Worlds of American Intellectual History

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About 40 years ago, the field of US intellectual history entered a period of self-doubt about the rigor of its methods, about the narrowness of its archive and its interests, even about the ontological gravity of the subjects it treated. The causes of this self-doubt were various, but their convergence seemed a consequence of seismic shifts in the way history was practiced as a discipline beginning in the last quarter of the 20th century, such as the ascendancy of social history over political and cultural history, the increasing interest in 'bottom up' methods of research, and, most of all, skepticism about whether ideas themselves, rather than social and economic forces for which those ideas came to be seen as proxies, played any role in shaping history. Aware of this crisis of confidence, some of the most important practitioners of US intellectual history gathered in December 1977 at Wingspread, an educational conference facility in Wind Point, Wisconsin (in a building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright), to share views about the problems their field had begun to face and to reflect about how to solve those problems. The proceedings of this conference, edited by Paul Conkin and John Higham, were published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 1979 as *New Directions in American Intellectual History*.

The problems considered at the Wingspread conference were of several kinds. First was a criticism of the vaulting ambitions of intellectual historians of the generation of Perry Miller, Henry Steele Commager, and Merle Curti, who sought to characterize 'the American mind' on the basis of a double handful of charismatic texts. Such a treatment does not do justice, the critics felt, to the granularity and to the dense crosscurrents of argument and affiliation of intellectual discourse as it happens. Connected with this criticism was the implication that concentration on high-profile thinkers and public intellectuals restricted intellectual history to a concern with an elite circle, a limitation that seemed as dated as a focus on political and military leaders had come to seem in political history. Intellectual historians were tasked to broaden their archive in just the way that literary scholars of the same period were seeking to broaden their canon. The archive was to be enlarged not merely by the inclusion of countervailing or non-elite sources, and by attending to how ideas were refracted across the internal boundaries of society such as those of gender, class, religion, and region,

but also by the recognition that ideas are rarely confined by national borders. Now even traditional US intellectual historians had had an international sense of their discipline - one could not study Puritanism without Calvin or for that matter Augustine and Peter Ramos, and study of Transcendentalism requires one to understand the post-Kantians and what sense 19th-century New England made of the religious philosophies of India - but the call for a more international focus perhaps reflects on a more general impatience with the concept of American exceptionalism than merely with the narrowness of the archive earlier intellectual historians relied upon.

What emerged from the Wingspread conference was chastened way of doing American intellectual history. The study of the thought of high-canonical figures still mattered, but not as a way of understanding the 'American mind' but as a way of charting the 'discourse of intellectuals'. Broader claims would require a broader archive which would include how themes were understood by non-elite witnesses and which would examine how they were received, critiqued, and transformed across the internal divisions of society. And themes are connected not only with their high-cultural antecedents in Europe but with cognate themes in other regions of the Americas, or in the Atlantic world created and distorted by the slave trade.

The *Worlds of American Intellectual History* does not propose to overturn the Wingspread paradigm, and indeed the volume does not center on methodological questions, but it does, in practice, push the boundaries of the discipline that Wingspread had drawn by featuring articles with widely different interests and approaches. If the volume has an overarching argument it is that intellectual historians no longer need to subordinate intellectual to social history completely. They still must place ideas in some form of engagement with the social world, however, since doing so is what distinguishes intellectual history from history of ideas, but they are open to many very different ideas of the form that engagement might take. This hospitality to contrasting approaches to the discipline and willingness to experiment with opposing methods is perhaps the most attractive feature of the book.

The volume is organized around five main areas of inquiry: 'Frames' (exploring the different roles played by ascribed identities with porous boundaries), 'Justice' (treating contested popular moral ideas as well as the arguments of political theorists of the past and present), 'Philosophy' (treating the development and reception of formal philosophical themes both in the academic discipline and in the culture of common readers), 'Secularization' (addressing the debate initiated by Max Weber but recently contested by Charles Taylor about whether modernity inevitably leads to the conviction that the world is a disenchanted, empty mechanism), and 'Method' (treating the consequences of the Wingspread conference and new possibilities for intellectual history that have arisen since Wingspread). This organization enables the volume to offer at once breath of coverage and engagement among texts. Often the essays engage each other across the boundaries of the parts as well. The richness and consistently high quality of the essays makes it difficult to do justice to the volume as a whole. But a few essays in each section deserve to be marked out for special praise.

