Liberals and Nations

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Abstract

This paper discusses the work of four liberal theorists who explicitly address issues of nationality and culture: David Miller, Will Kymlicka, Charles Taylor and James Tully. The discussion is structured around a generic liberal political theory, (endorsed for example in Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*) which I call the Universal Model. The Universal Model delivers agents moral respect, but, I argue, it has no theory of political (eg. national or cultural) boundaries. All four writers base their liberalisms on bounded national cultures, though Kymlicka alone continues to endorse the Model. I argue that tensions emerge between universal moral principles and the particular national cultures the four value - this occurs in different ways according to the theory each offers. I conclude by arguing that a liberal theory of national culture should be based on principles of recognition, not just respect. Recognition is a universal human need whose object is nonetheless particular. It could therefore link universal liberal principles and the national cultures they apply to.

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One way to think about culture and nationality (not the best way) are as secondary qualities. Just as Locke and Descartes distinguished bodies' primary qualities of mass, extension and number, from secondary qualities such as colour, texture, sound and so on, so we can distinguish individual human agents from their secondary manifestations such as culture, nationality - and for that matter ethnicity, race, religion and gender. Moreover, as primary qualities provide, by definition, an 'absolute conception of reality' in contrast to secondary qualities which subjectively vary across persons, so nations and cultures represent so many distortions on the basic truth that only individual persons constitute the social universe (Williams 1978: 273).

I begin with this analogy because I think it captures a common approach to culture in liberal political theory, which I want to call the Universal Model (see for example Rawls 1972; Nozick 1974; Nagel 1991; and Barry 1995). The Universal Model says that human beings are endowed with the primary capacities of rationality, reasonableness and autonomy. We are not encumbered with any social relationships since all such relationships have a particular character and particular characteristics are, for the Universal Model, secondary qualities. The social world may actuate both primary and secondary capacities, but only the former are the basic stuff of human agency. Consequently, the only essential moral relation between persons is respect for these primary capacities. The medium of mutual respect is individual rights and the system of rights (the political morality of the Model) is perfectly general. Since

justified merely by reference to primary capacities, it consists of a uniform application of general rules, neutral with respect to the manifold aims and allegiances which agents pursue. If particular allegiances, and the rights that uphold with them, are justifiable within the Model then this must be by some deduction from general principles. Whether this is possible is controversial (see for example Gewirth 1988; Goodin 1988).

The Universal Model provides a clear and consistent theory of world liberalism. What it cannot justify is that the world should be divided into different states with different schedules of rights, or, worse still, why cultures and peoples within a state might have their own special rights. For how can any liberal rights or principles justified on universal grounds, not, by that token, apply universally, that is, equally to every last person in the world? Free speech, for example, uncontroversially applies universally, but then should not Britain apply it to Iran? Schemes of social justice, by contrast, do differ between nations, but, if universal human needs are the criterion, why should they? In fact, most liberals have implicitly endorsed one aspect of the nation while officially rejecting its corollary. They have assumed that nations exist as networks of subjective identifications, in order to explain why persons should be motivated to comply with liberal universal principles. Yet, by token of the same universalism, they have denied that those identifications justify patriotism and nationalism as ethical particularisms. As Canovan argues, a theory of social justice must assume some boundaries to avoid being a theory of distribution for humanity itself (Canovan 1996: Ch.4). Social goods must be regarded as shared assets for redistribution to enjoy consent: hence there must be communal solidarity and mutual trust within the boundaries. Only a nation-state can engender such trust and solidarity

for schemes of redistribution to be practically effective. '[I]n justice as fairness', writes Rawls, 'men agree to share one another's fate' (Rawls 1972: 102). But not all men (or women): social redistribution is best achieved in a community of fate defined by national boundaries. Canovan's argument can be applied to democracy, political obligation and other concepts in the liberal canon: to be practically effective they have to be enforced by political power, and the nation-state is the most effective means for creating an 'us' to generate collective power based on consent (see also Tamir 1993: Ch.6).

My concern in this paper is the relation between the universal content of liberal principles and the particular sites - nation-states, multination-states or cultural communities - on which they must rest. I discuss the work of four authors: David Miller (Section II), Will Kymlicka (III), and Charles Taylor and James Tully (IV). All four appreciate that a liberal society must be seen, in some sense, as our society, and this sense of belonging cannot come from abstract principles alone. All base their liberalisms on national cultures - territorially-based networks of meanings and practices through which members mutually affirm each other. All of them want national cultures to have some political autonomy. Still, their boundaries are not quite the same. Miller defends the ideal of the nation state, while Kymlicka wants parity between the majority and minorities within a multinational (and ethnically diverse) state. Taylor explicitly addresses Quebecois nationalism, though his politics of difference also has an eye on the vigorous multicultural debates in American public life. Tully's interest centres on the claims to nationhood made by Aboriginal and indigenous peoples in Canada and elsewhere, though his post-imperial constitutional dialogue claims to apply to negotiations between cultures in their widest possible

sense including ethnic minorities, women and even supranational organisations. I will not look at the empirical particulars of the actual cultures and nations they address here, but rather explore the normative tools they develop for a liberal approach to culture as such.

