, there could be identified some first principle that all rational persons could be expected to endorse. With this principle identified, the philosopher’s task was to provide the demonstration that it is best realized within the context of a liberal political order. Following Rawls



(1996, 11–15), we may say that since traditional political theorists attempted to ground the liberal state in comprehensive philosophical doctrines, they offered ‘comprehensive’ theories of liberalism.

Many contemporary political philosophers have maintained that moral pluralism — whether epistemic or metaphysical — frustrates the aspiration for a comprehensive theory of liberalism. The argument is intuitive: if moral pluralism is correct, then there is no first principle that all rational persons can be reasonably expected to endorse. In other words, if moral pluralism is true, the search for a comprehensive doctrine to serve as the legitimating foundation for the liberal state is futile; thus, insofar as liberal political philosophy is bound up with the comprehensive project, it, too, is futile. Rawls (1996, 135) has pressed the point vigorously: ‘The question the dominant tradition has tried to answer has no answer’.

Hence, moral pluralism is often taken as a threat to the traditional activity of liberal political theorists. This threat might not be so worrisome were it not for the fact that recent globalizing tendencies, multicultural trends, advances in communications, and other technological factors have resulted in a greater sense among philosophers and ordinary persons that some version of the moral pluralist thesis is correct. Understandably, the past two decades of liberal political philosophy have been fixed upon the issue of pluralism: what is a liberal political philosopher to do?

We can discern three popular responses. The first is to reject moral pluralism and continue the project of comprehensive liberal theory. This is the path taken most forcefully by Dworkin (1995, 2000) and Barry (2001). Against the pluralist, Barry (2001, 262) argues that ‘there is nothing straightforwardly absurd about the idea that there is a single best way for human beings to live’, and Dworkin (1995, 193) maintains that his version of liberalism is ‘continuous with the best personal ethics, with the right philosophical view of the good life’. I of course cannot discuss these views here in detail; suffice it to say that both offer substantive accounts of equality as the basis from which the liberal principles follow.⁹

A second strategy accepts moral pluralism and drops liberalism. Gray (2000a,b) is the most obvious example of this response. Against comprehensive liberals, Gray contends that ‘The task of political philosophy is not to give practice a foundation,’ but rather ‘to return to practice with fewer illusions’; this requires ‘shedding the illusion that theories of justice and rights can deliver us from the ironies and tragedies of politics’ (Gray, 2000a, 139).¹⁰ Gray (2000b, 101) endorses a non-liberal, neo-Hobbesian view of politics according to which the most for which one can hope is a peaceful *modus vivendi* among conflicting ways of life.¹¹ Accordingly, Gray argues that several types of decidedly illiberal states are fully legitimate.

The third response endorses some version of moral pluralism, but proposes a less ambitious task for liberal theory. Rawls’s (1985, 1996) ‘political not



metaphysical' liberal programme has been the most influential proposal of this sort.¹² In Rawls's (1985, 395) view, the proper response of liberal theorists to moral pluralism is to 'stay on the surface, philosophically speaking' and to seek for a non-philosophical formulation of characteristically liberal commitments that can win an 'overlapping consensus' (Rawls, 1996, 147) among citizens profoundly divided at the level of comprehensive doctrines. The political liberal begins, then, not from philosophical theories, but from the 'shared fund of implicitly recognized basic ideas and principles' in existing liberal societies (Rawls, 1996, 8). In this way, Rawlsian political liberalism is a call for liberal politics without liberal philosophy; in fact, as was indicated earlier, it is a call for liberalism without even a philosophical account of *pluralism*.¹³

From Pluralism to Liberalism?

Despite the important differences between the approaches sketched above, they agree that pluralism and traditional liberal theory are incompatible. In his recent book, *Liberal Pluralism*, William Galston not only contends that liberalism and value pluralism are compatible, he also argues for the bolder thesis that value pluralism *entails* a particular version of liberalism; that is, Galston (2002, 9) promotes a *comprehensive* theory of liberalism based upon pluralism. He calls the resulting theory 'liberal pluralism.'

On its face, the very idea of a liberal pluralism seems implausible: how could value pluralism strictly entail a commitment to any specific political order? How could the thesis that the moral universe is populated by conflicting, incommensurable, and impossible values that cannot be rank ordered or subsumed under a single *summum bonum* entail any definite claims about politics? However, Galston's project is not without precedent. Berlin's (1969) principal contribution to political theory is his endeavor to draw precisely the same implication. I think Berlin's argument from pluralism to liberalism is a failure. As Galston's own effort draws from Berlin, a brief and admittedly incomplete discussion of Berlin's argument will be helpful for the coming examination of Galston.

