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Liberalism and Pluralism: Assessing the Affinity

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Liberalism and Pluralism: Assessing the Affinity

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Abstract

Isaiah Berlin was the first in a now long line of scholars to defend and provide argument for the affinity between two seemingly incompatible views, value pluralism and political liberalism. William Galston and George Crowder offer contemporary versions of the affinity argument, what I call the Berlin project. Critics of the Berlin project, including John Gray, Robert Talisse, and Matthew Moore, argue that the affinity argument is doomed to contradiction, as the incommensurable nature of values under pluralism cannot lend support to any particular value or set of values, including liberal ones. I propose to avoid this problem by distinguishing between two types of moral value, personal and political. Separating personal values from political makes clear important differences in application: Personal values apply to individuals and help to shape the lives we lead, while political values apply to polities and help to shape the societies we live in. I argue that the moral upshot of pluralism is a normative demand for political diversity only, applying at the level of polities not persons. And since political values are not incommensurable with personal values, the contradiction does not arise. I argue such a move avoids central criticisms of the Berlin project and provides proponents a path forward.

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To my father,
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Introduction: Value Conflict, Pluralism and the Berlin Project

The world of moral value is one of seemingly endless conflict. Everywhere we turn, we are confronted with a constant clashing of genuine human values. Between neighbours and among provinces, between countries and along racial lines, there are everywhere clashes over moral value and right conduct.

This sort of conflict of values can take place within one person, as in Sartre's famous case of the young man who must choose between leaving his home to serve in the French Resistance against the Nazi onslaught, or staying home to care for his ailing mother nicely demonstrates. (Sartre, 2009, pp. 409-410) The young man both cares deeply for the aims of the French Resistance and the vengeance of his brother's death, and cares for his ailing mother, whose life is devoted to him. There are good reasons to choose either course of action, reasons that are grounded in genuine human values, yet the young man seems to be faced with an irresoluble dilemma, forced to fulfil one set of values at the expense of the other.

And this persistent conflict, internally and between us, has obvious political implications. In all liberal democracies, there are live debates regarding the exercising of certain rights and practices that seem to pit one value or one way of life against another. Courts in these countries are filled with cases aimed at determining the limits of freedom of conscience and religion, as well as the extent to which governments can impose policies meant to alleviate economic, racial and gender inequality.

Liberal democratic states like France and Belgium have recently instituted policies barring Muslim women from wearing a burqa or niqab in public, defending these restrictions by claiming the practice of wearing the burqa or niqab undermines a deeply held commitment to gender equality.[1] While this claim is disputed by a number of Muslims, including a significant number of Muslim women, what cannot be disputed is that such restrictions are obvious cases of limiting individual liberty in the name of upholding equality.

In Canada, there are disputes of this sort regarding the permissibility of polygamist marriages. This conflict pits the freedom of individuals to live as they deem fit against the importance of equal and fair treatment for all. What is tragic about these debates is that two undeniable worthy human goods, equality and liberty, not only seem in conflict, but irredeemably so.

As these sorts of value clashes have become more prevalent, I began to wonder about the axiological root of these debates, the nature of the clash of moral value itself. This curiosity is what has lead me to theory of value pluralism and the work of Isaiah Berlin.

Berlin was an early adopter of a view that has since become much more prevalent, what he called value pluralism, or the view that there are many, independent moral values, and that they are (sometimes, at least) in tension with one another. This

[1] For a look at a number of issues surrounding this debate, see http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/france-burqa-ban/.

view of morality stands in stark contrast to the dominant traditions in ethics and meta-ethics that framed Berlin's milieu. The traditional Anglo-American view of morality is monistic, taking moral goodness to be a single thing or property. Think here of Kant's moral law, or Mill's utility index.

The prevalence and persistence of value conflict supports a pluralism with regard to the values. While rival theories of value account for value conflict in other ways, value pluralism has a compelling and direct way to account for it: moral conflict is a result of the basic tension between different features of morality itself.

The political implications of value pluralism are profound, but worrying. If the pluralist is correct, the theoretical roots of the sorts of conflicts just mentioned are revealed as the (putative) incompatibility of basic moral values themselves. If this is so, then it would seem that to resolve these issues, states would have to find a way to decide between competing values.

Of course, to say that there are different moral values, and that they are in tension, does not mean that there are not ways to resolve the conflicts. The different values might, for example, be ranked in some lexical order, so that we could resolve conflicts between them by reference to it.

But this path is not open to Berlin, nor most value pluralists, since they also hold that the different moral values are not only individually good, but mutually incommensurable. The same sorts of reasons that lead people like Berlin to adopt

pluralism also support the view that they are incomparable to one another, and cannot be rank-ordered in the way we would want to resolve conflict.

Yet despite this incommensurability, Berlin believes that value pluralism is not only the correct theory of moral value, but that it can serve to inform our political theory. Berlin believes that value pluralism has a special affinity for political liberalism, or that traditional set of values – liberty, equality, toleration – typified by the theories of Locke and Mill. Berlin is the first in a now long line of scholars who defend and provide argument for the affinity between value pluralism and liberalism, an affinity that, as we shall see, is far from obvious.

I call this the Berlin project. The goal of this thesis is to assess the arguments defending the Berlin project, including, of course, those of Berlin, but focusing also on the work of two more contemporary defenders of the Berlin project, William Galston and George Crowder. I offer a version of the Berlin project, one that re-interprets George Crowder's theory somewhat, to avoid the sorts of difficulties that plague every version of the project.

Of course, as far back as the arguments for defending a particular philosophical debate reach, the criticism of such arguments reach nearly as far back, and the Berlin project is no different. As with the long line of theorists defending the Berlin project, there is a long line of opponents to it. The most notable of these is John Gray, who presents perhaps the biggest challenge to Berlin's original argument. And like those who have followed in the tradition of Berlin and taken up the project, there are many

who have followed in the tradition of Gray in defiance of such a defense. Two figures of note are Robert Talisse and Matthew Moore whose views, like those of Galston and Crowder, will play prominent roles in the analysis.

My aim for this project is twofold. Firstly, I aim to provide an account of the history of the Berlin project, from its beginnings with Berlin and Gray, to the current state of play. I have found is that despite the continual dialectic surrounding the Berlin project, the same troubles keep cropping up, changing only slightly in context and shape. Indeed, the debate surrounding the Berlin project appears at a near standstill, with those on both sides seemingly talking past one another. Through my exegetical analysis, I hope to explain what has caused this impasse.

Secondly, I aim to propose a solution to the sorts of difficulties that plague the project in the literature. In particular, there is a tradition of critiquing the affinity arguments that make up the project by appeal to the basic tension between selecting liberal values as special, and the claim that such values must be incommensurable with all the other moral values. I propose to avoid this problem by distinguishing types of moral value, specifically personal and political. Separating personal values form political makes clear important differences in application. Personal values apply to individuals and help to shape the lives we lead, while political values apply to polities and help to shape the societies we live in. I argue that the moral upshot of pluralism is a normative demand for political diversity only, applying at the level of polities not persons. I argue

such a move avoids central criticisms of the Berlin project and provides proponents a path forward.

The thesis has three main sections. In chapter 1 of this first section, I will introduce the work of Berlin and demonstrate how the Berlin project took shape. I will offer some of Berlin's earliest views on the legitimacy of value pluralism, and his belief that such a view may be well accommodated by liberalism. In chapters 2 and 3, I unpack the two main views that compose the Berlin project: value pluralism and political liberalism. In chapter 2, I offer an account of value understood in pluralist terms, detailing the characteristics of value unique to the pluralist perspective. In chapter 3, I outline political liberalism, with a special eye on the liberalism as Berlin conceived it.

The second section of the thesis is dedicated to detailing the Berlin project as I have defined it, providing a history of the arguments for and against the affinity between value pluralism and liberalism. Chapter 4 outlines the original argument offered by Berlin, focusing on why, given value pluralism, Berlin believed liberalism is the best political arrangement. This chapter ends with what I take to be the first main challenge to Berlin's argument, the criticisms of John Gray. In the following two chapters I offer two contemporary attempts to rescue the Berlin project from the threats that Gray poses. In chapter 5, I consider the views of William Galston, who appeals to human nature to help explain the affinity between pluralism and liberalism. To close out the section, in chapter 6 I present what I take to be the most promising of the recent attempts to vindicate the Berlin project, the work of George Crowder. As

with Galston, Crowder must overcome the criticism first presented by Gray, and continued by Talisse. This chapter will end at the impasse that I believe holds between those defending the Berlin project and those challenging it.

It is in the third and final section wherein I present my positive arguments, with the stated goals of crystalizing the most damaging critics of Crowder's affinity argument and offering a novel solution to these challenges. In chapter 7, I present these challenges through the work of Matthew Moore, who takes the criticisms first offered by Gray and later developed by Talisse, and presents them in what I believe is the most precise and explicit way yet.

The main argument I construct from the work of Moore is what I have called the Contradiction Argument. The argument will be well rehearsed by this point, but Moore makes the underlying concern decidedly clear. After presenting the nature of the argument, I point to a solution. Specifically, my solution is a call for more pluralism when it comes to understanding value and the appeal of Liberalism. I provide a more nuanced axiology that will help to avoid the Contradiction Argument offered by opponents of the Berlin project. In the final chapter, chapter 8, I detail the alternative pathways the pluralist might follow that help to establish an affinity between Pluralism and Liberalism while avoiding the long-standing problems associated with the Berlin project.

By the end of the thesis, I hope to have not only offered an assessment of the general debate surrounding the Berlin project, but to have moved the dialectic forward, beyond the impasse that currently plagues it and into new and promising territory.

Chapter 1: The Berlin Project – The Affinity between Value Pluralism and Liberalism

Isaiah Berlin credits the Greek poet Archilocus with first pointing to a profound difference in the way people understand the world. The quote appears in the first line of Berlin's famous essay "The Hedgehog and the Fox." "The Fox knows many things," wrote Archilochus "but the hedgehog knows one big thing." (Berlin, 1953, p. 1) This can be taken to mean many things, but Berlin thought this short quote perfectly represented two of the most common yet contradictory ways of conceiving of the world and our place in it. Berlin writes:

> there exists a great chasm between those, on one side, who relate everything to a single central vision, one system less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think and feel – a single, universal, organizing principle in terms of which alone all that they are and say has significance – and, on the other side, those who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some *de facto*, for some psychological or physiological cause, related by no moral or aesthetic principle; these last lead lives, perform acts, and entertain ideas that are centrifugal rather than centripetal, their thought is scattered or diffused, moving on many levels, seizing upon the essence of a vast variety of experiences and objects for what they are in themselves, without consciously or unconsciously, seeking to fit them into, or exclude them from, any one unchanging, all-embracing, sometimes self-contradictory and incomplete, at times fanatical, unitary inner vision. (ibid, p. 1)

As will become clear, Berlin was most definitely a fox, believing that the world was in many ways complex and disjointed. As for the hedgehog, he thought such views were thoroughly misguided and based on the dangerous assumption of some unified ideal by which the world can be understood and guidance for a flourishing human life can be obtained. This is perhaps one of the most impactful of Berlin's negative projects, his extensive critical analysis of the monist utopianism/perfectionism born out of the

ethical and political philosophy of the Enlightenment. This would include some of the earliest Enlightenment philosophers, including John Locke and Immanuel Kant, but reaches beyond the age of the Enlightenment to the later views of John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx. While their philosophical work was wildly divergent, and without even considering the arguments of so many other Enlightenment thinkers, Berlin was deeply concerned with an assumption that he believed all of these philosophers shared. What Berlin attributed to all of these great thinkers was a belief in a kind of Platonic ideal that applied not only to the science and the physical world, but to the realm of moral and political philosophy. It was believed that moral truths, and the political truths that followed, were not only real, but that there "must be a dependable path toward the discovery of these truths." (Berlin, 1990, p. 6) There was an assumption that whatever questions arose as to how one should live a moral life or justly order society, such questions had objectively true and accessible answers. Further, the answers to all these questions were necessarily compatible with one another, forming a cohesive whole that aligned with a common understanding of the universe; "this kind of omniscience was the solution of the cosmic jigsaw puzzle." (ibid, p.6) The answers are not necessarily easy to discover, and there remain various paths one might attempt to follow in discovering them, but in the end there is a kind of universal convergence at which all inquiry must end. It is this divide, between the foxes and the hedgehogs, which Berlin believes will ultimately shape one's moral and political outlook.

For those that believe as the hedgehog does, that there is a unified understanding of our reality that, if only revealed, can yield answers to all the questions

of life, Berlin maintained that dire consequences were the likely result, particularly as it relates to moral and political life. Berlin believed monism was at the root of authoritarian systems of government. What underpins authoritarianism is the utopian belief in the ideal self and a perfected society. If we are simply able to reveal the universal system of morality, claims the monist, we can structure society around the shared understanding of the how we all ought to live. Thus, for Berlin, monism is the foundation on which authoritarianism is built, with all values and political ends aiming at the pursuit and achievement of this harmonious ideal. With such a single-minded utopian approach, Berlin views authoritarianism as virtually inevitable, given that "any method of bringing this final state nearer would then seem fully justified, no matter how much freedom were sacrificed to forward its advance." (Berlin, 1969, p. 168) History has shown the many of the most ruthless of dictators were single-minded in this way, stopping at nothing in the pursuit of their conception of the ideal self, the ideal society.

Berlin believed this kind of monistic perfectionism underlies the justification of many authoritarian regimes, the idea that the state "must do for men (or with them) what they cannot do for themselves, and…cannot ask their permission or consent, because they are in no condition to know what is best for them; indeed, what they will permit and accept may mean a life of contemptible mediocrity, or perhaps even their ruin or suicide." (ibid, p. 151). For those who believe in a certain path to self-mastery and human flourishing, the justification to force this path on individuals is readily accessible: it is for their own good, whether they know it or not. Berlin offered a number of examples highlighting the atrocities that can follow if a monistic

understanding and ordering of values is integrated into, and in some cases used as the foundation of, a political system.

> Those who believe in the possibility of a perfect world are bound to think no sacrifice for that can be too great. For attaining perfection no price can be too high. They believe that if blood must be shed to create the ideal society, let it be shed, no matter how much. You have to break eggs to make this supreme omelette. But once people get into the habit of breaking eggs, they don't stop—the eggs are broken but the omelette is not made. All fanatical belief in the possibility of a final solution, no matter how reached, cannot but lead to suffering, misery, blood, terrible oppression. (Berlin, 1991, p. 143)

While a wholesale review of the kind of utopian and authoritarian regimes Berlin thought monism gave rise to is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to highlight his belief that monism and authoritarianism were intimately linked, such that the problems of authoritarianism apply directly to monism. And it is his belief in the affinity between monism and authoritarianism that initially leads him to an affinity of a different kind, one between what Berlin believes to be the very opposite of monist authoritarianism.

A Different Kind of Affinity: Value Pluralism and Liberalism

Call this the Berlin Project: the goal of establishing an affinity between value pluralism, understood as the sort of deep meta-ethical claim about the irreducible plurality of moral values, and political liberalism, understood as the system of political and moral values identified with the enlightenment traditions of Locke and Mill.

The specific details on how Berlin supports his affinity argument between value pluralism and liberalism will be offered in chapter 4, but it is worth providing a cursory sketch of the strategy here. Briefly, the argument goes like this:

To accept value pluralism is to accept that no political arrangement can bring about the kind of the utopian harmony envisaged by monists. Pluralism rules out any notion of one common good by which the perfect society can be arranged, and instead leaves us with a multitude of goods that give rise to any number of conceptions of a good life. If pluralism is true, each individual cannot be compelled by reason to adopt a single way of life but must rather choose amongst a number of available options.

Under a pluralist construction of value, values are irreducibly plural and very often in tension with one another. This irreducible plurality gives rise to a variety of equally worthwhile pursuits and lifestyles that humans can reasonably endorse. Among the multitude of reasonably held values, or sets of values, around which one might shape a life, there is no way of rank-ordering one value or life as better or worse. They are in this sense equally ultimate. Given this fact about value, the ability for one to choose the kind of life one deems most fit, at least within the bounds of genuine values, emerges as a very special capacity. Berlin summarizes this intimate connection between value pluralism and the freedom of choice in the following passage:

> it is because this [value pluralism] is their situation that men place such immense value upon the freedom to choose; for if they had assurance that in some perfect state, realized 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 the freedom to choose. (Berlin, 1969, p. 168)

It is because we are forced to choose among values and lives that are equally ultimate that the freedom to make such a choice becomes so important. So essential is the

freedom to choose, Berlin suggests that freedom of choice is a normative demand that follows if one accepts value pluralism.

And this normative demand, that we value the freedom to choose, is best guaranteed by liberal political arrangements. This is so because liberal arrangements guarantee both the personal freedom to choose among the goods, and the larger social ability to do so, via the liberal emphasis on negative liberty and toleration.

Thus, we can see here is the general schema of the Berlin project: From the facts of value pluralism to a normative demand, X, and from that normative demand, X, to an endorsement of liberalism. Berlin proposes as X something like 'the value of choice', but there are other ways to fill out the schema, as our examination of Galston's and Crowder's work will show us later on.

Ethical Theory and Political Philosophy

Berlin's project assumes a sort of axiological continuity between moral and political theory. This is not a consensus position, and it bears a little notice here. Indeed, there is a tradition among contemporary political and moral theorists that are incompatible and best kept theoretically separate.

Regarding the theoretical relationship between a political philosophy like liberalism with any theory of value, we can identify two broad approaches. Those who argue that political theory can and/or should remain neutral regarding theories of value and morality (as well as various epistemological and metaphysical issues) view political philosophy as 'freestanding.' A freestanding political theory is one that attempts to isolate political philosophy from other philosophical disciplines and the disputes that

arise within them. Conversely, a 'comprehensive' approach attempts to integrate political philosophy within a larger philosophical picture. Rather than isolating a political theory, the comprehensive approach aims at providing an overarching political framework that not only incorporates a theory of value and morality, but aims at providing support for both the political and moral theory through their integration. Berlin clearly endorsed the latter, believing ethics and political philosophy were intimately linked, and shared a single comprehensive system of value. Berlin held that not only was the comprehensive approach preferable, it was inevitable. Berlin writes:

> Ethical thought consists of the systematic examination of the relations of human beings to each other, the conceptions, interests, and ideals from which human ways of treating one another spring, and the systems of value on which such ends of life are based. These beliefs about how life should be lived, what men and women should be and do, are objects of moral inquiry; and when applied to groups or nations, and indeed, mankind as a whole, are called political philosophy, which is but ethics applied to society. (Berlin, 1990, p.1)

On the other side, John Rawls is the most influential exponent of the freestanding isolationist approach, although there are others (Walzer, 1983). Rawls notes that any defense of liberalism must be equipped to accommodate the "fact of pluralism."(Rawls, 1993, p.145)

Ironically, Rawls is motivated to separate political theory and moral theory *because* of value pluralism. Rawls takes it that there will always be 'reasonable disagreement' between people with regard to the moral values and their relative positions in a lifestyle, and that as such, the sort of consensus necessary for political values to be adopted will never arise. So Rawls proposes to isolate certain values,

values such as justice, as entirely political, separating them from the moral values and appealing to them as the sorts of values that can garner universal support.

This is perhaps the starkest irony of the Berlin project. Berlin's view that there is an affinity between value pluralism and political liberalism flies in the face of an apparent tension between the two – a tension that sent Rawls and others fleeing in the other direction, denying that political values were comparable at all to moral ones. Berlin's project is not just interesting in this way, it is audacious.

Thus, the Berlin project as I have conceived it is an attempt to establish an affinity between ostensibly incompatible things – value pluralism and liberalism. The project has other proponents with different version of the schema from what Berlin presents, but all continue down a path of which Berlin takes the first step. Before turning to the specific affinity arguments, we must first chart a course through the body of literature on the two main components of the project, value pluralism and political liberalism. In chapter 2, I will outline the theory of value pluralism as understood by both the proponents and detractors of the Berlin project, including getting clear on the nature of value and their relationships with the life we choose to lead.