Kymlicka alone seeks to defend the national cultures theme through adherence to the Universal Model. Miller, Taylor and Tully reject the Model. They believe that the mutual recognition provided by national cultures is reason enough to limit the scope of universal principles, and enlarge the role of particular principles which promote national solidarity. The concept of recognition - critical for Taylor and Tully, implicit in Miller and largely absent in Kymlicka - is, I believe, the crucial concept in constructing a post-Universal Model liberalism which accepts that nations (and other particular entities) deserve theoretical inclusion. Section V concludes by setting down some markers for a recognition-based liberal theory.

Section II - Liberal Nationalism

In *On Nationality*, David Miller defends three connected propositions: that nationhood is a valid source of personal identity, that nations are ethical communities and that national communities have a good claim to be politically self-determining (Miller 1995). Self-determination has a large literature which I will not review here (see for example Raz and Margalit 1990; de-Shalit 1996). The first claim is either a sociological generalisation or a moral assumption. If the latter, it seems the same as claim two which is what I concentrate on. Miller's ethics of nationality rests on an

endorsement of 'ethical particularism' over 'ethical universalism'. Ethical particularism 'holds that relations between persons are part of the basic subject matter of ethics, so that fundamental principles may be attached directly to these relations' (Miller 1995: 50). On this view of moral agency we are encumbered with obligations to others and moral judgment consists in determining which of them has most weight in a given situation. According to Miller, 'the duties we owe to our fellow-nationals are different from, and more extensive than, the duties we owe to human beings as such' (Miller 1993: 8). Maybe, but for the consistent particularist communal, religious and familial loyalties have ethical weight too. As Vincent argues, 'nationhood has no particular position of privilege within our complex array of allegiances' (Vincent 1997: 288). Ethical particularism, by itself, does not champion the nation. Moreover, ethical particularism, when applied to the nation, has its ugly side: anti-cosmopolitanism, restricted immigration, xenephobia, even racism - as Miller's correspondents are very keen to point out (Freeman 1994; Jones 1996; Weinstock 1996).

In fact, however, Miller does allow universal principles to enter his normative vision of the liberal national state. Notwithstanding the partiality and privilege we may legitimately grant to co-nationals, there are certain basic rights - to personal freedom, bodily integrity etc. - which all humans hold as such (Miller 1995: 74). We may also legitimately use universal principles of practical reason such as appeals to consistency and a neutral realm of empirical facts in moral arguments with co-nationals. There is, however, an important asymmetry in this position: while, according to Miller, '[t]he consistent universalist should regard nationality not as a justifiable source of ethical identity but as a limitation to be overcome', the ethical

particularist, by contrast, is free to introduce universalist notions when it suits him (Miller 1995: 64).

Conflicts between duties (universal and particular) and the problem of why national affiliations should receive privilege over others come to be resolved through Miller's notion of the public culture. A common public culture is one of the five constitutive features of nationhood.[1] It is defined as 'a set of ideas about the character of the community which helps to fix responsibilities', or again, 'a set of understandings about the nature of a political community, its principles and institutions, its social norms and so forth' (Miller 1995: 68, 158). The network of rights and duties which defines the political character of the state is justified by reference to the public culture. The public culture, is the (more or less) shared conception of the good of a nation, in contrast to competing and conflicting sub-national obligations. It thus helps bind citizens together and sustain national identity in their personal identities (claim one). This in turn helps motivate citizens to make the mutual sacrifices demanded by schemes of social justice.[2] The relative stability of the public culture, with respect to government policies of the day, also makes it a reference for political criticism.

Miller does not intend the public culture to be a stagnant reservoir, however, but rather a source of values and ideals itself shaped by political debate. The ideal nation-state is not a Fichtean object of veneration, but an active, self-reflective, democratic society. What obligations co-nationals owe one another must be a product of fair and rational debate. Even an ethical particularist wants assurance that the duties she is owed by others are not determined by contingent sentiment, but, on the

contrary, by a democratic process where she and others have their say. Implanted into Miller's vision of the public culture, therefore, is the ideal of deliberative democracy 'in which decisions are resolved through an open and uncoerced discussion of the issues at stake' (Miller 1995: 96). Deliberative democracy is governed by two regulative ideals. First, that argumentative reasons should be 'sincerely' and 'consistently' held; and second, that 'citizens should be able to moderate their claims' in an effort to reach consensus, that is, they should be reasonable. Miller adds finally that decision-making should be a public dialogue 'in which all points of view are represented' (Miller 1995: 150).

I understand deliberative democracy as a moral ideal, akin to Rawls's Kantian account of public reason, which raises itself above a mere politics of barter.[3] Now the ethical universalist has a straightforward, consistent view of deliberative democracy. She simply insists that all particular obligations - national and otherwise - defend themselves before the tribunal of public deliberation. But there are two problems with this view. First, while democracy claims to test political disputes, including boundary disputes, by a democratic will, it simultaneously presupposes a bounded entity of the people. It is unclear, therefore, who are the people who are to judge who the people are. (Is the problem of Northern Ireland, for example, a problem just for the North or for the South too?). Second, many ethically valuable social relations may be overturned if they prove indefensible to the democratic will. That our community, our church, our firm should receive special privileges can often not be justified to those beyond that pronoun. On the face of it, Miller's thick, substantive democratic public culture seems to resolve these dilemmas. It consists of citizens who mutually recognize each other as members of the same nation-state, and who are encumbered

