
MODERATE PLURALISM: BEYOND A REASONABLE LIBERALISM
TO RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL EXPERTISE

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The spectator's judgment is sure to miss the root of the matter, and to possess no truth. The subject judged knows a part of the world of reality which the judging spectator fails to see, knows more while the spectator knows less; and, wherever there is conflict of opinion and difference of vision, we are bound to believe that the truer side is the side that feels the more, not the side that feels less.¹

—William James

The growing diversity of school populations in the present education milieu raises issues of treating difference along multiple lines of the social, political and economic well being of children. Difference is here defined as politically significant group identities (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and religion) to which I refer as *cultures* or *identity groups*.² Political liberal theorists generally subsume identity group theorizing in education within broader moral/political frameworks of justice and mutual reciprocity.³ They believe that the principles of political liberalism are adequate to ensure appropriate treatment of difference in education.

This paper argues that in principle, political liberalism's commitment to individual freedom under conditions of reason provides an adequate moral ground for the equality implied in the notion of democratic education. In application, however, its primary conceptual apparatus of equality is the autonomy promoted in deliberative problem-solving, which I will argue is problematic in its treatment of cultural beliefs. While developing the critical reasoning skills that deliberation requires (e.g. in history, social studies, economics, literature), fostering the liberal conception of autonomy in schools

¹ William James, 1899. "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings." In McDermott, J. ed. (1967) *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition* (New York: Random House), 631.

² Linda Alcoff. *Visible Identities*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 42. See also Amy Gutmann, *Identity in Democracy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 9.

³ John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 169; Amy Gutmann and Denis Thompson. *Democracy and Disagreement*. (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996.)

can fail to facilitate even a modicum of continuity between school and home life that is so important to children's sense of well-being.

Varieties of political liberalism hold principled commitments to equality, liberty, mutual respect, and deliberative resolution of disagreements in the form of consensus. These principles form the basis of the social contract in the tradition of Rousseau and guide institutions that constitute the political economy. It follows that education in a liberal society serves the purpose of sustaining democracy. Therefore, democratic principles and purposes should overtly and variously manifest themselves in the curriculum and broader culture of schools.

Given the moral priority that political liberalism places on equality, difference poses a particular dilemma. The democratic state in principle guarantees individual rights and privileges on the basis of common humanity. Fully acknowledging identity-based claims on the state can arguably exceed the boundaries of fair and equal citizenship. Contemporary diversity movements making such claims for special rights and privileges have been dubbed the "politics of identity." A robust body of literature has addressed the shortcomings of political liberalism in its treatment of group identities in education.⁴ An expansive discussion of this dilemma is beyond the scope of this paper; however, I offer a critique of a single aspect of political liberalism's treatment of difference. This aspect is the presupposed criteria for good reasons in liberalism in general and deliberative democracy in particular that are consistent with its aim of promoting autonomy.

DELIBERATION

Functionally, *deliberation*, or broadly, reasons-based disagreement among stakeholders, is ideally the conduit of public reasoning in a democracy. Deliberation is political in that it involves a public forum in which each individual defends preferences about matters of public policy (e.g. local, state or federal governance). The expectation in the process is that participants subscribe to diverse *comprehensive* beliefs but justify their positions on policy in terms that make sense to all stakeholders. For Rawls a fully comprehensive doctrine or belief system "covers all recognized values and virtues," but political liberalism calls for a "reasonable comprehensive doctrine" that can recognize and abide by the procedures of public reasoning.⁵

⁴ See Robert Rhoads and Shannon Calderone. "Reconstituting the Democratic Subject: Sexuality, Schooling and Citizenship," *Educational Theory* 52 (2007), 105-121; Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Will Kymlicka. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁵ Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 13, 169.

