

Politics, Pluralism and Religion

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Edited by

Chandana Chakrabarti and Sandra Jane Fairbanks

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS

P U B L I S H I N G

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This book first published 2010

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-2106-3, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-2106-3

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PREFACE

In the global culture of the 21st century we are faced with the challenge of rethinking and restructuring our departmentalized concepts concerning the boundaries of disciplines. We can no longer be protective of our specialized disciplines, while neglecting vast areas of interdisciplinary research. This new era of academia is reevaluating the future of religion, so that practitioners and scholars will be constantly encountering new challenges in the comparative context of understanding religion in a post—secular age. Thus we are witnessing today a new shift to understand religion from a pluralistic perspective. The exclusivist monotheist belief system is continuously being revisited by different sciences in order to critically balance the differences between fundamentalism, secularism and atheism. The traditional religious foundation and structure of our thinking is now facing an ever deepening crisis. Hence many are exploring ways to transcend our old fabric of thinking and deconstruct and simultaneously create a new paradigm of understanding and synthesis. Thus there is a timely openness on the part of scholars in this new century in calling for books and other resources addressing these underlying problems and issues to be faced by generations to come. It is our sincere hope that this anthology will be able to address some of these dilemmas and concerns

While religion has in recent times come under unprecedented scrutiny, it remains true that religion plays a pervasive role in individual lives as well as in the life of the nation. Even a cursory look at American politics suffices to show that the deep divide between pro-life and pro-choice lobbies is in part fueled by religious sentiments about the sanctity of life as a gift from the Supreme Being. In some Islamic nations (e.g. Saudi Arabia) prohibitions against a woman's right to vote and participate fully in political life are legitimized by appeal to interpretations of revealed sacred texts. The seemingly intractable conflicts between the Sunnis and the Shias, Israelis and Palestinians and so on are also without any doubt influenced by age-old religious traditions and beliefs. Under the circumstances it is difficult to see how some of these conflicts can be properly resolved unless there is greater awareness of the legitimacy of religious diversity and pluralism, and respectful acceptance and coexistence of multiple creeds and belief systems. Accordingly, a focused study of the ongoing interplay between religion, politics and pluralism has

become all the more important for scholars as well as the common man.

At first, undertaking this project about the interrelation of politics, pluralism and religion seemed to be an ambitious and daunting task. Undoubtedly making timely progress would have been much harder without the generous help I received from many esteemed colleagues, friends and members of my family. First and foremost, I thank my long time friend, Professor Joel Wilcox of Barry University. Professor Wilcox's guidance and help from the inception of the idea to the fruition of the project is truly invaluable. I am so blessed to work with Professor Wilcox; he formally did not work with me as the co-editor, but for all practical purposes his contribution to this anthology is indeed immeasurable. Professor Richard Liebendorfer and Professor Craig Matarrese of the Minnesota State University helped our Society for Indian Philosophy & Religion to organize and co-sponsor an International and Interdisciplinary conference on April 13-14, 2007 at the Minnesota State University, Mankato. A large number of scholars from different parts of the USA and abroad attended the conference, exchanged ideas from different perspectives and laid the foundation for this interdisciplinary endeavor. The interdisciplinary approach of this project will help the reader to understand diverse viewpoints and issues about the relation of politics and religion in our world of multiple religious beliefs and practices across the continents.

I would specially like to thank the Cambridge Scholars Press for their kindness in extending the deadline for submission several times and helping with the publication of this anthology. The project of writing this book started at Bethany College, where I was directing the Center for Spirituality, Ethics and Global Awareness. Dr. Larry Grimes, Professor of English and Dean of Arts and Sciences accepted my invitation to co-edit the anthology with me. I am truly indebted to Professor Grimes for his kind support in helping with the book proposal and submitting it to the CSP. Due to a shift in the nature of his duties at Bethany and his other writing commitments Professor Grimes had eventually to opt out of co-editing this work. While I was looking for a co-editor, Professor Sandy Fairbanks of Barry University graciously accepted my invitation and came forward to help with the project. Under her expert stewardship and utmost dedication the task of getting this book ready for publication became a reality. Professor Fairbanks did the final editing to ensure that the project could be delivered to the scholars and practitioners in a timely manner.

I would also like to take this occasion to give special thanks to Dr. G.T. Smith, President of Davis and Elkins College and former President of Bethany College, for allowing me ample time and resources for the fruition of the project. A special note of appreciation and gratitude needs

to be added also for Mrs. Joni Smith for her constant support and encouragement in my academic pursuits and in my personal life. Last but not the least, Dr. Kisor Chakrabarti of Davis and Elkins College, a world renowned scholar and my husband, helped me immensely in organizing the conference and developing the project.

—Chandana Chakrabarti

INTRODUCTION

SANDRA JANE FAIRBANKS

Globalization has brought diverse cultures, religions, moral values, political ideologies, races, ethnicities and nationalities into associations—often strained—that have created greater challenges than ever before for understanding and tolerance. While globalized economic markets, multinational corporations and international communication systems have produced greater exposure to and knowledge of cultural differences, these forces do not necessarily result in greater world harmony. Many cultures, particularly in the undeveloped world, perceive economic globalization as an instrument of western imperialism and exploitation. The spread of western culture—the proliferation of materialistic values, hip-hop music, Hollywood films, fast-food restaurants, cellphones and computers—threatens the cultural identity and religious values of many non-western countries. And of course religious intolerance remains a fruitful source of strife. So even though the world is more open as a result of modern technology and global economic markets, the situation is volatile. Given humankind's advanced nuclear capacity and the greater opportunities for conflict in an increasingly pluralistic world, we must better learn to manage the inevitable conflicts that are to come both on a national and international level.

