Breaking the Ties That Bind: A Critique of Liberal Multiculturalism

by

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ABSTRACT

For political theorists Will Kymlicka, CharlesTaylor, and Brian Barry, the question of multiculturalism is posed through an appeal to liberalism as a philosophical doctrine. Although positing variations on what form liberalism should take, they all nonetheless adopt the similar assumption that the question of cultural difference is a question for the liberal democratic state. As an alternative to this rather narrow and limited perspective I argue that a governmentality approach breaks free from the grip of a state-centric ontology and moves us toward an understanding of politics that views liberalism not as a philosophical doctrine or type of society, but as an 'art of government'. Using Foucault's insights into how liberalism arose historically as a problem of government, a governmentality perspective enables us to shift the question of multiculturalism away from the relationship between the state and its citizens, and toward an appreciation of the bio-politics that forms both the limitations to, and possibilities for, thinking about multiculturalism differently. I argue that we need to re-pose the question of multiculturalism in order to deal with contemporary political realities.

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Introduction

It has become readily accepted within both academic and popular discourse that the fall of the Berlin wall brought an end to the Cold War. As a result, liberal democracies (existing and newly emerging) have been faced with many new challenges. From debates in the 1970's and 1980's over the ideological merits of liberal democracy and communism, and their economic and social programs, to a myriad of claims revolving around language, minority rights, regional identity, and ethno-cultural recognition in the 1990's, liberal democracies in places like Canada, Britain, and the United States have undergone a series of reconfigurations. The tacit acceptance of neoliberal strategies of government in all these countries seems to suggest that the pressing political questions of the day can no longer be framed in terms derived from older ideological commitments.

Consequently, the intellectual community, especially on the left, but equally those identifying themselves as liberals, find themselves questioning the ground from which they have so long found solace. Redistributions of wealth and aspirations to social justice, although still important to those identifying with a left-leaning progressive politics, seem to have made room for other loci of concern.[1] While the 'Third Way' in countries like Canada and Britain spreads itself rather magically along the entire political spectrum, balancing neo-liberal economic policies of free market competition with social democratic initiatives of wealth redistribution, and universal health care and education,

[1] See for example, Iris Marion Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference, Princeton University Press, Princeton; Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, Verso, London; Nancy Fraser, Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition, Routledge, New York; Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity, Stanford University Press, Stanford, and Modernity and self-identity : self and society in the late modern age, Polity Press, Cambridge.

the progressive politics of the left has seemingly found a new niche for itself in the world of identity politics.

As increased migrations of people occur throughout the world, coupled with increased flows of telecommunications, technology, capital, and culture, there has come a significant challenge to understanding politics at the local, national, and global level. But perhaps more significantly, this distinction between the local, national, and global has itself been put into doubt. Although still the most recognizable ontological distinction within the contemporary political imagination, the line between the inside and outside of states has increasingly been subject to significant challenges. According to some, understanding contemporary political reality can no longer be adequately explained within the sovereign territory of the state.[2] As the line demarcating domestic politics from international politics increasingly fades, so too has the certainty of traditional markers of state-centric politics: national identity, territorial integrity, and centralized authority. In advanced liberal democracies like Canada, Britain, and the United States, some progressively minded liberal theorists have attempted to address this political reality

[2] This theme has been explored in a number of ways. From a liberal theory perspective, the most notable work has been done by David Held, see his Democracy and the global order : from the modern state to cosmopolitan governance, Stanford University Press, Stanford. From an international political economy perspective see Susan Strange, The Retreat of the State, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Stephen Gill (ed.), Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. From an international relations theory perspective see David Campbell, National Deconstruction, University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota; Michael Shapiro, Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War, University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota; Michael Shapiro and James der Derian (eds.), International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics, Lexington Books, New York; R.B.J. Walker, Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Michael Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (eds.), Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities, University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota; Jim George, Discourse of World Politics, Rienner Publishing, Boulder. From the perspective of urban politics see Warren Magnusson, The Search for Political Space, University of Toronto Press, Toronto; Engin Isin, Cities without Citizens: Modernity of the City as a Corporation, Black Rose Books, Montreal; Engin Isin (ed.), Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City, Routledge, London; Saskia Sassen, The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization, Columbia University Press, New York

under the guise of multiculturalism. Given the transformations and challenges brought to bear on conventional political wisdom, what is interesting to me is how the debate on multiculturalism seems to reify a particular conception of statist politics that most of these contemporary challenges are putting into question. Moreover, this debate about the politics of multiculturalism tends to focus its energies on the philosophical merits and limitations of liberalism, as it is traditionally conceived, without taking account of the new perspectives implicit in the contemporary literature on governmentality.

In Canada, the politics of multiculturalism finds its most vocal advocate in Will Kymlicka, a Queen's University professor of political philosophy whose work on multiculturalism can be traced back to the emergence of his first book in 1989, Liberalism, Community and Culture. As the title suggests, but perhaps does not make explicit, Kymlicka is concerned with reconciling the claims of cultural minorities with the principles of liberal democracy. But perhaps his best-known work, and one that stands as his most comprehensive attempt at defining a liberal theory of minority rights, is his 1995 book, Multicultural Citizenship. In both these works, Kymlicka is highly sensitive to the politics of cultural difference that countries like Canada highlight. He is aware of the nature of Canada's immigrant reality, and distinguishes ethnic or immigrant groups from what he terms 'national minority' cultures like the Quebecois. Kymlicka's multiculturalist project is a timely one, and one that has certainly gained much interest since the fall of Cold War geo-politics. And he is certainly not the only Canadian who has written on the necessity of advocating a politics of difference.

Probably Canada's most preeminent philosopher, Charles Taylor has also devoted considerable space to this question of cultural recognition within liberal democratic

polities. Taylor's most cited work in this respect is his 1992 article, "The Politics of Recognition". Here, Taylor muses about the possibilities of recognizing cultural identity within liberal democracy, while trying to steer a clear course between liberalism's classical focus on individual autonomy and negative freedom, on the one hand, and what, on the other hand, may be termed a more conservative communitarianism which has typically viewed the individual as first and foremost a part of a broader social context. The influence of both Hegel and Herder on Taylor is evident throughout this piece as he elegantly weaves together the notion of individual recognition/dignity with a reinvigorated sense of national community. This is not to suggest that these are the only two scholars writing on the politics of difference, but they are two whose work is, I believe, representative of liberal theorists advocating a politics of multiculturalism.[3]

But advocates of this sort of 'politics of difference' are not without their detractors, and perhaps the most virile of these critics has been Brian Barry. In a recent book, Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism, Barry dismisses multiculturalism on the grounds that a multiculturalist politics abandons the most significant principles of liberalism: namely, liberty and equality. Charging these advocates of multiculturalism with promoting cultural recognition at the expense of egalitarian liberalism, Barry's fear is that this program of multiculturalism will undermine, and thus fragment, a democratic community best maintained through the principle of universal equality. To call oneself a liberal (as Kymlicka and Taylor both do)

[3] For others working from a broadly conceived liberal background, see Michael Walzer, What it Means to be an American, Marsilio, New York, and his "Comment", in Amy Gutmann (ed.), Multiculturalism and the 'Politics of Recognition', Princeton University Press, Princeton; Michael Sandel, Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy, Harvard University Press, Cambridge; Chantal Mouffe (ed.), Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship and Community, Routledge, London; Nathan Glazer, We Are All Multiculturalists Now, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

is, according to Barry, to believe in and thus promote an egalitarian politics that does not put the interests of minority groups ahead of the individual. To do otherwise, Barry claims, is to put at risk the individual's capacity to choose his/her version of the good life autonomously, and to create an issue, unnecessarily, out of cultural diversity. Furthermore, according to Barry, a politics of difference merely institutionalizes antagonism and conflict, and destabilizes the foundations of democratic community. All this can be avoided, in Barry's eyes, if the 'multiculturalists' would simply stay true to liberalism's basic tenet of equal opportunity for all.

Although these theorists can be perceived as offering somewhat different takes on liberalism,[4] Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry all support the broader claim that cultural difference can, and should be, accommodated within liberal democracy. Moreover, the question of providing rights for disadvantaged and marginalized groups is seen by all of them as intrinsic to liberalism as a philosophical doctrine. What I find interesting about these authors lies less in what they say, than in what they do not say. And, in this way, my contribution to the debate on multiculturalism has more to do with what these theorists share in common than with their obvious differences. Although I am certainly sympathetic to the goal to which these folks aspire, I am nonetheless perplexed by the extent to which this debate on multicultural politics depends upon a particular commitment to the state (and the corresponding philosophical foundations of liberalism) as the best possible guarantor, and arbiter, of political difference. What I find perplexing is the way in which these "different" thinkers defend the merits of liberalism as the philosophical doctrine best able to accommodate claims of ethnic and cultural diversity,

[4] This claim is largely from my own reading of the three authors and the way in which, I believe, they perceive the other's perspective. I elaborate on their different takes on liberalism later in the thesis.

while, on the other hand, refusing to deal seriously with the complex, transnational forms of governance and the equally complex flows of culture characteristic of the neo-liberal era. All three thinkers share a similar conception of liberalism – one that treats it as a philosophical doctrine rather than as a strategy of government – and tend to reify a conception of the political that remains fixated on the problem of working out a 'properly' liberal relationship between the state and (the now admittedly culturally diverse) individuals that make up its population. What of the other issues that must concern us in this age of globalization in which the state is defined by proliferating forms of "government at a distance"?

The dialogue between Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry concerns the freedoms of individuals, but it narrows the issues by framing the problem in what is arguably an anachronistic way. It limits the extent to which a liberal politics can be successful by focusing attention almost exclusively on the liberal democratic state and its relations with citizens. Although all three are sensitive to the cultural embeddedness of individuals, they nonetheless seem determined to interpret culture in a particularly narrow way, one that poses the question of cultural difference as an issue for liberal democratic states. The liberal democratic state is the only space in which the "politics of difference" gains any real political meaning, and thus any authenticity as a problem for political theory, in their analyses. Liberalism as a philosophical doctrine provides the theoretical foundations for all their discussions. Claims for the recognition of cultural difference thus must answer to, and flow through, the sovereign authority of a state (informed by its philosophical orientation to liberalism) if there is to be anything serious to discuss. But does this reification of the liberal state as the embodiment of liberalism as philosophical doctrine

offer a promising portrayal of multicultural politics in the twenty-first century? It is this question that motivates my interest in the debate on multiculturalism.

My contention is that this way of theorizing multiculturalism in relation to the liberal state ends up domesticating, and thus reducing, the political (and analytical) possibilities that all three thinkers wish to advance within a rather conservative version of a state-centric politics. In so doing, I would argue that the authors mentioned above close down the political possibilities for re-thinking what the relationship between liberalism and politics might mean within the horizons of contemporary political realities.

The first chapter of the thesis will begin with a characterization of the relationship between Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry and their seemingly "different" stories about the relationship between the individual and her wider political community. To put it somewhat differently, this chapter will attempt to demonstrate that their common concern is with the place of minority rights within the framework of liberal theory. Consequently, the issue of minority rights within a liberal framework will be shown to be a debate about the extent to which granting cultural group rights contradicts liberal notions of equality and justice, or remains consistent with these principles. The second chapter will show how this liberal theory masks an implicit statism within their analyses. The third chapter will offer an alternative account of liberalism to the one presented in chapters one and two, and suggest how this alternative account shifts the focus of political analysis. To do this, this chapter draws on the relatively recent governmentality literature born out of a 1978 lecture given by Michel Foucault, titled, "Governmentality". The claim advanced in this chapter is that it is more fruitful, both theoretically and practically, to see liberalism as an 'art of government' and <u>not</u> as either a philosophical doctrine or a type of society.

In this way, I argue, a governmentality perspective opens up new and exciting ways to explore contemporary political thought and practice that move beyond the restrictive disciplinary boundaries of traditional political philosophy and theory. The concluding chapter will address the implications that such an analysis has for the debate on multiculturalism, as represented in the work of Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry. My argument is that we need to re-pose the problem of cultural difference to deal with contemporary political realities.

Chapter One

In Canada, we are often told a story about the 'multicultural' nature of our liberal democracy. We are a country, it is often said, which respects the diversity of cultural membership, and more importantly, we have a history that has had to deal explicitly with the experience of living with cultural difference. The uneasy, yet relatively successful marriage between Quebec and the rest of Canada is thought to reflect the intrinsic merits of a liberal democratic state. It should be of no surprise then that two prominent theorists of multiculturalism hail from the Great White North. And although Kymlicka and Taylor both champion the cause of multiculturalism, they have not always (nor have they recently) seen eye to eye on the exact formulation of liberalism's capacity to accommodate cultural diversity (and/or minority rights). Moreover, their versions of liberalism[5], although endorsing the need to recognize cultural difference, are in contrast to yet another liberal story. This other story, fashioned under the name of egalitarian liberalism and put forward as an alternative to a politics of multiculturalism, is advanced as the more authentic interpretation of the central tenets of liberal philosophy. Indeed, Brian Barry suggests in his recent book that, "multiculturalist policies are not in general well designed to advance the values of liberty and equality, and that the implementation of such policies tends to mark a retreat from both" (Barry, 2001, 12).

On the one side, then, we have two thinkers who, although representing different perspectives on liberalism, both identify as liberals and as defenders of a politics of multiculturalism. And on the other side, is a self-assured defender of equality and liberty who views recent multiculturalist champions as aberrant liberals, bent on a program of

[5] Although Kymlicka often refers to Taylor as a communitarian, I view both of them as endorsing a broader liberal perspective. Indeed, Taylor himself is convinced that his formulation of the relationship between the self and the community is consistent with a liberal commitment to individual autonomy and rights.

illiberality and special interest politics. This chapter, then, is concerned with sketching the differences that these thinkers perceive to exist between their interpretations of liberalism and multiculturalism.

The Forked Road of Liberalism

The tradition of liberal theory is a long and venerable one, stretching back to at least the 18th century.[6] In its various manifestations, it has been concerned with formulating a theoretical account of the relationship between the individual and the state. This has most often been characterized in terms of the extent to which the state can or cannot intervene in the affairs of the individual. This relationship has also typically been conceived of in terms of individual freedom. Thus, the question has often been put, to what extent should the individual be left alone from outside interference to pursue his/her own version of the good life (negative freedom); or to what extent does the individual have an innate disposition/obligation to exercise that freedom within the wider political community (positive freedom)?[7] In either case, two things are assumed: first, that an individual exists independently of the state (and in this way the state is also seen as independent of the individual), and second, that the liberal state is the space in which the values of individual liberty and equality are sure to be realized. Moreover, on this account, politics is assumed to occur within the spatial coordinates of the state, as it is inside the borders of the state that all the universal promises of freedom, equality, and liberty are promised. Consequently, political philosophers (such as the three engaged

[6] This is no doubt a contentious point, but my claim is simply that theorists working firmly within the liberal tradition tend to take theorist such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Stuart Mill as thinkers representative of a liberal perspective.

[7] The classic work on negative freedom is Isaiah Berlin's inaugural lecture at Oxford University in 1958, titled, "Two Concepts of Liberty". An equally significant text is Charles Taylor's response to the concept of negative liberty in his article, "What's wrong with Negative Liberty".

with in this thesis) have typically concerned themselves with working out the philosophical conditions under which politics can unfold. Moreover, there is a presumed distinction between civil society (made up of free individuals) and the state, and political theorists have most often been concerned with formulating the 'proper' or 'just' relationship between both. Hence the tendency within social and political theory to conceive of power in terms of the institutional reach and scope of the state over the private affairs of a society's individual members.

In the first instance, liberal philosophers have generally held that the individual possesses various interests, desires, and rights. Indeed, according to Kymlicka, there are

> two preconditions for the fulfillment of our essential interest in leading a life that is good. One is that we lead our life from the inside, in accordance with our beliefs about what gives value to life; the other, is that we be free to question those beliefs, to examine them in the light of whatever information and examples and arguments our culture can provide (Kymlicka, 1989, 13).

The political morality of liberalism, then, according to someone like Kymlicka, rests in its commitment to providing the conditions under which an individual's *essential interests* are afforded equal weight across society, and the way in which the state can provide the means through which one may question the beliefs and values that circulate through the institutions and practices of civil society as a whole. Furthermore, this philosophical sentiment is typically over coded with a language of rights. Freedom of expression, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, etc, typically means a right to exercise these in the face of divergent interests and opinions. These rights, moreover, are seen as a means to ensure that one's interests and desires are protected from the demands of the larger community within which one lives. But perhaps more importantly, rights within the liberal tradition are conceived as an instrument meant to prevent undue

intervention into one's life from other members of society, and from state involvement in private affairs. State involvement (or any other community involvement for that matter) in directing, or encouraging, the actions of the individual toward some goal that does not emanate from an autonomous realm of choice is seen as inimical to this model of liberalism. In other words, liberalism conceived in terms of individual rights stands in contrast to a form of communitarian (or republican) liberalism that emphasizes the individual's obligation and commitment to promoting, and preserving, the more general good of society as a whole.

Identified elsewhere as 'procedural liberalism'[8], this rights based version perceives itself as a doctrine about ensuring the protection of the individual's private life through the liberal principles of justice and fairness.[9] These theorists tend to conceive the state as ideally neutral, and as having no place in promoting a particular version of the good life. A discourse of rights is seen as a means to ensure that questions of morality are left to the individual, and not in the hands of the state. According to 'procedural liberals', deliberating on questions of the good life should be left to an individual's personal choice, and not be foisted upon a person through an appeal to some broader good to which the individual is thought to owe allegiance. Rights are then seen as a means through which individuals (including those within varying cultural communities) are ensured the protections needed to access a social context of choice. As Kymlicka states,

[8] This label is often used by communitarians in their characterization of liberals who they see as promoting an 'atomistic individualism'.

[9] See for example the work of John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin in the United States, and Will Kymlicka here in Canada. Kymlicka, however, although acknowledging his intellectual debt to Rawls and Dworkin, does take issue with their lack of sensitivity with regards to the importance of the individual's relationship with his/her's cultural background. What makes him more a procedural liberal however, than say, a communitarian, is that he does not believe the individual should be unquestionably committed to the values or norms of one's cultural context. In other words, what matters for Kymlicka, like Rawls and Dworkin, is the notion that liberalism is fundamentally about securing the rights and interests of the individual over and above the rights and interests of a larger community context.

> What matters, from a liberal point of view, is that people *have access* to a societal culture which provides them with meaningful options encompassing the range of human activities....In so far as polyethnic rights for immigrants or self-government rights for national minorities *help secure* access to a societal culture, then they can contribute to individual freedom (Kymlicka, 1995, 101, italics added).

Furthermore, "failure to recognize these rights will create new tragic cases of groups which are denied the sort of cultural context of choice that supports individual autonomy" (Kymlicka, 1995, 101). A discourse of rights, then, is central to this form of liberalism that seeks to defend cultural diversity. And what is important within Kymlicka's particular version of liberalism is his insistence on the compatibility of minority rights with principles of justice, equality, and individual autonomy. There is no reason to assume, as Kymlicka suggests, "that an endorsement of minority rights must involve a rejection of liberal values" (1989, 207).

