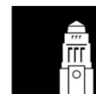

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‘Richly Imaginative Barbarism’: Stuart Hampshire and the Normality of Conflict

Derek Edyvane

> Vico’s cyclical theory of human societies, which must swing back and forth between prosaic good sense and richly imaginative barbarism, is as good a guess as any about human nature in society. (Hampshire 1980: 7)

The implications of value pluralism for contemporary public ethics depend crucially on the grounds of value pluralism. Isaiah Berlin’s body of thought about value pluralism largely overlooks the question of its grounds and thereby leaves us with an incomplete picture from which it is impossible to infer clear implications. In this article, I shall argue that the relatively neglected thought of Stuart Hampshire can help to fill this void by articulating a distinctive and powerful account of the sources of value pluralism. By taking seriously the question of the sources of value pluralism, I will argue that we expose an ambiguity in the perspective of value pluralists who neglect those sources, one which has important implications for contemporary public ethics.

The article is divided into three sections. In the first, I shall offer a reconstruction of Hampshire’s account of value pluralism and of its sources, which turns centrally on his understanding of the normality of conflict. In the second, I will use Hampshire’s account to identify the ambiguity in Berlin’s view, arguing that it is consistent with two different (and incompatible) models of the structure of pluralism. In the final section, I will explain why this matters by considering the implications of the different models of the structure of pluralism for a prominent problem of contemporary public ethics, namely the problem of toleration.

The Normality of Conflict

Stuart Hampshire is typically identified as a value pluralist in very much the same vein as Isaiah Berlin and Bernard Williams.[1] A standard gloss reduces their views to a single and shared outlook:

> For Berlin, Hampshire, Williams and others, values are intrinsically and perennially plural and the conflicts between them are irreducible. Thus, for moral subjects to subscribe to conflicting values, and therefore for ethical lives to consist in part at least of balancing conflicting claims and sometimes facing tragic choices, is a normal and more or less unavoidable state of affairs, rather than being a symptom of social or political pathology. (Laidlaw 2014: 165)

This is not an unreasonable summary of the doctrine of value pluralism, but the conflation of thinkers is unhelpful. We know that the three were not of a common mind about the character of pluralism because Hampshire tells us so: 'I am not merely arguing the case for the plurality of values, and the impossibility of realizing all positive values in a single life, a case that has been persuasively argued by Isaiah Berlin, among others. My thesis entails the plurality, *but it is a stronger thesis and differently grounded*' (Hampshire 1983: 159, my emphasis).

Elsewhere, in an interview given to the magazine, *Philosophy Now*, Hampshire explained that he was 'influenced particularly by the big gaps in the thinking of Bernard Williams and Isaiah Berlin, who appear to adopt a kind of pluralist view without giving any non-Nietzschean grounds for it' (Hampshire 2000). As a response in an interview, this statement lacks the

precision of formal prose. The allusion to 'big gaps' in the thought of Williams and Berlin may be a little strong, and there is room for doubt about what exactly Hampshire means when he speaks of 'non-Nietzschean grounds'. But his intention may well be to highlight the way in which Berlin and Williams arrive at value pluralism without offering a full account of its sources. Having dispensed with God and the enchanted world and having dismissed the Platonist myth of a final moral harmony one is left with no real reason to think that values should form a neat unity, and no reason to think that the plurality and conflict we see now and across history is anything other than a true reflection of the structure of value. In Williams's memorable expression at the end of Shame and Necessity, 'we know that the world was not made for us, or we for the world, that our history tells no purposive story, and that there is no position outside the world or outside history from which we might hope to authenticate our activities' (Williams 1993: 166). The overriding impression here is that a plurality of incommensurable values is all that is left once we have lost our illusions.

