IS A NON-LIBERAL VALUE PLURALISM POSSIBLE?
BEYOND ISAIAH BERLIN

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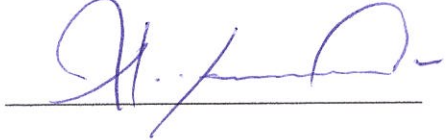OF
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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science and International Relations.

Examining Committee Members:

	DECISION	SIGNATURE
Assist.Prof. Ahmet Okumuş (Thesis Advisor)	Accepted	
Assist.Prof. Kadir Temiz	Accepted	
Assist.Prof. Muhammed Ali Ağcan	Accepted	

This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences of İstanbul Şehir University.

Date
27.11.2019

Seal/Signature

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and standards of ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and standards, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

First Name, Last Name: Esma Nur Şamiloğlu Sezgin

Signature

ABSTRACT

IS A NON-LIBERAL VALUE PLURALISM POSSIBLE?
BEYOND ISAIAH BERLIN

Şamiloğlu Sezgin, Esma Nur.

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This thesis explores the compatibility between the conception of value pluralism and liberalism. Isaiah Berlin is one of the chief political theorists who developed a particular notion of value pluralism, which has been widely discussed for decades. After stating the meaning and the roots of Berlinian value pluralism, the thesis focuses on how Berlin's conception of value pluralism has been interpreted and appropriated by other prominent political theorists. The thesis locates two main positions in the literature concerning the relationship between value pluralism and liberalism. The first is the liberal pluralist one. William Galston and George Crowder are the two prominent theorists developing liberal accounts of value pluralism. The second position is the agonistic pluralist one. John Gray and Chantal Mouffe are leading representatives of agonistic notions of (value) pluralism. This thesis aims, first of all, to point out how the liberal pluralist camp of Galston and Crowder relies on the Berlinian conception of value pluralism to build and justify their liberal political projects, sometimes to the detriment of value pluralism itself. Second, the thesis aims to explore agonistic pluralist theories developed by Gray and Mouffe in response to the liberal pluralist theories in order to see at which points these two positions converge and diverge. The final, and the primary, aim of the thesis is to discuss the possibility of non-liberal value pluralism and to reveal liberal limits of the agonistic pluralist theories. It is mainly argued that although Gray and Mouffe rightly criticize the promotion of liberalism as the universal and ultimate political ideal and accuse the liberal pluralists of championing certain values such as autonomy and toleration

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over others, their agonistic theories fail to go beyond those liberal limits, particularly in their pursuit of a minimum common ground.

ÖZ

LİBERAL OLMAYAN BİR DEĞER ÇOĞULCULUĞU MÜMKÜN MÜDÜR?
ISAIAH BERLİN'İN ÖTESİNDE

Şamiloğlu Sezgin, Esma Nur.
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Bu tez, değer çoğulculuğu fikri ile liberalizmin bağdaşabilirliğini incelemektedir. Isaiah Berlin, kendine has bir değer çoğulculuğu fikri geliştiren önde gelen siyaset düşünürlerinden birisidir ve onun bu fikri on yıllardır çok geniş bir şekilde tartışılmaktadır. Bu tezde, Berlin'in değer çoğulculuğu fikrinin anlamı ve kökeni aktarıldıktan sonra, bu fikri yorumlayan ve kullanan siyaset teorisyenlerine odaklanılacaktır. Bu tez, literatür içerisinde değer çoğulculuğu ve liberalizm ilişkisine dair öne çıkan iki temel yaklaşımı konu edinmektedir. Bunlardan ilki liberal çoğulcu yaklaşımdır. William Galston ve George Crowder değer çoğulculuğunu liberal perspektiften ele alan siyaset teorisyenleri olarak öne çıkmaktadır. İkincisi ise agonist (değer) çoğulcu yaklaşımdır. John Gray ve Chantal Mouffe, çoğulculuk fikrini agonist bakışla yorumlayan en önde gelen isimlerdir. Tez, ilk olarak, Galston ve Crowder tarafından temsil edilen liberal çoğulcu kampın kendi siyasi projelerini Berlin'in değer çoğulculuğu fikrine ne şekilde dayandırdıklarını açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır; ki bu bazen değer çoğulculuğunun aşınmasını beraberinde getirmiştir. İkinci olarak, tez, Gray ve Mouffe'un bahsi geçen liberal çoğulcu teorilere cevaben geliştirdikleri agonist çoğulcu teorileri incelemeyi ve bu iki farklı teorik tutumun birbirleriyle yakınlaştığı ve ayrıştığı noktaları tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tezin son ve en önemli amacı ise liberal olmayan bir değer çoğulculuğu fikrinin imkanlarını tartışmak ve agonist çoğulcu teorilerin liberalizme ilişkin sınırlarını görünür kılmaktır. Tez temel olarak, Gray ve Mouffe'un liberalizmi evrensel ve nihai bir siyasi ideal olarak ortaya koyanlara yönelik geliştirdikleri eleştirileri ve otonomi ve tolerans gibi değerleri diğer

değerlerden önde tutanlara yönelik suçlamaları isabetli bulmaktadır. Fakat Gray ve Mouffe'un geliştirmiş oldukları agonist çoğulcu teorilerinin, özellikle minimum ortak zemin arayışları bağlamında, işaret edilen liberal sınırların ötesine geçmek konusunda eksik kaldığı öne sürülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: değer çoğulculuğu, liberalizm, agonizm, Isaiah Berlin

To my family—for their support and unwavering humor

Special thanks to my advisor, Dr. Ahmet Okumuş for his help and guidance.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1994, at the close of the eventful twentieth century, Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997) sent a message to the pristine—yet to be corrupted—twenty first century.[1] Berlin concluded this message with a hopeful note and stated his belief that the upcoming century would be "a better time for mankind" than that of his. For a reader who is familiar with the anti-idealist and pessimist tone inscribed into his body of work, Berlin's emerging optimism may come as a surprise. After all, Berlin was the odd man out and nothing sums his stance and style better than the title given to one of his collections of essays: *Against the Current*.[2] Throughout his speeches and writings he warned against the ideologies and belief systems that promised golden days ahead.

On the other hand, his contentment is understandable. As a historian of ideas who found the extent of destruction brought about by the Soviets unprecedented in human history, Berlin did not hide his joy when the Soviet Union collapsed.[3] He considered it the harbinger of what he hoped to see in the decades to come: the belated realization that human values are plural, incommensurable and usually found to be in conflict with one another. These features of values form the backbone of the idea of value pluralism for Berlin. He welcomed the tolerance that would follow the realization that there are multiple ways of life that cannot be measured and compared in worth.

From the same source idea, namely value pluralism, political theorists have drawn contrasting conclusions. This variance is generally traced to Berlin's peculiar way of communicating his thoughts. He did not deal with the philosophical questions

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[1] Isaiah Berlin, "A Message to the 21st Century," *The New York Review of Books*, October 23, 2014, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/10/23/message-21st-century/ (accessed June 10, 2019).
[2] Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, edited by Henry Hardy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).
[3] Berlin, *Against the Current*.

in the way a political philosopher is expected to do back at his time. In fact, he rather preferred to be called a historian of ideas than a philosopher.[4] Accordingly, there is no comprehensive treatise on value pluralism to be found in his writings. Even the term value pluralism as such is not to be found in Berlin but later attributed to him by thinkers who advanced his thought. Toward the end of his influential essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" there is a section titled "The One and The Many" and it is in that short piece one finds his most extensive discussion on the subject. Even so, his pluralist perspective could be observed across his work ranging from his reading of Machiavelli to that of Marx.[5]

The theoretical and practical implications of Berlin's conception of value pluralism have been thoroughly explored in a wide range of literature. The subjects discussed in relation to value pluralism include, but are not limited to, topics of moral philosophy, political philosophy, philosophy of religion, philosophy of law, sociology, and theology. For decades, Berlin's conception of value pluralism, with its sharp critique of monism, universalism, and rationalism as well as its cautious distance from relativism, has led to various interpretations in the relevant disciplines. Some of those interpretations are fundamentally conflicting whereas some others are considerably complementary, and there are still many ongoing debates as to how Berlin's ideas on value pluralism could and should be understood and adapted. It is not wrong to argue, however, that value pluralism has been mostly considered as a positive theoretical contribution within those debates.

For example, there are notable works that discuss value pluralism with regard to both philosophy of law and practical legal issues such as the possibility of

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[4] Mark Lilla, Foreword to *Against the Current*.
[5] Joshua Cherniss, a Berlin scholar, elucidates why there is no master idea in Berlin's corpus and what to make from it: "Yet while Berlin's thought did not constitute a centripetal system or converge on a single solution, it did form a cohesive whole, consisting of a set of recurring, overlapping, interrelated concerns and convictions. The themes that he pursued across many years and pages ultimately fit into a pattern; but they are held together by his intellectual personality, rather than by a single master idea, or guiding principle, or preordained plan." In "Isaiah Berlin's Political Ideas: From the Twentieth Century to the Romantic Age" in *Political Ideas in The Romantic Age*, 2014, p. xliv.

cosmopolitan law, [6] moral and legal conceptions of rights, [7] and legal indeterminacy and the possibility of "multiple and contradictory resolutions to particular legal disputes."[8] Interreligious dialogue as well as religious violence and extremism, [9] theological pluralism, [10] and multiculturalism [11] are other topics widely covered with reference to value pluralism, particularly on the basis of its criticism against monistic worldviews. Here value pluralism is regarded primarily as a concept, which helps denounce exclusionary and dogmatic theological notions, and religious and social practices. It is also asserted that value pluralism promotes dialogue, cooperation, tolerance and even "radical acceptance of others" in religious as well as social terms.[12]

However, Berlinian value pluralism has been discussed mainly within the fields of moral and political philosophy. The studies vary greatly from the ones that examine Ronald Dworkin's monist critique of value pluralism[13] to the ones that compare Berlin's conception of value pluralism and relevant others with those of Hannah Arendt,[14] Joseph Raz,[15] Reinhold Niebuhr,[16] and American pragmatists[17] among many others.

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[6] William F. Helmken, "Legal Duty Beyond Borders: Value Pluralism and the Possibility of Cosmopolitan Law," *Washington University Jurisprudence Review* 4, no. 1 (2011): pp. 151-181.

[7] Horacio Spector, "Value Pluralism and the Two Concepts of Rights," *San Diego Law Journal*, no. 25.

[8] David Wolitz, "Indeterminacy, Value Pluralism, and Tragic Cases," *Buffalo Law Review* 62, no. 3 (2014): p. 529.

[9] Wiel Eggen, "Isaiah Berlin. A Value Pluralist and Humanist View of Human Nature and the Meaning of Life," *Exchange* 36, no. 3 (2007): pp. 326-327.

[10] Michael Jinkins, *Christianity, Tolerance and Pluralism: A Theological Engagement with Isaiah Berlins Social Theory* (London: Routledge, 2012).

[11] Darwin Joseph George, "An Application of Berlin's Concept of Value Pluralism to the Indian Tradition," *ABAC Journal* 38, no. 1 (2018): pp. 144-151.

[12] Jinkins, *Christianity, Tolerance and Pluralism*.

[13] Avery Plaw, "Why Monist Critiques Feed Value Pluralism," *Social Theory and Practice* 30, no. 1 (2004): pp. 105-126; Aiste Noreikaite and Alvydas Jokubaitis, "Dworkin's Alternative to Berlin's Value Pluralism," *Problemos* 88 (2015): pp. 153-165.

[14] Kei Hiruta, "The Meaning and Value of Freedom: Berlin Contra Arendt," *The European Legacy* 19, no. 7 (2014): pp. 854-868.

[15] Shinichiro Hama, "Two Views of Interpretation: Value-Pluralism and Monism," n.d., pp. 103-111.

[16] Müller Jan-Werner, *Isaiah Berlin's Cold War Liberalism* (Puchong, Selangor D.E.: Springer Singapore, 2019); Joshua L. Cherniss, "Isaiah Berlin and Reinhold Niebuhr: Cold War Liberalism as an Intellectual Ethos," *Isaiah Berlin's Cold War Liberalism*, 2019, pp. 11-36.

[17] Hans Joas, "Combining Value Pluralism and Moral Universalism: Isaiah Berlin and Beyond," *Responsive Community* 9, no. 4 (1999): pp. 17-29.

Most argue that Berlinian value pluralism is inherently against monism and undoubtedly for moral complexity and pluralism while a few contend that Berlinian thought is consistent "with ethical objectivism and even ethical realism." [18] Some trace the roots of his ideas in his general philosophical principles [19] or in his explicit anti-Enlightenment views [20] whereas others particularly focus on the personal and historical contexts in which his ideas took shape.[21] Especially his Jewish identity, Russian background, British citizenship, diplomatic career and deep experience of exile and immigration are largely stressed when it comes to his critique of monist and universal perspectives and his promotion of negative liberty, pluralism and toleration. Being a close witness of Zionism, Soviet socialism, German Nazism, Cold War nuclearism and post-Cold War heroism, Berlin's ideas bear the traces of some of the most important historical developments in the 20th century. It is therefore necessary to think of his political philosophy also in relation to the failure of Enlightenment ideals, the rise and fall of destructive and totalitarian Western ideologies and the emergence of world wars and industrial mass violence.

One of the most prominent debates on Berlinian value pluralism is its linkage, or the lack thereof, to liberalism. Political theorists differ in what political conclusions one can draw from the fact that human values are plural. While it is argued by the most that value pluralism and liberalism entail one another; claims also made concerning the stark incompatibility of the two. In this thesis, deriving from this debate, I explore how the concept of value pluralism is articulated in the political theory in line or in conflict with liberalism. I call them liberal pluralists and agonist

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[19] Jan-Werner Müller, "The Contours of Cold War Liberalism (Berlin's in Particular)," *Isaiah Berlin's Cold War Liberalism*, 2019, pp. 37-56.

[20] Avi Lifschitz, "Between Friedrich Meinecke and Ernst Cassirer: Isaiah Berlin's Bifurcated Enlightenment," in *Isaiah Berlin and the Enlightenment*, ed. Robertson Ritchie and Laurence Brockliss (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[21] Jessica Dubow, "A Therapeutics of Exile: Isaiah Berlin, Liberal Pluralism and the Psyche of Assimilation," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 44, no. 10 (2012): pp. 2463-2476; Joshua L. Cherniss, *A Mind and Its Time: The Development of Isaiah's Berlin Political Thought* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2013); Michael Ignatieff, *Isaiah Berlin: a Life* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2006); A. Dubnov, *Isaiah Berlin: the Journey of a Jewish Liberal* (Place of publication not identified: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

pluralists, respectively. I argue that the arguments put forward by agonist pluralists successfully reveal the weaknesses of the liberal pluralist position. However, I go on and leave the question open as to what degree agonist pluralists themselves are immune to the critique they directed against liberal pluralists.

There are different angles one can approach to this debate. Both sides agree that pluralism explains the moral and political realities we experience in this world way better than monist accounts. However, they disagree on the features of the political regime suited best to the value pluralist world. In the liberal pluralist side of this debate, I discuss George Crowder and William Galston. George Crowder writes extensively on Isaiah Berlin and the theory of value pluralism. Though he challenged the liberal-plural combination in his earlier writings, he concluded later that liberalism provides the best possible framework for the fulfillment of value pluralism in social and political life. I think the transformation of his thought contributes greatly to the discussion. William Galston, on the other hand, is known for bringing contemporary examples from the U.S. domestic politics to the discussion of pluralism and liberalism. Having served as an advisor to President Bill Clinton, he approaches the plurality debate from an administrator's perspective.

