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Afterword: Liberal Nationalism Both Cosmopolitan and Rooted

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I

There are nationalisms and nationalisms, and as nationalisms vary from barbarous and murderous to benign and, all things considered, perhaps desirable, so theories of nationalism vary from irrational or turgid metaphysical accounts to reasonable and carefully articulated and argued theories of nationalism. André Van de Putte has well described some of the former (without at all falling into that category himself) while David Miller, Yael Tamir, Geneviève Nootens, Ross Poole, and Robert X. Ware have carefully argued for some modest forms of nationalism, sometimes explicitly and sometimes only by implication. But there are also, as the reader will have seen, forcefully argued and systematic theories setting themselves against even the most sophisticated and plausible defences of nationalism. The articles of Harry Brighouse, Omar Dahbour, and Andrew Levine fall explicitly into that category and, we would argue, so does Allen Buchanan's carefully wrought article, though implicitly and by implication but not by programmatic intent. Buchanan would so constrain the conditions under which a nation could justifiably secede that, we believe, it would – and so we shall argue – again and again, and in circumstances where this is problematic, render the verdict 'unjustified' to reasonable nationalist

claims to secession. It would, if accepted, leave too little space for nations to be self-determining and in this way stand in the way of many plausible nationalist projects as well as progressive reforms. So, whatever Buchanan's intentions, his account, like Brighouse's, Dahbour's and Levine's, is another powerful theoretical account directed against nationalism. But even here, these accounts notwithstanding, we will repeat: there are nationalisms and nationalisms. There is the nationalism of the big powerful states, the superpowers, the United States most paradigmatically, using their economic domination to assert in the face of the world their national superiority in a way that is almost obscene. And there are the nationalisms of the stateless nations, embedded, in various degrees, in repressive states and struggling for emancipation and democracy. There are also the nationalisms of historical nation-states – France and Spain may be examples – whose sovereignty and democratic culture are threatened by the institutions of economic globalization.[1] Among the strongest and most powerfully articulated attacks on nationalism contained in this volume, some can be interpreted as challenges to the first kind of nationalism. Under such an interpretation we completely agree with them.

We, like Miller, Tamir and Ware, would like to make a case for a liberal nationalism that is fully compatible with a universalistic and internationalist cosmopolitan outlook and is, as well, compatible with a socialism which is a form of cosmopolitanism and internationalism. But a plausible cosmopolitanism will inescapably be a *rooted* cosmopolitanism.[2] Martha Nussbaum to the contrary notwithstanding, reasonable versions of nationalism and cosmopolitanism fit together like hand and glove.[3]

We will seek to articulate lines of argument that will vindicate a cosmopolitan liberal nationalism and show, as well, that there are real-

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1 Stanley Hoffman, 'Look Back in Anger,' *The New York Review of Books*, **44:12** (1997), 43–50

2 Kwane Anthony Appiah, 'Cosmopolitan Patriots,' in Joshua Cohen, ed., *For Love of Country* (Boston: Beacon Press 1996), 21–9

3 Martha C. Nussbaum, 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism,' 3–17, and 'Reply,' 131–44, both in Joshua Cohen, ed., *For Love of Country* (Boston: Beacon Press 1996)

life circumstances in which a good case can be made for the project of such a nationalism being carried through. Quebec is one case, Scotland is another, or at least so we shall argue. And in the past the Norwegian and Icelandic secessions were justified. But, for this argument to be something which will be launched in a fair-minded way, without being *parti-pris*, and facing the discipline of criticism, the central task of this Afterword will be to come to grips with the above trenchant critics of nationalism. We shall set out core arguments by Brighouse, Buchanan, Dahbour, and Levine and then critically examine them. What we think we have established, or at least gone some way towards establishing, by this examination, is that liberal nationalism is alive and well and not only is compatible with, but *requires*, a rooted cosmopolitanism that is also through and through universalistic.

In the rest of this first section, we shall, however, concentrate on a rejection of nationalism that is not to any considerable extent rooted in theoretical considerations but rather in a keen observation of history, society, and the lives of human beings. It is brilliantly instanced in this volume, though in different ways, by the essays of Barrington Moore Jr. and Carol A. L. Prager. They might very well say that fine theoretical constructions of liberal nationalism, however soundly argued as models for justified nationalisms, are all justified solely within the limits of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism. They are in reality no more than the dreams of a spirit seer distant from what massively are, have been, and (we have good empirical reasons to believe) will continue to be the realities of nationalist movements: realities, Carol Prager has it, which are, in contrast with liberalism, rooted in passions and not in reason.

Many modern nationalist movements have reignited old enmities and have, beyond that, generated, where the conflict is sustained, hatreds. Even in such a liberal society as Quebec, the police in Montreal on the night of the 1995 referendum in which the No side very narrowly won had to erect barricades and be out in force to keep partisans of the two sides apart. It was plain for everyone to see the hostility there. Moore argues that between different nations there are typically deep and smouldering enmities, resentments of each other, whether justified or not, but still psychologically very real, which go on from generation to generation. When a nationalist movement arises, these feelings are brought to the surface and intensified. Indeed, he could claim, as others have, no nationalist movement can arise without these resentments.

Moore does not distinguish at all between ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism or clearly between ethnic identities and national identities or ethnicity and nationality. However, when he speaks of there being in premodern times "thousands of separate jurisdictions, large and small" which, as we go into the modern era, get ground up and destroyed by central governments (e.g., peasants made into Frenchmen) in circumstances which "left a legacy of bitterness that survives to the present day," this may illustrate the move from an array of ethnic groups to the creation of nations and nation-states and distinctive national identities. In any event he does not attach much, if any, significance to the difference between a sense of ethnic identity and a sense of national identity. They are, he believes, made of similar psychological stuff, and in his view they have similar ill effects.

In speaking of different ethnic groups, Moore does not speak of immigrants but (for example) of those historically ancient, relatively small, localized peoples of Europe who have been made in a unifying sweep into modern French, Germans, Italians, and the like. Where once there were seventeen distinct languages and the diverse cultural groups to go with them, now there are French citizens with one national language: French. Where such unification went on, there are very frequently smouldering resentments and enmities, frequently not without reason, rooted in historically passed-down memories of time past. As Moore puts it,

> At any given time the map of European states has shown blocs of territory inside each state with language and customs that differ from the surrounding state. Usually such ethnic blocs [they could, as easily, have been called national minorities or even perhaps nations] are the result of a previous conquest, sometimes in the quite distant past. Often enough political leaders arise in these areas to play on local grievances and thereby win support for claims that the territory really belongs to another state or just itself, that is, it should be one more independent state.

Given such circumstances, at "some point in their history ethnic identities are likely to become quite militant." Where before they were quiescent, they become in such circumstances intense and insistent, and sharp ethnic conflicts and hatreds come into being. Throughout much of our history ethnic enmities wax and wane but always remain. Though sometimes rather concealed, as in much of Yugoslavia from 1950-80, they still are there, always ready to erupt into hostili-

ties and hatreds. Moore thinks, consciously or unconsciously echoing Carl Schmitt from whom he is certainly politically distant, that what binds people together is hatred. That is their social bonding, liberal piety to the contrary notwithstanding: a common hatred of what is perceived as the enemy or, less frequently, as one among many enemies. It is arguably a weakness of liberalism that it has never been able to take a proper account of that. The claim is that when in a liberal order a strong nationalist movement arises, given these smouldering resentments and the hatreds that nationalistic rhetoric summons out of these resentments, we have a recipe for intense social conflict that will tear the fabric of liberal society. Where such movements have the numbers and where they are strong and confident, they will, as Carol Prager emphasizes, defeat liberal political regimes as the Nazis defeated Weimar.

In the poorer parts of the world where reasonable nationalist demands are met (say, by decolonization), the hopes for a better life that the push of nationalism expresses (think here of Algeria) will be dashed because of the very great poverty and lack of infrastructure of such countries (*quasi-states* as some have been called). With such a deep disappointment, there emerge group bitterness and hatreds – the bitterness and hatreds resulting from crushed hopes. When this is the case, ethnic demands increasingly lead to a cycle of violence generating still more intensified hatreds between the contending groups. This exacerbates an already dreadful economic situation resulting in economic decline and disruption, even more poverty, and the disappearance of anything even looking like stability. Reasonable nationalist demands have triggered, in such circumstances of poverty, unmeetable aspirations, which in turn, not far down the line, lead to a virulent nationalism and something which comes to approach Hobbes's conception of a state of nature as a war of all against all. This is something like the story that Moore tells.

Carol Prager's thoughtful and insightful essay has a more contemporary focus than Moore's, and different aims, but their essays are revealingly complementary; they come to similarly historically pessimistic political conclusions, and both regard nationalism (to understate how they see it) as a misfortune that, in any of its forms, is devoid of an emancipatory force that could serve the cause of human progress, human autonomy, and self-realization. Indeed their pessi-

mism makes them deeply skeptical concerning even the very modest hopes for progress that some liberals continue to entertain even when they are acutely aware of the horrors of contemporary life.

More definitely than Moore, Carol Prager identifies nationalism with ethnic nationalism: 'ethnonationalism,' as she calls it, following Walker Connor, with nationalism *sans phrase*. Civic nationalism, to say nothing of liberal nationalism, does not seem to her a realistic possibility, though it is not clear that she would deny they are conceptual possibilities. Indeed when she speaks of what she calls 'positive nationalism,' which she thinks is now a thing of the past, we should conclude that probably she would take liberal nationalism to be a conceptual possibility. But her interests are not in conceptual possibilities. Her subject is savage ethnonationalism or, as she alternatively phrases it, barbarous nationalism, as it has emerged in the international world order and as it bedevils liberal internationalism in the post-Cold War era, where the end of the "bipolar international system has permitted temporarily repressed ethnic and nationalist passions to resurrect themselves."

Carol Prager, like Liah Greenfeld, sees nationalism as something springing from "resentment due to oppression, uneven development and other factors." Given these circumstances, she sees "no end in sight to the conditions that create furious nationalism." Indeed the "homogenizing effects of globalization ... have been seen as a source of oppression, leading to heightened nationalism." What she calls "positive nationalism" (that is, a nationalism with on the whole beneficial and progressive consequences) "has not only reached the point of diminishing returns but a destructive nationalism has replaced it, threatening to undermine the existing international order with its insatiable regress." What we have – and this is plain enough for all to see and is not reasonably contestable – is sickeningly barbarous nationalism in Nagorno-Karabakh, Rwanda, Burundi, and much of the former Yugoslavia. These are among the most prominent and extreme cases, but they do not stand alone. And, as Carol Prager remarks, these nationalisms "are absolutist and pitiless."

Like Moore, Prager sees the horrible logic of the thing. Ethnic enmities are usually ancient and continuing, and where there are people in a territory with minority status surrounded by historical enemies they will tend to feel menaced "by the majority, who typically see the minority as the most serious threat to the integrity of the nation." Not infrequently these

feelings will not be misplaced. But, misplaced or not, they will be tenaciously held onto by both sides. They will hug their grievances, both imagined and real, and fear attacks coming from their enemies.

Nations, particularly where nationalist sentiments are strong, have what Carol Prager calls "cherished narratives of themselves, their enemies, and their shared history, all of which have become seared into their identities and are renewed with each fresh atrocity." These narratives are, of course, largely, but sometimes not entirely, mythical. They are what some anthropologists call 'just-so stories' but just-so stories with baleful consequences. But, as both Moore and Carol Prager stress, many members of the nations in question (often most members) stick with them through thick and thin. These narratives, as Harry Brighouse remarks as well, are very resistant to critical inspection. Given such sociological and psychological realities, barbarous nationalism is very easily kindled and, while it can sometimes be contained for a time, its recurrence seems impossible to prevent. What Albert Camus said about the plague and what it was a metaphor of, can be said about barbarous nationalism: it is something that in one form or another is always with us.

Carol Prager is concerned with the anomalies of humanitarian intervention. And indeed humanitarian intervention is the first thing that those of us who are very normatively oriented call for when faced with a Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Burundi, or Nagorno-Karabakh. She carefully examines the moral, political, and empirical problems involved here, making it painfully evident that there are no easy solutions. But that concern, although important and the burden of her essay, is not what we shall be concerned with here. We shall instead fasten on what she and Moore say about the pervasiveness and intractability of barbarous nationalism and the threat (possible threat?) it poses for the reasonableness of arguments supporting liberal nationalism. In light of world sociological realities, is liberal nationalism a concept that has much, if any, application in the hurly-burly of the real world? It seems, some would assert, to have little interface with the actually existing nationalisms. Is it the case that ethnic enmities and enmities resulting from, and perhaps fuelled by, nationalist projects, with the hatreds they engender, are just here to stay as part of our very human condition? Or can we reasonably expect their slow attrition and expect, or at least plausibly struggle for, a world not so starkly constituted? And what does this say (if anything) about the justifiability of *any* nationalist project?

Behind the very idea of liberal nationalism is the modest assumption that some limited moral and political progress is possible, that there can be and will be societies where nationalist movements are reasonable, that with them we will sometimes have, all things considered, a justifiable ethical rationale for a nationalist project, and that sometimes an actually existing nationalist project can push this progress along. But should we not, if we are reasonable, have a deep historical pessimism and skepticism about that? Is it not more reasonable to believe, as Carol Prager does, that barbarous nationalism and a liberal national order will "remain at war, morally and empirically" and that barbarous nationalism will continue to triumph? And that, while liberal nationalism is not an oxymoron, it will have no stable exemplification?