I do not think that Hampshire would wish to dissent from any of this, but he was concerned to articulate a more affirmative argument that actually *explains* the plurality of values. And Hampshire wants to explain the plurality of values in a particular way: by appeal to an account of the character of human life and, more specifically, of human thought. The notion of thought here is deliberately and unavoidably vague – Hampshire is clear that there is a limit to how precise we can be in our language about the structure and character of thought (and he is suspicious of the detailed picture of the structure of the soul that one finds in Plato – Hampshire thinks that all such detailed pictures of the soul are ideological distortions). But we can reasonably (and non-ideologically) identify the idea of *thought*, and Hampshire explains that thought here is meant to imply active reflection as opposed to passive thoughtlessness

(Hampshire 1989: 38-41). He then proceeds to suggest that we can subdivide into two aspects of thought: rational thought and imaginative thought. Rational thought is the kind of thought contained in purely intellectual activity that 'crosses all frontiers; the thought is not of its nature best expressed in one language rather than in others. The thought involved is designed to be universal in the sense of ecumenical. … Theorems in mathematics, and their supporting proofs, and arithmetical calculations, are immediately accessible to everyone everywhere, whatever language they speak, sometimes with a relatively trivial call for translation' (Hampshire 1989: 42).

This style of rational thought can be contrasted with a different style of thought to be captured under the heading of imagination. While rational thought is universal and convergent in its nature, the work of imagination is essentially divergent. One of the most basic examples of imaginative thought (and one that seems to preoccupy Hampshire) is the acquisition of language: 'Learning one's own language is precisely and conspicuously to acquire a power that separates one's own people from the great mass of mankind with whom one cannot immediately and easily communicate, unless it be at the chess-board or in some mathematical notation' (Hampshire 1989: 42). The process of learning a language is a process of familiarisation, an 'acceptance of the way one's own world works, as one at first accepts the persons who constitute one's own family and the house that happens to be one's home. One tries to learn to be at ease in one's own language exactly as one tries to be at ease with one's own people and to imitate and follow their customs and observances' (Hampshire, 1989: 43). And, crucially for Hampshire's larger argument, the process of familiarisation involved in learning a language is, he contends, a process of 'seclusion' (1989: 43). That is to say, I familiarise myself with the persons who constitute my family and the house that is my home by acknowledging those who do not

constitute my family and those houses that are not my home. The learning of *my* language emerges therefore from the building of frontiers between me and mine and the outsiders, the barbarians. In other words, and this is the crux of the matter that I will return to, imaginative thought determines by a process of negation.

Turning, then, to morality, Hampshire suggests that morality possesses a dual aspect: some of our moral ideas and values are associated with the operations of rational thought, while others (most) are associated with the operations of imaginative thought. Thus, some of our moral ideas and values are convergent and universal – these ideas, like mathematical theorems, are 'immediately accessible to everyone everywhere … sometimes with a relatively trivial call for translation' (Hampshire 1989: 42). Chief among these universal moral ideas is the idea of procedural justice – the general principle of 'hearing the other side' in conditions of conflict (Hampshire 1999).[2] Other moral ideas and values, by contrast, are associated with imaginative thought and are essentially divergent. Here we may think about the variety of values, customs and observances associated with particular ways of life. And just as we saw in the case of language, the imaginative formation of particular ways of life and the values associated with them proceeds by seclusion. Hampshire describes this process of self-definition by opposition as 'the moral equivalent of the old logical principle *Omnis determinatio est negatio*', all determination is negation (1999: 34):

> Most influential conceptions of the good have defined themselves as rejections of their rivals: for instance, some of the ideals of monasticism were a rejection of the splendours and hierarchies of the Church, and this rejection was part of the original sense and purpose of the monastic ideal. Some forms of fundamentalism, both Christian and others,

> define themselves as a principled rejection of secular, liberal and permissive moralities. Fundamentalism is the negation of any deviance in moral opinion, and of the very notion of opinion in ethics. (Hampshire 1999: 41)

So, the central thought here is that the natural process of human imagination inevitably entails the creation of plural and divergent values because imagination works by negation.