Gutmann similarly elevates the means of social cooperation above group-specific forms of life. Abiding by the rule-based procedures of deliberation demonstrates the mutual respect that is inherent in democracy.⁶ In this sense, political liberalism holds indeterminacy about conceptions of the good so that individuals may subscribe to the belief system of their choice. Deliberation necessarily constrains the expression of diversity to that which is publicly meaningful. Political liberalism demands a public sphere that is, in principle, ruled by common rules of fairness and mutual respect. In Rawls' view the just society accommodates fully comprehensive doctrines that are reasonable in an overlapping consensus ensuring fair terms of cooperation.⁷ In terms of political morality, deliberation is also a public and democratic *virtue* because, out of concern for social reproduction, a state must select this particular practice as necessary for its long-term survival. In Gutmann's view, "We need not claim the moral superiority (or ownership) to say any of this, we need only claim that some ways of life are better than others *for us and our children* because these orientations impart meaning and enrich the internal life of family and society."⁸ Gutmann calls this aspect of democratic liberalism, "conscious social reproduction."⁹

Deliberation encapsulates and exemplifies political liberal ideals of equality and liberty because, at least in theory, it takes place under conditions of reason. In this sense, the collective deliberative process characterizes the exercise of *autonomy* as each participant rationally defends a given perspective. Both the speaker and the listener must think for him or herself through giving and evaluating reasons but be willing to be governed by the outcome that captures mutual reciprocity.¹⁰ Rawls holds that this procedure is the "political conception of justice" that regulates society.

Schools in a democracy rightly prepare students to participate in public reasoning as well as allow opportunities for petit democracy (e.g. student government, focus groups). Indeed, Dewey believed that a classroom should be a micro democracy. I believe that, in the valuing of impartial reasons-giving for belief as a necessary condition for the exercising of autonomy (e.g. thinking for oneself), imparting the principles of deliberative democracy in schools can fail to attend to the well-being of children in schools. Left wanting in deliberation theorizing are (1) accommodations of identity-based beliefs as legitimate discourse in deliberation, which should imply (2) recognition of the importance of the role of trust relationships together with thinking independently in

⁶ See Gutmann and Thomson, *Democracy and Disagreement*.

⁷ Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 167-169.

⁸ Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 43.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁰ See Emily Robertson, "The Epistemic Aims of Education," *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education*, ed. Harvey Siegel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

legitimizing collective agreement. I argue that without the latter component deliberation can be exclusionary of minority tradition, values and experiences in a classroom setting. A pluralistic broadening of democratic deliberation addresses these deficits. I propose a moderate pluralism as a theoretical modification of deliberation theory that values the experience of identity group members in education. William James leads the way.

DELIBERATING FROM AUTONOMY OF A DIFFERENT KIND

The liberal account of deliberation, particularly in regard to autonomy, is narrow in that it undervalues the significance of diversity for democracy in ways that are not necessary to the preservation of principles or purpose of liberalism. Specifically, the terms of mutually acceptable agreement in deliberation are skewed towards common ground or reciprocity and the presumed objective position from which participants value its informing reasons.¹¹ In Rawls's view, the commonality is shared reasoning—that which can be reasonably warranted within an individual's belief system. The overlapping consensus is reached according to "the balance of reasons as seen within each citizen's comprehensive doctrine and not a compromise compelled by circumstances."¹² In this form of moral reasoning, in the Kantian tradition, the participant exercises agency by reaching conclusions that seem good to him or her; but the standard of *goodness of reasons* is impartiality, meaning that reasons must seem good to any and all agents.

Kant's notion of agency is conceptually intertwined with rationality. It is the deontology of consistently applied rules giving and following that sets apart those with agency as such. As Appiah explains,

The standpoint of agency is connected in the most direct possible way, to our concern to live intelligible lives in community with other people... This practical interest requires us to be able to articulate our behaviour in relation to theirs, and this we do through our understanding of them as having beliefs and intentions—in short, as reasoning—and also as having passion and prejudices: in short, as always potentially unreasonable.¹³

Similarly, reciprocity involves the disposition to accommodate fellow citizens, on agreed upon terms of noninterference with either party's core values. Reciprocity allows for civil discourse and relations to a mutually acceptable resolution. One limit of both commonality and of reciprocity in deliberation is the extent to which promoting mutual understanding may

¹¹ See Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*.

¹² Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 169.

¹³ Anthony Appiah, *Ethics of Identity*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 58.

require cultural minority group members to differentiate themselves from their communities that are often economically and socially marginalized or transcend their group identities in giving *reasons* to support beliefs in order to acquire deliberative currency.