As opponents of liberal pluralism, I bring into the debate John Gray and Chantal Mouffe. John Gray is an obvious choice considering he is the fiercest critic of liberal pluralists. He unveils "the two faces of liberalism," as one of his book titles suggests, by pointing to the monist dispositions of liberalism. For him, plurality of values translates into plurality of ways of lives; and liberal way of life could only be just one of them. He argues, claiming that liberal values of freedom and personal autonomy are universal values results in the exclusion of many legitimate—but not necessarily liberal—regimes that does not uphold these values. Chantal Mouffe is not a Berlinian scholar, but her critique of mainstream liberal ideologies overlaps in many ways with Gray. She emphasizes the exclusionary practices at work in the consensus seeking liberalisms, which in turn undermine the plurality of the ways of life. For Mouffe, the political is the arena

of contestation and difference, not of harmony. She contributes to the discussion on pluralism and liberalism from the left with a focus on hegemony.

In chapter two, I trace the theoretical underpinnings of Berlin's idea of value pluralism. Firstly, I analyze how Berlin criticizes monistic and idealistic constructions of the moral and political world. Then, I discuss his critique of rationality. These two discussions become operational in the following chapters for they reveal the basis of the accusations that agonist pluralists direct against liberal pluralists. Later, I explain why Berlin is against the conflation of values. Berlin criticizes his contemporary liberals for gathering equality, justice or other values under the umbrella of freedom. For him, such a conflation is a betrayal to the plurality of values and opens the door to the erroneous idea that different values can be combined without a sacrifice from any. In connection to this, I examine Berlin's conviction that choice is vital, and the ensuing sacrifices are inevitable. This gives value pluralism its tragic character. Finally, I discuss how Berlin defines the category of human without essentializing it. The way Berlin draws the boundaries of the human horizon reveals the unique position value pluralism tries to hold without submitting to relativism/subjectivism or objectivism.

In chapter three, I explore the liberal pluralisms of William Galston and George Crowder and how they connect pluralism to liberalism. Even though they both defend the compatibility of the two, they do so for different reasons. For Galston, creating a plural society where individuals can choose how they want to live is the ultimate aim of value pluralism. He believes individuals should be defended both from state imposition of a single way of life and also from the coercion of the community they are a part of. Accordingly, he focuses on diversity and the rights of exit and believes the liberal framework is the best framework for pluralism. Crowder, on the other hand, connects value pluralism to liberalism via personal autonomy. He argues, if there is no autonomy to begin with, there can be no choice and, thus, no plurality. And being a liberal value, personal autonomy connects value pluralism to liberalism. At the end of the chapter, I compare the

arguments of Galston and Crowder and assert that examining the family dispute of liberal pluralism is helpful for it exposes the weaknesses of the liberal pluralist thesis as a whole.

In chapter four, I move to the incompatibility of pluralism and liberalism. Accepting the first but rejecting the latter, John Gray develops the political model of modus vivendi. He argues that liberalism is just one out of many worldviews and rejects that liberal values are universal values. Chantal Mouffe, on the other hand, focuses on the consensus-driven logic of liberalism and claims that no consensus is without exclusions. I argue that her theory of agonistic democracy, with its emphasis on pluralism rather than monism, on exclusion rather than harmony, and on passions rather than reason, provides a strong critique against liberal pluralist theories. Then I bring the liberal pluralists back into the discussion and give place to their criticisms against agonists.

CHAPTER 2

VALUE PLURALISM OF ISAIAH BERLIN

"But you must believe me, one cannot have everything one wants—

not only in practice, but even in theory."

Isaiah Berlin, *A Message to the 21st Century*

There are many interpretations of human life: ancient, modern, or post-modern; theistic or atheistic; individualistic or communitarian. Man tries to learn from those interpretations what life means and what is man's ultimate aim (if there is any) in this world. Isaiah Berlin, a political theorist and historian of ideas, *chooses* to give a tragic interpretation of human life. It is tragic because this interpretation does not offer humanity an ideal to follow; rather it condemns the theories offering ultimate solutions to man's troubles. The name given to Berlin's interpretation of human life is value pluralism. His interpretation is both philosophical and historical because while, for example, talking about human nature, he never seals off his ideas from the actual story of men. Berlin highlights the importance of human history at the beginning of his *Two Concepts of Liberty*: "To understand such movements or conflicts is, above all, to understand the ideas or attitudes to life involved in them, which alone make such movements a part of human history, and not mere natural events."[22] Thus, his idea of value-pluralism is, in a way, a manifestation of human history.

Though all the thinkers I included in this thesis are pluralists, and all—except Mouffe—adopts the Berlinian notion of value pluralism, they differ in their answer to the question of the political implications of value pluralism. I argue their difference mostly stems from the varying degrees of importance they attribute to the premises of the idea of value pluralism. While, for instance, in his interpretation of value pluralism Gray focuses the most on the erroneousness of

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[22] Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), 193.

the pursuit of the ideal, Galston focuses more on the ineradicability of choice and diversity.

In this chapter, I will briefly present Berlin's idea of value pluralism and then explore the roots of his idea of value pluralism in his political theory. Such an exploration is no easy task, regardless of the subject philosopher; one would always feel wary of presenting their ideas below or beyond their original intent. I believe it is particularly challenging in the case of Isaiah Berlin since as Roger Hausheer noted in the introduction of Berlin's collected works titled *The Proper Study of Mankind*, "Less, perhaps, than any other thinker does Berlin suppose himself in possession of some simple truth, and then proceed to interpret and rearrange the world in the light of it."[23] Berlin's political philosophy, thus, could be read as a continuous search and a call for a *non*possession of simple truths and a *dis*arrangement of the world we live in. He does not offer his readers an overarching truth that would help answer their ultimate questions. On the contrary, throughout his text, one would find Berlin's repeated reminder that he does not have dramatic answers to these kinds of ultimate questions—a ground he tried to keep at the expense of being found dull and gloomy by the idealistic young. Hausheer remarked, Berlin's avoidance of easy and all-encompassing answers, on the contrary, make his theory "peculiarly captivating to the moral idealism of the young."[24] I think the broad literature on value pluralism proves Hausheer right.

Value pluralism is the idea that "ultimate human values are objective but irreducibly diverse, that they are conflicting and often uncombinable, and that sometimes when they come into conflict with one another they are incommensurable; that is, they are not comparable by any rational measure."[25] As noted many times by Gray, Berlin's value pluralism is often mistaken with

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[23] Roger Hausheer, "Introduction," in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, by Isaiah Berlin, ed. Henry Hardy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), xxxii.
[24] Hausheer, "Introduction," xxxv.
[25] John Gray, *Isaiah Berlin: An Interpretation of His Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 36.

relativism, subjectivism, and skepticism. These moral perspectives have their own differences but for present purposes, it is enough to note that they assert the idea that human beings are so diverse, and we can thus have no standpoint or criteria to judge their specific perceptions of the world. Accordingly, it is wrong to establish an objective moral standard and expect individuals to act accordingly with it. However, contrary to the general inclination, Berlin's ethical theory is a species of objective realism.[26] "Berlin's objective pluralism insists," Gray argues, "that values and conflicts of value are matters of knowledge for us, with the necessity of radical choice arising only in conflicts of incommensurables."[27] Here, by the use of "matters of knowledge" we are reminded that the moral value of an act is neither random nor subjective. Berlin is against denying the obvious. For a given society, there are certain goods and vices that are known by the members of that society. Berlin recognizes this fact and for that reason, his value pluralism becomes distinct from relativism, subjectivism or skepticism.

To be able to present what Berlin meant by value pluralism in detail, I will now scrutinize the philosophical roots his idea springs from. I will start firstly with why Berlin argues against the pursuit of the ideal. Then I will continue with the problem of rationality, the confusion of values, the ineradicability of choice, and finally conclude with a discussion on what Berlin has meant by the human horizon.

2.1. The Pursuit of the Ideal

"The search for perfection does seem to me a recipe for bloodshed,

no better even if it is demanded by the sincerest of idealists, the purest of

heart."

Isaiah Berlin, *The Pursuit of the Ideal*

One of the strongest discussions one would find in Berlin's writings is on the pursuit of the ideal. It goes by many names in his writings: "the final solution," [28]

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[26] Ibid., 46.
[27] Ibid., 41.
[28] Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal," 12. Also see "Does Political Theory Still Exist?", 69, and "Two Concepts of Liberty," 237, in *The Proper Study of Mankind*.

"the perfect whole,"[29] "the notion of the perfect State,"[30] "the overriding human purpose," [31] "the great harmonious system," [32] "the Platonic ideal," [33] or "the optimistic view."[34] These, in general, denote the belief that all good things are necessarily compatible and they form a single perfect whole. The clashes of goods we encounter in human life cannot be attributed to these goods themselves, but to the irrationalities or imperfections of human beings. It is the view that even though the clashes of ends or goods cannot be avoided today in practice, they are perfectly reconcilable conceptually—since truth or good, by their nature, cannot lead to incompatibility.

In his essay titled *The Pursuit of the Ideal*, Berlin gives an autobiographical summary of how he came to realize the centrality of the pursuit of the ideal in almost all the philosophical writings, regardless of their stark differences in general. From the ancient Greek philosophy to Kant, Hegel and Marx, and to the thinkers of his own day Berlin finds similar propaganda of a right life to strive towards.[35] In Machiavelli, Giambattista Vico and Johann Gottfried Herder, on the other hand, Berlin finds road signs that carry him to the realization that the pursuit of the ideal is both an illusion and a fallacy.

In Machiavelli, he finds the incompatibility of the "ruthless pursuit of power" and Christian morality.[36] One has to choose one or the other; they cannot be pursued at the same time. Not all good things fit together. It is the realization that one has to choose between different values that made Berlin question the compatibility of all the true answers. He admits that that came him as a shock: "It undermined my earlier assumption, based on the *philosophia perennis*, that there could be no

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[29] Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal," 11.
[30] Ibid., 12.
[31] Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist?", 66.
[32] Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal," 4.
[33] Ibid., 5.
[34] Isaiah Berlin, "'From Hope and Fear Set Free'", in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, 117; "Two Concepts of Liberty," 198.
[35] Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal," 5.
[36] Ibid., 7.

collision between true ends, true answers to the central problems of life."[37] Then he came across with Giambattista Vico and found the incompatibility of the values of different cultures. Vico reminds that the Homeric Greeks were cruel, but they were the authors of the impressive works of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, presumably that could not be recreated in a more advanced day.[38] There is no tool to measure the values of different cultures that prospered in varying times and spaces since each of them is unique and possible only in that kind of world. Next, Berlin turns to the German eighteenth-century philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder and finds that societies become what they are by their different ways of thinking, feeling, worshipping, singing, clothing and so on. These, in turn, render the use of the same criteria to measure their values useless.[39]

The views of Vico and Herder, Berlin notes, are generally put under the umbrella of moral relativism. Berlin objects to that classification and he chooses to describe the ideas of Vico and Herder as pluralism.[40] What is the significance of the difference between relativism and pluralism for Berlin? He explains that relativism does not much to say when ends of life differ, aside from the fact that they differ. Pluralism, on the other hand, assumes that even though I cannot agree with a particular value of a different society and can never adopt it, I can understand that it is a value and grasp where it stands in the life of that society. The incompatibility of values, thus, cannot be reduced to relativism or subjectivity. I can understand why certain values are adopted, they are intelligible for me, but nevertheless, I may not agree with them. The discussion on the objectivity of values is an important part of Berlin's theory of value pluralism and I will return to it in detail in the last section of this chapter. For now, it is enough to note that Berlin is not a relativist and his objection against the pursuit of an ideal should be read by keeping this in mind.

The most obvious argument against the idea of an ultimate solution or a perfect whole would be its unattainability. It is impossible to reach a resolution from all

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 8.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal," 9.

the clashes of our world, it could be argued. However, for Berlin, the main problem with the idea of an ultimate solution is its incoherency: "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; I do not know what is meant by a harmony of this kind."[41] Of course, he understands what is trying to be meant by it, but he argues that a world of harmony is not consistent with his knowledge of the world around us. Unrestricted freedom would necessarily harm justice or establishing a certain degree of security would necessarily mean curbing some parts of freedom. Not only in the political life, but also on the level of individual life we encounter with the collision of ends. The spontaneity, for instance, cannot find itself a place in a fully planned life, but it does not mean that one has a higher value than the other. It simply means that they cannot be in full harmony with each other; one or the other must be curbed. He stands diametrically opposed to the a priori idea of a *summum bonum*, namely the belief in the existence of an ultimate good, which arranges the position of all the other goods in an ethical system. For Berlin, great goods are many and they cannot be organized to move in perfect harmony. As a consequence, Berlin objects conceptually and theoretically to the idea of an ultimate solution where all the inconsistencies are resolved.

In addition to his theoretical opposition to the idea of a perfect whole, Berlin draws attention to a more practical problem.[42] Since every solution comes with new needs and problems, legislating today for a perfect state or society of the future is impracticable. Berlin's opposition here is not to the particular solutions that could be used in individual or social life; he acknowledges their use. His opposition is to the insistence on an ultimate resolution and the arrangement of the social life towards it. In Berlin's words, "We cannot legislate for the unknown consequences of consequences of consequences."[43] Furthermore, he finds the claim that when perfect harmony is reached the newly emerging problems will not

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[41] Ibid., 11.
[42] Ibid., 12.
[43] Ibid.

be problems at all since they will be solved out themselves "a piece of metaphysical optimism" since the history as we know it provides no such evidence.[44]

So far, I have explored the process through which Berlin come to reject the pursuit of an ideal and what are the reasons for his rejection. He finds the notion of an ultimate solution both incoherent and impracticable. One wonders all the same, what harm could be done by believing in a final solution? Even if it is accepted that such belief is theoretically and practically ungrounded, could it not serve as an inspiration for the betterment of humankind? Berlin believes the history demonstrates the opposite: the designation of an ultimate ideal by any kind of authority necessarily leads to coercion and oppression.

"Where ends are agreed, the only questions left are those of means" says Berlin.[45] And if I were convinced that this perfect end would solve all human conflicts and problems, there would be no rules regarding the means. It would only be a technical discussion of what kind of means would be more effective for reaching the ultimate end, without giving much thought to the amount of freedom sacrificed in the process.[46] This criticism of Berlin could be directed to every single idea developed in the search for perfection, by the philosophers of the Ancient or that of the Enlightenment, but it is the force of the communism in the early twentieth century that Berlin directed his strongest criticisms against.[47] He is very much critical of communism mainly because he believes it gives the illusion that there is an ultimate solution, which makes room to the coercive practices on the way towards that solution.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 191.

[46] Ibid., 239.

[47] In "The Pursuit of the Ideal", Berlin manifests his abhorrence toward communist utopias and underscores the high costs of an ideal solution: "The possibility of a final solution—even if we forget the terrible sense that these words acquired in Hitler's day—turns out to be an illusion; and a very dangerous one. For if one really believes that such a solution is possible, then surely no cost would be too high to obtain it: to make mankind just and happy and creative and harmonious for ever—what could be too high a price to pay for that? To make such an omelette, there is surely no limit to the number of eggs that should be broken - that was the faith of Lenin, of Trotsky, of Mao, for all I know of Pol Pot." (12-13).

