

# **GALSTON'S LIBERAL PLURALISM**

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What is the proper role of liberal-democratic states in relation to non-liberal cultural minorities within their jurisdiction? On this question liberals divide into two main camps. There are those who argue that the liberal state should be maximally tolerant of different ways of life in its midst, even of those that are deeply illiberal. And there are those who see liberal democracy as itself the political expression of a particular way of life, a distinctive set of values and virtues. On this second view, the liberal state is entitled, even obliged, to move to liberalise its non-liberal minorities where possible, in order to protect the cultural underpinnings that are essential to the flourishing of liberal political institutions. The debate between supporters of these two positions has been especially vigorous in relation to education policy, where the liberalisers advocate a more interventionist role for the state, and the tolerators urge restraint (Brighouse 1998; Gutmann 1995; Levinson 1999; Macedo 2000).

For William Galston, the origins of this debate lie in the history of liberal thought, and specifically in the emergence of 'two concepts of liberalism', those of the Reformation and the Enlightenment (Galston 1995; 2002: ch. 2).<sup>1</sup> The former, looking back to the Lockean response to the European wars of religion, takes as its central value the toleration of religious and cultural diversity. The latter, including in its pantheon the key figures of Kant and John Stuart Mill, sees the distinctive task of liberalism as the promotion of a specific vision of the human good, namely that of the autonomous, or rationally self-directing, individual. Galston is a champion of the Reformation view, arguing for the priority of toleration over individual autonomy in the liberal schedule of values. Most recently he has sought to justify that position by

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<sup>1</sup> Similar distinctions are drawn by Larmore 1987; Kymlicka 1995: ch. 8.

appeal to Isaiah Berlin's notion of value pluralism, the view that human values, including at least some universals, are irreducibly multiple, frequently in conflict with one another, and sometimes incommensurable. In *Liberal Pluralism* (2002: referenced hereafter as *LP*), Galston restates and extends Berlin's position, arguing that the form of politics which fits best with the value-pluralist outlook is that of liberalism, Reformation liberalism in particular. Against anti-liberal pluralists like John Gray, Galston argues that liberalism is maximally capable of accommodating the 'expressive liberty' of the many ways of life that are worthy of respect according to a pluralist view. Further, the kind of liberalism that best fits with pluralism, according to Galston, will be exceptionally tolerant, embracing some ways of life that are based on explicitly non-liberal beliefs. Prominent among the non-liberal conceptions of the good life to be accommodated in this way are those of religious groups often described as 'fundamentalist', such as the Old Order Amish. Value pluralism thus supports, according to Galston, a Reformation liberalism based on toleration of diversity rather than an Enlightenment liberalism based on personal autonomy.

In this paper I welcome Galston's intervention on the side of a liberal interpretation of Berlinian value pluralism, but dissent from his account of the nature of the liberalism in question. Pluralism does indeed support liberalism, but in the Enlightenment or autonomy-based form rather than Reformation or toleration-based version. My argument is divided into three main sections. In the first I examine Galston's political conclusion, his picture of Reformation liberalism, questioning the extent to which this is really distinct from the Enlightenment view he claims to reject.

When Galston rightly allows a series of qualifications to legitimate expressive liberty, these cumulatively bring his preferred version of liberalism much closer to Enlightenment liberalism than he admits. Second, I discuss Galston's specifically value-pluralist case for the liberalism he endorses. Here I show that the logic of Galston's arguments from pluralism to liberalism, so far as these succeed in commending liberalism at all, does not stop at the hyper-tolerant species of liberalism that he claims to endorse. If pluralism supports liberalism, this will not be Reformation liberalism but rather Enlightenment or autonomy-based liberalism. Third, I anticipate and reply to some objections that Galston might raise against my position.

### **Reformation liberalism and its limits**

The central, guiding ideal of Galston's liberal state is a presumption in favour of the 'expressive liberty' of all citizens (*LP* 3). By expressive liberty he means the absence of obstacles to 'individuals and groups leading their lives as they see fit, within a broad range of legitimate variation, in accordance with their own understanding of what gives life meaning and value' (*LP* 3). People possess expressive liberty when they are not prevented from living in tune with their deepest convictions. Expressive liberty will necessarily be subject to the requirements of 'civic unity', but these will be limited to the minimum necessary for the maintenance of public order.