Conversely, a broad conception of autonomy would include not only offering reasons or justifications for beliefs but it would provide background for how the person comes to believe. Misak represents deliberation as a context within which we can learn from each other in what could be called a *pluralistic deliberation*.¹⁴ This kind of discourse need not take the form of solely reasons-giving, but instead can involve an exchange of explanations for the belief. The exchange can include questions such as, what caused the participant to develop the belief? If the source of the belief is a member of the cultural community, why did the participant consider the cultural source reliable? Members of given identity communities may appeal to the testimony of others or testimonial reasons in justifying their beliefs or choices, e.g., one cultural member appeals to the statement of another cultural member that the obtaining of a given state of affairs was a good reason for a particular belief or action. To do so, individuals may reference their traditions, values and other aspects of their comprehensive doctrines.

Modifying deliberation to be pluralistic in this way may appear to be a threat to liberalism, but I would argue that it challenges the preeminence of narrow autonomy's epistemological presumptions that can fail to robustly include culturally-based experiences while preserving individual agency. It can appear that in this broader interpretation of autonomy individuals fail to think for themselves when they assert claims on a cultural basis.¹⁵ They yet have, however, a form of autonomy in appealing to *trust* in cultural authority as a source of authority or expertise.¹⁶ If so, then the broader autonomy does not threaten the liberal principle of individual rights as the basic moral unit of democracy. Further, the specter of group rights does not threateningly hover for liberalism.¹⁷

Trust can perform this *epistemic*, or knowledge conducive, function because within cultural groups trust can offer a well-founded basis for believing a fellow group member's testimony. Bauerman explains, "It can be rationally justified for recipients to believe in the truth of information which they cannot verify themselves only if it's rationally justified for them to believe

¹⁴ See Cheryl Misak, *Truth, Politics, Morality* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁵ Sheron Fraser-Burgess, "The Social Nature of Epistemically Normative Deliberation" *Philosophy of Education Society 2008*. R.D. Glass, ed. (Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 2009) 219-227.

¹⁶ Robertson, "The Epistemic Aims of Education," *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education*, ed. Harvey Siegel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 23-29.

¹⁷ See Kymlicka, *Minority Rights: A Liberal Theory of Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 34-48.

in the trustworthiness of the informant.”¹⁸ In closely knit cultural groups trust in informants deemed reliable can reasonably be a source of the cohesiveness of aspects of a doxastic web rather than solely evidence or reasons for a belief. Because trust, as a causal origin of belief, is pervasive in our society and supports the democratic social order, it is as important to independence and self-determination that we critically examine the sources of our beliefs as well as the reasons for them. Additionally, it is the case that appealing to reasons for testimony makes explicit our dependence upon others for knowledge, an attribute of democratic community that narrow autonomy does not explicitly address.

Pluralistic deliberation decouples a narrow form of autonomy from deliberation. In its place is a broader account, consistent with the liberal conception of the relationship between the individual and the state. Broad autonomy is culturally holistic deliberation in that it considers the individual with respect to the individual’s web of relationships and the beliefs that underwrite them. It recognizes the mutuality of deep commitments to and multiple forms of allegiances around our identity. It promotes reciprocity that is potentially profoundly empathetic about the difficulties surrounding identity formation and reformation. Broad autonomy is engendered as it becomes clear that each person still may have the power to choose the belief system by which he or she is governed but may not always be in possession of rational justification for beliefs and values.

This realization is a logical implication of the interaction, understanding and practical negotiation that occurs in listening to the lived experiences of others in a context that is free from force or compulsion to *in toto* reject one’s own group identity. It proceeds from deliberation in that it takes place in a diverse community of radical differences and in which one participant is nevertheless willing to listen to the cultural metanarrative of the “other.” As Appiah argues, identities enable freedom in discourse: “Identities

¹⁸ Michael Baurmann, “Rational Fundamentalism? An Explanatory Model of Fundamentalist Beliefs,” *Episteme* 4 (2007): 150-166. Although Baurmann does not specifically discuss deliberation, he argues that trust is basic to human believing and knowledge. Indeed, he maintains that the same mechanism that engenders the rationality of relying upon scientific experts within modern society can render the belief in rational fundamentalist beliefs to be reasonable. Baurman’s assertions about trust are relevant to deliberation because he maintains that the symmetry between scientific expertise in modern society and fundamentalist beliefs of a closed religious group lies in the fact that in both cases, “Belief in the truth of this information is embedded in a highly generalized social trust.” (157) The common variables in both cases include the “common sense plausibility” of the claims and the degree of “epistemic seclusion.” The latter is an outcome of the extent to which “personal trust-networks will only include members of their own groups.” (162) In my view, deliberation in a diverse society can be as much about resolving differing identity group beliefs as between individuals.

give those who have them reasons for action.”¹⁹ Those reasons are bound in an exposition of histories, relations and loyalties, but they are also naturally grounded in generative and nourishing experiences, which as I have said can be an entrée for reciprocity of experience.