If, as many believe, this is so, then we should also realize that no sensible normative political theory can argue that what is impossible should be done. No fundamental 'ought' can be derived from an 'is,' but it is equally true that 'ought' implies 'can.'[4] But, and consistent with this, though less frequently noted, it is also the case, as Carol Prager insightfully observes, in international politics and indeed all politics, that whatever *is* constrains "to a significant degree what *can* be. In all politics, but especially in international politics, whatever is has to be taken seriously and, in that sense, respected." Will accepting this, as we think we must do if we would be reasonable, render any project of liberal nationalism a form of spitting into the wind, both utopian and dangerous, because it is oblivious to its inescapable untoward effects?

This challenge to nationalism is not a conceptual challenge or even a theoretical one. It does not say that the very idea of liberal nationalism or even civic nationalism is incoherent or conceptually or theoretically or ethically untoward, but rather that it is out to lunch with respect to the facts concerning nationalism. The beginning of a response goes like this: there are, as our opening sentence asserted, nationalisms and nationalisms, and while of course there are barbarous nationalisms with their horrendous effects, and while it is also plainly evident that such nationalisms are very widespread (and at least seemingly growing), dangerous and just plain evil, still it is also true that they are not the

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4 Kai Nielsen, *Why be Moral?* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books 1989), 13–38

only types of nationalisms that exist, for there are also instances of liberal nationalism. In our recent history Norwegian, Icelandic, Finnish, and Flemish nationalisms were instances of such nationalisms and at present Catalonian, Faeroesian, Scottish, Québécois, and Welsh nationalisms are paradigms of liberal nationalism and liberal nationalist movements. The struggle for some form of national self-determination is persistent, sometimes intense, and in all societies in which it occurs, it leads to social conflict, but such conflicts were (are) – some isolated containable hotheads to the contrary notwithstanding – non-violent. Moreover, where some isolated violence did occur it was contained with both sides – a few loose cannons excepted – acknowledging that the dispute and its resolution must proceed within the parameters of a liberal framework. This means that the struggle was not violent and, where it is going on now in the places we just mentioned, will not be violent, and that the matter was settled, is being settled, or will be settled in accordance with liberal democratic principles. There are, of course, often disputes about just how liberal democratic principles and procedures are to be understood and, even more so, about how they are to be applied in those contexts. But what is not in dispute is that the matter must be and will be settled democratically. At the height of the controversy, there will, unfortunately, be a lot of inflamed, partisan and often very silly rhetoric flowing from both sides. But (*pace* Carol Prager) there are real life situations where nationalism does not triumph over, or even trump, liberalism, but is rather strictly *constrained* by it. There is a firm resolve on both sides – indeed it is more like an unquestionable background presupposition – that matters be settled with words not guns, no matter how difficult and protracted the discussion may turn out to be.

There may be no international liberal world order, but in some relatively small but not insignificant parts of the world with a good number of nation-states and still more nations, parts of the world in many ways (though not all) more fortunate than the others, nationalist issues have been, and as far as we can foresee will continue to be, settled democratically. It is not we who are out to lunch about the facts, but those who deny the sociological reality of liberal nationalism or who set it aside. They are suffering from what Wittgenstein called a one-sided diet. A preoccupation with barbarous nationalisms, certainly understandable, and vitally important as it is, should not blind us to the fact

that there are actually existing liberal nationalisms and that they do not, whatever other inadequacies they may suffer from, suffer from what is so wrong about barbarous nationalisms. And in describing and interpreting nationalism, in making generalizations about nationalism, and in constructing theories about nationalism, we should not, in doing any of these things, treat a subspecies of nationalism as if it were just nationalism – as if it were the whole of nationalism. That it is the larger and more colourful subspecies is neither here nor there. That fact does not turn a subspecies into a species.

It might be responded that that is all well and good, but it is the case that (1) the instantiations of liberal nationalisms are piddling compared to a world awash with barbarous nationalisms, nationalisms that threaten the stability of the 'international liberal world order,' and (2) the characterization we have given of liberal nationalism in liberal societies is itself one-sided and utopian, failing to come fully into sync with salient realities, including the realities of nationalist movements in liberal societies.

We will turn to (1) first. Seen from a world scale these instantiations of liberal nationalisms may be, so viewed, 'piddling,' but they certainly are not so to the people and societies involved. They were not to the Norwegians, Icelanders, Flemish, and Finns, and they are not now to the Catalans, Faeroesian, Scots, Quebeckers, and Welsh. Moreover, the United Kingdom, Belgium, southwestern Europe, Scandinavia, and northern North America are wealthy, relatively influential, and relatively powerful parts of the world. Not the most influential by any means, but not negligible either. And it should not be forgotten that Scandinavia in particular serves as a beacon for progressive developments (feasible progressive developments) within liberal societies generally.

In turn it might be responded – but this moves over in the direction of (2) – that these societies are all at least relatively homogeneous and wealthy, with high levels of education and (Spain aside) with long histories of stability under liberal, often social democratic, democracies. They are not, given this homogeneity, good models for the whole of the liberal social order, to say nothing of the rest of the world.

We will respond to this by starting our consideration of (2). But let us first press the difficulty a little further. In addition to what was just said above, our characterization of the real world of liberal nationalism, it might be remarked, is one-sided in that it fails to consider that

nationalist movements are not as liberal in many reasonably stable liberal democracies as we have given to understand. We mentioned the Catalonians but not the Basques in Spain. And we have ignored the Corsicans and the quite distinct movement of Le Pen in France, nationalists in Italy, and nationalist struggles in Northern Ireland. These nationalisms – nationalism extant in liberal societies – hardly have a liberal face and sometimes are violent. There is a continuum here with barbarous nationalism. Quebec's nationalism is peaceful, working firmly within the limits of liberalism alone, but not a few, and not just anti-nationalists, worry about what might follow hard on a victory for the Yes side in the next referendum. Their concern is that in Montreal, right-wing, largely anglophone, partitionist groups might resort to armed violence in an attempt to destabilize things after a Yes vote. It is difficult to estimate how realistic such speculations are. It is hopeful, but perhaps a sticking of one's head in the sand, to believe that they are not very realistic and even to suspect that they are, in some instance, politically inspired to inflict fear on gullible people. And it is also reasonable to believe that in the eventuality of such violence, the Quebec police forces could contain it and the federal Canadian government, vengeful as it might feel, would not intervene causing mayhem. Its own self-interest would restrain it here. But that aside, what is relevant in the present context is that not all contending forces in liberal societies engaging in nationalist struggles are as liberal as our narrative gives us to understand and that what Moore calls ethnic enmities are deep, ancient, and intractable and generate hatreds and violence in liberal as well as non-liberal societies. To remind us of that, we have the fate of Weimar and the way that the United States, in reality an intensely nationalist society that does not recognize itself as such, in a illiberal way big-brothers the world. There is not here the liberal nationalism of which we have been speaking. Yes, as we have said, there are nationalisms and nationalisms, but liberal nationalism and progressively liberal societies are much more frail than we have acknowledged.

The verisimilitude in this should incline us to share Moore's and Prager's historical pessimism. However, the core of our response to (2) is the following: if we are just betting, it is perhaps safer to bet that things will go badly. But we are also actors in the world; we care about our situation and wish for, and some of us struggle to get, the best outcomes possible. In that context we should remind ourselves of

Antonio Gramsci's famous slogan about the pessimism of the intellect and the optimism of the will. Even Carol Prager allows herself a little hope at the end of her essay.

However, hope apart, the situation *may* not be as bleak as historical pessimists portray it. There is the undisputed fact that we have had peaceful successful secessionist movements in Norway and Iceland, a peaceful but perhaps ill-advised partition of the former Czechoslovakia, devolution of powers in Belgium, considerable local autonomy for Catalonia within Spain, and some movement (though not yet nearly enough) toward the recognition of First Nations in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. And we had votes in two referenda for devolution in Scotland and Wales, for a Parliament in Scotland and a limited form of self-government in both nations. All of the various things mentioned above have happened, and are happening, in a democratic and basically liberal way, though it indeed required some extra-parliamentary opposition.

Such occurrences and the liberal nationalist theorizing that accompanies them serve as models for what can go on in other liberal societies. Suppose this continues to obtain, as it feasibly could. Suppose further that the productive forces of these societies continue to develop, and with this, as can reasonably be expected, the level of wealth, health, and education in these societies continues to rise, and with that, their productive forces come to be more intelligently deployed. These things, of course, may not happen, but they feasibly could. If they do, it is not unreasonable to believe, or at least to hope, that liberal societies will increasingly go the way Scandinavia has and that with the increased salience of democratic ideas having as a constitutive part the very central idea of national self-determination, the aspirations for self-determination (aspirations of nationalist movements) will be increasingly recognized and, as it used to be said in the days of operationalism, peacefully operationalized.

It is still a long way from there to the illiberal and largely (in varying degrees) impoverished parts of the world where barbarous nationalism is rampant. But again it is reasonable to hope that with increased education and wealth the rich liberal capitalist democracies will in time turn away from neo-liberal and other conservative orientations and increasingly, Scandinavian-style, move toward social democratic and even conceivably liberal and market socialist orientations.[5] Even social

democracy, if pervasively and stably in place, will blunt the effects of neo-liberal globalization on the Second and Third Worlds as well as on the First. As we can see from Thomas Pogge's trenchantly argued essay in this volume, with even a very small transfer of resources, at great distance (*pace* Rorty) from anything that would require the impoverishment of the wealthy North or bring harm to even the North's poorest compatriots, not a little of the horrendous world poverty can be eliminated. Cutbacks in military expenses, space exploration, and other similar extravagances would greatly accelerate this elimination of such extreme poverty. It is even within the realm of feasible options, further down the line, that these impoverished Third World societies will slowly move to becoming tolerably wealthy, though probably, at least in the first instance, tolerably wealthy capitalist, societies. And this will provide one of the conditions that Moore describes in which ethnic enmities will slowly die, though we would add as well that often they will also die in time with the recognition of legitimate national aspirations to self-determination where the societies in question are not desperately poor. And where, with their realization, we will get either multinations or nation-states and not the quasi-states of the impoverished Third and Fourth Worlds. However, as Moore also envisages, sometimes ethnic enmities will die because ethnic differences will slowly lose their former importance to people, and, with that, the enmities will slowly wither away. Assimilation can be a tragic thing and is usually not to be desired, but it is not always bad when it is in no way forced. As will be seen when we discuss Brighouse, we will basically agree with Ross Poole that assimilation is generally something to be opposed. We are only claiming here that it is not always bad.

As well, there may be a continued devolution of powers to nations until someday even the United States might devolve into several different nations in some loose Swiss-style federation, thereby giving more autonomy to the inhabitants of the United States and making it a place that is more liberal both internally and externally and thus no longer

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5 Kai Nielsen, 'Is Global Justice Impossible?' in Jay Drydyk and Peter Penz, eds., *Global Justice and Democracy* (Winnipeg/Halifax: Fernwood Publishing 1997), 19–54

such a danger to and bully of the world. This is very probably a fanciful possibility. Did not their Civil War settle that question in the United States? Fanciful or not, it is, at least arguably, what thorough liberal democratic entitlements would require. And, given what may be the long-run power of democratic ideas, it may someday come to be.

Less fancifully, the narrative of a liberal rendering of the world that we have just gestured at, which includes liberal nationalism as an integral part, *probably* is less likely than one or another of the several narratives of historical pessimism. Indeed it may turn out to be a just-so story. But it is a possible (i.e., a feasible) option that with luck and intelligent struggle might become an emancipatory social reality. For human beings thrust into a world they did not make, it is something for which they can reasonably hope and struggle. Again there is the pessimism of the intellect and the optimism of the will.

II

In this volume, nationalism, including liberal nationalism, has come under vigorous, probing, and sustained attack from Harry Brighouse, Allen Buchanan, Omar Dahbour, and Andrew Levine. We will first recall their key arguments and then see what a reasonable liberal nationalist could say in reply. It is most certainly not the task of this afterword to aim at conclusiveness of argument, but we want to raise issues, show connections between different accounts, query the most crucial arguments set forth in this volume and elsewhere (particularly in relation to other claims that have been made), and make some suggestions about our perceptions of the lay of the land and about what issues we take to be outstanding.