with other particular ties besides this. Yet the site of deliberative democracy must not be confused with the ideal itself. The site is a national public culture populated by citizens who must judge which of their social relationships are of greater value in cases of conflict. The democratic norms Miller commends, on the other hand - sincerity, consistency, publicity and reasonableness - are universal in form and procedural in character. It is not difficult to think of cases when these can conflict with particular social relations. Is it reasonable for there to be a state religion in a multifaith society? Is it consistent for some geographic communities to have rights of self-determination while others do not? In such cases there are two alternatives. Either, consistent with ethical particularism, the procedural norms of deliberative democracy are weighed alongside substantive ethical sentiments. Or, consistent with ethical universalism, they prevail over them. In the former case, staying true to Miller's particularist worldview, it is unclear how deliberative democracy as a universal moral ideal can now function. But in the latter case, jettisoning ethical particularism, we are led straight back to the two problems with a universalist conception of democracy: indeterminate boundaries and ethical loss. Miller is surely right to claim that a common national culture, characterised by mutual trust and a shared collective identity, can power collective deliberation. Deliberation best takes place between interlocutors who recognize each other as occupying the same horizon of meaning. If that horizon is a particular one, however, then some universal moral considerations will be judged out of bounds from the outset. But if it is a universal horizon then it has no special connection with the nation.

I suggest there is an endemic conflict between the universal ideal of collective self-reflectiveness and the sentimental ties admitted to Miller's ethically particularist

worldview. Consider the important role of myth in sustaining national solidarity - a role which Miller defends. '[I]t may not be rational to discard beliefs, even if they are, strictly speaking, false', he writes, 'when they can be shown to contribute significantly to the support of valuable social relations' (Miller 1995: 36). False beliefs can embody continuity between generations, hold up the moral virtues of our ancestors and encourage mutual sacrifice, and all these help maintain that nexus of social relations which is the nation. Yet we subscribe to myths for reasons we think independently credible at the time. Its beneficial side-effects cannot count as a good reason for accepting a myth we know to be false. Conversely, credible myths may have malign side-effects. Thus it may be hard to reconcile belief in myth with the moral moment of deliberative democracy.[4] Suppose, for example, it is commonly (yet falsely) believed that sub-national group X played a treacherous role in a nation's history, but that now, in the national democratic arena, citizens of X are arguing for extra resources from central government. Belief in the myth means that X's co-nationals may be less inclined to be reasonable and try to reach consensus. Yet a full 'democratic excavation' of national history could begin to rupture the ties which bind non-X co-nationals together, especially if partly based on the contrast effect of not being X.

The problems with Miller's liberal nationalism result from trying to combine universal and particular ideals within a nation state. We now turn to a theory which insists that all particular solidarities fit into a universal moral matrix.

Section III - Liberal Multiculturalism

Will Kymlicka's aim in *Multicultural Citizenship* is to construct a theory of specifically cultural rights on liberal universalist foundations (Kymlicka 1995: 1-6). Nonetheless, against its neutral aspirations, Kymlicka contends that liberal theory always impresses society with a particular cultural stamp - one often harmful for minorities. But, if the impression is necessary the harmfulness is not, and Kymlicka wants to extend the logic of Rawlsian principles to aid cultural minorities.

These come in two varieties. National minorities are distinct societal cultures within larger multinational states. They include the Quebecois and indigenous Aboriginal peoples in Canada. By societal cultures Kymlicka means not just belief systems but the whole range of values and practices institutionally embodied in social, political and economic life (Kymlicka 1995: 76-90). They are self-sufficient, autonomous and provide for their members diverse social roles across the full range of human activities. They are the cultures of modernity: open, free and with standardised and rationalised social institutions. By contrast, ethnic groups are immigrants who typically wish to integrate into the societal culture of their host society. Though, like national minorities they seek recognition for their distinct identity, unlike them they seek to become full members of the larger society. On this basis, Kymlicka offers three kinds of multicultural rights.[5] Self-government rights delegate legal power to national minorities; polyethnic rights give financial and legal support to ethnic groups who wish to maintain their identity in a larger society. Privileges and exemptions on clothing, language or the slaughter of animals are examples. Both self-government and polyethnic rights are entrenched by, finally, special representation rights, which give quota representation in legislatures to both national minorities and ethnic groups.

Despite this emphasis on group rights, however, Kymlicka's transcultural liberal meta-principle remains individual autonomy. Autonomy is the moral tribunal before which all persons and cultures must defend themselves.[6] No culture can deny those liberal freedoms which enable us to assess its values and arrive at our own place within it. Exercising freedom, Kymlicka goes on, 'involves making choices amongst various options, and our societal culture not only provides these options but also makes them meaningful to us' (Kymlicka 1995: 83). Options inhere in the social practices, cultural narratives and vocabularies of tradition and convention are borne by our societal cultures. Thus '[c]ultures are not valuable 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).

The normative kernel of Kymlicka's defence of cultural rights is what he calls the equality argument.[7] While autonomous persons are responsible for their choices, they are not responsible for the circumstances in which they make them. Liberal justice should be sensitive to the unchosen circumstances which help or hinder the pursuit of one's chosen ends. '[A]ccess to one's culture', Kymlicka goes on, 'is something that people can be expected to want, whatever their more particular conception of the good' (Kymlicka 1995: 86). Cultural membership, therefore, is a circumstance of dis/advantage in a sense relevant for justice.[8] For most citizens, their societal culture is a public good, available to all. But for many minorities the survival of their culture is threatened by decisions of others in the state beyond their control. White settlers who move into Indian territory or a state decision to stop minority language schooling, for example, can begin to erode the very character of their

community of value. Group-differentiated cultural rights aim to neutralise the power of these external preferences in the cultural marketplace and give members relative autonomy in determining their culture's fate. Though inegalitarian in appearance, their effect is to alleviate the systemic disadvantage suffered by many minority cultural members and enable them to interpret their culture from a position of relative equality.