Chapter 3 will be a general look at the tenets of political liberalism, with a focus on the history of liberalism as Berlin understood it. With all the necessary components of the Berlin project made clear, we will turn to three separate attempts at drawing the affinity between liberalism and value pluralism, as well as outline the main obstacles of these attempts.

The starting point of the dialectic is of course Berlin, and his view will be sketched in more detail at the start of chapter 4. After unpacking Berlin's original affinity argument, the criticisms of John Gray, perhaps Berlin's most notable critic, will be presented. As Berlin casts the first defense of the affinity argument, laying the groundwork for those who will follow, so Gray casts the first critical responses challenging the affinity argument, and his criticism will be revisited throughout the analysis. Chapters 5 and 6 will be dedicated to two contemporary affinity arguments and their unique attempts to the obstacles put forward by Gray. In chapter 5, I will briefly outline the attempt by William Galston to fill out the gaps that Gray exposes. While I think Galston presents a compelling case with regard to the normative demand of value pluralism, his argument brings with it a number of difficult challenges to overcome.

In chapter 6, I will offer what I take to be the most compelling attempt at vindicating the Berlin project, the affinity argument offered by George Crowder. I will finish by revisiting some familiar criticisms, originating in Gray but given a contemporary gloss by Robert Talisse.

In the final two chapters I offer a solution to the criticisms of the Berlin project, in particular the programmatic criticism made most explicit by the work of Matthew Moore. In chapter 7, I outline the worry articulated by Moore, what I have called the Contradiction Argument, and I suggest a strategy as to how it might be met. I propose to avoid the contradiction inherent in thinking values incommensurate and taking that as a reason for a preference for liberal values by distinguishing between two sorts of

values, personal and political. I propose that we understand the affinity claims as between the two types of value – so the incommensurability of *personal* values leads to a preference for liberal *political* values. A crucial claim here is that personal and political values are not incommensurate, and I argue for this in 7 as well. So we can avoid contradiction by reference to the distinction between types of value, and the claim that no incommensurability exists between the types.

In the final chapter I argue for the value of political diversity, which serves as the middle term in the affinity argument I offer. I argue that political diversity is best understood as an instrumental value, and I offer two different paths for grounding this value in other moral values: The first is via an appeal to happiness, arguing that people's constitutions are better served by a choice of lifestyles, and thus a larger choice leads to more happiness; The second by appeal to the commensurability (possibly) of collections of values inside a society, on analogy with collections of other incommensurables, like books or works of art. I end with an assessment of the future of the Berlin project.

Chapter 2 – Value Pluralism

Before we assess the different affinity arguments that make up the Berlin project, we need to first get clear on the set of shared axiological, meta-ethical and metaphysical assumptions that form the parameters of the dialectic. How do we understand value, moral value, and the role moral values play in one's life? What is value pluralism, and what does it entail? What is political liberalism, and what does it comprise? These questions need detailed answers before we can properly assess the moves, and I turn to them in these next two chapters.

In what follows I defer principally to Berlin, with some allowance for other authors when appropriate. Not even within the somewhat narrow scope of those scholars working on the Berlin project is there complete consensus on these background parameters. The goal of the following chapters then is to offer the most plausible and acceptable versions of the relevant concepts, so as to try and honour the size and variance of the corpus involved in the Berlin project. Where I found a lack in the corpus, as in the discussion of incommensurability, I have brought in secondary sources, as well as adding some of my own analysis.

Axiology

To begin with, let us try and locate the discussion in axiological terms. The Berlin project is essentially an axiological one, seeking to link moral values, like bravery and honesty, to other moral values, like justice and equality. So what is a value?

For Berlin a value is understood teleologically, as a desirable or good quality or state of affairs, an end worthy of pursuing. Values of this general sort exist in a variety of

domains, aesthetic, ethical, epistemic, etc. Functionally values are the source of norms, i.e. standards or guides to behaviour. Norms provide a path to realizing of the value with which they are associated. This is of course a very broad understanding of value, and even though Berlin and other pluralists are focused primarily on those values that are moral, it is important to remember that the definition of value need not be restricted in this way. There are values that are purely epistemic or aesthetic, which generate epistemic or aesthetic norms.

Berlin does not offer us a complete ethical theory, in particular he does not give a strict criterion for the moral, relying instead on intuitive agreement on the more canonical moral values, like honesty and fairness. I will follow this lead here, although later in the thesis I will return to this basic ethical issue, when the question of whether a particular value is moral becomes more important.

Berlin understood moral values as "ideas about what is good to be and do – about what sort of life, what sort of character, what sort of actions, what state of being it is desirable to aspire to." (Cherniss, 2016). When Berlin gives concrete examples, the lists look quite a bit like Aristotelean virtues.[2] For Berlin the pursuit of values is "…part of what it is to be a human being". (Berlin, 2000, p. 12) Berlin continues, "The fact that men are men and women are women and not dogs or cats or tables is an objective fact;

[2]Berlin frequently uses the term 'value' and 'virtue' interchangeably. In one of his first drafts of Chapter VIII—*The One and the Many*, from "Two Concepts of Liberty", in a discussion about the tension between liberty and equality and justice and generosity, Berlin actually refers to these values as virtues. (Berlin, 2014) While Berlin later revises this wording, replacing the term 'virtues' with 'values', it is revealing of how Berlin was understanding values like liberty, equality, justice and generosity as virtues.

and part of this objective fact is that there are certain values, and only those values, which men, while remaining men, can pursue." (ibid, p. 12) The pursuit of these genuine values just is part of our human nature, without which we fail to live a good human life (indeed, we fail to live a human life at all). But the category is both larger and importantly different than Aristotle's.

The moral values then, for Berlin, are ways of being and doing. Individual values are experienced as embedded within a life, as a source of behaviour-guiding norms. Berlin and his commenters generally envision individual moral values as comprising part of a set of values, a sort of 'moral code' by which we lead our lives. We can call such collections 'lifestyles' for simplicity of reference here. A lifestyle is a collection of values, adopted as a way achieving a good (meaning a moral) life. On the importance of choosing between equally ultimate vales, Berlin claims humans "choose as they do because their life and thought are determined by fundamental moral categories and concepts that are…..a part of their being and thought and sense of their own identity; part of what makes them human." (Berlin, 1969, pp. 171-172)

So Berlin takes moral values to be ways of being and doing, character traits and other sorts of ways of being, like honesty, fidelity and bravery. He takes it that a (morally) good life is one animated by some collection of these values. Understood this way, moral values are *personal*. By this I mean that the bearers of these values are people, and the values form part of, in some sense, their lives.

Meta-Ethics

Turning now to the meta-ethical nature of these moral values, Berlin and others take moral values as real, objective and worthy of pursuit. Let us examine these properties in turn.

By realism I mean the opposite of skepticism or nihilism about moral value. The dialectic treats moral values as actual extant objects or properties in the world. This is in contrast with varieties of fictionalism and error-theories of moral value. (Ayer, 1984, Mackie, 1997, Joyce, 2001)

By objective values, I mean to contrast this with relativistic values. We can contrast the objective nature of values endorsed by pluralists with a competing theory of moral value, relativism.

Due to the fact that both views deny monism, and countenance a plurality of values, there is a temptation to confuse the objective pluralism of Berlin and others with a relativism regarding the moral values. However, they differ fundamentally in how they conceive of the ontological character of moral value. Relativists believe that values are entirely dependent on a particular social and/or moral framework. For relativists, the specific individual values are purely a human construct, and do not exist objectively, outside the bounds of a given framework. (Harmon, 1996)

In contrast, value pluralists like Berlin argue that distinctly human values are both real and objective. "The multiple values are objective, part of the essence of humanity rather than arbitrary creations of men's subjective fancies…that is why pluralism is not relativism." (Berlin, 2000, p.12) Again, this is not to suggest that we will not disagree

about what values are essential to a worthwhile life, far from it. Berlin is acutely aware that people may strongly disagree about these values; "if I pursue one set of values I may detest another, and may think it is damaging to the only form of life that I am able to live or tolerate, for myself and others; in which case I may attack it, I may even – in extreme cases –have to go to war against it." (ibid, p. 12)

But the nature of the disagreement between people who favor different values is fundamentally different on the pluralist view than on the relativist one. For the pluralist, one can recognize opposing values as such, as something "I can conceive of men pursuing while remaining human, while remaining creatures with whom I can communicate, with whom I have some common values…" (ibid, p. 12) despite my favoring another, different value. For the relativist, the partisans of different values must say something like: "This way of parsing out the value is the better one, rather than that way." But the pluralist can say: "While that is a good value to pursue, I still think this value is better." In other words, the pluralist understands the choice between values as an actual choice, between real goods.

And finally, Berlin and other pluralists treat moral values as motivationally 'internal', meaning they take them to provide reasons for their pursuit– the nature of values are such that they provide us with clear reasons to pursue them. The motivation to pursue any value is built into the value itself. We simply do not need any further justification for the pursuit or endorsement of such value, as the reason to pursue them follows from their very nature. This is as opposed to motivational 'externalism,' or the

relatively novel view that moral good(s) do not necessarily give us reason to pursue them. (Brink, 1989)

The Plurality of Moral Values

Of course, in addition to being real and objective, Berlin and other pluralists take moral values to be plural. What does this mean, exactly? The obvious meaning is that there is more than one moral value. The contrast to this sort of pluralism is value monism, or the view that there is only one moral value. It is worth some time spending a bit of time explaining the contrast.

Value Monism

By endorsing value pluralism, Berlin is opposing value monism. Indeed, as was briefly mentioned in the opening of this chapter, much of Berlin's endorsement of value pluralism (and, in turn, liberalism) comes by way of his critique and refection of monist accounts of value. On value monism, Berlin writes "the enemy of pluralism is monism…the ancient belief that there is a single harmony of truths into which everything, if it is genuine, in the end must fit." (Berlin, 2000. P. 14) Value monists are open to one or both of the following non-pluralistic beliefs: 1) there is one 'supervalue', to which all other values are reducible, and/or 2) there is a hierarchy of values that we can legitimately rank in degrees of importance. (Galston, 2005, p. 11) Conversely, value pluralists maintain there are a plurality of values and value systems that reasonable people can and do believe, and no one value or value system should be seen as more important than all the rest. As should be clear, irreducible plurality nature of value is a necessary requirement of any value pluralistic view. Value pluralists are thus committed

to the belief that there are a multitude of intrinsically worthwhile values that cannot be ranked in order of importance; “the claim that there are heterogeneous goods, goods that are *sui generic* and irreducible to any other good, is the distinctive claim of pluralism.” (Talisse, 2012, p. 17) While the monist argues value conflict and disagreement is based on a misunderstanding of the proper ranking of values, as opposed to the inherent incompatibility and unique character of each individual value.

For an example of a theory of value (and liberal political picture) painted with a monist’s brush we can turn to John Stuart Mill. As a utilitarian perfectionist, Mill is a value monist in that he believed that all values are ultimately reducible to utility, thus determining what course of action or policy maximizes utility is the way that individuals and/or states are able to determine the actions to take and the policies to implement. A political theory using a value monist theory of value centers all state policy and laws on abiding by some sort of hierarchy of values and/or the fulfillment of the one ‘supervalue’. The way in which Mill believed utility can be best maximized is to allow for as broadly liberal political framework as possible, enabling each individual to live and pursue those projects which she deems important. Thus, for a value monist like Mill, values like diversity and the freedom of choice are merely instrumental goods. Mill values diversity in living and the freedom to choose to live as one sees fit, but only insofar as such these allow for the maximizing of utility, the ultimate good. Given the importance of plurality and irreducibility to value pluralists, it is easy to see why the monism of Mill, and utilitarianism generally, lies in opposition to the value pluralist.

Indeed, “whatever pluralism is, it had better be something that utilitarians must reject.” (ibid, p. 10)

Though Mill appreciates diversity and the freedom of choice, he rejects the thesis of value pluralism. His view would seem to lend strong support for liberalism, but the approach is obviously quite different from that of pluralist like Berlin. Relating the differences between monism and pluralism to value conflicts that arise in liberal states, value monists argue that such conflicts are in fact superficial, even illusory, and arise from a misunderstanding of value, and values. If we can just become clear on which value or values are most important, and develop a ranking of sorts, the source of much political and social conflict will dissolve.

The monist believes that, in principle, all value conflict is resoluble if only we can identify which value is reducible to which other, or at least which value ranks higher on the monist's scale. In this way, monists view the problems of value conflict with skepticism, if not outright denial, as such problems are more due a failure to fully appreciate the arrangement and importance of some values over others. Berlin dismisses such notions of a harmony of values as not only overly optimistic, but simply nonsensical; "The notion of the perfect whole, the ultimate solution, in which all good things coexist, seems to me to be not merely unattainable - that is a truism - but conceptually incoherent." (Berlin, 1990, p. 12) Value pluralists such as Berlin, believing that individuals can rationally hold a number of equally worthwhile yet incompatible values, maintain that such conflicts are inevitable.

From this quick contrast we can see some of the important contours of the pluralism of the moral values that Berlin and his commenters take up. There are three properties on which most of our commentators concur that together account for the plural nature of the values for Berlin and his project: independence, incompatibility and incommensurability.

Value Independence

The first property that all pluralists agree on is that values are independent and irreducibly plural. There are a multitude of human values, each intrinsically good, independent and objective, and all connected to the flourishing life. John Gray describes the irreducibly plural nature of values as an "anti-reductionism about values." Gray writes, "They cannot be derived from or reduced to any one value. The diverse experiences, activities, options, projects and virtues that enter into good lives for humans are not tokens of a single type…. [t]he goods of human life have no common denominator." (Gray, 1998, p. 20)

This feature is perhaps the most fundamental of value pluralism, since it is a necessary antecedent of the next two features. To say that the values are independent is to deny all forms of monism, like, for example, Mill's hedonistic monism. Mill would insist that the apparent values, of say, liberty and equality, are in fact just divisible from the same value, utility, and this latter amounts to the 'common denominator' between them. But pluralism is not merely independence. Berlin and his commentators also assume that the values, in addition to being irreducible, are in tension with one another, and essentially unrankable. Let us look at these two properties.

Value Incompatibility

Value incompatibility is the idea that not only are there a plurality of values and lifestyles that do not reduce to one another, but that these values and lifestyles are, in many ways, in tension with one another. The nature of some of these values is such that they will inevitability come into conflict with others, and others may come into conflict more accidentally, as a result of contingent facts about human lives.

As an example of the first sort of inherent opposition, Berlin offers the tension between liberty and equality. These values, it seems, are often in opposition with one another, at least along some of their shared border. Indeed, Berlin believed liberty and equality are paradigmatic of the kind of equally ultimate values that appear in tension by their very nature. This belief underlies one of Berlin's most famous quotes, "total liberty for wolves is death to the lambs".[3] (Berlin, 1953, p. 12) With regard to human interaction, Berlin's point seems to be that allowing people total freedom to do as they like, including the freedom to enslave and abuse others, will almost certainly compromise equality.

The opposition is not a necessary relation between liberty and equality, as it is certainly possible that no tension need arise, but the fact that these two values can conflict in this way indicates that, at least in many cases, they will. It is plausible to think that hard choices will likely follow, given under most circumstances, the demand that we

[3] It is worth noting the reverse claim also points to the tension, as complete equality to the lambs could well mean death to the wolves. Thanks to Mark Migotti for bringing this point to my attention.

treat each other equally will constrain the liberty of those it binds. This rather oppositional relationship reflects the kind of inherent tension that arises when attempting to coordinate independent, equally ultimate values.

Other values will be in tension more contingently. Some values might take so much time and effort to cultivate that their pursuit would put other, similarly difficult values out of reach of a normal human life. This antagonism is most obviously seen when looking at virtues and the lifestyles to which they give rise. So, for example, it might take so long to master the virtues of a soldier that a career as an athlete might be ruled out. Given the time and energy it takes to attain and master the virtues that shape the life of a good solider, the virtues that shape the life of a good athlete are simply out of reach. Alternatively, some values and the pursuit thereof might change a person in such a way that it would be difficult or impossible for them to cultivate other values, values that might have been attainable for them prior to embarking on the pursuit of the first. So someone who has spent a lifetime mastering the art of asceticism might be, at the end, unable to appreciate the value of certain types of aesthetic pleasures.

These tensions arise not only from the basic nature of the moral values themselves, but also, and more commonly, from their combination into lifestyles. As I noted above, the dialectic generally assumes that individual values are combined into a set of values, a set with a certain ranking and ordering of the various values, that we call a lifestyle. These lifestyles, as we see here, are also (sometimes) independent and incompatible with one another, at least in one person's life.

For Berlin, tension between moral values can happen in a variety of instances: "…between cultures, or groups in the same culture, or between you and me…values may easily clash within the breast of a single individual." (Berlin, 1990, p.12)

Note that, regarding the incompatibility of values, these clashes in no way indicate whether one value is true and the other false; "it does not follow that, if [values] do [clash], some must be true and others false." (ibid, p.12) Thus Berlin recognized the immediate tension that comes with accepting the thesis of value pluralism. Whatever the outcome, there are cases wherein one moral value will necessarily be limited or suppressed at the expense of another; "Some among the great goods cannot live together. That is a conceptual truth."[4] (ibid, p.13)

This realism about values gives the pluralist a view of life as necessarily informed by moral loss and regret. "[I]t is a *conceptual truth* that every human life involves irreparable moral loss." (Talisse, 2012, p. 20)

This is not a minor implication of value pluralism, as this would imply that human lives will necessarily involve moral loss, regardless of the care one puts into the endorsement of one value or way of life over another. Given the incompatibility and opposition of some moral values, the mere choosing of one leads to the abandonment and/or rejection of the other, and in some cases multiple others.

[4] In his own analysis of the nature of value pluralism, Thomas Nagel adds to the notion of value incompatibility this degree of opposition. (Nagel, 2001, p. 10). Similarly, Nagel demonstrates that some values are in opposition with one and other, such that the promotion of one value involves the condemnation of another. While this reflects the kind of incompatibility discussed above, we might consider the value oppositionality as the epitome of value incompatibility.

The example of Islamic veiling shows the potential for such loss, as the conflict is such that in an attempt to promote equality, some measure of liberty will be sacrificed, and in an attempt to promote liberty, some measure of equality will be sacrificed. Perhaps a less controversial example of the inevitable loss that comes with a plurality of values comes from John Gray in evaluating the kinds of lives one might pursue. Gray maintains that the disharmony of moral value forces all of us to forgo a number of pursuits and goals. As we saw above, given that the values that make up a life are incompatible, this incompatibility would seem to become all the more prevalent when choosing the kind of life to lead. Arguing that no one can hope to become both a chess grand master and world-class ballerina, Gray writes "the brevity of the human life-span, together with the demands that these activities place upon the human organism, precludes any of us achieving in both of them the level of excellence that a few can achieve in each." (Gray, 1998, p. 21,). It is the nature of these valuable pursuits, combined with the limits of the human condition, which prevents any of us from accessing the plurality of valuable lives available. And it is this kind of inability that ensures that we all must forgo some values and valuable lives, thus ensuring a measure of loss.

Value Incommensurability

The notion of value incommensurability takes incompatibility a step further. Whereas value incompatibility explains clashes of value, value incommensurability is the view that one value cannot be (morally) better than another: "You cannot say that love is inferior to honour, and you do not want to say honour is inferior to love. Both these are

ultimate values, and there is no way of settling the issue: you must just plump in some sort of way." (Berlin, 1975) As the quote shows, Berlin thinks that love and honour are ultimate values with the kind of intrinsic value that simply cannot be rationally ranked.

Incommensurability, as a concept, plays a pivotal role in the dialectic. As I will show later, it is the incommensurability of values that critics argue is violated by the way Berlin fills out the affinity. The privileging of 'liberal values' over other values that the project proposes is (argue the critics) in tension with the claim that values are incommensurable with one another, and thus cannot be ranked this way.

Despite this centrality, incommensurability as a concept is not subject to very much analysis, neither in Berlin's texts nor in most of his critics. And this is a problem, because the actual contents of the concept, and how it is to be applied, are crucial to understanding how the criticism is meant to work.

