

A DEFENSE OF MODERATE COSMOPOLITANISM

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I argue for a moral view, moderate cosmopolitanism, which is a response to a conflict between two currents of thought in contemporary debates about moral obligation: a) a strict cosmopolitan current, which, grounded in the principle of equal moral worth, claims that our obligations to humanity are always primary and that we are justified in giving preference to family members and compatriots only insofar as doing so can be thought of as the best way to benefit humanity as a whole; and b) an anti-cosmopolitan current that claims that humanity does not exist as a moral community, that we owe virtually all of what gives meaning to our lives to our membership in particular families, communities and nations, and that if we cease giving priority to "our own," we jeopardize significant sources of positive value. Given the importance of nations and families to individual flourishing—given that our families and our nations are the

sites where our characters are formed and where we first learn virtue—any liberal view concerned with the good of individuals has at least instrumental reasons to value those institutions. But it is a feature of those institutions that instrumental valuing cannot but serve to weaken them when it is all there is. In my defense of moderate cosmopolitanism, which occupies a middle position between strict- and anti- cosmopolitanism, I argue for the fundamental (un-derived) status both of special obligations and of obligations stemming from equal moral worth; I defend cosmopolitanism against some of its opponents' main lines of attack--that it is too abstract and idealistic, that there cannot be a moral community comprising all human beings, and that there is no "universal reason"--and I demonstrate the viability of moderate cosmopolitanism as a moral-political view suited to solving practical problems, motivating action and offering just solutions when moral dilemmas arise.

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warts and all, is indispensable to the world at the macro level. Indispensable for world security, indispensable for human rights, and indispensable (in a way that is ironic given a common perception of Americans as provincial) for the pursuit of any kind of cosmopolitanism we ought to be striving for. Ima and Aba: this is for you, for the grandparents I knew, and for the grandparents I didn't know.

To my parents, and to the memory of my grandparents.

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"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am for myself [only], what am I? And if not now, when?" - Rabbi Hillel, Ethics of the Fathers¹

Introduction.

Moderate cosmopolitanism, the moral view for which this dissertation argues, is a response to a tension between two currents of thought in contemporary debates about the scope of moral obligation:

- a) a strict-cosmopolitan current, which makes a moral claim, grounded in the principle of equal moral worth, that we have fundamental and substantial obligations to humanity which, in many cases, override particularistic obligations, i.e., that it is in many cases immoral to benefit one's compatriots or one's family members rather than others in dire need; and
- b) an anti-cosmopolitan current that claims that humanity does not exist as a moral community, that we owe virtually all of what gives meaning to our lives to our membership in particular families, communities and nations, and that if we cease giving priority to "our own," we jeopardize significant sources of positive value.

¹(Pirkei Avos, 1995), p. 549, 1:14

Like strict-cosmopolitanism, moderate cosmopolitanism is a liberal conception, and as such, it views both the equal moral worth of persons and autonomy as fundamental values. But moderate cosmopolitanism is distinguished, among contemporary liberal moral conceptions, by the status it assigns to special obligations (understood as obligations to family members, compatriots, and members of other groups one's membership in which is perceived as engendering particularistic commitments) alongside its recognition of the equal moral worth of all persons. Special obligations are not viewed, in moderate cosmopolitanism, as all-trumping or unqualified, but neither is their status as obligations seen as derived from obligations to humanity generally, though the latter are held to exist as well.

It is important to note some distinctions both between cosmopolitanism and globalization, and between the liberal and moral cosmopolitanism I will be developing and another sense of cosmopolitanism.

First, for the cosmopolitan, morality's universal scope is not a new circumstance. The empirical fact of

increasing interdependence (globalization) in the contemporary world means that actions taken in any particular place in the world can have greater impact on people in other, far-away places than ever before, and this in turn means that we have become more conscious of the claims that people distant from us have on us. But it is only if, *as an antecedent condition*, our conception of morality extends beyond our narrower affiliations, that we have reason to ascribe any weight to distant others' claims.²

Second, though local communities around the world face challenges both from such aspects of globalization as the spreading of Western (and, in particular, American) culture, and from the universal application of liberal moral principles, it is significant that in the latter case

² Of course, antecedence in a logical, not a temporal sense, is meant here. It is easy to imagine a case in which a person's becoming aware of the suffering of distant others might trigger a moral action by her that could not be explained by the narrow view of morality's scope that she had held up until she had gained that awareness, and in which her desire to account for her action led her to revise her view. Of course, one explanation for her action might be that at some subconscious level she had long held a moral view broader than she acknowledged even to herself, and that in revising her consciously acknowledged view, she was merely aligning it with her subconsciously held view. However that stands, it is important to note that though both our increasing interdependence and our increasing awareness of that interdependence are new circumstances, our and others' moral status as human beings have greater salience than those new circumstances: if we do not recognize distant others' moral status as human beings, awareness of harm that comes to them will *not* trigger moral responses from us; we will not see it as morally salient harm.

the challenges issue from a moral conception. For example, it is not morally imperative to wear blue jeans rather than some more traditional type of clothing, for all that one might feel left out for not conforming to fashion. (Indeed, far from there being a moral imperative to wear blue jeans, it may be morally incumbent upon others in many cases to ensure that one doesn't suffer harm for not conforming to sartorial convention.) By contrast, it is always wrong to murder, even if others in one's social clique are murdering as well, and even if they do not regard what they are doing as murder: there is an objective standard.

Third, the moral conception at its heart distinguishes the cosmopolitan view I wish to defend not only from other universal systems but from other conceptions of cosmopolitanism as well. Characterizing one such rival conception, Pratap Mehta has written:

[U]niversalism is considered imperious, presumptuous, depoliticizing, and a search for uniformity rather than contrasts. Cosmopolitanism is, by contrast, a willingness to engage with 'the Other.'³

Moderate cosmopolitanism is, for its part, marked by a willingness to engage others on terms that are not open-ended insofar as they are constrained by morality. In its

³(Mehta, 2000), p. 622.

specific elaboration of Kleingeld's and Brown's definition of cosmopolitanism as "the idea that all human beings ... do (or at least can) belong to a single community, and that this community should be cultivated,"⁴ moderate cosmopolitanism assumes the uniformity inherent in the liberal idea of the equal moral worth of all persons: *that* uniformity it understands as a necessary condition if the idea of a community encompassing all human beings is to be worth pursuing. Further, given the equally all-encompassing senses of the Greek and Latin words in which both cosmopolitanism and universalism have their roots, it is not clear why we should find in the former term more promising ground for a *salutary* willingness to engage with "the Other."⁵

⁴ (Kleingeld & Brown, 2002), p. 1.

⁵ The ancient Greek originators of the word *kosmopolitês* engaged with others, but they generally considered those others (women, non-Greeks) inferior, the legitimate objects of treatment that was, among other (worse) things, imperious and presumptuous. Given the interpretive priority that is generally assigned to local and historical contexts by those who see cosmopolitanism as an alternative to universalism, there is irony in the circumstance wherein, in order to connote engagement on the salutary terms they desire, *kosmopolites* has to be understood so differently from the way in which those who coined the term understood it. That particular irony, at least, does not arise in the case of liberal cosmopolitans, for whom the difference between universalism and cosmopolitanism is, more than anything, one of emphasis: they/we say universalism to emphasize that all of humanity is subject to morality, and they/we say cosmopolitanism to emphasize that it is to all of humanity that each person stands in a relationship of moral obligation.

The debate about the status of special obligations can be viewed as but the most recent formulation of an old problem concerning universalist versus particularist claims. However, the newfound significance that the debate has acquired of late can be attributed to the need to address pressing issues which individuals and governments ignore at their peril. As Sissela Bok writes

...Just in the last three decades, the income gap between the world's richest 20 percent and poorest 20 percent has doubled. This widening gap between the haves and have-nots, and the sheer magnitude and intensity of present suffering challenge ... all existing conceptions of human rights and duties and obligations. What does it require in practice ... to give priority either to world citizenship or to national or community allegiances? What does it mean to honor human rights or to take seriously the duty to aid fellow humans in distress? And whose obligation is it to offer assistance on the scale now needed, or to protect rights, such as those not to be killed and tortured, when they are violated by others abroad?⁶

This dissertation is comprised of the following chapters:

In **Chapter 1**, I examine the link between cosmopolitanism and two main liberal principles: individual autonomy and the equal moral worth of persons. Neither principle's validity is suspended or terminated at national frontiers. They are not location-dependent values, though they may be

⁶ (Bok, 2002), pp. 41-42. Note that the gap has widened still further since Bok wrote. See (International Labour Organization, 2008)

more popular in some places than in others: the popularity of a moral principle is not the measure of its validity. Chapter 1's role is to establish moderate cosmopolitanism's place as a liberal theory. In **Chapter 2**, I respond to some of the main criticisms leveled against moral cosmopolitanism. In some of the criticisms there is an implied attack on liberalism more generally--and indeed they might have appeared in Chapter 1 as a further type of evidence in support of cosmopolitanism's claim of being entailed by liberal principles--while others are motivated by other concerns. It is claimed that cosmopolitanism is too demanding and impractical given human limitations; that it is too abstract and idealistic; that there cannot be a moral community comprising all human beings; that there is no "universal reason"; and that the aspiration to transcend national boundaries is akin to the aspiration to transcend mortality. I show that there is both ample reason for skepticism about those claims, and ample reason to positively affirm humanity's existence as a moral community as real as the smaller communities to which we belong. In **Chapter 3**, I critique strict-cosmopolitanism, the view that humanity is the *only* moral obligation-engendering

community. Strict-cosmopolitanism's strictness consists in its insistence that for an action to be classed as moral, its primary motivation must be the desire to do good generally, and that giving priority (in the distribution of one's resources) to fellow members of one's family, nation or other groups of narrower scope than the whole of humanity, is morally justified only when it can be shown to be the most effective way to ultimately benefit humanity generally. I argue, against strict-cosmopolitanism, both that there are important costs to thinking about families and nations in the instrumental way strict-cosmopolitanism requires, and that there are positive reasons for thinking of families and nations as fundamental sources of obligation.

In **Chapter 4**, I present a positive argument for moderate cosmopolitanism, a view that sees both our identities as members of particular families and nations and our identities as members of humanity as fundamental, moral obligation-engendering identities. Moderate cosmopolitanism makes a general presumption in favor of the obligations that flow from peoples' attachments to their families and nations that does not exist in strict-cosmopolitanism's

case. The presumption follows, in part, from a liberal imperative to respect, other things being equal, people's autonomously chosen deep commitments. Considered together with the corrosive effects on intimacy and stability that the sort of instrumental valuing strict-cosmopolitans advocate with reference to families and nations can have, moderate cosmopolitanism's positive respect for autonomy should recommend it to liberals; where, and into which family, we are born, is determined by chance, but within the constraints chance and nature impose upon us there is nevertheless value to our choices about our loyalties and obligations. I show why moderate cosmopolitanism best respects those choices.

Chapter 5 aims to answer the question: What does a moderate cosmopolitan view entail in practice? Moderate cosmopolitanism's self-description as a view that sees both membership in humanity and membership in nations and families as fundamental relationships, and the obligations that arise from membership in each as non-derived, might fit well with our intuitions, but it might be asked: what does the view offer in terms of positive prescriptions? I examine two strict-cosmopolitan policy proposals--one

concerning immigration, another concerning famine relief-- and explain what reasons there are for dissatisfaction with both. Moderate cosmopolitanism offers no unitary decision procedure, in which values come with pre-assigned rank order, much less with absolute weights, and where--for any given situation requiring moral assessment--all that is required is to identify which values are relevant in order to be able to say which considerations trump other considerations. I argue that nevertheless, it is the moral-political concept best suited for motivating people to action. I conclude that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an example of a document in which concern both for human beings as such and for human beings as members of particular families and nations are balanced in an attempt to reflect our most fundamental senses of ourselves, just as moderate cosmopolitanism seeks to do.

Chapter 1: The liberalism-cosmopolitanism connection.

In this dissertation, I defend moderate cosmopolitanism as a moral-political view which bridges two opposing views of the sources of moral obligation: the view which sees our identity as members of humanity as our core moral relationship, and the view that sees humanity as an abstraction and locates the core of moral activity in the relationships we have with people in closer affiliation to us.

The link between cosmopolitanism and two main liberal principles--individual autonomy and the equal moral worth of persons--is particularly important. Neither principle's validity is suspended or terminated at national frontiers. They are not location-dependent values, though they may be more popular in some places than in others: the popularity of a moral principle is not the measure of its validity.⁷

Moral cosmopolitanism has always been controversial. Ranging from denials at the level of principle that there is any sense in speaking of a community of any kind when each of a group's members shares (purportedly) little in

⁷ There are at least three distinct--though mutually compatible--ways in which moral views can be defended. They can be shown to meet certain criteria set by reason; they can be shown to follow from conventions; or they can be identified as compatible with our moral intuitions.

the way of common experiences and purposes with most of the other members of that group, to skepticism regarding the ramifications actions, whether well or badly motivated, have on distant others, there have been challenges leveled against the basic premise from which all moral cosmopolitanisms proceed: that the whole of humanity constitutes a moral community, and that there are obligations incumbent upon us that stem from that premise.⁸

Is it compatible with a commitment to liberalism to deny that basic premise? Certainly it is compatible with the exercise of liberal freedom of expression to deny it, but that is not the relevant threshold: liberal freedom of expression is compatible with (in the sense of protecting) views more straightforwardly in tension with liberal premises than the view that humanity does not exist as a moral community.⁹

⁸ Cosmopolitanism, in the conception I will be defending, is distinguished from conceptions which--though universalist in their understanding of the scope of authority and of whom we are obligated to--ultimately distinguish persons from one another either by virtue of the relationship in which they stand to God (e.g., Election or Grace); and from conceptions (e.g., socialism) which assign less value to autonomy than to equal moral worth. I will discuss anti-cosmopolitan critiques mainly in Chapter 2, but it is worth noting that many of them neatly map on to the categories of anti-progressive criticism described in (Hirschman, 1991)

⁹ It protects, for example, the view that there should be no freedom of expression.

Liberal principles have often first been formulated with explicit reference to the whole of humanity. Even where that has not been the case-- or, more commonly, where there has been a gap between theory and practice--as a matter of logical consistency there cannot be a principled conception of the scope of liberal principles that extends more narrowly than to humanity as a whole.

Let us consider two core liberal values: personal autonomy and the equal moral worth of persons. Joseph Raz prefaces his description of autonomy in **The Morality of Freedom** by telling us about the context in which it has become a popular ideal in western industrial societies:

[Autonomy] is ... particularly suited to the conditions of the industrial age and its aftermath with their fast changing technologies and free movement of labor. They call for an ability to cope with changing technological, economic and social conditions, for an ability to adjust, to acquire new skills, to move from one subculture to another, to come to terms with new scientific and moral views. Its suitability for our conditions and the deep roots it has by now acquired in our culture contribute to a powerful case for this ideal.¹⁰

But personal autonomy's popularity in contemporary western societies should not be understood to mean that it is only now and in such societies that the concept has value or meaning. Raz continues

But it would be wrong to identify the ideal with the ability to cope with the shifting dunes of modern society. Autonomy is an ideal of self-creation. There were autonomous people in many

¹⁰ (Raz, 1986), p. 370.

past periods, whether or not they themselves or others around them thought of this as an ideal way of being.¹¹

Now, an ideal of self-creation can sound naïve if we confine ourselves to describing what that ideal is, if we say nothing about its negative definition, about the conditions the absence of which arguably accounts for much of the dignity that liberals associate with autonomy. Self-creation can sound naïve to anyone—even in a free-society—who has some sense of the extent to which conditions not subject to a person's choosing can influence a person's life. But there are many ideals which lose none of their motivating power for all our awareness that they can only ever be achieved to some degree rather than fully, and though it is likely that with some of our ideals their full achievement would conflict with the full achievement of other of our goals, awareness of such potential conflict need not entail more than a prioritizing of those of our ideals that are in tension with each other, i.e., it need not, in every case, entail jettisoning some ideals altogether for the sake of pursuing others: degrees of incompatibility can differ.

What we have observed thus far about autonomy is a) that it is an ideal of self-creation; b) that the

¹¹ (Raz, 1986), p. 370.

possibility that it may never be fully achieved need not lead us to abandon it as an ideal and c) that its potential conflict with other of our ideals need not lead us to jettison one or another of the parties to the conflict.

Now we can turn to the conditions alluded to above:

autonomy's negative definition. Raz writes:

Autonomy is opposed to a life of coerced choices. It contrasts with a life of no choices, or of drifting through life without ever exercising one's capacity to choose. ... A person whose every decision is extracted from him by coercion is not an autonomous person. Nor is a person autonomous if he is paralyzed and therefore cannot take advantage of the options that are offered to him.¹²

The challenge from cosmopolitanism in connection with autonomy is in one sense very straightforward. "Why should we suppose," cosmopolitanism asks us, "that a life of no choices or of non-exercise of one's choices would be a good life for *anyone anywhere*?" Certainly from a liberal perspective there is no reason to suppose that such a life would be good.

Now, people in dire material circumstances--lacking adequate food, clothing or shelter, for example--might seem, to have more urgent needs than the need to be autonomous individuals. Certainly the desire to alleviate their immediate want is a motivation that seems

¹² (Raz, 1986), pp. 371, 373

particularly apposite, and I do not, in arguing for an autonomy-centered conception, argue that only obligations discharged/assistance provided with a view to others' autonomy can be noble. There are good grounds, however, for thinking that we owe *more* to distant others than the mere prevention of, or alleviation of, dire material conditions. One standard for determining what we owe others is provided by autonomy: to the extent that we are capable of doing so, we are responsible for ensuring that people are able to live lives that are at least minimally self-determined.

That assessment is distinct from the assessment whether there is a duty incumbent on those with the means to do so to intervene in foreign societies in order to ensure that minimal conditions of autonomy obtain for others, though, other things being equal, the case for intervention is certainly strengthened if it is shown that so long as certain conditions obtain the removal of which requires intervention, it is impossible to lead a good life.¹³

¹³ By intervention here I mean intervention of *any* kind. On the continuum of foreign interventions, the aid work of NGO's is often easier to justify than military operations, but the question is whether there is *even* a duty of humanitarian relief, and one liberal answer to that question can be given in terms of autonomy: given that the crises in response to which humanitarian agencies provide relief often

The idea that in fundamental respects the individual person is a sovereign self-creating entity is so fundamental to our thinking, as liberals, that it can be difficult to make the imaginative leap required in order to conceive of moral and political conceptions from which that idea is absent, though some of those conceptions are still with us today, and though the idea's predominance even where it holds firm sway is a relatively recent phenomenon, historically. It is only as old as liberalism itself. John Christman writes:

In the western tradition, the view that individual autonomy is a basic moral and political value is very much a modern development. Putting moral weight on an individual's ability to govern herself, independent of her place in a metaphysical order or her role in social structures and political institutions is very much a product of the Enlightenment humanism of which contemporary liberal political philosophy is an offshoot.¹⁴

Liberalism put the individual at the center of concern in a way that was unprecedented, and it did so both because of its distinctive, new understanding of each individual's capacities (especially the Enlightenment's view of individuals' capacity for reason) and moral worth, and for a quasi-consequentialist reason: in pre-liberal conceptions

endanger life itself, it may seem odd to focus on the effects of such crises on self-creative potential. Still, a minimum condition of a good life is that it be lived, and that to the extent possible, the effects of catastrophes that impinge on it be minimized.

¹⁴ (Christman, 2003)

of political authority that did *not*¹⁵ give the individual due respect, liberalism saw justifications for a large set of oppressive rules and practices it sought to end.¹⁶

Now, individual autonomy, though central to liberalism, has never been liberalism's only value, and if there were no tension *within liberalism* between, on the one hand, the right of peoples to self-determination and the exercise of sovereignty and, on the other hand, the basic rights of individuals, the entailment by liberalism of cosmopolitan obligations would undoubtedly have appeared more straightforward.¹⁷

¹⁵ I use the past tense here, though illiberal conceptions of political authority are still very much with us, in practice as well as in thought.

¹⁶ Since an antecedent condition of perceiving that human rights are being violated is perceiving that they exist in the first instance, there is a complication in referring to a fully fledged consequentialist ground for adherence to liberal principles, and I do not mean to suggest that non-contingent beliefs came on the scene with the proviso attached: "believe this only if and insofar as it makes an actual difference in terms of action." But liberalism's understanding of the concept of individual moral worth emerged not on a field bare of action, but in response to actual oppression, which liberalism perceived to be licensed by misconceived ideas about the relationship between states and the people governed by them. The *truth or falsity* of liberalism's own ideas is not a matter to be settled by the consequences that follow from holding those ideas. But at the very least the consequences are held to count as preliminary materials for a defense.

¹⁷ The importance of the right of national self-determination became especially apparent in the wake of colonialism and the oppression associated with it, and for all that *liberation* from that oppression owed to liberal ideas, the oppression itself was tolerated, where it was not more enthusiastically supported, by liberals of the time. See (Parekh, 2000), p. 34.

It is important to be clear about the implications of those historical circumstances. Autonomy, like other liberal concepts, can be contested on its merits. But for some, liberalism's connection to colonialism is a connection at an essential level: theoretical defenses of liberal concepts are met with the suspicion that they are made in bad faith or under the spell of false consciousness. Since in the past, colonialism shaped the way in which the concept of the individual was articulated¹⁸, we must, one way of thinking goes, ever be on our guard against the concept's oppressive potentialities, even when it may appear very starkly that a particular instance of oppression we have become aware of is facilitated precisely by the absence of consciousness of,

¹⁸ It's worth noting that Parekh himself doesn't claim an *exclusive* role for colonialism in the shaping of liberal conceptions. Not all of liberalism's detractors are as faithful to the facts, however, and even for some of those that are, it suffices that colonialism was a shaping influence for them to say that liberal concepts *other* than the right to national self-determination are irredeemable, whatever their propositional content. One of the problems with that approach is that there is a great deal of oppression that is compatible with the exercise of the right of national self-determination. And yet that oppression is generally held to show only that there are other values to consider in addition to national self-determination, it is not held to nullify that right altogether. Arguably, it should indeed not nullify it, but consistency would seem to require that if in the case of one concept (the right to s-d) compatible with wrongdoing it is possible to also see that concept's virtues, that should be the case with other concepts as well: not only those concepts in which colonialism did not have a shaping role, but also those in which it did, should be judged on their merits.

or by the willful denial of, individual moral worth. David Sidorsky writes:

In the political debate champions of social and economic rights have contended that the stress on political freedom is a "neo-colonialist" device for criticizing the governments of developing countries and for evading the responsibilities of the industrialized nations to promote economic development and to effect measures of economic redistribution.¹⁹

There are two important things to bear in mind here.

The first is that the fact of the matter about the degree of political freedom in any given place should weigh at least as much, as a consideration in judgment, as the motivations any particular actor on the political scene has for stressing the importance of political freedom. That is the case as well with respect to social and economic rights. The fact of the matter with respect to *them* ought to have no less weight as a consideration than the motivations of those who would have our primary focus be on such rights, though it is worth noting that negative motivations can exist there as well: a great deal of the indigenously motivated and produced state oppression that occurs in the developing world is presented to the world as justified under the banner of social and economic rights.