On the contrary, sensitivity to cultural membership is firmly embedded within the liberal tradition, and Kymlicka defends the force of this statement against others who he believes have misinterpreted that most venerable patriarch of liberalism, John Stuart Mill. Charging some liberals, like Rawls and Dworkin, with undervaluing the importance of cultural membership within the tradition of liberalism, Kymlicka cites a passage from Mill on the nature of identity:

> The strongest of all is identity of political antecedents: the possession of a national history, and consequent community of recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past (Mill, quoted in Kymlicka, 1989, 208).

Kymlicka goes on to say that, "for these writers[10], human freedom was tied to the existence, and consciousness, of a common cultural membership"(1989, 208). So rather than concede the point that liberalism does not, and cannot, account for the role of cultural membership in the formulation of individual identity in relation to principles of justice and equality, he insists that any construal of liberal thought as somehow inimical to the recognition of cultural rights, simply misreads the great texts of liberalism's esteemed past. Indeed, if one is to read the liberal canon as Kymlicka has done, then presumably one will come to the same conclusion: liberalism's respect for individual autonomy implies a, albeit qualified, commitment to the protection of an individual's cultural norms and practices. But the story does not end there, and Kymlicka's insistence that a respect for cultural rights is wholly compatible with liberalism's commitment to individual rights and freedoms, and state neutrality, suffers from what some say is a rather empty, meaningless form of liberalism.

Communitarians like Charles Taylor for example, reject this brand of liberalism on four points: its atomistic conception of the individual, its negative conception of freedom, its pretensions to neutrality, and its reluctance to endorse any notion of substantive goods (Abbey, 2001, 148). Taylor's particular approach to theorizing the modern subject in relation to modern forms of social and political organization reflects his broader philosophical orientation that views the subject's moral makeup as inextricably tied to the cultural community within which one derives the values and norms that inform the political decisions that one may make in the course of one's

[10] He is referring here to pre World War II liberal writers like T. H. Green, L.T. Hobhouse, and J. Dewey, and of course, 19th century thinker, John Stuart Mill.

participation in the wider political community. Taylor's communitarianism, then, embodies his particular understanding of the subject as a moral being.

The Communitarian Self

Coming from a different direction, 'communitarian liberals' suggest that the individual is first and foremost a member of a sociocultural context.[11] This context is thought to be constitutive of a person's identity, and thus of a wider landscape of possible thought and action. In this sense, the 'good' to which a person may aspire is seen to follow from belonging to a social context, and the values and norms that are embedded in it. As Charles Taylor suggests,

> the set of practices by which the society defines my status as an equal bearer of rights, an economic agent, and a citizen – practices such as the operation of the legal system, the political system of voting and elections, the practices of negotiations and collective bargaining – all have embedded in them a conception of the agent and his/her relation to society which reflects the modern identity and its related visions of the good (Taylor, 1986, 195).

On this account, it is simply not possible to assume that an individual can leave her values and norms at home when entering into the public realm to deliberate on questions of political significance. Furthermore, any context of choice must be seen in its relation to a wider community without which our choices would hold no significance outside of an empty nihilism, and thus could not account for the continued significance of community or cultural membership. Thus, the central difference distinguishing procedural liberals from communitarians is in how they characterize the relationship between the individual and their wider political community.

It should be recalled, here, that Kymlicka's particular form of liberalism is concerned primarily with providing the best possible conditions for which individual

[11] See for example the work of Michael Sandel in the United States and Charles Taylor here in Canada.

freedom and autonomy can flourish. His defense of cultural/minority rights must be seen as motivated by a concern for individual expression and mobility, and not by any commitment to the intrinsic worth of one's cultural context. The capacity to choose one's preferred way of life underscores this brand of liberal thought. So long as one's social context allows for choice about which version of the 'good life' to endorse and challenge (and liberal rights in this sense are thought to ensure this), and all members of society are afforded this right equally, then liberalism's basic tenets have been upheld and the citizenry is all the better for it. However, this seemingly infinite realm of choice is thought by some to be lacking any purpose. According to Taylor,

> Complete freedom would be a void in which nothing would be worth doing, nothing would deserve to count for anything. The self which has arrived at freedom by setting aside all external obstacles and impingements is characterless, and hence without defined purpose, however much this is hidden by such seemingly positive terms as 'rationality' or 'creativity' (Taylor, 1979, cited in Kymlicka, 1989, 47).

For Taylor, there is something more morally significant about living together in a social and political community than simply acknowledging (and respecting) each other's equal right to evaluate the norms and practices of our social and political contexts. To identify oneself as either a Catholic, or Jew, or as Quebecois or American, is to say more than simply that one is "strongly attached to this spiritual view or background; rather it is that this provides the frame within which they can determine where they stand on questions of what is good, or worthwhile, or admirable, or of value" (Taylor, 1989, 27). Moreover, to assume, as Taylor accuses liberals like Kymlicka of doing, that this freedom to question one's cultural norms can occur from some kind of objective standpoint overemphasizes the significance of individual choice and underemphasizes the background setting that

gives these choices meaning.[12] The theme that most often gets invoked in this context turns on the primacy of rights in the liberal tradition and its 'atomistic' conception of the self.

For Taylor, liberalism's explicit commitment to "rights as trumps" has devalued the importance of more substantive goods in the social and political lives of individuals. The expressed concern for the protection of individual autonomy has come at the expense of understanding the significance of the more general good of the politicocultural community within which one lives. More importantly for Taylor, it has done so under the assumption of moral neutrality.[13] It might be said in this context that liberalism's great lie has been its continued insistence that what establishes it as a superior foundation for a diverse and heterogeneous political society turns on its reluctance to promote any particular version of the good life at the expense of other, perhaps equally good versions. Taylor's most consistent remark in this regard has been that "liberalism is also a fighting creed". As I understand him, Taylor's point is that regardless of what liberalism says it is not doing, politics is inherently about making distinctions, and that these distinctions are informed by a prior moral framework, or what he has called elsewhere 'strong evaluation'. As he states, "they [strong evaluations] involve discriminations of right or wrong, better or worse, higher or lower, which are not rendered valid by our own desires, inclinations, or choices, but rather stand independent of these and offer standards by which they can be judged" (Taylor, 1989, 4). Moreover, these "substantive

[12] It must be noted here that Taylor's account of the self differs markedly from the standard liberal view of individual autonomy. For Taylor, the self needs to be seen against the backdrop of a moral framework that infuses an individual's choices with meaning and purpose. It is certainly beyond the scope of this thesis, but this theme is developed in much detail in Part I of Sources of the Self.

[13] However, it should be pointed out that Taylor's position is not simply about the primacy of the community over and above the individual. Rather, it is a much more sophisticated appreciation of the role that the community plays in the political and moral life of the self.

distinctions…are inescapable in politics, and … the non-procedural liberalism I [am] describing is fully ready to accept this" (Taylor, 1994, 63). For Taylor, then, there should be nothing wrong with admitting the moral basis of our judgments, while still maintaining a commitment to protecting the civil and political rights of individuals. However, a strict adherence to a procedural form of liberalism misses the importance that sharing a common goal or purpose has in the moral life of an individual, and overemphasizes liberalism's supposedly neutral foundations.

Although it is difficult to define the sort of liberalism that Taylor endorses, he has made a distinction between what we calls a "rights based model", and a "participatory model" (Taylor, 1985, 210-11). Taylor endorses the latter and says that

> What defines this model is that [a] sense of citizen dignity is based on having a voice in deciding the common laws by which members live. This naturally presupposes that the institutions and practices by which the whole corpus of common laws are established, as well as this corpus itself, enjoy a profound respect in the society, so that our identity is defined in relation to them and dignity is conferred by taking part in them (Taylor, 1985, 211).

In this model of liberal democracy participation in the wider political community is inextricably linked to an individual's sense of dignity and moral self-worth. To be a political subject is to participate in the affairs of one's political community; it is not to simply retreat into the private sphere, ready to play your trump card of rights at the nearest sign of an infringement on your freedoms.[14] Participation here must not be confused with the juridical realm of procedural liberalism where exercising one's rights in a court of law merely celebrates the individualistic nature of a rights-based model of liberal democracy. Rather, Taylor's brand of participatory democracy implies a shared

[14] The different understandings of freedom that Kymlicka and Taylor adopt will be elaborated on in the next chapter. For now, we can say that they represent the two most common conceptions of freedom in the liberal tradition: negative freedom and positive freedom, respectively.

moral commitment to the continued preservation of the institutions and practices of one's democratic society, as they are indispensable to the moral makeup of the individual. It is this particular point that markedly separates Taylor from Kymlicka in their understanding of the relationship between culture and liberalism. In a footnote in the1994 article, "The Politics of Recognition", Taylor has this to say about the failure of Kymlicka's particular brand of liberal multiculturalism:

> Where Kymlicka's interesting argument fails to recapture the actual demands made by the groups concerned – say Indian bands in Canada, or French-speaking Canadians – is with respect to their goal of survival. Kymlicka's reasoning is valid (perhaps) for *existing* people who find themselves trapped within a culture under pressure, and can flourish within it or not at all. But it doesn't justify measures designed to ensure survival through indefinite future generations (1994, 41).

We can see here that what is of significance for Taylor's brand of liberalism is the *ensured* preservation of one's cultural context for the betterment of future generations. If one bases liberalism primarily on the force of rights alone, then one risks losing the political significance that follows from sharing in a common purpose or collective goal. In other words, simply granting rights to cultural minorities (whether in the realm of political theory, or as public policy) does not help us get at what it is about our institutions and practices that is indeed worth preserving, or why they might need to be questioned at all. To wish to uphold the merits of liberal democracy, then, is to implicitly endorse an underlying set of norms and values that run through the core of society's institutions and practices. It would seem that for someone like Taylor, to participate in the affairs of politics, and to actively exercise one's positive freedom within the boundaries of the political community always already implies an underlying moral framework.

Liberalism's atomistic conception of the self, and the consequential notion of negative freedom, does not, for someone like Taylor, tell us why it is that we as liberals should tolerate difference or grant cultural rights (aside from some tacit allegiance to the rather metaphysical buzz words of equality and justice), or why it is that liberal democracy is perceived to be the only form of political community that is committed to, and capable of, tolerating and accommodating cultural diversity. A Taylorian reading of liberalism acknowledges the moral compass that implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) guides our political judgments and commitments. Liberal nationalism, which is what Kymlicka has said characterizes Taylor's particular brand of liberalism,[15] endorses a view of culture, and its relationship to the individual in much more substantive terms. The question for Kymlicka, is whether Taylor's substantive commitments violate the tenets of liberalism. Brian Barry thinks that even Kymlicka goes too far.

Egalitarian Liberalism

The first sentence that begins chapter two of Brian Barry's book Culture and Equality states that: "In every society, differences are socially recognized" (2001, 19). The next paragraph begins with the statement that "the fact of difference is universal and so is its social recognition" (2001, 19). It might appear from these two sentences that Barry is no less a defender of cultural diversity than Kymlicka and Taylor. However, Barry's "particular" brand of liberal philosophy has no room for the granting of special group rights on the basis of culture alone. Advocating a model of 'liberal citizenship', Barry is unapologetic about his opposition to any forms of citizenship rights that might tip the scales of equality in favor of particular groups. A common policy of equal

[15] See Kymlicka, Politics in the Vernacular, pg. 39-41, where he also includes other 'liberal nationalists' such as Yael Tamir, Avishai Margalit, Joseph Raz, David Miller, Margaret Canovan, and Michael Walzer.

citizenship rights for all is, according to Barry, the only liberal solution one needs to effectively deal with the realities of cultural and ethnic diversity. He quotes Kymlicka as saying that this earlier model of "unitary republican citizenship" was designed in the context of much more homogenous political communities and that it needs to be updated to accommodate contemporary cultural and ethnic diversity. Barry's position on this is unequivocal:

> In direct opposition to Kymlicka, indeed, I maintain that the relatively peaceful incorporation of a wide range of religions and cultures in the part half century is a tribute to the ability of what he [Kymlicka] calls the 'earlier model' to 'deal with issues of ethnocultural diversity' (Barry, 2001, 21).

For Barry, it is precisely liberalism's commitment to universal equality, in the form of common citizenship rights that distinguishes it from the politics of multiculturalism that he associates with people like Kymlicka and Taylor.

To promote a politics that would have certain cultural/ethnic groups enjoy an unequal degree of accommodation in society simply sows the seeds for future intra-state conflict. The state would then assume the unfortunate (and in Barry's eyes, illiberal) role of having promoted the cause(s) of particular cultural group(s) that were under the control of an ethnocultural elite. Barry states that

> The 'politics of difference' is a formula for manufacturing conflict, because it rewards the groups that can most effectively mobilize to make claims on the polity, or at any rate it rewards ethnocultural political entrepreneurs who can exploit its potential for their own ends by mobilizing a constituency around a set of sectional demands (Barry, 2001, 21).

His claim is that a 'politics of multiculturalism' abandons liberalism's most cherished principle: universal equality. There seem to be two things that bother Barry in this regard: one is that this 'new' politics is moving away from the grand Enlightenment claim to

universalism toward an unjust, undemocratic particularism; and second, that this 'politics of multiculturalism' overlooks the fact that liberalism already has the ability to accommodate cultural diversity (2001, 9-17, 123-131, 146-154), and, according to Barry, has done so for much of the last hundred years.

Barry believes that, as soon as the state gets involved in promoting legislation that unequally benefits the claims of particular cultural groups, it begins to lose its position of neutrality. Like Kymlicka, he is insistent about the danger to individual autonomy when the state gets involved in the business of promoting particular visions of the 'good life'. A liberal state is meant to treat all members equally and fairly, and any deviation from this idea is a move toward illiberality. As Barry suggests, "the state does not lend any special weight to the norms of illiberal – or liberal – groups. This is, indeed, the essence of what it means to say that a society is a liberal society" (Barry, 2001, 125). Any compromise on this principle is simply illiberal from Barry's perspective, and he heartily chastises Taylor for occupying just such a position (Barry, 2001, 65-68, 265-267, 279-284). Compromise on the issue of cultural rights, according to Barry, could lead to a dangerous form of moral relativism (or at the very least, to a claim about the incommensurability of cultures), which undermines liberalism's commitment to universal equality and justice.

However, Barry's liberalism is not insensitive to addressing injustices suffered by members of cultural groups, so long as the remedies fall within the legitimate bounds of redistributive justice. By this (and I am following Barry's lead here) I mean issues where individuals are at a disadvantage due to economic and/or social obstacles. However, as Barry states, "special treatment for members of disadvantaged groups is justifiable only for as long as the inequality exists" (2001, 13). This is clearly incompatible with Taylor's

argument for cultural recognition as being premised on the moral need (and desire) for the continued preservation of one's cultural community over the long term. On the contrary, egalitarian liberals "share the premise that justice – in relation to self-respect as much as anything else – concerns the distribution of rights and resources" (Barry, 2001, 269).[16] However, this redistribution of rights and resources to those disadvantaged members of society is only out of concern to provide everyone with equal opportunities.

It is perhaps here where Barry's liberalism is most far removed from both Kymlicka's and Taylor's. His unabashed plea for universalism turns on this liberal notion, and assumes on a matter of principle that this is what can ensure a fair and just democratic polity. So long as everyone shares equally the opportunities to choose and pursue whatever version of the good life she may wish, and are able to do so in a fair and just manner, then there is nothing more that one can ask of liberalism. Consequently, questions about self-government, language, constitutional exemptions, education, etc., are simply left out of Barry's equation. This is not to say that he does not address these issues, because he dismisses their relevance to questions about multiculturalism handily, but it is to say that because of his particular brand of liberalism, they simply do not carry the same theoretical or practical weight that they might for liberals like Kymlicka and Taylor.

Interestingly, and rather ironically, Barry is most dismissive of Kymlicka, who like Barry, is a self-professed liberal, heavily influenced by the thought of John Stuart Mill. It would seem that Kymlicka might have escaped the rhetorical vehemence of

[16] Barry's insistence on the need to preserve a liberal concept of justice is no coincidence as he has written two volumes on the idea of social justice. See for example, Theories of Justice: A Treatise on Social Justice, Volume 1, University of California Press: Berekely, 1989; and Justice as Impartiality, Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Barry's critique if it were not for his desire to make liberalism more inclusive. For Kymlicka, liberalism's earlier commitment to the notion of universal citizenship (which implied assimilation into the dominant national culture), has failed to live up to its initial promise of universal freedom and equality. Where Kymlicka's liberalism sketches cultural diversity in terms of its significance for an individual's freedom to participate in the cultural norms and practices of their particular cultural background, someone like Taylor views it in a much more substantive light. The significance of recognizing cultural membership and diversity lies in its importance for the moral make-up of its individual members. If one is to be fully capable of self-reflection and evaluation (which is what both Barry and Kymlicka endorse as good liberals) then it is important to recognize the cultural embeddedness of individuals and how this is constitutive of both a person's identity and a wider landscape of political thought and action. Culture, in this way, is ineradicable from one's sense of self. Egalitarian liberalism, on the other hand, is more interested in working out conditions of justice and fairness as a means to accommodate cultural diversity. Barry proposes what he calls a "liberal theory of minority rights", which is, I believe, a rhetorical twist to a 1995 book edited by Kymlicka called, The Rights of Minority Cultures. Barry sums up this, and his broader liberal position in the following passage:

> The fundamental liberal position on group rights, which received its classic formulation in *On Liberty*, is that individuals should be free to associate together in any way they like, as long as they do not in doing so break laws designed to protect the rights and interests of those outside the group (2001, 148).

Although all three theorists, then, might be said to endorse the "idea" of tolerating and accommodating cultural diversity through the philosophical tenets of liberalism, they all adopt slightly different perspectives on what these tenets are. Despite their

"differences", all three theorists might be said to reify a particularly philosophical understanding of liberalism, which is concerned with working out the theoretical relationship between the individual (civil society) and the state. In other words, they pose the problem of multiculturalism as a problem to be worked out philosophically. Thus Kymlicka focuses his attention on finding a place for minority rights within the tradition of liberal thought. His concern is with opening up liberalism to the issues of cultural difference. Hence his strategy for revisiting the tradition of liberalism in order to demonstrate its fundamental commitment to protecting one's right to culture. Taylor, on the other hand, revisits the liberal tenets of rights and freedoms as a means to demonstrate how they inadequately explain the significance of recognizing cultural difference. His point is that these fundamental liberal principles need to be buttressed by a more substantive appreciation of an individual's moral life and the ineradicable connection to her cultural community. Barry similarly re-reads liberalism, but he does so in order to show how the principles of universality and equality have been distorted in order to accommodate the claims of cultural minorities. However, the implicit assumption running through all of their thinking is that a set of political arrangements has to be liberal if they are to be good. Having suggested that these three theorists share a common concern with defining the normative qualities of liberalism, the next chapter explores in more detail their specific arguments as a means to draw out what I see as an implicit statism within their thinking.

Chapter Two

Having set up the first chapter as a general account of how Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry perceive the tradition of liberalism, and their particular positions within it, the following chapter seeks to further my overall claim that all these theorists share a similar perspective on liberalism as a philosophical doctrine. However, I am also interested in drawing out what I see as an implicit statism within all of their arguments. This chapter, then, has two major threads: one is to further make the point that Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry all share a similar perspective on liberalism as a philosophical doctrine, and second is to draw out their state-centric thinking, which I claim is intimately tied to their similar assumptions about liberalism. In this way, the chapter is meant to highlight the subtle differences between these thinkers, but also, and perhaps more importantly, it is meant to illustrate that the similarity of their deeper analytical commitment to defending liberalism assumes an implicit statism. This, I argue, limits the possibilities for rethinking multiculturalism beyond the conventional distinction between the state and civil society.