In particular, Galston's liberal polity will be wary of imposing its public principles on the internal arrangements of groups within civil society, even where these are explicitly non-liberal in character. The state 'will be parsimonious in

specifying binding public principles and cautious about employing such principles to intervene in the internal affairs of civil associations' (LP 20). Such associations would include groups identified by religious or cultural affiliations, and these may maintain practices that are explicitly illiberal – arranged marriages, sexual discrimination or indoctrinating forms of education. For Galston, 'expressive liberty protects the ability of individuals and groups to live in ways that others would regard as unfree' (LP 29). Liberal standards would continue to apply in the public realm but need not be mirrored within civil associations. Not all ways of life are protected by the principle of expressive liberty – I shall come to Galston's qualifications in this regard in a moment – but the range of legitimate variation will be very wide.

Galston thus pins his colours to the mast of Reformation liberalism in contrast with its Enlightenment rival. The problem with Enlightenment liberalism, he argues, is that it stands in effect for one particular understanding of the human good among others, and so is too exclusive of the legitimate diversity of lives to be found in a modern society. That diversity includes outlooks that 'cannot conscientiously embrace the Enlightenment impulse' (LP 25-26). If liberals insist on promoting the ideal of autonomy in all spheres of society, they risk alienating 'many citizens of goodwill' and creating opponents in place of allies (LP 26). On the other hand, the Reformation ideal is recommended by its realistic acknowledgement of the fact of a wide diversity of belief and practice, by its instrumental value in multiplying both cultural options (Mill 1974) and interests in equilibrium (Madison 1987), and by its intrinsic value as an expression of the 'diverse experiences and standpoints of different groups' (LP 26).

These general considerations in favour of Reformation liberalism can all be questioned. For example, it is true that Reformation liberalism realistically acknowledges the fact of modern social diversity, but so too does Enlightenment liberalism. The difference lies only in their respective attitudes to that diversity. Whereas Galston's view is apparently that when it comes to public policy all views and practices within the allowable range must be endorsed as acceptable, the Enlightenment perspective sees existing diversity as a field in which all individuals should be enabled and encouraged to judge critically and choose autonomously. This latter view extends to the public realm a critical role for political philosophy, in contrast with Galston's view that philosophical analysis should be confined to 'private' debate within the universities and other institutions of civil society. The obvious question here is: if this much is allowed to philosophical inquiry, how far can it, or should it, be kept out of public discourse? This raises the broader question of how far Enlightenment commitments can be avoided by any kind of liberal state.

This brings me to the first of my principal replies to Galston, namely that, for liberals, appeal to Enlightenment ideals is unavoidable. Galston anticipates and tries to resist this claim, but it receives support from his own argument. Initially his position seems to involve a very strong demand for expressive liberty, allowing non-liberal groups wide discretion. As the discussion proceeds, however, Galston rightly introduces a series of qualifications to legitimate expressive liberty, and these progressively narrow the range of ways of life that his liberal state can accommodate. Indeed, when all these qualifications are added up, expressive liberty is cumulatively

restricted to a point where it is hard to see that any gap remains between Galston's Reformation liberalism and that of the Enlightenment view he is supposed to be rejecting.

The first and weakest of these limitations on expressive liberty is the requirement that the way of life in question at least fall within the 'common moral horizon of the species' (*LP* 50). Following Berlin, Galston argues that some highly generic norms are universal. For Galston, they are universal in the sense that they are mandatory for any form of life to count as 'minimally human, decent, and morally acceptable' (*LP* 50). Galston offers no systematic account of the contents of the common moral horizon, but he gives the prohibition of human sacrifice as an example of the kind of injunction he has in mind (*LP* 23). Practices or forms of life that violate such norms will not be accommodated by liberal pluralism. This category will likely include many non-liberal forms of life, such as those of the Aztecs. The requirement of the common moral horizon therefore rules out at least some non-liberal forms of life from accommodation by liberal pluralism.