Kymlicka's dual allegiance to the Universal Model of liberalism and cultural particularity is maintained through his distinction between the cultural 'structure' or 'context' and the particular options which exist within that structure. The importance of this distinction for his argument cannot be over-stated. First, by claiming that people need cultural contexts which nevertheless bear many lifestyle options within them, Kymlicka can promote the specifically cultural character of his liberalism while still prizing autonomy as its central value.[9] Contexts of choice come culturally flavoured: by supporting plural options they are liberal not conservative. Second, Kymlicka maps his moral distinction between choices and circumstances onto the ontological one between options and contexts. Only a thriving cultural context enables individual choice of options; but the context itself is a circumstance beyond choice. Group rights which secure those contexts do not bind members to their culture, but rather enable them to choose their ends from the options their culture provides. Without contexts, cultural options become indistinguishable from other human pursuits and we are led to a kaleidoscopic cultural cosmopolitanism (see Waldron 1992). Without options, cultures become illiberal. Thus by maintaining that cultural structures are characterful entities, autonomous from the options they

nonetheless enable, Kymlicka can advance a theory of justice distinguished by both liberal universalism and cultural particularism.

In order for Kymlicka's equality argument to work, therefore, the cultural structure must be (i) an unchosen circumstance, which can be (ii) secure and stable or insecure and threatened; and which, finally, (iii) enables individual choice. But all three of these claims bear examination.

(i) Cultures as ethnic groups are, of course, not chosen by anyone. Leaving our culture of origin often has considerable psychological cost. Arguably, however, we are responsible for our cultural membership since expressing or, on the other hand, renouncing it are attitudes we can choose to adopt (see Danley 1995). This is very different to physical handicap and (most think) poverty: both these being unchosen circumstances beyond individual responsibility. Indeed we regard poverty and handicap as proper subjects of social justice just because no rational person would choose to be so. Since individuals are responsible for continuing to adhere to their cultural membership they must bear the costs of that choice without the subsidies which the true victims of circumstance can properly demand.

(ii) The second problem concerns the existential security or viability of cultures. Unless cultures can come under threat, there is no case in justice to support them. But here, I think, Kymlicka's argument falls through a dilemma. Suppose the cultural structure amounts to a particular cultural way of life: traditional and relatively monolithic. Ways of life, like animal species, can indeed be threatened with extinction. But identifying the cultural structure with a single way of life forfeits the

plurality of options for autonomous subjects. Reversing matters, culture, on another definition, could mean merely loosely affiliated sets of cultural options. Cultures, on this view, are mixtures, jumbles, compounds, without hypostatic ordering structures (Waldron 1992). But absent the overall structure - secure and viable or threatened and unstable - minorities can make no case in justice. Cultural practices, of course, are always evolving and hence so is a cultural community's character. But this normal evolutionary process needs to be distinguished from changes to a culture's structure which renders it dis/advantaged with respect to others. It is unclear on what principled grounds this distinction can be made (see here Tomasi 1995).

(iii) Kymlicka insists that cultures have no intrinsic value, but rather exist to enable personal autonomy. But there are three ways that cultural communities can enable autonomy. They can (a) avoid coercive intrusion in the freedom of individual members; (b) provide members with plural options for them to choose between; or (c) enable the very self-identity of being an autonomous chooser.

(a) is definitive of liberalism. Kymlicka accepts it through his careful insistence that no culture can raise internal restrictions against its members' freedom (Kymlicka, 1995: 35-44). He likewise argues for (b) where autonomy becomes not just formally possible but practically enabled. (Classical liberal adherents of negative freedom reject (b)). Outside Kymlicka's framework altogether, however, is (c). On this view, personal autonomy is a practical achievement which can only be realised if the subject has the requisite self-identity. It is not just something which can be obstructed (a), or mediated through cultural options (b), but is rather a contingent identity of subjects. It is achieved in a climate where agents are recognised as self-sufficient responsible

choosers by their moral community. Kymlicka sees that cultures provide meaning and orientation in a disenchanted universe. But, like most liberals, he takes an externalist view where society enables the pursuit of autonomy, but does not shape the internal identity of subjects who are only contingently autonomous. The capacity for autonomy is just assumed to be latently there, waiting to be actuated or denied. But not all persons have been autonomous, empirically speaking; and the non-autonomous have not just been victims of unfreedom but agents not brought to have the right identities by their communities of reference.

Kymlicka's endorsement of the Universal Model means he adopts equal respect for autonomous agency as his moral axiom. I have tried to show how the imperatives of equal respect lead Kymlicka to construe national cultures in a rather idiosyncratic way: instrumentally valuable, divided into discrete options and with an extra contextual substrate. A recognition-based view gives a very different defence of culture, and to this I now turn.