Berlin's argument

In 'Two Concepts of Liberty' and related writings, Berlin famously argued that value pluralism entails a liberalism rooted in negative liberty.¹⁴ Berlin's (1969, 169) argument for liberalism begins from the quasi-existentialist entailment of value pluralism that 'the necessity of choosing between absolute claims is...an inescapable characteristic of the human condition'; that is, the truth of value pluralism entails that human life inevitably involves choice-making among incompatible, competing goods. From this, we are to infer that 'to be free to choose, and not to be chosen for, is an inalienable ingredient in what makes human beings human' (Berlin, 1969, lx). Since humans realize that they *must*



choose, they consequently *value* the freedom to choose (Berlin, 1969, 168). In turn, they value a political order that *protects* the freedom to choose; therefore, the argument concludes that the liberal state, fixed as it is upon upholding negative liberty, is the most legitimate kind of state. In this way, value pluralism entails liberalism.

There are at least two problems here. First, it is unclear how the fact that a life of choice-making among competing goods is inevitable for humans should lead individuals to value the ability to make such choices freely. In fact, if value pluralism is true, then it is not clear why anyone should value the freedom to choose among goods. Such freedom seems valuable only in cases where one must choose between good and bad, or good and less good. But Berlin thinks that choices among rival goods, not between good and bad, is what is essential to being human, and the incommensurability component of value pluralism disallows rank orderings such as 'more good' and 'less good' in such cases. Hence, the inference from the inevitability of choice among goods to the valuing of the freedom to make such choices fails.

Berlin may be simply proposing the anthropological thesis that, as a matter of fact, the acknowledgment of the inevitability of choice-making leads individuals to value the freedom to choose. However, even if we accept this reading, the argument suffers a second, although related problem. How does it follow from the fact that individuals value the freedom to choose for themselves among competing goods that the state ought to *provide* or *protect* such freedom? Berlin has no resources for drawing the desired implications that are consistent with value pluralism. Any attempt to explain why the state must respect the desire for freedom of choice will invoke some *value* that the state must recognize, and any account of why the state must recognize this value will violate value pluralism. Berlin's argument hence fails to *establish* liberalism from pluralist premises. At best, it shows that value pluralism and liberalism are consistent.

Galston's argument

In *Liberal Pluralism*, Galston employs a slightly different argument to establish the entailment from value pluralism to liberalism. The core of Galston's argument can be stated easily:

Value pluralism suggests that there is a range of indeterminacy within which various choices are rationally defensible, at least in the sense that they all fall above the...line of minimum decency. Because there is no single uniquely rational ordering or combination of such values, no one can provide a generally valid reason, binding on all individuals, for a particular ranking or combination. There is, therefore, no rational basis for restrictive policies whose justification includes the assertion that there is a unique rational ordering of value. (Galston, 2002, 57–58)



Summarizing the argument, Galston approvingly cites Stephen Lukes' claim that if value pluralism is true, then it would be 'unreasonable' for the state to 'impose a single [way of life] on some of its citizens' (Galston, 2002, 58).¹⁵ Thus, value pluralism entails that any state that goes beyond the protection of negative liberty is unreasonable; hence, Galston concludes that value pluralism entails liberalism.

Does Galston's argument fare better than Berlin's? A seeming improvement is that Galston avoids claims about what individuals value and instead focuses upon whether there could be *good reason* for a state to promote a single way of life among its citizens. This surely avoids Berlin's faulty inference from the inevitability of choice to the valuing of choice, but it is not clear that Galston's shift to talk about reasons can successfully establish the desired conclusion.

First, let us note that Galston's argument involves a curious kind of burden shifting. Whereas Berlin contended that value pluralism provides a positive case for liberalism, Galston purports to show that liberalism follows from value pluralism simply because no illiberal order is consistent with the value pluralist thesis. A demonstration that value pluralism entails the rejection of illiberal arrangements surely is not sufficient for a demonstration of liberalism. Of course, Galston is not guilty of this rudimentary error; the argument must be read as a deliberate attempt to shift the burden of proof to those who would deviate from the liberal norm. The point is that value pluralism defeats the case for illiberal arrangements; the value pluralist case for liberalism is the case that value pluralism renders all other options unreasonable. Galston (2002, 58) writes, 'The value pluralist argument for negative liberty rests on the insufficiency of the reasons typically invoked in favor of restricting it'.