On a national level, liberal democracy, as a political system designed to ensure security and human flourishing in a distinctly pluralistic society, seems to be the best hope for a pluralistic world. Liberal democracy guarantees free and fair elections, the rule of law, separation of powers, and individual human rights such as freedom of speech, assembly and religion. The rational justification for liberal democracy is that it promotes the rational development, autonomy, creativity and moral virtue of each citizen. This liberal ideal can only be achieved under conditions that protect and promote pluralism in all its forms including cultural, religious, racial, ethnic, political, and moral.

Liberals often claim that for genuine diversity to flourish, the state must remain neutral with respect to any individual's conception of a good life. Maintenance of neutrality means that the state may not show favoritism

to any particular religion, political ideology, race, gender, lifestyle, etc., and must not allow any particular group to dominate over others. Moreover, when conflicts inevitably arise in a liberal society where everyone is entitled and encouraged to think for oneself, the state must provide a neutral and impartial apparatus for resolving these conflicts. In a liberal state the rule of law is supposed to provide this apparatus and guarantee state neutrality.

Although liberal democracy seems to offer the best hope of protecting this vision of a pluralistic society that grants to individuals the freedom to pursue their conception of a good life, there are many who argue that this liberal vision is an illusion. There are three grounds for this contention. The first, as the Critical Legal Studies movement argues, is that the rule of law is a myth and hence state neutrality is not attainable. This view alleges that, given the subjectivity of value in a pluralistic society, judges impose their own moral, political and religious views in their rulings, which are then rationalized by their interpretation of the law (which admits of more than one rational interpretation). Since legal language is not sharply distinguished from moral or political language, it is nearly impossible to know whether or not a judge is impartial. This alleged malleability of the law permits judges to privilege a favorite religion, race, economic class, gender, political ideology or lifestyle. Ultimately, the law serves the dominant economic class that underwrites and finances the current power structure responsible for writing legislation and appointing judges. So, the neutral and impartial application of fair and equal laws to all is a myth; pluralism is neither protected nor nurtured under liberal democracy.

The second reason for criticizing the liberal ideal, implicit in the Critical Legal Studies critique of the rule of law, is that our faith in objectivity, rationality and impartiality is naive in a post-modern world. This embrace of subjectivity and relativism has negative consequences for the possibility of harmony in a pluralistic society, because subjectivity and relativism tend to encourage suspicion and distrust of those who belong to differing groups. Since justice and fairness require impartiality, and impartiality is impossible to achieve because we are all loyal to our own group and its interests, then no one would expect fairness from someone who belongs to a different group. This outlook breeds contempt and conflict among the diverse communities within a society. The growing phenomenon of identity politics illustrates how the erosion of common ground and shared objective values based on a sense of justice and fairness can lead to fractious and destructive social interactions. For example, in American politics, Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor's comments about her identity as a "wise Latina" stirred up controversy about her

objectivity and whether or not whiteness, maleness, blackness, brownness or gayness constituted identities that no justice could ignore or overcome when making judicial decisions. Also, President Obama's plea for bipartisanship in the United States Congress has been widely viewed as futile given the seemingly irreconcilable divide between Democrats and Republican on most issues. Therefore, if we concede that subjectivity and relativism govern human interaction, then the liberal ideal of harmonious existence within a pluralistic democracy is not even remotely achievable.

A final challenge to the view that liberal democracy can protect and promote pluralism claims that capitalistic consumerism produces depoliticized, materialistic citizens who are anti-intellectual, ill-informed, conformist entertainment seekers. According to this view, America's mass entertainment industry, controlled by corporations, has a homogenizing effect on American culture. Our news outlets, financed by corporate advertising, present mainstream political, social and economic views with no mention of unorthodox perspectives. Network news coverage is largely narrow, shallow and monolithic—hardly conducive to the development of diverse perspectives among citizens.

Modern consumer culture portrays the good life as consisting of pleasure, comfort, material well-being and entertainment. What Americans want most are well-paying jobs and the right to shop; and they will compromise their principles in order to secure these perceived goods. Much has been written about the failure of the American educational system and the dumbing-down of America. All of these cultural trends produce conformity to a materialistic vision of the good life that crowds out or replaces alternative conceptions of what makes a life meaningful and worthwhile. Pluralism is not encouraged given prevailing cultural desiderata of profitability, comfort and entertainment.

If these three challenges to liberal democracy's capacity to promote and protect pluralism are convincing, then the prospects for pluralism in illiberal democracies or in dictatorships is grim. Pluralism obviously can not thrive where human rights are not protected and oppositional viewpoints are not tolerated.

The chapters in this volume discuss the many facets of pluralism in a liberal democracy, as well as the interplay between religion and politics. Religion is a central theme in this book for two reasons. First, religions often claim to possess truths about the nature of God and the proper way to live in order to achieve eternal life in heaven, or enlightenment or spiritual liberation. Unfortunately, different religions offer different sets of truths on these issues, a fact which creates obvious competition and rivalry between religions. Historically, religious differences have produced

countless wars, violent clashes, human rights violations and various forms of religious persecutions. Our record of coexisting peacefully in a religiously pluralistic world has been abysmal at best. Some chapters in this book discuss religious pluralism, the clash between science and religion and the role religious reasons should play in a public dialogue about public policy and law. The second reason why religion is a prominent theme is that, since religion is constitutive of the identities of so many individuals, its influence on politics, for better or for worse, is extremely significant. Many chapters explore the various ways in which religion can affect politics: From the dangers of theocracy, to Jihadist terrorism, to a Hindu approach to addressing terrorism, to a Unitarian Universalist perspective on ethical eating to the Christian virtue of forgiveness applied to political dispute resolution. All in all, the chapters in this book represent a variety of approaches to understanding the interrelated problems associated with religion and politics in a pluralistic world.