Section IV - Liberal Recognition

Charles Taylor's influential essay 'The Politics of Recognition' is best understood in the context of a complex moral philosophy culminating in his magnificent *Sources of the Self* (Taylor 1989, 1994).[10] Two themes of that philosophy deserve notice here. First, there is Taylor's profound conviction that the values we live by are plural, uncombinable and irreducible to any single moral metric. Modernity's special dilemma is between Enlightenment Liberalism and Romantic Expressivism

(which values authenticity, originality, creativity and unity). It is important to note that, *pace* Berlin, moral pluralism is not an argument for political liberalism since, for Taylor, liberal freedom is but one (albeit important) value - the justificatory terms by which it would assert its meta-status are simply unavailable to us. Taylor, therefore, decisively rejects the Universal Model (see also Taylor 1993). But, crosscutting the goods of modernity Taylor posits - the second theme - recognition as a human universal. In order to be a fully formed human being - one with a sense of self-worth grounded in a moral identity - you need recognition from others. This is achieved through dialogue, and the dialogic formation of identity is a central truth of the human condition. By dialogically recognizing others' worth, and receiving their affirmation of our own, we come to realise ourselves as properly formed identity-bearing persons (see Taylor 1989: Pt.1, 1994: 25-37).

In 'The Politics of Recognition', Taylor seeks to redress the balance between the meta-moral identity of autonomy, championed by the (Universal) 'Politics of Equal Dignity' and an alternative, politically neglected, self-understanding, originating in the Romantic movement, which he calls 'authenticity'. 'There is a certain way of being human that is my way. I am called upon to live my life in this way and not in imitation of anyone else's life' (Taylor 1994: 30, cf. Taylor 1991). Each of us has our own unique, particular, original accent on the human condition and each of us has a self-obligation to live up to this. But Taylor goes further and, following Herder, claims that cultures too have their own particular, unique way of worth or measure. A people should try to be true to their authentic cultural identity. Moreover, cultures too require recognition as collectives. The attitudes of outsiders are internalised: others'

affirmation can help raise a culture's collective esteem; negative attitudes tend to interiorise a diminished self-identity (Taylor 1994: 28-37).

A politics of recognition aims to ensure the survival of threatened cultures into the indefinite future. It involves substituting some individual freedom for the collective goal of maintaining authentic cultural identities. Thus, writing of his native Quebec, Taylor explains how French-speakers were required to send their children to Francophone schools and advertisers compelled to use French. Both these restrictions were justified by the over-riding imperative of preserving a distinctive Francophone community in that territory. Clearly, introducing a substantive conception of the good like this into liberalism prejudices its neutrality (cf. Walzer 1994). Taylor has no over-arching moral schema along the lines of the Universal Model with which to justify this partiality. His argument simply is that cultures which have animated and given meaning to human societies over a considerable time have objective moral value. Or rather, we should presume that they do. The presumption can only be justified through positive dialogic engagement with the other culture, an engagement which for both sides brings a new moral vocabulary of comparison with which to make judgments of worth. If other cultures do have worth that is a prima facie case for their public recognition and maintenance through political principles - as in the case of Quebec. Notwithstanding this, critical rights such as freedom of speech may never be abrogated, so Taylor's politics remain fundamentally liberal (Taylor 1994: 59).

Procedural critics of Taylor focus on how social justice in a liberal society can be contingent on the moral worth of cultures (Habermas 1994; Wolf 1994). Persons,

not cultures, are entitled to equal respect on the Universal Model. Cultures, as secondary qualities, have no authentic essence. Only members' autonomous choices should determine how a culture is interpreted - and whether it is reproduced over time. Cultural recognition crystallises a particular constellation of freedom restrictions without justification.

We must first ask whether there is a coherent notion of authenticity distinct from personal autonomy as liberals understand it. Both are ideals of modernity which suppose that individual persons can steer their own lives without taking their compass from authoritative (eg. religious) horizons (Ferrara 1994: 241-2). Many contemporary theorists of autonomy use the term 'authenticity' willy-nilly.[11] Maeve Cooke has recently argued that either autonomy and authenticity are indistinguishable, or, on a stronger interpretation, where authenticity is a basis for public moral evaluation, it lapses into relativism since each person's standards are her own (Cooke 1997).

The essence of authenticity is that each person has a measure, standard or calling which is uniquely hers. As its contemporary proponent, Alessandro Ferrara, puts it:

> Authentic conduct has the quality of being somehow connected with, and expressive of, the core of the actor's personality. It brings into play the actor's uniquely personal, as opposed to culturally or socially shared identity. If I am insensitive to my deepest needs, if I betray them, or if I inscribe my action into a life-plan which in turn fails to fit with who I am then I...act...inauthentically (Ferrara 1994: 243).

According to Ferrara, seekers of authenticity desire to construct for themselves a unique yet coherent, narratable life-project, using the roles and expectations of the external world as symbolic material. But, if so, it is far from clear what meaning can

be given to cultural authenticity. Cultural authenticity supposes that each culture has its own particular measure or calling, but Ferrara contrasts personal and cultural identity. Like Taylor, Ferrara is sure that only a matrix of recognition can generate authentic selves. But, he insists, we must distinguish between:

> (a) recognizing the dignity and worth of another person from the standpoint of what that person shares in common with the other members of a culture and (b) recognizing the dignity and worth of that person from the standpoint of what distinguishes her from everybody else and makes her unique (Ferrara 1994: 264).