Before we consider whether and in what sense the liberal concept "autonomy" implies cosmopolitanism, we

¹⁹ (Sidorsky, 1979), p. 107.

would do well to note the sense in which autonomy is a concept having to do, like cosmopolitanism, with scope: the distinction between the idea that an individual can govern herself and the idea that a metaphysical order or social structures or political institutions determine whether and to what extent she can do so, is a distinction between broader and narrower units of analysis. On the surface, at least, that distinction bears a resemblance to the distinction between cosmopolitanism and views that say that our primary obligations are to groups narrower than the whole of humanity. It is not a resemblance that by itself shows that cosmopolitanism entails autonomy or vice versa, and certainly it does not suggest that the two concepts are identical or wholly describable each in terms of the other. But conceptual resemblances can be philosophically productive even when relationships of identity, commensurability or causation are not shown by the fact of similarity.²⁰ We may better understand why a certain value

²⁰ Consider, for example, sexism and racism. Gender and race aren't commensurable concepts, neither of them is ultimately reducible to the other's terms of reference, and yet it is arguably useful to the understanding of each of those categories to observe that an attitude that is in many respects similar to the prejudice that can be held about *it*, can be held as well with respect to the other category. Certainly when we articulate moral principles, awareness of the resemblance is useful: if multiple attitudes of a particular mutually resembling type are morally problematic, their mutual resemblance is

is important to us, for example, when we analyze that value in connection with another value with which it shares particular features.

Now, we might well ask what, precisely, is signified by the fact that in the case of liberalism and cosmopolitanism, an important shared feature is skepticism. Skepticism is no mere incidental shared feature of liberalism and cosmopolitanism: historically, both liberalism and liberal cosmopolitanism came on the scene as skepticism-imbued challenges to existing views concerning political authority and the scope of obligation.

One main line of conservative criticism perceives only negative potential in cosmopolitanism, seeing in it only a threat to settled allegiances that we have come to think of as natural.²¹ It is, to be sure, legitimate to warn

not likely to be incidental to their problematic status. In racism's and sexism's case, the resemblance is at least in part due to the fact that both bigotries violate the general moral principle of the equal moral worth of persons. In cosmopolitanism's and autonomy's case, the skepticism associated with both is not held by their opponents to violate a moral *principle*, but it is held to be a morally problematic psychological disposition. This is not to say that there are no criticisms that are concerned with autonomy or with cosmopolitanism each in its own right. But to understand the more general disposition under attack, it is useful to examine more than a single concept associated with that disposition.

²¹ One thing that is interesting to note about that line of criticism is that it emanates from a point situated on the continuum of contemporary liberal democratic politics. In the case of the United States there is the further point that the country is a modern republic an important part of the founding of which involved a break with monarchy, but the

against the particular dangers that might ensue from yet another re-configuring of allegiances, but equally there is a sense in which we might wish to ask why our contemporary political arrangements, which are only the most recent ones, should be more worthy of conservation than all the arrangements that have come before, if conserving them should come at the price of tolerating large-scale injustice.

The principle of the equal moral worth of persons is the other liberal concept I mentioned, and *its* connection to cosmopolitanism is even more straightforward than autonomy's for at least two reasons: the first is that in its own name it tells us explicitly what the relevant group to which it is meant to apply is. It is not only "persons in America" or "persons in Washington DC" whose moral worth is equal to the moral worth of all other members of those groups, but "persons" *tout court*. As is the case with autonomy, in equal moral worth's case too, there is more we need to know before intervening in a foreign society than

constitutional monarchies of contemporary Europe have also seen, in modernity, fundamental changes in the structure and extent of state authority and, with those changes, changes in allegiance have come as well, often no less radical in nature than divisions and unifications of kingdoms (with the authority and allegiance changes *those* processes entailed) that occurred still earlier.

that the moral worth of that society's members is equal to our own moral worth. But knowing that their moral worth is in fact equal gives us the *beginning* of a case for intervention in instances in which we see that people are being treated in ways not compatible with recognizing their moral worth as human beings. "If we would act to try to end such treatment in our own society," cosmopolitanism challenges nationals of particular states to say, "What reasons are there not to act to try to end it abroad as well? Certainly there is not a difference in the value of the lives of people abroad as compared with our own."

An analysis of theories of moral knowledge may, on first impression, appear like a digression from an argument for cosmopolitanism. After all, there are senses in which *reasonableness* alone may suffice as a standard by which to judge particular moral principles, whether *truth* is claimed for those principles or not. Judging certain principles to be reasonable may, for example, be all that is necessary in order to motivate action to promote (or, short of that, to at least refrain from violating) those principles, and we need only to consider the ubiquity among our actions of those that are based on reasonable suppositions or

plausible hypotheses in order to wonder why anything more than reasonableness should be thought to be required if a moral principle is to have motivating force or appeal.

However, the defense of moderate cosmopolitanism requires bringing scrutiny to bear on deeply held convictions, and there is a sense in which once that sort of ground has been shaken, reasonableness might not suffice as a standard for assessing principles that make fresh demands.

In addition to our own conventions' (as liberals) having implications for the way we relate to peoples in other parts of the world, there are conventions like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights²² to which those peoples have committed themselves. Caution in influencing other societies' affairs will need to be exercised even if the standards to which we are holding those societies are ones that they (or their representatives) have agreed to themselves, but given that they are standards expressing universal moral ideals, there will be other considerations to weigh on the scales as well.

²² (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948)

One way to think about cosmopolitan justice is in terms of what we in the West need to do in order to ensure that basic human rights as specified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are respected. About those rights there is at least something approaching a formal consensus, and to some extent what cosmopolitan thinkers like Pogge and Nussbaum can be said to be doing is showing what sorts of conditions (material, institutional, etc.) need to obtain in order for those rights to be secured for people stably.²³

In chapter 4 of **World Poverty and Human Rights**, Pogge presents his own view about the application of moral principles as "contextualist moral universalism," a view "defined by the rejection of monistic universalism on the one hand and dogmatic contextualism on the other."²⁴ It is not only on cosmopolitan grounds that Rawls has been

²³ In those manifestations where I find strict-cosmopolitanism too demanding, the reason for that judgment is that it has exceeded what any reasonable inference about means and ends would tell us about the necessity of certain conditions for the achievement of rights, and gone on to pursue objectives for which a commitment to a particular (liberal) comprehensive doctrine is necessary. At the same time, I do join the cosmopolitans who are disappointed with Rawls' not having extended "justice as fairness" to the world as a whole; the view could have been extended in a manner consistent with respect for non-Western cultures, just as its application within individual liberal societies is meant to respect the fact of cultural diversity and value pluralism within such societies (e.g., through the overlapping consensus component.)

²⁴ (Pogge, 2008), p. 110

criticized for the limited scope over which he extends the difference principle, but also on the "monistic universalist" ground that there should be no distinction between the institutions that make up the basic structure of society and personal conduct, so far as the application of fundamental moral principles goes. Pogge defends Rawls' view against the monistic critique by showing that there are good reasons to limit the range of the principles of justice to the basic structure, but at the same time he criticizes Rawls for having failed to extend them to the world as a whole.

A striking feature of Pogge's, Beitz's and Nussbaum's cosmopolitan critiques of Rawls²⁵, is their non-reliance on metaphysical grounds. Indeed Rawls himself does not speak of metaphysics when he contrasts the Law of Peoples with a cosmopolitan view. He writes: "The ultimate concern of a cosmopolitan view is the well-being of individuals and not the justice of societies."²⁶ His cosmopolitan critics take him to task basically for not making his criteria for justice between societies more demanding, given the extent

²⁵ See (Beitz, 1999) and (Nussbaum, 2005)

²⁶ (Rawls, 1999), p. 119

to which the justice of societies and the well-being of individuals in those societies are intertwined, and Nussbaum also attributes to Rawls an anxiety about intervening in other societies²⁷, but one does not see a dispute at the level of comprehensive doctrine in those criticisms. Further, Nussbaum draws a distinction that seems plausible, between the criteria for saying that injustice obtains, and the criteria for justifying intervention; arguably Rawls should not have been so anxious on that score.

It is true, of course, that basic human rights attach to individuals rather than groups, and that ultimately they emanate from a liberal metaphysics that gives priority to individuals over groups, but in order to defend human rights (or even, more demandingly, to defend the (material, institutional, etc.) conditions necessary in order for human rights to be fully achieved), it is possible to point to an already ratified document and to the particular senses in which people fall short of flourishing (a falling short that at its worst means active oppression) where basic human rights aren't achieved. About every case in

²⁷ (Nussbaum, 2005), p. 206

which there are arguably oppressive consequences to respecting groups' or nations' autonomy, it is possible, rather than saying in general terms, that though respect for cultures and national self-determination are indeed liberal values, individual well-being ought always to trump them, to say that particular forms of oppression of individuals are not compatible with liberalism: respect for cultures and national self-determination, however much priority they might rightly have in particular circumstances, cannot mean that we must tolerate particular oppressive practices x or y.

Everything will then depend on the particular content of those practices, and on the extent to which it can be shown that they violate human rights to which there has already been at least a formal commitment expressed--*inter alia* in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights--on the part of people subscribing to many different comprehensive doctrines. Parekh distinguishes between a universal and a liberal moral minimum²⁸, but though that is a helpful corrective to, say, the thought that just any old case of a group's interests being given priority over the interests

²⁸ (Parekh, 2000), p. 111.

of particular individuals in it must be immoral, it is interesting to note that Parekh's distinction means that he does conceive of morality itself as universal.²⁹

The rights specified in the declaration of human rights are arguably a good place to start in thinking about what the moral minimum might consist of, though given a cosmopolitan understanding of those rights that also requires that the resources in each society, and in the world at large, be distributed with a view towards ensuring the conditions for the achievement of those rights, the liberal and moral minimums may end up not being too far apart. If they are in fact close, their closeness is not, of course, a consequence of liberal principles writ large having been accepted by non-liberal societies; it is, rather, because of an inference that if certain ends are desired (e.g., the achievement of particular rights) certain means are necessary as antecedent conditions.

²⁹ John Gray *does not* conceive of morality as universal--for a recent denial by him that it is universal, see (Gray, 2006)--and Brian Barry has pointed to the contradiction in Gray's holding that "the human world will be still richer in value if it contains not only liberal societies but also illiberal regimes that shelter worthwhile forms of life that would otherwise perish." "In order to describe a way of life as worthwhile," Barry writes in response "...we would have to have some universal criterion of value, which is precisely what [Gray's value pluralism] denies." (Barry, 2001), p. 134

If our concern is with moral action, not only with justification, then we should consider one candidate for a default way of proceeding when the right action in a particular circumstance is opaque to one: acting as though the more demanding action were right pending a final determination.³⁰

[Other good actions] are actions which require the virtues of courage or temperance, and here the moral aspect is due to the fact that they are done in spite of fear or the temptation of pleasure; they must indeed be done for the sake of some real or fancied good, but not necessarily what philosophers would call a moral good. Courage is not *particularly* concerned with saving other people's lives, or temperance with leaving them their share of the food and drink, and the goodness of *what is done* may here be all kinds of usefulness [i.e., as distinct from the goodness of what is done being (or following from) a sense of duty or the agent's motivation more generally.]³¹

In the above passage, Philippa Foot hints at one way of analyzing whether actions are moral: looking to their consequences. Consequentialism is, of course, the main alternative to views of ethics, Kant's among them, that focus on having one's actions follow from *a priori* principles.³² Ought one to act on the basis of *a priori* principles or on the basis of one's predictions regarding

³⁰ There is an analogy here with Pascal's wager, but with an important asymmetry: whereas belief for fear of consequences may not count as genuine belief, right action that is taken because one does not know what is required and seeks to at least fulfill one's obligations would, under some plausible accounts of moral action, count as moral action.

³¹ (Foot, 2002), p. 119.

³² It is worth underlining that Foot is *not* suggesting that the fact that it is to save another's life that one has risked one's own life is somehow *intrinsically* incidental, she is only suggesting that courage, as *courage*, is concerned with doing risky things in spite of one's awareness of the risks involved.

the consequences of one's actions? Judgments of character are to a great extent dependent on how that question is answered, since it will matter, for example, whether a relevant question to ask about a person is whether she has a good sense for the sorts of actions that will bring about particular consequences, or, alternatively, whether she is good at judging which particular a priori principles ought to be applied in particular cases.³³

The idea that action is virtually always better than non-action is false for much the same reason that the idea that the most demanding of multiple actions is always the action required is false. Neither action nor demandingness track moral value and it is too great a concession to value pluralism to suppose that either action or demandingness can be surrogates for deliberation.³⁴

³³ Some judgments of character do seem to be possible without that question being answered. Whether one is a good judge of shortcut devices to determine what to do in cases that are opaque, seems to be one such judgment, at least to some extent. Certainly, there can sometimes be something admirable about the use of shortcut decision-aiding devices for opaque cases. We may recall the passage in his treatment of friendship where Aristotle writes: "When people are friends, they have no need of justice, but when they are just they need friendship in addition." (Aristotle, 1962) p. 215 (Book 8, 1155a26)) Friendship, then, can be a shortcut device, or proxy indicator. But for all that it and other shortcuts can be beneficial, there are also pitfalls. One might have a wicked friend, for example.

³⁴ There is also, of course, the practical difficulty that the alternative actions among which one will have to choose will sometimes be equally demanding. And sometimes the more demanding action will cause harm, either directly or through one's neglect, by taking it, to

For a number of reasons, cosmopolitanism arouses suspicion with some commentators. Strict-cosmopolitanism can be mistaken for the only brand of cosmopolitanism available, in which case the suspicion arises that due value is not being ascribed to narrower affiliations than humanity. Sometimes any claim about humanity is treated as suspect, even claims—such as moderate cosmopolitanism’s—in which membership in humanity is not posited as an all-trumping affiliation, but only as a source of fundamental obligations alongside membership in families and nations.

But arguably an additional problem lies in the association some people have of cosmopolitanism with hubris and with the sort of vacuum-abhorring activism that is perhaps a distinctive feature of our contemporary world; certainly there is a large segment of Western society for whose members neither God nor reason provide either curbs on or supplements to action, because they are no more rational than they are religious. Action, for them, is a sort of totem, and when the lack of constraints on action combines with a claim that we have obligations to as broad

perform the less demanding action when it is the latter that *should* take precedence.

a group as humanity as a whole, the projected image is of hubris on all possible fronts.

This is something cosmopolitans should be cognizant of in arguing for cosmopolitan principles: a potential charge of action-obsessed hubris in addition to the other charges of hubris leveled against cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitans thus have one prudential reason in addition to the reason everyone has (i.e., its ineffectiveness), not to use demandingness as a guide to action, even though much of what is required of us by cosmopolitanism will in fact turn out to be demanding. Or indeed, *because* of that circumstance: since the set of demanding actions that are required may be jeopardized once demandingness is exposed as a faulty standard, it is best not to use it as a standard in the first instance.³⁵

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document agreed upon by liberal and non-liberal nations alike,³⁶ is

³⁵ All charges of hubris against cosmopolitanism are ultimately unfounded with respect to the theory itself. But we tend to assess theories in part by examining the attitudes and conduct of their advocates and practitioners.

³⁶ To be sure, there is not *universal* acceptance of the UDHR's validity. Certainly liberal regimes are more likely to adhere to the principles set forth in the UDHR's articles than illiberal regimes are likely to adhere to those principles. But many non-liberal regimes do support the UDHR at least formally, even if in reality they violate its principles, which may suggest that ultimately they know that it ought

based on two principles relevant to this discussion. The first is articulated in Article 1, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," and the second is articulated in Article 3: the right of all people to "life, liberty and security of person". These two inalienable rights are central to any liberal cosmopolitan moral view; they entail a demand that humanity be free and secure. They are also a source of controversy over the means of achieving that goal, including a debate about the legitimacy of intervention in the autonomy of individuals and nations.

Conclusion

Because their justifications are grounded in reason, rights have a universal aspect to them (in terms of the accessibility of their bases; reason is a universal feature of human beings) that most mere conventions lack. Even that aspect is not a sufficient ground for imposing liberal principles writ large on other societies, but when basic human rights are violated we have reasons additional to a defense of rationally accessible bases to rally to the aid of distant others: first there is the Universal Declaration

to be their goal to live up to those principles, that they are not just a Western imposition.

of Human Rights, which, if a nation is a signatory to it, should not be contradicted by that nation's actions. But at least as important is the fact that basic human rights protect the objective minimal interests of all human beings, independently of whether violators of such rights recognize that they do so and violate them willfully, or whether they are ignorant about the special severity of the harm they do,³⁷ and indeed, independently even of whether those whose rights are violated recognize that special severity. It may be expected of us as liberals, that we should have particularly acute sensitivity regarding basic human interests. But whatever may be said about other liberal sensibilities and their applicability or non-applicability beyond liberal societies, the aspiration must be for sensitivity about the interests that human rights protect to be shared by all human beings.

³⁷ It is hard to imagine gross violators of human rights being ignorant of doing any harm at all by their actions, even if they conceive differently of basic human interests.

Chapter 2: Arguments against cosmopolitanism.

Objections to cosmopolitanism abound: that it is too demanding and impractical given human limitations; that it is too abstract and idealistic; that there cannot be a moral community comprising all human beings; that there is no "universal reason"; and that the aspiration to transcend national boundaries is akin to the aspiration to transcend mortality. I argue that cosmopolitanism is not an inordinately abstract or idealistic moral view, that the transcendence it requires is not overly ambitious, and that there are some serious flaws in its critics' underlying premises.

The admission of our limitations, which is often only possible having made contact with transcendence or even its possibility—an encounter that reveals the true extent of our limitations—can have the unexpected effect *not* of making us crave for the inaccessible transcendent, but rather of making us cast our lot more firmly with those who surround us, those with whom we can reasonably pursue justice in the more limited fashion possible for humanity. —Patrick Deneen³⁸

³⁸ (Deneen, 2000), p. 229. Not all transcendence is the same. One sense of the term "transcend" is simply to "go beyond, lie outside, or exceed," and it would be accurate to say, about a house part of which lay within a particular city's boundaries, and another part of which lay outside of them, that it had transcended those boundaries. Using "transcend" to describe the case of a house like that might sound a little lofty because the term is usually reserved for use in reference to the crossing of less arbitrary sorts of boundaries than the ones between cities—one sense of "transcendent" is "existing apart from, not subject to the limitations of, the material universe" (McKean, 2003, p. 1263)—but generally we don't treat the desire to have a house part of which lies on one side of a city's limits and another part of which lies on the other side as anything like as ambitious as the desire that, say, for a particular house's case, the law of gravity should be suspended and the house should float in midair, and the legitimate use

There is an irony in my calling attention to limitations on the transformative powers of words and consciousness, in the context of the beginning of a critique of Patrick Deneen's argument against cosmopolitanism. For Deneen is concerned with limitations as well, albeit with different ones. In his interpretation of the *Odyssey*--with the glimpses that story's hero gets of immortality and comprehensive knowledge, and with his choice to return to Ithaca, to mortality, to partial knowledge, and to partial justice--the story is a prototypical case of admitting human limitations after contact with the transcendent. On Deneen's account, glimpse-of-transcendence-chastened admissions of human limitations have a *salutary* effect when they make us "cast our lot more firmly with those who surround us," but it is hard not to see the deck as stacked in such a way as to

of "transcendent" to describe both is unlikely to make most of us see the former sort of desire as any closer in its degree of ambition to the latter. Certainly the legitimate use of the word in both cases would not change the *fact of the matter* about the horizon of possibility with respect to achieving city boundary-transcendence as compared with the horizon of possibility with respect to achieving gravity-transcendence: for all the power that words can have, for all that under certain conditions saying that a thing is so makes it so,--see (Austin, 1962)--it is *not* in the power of speech to do more than suggest that multiple circumstances with respect to which the same word is used resemble each other in some respect. Words cannot make the resemblance itself closer simply by pointing to it; they can make us conscious of it, but the extent to which there *is* a resemblance is a fact independent of our consciousness and unalterable by it.

make that outcome the only one that can be salutary: the alternative with which it is juxtaposed is "to crave for the inaccessible transcendent."

Some types of transcendence are indeed inaccessible. Is cosmopolitanism's one of them? Or is it, rather, more like the transcendence achieved by a house on two sides of a city line?³⁹ Do the obstacles impeding achievement of cosmopolitanism warrant our calling it inaccessible just as immortality is inaccessible? Whether literature or Scripture are likely to resolve the matter better than reason can, it is worth noting that even so far as literature and Scripture are concerned, the transcendences we are explicitly confronted with for which a supernatural sphere is explicitly shown to be necessary are, precisely, transcendence of the limitations of human knowledge and transcendence of mortality. All sorts of interpretations are possible of the silences of literature and Scripture with respect to various issues, but with the particular issue of cosmopolitanism we should consider that perhaps the most straightforward inference we might draw both from

³⁹ The bureaucratic problems of such a house's owners, great though they might be, will be of an altogether different order of magnitude than the ones confronted by someone with the desire to live forever, to know everything, or to see her house levitate.

Odysseus' being offered immortality by Calypso but *not* cosmopolitan moral sensibility, and from a Tree of Cosmopolitan Moral Sensibility's *not* being one of the trees forbidden to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, is in fact the correct inference to draw: from the issue of cosmopolitanism's *not* being raised in supernatural settings we might infer that there is nothing at all supernatural required in order for a person to develop cosmopolitan moral sensibilities, that such sensibilities can be developed in altogether earthly settings. It is still open to us, of course, to draw analogies between those transcendences that are impossible without recourse to the supernatural and those that aren't, but such analogies will only work so far: analogies can only call our attention to similarities between the things they compare; they cannot erase the differences. It isn't self-evident that a sense of solidarity with the whole of humanity would not contribute to making the world a more just place than it is, and neither is it clear in what way the aspiration to make the world more just is comparable to the aspiration to live forever, though (as a case of something which human

action can sometimes influence to *some* degree) it might be comparable to the desire to live *longer*. Deneen writes:

The choice that Odysseus makes on Ogygia in refusing Calypso's long-standing offer of immortality reveals a centrally important feature of the human brush with transcendence. Not only is such transcendence foreign to being human at some level, but in the struggle to ascertain which is more centrally human—our aspirations or our limitations—the choice for the latter in many ways deepens our commitments to humans in ways that a devotion to "humanity" or to the "divine" cannot. Curiously, the lack of recognition by Nussbaum of the attractions of divine transcendence while considering Odysseus's choice seems intimately related to her subsequent downgrading of commitments to particular humans, as opposed to the priority of "humanity" in her later writings on cosmopolitanism.⁴⁰

If Martha Nussbaum *had* recognized the attractions of divine transcendence, the implication here is, perhaps she would not have given commitment to humanity priority over commitments to particular humans. That implication places an extraordinary burden on the mere recognition of the attraction of a thing. After all, even if Deneen is right to perceive attractions in divine transcendence, there are arguably reasons to take humanity out of inverted commas and to try to address problems that do afflict it in aggregate. For example, while it generally has at least a sad aspect to it (even in those cases when it is also noble, or also brings an end to pain, etc.), death is sadder still when we have reason to think that in a world which human beings could have made more just, some lives

⁴⁰ (Deneen, 2000), p. 228.

end half as soon, for no good reason (the luck of being born in a particular country is not a good reason in the sense of having any moral weight), as other lives.