We will first consider some of the arguments of Omar Dahbour. He stands a bit apart from the other critics of nationalism in this volume in that, like a nationalist and a communitarian, he defends the importance of communal identities, though his identities are even more local than those of communitarian nationalists and indeed most communitarians. It is not, in his view, the identities yielded by nations that are vital for solidarity, but those formed by subnational regions (including social movements developing in such regions) and cities. Moreover, he claims that his critique of nationalism does not

range over all accounts of nationalism, but only over communitarian defences of nationalism. But his two main targets are the defences of nationality and nationalism of David Miller and Michael Walzer, both of whom are communitarians (though this is a term that Walzer will not accept) *and* liberals. From his footnotes it is clear that Dahbour also applies his critique to Yael Tamir, Avishai Margalit, Joseph Raz, Charles Taylor, and Will Kymlicka, all of whom defend broadly similar conceptions of nationality, and of the right to national self-determination as Miller and Walzer do. But they are all liberals, though sometimes social democratic ones, with some communitarian leanings. Their nationalism, to the extent they have one, is, like Miller's and Walzer's, a liberal nationalism. So Dahbour's critique is broader than what he advertises, and if successful, would undermine liberal nationalism as well as non-liberal and illiberal versions of communitarian nationalism (though *some* of his arguments, as we shall see, only apply to those illiberal forms of nationalism). But other more general arguments cut against nationalism *period*. What crucially distinguishes Dahbour from Brighouse, Buchanan, and Levine is that he argues for the need to acknowledge even more local identities than do nationalists. He no doubt would also defend a cosmopolitanism, but not one that was not also very locally rooted.

Nationalists – or most of them – claim that national identities, in modern societies at least, provide the basis for political life. Many would claim that they are the only secure bases. Dahbour, by contrast, argues that "national identities cannot serve as the legitimate basis of political life." Many nationalists argue that nation-states may ensure the stable conditions for self-determination, if anything does. Against this Dahbour maintains that "nation-states do not ensure the real conditions for self-determination." And Dahbour maintains as well *contra* nationalism that "assertions of national rights are disruptive of relations between different peoples and states." Many nationalists, particularly those with a communitarian bent, including liberal nationalists such as Miller and Walzer, believe that having a secure sense of national identity is an important, indeed a crucially important, element for the very possibility of a full human existence and that we need nation-states to ensure such identities. Dahbour denies this. But he does not, as is often done, deny this on individualistic grounds. He agrees with nationalists that, for there to be a polity of any kind, there must be

a firm sense of communal identity for the individuals who are members of that polity. Even liberal constitutionalism *à la* Dworkin, Rawls, and Habermas will, he argues, not suffice. Their constitutionalism is a necessary ingredient in a good polity but it is not sufficient, for it will not yield or sustain *solidarity*. We need those common identities for the minimal trust necessary for establishing mutual relations between human beings. In fine, communitarians are right in thinking that community is a basic good of some kind. But what kind exactly is another and more complicated matter, and to think that community, or for that matter anything else, is *the* fundamental good is absurd. But that it is *an* important good should be uncontroversial. Still, Dahbour argues, it is a long way from there to the nationalist claim that, at least in modern industrial societies, nations are the best manifestations of community. We need some common identities to even have a polity, but why must they be or why should they be or why is it best that they be *national* identities? Dahbour presses nationalists for sound reasons for believing that this is so. What reasons and arguments do nationalists have for that fundamental belief of theirs?

It can be argued that in modern industrial societies national identities are the best manifestation of community because in such a setting they best secure for people the right of self-determination: the right to have control over their lives. They may not gain it anyway – that, unfortunately, is the more likely scenario – but they will certainly not gain it if they lack a national identity and, in the best case at least, a nation-state giving expression to and securing that national identity. Nations are vital, the nationalist claim goes, in establishing the legitimacy of modern states and in securing solidarity within these states. This is of crucial importance as boundaries between states become more and more permeable and as the world is increasingly shaped by decisions taken at a global level. If there is to be democracy in this new world, states and governments have to be firmly guided by national solidarities. The impulse here should come from the nation up. There will be little solidarity in societies that are not nation-states or that are not genuinely multination states that maintain their multinational culture by fully recognizing and empowering its component nations. And without solidarity the lives of people will not be secure and they will not flourish as persons.

We are saying here in response to Dahbour that either nation-states

or genuinely multination-states are necessary in the present world-order for solidarity and for democracy and that true solidarity and true democracy are importantly secured by instilling in the population a sense of national identity. There need not be, and indeed should not be, anything sinister, ethnocentric, paternalistic, or incapacitating of our critical faculties about this. All of us get socialized. Some socialization makes for autonomy; some fetters us. It all depends on what kind of socialization it is.[6] Instilling a sense of national identity, as we try to establish in various ways in this afterword, need not fetter at all. Indeed it can, or so we shall argue, importantly contribute to the self-respect and autonomy of people. Having in place one or another of these state forms is also necessary for stability in the society and for a sense of political legitimacy. In medieval societies closely knit local groups provided the bonding necessary for solidarity (though the solidarity was not society-wide nor did it need to be), but in modern societies with the movement of people and the creation of new forms of work the source of solidarity changed. Solidarity was once provided by the social ties rooted in the group-identities provided by local groups. But with industrialization these groups slowly dissolved or were very much diminished. They came to be for the most part replaced by larger groups, groups which became nations, with their identity rooted in their nationality, its common language, and its shared comprehensive culture. Whatever society-wide sense of solidarity and political legitimacy that people in modern societies have is rooted in that and provides the social cement necessary for the society to be stable.

To this Dahbour responds by saying that nation-states, giving expression to a principle of nationality, actually generate more conflict and insecurity than multination states, particularly when these multination states are thoroughly decentralized. (Switzerland is perhaps a good example.) Moreover, as we have seen, he believes that we certainly need a communal identity – we cannot be rootless atoms utterly lacking such identities and still thrive as human beings. Rather than a national identity what we need instead is a secure citizenship in a decentralized multination state, together with a firm sense of our local

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6 Kai Nielsen, *Equality and Liberty* (Totowa: Rowan & Allanheld 1985), 120–1

identity – far more local than anything a nation and a sense of nationality yield. It is at such a local level that we can exercise real self-governance, but not simply or primarily as citizens of a nation-state with a firm sense of our national identities.

We think that many would simply set aside what Dahbour says as too utopian to be feasible – with its echoes of 'Small is beautiful' and the splendid anti-statist, but still socialist, anarchism of Michael Bakunin and Rudolf Rocker. That anarchist ideal is indeed a very attractive one, but it is utopian in a bad sense, for it neglects, as Marx pointed out, problems of the transition. We should now add that that 'transition' seems at least to be a transition which is not very likely to end, and thus it cannot be a genuine transition. In our skeptical moods, it seems to us that we can no more finally get a classless, stateless society than it will be the case that the series of 'caused-causes' will terminate in that Uncausal Cause that some call God. States seem to be here for good. But that is not quite fair to Dahbour, for he (his sympathies for Rocker notwithstanding) does not think we can dispense with states. What he does think is that it would be a good thing to dispense with nation-states, or at the very least severely tame them, and aim for a world of "limited and overlapping sovereignties in a world political system based on regionally autonomous and self-reliant communities...." The characteristic state form here would be that of a deeply decentralized multination state in a world system of such states, all with mutually limiting sovereignties, and with borders that are much more porous and much less fixed than the borders of the nation-states we now have. This is the real-life second-best to a Bakunian socialist anarchism with a commitment to immediately attaining statelessness.

Still, while Dahbour's conception is not wildly utopian, it is perhaps neither very feasible nor normatively speaking the best alternative available. It still might be viewed as a nostalgic looking backward to times past, failing to take to heart Ernest Gellner's anthropological-sociological arguments about the rise of nationalism with the move from agrarian societies to industrial societies and the irreversibility of that process, barring some nuclear catastrophe.[7] Perhaps Dahbour's

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7 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1983)

model is a good one for agrarian societies where there is a lot of local bonding and where in central areas of their lives people have a certain kind of day-to-day control. In such a situation there will be little in the way of *national* sentiment and, where inasmuch as state forms exist at all, the states are loose, non-nationalistic – in effect multigrouped – states tolerating a lot of local autonomy not on principled grounds but because the ways in which such autonomy occurs are largely a matter of indifference to the rulers of such states as long as the people pay their taxes and do not struggle against the state.

But such an arrangement – something like the old Austro-Hungarian Empire or the Ottoman Empire – is not, as Gellner argues, functional for a modern industrial order rooted in wide universal generic education and with a considerable mobility of population. These local communities tend to evaporate with the emergence of an industrial order or at least their influence and appeal are much diminished. People shift around too much to continue to rely on their local dialects, on local ways of doing things, or on connections of kinship and other features of segmented societies. In industrial societies we need some *lingua franca* operating across societies, and not just for a small caste of elite either. It is what Latin once was, then French, and now English is, and perhaps in a couple of hundred years Chinese or Spanish will come to be. In addition, and centrally, for the nation-states of those industrial societies there is as well a need for a common national language (e.g., not a cluster of German dialects but high German) linked with universal literacy and the possession of transferable skills rooted in a common generic education. It is utterly essential for the proper functioning of such nation-states. Such a national language and education are universal in each nation and functional for its internal affairs, but they are also, in some of its elements, functional for transnational affairs. In such a world, local attachments will not supply the necessary social glue – glue that Dahbour, like communitarians, regards as essential for the proper functioning of societies and for human flourishing. But (*pace* Dahbour) the social glue essential in industrial societies for solidarity and the confidence necessary for cooperation within such societies must come from a sense of nation rooted in a firm sense of national identity.

Dahbour could respond that his account is not as nostalgic and backward looking as we are giving to understand. We neglect his stress on *new* local identities such as those yielded by new social movements

springing up in both modern societies and modernizing societies. These social movements struggle, sometimes effectively, against the pervasive domination and exploitation of people by an increasingly globalized capitalism and by the nation-states, including, of course, the nation-states of the rich capitalist democracies, in bed with global capitalism. These nation-states, Dahbour has it, are part of the problem and not the surcease from exploitation and domination that communitarians take them to be. To gain recognition, nation-states must be part of "an international system of political sovereignties...." And that system is thoroughly wedded to global capitalism. So a sense of nation and national identity is not a source of struggle for liberation and for people's reasonable control over their own lives. Nations are little more than important cogs in that international system.

A splendid example of what Dahbour seems to have in mind when he speaks of a social movement is the Brazilian Movement of Sem Terra, the Landless Movement. It has in the past, though not without grim and violent struggles to seize unused land in Brazil, gained land that they have turned into highly productive farms. These people, acting resolutely in solidarity, have seized that land for themselves and made it very productive in ways that benefit many people. It has in a few years swelled into a vast movement putting enormous pressure on the Brazilian government to allocate land that was, and still is, grossly underused. In the past six years (we write in 1997) Sem Terra has 'occupied' 518 large ranches and resettled 600,000 people. Their members acting together with determination and in solidarity with others have turned themselves from landless, destitute people into people farming productively. Land that was very under-utilized or not used at all has been turned into efficiently productive farms meeting the needs of people and increasing the productive wealth of the society. This movement, which continues to grow, shows how effective such social movements can be and how they can become a deep source of identity and solidarity. Moreover, as Sem Terra grows, it becomes more diversified. It has come to concern itself with the urban poor (plentiful in Brazil) as well as the rural poor (also plentiful), linking itself with more and more elements of Brazilian society and developing transnational links as well. It is said to now have the support of 90 percent of the Brazilian people and, understandably with such extensive sympathy, is gaining support in government circles (though this is something Sem Terra's mem-

bers, having been lied to before, rightly remain skeptical about).

Sem Terra started as a relatively small, resolutely militant force without the aid of the government or the support of the Brazilian nation. Indeed, it experienced resistance from the government, but, as it becomes successful, it gains ambivalent government support. Behind that, helping Sem Terra to call the tune, there is now broad popular national as well as international support. Without this Sem Terra would be unlikely to achieve its objectives, though its initial impulse had to come from successful militant action on its own. But to become a successful mass movement, since it was in no position to make a revolution, it had to gain that broad support. Local identities had to rely on eventually gaining support from national identities.[8]

The moral for us is that with Sem Terra we can see the importance of both national identities and more local identities. In a nation containing different local communities within states that are our modern states, there must be a reciprocity between them for things to work well. There must be reciprocity between at least some of the local communities, and there must, as well, be reciprocity between the national and local communities. Local communities, if they are not to be marginalized, must be linked with national identities. Neither can stand alone if anything progressive is to be achieved. Both are necessary and neither alone is sufficient for achieving widespread autonomy and human flourishing. Both national and more local identities are desirable; both can exist within a network of what could come to be decentralized, overlapping, multination states where there is limited sovereignty on all sides. But this would be a system where the several component nations with their multination state would have both sufficient power and powers (in the legal sense) to secure some considerable, though still limited, sovereignty. To be a nation, each nation must carry with it its encompassing culture. The securing of this encompassing culture within the multination state will often, but not invariably, be very central to the securing of their national language. Social movements and similar sources of local identity will not do that, but

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8 John Vidal, 'Landless on the Long March Home,' *Guardian Weekly* (11 May 1997), 8–9

will in fact presuppose in industrial societies the encompassing culture of a nation; they, in turn, do things that nations do not and perhaps cannot do. Consider again, to illustrate our point, the case of Brazil. The Brazilian nation is not under threat. Its language and the other parts of its encompassing comprehensive culture appear at least to be secure. And to the extent that that is true, there is no need for nationalism or a *stress* on national identity or nationality in Brazil. It is, if what we said is true, simply securely there. The crucial issue in Brazil concerns the vast inequality and dire impoverishment of huge sections of the Brazilian population: there remain powerful class and strata differences that result in the people at the bottom or near the bottom having no possibilities for a decent life. Social movements among the various landless people and deeply exploited workers are front and centre. While in Wales, Quebec, and Flanders there is, to understate it, exploitation and deep inequalities, they are not so deep as in Brazil and, as desperate as the situation of the poor is in Wales, Quebec, and Flanders, there are still in these societies more social safety nets for people than in a society like Brazil. But, unlike in Brazil, their national culture, including their language, are under threat, and issues of national identity and nationalism are front and centre. It is even reasonably arguable that until the people of these countries gain effective control of their nations there is not much hope for an amelioration of the severe exploitation of some people in these societies and the extensive marginalization of others. We should be good pragmatic contextualists and be cautious of wide generalizations. Even within modern industrial societies what we should say of one society or cluster of similar societies, we should not say of others.