It may also appear that in pluralistic deliberation there is a breaching of the public versus private sphere. The liberal social contract establishes a line of demarcation between the public space of equality and freedom and private life style of consenting adults. On this reading of liberalism, reasons for trusting one’s cultural informants would not legitimate basis for deliberation. I would argue that including trust-based reasons in deliberative discourse advances justice yet remains a significant and powerful majority in this country, whose levels of cultural uniformity, though not total, are sufficiently high to be a barrier to reciprocity. Philosophers and psychologists have put forward the notion of the White majority’s general resistance to acknowledging the cultural component to its identity.²⁰ As such the majority group is less inclined to accept the kinds of warrants offered by minorities because of unfamiliarity not only with actual cultural experiences but also with the notion of the mediating role of culture. Arguably, this unavailability of the majority’s reasons for a cultural critique—namely that beliefs may be held for trust-based reasons in support of testimony, rather than on the basis of reasons for the belief—stymies deliberation. Consider how difficult it is to currently make progress on a number of public policy initiatives because race is in the subtext of the opposition, but race cannot be constructively addressed without rancor because of the belief that it is a private matter.²¹

In fact, the articulations of one’s reasons for appealing to what Robertson calls *cultural expertise* can also be the point of inception that adds the degree of legitimacy to various points of views. The notion of *cultural expertise* acknowledges the location of knowledge claims within particular social and experiential contexts of experience. For example, the practitioner of alternative medicine justifiably classifies as an expert relative to dedicated participants. Thus, cultural or identity group members can draw upon their trust

¹⁹ Anthony Appiah, *Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 184.

²⁰ Barbara Applebaum and Erin Stoick, “On the Meaning and the Possibility of a White, Anti-Racist Identity.” *Philosophy of Education Society 2000*, in L. Stone, ed. (Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 1997), 307-316; Beverly Daniel Tatum, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

²¹ See Richard Brooks. *Racial Justice in the Age of Obama* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009.) Brooks argues that the “Age of Obama” is not post-racial but very much remains a time where the racial lens is salient. Denying the view that civil rights movement is no longer necessary, Brooks proposes a “theory of completeness” as a criterion for an account of civil rights that makes sense of the extreme divergences in the social conditions of African Americans, e.g., presidency versus schools in poor conditions.

in the claims of the cultural experts as the cause of their beliefs. Under these conditions, individuals do not fail to think for themselves but rather draw upon reasons they have for considering the cultural claims, which is an extraordinarily hopeful direction in which to go. Conventional and mainstream definitions of expert claims attribute it to holders of institutionally recognized credentials (e.g. teachers, scientists, academics).

A provisional acceptance of this testimony in deliberation suspends judgment of belief and can bring members of disparate identity groups figuratively to the deliberative table where a substantive discussion about the relative reliability of one's cultural source can begin and mutual understanding of the participants stories can flourish. I now turn to William James' metaphorical exploration of alienating factors between people and how being privy to cultural narratives and their ongoing justification can promote understanding, appreciation of the perspective of others and instantiates a form of reasoning as well.

PLURALISM AND WILLIAM JAMES' MODEL

The extant political philosophy literature presents pluralism as both a direct and indirect critique of liberalism. The indirect critiques explore the implications of cultural pluralism for ethics, political morality and education.²² Direct critiques are in the vein of feminist analyses of modern epistemology and moral philosophy and bring considerations of diversity and equality to bear in critical analysis of liberalism.²³ Degrees of pluralism can be conceived of as iterations of the standing of particular ways of life, along a moral continuum.²⁴

In the work of William James is found a defensible, if somewhat metaphorical, treatment of the tensions of liberalism's valuing of reason with promoting autonomy and accommodating diversity. James presents a wide-ranging and complex pluralism that space would not allow to be delineated here. However it is possible here to consider the role that reasoning plays in reconciling divergent forms on some common basis outside of narrow autonomy. It is not as political liberalism would propose—a matter of valuing the personal freedom of oneself and by extrapolation that of others. James' work that is the subject of this analysis is "A Certain Blindness," the written text of a pair of addresses to women students later published in *Talks To Teachers On Psychology: And To Students On Some Of Life's Ideals* (1917).