In Chapter 1, "The Importance of Pluralism: A Critique of Appiah," Steven Weimer argues that pluralism is a necessary condition for a life lived well. He takes issue with Appiah's view that autonomy is the ultimate justification for pluralism. Autonomy requires a variety of available choices from which to select in the constitution of an individual's life. Pluralism is important because it provides this variety. However, a problem arises when a people or a community autonomously choose to eliminate the variety of options make autonomous self-creation possible. According to Appiah, the State should not interfere with the decision. No moral or political problem arises so long as homogeneity is freely chosen.

Weimer argues that Appiah's view is mistaken because the State is responsible for ensuring that its citizens develop meaningful lives. Pluralism must be protected as a condition for developing meaningful lives for future generations as well as for currently living citizens. Citing the influence of John Stewart Mill, Weimer argues that progress requires pluralism for the following reasons:

1. It enables people to create objectively good things.
2. It contributes to the success of individual ambitions.
3. It contributes to and promotes human happiness.
4. It furthers self-development.

Weimer argues that cross-cultural interaction promotes creativity that produces new and culturally significant goods. Individual ambitions will be more successfully fulfilled in a pluralistic environment that offers a diversity of opportunities than in a homogeneous one with few options. Availability of a wide variety of identities improves the chances that

individual ambitions will succeed. This success in turn contributes to individual happiness and self-development.

Weimer concludes that the State must therefore protect and promote diversity by "keeping up a perpetual and standing opposition to the will of the majority." This can be accomplished if the State does the following:

1. Protects the rights of minority cultures and nonconformist associations.
2. Publicly funds alternative media outlets.
3. Supports the arts, practices and research essential to minority ways of life.
4. Requires an educational curriculum that critiques the dominant values.
5. Places minority hiring quotas on schools and universities.

Only strong State action can counteract the strong and natural tendency towards conformity, conventionalism and homogeneity in our society.

Chapter 2, "Religious Pluralism and Perspective Pluralism," addresses the problem of how to appropriately respond to religious diversity. Since most of the major religions are mission-minded—they recommend a path to either salvation or liberation or enlightenment—the problem becomes how to determine which religion, among the various competitors, possesses the true path. Edward Langerak characterizes the different approaches to this problem of religious diversity, including Religious Exclusivism, Religious Inclusivism, Religious Pluralism and Perspective Pluralism. Inclusivism is an improvement over Exclusivism—the view that one's own religion alone embodies God's saving truth—since it recognizes that other religions may have truths that can lead to salvation or enlightenment, and that these truths are effective because they are implicitly contained within your religion. For example, many Muslims believe that Christianity has validity because it is an incomplete form of Islam. The problem with Inclusivism is that belittles the unique truth and salvific power of other religions. Pluralists recognize that many religions offer alternative and effect ways to relate to God and achieve salvation. They also respect non-theistic religions that do not offer ideas about salvation or eternal life and conclude that no religion is superior.

Clearly, one's philosophical approach to religious diversity has a tremendous impact on political affairs. The more one tends towards Exclusivism, the less tolerant one will be towards other religions; and intolerance increases the likelihood of religious persecution, violence and war. However, Langerak thinks the pluralist conclusion that all religions are equally effective in leading us to truth is problematic because we cannot possibly know whether each religion is equally effective, since we

can never escape our own perspective. Although sympathetic to pluralism, he offers an alternative called Perspective Pluralism as the best approach to religious diversity. Since our religious perspective depends on our context—how we were raised, the culture we experienced, and our historical framework—religious beliefs are judged true or false from a particular religious perspective. So, from my religious perspective, religious beliefs that differ from mine may be reasonable to others, but these beliefs are not true. By the same token, my religious beliefs will not be true from a different religious perspective. The realizations that religious beliefs can only be justified within a religious perspective, and that there are many reasonable perspectives, lead to the possibility of religious tolerance.

In Chapter 3, "Science, the Secular and the Sacred," Richard Liebendorfer considers conflicts between science and religion. These conflicts are more pronounced if we adopt a view of religion as primitive science. On this view, religion attempts to understand and explain the world. Consequently, religion offers explanations and makes predictions that are either true or false. Since science also springs from our desire to understand and explain the world, it naturally comes into conflict with religion. However, in such a competition, science decidedly triumphs. As Oscar Wilde once said, "science is the record of dead religions." Religion's failure in this competition has lead many to reject the view of religion as primitive science. For example, Simone Weil finds religion in the limits of science, in the gaps that science cannot bridge. Similarly, Rudolph Otto argues that religion deals with what is mysterious—it cannot be represented or conceived, and is beyond the sphere of the intelligible. These sorts of views of religion escape the competition with science.

Liebendorfer also argues that religion as primitive science cannot account for the great diversity of religious experience. Primitive science misses the religious experience of mystery, an unseen order underlying reality. Such experience can be accompanied by joy, love or fear, and by a sense of the awe or awfulness of everyday life. Further, William James calls attention to the religious experience called "healthy mindedness," of seeing the world and apprehending its goodness. Another religious experience described by Martin Luther is the experience of the "sick soul"—the battle to overcome the temptations of the flesh and the weariness occasioned by defeat. This diversity of religious experience is much deeper and wider than the mere desire to know, explain and express truths about the world.

In Chapter 4, "Religious Experience from Mysticism to Pragmatism," Apple Igrek examines the contrasting views of religious experience as

characterized by mysticism and pragmatism. While recognizing the diverse array of religions in the world, William James claims that all religions point to a transcendent, unifying reality—the divine. This transcendent truth of religion cannot be reduced to human insights. Consequently, religious experience affirms our relationship to something infinitely vast and beyond human identification and comprehension. James' position represents a mystical view of religious experience.