The moral threshold Galston describes here is higher than Berlin's, and the Aztec example suggests that some non-liberal societies may not reach it.<sup>2</sup> Still, it is

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<sup>2</sup> Galston's notion of universal norms is, in general, stronger and more demanding than Berlin's. First, his account of a 'common human horizon' is quite different from Berlin's notion of a 'human horizon' (Berlin 1990). Berlin's human horizon includes all those ways of life and practices that, however misguided or repugnant, are recognisably 'human' and therefore capable of being understood (even if not endorsed) by other human beings. Berlin explicitly admits the practices of the Nazis within the human horizon, so is unlikely to exclude the Aztecs. Second, Galston's 'common human horizon' is closer to Berlin's idea of a 'central core' of human values (Berlin 1997: 243; 2000: 277), but even this latter idea is weaker than Galston's. While Galston conceives of his common human horizon as including the goods necessary to any conception of human well-being, Berlin's core refers to those goods actually valued by most human societies at most times (Berlin 1990: 18; 1997: 15; Jahanbegloo 1993: 37). Berlin is not explicit about the contents of this list, but it is likely to be short and highly generic.

shallow enough that many more non-liberal societies will do so comfortably.

Clearly, a society could reject human sacrifice without endorsing the individual rights and liberties characteristic of liberalism. Thus far Galston's claim that non-liberal cultures should be accommodated is unchallenged. But he soon advances further moral requirements that change this picture.

Galston's next qualification to expressive liberty follows from his claim that expressive liberty is a universal value, part of what makes a human life worth living. If expressive liberty is valuable for one group, then it is valuable for others. So it follows that in each case a group's expressive liberty is bounded by a requirement to respect the expressive liberty of others – both other groups and the individual members of the group itself (*LP* 29, 102). This suggests a 'civic precondition' for expressive liberty, namely the internalising of norms of 'self-restraint' in dealings with others (*LP* 29). Surely, few groups will meet this self-restraint requirement that are not already broadly liberal in outlook. Indeed, Galston notes that the kind of self-restraint described here can be identified as 'a core liberal virtue' (*LP* 29). Moreover, where self-restraint is lacking it is 'a legitimate object of liberal civil action' (*LP* 102) – that is, a legitimate reason for intervention within the internal arrangements of a group by the liberal state. This in turn lets in a more general argument, conceded by Galston, in favour of liberal state intervention in such groups for the purpose of 'civic education' with the goal of making 'good citizens' (*LP* 106, 126-7).

The upshot of these concessions is that the cultural diversity to be accommodated by Galston's liberal state is a diversity of characteristically liberal

cultures. The internal requirement of self-restraint is essentially a requirement of toleration: only those groups that are tolerant not only of other groups but also of the 'expressive liberty' of their own members meet that requirement. Few non-liberal cultures are likely to fit the bill. This point is reinforced by a further qualification to expressive liberty acknowledged by Galston, namely that only those groups will be accommodated which respect the 'basic rights of citizens'; where these are violated 'the state must step in' (*LP* 108). Presumably the 'basic rights' in question are the standard rights of liberal citizenship, reflecting the traditional list of human rights. If so, then here again the internal character of the group is (rightly) made subject to universal liberal principles. These groups will be internally liberal, and the diversity protected by Galston's state will be a liberal diversity. At this point what seemed to be Galston's original goal of accommodating not only liberal but also non-liberal groups and practices has been left behind.

Might Galston reply that his view still supports a recognisably Reformation rather than Enlightenment species of liberalism? It is true that only internally liberal groups will be accommodated, but these will be liberal in the sense that they take as their ideal toleration rather than personal autonomy. The self-restraint Galston speaks of is, I have suggested, equivalent to toleration, but one can be tolerant without being autonomous. One can exercise self-restraint towards others without possessing the positive capacity to make one's own plan of life through a process of critical reflection. Similarly, citizens' basic rights can be respected without their being autonomous: one can possess freedom of speech or access to decent public healthcare, for example, without being self-directing in the relevant sense. Galston's

discussion has narrowed the range of acceptable expressive liberty to a spectrum coextensive with liberalism, but is this not Reformation liberalism still, even if in a weakened form?

The gap between Galston's position and the Enlightenment view he officially rejects is closed by two further concessions. First, the legitimate expressive liberty of a group is subject to 'enforceable rights of exit' for individual members (*LP* 104). Consistently with the basic idea of expressive liberty as the freedom to live in accordance with 'one's own' deepest convictions, individuals must be free to leave the group if they no longer accept its values and authority. Groups may not legitimately keep individuals within 'a kind of mental and moral prison' (*LP* 105). But rights of exit must be 'more than merely formal'; they must ensure that individuals have real choices when it comes to deciding whether to stay or go. Groups must not 'disempower' people from living outside the group. This means at least two things. First, the group must acknowledge to its members that there is an 'outside', that is, that there are alternatives to the way of life that the group favours. Second, the group must not act to prevent its members from choosing those alternatives in preference to life with the group.