A Multicultural Liberalism

The three theorists presented in this thesis share a particularly normative approach to the relationship between liberalism and multiculturalism, although Kymlicka would generally evade any discussion about the moral dimensions of a politics of multiculturalism, focusing instead on notions of 'the right over the good'. Taylor by contrast would take issue with this idea of neutrality and would tend to place a much higher value on the moral importance that a politics of recognition has for individual members within a liberal society. Barry rejects the move toward theorizing the particularity of cultural or minority rights on the grounds that it flies in the face of a more

universal notion of citizenship for all. He is, however, nonetheless concerned with defending the normative pretenses of liberalism's philosophical leanings. Their differences, although significant, are perhaps less striking when seen in relation to the way in which all of them tend to frame the stakes of multiculturalism.

In the context of multiculturalism, Kymlicka describes three stages of the debate on accommodating minority rights within liberal democratic states.[17] The first stage has liberals on one side and communitarians on the other. Liberals in this sense are characterized by their commitment to the priority of the individual over the community, and thus minority rights are seen as inimical to the liberal project, which professes equality amongst all members of society. Communitarians, by contrast, are said to reject the priority of the individual and instead see the self as intimately bound up with, and thus inextricable from, the community in which one lives. Thus, for communitarians, minority rights protect one's community context from domination by a much larger majority.

The second stage of the debate, according to Kymlicka, is said to involve a shift away from the disjuncture between the individual and the community. Wanting to accommodate cultural difference within the framework of liberalism, 'liberal culturalists', with whom Kymlicka self-identifies, simply make room for the rights of minorities on the grounds that providing rights for minority groups is actually consistent with liberalism's mandate to provide rights for the individual. This involves both a theoretical sleight of hand and a careful qualification.

[17] See Ch. 1 of Politics in the Vernacular, 2001.

On the one hand, Kymlicka suggests that providing minority groups certain rights actually promotes the freedom of the individual. Allowing certain cultural groups special rights provides the individuals within those groups the opportunity to enjoy the full benefits of citizenship, and it ensures the continual flourishing of the cultural group in light of its vulnerability within the larger majority. On the other hand, the issuing of these rights is also meant to put a check on the power of these groups to inhibit or wrongfully persecute individual members for conduct that group elites might find inimical to their cultural traditions. Kymlicka's innovation in this respect is his distinction between what he calls rights from 'external pressures' and rights to 'internal restrictions'.[18] He suggests that liberal culturalists be skeptical to claims for 'internal restrictions' as a potentially abusive use of liberal laws to promote illiberal practices, and in this way Kymlicka confronts critics of minority rights who suggest that giving special rights to cultural groups opens the way for them to oppress their individual members' freedoms. Freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom to dissent are core principles of liberalism and any rights that groups might have that may enable them to squash individual freedom on the grounds that it contradicts cultural tradition or practice, is simply unacceptable to anyone defending a liberal democratic society.[19]

The third stage of the debate addresses the concerns of minority rights in relation to what Kymlicka calls nation building. The debate here supposedly moves away from the notion of the liberal state as simply ethno-culturally neutral, and hence of no threat to minority groups. Kymlicka's point in this respect is to highlight the way in which the

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[18] For a more detailed account of these distinctions see Kymlicka's Multicultural Citizenship, especially chapter 3.

[19] The paradigmatic case in this respect is the Salman Rushdie affair. For a critique of Kymlicka and Taylor through a look at the Rushdie case, see Daniel I. O'Neill, "Multicultural Liberals and the Rushdie Affair: A Critique of Kymlicka, Taylor, and Walzer", in Review of Politics, Spring 99, Vol. 61/2.

state participates in certain nation-building policies through ensuring standardized education, encouraging political participation, and promoting a common national language. These form the core of what he calls a 'societal culture', and if minority groups are expected to fully integrate into the broader national community, they should be granted, or at least given the opportunity, to determine and exercise to a certain extent, their own nation-building policies. However, it must be kept in mind that Kymlicka's intent is rather less inclusive than the above discussion might seem to suggest. The minority rights that Kymlicka has in mind are to be reserved for groups whom he refers to as 'national minorities', and these groups are far less numerous than the other cultural groups that Kymlicka identifies as ethnic immigrants. Moreover, they are defined according to some rather strict criteria about claims to territory over time, linguistic integrity, and some forms of established public infrastructure (i.e. schools, churches, bureaucracy, etc). Thus, Kymlicka's characterization of the evolution of the debate surrounding multiculturalism hinges on a series of theoretical claims and counter-claims about the place of minority rights within the philosophical doctrine of liberalism. Equally steeped in the discipline of political philosophy, and certainly more intellectually robust, Charles Taylor also addresses the issues of cultural difference through the disciplinary conventions of political philosophy.

Taylor's work spans the disciplines of philosophy and politics. Most known for his work on Hegel and for his work in moral philosophy, Taylor has also been at the forefront in the Canadian constitutional debate on Quebec secession. His contributions to the debate on multiculturalism, although perhaps less exhaustive than his other pursuits, is nonetheless influential within contemporary debates on the politics of identity. Like

Kymlicka, he self-identifies as a liberal and views liberal democracy as "a great philosophy of inclusion" (Taylor, 1998). However, unlike Kymlicka, he is less enthusiastic about the kind of procedural liberalism that Kymlicka is thought to endorse. For the sake of the argument being made here, I wish to place Taylor in contrast to Kymlicka only in so far as I believe he falls more on the side of communitarianism than he does on the side of procedural liberalism.[20]

For Taylor, an emphasis on the right over the good within a procedural liberalist approach to multiculturalism suffers from four limitations.[21] First, Taylor does not believe that a discourse of rights is capable of solving all social and political conflicts. Although he sees them as important, he views them as merely one aspect of a much wider political reality. Secondly, a focus on rights necessarily involves a focus on the juridical nature of politics. In this way, Taylor believes that public debate and discussion become less significant principles of democratic participation than do the mechanisms of the courts and the elite professionals who "hold court" there. Thirdly, a legalistic approach to politics does not foster a sense of public participation, or a collective involvement in, and responsibility for, the political decisions that follow from belonging to a liberal democratic society. Fourth, and finally, a rights discourse is typically framed as a zero-sum game, which makes compromise more difficult. A right is held up as something an individual believes she is deserving of, and this typically means that it is held up against, or in contrast to, someone else's right. A rights discourse thus produces winners and

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[20] That said, it must be admitted that Taylor may not be as keen as I am to place him in this camp. In fact, as Ruth Abbey has suggested, Taylor is more interested in mediating between the two and coming up with what she calls, a form of "complex liberalism". However, I hope to show in the course of this thesis, that this placement is less important in the long run as both Kymlicka and Taylor commit themselves to a similar reification of the liberal state in the context of multiculturalism.

[21] These are identified in Ruth Abbey's informative interpretation of Taylor's work, Charles Taylor, 2000, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

losers, and Taylor's project is one that seeks to foster deliberation and dialogue, compromise and collectivity. What Taylor wishes to promote is a liberalism that appreciates the necessity of basic civil and political rights, while advocating a democratic society where a sense of collective belonging flourishes within what he calls a "politics of equal recognition".

For Brian Barry, on the other hand, the "spectre" that now haunts places like Eastern Europe is "strident nationalism, ethnic self-assertion and the exaltation of what divides people at the expense of what unites them" (Barry, 2001, 3). Multiculturalism, according to Barry, should be seen in relation to the fall of communism and the intellectual vacuum left by those wayward Marxists who helped usher in, for all intents and purposes, liberalism's intellectual and political victory by embracing as Barry suggests, "various forms of relativism and postmodernism rather than a non-Marxist version of universalistic egalitarianism" (Barry, 2001, 4). It is safe to say that Barry finds it rather ironic that the ex-Marxists chose to embrace the particularism of multicultural politics over the universalistic politics of emancipation and progress. So although Barry would disagree with Marxists intellectually, he would at least agree with their pretense to universalism. Those who endorse a programme of multiculturalism, according to Barry, have not learned the lessons of Hitler's Nazi regime or Mao's communism. To make political claims on the grounds of ethnic difference is to tarry to close to some of the worst political violence in the history of humanity. And for Barry, anybody who self-identifies as a liberal should know this; the further irony of this comes when political philosophers like Will Kymlicka try to open up liberalism to the claims of ethnocultural diversity. The irony, it would seem, resides in the apparent theoretical innovation that this

'politics of difference' advances in the name of liberalism as a philosophical doctrine. For Barry, liberalism has always been a philosophy of inclusion and equality for all. Multiculturalists, however, represent a move away from liberalism. Consequently, his book Culture and Equality is unabashedly "focused on [the] criticisms of the liberal paradigm as misconceived in principle" (Barry, 2001, 8).

As we can see, the debate is largely over who represents the more authentic form of liberalism. Multiculturalism here might be said to merely provide the context in which a debate about the philosophical nuances of liberal thought can then unfold. Moreover, as political theorists, Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry all engage in what amounts to a contest over the terms of discourse. To quote William Connolly,

> The desire to expunge contestability from the terms of political inquiry expresses a wish to escape politics. It emerges either as a desire to rationalize public life, placing a set of ambiguities and contestable orientations under the control of a settled system of understandings and priorities, or as a quest to moralize public life thoroughly, bringing all citizens under the control of a consensus which makes politics marginal and unimportant (Connelly, 1993, 213).

In keeping with my overall argument that these theorists endorse a similar perspective on liberalism as a philosophical doctrine, I would now like to move on to a discussion of some of the central terms of their debate on multiculturalism. However, and taking a cue from Connolly's quotation above, my intention is not to clarify these terms, nor is it meant as a simple description of them. Rather, my intention is two-fold: first, it is to strengthen the claim that their approaches to multiculturalism are excessively normative, and thus limited by a similar desire to develop a comprehensive philosophy as an answer to contemporary realities; and secondly, to draw out the implicit statism of this approach, which as I argue, anchors the state at the center of their ontological account of political life.

Culture and Individuality

The relationship between culture and the individual is a varied one within the debate on multiculturalism. For liberal theorists like Kymlicka and Taylor there is a delicate balance to be struck between ensuring the rights and freedoms of the individual while recognizing the value that a cultural context provides for one's self-identity. Granting group rights to cultural minorities, then, is seen as a just and necessary condition for ensuring and protecting the freedom of individual choice for individual members of cultural groups. This notion of choice, however, is itself a contentious one and it is where liberals like Kymlicka and Taylor diverge on the question of the relationship between culture and the individual.

For example, culture, as it is defined by Kymlicka, is "an intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, [and] sharing a distinct language and history"(1995, 18). Furthermore, he suggests that, "a state is multicultural if its members either belong to different nations (a multination state), or have emigrated from different nations (a polyethnic state), and if this fact is an *important aspect* of personal identity and political life"(1995, 18, italics added). Culture and individuality are here tied to one another only in so far as a person can be said to derive an "important aspect" of her identity from her cultural context. The emphasis here is on the sense of belonging that one feels to one's cultural roots. But this belonging is reduced to a shared commitment to political institutions and a common working language that allows these institutions to function for the benefit of its citizens. Rights protections for minority cultures then, are a necessary condition for the realization of one's political freedom. Cultural membership here is understood in instrumentalist

terms whereby rights to freedom of expression or association allow the individual "to move around within one's societal culture, to [be able to] distance oneself from particular cultural roles, to choose which features of the culture are most worth developing, and which are without value"(1995, 90-91). This definition of the relationship between culture and individuality reflects Kymlicka's commitment to procedural liberalism and the emphasis he places on rights as instrumental to ensuring the freedom of individuals to choose how they may wish to live their life. The freedom to reflect on one's cultural norms and practices, and to perhaps opt for something different, underscores the extent to which liberals like Kymlicka seek a multicultural politics. Cultural membership is important only in so far as it does not prohibit one from living a free and autonomous life through personal choice.

Recall here Kymlicka's notion of a 'societal culture', which "emphasizes that it involves a common language and social institutions, *rather than* common religious beliefs, family customs, or personal lifestyles" (2001, 25, my italics). This distinction is important to keep in mind as it distinguishes the different emphasis he places on the nature of the individual and political action. Kymlicka is merely concerned with providing (in philosophical terms) the best possible conditions under which individual freedom of choice can be justified within a culturally diverse polity, rather than with explaining the nature of our cultural membership in moral (and thus prescriptive) terms. As Kymlicka states, "cultures are valuable, not in and of themselves, but because it is only through having access to a societal culture that people have access to a range of meaningful options" (Kymlicka, 1995, 83). For Kymlicka, what is important about the relationship between culture and individuality is the provision of a range of possible

choices about the good life, and not the prescription of a pre-determined conception of the good tied to a particular cultural context. However, there is another aspect to Kymlicka's take on culture and individuality that revolves around the question of language.

If, for Kymlicka, what is important about respecting the relationship between culture and individuality is how a societal culture provides for a range of possible individual choices about which vision of the good life one might wish to endorse, then we must also get a sense of the role that language plays in Kymlicka's liberal take on minority rights. For example, a claim for certain language rights by national minority cultures like the Quebecois is seen by Kymlicka as a claim for what he has called 'external protections'. That is to say, it is a claim made for the protection of institutional autonomy from infringement by a dominant majority group, which is necessary for the preservation of a cultural way of life. But, according to Kymlicka, what makes this consistent with liberalism is that it is fundamentally about ensuring individual freedom of choice.

> People make choices about the social practices around them, based on their beliefs about the value of these practices (beliefs which, I have noted, may be wrong). And to have a belief about the value of a practice is, in the first instance, a matter of understanding the meanings attached to it by our culture (1995, 83).

Kymlicka sums up the relationship between culture and individuality in this way:

> For meaningful individual choice to be possible, individuals need not only access to information, the capacity to reflectively evaluate it, and freedom of expression and association. They *also need* access to a societal culture. Group-differentiated measures that secure and promote this access may, therefore, have a legitimate role to play in a liberal theory of justice (1995, 84, italics added).

There is, however, a rather troubling ambiguity in Kymlicka's analysis, an ambiguity that I believe reflects his normative approach to multiculturalism. Although Kymlicka makes

the distinction between national minority cultures (which have a societal culture) and immigrant groups (which do not), so that certain group-differentiated rights such as language cannot be claimed by every visible minority in the country, it is nonetheless unclear as to how making this distinction remains consistent with liberal principles of equality and justice, or individual autonomy and freedom. Drawing a line between societal cultures and immigrant groups, between certain group-differentiated rights to language and institutional autonomy, and less robust rights to celebrate cultural festivals or holidays, seems to lessen the extent to which liberalism as a philosophical doctrine is helpful in explaining (or defending) the politics of cultural difference.

Moreover, I would argue that this also masks his ontological commitment to the state as the source of all questions about legitimacy. It is no coincidence that Kymlicka's definition of societal cultures involves an historical tied to the land, established public infrastructure, and a commonly used language. These are closely tied to our understandings of the modern state, understandings that tie questions of legitimate political authority to administrative robustness and territorial girth. From Kymlicka's perspective, Quebec as a societal culture has a more legitimate claim to self-government rights than say a community of Chinese Canadians. The state-centric thinking here is particularly striking when seen in relation to the emphasis on territory. To have a legitimate claim for self-government rights, then, requires proof that members of a cultural group inhabit a large territorial base and share a set of dominant cultural traditions. Territorial integrity implies cultural homogeneity, and therefore, to make a legitimate claim for the representative institutions and judicial jurisdiction needed to adequately represent the interests of the individuals who live there requires that the group

making the claim needs to inhabit a space bigger than a couple of city blocks and smaller than the already existing state.

As I have tried to show thus far, the significance of the relationship between culture and individuality in Kymlicka's liberalism (and in his defense of language rights for national minority cultures for example) is that for a liberal theory of justice to be effective, it must take this relationship seriously. It must take this relationship seriously, because for him, a cultural context provides individuals with a range of meaningful choices about how best to live their lives. Thus, to work to protect and defend cultural difference from a liberal perspective is to see how multiculturalism is essentially about promoting liberal principles of freedom and equality, and ensuring that these principles provide the foundation for a broader social framework. Now where Taylor diverges from someone like Kymlicka is in his ontological account of the individual,[22] and her relationship to a cultural context.

In the context of multiculturalism Taylor's approach to the politics of difference moves away from a Kymlickian procedural approach, which Taylor characterizes as "a commitment to deal fairly and equally with each other, regardless of how we conceive our ends" (1995, 56), towards a more morally grounded appreciation of an individual's relationship to her cultural background. Taylor does acknowledge the merits of an egalitarian account of civil and political rights, but approaches the politics of difference through an appreciation of the moral significance that one's cultural embeddedness implies for individual identity formation.

[22] See for a detailed account of his theory of the subject in Sources of the Self.

For the sake of simplicity, we might characterize Taylor's conception of the self as follows. One's identity as a self follows from her relationship to other selves, something he terms, a 'dialogical intersubjectivity'. According to Taylor, the "self exists only within what I call 'webs of interlocution'"(1989, 36). The problem he sees with modern liberal culture is that it wants to neutralize this relationship. Taylor puts it in this way:

> Modern culture has developed conceptions of individualism which picture the human person as, at least potentially, finding his or her own bearings within, declaring independence from the webs of interlocution which have originally formed him/her, or at least neutralizing them. It's as though the dimension of interlocution were of significance only for the genesis of individuality, like the training wheels of nursery school, to be left behind and to play no part in the finished person (1989, 36).

Where a 'procedural liberalism' simply takes the individual as she is now, with certain desires and interests independent of any prior identity formation process, Taylor wishes to highlight the importance of how she has come to know herself as a self different from others and capable of articulating this through language. This begins as early as when we are infants, when we are told who we are by our parents, and how we are to recognize ourselves as different from others. 'You are Quincy, my daughter'. 'You are a big sister'. As we grow older and develop our speech, we continue this process of identity formation with other interlocutors. But the conversations that we have as children must not be assumed to be of lesser significance than those we have as adults. But perhaps more importantly here is the idea that we are not selves in isolation. As Taylor states,

> This is the sense in which one cannot be a self on one's own. I am a self only in relation to certain interlocutors: in one way in relation to those conversation partners who were essential to my achieving self-definition; in another in relation to those who are now crucial to my continuing grasp of languages of self-understanding…(1989, 36).

I mentioned in chapter one that, for Taylor, the exercise of freedom always already implies a prior moral framework. Being free to decide what choices to make for yourself depends upon a prior orientation to what you value as important in the pursuit of whatever ends you seek. This assumes a prior horizon of meaning, and "thus usually involves not only his stand on moral and spiritual matters but also some reference to a defining community" (Taylor, 1989, 36, emphasis added). So where Kymlicka is concerned with ensuring that the widest range of choices are made available within one's cultural context of choice, so long as they remain within the scope of liberal principles, Taylor goes further by suggesting that what gives our identity and choices meaning is "the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose" (Taylor, 1989, 27). It's not enough to simply acknowledge, as Kymlicka does, that one's cultural context gives individual choice meaning. Hence defending the rights of minority cultures on the grounds that it is consistent with liberal principles of justice and equality. Rather, Taylor is making the more substantive claim that without acknowledging the significance that culture plays in defining our moral frameworks we would not be able to distinguish what is of significant value in our lives and consequently, what judgments or decisions we should then make - it would be, in Taylor's view to not know who one is, or where one comes from (Taylor, 1989, 26-32).