Let me here then attempt a little unpacking of this concept. To begin with, it is obvious from the word itself that incommensurability is at heart the denial of the cogency of some comparisons. When things are incommensurate, they cannot be compared, in some sense. But in what sense? Let us begin this investigation by borrowing a distinction from Ruth Chang, who has done excellent work on this issue, in the context of aesthetic values, which are also often taken as incommensurable. Chang distinguishes between incomparability and incommensurability. Things are incomparable when they are so sufficiently different in character that there is no obvious metric of comparison.

Incommensurable things, by contrast, are not incomparable, but rather, they resist *rank-ordering.* To rank-order things is not merely to compare them by some metric, but rather to put them in cardinal order, by the use of some metric that is capable of so doing. The simplest form of such a metric is a transitive 'better than' relation, one that is capable of producing an ordering, from best to worst, among the candidates.

Further, the candidates themselves are related in the commensurable (or incommensurable) relation in a tighter way. Candidate commensurables must all be of some common type, and that type must suggest the kind of metric that could serve as the ranker. To see this more clearly, consider an example:

Imagine a fishing competition is to take place at the local pond, and the winner of the competition will be determined by who catches the biggest fish in terms of weight (though this is certainly not the only metric available). In this example, the fish are commensurable, in that they are not only compared using a particular metric, in this case weight, but using this kind of metric provides us with the transitive relations that enables us to rank-order the fish in from heaviest to lightest. The fish are commensurable in this case because the weighs-more metric orders them nicely. Further, the fish form a common type, and one that itself suggests the sort of metric that would serve.

And the example shows us some other features of candidate commensurables. One is that they are, in some sense, alternatives for one another. And further, that we care, in some sense, about their relative rank as such. In this example our caring is a

little artificial, in that we make a contest of the ranking. But in real-world case, like moral values, we do, in fact, care honestly about the rankings.

The example also serves to demonstrate what is meant by a group of candidate commensurables: members of some type that can be rank-ordered by some salient metric, and whose ranking we care about. If I caught a spare tire, it's weight would be irrelevant to the contest, because it would not be of the proper type. The tire would not be a plausible alternative for another fish.

Now this is a rather simplistic example of commensurability, where the metric is cleanly drawn and the ordering is complete and well-behaved. While examples can get vastly more complex, where the metric is not perfectly applicable or the group unruly, the basic conditions for commensurability are made clear: we need a set of things that admit of some kind of typology, and we need a common metric, providing a transitive relation by which we can rank-order the group.

Incommensurability, on the other hand, occurs when there is something like a transitive relation that seems salient and available, but it does not work. That is, when we attempt to compare and rank-order the members of a type on the basis of the salient metric, we do not get any answers, the metric fails to provide any sort of guidance. Take as an example trying to rank some of the great works of art, say Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* and Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. There are clearly various aesthetic metrics available by which we could attempt to compare and rank-order these great works. But when trying to apply one of these metrics, it does not

appear to yield any concrete or clear rank-ordering. Trying to rank-order great works like this seems to indicate a misunderstanding of what makes these works valuable.

As Chang has pointed out, incommensurability is often used as tantamount to incomparability. Objects that are incomparable cannot be compared or even evaluated in the same way no matter what the context. In order to compare two things, we must have at least some common metric in which both things participate.

Treating incommensurability as equivalent to incomparability, John Kekes defines incommensurability in the following way: "there are some things so unalike as to exclude any reasonable comparison among them. Square roots and insults, smells and canasta, migrating birds and X ray seem to exclude any yardstick by which we could evaluate their respective merits or demerits." (Kekes, 1993, p. 21). To ask one to compare square roots and insults, or smells and canasta, is nonsensical, as the difference between the two defies any metric by which to evaluate.

But this sort of this is a basic conceptual mistake. If values are incommensurable, it is not because they are wildly different from one another. If anything commensurability and incommensurability are properties of things that are sufficiently *alike* to admit of possible ranking.

Another aspect of incommensurability that we need to examine is what we might call the strength of the relation. This is a matter of what kind of comparisons are improper between candidate commensurables. The stronger the relation (and thus the stronger the view), the more sorts of comparisons are forbidden. The strongest sort of incommensurability would forbid any kind of value comparison, even equivalence

comparisons. So, for example, the claim that value 'a' is as good as value 'b' would be false or meaningless. A slightly weaker version might allow for equivalence comparisons, but no other ranking comparisons. Weaker still might be an incommensurability that allows for so-called nominal-notable comparisons. Between an iconic and important value bearer and a nominal, or undistinguished members of the same category. The example of Shakespeare's works and the scribblings of an untalented pre-teen is one such case of an unproblematic nominal-notable comparison, and there are numerous others cited throughout the literature.[5]

One final point on incommensurability worth noting is why it is so troublesome from a practical standpoint. One reason we care about certain objects being commensurable is that rank-ordering various objects in the world is a means of choosing those sorts of objects. There are countless times in life that, faced with a choice among attractive alternatives, we rank-order our alternatives, using some transitive relation, to aid in our decision-making. To use a simple, everyday example, when wandering around the supermarket deciding what I want for dinner, I can weigh a number of candidate commensurables, according to a specified metric and transitive relation. I might choose "what tastes the best" or "what is the healthiest", weigh various alternatives that fit into the corresponding set, and rank-order the alternatives from best to worst. Whatever alternative comes out as best is the one I choose. However, if my choices for dinner were incommensurable, such that no ranking is available, my ability to choose is greatly

[5] For a useful discussion of the nominal-notable distinction, and the problems it poses for pluralism, see Talisse, 2012, p. 91.

diminished. I have to just settle on something, plumping one alternative over another, with no clear rationale based on the available options themselves.

While this example is rather mundane, if instead of dinner we are choosing what kind of life to lead, we can see the stakes our considerably higher. If there are a number of values or sufficiently good lifestyles to choose from, all of which are incommensurable, we are left with no clear rational or guidance to rank-order one over the other. We are forced to choose one, while leaving alternatives behind, without a clear guide as to which is best. And this kind of uncertainly can leave one feeling rather lost as far as the kind of life one should lead, or how to offer a justification for choosing one over another.

And this is, in fact, the sort of predicament that Berlin thinks we face in our choices among the various moral values. This is what Berlin takes to be an essential component of the human condition as it concerns morality: that we are forced to choose, blindly, as it were, between candidate values and their relative rankings for our moral lifestyles.

Summary

Value pluralism of the sort Berlin and his critics speak of is a little more complicated than it might initially seem. Moral values on this view are personal, they are ways of being for individuals. There are a variety of these values, and they are independent of one another, and in some case incompatible with one another, at least in the context of a lived life. Lives are animated by groups of these discrete values, ranked or ordered so as to organize a life, morally speaking.

The values themselves are quite strongly incommensurable with one another, meaning that we cannot rank them on moral grounds. But the nature of these values is such that humans are forced to choose among them. These values are necessary components of good lives, they must be organized and ranked in some fashion to serve as the basis of a good life, but because they are incommensurable, there is no such relative ranking actually available.

Thus, we are destined to choose among incompatible and incommensurable lives. We must follow a path that leads to a morally good life, yet we are faced with a vast array of options with no rational guide to distinguish one from another. And no matter what path is taken, moral values and lives will be forgone. The human condition is one that involves, by its nature, significant moral loss.

This same value pluralism also moves Berlin to defend the affinity between pluralism and political liberalism. It is because we are forced to choose that the freedom to do so is of such importance. And the freedom to choose, Berlin argues, is accommodated best by a liberal political framework. But given the antagonistic and incommensurable nature of values, how can political liberalism, and the liberal values that make it up, emerge as better than their alternatives, as Berlin claims? Is such a move not a straightforward violation of value pluralism? This is the puzzle in a nutshell. Before we turn to possible responses, let me next outline the key features of political liberalism.

Chapter 3 – Political Liberalism

Political liberalism is a family of views about the nature and justification of the state born out of the political theorizing that took place in Europe during the Enlightenment period in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

There are few periods more important to the history of political theory than the Enlightenment, and much of this work was in response to a failure of the political and social institutions during this period and gave rise to a great deal of political upheaval – including the English, American and French revolutions – laying the foundation for the constitutional democracies that now pervade modern Western politics.

Associated most closely with theorists like Locke, Rousseau and Mill, the liberal view of the state has as its main purpose the protection and preservation of the liberty of its citizens, protection from encroachment both by the state and by other citizens. As a matter of social fact, I think it is safe to say that liberalism, as a theory of the state, still dominates (Anglo-American) political philosophy. Interestingly, the monist theories of value Berlin contrasts with his pluralism also arise during the Enlightenment. Indeed, many of the early liberal theorists used a monist account of value as part of their defence of liberalism.

This long period of dominance, however, has led to a large variety of political theories in the family liberalism, each emphasizing a different aspect of a larger liberal picture. Galston and Crowder, to use as an example two theorists whose work I will examine in more detail later, use quite distinct variations of liberalism in support of their shared conclusion that value pluralism leads down a path to liberalism. But there are

central components that any theory of liberalism will possess, and these standard elements of liberalism should be made clear.

The Commitment to Liberty

At the centre of any theory of liberalism is, of course, an undying commitment to the value of liberty. Liberal theories often conceive of the overall project of the state as one where we seek to approximate the state of 'total liberty' found in the pre-state period theorists call 'the state of nature'. As Locke writes in the Second Treatise of Government, the natural state of humans is a "state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending on the will of any other man"[6] (Locke, 1689)

It is this value of liberty, freedom to live as one sees fit, without the interference of others, that is the guiding principle of liberalism. Because of this commitment to liberty, in liberal political frameworks the justificatory burden is on those who wish to limit individual freedom. That is, any proposed limitations on individual behaviour, be it in the public or private realm, needs sound justification, without which interference is presumed unwarranted.

[6] The emphasis on having the freedom to rule over one's rightly possessions reflects a common focus in classical liberalism on the link between individual liberty and private property. Indeed, property rights were seen as protecting and promoting all others rights, including a right of personal liberty. While the protection of property rights can be seen as the driving forces of classical liberalism, we now consider classical liberalism as but one strand of a much broader category.

Gerald Gaus calls this the *Fundamental Liberal Principle*. It is one of two principles that Gaus claims all theories of liberalism share. (Gaus, 1996, p. 4) The "presumption in favor of liberty" is the hallmark of liberalism, highlighting the importance and elevated status the value of liberty is given within liberal frameworks. (Feinberg, 1984, p. 23) It is assumed that individuals are entitled to living as they see fit, according to the value system they choose to endorse. Outside interference, be it from the government or from others citizens, is warranted only when clear justification is provided. Under liberalism, the freedom to choose is paramount.

What exactly liberty consists in is, of course, a central question for liberal theorists, one that is answered differently by different theorists. I will examine Berlin's gloss on liberty below, but for now we naively understand liberty as 'freedom', in its various guises.

After the nature of liberty, the central theoretical issues for liberalism are the constraints on liberty, particularly those imposed by the state, and the justifications of such restrictions.

Liberals generally assume that liberty can only be curtailed in the interests of other values, although the exact list of values that play this role varies from theory to theory. Many theorists agree though that values like equality, respect for the individual rights of persons and the liberty of others are all justifications for limits on liberty imposed by the state.

So, for example, liberals generally take it that equality between persons is a value to be protected by the state. This commitment to equality is expressed by the

extension of the protections of liberty equally to all citizens. Since all individuals have an equal moral worth and status, all the rights and freedoms afforded to one must be consistently applied to all. But this commitment to equality means that the liberty of citizens must be curtailed to the extent that it encroaches on the liberty of their fellow citizens. And this can be quite a severe limitation indeed.

This overriding limitation on liberty is embedded in many theories of liberalism. Compare Locke's claim our liberty must be the most 'compatible with a like amount for all with John Rawls' First Principle of Justice, which maintains that within ideal liberal political framework "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty *compatible with a similar liberty for others*." (Rawls, 1971, 60, emphasis added)

Thus, liberal political theory is, of course, dedicated to liberty, but a liberty that is tempered by the values of equality and respect for rights. Familiar rights associated with the nature of humans, like the right to freedom of conscience, exist prior to the emergence of society and government; thus the default positon must be to respect and preserve these natural rights for all individuals equally. The presumptive justificatory burdens of constraint on liberty are on those who wish to restrict the liberty of another, whether such restrictions come from the state, the majority or simply another individual.

Further, the toleration of systems of belief and ways of living is not just a value within liberalism, but a foundational component of any political liberal theory. There is a default assumption within liberalism that diversity in thought and ways of living is legitimate and inevitable, and a respect of this diversity necessarily generates toleration.

Toleration is what allows for the cooperation of a well-functioning society under liberalism, particularly given that differences in thought and in living are facts of human social life that defy any permanent or universal resolution. Many of these points are emphasized by Berlin, though his impressions of liberalism are shaped by his own unique perspective, with his strong belief in value pluralism remaining ever present. Let us now turn to liberalism as Berlin understood it.

Berlin's Liberalism

Given this is an evaluation of Berlin's political project, it is worth spending a bit of time unpacking Berlin's view of liberalism. Specifically, it is useful to spend some time unpacking the two concepts of liberty used by Berlin, in order to better understand how Berlin's argument from value pluralism to liberalism will unfold. Much of Berlin's endorsement of the fittingness between value pluralism and liberalism depends on these distinct understandings of the value of liberty itself. A clearer understanding of Berlin's conception of liberty will help also in comprehending the more contemporary arguments of Galston and Crowder, who use rather different strands of liberalism in their own arguments. In his famous essay "Two Concepts of Liberty," (1969) Berlin outlines two "senses" of liberty, one negative and one positive.

For Berlin, the distinction between positive and negative liberty can be found in response to two related questions about personal freedom that demand distinct answers. The first question is "How many doors are open to me?" while the second question is "Who is in control?" (Berlin, 1991, 40) While they are importantly

connected, an answer to the first question includes reference to negative liberty, while an answer to the second involves reference to positive liberty.

Negative freedom can perhaps be best understood simply as freedom from the coercion of others. One possesses this kind of liberty when one is free from the interference of others to achieve individual goals or attain the goods of a human life. Negative liberty involves the freedom to fulfill one's life plans regardless of what others may think or whether such choices bring about positive or negative consequences. For Berlin, negative freedom can only be deprived by other individuals - through coercion, enslavement and the like - as well as through the actions and policies of the state, which would include laws and certain social standards.

Further, one cannot be deprived of something that is outside of one's own capabilities, or at least those natural capabilities typical to the human condition. Thus, it would be misplaced to suggest that I have been deprived the freedom to fly like bird, but it would make perfect sense to suggest I have been deprived of the freedom to use another's property without permission. In the first instance, the inability to fly like a bird cannot be seen as a deprivation of my negative freedom as I have never possessed the ability to fly like a bird in the first place. Moreover, lacking the freedom to fly like a bird is not brought about by the restrictions or interference of anyone else, but arises from a natural restriction that all humans face in virtue of being human. The restriction on my using another's property without permission is a societal rather than natural restriction.

For Berlin, positive liberty refers the kind of freedom, or lack thereof, that one has over one's own actions, largely independent of the influence of others. Positive liberty points to a kind of self-determination or self-mastery over one's passions or impulses. For example, if a person is addicted to heroin, the addiction may compel such a person to act out in certain ways. While it is clear there is no interference from other individuals in such a case, it seems somewhat inaccurate to suggest the addict is acting entirely free from interference. Rather than being coerced or enslaved by another person, a restriction of positive liberty originates elsewhere, born out of our own personal limitations.

To fully achieve positive liberty, a person must not only be free from interference, as in the case of negative liberty, but one must possess a certain quality, be it self-determination, self-mastery, or the like. That is, one must be the author of one's own actions, free not only from the interference of other agents, but free from any inauthentic sources that undermines this authorship. Whereas negative liberty only requires the absence of interference or obstacles, positive liberty requires the kind of self-control that ensures that the source of our desires, goals, and actions is internal rather than external, authentic rather than inauthentic.

Berlin identifies the liberty of liberalism with negative, rather than positive freedom. As such the state is tasked with guarding the 'freedom from coercion' of its citizens, rather than helping to ensure their self- mastery, via positive liberty.

And like many liberals, Berlin maintains a programmatic presumption in favor of negative liberty, such that one restriction on this liberty by the state require clear and justifiable reasons.

Indeed, those who recognize the importance of negative liberty usually maintain that the primary, if not sole, responsibility of government is to ensure citizens and governing bodies do not limit negative liberty without clear and acceptable reasons. This is part of the foundation of liberalism. Many of the laws that govern society are thought to be justifiable restrictions on negative liberty, largely provided to ensure a minimal negative liberty for all members of society. Restrictions on murder and assault clearly fall under this category, as this loss of liberty is necessary to protect the negative liberty of all citizens.

The loss brought about by such restrictions is in a sense offset by the gains brought about by the promotion of other goods or values, including justice or equality. Thus, for Berlin, restricting one's negative liberty can be warranted, so long as the loss resulting from the restriction is offset by gains in the promotion of other values (which would include the negative liberty of others). Although, on this picture, other sorts of more paternalistic restrictions, like those banning the use of certain recreational drugs or dangerous sports, are often thought to be over-reaching and thus unjustified restrictions of our negative freedom.

Berlin’s emphasis on the presumption of negative liberty as central to political liberalism makes it clear that the burden of proof is on those, be it the state or other

individuals, who wish to limit such negative liberty. Combined with a demand that this presumption of negative liberty must hold for all individuals, we can identify a final value that informs Berlin's view of political liberalism worth noting: that of liberal tolerance.

The importance of liberal tolerance has its roots in the early liberalism of both Locke and Mill, as well as many others, and Berlin too sees it as an essential part of the bedrock of his own conception of liberalism. Given the nature of human society, true negative liberty, the liberty to live one's life 'as one sees fit', requires toleration for alternative ways of life. Interestingly for Berlin, ensuring this kind of tolerance in turn requires an understanding of the plural nature of values and the lifestyles to which they give rise and instantiate. He writes:

> If I am a man or woman with sufficient imagination (and this I do need), I can enter into a value-system which is not my own, but which is nevertheless something I can conceive of men pursuing while remaining human, while remaining a creature with whom I can communicate, with whom I have some common values – for all human beings must have some common values or they cease to be human, and also some different values or else they cease to differ, as in fact they do.[7] (Berlin, 2000, p. 12)

Once we recognize the plurality of reasonably held yet often conflicting values, we gain the understanding necessary to appreciate the importance of tolerating the wide spectrum of legitimate ways of living. While there are seemingly wide differences in the way we think and the values we hold dear, understanding such values as connected to human well-being helps us to realize the rationality in anyone holding them.

[7] Quote found in Ferrell (2009).

Notice that the importance of tolerance is as much for ensuring the freedom of ourselves to lead the life we deem fit as it is focused on allowing others to do the same, as one can never be sure what value system or lifestyles will be out of favor in the eyes of the state or the majority. The extent to which liberal tolerance should be upheld must be as far-reaching as the liberty to choose among the genuine values that can shape a flourishing life. If a society is to respect pluralism, and the certain conflict in ideas and ways of life that come with it, tolerance is paramount; a liberal society is necessarily one that embraces acceptance of value conflicts and stresses the role of tolerance as a way of easing the tension such conflicts will inevitably bring about. As with his emphasis on negative liberty, Berlin's pluralism shapes his view of liberalism to accentuate the role tolerance as fundamental to any liberal theory and society.

Without having yet carefully detailed the specific arguments on Berlin, Galston and Crowder, it is easy to see some of the initial appeal liberalism might have for pluralists. Given the multitude of values that one might legitimately endorse, a political system that allows for such endorsement without the unjustified interference of others seems *prima facie* quite amenable to the tenets of value pluralism. With special emphasis on the broad and equal application of liberty for all individuals, liberalism seems well-suited to allow for a wide spectrum of lifestyles and values while at the same time providing a clear restriction on those lifestyles and values that would threaten such diversity.