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In the 'Frames' section, Caroline Winterer's 'What was the American Enlightenment?' shows that the idea of a distinctive American version of the Enlightenment served different purposes and meant different things as the cross-currents of international politics and scholarly conversation shifted. Winterer points out that when Adrienne Koch first introduced the concept in the 1950s it served her own vision of Cold War politics: the thought of the five main Founders articulated a tradition of reason-shaped public participation which would enable the US to ward off totalitarian challenges left and right. Her vision of the Founders' thought was also resolutely secular, a vision which accorded with Koch's own sense of the tolerant secularism she hoped to encourage in the academy of her own day. Henry May's 1976 *The Enlightenment in America*, by contrast, attended to Tocqueville's observation that in France enlightenment and democracy had to take an anti-religious turn because of the power of state religion in the ancien regime, but the religious heterogeneity of the early Republic and the role of dissenting Protestant churches as spaces of self-rule and self-organization gave the relationship between religion and enlightenment a distinctive turn in the US. May's

treatment of religion as a symbolic system rather than as a body of superstition also represented the emergence in the historical literature of the kind of cultural hermeneutics championed by Clifford Geertz. May and Koch each responded in different ways to the external exigency of international politics and the internal exigencies of the academy.

Also in the 'Frames' section, Jonathan Scott Holloway's 'Curating the Black Atlantic' treats with detail and sensitivity the ways different museum curators around the Atlantic world have responded to the argument of Paul Gilroy's 1993 *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. The curators of the Yale Collection of British Art, for instance, have arranged exhibitions and adjusted the commentary on displayed works of art in order to point out the subordinate but still telling presence of enslaved Africans in group portraits and satiric engravings of upper class English people of the 18th century, where they reveal the ways in which slavery was 'vital to the making and marking of the idea of empire'. In doing this, the museum responded not only to modern scholarship, but to the responsibilities that inhered in their own situation as an institution that serves a largely African-American city. Likewise the Maritime Museum in Liverpool has increasingly focused upon that city's role in the African slave trade, and indeed has helped bring forth a separate new museum about it. The influence of Gilroy's ideas are also felt at the nearby Tate Liverpool museum, in whose exhibits Liverpool's imbrication in the slave trade makes it a center of a new Atlantic-African modernity. Both reflect not only the influence of Gilroy's book but a moral and political stance about multicultural Britain in the postcolonial age. Holloway traces a similar evolution in the Studio Museum in Harlem, where Africa is no longer just the imagined past of African-Americans, but an engaged and self-reflective part of the present on both sides of the Atlantic. Holloway's essay concludes with a discussion of how the necessities of appealing to the tourist trade have distorted how the Sunbury Plantation House and other historical Barbadian institutions have received Gilroy's ideas. These institutions have indeed sought to increase the salience of African forms of expression in Barbadian cultural life, but they have also ducked a serious confrontation with the history of slavery itself.

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Margaret Abruzzo's 'The sins of slaves and the slaves of sin: toward a history of moral agency,' which opens the 'Justice' section of the book, examines popular moral discourse of the antebellum era (sermons, polemics, popular fiction, literary works) on two contrasting but related situations of compromised moral agency. The moral freedom of slaves was of course limited by their physical subjection, but even slaveholders were never quite ready to see slaves as being without moral identities. The limitations on the slaves' moral freedom was not only that imposed by physical coercion, however, since their oppression also complicated their moral responsibilities. The moral faculties of certain kinds of habitual sinners - alcoholics most especially, but also those given to sexual sin - were also compromised: they were in the position of having willingly sacrificed control over their own wills, but they also were still to some extent capable of moral judgment and action. Abruzzo develops a fascinating take on the way ideas and political or social situations shape each other: the politics of slavery forced 19th-century masters and slaves alike to develop a subtle but unstable analysis of the problem of moral freedom, turning on questions about how slaves viewed their own workaday moral agency. Abruzzo's analysis of how Harriet Jacobs saw her own dalliance with Mr. Sands, of which she was ashamed but about which she nevertheless sought sympathetic understanding from her readers, is particularly subtle, in that she sees Jacobs as able neither to evade nor to assume moral responsibility for her affair. Both the compromised moral freedom of slaves and the compromised moral freedom of habitual sinners required a sophisticated if never fully explicit theory about the relationship between the will and the identity; both sinning slaves and slaves to sin inhabited a morally complex and densely contradictory world.

