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The Right to Reasonable Exit and a Religious Education for Moderate Autonomy

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Abstract: Political and comprehensive liberals are both pessimistic about finding a satisfactory way to resolve the debate over whether and how to expose students in public schools to religion. An examination of John Tomasi's *Liberalism beyond Justice* and William Galston's *Liberal Pluralism* reveals that a central cause of this pessimism is the presumption that an education for autonomy must encourage students to become rational choosers of their beliefs. This essay suggests that it is possible to found an education for autonomy on the more modest goal of ensuring that students have a reasonable ability to exit from their communities when they feel that membership is too painful. An education for exit would involve exposing students at the high school level to alternative religious beliefs to ensure they are aware that it might be possible to lead tolerable lives and achieve salvation outside of their communities of origin.

> Might it ever be possible to design public policies in ways that reduce the unintended effects of liberal justice on some citizens *without* violating the rights of others?
>
> —John Tomasi, *Liberalism beyond Justice*

The battle lines between political and comprehensive liberals concerning education policy about religion appear to be crystal clear. Comprehensive liberals argue for educating students for autonomy.[1] They contend that public schools have the right to expose students to alternative moral and religious worldviews to ensure they develop the rational and critical thinking skills necessary for autonomy. Political liberals contend that education's function is more modest. John Rawls argues in *Political Liberalism* that when the state finishes providing children with a "knowledge of their constitutional and civic rights" and prepares "them to be fully cooperating members of society," its authority over children's religious upbringing is exhausted.[2]

[1]Comprehensive liberals claim that the state should encourage individuals to lead a particular version of the good life that prioritizes the development of a robust form of individual autonomy. Prominent comprehensive liberal discussions of education include Eammon Callan, *Autonomy and Schooling* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988); Amy Gutmann, "Children, Paternalism, and Education: A Liberal Argument," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 9 (1980): 338–58; and Amy Gutmann, "Civic Education and Social Diversity," *Ethics* 105 (1995): 557–79.

[2]John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 199.

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Despite their differences about the role of education in a liberal society, comprehensive and political liberals both express great pessimism about the possibility of finding an answer to the question that will satisfy all parties to the debate. They agree that the conflict of so many legitimate rights involved in the religion and education debate—those of parents, the state, children, and religious communities—precludes an effective balancing act. The parties involved are left with no choice, therefore, but to argue as forcefully as they can for the education policy that secures the right they deem most important, even if it requires a significant infringement of other important rights. Comprehensive liberals argue for an education securing children's rights to autonomy, acknowledging that it might violate the rights of parents and religious communities. Political liberals support an education policy that values the rights of parents and religious communities even while acknowledging that it will violate the rights of children.[3]

Two important recent accounts of political liberalism devote considerable attention to the question of the relation between religion and education. Both John Tomasi in *Liberalism Beyond Justice* and William Galston in *Liberal Pluralism* forcefully and eloquently express concern about the spill-over effect of liberal principles and education upon nonliberal communities and individuals that threatens to wash away any genuine diversity in our society.[4] Galston is concerned about protecting what he describes as the expressive

[3]Shelley Burtt, "Religious Parents, Secular Schools: A Liberal Defense of an Illiberal Education," *Review of Politics* 57 (1995): 52–71; William Galston, "Two Concepts of Liberalism," *Ethics* 105 (1995): 516–34; Stephen Macedo, "Liberal Civic Education and Religious Fundamentalism: The Case of God v. John Rawls," *Ethics* 105 (1995): 468–96.

[4]While Tomasi identifies himself as a political liberal, a main purpose of Galston's book is to distinguish his liberal pluralist approach from the political liberalism of important theorists such as John Rawls. He, for instance, criticizes Rawls's emphasis upon public reason. Furthermore, Galston's value pluralism is a general theory about morality, and Galston's reliance upon it to justify liberal pluralism seems to qualify his position as comprehensive. In other essential ways, however, Galston's liberal pluralist position is fundamentally similar to political liberalism. Despite their different ways of justifying the protection of a diversity of values in theory, political liberalism and liberal pluralism are united in their primary concern to protect diversity in practice. Similarly, although liberal pluralism is a comprehensive moral theory, the content of his comprehensive theory is significantly different from traditional comprehensive liberal theories such as those of Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill. Galston strongly and explicitly rejects the traditional comprehensive liberal concern with the state's promotion of individual autonomy. Thus, liberal pluralism shares with political liberalism a practical commitment to rejecting the promotion of individual autonomy through a liberal education. Since the practical proximity between liberal pluralism and political liberalism is strong and the theoretical differences—although significant—are not relevant for the purposes of this paper, I classify Galston as a political liberal for the sake of brevity.

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liberty or "the absence of constraints . . . that make it possible (or significantly more difficult) for the affected individuals to live their lives in ways that express their deepest beliefs about what gives meaning or value to life."[5] Protecting the expressive liberty of religious parents and communities from the intervention of a liberal state requires the adoption of an educational policy that largely honors the choices of parents. Tomasi's recommendations are more ambitious. He contends that the civic education for tolerance that most political liberals advocate is not enough to halt the "free erosion of nonliberal communities."[6] A "reintegrative" education that informs students about how it is possible to reconcile their public and private normative commitments is necessary. This education would involve teaching students from various religious backgrounds about how to reconcile their religious viewpoints with public, liberal values.[7]

Despite the important contributions that Tomasi and Galston make, the same pessimism that informs the religion and education debate in general is evident in their works as well. Galston admits that his recommendations might infringe the right of children to exit their community.[8] Tomasi does not pay much attention to children's rights. But what is particularly interesting is why Galston and Tomasi are pessimistic about a satisfactory balancing of the rights at issue in the religion and education debate. Both believe that an education for autonomy must urge students to become rational choosers of their beliefs and practices who maintain a substantial detachment from the communities they are born into and join. They consequently reason that an education for autonomy should be rejected because it clearly conflicts with the rights of parents and religious communities.

This article contends that even if Tomasi's and Galston's discussion of an education for autonomy describes accurately the positions of some liberals, their discussion does not exhaust the types of education for autonomy liberals could support. It describes an education for autonomy concerned not with making students into rational reflectors upon their life choices but with ensuring that all students have a reasonable ability to exit their communities of origin when they feel that membership has become excessively painful. The practical result of this shift toward an education for a more modest version of autonomy is that public schools ought to require that all students be taught about comparative religions as an independent subject during their secondary education. An education that honors children's right to autonomy in a more modest way than comprehensive liberals have previously envisioned might allow for a simultaneous recognition of the rights of religious parents and communities.