Of course, this indicates little about how accommodating other political theories may be to the value pluralist. While it is one thing to suggest that liberalism is

compatible with value pluralism, it is quite another to claim that liberalism is the best, or only, political theory capable of accommodating value pluralism. Further, despite this initial appeal, there is also an obvious tension between central tenets of value pluralism and liberalism. As we have seen, there are certain values that hold a privileged status with in liberalism, including negative liberty and individualism. However, under value pluralism there are a plurality of values, irreducible, incompatible and incommensurable. How can a political theory that emphasizes a specific set of values accord with a theory of value that considers this kind of privileging illegitimate? Furthermore, the principles that emerge from liberalism, and the rights and freedoms to which these principles give rise, are meant to apply universally. This too seems in tension with value pluralism, particularly if a requirement of liberalism is for liberals and non-liberals alike to privilege liberal values.

The Berlin Project, Once Again

What remains for those who want to reconcile value pluralism and liberalism is the comprehensive aim of establishing a special affinity between the two sets of concepts. The Berlin project, as I have identified it, is the ongoing attempt to vindicate this affinity. The general schema is one that moves first from the facts of value pluralism to some further value, some particular normative demand, and from this normative demand a move to liberalism as the best political arrangement to meet not only this normative demand in particular, but the demands of values pluralism more generally.

In the following chapters I provide a brief history of the affinity arguments in offered support of the Berlin project. In chapter 4, I will outline the initial affinity argument given by Berlin in more detail, and provide some key criticisms offered by one of Berlin's most notable critics, John Gray. If Berlin is the one who first proposes the affinity between value pluralism and liberalism, I see Gray as the one who truly gets the dialectic going, providing the first major obstacles for defenders of the Berlin project to overcome.

Following Gray's critique, I will offer an account of two contemporary affinity argument, the first from William Galston and the second from George Crowder. Galston's attempt at responding to the challenge of Gray and filling in the gaps that Berlin's initial argument left void goes some way in moving the project forward. However, I believe he ultimately fails in his response, leaving too many obstacles to overcome.

Crowder's view appears more promising, though his view is not without criticism. I will offer some key criticisms of his view from the work of Robert Talisse. While some of Talisse's criticism fails to reach Crowder's view, Talisse presents a deep worry for Crowder and all defenders of the affinity argument. This deeper critique, articulated further by the work of Matthew Moore, and my attempt to respond to it, will be the focus of the final section

Chapter 4 – Isaiah Berlin's Affinity Argument

Over last 60 years, Berlin's project, has been attempted by a number of important political theorists. From Berlin's pioneering efforts in the late 1950's, to the more contemporary theorists like William Galston and George Crowder, the task of making out the positive relationship between value pluralism and liberalism has endured as a worthwhile challenge.

Of course, as with any interesting dialectic, there is no shortage of criticism of the various attempts as well. Perhaps historically the most important critiques of Berlin have come from John Gray. (1995; 1998; 2000; 2007; 2013) But there is no shortage of influential contemporary critics as well, e.g. Robert Talisse (2004; 2010; 201; 2012), Patrick Neal (2009), John Kekes (1997), Richard Arneson (2009), and many others.
In the next three chapters I review the historical dialectic of the Berlin project, from its postwar beginnings with Berlin to the most recent interpretations and amendments of the view, with the goal of assessing the current state of the debate. In this chapter I provide a detailed account of the original version of the arguments offered by Berlin. I then turn to the criticism of the view by way of John Gray, one of the leading critics of the affinity arguments, and liberalism more generally.

In the following two chapters I develop the views of two contemporary liberal theorists, George Crowder and William Galston, who attempt to rescue the Berlinian affinity project from the problems Gray raises. I then examine some contemporary critiques of both Galston and Crowder's versions of the affinity argument, particularly those of Robert Talisse, a widely influential critic.

Berlin's Argument

As I noted in the last section, the Berlin project arguments share a certain schematic form. From the facts of the plurality (and incommensurability) of values, some normative consequence 'X' is supposed to follow. 'X', in turn requires (or at least gives us reason to favor) liberal political policies or individual values. For Berlin, the normative consequence 'X' is "the value of choice" and the reason it gives us to favour liberalism is that a generous amount of 'negative liberty' is a general background requirement for free choice, particularly between different lifestyles. (Berlin, 2000, 1-23)

First, let us briefly outline Berlin's reasons for believing that choice is a value. Berlin argues that choosing between conflicting values is inescapable, and this fact leads Berlin to emphasize "the immense value on the freedom to choose."[8] (Berlin, 1969, p.168) It is an inevitable fact of the human condition that we must choose between competing but equally worthwhile values; thus the freedom to choose among these values is of special importance for Berlin, and the political theory and system that is best able to embrace and protect this freedom is the most valuable.

If value pluralism is true, the importance of allowing individuals the freedom to choose will follow, as this freedom to choose is essential to any conception of a flourishing human life, and transcends all social and cultural boundaries; "the necessity

[8] Helpful discussions on Berlin's analysis of positive and negative liberty can be found in Talisse (2012) or Carter (2012)

of choosing between absolute claims is then an inescapable characteristic of the human condition." (Berlin, 2002, 214)

So the reasoning seems to be as follows: because we are forced to choose given the nature of values under pluralism, the freedom to choose for ourselves the collection of equally ultimate values is essential, and thus valuable.

We should note here that the fact that we are even able to make rational choices among equally ultimate goods and values indicates a shift from Berlin's earlier work on the strength of value incommensurability. In Berlin's earlier work, he seems committed to a strong incommensurability of value, wherein values defy any kind of rank-ordering. Recall, under strong incommensurability, reasons to choose or endorse one value over another are seen as arbitrary and non-rational. When values are equally ultimate and incommensurable in the strong sense, then there is no rational way of rank-ordering one over the other when they come into conflict, "you must plump in some sort of way."[9] (Berlin, 1975).

If Berlin maintained strong incommensurability, it does seem difficult to understand how pluralism could be used to justify liberalism, or any political theory and framework, as any justification would rest on an arbitrary, non-rational reason. But Berlin later softens his use of incommensurability, adopting a weaker version. Recall, under weak versions of value incommensurability, making rational choices among

[9] This quotation is taken from a radio interview with Berlin in 1975. Quote found in Crowder (2015).

incommensurable goods is less problematic. While not considered universally applicable, definitive reasons to choose one good over another can be seen as perfectly rational, given certain contexts. While liberty and equality are equally ultimate values, in certain contexts in seems unproblematic to privilege one over another.

Berlin offers an example justifying wealth redistribution through taxes in order to achieve and maintain a measure of financial equality and stability, despite the clear limitation on the liberty of individuals to spend their money as they see fit. (Berlin, 2002, p.172-73) In the context of meeting a minimal standard of social welfare, it seems reasonable to privilege equality over liberty. Regardless of whether one agrees with the conclusion in this case, the reason to choose and privilege one value or another can be made on rational grounds. And if rational choices can be made under weak incommensurability, the freedom to make choices between incommensurable goods emerges as crucially important.

> Pluralism entails that, since it is possible that no final answers can be given to moral and political questions, or indeed any questions about value, and more than that, that some answers that people give, and are entitled to give, are not compatible with each other, room must be made for a life in which some values may turn out to be incompatible, so that if destructive conflict is to be avoided compromises have to be effected, and a minimum degree of toleration, however reluctant, becomes indispensable. (Berlin, 1991, 44)

And it is from the fact that we must choose between incompatible and incommensurable goods that Berlin concludes we must value the freedom to make such choices.

The second leg of the argument is the inference from the value of choice-making to the values of political liberalism. One of the clearest endorsements of this strong commitment comes from *Unfinished Dialogue*, wherein Berlin claims "if pluralism is a valid view. . . then toleration and liberal consequences follow." (Berlin, 2006, p. 93)

But Berlin also recognizes the need for an independent argument justifying the implication he believes holds between the freedom to choose and liberalism, one that does not depend on his negative critique of monism and its affinity with authoritarianism, since that set of claims is even more contentious than the affinity claims.

Berlin's argument here is that the nature of value pluralism is such that necessity of choice, and the value of choosing, between different moral paths, gives us reason to endorse two central values of liberalism: negative liberty and tolerance.

To the first, Berlin takes it that negative liberty, the basic freedom to choose how to live one's life free from the coercion of others, is intimately connected to the kind of self-direction and self-creation that is essential for the choice between different values. Without the ability to freely pursue the values and goods that shape one's life, we are unjustifiably denied the ability to choose among goods, values and ways of living that are equally ultimate and reasonable to pursue. To deny the freedom to act on those value and ideals that individuals hold most dear is to deny "a part of their being and thought and sense of their own identity; part of what makes them human. (Berlin,

1969, 171-172) This presumption in favor of negative liberty and the freedom to choose is one source of the affinity with liberalism.

> Pluralism, with the measure of 'negative' liberty that it entails, seems to me a truer and more humane ideal than…the ideal of 'positive' self-mastery by classes, or peoples, or the whole of mankind. It is truer, because it does, at least, recognize the fact that human goals are many, not all of them commensurable, and in perpetual rivalry with one another. (ibid, p. 171)

Another link between the two is the liberal value of tolerance. The fact of diversity between lifestyles and their component values, and the necessity of choice as a result, means that, in addition to the freedom to choose, we must also allow people to live by the various lights they have chosen. Berlin points to the affinity between a liberal sensibility and the kind of tolerance of values and lifestyles that is emblematic of liberalism:

> What the age calls for is….less Messianic ardour, more enlightened skepticism, more toleration of idiosyncrasies, more frequent *ad hoc* measure to achieve aims in a foreseeable future, more room for the attainment of their personal ends by individuals and by minorities whose tastes and beliefs find (whether rightly or wrongly must not matter) little response among the majority. (Berlin, 2002, p. 90)

Berlin believes that tolerance is endorsed by a pluralist meta-ethics, because given our shared human nature, while we endorse and pursue different values and lifestyles, we can understand the pursuits and value commitments of others as reasonable. He writes "if you are a pluralist, that commits you to toleration of diverse views – not only to toleration but to understanding them." (Berlin and Polanowska, 2006, p. 93) It is because we can understand the lives of those different from ours as reasonable that we gain respect for such lives, which leads to a position of tolerance for them. As Berlin

claims, “Toleration is the centre of the whole thing; and understanding must be presupposed in toleration….[t]here is something about a liberal society that possesses a width of understanding different views.”[10] (ibid, p. 93)

So the combination of the presumption in favor of negative liberty and the freedom to choose, and the need for the kind of tolerance that liberals champion, provides Berlin with the final linkage to political liberalism. A liberalism grounded in negative liberty and tolerance has a natural affinity with value pluralism.

Berlin’s view of the nature of value pluralism and its implications evolved through course of his life, but for the purposes of this thesis, the key conclusion for Belin can be summed up in the following inferences: (1) From the necessity of choice, given the demands of value pluralism, to a normative demand ensuring negative liberty and the freedom to choose, and (2) from this normative demand for negative liberty and the freedom to choose to necessity, to an endorsement of a liberal political arrangement. The question remains, has Berlin provided us with a clear enough argument to draw such a conclusion? Many have raised doubts about Berlin’s success, arguing he has failed to provide enough support for his conclusion. It is to those concerns that we now turn.

[10] Quotation found in Ferrell (2009).

Gray's Critique

Berlin's arguments have been criticized as unsuccessful on a number of fronts, so before moving on to the neo-Berlinian accounts of liberalism as most accommodating of value pluralism, it is useful to briefly look at some of these criticisms. This section is the introduction of the criticisms that animate the ongoing opposition to the Berlin project, so if nothing else, understanding Berlin's shortcomings will indicate the problems the neo-Berlinian accounts offered by Galston and Crowder must overcome.

In the same way that Berlin and his supporters follow a particular schema in presenting their affinity arguments – from pluralism to X, from X to liberalism – we can present the opponents of the Berlin project as formulating their criticism around these two inferences.

As earlier cited, there are many critiques of Berlin's argument for a comprehensive, value-pluralistic liberal theory, but perhaps the most notable are those of John Gray. Gray accepts value pluralism but maintains that arguments going from a pluralistic nature of value to a vindication of liberalism are mistaken.

Firstly, Gray highlights the infelicitous inference Berlin makes from the fact that we must choose between incompatible and incommensurable values to the conclusion that we therefore must value the freedom to choose among these goods.

Gray's ultimate argument here is a burden-pushing one: Why should this fact about the nature of value lead us to hold the freedom to choose among

incommensurable goods in such high regard? Just because choosing between and among values is inevitable, that does not entail that the freedom to choose is in itself a universal good. Nor does it follow from the fact that we must choose to the conclusion that we ought to promote or maximize the freedom to do so. After all, death is an inevitability for all us, but this in itself does not entail we must value it, nor give us reason to promote it.

Berlin argues that the ability to choose is fundamental to humans because the freedom to shape our own lives and identity is a crucial part of what makes us human. But Gray responds by saying that even if this is a fact of human nature, that fact has no immediate normative demand, especially a political one. Gray writes:

> there is not direct or universal road from the idea of man as a species whose nature is transformed through the recurrent exercise of powers of choice-making to the ideal of a society in which the making of choices is conceived to be central to human good. Indeed, the two notions have no necessary connections of any sort with one another. (Gray, 2004, p. 194)

The fact that we are forced to choose among equally ultimate values and lifestyles does not produce an obvious demand at either the level of the individual or society, and Gray accurately claims Berlin simply has not made the case for one, be it his demand for valuing choice or his further demand for liberalism.

It is important to remind ourselves exactly what Berlin is arguing in claiming that individuals will come to value the freedom to choose between incompatible and incommensurable values/goods. Recall the distinction between value relativism and value pluralism is that, under pluralism, we are able to identify and distinguish objective

goods from objective bads. The problem arising from value pluralism comes when we try to sort out rivals goods, or rank-order some goods better than others. Given value pluralism, choosing among rival goods and ways of living cannot be definitely rank-ordered as better or worse.

But if there is no ultimate way to distinguish between goods, then why should the freedom to do so seem that important? If a menu is filled with equally ultimate dishes, such that the value of one dish cannot be considered more or less than all the other dishes on the menu, should the freedom to choose among these dishes really be considered so valuable? If there is no reasonable way of comparing one dish with another, given incommensurability, what difference would it make to have the freedom to choose? If each dish is good in and of itself, why would have any less of a reason to assign dishes randomly to each patron be any less valued than having the individual freedom to choose? There is no ultimate way of ranking one dish over any other, so what role does the ability to choose play? Why would such a freedom be valued at all, let alone be considered of such importance to vindicate liberalism as an ideal political theory?

So to the first inference, Gray concludes it does not follow from the fact we are forced to choose between equally ultimate values and goods to the normative demand that we must necessarily value the freedom to choose, at least not from the arguments Berlin has offered. So the inference from the inevitability of choice to valuing choice is lacking or wrong, and unless Berlin can fill in the gap within such an argument, there is

no obvious reason to accept that value pluralism even implies liberalism, let alone entails it.[11]

However, Gray points to an even deeper worry with regard to the second of Berlin's inferences, from a normative demand of the freedom to choose to an endorsement of liberalism. His worry challenges the very compatibility between value pluralism and liberalism, particularly given value incommensurability. Gray argues that value pluralism is not only in tension with liberalism, these two theories are necessarily contradictory. Gray writes "value pluralism is bound to undermine liberalism, for it subverts all universal moralities. Those who cling to the moral safety of liberalism must face the fact that they cannot do so while accepting value pluralism." (Gray, 2007, p. 216)

Recall, in his move from the value of the freedom to choose to an endorsement of liberalism, Berlin points to a number of liberal values. Berlin argues that certain liberal values, most notably tolerance and negative liberty, are particularly accommodating in allowing an environment wherein individuals are given the freedom to choose the value and lives they find most suitable. Thus, it appears as though these liberal values are elevated as especially important, such that emphasizing them within society will allow for the freedom of choice that Berlin believes falls out of the demands on value pluralism.

[11] Galston takes a slightly different approach, arguing that value pluralism rules out illiberal frameworks, in this way vindicating liberal ones.

However an immediate tension appears, given that one of the demands of value pluralism is the inability to privilege certain values over others, given their incommensurable nature. If Berlin's ultimate conclusion is that the presence of values like tolerance and negative liberty is what renders liberalism so appealing, then how does he avoid immediately undermining value incommensurability, thus undermining value pluralism?

Gray maintains there is "no value-neutral method of judging the greatest liberty," because notions of greater and lesser liberty "cannot be insulated from controversial ideals of the good life." (Gray, 1998, pp. 28-29) If the values and goods that make up one's conception of the good life are incommensurable in the way the value pluralist demands, then so too are the values of conflicting liberties; "judgements about the greatest liberty avoid indeterminacy only at the cost of ranking human interests according to ideals that may be rationally incomparable." (ibid, p. 29) The fact of incommensurability exposes liberal values as indefensible as holding a privileged status among others, equally ultimate values. Gray concludes that liberalism is necessarily in tension with value pluralism, and any appeal to the benefit of liberal values violates the incommensurability of values.

The conclusion for Gray is that the hope for an affinity between value pluralism and liberalism should be dropped, in large part because of the limits value pluralism poses. "Liberal pluralists face a dilemma. Either they hold to value-pluralism, and

accept that liberal values have no universal authority. Or else they affirm the universal reach of liberal values, and abandon value-pluralism." (Gray, 2007, p. 218)

As we will see in the next two chapters, defenders of the Berlin project like Galston and Crowder attempt to fill in the gap between the facts of value pluralism and the normative demand that Gray claims dogs Berlin. These views are also subject to the deeper worry Gray raises, about the tension between the incommensurability of values, and the selection or promotion of liberal values in the Berlin project. In the final two chapters, I address these worries directly.

Chapter 5 – Galston's Affinity Argument

William Galston is a contemporary liberal theorist, and an active participant in the Berlin project. Galston offers a sophisticated and detailed version of an affinity argument along the lines of our schema, but with a different sort of normative demand, and a different sort of reasoning behind it, to address the logical gap Gray finds in Berlin's view.

Galston appeals to particular characteristics of human nature to provide the link between the facts about the plurality of values, and a particular normative demand. Roughly, he claims that people are constituted such that they place enormous value in being able choose their own moral way of life. He calls this expressive liberty, and it is this great value, combined with the realization that moral choice is in fact inescapable, that produces a moral demand that we preserve it. In turn the demand for expressive liberty favours liberal policies, in particular those of toleration for alternative lifestyles and prohibitions on state interference without very strong warrant.

Galston calls the theory *liberal pluralism*, indicating the overall shape of the project, from pluralism to liberalism. The theory relates three essential concepts: value pluralism, expressive liberty and political pluralism.

Galston defines value pluralism in a familiar way, and draws a familiar conclusion; "there are multiple goods that differ qualitatively from one another and which cannot be rank-ordered. If this is the case, there is no single way of life, based on a single ordering of values, that is the highest and best for all individuals." (Galston, 2009, p. 96) It is because there is a variety of reasonable values and normative

frameworks one could have that ultimately starts us on the path of liberalism. "There is no common measure of value for all goods, which are qualitatively heterogeneous. There is no *summum bonum* that is the chief good for all individuals…no comprehensive 'lexical ordering' among types of good…no 'first virtue of social institutions,' but, rather, a range of public values the relative importance of which depend on particular circumstances." (Galston, 2005, pp. 11-12) Similar to Berlin, Galston views values as "not only heterogeneous but also inharmonious." (ibid, p. 16)

Expressive liberty is intimately tied to Galston's view of value pluralism, and both play a central role in is argument for liberalism because the extent to which individuals possess expressive liberty is the extent to which they are able to realize their chosen values and corresponding lifestyles.

Expressive liberty "reflects a structural fact about human agency and gains value from the goods that it allows agents to fulfil. An individual is said to enjoy expressive liberty when surrounding social and political arrangements do not excessively or unnecessarily constrain the practices that collectively express that individual's conception of a good life." (Galston, 2004, p. 145) For Galston, expressive liberty is critically important because he believes it to be essential in enabling individuals to live the kind of life they deem appropriate, which in turn allows for the realization of the range of values one holds most important. Galston maintains that "part of what it means to have sincere beliefs about how one should live is the desire to live in accordance with them." (Galston, 2002, p. 29)

Without the ability to live by one's deepest convictions, individuals are deprived of fulfilling their own reasonable conception of the good life, which Galston believes is necessary for a complete and flourishing life. "To restrict individuals' expressive liberty is to deprive them of what they cannot help regarding as a very great good." (Galston, 2009, p. 100) Here, Galston is not claiming that expressive liberty is one value among many. Rather, he is making the stronger claim that humans are suited for a wide range of lifestyles, and the kind of life that is most suitable for each of us can only truly be determined from the inside. As we move through life, we discover the package of goods and way of life that is most suitable for us, thus the ability to choose the kind of life each of us wants to lead is necessary to a flourishing life. Without the ability to honour and pursue the life that best suits the individual and varying demands we all have, we risk failing to realize that which makes us human.