These reflections on the character of human thought lead Hampshire to suggest that moral conflict is 'normal' in human life and affairs – it arises quite naturally from the normal tendencies of human imagination (e.g. Hampshire 1999: 40). Note that conflict here is not the same as disagreement. For Hampshire, moral conflict is to be understood in broad terms as a kind of active negation – the insistence that 'this is not who I am', 'I reject those beliefs', 'I will not do that'. And active engagement is crucial – we can 'agree to disagree', but to do so describes a moment of peace and not of conflict. So, conflict is a condition of active contention. It may be violent, but it need not be. It will often be bitter and hostile, but it need not be. It is important to Hampshire's larger argument that conflict does not entail any particular attitude or emotion. In a manner that reflects his Spinozist sympathies, Hampshire wants to suggest that by the changing the stories we tell ourselves about the conflicts in which we are embroiled, it is possible to alter our emotional responses to them (Hampshire 2005).

The examples Hampshire chooses – of monks and fundamentalists – are ones that suit his argument neatly. But we can illuminate his view further by reflecting on a different case that does not immediately seem to lend itself quite so readily to the analysis. In his 'Two Theories of Morality' Hampshire suggests the following case (which he takes to be familiar from 'post-war existentialist writing'):

> In an occupied country a young man has to decide whether to join the resistance movement and thereby to bring punishments upon his family, who ask him to remain with them and to protect them. He recognizes both the claim of patriotic duty and loyalty and also the claim of loyalty to his family and the obligation to them which he knows he has (1983: 32)[3]

On the face of it, this may seem a categorically different case from those identified in the previous quotation. It is easy to see how the monastic conception of the good might have emerged from distaste for and (political) opposition to the splendours and hierarchies of the Church. But in the case described here, the young man faces a choice between two ways of life, both of which appeal morally to him. To be sure, it is a different sort of case, but I do not think it categorically distinct, and I think Hampshire believes that his conviction that 'all determination is negation' applies equally here.

Summoning the determination to adopt one of these ways of life rather than the other will consist in the rejection of the path not taken: for the young man to choose his family would be for him to realise that the life of the resistance, a life in which one exposes to harm those for whom one cares the most and which involves 'violence, skill in deceit, readiness to kill, and probably also false friendship and occasional injustice' (Hampshire 1983: 33), is not a life that he will lead ('this is not who I am', 'I will not do that'). And then, moreover, his subsequent repression of the path not taken will be keenly felt in his imaginative conception of the life he has chosen and in the demands it places upon him – 'the virtues of friendship and affection, gentleness, justice, loyalty and honesty' (Hampshire 1983: 33) demanded of him will derive

much of their sense and poignancy for him from his awareness of their antagonistic relation to the life he chose not to lead. As Hampshire elsewhere writes, man 'explains himself to himself by his history, but by the history as accompanied by unrealised possibilities on both sides of the track of actual events. His individual nature, and the quality of his life, do not depend only on the bare logbook of events and actions. His character and the quality of his experience emerge in the possibilities that were real possibilities for him, which he considered and rejected for some reason or other' (1989: 101). In very much the same way as those early monks who rejected the Church, the young man's way of life and the values he acknowledges do not come pre-packaged and antecedently determined; they are fundamentally and enduringly shaped by his rejection and subsequent repression of the life and values of the resistance: here as elsewhere, all determination is negation.