Samuel Moyn's 'The political origins of global justice', argues that the development of ideas of global justice by students of Rawls should be seen in the context of the world events to which they are an inadequate response, the oil shock and food crises of the 1970s, and the elaboration of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the United Nations and the Group of 77. Moyn sees Rawls' 1971 *A Theory of Justice* as an articulation of a national welfarist ideology that had already begun to pass when Rawls

published his book. Friendly critics of Rawls had faulted his taking the existence of states for granted and sought to extend the Rawlsian 'difference principle' to the global scale. Two themes - elaboration of an ideal of universal human rights and the use of the difference principle to criticize the economic inequalities attendant upon globalization - represent alternative developments of this critique. About the first, Moyn argues (as he does in his just-published *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World*) that the concern with universal human rights, which focuses chiefly on the behavior of evil states, has led thinkers either to ignore or become complicit in the deepening economic inequalities of the globalizing international world, since that kind of thought provides tools to combat physically repressive governments but provides no conceptual apparatus to contest the brutal effects of market fundamentalism. (Among other texts, Moyn has Rawls' own 1999 *The Law of Peoples* in mind here.) On the other hand, bracketing the state, as one brackets other features of human nature such as race, gender, or religion, behind the 'veil of ignorance' in the Rawlsian original position, does in fact expose the injustice of international inequality, but Moyn shows that it does so, in an individualist and anti-statist way that deprives political agents of practical means of action.

It need not, Moyn argues, have turned out this way, since the NIEO, among other things an attempt by decolonized producer states to claim control over their own natural resources, represented the promise of a state-oriented effort to remedy the injustices arising from colonial exploitation. These possibilities were articulated by Charles Beitz in the articles that preceded his 1979 book *Political Theory and International Relations*, which had treated the ambitions of the NIEO with qualified sympathy. Moyn sees the promises of Beitz's thinking as coming to grief for several reasons, some of which have to do with why the NIEO itself came to grief. The latter proved vulnerable to the hostility of the first world, but was finally undone by the transformation of some of its chief sponsors from postcolonial insurgents to petro-states with internal inequalities and external agendas of their own to defend. Beitz's own views were also ultimately 'deradicalized;' his turn from a concern with the disempowerment of colonized states to the disempowerment of individuals whom post-colonial states, not only colonizing ones, frequently oppressed, followed President Carter's elevation of human rights to a key role in his administration's foreign policy. In making this turn, Beitz, motivated by an in some ways admirable cosmopolitanism, also made peace with the anti-statism and individualism which would render the human rights regime toothless.

Moyn edges up to, but never quite decides, the question of whether thought about human rights is actually complicit with 'so-called neoliberalism' or merely impotent against it. One way to read Moyn's essay is to see it as attributing, as intellectual historians often do, an unacknowledged (or perhaps merely unrecognized) malign political agenda to a philosophical idea. But the moral passion behind the essay argues for a slightly different reading: impatient with the inability of philosophy to imagine any subject or agent of justice above the individual, Moyn bitterly calls to mind the famous concluding sentence of Marx's theses on Feuerbach: 'Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it'. In the first reading ideas are the tools or emblems of material interests and the thought of Rawls and Beitz reduces to 'letting loose an owl of Minerva on partial achievements their thought has apparently done nothing to extend'. The second reading may ultimately be only a *cri de coeur*, but it at least imagines a very different relationship between world and idea.

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Joel Isaac's essay in the 'Philosophy' section of the book, 'Pain, analytical philosophy, and American intellectual history,' has moments of unexpected congruence with Moyn's essay. Isaac's essay pushes intellectual history into a closer relationship with history of ideas by arguing that the first responsibility of intellectual historians of philosophy is a close engagement not just with the themes but with the arguments of the texts they examine. Without this engagement, he contends, discussions of philosophical ideas seems more like a pretext than a subject, an occasion for talking about other, non-philosophical things rather than a way of setting ideas in their most local context of meaning, the conversation among philosophers to which they are contributions.

Isaac presents a careful reading of the concern of analytic philosophy with problems about the status of other

people's pain, the problems which follow upon the fact that we do not sense other people's pain in the way we sense our own. Early 20th-century logical empiricism, Isaac argues, had sought to refound the naturalistic account of ideas and feelings first developed by the 18th-century empiricists by attending to new developments in psychology and in the philosophy of language. What was at stake in this project was not merely a non-idealistic epistemology but a way of giving a materialist but not reductive account of ethics. Logical empiricism's ambition to account for the privacy of experience without developing a theory of subjectivity, however, could not come to fruition without postwar analytic philosophy's insight that the key to the problem of others' pain was the recognition that the question turned not on sensations per se but on the philosophical grammar of persons: pains are things persons have, which is why when someone has a pain in the hand you comfort the person, not the hand. To attend philosophically to the problem of pain is to attend to the grammatical of the form of life shaping our conversations about persons and our obligations to them.