Personal identity emerges through the dialectic of others' recognition and a reflective self-consciousness. It seems to me that, whatever the undoubted importance of collective labels such as culture, nation (or race, gender and so on), they represent only one aspect in which individuals desire to be recognized. We also desire to be recognized as the distinct individual that each of us is. No member of an oppressed group would deny the saliency of the collective level of recognition. Moreover, the unchosen nature of culture makes it an unproblematic and secure constituent of individual identity: culture removes some of the struggle out of achieving an identity in modernity. But, very often, we want to use our cultural and other identities as symbolic material with which to construct, precisely, our self. Ferrara's recognitions (a) and (b), therefore, have a dynamic relationship. The conflict between them concerns whether our best self-interpretation takes a more inner-directed form or is referenced to the wider culture of which we are members. There is no answer to this conflict other than what each of us can work out for ourselves. And being authentic, we could say, involves constructively using role conflict, not being a captive of it.

Taylor's argument champions cultural authenticity as a meta-value of comparable moral worth to liberal autonomy such that a politics of difference is needed to express it. His problem is that substantiating authenticity as a modality of being separate from autonomy leads him away from the required notion of cultural authenticity. I would rather say there is an internal politics of difference within our selves where our cultural inheritance is tested against our self-understandings and each is reinterpreted in the light of the other. Culture is simply not the unproblematic, pre-interpreted constituent of personal identity which Taylor's argument requires it to be. Several writers, in fact, have complained that Taylor underplays the inner pluralism of cultural identities (Digeser 1995: 188-9; Dumm, 1994: 171; Rorty 1994: 156-9; Wolf 1994: 85). One of them, K. Anthony Appiah agrees that many members of many minority cultures do indeed demand recognition (Appiah 1994). But, he goes on, some recipients of recognition might object that it is not they who are receiving it, but just some attribute of theirs - first language, skin colour - which they invest with no special significance. 'It is at this point that someone who takes autonomy seriously will ask whether we have not replaced one kind of tyranny with another' (Appiah 1994: 162-3). That is the danger of Taylor's non-procedural moral-cultural schema: there is no principled way of finding a balance between the two universals of cultural recognition and respect for individual freedom.

A theory of recognition combined with a pluralistic view of culture is offered in James Tully's *Strange Multiplicity* (Tully 1995). Cultures, according to Tully, are 'overlapping, interactive and internally negotiated' (Tully 1995: 10). Cultures criss-cross and overlap geographically with minorities within minorities who are nonetheless majorities elsewhere and so on. They are entangled, interpenetrated and

woven from each other through history. Moreover, philosophically speaking, there are no cultural essences, but rather cultural identity is aspectival: cultures are centreless constellations whose meanings change according to the perspective from which one views them. They are always being re-formed and re-imagined as the diversity of intercultural meanings are compared and contested by members. Thus Tully aims to free us from the liberal/communitarian dichotomy according to which we are either imprisoned in our cultural identity or cosmopolitan spectators observing from the central tower (Tully 1989, 1995). Rather

> from the outset, citizens are to some extent on a negotiated, intercultural and aspectival 'middle' or 'common' ground with some degree of experience of cross-cultural conversation and understanding; of encountering and being with diverse others who exhibit both cultural similarities and dissimilarities (Tully 1995: 14).

Strange Multiplicity is also pluralistic in that the political demands for constitutional recognition Tully identifies are diverse. Incipient nations seek recognition as independent states while supra-national bodies like the EU want accommodation by existing states. Long-standing ethnic and linguistic minorities demand constitutional status, as do the 'intercultural voices' of immigrants, exiles and refugees who seek protection for their cultures. Feminists believe constitutions should 'recognise and accommodate women's culturally distinctive ways of speaking and acting', while finally - Tully's special interest - there are 'the demands of 250 million Aboriginal or Indigenous peoples of the world for the recognition and accommodation of their twelve thousand diverse cultures, governments and environmental practices' (Tully 1995: 2-3).

According to Tully, the ideals and values of contemporary constitutional theory are imperialistic, and not the impartial, universal moral framework advertised. The core conception of modern constitutionalism has a sovereign culturally-homogenous body of individuals agree in a single self-conscious act of reflection to constitute the abstract laws and principles of their political association. This itself does epistemic violence to the self-understandings by which many minority cultural members live their lives - understandings implicitly relegated to the closed, over-affective worldview of the non-European 'other'. Even Rawls's supposedly inclusive political liberalism derives its concepts from the experience of post-Reformation European constitutionalism and ignores the institutions and traditions of Aboriginal constitutional practice.

A just constitutional dialogue should instead be conducted according to the three conventions of mutual recognition, cultural continuity and consent. Mutual recognition means that in dialogic engagement each side respects the identity of the other and allows them to speak in their own distinctive language. The model of constitutional democracy is therefore a conversation between co-equals. Continuity means that all dialogic parties' cultural identities continue through the constitutional negotiations unless a group explicitly consents to amend them (Tully 1995: 124). This draws on Indian and Aboriginal common law traditions and contrasts with modern constitutionalism's self-identity as an explicit break from the past. Consent is founded upon Tully's belief that 'the customs and ways of peoples are the manifestation of their free agreement' (Tully 1995: 125). (If this means individual agreement it is surely false of cultures with a more authoritative tradition of interpretation). The political arrangements which emerge from a dialogue conducted

according to these norms will be the object of a just consensus - or will respect group differences where that is desired. (Tully relates how the Aboriginal leader Ovide Mercredi had simultaneously to reach agreement with the Canadian federal Government and the 600 chiefs for whom he spoke during multilateral constitutional negotiations in 1992) (Tully 1995: 130).