Pragmatism, as represented by John Dewey, rejects the notion that a common denominator can be ascribed to all religion. Religion may posit an underlying reality but religions offer diverse interpretations of this reality. While religious experience involves our deepest desire to become one with transcendent reality, this reality, since it is beyond human perception and comprehension, is impossible to verify. For Dewey, what stands outside practical intelligence is irrelevant to the moral and political concerns of everyday life. We should focus on the natural order rather than the supernatural if we are to create a better society. Therefore, pragmatic empiricism claims that religious sentiments are useful only within a pragmatic program to promote social justice.

However, Igrek argues, a moral transformation of society can only be achieved by an embrace of mysticism. This is so because moral transformation of character requires a detachment from the material self that seeks the satisfaction of desires. In particular, Catholic mysticism advocates the abandonment of one's natural will in favor of the submission to God's will. By abandoning ourselves to the will of God we transcend finite limitations and desires. He argues that self-interest, in allegiance to the body, is restricted by earthly delights, achievements, riches and affections. It is a temporal and spatial representation of good, but it is also a distraction from the mystic path of righteousness through unification in God's goodness.

Chapter 5, "Citizenship and Religious Expression," discusses the role of religion in political debate, particularly the appropriateness of employing religious justifications, either by the State or by citizens, for coercive policies and laws. Craig Matarrese examines the doctrine of separation of church and state that has become part of the United States Constitution through the Establishment Clause of the 1st Amendment. Two Supreme Court cases, *Van Orden v. Perry* and *McCreary County v. ACLU*, involve state action that may violate the Establishment Clause. The separation of church and state is challenged in both cases by the public display of the Ten Commandments on state property. Two main considerations emerged for deciding these cases. First, the display of the Ten Commandments must have a secular purpose and must not aim to

advance religion. Second, the display must not create social conflict and divisiveness. However, according to Matarrese, the strongest argument, which is only alluded to by the court, for keeping religion out of politics is based on the principle of respect for persons. The reason why the interjection of religion into politics creates so much conflict is because it exhibits a lack of respect for those who do not accept the religious justification for coercive laws.

He argues that religious debaters, including politicians, should restrain themselves from using religious reasons that either lack force or are not intelligible to nonbelievers or persons of a different religion. He defends his conception of civic virtue against various criticisms offered by Christopher Eberle. He concludes that while individuals have a right to use religious reasons as justifications for coercive laws, civic virtue demands that they exercise restraint from doing so, out of respect for other persons.

In Chapter 6, "Religious Pluralism and Philosophical Naturalism," Eric Kraemer also addresses the question of how someone with strong religious beliefs should argue for restrictive public policies, e.g., abortion, same-sex marriage, or euthanasia. The conservative tradition claims that debaters should use their strongest reasons for public policy even if this reason is a religious one. However, liberals object that the conservative approach promotes religious fundamentalists' push for policies that are harmful or repressive to others who do not accept their religious presuppositions. Hence, such an approach has a destabilizing influence in a pluralistic society. Consequently, liberals urge that debaters avoid religious reasons, and instead appeal to reasons that are available to all. This approach is unacceptable to conservatives because it rules out religious convictions that constitute a religious person's identity and source of meaning. An alternative to both of these approaches is called the Combined Liberal Perspective, which claims that religious debaters should have both religious and secular reasons for public policy.

Kraemer argues that parallel problems arise when we ask how a philosophical naturalist should argue for public policy. Naturalists not only reject religion and embrace atheism, but they regard all existence as natural and only accept natural explanations for natural events. Obviously, naturalists and religionists hold strongly opposed metaphysical and epistemological views. Liberals require religious debaters to present neutral reasons that appeal to all, but since naturalists are anti-religious, they too should be required to present only neutral reasons. It seems that genuine dialogue between the strongly religious and the strongly anti-religious cannot take place unless both seek neutral reasons for public policy.

In Chapter 7, "Hermeneutics and the Rational Resolution of Conflict," David Rose examines a case of inter-cultural conflict, namely the Taliban's destruction of the ancient statues of the Buddha in Bamiyan, near Kabul, Afghanistan. Mullah Mohammad Omar justified the destruction as the will of God since the Koran forbids idolatry. The Taliban's actions were met with moral outrage from around the world and yet, Rose argues, according to hermeneutics there is no morally correct judgment based upon the application of universal principles in this case. This is because our moral principles are not universal but rather are culturally acquired and given. So how are we to resolve this conflict rationally?

To understand a moral conflict, hermeneutics requires a distancing from one's own internal moral perspective and study of the opposing moral perspective from an external point of view. The agent must determine what one's obligation would be if one were a member of this culture. Of course, it is possible to understand the obligation without endorsing it. The hermeneutical method is characterized as idealistic in that it claims that our moral understanding is conditioned by the categories of the subject. However, these categories are culturally determined, not universal. Finally, hermeneutics recognizes the rationality of evaluative statements.

Given this method, the question remains whether or not hermeneutics is useful for the rational resolution of inter-cultural conflicts. The hermeneutical approach to the Buddha statues case is to recognize that both sides have rational arguments. When the participants dialogue, these rational arguments are brought forth and prescriptions must be made that are acceptable to both sides. Violence and the coercion of wills are not rational options.

Gordon Haist, in Chapter 8, "Pluralism, Hospitality and State of Exception," argues that value pluralism creates a problem for politics which democracy attempts to resolve. In a value pluralistic society there is no *summum bonum* that harmonizes lesser goods on a single scale of value. Unlike monism, pluralism embraces the incommensurability of value. Consequently, the function of politics is not the preservation of harmony among our hierarchically ordered objective goods.