When Taylor says that the demands debated in the context of multiculturalism are about recognizing the equal value of different cultures, he is also making the more substantive point, "that we not only let them survive, but acknowledge their *worth* (Taylor, 1995, 64, italics in original). To acknowledge the worth of different cultures is

also to acknowledge the worth of the individual who lives within that particular horizon of meaning.

The difference from someone like Kymlicka lies in this commitment to recognizing the moral worth of one's cultural affiliations. To acknowledge the inherent worth of one's cultural background is not only to recognize it in public policy, but it is to ascribe a moral value to it and to recognize the inextricable link between the self and the cultural context within which a meaningful life is made possible. Hence, for Taylor,

> the individual possesses this culture, and hence his identity, by participating in this larger [community] life . . . our experience is what it is, is shaped in part, by the way in which we interpret it; and this has a lot to do with the terms which are available to us in our culture (Taylor, quoted in Abbey, 2000, 67).

The emphasis on the role of culture in self-interpretation is important for Taylor as it reflects his ontological understanding of the self as dialogical. That is,

> My discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others . . . My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others (Taylor, quoted in Abbey, 2000, 67).

Thus, for Taylor, the relationship between culture and the individual means more than the instrumentalist sense that Kymlicka ascribes to it. For Taylor, culture both reflects, and serves, a moral purpose as it provides the conditions under which the individual can both form an identity and undergo a process of self-discovery. He puts it like this:

> I believe that what we are as human agents is profoundly interpretation-dependent, that human beings in different cultures can be radically diverse, in keeping with their fundamentally different self-understandings. But I think that a constant is to be found in the shape of the questions that cultures must address (Taylor, quoted in Abbey, 2001, 56).

From Taylor's perspective, individual rights are not unimportant to the relationship between culture and individuality, but they should be seen as only part of a wider horizon of meaning that infuses an individual's life with a moral significance that goes beyond the classically liberal concern with ensuring individual freedom of choice.

It might be suggested that both Kymlicka and Taylor agree on two things: that multicultural politics, buttressed by the liberal principles of equality and autonomy, is good for enhancing the individual freedoms of cultural minorities; and that the possibility for the existence of a liberal conception of multicultural politics rests on a particular sensitivity to the role that culture plays in the sociopolitical identities of a diverse citizenry. Attending to cultural difference, and accommodating claims to cultural diversity, is thought to be consistent with liberalism's basic tenets as it promotes equality and freedom for individual members of society. More importantly for my argument, in order for multiculturalism to be considered a success, it is assumed that the arrangements necessary for this to happen have to be liberal in nature. Moreover, these liberal arrangements are thought to be morally good and just. However, if we turn now to Brian Barry's perspective on the relationship between culture and individuality, we get a different version of what liberalism has to offer in the context of multiculturalism.

In 1980, Barry wrote an article titled, "The Strange Death of Political Philosophy", which was meant as a self-reflection on the changes he had perceived over the course of twenty-five years within the discipline of political philosophy. In the course of this article, he offers three ideas that he says have heavily influenced his approach to philosophical inquiry. The first is "that arguments should be pressed to the point at which the question is settled one way or the other". The second is that "arguments must stand on

their own feet and that one should avoid cluttering up the discussion with appeals to the authority of the illustrious dead". And the third is that "philosophy is defined by its method rather than its subject-matter"(Barry, 1989, 13).

A decade later, in a 1990 article titled, "How not to Defend Liberal Institutions", Barry sets himself the task of asking how one can persuade non-liberals to at least accept liberal institutions under the pretense of neutrality. He comes to the conclusion that it is unlikely that those with a non-liberal outlook will defend liberal institutions, making the underlying claim that liberals should abandon the cause of selling the idea of neutrality to those who do not share a liberal outlook, and instead focus their attention on discrediting their beliefs (1990, 14). This becomes significant when we situate this suggestion in relation to what he earlier describes in the same article as three ideas that are characteristic of a liberal outlook.

> First is the belief that inequalities are a social artefact, and therefore have to be justified on a basis that starts from the premise of the fundamental equality of all human beings. Second is the belief that every doctrine should be open to critical scrutiny and that no view should be held unless it has in fact withstood critical scrutiny. And third is the belief that no religious dogma can reasonably be held with certainty (Barry, 1990, 2).

Coupled with the three tenets of philosophical inquiry that I highlighted from the 1980 article, there are three things that I take from this passage as significant insights into Barry's later critique against multiculturalists. One is that liberal philosophers are reasoning individuals who are convinced of the merits of rational argumentation as an intellectual process for evaluating the validity of particular claims to truth. Second is that liberalism is fundamentally a doctrine about the equality of all people. Third, and perhaps more importantly for this section, is the idea that religion (which is often used

interchangeably with culture within the debate on multiculturalism) fails to stand the test of rational certitude.[23]

We can see here a certain affinity to Kymlicka's defense of liberalism as a doctrine about individual freedom of choice based on reflection and evaluation. What distinguishes liberalism from other philosophical doctrines is its commitment to reason as a tool for evaluating the credibility of particular claims to the 'good life'. And spending one's time reflecting on what is ideal for him/her is precisely what makes conventional liberal philosophy normative in scope. Barry's point in this regard is that it is not enough to simply see liberalism as a doctrine of negative freedom, as this can lead to the rise of particularly virulent forms of the 'good life' as evidenced with the rise of Nazism and fascism within otherwise liberal societies in the early part of the twentieth century. As is echoed in Culture and Equality, Barry views the current tide toward defending cultural difference on the basis of its distinctiveness alone as a rather illiberal sentiment. The mere existence of cultural difference, in other words, is not a sufficient condition for a liberal defense of multiculturalism. Indeed, there are three claims made about culture by multiculturalists that Barry wishes to dismiss as untenable from a liberal perspective.

The first claim he identifies is one that defends certain cultural practices as forming an element of the cultural group in question. According to Barry, this is merely "an anthropological observation", which, contrary to those who defend these practices as beyond having to demonstrate their necessity according to some universal criterion of value, must satisfy some universal value test. In response to this first claim, Barry asks the question, "How could anybody seriously imagine that citing the mere fact of a

[23] It should come as no surprise then, that Barry, almost unapologetically, conflates religion with claims to cultural difference in his treatment of current debates in multiculturalism as dangerous and ill-advised.

tradition of custom could ever function as a self-contained justificatory move" (Barry, 2001, 253)? In other words, for Barry it is not enough to simply say that, "because we've hunted whales since time immemorial, it's part of our culture and therefore we do not need to justify its moral value now".[24] Barry's point is that no cultural practice is above justification simply because it is claimed to form an integral element of a group's cultural framework on the basis of historical continuity alone. This is not to say, however, that Barry does not agree with someone like Taylor that we should recognize in all human beings an equal capacity for culture, but he adds that "we should also attribute to all human beings an equal capacity for cultural adaptation" (Barry, 2001, 256). According to Barry, a liberal perspective on culture implies that any claim to defend certain culturally specific practices or customs must fall within a liberal theory of justice. To demand the continuation of a cultural practice simply because it has always been done is not enough. As Barry states,

> some cultures are admirable, others are vile. Reasons for doing things that can be advanced within the former will tend to be good, and reasons that can be advanced within the latter will tend to be bad. But in neither case is something's being a part of the culture itself a reason for doing anything (2001, 258).

The second claim that Barry wishes to dispense with relates to what he calls, following Jurgen Habermas, "self-conscious traditionalism". The strategy deployed here in defense of cultural norms and practices revolves around the idea that what was good for our ancestors is good for us. The problem here, according to Barry, is that it tends to 'valorize' culture, to give it an essentialized quality, that, when put into use by multiculturalists, implies that "those who belong to the culture will never thrive unless

[24] I am alluding here to the Makah aboriginal band in Washington State which found itself in a political battle with the International Whaling Commission and environmentalists over their right to hunt 5 gray whales a year as part of a 'cultural renaissance'.

they remain true to it and ensure that any developments that do occur maintain the purity of its spirit" (Barry, 2001, 259). This is clearly inconsistent with his form of liberalism as it uncritically imposes on individuals a pre-determined set of values and practices that leaves no room for critical self-reflection and the freedom to choose a particular way of life over another (or even more modestly, some aspect of a particular way of life). Barry clearly sees this as an affront on individual freedom and autonomy and inconsistent with the liberal view that individuals are bearers of multiple desires and interests. Barry puts this succinctly when he states that

> Liberal principles are the fairest way of adjudicating the disputes that inevitably arise as a result of conflicting interests and incompatible beliefs about the social conditions of the good life (2001, 122).

To enforce a particular way of life on individuals would overlook liberalism's basic commitment to uphold the freedom of individuals to decide for themselves what constitutes a good life and the values and practices that follow from it. Furthermore, it does so without having to give good reasons why they should be protected, aside from the simple statement of fact that they have always done so. We should recall here that Kymlicka makes much the same argument by insisting that granting rights to cultural minorities must be followed by the condition that individual members must be allowed the freedom to dissent or question cultural norms and practices without fear of persecution.

The third claim about culture that Barry addresses revolves around the idea that cultures are of equal value. What is interesting about Barry's position here is that he characterizes the previous two claims as reflecting an idea about cultures as incommensurable. The wish to defend cultural practices on the basis of their

indispensability to the organic integrity of the cultural group as a whole implies that there are no objective standards by which to judge the value of differing cultures (except from inside them of course). Consequently, one arrives at this third claim. Barry's essential point is that even if, as liberals, they can all agree that "all *human beings* are entitled to equal respect", it does not follow from this that all cultures should be presumed of equal value. He makes the rather flippant point that we are (and presumably always have been) bound to make judgments about some cultures as better than others. However, Barry's real concern is with the idea that cultural difference "must be publicly affirmed as being of equal value".

Citing James Tully as one who suggests that to publicly affirm cultural difference means that cultural difference must be affirmed and recognized "by both those who do and those who do not share those cultures", Barry charges Tully with overextending liberalism's commitment to the idea of self-respect. Focusing on Tully's interpretation of John Rawls' theory of justice, Barry suggests that Tully misapprehends Rawls' understanding of the relationship between self-respect and public affirmation. He says that, contrary to what Tully wants Rawls to say, there is nothing in Rawls' theory that would equate to some society-wide mandate to recognize and affirm claims to cultural difference on the grounds that its relationship to individual self-respect is one of the 'primary goods' of a liberal society. Consistent with his own version of liberalism, Barry suggests that this move "shifts into the realm of public control matters that should be left to individual judgment" (Barry, 2001, 269).

At the root of Barry's understanding of the relationship between culture and the individual, then, is the claim that culture must not be given a *de facto* exemption from

having to evaluate, and justify, its norms and practices according to liberal standards of value. Furthermore, imposing these practices on individual members contradicts liberalism's commitment to the use of one's reason in deliberating on what version of the good life one might wish to endorse, or which cultural practices are no longer reasonably justified. Barry is not against the idea of recognizing cultural membership, but he is adamantly opposed to any program that promotes the value of a group (and their practices) over and above the individual (and his/her capacity to choose for themselves how to best lead their life).

Grounding these discussions on the role and place of culture, however, is a particular ontological assumption about the central place of the state in political analysis. As the supreme law-making body in the land, and as the only political authority capable of the legitimate use of violence, power is seen to flow outward from its center. Questions about cultural difference get posed in relation to a discourse of rights and as a matter of legitimacy. To frame the issue of cultural difference as a matter of meting out rights to groups, or members of groups, narrows the scope of the debate. So even though Kymlicka and Taylor spend some considerable time trying to convince us of the normative significance of culture in the lives of individuals, at the end of the day they are merely wanting our permission to grant certain cultural groups rights. In other words, they want our permission to put the force of the state behind claims of cultural difference. Multiculturalism on this account revolves around the capacity to which a cultural minority possesses institutional recognition within the polity. To gain access, and limited control, to the institutions of the state is perceived as the end of political participation. In a similar fashion Barry also frames multiculturalism in terms of rights. Although he does

not agree with Kymlicka and Taylor, he defends his position on culture by suggesting that the liberal state already provides adequate constitutional protections and recognition through common citizenship rights. Furthermore, as conventional political analysis, the debate around culture implicitly turns on questions of legitimacy.

For Kymlicka in particular, the distinction between societal cultures and immigrant groups can also be interpreted in relation to the problem of legitimacy. Societal cultures, from his perspective, are entitled to self-government rights because, as I suggested earlier, they reflect qualities that are very similar in nature to modern states. As the problem of legitimacy has for the most part been worked out in relation to the authority of modern liberal states, Kymlicka's analysis might be seen as an attempt to work out the conditions under which legitimate authority can be conferred upon societal cultures. Taylor puts the point more dramatically when he suggests that cultural groups like the Quebecois demand cultural recognition as a matter of survival. The legitimacy of Quebec's constitutional claims, then, is framed in rather eschatological language. In other words, without the institutions of the state (such as the possession of certain legislative powers) Quebec culture might not survive. The implicit assumption here is that in order for a cultural group like the Quebecois to participate in a legitimate form of politics it must possess the institutional autonomy and freedom to do so. What I wish to do now is move into a more detailed discussion of these terms of autonomy and freedom in order to show how their centrality to the debate is further evidence of Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry's perspective on liberalism and the statist thinking that runs beneath it.

Autonomy and Freedom

19th century political philosopher, John Stuart Mill, is often cited as one of the most powerful exponents of liberalism's commitment to individual autonomy. Of course this is not to suggest that the idea of autonomy was not in circulation before him.[25] But he is a significant figure within the tradition of liberal thought. Principles like freedom of expression, freedom of association, or freedom of speech can be found in Mill's text On Liberty, and his text is often cited as the most representative of liberalism as a philosophical doctrine. In the context of multiculturalism, liberal notions of autonomy and freedom take on a heightened importance, and it is not surprising that Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry all address these principles within the context of claims to cultural identity and difference within liberal democratic states. It will also be noticed that some of what has been discussed in the previous section will no doubt overlap with my discussion here. This is due I believe, to the way in which this dialogue about multiculturalism has largely been framed as a debate about working out the fundamental tenets of liberalism as a philosophical doctrine, rather than, as I will argue later, a rationality of government.

The notion of autonomy within liberalism is not a new concept, yet various formulations of it have been posed within Western philosophy and politics.[26] Equally taken for granted is the idea of freedom. Aside from the classic debate on negative and positive freedom represented in Isaiah Berlin's seminal text (which I will introduce briefly further on in this section), freedom within liberalism is often understood in the

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[25] One merely has to take a cursory glance back through history to see this concept developed, in varying ways, in the likes of Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Marx for example. The list of course could no doubt be expanded, but it serves to illustrate that its centrality too much of our social and political thinking is deeply felt.

[26] See for example, William Connolly's The Terms of Political Discourse, especially chapter 4.

negative sense which crudely refers to the freedom to choose one's preferred way of life without fear of persecution or discrimination from the state. Speaking generally, we might say that autonomy typically assumes the freedom to exercise one's reason in accordance with individual desires and interests, while freedom generally presumes the existence of limited constraints on one's autonomy. The two concepts are closely tied together, which is why they appear together here in the following section. However, I will focus my attention at this point on the concept of autonomy.

Kymlicka's two preconditions for leading a good life are: first, "that we lead our life from the inside, in accordance with our beliefs about what gives value to life"; and second, "that we be free to question those beliefs, to examine them in light of whatever information, examples, and arguments our culture can provide" (1995, 81). To be autonomous is to be free to make choices on the basis of what is of value to oneself; while to be free is to think and act as a means to preserve one's sphere of autonomy from external constraints or impositions (and in the context of multiculturalism, these external constraints refer to the internal restrictions placed on individuals by their cultural group, or as state imposed visions of the good life). Interestingly, this is both the principle for granting group rights, and the limitation to what can be seen as a valid claim to these rights. From a Kymlickian perspective, endorsing minority rights is wholly consistent within the framework of liberalism so long as individuals are free to choose and reflect on their personal circumstances. As he states, "liberals can only endorse minority rights in so far as they are consistent with respect for the freedom or autonomy of individuals" (Kymlicka, 1995, 75). Any minority right that might somehow seem inimical to liberal

ideas of individual autonomy and freedom would simply be deemed illiberal and factored right out of the equation before any deliberation could begin.

The role of the democratic community is to provide the conditions under which the individual can choose courses of action or make judgments about which version of the good life to endorse. This requires that one be autonomous in the sense that she be capable of acting in accordance with an assumed set of inner desires and interests.[27] Any action that may result from this internal deliberation is thus seen as a free act and one that must be encouraged and protected at all costs. There is however, according to Kymlicka, a tension within liberal circles in relation to group rights over "whether autonomy or tolerance is the fundamental value within liberal theory" (1995, 154).

The debate here turns on what Kymlicka sees as the rights of groups to impose internal restrictions on individual members according to cultural custom or practice, and whether or not liberalism consists in the state helping out non-liberal groups in the form of "public funding of schools, language rights, veto rights, or the redrawing of political boundaries" (1995, 155). In this tolerance- based approach, which he associates with the likes of Chandran Kukathus, liberals should "seek to accommodate illiberal groups, so long as they do not seek any support from the larger society, and do not seek to impose their values on others" (1995, 155). However, according to Kymlicka, defining tolerance in this way as the fundamental tenet of liberalism fails to deal effectively with the demands that non-liberal groups make on individual members. Kymlicka's answer to this is to show how, in fact, the idea of tolerance is dependent on the idea of autonomy.

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[27] It must be admitted that Kymlicka and most other classical liberal thinkers would not assume that these interests and desires are fixed, in perhaps the same way that Taylor might think of interests and desires in terms of a horizon of meaning informed by prior moral frameworks. As Taylor has in fact noted, the assumption is that these interests and desires are assumed to be independent of any context of meaning. See Sources of the Self, especially Part 1.

Citing as evidence the five hundred year reign of the Ottoman Empire and its millet system of government, which granted certain self-government powers to its religious communities of Jews and Christians, Kymlicka identifies this as a non-liberal approach to a tolerance-based system of society. Here, religious tolerance was practiced, but not the promotion of individual freedom of conscience, which Kymlicka describes as a distinguishing feature of liberalism. As he states,

> Historically, liberals have believed in a very specific notion of tolerance – one which involves freedom of conscience, not just collective worship. Liberal tolerance protects the right of individuals to dissent from their group, as well as the right of groups not to be persecuted by the state (Kymlicka, 1995, 158).

So where liberals like Kukathus might be said to endorse this quasi-liberal idea of toleration in relation to group rights, Kymlicka suggests that it is a rather distorted view, and one that fails to adequately portray a distinct version of *liberal autonomy*. A truly liberal version of tolerance is committed to autonomy, which is "the idea that individuals should be free to assess and potentially revise their existing ends"(Kymlicka, 1995, 158). Again, as was pointed out in chapter one, Kymlicka's particular brand of liberalism places much weight on the notion of freedom of choice. Autonomy implies the capacity to reflect and evaluate on our conceptions of the 'good', but it can only be corroborated by the freedom to choose whether or not we wish to continue endorsing this particular vision of the 'good'. Liberalism as a philosophical doctrine, then, is based on these principles, and any attempt to defend multiculturalism from a liberal perspective must, presumably, start from these premises. Or does it?