[5]William Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[6]John Tomasi, *Liberalism Beyond Justice: Citizens, Society, and the Boundaries of Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 97.

[7]Ibid., 90.

[8]Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 123.

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The article is divided into five sections. The first section briefly outlines the justifications of the four different rights claims in religion and education debates and provides an examination of what a reasonable ability to exit from one's community of origin entails. The second section examines the description of autonomy Galston and Tomasi provide. The third section discusses what model of autonomy and what form of education is necessary to ensure that students have a reasonable ability to exit their community of origins. It explains why the right to exit entails that students be taught world religions as an independent subject during their secondary education. The last two sections examine possible alternatives to an education for exit. The fourth section examines the advantages of an education for exit over the reintegrative education Tomasi favors while the fifth explains why an education for exit is superior to the education for civic tolerance proposed by Amy Gutmann and Eammon Callan.

Balancing Four Sets of Rights

Educational policy concerning religion lies at the intersection of four different rights claims. For the sake of simplicity, we can group these four sets of claims into two categories. The first category consists of the rights of parents and communities. These rights can be justified in several ways. Parents and communities could claim nonpaternalistic rights over their children's religious upbringing based upon the gratitude owed to them. Parents' altruistic provision of indisputable and extraordinarily valuable benefits to their children invests them with some degree of legitimate authority over their children's lives and religious upbringing.[9] Furthermore, proper respect for the religious liberty of individuals dictates that the state take account of the deep concern that religious parents have in passing on their religion to their children. Many religious parents view passing on their beliefs as a religious duty, and as the highest expression of love for their children.

The main defense of communal rights is provided by political liberals, including Tomasi and Galston, who follow Tocqueville in stressing that the health of liberal democracies depends upon the presence of a diversity of robust groups, associations, and cultures. Absent such diversity, liberal democracies are apt to have a bland, shallow, and homogeneous culture enshrining consumerism and instant gratification as its preferred values.[10] Thus, not only do associations have intrinsic value for their members, but

[9]David Bridges, "Non-Paternalistic Arguments in Support of Parents' Rights," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 18 (1984): 55–61; T.J. McLaughlin, "Parental Rights and the Religious Upbringing of Children," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 18 (1984): 75–83; John Coons and Stephen Sugarman, *Education by Choice: The Case for Family Control* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

[10] Tomasi, *Liberalism*, 32.

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they also play an instrumental role in sustaining central liberal democratic values. Without a diversity of thick cultures, autonomy is not possible because citizens will lack a genuine choice between competing conceptions of the good life. A diversity of viewpoints is also essential for the deliberation democracies need to thrive.

We must balance the rights of parents and religious communities against the rights of the state and children. Both Tomasi and Galston contend that a liberal state has the right to ensure that students develop tolerance for religions and value systems different from their own.[11] The failure of a liberal society to cultivate the roots of tolerance through education may lead to dangerous conflicts between groups that will sap its strength. The state not only has a right to act on its own behalf to ensure civic ends but also has the right to act on the behalf of children. Children's rights are of concern not only for comprehensive liberals interested in promoting autonomy, but for political liberals as well. Having the state step aside and allow all parents to educate their children according to different visions of the good may appear, but is not in fact, neutral. Neutrality requires some level of consideration for children's wishes and the realization that children's and parents' wishes may not always be identical.

The extent of the state's rights and duties to act on behalf of children is not clear. The state can surely require that children receive an education consistent with their physical security and ensure that they develop the self-respect and basic literary skills necessary for economic self-sufficiency as adults. Political as well as comprehensive liberals acknowledge that education in a liberal society must ensure the ability of students to exit their community of origin.[12] Although the state ought not to encourage children to exit from their community of origin during their school years, it has a duty to provide students with the information and skills necessary to exit their communities once they become adults.

Even though many children find great joy and profound meaning in all the types of religious communities their parents require them to participate in, participation in their parents' religious communities causes significant misery for at least some children. We need only reflect here upon the experience of some young women brought up in Jewish Orthodox or Islamic fundamentalist communities, or of some teenagers with homosexual desires brought up in Catholic or Southern Baptist communities. Children raised by staunchly atheist parents, who discourage religious exploration, or in broadly tolerant religious liberal communities may experience a debilitating lack of meaning and direction as a result of this upbringing. Like some orthodox religious families and communities, some atheist and religious liberal families and communities exert strong pressure upon their members to

[11]Ibid., 93; Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 119.
[12]Ibid., 123.

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remain and express strong hostility toward those who choose to leave. If primary goods are "what people need in order to live fully human lives within *our* society,"[13] then the right to a reasonable ability for exit is clearly a primary good. Being trapped in a community against one's own choosing is likely to undermine any chance the individual has for a fulfilling existence. The ability to leave one's community when membership causes significant distress is a precondition for a good life.

But does the state have a negative obligation to prevent teachings that inhibit the ability for exit or a positive obligation to ensure students receive information that enhances their ability to exit? Is a teenager with homosexual desires raised as a Southern Baptist hurt not only by a sectarian education that teaches him homosexuality is a sin, but also by a public education that neglects to tell him that other religions teach homosexuality is consistent with God's law? Is a teenager from an atheist background who feels his community's moral outlook is too relativistic hurt not only by an upbringing that does not provide firm moral guidance and limits, but by a public education that fails to inform him sufficiently about belief systems which impose firm moral limits and have well-defined conceptions of sin?

We can draw on Hume's famous criticism of Locke's tacit consent argument for political obligation to answer this question. In his "On the Original Contract," Hume asks:

> Can we seriously say that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language, and lives from day to day, by the small wages which he acquires? We may as well assert that a man, by remaining in a vessel, freely consents to the dominion of the master, though he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean and perish the moment he leaves her.[14]

In questioning whether the "poor peasant or artisan" is really capable of leaving his homeland to protest against his nation's government, Hume suggests that we have no genuine right of exit when the consequences of dissenting from a community are too extreme. Hume further argues that physical harm is not alone in the category of extreme consequences. The peasant is trapped not because he will be executed or flogged for leaving England, but because if he goes abroad he will struggle to earn his daily bread. When a person wishes to leave his community but believes that if he leaves he will be required to jeopardize seriously his prospects of leading a tolerable life, then he has no genuine ability to exit.