By now, the gap between Reformation and Enlightenment is closing rapidly, but Galston could still argue that it is not wholly closed. To be aware of alternative ways of life and to be unimpeded in pursuing them is still not quite to be autonomous. A group could forbear from preventing its members from choosing their own path without actively encouraging them to do so. 'The politics of negative

liberty seeks, first and foremost, to protect their ability to leave – although not necessarily to cultivate the awareness and reflective powers that may stimulate the desire to leave' (*LP* 51).

Everything depends on what counts as 'the ability to leave'. At a minimum this will include the absence of coercion to stay, and this Galston has covered with his principle of negative liberty. But it would be a narrow understanding of ability that would confine its means to the absence of coercion alone. Restrictions on ability can take various forms that need not involve outright coercion but include the effective imposition of economic or psychological penalties (Barry 2001: 150-1). Economic penalties include the loss of property or employment that would be necessary for people to leave some groups. Examples of psychological penalties include fear of the unknown or of leaving the safety of a closed society guarded by unquestioned rules. Deliberately leaving such fears in place can be as effective a means of imprisoning people within a group as any other. But then, what is it to remove such fears if not actively to enable individuals to make their own plan of life – that is, to become autonomous agents? If rights of exit are to be 'more than merely formal', then it's hard to see how such rights fall short of an endorsement of autonomous judgement.

That Galston has arrived, *de facto*, at an Enlightenment view after all is confirmed by his final qualification to expressive liberty. This emerges from his discussion of rights of exit. A precondition for such rights, if they are to count as genuine, is that those who might claim them must not be 'servile' in the face of their

parents', or the group's, authority. Here Galston cites approvingly Eamonn Callan's view that 'as a parent, I cannot rightly mold my child's character in a way that effectively preempts "serious thought at any future date about alternatives to my judgement"' (cited at *LP* 105). This is surely right. A person cannot be said to have a genuine right of exit if she is incapable of independent thought as a result of her upbringing. But then, it is hard to see how this kind of conditioning can be prevented short of encouraging the development in children of a form of character in which 'serious thought' along these lines is possible and valued. Once again, it is hard to see how this can be anything less than a case for the facilitation of personal autonomy.

I conclude that Galston's Reformation liberalism collapses on closer inspection into the Enlightenment liberalism he purports to reject. His official position is so tolerant of group practices that its general tendency is towards leaving individuals at the mercy of such groups. Galston is appropriately conscious of this problem, and his reasonable response is to insist that individuals always be accorded a right of exit from their groups. But it turns out that this right of exit means little unless people possess a real *ability* (Galston's word) to exercise it. To be genuinely able to exercise such a right it is not enough simply to be uncoerced; one must be capable of genuinely independent judgement. To be capable of independent judgement is to be autonomous. Galston's own reasoning leads to a liberalism not of group toleration but of individual autonomy - not to Reformation but to Enlightenment liberalism.

### Galston's pluralist case

I turn now to Galston's more specifically value-pluralist arguments. Value pluralism on Galston's understanding is Berlin's notion of the irreducible plurality of human goods, which opposes the idea of moral monism. Moral monism, at its most general, is the claim that all moral values can be embraced within a single system that can be employed, in principle, to resolve all ethical problems. Such systems are dominated by one or a few super-values that either override other goods in a hierarchical structure or serve as a common dominator by which all goods can be measured. One example of a monist moral system is utilitarianism, according to which 'utility', however understood, outranks or commensurates all values. On a monist view, moral decision making will be relatively unproblematic in principle, since the morally optimal action will always be that which subserves or maximises the relevant super-value.

Against monism, pluralists see moral values as 'incommensurable' or 'qualitatively heterogeneous', and consequently not subject to any 'comprehensive lexical orderings' (*LP* 5). Different kinds of goods are so distinct that each is its own measure, and none can be seen as outranking or serving as a common currency for all others in all cases. Some plural goods may be seen as more 'basic' than others, 'in the sense that they form part of any choiceworthy conception of a human life' (*LP* 6). These basic goods – examples may include liberty, equality, justice, courage – will override less basic goods where there is a conflict. But they will not invariably override other basic goods in all cases. When liberty conflicts with equality we cannot say either that liberty always comes first, or equality. Consequently

pluralism, in contrast with monism, contemplates the likelihood of many cases where moral decision making will be highly problematic. One basic good will sometimes conflict with another, and there will be no absolute or universal ordering, such as that of utilitarianism, to which we can appeal for a solution. Utility, on this view, will be no more than one basic good on a par with others. Pluralism accounts for the possibility of genuine moral dilemmas, where no single solution is uniquely sanctioned by reason.