Finally, a quick word about metaethics. In order to traverse from the idea that imaginative thought generates a diversity of beliefs about value to the claim that imaginative thought generates an actual plurality of values, Hampshire appeals to a kind of ethical naturalism: 'one may on reflection find … a particular way of life … acceptable and respect-worthy, partly because this specifically conceived way of life, with its accompanying prohibitions, has in history appeared natural, and on the whole still feels natural, both to oneself and to others. If there are no overriding reasons for rejecting this way of life … its felt and proven naturalness is one reason among others for accepting it' (1983: 99). The grounding here, then, is ultimately by an appeal to human nature (Hampshire 1983: 7). But then in contrast to the traditional, ancient idea that the study of human nature discloses one way of life that is best for all, Hampshire contends by appeal to the nature of imaginative thought that in fact it is natural for humans to generate a wide variety of different and incompatible ways of life all of which constitute

expressions of human nature and are thereby acceptable and potentially respect-worthy. ‘The distinction of humanity, and its interest in its own eyes, lies in the variety and unending competition of ideals and languages, and in the absurdity of a moral Esperanto’ (Hampshire 1993: 43).

In summary, Hampshire explains the plurality of values by appeal to the natural human capacity and propensity for imaginative thought. The work of the imagination leads inevitably to a plurality of incompatible values because imagination works by way of a process of negation and seclusion.

Two Models of Pluralism

This is how Hampshire explicitly differentiates his view from other, more familiar accounts of value pluralism:

> Belief in the plurality of values is compatible with the belief that the different and incompatible values are all eternally grounded in the nature of things, and, more specifically, in human nature. Then Aristotle was in error in supposing ultimate conflicts to be in principle, and with luck, avoidable. But still a definite list of essential virtues, deducible from human nature alone, could be drawn up, even if there will always be conflicts between them; and I deny that such a list is possible. (Hampshire 1983: 159)

Hampshire denies this possibility because any way of life instantiating any particular set of virtues will always, on his account, meet with opposition from humans exercising their natural capacity for imagination and thereby transforming existing ways of life and inventing new ways

of life and new sets of virtues without end. This seems a distinctly Heraclitean perspective, one that sees values and virtues perpetually in flux, constantly evolving, dividing against themselves, one moment shining brightly before fading away to be superseded by new and unanticipated experiments in living spearheaded by richly imaginative barbarians soon to become the establishment facing down a new generation of visionary rebels.

And the root of Hampshire's originality resides in the idea that is presupposed by what he says here: the idea that conflict is natural, that conflict occurs as an aspect of the natural and inevitable movements of human thought:

> everywhere, both in the soul and in the city, *the mark of vitality is conflict*, so much so that it seems *a law of life* that any individual's desires and feelings should be at all times in a state of conflict and properly unstable, and that in public life social classes should at all times be in conflict and society should be properly unstable. (Hampshire 1993: 46, emphasis mine)

These references to vitality and laws of life are to be taken very seriously. Conflict comes naturally to humans, and, as we have seen, this natural conflict is a valuable source of creativity and the source of value pluralism. I contend that it is this idea, the idea that conflict is natural or 'normal' as Hampshire often puts it that marks the real distinctiveness and originality of his view.

But now one might wonder how far all of this really deviates from Berlin's view of value pluralism. For example, in 'The Question of Machiavelli', Berlin seems to suggest that the ethic that Machiavelli embraces stems from a conflict between two ways of life which cannot be

brought into harmony. Machiavelli's ethic is defined against the Christian way of life. And Berlin seems to think that this applies more generally:

> One chooses classical civilisation rather than the Theban desert, Rome and not Jerusalem, whatever the priests may say, because such is one's nature, and … because it is that of men in general, at all times, everywhere. (Berlin 2001: 75)

Just like Hampshire, then, Berlin sees Machiavelli formulating his distinctive ethic in opposition to Christian morality.

But what Hampshire's account reveals is that there are two very different ways of interpreting what Berlin says here. The first is to say that Machiavelli discovers the plurality of values inscribed in the nature of things through his opposition to Christian morality. And that often seems to be the flavour of Berlin's account – he writes of the truth of value pluralism 'which Machiavelli had, unintentionally, almost casually, uncovered' (2001: 71), his achievement was 'the uncovering of the possibility of more than one system of values' (2001: 71), the 'uncovering of an insoluble dilemma' (2001: 74).