Of course, there are reasonable limits to the sort of life one can adopt. My conception of the good life cannot necessitate impeding or depriving other's from pursuing their conception of the good life. Yet, short of such interference, the onus is on the state or those wishing to limit certain values or ways of living to demonstrate why such a value or life cannot be reasonably endorsed.

Galston defines political pluralism as:

> an understanding of social life that comprises multiple sources of authority – individuals, parents, civil associations, faith-based institutions, and the state, among others – no one of which is dominant in all spheres, for all purposes, on all occasions…..it is a politics of recognition rather than of construction. It respects the diverse spheres of human association; it does not understand itself as creating or constituting those activities. (Galston, 2005, pp. 1-2)

The values we choose to endorse and shape our lives around arise from multiple sources, and political pluralism recognizes the importance of this, which makes it particularly amenable to fostering expressive liberty. It is because political pluralism "understands human life as consisting of a multiplicity of spheres, some overlapping, with distinct natures and inner norms" that it is attractive to the value pluralist, as it recognizes political the wide range of value and lives that one can conceive of pursuing, and how this is shaped by the "diverse spheres of human activity." (ibid, pp. 40-41)

Instead of constructing the values and lives that are to be considered legitimate, political pluralism respects the multitude of sources from which these spring, as well as recognizing the inevitable conflict that arise as a result. The goal of a pluralist politics, then, is to coordinate these spheres of activity and adjudicate disputes between them, but with as little interference as possible. (ibid, p. 41) Individuals can lead the lives they deem fit, for the reasons they find most compelling, and the political arrangement that best allows for this kind of expressive liberty is the one that is most suitable: "Political pluralism and Berlinian moral pluralism fit together in theory and in practice. Taken together, they offer the firmest basis for an account of liberal democracy that does justice to its "liberal dimension, to it understanding of legitimate public power as important but inherently limited." (Galston, 2005, p. 42)

So political pluralism is the political consequence of the recognition of value pluralism. This is how Galston moves from the normative demand (expressive liberty) to liberalism, although the path he takes is not entirely straight. Political pluralism, rather

than mandating liberalism, rules out non-liberal regimes. What remains is a sampling of liberal regimes, any one of which can serve as the conclusion of the affinity argument.

The strategy here is this: Galston takes the need to preserve expressive liberty as a crucial limitation on the legitimacy of governments to implement any one set of values over the other. Given the facts of value pluralism, in particular the incommensurability condition, the state is not justified in forbidding or curtailing the practice of any one or set of actual values, nor of mandating such things:

> 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 polices whose justification includes the assertion that there is a unique rational ordering of values." (Galston, 2002, pp. 57-58)

So in virtue of the need to maintain expressive liberty, illiberal and non-liberal frameworks are untenable, and what remains are a variety of liberal frameworks that are compatible with the demand, and thus with the facts of value pluralism.

Critique of Galston

Galston's version of the affinity argument is both sophisticated and subtle, with a number of individual arguments and confluences that make it attractive. On the negative side however, the view also commits us to a large number of contentious premises, about human nature, about non-liberal states and other things. Further, Galston proposes that some values, like expressive liberty, among others, are not merely possible components of a good life, but actual necessities, needed in any good life. This is also a supposition that many pluralists will not want to endorse. Galston calls these special goods 'basic':

> Some objective goods are basic in the sense that they form part of any choiceworthy conception of a human life. To be deprived of such goods is to be forced to endure the great evils of human existence. All decent regimes endeavour to minimize the frequency and scope of such deprivation. Beyond this (parsimonious) list of basic goods, there is a wide range of legitimate diversity – of individual conceptions of good lives, and also of public cultures and purposes. (Galston, 2005, p. 12)

It is beyond this list of basic goods that Galston thinks that values are plural with one another.

The problem is obvious. Carving out a select group of 'basic' goods and calling them essential to human flourishing, in that they are necessary to avoid great evils, seems very close to the sort of ranking value pluralists explicitly reject. Of course, this is a very simple sort of ranking, what we might call essential/basic goods and non-essential/non-basic goods. But surely this undermines the value pluralist claim that values cannot be justifiably ranked. By stipulating that there are certain objective basic goods that any conception of a good life must contain, Galston is stipulating that there are certain ways of living (which are, recall, simply collections of value) that are necessarily superior to others, namely, those ways of living that include the fulfilment of certain objective goods.

Galston might reply that he is merely categorizing values into two groups, basic and non-basic. And in a sense, he is merely categorizing, labeling values as basic or non-basic to the realization of any worthwhile life and putting each value into one of two categories. Yet, there appears to be more than just mere categorizing going on in Galston's description of objective, essential-to-human-flourishing goods. The terms basic and essential are evaluative. I can ask you to rank the contents of a first-aid kit in

terms of how basic or essential each item is to fulfilling the requirements of a medical emergency. Certainly those values that are in the basic category are not ranked by Galston, and those values in the non-basic category are specified as unrankable on the thesis of value pluralism. But Galston seems to have done something rather similar, evaluating certain goods as basic, even necessary, to the formation of any conception of a worthwhile human life. While this list of objective goods is parsimonious according to Galston, perhaps offering a few essential goods that must be part of any worthwhile life (goods that no doubt most of us would readily agree are essential), the ways of life that are likely to be excluded would be considerably greater. Any way of life that excluded just one of these objective basic goods is deemed as inferior, even illegitimate, and any "decent regime" should do all it can to limit these sorts of lives. While it may be easy for us to agree with this position, it is difficult to see how this should not be considered a kind of rank-ordering.

Perhaps switching the focus on Galston's view of the "great evils" will help put the point more clearly. Determining exactly what qualify as the greatest evils does not appear as clear-cut as Galston would have us believe, but doing so without the use of a ranking system seems highly unlikely. Galston writes, "even if we cannot identify a summum bonum, we can still specify the summum malum….death, suffering, oppression, isolation, and a handful of others." (Galston, 2005, p. 78) So value pluralists like Galston maintain that despite being unable to rank the greatest goods, we are able to clearly identify the greatest evils.

This leads to a rather peculiar outcome, nicely put by Arneson when he writes "Incommensurability of human good is supposed to be compatible with commensurability of human bad." (Arneson, 2009, p.5) While death, suffering, oppression and isolation would be on most lists of the greatest evils humans can suffer, how does such a list not constitute the kind of rank-ordering that value pluralists aim to avoid? Certainly, the *summum malum* list is a bottom-up listing, not the top-down (rank-ordering of values from best to worst) sort of list value pluralist are most wary of, but similar sorts of problems seem to no less apply to *any* listing of this kind – namely, that a ranking of values seems to inevitable slip into the assessment. Of course, it seems uncontroversial to claim death and suffering are great evils that any worthwhile life, but the inclusion of oppression and isolation highlights a number of worries.

Take, for example, an argument by Arneson from what he calls the Brechtian Stalinist perspective. The Brechtian Stalinist argues (in accordance with value pluralism) that state power might be used to limit individual autonomy "not on the ground that individuals left free will head off in various directions away from the One True Good; but rather on the ground that individuals left free will head off in different directions in a way that erodes elementary social solidarity and generates social conflict that causes Many Objective Bads." (ibid, p. 6) Such a strategy is not based on favouring one value over all others, rather it is used to prevent the great evils that must be avoided even within liberal pluralist framework. Arneson's Brechtian Stalinist maintains that in order to avoid the great evils of human life, governments must employ quite restrictive, even

oppressive, laws and policies, thereby limiting greatly individual autonomy and personal choice.

Thus, under the Brechtian Stalinist system, it would seem that oppression can be considered a value. Or consider Galston's inclusion of isolation as a great evil. A monk, for example, might consider isolation to be of the utmost value. Far from being the great evil Galston describes, this sort of monasticism considers a life of solitude and isolation as essential to a worthwhile life.

My point is not that oppression or isolation ought to be considered a great evil or a value. Rather, what one considers to be evil can be seen as incommensurable as what can be considered a value or good. It is this incommensurability that partially leads the pluralist to conclude that values cannot be rank-ordered, so why then ought the value pluralist be allowed to construct a very general ranking, consisting of values and evils? As Arneson writes, "this strategy of argument presupposes some commensurability across goods and bads, and any such commensurability is unobtainable with the value pluralist framework of assumptions." (ibid, p. 6)

At the very least, what Arneson's example shows is that while Galston indicates a compatibility between liberalism and value pluralism, he has not provided a definitive argument ruling out certain non-liberal states as equally viable options. This is the same line of criticism Gray takes against Berlin, claiming that the Berlin affinity argument between value pluralism and liberalism simply cannot rule out other options. While Galston goes to some length trying to demonstrate the positive relationship between value pluralism and liberalism, he has not gone far enough in ruling out liberalism's

rivals. The argument by elimination strategy fails Galston in the same way it failed Berlin, as both simply do not provide an exhaustive assessment of all rivals to liberalism, thus cannot claim vindication of liberalism.

Robert Talisse, an influential contemporary critic, reiterates this criticism when he claims "I see nothing inconsistent with a state adopting the position of promoting a single way of life without making *any claims at all*—implicit or otherwise—about the value of other ways of life." (Talisse, 2012, p. 65). As with Arneson, if Talisse is correct in claiming illiberal or non-liberal states can avoid violating value pluralism, then we surely have less reason to accept liberalism as the only or best political framework given value pluralism.

Similarly, Galston's claims that expressive liberty is a mandate of human nature is very contentious. While Berlin infers the importance in having the freedom to choose the life one deems most suitable falls out of the conditions of value pluralism, Galston seems to build the importance of this into an essential part of a flourishing human life. In outlining the importance of expressive liberty, Galston writes:

> To prefer, for oneself, a particular way of life is not (only) to embrace some conception of what is good or true; it is to have the desire to live in accordance with that conception. Assuming that one's conception crosses the threshold of pluralist acceptability, social arrangements that needlessly restrict my ability to translate my convictions into the structure of my life deprive me of *a great human good*. A life lived with the requisite symmetry between the inner and outer is a life of integrity. To live otherwise is to "live a lie"…" (Galston, p.2005, p. 192, emphasis added)

Galston is trying to avoid the charge of privileging the freedom to choose and pursue a particular way of life by referring to this not as value among many but as a great human good. Likewise, Galston stipulates a number of general values that are constitutive of all

flourishing human lives. This of course includes freedom as has been described, but includes other goods like rationality, personal fulfillment, subjective satisfaction, and normal development of basic capacities. (Galston, 1991, pp. 173-76) These general values are part of Galston's account of human well-being, the basic and minimum requirements of a flourishing life, and are used by Galston to rule out a number of distinctly illiberal options. But to do so Galston must distinguish this freedom, and these other basic goods, as an essential quality of any human life, rather than merely sufficient for a good life.

On top of all these idiosyncratic problems, Galston's view also suffers from the same worry of incompatibility that Gray raised for Berlin. The worry, which is a perennial problem for value pluralist, is that by being the metric of value by which we are to select one life over another, expressive liberty is no longer incommensurate with the other values, but rather *prima inter pares*, a first among equals. But this is a straightforward violation of one of the tenets of value pluralism.

Though Galston does go some way in moving the Berlin project forward by more carefully filling in some of the details that Berlin's affinity argument left out, I think the problems presented against his view, and the somewhat dubious assumptions needed to get the view off the ground in the first place, render his view as bringing aboard as many challenges as solutions. And it seems the difficulties that plagued Berlin's view, particularly in drawing a normative demand from the facts of value pluralism and then moving from this normative demand to liberalism, equally trouble Galston. I will now turn to what I take to be the most promising defence of the Berlin project, presented by

George Crowder. To be sure, these same troubles that arise in Berlin and Galston will no doubt concern Crowder as well. But I believe Crowder's argument, although initially imperilled by these long-standing criticisms, actually lays the groundwork for a plausible response.

Chapter 6 – The Diversity Argument: Crowder, Williams and Talisse

Perhaps the most influential contemporary defender of the Berlinian project, and certainly the most prolific, is George Crowder. Crowder has spent over two decades assessing and developing the work of Isaiah Berlin, including an extensive review of Berlin's political philosophy in several books and dozens of articles. Crowder was initially interested in the tension between value liberalism and pluralism, and like Berlin, now maintains that this tension can not only be eased, but there is good reason to affirm a strong affinity between the two.

Yet, in his earlier work on the link between liberalism and value pluralism, Crowder argues *against* the view that value pluralism lends support to a liberal political framework. In his 1994 article "Pluralism and Liberalism," Crowder argues that "not only does pluralism provide no positive assistance to the liberal case, it also sets certain obstacles in the way of that case….[raising] the question of whether pluralism is even *compatibl*e with liberalism." (Crowder, 1994, p. 293)

However, with the publication of his book *Liberalism and Value Pluralism* (2002), nearly a decade later, Crowder does an about-face on his original position, arguing the compatibility between value pluralism and liberalism is such that a recognition of the former should lead us to an endorsement of the latter. It will be useful to revisit some of Crowder's earlier reservation about the link between value pluralism and liberalism in the next section, as some of these objections remain a problem for the liberal value pluralist. But for now it is important to get clear on Crowder's current view on the fittingness between value pluralism and liberalism.

Following the schema of the Berlin project, Crowder's argument has two stages. First, he argues that value pluralism entails a commitment to the maximisation of moral diversity (as opposed to Berlin's appeal to the value of free choice). Secondly, from this commitment to diversity, he argues for the need for (or at least affinity with) liberalism.

To support the move from value pluralism to diversity, Crowder employs what he calls a principle of "respect for plurality." He writes, "value pluralism is the idea that there are many objective and intrinsic goods – that is, goods that are valuable for their own sake as components of human well-being." (Crowder, 2007, p. 132) These multiple goods are equally worth pursuing, "since none is inherently superior to any other." (ibid, p. 132) Thus, all such goods should be recognized as equally valuable "because these goods contribute to human well-being" (Crowder, 2015, p. 553). Of course, this is just to reiterate one of the central tenets of value pluralism, but it is how we respect this plurality that Crowder believes gives rise to a special commitment to diversity.
Given these heterogeneous goods are all considered as components of a flourishing human life, "we have reason to pursue all of these goods equally – that is, we have reason to pursue a multiplicity of goods." (ibid, p. 553). This plurality of reasons, following directly from the plurality of actual real objective (but incompatible) goods, in turn "commits us to the promotion of as many goods as possible in a given situation," what Crowder calls the "principle of maximum diversity" among moral values. (Crowder, 2007, p. 132)

The reasoning here seems to be something like the following: Since there are a variety of real and incompatible goods out in the world, we must try to maximise the

number of goods that are in fact realized in people's lives. The facts of the values, and the real reasons they give us for their pursuit, entail that we try and pursue as many of them as possible.

In support of this line, Crowder offers an analogy to Martha Nussbaum's theory of human capabilities. If we take values to be relevantly like human capabilities (and on the Aristotelean sort of view the Berlin project assumes, this is not a stretch), Crowder argues we get the same *prima facie* push to maximize diversity. Not only are societies that foster and allow for a wider range of human capabilities superior to societies that do not, "it is better still, at least prima facie, if a society can offer its members, or leave space for its members to propose, multiple interpretations of those capabilities." (Crowder, 2014, p. 552)

So for Crowder, the special importance of diversity falls directly out of a respect for the plurality of goods and values that are, as Berlin claimed, equally ultimate. It is because these goods and value contribute to a flourishing human life that Crowder maintains we have reason to pursue and promote these equally, that we have "reason to pursue a multiplicity of basic goods." (ibid, p. 553)

This line of reasoning borrows a sketch of an argument offered by Bernard Williams regarding the normative upshot of value pluralism. Williams writes "there is the obvious point that if there are many and competing genuine values, then the greater the extent to which a society tends to be single-valued, the more genuine values it neglects or suppresses. More, to this extent, must mean better." (Williams, 1979, p. xvii)

Williams seems to be saying something very similar here: Since there is no way to rank-order one genuine value over another, as none can be considered superior or more worthy, and yet all of the recognized values are considered to contribute to a flourishing human life, then it follows we must accept that all such values as worthy of pursuit. But this realization in turn gives us a reason to prefer more moral variety. "Roughly speaking, it is generally better that a society embrace a greater rather than narrower range of values." (Crowder, 2014, p. 552)

Crowder does recognize the limitations to his "principle of maximum diversity," most notably an appreciation of the inability of individuals and/or societies "to pursue the entire range of human goods and interpretations of those goods simultaneously and to the maximum extent conceivable." (ibid, p. 553) The limitation is based on a demand of coherence. The practical demands of human life require that choices between competing values will have to be made, as anyone committed to value pluralism must be aware.

Recall that under value pluralism, values and goods are often conflicting or incompatible, such that the promotion or pursuit of one comes at the expense of promoting or pursuing another value or good. It is the incompatible nature of values that turns Crowder to emphasize coherence as a minimal requirement for a suitable political framework. Crowder admits that, given the circumstances, many situations are going to demand that individuals make a decision to endorse some value over another, and this decision should be based on clear and justifiable reasons.

However, simply because the circumstances of an everyday human life are such that, in some cases at least, one must justify an endorsement of one value over another, we cannot conclude such an endorsement would follow if the circumstances change. And it certainly does not follow that, as a political policy, such a value should be privileged over the alternative. Indeed, for Crowder, it is because individuals must make such decisions that the value pluralist ought to endorse liberalism, and the maximum diversity of values that comes with it, as the best political framework. In order for individuals to deal with the plurality of equivalent values and the value conflicts that inevitably arise, "a good society will enable its members to pursue the widest possible range of ends subject to good reasons, generated by practical circumstances, for narrowing that range." (ibid, p. 553) So the kind of diversity Crowder believes is entailed by value pluralism is a combination of multiplicity and coherence.

And for the move from diversity to liberalism, as with Berlin and Galston, Crowder maintains that his normative demand (for diversity of values) rules out monistic political systems that push a narrow conception of appropriate values and lifestyles, including "theocracy, absolutist monarchy, fascism, state communism, or strong communitarianism." (ibid, p. 555). Conversely, because of the need for coherence necessary for diversity, any political system that fails to maintain a minimal level of unity will also be ruled out. (ibid, p. 556) This would include any political framework "in which no set of norms can legitimately claim priority over any others." (ibid, p. 556) Thus, the ideal political framework, given value pluralism, is one that "will be accommodating of a multiplicity of values and conceptions of the good, but it will not be so open-ended that

it will disintegrate in the face of the conflicts among those values and conceptions of the good that will inevitably occur." (ibid, p. 556) In other words, the ideal political framework is one that allows for a diverse spectrum of lifestyles while maintaining a minimum level of social order and cohesion. A system that balances both multiplicity and coherence, "sufficient to sustain a minimal social unity without trying to transcend the reality of plurality and conflict." (ibid, p. 556)

Talisse has spent several decades evaluating attempts at rescuing Berlin's original argument that value pluralism leads us down a path to liberalism, and he has taken issue with each attempt to do so, including Galston's and Crowder's more recent work. The culmination of Talisse's critical work regarding the affinity arguments comes with the publication of his book *Pluralism and Liberal Politics* (2013). In it, Talisse outlines the arguments of Galston and Crowder and points to what he believes are irredeemable problems with each view. While the view and problems with Galston's view have already been outlined, including Talisse's chief worry, Talisse's criticism of Crowder has not yet been assessed. Given Crowder's is the most prominent contemporary figure defending the affinity argument, it is worth spending some time outlining some of the main criticisms of his view.