It does not follow that, on a pluralist view, conflicts among basic values can *never* be resolved rationally. 'Value pluralism does not rule out the possibility of compelling (if nonalgorithmic) arguments for right answers in specific situations' (*LP* 35). There may be stronger reasons to pursue one set of goods rather than another within a particular context. Impartial justice may trump personal loyalty for the judge or the public official – at least while she is fulfilling her professional duties; in a private or family environment, it may be different. Pluralism implies that reasoned moral decision making is often hard, sometimes impossible – that is, it may be impossible to find decisive reasons to choose in one direction rather than another – but not *necessarily* impossible. Indeed, Galston, recalling his experience of wrestling with clashes among plural considerations while he was working as an official in the Clinton administration, finds it 'remarkable how often we could reach deliberative closure in the face of this heterogeneity' (*LP* 7). In this connection he notes that value pluralism is not to be confused with relativism: 'The distinction between good and bad, and between good and evil, is objective and rationally defensible' (*LP* 5). For

pluralists, goods are not simply whatever individuals or groups believe to be good.

There are objective goods, but they may conflict.

Galston argues that the form of politics that fits best with a value-pluralist outlook is liberalism. He presents three main arguments. The first of these follows Michael Walzer (1995) to the effect that pluralists and liberals share a 'common fundamental orientation' which consists in particular in their 'generosity' to a wide range of ways of life, including ways of life other their own (*LP* 61-62). Pluralists will accept that many ways of ordering the basic human goods will be equally (or incommensurably) reasonable, and so will respect a wide range of ways of life as legitimate and worthy of respect. Liberals, at their best, will do the same.

This argument is attractive as far as it goes, but its force is limited. For one thing it leaves room for disagreement about the range of lives to be respected: if pluralists include radically illiberal lives in their list, then pluralism and liberalism look like pulling apart. For another, even if pluralists and liberals agree on the range of lives to be respected, they may still disagree on the form that respect ought to take. On the face of it, Galston's model of accommodation of a diversity of cultures within a single (liberal) state is only one possibility; another may be John Gray's conception of a diversity of monocultural states, many of which may be politically non-liberal. I shall return to Gray's view shortly.

Galston's second argument addresses the problem of the range of conceptions of the good to be accommodated. The capacity of a liberal political order to

accommodate multiple conceptions of the good life is considerable but clearly not limitless. If pluralism implied a wholly open-ended indeterminacy in the ranking of incommensurables, then all such rankings, and so all conceptions of the good life (which are essentially generalised value rankings), would be morally valid. Liberal constraints would then exclude some substantial range of legitimate conceptions of the good, and would therefore have to be rejected from a pluralist point of view, except as merely one position with no more moral weight than any other. The question is, then, can pluralists give us any reason to restrict the acceptable conceptions to a range which liberalism can accommodate? Here Galston appeals to Berlin's notion of the 'common moral horizon' introduced earlier: certain very basic values must always be respected if a given society is to count as minimally decent. The range of acceptable conceptions of the good under pluralism is therefore not wholly open-ended but 'restricted' to that extent (*LP* 49).

This move does not really get us much closer to reconciling liberalism with pluralism. If the common horizon is to be genuinely universal, its contents can only be highly generic and consistent with a multitude of ways of life, many if not most of them non-liberal. Galston suggests that the minimum will contain 'a measure of negative liberty' (*LP* 50) in line with Berlin's claim that 'we must preserve a minimum area of personal freedom if we are not to "degrade or deny our nature"' (*LP* 49). But what is the evidence that negative liberty is a genuinely universal value in any relevant sense? Berlin himself notes in 'Two Concepts of Liberty' that the holding of negative liberty as a political value is a peculiarly modern phenomenon (Berlin 2002: 32-4, 176). Most human societies have not insisted on any minimum

measure of negative liberty in the treatment of their members. Even among modern societies relatively few consistently meet that standard to the extent required for a liberal conception of civil liberties. Furthermore, even if we agree that a minimal commitment to negative liberty is universal, does it follow that liberalism is the only, or even the best, political expression of that commitment? The notion of a common moral horizon does narrow the range of acceptable conceptions of the good somewhat. But while that may be enough to identify a minimally 'decent' society, it is unlikely to be sufficient to endorse a distinctively liberal order. Something more is needed.