It is equally important to note what do not qualify as extreme consequences of exit according to Hume's account. A genuine ability for exit does not require that individuals realize or be taught the advantages of other

[13]Gutmann, "Children," 338.

[14]David Hume, "Of the Original Contract," in *Hume's Moral and Political Philosophy*, ed. Henry Aiken (New York: Hafner Press, 1948).

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communities over their own. Hume's English peasant must be aware he can lead a tolerable life in France if he leaves England, but Hume does not claim he must be informed about why living under the French government may be preferable to living under England's political system. A reasonable ability to exit is largely concerned not with what individuals should feel about membership in their communities, but what they do feel about membership in their communities.

To return specifically to the state's rights and duties regarding the child's religious upbringing, when parents and religious communities threaten children with eternal damnation if they leave their community they are seriously inhibiting many children's ability to exit. Children reared in a religious community normally develop aspirations for divine salvation, grace, or favor that are likely to remain crucial to their self-conceptions and happiness for the rest of their lives. Individuals taught that they must sacrifice their religious aspirations altogether or face eternal damnation if they leave their religious communities face a tragic choice when significant aspects of their personalities, practices, and beliefs conflict with the community's norms. They must either surrender their aspirations for divine salvation, favor, or grace altogether or endure the extreme pain or sense of insincerity of remaining in their communities.[15]

A religious believer's capacity to imagine leading a tolerable life outside of her community requires knowledge of alternative religious beliefs that suggest it might be possible to achieve her aspiration for divine salvation, grace, or favor outside of her community. Since she is unlikely to receive adequate or objective exposure to other religions otherwise, the state has a positive duty to provide her with information about other religious communities and belief systems that accept qualities or hold beliefs her community rejects. A religious education in which children and adolescents are simply taught to tolerate other religious beliefs without being informed about the content of these beliefs fails to provide an adequate ability for exit. A liberal democratic state does not and cannot guarantee happiness for each of its citizens, but it is obliged to provide its citizens with the right to pursue happiness or at least avoid the absence of pain. The right to pursue happiness can only be honored when citizens are provided with the ability to exit communities that cause them significant misery.

Having reviewed the various rights claims and their justifications at issue in the religious upbringing of children, Aristotle's admonition that we should adopt the degree of precision appropriate to the subject of ethics

[15]Children from atheistic and secular communities and families may not believe in divine favor or salvation, but, to borrow Paul Tillich's famous terminology, they do hold "ultimate" beliefs about their purpose in the universe similar in function to beliefs in divine salvation. Thus, some children from these communities can and do experience the same tragic choice about remaining in communities they find painful faced by some children from conventional religious communities.

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seems particularly relevant. We should not expect to discover a policy that satisfies perfectly the rights of parents, religious communities, the state, and children. An educational policy concerned with the promotion of tolerance and autonomy will interfere with the full realization of all parental and communal claims, and vice versa. But the legitimacy of each group's claims requires that we at least satisfy each group's claims to a significant extent. The legitimacy of each group's rights claims precludes the adoption of a utilitarian approach. States cannot, for instance, choose to maximize three rights claims while completely ignoring the fourth.

But even if we lower the standard that a legitimate educational policy regarding religion must meet, it is possible that no policy may be able to meet it. Comprehensive and political liberals writing on the religion and education issue all conclude that all the alternative policies available to the state will infringe significantly upon an important value or right. Perhaps, after a thorough examination, we will find that even cautious optimism about the possibility of principled compromise is misplaced, but given the importance of all the rights claims involved, cautiously optimistic exploration is preferable to premature pessimism.

Galston and Tomasi on Autonomy

Tomasi begins *Liberalism beyond Justice* with a description of an alphabet people intended to reflect the mix of citizens in our liberal democracy. At the head of this alphabet are the A-people whose name reflects their embrace of autonomy as a "comprehensive world view":

> The A-people, let's imagine, affirm the values of autonomy and individuality as governing most if not every aspect of their lives. People in this category tend to live highly mobile, experimental, fallibilist, reflective lives from the ground up, as it were, seeing it as essential that each person decide completely for himself about all the moral dimensions of his life.[16]

The model of autonomy Tomasi and Galston present consists of three main elements. First, Tomasi and Galston stress the relationship between rationality and autonomy; Tomasi describes autonomous people as "reason-lovers."[17] An autonomous individual must be rational in the sense that she subjects her most fundamental commitments to critical and empirical scrutiny. Reliance on tradition and faith are permissible to some extent, but a person must use reason to determine whether tradition and faith claims are logically coherent, consistent with her most important goals, and empirically accurate. This emphasis upon rationality makes the pursuit of autonomy

[16]Tomasi, *Liberalism*, 17.
[17]Ibid.

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inconsistent with the claims of those conservative and fundamentalist religious communities which rely heavily upon tradition, faith, and authority.

Tomasi and Galston also stress the relationship between autonomy and independence. Autonomy requires an individual to separate himself from commitments and communal claims on his beliefs and actions to a substantial extent throughout his life. Citing Jeremy Waldron's account of autonomy as characteristic of liberalism in general, Galston claims that an autonomous citizen must look at himself not as a committed member of particular communities, but as a detached cosmopolitan.[18] A-people, Tomasi argues, are lone contemplators who consistently attempt to detach and distinguish themselves from others.[19] When it comes to religion, an autonomous person is an anthropocentrist. She looks at herself if not as an originator at least as a final arbiter of value. If this is accurate, then autonomy is hostile toward almost all religion because religions normally require individuals to place God at the center of their moral universe.

Finally, autonomy requires novelty. In the quote at the beginning of this section, Tomasi describes his A-people as "highly mobile" and "experimental"; they engage in critical reflection on a frequent basis. To be autonomous, it is not sufficient for a person to be independent and to abstract herself from her original community; experimentalism also requires that individuals make serious efforts to understand what it is like to inhabit alternative identities and communities. It demands that the individual use his capacity for sympathetic imagination to enter other communities to decide whether he wishes to retain his initial identity. Conservative religions may require of the individual a strong obedience to sacred texts and clerics' pronouncements and a deep, pervasive relationship to his religious community. If an individual must seek out novelty or engage in constant reflection, his commitments to his religious community are likely to be temporary and tenuous.