Nussbaum writes:

The fact that the nation-state is the fundamental political unit does not prevent one from discovering to what an astonishing degree the luck of being born in a particular country influences life chances. To take just a single example, life expectancy at birth ranges from 78.6 years in Hong Kong and 78.2 years in Iceland and Sweden to 39.0 years in Sierra Leone. This is not just, and we had better think about it. Not just think, do.⁴¹

Now, in response to the global state of affairs with respect to life expectancy, we can observe, as with many bad states of affairs, that even when all who have power to influence circumstances have the best intentions, and even when they perceive injustice where it exists, it is possible (indeed, it is often likely) both for reasons beyond human control and for reasons to do with human

⁴¹ (Nussbaum, Reply, 2002), p. 135. The figures Nussbaum cites are from the United Nations *Human Development Report* of 1995. The UN's 2006 figures (averages of projections from 2005-2010) range from 82.6 years in Japan (with an increase for Hong Kong's to 82.2, for Iceland to 81.8 and for Sweden to 80.9) to 39.6 in Swaziland (with an increase for Sierra Leone to 42.6) The United States' average is projected to increase to 78.2, though both Germany (whose 1995 figure was equal to the US's 76.0 that year and is projected at 79.4 in the 2006 report) and Finland (whose 1995 figure was 75.7 and is projected at 79.3 in the 2006 report) are expected to surpass it, as are all the other countries in the top 15 in the overall development ranking. The US is twelfth on that overall list, which is based on a formula involving a number of measures of development, including life expectancy. Given that the US has the highest GDP of all countries, its standing in the development ranking suggests something we may already be aware of: that wealth--which is highly correlated with life expectancy and other measures of development--is not distributed anywhere near equally within the country. See (World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision, 2006); (United Nations Development Programme, 2008); and (List of Countries by GDP, 2008)

nature, for things to go wrong and for injustice to persist. One might, that observation notwithstanding, choose to work towards making the state of affairs more just, e.g., by working in concert with others to influence one's government—if one is a citizen of a liberal democracy and has such freedom—to increase the foreign aid spent on programs targeting the diseases that contribute to lower life expectancies in the underdeveloped world, or by contributing to an NGO which implements such programs. Just how much priority it is necessary to give humanity over commitments to particular humans in order to make a significant contribution towards global justice in that sort of way is difficult to know. But it's easy enough to see that we are falling short, and that for many of us the reasons for falling short have less to do with having made contact with the transcendent and consequently having cast our lot more firmly with those around us, and more to do with a failure to make the imaginative leap required in order to see ourselves in the circumstances distant others face, or in order to see that distant others have claims on us by virtue of our shared humanity, in part simply because we are able to help them, but also, in part, because of the

sense in which we can be said to actively contribute to the present unjust state of affairs.⁴² Deneen writes:

The embrace of death is representative of an array of limiting features to human existence, and the admission that we would be incapable of making, or unwilling to make, Odysseus's choice, might give us pause as to what other implications that stance would entail.⁴³

But whatever else it may represent, the embrace of death surely doesn't mean that we should not try to prevent death from occurring unjustly to the extent that it *is* within our ability to do so. Deneen contrasts two remarks about the embrace of death, by way of underscoring the extent to which that embrace is, on his account, a mark of moral seriousness. The first remark is by Wilson Carey

McWilliams, who writes:

The willingness to die is an ultimate guarantee of moral standards, of purposes, and of the self; it establishes control over the tendency of the passions to seek survival at all costs, not excluding the destruction of the ego, the identity, of man.⁴⁴

The second remark is Nussbaum's. She writes:

Who, given the chance to make a spouse or child or parent or friend immortal, would not take it? (I would grab it hungrily, I confess at the outset.)⁴⁵

Those two remarks may not in fact be at odds with each other in the way Deneen seems to suggest. Nussbaum does not say, after all, that there are no values she would be willing to die for, that she would not see it as noble in

⁴² See (Pogge, 2008), p. 18-26

⁴³ (Deneen, 2000), p. 211.

⁴⁴ (McWilliams, 1973), p. 43, quoted in (Deneen, 2000), p. 238, n. 1.

⁴⁵ (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 1990) p. 368, quoted in (Deneen, 2000), p. 238, n. 1.

others if they endangered or lost their lives for certain values, or that she thinks mortality can in fact be transcended. Certainly she does not suggest that the hypothetical situation she describes is at all a likely one. We can notice, too, that it is precisely about the chance of bestowing immortality on *those surrounding her* that she speculates, perhaps a sign that we should not impute to her too thoroughgoing a downgrading of commitments to one's own any more than we should understand her as under-appreciating the link between morality and a person's willingness to die. If McWilliams' comment were juxtaposed not with Nussbaum's speculation about immortality, but with the life expectancy statistics she cites, it would be clearer that there are at least two mutually compatible senses of coming to terms with death: one sense does indeed involve recognizing the constraints nature imposes upon us, but another sense involves recognizing how much of the death that occurs in our world is a consequence of human-produced injustice. In the first sense, to refer to death is not only to refer to the end of life, but also to allude to human limitations generally. But the second sense reminds us that even death itself, the

limitation in comparison with which all others pall, often comes sooner to some than to others because of manmade circumstances.

Immediately after saying that she would hungrily grab immortality for her loved ones if offered it, Nussbaum writes:

And yet we don't seem to know very clearly what it is we are wishing when we wish that. And we may well suspect that there is an incoherence lurking somewhere in the wish; that what we actually love and prize would not survive such translations. That we may be doomed or fortunate to be human beings simply, beings for whom the valuable things in life don't come apart so neatly from the fearful and terrible.⁴⁶

Not only is her speculation about immortality marked by concern for those surrounding her, it is also marked far more by an expression of ambivalence couched in what might be seen as Odyssean language of chastened desire for transcendence, than by a morality-undermining denial of the connection between purposes, moral standards and the self and the willingness to die: the former expression appears explicitly; the latter denial does not appear at all, an absence that seems to count against the inference that on the question of how important the willingness to die is, Nussbaum and McWilliams disagree. We can reasonably assume that it is not an implication of McWilliams' view that for

⁴⁶ (Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 1990), p. 368.

moral standards' sake it is necessary to accept the unjust, preventable premature deaths of others, the only sort of deaths about the non-acceptance of which Nussbaum is explicit. Saying that one would grab immortality for one's loved ones if given the chance is no more an expression of one's non-acceptance of (even one's loved ones') mortality than saying that given the chance, one would have grabbed a taller height for oneself is an expression of one's non-acceptance of one's short height: acceptance, in both cases, hinges on recognition of the fact that one has *not* been given the sorts of chances in question.

Deneen's argument against cosmopolitanism can in one sense be interpreted as belonging to a particular rhetorical line commonly deployed against progressive ideas, which Albert Hirschman labels "the futility thesis," and which says

that in one way or another any alleged change is, was or will be largely surface, façade, hence illusory, as the 'deep' structures of society remain wholly untouched.⁴⁷

There is an obvious sense in which it is an awkward fit: Deneen suggests that even such actual change as may come about as a result of thinking about our allegiances in the

⁴⁷ (Hirschman, 1991), p. 43.

way Nussbaum proposes is likely to be undesirable if it comes "at the cost of weakening people's ties to local affiliations and loyalties,"⁴⁸ and *that* worry is precisely not about surface changes that leave deep structures intact, but about changes that threaten deep structures. But the sense in which there is also a "*plus ça change plus c'est la meme chose*," aspect to his argument is in its insistence on immutable human limitations, one of which is the inability to modify our allegiances so that they encompass a wider circle. The classification of that particular inability triggers skepticism, however, insofar as the sort of loyalty that it now holds to stretch our capacities to their limits is itself a phenomenon only as old as the modern nation-state, which itself required transcending allegiances that were still more local. That transcendence too, was constrained by human limitations, and yet it still achieved a great deal insofar as it increased the scope of mutual concern. That was not all that patriotism did, of course, but insofar as cosmopolitanism sees many of the problems associated with patriotism as emanating from its scope of concern not being

⁴⁸ (Deneen, 2000), 218. Deneen is here summarizing the points of convergence of the various critics of Nussbaum's article "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism," but it is evident that he joins them.

still wider, the burden of explaining why we should rest content with problems that are likely to plague us so long as we do not transcend patriotism to some degree should not fall on the shoulders of those who advocate cosmopolitanism.

Deneen writes:

Cosmopolitans often evince the certitude that irrational religious beliefs, often manifested in persecution and intolerance, will give way to either the willingness to forgo religion altogether or to a naturalistic or deistic piety that offers a moral code without accompanying threats of punishment from a divine being or a class of clerics to enforce them. Informing all of these beliefs, cosmopolitans exhibit an underlying certainty that all of these outcomes can be effected by a properly designed educational approach, rationally conceived, widely disseminated, universally applicable, and irresistible in its effect once its teachings were moved from the elite intellectual arena to the populace at large.⁴⁹

Now, in fact it is neither necessary nor sufficient, as a condition for holding a cosmopolitan view of justice or moral obligation, to hold any of the above views, much less to be certain of them, and even if they were all wrong and all cosmopolitans believed them, there would be a "guilt by association" aspect to the implication that because they were wrong, cosmopolitanism's particular propositional claims must be wrong as well. We will not examine here all of the beliefs mentioned, but it is worth briefly

⁴⁹ (Deneen, 2000), p. 218.

considering the one among them about which cosmopolitans are said to exhibit an underlying certainty that informs their other beliefs: the belief in a universally applicable educational approach, a belief which—however the question of its necessity to cosmopolitanism stands—may daunt us less if we understand the extent to which it builds on already existing arrangements. The civic education curriculum in the state schools of liberal democracies generally consists *both* of particularistic elements (e.g., teaching the history of the particular nation in question, its particular symbols, celebrations and commemorations, etc.) and of elements that are more universal (e.g., seeing how that nation's governing institutions are one sort of manifestation among possible others, of democratic values such as equal representation, a balance of legislative v. executive v. judicial powers, etc.) The type of abstract thought involved in the universal elements evidently does *not* preclude sentimental attachment to one's own nation's particular institutions, and still less does it foster some sort of wholesale skepticism, though it probably does in some sense lead to a healthy kind of critical thinking about institutional immutability: if a particular

institution functions better in another liberal democracy than it does in one's own, perhaps there are aspects of that better functioning that can be replicated. Perhaps not everything is determined by culture, luck or metaphysical necessity, and perhaps notwithstanding human limitations we have some hope of improving our situation. In any case, Nussbaum herself is clear enough about the insufficiency of abstract thought alone for a cosmopolitan educational curriculum,⁵⁰ but to the extent that referring to "a rationally conceived, ... universally applicable" educational approach is meant to express a worry about too taxing a reliance on abstract thought, we can again ask why, given the extent to which there is already a reliance on abstract thought in the contemporary civic education curricula of liberal democracies, we should suppose that cosmopolitan education's reliance on it will inevitably be too demanding.

The general claim leveled against cosmopolitanism, that it is inordinately idealistic, has more surface plausibility than the particular claim that the proportions of cosmopolitanism's idealism are somehow akin to the

⁵⁰ See (Nussbaum, Reply, 2002), pp. 139-141.

desire to live forever. Catherine Lu writes,

characterizing realist objections to cosmopolitanism:

The moral community of humankind, posited by Nussbaum and other cosmopolitan theorists, does not accord with the reality of the human condition. Because we live in a broken rather than united world, amongst self-interested rather than altruistic groups, no harmony or reconciliation of universal and particular, public and private, or international and national interests can be assumed, or perhaps, even attained.⁵¹

Lu concedes that

[i]dealistic cosmopolitanism is intricately associated with expressions of the cosmopolitan ideal in European Enlightenment thought, which stressed the significance of human reason in the advancement of civilization. A belief in the "unity and immutability of reason"—that it was "the same for all thinking subjects, all nations, all epochs, and all cultures"—gave the eighteenth century a complacent attitude about the inevitability of moral and intellectual progress guided by reason.⁵²

⁵¹ (Lu, 2000), pp. 246-247.

⁵² (Lu, 2000), p 247. Himmelfarb, for her part, calls cosmopolitanism a dangerous utopian illusion, and argues that the history of ideologies of cosmopolitan scope--like communism--is not inspiring. As the values liberal cosmopolitanism promotes are Western, she is skeptical about the idea of spreading them beyond the West.

To pledge one's fundamental allegiance to cosmopolitanism is to try to transcend not only nationality but all the actualities, particularities, and realities of life that constitute one's natural identity. Cosmopolitanism has a nice, high-minded ring to it, but it is an illusion, and, like all illusions, perilous. (Himmelfarb, 2002)

Deneen, attacking cosmopolitanism from another angle, attributes belief in reason-driven progress not only to contemporary and Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, but also, to ancient cosmopolitanism; the differences between those three variants of cosmopolitanism are, we are told, "slight." (Deneen, 2000), p. 217. A footnote refers readers to John Dewey, but not to any pre-Enlightenment cosmopolitans whose optimism about progress we might compare with his. The history of the twentieth century shows us that reason does not always prevail and that monstrously unjust actions can be committed on a massive scale. But it is not clear why this should have led so many to disparage the Enlightenment conception of "humanity," when the monstrosities in question consisted precisely in actions not consistent with belief in humanity as a moral community.

But she goes on to explain why that sort of complacency is far from a necessary or inevitable component of cosmopolitanism. It is worth considering a pretty non-complacent passage by Nussbaum herself:

My morning newspaper today brings information about the deaths of thousands of (mainly female) orphans in China from malnutrition. The very existence of such news opens possibilities of action for the world citizen, possibilities ranging from financial support for Human Rights Watch to thinking and writing to (where it is open to individuals) more direct participation in deliberations about the welfare of children and women. One can do all these things, and the fact that there is no world state is no excuse for not doing them.⁵³

One might add that neither should promoting cosmopolitan justice in the sorts of ways Nussbaum mentions hinge on resolving the question whether reason is, as it is characterized in the Enlightenment view Lu describes, unified or immutable. Hilary Putnam, for example, writes:

[I]t is one thing to say that poverty is an injustice that people inflict on other people, and not a law of nature; it is another thing to say what can and should be done about it. This latter requires not "universal reason" in the traditional philosophical sense, which is supposed to require nothing more than armchair reflection, but the kind of critical learning from experience that John Dewey advocated (which he called "intelligence," precisely because of the connotations of "reason" in the philosophical literature). The alternative to the kind of universal reason that Martha Nussbaum's Cynics thought they had available to them is *situated intelligence*.⁵⁴

Though that passage appears in the context of Putnam's explaining a difference he perceives between his own view and the cosmopolitan conception Nussbaum argues for,

⁵³ (Nussbaum, Reply, 2002), p. 135.

⁵⁴ (Putnam, 2002), pp. 96-97.

Deweyan situated intelligence is likely to yield the same array of concrete answers with respect to what can be done about the problem as Kantian/Nussbaumian universal reason does: the criteria for distinguishing better from worse reasons and for determining how much weight to assign to some reasons as compared with others would seem to matter more than the label the deliberative process is assigned.⁵⁵

Just two sentences before he disavows universal reason,

Putnam writes:

I believe that we need to condemn the conditions that poor people everywhere daily experience as unjust, as contrary to the most elementary principles of morality, and not simply as contrary to "our" values, in the style of Richard Rorty.⁵⁶

What matters for cosmopolitanism, then, is not the unity or immutability of *reason* (though these may well be properties of reason independently of the non-necessity that they be so), but the universal nature of *morality*: morality must be conceived of as universal at least insofar as is necessary for references to the most elementary principles of morality generally, not just "our" morality, to be comprehensible.

⁵⁵ Deneen refers to Dewey as a cosmopolitan ((Deneen, 2000), p. 217), and evidently attaches more weight to the affinity between Dewey and Nussbaum than to the differences Putnam is concerned to emphasize between Dewey's and Nussbaum's conceptions of reason. Certainly the affinity would seem to be more important if the policy outcomes likely to ensue from the two modes of reasoning were compared.

⁵⁶ (Putnam, 2002), p. 96.

Richard Rorty, though he is not an anti-cosmopolitan, cites an example that is challenging to anyone who believes in equal moral worth:

When a hospital is deluged with an impossibly large flood of victims of a catastrophe, the doctors and nurses begin to perform triage: they decide which of the victims are "medically feasible" - which ones are appropriate recipients of the limited medical resources available. ... When we realize that it is unfeasible to rescue a person or group, it is as if they had already gone before us into death. Such people are, as we say, 'dead to us.' ... For the sake of their own sanity, and for the sake of the less grievously wounded patients who are admitted to the hospital, the doctors and nurses must simply blank out on all those moaning victims who are left outside in the street. They must cease to think about them, pretend that they are already dead.⁵⁷

But for all that it is provocative of thought, it is worth noting that the analogy Rorty draws is problematic. Rorty compares the American underclass--insofar as they are told that it is politically unfeasible to remedy their situation--to accident victims who are told that it is unfeasible to offer them medical treatment,⁵⁸ but while there can be ethical dilemmas that lead to one judgment rather than another being made about the medical feasibility of a potential patient, one is *not* saying that one person's life which one has judged less able to benefit from medical care has less *intrinsic value* than another person's life which one has judged better able to benefit from such care. By contrast, telling the underclass that

⁵⁷ (Rorty, 1996), p. 13.

⁵⁸ (Rorty, 1996), p. 13.

it is politically unfeasible to remedy their situation amounts, basically, to saying that we do not view the underclass as having moral worth equal to our own. It amounts to such a statement precisely because it is others' *not* recognizing the underclass as having equal moral worth that makes remedying their situation politically unfeasible: there would be a need for medical triage even if all doctors viewed all patients as having equal moral worth, whereas there would not be a permanent underclass if all citizens viewed their fellow citizens as having equal moral worth, and acted in ways consistent with that belief.

Rorty writes:

These doctors and nurses illustrate the point that if you cannot render assistance to people in need, your claim that they form part of your moral community is empty.⁵⁹

Doctors and nurses, however, render a very particular type of assistance by virtue of practicing their professions. Consider the case of a doctor or nurse part of whose taxes have gone to fund a state educational system from which a patient they decided was medically unfeasible had benefited until catastrophe struck him or her. Why should medical triage, rather than contribution to public education, be thought of as the action reflecting a doctor's or nurse's

⁵⁹ (Rorty, 1996), p. 13.

view about who is a fellow member of that doctor's or nurse's moral community? Another way to see Rorty's error is to consider that the very reason that triage based on *medical* criteria is necessary is precisely that in terms of *moral worth* we are all equally deserving.

Is it necessary for us to blank out humanity beyond the particular communities we live in, in order to better help our fellow community members? Rorty's triage analogy seems inadvertently to show why our being better able to help some people more than others in some respects does *not* mean that those whom we are less able to help are not part of our moral community. Certainly membership in a moral community need not depend on being able to render assistance in the same way or in equal measure to all the other members of that community, any more than it depends on some sort of reciprocity of identical action on the part of fellow community members: it would be reasonable for a doctor to expect the moral community of which she was a member to render medical assistance to her if she needed it, but it would not be reasonable for her to expect that each of her patients be able to help her in ways that required medical expertise. The latter expectation would

not be reasonable even with respect to a small community, and the former expectation would be reasonable for her to have from humanity at large if the idea that humanity at large is a moral community gained wider currency.⁶⁰

Rorty writes:

Thinking of other people as part of the same "we" depends not only on willingness to help those people but on belief that one is *able* to help them. In particular, answering the question "who are we?" with "we are members of a moral community which encompasses the human species" depends on an ability to believe that we can avoid economic triage.⁶¹

Since as we noted above about the underclass, in their case the judgment of unfeasibility is an expression not of their fellow citizens' viewing them as having equal moral worth but failing to act in a way commensurate with that valuing, but of many of their fellow citizens' not viewing them as having equal moral worth in the first instance, "triage" has an odd ring here. Would something analogous to medical triage be required so far as economic priorities went even if all of us (especially all of us in the affluent West) viewed all other members of humanity as having moral worth equal to our own? Certainly a ranking of economic

⁶⁰ As things already stand, there is an ethical requirement on the part of doctors to treat those who come to them in dire need independently of community membership, or, we might say, with membership in humanity sufficing: note that doctors must treat even their countries' enemies' wounded.

⁶¹ (Rorty, 1996), p. 15.

priorities given limited resources would be necessary, but only to the extent that such a ranking took account in a similar fashion to the account medical triage takes, of where the resources in question could do the most good independently of recipients' local community membership, would it be reasonable to speak of a *fair* triage. Rorty writes:

[T]he rich parts of the world may be in the position of somebody proposing to share her one loaf of bread with a hundred starving people. Even if she does share, everybody, including herself, will starve anyway.⁶²

Farid Abdel-Nour writes:

[W]hy does Rorty think his conceptualization of the problem is a meaningful alternative to the admittedly problematic hypocrisy and self-deception of the disingenuous sharer of the loaf of bread? With her self-deception and hypocrisy the latter at least acknowledges the others and regards them enough to address and consider them. When she refuses to exclude from her conception of "we" the ones who she in fact chooses to let starve (that is, those with whom she decides not to share her loaf), she evinces her deep commitment to other-regard. Her self-deception and hypocrisy are signs of her inability to avert her gaze from their starving faces.⁶³

Now, it may be a leap to infer a *deep* commitment from a person's refusal to exclude people from a theoretical conception while at the same time that person knows that a choice she has made will allow those people to starve. If we think, for example, in terms of basic human rights, and

⁶² (Rorty, 1996), p. 10.

⁶³ (Abdel-Nour, 2000), p. 214.

of how notwithstanding the fact that any particular one of us can only do so much to ensure that such rights are respected throughout the world, every person deserves to have his or her rights respected, we are simply articulating the universal scope of our "we," but the articulation itself is only a thin preliminary sign of commitment. But certainly hypocrisy can be better than having too narrow a commitment in the first instance, and as Thomas Pogge shows, commenting on the same passage of Rorty's, the loaf-dividing analogy is misleading in another sense as well:

[T]his presumption ignores the enormous extent of global inequality. As we have seen, the aggregate shortfall of all these people in severe poverty amounts to barely \$300 billion annually—well under 1 percent of the aggregate annual gross national incomes of the high-income economies. On any credible account of Rorty's recognitional capacities, and ours, he and the rest of us could still recognize ourselves quite comfortably after accepting reforms that entail a 1 percent reduction in our standard of living for the sake of eradicating severe poverty worldwide.⁶⁴

Pogge's reference to the ability to recognize ourselves comes in response to his reading the above remark by Rorty in connection with another remark, where Rorty tells us:

[A] politically feasible project of egalitarian redistribution of wealth, requires there to be enough money around to insure that, after the redistribution, the rich will still be able to recognize themselves—will still think their lives worth living. The only way in which the rich can think of themselves as part of the same moral community with the poor is by reference to some

⁶⁴ (Pogge, 2008), p. 10.

scenario which gives hope to the children of the poor without depriving their own children of hope.⁶⁵

One might add that even if to make up the shortfall, the rich within high-income economies were progressively taxed 2 percent⁶⁶ of their pre-tax incomes in addition to the existing taxes assessed from them, it would require a peculiar understanding of hope to see one's children as deprived of it as a consequence of such a measure, and a peculiar understanding of the value of life such that it would seem to one to cease to be worth living as a consequence of such a measure.

Though in order to address the requirements of cosmopolitan justice it is necessary to cite data that give us a sense of the extent of injustice that currently obtains, there is an objection that can be raised to Rorty's "loaf divided by 101" analogy even before we know what the relevant figures are: global justice does not require an equal distribution of world wealth among all human beings any more than justice within a particular country requires wealth to be distributed equally among all of that country's citizens. Globally as well as

⁶⁵ (Rorty, 1996), p. 15.

⁶⁶ I.e., 100% more than what would be required if everyone in high-income countries were taxed an equal percentage.

domestically, distributive justice may require only (what is an ambitious goal in terms of higher-income countries' wills, but not in terms of what we would have to sacrifice) that there not be extreme poverty and extreme inequality. If the loaf were divided in a fair triage scheme, those most in need would get the most and those least in need would get the least, instead of everyone's starving due to an equal distribution, or of the poor's continuing to starve because the distribution was both unequal and unfair. Fair triage is the sort of distribution consistent with recognition of others' equal moral worth, but arguably *pace* Rorty, there is sense in speaking of such a community even though the triage now in operation is anything but fair: it can be spoken of both as an aspiration and as a standard by which to judge our current arrangements and inadequacies.

Pogge points out that Rorty's assumptions fit Hirschman's jeopardy thesis, which "asserts that the proposed change, though perhaps desirable in itself, involves unacceptable costs or consequences of one sort or another."⁶⁷ As is the case with the other theses in

⁶⁷ (Hirschman, 1991), p. 81.