Galston's third argument from pluralism to liberalism is his strongest. This is that pluralism implies the valuing of a diversity of conceptions of the good life, a diversity that is best accommodated by a liberal polity. This line does succeed in justifying liberalism from a pluralist perspective, but I shall argue, against Galston, that it justifies Enlightenment rather than Reformation liberalism.

The starting point for Galston's diversity argument is the claim that pluralism implies the desirability of a diversity of conceptions of the good life (*LP* 27). This follows fairly straightforwardly from what has already been said about pluralist indeterminacy in ranking goods. If values are plural and incommensurable, then many different general rankings will be equally (or incommensurably) valid as long as they fall within the (very wide) common moral horizon. Pluralists are therefore committed to finding value in a very considerable range of different ways of life. In general terms they are committed to respecting and valuing cultural diversity.

But does this pluralist case for cultural diversity also involve a case for liberalism? Such a link has been influentially denied by John Gray (1995a, b, 2000a, b). Gray accepts that pluralism implies the valuing of cultural diversity, but denies that this is best promoted by containment within a liberal state. Liberal states inevitably promote liberal ways of life within their borders, at best marginalising, at worst undermining non-liberal ways of life. Rather, the cultural diversity indicated by pluralism is best served by a diversity of political communities, some of which are liberal, some not. Liberalism is merely one valid political form among others: appropriate for those cultures that privilege distinctively liberal goods, but inappropriate for those that do not.

Galston's reply is, in effect, that pluralists must care about diversity not only among political communities but within them as well (*LP* ch. 5). The diversity celebrated by value pluralists suggests the desirability not only of multiple political regimes but of multiple ways of life within those regimes. Consequently, pluralist diversity cannot be promoted through political separatism alone; rather, it requires multiculturalism within political societies. Such societies, Galston believes, must be broadly liberal in form. Liberalism, again, is not limitlessly accommodating of cultural and other diversity, but is arguably more accommodating than any alternative political forms.

What kind of liberalism will this be? For Galston, of course, it is supposed to be a toleration-based Reformation liberalism that allows space for non-liberal groups

and practices. But here we should take Galston's own logic a step further. If pluralism implies the valuing of diversity among cultures within political societies, then it implies the valuing of diversity *within cultures* too. The diversity implied by value pluralism is a diversity not merely of states (Gray), nor merely of cultures (Galston), but of internally diverse cultures. Internally diverse cultures will be liberal cultures. Moreover, they will be cultures based on personal autonomy. Thus, the kind of liberalism that, on the logic of Galston's own view, most adequately promotes diversity will be Enlightenment liberalism.

Why and in what sense must the cultures within a pluralist polity be internally diverse? Here we should take note of a fundamental point that is not adequately acknowledged by either Gray or Galston, namely that the notion of value pluralism is primarily a notion of the plurality and incommensurability of *goods*, not of ways of life. This must be so, because if it were primarily cultures that were incommensurable there would be nothing to distinguish value pluralism from cultural relativism. Pluralism, as a distinctive position, points to a deep plurality of value that cuts across cultural difference; conflicts among incommensurable goods can occur as easily within cultures as among them. Indeed, on the distinctively pluralist view cultures, unlike goods, cannot be wholly incommensurable because they all overlap within the admittedly wide but nevertheless universal common moral horizon. This does not mean that pluralists should deny the fact or the value of cultural diversity altogether; on the contrary, pluralists should indeed value cultural diversity. But they should do so to the extent that this follows from their primary concern, which is respect for the diversity of human goods. What makes

cultures valuable on this view is that people will interpret and pursue the same goods in different ways in different contexts, giving rise to a diversity of value-patterns which should, *prima facie*, be respected. But a natural limit to the value of cultures from a value-pluralist perspective is set by the extent to which they fail to promote value-diversity internally.

The pluralist requirement that political societies be culturally diverse points to liberalism; the further requirement that the constituent cultures themselves be internally diverse points to Enlightenment liberalism. A culture is internally diverse when its members are genuinely able to pursue a multiplicity of goods and paths of life, either interpreting the culture in new or different ways or transforming it or abandoning it altogether in favour of new affiliations. This suggests that some notion of individual liberty must have a prominent place in a diverse culture. But individual liberty in what sense? Here I distinguish between three senses of individual liberty: 'negative', 'effective', and autonomy.