Analytic philosophy's approach to the problem of the pain of other people took two forms. One form, embraced by Norman Malcolm, Elizabeth Anscombe, and others, argued that philosophical skepticism about others' pain ('I cannot have the same pain you do') arises from a faulty understanding of the grammar of pain. Physical things must be numerically identical to be the same, but pain need not. If the pen I had yesterday is the same as the one you have today, they must be the same object, but this grammar does not apply to colors: my blue pen and yours can be the same blue but still be different pens. In the same way my pain can be the same pain as yours, but still not be numerically the same. Those who argue that no two people can have the same pain use an improper sense of the word 'same'.

If this style of philosophical argument is to be faulted it is to be faulted for doing the opposite of what Socrates did; it seeks vindicate unanalyzed but common-sense notions in the face of doubts that only a philosopher would entertain. But this kind of philosophy also argues, rather more substantively, that ways of engaging sympathy, solidarity, or moral investment are so deeply embedded in our whole way of being human that they are hard to step outside of, and we can only understand them by attending to our way of being in language, our form of life.

The other approach, exemplified in the work of Stanley Cavell, is to argue that doubts about experiencing the pain of others are essentially moral rather than grammatical in nature: they arise from the anguished suspicion that we are morally alone, or that we cannot adequately comfort any other person, or that the web of mutual attunements we inhabit as human beings may be so fragile as to break under pressure.

In the 18th century, Hutcheson, Shaftesbury, and Reid developed an idea of human sociability in the face of Humean skepticism by arguing that what ties us to others are ineluctably feelings one has, not facts one knows, and attempts to resolve these experiences of feeling back to unconscious automatic inferences grounded in sensations seem to be back-formations from primary experiences of feeling, not ways of discovering their foundations in sensations. Cavell and Anscombe both seek to recast this enlightenment tradition in a modern form by conceiving of these webs of attunement with others as unavoidable features of language. But their arguments, Isaac contends, are impoverished even relative to their 18th-century predecessor's accounts, because the predecessors developed their thoughts in a social and political direction, but analytic philosophy remains tied to an individualist horizon of interest, even if the universe of language in which it says we are to find our being is socially shared. In seeing contemporary philosophy as being impoverished by its inability to step outside of the individual as a moral frame of reference, Isaac's essay moves, in a very well-earned way, from philosophical analysis of ideas to critically assaying how they may have limited our understanding of the social world. In this way his essay links hands with Moyn's.

Sophia Rosenfeld's 'On lying: writing philosophical history after the Enlightenment and after Arendt' represents the volume's most daring attempt to move beyond the Wingspread conventions. If Isaac's essay sought to move intellectual history closer to history of philosophy, Rosenfeld's seeks to make a case for 'philosophical history', the very discipline that history as we now know it had to define itself against. Even where historians don't take an explicitly debunking stance toward ideas, what makes ideas matter in intellectual history is how they cash out in the political and social world of their own day. Intellectual history

interprets the political and social world by examining how thinkers and ideas emerge from and transform that world; to do this it must bracket normative questions about ideas as ideas. Intellectual historians, one might say, are supposed to seek not philosophical truth but truth about philosophy. In part, this stance reflects disciplinary modesty; to engage in philosophical history is to see one's self as a sage rather than as a scholar. But part of it also has to do with the standing assumption of our age that only materialist kinds of explanation really have authority as explanation. Philosophical history, because it turns to history to develop philosophical ideas, or uses philosophical ideas to interpret historical events rather than placing philosophical ideas in their historical context, seems anti-historical. History to be history must be localist, particularist, empiricist, and materialist (even if it is cultural rather than physical materialism that is in play).

On the other hand, Rosenfeld argues, historians' choice of tack and take themselves often embody historians' philosophical commitments, and their investment in these commitments bring them close, in unacknowledged ways, to philosophical history. Moyn's essay on Rawls, for instance, should be seen as a critique of Rawls' philosophy as philosophy, not merely as an examination of its ugly forgotten political context. Historians' motivations are often passionately normative, no matter how materially grounded and epistemologically modest their methods are. In bringing out the normative dimension of historical practices that seek to disavow explicitly normative arguments Rosenfeld does not seek to justify a return to the grand nomothetic histories of the enlightenment. But she does seek to justify a method such as Hannah Arendt's in her two essays on political lying, essays which seek to articulate the philosophical stakes, not just the partisan stakes, of current events by placing them in the context of events in other ages and in the context of themes from philosophy.