The politics needed for a pluralistic democracy affirms principles of negative freedom which grant the right of people to choose their own ends subject only to the restraints of justice. Strengthened by a commitment to diversity, pluralistic democracy is uniquely qualified to create a community of strangers collectively engaged in a national conversation about freedom, justice and governance. A necessary ingredient to the success of pluralistic democracy is hospitality—the imperative to "be at home despite your difference." Haist concludes that hospitality, as the ground for mediation

among differences, renders pluralistic democracy healthy by its inclusion of the stranger.

In Chapter 9, "Theocratic Conservatism," Ron Yezzi distinguishes three types of political conservatism: theocratic, autocratic and democratic, and argues that all three types are untenable because they rest on a mistaken view of human nature. The revolution in the social sciences has established that the conservative view of human nature is false because its conception of the individualistic private self that is relatively fixed, consciousness-directing, privately motivating and therefore personally responsible, ignores the influence of culture and social relations in the formation of the self.

Yezzi then describes the theoretical features of theocratic conservatism, which claims that government must be based upon divine guidance. The state becomes the fulfillment of the divine will and the individual or groups of individuals are subordinated to the theocratic state. Such a state cannot tolerate pluralism and difference because of the threat of disunity and dissention. Theocratic conservatism tends to promote religious absolutism, which claims that its religion is the one true religion, its doctrines are infallible and its scriptural foundation is certain. Therefore, religious absolutism removes all doubt about the truth of its various claims and beliefs. Yezzi then shows that religious absolutism shares many of the same characteristics as cultural relativism. Finally, he examines the political prospects of theocratic conservatism. He concludes that while there has been a strong resurgence of religious fundamentalism—Christian fundamentalism in the United States, Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East and elsewhere and Hindu fundamentalism in India—all advocating some rule by religion, there is some hope that the threat of theocracy will ease.

In Chapter 10, "Jihadist Terrorism and Democracy," I (Sandra Jane Fairbanks) argue that while there are many contributing causes of jihadist terrorism, the root cause is the terrorists' radical religious ideology. The centerpiece of this ideology is condemnation of liberal democracy, which advocates the rule of men above the rule of God, secularism, capitalism and individual human rights. Since democracy is antithetical to radical Islam, it is argued that the most effective way to attack jihadist terrorism is to work towards the democratization of Islamic countries.

I assess the viability of the democratization solution by examining two strategies for achieving democracy; first the direct invasion of Muslim countries as the United States did in Iraq and Afghanistan; and second, capitalist economic development, which claims to have a democratizing effect on society. The first strategy proves to be immoral and practically

unwise. The second strategy holds more promise than the first, but there are some serious doubts that the development of global economic markets will necessarily produce liberal democracies in the Muslim world.

In Chapter 11, "History Repeated or Losing the War on Terrorism," Andreas Bock argues that history has proven that fighting terrorism by military means is ineffective and even counter productive. The use of military force fails to defeat terrorism because it makes it easier for terrorists to justify their attacks, to gain broad public support and to recruit new followers to their cause. According to Bock, terrorism is a social movement intended to achieve social or political change. This movement's success is dependent upon strong public support. Therefore, any effective strategy to defeat terrorism must undermine and erode the base of public support.

An important fact often ignored is that terrorist groups are weak despite the horrific nature of their violence and the consequent fear and panic they engender. Since these groups are not states, they lack the various tools of power by which to achieve their goals, including an organized and securely-financed military, a system of diplomacy and a national constituency. Typically, terrorist groups operate underground, with scarce resources and no reliable source of money, equipment, weapons and manpower. Consequently, the best way to fight terrorism is to gain the trust and support of the people most likely to supply the necessary resources to the terrorists.

Bock suggests three ways to undermine the public support for terrorists. First, countries like the United States should negotiate with terrorist groups. Negotiations may enable terrorists to achieve some of their objectives, but they also indicate to the public that violence is not the only way to solve problems. Second, he recommends humanitarian aid to build better lives for the people who may support the terrorists' causes. The money spend on war could be used for education, health care, building infrastructure and economic development. Third, countries like the United States should follow their own ideals of justice. Unfortunately, the "war on terror" has lead to the violation of the civil rights of suspected terrorists and to the legalization of torture.

Joel Wilcox, in Chapter 12, "Gandhian Nonviolence as a Response to Jihadist Terrorism," discusses the application of Gandhi's idea of *satyagraha*, which combines elements of non-violence with active non-cooperation towards the end of transforming the character of wrongdoers, to problem of religious terrorism. While non-violent resistance seems less than promising as a response to jihadist terrorism, the military invasions of

Iraq and Afghanistan appear self-defeating because they have probably produced more terrorists than they have deterred.

Classical instances of *satyagraha* involve an oppressed group demonstrating against a superior power. However this approach must be altered if it is to be effective against terrorism. Education satisfies key criteria of Gandhian *satyagraha*: It is non-violent, aims to effect transformation, and honors the humanity of those for whom it is intended. Hence, an educational program geared towards Muslims, and particularly Muslim youth, seems promising. However, choosing the content of such a program is difficult since so many content areas would be controversial. Environmental education programs are consistent with teachings of the Koran, and would enable the United States to establish a greater sense of kinship with Muslim populations than is the case at present. According to Wilcox, this would mitigate the problem of Jihadist terrorism.

Chapter 13, "Ethical Eating: A Unitarian Universalist Perspective," by Marjorie Loring, argues that since our current food system threatens both human health and the health of the environment, we need to think ethically about the way we eat. The industrialization of our food system has introduced harmful agents into our food supply, such as genetically engineered cells, growth hormones, preservatives, chemical additives, pesticides and herbicides. It has also contributed to deforestation, pollution, global warming as well as the inhumane treatment of migrant farm workers and farm animals.