Although Tomasi and Galston never explicitly state what type of education about religion is required by their strong conception of autonomy, we can infer their views by tying these three points together. To satisfy the rationality requirement, such an education would encourage students to subject the claims of their own and other religious traditions to logical and empirical assessment. This requirement would at least implicitly encourage students to be skeptical of those conservative and fundamentalist religions that discourage logical and empirical assessment of their claims. To meet the novelty requirement, the curriculum and teachers would explicitly instruct students not only that they have a right to choose their religious beliefs but a duty to reflect periodically and seriously upon the legitimacy of the religious beliefs they hold. To ensure consistency with the independence and novelty requirements, such an education must strongly encourage students to

[18]Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 22.
[19]Tomasi, *Liberalism*, 17.

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abstract themselves from their current religious communities and sympathetically enter into the perspectives of other religious communities.

An Education about Religion Providing the Ability for Exit

Let us turn to an examination of what a reasonable exit option requires in terms of reason, novelty, and independence. The exit option requires not only that individuals be made aware of other belief systems, but that they also have the rationality sufficient to compare the claims of their community to the claims of other communities. But students should not be encouraged to evaluate religious beliefs and practices exclusively on logical and empirical grounds. A religious education for moderate autonomy must ensure students' awareness that some conservative and fundamentalist religious perspectives do not view their claims as subject to logical and empirical assessment and instead ground their claims upon a reading of sacred texts. Similarly, securing a reasonable exit option does not require that schools encourage students to ask whether they could be even happier or more satisfied than they are if they chose to leave their community or if they adopted a worldview that focused more upon reason and empirical observation than upon faith. The role of an education for moderate autonomy is not to enable students to realize they are being oppressed in ways they did not previously realize, but to enable students who feel oppressed to understand that they might be able to lead a tolerable life outside of their community if they choose to leave.

Indeed, an education that encouraged students to realize that they might be oppressed in ways they did not previously realize would violate neutrality and would likely be manipulated for partisan purposes. Since there is no consensus in our society about what forms of religious beliefs are oppressive, any attempt to encourage students to realize ways that they might be oppressed by their religious beliefs is bound to favor some religious beliefs and thus violate neutrality. It is preferable to construct an education that exposes students to a variety of religious perspectives in an objective manner and provides students with the skills to exit their religious communities if and only if they find membership in their communities to be oppressive. Such an education respects what students do believe rather than attempting to determine what they ought to believe.[20]

[20]Placing Hume's exit argument, which is the basis for the subsequent discussion of exit in this article, in the context of negative and positive liberty provides further clarification. Negative liberty involves freedom from interference with carrying out independently chosen desires. Positive liberty theorists claim that allowing individuals to pursue their independently chosen desires may be problematic because these desires may not reflect their true selves or true interests. Exposure to other viewpoints and persuasion, and at times even coercion to adopt other viewpoints, may be justified

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Furthermore, encouraging students to focus exclusively on logically and empirically assessing religious claims would inhibit rather than ensure reasonable exit in some cases. A liberal state has the duty to provide students from staunchly liberal or atheistic families with a reasonable opportunity for exit because belonging to such families may be just as harmful as belonging to religious communities. Some individuals reared in these communities report experiencing a lack of structure in their lives and a sense of licentious freedom. The lack of a firm moral tradition or value system to rely upon often leads them to focus excessively on immediate gratification and to engage in self-destructive behavior. Parents of these students may prevent them from any serious or objective consideration of what it is like to be a member of a religious community. By stressing rationality and evaluation of religious beliefs on logical and empirical grounds, an education for strong autonomy is likely to further lock these students into their perspectives. An education for moderate autonomy exposing students to religious views that advocate making major life decisions primarily on the basis of tradition and faith could facilitate the ability to exit by enabling students dissatisfied with atheistic or agnostic positions to explore religious options of which they would otherwise have been unaware.

Providing individuals with a reasonable exit option also entails that they experience a moderate sense of independence. To be able to leave their community of origin, individuals must be able to imagine what it would be like to be a member of other communities. Jumping from a community with the belief that there is nowhere to land will make exit excessively difficult. But the reasonable exit criterion does not require that this distance from one's community be permanent. It is enough for the individual to feel at some point that her beliefs and practices are not necessarily identical to those of her community to satisfy the reasonable exit criterion. The distance from one's community need not be complete even during this short time period.

But if the requirements of an education for moderate autonomy are more modest than those of an education for strong autonomy, might it be the case that such an education is superfluous or will only have negligible

to enable individuals to realize and act upon their true interests. Hume does not take into account the legitimacy of citizens' desires in determining their capacity for exit. The right to exit is compromised only when individuals desire to leave their communities but are unable to carry out these desires because of their professional and material limitations. In these cases, remaining in one's country may appear to be consensual, but is not in fact consensual. Similarly, the goal of the education for exit recommended here is only to ensure that individuals have the ability to act on their independently chosen desires to leave their religious community of origin. It does not consider religious believers, for instance, who choose to remain in what the majority of society might believe are oppressive communities to have betrayed their true selves.

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effects? After all, children growing up in the most insular religious communities and families surely will receive some exposure to the views of other religious groups and realize at some point that their beliefs and practices may not be necessarily identical to those of his community. This argument, however, ignores the substantial differences in the type of exposure that students will receive in a public education and in a sectarian upbringing. A fundamentalist Muslim family and community may teach children that other religious communities accept very different conceptions of women's roles but will accompany this with strong condemnation. By contrast, state schools will provide students with a balanced and objective account of religious beliefs and practices. Students will also become acquainted with a more extensive range of religious beliefs than they receive in a sectarian upbringing. Although parents and religious communities are able to counter what children are taught in schools, various empirical studies suggest that school curriculum has a significant effect upon the way students think and behave.[21] Students do not look at schools as the only important or ultimate source for morality in their lives, nor certainly should they, but they also do not completely ignore what they are taught at school when it differs from what their parents or religious community preaches.[22]

In 1999, Modesto became the first school district in the nation to require that all students take an independent, required course in world religions. From October 2003 to May 2005, my research partner and I engaged in extensive research about the effects of this course. Our Modesto research confirms that a descriptive course about religion in the public school curriculum can have a significant impact upon student views. In particular, our survey results indicate that the Modesto course achieved its intended goals of increasing students' overall and religious tolerance levels. We did not test for the course's effects upon exit because this was not a goal of the Modesto course. But given that a world religions course intended to promote tolerance appears successful in doing so, it is reasonable to extrapolate that a

[21]Herbert McClosky and Alida Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance: What Americans Believe About Civil Liberties* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1983), 395; Dennis Chong, "How People Think, Reason, and Feel About Rights and Liberties," *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (1993): 889; John Sullivan, George Marcus, and James Piereson, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

[22]Relying on mainstream culture and media in liberal, religiously pluralist societies to provide children with the exposure to alternative religious views necessary for exit is inadequate as well. Religious parents are able to determine their children's exposure to mainstream culture. Furthermore, the exposure to alternative religions that children receive, for instance, from TV and movies is extremely cursory and intellectually shallow. Information about other religions provided to students in school by teachers is more likely to command their attention and respect than information provided in the mainstream media.