Talisse explains that Crowder's diversity argument "purports to show that value pluralism entails an obligation to respect the diversity of legitimate human values." (Talisse, 2012, p. 68) He levies several criticisms against this inference. Some of these can be dispatched rather quickly, but there are at least two issues that Talisse proposes as problems that do indeed require some more serious attention.

In the following section I outline two shallower complaints of Talisse against Crowder, and provide a response on Crowder's behalf. I then turn to the deeper worries, which Talisse nominally addresses to Bernard Williams, but which are live problems for all versions of the Berlin project. I outline the problems, on the way to formalizing them via the exegesis of another contemporary critic, Mathew Moore, in the next chapter, and attempt a solution to them taking a Crowder-type approach to the Berlin project in the final chapter.

Talisse's Critique

One criticism Talisse puts to Crowder is an apparent violation of the ought-implies-can principle. This is a straightforward ethical principle, maintaining that if one ought to perform an action, it must be the case that it is possible that one can perform the action. Instead of demanding individuals ought to act in a way that is not logically possible, Talisse claims that Crowder is demanding value pluralists ought to act in a way that is not logically permitted by value pluralism. Talisse correctly points out that, according to Crowder, value pluralism requires that we endorse and promote the full range of incompatible and incommensurable values. Talisse picks up on Crowder's assertion that from value pluralism "it follows that the pluralist outlook commits us to valuing the full range of human goods." (Crowder, 2002, p. 137) Crowder elaborates further "to accept that there are plural and incommensurable goods is not merely to allow that there are such goods, but to endorse them, and to endorse them on an equal basis with one another." (ibid, p. 137). But Talisse wonders how this could be possible?

Given the incompossible and incommensurable nature of the wide range of value, how are we supposed to understand Crowder's claim "that value pluralism entails that we must value all objective goods."? (Talisse, 2012, p. 71) Given many of these values cannot hold at the same time, it is impossible to value all objective goods, let alone value all objective goods equally.

The problem with this criticism is that it is built of a misreading of Crowder. Talisse falsely attributes a much stronger claim to Crowder than is warranted. While Crowder does emphasize the implication that if value pluralism is true, there is an implicit duty to respect all values equally, it is incorrect to attribute to Crowder the much stronger claim that value pluralism demands we value all objective goods equally. It would indeed be a violation of the ought-implies-can principle to demand the value pluralist value all objective goods equally, as the incompossible and incommensurate nature of these values would make such a task impossible. But Crowder is not making such a claim.

Rather, Crowder emphasizes the need for the value pluralists to *endorse* all values and goods equally, given that each contributes to the human flourishing, but he uses endorse in a rather specific way, "in the sense that they have an equal claim on us until we are presented with a particular context in which we must choose among them." (Crowder, 2002, p. 137). These values have an equal claim on us, but that does not entail that we can offer no reason whatever to endorse or promote any one value, nor does it entail each of us must value them equally. Indeed, we have a clear reason to

endorse any and all of these values, given their contribution to human flourishing. Crowder admits such values are incommensurable, thus "cannot be said to be equal according to any measure." (ibid, p. 137) But each value is equally ultimate, given that each value contributes to human flourishing. It is the equally ultimate nature that Crowder believes given us reason to promote, endorse, and even value any and all these values. Far from failing the ought-implies-can principle, Crowder has simply claimed that values have a *prima facie* appeal, given they all contribute to human flourishing, and this appeal will apply equally to all values or goods. But it is a mistake to suggest the pluralist must value equally any and all values simultaneously.

A second criticism aimed both at Crowder and Berlin is that they move unacceptably from an 'ought' to an 'is'. As Talisse asks of Berlin's move: "How does it follow from the *fact* that individuals value the freedom to choose that the state *ought* to provide or protect such freedom?... Why should the realization that choice among incommensurable goods is inescapable lead us to value the freedom of choice?" (Talisse, 2010, p. 309)

Similarly with regard to Crowder's diversity argument, Talisse argues that even if we were to grant the claim that, given the nature of value pluralism, we are forced to choose among incompossible and incommensurable values, it does not follow that we ought to promote or maximize diversity. (Talisse, 2012, p. 72). The realization of multiple values does not entail that multiple values are necessary or laudatory.

This is a challenge for any Berlin project argument. Since the first leg of the schema is a move from the facts of value pluralism to a normative demand, they must explain how doing so does not violate Hume's proscription on such moves.

Crowder responds to this criticism by claiming that the diversity argument "does not move from fact to value but from value to value." (Crowder, 2007b, p.221; Crowder, 2015, p. 559). Crowder elaborates "the starting point of the argument is not a claim of fact about what people happen to value, but a value judgement to the effect that certain generic goods (and more specific local expressions of these) contribute, in distinct way, to human well-being." (Crowder, 2015, p. 558) But Talisse reiterates his point in responding to Crowder, claiming that he has simply misunderstood the criticism.

The objection, Talisse reminds us, is that Crowder starts with a fact about value, that a wide range of values contributes to a flourishing human life, then draws a conclusion about the state's obligation to promote a wide range of values. "That there are plural and incommensurable values, which objectively contribute to human flourishing, *cannot* by itself entail a moral obligation to promote or maximize diversity." (Talisse, 2012, p. 72) Talisse calls this mistake an error of scope, similar to the mistake committed by Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics*. At the very start of Book 1, Aristotle wrote "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim." (Aristotle, 2009, p. 124).

Talisse maintains that the same scope error plagues Crowder's jump from the fact of value pluralism to the obligation to maximize diversity; "it does not follow from the fact that there is a wide variety of values that contribute to, or even are constitutive of, human flourishing that humans cannot flourish expect under conditions that make available to them a wide variety of values." (Talisse, 2012, p. 72) Simply because there is a multiplicity of goods, each having the capacity to enrich a human life, it does not follow that we have reason to pursue or promote a multiplicity of goods. Talisse maintains that even granting there are "irreducible many ways of flourishing" we have not yet warranted the Williams-type conclusion that "a many-value-society is better than a less-than-many-value society." (ibid, p. 72)

While there are some difficulties to deal with here, I do not think either of these problems, nor some other minor issues that I have not covered here, are the real difficulties that Talisse offers for the Berlin project. Rather, there are a pair of deeper problems that Talisse offers up, not directly against Crowder, although it occurs during Talisse's discussion of Crowder's theory. Rather, Talisse aims the critique at Williams, and what he takes to be the more fundamental argument from the fact of plurality to the demand for maximization. These difficulties need to be addressed for the Berlin project to succeed, and I spend the rest of this essay on that task.

Deeper Worries

Talisse's nominal target in these passages is Bernard Williams' sketch of an argument referred to above. Williams is well acquainted with Berlin's view of value

pluralism and liberalism, and provides a key insight on the nature of value that Crowder believes to be essential to his diversity argument.

Williams begins his discussion by summarizing the key insights of Berlin's view of value pluralism as revealing certain truths about the nature of value and the world we live in. Value pluralism reveals to us that "we have no coherent conception of a world without loss, that goods conflict by their very nature, and that there can be no incontestable scheme for harmonizing them." (Williams, 1978, p. xvi) Theses 'truths' of value pluralism must be respected. To deny that value conflicts exist, or that these conflicts can be permanently resolved, is to deny a truth about value that demands respect (ibid, p. xvii). A respect for truth demands an acceptance for the often conflicting and incommensurable nature of value, as well as any implications that may follow.

The realization of this multiplicity of incompatible values, says Williams, gives us reason to favour variety and diversity in our moral menu. Since there are many different goods, and since they are all ultimately good, then, in the notorious words used by Crowder in nearly every defense of his diversity argument "more, to this extent, must be better." (ibid, p. xvii)

For Williams, this point holds in spite of the fact that "not all values *can* be pluralistically combined, and that some become very pale in too much pluralistic company." (ibid, p. xvii) There is clearly a limit as to the range of values an individual or society can endorse simultaneously, but that does not diminish the fact that, at a societal level, the more values and combinations of value that are available to pursue,

the better. If value pluralism is true, and both Williams and Berlin believe that the historical experience of human nature bears this out, then there are certain fundamental truths about value that ought to be respected; "one who properly recognizes the plurality of value is one who understands the deep and creative role that these various values can play in human life." (ibid, p. xviii)

Williams does not believe that this truth about value automatically vindicates liberalism, but a recognition and respect for this truth must play a role in determining how best politically to proceed. And this demand for truthfulness is what Williams believes demonstrates the appeal of liberalism, in that liberalism is uniquely suited to build a political system "round the recognition that these different values do each have a real and intelligible human significance, and are not just errors, misdirections or poor expression of human nature." (ibid, p. xviii) Liberalism is best suited to recognize and accommodate this truth, that is, to remain truthful to human nature. In the same way, illiberal and utopian political frameworks are dishonest in that they must reject the truth of value pluralism, and deny or explain away the historical experience of human nature.

Talisse opens the critique by trying to understand how Williams' 'more must mean better' view can be fleshed out into an actual inference. The problem he sees is with Williams' use of the term 'better'. First, Talisse asks, in what way might one think a many-value society is better than a less-than-many-value society? Talisse considers the following response "a society with a great number of morally permissible options

available to citizens is a society with more liberty than a society with fewer such options, and a society with more liberty is better than a society with less." (Talisse, 2012, p. 69) Talisse immediately rejects this characterization of the Williams view, however, as it would be an obvious violation of value pluralism. If the reason behind 'more must mean better' lies in the view that a many-value society contains more liberty than the less-than-many-value society, and a society with more liberty is better than a society with less, the value of liberty is given a privileged status. This, of course, would violate value pluralism, as liberty would is singled out as the "first virtue of social institutions." (ibid, p. 69) As has been made clear, ranking values like liberty as more fundamental than other 'equally ultimate' values cannot be justified under value pluralism. Indeed, reference to any value in defense of the 'more must mean better' view – including an appeal to justice, fairness, equality and the like – would violate value pluralism in the exact same way. If this is how one defends the 'more must mean better' view, argues Talisse, then one must reject value pluralism.

Talisse then considers another possible gloss of Williams' 'more must mean better' claim. Instead of suggesting that a many-value society has more (of what is) good than does the less-than-many-value society, perhaps Williams means that a many-value society has more goods available to access, and it is the presence of more goods that makes it better than the less-than-many-value counterparts.

In response to this move, Talisse asks us to consider the following case (ibid, p. 69). Consider two museums, one devoted to Impressionism, containing only the most important Impressionist paintings. The other museum is a much larger museum,

housing a collection of art throughout history, including not only Impressionism but a range of other periods. If Williams' 'more must mean better' principle were true, Talisse argues, then it would be obvious the larger museum, containing more works of art, would be better than the smaller, less diverse Impressionist museum. But to make such a claim, Talisse argues, requires "presupposing some view of what the 'first virtue' of a museum is….it is only in light of the claim that, say, a museum should provide its visitors a sense of the history of art, or should make available to visitors exemplars of many different artistic genres, that it makes sense to say that the [Impressionist] museum is better than the [Historical museum]." (ibid, p. 69)

But this sense of 'better' is not available to the value pluralist, as it would violate value pluralism by reducing the value of a museum to a single, 'super' value by which all museums can be measured. Something like 'diversity' or 'historical completeness' would be the overriding value to which all museums should be measured.

Talisse's museum case points to a familiar worry, raised by Gray and others, that however the normative demand is defined that moves us from the facts of value pluralism to an endorsement of liberalism, we will inevitably privilege a value or set of values, in the process violating value pluralism. In the move to liberalism – be it through Berlin's negative liberty and freedom of choice, Galston's toleration, or Crowder's diversity – liberal values either end up as rank-ordered as better than equally ultimate values, or playing the role of 'super-value', to which all other values are reducibly. But this would appear to violate the limits of value pluralism, rendering values as

commensurable and allowing for the kind of rank-ordering deemed unavailable by value pluralism.

The deeper worry Talisse raises against Crowder specifically is also of the variety that we have seen before, originating with Gray. Crowder attempts to draw a normative demand out of the facts of value pluralism, specifically a demand to value diversity, in the same way Berlin tries to draw a demand to value freedom of choice. But why should the fact there are a diverse array of values from which one can shape a life produce a normative demand to value diversity? This is the same question Gray asks of Berlin: why should the fact that we must choose among equally ultimate values produce a normative demand to value the freedom to choose? If these are moral values on the same level of the all the virtues and other values under the spectrum of pluralism, how can they do the work the proponents of the Berlin project ask them to do?

These two issues have plagued the Berlin project for decades. Every time a proponent of the Berlin project presents the latest affinity argument linking value pluralism to liberalism, these same criticisms are presented as definitive proof the argument is doomed to fail. Indeed, Crowder has repeatedly offered a response to these charges, almost with a bemused reply as to how his critics fail to see how his response works. The same goes for his critics, who respond to Crowder's reply with amazement as to how he is able to look past what they think are insurmountable difficulties. Their debate as to the potency of these criticisms appears at a standstill, and the interlocutors simply talk past one another.

My goal in the final two chapters is twofold: to illuminate the issues by showing what critics of the affinity argument may be missing, and provide a possible solution to these two now infamous criticisms. To accomplish these goals, I use Crowder's diversity argument as representative of the Berlin project, and I use the work of Matthew Moore as representative of the opponent to the Berlin project. I choose Moore because unlike other critics of the Berlin project, he states explicitly the underlying assumptions necessary to make out the incoherence worry that runs from Gray to Talisse.

Chapter 7- Value Pluralism and the Contradiction Argument: A New Proposal

Matthew Moore, in his 2009 essay "Pluralism, Relativism and Liberalism" provides us with perhaps the most detailed and explicit arguments against the Berlin project. I use Moore's arguments as paradigms of the sorts of critiques in the literature. In this chapter I outline the arguments Moore provides and I go on to offer a general solution to it, and thus a way forward for the Berlin project.

The Contradiction Argument

Moore groups together several different theorists under the banner of what I have called the Berlin project – Galston, Berlin, Crowder and Williams. He unites them as all attempting to prove the affinity between pluralism and liberalism via the original Berlinian schema outlined in the opening chapter: From pluralism to X, where X is some normative demand, and from X to liberalism. Moore writes:

> My main contention is that all three of these otherwise quite different efforts [made by Berlin, Galston and Crowder] to find some normative consequences in value pluralism rest on the same illegitimate move: all of them implicitly violate the premise of value pluralism by assuming that some value or combination of values can be treated as supremely important and therefore capable of rank-ordering value systems. My more general conclusion is that there is no way to simultaneously argue for value pluralism and the moral preferability of a particular value or set of values. The situation is not simply that these three authors make mistakes of logic but that the problems in their arguments reveal that the task is impossible. (Moore, 2009, p. 245)

What Moore is offering here is a *reductio* of the project, in the form of a straightforward contradiction that he claims must be adopted by those attempting it.

That is, that value pluralism means that values are incommensurable, and that in turn means that these particular values (liberal values) are preferable to others. Moore takes it that this contradiction is inescapable, that it would infect any possible way of filling out the schema. In this chapter I will offer an answer to Moore's *reductio*, and provide a path towards the completion of the Berlin project, that of making out the affinity between value pluralism and liberalism.

To begin with, we should note that Moore's argument invokes value pluralism, but the interesting conceptual work in the argument is done by one aspect of pluralism, value incommensurability. Value incommensurability denies the cogency of comparisons between values, but the schema requires that some set of values, liberal values, *be preferred* over other values. This is the ultimate source of the contradiction. As we saw in chapter two, value incommensurability is a complicated issue. I will put it aside for the moment, to first discuss other aspects of pluralism that are salient to my solution.

More Value Pluralism

As we saw in the second chapter, value pluralism as understood by these writers is a multi-faceted concept. Firstly, we should recall that moral values, for Berlin, are personal things, they are components of human lives, things like bravery and honesty. For Berlin, the human condition is that there are multiple such values, and that these values are in tension with one another, mandating that we choose between them. But further, that these ultimate values are incommensurable, so that rationality *cannot*

recommend between them. Thus we are forced to choose, blindly, as it were, between values and lifestyles. As Berlin writes, individuals are forced to "choose ends without claiming eternal validity for them." (Berlin, 2002, p.217). Given incommensurability among values, Berlin concludes "The need to choose, to sacrifice some ultimate values to others, turns out to be a permanent characteristic of the human predicament." (Ibid, p. 43)

But note that the sort of pluralism that Berlin adopts, while quite liberal in terms of accepting any number of possible personal values, is quite conservative in another way. Berlin only speaks of one *sort* of moral value, those personal values he describes in elucidating the problem he sees with moral choice. But as we have seen in the history of ethical theory, there are many other plausible candidates for moral values besides the sort of virtues Berlin and his commentators are entertaining here.

For instance, consider those moral theorists who think that there are group rights or other sorts of collective moral properties or claims. These rights cannot be personal, in the 'personal value' sense, as they are not parts of an individual moral life, like liberty or fidelity. Let me briefly point to a few examples. Take the following passage from Peter Jones on the nature of group rights. "A group, as a single integral entity, can possess duties just as it can possess rights, and those duties may derive from group rights. For example, each nation's right of self-determination is most obviously directed at other nations who, as nations, have corresponding duties to respect one another's right." (Jones, 2016)

Or consider a view offered by Peter French, who identifies a particularly category of groups, what he calls “conglomerate collectivities.” (French, 1984, p.13) A conglomerate collectivity is a distinct and unified entity that cannot be broken to individuals that make it up, as “what is predicable of a conglomerate is not necessarily predicable of all of those or any of those individuals associated with it.” (ibid, p. 13) Work done in the area of corporate moral responsibility and moral agency makes use of group rights in this way, grounding both rights and duties of corporations as distinct from the individuals that make them up. These are just a few example of moral value understood as more than simple atomic values applying to individual agents.

While I will not provide a comprehensive evaluation and defense of the many conceptions of moral nature and demands of groups, what these few cases do help to demonstrate is that there is a sort of blinkered chauvinism in demanding only the sorts of things Berlin offers as moral values. While these personal are surely representative of many of the sort of genuine moral values recognized under value pluralism, this seems at best an incomplete list of moral value, and of a larger moral picture. Following Thomas Hurka, we might question the agent-centered focus of virtue ethics as missing out on something quite important as far as moral value goes. (Hurka, 2001, pp. 219-255) Limiting moral values to those that are atomic and agent-focused seems to mischaracterize a number of uncontroversial moral values. Aid, care and compassion are moral values because of what they do for the others, that is bring them comfort, rather than what they do for the agent, as an exercise of virtue

In view of the above, I submit that it is more than plausible to assume that the sort of personal values at issue here represent only a subset of all moral values, albeit a subset of significant importance. In other words, I believe that the answer for the project lies in more value pluralism, not less.

New Moral Values: Pleasure and Politics

I propose here two other plausible candidates for categories of non-moral values that are not personal values. One kind is similar to the personal values, insofar as these values are distinctly human values that are directly salient to human lives. One particularly important non-personal moral value of this kind is pleasure. Pleasure has been taken as a moral value by thinkers from Epicurus to Mill and beyond. Hedonism is an account of value that understands all value, including moral value, in terms pleasure (or the absence of pain).

And there are of course complete moral theories that rest on hedonic theories of the good. Epicurus' views, for one, and utilitarianism for another. For utilitarians pleasure, or the absence of pain, is the ultimate moral good. It gives us norms regarding rightness or wrongness, it grounds decisions about relative goodness and other sorts of moral judgment.

But pleasure (or happiness, or absence of suffering, or utility) is not a personal value. It is not a potential component of a lifestyle, at least not in the way personal values are components of a lifestyle. The pursuit of pleasure might be such a value, although that is a different thing than pleasure itself.

A second sort of plausible non-personal moral value is somewhat more distinct from the Berlin values. Here I mean moral values that are not distinctly human values in that they are not properties of individuals nor the lives they lead. Consider, what is pertinent for this discussion, political values, such as tolerance or equality. These are, plausibly, moral values that apply not to individuals but to institutions or polities. This kind of moral value is obviously connected to the lives of individuals, but in a much more distant way than personal values, or even non-virtue moral values like pleasure. Political moral values are not direct components of lifestyles, rather they are qualities of polities and institutions.[12]

So, for example, a political value like 'the rule of law' might be a real value, and as such be preferable to alternative states on moral grounds, but no citizen of the state aspires to be 'ruled by law and not by man' as a way of living. This is a category mistake, citizens cannot be ruled by law in the way that states can.