With the usual rhetorical flare, Barry dismisses both the autonomy and tolerance-based strands of liberalism identified by Kymlicka as "confusing and confused". On the notion of autonomy, Barry is very clear that the liberalism he defends does not see the

role of the state as having to "take as its mission the inculcation of autonomy". He charges Kymlicka and William Galston as two who wrongfully characterize liberalism as assuming one of these two approaches. Moreover, he seems to assume that Kymlicka wishes to promote the autonomy strand of liberalism and thus the idea that the state should take an active role in promoting the autonomy of its citizens. On my reading of Kymlicka, however, I don't see this at all. What I do see is a rather close connection between Kymlicka's and Barry's versions of autonomy.

Barry interprets Kymlicka's understanding of autonomy as follows: "a psychological disposition that gives a high priority to Socratic questioning of traditional beliefs and customary ways of life"(Barry, 2001, 119). He then goes on to criticize the perfidious appropriation of liberalism as a doctrine about the state's role in inculcating individual autonomy. Citing for evidence John Stuart Mill's perspective on the role of the state in relation to education, Barry suggests that any claim that characterizes liberalism as a doctrine about inculcating autonomy misinterprets these canonical statements made by Mill in defense of liberal autonomy. Having settled the score, then, Barry states that "what we mean by saying that people are autonomous is simply that whatever beliefs they do have will have been subject to reflection: their beliefs will not merely be those that were drummed into them by their parents, community and schools"(2001, 123).

Recalling Kymlicka's discussion on autonomy in the preceding paragraphs, I see a rather striking similarity between the two. Although Kymlicka wishes to advance a case for cultural rights, he is quite insistent that these rights must not inhibit an individual from still questioning or reflecting on the beliefs or customs of the cultural group to which she belongs. Barry, it would seem, is a little hasty in dismissing Kymlicka on these

grounds and buttresses his claim for autonomy with a defense of the liberal idea of equal opportunity, suggesting that it "is sufficient to explain why ignorance should not be forcibly imposed"(Barry, 2001, 122). Barry's major point in this regard is to suggest that liberalism is not defined solely on the principle of autonomy. According to him, "the defining feature of liberalism is … the principles of equal freedom that underwrite basic liberal institutions: civic equality, freedom of speech and religion, non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and so on"(2001, 122). Consistent with the overall claim made in this thesis, multiculturalism is understood here in terms of its institutional capacity to accommodate cultural diversity. Barry's liberal politics is thus rooted in a sort of functionalism that reduces political questions to issues of institutional efficiency and accessibility.

With respect to Taylor, the notion of autonomy might best be understood through looking at his characterization of the self as a self-interpreting being. This understanding of the self, however, should also be seen in relation to his 'expressivist' understanding of language and what he calls an ethic of authenticity. Although one could fill many hundreds of pages on these ideas, I merely wish to provide a brief sketch so as to flesh out, as accurately as possible, Taylor's position in relation to liberalism and the concept of autonomy.

As we have seen with Kymlicka, the liberal notion of autonomy refers to an individual's capacity to reflect on one's notions of the good, and if one wished to, to choose another version of the 'good life'. So in relation to the many issues raised by multiculturalism, Kymlicka's most general point is that in deciding whether or not to grant group rights to cultural minorities, concern for protecting the rights of the

individual from restrictions placed on her freedom of choice from either the state, or some cultural group, is tantamount to championing the cause of multiculturalism from a liberal perspective. For Taylor, on the other hand, this liberal focus on the individualistic nature of the self and its subsequent portrayal of autonomy as some sort of absolutist claim to independence from others and one's cultural context misses the significance that self-interpretation has for the moral life of the individual.

To be capable of evaluating or reflecting on one's life implies that there is some higher order good that motivates one to question the relevance of one's notion of the good at any present time. Taylor refers to this sort of motivating principle as 'strong evaluation', and suggests that these

> "qualitative distinctions we make between different actions, or feelings, or modes of life, as being in some way morally higher or lower, noble or base, admirable or contemptible…are central to our moral thinking and ineradicable from it (Taylor, quoted in Abbey, 18).

But this form of evaluation does not occur in isolation, or from some objective standpoint that assumes the priority of individual reason apart from the moral framework that both defines the self and the social context within which a meaningful life is made possible. Moreover, these distinctions do not have to be made fully aware to an individual engaged in self-interpretation. Rather, it may be that these 'moral goods' form a tacit background against which the self understands itself and any particular vision of the 'good life'.

These are unique to the self, and are largely an effect of the cultural context within which one lives. In this sense, in so far as one possesses inner desires, or interests, one can be said to be an autonomous agent. Although Taylor views the self in dialogical terms, he nonetheless assumes that individual action is reflective of an inner desire to act on one's version of the 'good life'. In so far as one might be described as a self-

interpreting being, then, according to Taylor one must also be understood as a purposive being. That is to say, that "these are not purposes that can be assigned or imputed by others but are goals that the individual can claim as her own and that direct her action"(Abbey, 2001, 62). But this purposiveness should not be seen in the individualistic sense that liberals like Kymlicka or Barry might understand it. Rather, it implies a moral backdrop against which these goals or purposes gain meaning for an individual. They do not stand independent of this moral horizon, nor do they simply reflect an *individual's* goals, as though they were wholly unique to that person alone and not informed by anything apart from the individual's own consciousness. As Taylor suggests, "we become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity [and purposes], through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression (1995, 32). Taylor's use of language is different from Kymlicka's use of it, as Taylor does not see language in purely instrumental terms as merely the words we speak. It is certainly this,

> But also other modes of expression whereby we define ourselves, including the "languages" of art, of gesture, of love, and the like. But we learn these modes of expression through exchanges with others. People do not acquire the languages needed for self-definition on their own (Taylor, 1995, 32).

Within this 'expressivist' view of language, then, there resides an impulse to what Taylor sees as an 'expression of authenticity'. Each of us as autonomous, self-interpreting beings are motivated by a desire to discover our 'authentic' identity. Part of this drive for authenticity is found in our uses of language (which implies a wider community wherein our languages are learned and attain meaning), and part of it might be said to come from participating in the affairs of our wider political community. For example, Taylor's

assessment of self-determination claims has less to do with their instrumental necessity (in the sense that it provides for a context of choice) than it does with their importance for the survival of the cultural group in question as this ensures that the context of choice be recognized for the moral significance it has for individual identity formation. Taylor puts it in this way:

> one could consider the French language, for instance, as a collective resource that individuals might want to make use of, and act for its preservation, just as one does for clean air or green spaces. But this can't capture the full thrust of policies designed for cultural survival. It is not just a matter of having the French language available for those who might choose it....But it also involves making sure that there is a community of people here in the future that will want to avail itself of the opportunity to use the French language (1995, 58).

Notice here the importance placed on the survival of the cultural identity; and then consider this in relation to my interpretation of Taylor's understanding of the self alluded to earlier.

Multiculturalism, for Taylor then, is not simply about the instrumental need for cultural rights as necessary for individual freedom of choice, it is also about the desire to have one's identity recognized and affirmed as of equal worth to others. And in the context of multiculturalism, this plays itself out in terms of collective rights as it implies recognizing that one's cultural background is constitutive of one's individual identity.

For Taylor, some cultural groups hold certain collective goals as important. The Quebecois in Canada, for example, have been arguing for a certain degree of constitutional recognition as a means to ensure the continued survival of their cultural distinctiveness. This notion of cultural survival is important for Taylor as it is consistent with his understanding of the self as in need of public recognition in order to help realize, in a more substantive sense, one's self-identity. Continuity over time ensures that the

identity of a cultural group remains strong and meaningful for its individual members. A politics of multiculturalism, if guided by the principle of "equal worth", is simply the extension of this philosophical position to cultural minorities and the individual members within them. Implicit in this account of autonomy, however, is the assumption that a multicultural politics (and in this sense also a properly 'liberal' politics) occurs at the level of institutions. The 'recognition' of cultural difference translates into constitutional provisions and protections that are conceived as the end result of political struggle. If Quebec were given the constitutional recognition it demands, then presumably, for Taylor, this would constitute not only a political victory but a moral victory as well. Even though Taylor wants to distance himself from the emptiness of a 'procedural liberalism', his account of politics cannot escape the ontological seduction of the state. Politics in this sense still presumes a conception of the state as that center against which political struggle and contestation is measured. In a similar fashion, all three thinkers' conceptions of freedom remain bound to a tacit statism.

To begin any discussion about what constitutes freedom, or how one could conceive of it in relation to multiculturalism for example, is to come up against what Isaiah Berlin called "the question of obedience and coercion".[28] To what extent can or should the individual expect to be limited in their freedom to do, or say, what they like? In Berlin's formulation, the question turns on the absence of external constraints. As he states, "why should I (or anyone) obey anyone else? Why should I not live as I like? Must I obey? If I disobey, may I be coerced? By whom, and to what degree, and in the name of what, and for the sake of what"(Berlin, 1977, 121)? For Berlin, any discussion about the

[28] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty", in Isaiah Berlin, Four Essays on Liberty, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, 121.

concept of freedom must, and can only examine the degree to which a person is coerced, or is expected to be coerced by authority outside the sphere of the self. Freedom is thus conceived, for Berlin, in a 'negative' sense.

But what then does 'negative' freedom look like? In this sense, an individual is "normally said to be free to the degree to which no man or body of men interferes with [his] activity. Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others" (Berlin, 1977, 122). In other words, freedom inheres in the absence of both obstruction and coercion. We can see here the influence on Kymlicka's understanding of liberal autonomy as "the importance of allowing individuals to make free and informed choices about how to lead their lives"(2001, 53). Consequently, for Kymlicka, freedom "is the ability to explore and revise the ways of life which are made available by our societal culture"(2001, 53). Corroborating this 'negative' conception of freedom, Barry states that "since liberals value freedom of association, they are naturally favorable to the creation of conditions in which association can flourish with the least possible public regulation"(2001, 148). Although the difference between Kymlicka and Barry turns on just what these 'conditions' are, they are nonetheless convinced that liberalism as a comprehensive philosophy provides us with the principles that are necessary for ensuring and protecting individual freedom more generally.

For Kymlicka, the link between societal cultures and freedom is essential to his argument in favor of minority rights. It is essential, moreover, in two respects: first, to grant a cultural minority the right to practice or worship according to one's religious association must not lead to the oppression of individual member's freedom to "exit" or dissent from one's cultural group; and second, this freedom of association must uphold

the right for individuals to freely choose which cultural group one might wish to belong to. As Kymlicka states, "to ensure freedom and equality for all citizens involves, inter alia, ensuring that they have equal membership in, and access to, the opportunities made available by the societal culture"(2001, 53). It must be remembered here that Kymlicka's distinction between societal cultures and immigrant groups is important as it implies different forms of group-differentiated rights demanded by minority groups.[29]

Nevertheless, freedom is meant here as freedom from outside interference (so long as the action or practice does not contradict liberal values), and freedom to live one's life according to a particular vision of the 'good life'. Kymlicka puts it like this, "paternalistic restrictions on liberty often … do not work – lives do not go better by being led from the outside, in accordance with values the person does not endorse"(1995, 81). So a recent Quebec court decision to allow a 12-year-old Sikh boy to wear his ceremonial *kirpan* to school would not be a contradiction of liberal values as it allows the boy to practice freely his religious customs without being discriminated against on account of his cultural membership. And presumably, this judicial decision, if it is thought to be promoting a truly liberal version of freedom, will also uphold the boy's right to <u>not</u> wear the dagger if he so chooses in the future without fear of persecution by those within his cultural community. Interestingly, for Barry, a liberal concern for freedom stops at freedom of association. So although an individual should be free to choose how they live their life, regardless of what some political (or organizational) authority might say,

[29] For example, societal cultures like the First Nations or the Quebecois, typically demand the right to self-government which usually takes "the form of devolving political power to a political unit substantially controlled by the members of the national minority, and substantially corresponding to their historical homeland or territory"(1995, 30); while polyethnic rights sought by immigrant groups "are usually intended to promote integration into the larger society, not self-government" (1995, 31). In the latter case, this can take the form of a demand to express cultural particularity and pride without jeopardizing "their success in the economic and political institutions of the dominant society"(1995, 31).

freedom must not be used to promote the unequal treatment of citizens across different cultural contexts.

By promoting the liberal value of freedom of association as a universal principle capable of accommodating claims to cultural distinctness, Barry is implying two things. One is that liberalism is already a doctrine that is capable of respecting the freedoms of different cultural groups without having to promote the cultural particularity of certain groups over and above all individuals universally. And second is the claim that multiculturalists who promote the rights of cultural minorities under the auspices of the freedom do so rather illiberally.

> With regards to the first claim, Barry states rather brazenly, that
>
> the partisans of diversity or tolerance are absolutely right to insist in the importance of freedom of association. [But] they are in error, however, in suggesting that liberals are somehow inhibited by their principles from recognizing its value (2001, 123).

What Barry is suggesting is that liberals (like himself) are committed to the idea of people freely choosing which groups they would or would not like to belong to. But this does not lead to the conclusion that accommodating cultural diversity equals granting special rights to groups to intervene in the affairs of their members that parallels the authority of the state. On the critique that Bhikhu Parekh levels at liberal thought for "privatizing" non-liberal ways of life, Barry states that "to say that liberalism 'privatizes' non-liberal ways of life is simply to say that members of illiberal groups enjoy exactly the same rights as anybody else" (2001, 124). Granting special rights to groups to intervene in the lives of its members under the guise of extending liberal conceptions of freedom to individual members of varying cultural groups is to miss the importance of voluntary association.

Barry's crucial point in this regard is that liberalism acknowledges the importance of group affiliation or cultural membership, but it draws the line on cultural recognition at the point when individual membership becomes involuntary. Barry puts it in this way:

> The whole point of liberal institutions is to leave people with a great deal of discretion in their conduct, and one of the ways in which they can exercise that discretion is *voluntarily* to follow the orders issued by bodies whose authority they acknowledge (2001, 124, italics added).

Here Barry moves very close to Kymlicka's insistence that granting group rights must not inhibit an individual's freedom to dissent or challenge cultural customs or practices if they are viewed by the individual as not consistent with their own particular vision of the 'good life'. After all, according to Barry, it is only the state's business to intervene in the affairs of citizens, and this only when it is meant to protect individual freedom from any external constraints placed on individual action. If granting group rights might in fact encourage this form of restrictive behavior then it is surely not a position rooted in liberalism (2001, 125). Barry, like Kymlicka, prefers a negative conception of freedom over a positive one, and like Berlin, they are both skeptical of views of freedom that bind the individual to her community context. For Taylor, however, a negative conception of freedom already implies a positive conception of freedom, and thus he sees the distinction between the two as rather dubious.

This move pivots around Taylor's understanding of freedom as "self realization". That is to say, freedom cannot simply be the absence of external constraints, it must also involve some measure of "self-fulfillment". If freedom inheres to some degree in self-fulfillment, then it must entail some measure of exercise. Taylor suggests that, "one is free only to the extent that one has effectively determined oneself and the shape of one's life" (Taylor, 1979, 177). Given his ontological account of the self as a purposive being

constituted in and through one's cultural/community context,[30] it should come as no surprise that he defends a positive conception of freedom.

Where Taylor takes issue with the concept of negative freedom is with regards to individual motivations. To simply be free of coercion or external constraints is to occlude the moral significance, or underlying impulse of freedom. Freedom for Taylor must be for some reason. It is not enough to simply conceive of freedom as an "opportunity concept", as he has criticized Berlin (and presumably other advocates of a negative conception of freedom) with doing (Taylor, 1979, 177). To be given the opportunity to be free, already implies, according to Taylor, an idea of freedom as an "exercise concept". As he states, "with the freedom of self-realization, having the opportunity to be free requires that I already be exercising freedom. A pure opportunity concept is impossible here"(1979, 178). To exercise one's freedom is to act in accordance with one's inner purposes or goals. If we recall the earlier discussion on Taylor's understanding of the self, we know that for him, one's purposes or goals are derived from the moral frameworks that make up one's cultural/community context. And part of what makes us human beings is our desire to discover our 'true' identity through self-interpretation and the exercise of our freedom.[31] Thus to realize one's purposes or goals is the end to which a free subject gestures. In other words, Taylor views freedom telelogically whereby an individual's existence might be said to be directed toward fulfilling one's obligation to oneself through the exercise of her freedom in accordance with her sense of self. Stated

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[30] I am using cultural/community context as I believe Taylor would understand them in the same way. Moreover, as this thesis is interested in Taylor's brand of liberalism in the context of multiculturalism, one's cultural context implies the same sort of horizons of meaning that a community context does.

[31] This 'true' identity, however, should not be confused with an essentialist claim to identity as Taylor acknowledges that an individual's interpretation of oneself can change, thus altering our conception of who we are trying to become. The point is that our search for our 'true' identity is true in the sense that it has moral significance for us individually.

differently, an exercise concept of freedom means that, "being free can't just be a question of doing what you want in the unproblematic sense. It must also be that what you want doesn't run against the grain of your basic purposes, or your self-realization"(Taylor, 1979, 180). A positive conception of freedom implies, and remains consistent with, Taylor's idea of strong evaluation, which suggests that the actions we may take, or the goals we may aspire to, are informed by prior qualitative distinctions about what we value in life.

Politically speaking, a positive conception of freedom suggests more than the simple possibility to act or not act, it implies providing the conditions under which one may realize her inner purposes or goals. As Ruth Abbey has suggested, "the accent here is on the individual achieving some control over his or her own life, some measure of self-mastery or self-direction. In some areas, the self-mastery promoted by positive freedom might not be attainable by acting, or being left, alone"(Abbey, 2001, 108). And here I think we can begin to see Taylor's position on multiculturalism more clearly. His defense of what he calls a 'politics of recognition', then, revovles around the notion of providing the conditions under which a positive conception of freedom may develop. In order for an individual to realize his/her 'true' self, the cultural background that provides the language within which we make our strong evaluations about what is more meaningful to us must be recognized as of equal worth to other cultural/community contexts. And as I have suggested earlier, this recognition translates into institutional or constitutional protections. Kymlicka appears to come close to this sort of defense of cultural rights, but whereas he is more skeptical of cultural groups having some direction over their members actions, Taylor is more willing to see the need in helping steer

individuals toward their higher goals, purposes, or motivations. As he puts it, "freedom can't just be the absence of external obstacles, for there may also be internal ones"(Taylor, 1979, 193). In other words, we may misrepresent our inner purposes or goals and be acting merely on what we perceive to be of moral significance for us. If this is the case, then there is nothing wrong, according to Taylor, with intervening in the affairs of individuals so long as it is done under the auspices of enhancing our (positive) freedom in the name of self-fulfillment.