But there is another interpretation, which is to say that, instead of 'uncovering' an antecedently existing plurality of values, Machiavelli, or more precisely those political actors he admired, *created* a plurality of values where it had not previously existed by the exercise of imagination working against the claims of Christian morality.

In other words, there is a critical ambiguity in Berlin's account between two distinct models of value pluralism.[4] On one of these models – call it the *standard model* – conflicts of the kind we are considering are inevitable because there is a plurality of values. That is to say, the

basic claim here is that there is a plurality of values (inscribed in human nature or in the fabric of the moral universe) and this plurality leads us inexorably into conflict, both with ourselves and with others. But there is a second model of pluralism, which Hampshire endorses, whereby a plurality of values is inevitable because humans naturally enter into conflict with themselves and with others. While on the standard model conflict is a consequence of value pluralism, on Hampshire's model value pluralism is a consequence of conflict.

And the division between the two models seems to have some rather significant implications. On the standard model, conflict, whilst it seems inevitable, is, in an important sense, *contingent* in human life. We can coherently conceive of human existence without conflict. On Hampshire's model by contrast, conflict is not contingent: it is an essential and necessary feature of human life – 'deep-seated spiritual antagonisms have come to seem the essence of humanity' (Hampshire 1993: 43). We cannot coherently imagine human existence without conflict. The fact that the world we inhabit was not made for us nor we for it is neither here nor there. Conflict does not arise from a lack of fit between our ethical aspirations and the disenchanted world we inhabit. Any world inhabited by humans would be a world characterised by conflict. As Hampshire writes, 'harmony and inner consensus come with death, when human faces no longer express conflicts but are immobile, composed, and at rest' (1989: 189) – a world without conflict would, quite literally, be a world without human life.

So Hampshire's account is more fundamentally a story about conflict and the place of conflict in human life and history; it is only secondarily a story about the structure of value (and value pluralism). And that seems to suggest a sense in which Hampshire's account is more immediately political than the standard account. While the standard view starts from a metaethical thesis about the structure of value; Hampshire starts from a thesis about actual

conflict. As Hampshire suggests, if grounds are to be given for pluralism, then 'they should be offered in the spirit of Machiavelli, recognising the diverse and sometimes irreconcilable conceptions of the good entangled and competing within a society' (Hampshire 2000). The grounds for pluralism are to be found in natural and inevitable political conflict.

Whether or not we endorse Hampshire's view of value pluralism, his work makes a significant contribution to our understanding by revealing two distinct versions of the doctrine. The 'big gaps' in the work of Berlin and Williams on the question of the sources of value pluralism means that their accounts oscillate uneasily between the two models. In the final section, I will argue that this ambiguity creates incoherence as we turn to the practical implications of value pluralism for contemporary public ethics.

Toleration and Conflict

In Williams's essay 'Toleration: An Impossible Virtue', he says something that has attracted quite a lot of comment, not least because it sounds like rather a surprising thing for him to say. He writes that 'perhaps toleration will prove to have been an interim value, serving a period between a past when no one had heard of it and a future when no one will need it' (1996: 26). Williams claims that with the emergence and growth of 'international commercial society' (modernity's 'principal creation'), it will become 'harder than in the past for a cultural environment of fanatical belief to coincide for a considerable length of time with a center of state power, remaining shielded from external influences' (1996: 26). The exposure to different ways of life and belief could lead to greater scepticism about 'final solutions' and, in turn, greater indifference to diversity. Williams is usually associated with the conviction that pluralism and

hence conflict are permanent and so it seems odd for him to suggest here that toleration might at some point in the future cease to be necessary. But on the account I have offered, we can make sense of his claim insofar as we take it as a reflection of what I have called the 'standard model' of value pluralism. For on the standard model, while pluralism is endemic to human life, conflict is not. And so it is an open possibility (albeit a remote one) that, as people come to recognise the inescapability of pluralism, they will acquiesce and social and political conflict will abate, thereby rendering toleration unnecessary. Indeed, Berlin canvasses precisely this possibility at the end of his essay on Machiavelli:

> If there is only one solution to the puzzle, then the only problems are firstly how to find it, then how to realise it, and finally how to convert others to the solution by persuasion or by force. But if this is not so … then the path is open to empiricism, pluralism, toleration, compromise. Toleration is historically the product of the realisation of the irreconcilability of equally dogmatic faiths and the practical improbability of complete victory of one over the other. Those who wished to survive realised that they had to tolerate error. They gradually came to see merits in diversity, and so became sceptical about definitive solutions in human affairs. (2001: 78)[5]

Here Berlin describes a process of transition that occurs as people gradually come to recognise the inevitability of pluralism from a state of war, to a state of uneasy toleration of error, and finally to a state beyond toleration and conflict, of resignation, indifference or even active enthusiasm for diversity. For both Williams and Berlin, then, toleration serves as a kind of

stepping-stone, a vehicle to deliver us from a condition of aberrant political conflict and hostility in to a peaceful future of settled diversity.

To be sure, neither Berlin nor Williams were optimistic about the likelihood of such a future beyond toleration, but both appear to recognise its possibility. By contrast, the process of transition they describe is one that simply *cannot occur* on Hampshire's model of the relationship between conflict and pluralism. Conflict is *normal* in human life, and so toleration cannot function as a stepping-stone; its work cannot coherently be to deliver us from the state of conflict which is our natural and inevitable condition. Hampshire writes that 'to follow through the ethical implications of these propositions about the normality of conflict, these Heraclitean truths, a kind of moral conversion is needed, a new way of looking at all of the virtues' (1999: 40). He bids us to recognise and accept naturally inevitable conflict and ambivalence in both the soul and the city, and suggests that recognising the normality of conflict in this way will require us to think quite differently about 'all of the virtues', including the virtue of toleration.

The traditional concept of toleration suggests that toleration consists in accepting (or putting up with) practices of which we morally disapprove despite our capacity to suppress, change or eliminate those practices (Mendus 1989). There are notorious concerns that the traditional concept of toleration has a condescending quality because of its presupposition that the tolerator could, if she so desired, suppress or eliminate the object of her toleration. It seems patronising and stigmatising to say that I will allow you to keep doing that nasty, deviant, misguided thing you do even though I could put a stop to it if I wished (see Brown 2006). But Hampshire's view of pluralism and conflict seems to undermine this sort of concern. Acknowledging conflict's normality means accepting that I am not ultimately in a position to put a stop to conflict and therefore unable to patronise those who disagree with me by my toleration

of them. The accommodation of dissent cannot be an expression of condescending magnanimity, because there is no way to end dissent. More than that, by coming to view conflict and dissent not as an aberration to be eliminated, but as a normal and natural (albeit potentially dangerous) expression of human imagination, it becomes easier to see the *good* of toleration. Hampshire notes that 'for many modern liberals', tolerance is a disposition that one must 'constrain' oneself to acquire and exercise; it is seen as a barrier to the realisation of one's moral purposes (Hampshire 2003: xxii). But if conflict is normal, then that sort of attitude becomes harder to sustain.

A key influence on Hampshire's thought here is that of Michel de Montaigne. Hampshire was a keen admirer of Montaigne and wrote an introduction to the Everyman edition of Montaigne's collected works. Hampshire regarded Montaigne as a man who, to a greater degree than many others, had come to accept the normality of conflict. He approvingly quotes the following passage from Montaigne's essay 'Of the resemblance of children to their fathers':

> I do not at all hate opinions contrary to mine. I am so far from being vexed to see discord between my judgements and others', and from making myself incompatible with the society of men because they are of a different sentiment and party from mine, that on the contrary, since variety is the most general fashion that nature has followed … I find it much rarer to see our humors and plans agree. And there were never in the world two opinions alike, any more than two hairs or two grains. Their most universal quality is diversity. (Montaigne 2003: 725)