We should also see (*pace* Dahbour) that there is no conflict between a liberal nationalism and a respect for and a recognition of the importance of more local communal identities. We think that Dahbour is blind to this because he does not believe, or perhaps even recognize, that there is or even can be liberal nationalisms. All nationalism is for him ethnic nationalism ('ethnonationalism' seems for him also to be a pleonasm), and all national identities are taken by him to be ethnic identities. We think this to be a very fundamental mistake and we turn now to this issue.

We will begin (returning to what we briefly discussed in Section I) by making a distinction that Dahbour unfortunately does not make

between ethnic nationalism and liberal nationalism – between plainly bad nationalisms and at least putatively good nationalisms – and relatedly between an ethnic conception of nationality and national identity, on the one hand, and a liberal conception of nationality and national identity on the other. Ethnic nationalism defines membership in the nation in terms of descent: put crudely, in terms of blood. Liberal nationalism, by contrast, defines nationality in terms of sharing a distinctive encompassing and integrative (sometimes called comprehensive) culture which is both cultural and political. What makes the culture a national culture (an encompassing and integrating culture) is that it is the culture of an historical community, either having a homeland (a territory they have historically occupied) or (where the nation is in diaspora) the culture of a historical and political community aspiring to a homeland: some distinctive territory of its own where it will have some form of self-governance. What makes the culture encompassing is that it is integrative of the various institutions and forms of life of the culture and that it includes the whole of the culture, all its varied institutions, social practices, and the like.

Ethnic nationalists and liberal nationalists construe *membership* in the nation differently. Ethnic nationalists determine membership in the nation by blood – by descent; liberal nationalists, by contrast, determine membership by people (various individuals) having a common encompassing culture and normally by their residing as citizens in a territory historically occupied by the nation whose members they are or, where the nation is in diaspora, by being persons sharing the same encompassing culture who aspire to have the same homeland. If the nation has a state, those who are entitled to membership – to become citizens – may come as landed immigrants to the country if they fulfill certain conditions: acquiring (if they do not already have it) the encompassing or comprehensive culture (the language, an understanding of and some attunement to the culture, and a willingness to adhere to the laws of the country). Where the nation does not have a state, or yet a state, those entitled to membership are those who come to live on the historical territory of the nation and acquire something of its encompassing culture. This, in short, is the way they become members – full-fledged members – of that nation: a way that has nothing to do with birth or blood, with kith or kin.

We can also see (*pace* Dahbour) how the cultural nation (or as R. X.

Ware calls it, the societal nation) is also, and necessarily so, a political nation, that is, it must have, or aspire to have, a legal structure, including a constitution or its functional equivalent, a set of legal practices, and in most circumstances an exclusive authoritative control (including control over the means of violence) over a certain territory and the authority to tax, control immigration, determine citizenship, and the like. Such a liberal conception of membership in a nation, unlike that of ethnic nationalism, is not exclusionary; it is open in principle at least to anyone as there are no biological or kinship blocks to citizenship. Impediments to citizenship are not at all a matter of not having the right blood. What you need to become a member of the nation is to learn its language, its customs, something of its history, and be willing to abide by its laws. There are, however, additional conditions as well: citizenship must be open in such a way that people who apply for landed immigrant status (something open to anyone who is willing to meet the aforementioned conditions) *must* (1) be accepted as landed immigrants and (2) can, after a short mandatory residence in the country in question as landed immigrants, claim citizenship and *must*, if they meet the above conditions, be accepted as citizens after going through a formal swearing-in process, where the opportunity to so swear allegiance cannot be denied them if they meet the above conditions. This is something (*pace* Walzer) which cannot be denied them if they meet the above conditions. In that way countries must have open borders.

Ethnic nationalism is centrally a matter of blood and ancestry. Liberal nationalism, by contrast, is centrally a matter of having a distinctive encompassing or comprehensive culture in a polity or in diaspora. Ethnic nationalism is closed, exclusionary, and racist, while liberal nationalism is open and a matter of cultural achievement, residence, and allegiance. The difference is well exemplified in Germany which, anomalously for a Western democracy, has an ethnic conception of citizenship and membership in a nation. The current citizenship law in Germany, rooted in an imperial decree of 1913, bases nationality on German ancestry. Under this principle of inherited nationality, we have the bizarre situation in which millions of ethnic Germans whose ancestors have lived for generations in the Volga region of the former Soviet Union, who do not speak German, and who have little acquaintance with the encompassing culture, count as Germans and

upon entering the borders of Germany are entitled to citizenship automatically, while many people of Turkish (or Italian or Spanish) descent, to use examples, who were born and educated in Germany, speak fluent German, work for German companies, pay German taxes, are subject to German laws, and are fully attuned to the encompassing culture do not automatically count as Germans and have great difficulties in gaining German citizenship. With a liberal, non-ethnic nationalism, the situation would be reversed. People such as these Turkish Germans would be automatically entitled to German citizenship, if they applied and were willing to take the oath of allegiance, while ethnic Germans such as those from the Volga region could only come to acquire it by coming to reside in Germany and by coming to adopt its encompassing culture and acquiring some reasonable mastery of its language.

Dahbour does not draw this distinction and in effect treats 'ethnic nationalism,' or what he calls 'ethnonationalism,' as equivalent to 'nationalism.' He defines 'national identity' as a "set of personal characteristics ascribed to individuals denoting their kinship, ancestry, or origins," thus clearly defining 'national identity' in ethnic terms. His conception of nationalism as essentially ethnic nationalism is revealed in a passage he quotes with approval from Lewis Mumford written, revealingly, in 1938. Mumford remarks, "Only in times of war, when frontiers are closed, when the movement of men and goods and ideas across 'national' boundaries can be blocked, when a pervading sense of fear sanctions the extirpation of differences *does the national state conform to its ideal pattern*" (italics ours). But this clearly shows that Dahbour takes it that the 'ideal pattern' of nationalism is that of an ethnic nationalism and a fairly virulent one at that – a nationalism, as he goes on to say, that must lead to a militarized Warfare State rather than to a Welfare State of peaceful social democracies. It cannot, when nationalism conforms to its *ideal* pattern, help but be xenophobic, authoritarian, exclusivist, and not infrequently expansionist as well. Nationalists, on such a conception, will claim that a people should give their highest loyalty to their nation and that the state policy of a nation-state should be above all the pursuit of 'the national interest,' if not national greatness, and that in politics all other interests should be subordinate to its achievement. International treaties, the welfare of other countries and nationals, must give way, no matter how much

harm is done to those others, to the national interests and the national projects of one's own nation-state. In short nationalism so conceived, with its communitarian underpinning, has a view of political community in which, as Dahbour puts it, "nations are entitled to protect their communal integrity by whatever means are necessary." Thus the Nazi state, as a one-time embodiment of the German nation, is entitled to exterminate the Jews to maintain its communal integrity, an integrity which requires on their view a *Juden Frei* world. This, of course, is vilely extreme, yet it seems to be sanctioned by such a conception, at least if it is consistently adhered to. But it is just such a conception that Dahbour takes to be inescapable for nationalism; not just ethnic nationalism, but any nationalism. That is to say, someone who accepts that conception cannot consistently reject such revolting exemplifications. Hardly surprisingly, Dahbour firmly rejects it, thinking that in doing so he has rejected nationalism *tout court*. This results from his ignoring both the very idea of a liberal nationalism *and* its sociological reality. But there are actually existing nationalisms fitting the model of liberal nationalism, as Will Kymlicka and Jocelyne Couture have pointed out, as well as Geneviève Nootens in this volume, that are not intolerant or even exclusionist, to say nothing of being bestial as were Fascist nationalisms.[9]

Liberal nationalism, as we have observed, does not determine nationality in terms of descent, and it does not take the furthering of the interests of the nation as justifying the inhuman treatment of people or the running roughshod over their rights. Some 'nationalisms,' Kymlicka remarks, "are peaceful, liberal and democratic, while others are xenophobic, authoritarian and expansionist."[10] Earlier in this century, nationalist movements in Norway and Iceland were peaceful and democratic, fitting in well with a liberal conception of society. So it is

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9 Will Kymlicka, 'Misunderstanding Nationalism,' *Dissent* (1995), 130–7; Jocelyne Couture, 'Pourquoi devrait-il y avoir un conflit entre le nationalisme et le libéralisme politique?' in F. Blais, G. Laforest, and D. Lamoureux, eds., *Libéralismes et nationalismes*. Coll. *Philosophie et Politique* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval 1995), 51–75

10 Kymlicka, 'Misunderstanding Nationalism,' 132

(*pace* Dahbour, Shklar, and Barry[11] as well) not nationalism *per se* that should be rejected, but *illiberal* forms of nationalism.[12] Dahbour both ignores the relevant conceptual distinctions and sociological realities and, by a combination of stipulation (selective *persuasive* definitions) and selective examples, makes nationalism look bad. But that is word magic and biased sampling. The reality is that some forms are bad – indeed some forms are plainly deeply evil and destructive – and other forms are not, but are forms of nationalism that under certain conditions arguably (as we shall see) can contribute to greater equality, autonomy, and human flourishing without anyone's rights being trampled on or even troubled.

We will now turn to a crucial specific place where Dahbour is led astray by his failure to envisage that liberal nationalism is a possibility even for those with communitarian propensities such as Walzer, Taylor, and Miller. He makes the point, forcefully made as well by Miller, Walzer, Gellner, and Buchanan, that, since there are more nations than there are territories on which they could form nation-states some nations cannot have their own nation-states. They must settle instead for a form of self-government that is less complete than that of a sovereign state. Indeed nationalists of every nation want, and understandably so, their own nation-state or a genuine recognition within a multination state. *Ceteris paribus* it is within nation-states or such multination states that their nationhood would be most secure. But sometimes there are competing historically based claims to the same territory for a homeland. That is to say, sometimes there is more than one nation on a given territory or aspiring to be on it with a genuine historical rationale. Against that background Dahbour asks the question "Why should nations renounce or modify their claims to be states?" He answers that there is no reason available within nationalism with its communitarian underpinnings for nationalists to modify their claims. Following the

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11 Judith Shklar, 'Liberalism of Fear,' in N. Rosenblum ed., *Liberalism and the Moral Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Brian Barry, 'Nationalism,' in David Miller, ed., *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1987), 352–4

12 Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1993)

'nationalist principle' (see our Introduction, part II) they will simply push for sovereignty and have to fight it out with their opponents where there are such conflicting claims to a territory for a homeland. Their conception of a political community, he claims, is "in important ways 'antipolitical' in the sense that it leaves no room for the virtues of political judgment, debate, or compromise." Why would a nation seeking a state accept anything less "if it regarded its right to one to be rooted in the very structure of political life"?

It should in turn be replied that any reasonable political theory, including robust nationalist ones, will recognize that *any right* is defeasible and can upon occasion be rightly overridden by other normative considerations, including being sometimes trumped by other rights, without that right ceasing to be a right. That is true of rights generally and thus it is true of the right to national self-determination.[13] This will be particularly obvious for nationalisms (communitarian or otherwise) that are embedded in liberal theories. Moreover, if the liberal nationalism is even a reasonably philosophically sophisticated one it will not, as Dahbour makes the nationalists do, accept "the right of national groups to political power" as a bedrock principle. There are no bedrock principles on such an account. To believe there are sits ill with the fallibilism and coherentism and anti-foundationalism of a philosophically sophisticated liberal nationalism.[14] There will be a connected cluster of principles embedded in a connected cluster of social practices as part of a web of interconnected beliefs. Some will be more deeply embedded in and more central to the web of beliefs than others, but there will be no supreme principle or set of supreme principles. There will, that is, be no bedrock principle or set of bedrock principles that always calls the tune, in terms of which everything else that is morally and politically relevant must be justified. In some contexts some principles will have greater weight and in others, others will. There is no supreme prin-

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13 Kai Nielsen, *After the Demise of the Tradition* (Boulder: Westview Press 1991), 101–24, and *Naturalism without Foundations* (Amherst: Prometheus Books 1996), 229–60

14 Nielsen, *Naturalism without Foundations*, 23–77

ciple to decide everything or even to break what looks like ties. And all beliefs are fallibilistically held; all are subject, as they work together in a coherent pattern of beliefs, including normative beliefs, to modification and revision and even abandonment. Nations have a right to self-determination and because of that they have a right, if the proper conditions obtain, to become nation-states. There is a *presumption* in favour of the claim that a nation, just in virtue of being a nation, has a right to its matching nation-state. But it is just that – a presumption. That claim, however, as all claims, can, and should, upon occasion be overridden.