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course intended to provide a capacity for exit could be successful in achieving its goal.[23]

Nevertheless, the education recommended here might still be accused of being superfluous on the grounds that merely providing information may not be sufficient to ensure the ability for exit. Will all or almost all students from religious fundamentalist communities who receive this education be able to exit their communities when they feel that membership is excessively painful simply as a result of receiving this education?

This claim, however, rests on a misunderstanding about the justification of an education for exit provided here. Including an education for exit in the curriculum does not rest on the premise that information about other religions is the only important factor in providing students with the ability to exit their religious communities, but rather on the premise that provision of such information is one of the important factors contributing to the student's ability for exit. An individual's decision to leave a community she finds excessively painful is often inhibited by several sources of anxiety. In addition to anxiety about losing family and friends, one significant source of anxiety is concern that leaving one's community will be accompanied by eternal damnation.

Thus, we should not expect an education for exit alone to provide a sufficient capacity for exit in all cases where individuals find membership excessively painful any more than we should expect an education for tolerance to ensure that all students are tolerant. But this does not mean that such a course would be superfluous. Given the importance of exit rights, a liberal democratic society can not simply sit by and continue to allow their infringement.

Finally, a reasonable exit option does require that the student experience novelty in the sense of exposure to new ideas for a limited period of time, but does not require the student to feel that great value comes from novelty for novelty's sake or that they ought to experiment with many types of communal memberships. As long as the individual is able to imagine himself as joining another community and avoid extreme consequences for leaving if he feels that membership in his community is too oppressive, an education for moderate autonomy has done its job.

An education for strong autonomy that explicitly or implicitly encouraged students to accept only religions that allow for rational, critical scrutiny of religious authority places students in a Procrustean bed that ill accords with the spirit of autonomy. A byproduct of an education for moderate autonomy's

[23] The results of our research will be featured in a forthcoming manuscript. Modesto's experience also provides evidence that the courses about religion like the one recommended in this article could be implemented successfully in most communities and school districts around the nation. Modesto has a significant evangelical Christian population, and religious leaders routinely described it as belonging to the "California Bible Belt." The evangelical Christian community has not objected to the teaching of the course, and pastors associated with two Modesto evangelical megachurches I spoke with were supportive of the course.

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refraining from encouraging students to recognize the ways that they might be oppressed is that it does not impose a particular view of traditional and communal authority. Rather than encouraging students to march down an Emersonian path of self-reliance, an education for moderate autonomy would enable students to choose to explore the divergent roads religions offer concerning the relationship between reason, individualism, and authority.

What would an education ensuring a reasonable ability for exit and promoting moderate autonomy look like in practice? Such an education must enable the student to imagine himself as a member of a religious or secular community other than his native community. Countering the extreme consequences of exit involves teaching children that others believe hell can be avoided or heaven attained through other religious paths, and that others accept the characteristics denigrated and punished by their communities.

The most neutral way to achieve this goal is to focus primarily on the practices of other faiths and to a lesser extent upon the theology and justifications for these practices. A practical approach would focus on providing students with descriptive information about the beliefs, practices, and views on major social questions other religious communities live by. A moderate amount of discussion of the reasons and justifications behind these practices is vital to promote the respect for other religions necessary to take them as serious alternatives and view them as worthy of civic tolerance.

At the same time, such an education should avoid an excessive focus upon the theology and justifications of practices because this might promote a religious relativism contrary to neutrality and anathematic to many religious conservatives. Many conservative Christians, for instance, hold that the truth claims of their religious beliefs are mutually exclusive with the truth claims of other religious beliefs, and that skepticism about Christianity's and the Bible's literal truth is incompatible with sincere religious belief.[24] Providing extensive discussion of the justifications of non-Christian religions might encourage acceptance of the truth value of other beliefs and illegitimately erode the belief in mutual exclusivity of students who are not interested in leaving their communities. Providing extensive discussion of the historical approach to the Bible taken by many liberal Christians might illegitimately encourage conservative Christian students to adopt an overly skeptical attitude to their beliefs. The primarily practical approach is more narrowly tailored to promote exit without violating the rights of religious conservatives. It would allow students themselves to decide if they want to learn more about other religions based on whether they find membership in their own religious community excessively painful, but would prevent illegitimate side effects by avoiding an overly robust discussion of the justifications of beliefs.

[24]Vincent Branick, "The Attractiveness of Fundamentalism," in *What Makes Fundamentalism So Attractive?* ed. Marla Selvidge (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, 1984), 22.

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Such an education ought to include a substantial discussion of conservative and fundamentalist variants of religion. These religions provide the strongest alternatives to a life of extreme autonomy and evaluative rationality. The fundamentalist emphasis on literal interpretation of sacred texts challenges the secular belief that such texts must be read critically and be subjected to logical and empirical scrutiny. The fundamentalist emphasis on absolute commitment to one's faith challenges the A-person's emphasis on constant novelty and experimentation. The conservative and fundamentalist emphasis upon placing God and religion at the center of one's life challenges the A-person's emphasis on extreme independence. There is no need, however, to expose students to an infinite variety of religions. A religious education for exit ought to focus upon a description of the current incarnations of major religions and denominations rather than their historical form or development. Reasonable exit requires knowledge only of live options available in the contemporary United States.[25]

The need to expose students to live options also indicates that a religious education for exit must be an autonomous subject in the compulsory curriculum. Currently, public schools treat religion, if at all, by naturally including discussion of religion in history, social studies, and literature courses. The natural inclusion approach fails to provide students with the knowledge of a diverse range of religions sufficient for a reasonable ability to exit. Since other curricular subjects have their own agenda in teaching religion, the essential message that students have a right to exit their religious communities is likely to be omitted or not sufficiently emphasized. History classes teach religion to facilitate understanding of past cultures and past incarnations of our own culture. Literature courses teach religion to facilitate an understanding of important literary texts and trends in Western literature and do not consider a wide enough range of religions.