In Arendt's case the point is not, in the manner of traditional philosophical history, to underline some perennial theme, but to notice the novelty of something in the present: recent political events show a new kind of lie, or a new (if implicit) kind of philosophical anthropology, or a new (if implicit) concept of moral identity, from which further political consequences follow.

Arendt proposes a philosophical critique of historical events, not an attempt to show the effects or trace the causes of philosophical ideas in their historical context. But in so doing her eye is on how ideas that arise from philosophy make clear not just the meaning but the mechanics of political events. By translating an account of historical events into a philosophical language, Arendt enables one to reflect on their meaning and consequences more deeply. Describing modes of political reflection and communication in philosophical rather than in straightforwardly historical language better captures how they shape political events; a deadening of language, for instance, mediates a brutal politics, and a weakening of the ability to engage in that reflective two-in-one conversation Arendt calls 'thinking' makes intelligible the political triumph of repression and genocide.

Arendt's is a way of doing history that is unavoidably but also unashamedly normative. But Arendt's practice is not a universalizing one. Rosenfeld describes Arendt as being, like Ian Hacking, a 'philosopher of the particular case'. Philosophical analysis underlines the strangeness and anomalousness of the political events that concern Arendt; it does not elevate grand and universal themes that apply to all time. Like every historian Arendt seeks to estrange her readers from their own present in order to reveal what our commonplaces usually conceal. Particularism and situated knowledge are capable of yielding philosophical critique no less than generalization and abstraction are, and one of the values of Arendt's methods are the ways in which it unsettles confident ideas about the past and the present. Rosenfeld's essay shows how a cautious use of the tools of philosophical history can enrich intellectual history while not transforming it into something else.

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Peter Gordon's essay in the 'Secularization' section, 'Religion within the bounds of democracy alone: Habermas, Rawls, and the Transatlantic debate over public reason' is a model of how intellectual history can pay scrupulous attention both to the formal arguments of philosophers and to the world those philosophers

engage in their thought. Gordon captures, with scrupulous fairness, what Rawls' ideas and Habermas' ideas about how to integrate religious themes into the liberal political order have in common, how Rawls and Habermas have addressed their differences in their arguments with each other, and the differences in the political exigencies to which the two philosophers see themselves as responding.

Gordon points out that Rawls and Habermas encounter each other moving in opposite directions, in Rawls' case from the deeply held faith that informed his recently published 1942 senior thesis at Princeton to the bracketing of religious concerns (along with every other theory of the good) in his *A Theory of Justice*, and in Habermas' case from the resolute secularism of his work of the 1970s to his recent contention that religious traditions may provide vital and unique access to normative ideas which political systems must not only conserve but to which they must concede a special role.

Gordon contrasts Rawls and Habermas along two axes. The first has to do with slight but important distinctions in the constructs they use to ground their sense of what liberal democracy is. The second has to do with the special conditions Rawls imposes upon participation by religious believers in political life.

A foundational part of Rawls' political philosophy is the thought experiment of imagining an 'original position,' an imaginative construct in which we are asked what social and political order we would agree to if we had to design it from behind a 'veil of ignorance' which would keep us from knowing what our particular statuses, our personal attributes, and our private interests would be in that order. The parties behind the veil of ignorance are imagined to be seeking only their own advantage, but the veil of ignorance constrains them to seek an impartial political order by making self-dealing impossible. Rawls does not suppose that actual citizens are only rational maximizers of their interests such as economists imagine, or that real citizens are actually isolated in the way that the imagined parties are, having no vision of the good and no commitments of a public kind, only that what such imaginary parties would agree to, constrained by the veil of ignorance, will approximate what we intuitively think of as fair arrangements. Rawls argues that among the rules parties in the original position would adopt is what he calls the 'difference principle,' which holds that the parties will tolerate inequalities of distribution only if, relative to other imagined distributions of resources, the one they choose is most beneficial to those in the worst-off position.