All in all, Berlin is against the hegemony of the notions of the perfect whole and the ultimate solution in political philosophy. Firstly, because these notions are against what we know of the world as humans—a world of collisions of ends—and thus they are conceptually incoherent. Secondly because the historical evidence shows that these notions serve as a validation of the coercion of individuals and societies. Hence it could be said that his theoretical criticism is very much embedded in his morality. After all, Berlin is a philosopher who maintains, "Political theory is a branch of moral philosophy."[48]

2.2. The Problem of Rationality

The problem of rationality has a central importance in Berlin's writings on freedom. In his *Two Concepts of Liberty* he explains in detail in what ways the imposition of rationality curbs freedom while it claims to enhance it. This criticism finds its place mainly in his illustration of the notion of positive freedom. Berlin defines positive freedom as the wish of individuals to lead their own lives as subjects: "I wish to be somebody, not nobody; a doer—deciding, not being decided for, self-directed and not acted upon by external nature or by other men as if I were a thing, or an animal, or a slave incapable of playing a human role."[49] On the face of it, being the master of one's own life does not seem to contradict with freedom. Berlin explains, however, why this notion of self-mastery is, in the end, a problematic notion to exist in the realm of liberty. The notion of self-mastery assumes the man as "divided against himself," having natural desires that have to be overcome by the use of reason.[50] Desires and passions are all impediments to your becoming a rational human being. Thus, the individual should control these desires and make herself rational and free with the aid of her "dominant," "real," "ideal," "autonomous" self.[51] According to the theories of self-mastery, reason and freedom go hand in hand. Any increase in the first leads

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[48] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 193.
[49] Ibid., 203.
[50] Ibid., 206.
[51] These adjectives are used by Berlin to summarize the characteristic of the higher self as the proponents of self-mastery conceive it. See "Two Concepts of Liberty," 204.

to a necessary increase in the latter—a confusion of values much disputed by Berlin that will be explored in the next part.

The argument of self-mastery asserts that following a desire blindly is not a free act and it simply means you are a slave to that desire; only the voice of reason could convey you to the freedom. A state, a religion or an authority of a similar kind could raise the voice of reason and it may serve as the *real self* that you shape yourself towards. What happens if I do not follow the voice of reason? Will I be directed towards it? Will I be coerced? Berlin shows how short the way from the ideal of self-mastery to the coercion of others for their own interests. The logic behind is that "they would not resist me if they were rational and wise as I am" and this assumption I have of other people gives me a kind of carte blanche to compel them to act accordingly with *the* reason.[52] For a proponent of self-mastery, this is not a discussion of *whose* particular reason people would be coerced to follow. Berlin makes a wonderfully satirical illustration of such rationalistic way of thinking:

> If I am a legislator or a ruler, I must assume that if the law I impose is rational (and I can consult only my own reason) it will automatically be approved by all the members of my society so far as they are rational beings. For if they disapprove, they must, *pro tanto*, be irrational; then they will need to be repressed by reason.[53]

All the doors closed to the individual except the door that opens to the rational action—a one single door.[54] Berlin does not try to eliminate the use of reason in human action; he rather rejects the hegemony of rationality over choice because he believes freedom to choose should not be restricted by any other criteria. And if freedom is restricted for some reason, there should at least be an acknowledgement of it. It should at least be admitted that it does not enhance but

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[52] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 204.
[53] Ibid., 224.
[54] John Gray, similarly, draws attention to the tension between choice-making and rationality: "Whereas choice presupposes genuine rivalry among conflicting goods, rational will points to one, and only one course of action, one form of life, for the individual." *Berlin* (London: Fontana Press, 1995), 21.

curbs freedom. A frankness Berlin finds in Hobbes: "Hobbes was at any rate more candid: he did not pretend that a sovereign does not enslave; he justified this slavery, but at least did not have the effrontery to call it freedom."[55] Berlin's argument against rationality is supported also by his claim that reason is helpless to many choices men makes in life. When a human is faced with two incommensurable goods, reason is irrelevant.

In sum, starting with the question of how human beings can be free, the ideal of rationality comes full circle with the necessity of authority. I want to be a free individual, but my acts are deemed free as long as they are guided by *the* reason and not by *my* irrational desires, which necessitates an authority that would establish the borders of rationality and keep me from drifting into irrationality. The value of your choice is conditioned upon the rationality of that choice. The search starts with freedom, but it ends up with authority. Berlin notes that the line of thought from liberty to authority is so pronounced that liberty and authority have become "virtually identical" with each other. [56]

2.3. The Confusion of Values

"Social and political terms are necessarily vague. The attempt to make the vocabulary of politics too precise may render it useless" admits Berlin. [57] Then he quickly adds, "But it is no service to the truth to loosen usage beyond necessity."[58] In this section, the loosening of the political term freedom and its identification with self-direction, freedom and knowledge will be explored. The great goods of human life are many and the freedom stands out amongst them. Does it mean that freedom is always compatible with them?

Berlin notes, in the beginning of his *Two Concepts of Liberty*, that how difficult it is to make a definition of a concept such as freedom, which has been championed

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[55] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 235.
[56] Ibid., 220.
[57] Ibid., 229.
[58] Ibid.

and interpreted in many different ways throughout history.[59] Berlin's aim throughout that essay is to expose the perils of using the single term freedom to denote two different things: labeled as negative and positive senses of freedom by Berlin. For him this is not a simple difference of interpretation. Rather, these two notions of freedom imply a stark difference in attitude towards life. The negative freedom tries to define the space where people are free from any interference or coercion in deciding who they are and what they do or not; whereas the positive freedom deals with the question of "What, or who, is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that?"[60] In other words, the former deals with the boundaries of authority while the latter deals with the subjects of it. From the view of it, it may be thought that Berlin values the negative notion over the positive. He makes no such value claim. On the contrary, he believes they both equally have a right to be counted among the great goods of the humankind.[61] What Berlin does is approaching positive freedom with extreme caution for he believes it has a potential to curb the range of choices available to human beings.

The main problem Berlin sees in the claims of positive freedom, and particularly in the usual manifestations of it as self-government, is the claim that there is a necessary connection between governing oneself and freedom. According to the view of self-government, I am free as much as I govern myself, or be governed by whom I choose. While I govern myself, I also have to consider my passions and desires. I need to govern them with the use of my reason in order to be fully free; otherwise I may be said to be a slave to my desires. Through this, I may start to see rationality as a precondition to freedom and create a necessary connection between them. Berlin summarizes the logic behind the identification of rationality with freedom in one sentence: "If the universe is governed by reason, then there will be no need for coercion; a correctly planned life for all will coincide with full freedom—the freedom of rational self-direction—for all."[62]

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[59] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 193.
[60] Ibid., 194.
[61] Ibid., 237.
[62] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 218.

A similar confusion presents itself in the assumption that there is a necessary relation between knowledge and freedom. Knowledge may liberate me in some respect, Berlin agrees, but does knowledge always mean an increase in all aspects of my freedom? Berlin has practical reasons to believe in the opposite, namely knowledge making me less free in certain parts of my life.[63] To demonstrate his point, Berlin gives the example of a poet whose lyrical strength finds its source in the teachings of his religion.[64] If a rationalist makes me aware that these teachings are mere myths and illusions, will it not affect my lyrical strength? As a consequence, "May it not be that my clear gain in knowledge and rationality is paid for by the diminution or destruction of my powers as a poet?"[65] Or similarly, the knowledge that I have a serious illness can provide me with the benefits of an early diagnosis; but the same knowledge may also cause me to lose some of my vivacity and productivity. In other words, this kind of knowledge may open some doors for me, but at the same time it may close others. It cannot be said that an increase in knowledge everywhere and always means an increase in freedom; the opposite scenario is quite demonstrable. Here Berlin once again draws attention to the belief in the perfect harmony of goods. Infinite knowledge and infinite freedom cannot exist in perfect harmony and a sacrifice in parts of each is inescapable.

In the previous section I explored what might be the danger of identifying freedom with rationality, namely the problem of coercion it may entail. But there is another problem caused by the belief in the perfect harmony of goods or values, which is the confusion of values in general. When looked from a harmonious perspective, freedom for instance becomes inseparable from rationality and knowledge. Berlin argues, however, when there is no freedom to begin with, having knowledge of it would not make me freer. In Berlin's words, "if liberty does not exist, the discovery that it does not exist will not create it."[66] This is not to say that knowledge would not add any value to me; on the contrary, its benefits might be more than it could

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[63] Berlin, "'From Hope and Fear Set Free'", 94.
[64] Ibid., 114.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Berlin, "'From Hope and Fear Set Free'", 103.

be counted: "Our new knowledge will increase our rationality, our grasp of truth will deepen our understanding, add to our power, inner harmony, wisdom, effectiveness" Berlin acknowledges; then he warns "but not, necessarily, to our liberty."[67]

Lastly, a similar connection is assumed between freedom and recognition. Berlin states that when a group complains from a lack of freedom they experience, what they meant generally is a lack of recognition.[68] They demand to be recognized for who they are and have their voice heard. It is one of the basic needs of us as human beings. But does recognition constitute a part of freedom? Or are they separate? To explain their difference Berlin gives example of a society ruled by an alien power. It might also be the case that the extent of freedom enjoyed by this society is quite acceptable. Nevertheless, people of this society might prioritize being ruled by one of their own over liberty they enjoy under an alien power. Even though such a preference might lead to a decrease in their overall liberty, they still might choose it. It is a choice through which some part of their freedom is sacrificed in return of their recognition and sovereignty. Berlin puts the search for recognition into words in a compelling way:

> This is the degradation that I am fighting against – I am not seeking equality of legal rights, nor liberty to do as I wish (although I may want these too), but a condition in which I can feel that I am, because I am taken to be, a responsible agent, whose will is taken into consideration because I am entitled to it, even if I am attacked and persecuted for being what I am or choosing as I do.[69]

As humans we make choices in life and we might sacrifice some of our freedom for recognition, justice, equality or for some other value. No matter how much heroic and honorable that sacrifice is, it would not increase my freedom. He wraps it up with a straightforward statement: "Everything is what it is: liberty is liberty, not equality or fairness or justice or culture, or human happiness or a quiet

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[67] Ibid.
[68] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 226.
[69] Ibid., 227.

conscience."[70] Consequently, it is true that recognition and freedom are closely related. But to claim that everywhere and always an increase in recognition of a society will lead to an increase in their freedom is false.

All of this brings us to the question of if neither self-direction nor knowledge, nor recognition can be identified with freedom, why there is a general tendency to do so? This tendency could be traced back, firstly, to the belief that all good things are necessarily compatible and secondly, to the overcharging of the value of freedom. If I believe that there is a final solution in which all goods things fit without conflict and create a harmonious whole, then it is also necessary for me to believe any pair of goods taken from this whole would also be compatible and even imply to one another.

In addition, there is a mistake on the part of assuming freedom is the highest value at all times and places. Berlin reminds in his discussion of the Millian liberty, "extreme demand for liberty" is to be found in only a small minority of humanity.[71] For the most part of humanity, liberty could at times be sacrificed to other values or goals such as justice, equality, security or status because they cannot be attained when liberty kept at a maximum level. Berlin puts a distance between himself and the liberals of his time because he believes they ignore the fact that freedom may sometimes be sacrificed to other goals:

> It is the non-recognition of this psychological and political fact (which lurks behind the apparent ambiguity of the term 'liberty') that has, perhaps, blinded some contemporary liberals to the world in which they live. Their plea is clear, their cause is just. But they do not allow for the variety of basic human needs. Nor yet for the ingenuity with which men can prove to their own satisfaction that the road to one ideal also leads to its contrary.[72]

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[70] Ibid., 197.
[71] Ibid., 232.
[72] Ibid., 233.

In sum, it is one thing to say that self-direction, knowledge and recognition are good things; it is another to claim that they are necessarily compatible with liberty. Berlin, as he himself states, do not make a value judgment regarding any of those values.[73] He merely points to the loosening of the term freedom and why it should alarm us.

2.4. The Ineradicability of Choice

The exploration of Berlin's political philosophy that supports his idea of value pluralism would be incomplete without a reference to the discussion of choice. Berlin puts down his views regarding the value of choice largely in his famous essay *Two Concepts of Liberty*, but he touches the subject also in his essays titled *The Pursuit of the Ideal, 'From Hope and Fear Set Free', Does Political Theory Still Exist?* and *The Originality of Machiavelli* because his views on the choice is inseparable from his understanding of political theory, history and freedom. The prevalence of choice in Berlin's writings gives his political theory its tragic angle. He is a thinker who avoids clear-cut solutions to the political problems. He believes the story of humanity is one of choice, conflict, loss and tragedy. Rather than seeing the inevitability of choice as an anomaly and trying to formulate a method to overcome its illnesses, he makes his peace with it.

In the beginning of his inaugural lecture delivered as the Chichele Chair of Social and Political Theory at Oxford in 1958, which later transcribed and became the famous essay *Two Concepts of Liberty*, Berlin reminds his audience that the studies of social and political philosophy would not be possible if men never disagreed on the ends of life.[74] What is it so? In *Does Political Theory Still Exist?*, Berlin tries to create a thought experiment about a society in which the ultimate human purpose is agreed by all of its members.[75] It could be a utilitarian or a communist society where an ultimate goal, it could be happiness or self-realization, is established and therefore the question "What is the overriding human purpose?" is answered for

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[73] Berlin, "'From Hope and Fear Set Free'", 117.
[74] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 191.
[75] Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist?", 66.

all. If the ultimate goal were established, the main discussion would be about the best means towards the achievement of that goal for all the parts of the society. Berlin asserts that the discussion on the means is a technical rather than a political one, which could be conducted by experts rather than philosophers. [76] The coercion of the society to move towards a single goal would mean the death of the discussion on the alternative ways of life. However, Berlin notes, even in such a society there would be open questions on what should be the secondary ends or values in their life. In other words, "No society can be so 'monolithic' that there is no gap between its culminating purpose and the means towards it." [77] Nonetheless, he finds the abstraction of a monistic society useful to show how the plurality of values provides the ground for political philosophy and for freedom.

The belief in the existence of a perfect solution inevitably finds the collisions of goods as anomalies that would eventually and ideally solve themselves out and become parts of the great harmony. In that perfect whole, no good would need to be sacrificed for another good because all goods necessarily fit together. I could enjoy liberty, equality, security, rationality and happiness all together without making a sacrifice from any. Well, Berlin thinks this is not possible even in theory. Berlin's answer to the *unworldly* beliefs of this kind is that "We are doomed to choose, and every choice may entail an irreparable loss."[78] He believes there is no going around the choice to avoid the loss. However, what distinguishes Berlin from the political philosophers of the Ancients to Enlightenment and to the contemporaries is that he sees the inevitableness of choosing a good in the expense of another neither an anomaly nor a rarity. On the contrary, he finds the ineradicability of choice an integral part of human condition and human history. Bernard Williams agrees: "It is my view, as it is Berlin's, that value-conflict is not necessarily pathological at all, but something necessarily involved in human values, and to be taken as central by any adequate understanding of them."[79]

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[76] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 191.
[77] Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist?", 66.
[78] Berlin, "Pursuit of the Ideal," 11.
[79] Bernard Williams, "Conflicts of Values," in *The Idea of Freedom: Essays in Honour of Isaiah Berlin*, ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 222.