First, negative non-interference or toleration will promote value diversity to a degree, but only a limited degree. As Berlin and many other writers have allowed, non-interference alone is consistent with the absence of any genuine capacity to act because, for example, one lacks the material resources to do so. In this connection Berlin distinguishes between negative liberty and its 'conditions', 'without which it is of little or no value to those who may theoretically possess it' (Berlin 2002: 38). Mere non-interference or toleration alone is not sufficient for value diversity, since it will leave some paths of life effectively closed.

It follows that the prospects for intra-cultural diversity are improved when people possess not merely negative liberty but also the conditions for its exercise – the combination of non-interference and access to resources often called ‘effective’ liberty (Swift 2001: 55). However, although this would be an improvement, it would again take us only so far in the direction of diversity. Even if people are well resourced and therefore in a strong position to translate their wishes into action, this will generate little diversity if their wishes conform to conventional patterns. One can could possess material resources but still be ill-equipped to follow any path other than that frequented by the majority.

What is missing even from effective freedom is the capacity to form one's own wishes in a stronger sense, if necessary in opposition to existing social conventions. The key requirement in this connection is a capacity for critical reflection on those conventions: the ability to stand back from one's own society and its settled practices, question them, and be prepared to depart from them where that is indicated by one's own judgement. That is, the key requirement is personal autonomy (Taylor 1985; Benn 1988). Only the autonomous person is able to pursue divergent goals rather than familiar ones, and only the society that encourages or at least accommodates personal autonomy is likely to maximise its potential for realising a diversity of goods. Again, this is to say that Galston's own logic points, in spite of his Reformation preference, to an Enlightenment conclusion. If pluralism implies the valuing of a diversity of goods, then that suggests a liberalism not merely of negative non-interference but of positive autonomy.

## Objections and replies

Galston might object to my pro-Enlightenment conclusion along two principal lines: liberal and value-pluralist. First, he might remain concerned that a commitment to individual autonomy as a public policy ideal will undermine fundamental liberal principles of non-interference by the state in the lives of individuals and groups.

Will an Enlightenment approach not be too intrusive?

My answer is no, for two reasons. First, even if the liberal state is entitled, in principle, to intervene in its citizens' lives in order to liberalise them, it is another matter how the state should use that entitlement in practice (Kymlicka 1995: 170-2). Heavy-handed prohibitions are unlikely to be the most prudent means of promoting personal autonomy, and indeed will often be counter-productive. More positive and subtle alternatives, such as incentives in various forms, are more in keeping with the spirit of liberalism, and may well be more effective in any case.

Second, the goal of Enlightenment policy need not be conceived as an insistence on individual autonomy as the central feature of a substantial way of life. In this connection Harry Brighouse draws a useful distinction between two kinds of education: '*autonomy-promoting*' and '*autonomy-facilitating*' (Brighouse 1998: 733-4). Unlike autonomy-promoting education, autonomy-facilitating education '*does not try to ensure that students employ autonomy in their lives, any more than Latin classes are aimed at ensuring that students employ Latin in their lives. Rather it aims to enable them to live autonomously should they wish to*' (Brighouse 1998: 734). The

Enlightenment-liberal state need not promote autonomy, but only facilitate it. Such a state need only ensure, principally through the education system, that its citizens have the capacity to live autonomously; it need not demand that its citizens' lives be comprehensively autonomous in content, like the energetically innovative lives celebrated by J. S. Mill (1974: ch. 3). People may legitimately use their capacity for autonomy to opt for ways of life in which individual self-direction is not highly valued, as in many traditional or religious ways of life.

This distinction between the facilitation and promotion of autonomy might seem unsatisfactory to some liberal pluralists, since it is also true that substantially non-autonomous ways of life are not ideal from either a liberal or a pluralist point of view. Some liberals will see as regrettable lives that fall short of the model articulated by Mill. Pluralists may reasonably object that heteronomous ways of life tend to employ rigid, monist rules to navigate among pluralist choices, when such choices call for a more flexible approach if they are to be made for good reason. This point suggests another argument from pluralism to individual autonomy that I have developed elsewhere (Crowder 2002: ch. 8; 2004: 164-9). Briefly, the argument is that to cope well with the hard choices imposed on us by pluralism, we need to develop certain dispositions of character, or virtues, prominent among which is the capacity for personal autonomy. If we cannot rely on monist rules like utilitarianism, or on those values that happen to be privileged by local tradition, then we are necessarily forced to think critically for ourselves. Consequently, it is liberalism in its Enlightenment form, in which the facilitation of personal autonomy is central, that answers best to the demands of pluralism.