²² See Nicholas Appleton, *Cultural Pluralism in Education: Theoretical Foundations* (New York: Arizona State University, 1983); Micheal Olneck, "Is Pluralism Possible in Education," *The Challenge of Pluralism: Education, Politics and Values*, ed. F. Clark Power and Daniel Lapsley (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1992), 251-272.

²³ See William Galston, *Liberal Pluralism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2002; John Gray, "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company," *Pluralism: The Philosophy and Politics of Diversity*, eds. M. Baghrmian and A. Ingram, A. (New York: Routledge), 85-102.

²⁴ Fraser-Burgess, "Problems with a Strong and Weakly Pluralist Approach to Democratic Education," *The Pluralist Society*. 4:2 (2009), 1-16.

James characterizes this essay as an expression of the “pluralistic or individualistic philosophy.”²⁵ In my view, the essay represents both the incongruities and common ground that can occur in attempts to understand the valuing and reasoning of the “other” especially when the dialectic is made more complex by issues of identity.

In the piece, James initially expresses puzzlement and disdain about the lifestyle choices and preferences of an Appalachian farmer. He claims that it is “the blindness with which we all are afflicted in regard to the feelings of creatures and people different from ourselves.”²⁶ The simple example of the perception differential between Appalachian farmer’s view of his property and James illustrates this phenomenon:

Some years ago, while journeying in the mountains of North Carolina, I passed by a large number of “coves,” as they call them there, or heads of small valleys between the hills, which had been newly cleared and planted. The impression on my mind was one of unmitigated squalor. The settler had in every case cut down the manageable trees, and left their charred stumps standing . . . The forest had been destroyed; and what had “improved” out of existence was hideous, a sort of ulcer, without a single element of artificial grace to make up for the loss of Nature’s beauty. Ugly, indeed, seemed the life of the squatter, scudding, as the sailors say, under bare poles.²⁷

There is obvious disdain and condescension for this uncultured life in James’ description. The farmer is portrayed as being ignorant of or rejecting conventional and generally middle class norms of the acceptable environs. This way of life presents as depraved to James’ more refined sensibilities. “Talk about going back to nature!” James writes that he mused to himself,

oppressed by the dreariness, as I drove by. Talk of a country life for one’s old age and for one’s children! . . . Never, without the best spoils of culture woven in! The beauties and commodities gained by the centuries are sacred. They are our heritage and birthright. No modern person ought to be willing to live a day in such a state of rudimentariness and denudation.²⁸

Clearly a primary objection that James has to the farmer’s notion of the good is that it is anti-progress. It can be said that James acquires his opinion on the basis of good reasons because arguably it is far more reasonable to take

²⁵ Anthony Skillen, “William James, ‘A Certain Blindness’ and Uncertain Pluralism” in *Philosophy and Pluralism*, ed. David Archard (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 33-46.

²⁶ James, “On Certain Blindness in Human Beings,” 630.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

advantage of the expansion of options for quality of living available than to remain in squalid conditions.

James does shed some light on why the farmer prefers this particular way of life. Is it because of reasons that each could defend? Or does his way of life appear good because of observing and wanting to emulate the long-established practices that characterize the Appalachian farmers' way of life? For the farmer, this way of living is traditional. It is a "symbol redolent with moral memories and sang a paean of duty struggle and success," and as the mountaineer who was James' driving escort explains, "All of us . . . Why, we ain't happy here, unless we are getting one of these coves under cultivation."²⁹ In Rawlsian terms, this way of life was a particular instantiation of a comprehensive belief system.

Imagine for a moment that a disagreement should arise regarding the very clearing under discussion. Hypothetically, the land has properties that support greater utility as public use. In an appeal *ipso facto* to eminent domain, the academic could argue that developing the land is warranted and provide the very reasons that James offers. In these deliberations, the farmer would arguably be at a disadvantage if (1) his reasons for valuing the land are primarily because doing so is in keeping with family tradition, or (2) reasonableness is the gold-standard of reaching the overlapping consensus regarding the use of the land. In the case of the former, family tradition may not withstand the rationally superior challenge posed by the urgency of public need. In the case of latter, it is likely the farmer cannot act as Rawls or Gutmann requires: impartially concede that James' objections are warranted or somewhere along the continuum of prudence or altruism, acknowledge the fairness of the surrender of the land, based on a principle of reciprocity. Competent lawyers notwithstanding, the farmer would be at a substantial disadvantage in defending his claim.