But these political values are still recognizably moral values. As an example, they provide us with norms by which institutions and states can guide themselves towards these virtues. Justice, tolerance, equity and others produce norms of statecraft in the same way that honesty, modesty and temperance produce norms of personal conduct. The same way that personal values, if followed, can lead one to a flourishing life, the

[12] It is worth noting that not all political values would be considered moral. Political efficiency might be one example of a political non-moral value. Political efficiency is clearly a good that applies to political institutions, but it is not obviously a moral good. However, it is the moral values that can be rightly considered political that will play a role in addressing the contradiction argument, and no further attention will be paid to non-moral categories of political value. It what follows, any discussion of political values is to be read as political-moral values.

political virtues are considered the building blocks of a well-functioning, flourishing society.

What is so potentially confusing about *political* moral values is that they are often paralleled with personal moral values. Take for example justice. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defines justice as a virtue of individual character, akin to other virtues like courage and temperance, while in *Politics,* he treats justice as a political virtue, that is, a virtue of polities or states.

While there are obvious similarities between the two uses of justice, they are not synonymous, and Aristotle does not take them to be the same thing. Perhaps the most significant difference between them is the object to which the value of justice applies. Justice as a virtue of character (along with a number of other such virtues) is a property of persons. In this guise, justice is a part of a flourishing life. Justice the political value is a property of a society or institution. While political justice impacts the lives of individuals, such a moral value is not a value *of* individuals, nor is it a component of a lifestyle. Put another way, while the bearer of justice as a virtue of character is the individual, the bearer of justice as a political virtue is a polity or state.

My Solution: More Pluralism – Multiple Moral Values

With these additions to the moral stock in hand, let us return to Moore's contradiction. The solution I propose is that we read Berlin as equivocating between two sorts of moral value. The first sort, personal values, are the things that Berlin thinks are incommensurable, the various good lives they make up are rationally indistinguishable. But the second sort, the political values, are not personal values.

Rather, they are values of political entities, institutions, states, nations. These are the 'liberal' values that compose the second component of the affinity argument. So Berlin's position then, is that incommensurability among the personal values, gives us reasons to favour liberalism among the political ones

Crucially, in order to avoid the sting of Moore's argument, the political values must *not also* be incommensurable with the personal values. In addition, we might worry that they are incommensurable with one another as well, in the way that the personal values are. I will address both of these issues below. For now, though, let me try and outline the formal structure of the solution.

Recall the schema for a solution was:

From value pluralism to X, where X is some normative demand, and from X to liberalism.

The solution I propose is similar in structure to George Crowder's, presented in chapter six. The X that I propose here is, like Crowder, the value of diversity. And, like Crowder, I argue that liberal values are required to promote that diversity. But unlike Crowder, who takes diversity as well as other liberal values, such as equity and tolerance, as to be personal values, I propose to understand diversity and the liberal values that promote it as political moral values, moral values of societies. Political diversity means varieties of lifestyles within a polity, rather than variety of values within a lifestyle. Political tolerance is tolerance practiced by a state, and so on for the other liberal virtues.

This distinction allows me to avoid the contradiction of preferring one, or a set of, incommensurable values over others, so long as we understand the political values

to be moral, and not incommensurable with the personal values. To unpack this a bit, let us revisit how Crowder's proposal is critiqued in the literature

Crowder's proposal is that pluralism results in a normative duty towards "moral diversity'", and that liberal values help to ensure that the value of diversity is attained. We should choose liberal values over others, because they will help to ensure a diversity of values are represented in the society.

In critiquing Crowder's diversity argument specifically, both Moore and Talisse attribute the demand for diversity by Crowder as a demand for diversity within lives, and thus a demand that we each individually 'take up' or live incompatible values, rather than endorse them from the level of polities. Talisse, for example, argues that Crowder's move from the plurality of incommensurable values to a normative demand to endorse and promote diversity is illegitimate because it violates the ought-implies-can principle. (Talisse, 2012, p. 71) The reason for the violation is that, under value pluralism, atomic personal values and the lifestyles that instantiate these values are incompatible and incommensurable. Talisse writes:

> one wonders what it could mean to endorse incommensurable values *equally*. Would this involve judging them to [be] equally valuable, which would imply commensurability? Further, one is left to wonder how is it possible on a value pluralist view to endorse *all* genuine goods. Recall that value pluralism involves the claim that some values are not only incommensurable with other values but essentially *in conflict* with other values. (Talisse, 2012, p. 70)

Talisse goes on to discuss how the good of certain lifestyles – specifically "the life of a concert pianist, the sculptor, and the mechanic" – are potentially incompatible, as the

"dexterity required by any one of these pursuits may preclude the development of the kind of dexterity required by the others." (ibid, p. 70).

Clearly, Talisse is interpreting Crowder's call for diversity from the perspective of individuals choosing (in the loosest sense) among personal values in deciding the kind of lives they want to lead. The nature of atomic values and lifestyles, argues Talisse, would obviously stop individuals from endorsing all genuine goods or lifestyles because given the nature of values and lifestyles, such an endorsement is impossible. However, if we read Crowder as arguing for the endorsement of diversity as purely a political value, leading to a normative demand on polities to respect the demands of value pluralism and recognize that atomic personal values and lifestyles cannot be rank-ordered as better or worse, the worries Talisse raises do not apply. Polities, not individuals, must recognize that that personal values and the lives they shape are incompatible and incommensurable, and on the basis of this recognition promote and allow for as diverse a range of atomic vales and lifestyles as possible.

Diversity as a personal moral value is about the variety and relations of the values one lives one's life by. But diversity as a political moral value of polities, focused on the variety of lifestyles within a given society. Those who argue for diversity as a good of society believe that the more varied the number of lifestyles that can flourish in the society, the better (morally speaking) it is.

So political diversity recasts the nature of the normative demand, from one of diversity *within* lifestyles to one of diversity *between* lifestyles. That is, a normative

demand that applies not to persons and the lives they lead, but rather to polities. What pluralism about personal moral values yields is a normative duty of *societies*, not people. Because we can see, given value pluralism, that there are a variety of incommensurable and incompossible (in one life) lifestyles that are all 'good' (sufficient for a good life), we are led to a duty of polities to maximise (or at least prefer) diversity among the various lifestyles represented in our larger polities.

To refer to the situations that I began with, cases where there are conflicts between polygamous societies, and other lifestyles (liberal, secular, other traditions, etc.) are not cases that are aided or informed by the fact of value pluralism. Rather, it is cases where we must decide what kind of *society* we will have, i.e. One where a variety of different good lives are possible, or one where only a few good lives flourish. In these cases, pluralism of values tells us to choose variety. Better a diverse and varied polity, than a monoculture, even if, *ex hypothesi*, there is the same amount of 'moral living' occurring in each.

The solution avoids Moore's contradiction challenge entirely. The argument, framed as it is in terms diversity as a personal value of lifestyles, simply does apply to the realm of political value. Of course, the solution is still in need of some defense. The inference from value pluralism to the normative demand of political diversity is not obvious, and the plausibility of the alternative moral values it invokes is in need of shoring up. But first, let me stop to note one further benefits of the proposed solution.

One advantage of the solution is that it fits much of Crowder's later text quite well, and I think that something like this might in fact have informed his analysis all along, although perhaps from a distance. Crowder frequently refers to the diversity specifically as it applies to polities. In his earlier book, Crowder reiterates his general argument that "value pluralism implies an 'ethic of diversity' such that a political system is desirable to the extent that it permits or enables the promotion, to the greatest extent possible in the circumstances, of the full range of human values." (Crowder, 2002. p. 139) In a more recent paper, Crowder makes explicit that diversity as he uses it is a political value of societies, one that is grounded in pluralism.

> Why should a society promote, or at least not impede, more values rather than fewer? The basic reason appeals to the concept of pluralism itself. On the pluralist view there is a wide range of intrinsic human goods and distinct components of human well-being. Because these goods contribute to human well-being, we have reason to pursue and promote them. None of the basic goods is intrinsically more or less valuable than any other. All possess an equal status in that sense; each has, prima facie, an equal claim on us. Consequently, in the abstract, we have reason to pursue all of these goods equally – that is, we have reason to pursue a multiplicity of goods. (Crowder, 2015, p. 552-553)

This last quotation is rather important, as it makes it clear Crowder's focus is on societies' moral duty to allow for individuals to pursue the kind of values and lifestyles they deem fit. As none of the genuine personal values can be rank-ordered as better or worse, given incommensurability, each is worthy of pursuit and each can add to the flourishing of a life. And it is because of this incommensurability of atomic personal values, and the lifestyles in which these values are instantiated, that the value of diversity emerges as a political value, applying specifically at societal level.

Personal Values, Political Values and Incommensurability

As I noted above, in order for the solution to work, personal values must not be incommensurable with political values. If they are, then we have the same difficulty we started with, preferring one (or a set) of incommensurable values over others. What reasons do we have to think that this is not the case?

Firstly, let us revisit incommensurability as we unpacked it in chapter two. There we noted that commensurability was a relation that held between members of a type, and that the relation was one of rank-ordering of the members of the type along some salient metric. Incommensurability is the denial of this sort of successful cardinal ranking for a type of thing. Objects are incommensurable when they are members of a type that admits of no definitive rankings of the members.

We also noted that incommensurability generally implied that we are interested in the cardinal ranking of the set members, and that interest might follow directly from being forced to choose between alternative members of the type on account of their incompatibility with one another.

All of these conditions are met for personal values, considered as a type. These values are members of a type that look rankable, i.e. they look like plausible substitutes for one another, at least in terms of function. They are in tension with each other, making choice necessary if we are to have more than one. And we must have more than one, and we must rank them within our lives, as a condition of their use.

But what of the larger type, that includes both personal and political moral values? I do not think we can reasonably say that political values are incommensurable with personal values, since I cannot see what kind of ranking metric would serve for both sorts of values. Personal and political values have different 'bearers of value'. They are different properties, of different entities. Personal values are values of people, or perhaps, of lives. Political values are values of institutions and societies. As such, they are not plausible substitutes for one another.

We do not have to worry about whether political justice is better than personal honesty, since the choice between the two does not arise. This is not to say that there will not be times when the actions involved in honouring these values conflict. But rather that we will never be in a position of deciding whether to adopt one or the other, because we cannot 'adopt' political justice in the relevant sense. Similarly, we will never be in a position of having to choose between exemplifying (political) justice and exemplifying honesty, since we cannot exemplify political justice, only institutions (states, polities) can.

Note that the above does not mean that the two sorts of values are *commensurable*. The negation of incommensurable is better understood here as non-commensurable, rather than commensurable. Personal and political values are not candidate incommensurables, because they are not of the same type for rank-ordering purposes. They are not of the same type because they are not substitutes for one another, and thus no rank-ordering of them is needed.

Incommensurability of Political Values

However, even if we can block the claim of incommensurability between personal and political values, one might worry about incommensurability between political values themselves. Might political values be incommensurable with one another, in the way that pluralists maintain personal value are incommensurable with each another? If political values are incommensurable, then the problems avoided by separating political value from personal value may simply reiterate at the political level. While there has been no definitive argument establishing (or denying) the problem of incommensurability of political values, there are a few important points worth noting that suggest that support for this view is lacking. My goal here is a bit of burden-pushing, to suggest it is on those who maintain incommensurability of political value to demonstrate why this must be the case.

First, let us remind ourselves what political values are in the context of the Berlin project. Political values have as their objects polities or societies. A political value is a potential property of any good polity or society. I have labeled the value of diversity used by Crowder to support the affinity between liberalism and pluralism as strictly a political value, though of course diversity is also a personal value when applied personally to the lives of individuals. There are other political values worth mentioning, though as will be discussed shortly, compared to the list of personal values, the scope of political values appears much narrower. Coherence is another political value similar to diversity, in that coherence can be reasonably seen as a value of well-functioning polities. While it would be hard to deny that coherence as a political value may come

into tension with diversity as a political value, indeed they may even be antagonistic, this does not imply that such values are necessarily incommensurable. For political values to be deemed incommensurable, it must be the case that despite being candidate commensurables, these values cannot be sensibly rank-ordered. But why should we maintain that political values defy rank-ordering? It seems there are several reasons for why we might doubt such a claim.

First, most commentators in support of the Berlin project are not incommensurabilists about political value. Given Berlin explicit acceptance that personal values are incommensurable with one another, he still maintains that liberal values, supporting a liberal political framework, should be endorsed over illiberal ones. Later proponents of the Berlin project, including Galston and Crowder, maintain the same approach. This in itself demonstrates that they all assume that liberal values, seen as political values applying to states and polities, do not conflict in the way personal values that shape a life do, given they are arguing for the affinity between pluralism and the set of political values defined as liberal. Opponents that accuse Berlin and others of a straightforward contradiction appear to give a rather uncharitable interpretation of the arguments, one that assumes Berlin simply did not take notice that privileging liberal personal values violates incommensurability. Berlin and his followers are surely aware of the potential contradiction, yet feel they can avoid it. While my suggestion that political values are distinct from the personal values may not completely align with the original arguments provided by Berlin, it certainly aligns with his view that pluralism lends support to a liberal political framework in a non-contradictory way.

Secondly, the list of political values seems vastly smaller than the list of personal values. The structure of polities makes it such that the many of the values that are rightly called personal values do not have a political equivalent, largely because the values that shape a life just are not the kinds of goods that emerge at the political level. The values that do hold in both the personal and political realm, like justice or even diversity, are some limited, and server to highlight just how distinct the personal and political vales appear to be.

Finally, to accept the incommensurability of political values leaves some rather large bullets to bite. If we derive a collection of incommensurable political values around which a society might structure a society, then we are left with no way of evaluating societies as better or worse, at least not on the basis of these values. Thus, a strict authoritarian regime such as North Korea, defined as polity structured around a particular set of political values, could not be deemed as better than or worse than far less oppressive states, like a constitutional or parliamentary democracy for example. This seems to me as a rather untenable consequence of the position that political values, and as a result the polities comprised thereof, defy rank-ordering. One might argue in response that the North Korean government, as with numerous polities before it, are not in fact shaped by genuine political values, rather they are comprised of what we might call false values (which are obviously not values at all). While this might be the case in some of the most historically corrupt polities, it is difficult to accept that all polities can be regarded as only sufficiently good or not. Yet, if we deem political values

as incommensurable, there is no other way of distinguish the quality/value of polities except in this most basic way.

Summary

The goal of this chapter has been to demonstrate the way in which the second half of the ultimate claim of the Berlin project, from diversity to liberalism, can follow without falling to the contradiction argument posed by Moore and others. By classifying diversity as strictly a political moral value, we can avoid mixing it in with the collection of personal values that are deemed incommensurable.

The first move of the Berlin project, from pluralism to some normative demand X (in this case diversity), will be the focus of the final chapter. The arguments provided to support the claim that from value pluralism we can derive a normative demand to diversity must be addressed. In establishing the political value of diversity as truly moral, we have two viable options. We might establish the moral value of diversity of the political kind by appeal to it's intrinsic value, or by appeal to it's instrumental value. Both paths have potential obstacles, yet both provide a way of rescuing the Berlin project from many of the chief arguments against it.

Chapter 8 – Political Diversity and Value Pluralism

The focus of the last chapter was a defense of the move from diversity, understood as a political-moral value, to liberalism. By distinguishing political-moral value from personal-moral value, we were able to avoid the problem of the incommensurability of personal values that is central to value pluralism as Berlin defines it, and so avoid the contradiction argument posed by Moore and critics of the Berlin project. But what about the first leg of the argument, the inference from value pluralism to diversity as a normative demand?

To quickly rehearse the schema: Value pluralism implies some normative demand X (in our case political diversity), and X in turn implies political liberalism. For Berlin, the X was the demand of personal (negative) liberty. For Crowder and I, X is diversity, albeit of different flavours. On my account, X is *political* diversity, or diversity of lifestyles inside a society or nation.

Seen this way, the view raises some obvious questions: Why should we believe value pluralism implies diversity as a political value? More radically, how is political diversity a moral value at all? In this last chapter, I will look to address these issues.

Broadly speaking, there are (at least) two kinds of value, intrinsic and instrumental. Intrinsic value is value that a thing has in itself. Many of the personal values associated with value pluralism are of this variety, in that they are considered good in themselves. Pleasure or happiness are considered intrinsic values, as are courage and honesty. Intrinsic values are by nature reason-giving. It is rational to

pursue these values because they are good in themselves, they add to the flourishing of any human life.

Instrumental values, on the other hand, are valuable insofar as they help to secure other values. So, for example, doubt is an epistemic value not for its own sake, but rather because of its (claimed) relationship with epistemic values like truth and justification.[13]

Instrumental values take the colour of the values they target. Doubt is an instrumental epistemic value, because truth is an epistemic value. Similarly politeness, if it is an instrumental value, would be a moral value, in that its target is likely something like comity or respect, which are moral values.

So there are two ways of making out that political diversity is a moral value. It can be an intrinsic moral value, a political end in itself, like (for example) justice. Or it

[13] At the start of the first meditations, Rene Descartes writes, "It is now some years since I detected how many were the false beliefs that I had from my earliest your admitted as true, and how doubtful was everything I had since constructed on this basis; and from that time I was convinced that I must once for all seriously undertake to rid myself of all the opinions which I formally accepted, and commence to build anew from the foundation, if I wanted to establish any firm and permanent structure in the sciences……Now for this object it is not necessary that I should show that all of these are false—I shall perhaps never arrive at this end. But inasmuch as reason already persuades me that I ought no less carefully to withhold my assent from matters which are not entirely certain and indubitable than from those which appear to me manifestly to be false, if I am able to find in each one some reason to doubt, this will suffice to justify my rejecting the whole" (Descartes, 1911) Descartes also uses doubt in two of his main arguments in the First Meditation, the Dream Argument and the Evil Demon Argument. Clearly, Descartes sees doubt as valuable in understanding the nature, acquisition and confirmation of knowledge. Interestingly, as will be discussed, diversity has been defined as instrumentally valuable in the same way.

can be an instrumental moral value. If the latter, we need to explain what moral values it targets and how. If the former, we need a reason to believe that such a thing really is an end worthy of pursuing in itself. Let me start with that question.

Diversity as an Intrinsic Value

Foundational properties like intrinsic value are notoriously difficult to argue for. Most appeals will be simply to moral intuition, and this is of course suspect. To get a grip on whether political diversity might be such a value, let me begin by noting some cases where diversity as a value more broadly is argued to be intrinsically valuable.

For example, having a diversity of life experiences, tasting as much as life has to offer, is often seen as a good in and of itself. Life experiences, good or bad, can be thought to strengthen character, enrich one's life. At a very general level, a minimal diversity of experiences in one's life is often thought to be necessary for a fulfilling human life. Imagine a person who remains in the very same room, eating the exact same meal and repeating the exact same activity day in and day out until their death. It seems reasonable to suggest that person has missed out on the richness of life. To have never experienced anything but an extremely narrow/minimal set of human experiences would seem to inhibit human well-being in such a way as to constitute a failure to live up to any reasonable conception of a flourishing human life. Of course, this notion of diversity as intrinsically value is clearly a personal value, one that would fit into the large collection of personal moral values restricted by the demands of value pluralism, including incommensurability. Recall, to help avoid the contradiction

argument, we have isolated the kind of diversity used by proponents of the Berlin project as strictly a political value, a value of states or polities rather than of persons and the lives they lead.

Another context where diversity is offered as an intrinsic good is in ecology. In a publication by the UN entitled *United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity*, the authors suggest an awareness of the "intrinsic value of biological diversity". (UN, 1992, p. 4)

While these cases shed some light on how diversity might be an ultimate value, they do not offer much help in explaining political diversity this way. Forms of life and life experiences just seem like the sort of things for whom variety is an intrinsic good. But in the political domain, it is not obvious why people leading different sorts of lives in the same polity is *in itself* an end to strive for.