To understand Berlin's view on the ineradicability of choice better, it would be useful to return to his reading of Machiavelli. In "The Originality of Machiavelli," Berlin keeps asking: "What was it that was so upsetting in the views of Machiavelli?" and "If it is not Machiavelli's (ruthless, but scarcely original) realism, nor his (relatively original, but by the eighteenth century pretty widespread) empiricism that proves so shocking during all these centuries, what was it?"[80] According to Berlin, who do not find persuasive any of the explanations given that far to the questions above, it was Machiavelli's uncovering of the incompatibility of the Christian values and the values needed for political potency. [81] For Machiavelli, these values cannot be pursued at the same time; one must choose. To the claims that Machiavelli rejected morality altogether in the sake of politics, Berlin replies that Machiavelli merely chose a different kind of morality, that of the pagan world.[82] He did not make a value judgment regarding the value of unworldliness, for instance, he simply believed unworldliness prove ineffective in the political life. In addition, for the thinkers who believe in the possibility of the reconciliation of values, the necessity of sacrificing one value for another is a source of agony because it is seen as a rare instance where your rationality cannot secure you from a loss. On the other hand, Berlin argues, there is no agony for Machiavelli: "One chooses as one chooses because one knows what one wants and is ready to pay the price."[83] Hence, for Berlin, the originality of Machiavelli lies in the contrast he drew between two different and incompatible moralities.

Consequently, on the contrary to many, Berlin believes the ineradicability of choice—and the agony within—is an inseparable part of the human condition. Some choices are indeed tragic, yet for Berlin abandoning this reality would mean an impoverishment of the moral world. The instance in which it would be inevitable to choose between ultimate ends is not a rarity or an anomaly, but an

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[80] Isaiah Berlin, "The Originality of Machiavelli," in *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), 280-283.
[81] Ibid., 270.
[82] Ibid., 299.
[83] Ibid., 320.

integral part of understanding what it means to be human. In the last section, Berlin's understanding of the human nature will be explored.

2.5. The Human Horizon

The exploration of Berlin's political theory reveals that he is highly critical of universalist, rationalist, monist and essentialist claims made on the nature and the history of humanity. When Berlin gathers his arguments against these positions, he is wary of creating another encompassing solution and thus he keeps his theory of value pluralism mostly in the phase of what it critiques. Still, especially in the instances where Berlin refers to the human condition, to the human horizon or to humanity, it gets challenging for the reader to decide whether Berlin postulates a particular human nature or not. Berlin's conception of the human is where his writings on freedom, choice and objectivity converge, thus it is critical to delve into Berlin's understanding of human nature.

One of the most striking passages in *The Pursuit of the Ideal* is where Berlin draws the boundaries of being human. He gives the example of a society who worships trees and who do not give any explanation on why they worship trees other than 'Because they are wood.' Berlin argues if people of that society have given him explanations like 'Because these trees represent fertility' or 'Because these trees are divine,' Berlin could make sense of why they worship those trees. But without any explanation of a similar kind, Berlin says he would not find them to be in the human horizon: "If they are human, they are not beings with whom I can communicate—there is a real barrier. They are not human for me. I cannot even call their values subjective if I cannot conceive what it would be like to pursue such a life."[84] Hence, there is a human sphere for Berlin, borders of which might change through time and space, but there is a border nonetheless.

For Berlin, nothing is essential or universal for humanity; humans are so diverse. Being diverse is the only claim Berlin makes. However, this diversity is, again, neither a priori nor a necessity. Humans lived in such a way that their choices made

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[84] Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal," 10.

them what they are now, and this will continue to be so in the future. This is why the freedom to choose is inherently human. Choice and diversity are what makes humans what they are as we understand them. As Gray states in his interpretation of Berlin's thought, "There may be a best life for any individual; but not one that is without loss."[85] This is why Berlin's value pluralism is tragic. Out of crooked timber, he does not try to carve an ideal. Rather, Berlin seems to value that crookedness because he thinks this is what makes us humans.

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[85] Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 9.

CHAPTER 3

FROM VALUE PLURALISM TO LIBERALISM

In this chapter, I will examine the ways in which William Galston and George Crowder make use of the Berlinian conception of value pluralism in constructing their liberal political theories. Galston and Crowder are the two pioneers of liberal value pluralism who consider the plurality of values in moral life as the basis of political liberalism. Both theorists also assert that only a liberal political regime guarantees that different moral and cultural values can coexist without hierarchy and suppression. As I argue, while Galston and Crowder substantially converge in their endeavor to justify liberalism with value pluralism, their paths considerably diverge when it comes to interpreting liberal thought. Crowder insistently affiliates himself with Enlightenment liberalism at the core of which is personal autonomy. Galston, on the other hand, is decidedly committed to Reformation liberalism which is based on the promotion of diversity and tolerance.

I will begin with discussing the place of Berlinian value pluralism in Galston's political theory. It constitutes, alongside expressive liberty and political pluralism, the building blocks of his notion of liberal pluralism, practical implications of which is central to Galston's theory. Then I analyze the course of Crowder's political thinking concerning the relationship between value pluralism and liberalism. Crowder, who adheres to both, has developed over time a theory that links them in a compatible way. In the last part, I will compare Galston and Crowder in order to see how their theoretical projects resemble and differ from each other. I will particularly point to the shared difficulty of not relying on an overriding value when proposing a liberal political order even though it is based on value pluralism.

3.1. The Argument from Diversity and Tolerance: William Galston

William A. Galston is a political theorist who focuses on the subjects of value pluralism, liberal pluralism, liberal democracy, and multiculturalism. A thorough discussion of these subjects is to be found in his books titled *Liberal Pluralism*

(2002) and *The Practice of Liberal Pluralism* (2004). In his latest book *Anti-Pluralism: The Populist Threat to Liberal Democracy* (2018) he concentrates on the populist moment and its relation to the liberal democracy. He is a thinker who conjoins theory and everyday practices and thus a good source on what might be the practical implications of value pluralism in domestic and international politics. To the criticisms that find his style missing on the philosophical aspect, he replies as follows: "I have the highest regard for sustained philosophical reasoning, but often it is not enough to get us where we want to go. For those seeking to craft a three-dimensional account of the basic structures of public life, a diversity of materials is essential."[86] Accordingly, his writings explore the implications of value pluralism in contemporary liberal politics, rather than providing a justification for the theory of value pluralism itself. He mostly adopts the account of value pluralism provided by Isaiah Berlin.

Galston asserts that there are two main approaches in liberal thought, one based on "the core value of individual rational autonomy," and the second based on "respect for legitimate difference."[87] He argues for the latter because he believes an approach regardful of diversity is more likely to provide a space for individuals and groups to have the liberty to live their lives as they see fit. In order to show how liberalism and diversity (and pluralism) is connected, he explores three fundamental concepts: value pluralism, expressive liberty, and political pluralism.[88] In this section, by exploring these concepts I will show how Galston links value pluralism to liberalism with a special emphasis on diversity and tolerance.

To situate himself within the constellation of political theories, Galston draws distinctions between monist and pluralist theories on the one hand, and

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[86] William A. Galston, *The Practice of Liberal Pluralism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 6.
[87] William A. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 10-11.
[88] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 28-38.

freestanding (political) and comprehensive theories on the other. [89] Monists organize their theories around what they think to be the overriding human purpose. They may not deny there are other purposes or goods in human life, but they nevertheless would argue for the existence of a primary human good through which other human goods are ranked in value. Pluralists do not ascribe themselves to a single value because they believe in the multiplicity and incommensurability of human goods. Thus, the monist-pluralist difference is about the recognition or the denial of the supreme good. On the other hand, the freestanding and comprehensive distinction is about how broad a theory claims to be applicable. Freestanding or political theories limit themselves to the political life and do not extend their claims to all the spheres of human life. In contrast, comprehensive theories do speak beyond the political arena because they believe political theory "cannot be walled off from our general understanding of what is good and valuable for human beings." [90] On the basis of these classifications, Galston considers his liberal pluralism to be a comprehensive pluralist theory.[91]

For Galston, the first source of liberal pluralism is expressive liberty. It translates as the right of individuals and groups to live their lives as they see fit. It is called expressive because it enables individuals to have a life expressive of their beliefs and their understanding of a meaningful life. In short, "Expressive liberty offers the opportunity to enjoy a fit between inner and outer, belief and practice."[92] Though it is a basic human good, it cannot be unlimited. Galston being an objective pluralist, and not a relativist, asserts that not every practice stemming from an inner belief is acceptable. The practices that would fall under the umbrella of objective evils, like human sacrifice, cannot be accepted. But apart from those, the utilization of expressive liberty yields to a vast area of diversity that is inclusive of

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[89] Ibid., 8-9.

[90] Ibid., 8.

[91] Ibid., 9. According to this classification, Galston finds John Rawls as exemplifying a freestanding (political) monist position; the theory of Ronald Dworkin as a comprehensive monist one; Michael Walzer's *Spheres of Justice* (New York: Basic Books, 1983) as a freestanding pluralist; and Joseph Raz and John Gray, like Galston himself, as offering comprehensive pluralist theories. For an alternative account of Rawls being closer to pluralism than monism sees George Crowder, "Berlin and Rawls," APSA 2009 Toronto Meeting Paper, August 13, 2009.

[92] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 28.

practices of certain individuals and groups that may be found disagreeable by others. For Galston, male circumcision and gender separation practiced by Orthodox Judaists are such examples. [93] Many may find these practices objectionable, but nevertheless, they form part of the identity of Orthodox Judaists. For him, in order to keep the range of legitimate diversity broad, public institutions should be cautious not to create laws that would violate the expressive liberty of its citizens.

The second source of Galston's liberal pluralism is provided by the concept of value pluralism. For Galston, value pluralism has five basic tenets.[94] First of all, value pluralism is not relativism. There are objective goods and objective evils that are rationally defensible. Secondly, these objective goods cannot be ranked in their value by an appeal to a common measure. Such a measure does not exist. In other words, "there is no summum bonum that is the chief good for all individuals."[95] It is not to deny the right of an individual to organize her moral life with reference to a higher good, but to assert that it cannot be the supreme good for all the individuals. Thirdly, there is a certain minimum of human goods, the violation of which would mean to coerce the individuals "to endure the great evils of existence." [96] For Berlin, slavery or ritual murders are instances where this minimum has trespassed.[97] Fourthly, beyond this inviolable basic minimum, there is an area of legitimate diversity for individuals to pursue their life as they see fit. Pluralism entails embracing this great range of human diversity where choice operates. And lastly, value pluralism is to be separated from the monistic prescriptions, from utilitarianism for instance, where the moral life is organized by a single measure of pleasure. These features of value pluralism form the backbone of Galston's pluralist orientation.

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[93] Ibid., 29.
[94] Ibid., 5-6.
[95] Ibid., 5.
[96] Ibid., 6.
[97] Berlin, "The Pursuit of Ideal," 15.

The third source of support for Galston's liberal pluralism is the idea of political pluralism. Political pluralism makes "a critique of the plenipotentiary state" and asserts that there are various sources of authority in human life and none trumps all the others.[98] Individuals, public institutions, religious associations are all but few examples of the potential sources of authority. Galston believes, for example, over the education of a child neither the state nor her parents can claim to have absolute authority.[99] How a balance would be worked out between these multiple sources of authority without giving the state a plenipotentiary position is a matter of great importance for Galston. His idea of liberal pluralism could be read mainly as an attempt to sorting out such a balance between voluntary associations and state institutions.

What kind of a relationship does Galston draw between these three sources of liberal pluralism? For him, it is evident by the definition of expressive liberty that it would not operate in a monistic moral world. The exercise of expressive liberty would have a meaning only in a world where there are multiply diverse conceptions of a valuable human life. Value pluralism makes the truth claim that the world we inhabit is such a pluralistic world of incommensurable values. Accordingly, "Moral pluralism supports importance of expressive liberty in ways that monistic theories of value or accounts of the summum bonum do not."[100]

In addition, Galston asserts that there is a mutual relation of support between value pluralism and political pluralism. Since the idea value pluralism is against a rank ordering of ultimate human goods in general, it would also be against the precedence of political goods over family or community goods. In this way, Galston brings value pluralism, expressive liberty and political pluralism under the umbrella of liberal pluralism.

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[98] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 28.
[99] Ibid., 36.
[100] Ibid., 37-38.

However, as it could be seen in the way Galston connects these three sources together, the main source of his theory of liberal pluralism is value pluralism; expressive liberty and political pluralism are derivatives of it. The connection he sees between value pluralism and liberalism is evident in his lines: "I suggest that liberalism derives much of its power from its consistency with the account of the moral world offered by Isaiah Berlin and known as value pluralism."[101] Thus, what he tries to achieve is showing there is a strong connection between liberalism and value pluralism; the latter could only be realized in a political canvas provided by the latter.

3.2. The Argument from Personal Autonomy: George Crowder

George Crowder is one of the most published scholars focusing on Isaiah Berlin's political theory and the relationship between liberalism and value pluralism. His engagement with the notion of value pluralism started as early as 1994 when he questioned the relationship between value pluralism and liberalism;[102] and ever since he has authored numerous articles [103] and books [104] discussing value pluralism vis-à-vis liberalism, multiculturalism, and communitarianism. Though his understanding of value pluralism originates mainly from Isaiah Berlin's account of it, his writings should be read keeping in mind that his interpretation is one out of many and differs not only from the anti-liberal interpretation of value pluralism carried out by John Gray, but also from the liberal interpretation provided by

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[101] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 4.

[102] George Crowder, "Pluralism and Liberalism," *Political Studies* 42, no. 2 (1994).

[103] "Communications," Political Studies 44, no. 4 (1996); "From Value Pluralism to Liberalism," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 1, no. 3 (1998); "Value Pluralism and Communitarianism," *Contemporary Political Theory* 5, no. 4 (2006); "Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism," *Political Theory* 35, no. 2 (2007); "Pluralism and Multiculturalism," *Society* 45, no. 3 (2008); "Berlin, Value Pluralism and the Common Good," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 34, no. 8 (2008); "Thunder versus Enlightenment," *Political Theory* 37, no. 1 (2009); "Berlin and Rawls" (2009); "Value Pluralism and Monotheism," *Politics and Religion* 7, no. 4 (2014); "Pluralism, Kant and Progress," *Analyse & Kritik* 40, no. 1 (2018); "Value Pluralism vs Realism in the Political Thought of Bernard Williams," *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, (2019); "Value Pluralism, Constitutionalism, and Democracy: Waldron and Berlin in Debate," *The Review of Politics* 81, no. 1 (2019).

[104] *Liberalism and Value Pluralism* (Continuum, 2002); *Isaiah Berlin: Liberty and Pluralism* (Polity, 2004); T*he One and the Many: Reading Isaiah Berlin* (co-edited with Henry Hardy, Prometheus, 2007); *Theories of Multiculturalism: An Introduction* (Polity, 2013); *The Problem of Value Pluralism: Isaiah Berlin and Beyond* (forthcoming, Routledge, 2019).