A required education about religion providing the ability for exit describing the major Western and Eastern religions might take place during a semester of the high school student's education.[26] The course would focus on the major denominations within each religious tradition as well. While an exposure to religion at the elementary level may lead to a chaotic sense of self that cannot be reversed or a dramatic blow to the student's self-esteem, this is less likely to be the case if exposure takes place at the secondary level. Conversely, the short period of cultivating and encouraging distance should

[25]An education for exit should not be confined to the live options present in the community where it is being taught. Such a restriction on an education for exit in a religiously homogeneous community would obviously defeat the course's purpose.

[26]Warren Nord and Charles Haynes, *Taking Religion Seriously Across the Curriculum* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998), 45.

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take place before the parents' and community's indoctrination of the student is so complete that they preclude any sense of distance.[27]

Students should not have a right to opt out of an education for exit. This may seem strange given the emphasis upon the subjective beliefs of students. If students do not feel oppressed by the religious beliefs they hold, then why shouldn't they be allowed to opt themselves out of an education for exit in high school? If students are allowed to opt themselves out, this allows parents the opportunity to pressure their children into forgoing a reasonable ability to exit. We cannot be sure whether the student's decision to opt out is his own or his parents.[28] More important, even if students do not feel oppressed by their religious beliefs during their education, there is a significant possibility that they might feel oppressed by them in the future. If they feel oppressed as adults who have not received an education about religion for exit, they may choose to remain in their communities primarily because they have not received information indicating that they may lead a tolerable life outside of their communities. It is thus justifiable to require students to learn about tolerable lives outside of their communities before they feel oppressed by their communities.

We are now in the position to discuss several significant practical differences between an education about religion for moderate autonomy and one for strong autonomy. First, an education for strong autonomy would instruct students to take seriously their capacity for rational and independent evaluation of different perspectives by periodically reflecting upon the legitimacy of the religious beliefs that they hold. In an education for moderate autonomy, the curriculum and teachers would focus on the objective presentation of facts about various religious communities without instructing students about what sort of perspective they should use to evaluate these facts. For instance, tests, homework, and assignments in an education for strong autonomy would ask students to compare and evaluate the merits and disadvantages of the different religions they are studying; tests, assignments, and homework in an education for moderate autonomy would avoid comparisons and instead ask students to describe the religions they are studying.[29]

[27]An education for exit should take place either during students' sophomore or junior year. Several Modesto teachers mentioned that their freshmen students occasionally confused being asked to tolerate other religions with being asked to accept the truth of other religions. This suggests that an education for exit in the freshman year might illegitimately encourage some students to consider leaving even when their religious community is not the sources of excessive pain. At the same time, the course should not be postponed to senior year because by then the indoctrination of students may be too complete for the course to be valuable.

[28]Gutmann, "Children," 354.

[29]Another strong reason to adopt this more descriptive approach to the presentation of religion is that it is clearly consistent with the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment's Establishment clause. The constitutional validity of a descriptive public education about religion was robustly affirmed in *Abington v. Schempp*.

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Second, the two types of education would differ concerning their approach toward encouraging sympathetic imagination about alternative religions. An education for strong autonomy requires that students not only abstract themselves from their current perspectives, but that they actively and sympathetically enter into alternative religious perspectives to contrast other beliefs with their own effectively. It would use extended excerpts from sacred texts to enable students to realize what forms of beauty or transcendence they might be missing if they remain in their own religious tradition. Teachers and textbooks would encourage role-playing, and classes would make trips to a variety of religious places of worship to enable students to experience other religions from the inside. By contrast, an education for moderate autonomy would only require abstraction from present beliefs; students would be left free to determine if they wish to engage in sympathetic imagination about other religions. In an education for moderate autonomy, students would not engage in role-playing, and readings would consist of descriptions of a variety of religions by academic scholars of religion without a strong sectarian affiliation or bias instead of extended passages from sacred texts.

Finally, an education for moderate autonomy would be more cautious than an education for strong autonomy concerning how it facilitated exit. The ability for exit would be accomplished not through subjective, discretionary advice or counselling dispensed by teachers to individual students, but through the transmission of basic information about religions provided in an established curriculum. If students wish to learn more about alternative religious traditions, schools should provide these students with optional, supplemental reading lists about the religions in which they are interested. This restriction on discretionary counselling of individual students is defensible on the grounds that teachers and schools must be careful only to ensure the student's capacity for exit when the student independently desires the capacity for exit. Teachers can be trusted to administer an established curriculum in a neutral fashion,[30] but their biases are more likely to affect the advice that they provide to students in individual counselling situations. Furthermore, the role that religion plays in the lives of many families is contentious and

Justice Tom Clark's majority opinion in *Abington* upheld study of the Bible when conducted "objectively as part of a secular program of education," *Abington v. Schempp*. 1963. 374 U.S. 203, 225.

[30] The Modesto research provides supporting evidence of the possibility of teacher neutrality. I asked the twenty students I interviewed—which included Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, and atheistic students—about teacher bias, and none of the students complained that their teacher had demonstrated bias toward or against any religion. The Modesto school district required that all teachers receive thirty hours of training before teaching the course. This training stressed the importance of teacher neutrality and taught strategies for avoiding bias and handling controversial classroom conversations. A similar type of training should be a prerequisite for teachers of an education for exit.

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complex in ways that teachers are probably not equipped to assess. Having teachers directly and excessively intervene in students' decisions through counselling without comprehensive knowledge of their family situations might lead to an excessively hostile home environment for students whose parents strongly object to their desire to exit.

Although this restriction may appear to hamper the ability of schools to promote the capacity of exit for students whose parents strongly object to their exit in the short term, it is unlikely to inhibit their capacity for exit in the long run. Even if students whose parents strongly object to their exit from their religious community are unable to exit while remaining in their parents' home because of financial and other forms of dependence, an education for exit will still provide these students the psychological skills and information necessary to exit at a later age when they are more independent of their parents.

