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ple of the extent to which certain intellectual tensions are downplayed, especially the tension that exists between religious liberty and the covenant tradition. However, discounting this one general weakness, the majority of contributions represent praiseworthy attempts to draw connections between covenant theology and constitutional political theory.

The essay by James B. Torrance on "The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics" is especially noteworthy. Torrance argues that the federal scheme of seventeenth-century Scottish Covenanters "was built upon a deep-seated confusion between a covenant and a contract, a failure to recognize that the biblical God is a covenant-God and not a contract-God" (p. 158). Of all the contributors, Torrance probably goes the farthest in helping to point out some of the radical differences and tensions that exist between the covenant theology of the Protestant Reformers and the subsequent development of modern constitutional forms of government.

The essays by James D. Bratt, Daniel J. Elazar, and Charles S. McCoy also are exceptionally balanced contributions as they recognize some of the tensions that exist between the covenant tradition and other non-covenantal political traditions that have influenced the formation of the social and political order in the West. Additional contributors include: J. Wayne Baker, Harold Fisch, Thomas O. Hueglin, Donald S. Lutz, Michael McGiffert, John Peacock, W. Stanford Reid, Filippo Sabetti, and James W. Skillen.

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Religious Goodness and Political Rightness: Beyond the Liberal-Communitarian Debate. By Yong Huang. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001. 279 pp. \$28.00 paper.

In *Religious Goodness and Political Rightness*, Yong Huang asks, "What is the proper relationship between people's religious ideas of the good and their political ideas of the right in a religiously plural society" (p. 247)? Huang sees this as the fundamental question posed in the liberal-communitarian debate. Liberals argue that the political idea of the right trumps the religious idea of the good, while communitarians argue that the religious idea of the good trumps the political idea of the right, and that ideas of the right must be derived from ideas of the good. Huang thinks that both liberals and communitarians have good reasons for their positions, but that, finally, neither answer to the question is satisfactory.

Huang explores the thought of Charles Taylor and Richard Rorty, two philosophers who propose what Huang sees as useful, if ultimately unsuccessful, ways to incorporate the insights of both sides of the debate into a single framework. According to Huang, Taylor agrees with the liberal insight that there is a universal idea of the right that transcends local ideas of the good. However,

Taylor maintains the communitarian position that the right is not separate from the good but must be derived from it. Although the universal idea of the right transcends local formulations of the good, it depends upon the universal idea of the good (ultimately, a non-confessional God) that, in some form, is the ground of and framework for what Taylor considers to be universal human moral intuitions. Huang objects to Taylor's appeal to the transcendental and questions its ability truly to transcend particular cultural perspectives.

Huang turns next to Rorty, who holds the communitarian position that all ideas are contextuated within specific cultures in history. As a result, Rorty argues that it is a mistake to try to ground a political idea of the right in a transcendental perspective. He maintains that it is impractical to base a political idea of the right on an idea of the good. We need principles for adjudicating among communities or persons with different conceptions of the good. Rorty proposes that the actual life of a pluralist society is what creates a shared political idea of the right. However, Huang believes Rorty errs in arguing that in this societal life there should be a complete separation of the public and private spheres, the political and the religious. According to Huang, in the end, Rorty gives priority to the right over the good. Huang argues that it is impossible for people to separate their religious and political beliefs, to reach consensus with others about political ideas that may conflict with their other beliefs.

Finally, Huang attempts to reframe the question of the relationship between the right and the good. He argues that neither need be prior, that the two can perpetually question each other through a "reflective equilibrium." Reflective equilibrium relies on the need to work toward a coherent body of beliefs. When people acquire new beliefs, they must incorporate these beliefs into their general worldview. If different beliefs conflict, some beliefs must be modified or discarded until the set of beliefs is a consistent whole. Huang argues that our beliefs about the political idea of the right and the religious idea of the good can be weighed in this way, so that sometimes we discard or modify political beliefs so they are consistent with our religious ones, and sometimes we discard or modify religious beliefs so they are consistent with our political ones. Reflective equilibrium can be employed at the individual level, within religious communities (as new religious beliefs are introduced), among citizens (as new political beliefs are introduced), and also, at the same time, between religious communities and political society. Huang holds that reflective equilibrium allows there to be multiple religious ideas of the good that are consistent with a single political idea of the right.

Huang, for reasons never given, identifies the good communitarians extol with religious values, although most embrace secular values. He focuses on old communitarians and hence seems unaware of a major group that has arisen since 1990—new communitarians—that seeks a carefully crafted balance between liberty and social order, between universal rights and particularistic cultures. (See especially Amitai Etzioni, *the New Golden Rule* [1996] and the group's web site, www.gwu.edu/~ccps.) Most damaging, he does not indi-

cate which criteria we should employ in deciding which beliefs need to yield when we reflect about conflicts between religious beliefs and political ones.