William Galston. Out of all the discussions around the notion of value pluralism, what interested Crowder the most is the compatibility of value pluralism and liberalism. Like Galston, Crowder does not delve much into the truth of value pluralism itself—he takes it for granted and engages with its implications in politics. To prove his point that liberalism is implied by value pluralism, he addresses the following issues: the contextuality of pluralism and the importance of personal autonomy. In this section, I will take up those issues and try to give an outlook for the political theory of value pluralism in Crowder and its connection to liberalism.

Crowder agrees with Berlin's account of value pluralism that is explored in the second chapter. Briefly, the notion of value pluralism purports that fundamental human values are irreducibly multiple, often conflicting and incommensurable. When faced with a decision between two ultimate goods, say liberty and security, we make a choice and incur an irreparable loss. It is not to say that liberty and security cannot be pursued in the same life, but rather they cannot be pursued in full: we lose some of our liberty to gain some security or the other way around. There is no tool to measure the respective worth of ultimate human values and thus no hierarchy between them. In opposition to the monistic ones, the pluralist theories avoid asserting an ultimate value or an ultimate political ideology. This is what brought Crowder to the question of whether value pluralism entails liberalism or not.

In his early writings, Crowder found to be arguing against the common view that there is a link between value pluralism and liberalism. He notes his intention is not to argue against pluralism or liberalism—he is sympathetic with both—but to illuminate the assumed relation between the two. In the literature, he identifies six values that are thought to be linking pluralism to liberalism: tolerance, freedom of choice, humaneness, diversity, truth and personal autonomy.[105] He argues that none of these could be used as a stepping-stone in the route from pluralism to

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[105] Crowder, "Pluralism and Liberalism," 296.

liberalism since the fact of values being plural does not necessarily provide a norm of pursuing any of these values.[106] In short, what troubled Crowder in his early works was the lack of consideration for the open-ended character of pluralism. He asks, "Why should we accept that the plurality of values available to us is, on the whole, a plurality of liberal values?"[107] It might as well be a plurality of illiberal values.

One possible answer from within contemporary liberal theory would be that what we recognize to be values are defined by a cultural or a historical context. But Crowder finds the historicist argument weak for it falls short of the universal scope of liberalism.[108] In other words, appealing to contextuality would result in a retreat from the universality of liberal values. What led Crowder to ask these troubling questions is his conviction that pluralism has been, with its "full implications," seldom discussed in depth despite its eminence within intellectual circles.[109] As Crowder himself notes, he is sympathetic with both pluralism and liberalism, but is not satisfied with the existing arguments that claim to link these two to each other.

Crowder continued his search for a serious argument that would connect pluralism to liberalism. He briefly settled down on a contextualist approach that he hinted at but also criticized in his previous essay. He argued, "Pluralism may not in itself entail a case for liberalism, but there may be a less direct route from pluralism to liberalism by way of context. He offered context as a solution to overcome the drawbacks of Berlin's attempt at connecting pluralism to liberalism by way of choice. Not satisfied with Berlin's position on the subject[110], Crowder claims the

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[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid., 304.
[108] Ibid., 305.
[109] Ibid.
[110] In "Two Concepts of Liberty," Berlin connects the value of choice to the fact that choice is inescapable for human beings: "The world that we encounter in ordinary experience is one in which we are faced with choices between ends equally ultimate, and claims equally absolute, the realisation of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of others. Indeed, it is because this is their situation that men place such immense value upon the freedom to choose; for if they had assurance that in some perfect state, realisable by men on earth, no ends pursued by them

fact that choice is inescapable for human beings would not make choice valuable for them. In fact, choice serves as a link from pluralism to liberalism only in "a contemporary social context in which choice does happen to be highly prized"[111].

One gets the impression that Crowder would stick to the contextualist argument as a way of connecting pluralism to liberalism. But he does not stop there. He states, "Many liberals . . . will remain dissatisfied with the contextual or contingent nature of the case offered" because "there is inherent in liberalism a pressure toward more universal forms of justification."[112] Crowder himself is a dissatisfied liberal who is eager to prove the compatibility of liberalism with pluralism not only with regards to context but also as a universal rule. He tried to combine universal and contextual justifications of liberalism in an ambitious manner:

> Although these two arguments generate distinct and independent cases for liberalism, they can also be thought of as respectively universal and particular aspects of a single pluralist case; namely, that pluralism implies a universal commitment to a kind and degree of diversity that is best promoted in a framework of broadly liberal principles, the detailed content of which must be decided in context.[113]

It could be put ironically that Crowder did not want to make an agonizing choice between pluralism and liberalism; or between the particular and the universal.

The change of course in Crowder's writings did not go unnoticed. The reviewers to his book *Liberalism and Value Pluralism* (2002) remarked that Crowder had "changed tack" [114] or "had a change of heart."[115] This is because in that book Crowder claims that pluralism generates liberalism, whereas in his 1994 essay mentioned above he found to be arguing pluralism and liberalism are

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would ever be in conflict, the necessity and agony of choice would disappear, and with it the central importance of the freedom to choose" (239).

[111] Crowder, "From Value Liberalism to Liberalism," 7.

[112] Ibid., 7-8.

[113] Crowder, "From Value Liberalism to Liberalism," 16.

[114] Jonathan Seglow, review of Liberalism and Value Pluralism, by George Crowder, *Contemporary Political Theory*, 2004, 122.

[115] Chad Cyrenne, review of *Liberalism and Value Pluralism*, by George Crowder, *Ethics*, 2003, 873.

incompatible. Reading Crowder's 1994 essay (and essays that followed in 1996 and in 1998) retrospectively, I do not see it as a surprising move. Unlike John Gray who argued for the incompatibility of pluralism with liberalism with an emphasis on the problems inherent to liberalism itself, Crowder admitted from the very beginning he is sympathetic with both. What troubled Crowder was the inadequacy of the claims that connects the plurality of values to a liberal ideology. Accordingly, the ultimate quest for Crowder was to find ways to justify liberal pluralism, not to seal off liberalism from the field of pluralism.

So far, I have explored how Crowder came to argue for the compatibility of pluralism and liberalism by way of contextuality. Pluralism tells us that ultimate human values are plural but does not make a restriction on what kind of values to pursue (liberal or illiberal). However, the historical and cultural circumstances equip us with a liberal context that draws the boundaries of the plural values and hence pluralism becomes compatible with liberalism. What about different contexts (that of minorities, for example) within liberal societies? Is Crowder's liberal state has a say only in a liberal context? What kind of a liberal pluralism Crowder has in mind? In order to answer these questions, I will now discuss the value Crowder attributes to personal autonomy.

Firstly, Crowder points out the difference between toleration-based and personal autonomy-based liberal pluralisms. He stands for the latter and argues that the notion of value pluralism necessitates a type of liberalism that is based on personal autonomy.[116] The line of reasoning that connects value pluralism to the ideal of personal autonomy in Crowder is as follows. The notion of value pluralism purports the idea that ultimate human goods are irreducibly multiple and there is no measuring rod to decide which one ranks higher than the other. Human beings make choices between incommensurable values; but to make a choice means each individual autonomously decides for herself. Reminiscent of the agony of choice in Berlin, Crowder speaks of the burden of autonomy. For him, the necessity of

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[116] Crowder, "Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism," 123.

autonomy is what unites pluralism with liberalism. "Pluralists should be prepared to be autonomous because there are no ready-made norms conclusive enough to relieve them of that burden. If autonomy is required for good judgement under pluralism, then pluralist judgement is best made in a political environment supportive of autonomy—that is, liberalism."[117]

3.3. The Family Dispute of Liberal Pluralism

As I have shown in the previous sections, taking value pluralism seriously translates into a special emphasis on diversity for Galston, while for Crowder the emphasis should be on individual autonomy. In this section, firstly, I will explore the points of agreement and disagreement between Galston and Crowder. It will enable me to present the strengths and weaknesses in their attempt at justifying liberalism with value pluralism.

First of all, what Galston and Crowder agree upon for sure is the explanatory power of Berlin's value pluralism. For them, value pluralism is the best accurate depiction available of our moral world. The idea of value pluralism provides us with a handful of truth claims: that basic human values are plural; that these values cannot be reduced to a single ultimate value or cannot be ranked with reference to a summum bonum; and that conflict of values at times is an inescapable fact of human life. Both Galston and Crowder take these claims of value pluralism as given while developing their political theories.

Secondly, they both hold that value pluralism is not relativism. Crowder states, "For pluralists, goods are not simply whatever individuals or groups believe to be good. There are objective goods, but these may conflict, and such conflicts cannot be resolved by simple monist formulas."[118] Galston suggests a similar line of reasoning: "Pluralism is not relativism. The distinction between good and evil is as objective as is the copresence of multiple competing goods."[119] What I have

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[117] Crowder, "Berlin, value pluralism and the common good", 936.
[118] Crowder, "Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism," 126.
[119] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 131.

noticed however is that Crowder emphasizes the notion of objectivity throughout his writings much more than Galston does. This is because Crowder concerns himself more with the perils of upholding cultural diversity at the expense of its individual members. He finds value in the diversity of cultures as long as these cultures do not run against the minimum area of universal and objective values, i.e., the area of personal autonomy. Galston, on the other hand, holding a pro-diversity ground, is careful not to call the state in as long as the members of a culture have exit rights. That being the case, it could be stated that Crowder has a thick conception of objectivity whereas Galston holds a thin one and provides more room to cultural differences.

Deriving from the second, the third point of agreement between Galston and Crowder is the commitment to the diversity of values within cultures. It is mostly a position of agreement against John Gray's interpretation of value pluralism. John Gray, whose position will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, is against drawing liberal conclusions from value pluralism. For him, societies that do not carry liberal characteristics have a right to be counted as a participant in the great diversity of humanity as much as a liberal society. Accordingly, value pluralism for Gray implies a diversity of political societies—liberal or otherwise. Crowder and Galston, each in their own work, argue against Gray for they found him to be taking political societies as homogenous units. With the conviction that political societies are not at all homogenous, Galston raises the question: "What happens when (for whatever reason) certain individuals or subcommunities within a non-choice society cease to feel this sense of identification, wish to lead their lives differently, perhaps wish to leave altogether?"[120] Galston believes the truth of value pluralism is manifested also in the internal diversity of political societies. This is why he emphasizes the rights of exit of discontented individuals and communities (ethnic, religious or otherwise) in a political society. Disregarding the plurality of cultures within political societies, for him, would result in coercion: "to the extent that the

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[120] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 54.

society enforces compliance or continued membership, it becomes, in Berlin's sense, a kind of prison."[121]

Crowder agrees with Galston but carries his argument further and argues that value pluralism principally is about the diversity of values and has implications for autonomy. The compact argumentation of him is as follows:

> If pluralism implies the valuing of diversity *among* cultures within political societies, then why should it not imply the valuing of diversity *within* cultures too? Shouldn't pluralist diversity be diversity not merely of states (Gray), nor merely of cultures within states (Galston), but of internally diverse cultures? If so, it might then be argued that internally diverse cultures will tend to be liberal cultures; furthermore, that they will tend to be liberal cultures based on personal autonomy.[122]

This passage discloses the fourth point of agreement between Galston and Crowder, namely, their conviction that value pluralism is fulfilled best in a liberal context. But it also reveals where these thinkers part ways. While Crowder and Galston agree that a value pluralist theory could be realized best in internally diverse cultures, namely in societies shaped by liberal practices, they have different views regarding the most significant good in a liberal pluralist setting. For Crowder, it is individual autonomy, which he finds to be "a human good of especial importance."[123] For Galston, it is legitimate diversity, feasible only where there is "respect for pluralism."[124]

Crowder might regard himself to be the most committed to value pluralism (ergo liberalism) for he underscores the plurality of values instead of plurality across cultures or states. That is the reason why he is not contented with the diversity-driven pluralism of Galston and insists that the argument for individual autonomy logically follows from the argument for diversity. [125] According to Crowder,

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[121] Ibid.

[122] Crowder, "Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism," 134 (original emphasis).

[123] Crowder, "Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism," 138.

[124] William A. Galston, "Jews, Muslims & the Prospects for Pluralism," Daedalus 132, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 73.

[125] Crowder, "Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism," 136.

Galston's discussion on the rights of exit is meaningful only where the individual member is able to *decide* to stay or to leave. In other words, "such a right, to be effective, presupposes a capacity for personal autonomy."[126] To prove his point, Crowder brings up the debate that took place between Will Kymlicka and Chandran Kukathas in the early 1990s on the question of whether individual autonomy or toleration should be the defining criteria of a multiculturalist politics.[127] Crowder takes Kymlicka to be a representative of a pro-autonomy position and Kukathas as championing a pro-toleration type of multiculturalism. He sees a parallel between their exchange and the exchange that took place between himself and Galston. To argue against the pro-autonomy position of Kymlicka, Kukathas brings the example below:

> Consider the case of Fatima, the wife of a Malay fisherman . . . She is a Muslim, a mother, and a wife; and her life is very much shaped by these aspects of her identity . . . She has no desire to live elsewhere or otherwise. If she did wish to live in some other way she probably would have to live elsewhere, since it is unlikely that the village would tolerate-let alone welcome-any deviation. Is Fatima free?[128]

Kukathas answers this question in the affirmative because he believes what is vital in terms of freedom is not having individual autonomy but having the liberty of conscience. It is similar to what Galston implies by expressive liberty. Galston shares Kukatkas' view that minorities should not be judged by the standards of the mainstream culture;[129] but unlike Kukathas he is in favor of a liberal pluralist state that promotes a minimum of liberal pluralist virtues among its citizens. So, his expressive liberty is a further liberated (or depending on the position, a further restricted) version of Kukathas' liberty of conscience.

Crowder, on the other hand, takes the example of Fatima to demonstrate how the rights of exit emphasized in pro-diversity theories necessitate individual autonomy. Crowder reckons, "Although Kukathas does not quite say so, it

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[126] Ibid., 123.
[127] Ibid., 122-127.
[128] Chandran Kukathas, *The Liberal Archipelago: A Theory of Diversity and Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 113.
[129] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 127.

probably does not occur to Fatima even to imagine how her life might be otherwise than it is."[130] Having the freedom to exit does not mean much when members of a community cannot even contemplate what would it be like to live differently. And to be able to reflect on the possible alternatives, individuals need autonomy. Hence Crowder's motto: "No exit without autonomy."[131] There is no question on Crowder's part when it comes to the interconnectedness of pluralism, liberalism and individual autonomy.

Yet, would it be as easy as Crowder makes it look to marry autonomy off to diversity, considering the "family dispute" between these values that runs deep and goes back?[132] As stated by Galston, "The clash between autonomy and diversity is not accidental, nor is it simply a feature of contemporary theory and practice. Rather, it is deeply rooted in the historical development of liberalism."[133] What Galston refers to are the peculiar characteristics of the Enlightenment and the Reformation periods. He associates the former with liberal autonomy, self-reflection, and the superiority of reason over tradition and faith. The post-Reformation period, he argues, on the other hand, is associated with the efforts of making do with religious diversity that eventually generated the solution of mutual toleration. Galston believes liberal pluralism today should be a successor of the post-Reformation current that generated the liberal values of diversity and toleration, or it will risk shouldering the problem of autonomy:

> Autonomy-based arguments are bound to marginalize those individuals and groups who cannot conscientiously embrace the Enlightenment impulse. To the extent that many liberals identify liberalism with the Enlightenment, they limit support for their cause and drive many citizens of goodwill—indeed, many potential allies—into opposition.[134]

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[130] Crowder, "Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism," 127. Here Crowder approvingly cites Susan Okin who argued that in traditional societies the rights of exit alone might not be enough since for the women living in such societies the possibility of exit is probably unimaginable. See Susan Okin, "'Mistresses of Their Own Destiny': Group Rights, Gender, and Realistic Rights of Exit," *Ethics* 112 (2002): 205-30.