Burden-shifting maneuvers are typically controversial, and this instance is no exception. What entitles Galston to the presumption that liberal negative liberty is properly a default position, deviation from which stands in need of justification?¹⁶ Moreover, if negative liberty is taken as a proper default, in what sense is Galston's liberal pluralism a *comprehensive* theory? That is, if negative liberty is presumed from the start, how does Galston's liberal pluralism differ from Rawlsian political liberalism?

Although I think these are difficult questions for Galston, we shall not engage his argument at this level, since it is unclear that value pluralism does, in fact, render illiberal arrangements unreasonable. To see this, imagine three internally consistent but mutually exclusive and impossible clusters of values, A, B, and C. Let us stipulate that clusters A, B, and C each represent a *comprehensive* set of values, what we might call roughly a 'way of life,' and that each way of life falls above the 'line of minimum decency.' To fix ideas, we may say that A represents a Millian life of civic engagement, political participation, and open-mindedness in the face of a wide variety of experiments in living; B represents a life of quietude, orthodoxy, and devotion in the name of a



traditional religion; and C represents an Emersonian life of self-sufficiency, hard work, and independence. Now, Galston's argument has it that there could be no valid reason for a state to promote any of these ways of life among its citizens. The point seems intuitive: since A, B, and C are *all* good, there could be no compelling reason to impose, say, A over B, or C rather than A. Therefore, the argument runs, the state must allow for A, B, and C, and leave it to citizens to decide which to pursue; that is to say, the state has no good reason to do more than protect negative liberty.

The intuitive appeal of the argument obscures the fact that the conclusion does not follow from the premises. The state indeed has good reason to promote, for example, A, namely that *A is good*. Of course, the value pluralist will insist that the state has no *better* reason for promoting Millian civic liberty rather than religious devotion or Emersonian self-sufficiency, but surely this is *not* a reason for remaining neutral with regard to these options, and it is *not* a reason to not promote Millian civic liberty. After all, *ex hypothesi*, the Millian way of life is actually good. What could be a better reason for imposing it? How could it be 'unreasonable' to promote a good *because* it is good?

As the quotation above suggests, Galston has supposed that the imposition of a Millian way of life will necessarily be accompanied by the claim that it is *exclusively* good, or that its competitors are less good. However, it is not clear that this is so, or even that it would matter if it was so. There is nothing inconsistent in the idea of a state imposing a single way of life upon its citizens without thereby making *any* claim about the worth of other ways of life; here we might think of small tribal societies, or tiny states in relative isolation. Nor is there anything contradictory about the idea of a state promoting a single way of life while openly acknowledging that other ways of life are also good. However, even granting the premise that the imposition of a single way of life must be accompanied by the false claim that it is *exclusively* good, the implication that imposing a single way of life is unreasonable does not follow.¹⁷

Back to Autonomy?

On the face of it, then, Galston's argument is unsatisfying; it is at best enthymatic, and it is not clear that he can provide an additional premise that will support the implication without thereby frustrating his pluralism. Luckily, Galston (2002, 58) provides the missing premise, claiming his argument 'draws its force from the underlying assumption that coercion always stands exposed to a potential demand for justification'. Explaining further, he writes:

[C]oercion is not a fact of nature, nor is it self-justifying. Just the reverse: There is a presumption against it, grounded in the pervasive



human desire to go our own way in accordance with our own desires and beliefs. (Galston, 2002, 58)

In drawing upon the supposedly 'pervasive human desire' to decide for ourselves among competing goods, Galston has now moved closer to the original Berlinian argument, and has inherited its difficulties.

I concede that 'coercion always stands exposed to a potential demand for justification.' On the argument I have posed, a state's imposition of a way of life based on Millian civic liberty can be justified by appealing to the fact that the Millian way of life is *good*. This will be seen as insufficient by Galston, who, like Berlin, locates the force of the demand for justification within the 'pervasive human desire to go our own way in accordance with our own desires and beliefs.' But, again, why should a value pluralist give any weight to this supposed desire? First, it is not clear that such a desire is reasonable if value pluralism is true. When one is presented with a choice between several irreducibly good, incommensurable, and impossible options, what sense does it make to desire one rather than another? That is, the desire to 'go our own way' is rational only when the options can be rank ordered. Second, what reason can the value pluralist give for the state to accommodate such desires, especially when doing so opens individuals up to the possibility of living bad lives, or at least lives that are less good than they might otherwise be?