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Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship. By Will Kymlicka. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. 383 pp. \$18.95.

Becoming Free: Autonomy and Diversity in the Liberal Polity. By Emily R. Gill. Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Press, 2001. 292 pp. \$19.95.

Over the past decade, liberal political theory has been steadily engaging the challenge of reconciling its commitment to autonomy with the oft-times highly scripted practices of cultural and religious communities. Against this backdrop, Kymlicka's and Gill's texts, in disparate ways, are noteworthy attempts at cultivating diverse *liberal* democracies.

The initial section of Kymlicka's text reiterates the distinction, in his previous works, between immigrants who should be guaranteed fair processes of integration, and national minorities who as conquered peoples should be allowed semi-autonomous political institutions within the overarching nation-state—for instance, Quebec vis-à-vis Canada. In the second section of his text, Kymlicka elaborates on the merits of this multinational as opposed to territorial federalism in terms of: 1) the possible scope for the rights of indigenous peoples in international law; and 2) the tension between indigenous cultures and environmentalism in the context of the politics of the developing world.

Although very concerned with the plight of national minorities, in his third section, Kymlicka critiques the growing call for a cosmopolitan liberal political system that would engage multiculturalism by transcending nation-states. Instead, Kymlicka insists that national political identities have proven to be the most effective basis for a liberal politics—hence his title that “democratic politics is politics in the vernacular” (p. 213). He, nevertheless, promotes a post-ethnic nationalism in which a political system, while fostering a particular ethnic or national identity—for instance French Canadian culture in Quebec—can simultaneously be pluralistic and accommodating to immigrants and national minorities. This argument is frankly murky, for if indeed nationalism can become “post-ethnic,” then it also makes sense to suggest, contrary to Kymlicka, that one can “cross borders” through cosmopolitan political arrangements.

In his final section, Kymlicka focuses on cultivating a liberal reasonableness in citizenship education. Most notably, he distinguishes his liberal egalitarianism from what he terms right-wing liberalism in the United States, which he contends has been infected by an illiberal cultural conservatism.

Overall, his engagement of communitarian and civic republican concerns from a liberal standpoint is most refreshing, even though his liberal egalitarianism might analogously be influenced as much by socialism as by liberalism.

Whereas Kymlicka dwells on novel liberal institutional arrangements for dealing with multiculturalism, Gill's focus is much more on the circumstances that enable individuals to lead autonomous lives: "The liberal polity is *non-neutral* in the sense that it embraces autonomy as a necessary means to the good life" (p. 3). Acknowledging how integral diversity is to the liberal heritage, she insists that this diversity is principally valuable as "an expression of [personal] autonomy" (p. 10). Indeed, whereas Kymlicka, according to Gill, "views cultural membership as a precondition of autonomy rather than as its expression" (p. 106), Gill accents the latter. Still, she adds, Kymlicka's cultural rights focus is premised on her concern for creating spaces in which critical personal reflection can project and value alternative ways of life.

For Gill, the principle virtue of liberalism is not just freedom of choice, but the fostering of personal critical reflection through which individuals can confidently value why they are making particular choices without making the content of such choices goods for everybody. She then applies this norm of engendering critical reflection to concrete public policy issues—citizenship criteria, cultural rights, ethnic and gender identity politics, religious toleration, sexual preference, and citizenship education. As passionate and cogent as her elucidation of each example is, her argumentation proves very dense and enmeshed in contemporary liberal scholarship. Though Kymlicka's text does not cover as wide a range of issues, his presentation reaches a wider-ranging audience.

Gill and Kymlicka converge at two junctures. Gill reiterates Kymlicka's accent on the nation-state as the principal locale for liberal democracy insofar as she argues that liberal polities inherently are bounded with regard to outsiders but inclusive to all individuals within the boundaries. In turn, like Kymlicka, her text culminates with citizenship education. Specifically, she insists that liberal education focuses not on "what to choose" (p. 219), but "how to choose" (p. 219) and quite incisively shows that critical engagement of "the contingent character of any particular narrative" (p. 257) must be undertaken by illiberals and liberals alike.

Gill devotes much more attention than Kymlicka to accommodating *religious* groups and practices within liberal democracy. Apart from some scattered references to the Amish and other religious traditions, Kymlicka remains focused on accommodating ethnic, linguistic, and racial groups. On the other hand, Gill devotes three chapters to the quandaries posed by religious toleration and the tension between reflective autonomy and the religious belief systems. Consonant with the rest of her argument, Gill renders freedom of conscience as an expression of autonomy, a spirituality that can be defended through rational deliberation ennobling to the person of faith. At the same time, she is quite willing to permit government to regulate and prevent illiberal practices that do not facilitate autonomy. In the end, the individualistic cast of her argument will hardly appeal to many religious believers who understand their identity as being constituted through a communitarian set of prac-