[131] Crowder, "Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism," 126.

[132] David Thunder, "Why Value Pluralism Does Not Support the States Enforcement of Liberal Autonomy," *Political Theory* 37, no. 1 (2009): 155.

[133] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 24.

[134] Ibid., 25-26.

It is hard to miss the pragmatic reasoning Galston employs. He recommends avoiding the Enlightenment ideal of personal autonomy because he believes it damages the liberal cause. One wonders if Galston has internalized his claim, namely to "embrace diversity as an *intrinsic value*;"[135] or he merely offers diversity as a strategic alternative to personal autonomy in order to alleviate the burden on the liberals facing "individuals and groups who cannot conscientiously embrace the Enlightenment impulse."[136]

Galston is well aware of the repercussions that would follow John Gray's assertion that the agenda of value pluralism and liberalism cannot be pursued at the same time. By arguing for a diversity-based liberalism that adopts the basic values of Reformation, Galston tries to escape the agonistic critiques that are directed against liberal pluralists who champion the basic Enlightenment value of individual autonomy. So, supposedly, Galston agrees with Gray up to a point. He states, "We must grant Gray this much: Value pluralism rules out any general appeal to the classic Enlightenment value of public truth as the ground for political liberalism."[137] It should also be acknowledged that Galston is willing to provide—more than Crowder does—an intervention-free area to religious or cultural groups, where public intervention is justified only when the expressive liberty and the right of exit of group members are violated. However, it is also necessary to leave the question open: to what degree Galston is immune from the Enlightenment impulse he refers to? Evan Charney, for example, found it hard to discern Galston's diversity-based pluralism from a pro-autonomy one.[138] Thunder, on the other hand, believes that Galston's emphasis on the right of exit should not be equated with the pro-autonomy view.[139]

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[135] Ibid., 27.
[136] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 25-26.
[137] William A. Galston, "Value Pluralism and Liberal Political Theory," *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4 (1999): 774.
[138] Evan Charney, review of *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice*, by William A. Galston, *Perspective on Politics*, June 2003.
[139] Thunder, "Why Value Pluralism Does Not Support," 156.

All in all, the diversity-autonomy debate in value pluralism presents us with three standpoints. First of all, Galston represents the pro-diversity position because he argues value pluralism realized best in a pluralistic society where its members share the values of diversity, tolerance, and respect. He is not on the same page with Crowder because he finds the insistence on personal autonomy to be detrimental to the liberal pluralist cause. Secondly, there is the pro-autonomy position of Crowder, who insists that one cannot defend diversity without accepting the need for personal autonomy. The third position is the pluralist critique of liberalism that agrees neither with the liberal autonomy of Crowder nor with the liberal diversity of Galston. It will be explored in the next chapter.

In this chapter, I tried to present the political thought of William Galston and George Crowder with a focus on how they connect value pluralism to liberalism. Galston connects those via the value of diversity, while Crowder employs the value of personal autonomy. Accepting the truth of value pluralism, they are aware they cannot attribute an overriding importance to those values. Crowder admits this fact: "As a pluralist, I have to agree that individual autonomy is not the only value or always overriding. Nevertheless, it's an especially important value for both general and specifically pluralist reasons."[140] So he tones down what he takes to be the overriding values to *especially important* values to make them fit in a pluralist theory. Similarly, Galston does not claim that diversity is the ultimate good, but he is of the opinion that a liberal pluralist regime that provides a broad area for legitimate diversity "would represent a significant improvement for the vast majority of the human race."[141] In sum, Crowder and Galston tried to provide reasons for being liberals and pluralists at the same time. In the next chapter, by exploring the views of John Gray and Chantal Mouffe, I will try to see if such concomitance is viable.

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[140] George Crowder, "Thunder versus Enlightenment," *Political Theory* 37, no. 1 (2009): 162.
[141] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 132.

CHAPTER 4

TOWARDS A NON-LIBERAL VALUE PLURALISM: AGONISM

In this chapter, I will examine the alternative pluralist theories developed by John Gray and Chantal Mouffe in response to liberal accounts of pluralism. I argue that although Mouffe does not base her conception of pluralism on the idea of value pluralism, her theory should be considered as relevant to the discussion of the relationship between liberalism and value pluralism. This is reasonable particularly for the centrality of agonistic pluralism in her thought and for the ways in which Mouffe criticizes liberal political philosophies. These are also the points at which she considerably converges with Gray, perhaps the most prominent theorist of Berlinian value pluralism. Both Gray and Mouffe accuse consensus-seeking liberals of undermining the plurality of ways of live. They also agree that neither rationality can be used as a justification for the supremacy of liberal regimes nor it is possible to contend that there is only one ideal political regime, namely liberalism. Furthermore, both Gray and Mouffe underline, though from different angles, the agonistic nature of pluralism and consider it as the principal characteristic of their non-liberal pluralist political theories.

I will discuss firstly how Gray approaches and appropriates Berlin's ideas on value pluralism in a quite different way from George Crowder and William Galston. Gray expressly argues against the ones who necessarily connect value pluralism with liberalism. He actually regards the promotion of liberalism as the universal political ideal the main barrier to value pluralism. His belief in the multiplicity of human values and in the value of conflict among them led him to develop an alternative political model called *modus vivendi*. Then I will delve into Mouffe's political theory, especially her notion of agonistic democracy. Mouffe points out the suppressing and exclusionary nature of the attempts to seek a rational consensus without excluding any party. She stresses the "antagonistic nature of the political" and offers an alternative political model that is aimed at both the recognition and the organization of irreconcilable values within democracy. In the last part, firstly,

I will point to the similarities between liberal pluralists and agonistic pluralists; for example, their shared opposition to monist, relativist and utopian perspectives. Secondly, I will examine how Crowder and Galston criticize agonistic pluralists mainly for their contextualist and subjectivist positions.

4.1. Strong Value Pluralism of John Gray

"We have no reason to abandon the richness and depth of moral life, with all of its undecidable dilemmas, for the empty vistas of moral theory."

John Gray, *Isaiah Berlin*

John Gray is one of the first and also the most influential interpreters of Isaiah Berlin. In his book titled *Berlin*, Gray expresses that all of Berlin's work is animated by "a single idea of enormous subversive force" which Gray calls value pluralism. He defines value pluralism as "the idea that ultimate human values are objective but irreducibly diverse, that they are conflicting and often uncombinable, and that sometimes when they come into conflict with one another they are incommensurable; that is, they are not comparable by any rational measure."[142] So while Berlin had written on a wide array of thinkers and subjects, ranging from the thought of Machiavelli to that of Marx, from the critique of romanticism to that of nationalism, Gray finds all of Berlin's writings to be fueled by the idea of value pluralism. Gray agrees with Berlin's claim that value pluralism provides the most accurate depiction of our moral world. On the other hand, Gray denies the common assumption that there is a necessary connection between value pluralism and liberalism. For him, the truth of value pluralism itself is what stands in the way of promoting liberalism as the ideal regime. In this respect, Gray becomes a troublemaker for liberal pluralist thinkers for he destabilized the belief that value pluralism is realized best in a liberal regime.

The aim of this section is to explore why John Gray does not think that value pluralism implies liberalism. In line with this aim, I will review first how Gray interprets Berlin's value pluralism and discuss whether he finds Berlin's value

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[142] Ibid., 1.

pluralism to be particularly favorable to a liberal political morality. Following this, I will present the challenge of liberalism uncloaked by Gray's interpretation of value pluralism. Against the project of liberal toleration and consensus, Gray offers the framework of *modus vivendi* for settling the conflicts between plural and incommensurate ways of life.

Gray reads Berlin's idea of value pluralism mainly as defiance against the "foundational Western commitment" that the questions of value conflict have single true answers and when these answers taken together they create a harmonious whole.[143] In the search of these genuine answers, there emerges the appeal to rationality. To be able to make the *right* choice between goods available to me, or to rank human goods with respect to their value, I consult to my reason. Gray agrees with Berlin that there is no universal rational measure to employ when faced with a choice between conflicting values. There are cases where the full realization of all the valuable options is impossible: the maximization of the freedom of expression may result in the curtailment of the freedom of privacy.[144] So as Berlin repeatedly reminds, the loss is inevitable. Gray believes this is precisely where Berlin's understanding of freedom differs from that of his contemporary liberals. Gray calls Berlin's liberalism agonistic for it acknowledges the reality of value pluralism:

> Political life, like moral life, abounds in radical choices between rival goods and evils, where reason leaves us in the lurch and whatever is done involves loss and sometimes tragedy. I call the political outlook which this idea inspires in Berlin's work *agonistic liberalism*, taking the expression from the Greek word *agon*, whose meaning covers both competition or rivalry and the conflicts of characters in tragic drama. . .. Berlin's is a stoical and tragic liberalism of unavoidable conflict and irreparable loss among inherently rivalrous values.[145]

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[143] Gray, *Berlin*, 43.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Gray, *Berlin*, 1.

So, the reason may prove ineffective when it comes down to choose between incommensurable human goods. In this context, human choice gains a value independent of its being made rationally or not.

It is clear that in Berlin there is a recurring emphasis on choice. Does it follow that choice gains a universal currency? Gray does not think so. According to him, one cannot derive a universal normative claim in favor of choice-promoting liberal regimes from the empirical observation that human values are multiple and at times incommensurable. He criticizes liberal pluralists for postulating choice as a necessary condition for the flourishing of each and every human being. In his own words, "the truth of this conception of man would not guarantee the acceptability of a form of liberalism in which the exercise of the powers of choice is accorded a central place in the human good."[146] An illiberal conception of the life may not prioritize choice as a central human value and this does not make this particular way of life invaluable. Hence, while Gray agrees with Berlin that there is plurality and incommensurability of values at the individual level, what interested him more is the incommensurability between different conceptions of the good life. For Gray, the truth of value pluralism implies that there is a multiplicity of valuable ways of life. A way of life that promotes liberal toleration is only one among those and cannot be claimed to have universal applicability. In his book *Two Faces of Liberalism*, Gray discusses this issue.

According to Gray, the liberal thought posits two conflicting philosophies: "Viewed from one side, liberal toleration is the ideal of a rational consensus on the best way of life. From the other, it is the belief that human beings can flourish in many ways of life."[147] The rational consensus represents "the one", while peaceful coexistence harbors "the many." Gray believes the former is anachronistic in the late modern era we are living in. This is because "As a consequence of mass migration, new technologies of communication and continued cultural experimentation, nearly all societies today contain several ways of life, with many

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[146] Gray, *Berlin*, 24.
[147] John Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 1.

people belonging to more than one."[148] So Gray tasks himself of unveiling these "two faces of liberalism" and criticizing the ideal of uniformity one face of liberalism purports that became more and more problematic in today's intensively plural world. The alternative he offers is *modus vivendi,* which expresses the belief that "there are many forms of life in which humans can thrive."[149] The major difference of modus vivendi from the liberal toleration is the genuine recognition of plurality. Gray argues that from the perspective of liberal toleration, the best life is the same for all (i.e., a life cherishing liberal values) and thus its toleration towards differences bound to remain a pity (because they are not *yet* perfectly liberal individuals). On the contrary, modus vivendi provides a conception of the world in which "no kind of life can be the best for everyone."[150] Why this is so? Even though some particular differences can be accepted, is not justice or equality should be wished for all the humans? Gray answers this in the negative because he believes if we know that ways of life differ greatly in their view of the good life, they might also differ in their view of justice. Arguing for the universal applicability of a certain value is problematic since it speaks from a particular conviction of the good life.

However, this does not mean Gray's modus vivendi assumes a world in which there is no objective human goods or evils. His understanding of pluralism is objective like that of Berlin. Neither he claims that in a modus vivendi the virtues of liberal toleration or autonomy lose their worth. Gray is on the same page with Berlin on this: "Berlin does not deny that autonomy is a good, even perhaps an intrinsic good, if a far more problematical one than is dreamt of in Kantian philosophy; but he denies that the goodness of negative freedom is derivative from that of autonomy."[151] So it is important to locate exactly where Gray sees the problem of liberalism. Not in the values liberalism cherish, but in the idea that liberal way of life is the ideal.

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[148] Ibid.
[149] Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 5.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Gray, *Berlin*, 31.

The conclusion Gray draws from this is that the idea of value pluralism does not support liberalism as a political ideal. For Gray, any claim of the best life for all (be it an ideology or a universal religion), regardless of its political message, conflicts with the idea of pluralism. This is not because there are many rival claims about the ultimate meaning of life and it is impossible to decide which one is true. Rather, because they are "collisions of illusions."[152] Gray thinks, from a value pluralist perspective, most Enlightenment political philosophies, liberal or socialist, are guilty of promoting such illusions. Gray thus shares the anger of Berlin directed against monistic and melioristic accounts of moral life.[153] What I tried to explore in this section was the question of why, for Gray, the idea of value pluralism is in tension with a full-fledged liberal agenda.

4.2. Agonistic Pluralism of Chantal Mouffe

Chantal Mouffe is a political theorist whose area of interest consists mainly of the subjects of democracy, multiculturalism, pluralism and populism. Her ideas have been influencing the left populist movements of Europe for a decade. For the purposes of this thesis, I will focus especially on her critique of the consensus-seeking liberal democratic theories and the idea of agonistic democracy she formulated in response to those. Unlike the thinkers I have discussed so far, Mouffe does not build her ideas upon the Berlinian concept of value pluralism. She is a pluralist for other reasons that I will explore in the following paragraphs. I have included her position to the discussion to see in what ways the implications of pluralism would change when approached from the perspective of power and hegemony.

In order to locate Mouffe's agonism in the political theory, one should start with negations. Agonism is firstly against the idea that a holistic account of politics is possible. There is no universal solution that would make conflicting passions fit together in harmony. There is no final resolution. Mouffe's position overlaps with

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[152] Gray, *Berlin*, 21.
[153] John Gray, "Isaiah Berlin and the Meaning of Freedom" (Isaiah Berlin Memorial Lecture, Riga, 2013, October 9, 2013), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrVY4Uz16v0.

that of Berlin in that respect. The reason behind such negations is the recognition of the proposition that the identity (and thus social) is a construction. There are no abstract identities prior to society. It entails that there is no neutral ground. The identity could only be constructed in relation to the *other*, which gives the social its antagonistic character. What we call a social objectivity is in fact a construction, which carries the traces of what it excludes. Thus, any social objectivity is political. The attempts of creating a rational consensus would always fail since it ignores the ineradicability of difference that arises from diverse collective passions. For conflicting alternatives no rational solution exists. What we call as consensus is something temporary formulated by a certain hegemony that would be dissolved with the rise of a new hegemony.