Habermas has faulted Rawls' thought experiment, believing that the constraints of the original position load the dice in favor of the outcomes Rawls prefers. Habermas chooses instead to imagine what the outcome would be of deliberations among citizens who, with all their interests and values intact, are asked to interact with each other in a construct he calls an 'ideal speech situation' in which all information is publicly known, in which there is no coercion, in which all participants are equal, and in which no constraints are imposed upon who can participate, upon the outcomes they argue for, or upon the arguments they use. Habermas believes that Rawls' procedure, because it constrains political agents to accept over the long term the ground rules they adopted in the original position, also prevents them from radically rethinking their political arrangements as experience changes their views. Habermas's imagined society is endlessly open to rethinking, because the ideal speech situation is meant to be something that happens continuously in the present, where Rawls's imagined society is bound by the foundational commitments it conceives itself to have made in the original position in an imaginary past. One way of phrasing the distinction is to say that Rawls makes the distinction between higher lawmaking and ordinary lawmaking in an American way, in which the ground rules of a written constitution have a deeper authority than ordinary laws do, but Habermas rejects the distinction between ordinary lawmaking and higher lawmaking in a way that resembles British practices in contrast to American ones, where the British constitution is not a formal body of codified higher law but the intuited upshot of years of legal experience and tradition.

The two theories have most values in common. But the distinction between them matters because higher law as Rawls imagines it might conceivably come into conflict with other domains of higher law, such as conceptions of divine will, which believers might see as having trumping force over constitutional law. On the other hand nothing except the force of the greater argument in the here and now prevents any Habermasian society from running off the rails. The two philosophies have different vulnerabilities.

When Rawls addressed the religious problem in his 1993 *Political Liberalism*, he sought to respond to the charge that the comprehensive liberalism embraced in *A Theory of Justice* did not in fact provide for freedom of religion but imposed secular humanism as a kind of state religion. Rawls answered this objection by distinguishing between liberalism as a comprehensive doctrine applying to all spheres of life (in economics, religion, politics, and so on), and purely political liberalism, which can be authentically embraced by adherents of many comprehensive doctrines (which is to say, by adherents of many faiths, but also by adherents of other things that are the moral equivalent of faiths, such as Marxism or individualism or other complete visions of the good life). Purely political liberalism assumes that many comprehensive doctrines will be in play in a liberal polity, and that its rules must govern a society in which adherents of differing comprehensive doctrines recognize that they must share a society and work out reasonable schemes of cooperation with each other over a long term in which different comprehensive doctrines may gain and lose power in unpredictable ways. Under political liberalism the constraints of the original position motivate a fair scheme of religious toleration which any faith which understands that it will have to share the society with other faiths can embrace. Not every comprehensive doctrine can embrace a regime of religious toleration, but what Rawls calls 'reasonable pluralism' is available for a wide variety of comprehensive doctrines, religious and otherwise. That political liberalism can only apply to comprehensive doctrines that are already committed to sharing a society with other such doctrines would seem to be an important limitation, but this limitation does reproduce some of the circumstances under which religious toleration historically came about in Europe after the stalemate of the wars of religion. The limitation is not a measure of Rawls' naivete, only of his realism about human nature.

Accepting the fact of reasonable pluralism does not mean merely accepting the fact that one is not at the moment in a position to drive the adherents of competing comprehensive doctrines to the wall. Such a situation would create nothing more than a temporary modus vivendi which could come apart should the balance of forces change. Worse, a modus vivendi is only a second-best solution for believers, who might feel that there is something half-hearted and insincere about making political compromises about things God commands in absolute terms; truly resolute believers would not accept compromises, and might, say, prefer to trample their opponents if they had the power to get away with doing so. A stable arrangement must provide a first-best solution, not a second best solution for the adherents of the comprehensive doctrines; it must enable believers to embrace the view that a tolerant believer is not only a better citizen but a better believer than an intolerant one. (In the West, this was arrived at by recognizing that coerced faith is inauthentic, so that tolerant believers serve their faith as faith better than intolerant ones do. This solution has most power when it is applied to religious questions that turn on inward belief. It is not certain how well it can apply to religious questions that turn on holistic life-practices.) For a stable political order, not a mere modus vivendi, to arise, adherents of different comprehensive doctrines must affirm from within their comprehensive doctrines, from within their faiths, political principles they reasonably expect adherents of other faiths to share. Adherents of other faiths need not have the same reasons for embracing those political principles, but they must, for their own reasons, embrace the same principles, Catholics, say, finding Catholic reasons, and Protestants finding Protestant ones. Rawls calls this convergence, in which adherents of different comprehensive doctrines embrace the same political values for different reasons, 'overlapping consensus'.