Suppose for instance that another nation on the same territory has, as far as we can at the time ascertain, an equally valid claim to found a nation-state on the same territory. Then fairness requires that neither side try to establish their state, but that they should seek some other solution. Perhaps the solution should be to accept the idea of their being two nations with more limited sovereignty in a decentralized multination state. Or perhaps partition, where it is practically feasible, should be negotiated between them. Nationalists, if they are at all sensible, will not be, *à la* Bentham or Nozick, one-valued people. They will have a cluster of related values of which the principle of national self-determination is only one. Moreover, if they are also liberals, as Miller and Walzer are, they will also be committed to principles of tolerance, equal respect for all people, *moral* equality (i.e., that the life of everyone matters and matters equally) along with the related belief that the interests of all human beings have in principle an equal right to be satisfied. Similarly, liberal nationalists will have as *a* key (not *the* key) political and moral principle, a principle of equal respect for all peoples. This is a cosmopolitan and internationalist attitude that goes with, not against, their liberal nationalism. They may very well have a maxim 'compatriots first,' but that will be understood as compatriots first, *ceteris paribus*, and it will be recognized that it is often the case that *ceteris* is not *paribus*. (In this volume Thomas Pogge's remarks are very important in this regard.) A reasonable liberalism will be coherentist and non-foundationalist, through and through, claiming no principles to be the supreme overriding principles. There is, that is, no principle or cluster of related principles that always trumps all other principles and always determines which practices are legitimate.

So there is a plain rationale for the nationalist, particularly for the nationalist who accepts the nationalist principle, to renounce or modify, on certain occasions, her claim to a state of her own – a state that is her nation's state – and she can make no claim to an unqualified territoriality. We have just given a rationale for this, rooted in liberal moral thinking of a rather untendentious sort. But there is a compatible prudential rationale as well for such a nationalism, rooted in the sensible wish to avoid intractable conflict and strife and repeated power plays whose outcomes are often uncertain and historically unstable. There are, that is, good Hobbesian reasons for being circumspect and flexible in one's claims for a nation-state to match one's nation. Nationalists should have a proper regard for the welfare and integrity of their nation. But that, if they are reasonable or even just prudent, will not come to pushing for a nation-state no matter what. Neither morality nor prudence recommends that.

This is not all that can or should be said about Dahbour's intricate, extended, well-informed, probing, and original essay. But it is almost all that we have space to consider. In saying the little more that we do – a critical little more – we do not wish to leave the impression that we think Dahbour's account is fundamentally misconceived – that what he says is all dross – or even to deny that with some modifications, amplifications, and perhaps some retractions there may not be resources in his theory to respond to our critique. But we have, we believe, pointed to places where his argument is at least inconclusive and to important roads not taken that makes nationalism a more reasonable alternative than he thinks is the case.

A reasonable nationalism, to start some specification of this, with its principle of national self-determination, should not be committed to what Dahbour rightly calls "the elusive goal of a world divided without remainder between nation-states." We also agree with him that it is not always a good thing that there be a separation of peoples from one another into distinct nation-states. Sometimes, indeed often, that is a good thing, most particularly when the viability of a culture is threatened, but sometimes (though less frequently) even when it is not. We should go case by case. But we do think that it is not infrequently reasonable for a nation to want its own state and that *ceteris paribus* nations ought to have them in those circumstances unless some mutually acceptable arrangements within a multination state could become

feasibly mutually advantageous for the component nations.[15] But to claim this is a far cry from making an unconditional and unqualified claim to their own exclusive territoriality and absolute territorial hegemony. Or to a claim, just as absurd, that each nation *must* have its own nation-state.

We also agree with Dahbour that it is a mistake to believe, as Walzer does, that the distribution of membership in a nation-state is not "subject to the constraints of justice" and that "states are simply free to take in strangers (or not)...." If, however, we try to unravel this complicated issue, it cannot be as straightforward as Walzer tries to make it. If applicants for citizenship meet the requirements we characterized a few pages back, then a *just* state – subject (as we did not mention there) to the imperatively realistic constraints of really serious problems of overcrowding or economic undermining – *must* grant them citizenship. There are, of course, fully at play here the realistic type of considerations that John Rawls alludes to when he speaks of "the strains of commitment." Still, if a state fails to grant persons citizenship under the conditions just described, then there is a lapse, though often a very understandable one, in justice. The state, *realpolitik* to the contrary notwithstanding, is not behaving as it *ideally* ought. The claims of sovereignty have no more grounds for being treated as *absolute* (totally unconditional) than any other normative claims. No moral claims have that pristine status, and the claim that the state has such an unchallengeable right (current international law to the contrary notwithstanding) to determine who can enter and who can exit is no exception to that general fallibilism.[16] A reasonable nationalist – communitarian or otherwise – will not take such a claim to be absolute or unconditional. She will recognize that a nation's push for its own nation-state is *sometimes* not justified and that a state's right to control exit and entry is not absolute.

Dahbour argues that "political identities may have antecedents in non-political forms of life." While not dissenting from that, we do not agree that national identities are pre-political. They are, given the closely

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15 Kai Nielsen, 'Secession: The Case of Quebec,' *Journal of Applied Philosophy* **10:1** (1993), 29–46

16 Nielsen, *After the Demise of the Tradition*, 101–54

similar conception that Miller, Walzer, and Kymlicka deploy and that we have deployed as well, inextricably both political *and* cultural. More specifically such conceptions are inherently political in the sense that nations aspire to some form or other of political self-government. A nation, as we construe it, is political in the sense that it is identical with some form of political community. Perhaps the modernists are right and we should reject *primordialist* conceptions of nationality, to wit "the idea that national identities have deep roots in historically ancient, or 'primordial' circumstances." Perhaps it would be better for a nationalist to take a view similar to Gellner's, that is to say, a view that regards nations and 'national identities' as comparatively recent phenomena arising with industrial societies.[17] Though no doubt, as nations, national identities, and nation-states were being forged, use was made of cultural materials from earlier societies. There were often, perhaps always, elements of culture there which causally affected the particular forms the various nations came to have. But that is still distant from a primordialist theory or even premodern conception of nationality. We are not saying that the nations were just there from time immemorial. With such a broadly Gellnerish modernist view, we still could, and should, agree with Miller that "nations *really* exist [and] identifying with a nation, feeling yourself *inextricably* part of it, is a legitimate way of understanding your place in the world."[18] Reflecting on this, Dahbour simply foists a primordialist view on Miller. But that is not entailed by what Miller says. For something to exist – even 'really' exist – it need not have existed from time immemorial.

Dahbour remarks, unexceptionally enough, that political identities formed on the basis of national identities *may* be the result of custom, prejudice, and oppression. That is inescapable. But the same thing applies for the more local identities he has appealed to as well. Indeed, the political identities formed by local identities are very likely to be the result of custom, prejudice, and oppression. But we have shown earlier how the nationalist, as well as anyone else, can perfectly well

17 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*

18 David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995), 10–11. Quoted by Dahbour and italics added by Dahbour.

use coherentist criteria (say, wide reflective equilibrium) to correct for the distortions introduced by custom, prejudice, and for what has come about as a result of oppression. We are all on Otto Neurath's boat – nationalists and anti-nationalists alike – and we must, being so situated, unable as we are to stand free from our histories, cultures, and practices, plank by plank, always working from inside, repair and refashion the ship at sea. Not being able to stand completely outside of all our practices (the very idea of doing so being unintelligible), but rather at any time having to rely on some of our practices, which on another occasion, using still other practices, we can assess, does not lead us to relativism or ethnocentrism. But it does lead us to contextualism and historicism.[19] Being so inevitably placed inside our practices – there is no other place to be – does not mean that we cannot intelligibly step outside of even a very big hermeneutical circle. Any practice or limited cluster of practices can be criticized by using other practices which can in turn be criticized by using still other practices. What we cannot do is stand free of all practices *at once*. In understanding anything and criticizing anything we must be using some practices.[20] Here John Dewey, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Donald Davidson, and Robert Brandon all make common cause.

Relatedly (*pace* Dahbour) both his more localized communal identities and national identities are "capable of incorporating the principled or communicative aspects of political identity." They can incorporate, that is, such salient conceptions from Ronald Dworkin and Jürgen Habermas. The only reason for denying this of national identities, while accepting it for more local communal identities, is Dahbour's arbitrary identification of nationalism with illiberal nationalism, leaving liberal nationalism out in the cold. It is true that nationalism sometimes "colonizes local life on the basis of the dominance,

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19 Kai Nielsen, *Naturalism without Foundations*, 25–77

20 Robert Brandon, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1994), 'Replies.' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, **57:1**, 197–204; Richard Rorty, 'What Do We Do When They Call You a Relativist?' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, **57:1** (1997), 173–7

enforced by the state, of one region over others." This indeed is what often spurs secessionist movements and sometimes unfortunately revanchism, and in such circumstances we very often get nationalisms which are illiberal. But to say, as Dahbour does, that it is something that nationalism *not sometimes*, but *inevitably*, does is again simply to ignore the fact of liberal nationalism both as a theory and a *sociological reality*. There have been nationalist movements in liberal democratic states – Quebec and Belgium, for example – that have not dominated, or tried to dominate, the minorities in their territories and have acknowledged their full set of civil and human rights.[21] And this is exactly what liberal nationalism as a theory and as a coherent ideological movement is committed to. Dahbour has given us no reason to think such a nationalism is either impossible or in error.

What we have argued that Dahbour basically fails to see is that communitarianism and liberalism, at least over the issues we have discussed, can coherently go together (there can be a communitarian liberalism, if you will) and that there can be a liberal nationalism, much like that of Miller's and Walzer's, with a conception of nationality and a tandem conception of the central importance of nations in political and social thought, that does not have the untoward features of nationalism specified by Dahbour.

III

Dahbour, as we have seen, defends an appeal to local cultures with smaller, and what he takes to be, psychologically and socially speaking, more rooted units than nations. Harry Brighouse and Andrew Levine, by contrast, as Levine puts it, "endorse a cosmopolitan world view in which nationalist aspirations ultimately have no place." We will restate certain of their core arguments and attempt to show in opposition to them that a *rooted* cosmopolitanism will recognize the deep significance of nationality in making sense of human life in con-

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21 Kymlicka, 'Misunderstanding Nationalism,' 130–7; Kai Nielsen, 'Cultural Nationalism, Neither Ethnic Nor Civic.' *The Philosophical Forum*, **28:1-2** (1996-97), 42–52

ditions of modernity informed by Enlightenment values.[22] Nationality will appropriately continue to have moral and political force and not just as a flawed idea of our intellectual and political immaturity and not just as a historical expediency in a certain phase of modernity. Or so at least we shall argue against Brighouse's and Levine's powerfully articulated views. Unlike Brighouse and Levine, we shall contend that the most adequate expression of cosmopolitanism will make room for a sense of nationality – the sense of nationality captured by liberal nationalism. Levine grants that "ambivalence to nationalism is a reasonable, if not entirely satisfactory, response to the situation we actually confront." But, he adds, in a reasonable world with a thoroughly just social order in which we had fully overcome our 'self-incurred nonage' a sense of nationality would have no place. In such a situation, he has it, "the nationalist temptation itself would pass into obsolescence."

Levine develops an extended analogy between the phenomena of religion and nationalism. He first accounts how, against the background of Enlightenment critiques of religion, Freud developed an account of how religion – and most particularly theistic religion — was a flawed idea resting on an illusion grounded in historically transitory conditions. Similarly nationalism, a belief in nationality and the pressing of nationalist sentiments, Levine claims, rest on an illusion. If conditions change, theistic religion might – just might – wither away. In a parallel way, Levine ventures the conjecture that nationalism similarly rests on an illusion and that 1) "a post-nationalist future is a genuine possibility" and 2) an unequivocally cosmopolitan stance – a stance that he, like Brighouse, takes to be incompatible with even the maturest forms of nationalism – "will one day become morally possible." But, just as for now and for the foreseeable future religion is with us, so for now and for the foreseeable future ambivalence about nationalism and even, in some circumstances, acceptance of nationalism is a "reasonable, if not entirely satisfactory, response to the situation we actually confront." Moreover, just as a fully cosmopolitan outlook rooted in Enlightenment values and conceptions would be free

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22 Appiah, 'Cosmopolitan Patriots,' 21–29

of theistic belief, so a fully cosmopolitan outlook would be free of nationalist commitments.

In those parts of the world deeply affected by modernity, Levine remarks, "religion has effectively migrated from the public arena to the sphere of private conscience" and with this, in such societies, religion's "political impact has lessened." Moreover, many people affected deeply by the Enlightenment and modernity "experience the inability to understand [religious] belief empathetically as a triumph." They consider themselves, and without ambivalence, regret, or nostalgia, as '*beyond* theism.' They see religious beliefs as illusions, that is, as beliefs not held in consequence of rationally compelling reasons but because they are expressions of unconscious wishes. Enlightenment thinking in the tradition of Hume-Marx-Freud, and shared by many secularizers, contains the injunction that we should "face the world as it is, without benefit of comforting but indefensible illusions that represent only how we would like the world to be." If we can bring ourselves to follow this injunction we will come to live without theistic beliefs and parallelly, Levine maintains, if we follow this injunction, we will live without nationalistic commitments or any belief in the inherent value of nationality. "Nationalism is at best, a passing phase in humanity's progress towards something more 'mature'."