Hampshire detects in Montaigne's remarks here a distinctive way of thinking about toleration (2003: xxii). Montaigne finds the idea strange that one should make oneself 'incompatible with the society of men' because one disagrees with them. Instead he delights in human variance. He thereby implies the possibility of society *amid* discord. This in turn suggests a mode of accommodating diversity quite different from the kind of traditional toleration I described above. Instead of offering delivery from conflict into mutual avoidance, benign indifference or active enthusiasm, Montaigne's remarks suggest a mode of accommodation that enables us to live (happily) together in enduring conflict.

It is this understanding of the accommodation of diversity that animates Hampshire's account of procedural justice which, as I have noted, consists in 'hearing the other side' in conditions of on-going contention (see Hampshire 1999). Hearing the other side is not a 'way out' from conflict: it is a way of conducting it. It is a recurring theme in Hampshire's thought that humans can, some of the time at least, thrive on the experience of conflict. He writes of humans as 'argumentative and litigious animals, observably taking delight in the rituals and procedures of argument, advocacy, and negotiation' (1989: 176). He notes that 'it is easy to underestimate the acute professional pleasure that politicians of sharply hostile purposes may take in their negotiations with each other and in the processes of manoeuvre and counter-manoeuvre.' (1989: 176) It may be that the language of toleration is unhelpful here. It is perhaps noteworthy that, in his review of John Rawls's *Political Liberalism*, Hampshire does not write of the liberal enthusiasm for toleration; he writes instead of the liberal 'passion for civility within conflict' (1993: 47). It may be that the idea of 'civility', understood as a way of conducting conflict rather than as a way of avoiding it, better captures the form of accommodation to which Hampshire's model of value pluralism leads us.[6]

To this extent, we might be inclined to associate Hampshire's view with that of certain deliberative democrats. There is a familiar strand of the deliberative democracy literature which expresses uneasiness with the traditional concept of toleration for the way in which it encourages the avoidance of conflict (see Gutmann and Thompson 1996). What is needed, the deliberative democrats argue, is not the tolerant 'bracketing' of differences, but rather productive modes of deliberation within conflict. But this view should not be confused with Hampshire's. The complaint of deliberative democrats is that toleration 'provides no basis on which citizens can expect to resolve their moral disagreements' (Gutmann and Thompson 1996: 62-3); the purpose of deliberation on this view is to seek consensus and thereby resolve conflict. So, despite their differences, both the traditional account of toleration and the deliberative alternative seek an to end conflict, in the former case by avoiding it (or by coming to terms with the diversity that creates it) and in the latter case by confronting it and resolving it. Hampshire's account is thus at odds with both of these prominent positions. The aim of 'civility within conflict' is not to avoid or to resolve conflict, but to live with it in 'sustained and undiminished tension' (Hampshire 1999: 39).

The position with which Hampshire's account may seem to have most in common, then, is agonism of the kind defended by the likes of Chantal Mouffe (2005) and Bonnie Honig (1993). Agonism asserts the permanence and desirability of certain forms of political conflict and, therefore, the importance of democratic arenas for the containment of conflict. To be sure, there are important connections between Hampshire's philosophy of conflict and that of the agonists, but I also think it would be a mistake to identify Hampshire with agonism. This is because, unlike most agonists, Hampshire begins from an objective account of human nature and shows no reticence about making universal moral claims of the value of procedural justice and of

the 'great evil' of anarchy that it functions to prevent (e.g. 1999: 91-2). Hampshire's is no straightforward valorisation of political conflict[7] – conflict is the natural expression of human imagination and creativity, but human imagination and creativity unconstrained lead directly to madness in the soul and barbarism in the city. The 'prosaic good sense' of rationality and civility are an essential and universally valuable bulwark against catastrophe (Hampshire 1980: 7). In this regard, Hampshire shares with the likes of Berlin and Williams, and the defenders of toleration more generally, a keen sense of the dangers to which diversity and conflict expose us all.