From the 'overlapping consensus' arises Rawls' controversial 'proviso' that, his critics believe, separates public reason from private faith. Gordon notices, as many of Rawls' critics do not, that Rawls does not in fact say that religious believers are forbidden from articulating their concerns in religious terms. Rawls argues only that they must also articulate appeals to shared public values in the course of their argument.

(This burden doesn't only apply to religious people: adherents of all comprehensive doctrines must do the same.) Rawls derives this proviso from something fundamental about all reasonable persuasion: the fact that persuasion happens only when one side makes a commanding appeal to a value it holds in common with its opponents, since those who argue from premises that only their own side can embrace are not engaged in persuasion but in screaming at each other. It is true that in constructing the original position Rawls articulates a standard of what he calls reasonableness that requires all the parties to separate themselves in imagination from even their most deeply held convictions, and that may seem to be a demand for a measure of insincerity. But this kind of insincerity, if that's what it really is, is required by any conception of reasonable persuasion. No matter how deeply held our convictions are, we must be able to detach ourselves from those convictions far enough to imagine what we owe to people with other convictions if we are to share a common political order with them; we must imagine what they have a right to expect from us, not just what we have an opportunity to demand from them. No matter how deep our convictions are, if we cannot enter sympathetically into the conditions of those who do not share them we do not seek a common political life but only better means of coercion. Otherwise we do not offer the mutual respect which is the precondition of all persuasive relationships, and what we engage in in the public world of political argument is at best manipulation rather than persuasion, and at worst a contest of force carried out in the arena of words rather than in the arena of blows.

Rawls's 'proviso' amounts to nothing more than noticing the difference between persuasion and compromise, on the one hand, and coercion on the other. It also amounts to noticing the difference between persuasive and manipulative uses of reason. Religious people, like everybody else, are required to argue in a way which conserves the political order in which they themselves have received and continue to expect toleration in return for tolerating others. All the proviso prevents believers from doing is trampling the foundational principles of democracy because they believe God gave them permission to do so.

Rawlsian political liberalism treats religion as a two edged sword, something that some citizens value and that other citizens will have to tolerate, but also something capable of threatening public order. Habermas's essays, particularly since the September 11 attacks, have treated religion with more explicit sympathy, seeing it as a privileged source of normative thought in a disenchanted social order in which normative thinking is a dwindling but essential resource (an essential resource, that is, for democracy, not just for religious life). Secularists themselves need the unique access to normative values that religion provides, and thus should not give religion mere toleration edged with condescension, as Habermas believes Rawls's theory does, comparing the Rawlsian stance towards religion to the 'cultural equivalent of the conservation of species threatened with extinction.' Gordon points out, however, that Habermas still argues that religious citizens must commit themselves to fallibilistic democratic procedures and to accepting outcomes that run against their religious convictions. In practice this amounts to the Rawlsian concept of reasonable pluralism, and it would seem to have the Rawlsian proviso as a necessary consequence.

Connecting the world of political philosophy with the world of actual politics, Gordon astutely notices that Rawls and Habermas address slightly different political circumstances. Rawls is concerned about what concessions are reasonable to make and what concessions must be withheld from a majority religion in the US that seems to desire to warp democratic practices, and Habermas is concerned with opening a space for toleration of minority Islam in a Europe increasingly willing to sacrifice its democracy to keep Muslims under the heel of secular governments.

Perhaps the difference between Rawls and Habermas has to do with the different understandings of the cultural underpinnings of citizenship that prevail in Europe and in the United States. In the 19th century, as Tocqueville pointed out long ago, democracy and religious institutions had a very different relationship in the US and in Europe, since the heterogeneous sects of the US of Tocqueville's day had something to gain from the ethos of democratic toleration and the state religions of Europe of the same period had something to lose. Although cultural assimilation has been a common fate of immigrant groups and immigrant faiths in the United States, the US has striven (with mixed success) to establish a conception of nationality that inheres in political values rather than in ethnicity, so that to claim American citizenship is also to claim

American nationality, and to the extent that it has succeeded in that attempt public expressions of religious convictions have not generally been felt to be subversive of its political order. (Whether the US will continue to embrace a non-ethnic understanding of nationality, however, has suddenly become an open question.) Republican France, with its unitary ideal of Republican citizenship, has had reason to fear that religious institutions might subvert the republican order, and understands the public expression of religion in a very different way from how it is understood in the United States, as the two countries' very different legal treatment of such acts as wearing the hijab in the public square would show. Habermas' warning would seem to be particularly aimed at the cultural predicament of France (more even than that of Germany). But even in Germany democracy and religion are understood to be in an essential tension with each other, and they have not traditionally been felt to be in the same kind of tension in the United States. The bitter cultural war in the United States over the last few years, however, threatens to recast the relationship between democracy and religion in unpredictable ways.