The liberal again can give a strong account of why the desire to live in 'accordance with our own desires and beliefs' ought to be accommodated. Such a story will draw upon the over-riding value of autonomy, derived generally from the need to feel that one's life is valuable *from the inside* (Kymlicka, 1989, 12).¹⁸ That is, the liberal can countenance autonomous choice as a kind of trumping value that can break the deadlock between otherwise competing values; on this picture, that a given individual perceives a way of life based on Millian civic liberty as choice-worthy contributes to the value of that way of life for that individual. However, this line of argument is not open to the value pluralist, for it involves the claim that autonomous choice is a trumping value, and that consequently goods can be rank ordered.¹⁹

Hence, Galston's justification for giving weight to the 'pervasive human desire to go our own way' surely cannot rest upon a standard liberal appeal to the value of autonomy. The most he offers by way of justification is that there is, in fact, a 'presumption' against coercion. Indeed, there is such a presumption *in a liberal political order*. There is certainly no such presumption among those who are not already committed to liberalism. So, as with Berlin, the proposed value pluralist case for liberalism, in fact, *presumes* characteristic principles of liberalism that cannot be derived from value pluralism. Taken as a comprehensive theory of liberalism, Galston's view fails; at most it shows how a value pluralist can join a Rawlsian 'overlapping consensus' on a liberal regime.



Conclusion

Early in this essay, I called attention to the intuitive implausibility of the claim that value pluralism could provide the philosophical basis for liberalism. The analysis has vindicated this intuition at least with regard to what is perhaps the most careful attempt at the comprehensive pluralist liberalism to date. The argument has shown that in order to produce a comprehensive theory of liberalism, Galston must commit to some fundamental value that provides the foundation for the legitimacy of the liberal state. However, the identification of such a value is inconsistent with his value pluralism. Galston thus must appeal to political 'presumptions' operative *in a liberal society* against coercion and in favor of negative liberty, but he cannot give a philosophical account of the worthiness of upholding these presumptions. In this respect, Galston's liberal pluralism is indistinguishable from the justificatory strategy of appealing to the 'implicitly recognized basic ideas and principles' (Rawls, 1996, 8) employed by Rawls and other non-comprehensive or 'political' liberals; accordingly, Galston has failed to provide a *comprehensive* liberal theory.

All this suggests both a more general conclusion as well as a further complication. The conclusion seems to be that if we want a robust philosophical foundation from which our liberal commitments follow, we must follow Brian Barry and Ronald Dworkin in rejecting the thesis of value pluralism. If, on the other hand, we are devoted to the value pluralist thesis, we must follow either John Gray in rejecting liberalism or John Rawls in promoting a non-comprehensive kind of liberal theory. In any case, the value pluralist must give up the aspiration for a comprehensive theory of liberalism, and the comprehensive liberal must reject value pluralism.

Here is the complication. As I noted early in this essay, there are some very compelling considerations in favor of some variety of moral pluralism. Moreover, despite a vast and ever-growing literature criticizing liberalism, liberal democracy still enjoys a strong intuitive appeal, as does the thought that there is a deeply philosophical justification for it that political theorists should try to articulate. Hence, anti-pluralist and non-comprehensive accounts of liberalism tend to dissatisfy. That is, Galston has identified correctly the *kind* of theory we require and hence pointed the direction in which future work should move. This is, to be sure, an achievement in itself.

Date submitted: 6 May 2003

Date accepted: 7 August 2003

Notes

1 On James's pluralism, see also O'Shea (2000).

2 Hence, I am also not concerned with the positive proposals Galston makes with regard to political *policy*, many of which seem to me unobjectionable. There is a question, however, as to



whether a moral pluralist can commit to Galston's political policies; I shall not engage the question here.