This review of the basics of a religious education for moderate autonomy allows us to see that it might not only garner support from political and comprehensive liberals, but may also be acceptable to religious conservatives. For instance, a temporary and partially critical distance from their religious communities may deepen the students' adherence to their communities and families. Students receiving a religious education are unlikely to perceive their religious beliefs as the product of coercion. If they choose to remain in their communities, this perception may strengthen their sense of obligation and reconcile them to the claims made by their communities upon them. Students who have not received an education about religion for exit are left to wonder if their beliefs would stand up to even temporary reflective examination and whether the grass is greener in other religious pastures. Giving students the chance to contrast their beliefs with other beliefs might enable them to recognize the unique aspects and benefits of their own religious perspective.[31]

More important, the education for moderate autonomy outlined here will address several crucial concerns of religious conservative parents to a greater extent than does the current omission of such an education from the compulsory curriculum. Many American religious conservatives and fundamentalists claim that the lack of adequate mention of religion in the current curriculum gives students the impression that religion is not essential to

[31]Three of the twenty students I interviewed in Modesto said that taking the course had encouraged them to learn more about their religion and discuss their religion to a greater extent with their parents, and teachers related that a significant minority of students told them the course had reinvigorated their interest in their religion. One student told me that she had several conversations with her parents "especially about my religion—Christianity. If I had a question about something in here or I was concerned about a certain element we learned about, my parents may be able to expand on it and give me a little more detail about it. I got some clarification on my own religion and learned a little bit more about it."

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American public life. Without an adequate mention of religion, schools at least implicitly give students the impression that the pursuit of materialistic goals should triumph over moral and spiritual concerns in their lives.[32]

Teaching about religion in an independent course would encourage a greater recognition of the role that religion does and can play in the private and public lives of American citizens. By learning about the practices and justifications of a variety of faiths, students are likely to develop greater respect for the choices made by other religious believers. The recognition of their own religion in the public school curriculum will likely provide those students content with their religion to feel more comfortable about openly practicing their religions. Adding a robust and independent discussion of religion to the curriculum will also help to temper the materialistic conception of the good life the current curriculum implicitly promotes. After all, the ability for exit is important precisely because a person's attitude toward and relationship with religion is an essential part of her well-being, and an education for exit should explicitly acknowledge this truth to students. Students will emerge from such an education not only with a greater consciousness of moral and spiritual concerns but with a greater appreciation, or at least a reminder, of the role that membership in deeply and distinctively religious associations can or does play in their lives.

An Education for Moderate Autonomy or a Reintegrative Education?

An additional way to realize the benefits of an education for moderate autonomy is by comparing it with the reintegrative education Tomasi proposes. Like other political liberals, Galston argues that public schools should provide a civic education promoting general tolerance, but should avoid providing students with a substantial exposure to alternative moral and religious viewpoints. Tomasi argues that the civic education approach advocated by Galston and other political liberals runs counter to central political liberal concerns and advocates a reintegrative education that would include a substantial discussion of different religious perspectives.

Tomasi's concern with free erosion leads him to reject an "ethical liberalism" led by an "activist, tutorial state" that encourages students to adopt a "thickly autonomous worldview."[33] He also rejects the civic education aimed exclusively at ensuring tolerance by teaching students the burdens of judgment and neutral ways of justifying essential liberal political rights most political liberals support. He argues that "simply to tell students

[32]Paul Vitz, "Traditional Values in Public School Textbooks," *Public Interest* 84 (1986): 79–98; Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square* (Grand Rapids: Eerdsman, 1984).

[33] Tomasi, *Liberalism*, 97.

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about their rights and grounds, then halt the lesson and send them out to play" will have the same disintegrative effect upon communal membership as a liberal education for autonomy if students are not encouraged to reflect upon the way they are ethically situated in particular worldviews.[34]

To prevent free erosion, states must take a more active role in ensuring that students develop an appreciation for how to integrate their obligations as liberal democratic citizens with their obligations to their communities of origins. This education would teach students that there are many different ways to be a successful liberal democratic citizen. It would teach students not only general liberal democratic virtues such as tolerance, honesty, and compassion, but particular virtues they will need if they hope to integrate their public and private commitments. It would also suggest to students how important liberal democratic norms and policies could be justified within their community's perspective.

> Since Catholic children are to learn about their rights and about the standing of all citizens as political equals, they must also be brought to understand what it means to be a Catholic within the particular social world they are about to enter .... Children need to be taught how it is that the liberal social world makes itself available to people with a worldview such as the one they have so far grown up in—always taking care to avoid proselytization, whether on a general or an individual basis.[35]

One difference between Tomasi's position and that outlined in the previous section is that Tomasi does not explicitly argue for the inclusion of religion as an autonomous subject in the compulsory curriculum that students are unable to opt out of. It is not clear whether Tomasi wants schools to make religious education compulsory, to offer more elective courses in religion, or to discuss religion to a greater extent in traditional compulsory curriculum courses than is currently done.

A more important difference between Tomasi's recommendations and an education for moderate autonomy has to do with the purposes and methods of presenting different religions. The purpose of presenting different religions in an education for moderate autonomy is to ensure students have a reasonable ability for exit by encouraging them to develop the sympathetic imagination necessary for exit. For Tomasi, the purpose of presenting different religions to students is to make them aware of how they can use the ethical commitments emphasized by their communities to be successful liberal democratic citizens. Although he is never sufficiently specific about what his education would entail, the focus seems to be on the elements of religion that intersect with liberal democratic politics. The failure of such an education to make students aware that they can possibly find salvation or a tolerable life outside their community of origin would not violate Tomasi's parameters, but

[34]Ibid.
[35]Ibid., 96.

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he expresses concern that exposing students to a wide range of alternative beliefs may lead liberal norms to spill over and erode traditional communal norms.[36]

These differences suggest a major advantage of a religious education for moderate autonomy over Tomasi's proposal. Tomasi is careful to note that his proposal would not involve explicit proselytizing and that religious parents cannot demand that public schools teach their religions are true.[37] But stressing the state has a negative duty to avoid proselytizing is not sufficient to ensure that students have a reasonable ability to exit. More disturbingly, Tomasi's civic education may positively discourage students from exiting their communities and add to the already heavy burden that students who want to exit bear. Tomasi asserts that he is not "suggesting that each child is to be assigned to whatever particular ethical orientation it is determined in advance is irrevocably appropriate to him."[38] There is a thin line between telling students that they can give special weight to their traditions and telling them that they ought to give special weight to their traditions, and there is a significant chance Tomasi's proposed education will at least implicitly encourage students to remain in their communities.