Today nationalism generally gets a more favourable press than it got in the past. But that notwithstanding, it is Levine's belief, and Brighouse's as well, that this traditional Enlightenment conception is the way we should view things. Indeed a thoroughly cosmopolitan view of the world, they have it, requires it.

However, things are complicated, Levine adds, even for "those of us who think of nationalism as a vestige of humanity's 'nonage'," for we have also seen that *sometimes* nationalisms on the ground – really existing nationalisms – have served as the agent for progressive social change. Beside, those of us affected, as almost all of us now are, by broadly Rawlsian conceptions of justice and political legitimacy will take a somewhat different attitude towards both religion and nationalism than most pre-Rawlsian liberals and radicals did. We will stress, as Rawls himself does, "that religions are of deep importance in many people's lives – that they are constitutive, in some cases, of long-term projects and plans of life, and that they serve as elements

in the construction of particular personal identities."[23] Because they are, for many people, sociologically and psychologically speaking, so fundamentally important, legitimate political "institutions are obliged to protect them wholeheartedly and fairly – without favouritism to some religions over others or even to religion over non-belief."

The analogy between nationality and religion is, as Levine recognizes, not perfect, but it is close enough to make rationally compelling the extension of the liberal consensus concerning respect for religion in the public domain to nationality. Nationality, like religion, matters fundamentally to many people and "its protection must therefore be of paramount concern in any just society." A just society "cannot rightfully repress nationalist aspirations and ... it must be fair to competing nationalist claims."

Those, like Brighouse and Levine, who are against nationalism can consistently support such views. "There is no inconsistency," Levine remarks, "in holding the view that justice sometimes implies support for nationality and a cosmopolitan world outlook too." As atheists who are also Rawlsians must and, of course, consistently can support religious toleration, as Geneviève Nootens has well explained in her essay, so a cosmopolitan who is also a Rawlsian must accept the legitimacy of a "national minority to maintain and strengthen its nationalist identifications." In short, as Levine puts it, "respect for nationality at the political level, like toleration for religious doctrines and practices, is compatible with virtually any assessment of the merits of these positions or of the sentiments that make them compelling to the people who hold them."

So, as a matter of political morality, including a very fundamental belief in the respect for persons, someone who accepts a broadly Rawlsian conception of justice and political legitimacy, as both Brighouse and Levine do, will also accept the legitimacy of nationalist aspirations. But why then at a deeper level are they against nationalism? What are the grounds for Levine's claim that "a truly rational nationalism is an impossibility even in principle"? Levine's arguments are more general and more historically sweeping than Brighouse's

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23 John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press 1993)

which emerge in the context of a detailed critique of William Galston's, David Miller's, and Will Kymlicka's defences of nationality. Generally speaking, however, their cases against nationalism mesh and are mutually supportive. We will argue that as probing, nuanced, and in many ways right-minded as they are, they are still seriously flawed and fail to undermine the case for a rooted cosmopolitan liberal nationalism. They fail to show that such a view cannot be through and through reasonable and rational.

While Levine stresses, as we have seen, that "nationalism ... is a fact of political life that just polities must accommodate" and is a "genuine political ideology suitable for guiding political practice in the short and long run," still we will not, he also has it, be nationalists if we will face the world as it is without comforting illusions. Nationalism, as Levine summarizes, "is based on a wish, not a reality – because the nation is not found and sometimes even deliberately contrived."

The nation, on Levine's account, is not just something there in the world to discover, and nationalist sentiments, the notion of a nation and the nation-state, have not always been with us. They are not as old as social life and societal cultures themselves. Levine, in this part of his argument, agrees with Ernest Gellner that these notions emerged with capitalism and modernization and that they are functionally indispensable for modernization. Nations came into being with the nation-state system that emerged with capitalism. And national identities – identifying ourselves as members of a nation and prizing that identification — are essential to produce the social bonding for such national economies so that they will function efficiently and, what is another side of the same coin, so that such nation-states will be stable. Even though nationalism is functional in modern and modernizing societies, unlike patriotism (i.e., the "support for the political community of which one is a part, for its fundamental constitutional arrangements, irrespective of the ethnic or national composition of that community"), nationalism can never be rational, "even when it is incontrovertibly 'progressive'" for a "nation is nothing if not an expression of a wish, a wish for a community that extends throughout time, uniting generations, and across space, incorporating strangers." But this, Levine claims, is an *illusory wish* that is "always at least somewhat at odds with the facts."

However intensely they may come to be experienced, nationalist sentiments, according to Levine, "are always to some degree contrived

– not just in the way all social identities are 'socially constructed,' but in a more straightforward way." "Nationalisms," Levine claims, "are deliberately contrived and promoted." They are, he further continues, "the work of political entrepreneurs who mold popular longings for communal forms appropriate to modern life in nationalist directions." That there are peoples making up such communities is a fabrication of nationalist writers giving people just-so stories about who they are. The old feudal solidarities dissolved with modernizing capitalist economies. They were hardly functional even then. But these new economies (these new modes of production), with nation-states functional for them, had to forge new solidarities to replace the dissolving, now dysfunctional, feudal solidarities at the level of the national economies themselves.

Nations were indeed not, Levine admits, "fabricated out of thin air." They are not *just* creatures of our imagination. There were previously existing cultural materials used in their forging. The French, German, and Italian languages, essential for these nations, were constructed out of different dialects bearing some relation to modern French, German, and Italian, but still these modern languages were constructed and coercively promoted. And not without a point, for the capitalist order and modernity more generally and the systems of general education that went with them, were essential to these nations and to the modern economies of these states. Their respective comprehensive cultures were not just something in some recognizable (though still slowly changing) form, which was always there. The historical conditions that produced them "failed to obtain for most of human history," and they, as Levine puts it, "could well cease to exist again."

Levine ends his essay by asking, "What remains when nationalist illusions are finally overcome?" He responds: "At a very high level of generality, the answer is clear: real, not imagined communities." We need, he tells us, "to build communities without illusions." And the first step here is to become clearer about what this goal implies.

We will query his claim, remembering that validity is independent of origin, that nationalist sentiments, just in being nationalist sentiments, must reflect *illusory* wishes. Sometimes they do and sometimes, we shall argue, they do not. Perhaps nations, like all cultural phenomena, are in some sense 'socially constructed,' but they need not always be imagined, fabricated, or deliberately contrived creatures of political ideology. They, like all cultural phenomena, arise at a particular time,

are subject to certain historical vicissitudes and contingencies, change and decline, and answer to certain determinate economic relations. Nation-states, a sense of nation, and nationalist sentiments are functional for certain economic relations, and not for others.[24] But this is true of all cultural phenomena of this very general type – the medieval solidarities and the solidarities of the ancient world as well as modern nationalist solidarities. A sense of national identity need be no more, or no less, constructed than any of the historically previous solidarities. If they are 'imagined' then all cultural phenomena are imagined, i.e., socially constructed, and all cultural phenomena rest on illusions – on a wish fulfilment that is in someway at odds with the facts about people and societies. But this fuses together ideas that should be kept distinct. Being socially constructed, being rooted in wishes, and being at odds with the facts are all different things. Moreover, this renders the very idea of 'a community without illusions,' a Holmes-less Watson, for lack of even a possible non-vacuous contrast. It says, in a misleading way, that *all* cultural phenomena are illusory. 'A non-illusory community,' by implicit *persuasive* definition, becomes an oxymoron. This is a *reduction* that Levine rightly will reject. But then his claim that nations, a sense of nationality, and nationalist sentiments *must* rest on illusory wishes about what some people want, and thus cannot be rationally grounded, is at best false. Levine must show something more straightforward than that these ideas have a determinate historical origin, are functional for a given type of society, and coincide with the aspirations of certain people. He must show that they are illusory wishes answering to nothing in reality. (Moreover, *'illusory* wishes' must *not* be in effect treated as if it is pleonastic). That a person wants a socialist transformation of society is not a good reason in itself to believe that it is unrealistic to believe that a socialistic transformation of society can, or perhaps even will, obtain.

Is there anything more straightforward that Levine could appeal to in order to show that nations are imagined and national sentiments are illusory? Does he have any more specific grounds for his claim that nationalist beliefs are dubious and that nationalist sentiments lack ra-

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24 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*

tional grounding? Well, he could rightly respond that *some*, sometimes plainly, lack such grounding. Many, perhaps all, African or Arabian nations – in some instances nations forged by colonial powers out of disparate groupings of people – are *contrived* communities with no roots in history or determinate long-standing territorial claims. They are the contrivances of the colonial powers. *These* nations are in a more determinate sense imagined than are some other nations which are also simple social constructions as perhaps all cultural groups are social constructions. But to vindicate Levine's strong claim one must go from *some* to *all* and indeed to the claim that there is something about the very idea of a nation that makes it an *illusory* community. But he has done neither of these things.

Levine's argument presupposes that all nations are the creation of an 'ideological state apparatus.' But what about stateless nations, imbedded in a repressive state, and what about nationalist movements aiming at the political sovereignty of such nations? They are not so rare that we should ignore them. These nationalist movements often take the form of an authentic struggle for democracy and justice. Why should we think that they are not, and cannot be, rationally grounded or that they are the creation of the ideological state apparatus? Can they not be movements which are, in Rawls's terms, both rational and reasonable? Moreover, these movements appeal to solidarities based on a common history of injustice, domination, and sometimes exploitation inflicted on peoples because they happen to have certain traditions, culture, language, or sometimes skin colour. To say that these nations are not real is to add insult to injury. And to say that they were 'not found' but contrived by a State which was precisely trying to repress or even eradicate them is something, to understate it, which is not obviously true. It is true that these movements express a wish, perhaps not likely to be realized, for a better society. But so do our aspirations for liberalism or cosmopolitanism. Again, should we abandon our wishes for a better society because that society does not correspond to 'the facts' of our actual circumstances? To claim that is what it is to be tough-minded is a bit of a persuasive definition.

Moreover, over time with the forging of a national language (e.g., French, forged in a territory that once contained seventeen distinct languages) and the comprehensive culture that goes with it, what started out as contrivance can as time passes become rooted in people living

in a determinate territory with what has become a common comprehensive culture pervasively adopted in the territory in question. Indeed this has happened again and again. To speak of such communities as 'imagined communities' is not only misleading, it is a mistake. All social constructions are *not* imagined. And what started as contrivance can over time become something very different. Levine here misses the importance of Brighouse's point about attending to the dynamic effect of the reproduction of culture.

Perhaps it is not nationalism or nationalist sentiments that should be said to be illusory, but *a powerful image of the world and ourselves as human beings* that *often* goes with the nationalist project. In an important passage which we have already cited, Levine writes that the nation is a mere expression of "a wish for a community that extends throughout time, uniting generations, and across space, incorporating strangers. But this wish is always at least somewhat at odds with the facts." Levine is surely right, and importantly so, about this. There is, our dreams notwithstanding, no such community that is so transhistorical or indeed in any way transhistorical. Nationalism, *in this sense*, is illusory. It is understandable that we should so wish to escape the vicissitudes of time and deep, typically irreversible, change, but there is no such escape. That is a utopian dream and we should be grateful to Levine for so clearly pointing this out to us.

But we need not give such a utopian range to our imagination – to our humanly understandable wishful thinking. We need not so embellish our sense of being a member of a nation. Is there not a more modest, more realistic, belief in the importance of nations, the significance of national identification, the seeing of ourselves as a people, as members of a distinct nation with its distinctive language and pervasive culture? Is such a conception of nationality at odds with the facts? And is that not something that is important to retain? Is seeing ourselves as Mexicans, New Zealanders, Cubans, or French something that is of no human importance or at least something which would be transcended with greater maturity? Seeing ourselves as *superior* or the ways of our culture to be just the right way of doing things is indeed something urgently in need of being firmly set aside as blindness or arrogant ethnocentrism. Liberal nationalists cannot be committed to ethnocentrism of any kind. Indeed, as soon as a trace of it is recognized, a consistent liberal nationalism must repudiate it. But to have a sense of being a

people need not be ethnocentric. And, shorn of dreams of historical transcendence or of mythological self-seeking and self-glorifying national historical narratives (the history of the nation we get taught in school), it need not be illusory. Neither Levine nor Brighouse nor Buchanan, who makes similar points against nationalism, have done anything to show that having a sense of belonging to a group and attaching importance to this group belonging and identification is irrational or something to be abandoned with greater maturity and a 'more universalistic' outlook.

Levine, following Gellner, has claimed that only with the rise of capitalism and modernity does this group identification take the form of national identification. It is the form of group identification that goes with modernity, that is, with capitalist societies and with postcapitalist societies (when we get them), including such socialist ones as might come into being. And given that group identity, of which national identity is a subspecies, is so humanly ubiquitous and taken by almost all human beings to be so important, what is the basis for saying it is illusory? Here is an important disanalogy between nationalism and religious feelings which are also pan-culturally ubiquitous, but which can still be said to be illusory because they rest on *cosmological* beliefs which are at best false.[25] But what are the false *cosmological* beliefs, or even *just false beliefs*, that go with attaching importance to group identity? Levine does not say, and it is, to put it minimally, not evident that there are any.