- 3 In earlier work, he refers to the 'burdens of reason' (Rawls, 1989, 475ff.)
- 4 Rawls's 'political' liberalism deliberately abstains from deep philosophical controversy. See Raz (1990) and Hampton (1989) for criticisms of this aspect of Rawls's view.
- 5 See Estlund (1998), Scheffler (1994), Sandel (1998), Gaus (1996), Gray (1993), Galston (2002, Chapter 4), and Talisse (2003).
- 6 See Berlin (1969, li), Gray (2000b, 87–94), Galston (2002, 4–6), Kekes (2000), Baghramian and Ingram (2000), Lukes (2001, 53–54), Crowder (2002, Chapter 3) for more detailed formulations of these implications of the value pluralist thesis from which the following characterization derives.
- 7 See Nussbaum (1997, 62), Buchanan (1989, 854), Galston (2002, 3–4), Geuss (2002, 323), and Crowder (2002, 22–25) for concise characterizations of liberalism.
- 8 There are versions of liberalism that reject the idea that a properly liberal state must confine itself to protecting negative liberty. Raz (1986) and Sher (1997) promote 'perfectionist' versions of liberalism. I cannot engage this style of liberalism here (on Raz, see Regan, 1989; Lomasky, 1990); I shall use the term to refer strictly to the political order based on negative liberty.
- 9 Note that Barry (2001, 133) equates moral pluralism with relativism. Dworkin places his theory in opposition to Rawls's political liberalism and Berlin's value pluralism (Barry, 2000, 4–5). See also Dworkin (2001) for an argument against Berlin's thesis that liberty and equality conflict.
- 10 Gray (2000b, 85) holds that 'Late twentieth-century political philosophy aimed to find bad reasons for what conventional liberals believed by instinct'.
- 11 Cf. the 'agonistic' proposals of Honig (1997) and Mouffe (2000); see also Deveaux (1999). See Talisse (2000) for a criticism of Gray.
- 12 See also Larmore (1996), Nagel (1987), Cohen (1993), Tomasi (2001), and Dombrowski (2001). Rhodes (2002) argues that Gray's *modus vivendi* is closer to Rawls's political liberalism than Gray recognizes.
- 13 Hence, Rorty (1988, 178) approves of the later Rawls, commending him for 'putting politics first, and tailoring a philosophy to suit'. According to Rorty, liberal philosophers should turn all attention to the project of telling 'inspiring stories' (Rorty, 1998, 3) that '[clear] philosophy out of the way in order to let the imagination play upon the possibilities of a utopian future' (Rorty, 1999, 239). Cf. Posner (1999). The question regarding the accuracy of Rorty's reading of Rawls cannot be engaged here, but I should think that Rawlsian political liberals should want to reject Rorty's view.
- 14 Gray (1996, 143ff.) identifies three lines of argument in Berlin, but it seems to me that these are actually different formulations of the basic argument I sketch below. See Weinstock (1997) for a critique of Gray's reading of Berlin.
- 15 Galston is quoting from Lukes, (1991, 20).
- 16 Perhaps Galston would appeal to our liberal traditions as generating a presumption in favor of negative liberty. In response, one might launch an argument similar to the one Sandel (1996, 5) deploys to the effect that 'the version of liberalism that informs our present debates is a recent arrival, a development of the last 40 or 50 years'.
- 17 Following Raz (1986), we may envision a state that simultaneously promotes all three options specified above, as well as many other good options, but does not claim that any of these is exclusively good or best. Such a state would certainly be engaged in something more than protecting negative liberty, but I cannot see how a value pluralist has the resources to argue that such a state would be unreasonable.
- 18 Kymlicka (1989, 12) writes, 'You can coerce someone into going to church and making the right physical movements, but you won't make someone's life better that way. It won't work, even if the coerced person is mistaken in her belief that praying to God is a waste of time. It won't work



because a life only goes better if led from the inside (and some values can only be pursued from the inside)'.

19 I note once again Raz's (1986) pluralist argument for an autonomy-based perfectionist liberalism. Notice that Galston (2002, 20–27) rejects Raz's proposal, claiming that it is insufficiently pluralist; see also McCabe (2001).