None of this disqualifies political diversity from being an intrinsic moral value, of course. But there is another, more important reason that supporters of the Berlin project should not opt for this route: If political diversity were an intrinsic good, then it would be worthy of pursuit all on its own, without the need for an appeal to (personal) value pluralism.

Recall that the Berlin project, the schema we have been looking to fill in – is an affinity between value pluralism, understood here as a phenomenon of the personal values, and political liberalism, with political diversity as the middle term. As a result, what is needed to honour the Berlin project is an explanation of how political diversity is

implied *by value pluralism*. If political diversity is an end in itself, value pluralism is, at best, unnecessary for that status. If we want to fill out the schema, it would seem we need to make political diversity out to be an instrumental value.

Diversity as an Instrumental Value

Let us turn then to that task then. How can we understand political diversity as an instrumental moral value? Like the last section, let us begin by noting some examples of other sorts of diversity serving as instrumental values.

Diversity of backgrounds and perspectives in epistemic communities is argued to improve both the epistemic value and success of enquiry. Helen Longino, for example, argues that the value-laden nature of scientific inquiry, combined with the biases of perspective and the unrepresentative nature of scientific communities, makes science less epistemically successful than it could be. A diversity of perspectives and tacit assumptions (and other epistemically relevant things) is essential in helping to minimize bias in all stages of the enquiry process. (Longino, 1990; Longino, 2002)

A similar concern is raised regarding the history of Western ethical theory. Given that the historical dominance of white male ethicists, concerns have been raised as to the problems that arise from having such a narrow group of people shaping and constructing the majority of ethical discourse. While such a criticism is not entirely unique to 20th century feminist philosophy, feminist moral philosophers are often credited with highlighting the potential problems and biases that arise as a result of having too narrow and homogeneous approach to ethical inquiry, particularly as it

pertains to those conducting the research. Many feminist ethicists have argued that because of the lack of gender and cultural diversity in ethics, certain concepts have been given privileged status while others have been undervalued. (Held, 2009) Traditional ethics has emphasized the importance of individualism, rationalism, and independence while ignoring or deemphasizing notions of interdependence, emotionality and caring. But as Virginia Held argues in her discussion of the feminist influence on ethics, "caring, empathy, feeling with others, being sensitive to each other's feeling, all may be better guides to what morality requires in actual contexts than may abstract rules of reason, or rational calculation, or at least they may be necessary components of an adequate morality." (Held, 2009, p. 730) While the more traditional moral concepts are still relevant to moral theory, there are a variety of other concepts that seem just as important yet historically have not been recognized as such, in large part because of the lack of diversity in ethical theorizing. A call for diversity in these cases is meant to alleviate the inevitable bias.

Diversity is also taken as an instrumental value on pedagogical grounds. Affirmative action programs aimed at promoting diversity, where candidates from under-represented groups are given favourable status in admissions, are defended at least in part on grounds of the pedagogical benefits such diversity brings to the student body. As I write, the Supreme Court of the United States has recently upheld the right of universities to implement affirmative action admittance programs.[14] Fisher v.

[14] Fischer v. University of Texas at Austin. Found at https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/15pdf/14-981_4g15.pdf.

University of Texas at Austin was brought to the Supreme Court in the United States as a challenge to the practice of taking into account factors like race and ethnicity, in addition to academic achievement, when considering admission to the university. In explaining the court's ruling, Justice Kennedy makes reference to the role of diversity in this and previous rulings. He writes "A university may institute a race-conscious admissions program as a mean of obtaining 'the education benefits that flow from the student body diversity'," because such diversity "promotes cross-racial understanding, helps to break down racial stereotypes, and enables student to better understand persons of different races." (Fisher, pp. 11-12) Of equal importance, "student body diversity promotes learning outcomes, and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society." (Fischer, p.12)

Political Diversity as an Instrumental Moral Value

So how might political diversity be understood as an instrumental value? I will consider here two ways in which this might be filled out. One way is a re-purposing of an approach pioneered by John Stuart Mill and William Galston, where the target value is happiness (pleasure, utility, etc.). The other is my own, and it appeals to a weaker version of incommensurability. Let me start with the Millian approach.

Political Diversity and Happiness

John Stuart Mill is clearly an advocate of this sort of political diversity, what he calls "experiments in living", as a way to bring about social progress and development, and ultimately add to human flourishing. For Mill, there are a number of conceptions of the good life that human beings might reasonably hold, giving rise to a variety of values

and value systems. In the opening of chapter three of *On Liberty*, Mill defines diversity as "not an evil, but a good."(Mill, 1978, iii.1) Later, Mill writes:

> such are the differences among human beings in their sources of pleasure, their susceptibilities of pain, and the operation on them of different physical and moral agencies, that unless there is a corresponding diversity in their modes of life, they neither obtain their fair share of happiness, nor grow up to the mental, moral, and aesthetic stature of which their nature is capable. (ibid, iii.14)

In other words, human beings are of such a varied nature that allowing each person to pursue the life they deem fit (within the backdrop of sufficiently good lives) is essential for maximizing happiness.

This approach also allows us to explain the linkage between value pluralism and political diversity. Recall that Berlin's view of the human condition was that we were condemned to choose between different ultimately good but practically incompatible lifestyles. This dovetails quite well with Mill's claim that people are constituted so differently that they need different (good) lifestyles to maximise their happiness. So if we understand value pluralism as both the need to choose a lifestyle between incommensurable alternatives (Berlin) and the way in which we choose among them, i.e. by appeal to our expected happiness in that lifestyle (Mill), then value pluralism implies that political diversity, the condition of there being many sorts of lifestyles available in a society, will be an instrumental good for the production of happiness.

As an analogy, in a world where candy increases happiness, but different people like different candies to different degrees, in order to maximise happiness from candy we would want to maximise types of candy available (at least within limits). In that

world, candy diversity would be instrumentally valuable, with happiness as the target value. And candy diversity would be an important instrumental value *because of* the facts underlying differential candy enjoyment, e.g. different tastes, different candies, etc.

There are two key points worth highlighting in this analogy. Diversity is only instrumentally valuable when aimed at a further good or value. In this world, as with our own, candy can be a good in a variety of ways, including as a means to pleasure and/or happiness. The diversity of candy is valuable in large part because candy is valuable. Diversity of, say, road kill along the highway is not instrumentally valuable because the diversity in this case is among a group who's members lack value. Diversity, as with any instrumental value, is only valuable insofar as that at which it is aimed is valuable.

However, there is another key point to consider in this analogy, a further reason to think diversity of candy is instrumentally valuable to humans (be it pleasure, happiness, and the like). Part of the reason diversity of candy is instrumentally valuable is linked with the variety of human tastes and desires. We might say as far as candy goes, and food more generally, the human pallet is of such a varied nature that different people like different tastes. The more flavours options that are available, the better chance to satiate this variety in human tastes. This would seem to apply to candy in the exact same way. If it turns out that the range of human tastes is very narrow, diversity in candy, or food more generally, would not be considered instrumentally valuable.

Thus, whether diversity, be it for candy or for personal values, is to be considered instrumentally valuable is in part dependent on the human condition.

In this world (I argue), political diversity is instrumentally valuable for happiness, and it is so because of the facts underlying value pluralism, i.e. value independence, incompatibility and incommensurability, as well as other aspects of the human condition, like the fact that we must choose, and that we have limited resources.

The plausibility of this approach rests in large part on the plausibility of the empirical claims it makes. In particular, we might ask how plausible it is that people in fact come in such different temperaments that very different lifestyles would be necessary to maximise happiness among them.

It is difficult to answer such questions, but one way to start is by looking at history. And we do find plenty of evidence that people chafe under regimes that limit the sorts of lifestyles they allow in the polity.

As one example, there is a long history of religious persecution by a number of states, blocking their people's ability to fully structure a life around a particular religious narrative. Arguments for religious freedom often emphasise the importance of allowing individuals to adopt whatever religious values they deem fit, with as few limitations as possible, primarily because of the importance such values have to the overall satisfaction and well-being of so many people. (Grim, 2008; Seiple, 2012)

Another way is to appeal to art as a reflection of social reality. And again, in narrative fiction and drama, we find evidence, at least in the negative, for our claim that

diversity of lifestyle is valuable for happiness: The trope of the misfit, the character who's life is blighted because they cannot stand the lives that their peers lead, and they cannot lead the life they would want, which is different from that.

For a concrete example, consider the classic animated Christmas classic, *Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer*.[15] Apart from the familiar Rudolph story line, a secondary character is Hermey, an elf who takes more of an interest in dentistry than more traditional elf duties like toymaking. In fact, Hermey's love for dentistry results in his alienation from his local community, largely because his interest in dentistry isn't the sort of life that elves are meant to follow. And this alienation, combined with the inability to pursue the kind of life he deems most suitable, leads to a great dissatisfaction within Hermey. We might say within this imaginary community, there is a limited selection of lifestyles from which community members can select. Apparently, the kind of elf Hermey is cannot find satisfaction from the limited options provided.

The point of this light-hearted example is to demonstrate that limiting the kinds of lifestyles individuals might choose can force some into making selections that fail to satisfy in the most optimal way. Apparently the nature of elves, like people, is varied, and there is no one kind of life that can satisfy everyone. Different dispositions can only be satisfied by endorsing different values or pursuing different lifestyles, and limiting the available options risks leaving some unsatisfied.

[15] *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,* Rankin/Bass Productions, 1964.

One worry that might be raised against this view is that a wider range of choice may well be antithetical to personal satisfaction. Actual satisfaction is not independent of alternative presentations, and kind of confused-by-multiple targets worry. The claim here is that more choice actually make it more difficult to choose, there is an inverse relationship be the ability to choose and the available options, such that the fewer the options the easier the choice. Ultimate satisfaction may be better served by limiting our lifestyle choices, not broadening them.

While this might be true in select cases, there seems no reason to accept such a view when choosing the personal values and lifestyles that will shape one's life. The range of human interests and pursuits is wide indeed, what brings happiness to one less the other unfulfilled. This seems like an uncontroversial, brute fact of the human condition. While there may be legitimate concerns about the difficulty in choosing among so many worthwhile options, this difficulty does not itself seem sufficient to limit the opportunity to pursue genuine value and sufficiently good lives.

Political Diversity and Personal Values

The second way of understanding political diversity as an instrumental moral value appeals to the underlying personal values in the lifestyles of people. This method is truer to the spirit of Berlin's (and Williams) vision, but it relies on more tendentious claims.

Recall the Bernard Williams 'more must mean better' principle, and Talisse's criticism of it, discussed at the end of chapter six. Williams claims: "there is the obvious

point that if there are many and competing genuine values, then the greater the extent to which a society tends to be single-valued, the more genuine values it neglects or suppresses. More, to this extent, must mean better." (Williams, 1979, p. xvii)

Talisse criticizes Williams, using his museum example cited early. Briefly, Talisse asks us to consider two museums, a small one devoted to Impressionism, and a much larger one devoted to a more general, historical theme, including not only Impressionism but a wide range of other genres. In this example, the works of art are similar to personal values, in that they are incommensurable. However, if Williams' 'more must mean better' principle is true, then it would follow that the larger general museum must be considered better than the smaller Impressionist museum. But this, claims Talisse, requires the ability to commensurate between museums, which is simply not allowed given the incommensurable nature of the works of art. Any metric by which we rank-order museums will violate incommensurability. To make sense of the Williams 'more must mean better' principle, this familiar problem of incommensurability must be addressed.

Recall that in defining incommensurability, I introduced an axis of strength along which incommensurability could be understood. As I said in chapter 2, the stronger an incommensurability relation is, the more sorts of comparisons are forbidden.

On the strongest sort of incommensurability relation, we deny any kind of value comparison, including equivalence comparisons. On such a view, not only can we not

say that honesty is better than bravery, we cannot even say that honesty is *as good* as bravery, since that is also a comparison.[16]

A slightly weaker version of incommensurability would allow for, say, equivalence comparisons, but forbid any other ranking comparisons. So on this view, all incommensurable values would be as *morally good* as all others.

A new wrinkle is added when we consider collections or groups of values, instead of individual values. The contributors to the dialectic all hold, explicitly or implicitly, that the incommensurability of personal values entails the incommensurability of collections of such values as well. This entailment follows whether those collections are understood as the values that make up a lifestyle, or the values present in a given society. Talisse's quote above is evidence of this latter view. There Talisse is arguing that the larger museum is not better than the smaller one, where the museums are taken to represent societies with more and fewer individual values expressed. As for evidence of the former view, consider Moore here:

> Imagine three value systems, A, B, and C. A is composed of one real value and one spurious value. The adherents of system A spend their days carrying out their values, and both values are actually expressed in the lives of the citizens. System B is also composed of two values, but they are both real. The everyday life of its adherents is also entirely devoted to carrying out the values of the system, and since all of those values are real, the entirety of that everyday life reflects real values. Finally, C is composed of three values, all of which are real. Once again, everyday life is dedicated to

[16] Indeed, on this strongest version of incommensurability, it seems problematic to claim that honesty is as good as honesty, since again, values cannot appear flanking that sort of relation. But this is surely too strong. It seems perfectly reasonable to claim that honesty is as *morally good* as itself, in the same way we might claim that it is as *difficult to live by* as itself.

> carrying out these values, and since all of them are real, all of that everyday life reflects real values.
>
> It seems obvious that we have grounds for saying that both B and C are morally better than A, since more of the activities of their adherents instantiate genuine values. In other words, the people who live by those value systems live lives that are more moral. But Williams and Crowder's argument is that we also have grounds for saying that C is morally better than B, since C instantiates *more* genuine values. **This cannot be true for the same reasons that B and C are superior to A, since the adherents of B and C all live lives that are, by hypothesis, 100 percent moral**. Rather, their claim is that it is better to pursue more genuine moral values than fewer, even if that means that each value in our system gets less time and attention devoted to it than it would if we tried to instantiate fewer values. (Moore, 2009, p. 250, emphasis added)

Whether or not this claim (that individual incommensurability entails incommensurability between sets) is correct, we should see this as another measure of the strength of an incommensurability view – whether the view entails that collections of incommensurables are also incommensurable.

And the importance of this dimension of strength to our case here is this: if we take incommensurability to forbid any comparisons between collections of values, then we will not be able to appeal to the fact that diversity produces 'more' values (in the Williams sense of more types of values) as a reason for its being an instrumental value, since that differential wont be commensurable with its alternatives.

Incommensurability and Societies

If we want to claim that political diversity might be instrumentally good because diverse societies have more (types of) values, and as such are preferable

to societies with fewer values, then we will have to relax the strength of the incommensurability relation to allow for those types of comparisons between collections. What reasons do we have for adopting a weaker version of incommensurability?

One such argument is the following: Imagine a general library with a thousand books in it. There are a variety of books, each with distinct values. There are a number of classical texts, some original. There are a number of books with duplicates, and there are some with only one copy. There are various genres, some make you laugh, some educate you, some arouse emotion in you. There are books that reflect a range of values and virtues, including justice, equality, liberty and the like. Compare this to an electronic specialty library, also with a thousand books in it. But in this library there is only one title available, with a thousand copies. Moreover, that title *is also available in the general library.* But it is a thousand copies of the exact same book. Further, assume that there is no way of ranking the books as better or worse, as their individual value is incommensurable. Despite this, the libraries themselves do seem to be commensurable. Clearly, the general library is to be preferred to the specific one.

Generalising from this, we might say that comparisons between sets and their proper subsets might be allowable on our weaker version of incommensurability.

Given that the number of books is equal, the diversity of the books available provides a clear distinction between the libraries, a distinction that seems to give a universal reason to characterize the general library as better than the specialized library.

Indeed, on what grounds could one claim the specialized library is better, or even equivalent, to the general library? Nor does it seem reasonable to claim the libraries are incommensurable and cannot be rank-ordered in any meaningful way, even if it were the case that the books themselves are incommensurable. The evaluation that the general library is better than the specialized library does not refer to the individual value of any of the books they contain. The property by which the libraries are compared applies to collections of books, libraries, only, and cannot apply to individual books.[17]

Having the ability to rank-order sets and subsets is intuitively quite appealing, allowing for the seemingly obvious evaluation in the library example to follow unproblematically. This also helps us to understand further the intuition behind Williams' 'more must mean better' principle. Given the range of good values and lifestyles one might choose to shape a life around, it is hard to deny the benefit of allowing for as many of these values and lifestyles to be realized, or at least available. A society that accommodates this variety in value does seem to align with the nature of value under pluralism. The primary issue with authoritarian regimes that select a narrow range of values and lifestyles is that such a society selects for some equally ultimate values and lifestyles while

[17] One question we might ask is if the comparison might change if the number of books changed, such that the specialized library, while still containing only one title, now has millions of copies available. Judging the general library as better than the specialized library seems rather obvious when the number of books in each remains the same. But if we keep increasing the number of copies available in the specialized library, is it not plausible that at some point the number copies will become relevant in the comparison, and may even take precedence? And doesn't this bring us back to the problem of weighing incommensurable values?

rejecting others. The set of values and lifestyles is unjustifiably narrow. For the pluralists, this kind of privileging and suppressing is indefensible and cannot be accepted. However, the society that remains neutral, as far as is possible, as to what values should or should not be accepted, and what lifestyles should or should not be pursued, respects the plurality of equally ultimate values and lifestyles. In so doing, the set of available values and lifestyles is considerably broadened.

The Future of the Berlin Project

My principle aim is that the solution I have proposed, using Crowder's diversity argument as a springboard, moves the dialectic surrounding the Berlin project a step further. I have responded to the criticisms presented by the opponents of the Berlin project, most notably Gray, Talisse and Moore, in attempt to vindicate the affinity argument between value pluralism and liberalism. At the very least, what I have suggested demands a response. If we are able to cleanly separate moral value along the lines I have drawn, distinguishing personal values from political values, the prospect of avowing some of the classic limits of value pluralism as it has traditionally been understood seems promising. Specifically, by distinguishing values in this way the problem of value incommensurability may not apply at the political level, including political diversity. At the very least, an argument must be given. As to the further claim that liberalism is the best suited political arrangement to accommodate value pluralism, what I have hoped to have shown is that a plausible argument can be made for such a

move. That is, far from contradicting value pluralism, liberalism may actually arise out of value pluralism.

However, an important qualification is needed, one that arises out of a long-standing worry of Gray with regard to the limitations liberalism must impose. Gray argues that while it seems true that liberal political arrangements will accommodate a wider range of values and valuable lifestyles, it is inevitable that there will be limits to that range, limits that might come into conflict with pluralism (Gray, 2013, p 200-202). Recall Berlin's appeal to liberalism is its "moderation and compromise….[and] the recognition of the ultimate validity of conflicting claims." (ibid, p. 201) But by implementing liberalism, Gray argues, some genuine value and lifestyles that hold legitimate place on the pluralist spectrum are excluded or suppressed. (Gray, 1995, p. 153-154) If true, perhaps we will have to admit liberalism is not nearly as accommodating to the diversity in personal value and lifestyle as we thought.

In response, we must be reminded that the Berlin project is one aiming to establish an affinity between liberalism and value pluralism, particularly as it relates to competing political frameworks. But even if the affinity is established and the vindication of liberalism as the most suitable confirmed, this does not imply that liberalism does not have costs in pluralist terms (nor, for that matter, does it imply liberalism will forever remain the most accommodating). The claim that the defenders of the Berlin project want to defend is that liberalism is more accommodating to value pluralism than its rivals, not that liberalism is perfectly suited to value pluralism. Crowder responds to Gray's challenge with the following;

> All viable societies need some political framework, and any such framework will reflect some conception of the good that excludes alternative. The question is not whether we can identify a framework based on a conception of the good that will impose no costs and exclude nothing, since clearly there can be no such thing. The question is how well liberalism fares against its competitors in terms of its capacity to accommodate diversity. (Crowder, 2015, p. 561)

While a liberal political arrangement may not be limitlessly accommodating to diversity, it appears better than the alternatives. The challenge for opponents of the Berlin project, then, is not just to reveal a crack in the affinity, but to establish that the affinity between an alternative to liberalism and value pluralism is better than the one established between liberalism itself. I believe that challenge still awaits such a response.

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