In fact, his proposal runs the risk of suggesting to students that they not only have obligations to their parents and community requiring them to remain in their communities, but that they have a civic duty to remain in their communities. His civic education encourages students explicitly to believe that they have a civic duty at least to think about how they can maintain their integrity as members of their particular communities of origin while striving to be successful liberal democratic citizens. We should not be surprised if students receive the impression that the state is taking for granted that they will remain in their communities.

Tomasi could admit these flaws and still maintain his civic education is superior to an education for moderate autonomy. An education for autonomy, Tomasi claims, would lead to free erosion and violate the rights of parents and religious communities. But this critique rests on Tomasi's caricature of what an education for autonomy requires. An education for moderate autonomy aimed only at ensuring a reasonable ability for exit does not entail an "activist, tutorial state" encouraging students to adopt a "thickly autonomous worldview." Furthermore, it is reasonable to expect an education for moderate autonomy to address the free erosion and reintegration concerns that Tomasi raises almost as well as Tomasi's civic education.

An education for moderate autonomy would not tell students explicitly to give special weight to the comprehensive conception they and their parents hold. But it would encourage students implicitly to develop an appreciation

[36]Ibid., 91.
[37]Ibid., 88.
[38]Ibid., 97.

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for the importance of possessing a comprehensive conception. Separating the teaching of religion from other subject matters will convey to students the importance that religion plays in the lives of many and might play in their lives. Since religions are comprehensive views that usually are accompanied by thick communal obligations, studying them will encourage students to reflect upon the value of living in a particularly close community. Such an education would thus address the free erosion problem better than current public education.

Conclusion: An Education for Exit and the Promotion of Religious Tolerance

Tomasi's reintegrative education is one possible alternative to an education for exit for including a treatment of religion in the curriculum. The other major alternative is to include a treatment of religion in a civic education for tolerance as Amy Gutmann and Eammon Callan recommend. A civic education for tolerance would focus exclusively on teaching students to respect the civil rights and status of religious groups as well as other groups deserving of toleration without including an extended discussion of the beliefs, practices, or theologies of these groups.

There is much to recommend a civic education for tolerance. The need for religious tolerance, for instance, is more urgent in America today than perhaps at any previous point in its history. Recent waves of immigration have expanded America's religious diversity by increasing the population of Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims, and other religious groups.[39] The events of 9/11 have introduced strains between American society and Muslims at home and abroad. An increasingly acrimonious cultural conflict between orthodox and progressive believers over political and social issues threatens to undermine the reasoned dialogue necessary for the flourishing of our democracy.

Furthermore, Gutmann and Callan have argued that including an education for civic tolerance in the public school curriculum would render an education for autonomy or exit superfluous. Gutmann argues "there is in liberal political practice little difference between educating for citizenship and educating for individuality and autonomy."[40] Callan claims in his *Creating Citizens* that "the political virtues that implement the fair terms of cooperation bring autonomy through the back door of political liberalism."[41] Callan and Gutmann argue that the virtues and skills necessary for liberal democratic citizenship overlap significantly with those necessary for

[39]Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America* (San Francisco: Harper, 2002).
[40]Gutmann, "Civic Education," 573.
[41]Callan, *Creating Citizens*, 40.

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autonomy. A civic education that inculcates only for tolerance and respect will inevitably encourage students to lead autonomous lives.

A deeper examination, however, suggests that Gutmann and Callan are too quick to collapse the conventional political liberal civic education and the education for moderate autonomy outlined above into each other. Gutmann and Callan are correct that a civic education for tolerance requires that students consider religious and moral worldviews different from their own. Callan argues that exposure and sympathetic imagination is necessary for justice under conditions of pluralism because students must realize that diversity is not the result of evil or folly, but of the limits of reason. Gutmann argues that students ought to be exposed to different religions so that they know why religion is off-limits to governmental regulation.

But there is a crucial difference between the exposure to different ways of life in a civic education for tolerance and an education for moderate autonomy. Take the teaching about homosexuality in each type of education. Teaching for tolerance and respect for homosexuality in a civic education would require teaching students that state discrimination and private action that has significant public consequences such as discrimination in hiring on the basis of sexual orientation are illegitimate. It would require that students understand the value and meaning that many people find in homosexual relationships and that many adults and children lead flourishing lives in homosexual families.

Such exposure would not be adequate to provide some students with a reasonable ability for exit. It would inform homosexual students from religious communities that condemn homosexuality as a sin that if they leave their communities and embrace their homosexuality they might find acceptance by the general culture. But it would not enable such students to overcome their fear that leaving their religious community will lead to eternal damnation. To counter this, students must be exposed to the belief held by some religious communities that homosexuality is not a sin and that God sanctions homosexual relationships as a legitimate form of romantic love. Students will only receive this information in an objective manner if they participate in an extensive education about religion as an independent subject. Whether students are taught for civic purposes or exit does make a difference.

Indeed, the education about religion outlined here would do a better job of promoting religious tolerance than the civic education Gutmann and Callan propose. An independent course about religion for exit would provide students with a greater and more in-depth exposure to the beliefs and practices of the major Western and Eastern religions present in the United States today than either the current curriculum provides or the education about civil rights proposed by Gutmann and Callan. A greater acquaintance of students with religions besides Christianity and Judaism would promote a greater respect for the political and civil rights of members of these religions. The exposure of progressive, liberal, and secular students to the practices and justifications of conservative forms of the Western and Eastern religions studied in the

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course, and of conservative students to more progressive and liberal forms of the Western and Eastern religions studied in the course would help to bridge the chasm currently separating progressive and orthodox believers. This education neither should nor would aim to erase healthy religious diversity, but it would help believers on both sides of the cultural divide to establish more common ground. Thus, Gutmann and Callan have reversed the true relationship between a civic education for tolerance and an education about religion for exit. Their civic education for tolerance would not serve as an adequate education for exit, but the education for exit described here would promote the respect for religious diversity and liberty of which our country is in dire need.

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