Given this reality, each person has a moral obligation to not only learn about the ethical issues involved in our food choices but to determine our food choices according to our own moral principles. Loring then presents an analysis of ethical eating by applying the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism to this issue.

Chapter 14, "Political Forgiveness," by Bernardo Cantens, argues that the virtue of forgiveness, rooted in the Christian tradition, is not a moral virtue restricted exclusively to the realm of interpersonal relationships, as many philosophers have argued. On the contrary, forgiveness can play an essential role in achieving genuine reconciliation and peace between parties to political conflicts.

In order to make his argument for political forgiveness, Cantens first discusses the nature of an act of forgiveness. In the private realm of interpersonal relationships, the paradigmatic act of forgiveness takes place between two parties, the wrongdoer and the victim. It is commonly agreed that forgiveness requires that the victim overcome "vindictive passions" toward the wrongdoer, including anger, resentment, hatred and the desire for revenge. However, Cantens argues that this analysis of forgiveness is

flawed for a number of reasons and offers a plausible alternative. Forgiveness requires that the victim reconcile with the wrongdoer through a deliberate choice to treat the wrongdoer with the respect and care due to any person. This account explains how it is possible to have negative feelings towards a person we have already decided to forgive.

According to Cantens, political forgiveness between nations, for example, is possible because sensations such as anger, resentment and remorse can be intelligibly predicated of groups, and not just to individuals. The position that forgiveness is restricted to individuals in the private realm rested on a flawed, individualistic view of human nature. Cantens argues that human nature is essentially social and political, since membership in a community is constitutive of the identity of any human being. The individual is not completely independent and isolated from a social and political community. Moreover, the community transcends the individual in so far as the good of the individual depends on the good of the community. This transcendence helps explain how political forgiveness is possible.

Cantens defines political forgiveness as a political community's thoughtful decision—an act of political will guided by its legitimate leadership—to consent to treat another group as an ally or political friend, despite the harm they have caused. There are different degrees of political friendship, but the weakest form requires that the forgiven group be treated with the same respect as any other group. Cantens concludes with a discussion of political forgiveness in the case of South Africa.

In Chapter 15, "The End of Economic Growth and the Belief in Progress," Michael Wenisch argues that the dominant belief system in our industrialized global civilization rests on the presumption that economic progress will continue into the indefinite future. This belief in progress not only pervades the attitudes of the general public in the West but also in many of our political ideologies and policies. He claims that the belief in progress originates in traditional Judeo-Christian religious ideas, particularly the idea of redemption from sin. In both Judaism and Christianity, the narrative of redemption involves the agency of a messianic figure sent from God, who saves us from death and offers a life of eternal bliss. These Judeo-Christian roots help explain the powerful hold the belief in inevitable progress has in the western consciousness.

Unfortunately, the wisdom of this faith in progress is seriously challenged by the phenomenon of peak oil. There is considerable evidence that worldwide oil production has reached its peak, so that the ever-increasing demand for oil will greatly surpass the supply of oil in future decades. According to Wenisch, the depletion of our oil supply will

inevitably lead to protracted economic contractions and, consequently, the refutation of the presumption of progress. He argues that this unwavering faith in progress is responsible for our inability not only to recognize the threat posed by peak oil but to take the steps necessary to mitigate the effects of this impending economic catastrophe.

In Chapter 16, "Bad Morality, Conscience and Genocide: A Reply to Bennett," Morgan Rempel argues that a person's adherence to a "bad morality" and the refusal to acknowledge the reasonableness of other alternative moral perspectives can profoundly affect the political landscape. Rempel analyzes two examples provided by Jonathan Bennett: Huckleberry Finn and Heinrich Himmler. In the case of Huck Finn, Rempel points out that Huck followed his sympathy for Jim instead of his conventional moral duty that required turning Jim in to the authorities as a "rightfully owned slave." Huck viewed himself as weak and immoral for helping Jim. Obviously Huck failed to recognize that from a different moral perspective one's feelings of sympathy and compassion for another human being have moral weight and validity, let alone the fact that persons of color are fully human and possess that same moral value and moral rights as a white person. If this moral perspective had been recognized and adopted the practice of slavery would have been abolished without a resort to civil war.

In the case of Heinrich Himmler, Himmler's morality requires the extermination of the Jews while remaining morally "decent" in the process. This decency requires maintaining one's sympathy for the victims while doing one's genocidal duty. A good German soldier must achieve a golden mean with regard to sympathy. He should not become softened by sympathy which would cause him to shirk his duty, nor become desensitized to sympathetic feelings which would cause him to brutalize the prisoners. Moreover, the good German soldier is honest and does not steal from or take advantage of the Jewish prisoners. Again the adherence to a "bad morality" and the utter blindness to different moral perspectives contributed to the Holocaust and to WWII, two of the most catastrophic political disasters of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER ONE

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLURALISM: A CRITIQUE OF APPIAH

STEVEN WEIMER

Introduction

The nature and significance of identities—that is, the genders, sexual orientations, religions, ethnicities, vocations, etc. that help make us "who we are"—have for some time now been important, and difficult, concerns in ethical and political philosophy. At the most general level, the question is whether the fact that "we make our lives *as* men and *as* women, *as* gay and *as* straight people, *as* Ghanaians and *as* Americans ..." ¹ is something that ought to be abstracted away in moral and political theorizing, something which ought to be, perhaps grudgingly, acknowledged and taken into account, or something rather to be positively embraced. In his *The Ethics of Identity*, Kwame Anthony Appiah adopts the middle, neutral approach. Writing "neither as identity's friend nor as its foe," ² Appiah takes our nature as identity-encumbered beings as a given and then examines, first, the ways in which our well-being depends upon our identities, and second, the implications that dependence has for liberal political theory.