Hirschman's typology, it is not the case that there can be no proposed progressive changes that are in fact vulnerable to the objections in question. It is easy to conceive of progressive changes for which the costs or consequences would indeed be unacceptable, just as, with reference to the futility thesis mentioned earlier, it is possible to think of reforms that would indeed be futile given some deeply structured aspects of society. But it does not suffice to *assert*, with respect to any particular reform, that it is either futile or jeopardizing. These are flaws that need to be shown. The most direct way to show them would be to refer either to flaws of logic or to flaws in empirical data, and the deployment of metaphors and analogies is by definition less direct.⁶⁸ For all that distinguishes Rorty's analogies with respect to hospitals and loaves of bread from Deneen's analogy with respect to the wish to live forever, and for all that they can be said to fit different rhetorical categories, there is, implicit in both of their arguments, an exaggerated view of what cosmopolitanism requires of us. We can notice the same

⁶⁸ Metaphors and analogies can nevertheless be illustrative of genuine problems but metaphors themselves are vulnerable to criticism when they exaggerate either the demands or the likely consequences of a proposed reform.

feature as well in the next writer we turn to, John Gray. First, we can note his general view of the Enlightenment. About it, and about the task of contemporary liberal theory, Gray writes:

The world-historical failure of the Enlightenment project—in political terms, the collapse and ruin, in the late twentieth century, of the secular, rationalist and universalist political movements, liberal as well as Marxist, that that project spawned, and the dominance in political life of ethnic, nationalist and fundamentalist forces—suggests the falsity of the philosophical anthropology upon which the Enlightenment project rested. In this philosophical anthropology, cultural difference was conceived as ephemeral, even an epiphenomenal incident in human life and history. ... The task for liberal theory, as I see it, is ... to attempt to reconcile the demands of a liberal form of life with the particularistic character of human identities and allegiances—to re-theorize liberalism as itself a particular form of common life.⁶⁹

Although Gray is more an anti-universalist, strictly speaking, than an anti-cosmopolitan,⁷⁰ what he says about humanity is striking. At the beginning of **Al Qaeda and What it Means to Be Modern**, Gray writes:

"[H]umanity" is itself a myth, a dusty remnant of religious faith. In truth there are only humans, using the growing knowledge given them by science to pursue their conflicting ends.⁷¹

But it is not under the spell of some myth, it is rather by virtue of our recognition of certain traits—not least among them, certain basic needs--we share in common with other humans, that we do coherently speak of "humanity," and to

⁶⁹ (Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake*, 1995), p. 65-66

⁷⁰ See (Gray, *Easier Said Than Done*, 2006), for a favorable review by him of a book on cosmopolitanism, and for the distinction he draws between universal morality and cosmopolitanism.

⁷¹ (Gray, *Al Qaeda and What It Means to Be Modern*, 2003), p. 4.

speaking only of the presence of conflicting ends is to fail to adequately describe reality. After all, the members of a single family or a single nation can have conflicting ends as well, but we do not generally take that to mean that the only ends they can have are conflicting ones, or that those of their ends that do conflict render the existence of families or nations a "myth." It is unclear, then, why we should suppose that the only ends that humans qua humans have are ones that conflict with those of all other humans qua humans, such as to render "humanity" meaningless.⁷²

A similar inference from the ubiquity of conflict to the impossibility of cosmopolitanism is drawn by Lee Harris, who writes:

...[T]he whole attempt to frame the question as a choice between patriotism and cosmopolitanism turns out to be illusory, because it assumes that one may have an undivided allegiance to the community of all human beings on the planet, when in fact this is impossible as long as human beings are capable of dividing themselves into two conflicting camps—and it makes no difference what constitutes the source of the structural antagonism embodied in this conflict.⁷³

⁷² Gray has written "To be at risk of genocide or subject to torture is an evil for all human beings whatever their beliefs. These evils are not culture-relative, and protection from them is a species-wide good. Once we recognize this, we cannot avoid speaking of universal human values; but this is not the same as having a universal morality." (Gray, *Easier Said Than Done*, 2006) Indeed (close though it comes) it is not, though—for reasons that space constraints preclude my addressing here—the reasons why Gray denies there can be such a morality are unpersuasive, and there is something odd about speaking of things that are "species-wide" goods for human beings while at the same time one denies that there is sense in speaking of "humanity."

⁷³ (Harris, 2003), p. 56.

It is not clear why even the tendency—much less the mere capacity—of human beings to divide themselves into two conflicting camps should mean that the assumption that “one may have an undivided allegiance to the community of all human beings on the planet” is necessarily mistaken.

Tendencies can change, and tendencies with respect to allegiances have historically been no less elastic than other tendencies. The multi-ethnic nation-state, for example, is a modern phenomenon, but such nation-states, the US among them, are typically objects of quite robust allegiance from many of their citizens, transcending all sorts of other aspects of identity that in previous eras were thought to constitute the boundaries of solidarity, and, indeed, often unifying two or more camps that had hitherto been divided. The capacity for division into camps is not, then, humankind’s only capacity.

But even if it is acknowledged that the capacity for division into camps has exceptional strength among human capacities, it is not clear what sort of challenge that circumstance poses for cosmopolitanism understood as a moral conception. Humankind’s capacity to act immorally has exceptional strength as well. Surely this does not

mean that we should not aspire to be moral.⁷⁴ *Pace Harris*, it does make a difference, what the source of structural antagonism in particular cases is. Calling one or another antagonism "structural" does not tell us too much more than that that antagonism is more than a matter of caprice or utter arbitrariness. But "structural" need not mean permanent, insoluble, or natural and certainly it does not mean anything like un-modifiable in perpetuity. When it is said, for example, that structural racism or sexism are present in a society, what is generally meant is not that there can be no solution at all to the problems in question, but rather that the problems are of great scope, that they have persisted over time, and that addressing them may require changing commonplace patterns of thought. That is a more demanding task, in many senses, than dealing with individual instances of racist or sexist actions. But that is not to say it is impossible, any more than the

⁷⁴ To draw that analogy is not to equate the capacity to divide into camps with the capacity for evil. The capacity to divide into camps is, morally speaking, neutral, and indeed one can imagine it being pressed into morality's service, with the camps being defined by moral criteria—e.g. human rights-respecting states v. human rights-violating states—though of course the objective is for the division to last only as long as gross immorality persists in one of the camps.

capacity to divide into camps precludes the capacity not to do so.⁷⁵

Harris continues:

Indeed, a cosmopolitanism that can clash with patriotism, such as Nussbaum envisions, is, for that very reason, no longer a genuine cosmopolitanism. It no longer speaks for those who remain loyal to their own country, and hence becomes a merely sectarian ideology—and hardly the universal and all-encompassing faith that it aspired to be.⁷⁶

Now, the universal scope of cosmopolitanism should not be mistaken for an aspiration to encompass any beliefs other than in cosmopolitan principles themselves, and certainly it should not be mistaken for a claim to encompass *all* beliefs. Does this make it a “merely sectarian ideology” as distinct from a “universal, all-encompassing faith”? One part of the answer to that question is that generally, religions that claim to be universal and all-encompassing make those claims about the truth status of their central tenets and about the applicability of those tenets to the whole of humanity; that they do not claim that their universality consists of encompassing all beliefs as their own (not least because

⁷⁵ At least *prima facie*, there does not seem to be the same sort of necessity—if there is any necessity at all—to dividing into camps that there is to, say, eating.

⁷⁶ (Harris, 2003), p. 56. The reference to Nussbaum is to (Nussbaum, *Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism*, 2002), pp. 3-17.

they find some beliefs incompatible with their own) generally does not—nor should it—expose them to the charge that they are merely sectarian ideologies. The other part of the answer is that cosmopolitanism is neither a religion nor an ideology. It is a view about the scope of moral obligation, but its main insight is that we should not assign inordinate value to that which is accidental, and that the least accidental group to which we belong is humanity as a whole.

Alasdair MacIntyre suggests that “we inhabit a kind of polity whose moral order requires systematic incoherence in the form of public allegiance to mutually inconsistent sets of principles,[patriotism and universal morality.]”⁷⁷ MacIntyre claims that cosmopolitanism is unviable due to its consisting of a conflict between two competing sets of obligations, but perhaps cosmopolitan morality and patriotism are not inconsistent as a general matter, and it is only that in particular cases the imperatives following from each might conflict with those following from the other. Certainly whatever tension exists between these two sets of principles is not experienced by most people as

⁷⁷ (MacIntyre A. , 1984), pp. 19-20.

paralyzing. In MacIntyre's account of ancient heroic society, one's belonging to a particular society and not to another is, far from being considered a morally irrelevant accident, the main determinant of one's moral identity. He writes:

There is...the sharpest of contrasts between the emotivist self of modernity and the self of the heroic age. The self of the heroic age lacks precisely that characteristic which we have already seen that some modern moral philosophers take to be an essential characteristic of human selfhood: the capacity to detach oneself from any particular standpoint or point of view, to step backwards, as it were, and view and judge that standpoint or point of view from the outside. In heroic society there is no "outside" except that of the stranger. A man who tried to withdraw himself from his given position in heroic society would be trying to make himself disappear. Identity in heroic society involves particularity and accountability. I am answerable for doing or failing to do what anyone who occupies my role owes to others and this accountability terminates only with death. I have until my death to do what I have to do.⁷⁸

That passage is worth quoting at length because it is not at all clear why most of the components of self-perception MacIntyre mentions in its last few sentences should obtain for the self-perception of the contemporary cosmopolitan any less than they do for her ancient heroic age ancestor. Like her counterpart in heroic society, the person whose conduct is assessed in the light of cosmopolitan moral principles is "answerable for doing or failing to do what anyone who occupies [her] role in society owes to others," though, significantly, she has a

⁷⁸ (MacIntyre A. , *After Virtue* , 2003), p. 126.

greater measure of autonomy in determining what that role will be, and it will be to her conscience that she is answerable first, whether or not others hold her to account. And just as is the case with her ancient antecedents, the contemporary cosmopolitan's accountability ends only with death.⁷⁹ As to the differences MacIntyre mentions in earlier part of the passage, foremost among them the ancient heroic lack of a capacity to detach oneself from any particular standpoint or point of view, the question is whether some sort of return to narrower horizons would be desirable even if it were possible. We can note at least a surface similarity to Rorty's claim about the psychological need for us to practice triage in order to be able to act morally within the narrower circles within which acting morally is said to be possible. "When we realize it is unfeasible to rescue a person or a group," Rorty writes, "it is as if they had already gone before us unto death. Such people are, as we say 'dead to us.'"⁸⁰ To say as MacIntyre does, that for the heroic self there is no

⁷⁹ That accountability should in an important sense end when one dies may seem too obvious a point to warrant explicit mention, but given that it seems to be a recurring theme in criticism of cosmopolitanism, to see in its desire to transcend national boundaries some sort of proxy expression of a desire to transcend mortality as well, it is best to be clear that mortality is a limitation no less compatible with cosmopolitanism than with other moral views.

⁸⁰ (Rorty, 1996), p. 13.

outside other than that of the stranger is not to say that those outside are dead to that self, exactly, but it is arguably nevertheless to characterize a perspective that we should be wary about rehabilitating in the way MacIntyre suggests. He writes

...[P]erhaps what we have to learn from heroic societies is twofold: first that all morality is always to some degree tied to the socially local and particular and that the aspirations of the morality of modernity to a universality freed from all particularity is an illusion; and secondly that there is no way to possess the virtues except as part of a tradition in which we inherit them and our understanding of them from a series of predecessors in which series heroic societies hold first place. ... Freedom of choice of values would from the standpoint of a tradition ultimately rooted in heroic societies appear more like the freedom of ghosts—of those whose human substance approached vanishing point—than of men.⁸¹

Of course, not only the idea that *cosmopolitan* values ought to be chosen rather than inherited, but the idea that values of any kind ought to be chosen, is challenged by MacIntyre in that passage. But to a cosmopolitan moral sensibility, the mention of human substance approaching vanishing point will have an odd ring to it, given the non-metaphorical, material sense in which some human beings might avoid reaching such a point if only other human beings viewed them less as strangers and did more to eliminate famine. In that material sense, it is clear that

⁸¹ (MacIntyre A. , *After Virtue* , 2003), p. 127.

a belief in freedom of choice of values is not the most proximate cause of ghost-likeness, and indeed that many of those approaching that condition approach it notwithstanding their not having that belief. Whether it is right or wrong for morality to aspire to universality in its principles is an important question, though as I've already suggested, Deweyan situated intelligence may suffice for cosmopolitan purposes. But whether the aspiration is right or wrong, just how we are supposed to learn that it is wrong (or an "illusion") from the fact that ancient heroic society did not conceive of morality as universal is unclear: perhaps it was ancient heroic society that was wrong about morality's scope. Last but not least, it's not clear what it can mean to say that "there is no way to possess the virtues except as part of a tradition in which we inherit them." Why particular virtues cannot be acquired as the result of a person's being motivated by a value she has come to embrace through autonomous reflection (including reflection on her tradition, but not only on it) we are not told, though in the first passage's mention of accountability in ancient heroic society we have an implicit suggestion similar to Rorty's claim that "if you

cannot render assistance to people in need, your claim that they form part of your moral community is empty."

MacIntyre's variant might be "If people cannot hold you accountable, your claim that they form part of your moral community is empty." And indeed, accountability is a good test to subject a theory of morality to, but the conclusion to draw from the fact that others are unable to hold us accountable under current circumstances might be that we ought to try to find mechanisms to make it easier to do so (or to reform those mechanisms, such as international institutions, that already have such accountability as one of their stated aims, where they fall short of meeting those aims), rather than that there can be no humanity-encompassing moral community in the first instance. After all, not all of those people within our local or national communities whose lives our actions effect, are able to effectively call us to account. Should we conclude from that that we share no moral community with *them*? If we should not draw that conclusion, then there is also no reason at the level of principle why the inability of distant others to hold us to account should count for more when we determine whether we have obligations to them than

it does when we make that determination with respect to our local or national communities.

Roger Scruton's view is particularly caustic: a cosmopolitan, he writes is "a kind of parasite who depends upon the quotidian lives of others to create various local flavors and identities in which he dabbles."⁸² As problematic as that formulation is, when broken into parts that are phrased as questions, its components are useful. Thus, we might ask: Is it really the case that various local flavors and identities are created only by those who think of their own cultures in essentialist, unmixed, unself-conscious terms? Aren't most of us, in late modernity, dabblers at some level when it comes to our identities, and to the extent that we are, does this really make us parasites?

Commenting on the range of positions taken in the debate about cosmopolitanism as a political concept, Janna Thompson writes:

[I]nstead of the triumph of cosmopolitanism, what we are witnessing are two developments which appear to be taking us down a different path. The first is the ascendancy of neo-liberalism and its rejection of political measures for curbing or directing market forces. The second is the "return to community": the resurgence of nationalism, the assertion of cultural or religious identity and demands of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities for autonomy and the right to preserve their own heritage and

⁸² (Scruton, 1980), p. 100.

customs. Both of these developments not only impede cosmopolitan programs, as they are usually defined. They also present a philosophical challenge to cosmopolitan ideas.⁸³

At least two things are worth bearing in mind as we consider that passage. The first is perhaps an obvious point: however one understands cosmopolitanism, its failures and triumphs on the world scene can be thought of as distinct from its failures and triumphs as a concept—or line of thought—in political theory. That the spheres of theory and practice are distinct does not mean that what occurs in one sphere does not bear on what occurs in the other, but sometimes the relationship is inverse, as seems to be the case at least some of the time with cosmopolitanism: when local identities are asserted with vigor, people with cosmopolitan intuitions feel that they need to articulate their ideals more clearly and persuasively--the vulnerability of the more cosmopolitan *status quo ante* is sometimes blamed on intellectual slackening—or at least to try to analyze why cosmopolitanism has failed.

Thompson's reference to "the ascendancy of neo-liberalism and its rejection of political measures for curbing or directing market forces" as "a challenge to

⁸³ (Thompson, 1998), p. 179.

cosmopolitan ideas" is odd as well. One does not need to join the neo-liberal rejection of the sorts of measures to which Thompson refers in order to recognize that the motivation behind such measures is not always primarily cosmopolitan. Even if defenses of many such political measures can be couched in cosmopolitan terms, so too, can defenses of many profit maximizing measures taken by corporations.

Problematic as well, is the statement that the various trends jointly termed the "return to community," together with neo-liberalism's ascendancy, "impede cosmopolitan programs" and "present a philosophical challenge to cosmopolitan ideas."

The return and the ascendancy would present a philosophical challenge to cosmopolitan ideas only if such ideas denied that such a return or ascendancy could take place. For if cosmopolitan ideas only maintained that for reasons *x*, *y* and *z*, such a return or such an ascendancy *ought* not to take place, and it nevertheless *did* take place, this might mean that people had not been exposed to cosmopolitan ideas; or it might mean that people had been exposed to cosmopolitan ideas but that they were weak-

willed in following the dictates of reason; or it might mean any number of things that would fall short of a philosophical challenge. The existence of thieves, it should be remembered, falls short of posing a philosophical challenge to the prohibition against theft.

Conclusion

In the present chapter, I have attempted to show some flaws in the premises behind the main lines of attack against the very idea of humanity as a moral community. At the very least, I have tried to show that only a modification of convention, nothing more ambitious and nature-involving, is implicated in the attempt to expand moral consciousness as moral cosmopolitanism seeks to do. That is not to say that it is not ambitious at all, but the task may seem less daunting if we think of it as involving no more than what we owe to other people who are like us in the ways that are of greatest moral salience.

Cosmopolitanism's greatest challenge is posed by those who deny humanity's existence as a moral community. There is seductiveness to views in which we are cast as especially noble if we voluntarily help far away people in

need, as distinct from seeing us as taking action that in certain circumstances we can be said to have a duty to perform. Anti-cosmopolitanism takes the insight moderate cosmopolitanism has into calculations' corrosiveness of intimacy, too far. Given the pressures facing people everywhere in our globalized world, the temptation to retreat into spheres of intimacy and to think that all of one's resources should be dedicated to protecting them is understandable. But it should be resisted. Humanity does exist as a moral community: it is not only the sharing of biological traits across our species that gives us a reason to view humanity in that way, it is also the reflexive sympathy we feel for suffering people anywhere. Such sympathy is a moral emotion which has value in itself, but we should also see it as a spur to action, not least because in a globalized world, there is often a sense in which we are sometimes responsible, at least partly and indirectly, for the suffering we hear about in far away places. But even where we are not responsible for others' suffering, our very ability to help others in dire need means that we should at least be pressed to offer reasons for directing our energies elsewhere. Some of the time, we

may in fact be able to provide such reasons in a convincing way. But at least part of the time—for the cases of distant others' needs that are most dire--we will be unable to do so.

Chapter 3: Strict-cosmopolitanism

In the previous chapter, on anti-cosmopolitans, we saw that certain claims about cosmopolitanism's purported excessively demanding character do not withstand scrutiny: nothing akin to transcending mortality would be necessary in order for us to view ourselves as global citizens, and neither would a sacrifice in terms of cost of living so great that it would disable us from recognizing ourselves be required in order to end the most extreme poverty.⁸⁴ Neither does the charge that humanity is too abstract a concept bear reflective scrutiny.

What, then, does strict-cosmopolitanism's strictness consist of? The first thing about which to be clear is that a continuum of degrees of self-sacrifice does not track the difference between strict-, moderate- and anti-

⁸⁴ One contemporary proponent of cosmopolitanism *has* argued that every relatively affluent person

must contribute to vitally effective groups, like Oxfam and UNICEF, most of the money and property she now has, and most of what comes her way for the foreseeable future (Unger, 1996, p. 56)

but even strict-cosmopolitanism's strictness does not consist of its requiring self-sacrifice of such magnitude, and Unger is in a minority even among strict-cosmopolitans in thinking that self-sacrifice on so high a scale is required by cosmopolitanism (i.e., by any aspect of it as a moral view) at all. See esp. (Nussbaum, 1997); the criticisms expressed in (Farrell, 1999) and (McGinn, 1996) are criticisms specific to Unger's view, and though, unlike Nussbaum, Farrell and McGinn are not self-declared cosmopolitans, the cosmopolitan theories of, for example, Beitz and Pogge are, like Nussbaum's, not vulnerable to those criticisms.

cosmopolitanism. A moderate cosmopolitan might, for example, think that justice required some particular action on her part on behalf of distant others in response to particular circumstances, that was more self-sacrificing than the action her strict-cosmopolitan friend thought was required in those same circumstances. And indeed, an anti-cosmopolitan might be moved by his sense of charity to take an action that was still more demanding in response to those circumstances, even if he saw no requirement of justice that he do so.

Strict-cosmopolitanism's strictness consists, rather, in its insistence that for an action to be classed as moral, its primary motivation must be the desire to do good generally, that giving priority to fellow members of one's family, nation or other groups of narrower scope than the whole of humanity, is morally justified only to the extent that it is the most effective way to ultimately benefit humanity generally. Nussbaum writes:

Cosmopolitans hold ... that it is right to give the local an additional measure of concern. But the primary reason a cosmopolitan should have for this is not that the local is better per se, but rather that this is the only sensible way to do good. ... [I]f I tried to help all the world's children a little bit, rather than to devote an immense amount of love and care to Rachel Nussbaum, I would be no good at all as a parent (as Dickens's portrait of Mrs. Jellyby mordantly showed). But that should not mean that we believe our own country or family is

really worth more than the children or families of other people—all are still equally human, of equal moral worth.⁸⁵

Nussbaum attributes that view of the local⁸⁶ to cosmopolitans generally, but following Scheffler,⁸⁷ I will refer to it as strict-cosmopolitanism's view of the justification for duties that arise from our non-humanity-based relationships: ultimately, such duties must derive from our membership in humanity—with families, nations and other duty-generating groups having a kind of intermediate status—just as those duties in which that derivation is clear and direct from the outset must do. Here it may be useful to think of the Stoic image of concentric circles of affiliation Nussbaum has referred to,⁸⁸ but perhaps with dashes forming the circles representing groups smaller than humanity in the strict cosmopolitan view, whereas in the moderate cosmopolitan view *all* the circles would be unbroken, to represent the non-derived nature of the duties

⁸⁵ (Nussbaum, Reply, pp. 135-6)

⁸⁶ "Local" should be understood in terms of scope rather than of location, such that it encompasses all relationships one might have with other people other than the relationship of solidarity based on shared humanity. Not only the bond between a family all of whose members lived in the same house, but also a friendship based on shared experiences, mutual admiration, etc., would count as "local" in that understanding, even if the two friends were in different countries.

⁸⁷ (Scheffler, 2001, pp. 111-30) and (Scheffler, 1996)

⁸⁸ (Nussbaum, Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism, p. 9)

within all of them. Moderate- and strict- cosmopolitanism diverge precisely on that issue.

Though in the next chapter, I will argue for a moderate-cosmopolitan conception, it is worth acknowledging some of strict-cosmopolitanism's insights into the limitations of local affiliations. Thomas Pogge is right, for example, to observe that

It is within the family that concentration of concern is most clearly desirable and appropriate, and friends of a nationalist concentration of concern often invoke the family as an analogue or metaphor. But acceptable concern for even very close relatives is in fact thought to be quite strictly circumscribed in public life. It is, for instance, not merely illegal, but also deemed highly immoral, for a state official to favor her son's firm in the application of regulations or in the awarding of government contracts.⁸⁹

The example Pogge cites has at least two virtues, showing as it does both that even loyalty to family is not generally considered a virtue that ought always to trump all other considerations, and that conflicts between loyalties to narrower and wider groups with which one might be affiliated can arise even prior to our acknowledging that there are obligation-engendering senses in which each of us is affiliated with humanity as a whole: one needn't be a cosmopolitan of any kind to object to nepotism. Pogge

⁸⁹ (Pogge, 2008, p. 126)

goes on to analyze the metaphor of a "level playing field," and then writes

In our example, the state official plays a role analogous to that of a referee. She, as well as her son, should ideally be animated by the thought that, if she were to bend the rules in his favor, the game would be spoiled, rendering his "success" meaningless or even shameful. This ideal has wide application, because we all frequently play the role of referee when we act as citizens, voters, jurors, and the like.⁹⁰

The question arises: why--given that we do generally recognize that there are moral constraints even on pursuit of one's family's interests--do we not recognize that there are moral constraints as well, on the pursuit of one's nation's interests? As Pogge writes

How can we ask our officials to put their own family's finances out of their minds when deliberating about the domestic economic order (e.g. the tax code) and yet expect those same officials to have their own nation's finances uppermost in their minds when deliberating about the global economic order?⁹¹

There is a quick answer to that question that is not satisfying: in the case of officials whose own nations' finances are uppermost in their minds when they deliberate about the global economic order, it is not just any kind of expectation, but one that is often expressed, *inter alia*, by job descriptions specified by law, that they are held to. The answer is unsatisfying because it is question-begging. Other things being equal, laws that bolster

⁹⁰ (Pogge, 2008, p. 128)

⁹¹ (Pogge, 2008, pp. 130-1)

particular expectations of ours give our officials a further reason to work to meet those expectations, a reason beyond those officials' general sense of duty to represent us: their desire to be law abiding, either out of a sense of duty, or out of fear of punitive consequences for non-obedience, or out of a mix of both motivations. But though laws that express expectations can tell us that those expectations have particular strength⁹², they do not tell us why that is so, or how—as Pogge's question asks—they can be justified, while at the same time we *do* expect impartiality so far as both the content and the implementation of policies within our own societies goes.