References

- Baghranian, M. and Ingram, A. (2000) 'Introduction', in M. Baghranian and A. Ingram (eds.) *Pluralism*, London: Routledge.
- Barry, B. (2001) *Culture and Equality*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Berlin, I. (1969) *Four Essays on Liberty*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Buchanan, A. (1989) 'Assessing the communitarian critique of liberalism', *Ethics* 99: 852–882.
- Cohen, J. (1993) 'Moral Pluralism and Political Consensus', in D. Copp, J. Hampton and J. Roemer (eds.) *The Idea of Democracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crowder, G. (2002) *Liberalism and Value Pluralism*, London: Continuum Books.
- Deveaux, M. (1999) 'Agonism and Pluralism', *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 25(4): 1–22.
- Dombrowski, D.A. (2001) *Rawls and Religion*, New York: SUNY Press.
- Dworkin, R. (1995) 'Foundations of Liberal Equality', in S. Darwall (ed.) *Equal Freedom*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Dworkin, R. (2000) *Sovereign Virtue*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Dworkin, R. (2001) 'Do Liberal Values Conflict?' in R. Dworkin, M. Lila and R.B. Silvers (eds.) *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin*, New York: New York Review Books.
- Estlund, D. (1998) 'The insularity of the reasonable', *Ethics* 108: 252–275.
- Galston, W.A. (2002) *Liberal Pluralism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gaus, G.F. (1996) *Justificatory Liberalism*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Geuss, R. (2002) 'Liberalism and its discontents', *Political Theory* 30(3): 320–338.
- Gray, J. (1993) 'Review of *Political Liberalism*, by John Rawls', *New York Times Book Review*, 16 May, 35.
- Gray, J. (1996) *Isaiah Berlin*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Gray, J. (2000a) *Two Faces of Liberalism*, New York: The New Press.
- Gray, J. (2000b) 'Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company', in M. Baghranian and A. Ingram, (eds.) *Pluralism*, London: Routledge.
- Hampton, J. (1989) 'Should political philosophy be done without metaphysics?' *Ethics* 99: 791–814.
- Honig, B. (1997) *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- James, W. (1977) *A Pluralistic Universe*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Kekes, J. (2000) *Pluralism in Philosophy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kymlicka, W. (1989) *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Larmore, C. (1996) *The Morals of Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lomasky, L. (1990) 'But is it liberalism?' *Critical Review* 4(1): 86–105.
- Lukes, S. (1991) *Moral Conflicts and Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lukes, S. (2001) 'An Unfashionable Fox', in R. Dworkin, M. Lila and R.B. Silvers (eds.) *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin*, New York: New York Review Books.
- McCabe, D. (2001) 'Joseph Raz and the contextual argument for liberal perfectionism', *Ethics* 111(3): 493–522.
- Mouffe, C. (2000) *The Democratic Paradox*, New York: Verso Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (1997) 'The Feminist Critique of Liberalism', in M. Nussbaum (eds.) *Sex and Social Justice*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nagel, T. (1987) 'Moral conflict and political legitimacy', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 16: 215–240.



- Nagel, T. (2001) 'Pluralism and Coherence', in R. Dworkin, M. Lila and R.B. Silvers (eds.) *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin*, New York: New York Review Books.
- O'Shea, J.R. (2000) 'Sources of Pluralism in William James', in M. Baghrmian and A. Ingram (eds.) *Pluralism*, London: Routledge.
- Posner, R. (1999) *The Problematics of Moral and Legal Theory*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rawls, J. (1985) 'Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical', in S. Freeman (ed.) *John Rawls: Collected Papers*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rawls, J. (1989) 'The Domain of The Political and Overlapping Consensus', in S. Freeman, (ed.) *John Rawls: Collected Papers*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rawls, J. (1996) *Political Liberalism*, (Paperback edn), New York: Columbia University Press.
- Raz, J. (1986) *The Morality of Freedom*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Raz, J. (1990) 'Facing Diversity', in J. Raz (ed.) *Ethics in the Public Domain*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Regan, D. (1989) 'Authority and value', *Southern California Law Review* 62: 995–1095.
- Rescher, N. (1995) *Pluralism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Rhodes, R. (2002) 'Reading Rawls and hearing hobbes', *Philosophical Forum* 33(4): 393–412.
- Rorty, R. (1988) 'The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy', in R. Rorty (ed.) *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rorty, R. (1998) *Achieving our Country*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rorty, R. (1999) *Philosophy and Social Hope*, New York: Penguin Press.
- Sandel, M. (1996) *Democracy's Discontent*, Cambridge: Belknap.
- Sandel, M. (1998) 'A Response to Rawls's Political Liberalism', in M. Sandel (ed.) *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (2 edn), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scheffler, S. (1994) 'The appeal of political liberalism', *Ethics* 105: 23–43.
- Sher, G. (1997) *Beyond Neutrality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Talisse, R. (2000) 'Two-faced liberalism', *Critical Review* 14(4): 441–458.
- Talisse, R. (2003) 'Rawls on pluralism and stability', *Critical Review* 15(1–2): 173–194.
- Tomasi, J. (2001) *Liberalism Beyond Justice*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Weinstock, D. (1997) 'The graying of Berlin', *Critical Review* 11(4): 490–506.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.