However, above-mentioned characteristics are not considered in aggregate or deliberative models of democracy. Mouffe realized the need to formulate a new model that would answer to the necessities of hegemony and democracy. This is why she formulated the model of agonistic democracy that considers both the existence of irreconcilable differences and the need to organize those differences in a democratic way. Agonism is a 'tamed' version of antagonism. In antagonism, adversaries have a friend/enemy relation. With agonism, the enemy is transformed into a legitimate adversary. In both cases it is known that there is no rational solution to their differences. However, in agonism, one accepts the legitimacy of her opponent's claims. Since the antagonistic character of the political can never be eradicated, Mouffe calls her theory of agonism as "agonism with antagonism." The task of agonism is mobilizing antagonistic passions in a democratic way.

The concept of antagonism in Laclau and Mouffe derives from Derrida's concept of *différance*. Derrida argues presence (or identity) could be understood only in relation with an "other" that is different from the thing itself. Thus, what is there is not presence but an absence of presence. According to Spivak, Derrida's discussion on presence touches the metaphysics of closure. She defines it as "the metaphysical desire . . . to create an *en*-closure, make the definition coincide with

the defined . . . close the circle."[154] She adds, "Our language reflects that desire."[155] Is it enough to notice that desire in our language in order to find a way out from that closure? No, nothing would be enough. Derrida argues it is not possible to stand outside of that closure. This is why he claims he is "within yet without the closure of metaphysics."[156] Being "within yet without" means pointing out to an opening while still speaking with the words of that space. There is no other alternative. This is why Spivak remarked, "He [Derrida] does not succeed in applying his own theory perfectly, for the successful application is forever deferred."[157]

I find Spivak's elucidation of "the desire for metaphysical closure" reminiscent of Berlin's denouncement of "the desire for guarantees". Though these thinkers could never be brought on the same page on the possibility of escaping from such desire—or from such language; they seem to meet in their emphasis on openness rather than a non-viable closure. Berlin concludes his seminal essay *Two Concepts of Liberty* with a call for resistance to certainty:

> Principles are not less sacred because their duration cannot be guaranteed. Indeed, the very desire for guarantees that our values are eternal and secure in some objective heaven is perhaps only a craving for the certainties of childhood or the absolute values of our primitive past. 'To realise the relative validity of one's convictions', said an admirable writer of our time, 'and yet stand for them unflinchingly is what distinguishes a civilised man from a barbarian.'[158] To demand more than this is perhaps a deep and incurable metaphysical need; but to allow it to determine one's practice is a symptom of an equally deep, and more dangerous, moral and political immaturity.[159]

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[154] Gayatri C. Spivak, "Translator's Preface," preface to *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri C. Spivak, by Jacques Derrida (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), xx.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid., xxxviii.
[157] Ibid., xlv.
[158] Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (London: 1943), 243 in Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 242.
[159] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 242. The word choices in this quote (e.g. primitive past, civilized man, barbarian, immaturity, childhood) deserves a criticism of their own for they are indicative of a dichotomy between a self who is moved by desires and a self who has overcome the desires of its primitive past and become a mature being. Interestingly, Berlin criticizes the proponents of self-mastery for creating a similar dichotomy. See the preceding paragraphs of the same essay, 204.

Laclau and Mouffe translates "the absence of presence" into the social with the term "absent totality" and argues what we understand from the social is a construction, the character of which is defined by what is outside of it.[160] Thus, the society always exists with a reference to what it excludes. Throughout her writings, Mouffe refers to this outside as the "constitutive outside" which has the political implication that "us" is always constituted with a reference to "them."[161] This is where antagonism makes its entrance to the theory of politics. Mouffe argues only if we recognize this antagonistic dimension of social relations we are able to produce an accurate theory of democracy. This is where the mistake of other liberal-democratic theories lies for what they understood as the aim of democracy is reaching a rational consensus. In opposition to them Mouffe asserts: "Such a consensus cannot exist. We have to accept that every consensus exists as a temporary result of a provisional hegemony, as a stabilization of power, and that it always entails some form of exclusion."[162] A theory of democracy should be formulated by acknowledging the antagonistic character of social relations.

What are the implications of antagonism for politics? In order to explain this, Mouffe draws a distinction between "the political" and "politics". While "the political" refers to the antagonistic dimension inherent in all social relations, "politics" is the attempt of creating an order in a place of conflict marked by the political.[163] In other words, "the political" refers to the character of political life, whereas "politics" refers to the realm where practices of political life take place. Mouffe finds it crucial to recognize the "ineradicable" character of the political. It entails facing the reality that exclusion will always be part of politics and abandoning the illusion that a rational consensus can be reached. After all, "politics . . . is always concerned with the creation of an 'us' by the determination

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[160] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), 7.
[161] Chantal Mouffe, "What is Agonistic Politics?" in *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (London: Verso, 2013), 3.
[162] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), 104.
[163] Chantal Mouffe, "By Way of a Postscript," *Parallax* 20, no. 2 (2014): 150.

of a 'them.'"[164] It should be acknowledged, politics is about "domesticating hostility."[165]

Having recognized the antagonistic character of the political, the crucial question for Mouffe was this: "How could a democratic order acknowledge and manage the existence of conflicts that did not have a rational solution?"[166] Her solution was organizing antagonistic relations in such a way that they could manifest themselves in agonistic ways. Mouffe says this is where she departs from Schmitt's theory of the political. She asserts that for Schmitt, the only relation that is expressed by the political is a friend/enemy relation and this is why political pluralism was not possible.[167] But what if there is another way of expressing the antagonistic character of the political? Mouffe argued, agonism is the name of that alternative through which the enemy is transformed into an adversary. The main difference between an enemy and an adversary is the absence or presence of legitimacy. If opponents see each other as adversaries, then "they know that they disagree and that they will never find a rational solution to their disagreement, but they nevertheless accept the legitimacy of the claims of their opponents."[168] Then, according to Mouffe, the task of democratic politics should be finding the ways through which enemies are transformed into adversaries. "Collective passions" should be channeled in such a way that people should be able to preserve their identities without turning their opponents into enemies.[169] This leads us to the discussion of the role of passions and affects in politics.

As stated above, "the political" necessitates relations to be built upon an us/them distinction. Mouffe argues such distinction is constituted only by making a "libidinal investment" into politics.[170] Contrary to the aggregative model of

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164 Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 101.
165 Ibid.
166 Mouffe, "By Way of a Postscript," 154.
167 Allan Dreyer Hansen and André Sonnichsen, "Radical Democracy, Agonism and the Limits of Pluralism: An Interview with Chantal Mouffe," *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory* 15, no. 3 (2014): 267.
168 Ibid., 268.
169 Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 103.
170 Mouffe, "By Way of a Postscript," 155.

democracy which asserts that individuals are moved by their self-interests, and also contrary to other models of democracy which assert that individual actions are motivated by moral considerations, Mouffe's agonistic model of democracy claims that what defines political actions are passions.[171] To a within-paradigm suggestion[172] to use the term emotions instead of passions—because the latter has been used historically to imply irrationality and undesirability—Mouffe replies by stating that she is aware of the negative connotation the term "passion" has today, but she disagrees with the idea that it was as such historically. She underlines the fact that passion came to have a "negative connotation" as a result of the rise of rationality with the Enlightenment.[173] Thus, Mouffe's use of the term passion shows the insistence of her to differentiate the theory of agonism from rationalist theories of democracy. According to Jones, mobilization of passions is one of the strengths of agonism while traditional theories, on the other hand, try to eliminate passions from the political realm[174]—and fail to do so. The trouble of traditional theories turns into an opportunity with agonism.

Nevertheless, is it not dangerous to work with passions? Mouffe would reply to this question by reminding that trying to exclude passions from politics *already* creates dangers. This is how it happens:

> Too much emphasis on consensus and the refusal of confrontation lead to apathy and disaffection with political participation. Worse still, the result can be the crystallization of collective passions around issues which cannot be managed by the democratic process and an explosion of antagonisms that can tear up the very basis of civility.[175]

Hence, the task of agonism is to mobilize those passions so that they can be represented in the realm of politics. But here it seems as if she tries to propose her solution to mobilize passions as *the lesser of two evils*.

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[171] Ibid.

[172] Mihaela Mihai, "Theorizing Agonistic Emotions," *Parallax* 20, no. 2 (2014): 36.

[173] Mouffe, "By Way of a Postscript," 155.

[174] Matthew Jones, "Chantal Mouffe's Agonistic Project: Passions and Participation," *Parallax* 20, no. 2 (2014): 22.

[175] Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 104.

What about passions that cannot be mobilized and enemies that cannot be turn into adversaries? This question is related with the limits of agonism. Reading Mouffe's theory of agonism, one may get the impression that every antagonistic opposition could be transformed into an agonistic one. But this is not the case. Mouffe states that an enemy could become an adversary only if the opposed sides have "a shared adhesion to the ethico-political principles of liberal democracy: liberty and equality." [176] In other words, the opponents should value those principles, but they may have different and even conflictual interpretations regarding the meaning or practical implications of them.

I think, all in all, there are two issues that might raise the question: Is Mouffe's agonistic pluralism non-liberal at all? The first issue is related with the legitimacy of an adversary. It is stated that adversaries should share a symbolic place or a shared set of rules. This symbolic place comprises of ethico-political principles of liberty and equality. If an opponent does not have an adhesion to this symbolic place, then it cannot become a legitimate adversary. However, there is a nuanced point in adhesion to those principles. Mouffe stated that adversaries may differ in the meaning or interpretation they attributed to the principles of liberty and equality, but as long as they agree on the constitutive value of those principles they continue to be legitimate adversaries. It is easy to give an example of a perfect enemy—who outrightly rejects liberty and equality—and an example of a perfect adversary—who outrightly accepts liberty and equality—as she herself accepts. But where one should draw the line of legitimacy that would create an inside and outside? I reckon Mouffe would refrain from drawing a fixed line since there is no fixed difference. But if that is the case, why the shared symbolic space she defines *has to* involve liberty and equality?

The second issue is related with the role of passions in politics. Throughout her articles and interviews, Mouffe argued that if collective passions cannot find a place for themselves in politics, they transform into more radical and dangerous

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[176] Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 102.

passions. This is why, she argues, people should be able to find a place in politics to voice their passions. On the one hand, she criticizes traditional democracies for they try to eradicate passions from politics. On the other hand, she points to the possible dangers that will emerge (i.e., fundamental groups) if political life does not provide a space for those passions. This gives the impression that passions do not necessarily a vital part of agonistic politics. Rather, they have to be given a place in politics to avoid from fundamental dangers. In other words, passions look like virtues because of necessity.

4.3. The Liberal Pluralist Critique of Agonistic Pluralism

As established in the previous chapter, there are internal discussions between liberal pluralists as to what kind of liberalism (pro-diversity or pro-autonomy) value pluralism implies. But what they agree upon for sure is that the liberal outlook is connected with the idea of value pluralism more than any other political outlook. This is where liberal pluralists part ways with agonistic pluralists, for whom the idea of value pluralism does not in any way prioritize liberalism. In this section, I will explore on what grounds liberal pluralists argue against agonistic pluralists. This encounter will be mainly between George Crowder and William Galston on the one hand, and John Gray and Chantal Mouffe on the other. But before proceeding to the difference of opinions, I want to convey first the matters of agreement between all walks of pluralism.

Liberal and agonistic pluralists alike believe in the accuracy of pluralism in its depiction of the world of values. Pluralism asserts that there is a multiplicity of human values and we do not have a universal unit of measure to weigh and rank their worth. Together with this, pluralism recognizes the fact that in a given context one value may be chosen over another. It is not a wholly random affair. The point is that it does not give the chosen value a universal priority. A good could be sacrificed for another good in some cases; it might be the other way around in others. In this sense, it is also an anti-utopian position. It argues against the claim that all human goods can be reconciled in a perfect and ultimate solution. The loss is inevitable.

Accordingly, value pluralism by definition stands in opposition to monism, relativism and utopianism. On these points, liberal and agonistic pluralists agree. When they differ, it is because they claim another to be deviating from these truths of value pluralism. In short, the arguments of liberal and agonistic pluralists directed against each other generally take the following form: If you are a value pluralist, you cannot consistently claim the primacy of x. The substitutes for x vary: choice, personal autonomy, tolerance, diversity, liberalism, democracy, tradition, culture, power, the political and so on. Galston criticizes Crowder for giving primacy to personal autonomy. Crowder criticizes Galston for giving primacy to the tolerance of minority groups and thus possibly endangering the freedom of individual members in those groups. Nevertheless, Galston and Crowder, for instance, unite in their opposition to Gray for they find him to be giving primacy to cultures—liberal or otherwise. Now I will explore exactly how they ground their criticisms.

On Gray's account value pluralism does not necessarily coexist with liberalism. According to his interpretation, Berlin defended liberty "not because it enables the discovery of the one true way for humans to flourish, but because it allows people to flourish in different ways."[177] However, as Crowder noted in his *Isaiah Berlin: Liberty and Pluralism,* Gray's interpretation represents only one branch, namely the "non-liberal camp."[178] Crowder argues Berlin would not agree with such interpretation. According to him, Berlin regards liberalism to be the best political system available from a pluralist point of view.

William A. Galston, also, in his *Liberal Pluralism* criticizes Gray's radical pluralism that argues against the primacy of the values of choice and tolerance. Galston believes Berlin's value pluralism indeed gives special importance to negative liberty and choice, the proof of which can be found in Berlin's lines:

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[177] Gray, *Berlin*, 31.
[178] Crowder, *Isaiah Berlin: Liberty and Pluralism*, 148.

> The world that we encounter in ordinary experience is one in which we are with choices between ends equally ultimate, and claims equally absolute, the realization of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of others. *Indeed, it is because this is their situation that men place such immense value upon the freedom to choose.*[179]

Crowder argues that Gray's interpretation of value pluralism—with its understatement of liberal values—may serve as a pretext for a Nazi-like regime to claim legitimacy for itself. In fact, Gray argues regimes that use torture, genocide and the like will be considered illegitimate because they use universal evils. However, Crowder attacks Gray with his own sentences: "But he (Gray) immediately adds that these universal evils imply no 'minimal morality' for human beings, since different societies may have very different interpretations of what counts as an instance of any such evil and may rank or trade-off evils in very different ways when they conflict."[180] According to Crowder, such subjectivism is the flaw of Gray's argument. It leaves no room for reasoned choice since every action can be considered valuable in their own context.

Crowder attacks Mouffe for similar reasons. He finds the subjectivist view to be denying the existence of reasoned choice between alternatives and eventually giving way to an agonistic politics.[181] For Crowder is aware that Mouffe is very much critical of consensus-driven deliberative democracy, he couples her idea of agonistic democracy with "the inevitability, even desirability, of contests for power rather than reasoned debate and consensus."[182] I believe Mouffe would reply to Crowder that the main issue is not if the particular choice is made by reason or not—surely humans can use their reason—but rather how the promotion of rationality contributes to the hegemony of liberal institutions and "make their contestation impossible."[183] The liberal pluralist naiveté that the

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[179] Isaiah Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty* in William A. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism,* 52 (emphasis made by Galston).
[180] Ibid., 149.
[181] George Crowder, "Berlin, Value Pluralism and the Common Good," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 34, no. 8 (2008): 933.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Chantal Mouffe, "The Limits of John Rawls's Pluralism," *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 4, no. 2 (2005): 227.

reasoned choice or personal autonomy are valuable independent of context is a subject of criticism for both Gray and Mouffe.