One of those implications is, Appiah says, that liberalism should embrace what he calls "rooted cosmopolitanism"—a form of cosmopolitanism which "isn't exhausted by the appeal to moral universalism," but instead makes considerable room for group partiality, and thus for cultural difference. ³ Liberalism should embrace such cosmopolitanism, he explains, because the pluralism it makes possible is a "precondition for the self-creation that is at the heart of a meaningful human life." ⁴ The idea here is that to shape a life is to make choices concerning the materials history has provided you—to embrace your ethnicity and identify *as* an African-American, say, or to disregard it; to adopt your family's traditional religion, or to take on some alternative religious identity. People can only make these sorts of

life-shaping choices, however, if they have available a variety of identity-constructing materials from which to select. Pluralism is on Appiah's view important because it provides that variety—it is, he says, a precondition of a meaningful life.⁵

The political consequences of that importance are, however, for Appiah clear and strict. As "it is the autonomy that variety enables that is its fundamental justification . . . the options we need for our choices to be substantial must be freely sustained."⁶ In other words, despite its importance, pluralism must not be protected at the price of autonomy. Thus, if people autonomously choose to eliminate the range of options that make autonomous self-creation possible, the state must not intervene. As an example of such autonomous homogeneity, imagine a society whose members, after considering a variety of conceptions of the good, unanimously and autonomously decide that Mormonism, say, is the one true faith, the sole means to eternal salvation.⁷ Judging it best to reduce the likelihood of others being tempted from the path of righteousness, they then choose to eliminate all alternatives to the Mormon way of life. On Appiah's view, those choices must not be interfered with. As he puts it, "We can't require others to provide us with a cultural museum to tour through or to visit on satellite television's endless virtual safari,"⁸ or, less vividly, "freely chosen homogeneity . . . raises no problems."⁹

I believe that homogeneity, even when freely chosen, does raise problems for Appiah's account and for any which is likewise concerned with both the autonomy and the quality of people's lives. I will argue that Appiah reached his contrary conclusion only by paying inadequate attention to the ethical value of pluralism.

Appiah correctly rejects the idea that diversity is of intrinsic, aesthetic value. As he says, pluralism is but a link in a justificatory chain which is ultimately grounded in something more substantial than a fascinating collection of diverse ways of life. Where his response to homogeneity goes wrong is that it takes respect for autonomous choices, and that alone, to be the ultimate foundation, the justificatory anchor, of that chain. This is a mistake because Appiah's is not an autonomy-based ethic. What grounds his theory is not the belief that the autonomy-valuing dictates of rationality must be followed unerringly, or that individuals' self-ownership must be respected without exception, but rather a concern that people live well. Following Ronald Dworkin, Appiah distinguishes two dimensions by which lives should be evaluated: the moral and the ethical. "A life has gone well," he explains, "if a person has mostly done for others what she owed them (and is thus morally successful) and has succeeded in creating and experiencing things of significance and in fulfilling her ambitions (and

thus ethically successful)."¹⁰ There are thus for Appiah three components to a good life: fulfillment of moral duties, creation and experience of objectively significant things (including, for instance, relationships and works of art), and success at one's ambitions. Therefore, while the moral duty to respect the autonomous choices of others is certainly part of living well, it is but one part of one component of the good life. It is the goodness of a life as a whole which ultimately matters on Appiah's account. Nor, it should be noted, is respect for autonomous choices a lexically superior part of that whole—the relationship between the moral and the ethical is not, Appiah makes clear, a hierarchical one, with morality always trumping ethical well-being.¹¹

Appiah's discussion of autonomous homogeneity, however, focuses exclusively on the moral duty to respect autonomous choices. This is short-sighted, for it is not only respect for already-made autonomous choices that is at stake in such cases, but also (A) the ability of others to make such choices, as well as both halves of the ethical dimension of life; (B) the creation and experience of objectively significant things; and (C) people's success at their ambitions. As a result, a loss of social diversity is a more serious problem than Appiah makes it out to be, and one in need of a more complex resolution than that he offers.¹² I will discuss each of these implications in turn, beginning with the relation between pluralism and autonomous self-creation.

Pluralism and Promotion of Autonomy

In discussing the demands of autonomy, Appiah mentions only the duty to respect already-made autonomous choices. Conspicuously absent is a duty to ensure that people are able to make such choices. This is surprising, given his comment that, because it provides people with a range of options from which to select in shaping their lives, pluralism is, a "precondition for the self-creation that is at the heart of a meaningful life."¹³ It is with its capacity to enable such autonomous self-creation that pluralism's fundamental justification lies.¹⁴ Autonomy thus has important ethical implications as well as moral demands. As such, cases of autonomous homogeneity would seem to create a rather straightforward dilemma. That is, because "one needn't subscribe to autonomism to have autonomy,"¹⁵ it is possible that the values on which a homogenous society has autonomously centered do not include autonomy. For instance, in the Mormon society described above, although members of the adult generation have by hypothesis shaped their own lives in an autonomous manner, they may not themselves value autonomy. On the contrary, those

autonomous conformers may think that they would have been better off without having had to select Mormonism from amongst a range of options, and consequently decide to shelter their children from all alternatives to Mormonism, thereby better ensuring that the younger generation will adopt the "one true way." What are we to say about such a case? Should the state respect the adult generation's autonomous parenting choices and allow the pluralism which is a precondition of their children's ethical success to be eliminated, or protect that pluralism at the cost of violating autonomous choices? As moral considerations do not on Appiah's view trump ethical ones, there would appear to be no easy answer, but rather some regrettable balancing to be done, with the ethical costs of homogeneity on one side, and the violation of autonomy on the other.