Conclusion

By way of an engagement with the thought of Stuart Hampshire, I have been arguing that the implications of value pluralism for public ethics are more complex than is usually supposed. By offering a comprehensive account of the sources of value pluralism in the seclusionary tendencies of human imagination, Hampshire's work reveals a distinction between two different models of value pluralism, each of which accords a very different status to social and political conflict. In the final section of the paper, I sought to explain why this distinction matters by considering the implications of value pluralism for a key problem of contemporary public ethics –the accommodation of moral diversity. Here I made two central claims. The first is that the way in which value pluralists think about the public ethics of accommodating diversity depends crucially on the sources of value pluralism. The practice of toleration conceived as a pathway to the avoidance of conflict is a reasonable response to diversity on the standard model, but it makes no sense at all on Hampshire's model which is premised on conflict's normality. There is a tendency among contemporary pluralists to conflate the two models of pluralism and

incoherently to defend the practice of traditional toleration whilst simultaneously proclaiming the normality of conflict. The second claim is that, by taking conflict's normality seriously, we illuminate a distinctive way of interpreting the accommodation of diversity as the practice of what I have termed 'civility within conflict'. Whilst I have not attempted to offer a comprehensive articulation of his view, I have suggested that Hampshire's account of civility makes a potentially original contribution to the scholarly debate about the accommodation of diversity distinct from both the advocates of traditional toleration and deliberative democracy on one side, and the advocates of agonism on the other.

Abstract: By way of an engagement with the thought of Stuart Hampshire and his account of the 'normality of conflict', this article articulates a novel distinction between two models of value pluralism. The first model identifies social and political conflict as the consequence of pluralism, whereas the second identifies pluralism as the consequence of social and political conflict. Failure to recognise this distinction leads to confusion about the implications of value pluralism for contemporary public ethics. The article illustrates this by considering the case of toleration. It contends that Hampshire's model of pluralism offers a new perspective on the problem of toleration and illuminates a new way of thinking about the accommodation of diversity as 'civility within conflict'.

Key words: civility, conflict, Stuart Hampshire, toleration, value pluralism

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[1] A forthcoming monograph by Ed Hall devoted to the thought of Berlin, Hampshire and Williams takes an important step towards clarifying the intellectual differences between the three men and engaging each on his own terms.

[2] See Edyvane (2008) for a discussion of Hampshire's view of justice.

[3] I am grateful to Ed Hall for prompting me to think about this case.

[4] To be clear, I am not attributing either of these views to Berlin. The important point for my argument is not the historical issue of what Berlin (or Williams for that matter) actually believed, but rather the conceptual issue that one can arrive at what Berlin says in the Machiavelli essay from *either of two* radically different accounts of value pluralism. It is my contention that the distinction between these two accounts has not been taken sufficiently seriously.

[5] Berlin appears to depart here from the standard definition of toleration in the literature, which entails that I must have the power to suppress, change or eliminate the object of my disapproval in order to be said to be truly tolerant. It may seem that what Berlin is describing is more akin to acquiescence in the face of ineradicable pluralism. But I think we can interpret this as an appeal to toleration in the standard sense – I might have the power in principle to suppress or eliminate the object of my disapproval, but still feel that the costs (moral or otherwise) of so doing were too great to bear and so choose (coherently) to tolerate on that basis.

[6] My aim here is not to provide a comprehensive account of civility, but merely to suggest that the way we think about the accommodation of moral diversity (whether in terms of toleration or civility or some other way again) is shaped by the way we think about value pluralism. I have elsewhere tried to elaborate the idea of civility in more detail (Edyvane, 2017).

[7] It is sometimes, perhaps unfairly, said of the defenders of agonism that they succumb to a rather glib celebration of conflict betraying a lack of moral seriousness and a blindness to the sheer bitterness and hostility that attends many real world political conflicts.