Pogge's claim is that there is an inconsistency in justifying the one expectation of impartiality and not the

⁹² They may tell us that they are so strong that we wish for them to be expressed in law. It should be noted that laws do not always tell us that straightforwardly, however. The law sometimes serves (merely) to resolve ambiguity about our expectations through explicit codification (though of course the law itself can sometimes be ambiguous). Further, certain expectations (independently of their strength) are expressed in law because the temptations to act against them are especially strong: the law in such cases consists of a distinct reason not to yield to those temptations, and certainly it tells us that the expectations in question matter sufficiently to us for us to legally prohibit acting against them in particular ways, but we may have other, non-legislated expectations which we hold as strongly, as a society, as those to which we have given legal expression. We want to know more about the politicians we elect, for example, than just that they are law abiding and represent our interests. We often hold them to more stringent expectations of proper conduct than mere law-abidingness. (Sometimes we do not even hold them to law-abidingness, of course, but I am writing here of liberal democratic societies when they are at their best.)

other. But there is a related inconsistency he is also concerned to expose: a view that does concede that as *individuals*, each of us is constrained by morality from the unlimited pursuit of his or her interests and has to take into account the interests of others including distant others, but that at the same time sees it as the duty of *our officials* to give unlimited priority to our own societies' interests. Here it is not partiality as such that is at issue, but rather a particular purported difference between our deliberations as individuals and the deliberations of the officials who represent us. As Pogge writes:

A democratically constituted government can ... plausibly be conceived as the agent of its people. But allowing such agents to give unlimited priority to the interests of their clients runs into a fatal trilemma. For such clients:

- either: must then be permitted to give the same unlimited priority to their own interests even when acting in their own behalf (without an agent),
- or: must then be prohibited from appointing an agent (here: government) to represent their collective interest,
- for otherwise: they would be able to circumvent moral constraints that the interests of others impose on their conduct merely by acting through an agent rather than directly.⁹³

Here it is important to acknowledge an insight original with strict cosmopolitanism. One needn't be a strict-cosmopolitan in order to hold that governments should be

⁹³ (Pogge, 2008, p. 132)

constrained in the pursuit of national self-interest by a consideration of at least the basic interests of distant others, any more than it is necessary to be cosmopolitan at all in order to object to nepotism, but it was strict-cosmopolitanism that first articulated this issue.⁹⁴

Further, in strict-cosmopolitanism's case there is the advantage of an immediately apparent consistency: though it is *consistent* with holding--as moderate-cosmopolitanism does--that narrower affiliations than humanity can provide independent reasons for action, to hold as well that the interests of distant others should in some ways constrain

⁹⁴ About equality of resources *within* a society, Dworkin writes:

People are free to take up personal aims and attachments in their private lives with complete conviction, if and because [under equality of resources] politics has secured a distribution that is egalitarian publicly. Of course this division of labor must not be taken to mean that private individuals have no concern with distributive justice... But... it is a complex and perhaps unanswerable question what equality of resources asks of us, as individuals, in our own unfair society. That is part of the reason why ... our lives go worse if we live amid injustice. So we should say, of our own indelible partiality in the private perspective, not that it conflicts with a genuinely egalitarian politics but rather than it conflicts with any other kind of politics. (Dworkin, 2000, pp. 280-1)

That view might have greater plausibility with respect to global justice if as much were spent on foreign aid as was necessary to end extreme poverty (and if it were spent on that goal), though it is unlikely that even with extreme poverty ended, individual actions in better off societies would have no potential to cause harm abroad, given the global economic system. As things stand currently, at any rate, *both* the view that we can absolve our officials of the requirement to consider the interests of distant others, *and* the view that our officials can absolve us of that requirement, are seriously flawed. The insight that there is such a requirement is one for which we are indebted to strict-cosmopolitanism, not because the insight is incompatible with moderate cosmopolitanism (it is not), but because strict-cosmopolitanism had it first.

the pursuit of our national self-interest,⁹⁵ it requires more exposition to explain why that is so than is required to show why a view that denies at the outset that affiliations other than membership in humanity can provide independent reasons for action. For the latter sort of view—i.e. the strict-cosmopolitan view—the challenge will be to find a basis on which to legitimize giving priority of any kind to one's own family members or compatriots; by contrast, the fact that a strict-cosmopolitan like Pogge urges us (and our governments) to take others' interests into account, and that he compares our over-privileging ourselves in the international economic order with nepotism is not likely to strike us as self-contradictory even *prima facie*.⁹⁶

⁹⁵Though both strict- and moderate- cosmopolitanism view all human beings as having equal moral worth, consider that even holding that view is not necessary in order to hold that others can have interests that ought to constrain us in our pursuit of certain of our own interests. That is not enough to recommend views that hold that the moral worth of all human beings is *not* equal—it is not enough both because it is only when it is held to be equal that others' interests will be given the full consideration they are due, and (more importantly) because holding that some human beings have greater moral worth than others is repugnant in itself. The point is that there are less stringent standards than one over which there is general consensus, by which our conduct would be found wanting: given that even most anti-cosmopolitans, at least in liberal democratic societies, do hold, ultimately, that there is equality of moral worth, the extent to which on the whole we members of such societies do not consider distant others' interests as constraints on the pursuit of our own is all the more striking.

⁹⁶ See also *supra*, pp. 26-30.

Describing strict cosmopolitanism, Scheffler writes:

Cosmopolitanism, in this [strict] view implies that particular human relationships and group affiliations never provide independent reasons for action or suffice by themselves to generate special responsibilities to one's intimates and associates.⁹⁷

Moderate cosmopolitanism challenges strict-cosmopolitanism precisely on the question of the status of particular human relationships and group affiliations. It does so in what Abizadeh and Gilabert, commenting on Scheffler, identify as five theses, the first of which they refer to as

the phenomenological thesis: if one values a relationship to some person non-instrumentally, then one acknowledges un-derived special responsibilities to that person.⁹⁸

That thesis consists of a first line of attack against the strict-cosmopolitan claim that there can be no special responsibilities that do not derive from valuing all people as having equal moral worth, and it helps us understand exactly what is at issue between strict- and moderate-cosmopolitanism: not special responsibilities *per se*, but rather their status or force as derived from respecting the equal moral worth of persons (in the strict-cosmopolitan conception) or as independent from such

⁹⁷ (Scheffler, 2001, p. 115)

⁹⁸ (Abizadeh & Gilabert, 2008, p. 351); see (Scheffler, 2001, pp. 97-9, 100, 104, 118, 121-2).

respect (in the moderate cosmopolitan conception)⁹⁹. What is meant by referring to the first thesis as phenomenological is that it is based on actual practice: in all cases in which people value their relationships to certain other people non-instrumentally, that valuing is manifest in an acknowledgment of non-derived special responsibilities to those other people. Now, that may seem like a tautology, with "non-derived" simply working as a synonym for "non-instrumental." But strict-cosmopolitanism, admitting special responsibilities only when and insofar as they are the most efficient way to benefit humanity as a whole, appears to reject precisely the claim that the two terms are synonymous: for strict-cosmopolitans, the value of special relationships rests on the assumption that other things being equal, the most efficient way for everyone to experience the benefits of, e.g., friendship that are necessary for human flourishing is, if for every individual person, his or her friends devote extra measures of their resources to him or her.

Any special relationships can slot in here in place of friendships, from groups as small as immediate families to

⁹⁹ For moderate cosmopolitanism equal moral worth is a fundamental source of obligation, only—as distinct from strict-cosmopolitanism—it is not the *only* such source.

groups as large as entire nations. The point is not that all special relationships make the same sorts of contributions to human flourishing, or that membership in a nation is as uncontroversial a source of special obligations as membership in a family. Rather, the point is that even those strict cosmopolitans who see membership in a nation as contributing a great deal to well-being, and who can conceive of many circumstances in which giving one's compatriots priority is justifiable, require that the ground for giving such priority ultimately lie in the equal moral worth of all persons: the primary reason one ought to have in giving priority to one's compatriots should be that doing so is the most effective way to do good generally, i.e., to benefit the world as a whole.

From the phenomenological, we now move to the ontological, and from humanity as a whole vs. individuals to the state vs. individuals. David Held writes:

While states are hugely important vehicles to aid the delivery of effective regulation, equal liberty and social justice, they should not be thought of as ontologically privileged. They can be judged by how far they deliver these public goods and how far they fail; for the history of states is marked, of course, not just by phases of bad leadership and corruption, but also by the most brutal episodes.¹⁰⁰

The question, whether states should be ontologically privileged, may be more difficult to answer than that

¹⁰⁰ (Held, 2005, p. 10)

passage suggests. In one sense, Held seems to be arguing against a straw man. After all, those claiming that states *do* have ontologically privileged status generally don't deny that there have been phases of bad leadership and corruption, as well as brutal episodes, in the history of states. It isn't *necessary* to deny those facts about the history of states in order to claim that states are ontologically privileged, any more than a denial of flaws is necessary in order to claim ontological privilege for beliefs, institutions or states of affairs generally, and indeed it can only be *sufficient* to say that ontological privilege for a belief, institution, etc. should follow from that belief's, institution's etc. being flawless in every way *if* one has a particular metaphysical view which premises ontological privilege on perfection. Not all metaphysical views do so, and even in the case of those metaphysical views about which it is more plausible to say that they premise certain kinds of ontological privileging on perfection, there can be other ontological privileging that isn't thus premised. For example, a religion might premise its ontological privileging of God on God's perfection, while at the same time that religion premised

its ontological privileging of human religious authorities on those authorities' function as intermediaries between laity and the Divine, or on their superior understanding of Scripture, or on a host of reasons other than perfection.

Now, moderate-cosmopolitanism shares with strict-cosmopolitanism the view that our moral affiliations and obligations are not exhausted by any of the groups smaller than humanity that we belong to, that we have obligations to others simply by virtue of both their and our being human beings. Certainly moderate-cosmopolitanism doesn't see the state of which a particular person is a citizen as encompassing the broadest circle with whose members that person is morally connected, and certainly there are grounds for skepticism about claims that for psychological reasons, human solidarity cannot be extended to encompass the whole of humanity, given the (immutable, it was thought, until their mutability was exposed) frontiers of solidarity that were transcended with the advent of the nation-state. But the denial of ontological privilege is a more ambitious discursive move than the expression of skepticism about psychological capacity, and there are at least two reasons to suppose it is an inadvisable move.

The first of those reasons we have already considered: ontological privileging of the state does not require viewing the state as a perfect form of organization, much less ignoring brutality and other evils much in evidence in the history of states. The second reason is more general. Since debates about ontological privilege properly belong to the realm of metaphysics, liberals formulating a view for which they aspire that it will become part of an overlapping consensus in their societies, should avoid them as far as possible: even *moderate* cosmopolitanism will not be compatible with all comprehensive doctrines or metaphysical premises, but, for example, a view that premised its ontological privileging of the state on the state's being the most effective instrument for national self-determination¹⁰¹ would be compatible with a cosmopolitan view that saw national self-determination as a fundamental right, though not the only such right.

¹⁰¹ The idea that ontological privileging might be premised on an explicitly instrumental sounding a criterion as the one mentioned may sound odd, because it is tempting to mistakenly conflate the ontological privileging of a thing with the determination that that thing has intrinsic rather than merely instrumental value. Held is arguably guilty of such conflation. It is important to remember that distinct categories are at issue here. For instance, in the example I introduced above, some of the reasons for ontologically privileging religious authorities—e.g., viewing them as intermediaries to the Divine—are instrumental reasons.

Some of the obstacles impeding the achievement of a liberal cosmopolitan global system are a function of the power struggle between autocracies and Western democracy that was the subject of a recent article by Robert Kagan.

He writes:

Although in the struggle between modernization and tradition the United States, Russia, China, Europe, and the other great powers are roughly on the same side, the things that divide them from one another--the competing national ambitions, the divisions between democrats and autocrats, the transatlantic disagreement over the use of military power--undermine their will to cooperate.¹⁰²

The world's liberal democracies are confronted, insofar as they aim to spread liberal democracy beyond their own borders, with countries that appeal to the principle of national self-determination to justify their opposition to liberal intervention:

China's Li Peng told Iran's Rafsanjani, China and Iran are united by a common desire to build a world order in which "the selection of whatever social system by a country is the affair of the people of that country."¹⁰³

Sensing both the appeal to their people and the danger to their own regimes, which liberal democratic principles constitute,

[the] autocracies of Russia and China have figured out how to permit open economic activity while suppressing political activity. They have seen that people making money will keep their noses out of politics, especially if they know their noses will be cut off.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² (Kagan, 2008, p. 47)

¹⁰³ (Kagan, 2008, p. 44)

¹⁰⁴ (Kagan, 2008, p. 41)

Of course, even with open economic activity not everyone in Russia and China is making money—it is absence of political freedom that is equally distributed--and further, in the case of Myanmar and its current crisis we are reminded that there remain autocratic states in which there is *neither* economic prosperity *nor* political freedom, and where the consequences of natural disasters that would have taken a large toll even in open societies are exacerbated by the measures taken by the regime to maintain its undemocratically won hold on power.¹⁰⁵

There is, fortunately, no inevitability to illiberalism's ultimate triumph, however:

Of course there is strength in the liberal democratic idea, and in the free market. It is logical, too, that a world of liberal democratic states would gradually produce an international order that reflected those liberal and democratic qualities. This has been the enlightenment dream since the eighteenth century, when Kant imagined a "perpetual peace" consisting of liberal republics and built upon the natural desire of all peoples for peace and material comfort. Although some may scoff, it has been a remarkably compelling vision.¹⁰⁶

Strict-cosmopolitanism has the appeal, for some, that reductionist views generally have--though it is normatively rather than (as is typical of reductionist views) explanatorily reductionist—but the source of its appeal is

¹⁰⁵ (Wright & Barta, 2008)

¹⁰⁶ (Kagan, 2008, p. 47)

also a flaw: it does not give sufficient weight to local attachments. People within liberal societies care about local attachments a great deal, and moderate cosmopolitanism's primary purpose is precisely to persuade liberals who care about local attachments that even if such attachments are recognized as fundamental sources of moral obligation, distant others also have claims on us, emanating from an identity--membership in humanity--that is a fundamental source of moral obligation as well. But it is worth considering non-liberal societies in order to remember the current prevalence of the view that the local is *all* that matters, that it is all-defining in the sense implied by Li Peng in the passage above.¹⁰⁷

Strict- and anti- cosmopolitanism are irreconcilable and no intermediate position can change that circumstance any more than a circle can be squared. However, the claim that the scope of our moral obligations extends to the whole of humanity, *is* compatible with the claim that (a) we

¹⁰⁷ He was, it might be said, merely invoking the liberal concept of national sovereignty. But quite apart from the oddity of a principle like that being invoked by a communist (in one sense, it is not so odd, of course, given the precedent of cases of communism "in one state"; but that does not diminish the conceptual oddity that Trotsky identified and fought against), its uniqueness as a liberal principle among Peng's commitments ought to lead us to suspect what is in any case transparent: that the commitment is not principled, but contingent and self-interested.

have special duties to compatriots and others with whom we identify in groups smaller than the whole of humanity, and that (b) these latter duties are fundamental in the sense of having their sources in the narrower affiliations in question rather than being derived from duties to humanity as a whole.

Conclusion

Bernard Williams' famous example of how a man could be said to have "one thought too many" if the motivating thoughts behind his saving his wife from a fire were both that she was his wife and that in circumstances like the one in question, he was permitted to save his wife, rather than just the first of those two thoughts, is perhaps the best explanation for why we ought to think of special obligations as fundamental, rather than derived. Familial, communal and national relationships depend on bonds of intimacy which calculations of the kind "am I permitted to benefit my family member and not someone in greater need" can corrode if they are asked too frequently. If these relationships are indispensable to us for our flourishing, we must treat them as sources of fundamental obligations—they depend on precisely such valuing in order to exist.

That is not to say that there are no costs to humanity as a whole as a consequence of such valuing, though it is worth noting both that to some extent these costs are mitigated by membership in humanity also having fundamental status as a source of obligations--obligations that can trump special obligations, it is only that they do not do so automatically--and that it is in our families, communities and nations that we learn to feel sympathy for others in the first instance; humankind benefits from that, it does not only lose.

Chapter 4: Moderate Cosmopolitanism.

Why should we attribute independent moral significance to the relationships we have with people to whom we are connected through ties of blood, nationality or friendship? Alisdair MacIntyre¹⁰⁸ suggests that we ought to do so out of gratitude, but that suggestion is problematic in the following sense: we do indeed have good reasons to be grateful for our survival, formation and maturation to the groups that support us in these processes, but if we attribute independent moral significance to them for that reason it will be an odd sort of independence. First, we should note its non-universal character: the closest I will be able to come to the moral valuing another person has for his parents is--with respect to them--to recognize that he sees them as having a particular moral significance that other people do not have for him. I will not--unless he is my sibling or there are extraordinary circumstances--attribute to his parents the same moral significance he does. But this trivial sense of non-universalism is not one that even Kant would say signified very much, and it is not what he means by universalizable maxims, which for him have to do

¹⁰⁸ (MacIntyre, 1999)

with circumstances that are similar in significant particulars, not with identical agents or objects. So it would actually be possible to have a maxim that said: "people ought to treat those to whom they owe their survival, formation etc. as bearing independent moral significance," and for all that for person x the people she treated in that way would be different people than person y treated that way, the maxim would be universalizable in the salient sense.¹⁰⁹

At least two problems remain, however. The first is that even a universalizable maxim enjoining us to treat people as having particular significance does not establish that they do in fact have such significance in an objective sense. About that problem, there is little we can do. We can point to the concept of performative utterances which can change the status of people in more (e.g., "I thee wed") and less (e.g., "you are henceforth a knight of the realm") profound ways¹¹⁰, but there is likely to be something unsatisfying for us about that concept if we

¹⁰⁹ Of course, Kant is well known not only for his universalize-ability condition but also for his insisting that people always be treated as ends in themselves. As I interpret it, treating people as ends in themselves is a minimum condition; it is not incompatible with the special additional valuing we may have of people with whom we are engaged in particular relationships.

¹¹⁰ See (Austin, 1962)

generally think of moral value as a property of people or relationships that exists independently of our interventions, like a property of the material world.¹¹¹

We will have to modify our view of moral value so that it will admit of the ubiquitous convention of our bestowing value on people or relationships, value which exists alongside the value that exists independently of our valuations. People are ends in themselves independently of whether every person recognizes all other people as valuable in that non-instrumental way. But in addition, there is value that does depend on us: we should not worry that in itself this circumstance opens the door to a relativist free-for-all: there are better and worse reasons to value things as we do. Our families' and nations' contributions to our identities, development and flourishing are--other things being equal--good reasons to attribute independent moral significance to those groups.

The second problem is that some will not be satisfied with such "valuing for a reason." But arguably the burden should be on them to show why, when families or nations are, for example, abusive of their members, their members

¹¹¹ Gravity, the earth's revolution around the sun, glass's fragility (for all that we can now make stronger glass than existed in the past.)

ought nevertheless to view themselves as having duties to them. That there should be a presumption in families' and nations' favor,--that, other things being equal, the "default option" should be to value them as having independent moral significance--is arguably warranted, both because for the most part, nations--as distinct from particular governments, and certainly as distinct from particular regimes--and families contribute to their members' survival, formation, maturation and flourishing in such ways as to earn that status, and because calculation about "what one's country (or family) can do for one" can be corrosive of the intimacy familial and national bonds rely on,¹¹² such that it oughtn't to be engaged in--at least not too vigorously--from the start. But it would be a perverse morality that required loyalty from people to abusive families or nations, though we can note to our chagrin, that many people do remain loyal in abusive circumstances, absent any moral requirement that they so

¹¹² An example of intimacy with compatriots: there are self-deprecating jokes about one's nation that one might feel differently about telling one's compatriots than one would feel about telling others.

remain (indeed: often in contravention of a moral requirement that their loyalty should cease.)¹¹³

Consider the following passage by David Miller:

According to the strong version [of cosmopolitanism] ... all moral principles must be justified by showing that they give equal weight to the claims of everyone, which means that they must either be directly universal in their scope, or if they apply only to a select group of people they must be secondary principles whose ultimate foundation is universal.¹¹⁴

In contrast with the strict version of cosmopolitanism described in the previous chapter and in the above passage, moderate cosmopolitanism takes the fact of allegiance to more than a single sort of group as a core feature of humanity's constitution, a fact about our timber¹¹⁵ that cannot be sanded away. The image of the reckless sander should be with us always, because without its serving as a metaphor for reductionism, the latter can seem less grave than it is: one might think, when one is guilty of reductionism, that one has merely taken a few abstract steps too many. But a great deal of tragedy has followed,

¹¹³ In this context it is worth remembering a passage from the preamble of (UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights), 1948) "Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by law."

¹¹⁴ (Miller, 1998, p. 166)

¹¹⁵ I take the image of humanity's timber from Isaiah Berlin (Berlin, 1991), who in his own turn took it from a sentence attributed to Immanuel Kant: "Out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made."

historically, from actions premised on reductive abstractions, and we should not be cavalier in thinking about the consequences doctrines about human essences can have.¹¹⁶ Fortunately, we are not altogether without resources with which to distinguish between less and more plausible accounts of the human essence: from the lived complexity of human allegiances we can infer, at least, that if there *is* a human essence, it is likely to have more than a single object of allegiance.

Moderate cosmopolitanism holds both a) that there are fundamental (i.e., non-derived) obligations to humanity generally and b) that there are fundamental obligations to those with whom we are associated through special relationships. It gives some weight, at a theoretical level--in the form of a positive presumption--to the pervasiveness of the common sense view that *both* types of obligation are un-derived, each of them not reducible to the other's terms.

¹¹⁶ Of course, to speak of equal moral worth is itself to say something particular about human essences--i.e., that so far as moral worth is concerned, human essences are all equal--but too often the purposes to which the category "human essence" has been put have been inhumane, giving us reason to tread carefully in thinking about "human essence" as a category.