However, what has been bubbling beneath the surface throughout the characterization of these three thinkers in this chapter has been an implicit statist ontology that narrows their debate on questions of autonomy and freedom to very similar claims about the place of liberal institutions in the politics of cultural difference. For Kymlicka and Barry, liberal institutions provide and protect a sphere of individual mobility and autonomy where individual freedom is then thought to flourish. Despite their differences about the place of cultural rights, what is undisputed is the importance that rights play in their conceptions of liberal politics. Thus, their debate over autonomy and freedom in relation to multiculturalism is largely a debate about whether or not some cultural groups need more rights than those already provided by the liberal state. Moreover, (negative) freedom by their accounts, is a typically liberal one that opposes freedom to government. Freedom in both their perspectives is freedom *from* external interference. It is something to be secured from the state, it is understood to be separate from the apparatuses of government. In this way, the institutions of a liberal society are important only in so far as they provide the freedom for individuals to live a life outside the institutional and bureaucratic machinery of government. Thus the question of cultural

rights is posed in terms of the efficacy of liberal institutions - do they, or do they not provide an adequate range of legal rights? Taylor, for his part, retreats to a similar ground.

Despite his different interpretation of freedom, and perhaps because of it, his account of politics depends very heavily on the centrality of liberal institutions. To recognize the moral significance of culture in the lives of cultural minorities is no doubt an important insight and one that goes a long way to justifying the claims of these groups. However, the further point that Taylor is making is that the "politics of recognition" is largely about promoting the values of democratic participation and cooperation. What we all share as members of a national community (a liberal one to be sure) is a common relationship to our political institutions. These institutions are important as they provide part of the moral framework that is constitutive of our sense of self. Thus, a multicultural politics on this account is posed as a matter of securing some level of state power in order to participate in the affairs of the democratic polity. Implicit in Taylor's politics, however, is his relationship to the tradition of republicanism, which, alongside Kymlicka and Barry's commitment to questions of justice provides another cut into drawing out the state-centric focus of their analyses.

Justice, Republicanism and the State

For all three thinkers discussed here, there is an underlying assumption intimately tied to their particular orientation to liberalism as a philosophical doctrine. That assumption pivots on an implicit statism. The concern that all three have shown for attempting to clarify liberalism's fundamental principles in relation to the individual, their cultural context, and the wider political community follows from a prior, common

point of departure. To put it somewhat differently, it might be said that all three equally reify a particular conception of liberal democratic community which limits their discussions about multiculturalism to one focused on working out the proper conditions between the state and civil society.[32] On this view liberalism becomes merely one view among other 'isms' (here I am thinking of socialism, nationalism, etc) which are equally concerned with offering an 'ideal' account of the relationship between the state and civil society. Once the assumption has been made to conceive of politics as something that occurs, or should somehow occur, between the state and civil society, it is not a long slide into that perennial question about which came first, the chicken or the egg. If one reads much of modern political thought as a series of questions (and 'resolutions') about what to do about obligations to the sovereign state and respecting the autonomous lives of individuals, then one can begin to see the all to familiar problems between individual and state, identity and difference, unity and diversity.

R.B.J. Walker has suggested that modern democratic thought has most often been framed in relation to a central contradiction between universal aspiration and particularistic practice, which can be envisaged in three stages (1993, 146). In the first place, there have been the competing claims to liberty and obligation, on the one hand, and to liberty and equality, on the other. Implicit in these formulations is a, according to Walker, distinctly modern account of the individual as both autonomous and equal, as opposed to "the grand hierarchical schemes of feudalism, empire and scholastic metaphysics" (Walker, 1993, 147). Given this historical transformation in the nature of

[32] On this idea of the reification of liberal democratic community within democratic theory, and its subsequent erasure of the 'local' as a site of politics, see Warren Magnusson, The Search for Political Space, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996, especially chapter 2; and R.B.J. Walker, Inside/Outside, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, especially chapter 7.

the individual, modern political thought, on this account, has been faced with the problem of reconciling claims of individual identity with those of political community.

This brings us to the second stage, which Walker identifies as attempts to resolve these apparent contradictions through appeals to the conceptual pairings of, for example, public/private and state/civil society. For Walker, however, the most significant point of this has to do with the way in which the conditions under which these contradictions, and their partial resolutions, have become possible. In this way, and in keeping with his broader interest in the spatiotemporal framing of modern political thought and practice, Walker identifies the third stage of this framing of the contradiction between universal aspiration and particularistic practice as a limit, or boundary, condition.

What have made these modern contradictions possible have been assumptions about what lies inside and outside of modern democratic communities. He identifies these in spatial and temporal terms, suggesting that outside the modern state there is thought to exist insecurity, anarchy, and development, while inside there exists security, identity, and progress (Walker, 1993, 147). Walker puts the point like this:

> The legitimacy of the modern state depends in the final instance on the claim that it, and it alone, is able to allow the citizens of particular states to participate in a broader humanity, no matter whether this participation is understood to be a product of mere utilitarian prudence or some more elevated ethical or communitarian principle (1993, 151).

For my purposes, these insights help to situate my analysis in relation to what I believe is a rather unhelpful (and all to familiar) focus on attempting to reconcile claims to individual identity and difference through the philosophical trappings of liberalism and the presumed resolution to this dilemma through an appeal to the opposition between civil society and the state. Having staked out their ground in relation to notions of culture

and individuality, and autonomy and freedom, Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor offer support for their philosophical musings through particular justifications. With regards to Kymlicka and Barry, this plays itself out in relation to notions of liberal justice, while for Taylor this assumes a rather nostalgic reach into the past for the retrieval of the merits of republicanism.

Kymlicka tells us in Multicultural Citizenship that "protecting one person's cultural membership has costs for other people and other interests, and we need to determine when these trade-offs are *justified*" (1995, 107, italics added). It is not enough to simply define one's particular brand of liberalism as a means to persuade the non-believers about the merits of defending cultural rights; this must also be buttressed by a strong claim for justice. Moreover, given the assumed opposition between state and civil society, Kymlicka as a prudent political philosopher sets himself the task of working out the conditions under which claims made on the polity are justified. For him, a liberal theory of justice, in relation to claims about cultural rights, turns on a particular reading of equality.

Arguing against those who endorse what he calls a 'benign neglect' perspective, which claims that universal individual rights are more than enough to accommodate the claims of cultural difference and that the role of the state should be as a neutral bystander in the cultural market-place, Kymlicka suggests that these 'liberal' proponents miss the significance of the equality argument within liberal thought. As he puts it,

> Any plausible theory of justice should recognize the fairness of these external protections for national minorities. They are clearly justified, I believe, within a liberal egalitarian theory, such as Rawls's and Dworkin's, which emphasizes the importance of *rectifying unchosen inequalities* (Kymlicka, 1995, 109, italics added).

Consider now the following quotation from Barry: "for egalitarian liberals, equal treatment is required by justice. It is an expression of the equal rights to which citizens of a liberal state are entitled" (2001, 71). Both claim to represent a form of 'egalitarian liberalism', and both view justice as ineradicably linked to concerns for ensuring conditions of equality. For Kymlicka, justice as fairness depends upon this notion of *unchosen inequalities* and provides a justification within a liberal theory of justice to right the wrongs of cultural injustice. Moreover, it does so in order to justify a more active role for the state in adjudicating claims about cultural inequality. Interestingly, Brian Barry admits elsewhere his partial agreement with Rawls's theory of justice,[33] yet sees no affiliations whatsoever with Kymlicka as he handily dismisses his case for cultural rights throughout his book, Culture and Equality. But perhaps more importantly for my purposes, it is the role of the state in these appeals to justice that is interesting.

One of the central points that Kymlicka consistently makes is that national minority cultures must be supported in their efforts to ensure the continued preservation of their societal cultures revolves around claims about individual autonomy and freedom. Whereas group-differentiated rights for immigrant groups may be satisfied through the recognition (and non-persecution) of certain religious customs and dress, the case is much different for those cultures that have a claim to territorial integrity, some established institutional infrastructure, and a shared language. Buttressing this point is the claim that a liberal theory of justice provides the justifications necessary for defending a politics of multiculturalism. As Kymlicka puts it, "were it not for these group-differentiated rights, the members of minority cultures would not have the same ability to

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[33] See his "John Rawls and the Search for Stability", in Ethics, 105, July 1995, 874-915.

live and work in their own language and culture that the members of majority cultures take for granted" (1995, 126). In other words, to resolve the contradiction between individual autonomy and equality, or unity and diversity, Kymlicka appeals to a liberal theory of justice that sees the state's role as inextricably tied to meting out justice to those who suffer from some form of unequal treatment. Political contestation, in other words, is a matter of speaking truth to power. The state and its institutions are seen as the center of political authority and power, so political questions are framed in relation to these structures.

For Barry, on the other hand, an egalitarian liberal perspective only requires that the state provide the conditions under which every citizen be provided with the same equal opportunities to pursue whatever version of the 'good life' they wish. As he puts it, "the egalitarian liberal position is that justice requires equal rights and opportunities but not necessarily equal outcomes defined over groups" (Barry, 2001, 92). What makes liberalism a fundamentally egalitarian doctrine is that it promotes the equal treatment of individuals despite, or perhaps in spite of, differences in race, ethnicity, or class. But for Barry, this follows from a prior assumption about the minimal interference of the state in the constitution of civil society. For him, "liberalism is, both historically and logically, the result of generalizing the proposition that it is no business of the state to enforce the observance of the true religion – however and by whomever that is defined" (2001, 65). According to him, this is exactly what the defenders of multiculturalism wish to do – to 'culturalize' "the proposition that the legitimate tasks of the state include the enforcement of the true religion" (2001, 65). In Barry's egalitarian liberalism "special treatment for

members of disadvantaged groups is justified only for as long as the inequality persists" (2001, 13).

In either case, there is an underlying sense that the state is central to implementing a liberal theory of justice within the context of multiculturalism. In Kymlicka's case, the state assumes a more active role in ensuring that cultural inequalities are rectified through cultural rights, while in Barry's case it assumes a more passive role, suggesting that the liberal state already provides the conditions for accommodating cultural difference through its commitment to freedom of association. In any case, according to Barry, "diverting attention away from shared disadvantages such as unemployment, poverty, low-quality housing and inadequate public services" (2001, 12) detracts from the state's more legitimate role in what he has called "the politics of redistribution".

Recalling Walker's claim that modern political thought might be seen to be torn between the contradictory pull of universal aspiration and particularistic practice, which is often thought to be resolved through the familiar pairing of the state and civil society, we might be better able to see this within Kymlicka's, Taylor's, and Barry's thinking about multiculturalism. On the one hand, it might be said, 'we' are all citizens of the state, and as such are entitled to all the universal promises that this supposedly offers: freedom, equality, progress, and self-fulfillment. While on the other hand, it might be said that 'we', in fact, are all individuals with varying cultural backgrounds, experiences, and visions of what makes life good for 'us'. This, it would seem, entails ensuring that the conditions of our particularity are met: our autonomy, our capacity to use our reason toward particular ends, or by simply protecting our right to be different. For Kymlicka and Barry, this resolution comes through a philosophical treatment of the liberty and

equality of individuals within the bounds of liberal justice. But there is another way in which this contradiction (and its 'resolution') might be met. For Charles Taylor, the demands of individual autonomy must be met by an equal demand for civic virtue.

Taylor has suggested elsewhere that, "liberal democracy is a great philosophy of inclusion" (1999). Part of what makes liberal democracy so attractive over other less "inclusive" regimes is its philosophically grounded commitment to recognizing the difference and the equality of all citizens, and largely its promise of freedom. However, and according to Taylor, this liberal commitment to negative freedom should also be supplemented by an obligation to participate in the affairs of one's political community. Consistent with his conception of the self, and the political implications that arise from his understanding of positive freedom, Taylor suggests that part of what characterizes the general "malaise of modernity" and the subsequent retreat from democratic participation follows from a more general, and very classically liberal, suspicion of politics and state (1985, 1991).

Rather than simply dismiss those liberals who seem content in defending liberalism in relation to claims about negative freedom and a minimalist state, Taylor wishes to prop these assumptions up so that they are better able to carry the full weight of liberalism's political and philosophical significance. Reaching back into our civic humanist past, he retrieves and attempts to revive, an appeal to collective belonging, which he believes is necessary for a stable democratic polity to flourish and survive. Taylor puts it in this way:

> Modern western societies are all citizen republics, or strive to be. Their conception of the good is partly shaped by the tradition of civic humanism. The citizen republic is to be valued not just as a guarantee of general utility, or as a bulwark of rights. It might even endanger these in certain circumstances. We

> value it also because we generally hold that the form of life in which men govern themselves, and decide their own fate through common deliberation, is higher than one in which they live as subjects of even an enlightened despotism (Taylor, quoted in Abbey, 2000, 115).

The *citizen republic* (the state) is not worth defending simply because it guarantees for all citizens certain rights which protect their individual freedoms, rather it is to be defended because it is a space in which self-fulfillment and self-discovery is made possible.[34] The *citizen republic* is that space in which one's sense of dignity can flourish through political participation in a community in which all citizens share similar feelings of belonging, loyalty, and above all, a commitment to the moral significance of our political and spiritual lives. This of course implies that 'we' all recognize one another's equal need for the public recognition of what makes us uniquely 'us'.[35] This, of course, sets the backdrop for Taylor's foray into the 'politics of recognition'.

What occupies most of Taylor's essay of the same name turns on his desire to suggest that with the shift from pre-modern forms of identity formation, whereby one's identity was largely recognized in relation to their social role, the modern era has ushered in an understanding of identity that recognizes our *uniqueness* as more than simply a result of an "inherited social hierarchy". Contrary to what liberals like Kymlicka and Barry might say about modern liberalism's notions of equality as being understood through claims about the centrality of rights, Taylor places a lot more weight on the potentially deleterious effects that *mis*-recognition might have on one's sense of self

[34] Of course this is not to suggest that Taylor dismisses the importance of civil and political rights, but rather that what underlies a commitment to these rights is our drive to realize our 'authentic' self. Again, this may be characterized as the chicken or egg question.

[35] The double meaning of the word 'us' as a reference to both the individual and the wider political community embodied in the state is evidence of what Walker refers to as modern political thought's contradictory pull between universal aspiration and particularistic practice.

when a person's cultural context is unequally valued. So in the context of Canadian multiculturalism, then, part of what has made the Quebec question such an irascible problem from Taylor's point of view is that "the very understandable grievances of French Canadians were made more acute and complex by the perception they were not acknowledged by the English speaking world" (Taylor, quoted in Abbey, 2000, 137). What a strict rights-based model of democracy (of the sort that Kymlicka and Barry develop), cannot do, then, is appreciate how the deeply moral significance that having one's identity (whether collective or individual) recognized publicly is essential to helping empower a person to realize a 'truly' authentic sense of self. Taylor's desire to retrieve the merits of civic humanism and the *citizen republic* can perhaps be seen as another way in which the contradictory claims to universal aspiration and particularistic practice is thought to be resolved. Only within the liberal democratic *citizen republic*, where all citizens share a similar desire to realize their full potential, can the demands of cultural diversity be met without the bloodletting of competing nationalist sentiment. There is an underlying fear in all of these thinkers' work on multiculturalism that what is at stake in the politics of difference is the stability of the liberal state.

To be sensitive to the claims of the Quebecois for example is to recognize that to be insensitive is to invite acrimony within the national borders of Canada. It is in effect to move towards the dissolution of a pan-Canadian identity, which is seemingly only possible with the inclusion of Quebec. For Kymlicka, claims for self-determination rights (if they meet his definition of a societal culture) must be met in order that the smooth functioning of a multicultural state can continue unabated. As he notes, " refusing demands for self-government rights will simply aggravate alienation among national

minorities, and increase the desire for secession" (1995, 183). However, this impulse to recognize and affirm cultural difference is always held in check by the larger demands of the national community. Kymlicka admits that, "the fundamental challenge facing liberal theorists…is to identify the sources of unity in a democratic multination state (1995, 192). Similarly, Barry notes that "liberal democracies are very unlikely to produce just outcomes unless their citizens have certain attitudes towards one another…and a willingness on the part of citizens to make sacrifices for the common good"(2001, 80). The state is thus conceived as the anchor that holds together a heterogeneous citizenry whose common interests must be identified and whose loyalties must be secured if the state as a whole is to avoid internal dissolution. When liberals like Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor frame the question of cultural diversity in terms of liberalism as a philosophy or type of society, what they are implying is that in order to avoid the violence that arises from civil wars, or claims for self-determination, liberal principles and institutions should be adopted, as they are thought to be the best choices for ensuring the stability of the state.

It is no coincidence that Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry are all, rather ironically, obsessed with questions of unity and stability. However, cultural difference is good for the development of a liberal state only in so far as it doesn't put into question the central role that the state occupies in our commitments to principles of citizenship, justice, equality, freedom, and democracy. After all, most debates on multiculturalism still take the relationship these terms have with the state to be rather unproblematic. This is perhaps more evident in Kymlicka's various attempts to broaden the scope of what citizenship might mean, to weigh claims for cultural recognition in terms of justice, to

work out cultural difference in terms of its relationship to liberal equality and freedom, or to assess the merits of multination federalism (1995, 2001). His project of broadening the terms of the debate to include more possibilities is certainly consistent with his liberal background. After all, liberal philosophy is all about inclusion! What's not considered is how one may pose the question of cultural difference beyond the already given boundaries of the liberal state. Liberal notions of equality, justice, freedom, and autonomy, as represented in Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor, depend upon a particular commitment to the state as that space in which democratic principles are secured for the benefit of its citizens.

If one reads Kymlicka's, Barry's, and Taylor's discussions on multiculturalism through liberalism as a philosophical doctrine, then, one could suggest that it produces an 'ideal' conception of what politics could be. It does so, I would suggest, through its capacity to locate a problem (cultural difference), fix it in a place (the liberal state), accord it a certain degree of urgency (referencing examples like Yugoslavia), and by appealing to the desire of hope (liberalism as the great philosophy of inclusion). But all this is possible only if one first makes an ontological commitment to the state as the place in which, and through which, the good life is thought to have the best chance of realization. In this way, the discourse of multiculturalism represented by Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor, can be said to reproduce the centrality of the state in our explanations and understandings of modern politics in much the same way that one could say that the state is thought to provide the only conditions under which a politics of multiculturalism can be made possible.

What this rather long chapter has attempted to do is to suggest a similarity between Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry that is perhaps overlooked in their discussions on multiculturalism. Their 'competing' forms of liberalism are all bound together through an understanding of liberalism as a philosophical doctrine. As such, their discussions on multiculturalism tend toward a series of claims and counter-claims about the merits and limitations of liberalism, rather than on rethinking what it might mean to think about cultural difference beyond the confines of disciplinary convention and the implicit statism this assumes. Underlying all three thinkers' perspectives on multiculturalism are common assumptions made about the distinction between the state and civil society, between questions of unity and diversity, and between freedom and autonomy. Moreover, resolving these apparently contradictory claims can only come about through an appeal to liberalism as a philosophical doctrine and through a particularly liberal answer to the relationship between the individual and the state. What I want to do in the next chapter is offer an alternative account of liberalism, which shifts the focus away from it as a philosophical doctrine and its implicit statism, towards what a governmentality approach suggests is an 'analytics of government'. In this way, a governmentality approach is less concerned with offering a philosophical answer to the competing claims of universal aspiration and particularistic practice than it is with exploring, and uncovering, the various rationalities, forms of knowledge, and techniques and strategies of government that connect questions of government, politics and administration to the space of bodies, lives, selves and persons (Dean, 1999, 12).