It does not follow, however, that the substantially autonomous life should be enforced by the state. For one thing, such enforcement is impracticable, since it would involve investigating many different groups. Nor would it be desirable on liberal grounds. As Galston rightly insists, liberals will want to keep state enforcement of morality to a minimum. That minimum will include a genuine right on the part of individuals to exit from their groups, and I have argued that this will require more than the negative liberty allowed by Galston. It will require the capacity to think independently. But that is not to say that independent thought must then become the central theme of every life. That people be genuinely able to rethink their group affiliations when the occasion arises – that is as much as can reasonably be demanded in relation to individual autonomy, as a matter of public policy, from a liberal point of view.

The second main line of objection that Galston might raise is that my conclusion in favour of Enlightenment liberalism is out of keeping with value pluralism. The basic claim of pluralism is that within the human repertoire there are many distinctly legitimate goods and that none of these is always overriding. Doesn't Enlightenment liberalism collide with pluralism by according a universal privilege to a single good, namely personal autonomy?

It might be tempting to reply that Enlightenment liberals privilege individual autonomy only as a political ideal, and not as a private goal or substantial feature of the good life. In the familiar terminology of Rawls (1971), might Enlightenment

liberal pluralists argue that they advance autonomy only as an element of 'the right', not of 'the good'? There is some truth to this, since I have just argued that personal autonomy is a legitimate goal of enforceable public policy only so far as it is conceived as an entry-point into particular conceptions of the good, rather than as itself a central goal of such a conception. It is the individual's capacity for autonomy rather than her consistent exercise of it that is a legitimate public policy goal for the liberal-pluralist state. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to rely too much on a public-private distinction here, since I have suggested that the capacity for autonomy is an ideal not just for the best forms of pluralist politics but for the best lives under pluralism. In any case, state-sponsored facilitation of individual autonomy will obviously influence the lives of individual citizens, and will therefore have to be justified in terms of their well-being at some point.

So, Enlightenment liberals commend the capacity for individual autonomy as a necessary component of both the right and the good. But to commend autonomy in these general terms is not necessarily to insist that it is always overriding.

Enlightenment liberals need not violate the pluralist injunction against monism, because they need not demand that individual autonomy be accepted as a trump in every case. The Enlightenment liberal-pluralist view does place a general emphasis on the importance of individual autonomy, but it does not deny the possibility of cases, in both private and public life, where autonomy appropriately yields to rival considerations, such as urgency or security or the demands of personal relationships. On the pluralist view, there can be no moral absolutes – these are precisely what pluralism rejects. On the other hand, that does not prevent pluralists from

recognising rules or principles that apply not absolutely but generally. The right note here is struck by Galston, who argues that pluralism is compatible with 'powerful but rebuttable presumptions' – rules that apply across a wide range of cases, but which can be overridden in particular circumstances. 'Rights', for example, 'have great moral weight, but they do not function as trumps in every shuffle of the deck. Rights have enormous value, but they are not the only things of value in our moral universe' (*LP* 77). A similar claim can be made for the individual autonomy upheld by Enlightenment liberals.

In general, value pluralists must accept that all moral decisions are unavoidably made within a political framework informed by *some* general ranking of values. Some such ranking is inescapable; the only question is how far it answers to fundamental pluralist concerns. Among these are concerns for value diversity, which argues for a politics capable of accommodating many goods and (secondarily) ways of life. Galston sees this as suggesting a liberalism of group toleration. But I have argued that this same principle of diversity requires that the ways of life in question be themselves internally diverse. Ways of life are internally diverse when they allow their members to follow different paths of their own choosing, including exit from the group. That, in turn, involves acknowledging the capacity for personal autonomy as a significant value. This line is reinforced by the further pluralist insight, not developed here, that personal autonomy is required for coping with the exigency of choices among incommensurables. In the end, pluralism points beyond toleration to the stronger, Enlightenment form of liberalism. Within such a framework there will be a great diversity of goods, among which personal autonomy

will be prominent but not always overriding. There will also be a great diversity of ways of life, but these will have in common a commitment to ensuring that individuals are capable of autonomous judgement.

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