It might be objected that there is only a short conceptual distance to travel, from giving theoretical weight in argumentation to the empirical fact that a particular view is pervasive, to a collapsing of the distinction between "is" claims and "ought" claims, or to viewing ourselves as having permission to be guided exclusively by whatever version of common sense prevails in whatever time and/or place we happen to be. But moderate cosmopolitanism's presumption in favor of common sense means only that we might view it as a consideration in moderate cosmopolitanism's favor--not as a determinant of its ultimate truth, and not as a consideration to which the highest priority is assigned--that it gives due weight to the internal tension in the commitments held by citizens of liberal democracies, between the two fundamental values in question: the equal moral worth all persons have as members of humanity, and the value of belonging to particular families, nations and other groups to which we feel bound. One might view this aspect of moderate cosmopolitanism as having the same sort of weight, as a consideration, as the fact of moderate cosmopolitanism's lineage within the tradition of liberal political thought. Both of these

aspects of moderate cosmopolitanism might be thought to count in its favor by those who share liberal intuitions, or who value the liberal tradition.¹¹⁷

Samuel Scheffler is the most prominent contemporary advocate of moderate cosmopolitanism. Of the tension mentioned above he writes:

Many people ... experience the tensions between [justice and equality on the one hand, and personal friendship and communal solidarity on the other] as tensions internal to their own moral outlooks, not as collisions between alien and incompatible systems of thought.¹¹⁸

That passage appears in a review by Scheffler of Nussbaum's essay in **For Love of Country**,¹¹⁹ and it is precisely in his classification of the tensions in question as internal to

¹¹⁷ Of course, there's some overlap between the latter two groups, but they are not identical: some people who value the liberal tradition have views of moral reflection that attach little weight to intuitions, and other people might give intuitions substantial weight in moral reflection, while (oddly) viewing appeals to tradition as irrelevant, as though tradition played no part in forming our intuitions. Neither schools of thought in the academic discipline of international relations, nor political movements neatly track philosophical views about the scope of moral obligation, but for all that, Robert Kagan's recent article (Kagan, *Neocon Nation: Neoconservatism*, c. 1776, 2008) does give a sense of what one iteration of moderate cosmopolitanism might look like, and of that iteration's distinctive pedigree within American foreign policy history.

¹¹⁸ (Scheffler, 1996, p. 9)

¹¹⁹ (Nussbaum, *Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism*, 2002) Scheffler continues his critical treatment of Nussbaum's dilemma--her implication that "Either we must argue that devoting special attention to the people we are attached to is an effective way of doing good for humanity at large, or else we must suppose that those people are simply worth more than others" at (Scheffler, *Boundaries and Allegiances*, 2001, p. 118)

moral outlooks that he distinguishes moderate- from strict-cosmopolitanism.

Moderate cosmopolitanism acknowledges a particular perplexity: the conception's classification of both special obligations and obligations to humanity as a whole as emanating from distinct fundamental sources is not only a bow to common sense, it is also a reflection of epistemological agnosticism, regarding the question whether either a moral sense or moral knowledge can be acquired outside particular communities.¹²⁰ Scheffler writes:

On this alternative [i.e., more moderate] interpretation [of cosmopolitanism], to say that one is a citizen of the world is to say that, in addition to one's relationships and affiliations with particular individuals and groups, one also stands in an ethically significant relation to other human beings in general. There is no suggestion, on this interpretation, that one's special relationships and affiliations need to be justified by reference to the ideal of world citizenship itself, or that any legitimate reasons we have for promoting the interests of the people we care specifically about must be derivative from the interests of humanity as a whole.¹²¹

Though dissatisfaction with strict cosmopolitanism's exclusion of such identities as family and nation from the

¹²⁰ One might, of course, ask that question about other knowledge and about other senses bound up with one's identity as well, but even when narrowed down to cover morality alone, the question is sufficiently perplexing.

¹²¹ (Scheffler, 2001, p. 115)

category "fundamental,"¹²² has led to the formulation of an alternative view—i.e., moderate cosmopolitanism--it is important to note that it is not the rule, but the exception, that so far a theoretical step as the formulation of an alternative view is taken in response to dissatisfaction with strict views. The more typical response is to live with the inconsistency of espousing a strict view while departing from strictness in practice.¹²³

To be sure, moral theory has the distinctive characteristic of giving us reasons to act in particular ways: moral theory is never quite as exclusively theoretical as, say, mathematical theory, and it is therefore arguably more pressing to find alternatives to dissatisfying moral views than is the case with

¹²² Kok-Chor Tan, for example, writes:

If the cosmopolitan idea of justice is to have any appeal for human beings, it must acknowledge the local attachments and commitments people have that are characteristic of most meaningful and rewarding human lives. (Tan, 2005, p. 164)

But the form his own cosmopolitan view's acknowledgement takes falls short of ascribing fundamental (i.e., un-derived) status to obligations that follow from local attachments and commitments.

¹²³ There are, it should be noted, strict views for which the level of abstraction at which their principles are formulated leaves what ought to be done in practice open to interpretation to so great an extent as to make the likelihood/frequency of honest mistakes very great. But self-conscious, which is to say willful, inconsistency does occur as well. Walt Whitman can be said to have spoken for many when he wrote:

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.) (Whitman)

dissatisfying views generally. Examples in moral theory are seldom only cases to study analytically; our evaluations of them generally consist of judgments regarding how we or others in similar circumstances to those obtaining in the cases under study *ought* to act. That much is as uncontroversial, and perhaps as obvious, as saying that moral theory is normative. Equally, however, even if strict cosmopolitanism or moderate cosmopolitanism were ample concepts like autonomy, equality, or authority, rather than being the spare categories they are, a good deal of work would still need to be done at some level of abstraction before policy questions impinged. Arguably, most moral and political concepts are not best understood exclusively as analytical atoms in voids: concepts take on lives of their own and it is generally only of limited value to understand them independently of what people have taken them to mean, what actions have been thought to follow from adhering to them, etc. Nevertheless, the method whereby all but a concept's core sense is pared away does have some advantages, and in the case of liberal values its use seems especially apt insofar as there is a kind of symmetry between ascribing analytical autonomy to

concepts and ascribing moral autonomy, as liberalism does, to individuals. In neither case is autonomy absolute, but in both cases the objects of analysis would be unintelligible in the context of liberalism if autonomy did not figure prominently in their composition.

It should give us some indication of autonomy's centrality to liberalism, to consider that even liberal *anti*-cosmopolitans refer to autonomy as they seek special status for groups or states, thereby shifting the focus away from--while maintaining the cachet *autonomy* first acquired in reference to--individuals.

Liberal respect for autonomy gives us reasons to treat some identities narrower than membership in humanity as fundamental, such that the obligations to which those identities give rise can have equal or greater weight in some cases, (and lesser weight in others), than the obligations that arise out of our membership in humanity.¹²⁴

Equally, however, the liberal principle of equal moral worth gives us a reason to see ourselves as having fundamental obligations to humanity as a whole. Moderate

¹²⁴ An analysis of autonomy itself, for example, could be self-contained without venturing too far beyond the realm of theory, other than for the sake of poaching examples of autonomy's interplay with other values, to make vivid what giving autonomy priority over some values, and subordinating it to others, can entail.

cosmopolitanism's accommodation of these parallel grounds for obligations distinguishes it as a viable alternative to strict cosmopolitanism.

Moderate cosmopolitanism views more than one sort of affiliation as fundamental; that it should also be capacious enough to contain more than a single ideal¹²⁵ is perhaps what one would expect, not because breadth in one thing necessarily entails breadth in another, but because the sorts of identities that can engender fundamental obligations also tend to give rise to ideals. It would be odd if moderate cosmopolitanism viewed, for example, my identity as an American as a fundamental identity without also classifying it as a legitimate source of my ideals.

An ideal is not an *all-trumping* value or aspiration. Ideals can of course conflict, though conflicting obligations can arise even when there is no conflict between ideals. Indeed, the obligations that arise from a single identity or ideal might at times conflict with one

¹²⁵ Below, I refer to moderate cosmopolitanism's encompassing *modus vivendi* as a regulative ideal, along with other ideals, whereas here I am more concerned with the more formal question of a moral view's capacity for encompassing multiple ideals as a general matter. Not all views are equally capacious in this sense, but a view that sees both membership in humanity and membership in particular groups as fundamental sources of obligation must be at least capacious enough in order to encompass some of the ideals emanating from the identities it views as such sources.

another, with moral loss involved whichever obligation one ends up meeting, in circumstances where there would be still greater loss if one fulfilled no obligations at all.

Consider Abizadeh's and Gilabert's critique of Scheffler in their paper, "Is there a genuine tension between cosmopolitan egalitarianism and special responsibilities?"¹²⁶ The paper's authors argue that the tension Scheffler describes, between cosmopolitan egalitarianism and special responsibilities which gives rise to the category "moderate cosmopolitanism," ought to be characterized instead as a tension between special responsibilities and the various general duties that arise from the recognition, demanded by cosmopolitan egalitarianism, of a multiplicity of other basic goods.¹²⁷

Abizadeh and Gilabert's analysis challenges both the way Scheffler characterizes the tension in question, and his proposed solution as well. A distinct, moderate conception of cosmopolitanism is not required if they are right, only some tweaking of the strict conception. At issue is a substantive difference, not merely a disagreement about

¹²⁶ (Abizadeh & Gilabert, 2008)

¹²⁷ (Abizadeh & Gilabert, 2008, p. 349)

terminology, and in order to understand it, it is necessary to understand the three central claims Abizadeh and Gilabert make. They write:

First, while some relationships are non-instrumentally valuable, no relationship is unconditionally valuable. Second, whether such relationships give rise to special responsibilities is *conditional* on those relationships not violating certain moral constraints. Third, these moral constraints arise from within cosmopolitan egalitarianism itself.¹²⁸

The third of those claims is perhaps the most important one, so far as challenging moderate cosmopolitanism goes. The idea that it is a necessary condition, in order for a relationship to give rise to special responsibilities, that it not violate moral constraints, seems plausible enough. It would be an odd morality that held there was a responsibility to help one's friend achieve an immoral end, for example, or that saw friendship itself as having the power to transform the status of particular ends from immoral to moral. It is possible for motivations that in certain contexts are noble, to steer a person wrong in other contexts, and therein lies a potential source of confusion: for example, other things being equal, loyalty to one's friends is an important value, and one might be

¹²⁸ (Abizadeh & Gilabert, 2008, p. 349)

motivated by such loyalty, rather than by sharing a particular friend's bad end, to help that friend do wrong. Although morality may not only require that one refrain from *acting* on such a motivation (due to the consequences of so acting), but may also judge the *motivation itself* as blameworthy,¹²⁹ it is often difficult for us not to view bad actions taken out of loyalty differently than we would if that motivation were not part of the context.¹³⁰

But that particular difficulty and the more general difficulty of disentangling means from ends are concerns secondary to, and compatible with, acknowledging that obligation-grounding relationships are subject to morality's judgment. The question is whether it is in fact

¹²⁹ The motivation would, for example, be blameworthy according to a conception that held that loyalty cannot be assessed independently of its object in any particular case, that loyalty to a bad person out of friendship to him/her is bad because one should not be a bad person's friend in the first instance. Aristotle writes of a particular sort of circumstance:

If we accept a person as a friend assuming that he is good, but he becomes, and we think he has become, wicked, do we still owe him affection? Surely, that is impossible, since only the good—not just anything—is the object of affection. What is evil neither is nor should be an object of affection, for a man must not be a lover of evil, nor must he become like what is base.

But to the question: "Should the friendship, then, be broken off at once?" Aristotle replies "Probably not in every case, but only when a friend's wickedness has become incurable." (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 251 (1165b))

¹³⁰ Loyalty to one's nation does not involve loyalty to an evil regime in control of one's nation (e.g., to the Nazi regime, the Zimbabwean dictatorship, etc.)

from within cosmopolitan egalitarianism that the regulative principles by which obligation-generating relationships are judged emanate. Does cosmopolitan egalitarianism generate all the moral principles we need? If it does, then why do we—even those of us who do view cosmopolitan egalitarianism as generating *quite a few* of the principles we need--generally still hold back from using "cosmopolitan egalitarianism" interchangeably with "morality"? One possible explanation might lie in our wishing to reflect the fact of a diversity of moral views, some of which, though we might judge them repugnant, can be called "moralities" because they meet certain value-neutral, formal definitional criteria.¹³¹

But there is another possible explanation for our reluctance to refer to the whole of morality as "cosmopolitan egalitarianism": the possibility that even for liberals whose commitment to it constitutes a central element of their/our identities, cosmopolitan

¹³¹ We might speak of "fascist morality," for example and, without self-contradiction, mean something altogether negative. "Fascist morality is bad," we might say. The term "moderate" too has, among its senses, one that is value neutral: it can signify, for example, that a person or group is using less extreme means for tactical reasons than others are using, to further illiberal ends. Moderate fascists, communists, and theocrats are, after all, still fascists, communists and theocrats.

egalitarianism does *not* account for all of the moral constraints to which relationships are to be subject if they are to generate obligations, that it is not necessary to think of morality in an anthropological, value neutral sense, in order to think that for liberals themselves—and consistent with their commitment to liberalism—there are other regulative moral values. For an example, we can return once again to the question of our membership of particular families as a source of moral obligation. In the case of the prohibition against nepotism, equal moral worth does indeed constrain us from what we might otherwise feel obligated to do for our family members. We can think of the prohibition against nepotism as setting a limit: giving advantage to one's family members in all sorts of ways *is* permitted, but at point x, such advantaging ceases to be compatible with regarding people outside one's family as having equal moral worth. In nepotism's case, those potentially harmed are, obviously, not participants in the obligation-generating relationship in the first instance,¹³²

¹³² There is, of course, a sense in which the perpetrators of immoral practices can be said to be diminished by committing them, and there is also a sense in which a society as a whole can be said to be diminished when it allows or encourages (with all the differences between toleration and encouragement acknowledged) such practices. But I do not here mean "those potentially harmed" in as broad a sense as that; I

a feature of nepotism that distinguishes it from harm done *within* a family, nation, or other special obligation-engendering group. Suppose, by contrast, that out of loyalty to a friend, a person commits treason against her liberal democratic country.¹³³ When we say that her loyalty to her friend ought to have been constrained by a sense of duty to her country, we generally do not think of the latter moral constraint as emanating from equal moral worth. It is not because she failed to view her compatriots as having equal moral worth that we judge her action as morally wrong, but because she failed to view her compatriots as having a *special* claim to her solidarity that other people—including her friend, if she must choose between him and her compatriots--do *not* have. Equally, in the case of domestic violence, the reason why we tend to see additional harm or severity to such abuse, as compared with violence outside the family, is precisely that a family bond leading to an expectation of special treatment has been violated, over and above the bond implied by

mean it in a more direct sense, in which as a consequence of nepotism some suffer material harm--by not getting their due through a fair process--over and above the moral diminution of their society.

¹³³ I don't argue that treason is always permissible against non-liberal regimes, but about its impermissibility against liberal democracies there is a general consensus among liberals.

treating others as having equal moral worth.¹³⁴ That "over and above" aspect is, at least prima facie, not accounted for by cosmopolitan egalitarianism, and the burden of proof is on Abizadeh and Gilabert to show that beneath surface appearances, it is in fact accounted for. Certainly it does not seem to be accounted for in this passage from

Thomas Pogge's **World Poverty and Human Rights**:

I concede that [beating up someone with whom one is affiliated as opposed to beating up a stranger] usually is morally worse if the [affiliated] victim is one's mother. But this may be not because one ought to be more concerned to avoid harming family members than to avoid harming strangers, but because the harm [itself] is so much greater: the son is not merely inflicting physical pain without provocation; he is also showing ingratitude toward the person who raised him, deeply hurting her love and trust, and/or the like.¹³⁵

An expectation of special treatment, according to this reasoning, is justified only insofar as there are distinctions between family members and others beyond

¹³⁴ Consider also, the case of corporations based in affluent countries that subject workers in their plants in developing countries to exploitative conditions or that pollute the environment in those countries, knowing not only that there are differences in law that make it easier for them to do so abroad than at home, but also that people in their home countries will tend to care more about their compatriots' exploitation, and about pollution in their own countries, than about those same phenomena abroad. (Of course, corporations' ability to pay lower wages, lower pollution fines, lower taxes, etc. abroad can have an impact at home when it means that plants at home can't compete, and have to close. But concern about what happens to others because of the consequences for oneself is, while better than no concern at all, not the same as concern about what happens to others for those others' own sake.)

¹³⁵ (Pogge, 2008, pp. 290, nn. 204)

merely nominal family membership. In other words, family members are not in a separate category *a priori*: they deserve to be treated specially by a person only insofar as they have themselves dispensed special treatment to that person.

We might, here, note a problem not specific to strict cosmopolitanism: it can feel odd (at the very least) to read hypothetical examples that involve actions about which we have a very strong intuitive sense that they are wrong, and it can also feel odd to weigh lesser and greater harms on an analytical scale, or at least to weigh certain particular harms, in comparison with which it is hard to imagine anything else being worse. How could beating up a stranger even begin to compare with beating up one's own mother? Is it really necessary to philosophize about that, even if through philosophizing one arrives at reasons why beating up one's mother is in fact worse, i.e., even if the reasons *don't* point to a conclusion we might sense is perverse?

Those questions may remind us of Bernard Williams' claim that "some situations lie beyond justifications."¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Williams writes those words about a hypothetical case in which, if there were two persons in equal peril, one of whom was the wife of a

Williams' "one thought too many" objection has undeniable appeal, but it is worth remembering that both in the case of beating up a stranger instead of one's mother and in the case of saving one's wife but not a stranger, the states of affairs we are left with are not victimless, for all that the person's own family members are spared. Of the two permission-granting thoughts Williams mentions, the one that *does* include a reference to a general principle might well be the only one consistent with recognition of the moral worth of the person *not* spared; without reference to the general principle, the thought "she is my wife" is silent about the limitations others' interests *do* place on our own. Saying "she is my wife" would not, after all,

third person who could save only one of them, the third person would be justified in saving his wife. He goes on to write:

...[S]urely this is a justification on behalf of the rescuer, that the person he chose to rescue was his wife? It depends on how much weight is carried by "justification": the consideration that it was his wife is certainly, for instance, an explanation which should silence comment. But something more ambitious than this is usually intended, essentially involving the idea that moral principle can legitimate this preference, yielding the conclusion that in situations of this kind it is at least all right (morally permissible) to save one's wife. ... But this construction provides the agent with one thought too many: it might have been hoped by some (for instance, by his wife) that his motivating thought, fully spelled out, would be the thought that it was his wife, not that it was his wife and that in situations of this kind it is permissible to save one's wife. (Williams, 1981, pp. 17-18)

have the power to transform an act of nepotism from an illegitimate to a legitimate act.¹³⁷

Now, it might be objected that if *all* of our thoughts were to take general principles into account, it might be difficult to attend as well to the nuances of the particular circumstances we found ourselves in, and if a valuable feature of human nature is spontaneity, it is indeed easy to see how there might be a tension between giving spontaneity scope to exhibit itself while at the same time insisting that relevant general principles be considered. But spontaneity isn't, at least in any straightforward sense, a *moral* virtue.¹³⁸ To be an

¹³⁷ And, of course, saying "she is my wife" would be citing a necessary condition for the act's being nepotistic in the first instance (the person one has privileged must be a relative in order for nepotism to have occurred) as a defense against that charge. Imagine someone's saying "item x is not mine" as a defense against the charge of stealing item x. The person might have come into possession of item x through some other means than theft, but logically there could be no charge of theft in the first instance if the item *did* belong to the person against whom the charge was leveled.

¹³⁸ Reflection in general—not only reflection about general principles—may be in tension with spontaneity, it should be noted, however, and if the idea of constantly reflecting about general principles as an ideal brings to our minds images of rule-driven robots, we should consider that micro-logical attentiveness, for which "not seeing forests for trees" serves as a useful metaphor, can be overdone as well. Spontaneity may be compatible with attending to the minute details of certain particular cases, but since it is exceptional actions that we view as spontaneous, a person who as a rule is minutia-oriented won't be judged spontaneous for focusing on minutia in any particular case if its features are similar to those she usually assesses. Moreover, though spontaneity is clearly a moral virtue in a derived sense when it leads someone to perform a moral action (an action requiring courage that person generally did not display, for example), clearly morality

objection on moral grounds, the "one thought too many" objection would have to be grounded in a view like Samuel Scheffler's that

Since certain kinds of relationships [...] cannot exist at all unless the participants value them, and since the participants cannot value them without seeing them as providing reasons for unequal treatment, certain kinds of relationships cannot exist at all unless they are seen as providing reasons for unequal treatment. Thus, the claim that the "mere" fact that a relationship is one's own cannot provide one with legitimate reasons for action involves a deep error. Interpersonal relationships could not play the role they do in our lives, and in some cases could not even exist, unless they were treated by the participants as providing such reasons.¹³⁹

Note, though, that Scheffler himself does not go as far as Williams does: he does not say that though interpersonal relationships depend (sometimes to the point of their very existence) on their participants' seeing them as providing reasons for unequal treatment, those reasons cannot form a general principle that can be invoked as a justification for saving one's family members before saving other people. Scheffler does indeed see those reasons as justifications, not just as explanations, for giving priority to one's associates, and as Abizadeh and Gilabert write

cannot *depend* on spontaneity to the point of foregoing the formulation of general principles.

¹³⁹ (Scheffler, 2001, p. 121)

Scheffler's view would, ... be the object of Williams' famous "one thought too many" objection (focused on ridiculing demands that agents provide more grounds than a reference to the fact of a relationship to another agent when they choose to favor that agent as opposed to a stranger).¹⁴⁰

It is possible, then, as comparing Scheffler with Williams shows¹⁴¹, *both* for the thought that certain relationships depend for their existence on our viewing them as providing reasons to treat people unequally to lead to a further thought that is vulnerable to Williams' objection *and* for the former thought *not* to lead to the latter thought: the objectionable further thought concerns the general rule about permission, but since the reason why Williams finds

¹⁴⁰ (Abizadeh & Gilabert, 2008, pp. 358, nn. 12)

¹⁴¹ For a more extensive treatment of the differences between Scheffler's and Williams' views, see (Wellman, 2000); perhaps the most important difference is captured in a passage in **Human Morality**, where Scheffler writes that the judgment that the man's saving his wife is beyond justifications, "depends implicitly on a kind of assessment of the act and its context that is indistinguishable from moral assessments." (Scheffler, 1992, p. 25) As close as they are in other respects, then, on this important point Scheffler basically calls Williams' position self-contradictory. Also see **Justice as Impartiality**, where Barry writes:

[T]hat [i.e., the permissibility of saving one's wife] must be so if we are to say that in other cases 'It was his ...' will not be available as a justification. What about 'It was his horse' or 'It was his typescript'? ... [A]t some point the legitimate priority of a personal attachment runs out. If this is conceded, Williams is faced with the embarrassment that we apparently [do indeed] need a general theory to tell us where this point comes. If the 'one thought too many' objection is really an objection, it now simply crops up at a different point. For we must now presumably say that, before saving his wife, the man has to think: 'It's my wife and this is the sort of case where that thought is sufficient.' (Barry, 1996, p. 232)

such a rule ridiculous is that he sees a trumping character to certain relational facts, whereas Scheffler, who also sees relational facts as having a trumping character does not find formulating general rules that grant one permission to give priority to one's associates in certain cases but not in others ridiculous, we can at minimum say that the case is not open and shut: the "one thought too many" objection is at least arguably outbalanced both by the need to acknowledge the equal moral worth of those over whom one has given one's associates priority, as well as by the need to make explicitly clear that one's priorities in such cases do not reflect judgments of moral worth any more than the universe of actions that treat people unequally is coextensive with the universe of actions that treat people as having varying levels of moral worth.¹⁴²

¹⁴² To hire a better- rather than a worse- qualified job candidate, for example, is, other things being equal, not to make a statement about the moral worth of either job candidate; cases like that in which non-identical treatment is morally justified abound. But "other things being equal" is a crucial clause here: when other morally salient things aren't equal, there might be hiring procedures that reflect a view that moral worth *isn't* equal across humanity. For symmetry's sake we should consider not only that non-identical conduct can be consistent with recognizing the equal moral worth of all persons, but also that seemingly/*prima facie* equal treatment can be a manifestation of not valuing people as having equal moral worth; if, for example, a doctor from ethnic group x has the same privileges as other citizens in general rather than—in circumstances where doctors have special privileges—the privileges other doctors have, and her ethnicity is the explanation for her being treated differently than other doctors, it is no defense against the charge of discrimination to say that she has no

If we can have different priorities based on our relationships with some people versus other people without this necessarily implying an unequal view of moral worth, then claiming (as Pogge does¹⁴³) that there is greater harm--in terms of hurting the other person's love and trust when a person harms his family member than would be the case if it were a stranger that, e.g., one was beating up--is problematic because the greater weight that attaches to harms against one's family members is a function of the special status of families *per se*: it is *not* dependent on the high degree of love and trust that distinguish families at their best. An implication of Pogge's view is that to the extent that the love and trust that are the general rule in the case of mothers with respect to their children are present in any particular case, greater harm is done when one beats up one's mother. A main problem with this view is that even in cases where there is no serious deficiency of love and trust--i.e., where even by the strictest standards we would be licensed in giving priority to family members--we may not want to foster a mentality that weighs harms on scales. This problem is not unique to

fewer privileges than her fellow citizens generally: the latter would not be the relevant reference group.