How then would a broader concept of autonomy help? First, it is important to be clear that the outcome may not change under a broader conception of autonomy, but it would arguably be more in keeping with political justice and equality if the deliberative process involved a mutual and reciprocal communication. In this case, James would offer not only reasons for preferring a more modern lifestyle but how he has come to give it preeminent value, which is an explanation for the belief. Similarly, the farmer would not only engage in the latter but also the former. From such a dialogue often comes mutual understanding of aims, interests and purposes that still fosters independent thinking.

James affirms this change of heart as one of the desirable outcomes of the encounter:

²⁹ Ibid.

Because to me the clearings spoke of nought but denudation, I thought that to those whose sturdy arms and obedient axes had made them [,] that they could tell no other story. But when *they* looked on the hideous stump, what they thought of was a personal victory ... I had been as blind to the peculiar ideality of their conditions as they certainly would have been to the ideality of mine, had they had a peep at my strange indoor.³⁰

James sees this phenomenon as a kind of extreme rational myopia rather than a positive trait engendered by the academic way of life at Cambridge. He concedes that, in evaluating the relative worth of conceptions of the good, both parties would be ill-equipped by virtue of experience to make such judgments, but an exercise in sharing the farmers' perspective cures the rational myopia he previously experienced. Skillen characterizes James' change of heart as a "revaluing, revisionary experience... a richer recognition of the ways in which this can be seen as having beauty."³¹ James recognizes diversity as a valuable formative lens that shapes and informs one's perspective and as a source of expertise; a lens with profound educational implications.

PLURALISTIC DELIBERATION, BROAD AUTONOMY AND CHILDREN

Education participates in deliberation to the extent that it aims for, in Gutmann's terms, the conscious social reproduction of democracy. It follows that education should be promoting the constitutive skills of deliberation. I would argue that decoupling deliberation from narrow autonomy is not only in keeping with such an overall aim, it is also more consistent with the promotion of students' well-being—also an important goal of education in a democracy. Well-being concerns that which engenders a sense of wholeness. It is imposed by both a conscious awareness of having one's happiness and a less aware state in which there is no overriding lack, deficit or want. de Ruyter describes the theory of well-being in the following way: "A combined theory [of well-being] has both objective and person related aspects. It is objective in that it claims that human flourishing requires particular goods and characteristics, among which are the goods of health, social relations, and safety, as well as intellectual, creative, and physical pursuits."³² Agents makes this assessment, however, from their own perspective. A child's world reflects the interrelationship of multifarious environmental factors in ways that are

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 631.

³¹ Skillen, 35-36. It is worth noting that James' pluralism is explicitly *individualistic*, concerned with allowing a diversity of forms of the individual good to flourish. I am interested in how the individual good is realized in group membership commitments.

³² Ruyter, E., "Ideals, Education and Happy Flourishing," *Educational Theory* 57:1 (2007), 26.

ecological.³³ Although students grow to understand the line of demarcation between home and school as they develop, the political liberal form of deliberation forces the separation of home and school in an arbitrary manner for all children. The arbitrariness is especially significant for these children for whom trust in the teacher may not be forthcoming for reasons of cultural or social barriers. Although preparing students to be good citizens is an important aim of education, promoting in deliberation the idea that we can learn from each other as gendered, racialized, sexually oriented, religious beings is also important of schooling and democracy.

On a political liberal conception, reasons-based independent thinking encompasses this task of promoting the constitutive skills of deliberation. Broad autonomy adds to this skill set the capacity to articulate one's cultural stories and as such engage with the cultural narrative of others. While narrow autonomy is exclusively linear in thinking, broad autonomy takes a more recursive approach to incorporating both trust reasons and belief reasons in one's thinking and in deliberating towards a consensus.

This form of deliberation can occur in aspects of school that are the means of the social reproduction of democracy, for example clubs and other school organizations, curriculum in classes such as history, social studies and literature. In Dewey's vision of the classroom, students conduct themselves as a micro-democracy, which would be a fitting place to model a broad conception of autonomy.

³³ See Urie Brofenbrennar, *The Ecology of Human Development*, MA: Harvard University, 1997.