In addition to the question of subjectivity, liberal pluralists are on a different page with agonistic pluralists on another issue: their emphasis on the plurality of the ways of life rather than the plurality of values themselves. Crowder argues, the emphasis on the plurality of associations is mistaken, because "under value pluralism it is not cultures or ethical systems that are incommensurable, but rather values or goods."[184] As discussed in the previous chapter, for Crowder the notion of value pluralism gains meaning at the level of individual and thus closely related to individual autonomy. He insists, "From a pluralist perspective, cultures are not self-contained organic unities that possess an indefeasible moral authority."[185]

Throughout the work of Crowder, there is a recurring reminder that value pluralism is about the incommensurability of values, not cultures. In one of those instances, he argues in the literature of pluralism this point is often misinterpreted, "especially in the work of writers such as Mouffe and John Gray."[186] Crowder argues in favor of the incommensurability of values rather than cultures because he believes the latter would be no different than a cultural relativist position into which, he believes, Gray drifts. Crowder argues against Gray primarily because he believes there is a difference between liberal and illiberal cultures in terms of their pertinence to the entailments of value pluralism. He argues in liberal cultures the number of doors open to individuals would be significantly higher.

So where do cultures stand in Crowder's understanding of value pluralism? In his article on the relationship between value pluralism and communitarianism, he searches for a type of communitarianism that would be compatible with the liberal

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[184] Crowder, "Pluralism and Multiculturalism," 250.
[185] Ibid.
[186] George Crowder, "Berlin, Value Pluralism and the Common Good," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 34, no. 8 (2008): 939.

pluralism he has in mind.[187] He does not wish to deny the value of different cultures, but he neither wishes to prioritize it over the value of the individual. But his scale weighs always on the side of personal autonomy and liberalism: "Liberals should promote only those kinds of community that are genuinely supportive of autonomy. Communities should, at least in principle, be liberalized where autonomy is at risk."[188] By advising the liberals that they should advocate only certain kinds of communities and intervene when certain communities fail to support personal autonomy—or when they simply fail to convince that they are "genuine" in their support—Crowder's position seems to move away from the central claim of value pluralism: that ultimate human values are irreducibly diverse and none could claim total superiority over the others. Gray argues against exactly these kinds of inferences drawn from value pluralism. Liberal regimes, with their presupposition that the values they uphold such as negative freedom and personal autonomy are universal values, deem other regimes that do not cherish aforementioned values illegitimate.[189]

In a nutshell, liberal pluralists criticize agonistic pluralists for being far too contextualist and subjectivist than a value pluralist account would allow. At its root, their difference is mainly about their difference of opinion on the connection between value pluralism and liberalism. Crowder refers to Gray and Mouffe in the same breath for he finds both to be mistaken in their claim that value pluralism does not necessitate liberalism. Intriguingly, Schmittian scholar William Rasch does the same for he finds both Gray and Mouffe to be radical liberals:

> More interesting than the debate between communitarians and liberals is *the contemporary skirmish within liberalism itself*, in which a contentious and antagonistic pluralism proposes to overcome the

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[187] George Crowder, "Value Pluralism and Communitarianism," *Contemporary Political Theory* 5, no. 4 (2006).

[188] Ibid., 420. Crowder anticipates that his "liberal communitarian" position with its emphasis on the value of personal autonomy might not be regarded as communitarian at all. To those skeptical of his communitarian attachments, he does not provide another answer; he is "happy to withdraw the term 'communitarianism' altogether and to concede that it is the liberal component of the position that is essential." (424).

[189] John Gray, "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 6, no. 1 (1998): 34.

shortcomings of classic liberal foundationalism. One can account for the increased interest in a newer, more radical liberalism in a number of ways: as a reclamation of what is salvagable in liberalism from within the tradition itself (e.g. Bobbio, 1987, Gray, 1993), as the response to impulses coming from post-structuralist-influenced feminism (e.g. Connolly, 1991), and as a renewed appreciation for liberal safeguards by post-Soviet Marxists (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).[190]

I think his analysis worth considering for it reveals that the controversy between liberal and agonists pluralists might not be as tough as the parties of that controversy believe.

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[190] William Rasch, "Locating the Political: Schmitt, Mouffe, Luhmann, and the Possibility of Pluralism," *International Review of Sociology* 7, no. 1 (1997): 103.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

"I don't know anyone who believes in value pluralism who isn't a liberal,

in sensibility as well as conviction."

Michael Walzer, *Are There Limits to Liberalism?*

The idea of value pluralism adopted by Isaiah Berlin is emblematic of the philosophical tensions of monism vs. pluralism, uniformity vs. variety, universalism vs. particularism, idealism vs. realism. Berlin's contestation against the "faith in the possibility of a golden age still to come" sets the tone in all of his works.[191] Having lived in the 20th century and thus having witnessed the practical consequences of socialist theory, socialism becomes the exemplar of his case against monism. He approvingly refers to the forewarning of the German poet Heine: "philosophical concepts nurtured in the stillness of a professor's study could destroy a civilisation."[192] Even though his distaste with utopian promises was triggered mainly by socialists of his time, he expands his criticism to include liberals who give similar promises.

Berlin is highly critical of the assurances of universal harmony because he believes the life, as we know it, never provides reasons for the viability of a perfect harmony. On the contrary, if we know one thing for sure, it is the impossibility of the perfect resolution of conflicts. It is Berlin's firm conviction that "not all ultimate human ends are necessarily compatible, there may be no escape from choices governed by no overriding principle, some among them painful, both to the agent and to others." [193] The world, as Berlin sees it, is a world of tragic choices. Disregarding this fact and promising a reconciliation of all the human goods have resulted and will continue to result not in perfect solution but in unendurable

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[191] Isaiah Berlin, "The Apotheosis of the Romantic Will," in *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), 578.
[192] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 192.
[193] Berlin, "The Apotheosis of the Romantic Will," 578.

coercion. It does not matter for Berlin whether this heaven is claimed to have brought by a creative social class, by an invisible hand or by reason. For Berlin is against the triumph of one value over all the others, he himself avoids giving ultimate priority to a single value. Even freedom could be sacrificed, he states, for another value like equality and justice. But it does not make, say equality, an overriding value in all cases and at all times.

I have explored Berlin's idea of value pluralism together with its philosophical origins in the second chapter. Partly because of his style of writing and partly because of his avoidance of creating a Hedgehogian kind of theory, the work of Berlin has ensued a wide range of questions.[194] In this thesis I have chosen to focus on a particular discussion charged by the question: Does his idea of value pluralism is compatible with the promotion of liberal values? I did not aim to make an exegetical reading and explore what Berlin really meant, but rather I aimed to explore the main branches of thought that have unfolded beyond Berlin.

Principally, there are two sides to the discussion: those who argue that value pluralism provides a special case for liberal values and those who argue that value pluralism undermines the insistence on liberal values. As the representatives of the first side, namely the side of liberal pluralism, I have focused on the works of William Galston and George Crowder in the third chapter of this thesis. Though they choose different stepping-stones on their way from value pluralism to liberalism, they meet on their conviction that value pluralism provides a special reason to favor liberalism. Galston believes that what makes liberalism strong is mainly its "consistency with" Berlin's conception of value pluralism.[195] Likewise, according to Crowder, the recognition of value pluralism requires the existence of a liberal world that is predicated on personal autonomy.[196]

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[194] Berlin quotes the Greek poet Archilochus to demonstrate two different styles of thinking about the world: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." Berlin intends to follow in the footsteps of the fox. See *The Proper Study of Mankind*, 436.

[195] Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 4.

[196] Crowder, "Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism," 123.

On the other side of the discussion stand agonistic pluralists. In the fourth chapter, I have focused how John Gray and Chantal Mouffe, despite coming from different ideologies, could be found to be joining in their defense of the plurality, and accordingly, in their critique against liberalism. They are contributors to the political philosophy of dissensus—against the theories of consensus. Though liberal pluralists are not to be equated with traditional liberals, they are nevertheless the target for agonistic pluralists, since they are found to be prioritizing a certain way of life or set of values over the others. Liberal pluralists, on the other hand, find agonistic pluralists for being far too relativist, subjectivist and contextualist than an allegiance to value pluralism would allow. I have given place to those criticisms towards the end of the fourth chapter.

Now with all the positions and discussions I have explored in mind, I will return to the question that I have asked at the beginning of this thesis: Is a non-liberal value pluralism possible? Put differently, is settling on the idea of value pluralism can be possible without also a commitment to liberal values? As I have demonstrated, liberal and agonistic pluralists differ in the political conclusions they draw from the idea of value pluralism. Nevertheless, I argue that agonistic pluralists draw near liberal pluralists in their search of a minimum common ground.

For example, with the aim of distinguishing his account of the moral world from that of universalists and relativists, John Gray states:

> Liberal universalists claim that what they take to be liberal values are authoritative for every regime. Liberal relativists deny that there are any universal values. Both are mistaken. There are *minimal standards of decency and legitimacy* that apply to all contemporary regimes, but they are not liberal values writ large.[197]

Or, similarly, when he defines his project of modus vivendi, he expresses that "[t]he terms of such *modi vivendi* will be constrained by a universal minimum morality which specifies a range of generically human goods and bads; but within the vast range of legitimate *modi vivendi* there are many that do not embody the

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[197] Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 109. Emphasis mine.

full range of liberal freedoms."[198] So, for Gray, a threshold of morality do exist that leaves out who do not adhere to the minimal standards of morality. But where exactly Gray draws the line? Who is inside and who is outside? What kind of morality this minimum assert? He does not elaborate much—on purpose, it seems. He affirms that he has "said little about this morality," and adds:

> Here I say only that it works as a constraint on the reasons that practitioners of different ways of life can invoke when they seek a *modus vivendi* between them. Its contents overlap with that of liberal morality in that both proscribe such practices as genocide and slavery; but it undermines liberal morality in that it does not dictate distinctive liberal freedoms of the press, religion or autonomous choice.[199]

I argue, thus, the political implications of value pluralism for Gray is not non-liberal, but thinly liberal.

According to Gray, the Ottoman Empire can be regarded above the threshold of decency and legitimacy even though it did not uphold liberal values since it was a "regime of toleration" with its *millet* system, which maintained a multireligious society.[200] Still, to be able to deem Ottoman political system *acceptable* he looks for certain characteristics coherent with his understanding of a decent and legitimate regime. It raises the question, is not the meaning he attributes to being decent and legitimate arise from a particular way of life that he is a member of?

Elsewhere, Gray again argues that "many of the regimes that meet the test of the universal minimum . . . will not be liberal regimes."[201] Then, he divides non-liberal regimes into two: those who passed the test of the universal minimum and those who failed it. Among others, he considers the East Asian countries such as Singapore and China as examples to the first, while for the second part he gives the countries of Algeria and Egypt which experience "a spread of Islamic

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[198] John Gray, "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company," 20.
[199] Ibid., 33.
[200] Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 109.
[201] John Gray, "Agonistic Liberalism," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 12, no. 1 (1995): 130.

fundamentalism" and post-Soviet regimes as examples. [202] Then he adds the following:

> [I]n all these cases it is arguable that the regimes which are emerging will not only confound Enlightenment expectations of a convergence on liberal values but will fail to satisfy minimal conditions of moral acceptability for their subjects. These are examples of states, regimes, and movements that plausibly violate both liberal norms and the universal minimum content of morality.[203]

What is the difference between "liberal norms" and "universal minimum content of morality"? Gray does not provide a detailed account of how they differ from each other. If liberal values cannot define the standards of legitimacy, what kind of values can? A liberal might return the criticism back to Gray and say "minimal conditions of moral acceptability" defined by Gray are not necessarily universally accepted minimums. This tension is also a part of the larger question: Is pluralism destined to fall to the side of universalism while it tries to avoid relativism?

I think the same question could also be directed to Mouffe's account of pluralism. While she is highly critical of liberal theories that seek consensus, she nevertheless argues there must be consensus on "ethico-political principles". She explains:

> My contention is that the kind of consensus needed in a pluralist democracy is a 'conflictual consensus'. What I mean is that, while there should be consensus on what I call the 'ethico-political' principles of the liberal democratic regime, that is, liberty and equality for all, there should always exist the possibility of serious dissent about their interpretation, a dissent that can never be overcome thanks to rational procedures. It is the tension between consensus on the principles and dissensus about their interpretation which constitutes the very dynamics of pluralist democracy."[204]

But, how, one may ask, Mouffe's conflictual consensus different from the liberal consensus she criticizes? It is an important question since the pluralism Mouffe refers is an internal pluralism of a shared way of life, rather than a plurality of

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[202] Ibid., 131.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Mouffe, "The Limits of John Rawls's Pluralism," 228.

different ways of life. She concludes that "some kind of common bond," without which political association seizes to exist, is necessary to differentiate between an opponent and an enemy.[205] Hence, for Mouffe, "The criteria for drawing the line will be those demands that respect the principle of liberty and equality for all, even if we disagree with the interpretation."[206]

The boundaries of Mouffe's agonistic pluralism signify a substantial discussion on the limits of pluralism. The dilemma is this: Upholding pluralism, but at the same time, leaving those out who would incapacitate pluralism. Mouffe is aware of that dilemma: "A total pluralism would indeed endanger the liberal institutions which provide the very conditions for the possibility of pluralism."[207] Here, Mouffe differs from Gray for she traces the source of pluralism to liberal institutions. However, like Gray, she is against the conclusion that truth of pluralism necessitates a liberal order because she believes "[n]o state or political order, not even a liberal one, can exist without some form of exclusion."[208] In other words, even though pluralism finds its source in liberal institutions, those institutions themselves exclude some. As a matter of fact, Mouffe's agonistic democracy is culpable of exactly such exclusion for it demands coming together around "ethico-political principles of liberty and equality." Mouffe would accept this since what she tries to show is the ineradicability of conflict from the political. However, she fails to show how different her common ground is from that of mainstream liberals. I think this is a fundamental problem in Mouffe's thought that needs further explication.

All in all, though Gray and Mouffe rightly criticize the promotion of liberal values (e.g. tolerance, personal autonomy, rationality) as universal human goods, they fail to provide reasons for their search for minimum common ground. Hence, I

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[205] Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005), 20.
[206] Allan Dreyer Hansen and André Sonnichsen, "Radical Democracy, Agonism and the Limits of Pluralism: An Interview with Chantal Mouffe," *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory* 15, no. 3 (2014): 269.
[207] Mouffe, "The Limits of John Rawls's Pluralism," 227.
[208] Ibid.

think, what Gray and Mouffe achieved is lowering the standards of the liberal common ground. Nevertheless, the standards are there, and one would not know what to call them but liberal. As Mouffe reminds, "It is always possible to distinguish between the just and the unjust, the legitimate and the illegitimate, but this can only be done from within a given tradition, with the help of standards that tradition provides; there is no point of view external to all traditions from which one can offer a universal judgement."[209] Accordingly, the viewpoints of Gray and Mouffe are limited with their tradition. Though they are highly critical of the liberal, they have their fair share of liberal and Eurocentric assumptions.

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[209] Chantal Mouffe, "Radical Democracy: Modern or Post-Modern?" *Social Text*, no. 21 (1989): 37.

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