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Sarah E. Igo's essay in the 'Method' section, 'Towards free range intellectual history,' provides a beautiful example of the method its title promises. Examining the meaning of the modern concept of privacy, she begins with the traditional starting point, Joseph Warren and Louis Brandeis's 1890 *Harvard Law Review* article in which they quote Thomas Cooley's phrase 'the right to be left alone'. The threat Warren and Brandeis imagined, however, was not the threat of intrusive government surveillance, but the threat of paparazzi, who catered to a prurient curiosity about the lives of the socially prominent, of the people who might have been found in the well-to-do social circles of the authors. Ironically, the concern with privacy ran somewhat against the grain of Brandeis' thinking at the largest scale, since he was for the most part an advocate of opening up the public sphere, and particularly an advocate of a free press.

Igo proposes supplementing and transforming this analysis by looking at other areas where modern life fosters intrusions on privacy, from the invention of the postcard and the x-ray to the diffusion of party-line telephones. She notices also that there was a countervailing ethos of people exposing their private lives - wealthy people inviting journalists to make photo spreads of their elegant homes, or the promiscuous intermingling of travelers, for instance. She adds a fascinating example of the resistance to the intrusive use of fingerprints to monitor dissidents and union members, a use that was successfully thwarted by taxicab drivers and hotel employees. Her essay is a rich demonstration of the cornucopia of new uses of the archive.

Angus Burgin's account of the Wingspread conference and its consequences, 'New Directions, Then and Now' is a scrupulous treatment of the conference itself and of the ways it redefined the discipline in ways that have come under reconsideration only in the last few years. I suspect that no methodological reflection will quite settle the question of the relationship between social and intellectual history. The increase of rigor about the kinds of conclusion that can be drawn from a limited archive that followed from the Wingspread conclusion was welcome. The invitation to bring new kinds of witnesses to bear on questions of intellectual history opened up new worlds of endeavor. But some questions which underlay the unease of intellectual historians in the 1970s still remain unanswered, because those questions are in principle not answerable, because they arise from an insoluble antinomy at the center of every examination of what human beings do.

When at the beginning of the 20th century Wilhelm Dilthey distinguished between the *naturwissenschaften* and the *geisteswissenschaften* he wasn't merely redrawing the classical line that separated the sciences from the arts, the trivium from the quadrivium. He was distinguishing between two kinds of scholarly conversation, between explanation, and interpretation. Explanation seeks to place events in a nexus of causes and effects; inevitably an explanatory conversation has to bracket the question of teleology, of the ultimate ends events might be designed to serve. Scholars have internalized this methodological stricture to such an extent as to treat it as drawing a metaphysical line, as treating teleological questions not just as off limits for materialist disciplines but as unreal, as matter for superstition and dream.

Interpretation, in contrast, seeks to place events in a design that reflects the deliberation of a human agent,

articulating relationships between part and whole, expectation and transformation, design and variation, proximate aim and ultimate aim. Everything explanation describes is an 'it,' even if what explanation describes is a person. Interpretation inevitably concerns a 'thou' whose intentions are manifested, and another 'thou' to whom those intentions are addressed. Conversations about explanations are conversations about causes and effects. Conversations about interpretations are conversations about reasons and ultimate aims. Interpretation is as ineluctably teleological as Explanation is causal.

What is caused and what is reasoned for are different things, and they can never be entirely reduced to each other. Every human thing demands to be seen from both perspectives, both as something caused and as something reasoned for. Sometimes the two perspectives can partly be reconciled, as for instance when something is seen as an intelligent strategic intervention designed to advance some agent's position. But not all human acts can be described as strategic interventions, and attempting to see every act in that way is inevitably reductive, inevitably leaves something important, usually something normative, out of the story. Because it must hold in one hand both mind and world, both persuasive discourse and manipulative discourse, both normative and strategic claims, both the form of life and the life-world, both meaning and effect, intellectual history inhabits the tension between explanation and interpretation as no other discipline does. For this reason the tension between a perspective within the agent's horizon of meaning and a perspective rooted in the world's horizon of action, a tension inherent in the project of intellectual history, is never likely to be resolved.

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