That nationalism, any form of nationalism, involves such a mythical embellishment of the nation and/or a sense of inherent superiority is also a claim made by Brighouse. Nationalism implies, Brighouse has it, that the "state involves itself in deliberately trying to condition consent in a way that bypasses the critical faculties of its citizens and future citizens." Nationalism, he argues, is committed to manufacturing a kind of mythical history, a 'history' which at crucial points deliberately bypasses, without caring about truth, what rigorous and critical research would put before us and which gives us instead "a nobler, moralizing history: a pantheon of heroes who confer legitimacy on central institu-

25 Kai Nielsen, 'Naturalistic Explanations of Religion.' *Studies in Religion*, forthcoming, and his *Naturalism without Foundations*

tions and are worthy of emulation."[26] Nationalists claim, Brighouse also has it, "that nationality has a special importance that should inform institutional design" and that a sense of nationality is crucial for our having firm personal identities. But in achieving that, Brighouse avers, nationalism also carries with it the idea that certain people, as members of a particular nation, "are superior to others in a way that justifies overriding the interests of non-nationals as well as some of the claims of national members."

We cannot but agree that when nationalism leads to such things, then nationalism is bad. It is completely unacceptable for nationalists (or for that matter, anyone else) to argue that students should have a 'civic education' centrally involving a *mythical* history. To do this, to put it bluntly, is to replace history with propaganda. Such 'civic education' fails to respect human beings by paternalistically teaching them 'noble lies' which bypass (or try to bypass) their intelligence and integrity. But while *some* nationalists have argued in defence of such a mythological 'history,' and claimed the inherent superiority of their nation, it is not even remotely, as we said before, a viable option for a liberal nationalism. Institutions which seek to pervert our ability to use our critical intelligence and undermine equal respect for people are completely unacceptable. But such things are not inherent components of having a sense of national identity and are plainly incompatible with liberal nationalism. There are, as we have seen, nationalisms and nationalisms.

Brighouse makes another critical point against nationalism to which any liberal nationalist who is also a socialist must be particularly sensitive. His critical point is that nationalism with its stress on national identities frequently has "disruptive effects ... on class solidarities, and hence on redistribution." He goes on to remark that "national identity is often used with some success in capitalist democracies to persuade working people that they should moderate their demands, and to impugn the responsibility of political agents who advocate a more militant stance." This was dramatically exemplified by all the contesting powers in and around the First World War. And it has been used again

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26 William Galston, 'Two Concepts of Liberalism,' *Ethics* **105:66** (1991), 516–34

and again both before and since. But it is something that does not, as Brighouse himself recognizes, necessarily go with nationalism. A liberal nationalist must (1) reject this kind of repressive ideology, and this mystifying of people, out of hand and (2) be on guard against its arising in nationalist movements. Though it *has* gone with nationalism it *need* not and *should* not go with nationalism.

Brighouse also objects to nationalism and to having national sentiments because they promote, according to him, loyalty to *the existing order*. Given what most – and perhaps all – existing states are actually like, this is indeed a bad thing. But such a claim shows that Brighouse, no more than Levine, pays attention to the nationalisms of stateless nations, whose aim is to change the existing order. Brighouse, like Buchanan and Levine – but Brighouse in the most detail – also argues that the ethical particularism of nationalism is incompatible with ethical universalism and its commitment to the impartial treatment of all, to equality and to equal respect and freedom for all. One way nationalism can do that is by advocating some 'special obligations' to peoples belonging to one's nation. But here, as Levine well realizes, we must be careful. Many things can lead to overriding a loyalty to a community of which one is voluntarily (in some not very clear sense of 'voluntarily') a member. In this volume Thomas Pogge powerfully and in convincing detail shows the limitations of such loyalties. But limitations are one thing; denial that there are such special obligations is another. *Prima facie* in certain respects, one has special obligations to those people whom one recognizes to be members of one's community that are not the same as obligations one has to others. First, the rationale for the special obligations to one's compatriots need not be, and indeed must not be, that they and you – members of a particular community – are superior. Rather the rationale is that for there to be bonds of community – something which is essential for anything recognizable as human life – there must be such special obligations. Second, this loyalty need not be to the particular government or even to the state of that nation but to the nation – to the people – of which one is a member. And finally, such a loyalty does not, to understate it, override all other moral considerations. One's nation may behave so badly that one leaves or alternatively stays and fights to change it or, if one is weaker or in some other way inescapably encumbered, one enters into 'inner emigration.' And with any of these things one may come to side

with a people that have a different national identity. This may earn one the name of 'traitor' – as some Germans spoke of Willie Brandt for fighting against the Nazis in the Norwegian army – but, its negative emotive force notwithstanding, one sometimes can receive that epithet with pride and honour.

If one migrates out, one may in time come to have a different sense of nationality aligned with a different community. This is usually, perhaps always, more difficult and less complete than it is often thought to be. A person without a community is lost, but where this is not her situation and where she sees herself as a 'we,' she has special obligations to that 'we.' As egalitarians we will believe in the equal worth of all human beings, but with that we still can consistently recognize certain people as 'our people.' To which community we belong is, of course, an accident of history. But belonging to some community – the having of 'we feelings' – is essential for human flourishing, and the historical contingency of which community we are a part does not in any interesting or significant sense make that belonging arbitrary.

Buchanan, Levine, and Brighouse all recognize that there are certain particular attachments that are in certain respects privileged. For example, an adequate universalistic ethical theory must acknowledge a special place for friendship and family relationships. As Brighouse well puts it, "Although strangers are often in greater objective need than our friends and family members, it seems wrong of us to abandon our friends or children, or even to make our attachment to them contingent on them having needs we can better fulfil than those of others." Of course, and fortunately, it is not always, or even usually, the case that "we have to abandon our friends or children" in order to efficiently help those who are strangers. But the point here is that Brighouse's belief about it, as difficult as it is to theorize or rationalize, is one of our deeper considered judgments. Is that particularist claim incompatible, as he also believes, with a universalistic ethic? We do not think so; it is perfectly generalizable or universalizable. The claim is that any person *x* has special obligations to her friends and family rooted in intimacy and sometimes in mutual dependence that that person does not have to others standing in different relations to her. And this is universal. It applies to all persons in their relationships to friends and family. Something very like that obtains between a person (any person you like) and her compatriots. Any person *x* has special obliga-

tions to her compatriots because of their communal relationships and mutual dependence that that person does not have, or does not have as stringently, to others. And this is universal. It applies to all persons in their communal relationships and in their recognition of a common nationality. It is no more morally arbitrary than the special obligations involved in friendships and families.

All of these things are for most people deeply important: they are relationships they care about and would continue to care about on informed reflection in a cool hour. There is no good reason to label them irrational or illusory. However, while this special importance of friends and family cuts across time and location, though, of course, its specific forms will vary from culture to culture and over historical time, national identity, though not group identity, of which national identity is a subspecies adapted to certain historical circumstances, is, as we have seen, something which came into prominence with the modern era and is functionally appropriate to it. Still, for most people in conditions of modernity, it is a vitally important relationship, and modern nation-states and multination-states could not continue to even remotely efficiently function without it.

Brighouse, like Levine, resists this. We have already considered and set out what we take to be a refutation of Levine's argument that national identity is imagined – a product of wishful thinking. But Brighouse here argues differently. He argues that "nations are not families"; a nation, lacking the intimacy of families, "is, simply, a group of strangers." But, while it is true they lack the intimacy of families or of clans in primitive societies, it is at best misleading to say that nations are simply groups of strangers. A nation is a people with a common language and comprehensive culture with distinctive ways of doing and perceiving things that are prized by most of its members and which yield a common form of recognition. They are things into which they are all thoroughly socialized. Such a collection of individuals provide for each other a common sense of at-homeness (in the German sense of *heimat*) that is commonly not felt by these individuals when they are among people with a different language and culture. In these very important ways people with the same comprehensive culture do not face each other as strangers but as members of a common community. This remains so, in a backhanded way, even when some alienated members of the community recognize with distaste their compatriots abroad.

It is *ersatz* realism to claim that a "nation is, simply, a group of strangers." Their commonalty carries the sense of at-homeness described above and it yields specific obligations – obligations to, in some way, serve in their common defence, to pay their fair share of taxes, to accept if called to jury duty, and the like. These are obligations, sometimes overrideable, that obtain between compatriots that do not obtain more widely. If they were not in place, nations would be dysfunctional and life in our conditions of modernity would be even more impoverished than it already is.

Brighouse argues that nationalism, because it yields special obligations and is a particularism, is not egalitarian and undermines autonomy. Like Buchanan, he also claims that it undermines the very central liberal norm of equal respect for all people. Again there are nationalisms and nationalisms. To claim that we have special obligations to our compatriots is not to claim that we have *no* obligations to other people. For liberal nationalism, a commitment to equal autonomy and equal respect for all people are such obligations. To remain a liberal nationalism, it must be committed to the egalitarian maxims that the life of everyone matters and matters equally and that each is to count for one and none to count for more than one. These notions of moral equality are key background assumptions as much for liberal nationalism as they are for Rawlsian cosmopolitanism.

There are, of course, severe problems – problems Brighouse adverts to – concerning how to achieve equality – particularly fair equality of opportunity – where in a territory there is a majority language, which is the *de facto* dominant language, and a minority language or languages. The people speaking only the minority language or speaking also, but imperfectly, the majority language cannot but be disadvantaged and this will obtain with even the best will in the world among all the different linguistic groups in such a territory.

The solution in Quebec to these problems seems to us exemplary. (We do not assert that this is only true of Quebec.) French is the language of Quebec (it is the mother tongue for over 80 percent of the population), but there is a sizeable, historically rooted English-speaking minority. Its linguistic rights are respected with English-speaking schools (including universities), hospitals in which all services are available in English as well as in French, the right to have a trial in English, to have official services in English, and to use English in the National Assem-

bly. It is also the case that anglophones are taught French in the schools just as francophones are taught English in francophone schools. Quebec realizes it is essential for much of its population – ideally all – to learn English in a North America largely made up of anglophones. The circumstances of the francophone Québécois are, in this respect, closely analogous to that of the Scandinavians, Flemish, Welsh, and Dutch, where it is vital for them to learn English and learn it reasonably well.

Brighouse's example is not Quebec but Wales. But it seems to us, except that their national language is actually threatened, that the situation for the Welsh is essentially the same as it is for the Scandinavians, the Flemish, and the Dutch. Three things are essential in all these places (and in Quebec as well). (1) It is essential to protect the language of the majority and to make it the official language spoken by almost everyone. (2) Where there are national minorities it is essential to preserve their culture while at the same time facilitating the acquisition of the national (official) language of the society in which these minorities, in one way or another, must interact. (We are not claiming that an effort be made to educate them to the level where they have the same proficiency in the language as a native speaker. That is unrealistic and unnecessary, but we are arguing that it is vital for them to come to have a functional acquaintance with the language.) And (3) It is essential to facilitate, for all people living in the society, the learning of the *lingua franca* of the bigger world in which they also have to interact. This now, and for the foreseeable future, means learning English, and it seems to us that the Dutch, Flemish, and Scandinavians have been exemplary in doing this. They have securely maintained their national languages and the sense of nation that goes with it while learning English in a way which offers them at least an equal opportunity in the larger world. Government policy in all such small states or, as the case may be, nations, where they have sufficient resources to do it, should be to ensure (1), (2), and (3). This has been and remains a policy for liberal societies where linguistic problems exist, including liberal societies with a nationalist agenda. Nation-states need a national language to properly function. Where there is no national language but only a myriad of different languages, this inescapably leads to *de facto* inequalities for people who happen to speak the language of the minorities in that society. There will also be *de facto* inequality, even where there is a national language, for people whose first language happens to be a dif-

ferent one. There is no getting around it. The best way of ameliorating it is, as we argued above, by facilitating the acquisition by the national minorities of the national language, while preserving as much as possible, where they want it, their culture and the language which goes with it. The cure of forced assimilation with the destruction of the language and cultures of historical national minorities is worse than the disease, and would make for even more inequalities and loss of autonomy and self-respect.

Here it is crucially important that a liberal nationalism, as Ross Poole in effect shows, should not succumb to the siren song of Bakhtinian multiculturalism. Surely liberal nationalists, like all humane persons, will strongly favour the politics of inclusion. But they will, if they have their wits about them, resist both assimilation and multi-voiced communities, where this comes to the interaction of 'languages of heterogeneity,' and where such interaction is intended to replace the hegemony of the national languages of nations. There can be no society without a Public Reason and there can be no nation without a national language and the comprehensive culture of that nation. Without that there is no full and adequate communication and interaction in the nation and there is no democratic equality for groups not sharing in the dominant language. Moreover, without it, there is no common culture to make a people a people.