Chapter Three

In the previous chapter I tried to illustrate a common point of departure that Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor all assume in their analyses of multiculturalism. I have suggested that their attempt to come up with a comprehensive philosophy that can be transposed onto society masks an implicit statism that reduces their theoretical claims to something of a normative ideal. What I wish to do in this final chapter is offer an alternative account of liberalism that I believe opens up the theoretical possibilities for thinking beyond the conceptual and territorial boundaries of the state. To do this I have turned to a body of literature inspired by Michel Foucault that has come to be known as 'governmentality studies'.

Rather than concern itself with the question of "how we *should* organize ourselves", which leads thinkers like Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor into a normative debate about liberalism as a philosophical doctrine, a governmentality perspective takes the position (following Foucault) that what is interesting about liberalism is how it has evolved historically as a critical attitude toward the problem of government and into a series of responses about questions of "how to govern". This historical interpretation has led some, following Foucault's lead, to view liberalism as "an art of government". This chapter, then, will highlight some of the significant features of this alternative perspective on liberalism as a means to open the way toward, what I suggest in the conclusion, is a shift in focus away from the centrality of state.

The Problem of Government

Michel Foucault suggested in his 1978 lecture on 'Governmentality'[36] that in the

[36] Reprinted in Graham Burchell et al 1991. The Foucault Effect, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

sixteenth century there was an explosion with regards to the problem of government. There was, he suggests, a multitude of ways in which the question of government was posed. There was the government of oneself, the government of souls and lives, the government of children, and the government of the state (Foucault, 1991, 87). What was significant about this shift in thinking about government was that it was a move away from a strictly juridical theory of sovereignty that was most prevalent throughout the Middle Ages, which defined the rule of sovereignty in strictly legal terms and in relation to what Foucault has called '*raison d'etat',* or reason of state (Foucault, 1991, 93). Power and authority were defined in terms of how best to ensure the security of one's territory. Thus, early modern political treatises, such as Machiavelli's The Prince, are often interpreted as texts offering 'advice to the prince' on how to best protect his principality from both internal and external strife. Consequently, the prince was meant to rule from the top down, issuing edicts and decrees that were meant to reinforce the prince's divine right and sovereign authority over a territory. Thus one gets the caricatured sketch of Machiavelli as the thinker most known for that hackneyed aphorism "the means justify the ends". Power, in this sense, was to be retained at all costs so as to ensure the stability and security of the principality.[37]

However, Foucault interprets in Machiavelli (or more specifically in the reactions to him from other contemporary thinkers) the beginnings of what he calls the 'problem of government'. The prince, as external to the principality over which he wields sole political authority, has no "fundamental, essential, natural and juridical connection" with

[37] Critical IR scholars have been insightful in pointing out the use of Machiavelli in realist theories of IR as a means to justify and explain an international world of anarchic states related to one another only through a similar commitment to the pursuit of rational self-interest. See in particular, R.B.J. Walker, Inside/Outside, 1993.

his subjects. As a result, any link there is indeed a fragile one and thus susceptible to erosion. Consequently, the authority and energies of the prince must be continually concerned with strengthening this rather fragile relationship. Foucault sees in Machiavelli's text two prominent themes: one is concerned with "identifying dangers (where they come from, what they consist in, their severity: which are the greater, which the slighter), and second, [is the] develop[ment] [of] the art of manipulating relations of force that will allow the prince to ensure the protection of his principality, understood as the link that binds him to his territory and his subjects" (Foucault, 1991, 90). This second concern might be said to mark the nascent beginnings of what Foucault interprets as a series of questions relating to the form that government should take. The earliest expression of this form of government, according to Foucault, comes with the idea of the economy.

> To govern a state will therefore mean to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of the entire state, which means exercising towards its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and his goods (1991, 92).

This is significant as the household economy was taken as a model for how to manage the affairs of the state and the inhabitants within it. This particular model will persist as a cogent answer to what Foucault refers to as 'reason of state' up until around the eighteenth century when this model loses its significance as a justification for the rule of sovereignty and when an 'art of government' as an alternative form of rule really begins to flourish.

What Foucault is getting at is a distinction he sees emerging between sovereignty and government. Sovereignty was, throughout the Middle Ages, assumed to be a juridical

defense of the sovereign's rule over his territory and subjects through an appeal to natural law, and in this way suffered from what Foucault saw as a problem of self-referentiality, which, simply stated meant the end of sovereignty was the exercise of sovereignty. Government, by contrast, was emerging in the eighteenth century as a particular rationality concerned with "the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead to a convenient end" (La Perriere quoted in Foucault, 1991, 93). This is not to suggest, of course, that sovereignty was disappearing. Rather, a juridical theory of sovereignty informed by a 'reason of state', was becoming one form of rule alongside two others, namely, government and discipline.

The significance of Foucault's insight in this regard is his suggestion that throughout early modern Europe there was beginning to emerge, however inchoate at the time, a particular rationality of rule that was distinct from the theories of sovereignty that proliferated throughout the rise of the modern states system. So that although one may see in the works of Hobbes, Bodin, Pufendorf, and Rousseau for example, an explicit concern with formulating theories of sovereignty, there were also thinkers (Foucault identifies the economic theories of the Physiocrats and Adam Smith for example) that were dealing with the problem of governing a population in relation to a market reality that was beginning to be seen as separate from, yet internal to, the state. Managing the economy was being seen less as an activity of the state, and more as a reality in possession of its own laws and mechanisms of control.

Up until the middle of the eighteenth century, according to Foucault, it was on the model of the family that the state tried to mirror itself in relation to the management of the economy, or in terms of the conduct of the sovereign.

> The art of government . . . is essentially concerned with answering the question of how to introduce economy – that is to say, the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the family (which a good father is expected to do in relation to his wife, children and servants) and of making the family fortunes prosper – how to introduce this meticulous attention of the father towards his family into the management of the state (1991, 92).

The father, as head of the household, was responsible for the well-being of his wife, children, and servants. It was his responsibility to ensure that the affairs of the house were managed properly, and that all those living within his walls were deferential to his authority. In other words, what mattered was a properly run household, where everyone knew their place and what was expected of them. What was good for the family as a whole was what motivated the behaviour of the head of the household. Moreover, in early modern Europe, it was this model of the family that provided a framework for the organization of the state.

According to Foucault, however, this model began to lose its centrality, largely as a result of an emerging phenomenon called the population. He puts the point like this:

> Prior to the emergence of population, it was impossible to conceive the art of government except on the model of the family, in terms of the economy conceived as the management of a family; from the moment when, on the contrary, population appears absolutely irreducible to the family, the latter becomes of secondary importance compared to population, as an element internal to population: no longer, that is to say, a model, but a segment (Foucault, 1991, 100).

It should be kept in mind that what Foucault wants us to see is not so much the simple emergence of something called a population, but its transformation into a field of reality that is both an object to be dealt with by government, and a subject possessing its own needs, and aspirations. Government is now not synonymous with the act of government, or the exercise of sovereign authority, it becomes a form of rule that is concerned with the general "welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of

its wealth, longevity, health, etc" (Foucault, 1991, 100). What this implies is a plurality of governing practices that spreads rhizomatically through a multifarious population, and the rationalization of these practices in relation to both an economy, which is becoming an object to be studied, and also a subject in possession of its own logic, laws and regularities (or irregularities as the case may be), and sovereignty, which as a theory and practice of power over things becomes less of a justification for sovereign authority. To put it differently, whereas sovereignty was the right to rule over things and was buttressed by a "right to kill and let live", the form of rule that was emerging in its wake was a rule over things to be sure, but one which sought "to foster them, to increase the means of subsistence, to augment the wealth, strength and greatness of the state, to increase the happiness and prosperity of its inhabitants, and to multiply their numbers"(Dean, 1999). Foucault puts this point succinctly:

> I wanted to demonstrate the deep historical link between the movement that overturns the constants of sovereignty in consequence of the problem of choices of government, the movement that brings about the emergence of population as a datum, as a field of intervention and as an objective of governmental techniques, and the process which isolates the economy as a specific sector of reality, and political economy as the science and the technique of intervention of the government in that field of reality (1991, 102).

But there is another element that is integral to Foucault's interpretation of the modifications of rule that were emerging from about the sixteenth century – this is the notion of discipline.

Disciplinary practice, or the strategies and techniques utilized to encourage certain individual behaviour according to a particular rationality, are embodied in institutions such as schools, hospitals, prisons, armies, manufactories, etc. Governing the lives of individuals or a population becomes a matter of encouraging behaviour that will

serve the ends of government without the need to exercise authority in any absolutist sense. Rose puts it like this: "the 'public' activities of free citizens were to be regulated by codes of civility, reason, and orderliness…[while] the private conduct of free citizens was to be civilized by equipping them [with?] languages and techniques of self-understanding and self-mastery"(1999, 69). To govern over a territory then, is not only to concern oneself with security of the state and the inhabitants within it, it is also to govern individuals through certain disciplinary techniques and rationalities that encourage particular behaviors that serve the ends of government without having to impose the will of the sovereign. Foucault thus sees a sort of triangle of modern rule, which he labels, sovereignty-discipline-government. Moreover, these historical transformations can be more broadly understood by what he calls the 'governmentalization of the state'.

It is against this historical interpretation that studies in governmentality have advanced, and it is for this reason that I have spent some brief moments trying to articulate Foucault's historical perspective with respect to what he has called the 'problem of government'. Although I will make the case more forcefully further on in this chapter, what I hope is at least implicit in the preceding section is Foucault's desire to shift the focus of analysis away from the state toward the plurality of practices and rationalities that can be seen at work in the government of society. Commenting on Foucault's use of the terms of 'rationality of government' and the 'art of government', Colin Gordon has put the point like this:

> a rationality of government will thus mean a way or system of thinking about the nature of the practice of government (who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed), capable of making some form of that activity thinkable and practicable both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it is practised (1991, 3).

What is also evident I believe, is a particular appreciation of the discursivity of modern governing practices. Government is not simply a matter of state policy. Rather, it also includes the plurality of rationalities, techniques, and strategies, which proliferate throughout society as a means to regulate individual conduct. Foucault's lecture on governmentality, then, is not to be seen as a comprehensive philosophical doctrine offering an account of the 'proper' relationship between the state and the individuals that comprise civil society.[38] As a result, his analysis steers clear of any kind of normativity.

Seeing the theoretical potential of Foucault's insights into the idea of governmentality, some scholars have challenged the dominant tendency to treat liberalism as a philosophical doctrine by posing the question, as Nikolas Rose does, following Foucault, 'what is liberalism if we consider it neither as a political philosophy nor as a type of society but from the perspective of governmentality'? It is this question that informs much of my critique of Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor, and it is a question that I wish now to turn to in the next section.

Liberalism, bio-politics and the 'art of government'

Liberalism, as it will be recalled from my discussion of it in the first and second chapters, is typically understood to be a philosophical doctrine centered on the question, 'what relationship should the state have with the individual'? In this way, and in the context of multiculturalism, thinkers like Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor tend to focus their debate in relation to a series of questions about the extent to which state support for

[38] Which is not to say that these do not play a role in the constitution, and explanation, of our political reality. It is merely to suggest that Foucault does not want to take these terms as a natural condition of human existence, but rather they should be seen as subjects and objects of rule, each reflecting forms of political reason which can be "analyzed as practices for the 'formulation and justification of idealized schemata for representing reality, analyzing it and rectifying it' – as a kind of intellectual machinery or apparatus for rendering reality thinkable in such a way that it is amenable to political programming" (Rose, 1996, 42).

claims to cultural rights remain consistent with, or infringe upon, liberal principles of equality and freedom (Barry), or enhance equality and freedom (Kymlicka and Taylor). Either way, the question is posed as a matter of state policy, and what the state should, or shouldn't do about cultural difference. While this mode of analysis seeks a comprehensive philosophy that can be transposed onto the level of society, anchored by the institutional and juridical authority of the state, a governmentality perspective eschews this normative obsession in favor of viewing liberalism as "a form of critical reflection on governmental practice"(Foucault, 1994, 77). Recalling a point made in the previous chapter, it is rather ironic that three thinkers identifying themselves as liberals accord the state such a totalitarian presence within their analyses of multiculturalism. Whether the position one takes promotes the granting of more substantial cultural rights for minorities, or prefers to keep those rights in line with a regime of egalitarian citizenship, Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor would nonetheless have the state command all our political attention and intellectual energies.

It would be a mistake, however, to suggest that the tradition of liberalism has not been at all concerned with the problem of 'too much government', or of the 'excesses of state intervention'. Indeed, the historical emergence of liberalism can, in part, be seen as a critique of state reason (Gordon, 1991, 15). Stated differently, liberalism can be seen as "a doctrine of limitation and wise restraint, designed to mature and educate state reason by displaying to it the intrinsic bounds of its power to know"(Gordon, 1991, 15). For their part, both Kymlicka and Barry worry about the state's role in promoting any particular vision of the good life over and above an individual's right to choose a conception of the 'good life' according to their own reason. Taylor, although not

explicitly endorsing this classically liberal suspicion of the state, equally worries about the dangers of an authoritarian state, as may be the case with excessive nationalism for example. But this is where a governmentality perspective on liberalism departs from accounts of liberalism traditionally conceived. Rather than take the distinction between the state and civil society as natural, in the sense that it is taken to be rather unproblematic and therefore liberalism becomes the philosophical doctrine set on working out the conditions under which this relationship maximizes individual liberty and ensures universal equality, Foucault interprets the emergence of liberalism as a problem of governmental practice.

In this way, liberalism is not necessarily intrinsically related to the rule of law and representative democracy. Rather, as Mitchell Dean has noted,

> Liberalism considered as a rationality and technology of government rather than as a political philosophy has a certain rationale for the adoption of the rule of law – its generality and exclusion of the particular – and for representative institutions – they permit the participation of the governed in the 'governmental economy' (1999).

With the emergence of a population and an economy that present both the conditions for government and the limitations to it, and the move away from a strictly juridical theory of sovereignty, which envisaged the exercise of government as a means to retaining the ends of sovereignty, the question about government becomes "what makes it necessary for there to be government, and what ends should it pursue with regard to society in order to justify its existence"(Foucault, 1994, 75). In other words, the justification of government no longer issues forth from the juridical edicts of '*raison d'etat*'; rather, liberalism arises precisely as a response to the absolutist claims of the state and in favor of promoting a form of government that would be more attuned to the emerging needs and aspirations of

a diverse population and an autonomous, presumably self-regulating market integral to life within the territorial boundaries of the state. This, for Foucault, instantiates the 'birth of bio-politics', which he suggests is "the endeavor, begun in the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems presented to governmental practice by the phenomena characteristic of a group of living human beings constituted as a population: health, sanitation, birthrate, longevity, race"(1994, 73). Bio-politics is thus a politics administered in the name of a population that is seen to possess a certain organic life of its own. Liberalism, from this perspective, then, might be understood as an *ethos* of government, a rationalization of governmental practice, which is at once the source of a critical attitude toward government, and a justification for the end of government.

Dean has suggested that liberalism enjoys a rather complex relation to bio-politics and that "the discovery of society, itself only possible because of this bio-politics of the population, is a precondition for liberal government and a tool for its critique"(1999). To govern those processes of life and labor, health and illness, normalcy and pathology at both the level of the individual and a wider society, however, is not only a matter of techniques and strategies of rule, it also implies a knowledge of those spheres of life to be governed. Liberal arts of rule presume to know that which is to be ruled, which in the context of the discussion here, refers to the bio-political reality of the population – the individual, the family, the economy, the community (Rose, 1996, 44). For example, within these fields of reality experts become the bearers of an authentic knowledge of 'truth' (i.e. economists, urban planners, engineers, social workers, etc). This knowledge can then be put to work in the service of a governmental rationality that seeks to shape our conduct by "working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs, for

definite but shifting ends…" (Dean, 1999). Thus, the justification for the end of government exists in its capacity to direct, through apparatuses of governmental practice and rationality, the affairs of a happy, healthy, wealthy, and responsible population.

Liberalism understood as a philosophical doctrine, however, does not help us get at what government does, why it does it, or more importantly, how it does it. Liberalism is more than a philosophical justification for limiting the exercise of state sovereignty in the name of individual liberty and equality. So what is liberalism, if understood from the perspective of government? Nikolas Rose suggests that there are four significant features that we can draw from posing this question, and indeed some of them will overlap with what has already been discussed. First, it points to a new relation between government and knowledge. That is to say, that government becomes linked to a variety of facts, theories, diagrams, techniques, and knowledgeable persons who can speak in the name of society. Knowledge "flows around a diversity of apparatuses for the production, circulation, accumulation, authorization and realization of truth". Whether in the academy, the civil service, public enquiries, or interest groups, knowledge carries with it the promise that it can "render docile the unruly domains over which government is to be exercised, to make government possible and to make government better".

Second, it suggests a novel specification of the subjects of rule as active in their own government. This points to the way in which individual behaviour comes to be regulated in relation to various disciplinary tactics. While respecting the limits to the legitimate scope of political or legal regulation through appeals to individual liberty and rights, "liberal strategies of government thus become dependent upon devices (schooling, the domesticated family, the lunatic asylum, the reformatory prison) that promise to

create individuals who do not need to be governed by others, but will govern themselves, master themselves, care for themselves".

Third, there arises an intrinsic relation to the authority of expertise. With the emergence of what Foucault has called 'bio-politics', interventions into the fields of the family, the economy, the private firm and the individual no longer serve a coherent programme or logic of *raison d'etat*. Rather, experts speaking in the name of these various bio-political spheres begin, around the nineteenth century, to demand that they be governed according to their own programmes. Thus, these, and other political forces seek to give effect to their strategies, not only through the utilization of laws, bureaucracies, funding regimes and authoritative State agencies and agents, but through utilizing and instrumentalizing forms of authority other than those of "the State" in order to govern – spatially and constitutionally – "at a distance". This utilization of expert authorities is authorized by the state, and for its own use, through various licensing mechanisms and modes of professionalization and bureaucratization.

Lastly, liberalism from the perspective of government implies a continual questioning of the activity of rule.

> Liberalism confronts *itself* with the question "Why rule?" – a question that leads to the demand that a constant critical scrutiny be exercised over the activities of those who rule – by others and by authorities themselves. For if the objects of rule are governed by their own laws, "the laws of the natural", under what conditions can one legitimately subject them to "the laws of the political"? Further, liberalism confronts itself with the question "Who can rule?" Under what conditions is it possible for one to exercise authority over another, what founds the *legitimacy* of authority? This question of the authority of authority must be answered, not transcendentally or in relation to the charismatic *persona* of the leader, but through various technical means – of which democracy and expertise prove to be two rather durable solutions (Rose, 1996, 47).

Liberalism, then, from the perspective of government is better understood in relation to a series of historical contingencies that were neither the root causes, nor the inevitabilities of an ideological form of liberal thought. On the contrary, the view of liberalism that I have tried to portray here emerges as a response to a series of questions about the problem of government in relation to a reconfigured notion of sovereignty, a newly emerging population, an autonomous economic sphere (yet integral to life within the state), and the birth of bio-politics, which according to Foucault has its beginnings in the nineteenth century. But there is another significant way in which the sketch of liberalism I have provided here, can be contrasted with the one adopted by Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor, and that is in relation to the idea of freedom.