These three norms have no transcendental status but rather 'come to be accepted as authoritative in the course of constitutional practice, including criticism and contestation of that practice' (Tully 1995: 116). This reflexive justification rests on citizens' appreciation that their own cultures are not hermetically-sealed authentic essences but open and plural - as Tully explains in the long quote above. 'The everyday mastery of the criss-crossing, overlapping and contested use of terms' in culturally diverse societies is the reason 'it is possible to understand each other in intercultural conversations' (Tully 1995: 133).

One odd thing is the dichotomy between Tully's insistence that cultures are aspectival and different to themselves and his main project of defending particular cultural identities. For surely if one loves one's culture that is because, with Taylor, it has some definite authentic substance and not because, on reflection, its boundaries dissolve into a tangled mass of cross-cultural meanings. The greatest problem for orthodox liberals, however, is Tully's rejection of over-arching moral principles. The three normative conventions aim to preserve particular cultures. They eschew reference to universal features of moral agency, reasonableness for example. Accommodation to others comes rather through recognition of one's own aspectivalism in dialogic interchange. Thus 'sovereign people come to any

constitutional dialogue already constituted by their identity-related differences' (Tully 1995: 184). Still, liberal practice is less dependent on the universal aspectivalism of cultures (if they are so), than members' abilities to respect other ways of life. Rejecting moral universals, the burden of the latter can only be borne by dialogue for Tully. Thus racism is an identity-related difference and racists may come to appreciate this through interchange with others in intercultural dialogue. Dialogue, though, is a very roundabout way of getting to the conclusion, which we could state in universal terms at the outset, that racism is simply unjust.

Section V - Conclusion

Let us pull the threads together. Miller's national public culture was a realm of shared citizenship, but remained ambivalent between universal democratic ideals and particular ethical sentiments. Kymlicka sought to find an argument in social justice which would improve the position of cultural minorities with respect to their larger public culture, but his robustly liberal approach construed cultures as mere instruments for individual autonomy. Taylor and Tully challenged the Universal Model by arguing we should recognize cultural particularity itself. Taylor's politics of difference rejected the universality of autonomy through positing the intrinsic value of authentic cultures; but was weakened by its seeming assumption that all persons relate to their culture in the same way. Moreover, the moral division of labour between cultural recognition and respect for individual autonomy was somewhat arbitrary. Tully's post-imperial, aspectival argument for cultural difference, finally, the most radical model of all, extracted its normative tools from the concept of culture

itself, but, I argued, put too much faith in the future beneficial effects of dialogue, sacrificing the universality of liberal principles.

There are then these strengths and weaknesses in the three positions, some normative constructions more, and others less, useful in mapping the cultural terrain on which a post-Universal Model liberalism must be situated. I conclude by setting down three markers for a reconstructed liberalism fit for a nationally and culturally charactered society.

First, that liberalism must have a universal moral core. The historic mission of liberalism has been to find a fair political settlement for moral controversies, in the past religious, but now often culturally, generated. Tully's intercultural dialogue, Taylor's twin promotion of both recognition and respect and, in part, Miller's ethical particularism each leave us a hostage to the judgment of others (and us to them), when it is not any agreement that is the aim, but one that can be reasonably assented to by equally situated interlocutors. A culturally pluralist liberalism should, indeed, lessen the scope of 'covering law' univeralism, where moral controversies are resolved by the theorist, and expand its 'deliberative universal' component where it is cultural members on the ground who come together to resolve political issues (see Gutmann 1993). Society-wide deliberative democracy calls for a public sphere patterned by sites of intersubjectivity (something rather more than Kymlicka's legislative entrenchment of group interests). A vigorous theoretical industry, largely issuing from Habermas's discursive model of democracy, is currently debating whether a communicative democratic framework can indeed fairly encompass the cacophony of voices of the many cultural identities sharing plural societies.[12] Tully's core belief is

that it cannot, although this is based, as much as anything, on the unenviable history of liberal constitutional practice. I believe that, contrary to this, liberals must retain faith in the conceptual possibility of a fair moral-cultural framework.

Second liberals should elevate the concept of recognition.[13] With Taylor and Tully, I suggest recognition is a universal human need. It is the desire to be affirmed by others who occupy the same horizon of meaning. This is different from being respected as a moral agent, a bearer of rights. Equal respect founds liberal freedom and material justice. But this presupposes, and hence cannot explain, the sense that one's ends are worth pursuing. For a just distribution of freedom and resources can co-exist with a public sphere structured to deny recognition to marginalised and underprivileged groups, who, consequently, have little sense of self-worth. Recognition and respect will, of course, often conflict. While both are universal needs, the object of recognition is always particular But the two are also linked because self-worth is not just an extra gloss on moral personhood. Recognition brings coherency and integration in personal identity which enables one to be an effectively autonomous agent, an actual exerciser of freedom. And cultural membership is one (but not the only one) of the symbolic modes through which recognition is transmitted. Tamir's study of nationalism, for example, sees the need for recognition as a yearning for the status and standing that comes from having a state of one's own (something not immediately appreciated, perhaps, by members of cultural majorities in secure nation states) (Tamir 1993: Ch.5, 1997: 302). How to accommodate both recognition of cultural difference and respect for individuals within a universal framework is, I believe, the major issue facing a culturally sensitive liberalism.