Despite Appiah's claim to the contrary, it is at least plausible to suppose that the state ought to protect pluralism in such cases. It is true that parents' child-rearing decisions often comprise a vitally important aspect of their lives. To override such decisions thus represents a serious violation of the parents' autonomy. The autonomy which their children are able to gain from that violation, however, is of a fundamental and pervasive sort. Pluralism would provide the younger generation with an awareness of alternative value systems and ways of life to consider, and possibly adopt, in shaping many, and many of their most central, identities. It is telling to note that in light of such considerations, even Nozick, who does not share Appiah's concern that the state should enable its citizens to live well, believes that it must somehow be ensured that the children of a homogenous society are "informed of the range of alternatives in the world."¹⁶ If we believe that autonomy requires not simply that one has been informed of alternatives, but that those alternatives are meaningful—that one can see them as realistic options to consider in shaping her life—then *informing* children of alternatives may not be enough. For most of us, to reject convention, ignore expectations, and adopt a way of life we have seen only in a textbook or on television would be virtually unthinkable. In order to enable autonomous self-creation, it might therefore in some cases be necessary to employ stronger measures aimed at exposing children to *lived* examples of alternative ways of life—that is, measures aimed at protecting or promoting pluralism.

On my view, in such autonomy-considerations we already have a strong case for protecting pluralism. We need not, however, issue our verdict on autonomous homogeneity quite yet because the case for protecting pluralism is not yet complete. In the next two sections, I will argue that pluralism is not merely a pre-condition of ethical success, but a strong predictor of it. That is, pluralism not only enables people to live

well, it also makes it more likely that they *will* live well—that they will create and experience objectively significant things and that they will succeed at their ambitions.

Pluralism and Objectively Significant Things

Let us first examine the relation between pluralism and the first half of Appiah's ethical dimension of life: production and experience of objectively significant things. His focus being the more subjective ethics of identity, Appiah does not discuss these objective values in much detail. He tells us that there is a "determinate (if as yet unmapped)" list of such things,¹⁷ but provides just three examples: relationships, works of art, and institutions.¹⁸ We can, I think, safely make several additions to that list on Appiah's behalf. Most obviously, it would seem that accomplishments in science, mathematics, and philosophy should qualify as well as those in art and institutions. Given that Appiah anoints Mill the "traveling companion" for the journey of his book, we might expect a couple Millian values to make the cut as well. First, it seems that human happiness, or at least prevention of suffering, ought to be included in any, but especially any Mill-inspired, list of things which ought to be created and enjoyed. Other things being equal, that is, a life which contained and created human happiness is for that reason better than one which contained and created human suffering. Second, it is plausible to expect development of one's distinctively human capacities to appear on a more complete version of Appiah's list as he seems to approve of Mill's belief that, as Appiah words it, "Not only is exercising one's autonomy valuable in itself, but such certainty exercise leads to self-development, to the cultivation of one's faculties of observation, reason, and judgment."¹⁹

Now, as Appiah recognizes, Mill famously and firmly believed that the best way for a society to promote the self-development of its members, the social progress brought by advances in art, institutions, etc., and happiness in general is for it to maintain an environment of freedom and diversity. If Mill was right about that, and I will briefly give some provisional reasons to think that he was, then pluralism would be a benefit to the "objective goods" side of the ethical dimension of life.

The Millian idea relevant here is that progress requires pluralism. For its "progressive and many-sided development," Mill tells us, Europe is "wholly indebted" to its "remarkable diversity of character and culture," to its "plurality of paths."²⁰ Mill's claim here is an evolutionary one. Pluralism brings progress on this view because it increases the number and variety of ideas available at a society's "free marketplace of ideas." With

enough people engaging in enough "experiments in living," the idea is, some of them are bound to hit upon progressive ideas, inventions, etc. Thus Mill says that "the only unfailing and permanent source of improvement is liberty, since by it there are as many possible centres of improvement as there are individuals."²¹ Presumably, many of those improvements would qualify as objectively significant for Appiah—achievements in areas such as art, science, and philosophy on his view contribute directly to the quality of the achiever's life. Often, such advances would be of indirect value as well. This will be true of any improvement which either (A) better enables people to create directly significant things (by, for instance, allowing a society to spend more time in pursuit of such goods), (B) contributes to an individual's success at her ambitions (thus benefiting the subjective half of Appiah's ethical dimension of life), or, if we add to Appiah's list of objective goods the Millian values suggested above, either contributes to or promotes (C) human happiness or (D) self-development. I would expect the majority of the improvements Mill has in mind to be of direct and/or indirect value on Appiah's account. As a result, Mill's claim that pluralism increases a society's rate of improvement would, if correct, mean that it also improves the quality of its members' lives. This is not at all surprising, given that Mill is in effect claiming that pluralism enhances social progress and that social progress is, I believe, best understood as improvement in the quality of lives within a society.

The question, then, is whether Mill is in fact right about the connection of diversity and social progress. Although I will not be able to fully defend this here, I want to suggest that the social sciences have gone some way in vindicating Mill's claim.²²

Mill finds support, first of all, in historical observations of the fact that social progress tends to follow cross-cultural interaction.²³ When the societal intermingling brought by trade, exploration, and conquest have declined, as happened when Rome fell and Europe entered the dark ages, societies have tended to stagnate. When cross-cultural interaction has increased, as it did during the transition from the dark ages to the renaissance as well as the period from 1800 to World War I, during which time international trade grew from comprising three percent of the world economy to 33 percent, so too has the rate of progress.²⁴ It is of course immensely difficult to identify the causes of such broad historical trends, and we therefore ought not to place too much weight on these observations. Nevertheless, it is certainly plausible to suppose that cross-cultural contact would play some role in bringing about the "creative booms" with which it has often been correlated, as it is difficult to imagine