Governing through Freedom

What occupies much of Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor's thinking about multiculturalism is the extent to which individual freedom can be maximized through state policy (whether this state policy is understood as a matter of minimal state intervention, or as more direct and active state promotion of cultural differences). Kymlicka and Barry can be seen as advocates of a kind of negative freedom, or freedom as the absence of coercion or oppression that would interfere with the pursuit of a person's particular conception of the 'good' unimpeded. Taylor, I suggested, falls on the side of positive freedom, in which freedom is linked to an individual's obligation to exercise his/her freedom in pursuit of a conception of the 'good life' that falls in line with his/her inner desire to attain self-fulfillment. Either way, the concept of freedom plays very heavily in these thinkers' analyses of multiculturalism, and the role that the state plays in facilitating the realization of this freedom is equally significant. However, there

are two ways in which their treatment of freedom can be seen to be rather limited and unhelpful when seen from a governmentality perspective.

In the first place, their treatment of individual freedom assumes that freedom follows from the implementation of the basic tenets of liberal philosophy. Liberalism in this sense is thought to ensure the best possible conditions for the realization of freedom. As a matter of normative principle, all three thinkers defend the claim that a healthy dose of liberalism is what is needed if freedom is to flourish. It is assumed that liberal institutions and liberal principles are the best assurances for creating a free and democratic society. These institutions and principles include the ones that put states in a position to overawe private individuals and cultural minorities. To suggest that freedom might require something altogether different is no doubt to tarry close to blasphemy. It is even more controversial to suggest that freedom may be overrated, in relation to other values. After all, it is 'our' deeply held commitment to protecting, and promoting freedom that distinguishes 'us' in the West from everyone else. However, within the Western tradition of liberal thought, freedom has come to be understood as a transcendent value; moreover, as a value that is to be achieved in and through the liberal-democratic state.

Whether as the freedom to participate in the market through the twin desires of production and consumption, or as freedom from external constraints on one's sphere of mobility, or as freedom to express oneself and associate with others in relation to one's personal inclinations, freedom is offered as a promise or a prize.[39] To stake a claim for it is to demand the right to be a liberated subject, free from oppressive regimes of power.

[39] On this idea of freedom as the promise of liberalism, see Vicki Bell, 1996, in Barry, et al.

Liberalism has coveted this promise as something that it is most suited to provide, even though Marxist inspired theories of socialism or programmes of social democracy have offered their own visions of what individual freedom should be, or at least could be if relinquished from the exploitative grip of free market economics. In any case, freedom, or the demand for it, has become a sort of catch-all phrase in our political vernacular. Freedom, it would seem, is everywhere and on everyone's mind, and the problem (it is thought) is simply to work out its principles a little more clearly and develop more effective mechanisms for implementing it. It should be of no surprise, then, that much of what occupies Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor in their discussions on cultural difference turns on this question of freedom. For them, the demand for cultural rights is a demand to be free. To champion the cause of cultural minorities is to fight for their right to be free; free to act in accordance with cultural norms and practices; free to celebrate cultural distinctness without fear of persecution or discrimination; free to act as autonomous individuals. Whether one agrees or disagrees with Kymlicka, Barry, or Taylor, one thing is certain – for them, the best chance for freedom lies with the promise of liberalism, and liberalism, for them, involves a system of government not unlike the one we already have.

However, there seems to be a contradiction here. The present system of government is one that extends into most areas of life. Demands for fuller freedom lead to more government: for example, the effort to protect cultural minorities from hate crimes, or to ensure that the children of cultural minorities get equal access to education. If – as liberals tend to suggest – freedom is about securing personal autonomy from the state, then how can it also be about extending government into more and more areas of

life? What a governmentality perspective shows us is that the contradiction is only apparent, for the philosophical commitments of liberalism are secondary to the strategy of government implicit within it. What is unique about liberalism is not its commitment to freedom as a moral objective (there are other philosophies that pose a similar objective, but pursue it in a different way), but rather its conviction that effective government is government through freedom. This conviction is apparent in the works we are considering. On the other hand, those works are fixated on the classic problem of the relation between the state and society, and tend to ignore practices of government that are at one remove from this boundary. If government is understood as those practices which operate not only at the level of bureaucratic institutions but also in relation to the various forms of knowledge, strategies, and techniques that work to shape our conduct, then freedom is not a problem only at the boundary between state and society. It is a more general problem, for which the standard liberal solutions may provide few answers.

Thus, the second and, I would say, more significant way in which a governmentality perspective challenges a liberal conception of freedom is in relation to the common understanding of freedom as in opposition to government, government conceived as flowing from the state. Government is typically seen as that which is done to individuals in the name of bureaucratic administration or institutional functionality, while freedom is that which the individual enjoys outside the bounds of governmental institutions. Hence one sees in Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor an equal concern to valorize the notion of freedom as an abstract good that remains separate from what goes on within

government.[40] By contrast, a governmentality perspective inverts this relationship of freedom to liberalism by suggesting that it was indeed freedom that was necessary for liberalism and liberal arts of rule to develop. Nikolas Rose puts the point like this:

> The freedom upon which liberal strategies of government depend, and which they instrumentalize in so many diverse ways, is no "natural" property of political subjects, awaiting only the removal of constraints for it to flower forth in forms that will ensure the maximization of economic and social well-being. The practices of modern freedom have been constructed out of an arduous, haphazard and contingent concatenation of problematizations, strategies of government and techniques of regulation (Rose, 1996, 61).

Furthermore, a governmentality perspective dissolves the opposition between government and freedom by insisting that what is significant about liberalism as an 'art of government' is that liberal arts of rule govern *through* our freedom. To put the point somewhat differently, a governmentality perspective is less concerned with what freedom we as humans are entitled to (i.e. negative or positive freedom), than it is interested in the ways in which freedom has been used as a justification for the governability of people, ideas, institutions, practices, etc. Freedom and government in this sense are two sides of the same coin. They need to be seen in the many ways in which a multiplicity of governing practices, from the government of the family, the child, or the economy, to the government of individual action and behaviour, have been justified on the basis of freedom.[41] To ask the question "how can we be free?" is to ask how we govern ourselves and vice versa. Freedom, then, is always already present from this perspective. It provides the ground from which, and through which, questions about government arise.

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[40] I am aware that Taylor's position on freedom is linked to the notion of participation, so that to be free is to participate in the political affairs of one's country, and in this sense he draws a less sharp line between government and freedom. However, I would maintain that Taylor's desire to defend the merits of civil and political rights as liberal values is a tacit admission of this sort of distance between freedom and government. After all, these rights are meant as protections from undue, or unlawful interference into the free lives of individuals. Otherwise, they would lose their normative force.

[41] See in particular Rose, 1999, especially chapter 2.

The question for political philosophers like Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor is most often "how can people maximize their freedom", and in this sense freedom becomes something of a commodity. 'How can I get freedom?' And if I already have it, 'how can I ensure that it isn't taken away?' Thus freedom (at least in the West) is a highly personal prize, and any political, social, cultural, or economic activity that threatens to take it away, or restrict its sphere of enjoyment, is viewed with much suspicion. Ironically, for political philosophers like Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor, freedom cannot endure, indeed it cannot even exist without the political authority of the state. Freedom emanates from the constitutional protections of the state, yet simultaneously, it is to be protected from the very thing that gives it life. Within the juridical language of rights, freedom becomes a good to be demanded and a condition to be protected. Thus, when Rose writes that freedom most often appears by definition as the antithesis of government, he is suggesting that "freedom is understood in terms of the act of liberation from bondage or slavery, the condition of existence of liberty, the right of the individual to act in any desired way without restraint, the power to do as one likes"(1999, 62). Freedom in this sense is an abstract ideal frozen in time that animates much of contemporary political life.

To suggest that liberalism, then, is a particular orientation to the problem of government, which utilizes an understanding of people as free subjects to articulate and instrumentalize a multiplicity of rationales, techniques, strategies, and forms of knowledge to govern individuals *through* their freedom, is a provocative hypothesis indeed. What I find particularly provocative about it is its ability to shift the terms of political analysis away from an exclusive focus on the centrality of the state in relation to questions about government and politics. From a governmentality perspective, questions

about power, authority, and government take the state as merely one agent among a multiplicity of others that govern the conduct of individuals and collectivities. In other words, the problem of government/freedom does not simply occur in the interface between the state and society; rather, the problem of government/freedom manifests itself in a variety of contexts that are not always effectively mediated by the state. It occurs at the level of the family where the discipline of children is not only a matter of imposing parental authority according to moral norms, but is also a matter of child psychology where "positive discipline" means reinforcing the child's self-esteem and confidence, which better equips the child to integrate into society as an independent adult and responsible citizen. It occurs in advertising campaigns where a person's economic freedom is inculcated through the representation of products as lifestyle choices. To be free here is to be governed according to the economic imperatives of production and consumption.

The politics of multiculturalism, then, does not simply begin and end with constitutional recognition, or citizenship rights. The transnational character of cultural migrations and diasporic communities, and the multiplicity of forms of knowledge that govern our ways of thinking and acting imply the existence of multiple points, or networks, of governmental practices and rationalities beyond the political authority of the state. Multiculturalism, then, is also about global economics and the various rationalities and strategies that are employed through World Bank or International Monetary Fund initiatives that seek to create environments where market freedom becomes the aspiration and desire of both Third World governments and their citizens; yet, rather paradoxically, these non-state agencies are imbricated in the displacement of millions of people who

find themselves in search of new homes. It is about the refugee camp as a site of technical control, documentation, and regulation, and as a space where the refugee is produced as a subject without a home. It is about inculcating a particular way of thinking about the refugee, or immigrant as a potentially 'good' citizen, who, although not considered a 'properly' political subject as he/she awaits entry into a receiving state, is nonetheless the site of a particular form of bio-politics.

Governing cultural difference is not merely a matter of state legislation. Immigrants awaiting entry into states are documented and codified through various strategies and techniques within immigration departments. The immigration officer, although employed by the state, is not an elected official, yet he/she is authorized to speak the 'truth' about particular refugee claims, or citizenship applications. Similarly, doctors have access to knowledge of medicine and are authorized to speak the 'truth' about disease, or certain pathologies that may render an immigrant's wish to become Canadian null and void. Beyond this though, the doctor is also implicated in multiculturalism when she/he becomes a newly arrived immigrant's family doctor. New patients are put on file that documents illness, medical history, and other personal information. The doctor may encourage the new immigrant to alter aspects of his/her diet, may encourage forms of birth control or medical treatment. Moreover, what might be interesting about these examples from a governmentality perspective is the way in which all these various governmental practices might be linked within a broader rationality about the security of the state. At a minimum, it draws our attention to the fact that governmental practices exist within an assemblage of rationalities, forms of knowledge, techniques and strategies.

To adopt a governmentality perspective, then, is to engage in what has been called an 'analytics of government'. Government by this account is understood as "any attempt to shape with some degree of deliberation aspects of our behaviour according to particular sets of norms and for a variety of ends"(Dean, 1999, 10). In other words, it is not reducible to a kind of functional determinism, whereby government comes to be synonymous with bureaucratic machinery and parliamentary democracy. In this sense, government is much more dynamic, connecting with a multiplicity of spaces and traversing a wide range of human practices. At the risk of simplification, government might be understood as the 'conduct of conduct'. This implies a focus on various practices and ways of thinking that operate at the level of the individual and the many ways in which individual action and behaviour are regulated according to norms of morality.

Morality, here, understood "as the attempt to make oneself accountable for one's actions, or as a practice in which human beings take their own conduct to be subject to self-regulation"(Dean, 1999, 10) does not figure in an analytics of government as a normative principle to be obeyed. Rather, it refers to the assumption that we are embedded in a multiplicity of practices and ways of thinking that are variously informed by moral norms that may not necessarily coincide with one another. Thus the criminal is regarded as a victim of circumstance in need of reform, the unemployed person as someone at risk of welfare dependency, or a national population seen as lacking the competitiveness to succeed in a global economy. Consequently, "government concerns not only practices of government but also practices of the self"(Dean, 1999, 11).

To employ an analytics of government is to concern oneself "with the means of calculation, both qualitative and quantitative, the type of governing authority or agency, the forms of knowledge, techniques and other means employed, the entity to be governed and how it is conceived, the ends sought and the outcomes and consequences" (Dean, 1999, 10). By contrast, Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry employ a form of analysis inherently normative in focus, whereby the state acts as a kind of anchor in their attempts to work out a philosophy that can provide a comprehensive framework for the legitimation of political authority. The issue of cultural difference is framed in terms of a political *a priori*: of the division between the subjugated and the liberated, of the sovereign and its subjects. In the case of our three liberal theorists here, the state provides the conditions of both liberation and subjugation. In relation to the former, and in the context of multiculturalism, a liberal democratic state is thought to ensure that the liberty of cultural minorities can flourish through a regime of common citizenship rights and the mechanisms of constitutional protection, while the latter is thought to be a result of the domination of a minority by a majority, yet potentially reparable through recourse to liberal democratic principles and institutions. To state it differently, the suggestion is that for a set of political arrangements to be good, they must be liberal. However, to frame the issue in such a way unnecessarily privileges the ontological primacy of the state in our conceptions of the political. As Dean suggests,

> Questions of how we govern and are governed are reduced to the problem of how the dominant group or sovereign state secured its position through legitimate or illegitimate means. Indeed, the problem of legitimacy –deeply tied to a conception of the state as a 'law making body' – lies at the base of our thinking about power and the state (1999, 19).

A governmentality perspective, then, displaces the central place of the state in analyses of politics. Given that the debate on multiculturalism, as represented by Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry, anchors questions about cultural difference in relation to what a liberal state can, or cannot do, a governmentality perspective would re-pose the problem so that the state would be merely one actor among many engaged in the act of governing cultural difference. It would concern "studies of a particular 'stratum' of knowing and acting. Of the emergence of particular 'regimes of truth' concerning the conduct of conduct, ways of speaking truth, persons authorized to speak truths, ways of enacting truths and the costs of so doing"(Rose, 1999, 19). In this way, a governmentality perspective can bring new critical perspectives to bear.

Conclusion

I suggested at the outset of this thesis that I was perplexed by the way in which Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor all approach the question of multiculturalism through an appeal to liberalism as a philosophical doctrine. Although positing variations on what form liberalism should take, they all nonetheless adopt the similar assumption that the question of cultural difference is a question for the liberal democratic state. I suggested that there were two general directions this form of analysis takes us: one is that Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor all immerse themselves in a debate about what fundamental tenets of liberalism are best suited to accommodating cultural difference. Despite their differences, they all share the belief that liberalism is a philosophical doctrine or type of society that uniquely values the principles of freedom and autonomy. Indeed, I suggested that for them the normative force of liberalism is its conviction that it represents the best chance for the realization of freedom. Consequently, freedom is thought to follow from the implementation of liberalism and the adoption of liberal institutions. Freedom is thus something to be both secured by, and protected from, the state.

Contrary to this account of liberalism and freedom, a governmentality perspective views liberalism as a particular *ethos* of government that arose in response to the absolutist claims of the state in and around the sixteenth century. Liberalism as an 'art of government' assumes the freedom of subjects and thus liberal arts of rule govern *through* our freedom. As a result of this rearticulation of liberalism through a governmentality perspective, freedom is no longer conceived in opposition to government. Rather, freedom and government represent two sides of the same coin. To ask questions of how to be free is to ask how we govern ourselves and vice versa.

The second direction that Kymlicka's, Barry's, and Taylor's analyses take us is toward an ontological account of politics that fixes the state at the center of explanations and understandings of contemporary political realities. Framing the question of cultural difference in relation to what the state can or cannot do to ensure the freedom and autonomy of its citizens, Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor reduce the politics of multiculturalism to questions of accommodation.

The issues at stake revolve around practices of religious difference, and self-determination claims made by 'societal cultures' (as Kymlicka defines them, and which Taylor seems content to endorse), and these then range from the recognition of particular holidays or forms of dress, to claims for language rights, constitutional equality, and limited powers of self-government. Consider this statement from Kymlicka:

> The late twentieth century has been described as 'the age of migration'. Massive numbers of people are moving across borders, making virtually every country more polyethnic in composition. This has also been described as 'the age of nationalism', as more and more national groups throughout the world mobilize and assert their identity. As a result, the settled rules of political life in many countries are being challenged by a new 'politics of cultural difference' (1995, 193).

For Kymlicka, the question becomes what can the state do to accommodate these new waves of people (or new voices) who bring with them different experiences and ways of life. It is assumed that the issue of cultural difference is a matter of state policy. Even in the case of self-determination rights, it is the state that must be persuaded of the claim to accommodate such a demand.

It is the state, within the perspective adopted by Kymlicka, Taylor, and Barry, which receives these cultural migrants and immigrants, and thus it is presumably the task of the liberal theorist to help define the ways in which the liberal state can accommodate

these new (or old) additions to the national community, while remaining true to the liberal principles of individual rights and freedoms, and personal autonomy. Hence, Kymlicka and Barry are motivated by a desire to justify their perspectives on multiculturalism in relation to a liberal theory of justice. Taylor seeks justification through an appeal to the ideals of republicanism. However, implicit in Kymlicka's statement above is a reality of multiculturalism that is not just a problem that occurs within the boundaries of the state – multiculturalism is both more localized and more transnational than Kymlicka, Barry, and Taylor are willing to admit.

From the perspective of governmentality the question is not what philosophical doctrine most persuasively accommodates claims of cultural difference made on already existing polities. Nor is the question what the state can do to ensure that cultural difference is accommodated. Rather, the question becomes how has the problem of multiculturalism come to be understood as a problem, and how might one understand multiculturalism within those historical trajectories that have been constitutive of our present ways of thinking and acting in relation to living with cultural diversity. An analytics of government shifts the politics of cultural difference away from the relationship between the state and its citizens, and toward an appreciation of the bio-politics that forms both the limitations to, and the possibilities for, thinking about multiculturalism differently. In other words, a governmentality perspective shifts the focus onto the bodies, lives, and selves of those who are implicated in the politics of multiculturalism. Implicit in this particular perspective, then, lies the critical purchase of a governmentality perspective.

To adopt a governmentality perspective, is to engage in a genealogical study of present day political questions. It is a particular orientation to the present that seeks a critical distance from the forms of knowing and acting that infuse our current political horizons with meaning. A genealogical study is explicitly historical in that it views the present as strangely redolent of the past, yet without the anachronism of an anti-Enlightenment critical theory such as that associated with the Frankfurt school, or within the modernist social theory of Jurgen Habermas, for example. In Foucault's words, it is to refuse the blackmail of the Enlightenment, to be for or against it. Genealogy from this perspective "views the hard and patient labor of detailed historical and empirical work as necessary to question and reformulate presumed continuities and discontinuities so that it is possible to offer diagnoses of the limits and possibilities of the present" (Dean, 1999). As a history of the present, however, an analytics of government is not simply the description of the structural, or ideological forms of government as they have come down to us from our ancestral past. Instead, an analytics of government questions the naturalness of how things are done. By identifying problematizations today and situating them in an historical context of a contingent, yet constitutive nature, a genealogical study of this sort opens the way for us to question the limits of our political horizons so that we may render anew what it might mean to think and act otherwise than we do.

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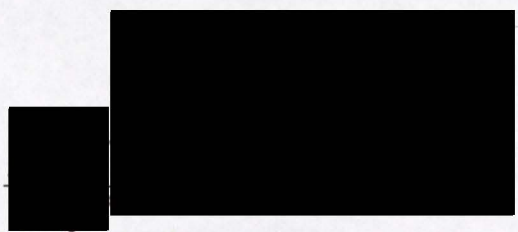
Author 

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