The recognition of culture in a universal framework raises a third issue which is how the well-being of cultures can be publicly measured. What is needed here is a more nuanced parity argument than Kymlicka's appeal to 'circumstances of choice'. For a political morality of recognition calls for no less than a fair distribution of the conditions for collective-esteem. Exactly what measures help secure this will depend on the circumstances at hand. That is for a deliberative democratic procedure to resolve. I am suggesting only that some benchmarks of cultural flourishing be publicly agreed and available. This would enable us to enter cultural well-being into the lexicon of moral-political justification. This is an ambitious task, of course. But the two alternatives are not attractive. Either culture is merely measured by its contribution to personal autonomy in Kymlicka's externalist sense. Or there is no principled way of adjudicating between the clamorous and conflicting cultural demands that members make for the survival their collectives (this is the slippery slope down which Taylor's argument could slide). Ferrara, for example, has theorised the Aristotelian notion of a good life along the four dimensions of coherence, vitality, depth and maturity, and he argues these can apply to collectives too (Ferrara 1992). Naturally, there are other dimensions and interpretations. But one vital theoretical pay-off of incorporating an account of cultural recognition into liberalism is this: it would provide an argument which addressed the boundary problem outlined in the Introduction. Nation-states, and even multinational states, would become zones of mutual recognition. This would, as Miller argues, help motivate us to make the mutual sacrifices which citizenship entails. The motivation problem, which has vexed liberals and which they have solved implicitly through the nation (as Canovan shows) could be resolved by it explicitly. Why the world should be divided into states held in place only by the shared meaning of their members is beyond the scope of the

Universal Model of liberalism to justify. The concept of recognition helps explain why statehood could become a primary quality of liberal theory.

Notes

[1] According to Miller a nation is (i) a network of shared belief united by mutual recognition, (ii) whose identity embodies historical continuity making each a 'community of obligation'. (iii) Nations are active collective identities who (iv) occupy a particular geographical place, and who finally (v) share a common public culture (Miller 1993: 6-8, 1995: 22-7).

[2] Miller argues that ethical universalism can only motivate citizens to deliver each other reciprocal duties (1995: 71-2). For a critique of ethical particularism applied to social justice see Weinstock (1996: 92-5).

[3] In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls contrasts the 'background culture' of civil society, which is outside the political domain, with the public political culture. The latter consists of those fundamental ideals of society and person, and a companion account of public reason - all universal in form if not in scope - which justify the political conception of justice. Miller's more communitarian public culture, by contrast, conflates these two senses. It thus counts as a 'comprehensive doctrine', in Rawls's sense, which may not serve as a basis of justification for political principles (Rawls 1993: 13-4).

[4] Some of Miller's more rationalist correspondents have seized on his defence of myth as a weak spot in his nationalist ethics (Jones 1996; O'Neill 1994). For a counter-view see Archard (1995).

[5] For this typology see Kymlicka (1995: 26-33). Kukathas argues that since they are fluid, their identity changing partly in response to the legal norms which prevail in society, cultural communities cannot be the holders of legal rights. See the exchange between Kukathas and Kymlicka in *Political Theory* 20 (1992). See also Kymlicka (1995: Ch.3) where he defends the notion of collective rights and Kukathas (1997: 415-7) for his argument restated. By contrast, Margalit and Halbertal maintain that a threatened minority culture has 'the right to preserve its particular culture with its traditional content' - a far stronger group right than Kymlicka's (Margalit and Halbertal 1994: 504).

[6] This is Kymlicka's crucial move in advancing his robust understanding of liberalism. For a plea on behalf of the 'nonliberals' inhabiting liberal societal cultures see Parekh (1997).

[7] Kymlicka also refers to the 'Historic agreement' and 'Value of Diversity' arguments for minority rights, but these are given fairly short shrift (Kymlicka 1995: 116-23). For an earlier rendering of the equality argument and the Rawlsian intuitions behind it see Kymlicka (1989).

[8] Ethnic groups, unlike national minorities, have chosen to embrace a new society. Since their circumstances are partly of their own making, Kymlicka argues, they merit a less extensive range of group-protective cultural rights. For criticism of voluntariness/involuntariness as the criterion distinguishing national minorities and ethnic groups see Kukathas (1997: 412-6). Levey argues that cultural disadvantage is virtually endemic to being a national minority (1997: 219-24). Walker (1997) argues that communities in a much wider sense than Kymlicka's ethnic groups suffer deprivation and threats to their survival.

[9] Kymlicka never defines precisely what an option is. It must mean something like a culturally-charactered role or practice so that Christian marriage, Inuit hunting or wearing the chador are all options provided by distinct cultures. The word 'option' connotes a rather static view of culture, innocent of the way cultural practices are replicated and revised by our engaging in them, or the way that these practices overlap and are entangled with each other. See the discussion of Tully's interpretation of cultures in Section IV in the text.

[10] For a survey of Taylor's moral philosophy see Seglow (1996).

[11] See for example the references to authenticity in the index of Christman (1989).

[12] See Habermas (1996) in Benhabib (1996) and the many critical responses collected in this volume. For a defence of some moral-democratic framework despite 'deep pluralism' see Bohman (1996), prefigured in Bohman (1995).

[13] The major recent study of recognition is Honneth (1995), prefigured in Honneth (1992). Honneth has been criticised for failing to take account of the ways recognition is symbolically (eg. culturally) mediated. See Alexander and Lara (1996).

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