¹⁴³ (Pogge, 2008, pp. 290, nn. 204)

how we think about families: we may not want to think in a quasi-mathematical way about our relations whether narrow or humanity wide. I offer one response to this problem above, when I say that explicit reference to a permission granting principle may be the least, in the way of recognition of equal moral worth, that is required in circumstances in which there are negative consequences for others to one's choices, but for all that that response may explain why the cost of reasoning in a quasi-mathematical idiom may be a necessary one to pay for the sake of an important ideal, the explanation cannot change the impious character of the idiom itself, and neither can that character be altered by a potential salutary benefit we might cite in favor of reasoning in that way: that in determining e.g., whether the features that in general make harming one's own mother worse than harming a stranger are present in a particular case, we are compelled to become more attentive to whether the special relationships to which we might otherwise have been too cavalier in giving priority are functioning properly. Furthermore, if nepotism is a problem at one end of the continuum (one loves one's own so much that one does not give others' claims due

consideration), grave deficiencies of love and trust are a problem at its other end,¹⁴⁴ and arguably it does make sense to ask whether, when love and trust are *not present*, and a person's parent is only nominally her parent, that person still owes her parent greater consideration than she owes a stranger. If love and trust are absent, then the most serious problems plaguing a parent-child relationship already characterize that relationship as antecedent circumstances; it will not be deliberation about what is owed to the parent in light of those circumstances that does the worst damage, if such deliberation does any damage at all. And yet, there's still a problem with the idiom, since for all that it may aid us in better understanding and reforming (or ending) those relationships that function *badly*, thinking in instrumentalist terms can have a corrosive effect on those of our relationships that function *well*.

Not to be conflated with instrumentalist thinking, is the abstract shorthand representation on which examples in

¹⁴⁴ I say that these are problems at opposite ends of the continuum, but that is not to say that as pathologies they are altogether mutually exclusive; many dictators who both give their family members privileges the rest of the population in their societies don't enjoy, and treat those same family members cruelly. On Stalin and his daughter, see (Glad, 2002, pp. 22-23); on Saddam Hussein and his sons and sons-in-law, see (Post, 2006).

analytic philosophy rely. Sometimes, the abstraction in such representation is, ironically, necessary precisely in order to best characterize the prioritizing involved in special obligations, however much more at odds those obligations may seem with abstraction of any kind than the obligations we have to humanity as a whole. Thus, Abizadeh and Gilabert write,

Partaking in non-instrumentally valued relationships is a basic constituent of the well-being of each person, and so is a basic good to which each person ought to have access.¹⁴⁵

in the context of a series of claims supporting their reclassifying the tension Scheffler identifies, between cosmopolitan egalitarianism and special responsibilities, as a tension "between general duties and special responsibilities related to the recognition of a multiplicity of basic goods."¹⁴⁶ Abizadeh and Gilabert are arguably mistaken in their reclassification, but the point is that it is not because of their analytic style that they go wrong; indeed, with respect to the particular issue of valuing non-instrumental relationships, they do not go wrong at all. At the beginning of their paper, they present the following scenario:

¹⁴⁵ (Abizadeh & Gilabert, 2008, p. 361)

¹⁴⁶ (Abizadeh & Gilabert, 2008, p. 363)

Suppose that A must decide how to allocate scarce resources and that B and C lay claims to them. Suppose that C is needier than B. Assume also that B is, and C is not, connected with A as party to a special relationship. On the one hand, it seems that cosmopolitan egalitarianism demands that A allocate scarce resources to C rather than to B, since C is needier than B and egalitarian distribution should always focus primarily on those who are worse off. On the other hand, the commitment to special responsibilities seems to demand that A prioritize B over C. A special responsibility is just the kind of responsibility that marks those who are near and dear as having priority over those who are not.¹⁴⁷

Abizadeh's and Gilabert's argument is that in addition to a) there being no responsibilities that can arise from relationships the pursuit of which *inherently* conflicts with some basic moral principles, it is also the case that b) the responsibilities to which relationships

whose pursuit under the circumstances [in which they are being pursued] *incidentally* conflicts with moral duties not related to the relationship[s themselves] .. conflicts with (prima facie) general duties¹⁴⁸

do not always trump those duties. About the first type of relationship they mention, there is no great controversy. Aristotle, for all that he says that "when people are friends they have no need of justice," also holds, as we saw above, that in the first instance "only the good—not

¹⁴⁷ (Abizadeh & Gilabert, 2008, p. 350)

¹⁴⁸ (Abizadeh & Gilabert, 2008, p. 361)

just anything--is the object of affection." It is in their claim about the second type of relationship mentioned, where general duties can trump responsibilities arising from relationships that (only) incidentally conflict with those duties, that Abizadeh and Gilabert arguably go wrong. Amending the scenario with which their paper begins, they write, toward their paper's end, that the "distributive objection" to certain cases of prioritizing B over C can be characterized in the following way:

- (a) everyone has a negative duty to avoid practices causing others' life-threatening poverty and (b) all those who, with no grievous sacrifice, can help people to overcome life-threatening poverty have a positive duty to do so.
- if the pursuit by A and B of their special relationship incidentally contributes to the production of life-threatening poverty for C, then A might *not* have a reason to prioritize B over C in the allocation of resources that could help C avoid life-threatening poverty.
- if the pursuit by A and B of their special relationship incidentally involves neglect of the plight of C who lives in life-threatening poverty, then A might *not* have a reason to prioritize B over C in the allocation of resources that could help C avoid life-threatening poverty.
- A's special responsibilities to B are in conflict with her (a) negative and/or (b) positive duties to C.

- A's special responsibilities to B ought, all things considered, to be balanced against A's negative and/or positive duties to C.¹⁴⁹

But nothing in their amended version, shows what they claim to show, i.e., that it is best to think of the tension at the heart of moral cosmopolitanism as a tension between obligations, all of which are derived from cosmopolitan egalitarianism.

Let us now turn to Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an article which sees a community smaller than humanity as a whole as a primary site of one's obligations and development. It states:

Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.¹⁵⁰

Article 16 fits with moderate cosmopolitanism's view of there being more than a single source of moral obligations. Though the article stops short of calling the family the fundamental unit of society, and refers to it only as the fundamental *group* unit, the fact that the UDHR includes an article dedicated to the family's protection and to the

¹⁴⁹ (Abizadeh & Gilabert, 2008, pp. 361-2), underlining added.

¹⁵⁰ (UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights), 1948), Article 16

right of people to marry and found families is significant in itself, and shows that it is not only with individuals *tout court*, but also with individuals as members of families, that the Declaration is concerned.¹⁵¹ Further, the article excludes conceptions of identity--e.g., some fascist ones--in which the state is society's fundamental unit, and along with the stipulation that excludes limitations due to race, nationality or religion, the article serves to carve out a space for marriage and families that is independent of any intermediate group's view, i.e., a family is entitled to protection from the state even if the religious group its members belong to, or the family members' compatriots, ostracize it. The state's primary concern in such a case must be for the individual family rather than for any other group in society. Otherwise, it is not clear what coherent meaning there can be to specifying the family in particular, as the fundamental group unit of society.¹⁵² The connection to moderate cosmopolitanism should be clear: if the state and

¹⁵¹ Also see (UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights), 1948), Article 25.

¹⁵² A passage in Article 25 seems to support this interpretation: "Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection."

society are to regard the family as society's fundamental group-unit, the family must exist in the first instance. Thus, if it is shown that the family cannot exist--or that it cannot exist in precisely the form in which it is valued--without being viewed as a non-derived source of obligation, then there is at least an implicit endorsement by Article 16 of viewing families as non-derived sources of moral obligation. So far as institutions go, state protection for families might mean that quite apart from any need-based welfare scheme or foreign aid program, the state might give preferences to families in the form of tax credits, transfer payments, and the like.¹⁵³

Conclusion

A stable feature of human nature, over and above a normal physical constitution, is the need to possess a distinct history, which is one's own and not that of all mankind, and also to cultivate that which is particular and that is believed to be the best of this time and of that place, alongside and within the universal and moral claims that are common to all people as such.¹⁵⁴

Babies are born into this world sharing certain basic features with all other babies in all times and places on

¹⁵³ Also see (UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights), 1948), Article 22, however, where the focus is on each *individual's* right to social security.

¹⁵⁴ (Hampshire, 1983)

earth, and yet at the same time, even before they can speak themselves, they will be spoken to in languages that are particular, they will be considered members of particular families, communities and nations, as their lives progress first through childhood and then through adulthood, their triumphs and setbacks will be felt with varying degrees of greater keenness by their own kin and compatriots than by those outside those circles. To the extent that we achieve sympathy for people beyond the circles in which our identities are formed, it is within those circles that we first develop feelings for others beyond ourselves. One of the things that grounds seeing special obligations as fundamental is the account of individuals' development just sketched. But a further reason is grounded in phenomenology: by and large, most people simply do choose, autonomously, to treat their families and nations as having fundamental, non-instrumental value for them. What is meant by the value being seen as non-instrumental is that though membership in family x or nation y is a component in peoples' flourishing—and can be said to be instrumental in that sense—no trivial ends, nothing fleeting, nothing short of flourishing itself in a deep sense of the term, is a

valid criterion in respect of which to judge their membership, except for—at a certain point—equal moral worth. That may sound like a large exception, but the point is that—with moderate cosmopolitanism—there is a general presumption in favor of the obligations that flow from peoples' attachments to their families and nations that does not exist in strict-cosmopolitanism's case. The presumption follows in part from a liberal commitment to respect, other things being equal, the deep commitments people hold when these are autonomously chosen. In addition to the corrosive effects on intimacy of calculations, a point against even those variants of strict-cosmopolitanism that do permit privileging one's own on efficiency grounds,¹⁵⁵ moderate cosmopolitanism's greater respect for autonomously made valuing ought to be an important consideration in its favor for any liberal who is deliberating among views. The charge leveled most often against strict-cosmopolitanism is that it is unrealistic. Since respect for autonomy is a core liberal principle, as serious an additional flaw that strict-cosmopolitanism

¹⁵⁵ The calculations there involve constantly asking whether efficiency does in fact license each additional measure of whatever resource one is expending on one's own.

bears is that the value it attributes to special obligations does not show sufficient liberal respect.

Chapter 5: What does moderate cosmopolitanism entail in practice?

The present chapter aims to answer the question: What does a moderate cosmopolitan view entail in practice? Moderate cosmopolitanism's self-description as a view that sees both membership in humanity and membership in nations and families as fundamental relationships, and the obligations that arise from membership in each as non-derived, might fit well with our intuitions, but it might be asked: what does the view offer in terms of positive prescriptions? It may be best to state at the onset what is not on offer. There is no unitary decision procedure, in which values come with pre-assigned rank order, much less with absolute weights, and where—for any given situation requiring moral assessment—all that is required is to identify which values are relevant in order to be able to say which considerations trump other considerations. That is not to say that policymaking guided by moderate cosmopolitanism is altogether a free-for-all, but some measure of flexibility is necessary in a view that sees both membership in humanity and membership in families and nations as fundamental.

If, as moderate cosmopolitanism holds, membership in a nation is a fundamental source of obligation, what follows from that for nation-states? Recall that moderate cosmopolitanism is a liberal view, and that a feature distinguishing liberal views about the state from non-liberal views, ancient and modern, is that liberal views see the state in instrumental terms, as a protector, a guarantor of rights, and an administrator of justice. A further role the nation-state plays, for which moderate cosmopolitanism particularly appreciates its value, is as an expression of the right to national self-determination. Moderate cosmopolitanism's appreciation of this particular role played by nation-states means that for principled reasons it is not cavalier about the question of national sovereignty. There are, of course, prudential reasons—quite apart from principle—for taking states' claims to national sovereignty seriously. A person might, for example, be a strict-cosmopolitan and work within the current system of nation-states to pursue some particular cosmopolitan goal (famine relief; calling attention to human rights violations, etc.) while bracketing, all the while, her desire that the nation-state system will one day be

replaced by, say, a world government. For a moderate cosmopolitan, by contrast, the nation-state system, for all its flaws, reflects to a degree that no world government would be able to, the expressions of self-determination of the nations represented in that system: a moderate cosmopolitan therefore has principled reasons not to entertain thoughts of jettisoning that system, for all that moderate cosmopolitanism does not hold that national sovereignty is an inviolable absolute.¹⁵⁶ Gross human rights violations, for example, would certainly prompt intervention on the part of moderate cosmopolitans, but the formulation licensing such intervention is significant: moderate cosmopolitanism begins with a presumption in favor of respecting states' sovereignty, but by taking certain actions that fail to minimally respect human beings qua human beings, states forfeit that presumption of respect. The forfeiture can mean a range of responses in practice: in some cases states' conduct can be reformed,

¹⁵⁶ It is important to note that the right of national self-determination has not been fully achieved by all nations even under the current nation-state system. But it is chimerical to suppose that with the advent of world government, the sorts of interests and power dynamics that have led to the marginalization of some national groups under the nation-state system would disappear. Interests and power dynamics existed before nation-states came on the scene; they would be likely to remain with us if nation-states were superseded by some other form.

interventions can be narrowly targeted, and the presumption in favor of respecting sovereignty can be restored without recourse to drastic means. In other cases, when states either fail to provide relief to their citizens from gross human rights abuse or are themselves the agents, systematically and over time, of such abuse (one thinks of Zimbabwe, for example, or of Afghanistan under the Taliban, in this context), the forfeiture of respect for state sovereignty is more comprehensive, and a moderate cosmopolitan—not only a strict cosmopolitan—could advocate interventions as drastic as changes of regime. But a moderate cosmopolitan would say something additional to what a strict-cosmopolitan would say in defense of such intervention. She would not only say: "certain actions are not compatible with our having a bond with other beings qua human beings." She would also say: "a nation is sullied when the state which is an expression of that nation's right to national self-determination takes certain actions." We are all shamed as human beings by violations of human rights; membership of a nation whose state

violates human rights gives us, according to moderate cosmopolitanism, a further reason for shame.¹⁵⁷

Schools of thought about foreign policy do not neatly track moral views. We might think, for example, that moderate cosmopolitanism would be more closely connected to actions taken by coalitions of states in defense of human rights than to actions taken by individual states on their own. We might suppose this to be the case for at least two reasons, one having to do with moderate cosmopolitanism's valuing of national ties as fundamental, and the other having to do with—often warranted; sometimes not—intuitive associations we may have of moderation with multilateralism.¹⁵⁸ First, let us consider the national ties idea: if national ties are classified (as moderate cosmopolitanism classifies them) as fundamental, then one line of thought is that this gives citizens of any individual nation a justification for minimizing the burden to their own nation in, for example, circumstances

¹⁵⁷ Anti-cosmopolitans may have only that further reason, insofar as they see everything a person does as an expression of an identity narrower than membership in humanity, but that is not to say that they feel shame at bad conduct by their states any less intensely: they may not think there are universal standards of conduct, while at the same time they hold their own states to high subjective standards.

¹⁵⁸ We have other associations with multilateralism as well. For example, in certain contexts we might view decisions arrived at multilaterally as having greater legitimacy than decisions arrived at unilaterally. But legitimacy is a category distinct from moderation.

requiring the use of force. In such circumstances they will be more inclined to favor action in concert with other nations so that fewer troops from their own nation will be put at risk than would be the case if action were taken by their own nation alone. But to what extent can such a disposition—i.e., an inclination to favor multilateralism—in fact neatly be associated with moderate cosmopolitanism? Moderate cosmopolitanism's valuing of national ties might, after all, serve to pull policymakers influenced by it in a *unilateralist* direction with respect to certain issues, due to policymakers' concern for national sovereignty (which can be a higher ranking concern than the concern to share the costs of war), their reluctance to see their own countries' soldiers commanded by officers from other countries, and their practical-level worry about any particular case of intervention that it might be executed in a worse fashion (with fewer of the desired goals achieved, say) if undertaken jointly than it would be if it were taken by their own countries acting alone. Nations will often pay a higher cost in terms of their own soldiers' lives rather than take measures they perceive would dilute their own sovereignty, but it is worth noting

both a) that unilateralism can sometimes mean not that an action (whether well- or ill- judged) that would be taken together with others is taken on one's own but that it is not taken at all, and b) that multilateral action does not translate neatly into lower costs for each nation involved. Multilateralism can, after all, simply mean that other nations are contributing resources in addition to one's own nation contributing them; it need not mean that the level of one's own nation's contribution necessarily decreases relative to what it would have been had one's own nation acted alone, much less does it mean that the risk to one's own nation's soldiers necessarily decreases: choices between two or more circumstances all of whose salient features but one are identical are rare in policy implementation.¹⁵⁹

It is worth remembering, as has been pointed out in previous chapters, that the difference between the strict and moderate views is not how demanding each view is. And if the needs of distant others did not at least sometimes

¹⁵⁹ As for our intuitive association of multilateralism with moderation, consider that the joint exercise of agency can as easily be a force for ill as for good: human rights-violating dictatorships (which may be politically stable, but which are often immoderate in other senses) can form alliances just as liberal democracies can; even within alliances between liberal democracies moderation can be deployed both in the service of advancing human rights, and in the service of, e.g., the pursuit of too-narrowly conceived self-interest.

have a trumping character over benefiting one's own community, there would be no sense in calling them, as moderate cosmopolitanism does, "fundamental." If it did not view equal moral worth as one of its core principles, moderate cosmopolitanism would be no kind of cosmopolitanism at all. This should not be obscured by equal moral worth's not being moderate cosmopolitanism's *only* core principle.¹⁶⁰

Let us now consider two particular strict-cosmopolitan practical policy arguments: Peter Singer's argument in favor of contributing a substantial portion of our income to famine relief, and Josphe Carens' argument in favor of open borders. Moderate cosmopolitanism's disagreement with the case Peter Singer advances in his article, "Famine, Affluence and Morality," is not as straightforward as it might seem. Singer's argument in the article proceeds from the principle that "If it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening without sacrificing

¹⁶⁰ Further, even by standards falling far short of equal moral worth, there would be reason to see as blameworthy international institutions' failure to prevent great tragedies from occurring when the likelihood was high that had they acted differently than they did, they might have saved a great many lives. In mentioning standards short of equal moral worth, I am thinking in particular of Srebrenica, Rwanda and Darfur, the three cases examined in (LeBor, 2006). Most bigots, even most violent bigots, even though they do not believe in equal moral worth, stop short of advocating genocide, after all.

anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it,"¹⁶¹ a principle which, Singer claims,

takes ... no account of proximity or distance. It makes no moral difference whether the person I can help is a neighbor's child ten yards from me or a Bengali whose name I shall never know, ten thousand miles away.¹⁶²

Our first thought might be that the "moderate" aspect of moderate cosmopolitanism would object to a principle that explicitly denied any morally salient distinctions between near and far. And even if we did not remember moderate cosmopolitanism's particular formulation, whereby membership in nations and families--not only membership in humanity--engenders fundamental obligations, some might say that there was something inherently immoderate about the idea of moral principles of universal scope. Few would claim that there were no principles at all whose scope was universal. But the claim that moral principles are *by definition* universal in scope would be met by some not only with principle-by-principle contestations--e.g., principle x shouldn't apply in particular case/time/location y, because z--but also with charges that it was an immoderate claim, a manifestation of the wrong sort of temperament, a sign that one had imported motivations (totalizing,

¹⁶¹ (Singer, *Famine, Affluence and Morality*, 1972), p. 231.

¹⁶² (Singer, *Famine, Affluence and Morality*, 1972), pp. 231-2.

imperialistic, homogenizing etc.) external to morality into one's moral deliberation.

In a curious contemporary turn, those charges are at least as likely to come from the Left part of the political continuum as from the Right. We might wonder whether, faced with the particular case of endangered children's lives, near and far, any objections the Rightist anti-cosmopolitan writers discussed in Chapter 2 (Rorty is the only anti-cosmopolitan treated there who is unambiguously Left-leaning) might have to the idea of a duty to help distant others would really be at the level of theory or abstract principle, as distinct from the sorts of practical-level objections raised by William Easterly in a review¹⁶³ of a recent book¹⁶⁴ in which Singer reiterates and develops the argument made in "Famine, Affluence and Morality."

Easterly writes:

Unfortunately, there are several differences between these two situations [Singer discusses, one of a nearby child whose life is threatened by drowning, another of a faraway child whose life is threatened by starvation]. The most important is that you know exactly what to do to save the child, whereas it is not at all clear that you (or anyone else) knows exactly what to do to save the lives of poor children or how to get them out of extreme poverty. Another difference is that you are the one acting directly to save the drowning child, whereas there are multiple intermediaries between you and the poor child—an international

¹⁶³ (Easterly, 2009)

¹⁶⁴ (Singer, *The Life You Can Save*, 2009)

charity, an official aid agency, a government, a local aid worker.¹⁶⁵

Though it is as Right-leaning a critique of Singer's book as is likely to appear in a major American national newspaper, it is important to note that ultimately, Easterly's is an efficaciousness-oriented critique of Singer's argument: Easterly examines the practical differences between the two sorts of cases of endangered children's lives that Singer suggests are equivalent in all morally salient respects, and though his implication is that those practical differences are morally salient considerations, there is no contestation by him of the most weighty moral consideration of all: that all lives are of equal moral value, such that absent the practical impediments he points to, it would in fact be no less incumbent on each of us to save imperiled lives far away than it is to save imperiled lives closer to home.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ (Easterly, 2009)

¹⁶⁶ Would anti-cosmopolitan theoreticians really deny this? We can suppose that that metaphor would not be deployed in the service of an objection to saving the lives of distant others in need in cases where there are not the practical impediments to doing so that Easterly mentions. In fairness, its non-deployment in that context would not in itself suggest a contradiction, insofar as our particular political allegiances need not exhaust our capacity for solidarity: we can be patriots of particular countries while at the same time having humanitarian concern for the suffering of people in places beyond our own countries.

But if Easterly does not introduce any new considerations at the level of principle, moderate cosmopolitanism does, in the form of a concern for the distribution of wealth within our own societies. In absolute terms, the poverty of people in the developing world will always be worse than the poverty of people in the developed world. Even the United States, which has fewer state-sponsored safety nets than other countries in the affluent West, seems lavish in its transfer payments in comparison with countries that cannot even keep their citizens from starving or provide them with security or shelter. But the distribution of wealth within a society matters as well, and the obscenity of the gap between rich and poor in the industrialized West—and in the US in particular—is often remarked upon. Here, again, is a case where prudence might suffice to give rise to a concern to address the wealth gap: vast inequality of wealth has been shown to be highly correlated with unequal access to public services, with societal instability and with a host of social pathologies:¹⁶⁷ if a certain degree of social cohesion is a necessary condition before people can be

¹⁶⁷ (Iceland, 2006)

motivated to care for distant others, strict-cosmopolitans have reasons for concern about income inequality within relatively well-off societies, not just about global inequality. But moderate cosmopolitanism has a principled, not only an instrumental, reason for such concern, insofar as it views bonds among compatriots as fundamental: if inequality within a society frays those bonds, moderate cosmopolitanism sees that fraying as bad in itself, not only as bad because it is likely to mean that the world's absolute worst off will suffer still more. A moderate cosmopolitan would have reason, then, to advocate that at least some of the contributions we make be made not to famine relief for the developing world, but to reducing relative poverty in the affluent West.¹⁶⁸

Moderate cosmopolitanism, for its part, recognizes the value of deep commitments to one's own--even at the point where further benefiting one's own cannot be justified, there is often reason to suppose that the motivation for such benefiting is noble, and it seems at least as evident that saying that a particular duty ought to be discharged by the government can be a way of saying that that duty is

¹⁶⁸ The practical aspect of such a moderate cosmopolitan stance concerns individuals, NGOs and governments.

noble or necessary that the state ought to be associated with it, that that sort of statement need not be seen as a shirking of individual responsibility. Singer writes

...I would sympathize with someone who thought that campaigning was more important than giving oneself, although I doubt whether preaching what one does not practice would be very effective. Unfortunately, for many people the idea that "it's the government's responsibility" is a reason for not giving which does not appear to entail any political action either.¹⁶⁹

It is not only that passage's second sentence—in which Singer seems to be saying to imagined interlocutors "your main concern is not whether government ought to be responsible for this issue; what you are really interested in is avoiding responsibility yourselves"—that may strike us as problematic. In a democratic society, campaigning by all people who share the goal of changing one or another particular government policy is generally not required in order to achieve a change in that policy — one can value democratic participation without supposing that at its best it entails that on every issue, all people should be equally committed or involved. For example, without the activism of a core group, a bill requiring an increase in famine relief aid will not come before a country's legislative body. But if a person has voted into power a representative who is likely to vote for that bill, why

¹⁶⁹ (Singer, *Famine, Affluence and Morality*, 1972), 240

should it be necessary for that person to take additional action? Does morality require of her that she take as much action as a member of the core group whose efforts led to the drafting of the bill in the first instance? Even if, beyond just voting for the representative more likely to vote for the bill, she wrote him a letter to increase that likelihood, she would--let us suppose-- still be less engaged than members of the core group, all of whom had done more. Is she failing to do her duty by not being as engaged as them? Should she feel bound--as distinct from feeling it would be a good action but not an action *required* of her--to compensate for her lower level of political engagement by giving a larger private donation to famine relief than them? That suggestion is preposterous. And yet the logic of Singer's argument seems to imply precisely such preposterousness, mitigated only by the concession Singer makes, in the qualified version of his argument, that if another "morally significant" concern was present, attending to it might trump attending to famine relief. In the unqualified version, the concern would have to be of "comparable moral importance" to preventing the death, by famine, of people far away. "By 'without

sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance,'" "

Singer writes,

I mean without causing anything else comparably bad to happen, or doing something that is wrong in itself, or failing to promote some moral good, comparable in significance to the bad thing that we can prevent.¹⁷⁰

A comment made by Bernard Williams comes to mind:

Some utilitarian writers aim to increase a sense of indeterminate guilt in their readers. Peter Singer is an example, and in his book **Practical Ethics**,¹⁷¹ he is evidently more interested in producing that effect than he is in the theoretical basis for it, which gets very cursory treatment. As moral persuasion, this kind of tactic is likely to be counterproductive and to lead to a defensive and resentful contraction of concern. ...¹⁷²

Guilt undoubtedly has a role to play as a moral sentiment.

We might well wonder how much rectification of moral wrongs there would be if it never existed as a motivation; if our acknowledgment of having done wrong were limited to recognizing our errors at an analytical level, without any sentiment being associated with that acknowledgment.¹⁷³ But guilt's value as a moral sentiment must be distinguished from its effects on philosophy, where, as often as not, it can hinder reflection. This is a different concern about guilt than Williams expresses, insofar as his focus is on

¹⁷⁰ (Singer, *Famine, Affluence and Morality*, 1972), 231.

¹⁷¹ (Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 1980)

¹⁷² (Williams, 1985), 212, n7.

¹⁷³ Indeed, perhaps for those wrongs that cannot be rectified, guilt plays at least as important a role, as a spur to self-reform, as a signal to others that one's acknowledgment of the wrong one has done is genuine, and as an indication that there is some measure of justice, however incommensurate to the harm: one has paid a price at least in terms of one's emotions, for the harm one has done, one has not—or not only, depending on the circumstances—profited from that harm.

the ethical consequences of trying to produce feelings of indeterminate guilt in one's readers whereas in my view even if there were no ethical consequences there would be philosophical ones. The distinction is vital for all that theory and practice are closely bound together in the case of moral philosophy, because even if Williams is wrong about one sense in which Singer's strategy is likely to be counterproductive,--or if he is right overall but still wrong about a large enough minority of individual cases to warrant Singer's approach--presumably an important goal of Singer's as a moral philosopher is also to further our understanding at an analytical level of the issues he treats. If his approach is at odds with achieving that goal, that ought to be a consideration of some heft against it. John Arthur writes:

The moral code it is rational for us to support must be practical; it must actually work. This means, among other things, that it must be able to gain the support of almost everyone. But the code must be practical in other respects as well. ...Rules that would work only for angels are not the ones it is rational to support for humans.¹⁷⁴

In "Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders," Joseph Carens advances an argument similarly sweeping to Singer's

¹⁷⁴ (Arthur, 2003)

that borders should generally be open and that people should normally be free to leave their country of origin and settle in another, subject only to the sorts of constraints that bind current citizens in their new country. The argument is strongest, I believe, when applied to the migration of people from third world countries to those of the first world. Citizenship in Western liberal democracies is the modern equivalent of feudal privilege—an inherited status that greatly enhances one's life chances. Like feudal privileges, restrictive citizenship is hard to justify when one thinks about it closely.¹⁷⁵

On its face, Carens' argument is difficult to resist: being born in one place and not another is, for so many people, a matter of pure luck, and there is a basic unfairness in luck having so large a role in determining one's life chances. But moderate cosmopolitanism has at least two reasons for resisting Carens' logic: the first reason is that in order to help as many people as possible to escape dire need over time, resources must not be used up all at once, and a certain level of social and economic stability must be maintained, which it would be impossible to maintain beyond a certain level of immigration. It suffices to say that the point beyond which it would be impossible to maintain social and economic stability, would, whatever its precise location, be reached before borders were completely open in the way Carens proposes. The second reason is that notwithstanding luck's role in determining which nations we belong to and, consequently,

¹⁷⁵ (Carens, 1987), 251-2.

our life chances, moderate cosmopolitanism values membership in nations and takes such membership to translate into a special claim on the resources those nations possess. It is not an all-trumping or unlimited claim, but it is difficult to see what meaning membership in nations could have in the absence of such a claim as a component.

We have become used to seeing a world which is getting smaller and closer. However, to leap from this to complete abandonment of nation states is dangerous if not potentially fatal: it denies moderate cosmopolitanism's basic concept of fundamental obligations to one's own. Arguably moderate cosmopolitanism is better suited to accommodate the thriving of peoples with multiple identities, affiliations and allegiances, within their distinct communities/nations.

Carens tells us that

The fact that [Rawlsian, Nozickean and utilitarian] theories converge on this issue [of open borders], despite their significant disagreements on others, strengthens the case for open borders and reveals its roots in our deep commitment to respect all human beings as free and equal moral persons.¹⁷⁶

But there is a sense in which for anyone who believes in the equal moral worth of human beings the appeal to Rawls,

¹⁷⁶ (Carens, 1987), 251.

Nozick and utilitarians is superfluous, and in which there is at least a *prima facie* arbitrariness to the fact of citizenship in one political community and not another. By referring to arbitrariness I do not mean that there are no good reasons why a person might rightly value her membership in her own society over membership in others, no good reasons why she might feel more committed to her own society than to others, or no good reasons in general why circumstances that are a product of good fortune rather than being a reflection of a well-ordered universe can reasonably be invested by us with value and meaning that differentiate them from other circumstances. It is precisely because I see such valuing, commitment and investment of meaning as constitutive of our identities--a country, family, or person we care about might have had different identities than they turned out to have, but if the identities of any of them had been different in what sense would it be intelligible to still speak of our having the same identities ourselves?--that I argue for a type of cosmopolitanism that sees membership in families and in nations as no less fundamental a source of obligation than membership in humanity. But it is worth remembering the

role of chance, or of good or bad fortune, in our circumstances as we consider Carens' argument for open borders not only because of the extent to which national boundaries themselves are such contingent things,¹⁷⁷ the determination of which has historically had more to do with a host of factors other than reason or fairness than with the latter factors, but also because the fact that any one of us cares particularly about the borders of his or her own country is itself a contingent fact: he/she happened to be born in, say, the United States and not in, say, China.

However, this so-called arbitrary fact molded distinct identities, cultures, traditions, political orientation and other factors that economic migration tends to harm; problems of alienation and disorientation; the breaking of the traditional family; loss of language, identity, community and the culture it represents. Obviously what is gained are livelihoods, the importance of which cannot be denied, but arguably less extreme measures ought to be taken by our societies before the jettisoning of national

¹⁷⁷ Consider all the territories that have belonged first to one country, then to another, and which have then either gone back to the first or belonged to yet a third. Examples abound, but some notable ones are Danzig/Gdansk (Poland/Germany), Bessarabia/Moldova (Russia/Romania), Palestine (a province of Syria under the Ottoman empire, then ruled by Mandatory Authority of the League of Nations by Great Britain, and now under Israeli and (limited) Palestinian sovereignty.)

sovereignty that an open borders policy would represent is undertaken: trade agreements, development of natural resources, development of self-help programs, investment in education and technology, to name just a few, as well as intervention in removing corruption and human rights violations in order to give people a chance to flourish in their own communities, humanitarian aid's main purpose in the first instance.

Immigration policy and famine relief policy are two cases in which moderate cosmopolitanism clearly recommends itself as an alternative to extreme views offered by both anti- and strict- cosmopolitanism. It does not wish to jettison international institutions altogether where they do not work well, it wishes to reform them: temperamentally, moderate cosmopolitans differ from strict-cosmopolitanism in their patience and ability to compromise; these are arguably necessary qualities for successful reform. The zeal associated with anti- and strict- cosmopolitanism not only gives us grounds for thinking that at a theoretical level those extreme views may miss something, it is also a temperament which needs to be reined in if justice itself—which is often better served

by reform than by wholesale demolition and rebuilding—is to be served.

The world's worst evils and oppressions are those associated with politically illiberal views and regimes; when those evils and oppressions are borne in mind, it can be hard to see the differences between liberal views as the most important things to focus on in any absolute sense (as distinct from the sense in which it is practically important for us in the liberal democratic West to focus on them): we do not start from zero, after all; we start with the liberal idiom in which we live, and from within that idiom we must choose how best to respond to suffering in places in which liberalism is not the prevailing way to think about the individual's relationship to the state.¹⁷⁸

What of anti-cosmopolitans and the Right? Arguably, those camps should be seen as distinct, for all that in some cases they overlap. It is worth noting that in our public discourse generally, objections from the Right to Singer's sort of argument about famine relief, and to

¹⁷⁸ It is no mere coincidence that liberal democracies are better guarantors of the rights specified in the UDHR, or that when the governments of liberal democracies violate those rights the violations are sometimes referred to as "fascistic." Sometimes the term is fairly used and at other times it is not, but in any case its use is meant to imply that a government is not living up to the liberal ideals of its society, that certain of its actions are more consistent with the evil principles of a different type of regime.

cosmopolitan arguments generally, tend to be premise-granting objections that are concerned with efficaciousness, not root-and-branch rejections of cosmopolitanism of any kind.¹⁷⁹ Consider, in addition to Easterly's review of Singer's book, a *Wall Street Journal* editorial about the arrest warrant recently issued by the International Criminal Court for Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir for the slaughter in Darfur. The editorial argues that

The practical effect [of the issuing of the warrant] will be to increase the suffering of Darfurians. Sudan moved to kick out 10 foreign aid agencies hours after the warrant was issued. These groups assist some 2.7 million Darfur refugees and help in the reconstruction of south Sudan, where Khartoum recently ended a two-decade-long campaign against Christians and animists. Three more aid groups were expelled yesterday.¹⁸⁰

Now, one might disagree with the editorial's argument that the ICC's issuing of the warrant is in fact something that will harm Darfurians more than it helps them.¹⁸¹ At the very least, it should be noted that if it is sensible at all to think of an arrest warrant as a spur to further

¹⁷⁹ Immigration (see below) is a partial exception to this, insofar as arguments about the preservation of cultural integrity are deployed by some opponents of immigration, but the problem of finite resources is cited at least as frequently by them and by other opponents.

¹⁸⁰ (More Misery for Sudan, 2009)

¹⁸¹ Indeed, the same issue of the WSJ in which the editorial appears, has an op-ed piece *supporting* Bashir's indictment, by Bernard-Henri Levy. (Levy, What the Bashir Indictment Means, 2009)

crime,¹⁸² al-Bashir is a more proximate cause of the harm that will come to Darfurians than the warrant for his arrest if he harms them or facilitates harm coming to them. Al-Bashir is, after all, no less a moral agent as a consequence of a warrant's having been issued for his arrest than he would be had there been no such warrant. But what is interesting about the piece, and what it can be said to have in common with Easterly's review of Singer, is that there are some basic cosmopolitan premises which it unreservedly shares. Why, after all, would the editorial's author mention the help provided by aid groups that have been expelled in the wake of the arrest warrant, if he or she did not view the plight of Darfurians as a matter of pressing concern? The editorial ends:

We'd like to see Mr. Bashir and his henchmen stand trial for their crimes. Even more, we'd like those crimes to stop. But the ICC's indictment serves neither justice nor the Darfurians.¹⁸³

¹⁸² We might wonder whether the editorialist would ever write of an arrest warrant within the US that it was likely to be the cause of further suffering. In the US too, criminals often go on to commit further crimes after warrants for their arrest have been issued but before they have been captured; a search of *Wall Street Journal* editorials turned up no condemnations at all of arrest warrants issued in such cases, suggesting that the likelihood of additional wrongdoing is not the consideration that always has the most weight in the editorialist's assessment of which arrest warrants to criticize and which ones to praise (or at least refrain from criticizing.)

¹⁸³ (More Misery for Sudan, 2009)

To wish to see a trial held for crimes committed to distant others, and indeed to refer to them as *crimes* as though at least with respect to some category of actions, that term is universally valid, is to have at least a minimally cosmopolitan understanding: some action *x* is not merely "how things are done over there," it is a crime independent of the location of its commission.

Conclusion.

There is no unitary decision procedure for determining a *priori* whether it is one's obligations to humanity or one's obligations to one's family or nation that ought to take precedence in any particular case. The most that can be expected when dilemmas arise in this context is that those facing them acknowledge the competing considerations, and that they give good reasons for choosing as they do, with the full knowledge that there might also be good reasons for choosing differently. Moderate cosmopolitanism acknowledges the senses in which there is genuine loss when the interests of any group we belong to are sacrificed for the sake of the interests of any other such group (small as the family, or large as humanity), and the senses in which such sacrifices are justified. It is also skeptical about

proposals for radically restructuring the way we think about morality. Moderate cosmopolitanism knows that we are not angels, but it also knows that having principled reasons to value our families and nations, and to give them priority at least some of the time—without which justice itself will not be served—does not make us the opposite of angels.

Conclusion.

This dissertation argues for a middle position along a continuum of views about the scope of moral obligation. Though one motivation behind my argument is my sense that a moral view which sees both our obligations to humanity generally and our obligations to our families and nations as having fundamental status is likely to achieve better results in the sphere of action—i.e., to lead to moral action both within the groups with which we are affiliated, and within humanity as a whole—at least as important a reason for defending moderate cosmopolitanism as a view has been my perception that a view quite close to it is already held by many people in contemporary liberal democratic societies, though the theoretical defenses one sees most often are of views at either of the two poles: strict-cosmopolitanism, which allows benefiting our family members or compatriots only on efficiency grounds or instrumentalist grounds, according them no special status; and anti-cosmopolitanism, which has a space for charity towards distant others, but which denies that we have fundamental obligations towards them by virtue of our shared identity as human beings. That the theoretical

defenses one most often sees are of positions at the ends of the continuum rather than at its middle is not surprising: those positions lend themselves more easily to the sorts of formulas which tell one at every turn what the rank order among our affiliations is, which values trump which other values, and which considerations are and aren't morally salient. Moderate cosmopolitanism, by contrast, does not as easily lend itself to application via such formulas, but it is arguably worth defending nevertheless because it comes closest to being an accurate description of how many of us view our membership in families and nations on the one hand and our affiliation with humanity as a whole on the other: we do not view either of these types of affiliation as ultimately reducible or subordinate in terms of the other, at least not in any general way.¹⁸⁴

A main feature of my argument has been to show the senses in which the claims made by anti- and strict-cosmopolitans are unrealistic and counter-productive. In the case of anti-cosmopolitans, it is hard not to interpret

¹⁸⁴ E.g., when families or nation-states are abusive, we (the state in the case of families; other nations in the case of nation-states) might intervene for the sake of the individuals in them, and such intervention can be said to amount to our ultimately giving priority to the identity each person has as a rights-bearing human being, but we do not think of that priority as a matter of course; in particular, we do not think of it when we consider families' or nations' positive achievements.

the inapt deployment of metaphor, the association of cosmopolitanism with a sweeping hubristic modern project, and the nostalgia for antiquity as a resistance to any sort of attempt to say that we should have more than a single focus—even if there is no danger of our families or nations being excluded; even if they are explicitly classified as fundamental—of moral attention. Further, the resistance to such attempts is connected to a more general resistance to the philosophical analysis of moral commitments, resistance which ranges from a stylistic concern (e.g., "how can such things as moral commitments be discussed using generic, unpoetic terms like 'focus'") to the worry that bringing philosophical scrutiny to bear on moral commitments can have the effect of eroding those commitments. One can sympathize with the stylistic concern, though sometimes it is necessary for poetry to be sacrificed for the sake of clarity, and one can understand the worry about the potential effects of philosophical scrutiny as well, though against the potential for erosion of some commitments (an unintended effect even where it does occur), we should, arguably, weigh the potential for acquiring consciousness of obligations that would have been obscure to us had

philosophy not shown us/clarified for us that the least accidental among our identities is our identity as human beings.

With strict-cosmopolitanism, we encounter other problems. If, for example, the right of national self-determination matters to us as liberals, we might worry that a view which subordinates all identities to membership in humanity might not respect that right sufficiently—indeed, some strict-cosmopolitans do not view it as a right at all—and though a general worry about philosophical scrutiny (in the way that anti-cosmopolitans worry) seems too sweeping, it does seem fair to ask to what extent families and nations can be the strong institutions we rely on them to be if our membership in them is viewed in instrumental terms, and if giving extra measures of resources to family members or compatriots is viewed as justified only insofar as humanity as a whole can be said to benefit. If at every instance of privileging one's own one asks oneself whether the privileging is justified with reference to humanity as a whole, a calculating spirit at odds with the meaning of being a family member or compatriot enters the scene.

David Miller writes:

The weak version ... [of cosmopolitanism] holds only that morality is cosmopolitan in part: there are some valid principles with a more restricted scope. According to ... weak cosmopolitanism ... we may owe certain kinds of treatment to all other human beings regardless of any relationship in which we stand to them, while there are other kinds of treatment that we owe only to those to whom we are related in certain ways, with neither sort of obligation being derivative of the other.¹⁸⁵

By the "weak version," Miller means the moderate version that has been presented here. But arguably its weakness in the sense of its accommodating more than a single regulative principle, is in fact a strength in the sense of making moderate cosmopolitanism more likely to gain support among liberals, with whose intuitions about the requirements of justice at home and abroad it fits more closely than a stricter view, and in the further sense of its not having the diminishing effect on our local relationships that weighing them on inappropriate scales can have even on those occasions when according to the scales such relationships have greater weight than the relationship each of us has to the world as a whole by virtue of being human.

Moderate cosmopolitanism strikes a balance between two strands within liberal history and theory: a strand which

¹⁸⁵ (Miller, 1998), p. 166-7. Miller uses "strong" and "weak" to refer to what I, following Scheffler, call "strict" and "moderate."

views the individual as an end in herself, and a strand, associated with the modern nation-state, which values state sovereignty as an expression of the right of national groups to self-determination.¹⁸⁶ Given the importance of nations and families to individual flourishing—given that our families and our nations are the sites where our characters are formed and where we first learn virtue¹⁸⁷—any liberal view concerned with the good of individuals has at least instrumental reasons to value those institutions. But it is a feature of those institutions that instrumental valuing cannot but serve to weaken them when it is all there is.

Moderate cosmopolitanism has the advantage of seeing membership in families and nations as giving rise to fundamental obligations, just as it views membership in

¹⁸⁶ As central a figure in the history of liberal political thought as Hobbes was concerned with sovereignty in connection with security, not self-determination, but whereas self-determination is a distinctively liberal ground for valuing sovereignty, security, for all its importance, is not.

¹⁸⁷ Indeed, we may think of them as the sites where an intermediate stage of development is reached, whereby we care for others beyond ourselves, though not yet for others as members of humanity. We cannot reach the more advanced stage (more advanced not in its moral status, but in the greater imaginative exertion required to reach it) of caring for others without first passing through the intermediate stage (though the intermediate stage continues to make valid claims on us even after we have gone beyond it.) Perhaps the image that best represents this idea visually, is an individual represented by a dot at the center of concentric circles with circumferences that grow until the circle with the widest circumferences, representing the whole of humanity, is reached.

humanity as a whole as such giving rise to such obligations, but we might wonder what follows from this so far as education and the formation of citizens' moral outlooks are concerned. How, we might wonder, are we to teach children that there is more than one sort of source for fundamental obligation? Will this not confuse them? Here it is worth remembering that many school curricula in contemporary liberal democracies already teach children that, for example, there can be all sorts of motivations for noble actions, that historically, some have risked their lives in service to their particular nations, while others have done so motivated by a desire simply to help fellow human beings. Children are generally able to cope with being told that there are multiple grounds (and indeed, multiple types, most not involving putting one's life at risk) for noble actions and if despite their education there is nevertheless a greater need for such actions than there are people queuing to perform them, the fault might well be with the ease with which in adulthood, other concerns, pressures and demands on our time and on our other resources can begin to weigh down on us, rather

than with some defect in the education we receive in childhood.

Both here, and in the section in Chapter 5 where I show that certain basic cosmopolitan premises seem to be conceded even by the Right, I may seem to be implying that no changes are in fact needed at the level of practice, or that insofar as there are, this is only because some people might have been alienated by strict-cosmopolitanism's unrealistic understanding of our obligations to our fellow family members and compatriots. Of course, in fact it is possible to have a moral theory that is more realistic but for many people to continue to act immorally because they find the demands made upon them by the various moral communities to which they belong—whether humanity or narrower—too burdensome whatever the status of those demands. Arguing that a new moral view ought to be widely accepted is not only a theoretical exercise, and one hopes that it will result in a net increase in moral action, but given both its critique of transcendence as a metaphor, and the alternative it represents to a strict view that is too sweeping, it would be odd if moderate cosmopolitanism saw itself as the moral view that would bring about an end to

immorality once and for all. Indeed, even stricter views than moderate cosmopolitanism don't see themselves in that way when they are also liberal views, insofar as the liberal freedom they value includes the freedom to err.

But it would be no small achievement if, in the teeth of the human capacity to err, the number of people motivated to help their fellow human beings increased, because they had found a theory that did not *a priori* subordinate the value of their family membership and their membership of particular nations to any other value, while at the same time that theory insisted that membership in humanity had fundamental status as well. This dissertation aims to advance such a theory.

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