There is plenty of historical evidence to support this view. Most of it also shows evidence of violence, domination, and repression of genuine nations whose language should have been recognized, together with their culture in a real multination-state. French was forced on what has become the French people starting just before the French Revolution and coming to be consolidated with the revolution. Where before, as we have previously noticed, there were seventeen languages, now there is one common language and a French nation. The Spanish conquistadors and later revolutionaries forced Spanish on what is now Mexico, English and Afrikaans were forced on the bulk of the population which is now South African, and English was forced on the Irish and the Scots by the British. There was brutality, coercion, and ethnocentric arrogance and sometimes (as in the case of the Highland Scots) ethnic cleansing in the doing of these things. That should never be forgotten. But neither does it need to be repeated in order to create a national and official language. What is different between different peo-

ples in a nation-state should, where it reasonably can, be preserved and respected. This cannot be at the expense of building a nation-wide system of education and common cultural attunement that would give everyone, as far as that is possible, equal access to the national language and the culture that goes with it and the capacity to converse, participate in the public forum, and otherwise interact with each other as equals. If people who are not native speakers of the national language do not develop some reasonable fluency in it, they will be terribly ghettoized, marginalized, and kept from playing an effective role in the society, to say nothing of their being seriously economically disadvantaged. Sometimes this is the effect of multiculturalism. This must be avoided even if it means not *fully* protecting their differences. Ross Poole's discussion of such general issues in this volume is, in our view, very much and perceptively to the point.

In a just society there will be, along with the other more familiar equalities, an equality of being listened to. This is a difficult task to fulfil for those people who are members of the dominant culture. But if we are to have a decent and just society, it must be done. A necessary but not sufficient condition for the doing of this is to have a common encompassing culture in the nation-state, or even (as much as possible) in a genuine multination-state, in which these otherwise diverse people abide. Moreover, it is important that this encompassing culture be ubiquitously present without being oppressive. This is not easy to achieve, but it is essential that it be done. Of course this equality of being listened to – a central element of equality of self-respect – must not stop at the border of the nation-state. There – that is, across these nation-states and multination states – the doing of it is much more difficult because of problems of communication and of the non-existence of a common comprehensive or encompassing culture. We cannot see any way around this except the standard one of having one international or perhaps a very few international languages as Greek once was and then Latin and then French and now English, and as some other language will no doubt be in several hundred years. For an equality of being listened to to become possible, there must be some common communicative idiom across nations that, if cultural autonomy is to be preserved, will still be less than a common comprehensive culture, the latter running along national lines in modern societies. Assimilation to any one comprehensive culture, while probably impossible, is plain ethnocen-

tric arrogance that no cosmopolitan, if she thinks about it carefully, can accept. Still we need a *lingua franca*, but that does not require a common comprehensive or encompassing culture.

Such considerations lead us to Brighouse's theory (conception) of *benign neglect*. We could perhaps shore up national identities and nations in the way suggested above, but, he asks, as does Levine as well, *why do so?* There is, he argues, a better alternative for people living in our conditions of modernity: it is the alternative of *benign neglect toward cultural identities*. Brighouse describes it as "the position that the state should, as far as possible, be neutral among the cultural (and hence national) sentiments of its citizens." That is, to put it unsympathetically, we should have a state that is somehow – mysteriously – above, and neutral towards, all nations. He adds that his position is "implicit in the theoretical work of many contemporary liberals, and also in much socialist theory and some socialist practice." He defends such a conception while we think, *au contraire*, such a conception is a deeply mistaken one for either a liberal or a socialist, and, of course, for a liberal socialist.

However, careful argument is required here, for Brighouse's arguments are powerful and well set against a careful consideration of Will Kymlicka's and David Miller's defences of liberal nationalism and the key importance of cultural (including national) identities. Brighouse argues (*pace* Kymlicka) that we should "design a cultural policy aimed not at protecting any particular cultures, but at a long-term integration of different cultures, so that it is easy to move between them and perhaps even difficult to differentiate between them." Such an aim he identifies, we think mistakenly, with a commitment to cosmopolitanism. And the aim of cosmopolitanism, as Brighouse sees it, is "deliberately ... to erode the significance of national sentiment within civic life." That is, we need in our social policies to engage in a benign neglect toward considerations of nationality.

Part of his argument depends on the soundness of his defence of strict *state neutrality* concerning conceptions of the good life which he takes to include state neutrality concerning considerations of nationality. Rawls has argued plausibly, and Brighouse follows him here, that the state should be neutral concerning conceptions of the good life. Modern societies are irreducibly and inescapably pluralistic. That is to say, within them there is a plurality of ways of life, including religious

and secular orientations to the world, with a bewildering variety of conceptions of how best to live. The state should not favour some conceptions at the expense of others.

The state neutrality that Brighouse defends is not the impossible one of neutrality of *effect*, but neutrality of *justification*. "Neutrality of justification," Brighouse puts it, "prohibits that policies be *justified* on the grounds that they favour one conception over another." Neutrality of justification concerns itself with the *reasons* for policies rather than the *effects* of the policy. Neutrality of effect is impossible to achieve. But the state should not seek as a *rationale* – a *justificatory base* – for any of its policies something that is rooted in some particular conception of the good life. It must, in this *justificatory* sense of neutrality, remain strictly neutral on contested terrain concerning the good life and concerning what life-plans the citizens of the state can legitimately have. It has no business intruding in these matters. Indeed it must not do so. In taking that line of neutrality of justification, Brighouse takes the Millian position that among ways of life, anything goes, as long as others are not harmed or their rights violated. As long as they do not violate these constraints individuals may live as they please.

This is the standard liberal position, and (*pace* Brighouse) liberal nationalists and socialists can and should accept it. Brighouse brings out very well why such a conception is so appealing:

> If we accept what Rawls calls the fact of reasonable pluralism – the idea that a free society will inevitably be characterized by reasonable disagreement among its citizens about the good, leading to a multiplicity of competing, conflicting, and sometimes incomparable conceptions of the good – then we should be concerned that the state not presume the falsehood or wickedness of the deepest moral commitments of its reasonable citizens. As the holder of a monopoly on legitimate coercive force, and as a mechanism which is supposed to be accountable to all citizens, the state should pass as little judgment as possible on the content of the ways of life of its own citizens.

We, like Brighouse, think this liberal conception here, coming down to us from Humboldt and Mill, and restated with force in our time by Berlin, Rawls, and Dworkin, is right on target. What we object to is Brighouse's application of it to questions of nationality.

As is well known, Rawls – and many liberals follow him here – does not put matters concerning fundamental principles of justice or constitutional essentials into the pluralistic hopper where anything goes or

at least any 'reasonable anything' goes. Unlike for comprehensive conceptions of the good, ways of life, life plans, religious or non-religious orientations, neither the liberal state nor any other state can or should be neutral with respect to constitutional essentials or fundamental principles of justice. (We speak here not only of neutrality of effect but of neutrality of justification as well.) This entails that they cannot and should not be neutral with respect to primary natural and social goods, for these are presupposed in the very choice of principles of justice – indeed in even being able to make such a choice or (even more fundamentally) being able to come to articulate principles of justice. To be acceptable, comprehensive conceptions of the good and the like must be in accordance with the constitutional essentials of a liberal state and its principles of justice. If they are not so acceptable they will not be a part of the reasonable pluralism of such societies. A great motley of quite divergent conceptions of the good are acceptable and must at least be tolerated, and in that sense accepted, in liberal societies. Still, to be acceptable they all must be compatible with the constitutional essentials and the basic principles of justice of the society in which they are held. If, as philosophers such as John Gray believe, there is no consensus here among the citizens of such a society then this whole Rawlsian nonfoundationalist rationale collapses. Consensus, of course, isn't sufficient but it is necessary. But this consensus (if it exists), if it is to be reasonable (that is, in accordance with wide reflective equilibrium), requires – and Brighouse does not challenge that – a rough agreement about primary natural and social goods. There can be no state neutrality – justificatory or otherwise – concerning the primary natural and social goods.

It is here that Kymlicka's argument enters and it is of crucial importance for the dispute about nationalism. It is the argument "that membership in a cultural community should count as a primary good in exactly the Rawlsian sense of a good that any rational person should want whatever else she wanted." If Kymlicka's claim is sound, this makes nationality and a sense of national identity – the modern form of membership in a cultural community – not an optional matter of different comprehensive conceptions of the good or of ways of life, but, like other primary goods, something essential for social life itself under modern conditions. Brighouse is at pains to reject Kymlicka's arguments here. Indeed the soundness of this rejection is a linchpin in the consideration in his argument against nationalism.

So we will review Brighouse's argument here and try to make a reflectively critical response to it. Brighouse argues, rightly we believe, that a liberal state cannot pass judgment on the ways of life and comprehensive or, for that matter, non-comprehensive conceptions of the good of any of its citizens so long as these conceptions or ways of life are in accordance with the constitutional essentials and principles of justice of that society. If the state acts here in a non-neutral way it is "an unwarranted sign of disrespect to the person whose views are being disregarded. In treating his conception of the good as inferior to others the state is (and his fellow citizens through the state are) treating that person effectively as worthy of lesser respect." This is standard liberalism, and it seems to us that we have very good reasons to accept it. So far we are with Brighouse.

However, because of these considerations, Brighouse thinks that it is "obvious how neutrality of justification would prohibit special attention to national sentiment." It is here that our disagreement begins. He argues that in "any free society not only can pluralism about ways of life be expected, but so can pluralism about the nation." But, we submit, 'ways of life' and 'nations' are in important ways not parallel. A nation provides the language and the comprehensive culture in which *various* ways of life, life plans, and conceptions of the good get articulated and can flourish. To even exist in modern conditions, they must have these background conditions provided by the nation. That is, the nation or nations within a given society provide the medium or media through which such ways of life get articulated and without which they could not get articulated. They supply the cultural context of choice in which these diverse choices are made. In a non-multination state there is one comprehensive culture and one national language, and that language, in ways we have already delineated, must be privileged by the state for us to have such a society at all. In a state encompassing more than one nation, there will be two or more national languages if the different component nations have different languages, but in such a state these languages will be privileged in the same way a single national language is privileged in a nation-state. *In conditions of modernity no nation, no comprehensive culture; no comprehensive culture, no modern society.* Going further we should recognize that *no common language, no comprehensive culture and thus no society or at least no modern society. And without a society there obviously can be no cultural context of choice at*

all. A nation-state, or for that matter a multination state, cannot be neutral about such matters, for its very existence depends on their existence.

The existence of multination states may seem to belie at least some of that, but it does not. With multination states by definition there are several (two or more) nations in a single state. There will not be a *single* comprehensive culture, but a plurality of such cultures in some way politically and culturally linked in some form of common political community. But the state – the multination state – will not be indifferent to the existence of these different nations with their comprehensive cultures and will privilege all of them as being necessary to sustain these various component nations without which that multination state could not function. There is a kind of pluralism here, but not the pluralism of comprehensive conceptions of the good and ways of life of which Rawls speaks. The state cannot and, even if it could, should not remain neutral about the nation or nations that it is the nation-state or multination state of. We need some common language or languages and comprehensive culture or comprehensive cultures to make social life possible, to sustain the nation or nations the state is a state of. Without that, that very state could not exist. To ask for state neutrality in that sense is to ask for the state to put itself out of business or at least to neglect the issue of its own existence. It is, that is, in effect to ask for the demise of that very state.

Nothing even remotely like 'everything goes that does not harm others or violate their rights' is viable *vis-à-vis* nations. It is not a matter of believing that some nations or national sentiments are superior to others, but of recognizing that one or a limited number of them in any territory must be privileged for there to be a society and a state at all. It is analogous to language. It is now generally realized that there are no intrinsically superior or inferior languages. But it is also plain that in any territory some privileged language or a limited number of privileged languages (as in Finland there are Swedish and Finnish) are necessary for there even to be a society at all and for there to be anything recognizable as a human life.

However, we are not quite at the end of the line (if indeed in philosophy we are ever at the end of the line), for Brighouse does not agree that, even in conditions of modernity, membership in a nation is a primary good and he does not accept what Kymlicka says about the cultural context of choice. Presumably (*pace* R. M. Hare and the early

Jean-Paul Sartre) Brighouse would agree with Kymlicka, and almost everyone else, that our ability to form and revise a conception of the good is not just dependent on our own capacities and our being, in some probably illusory individualistic sense, in conditions of freedom, but depends, as well, "on there being background cultural and intellectual institutions which we can realistically draw on in developing our beliefs." We invariably, and inescapably, also critically scrutinize our ideas in a determinate cultural environment which for us moderns is that of the comprehensive culture that is our nation. This is not something that in the first instance we adopt or even can adopt; rather it is a given for us, like our mother tongue.

What Brighouse denies is that a determinate cultural structure – in conditions of modernity the nation – is necessary to provide a context of choice which is essential for our being autonomous agents and thus is essential for our self-respect and flourishing. Here he runs flatly against the arguments of Kymlicka, Tamir, and Miller. He is also, or so it seems to us, running against a more general point which should be of some concern for cosmopolitans. National identity is often linked with politically emancipatory movements. Stateless nations fighting to gain their political sovereignty are also fighting for their recognition and their right to be listened to within the community of nations, or more prosaically, as states among, and equal to, the other states. If cosmopolitanism is committed, as Brighouse believes, to "deliberately trying to erode the significance of national sentiment in the public life," then cosmopolitans will be committed, in many cases, to the erosion of democratic movements and to the perpetuation of domination and repression. We, on the contrary, believe that cosmopolitanism is committed to support struggles for more democracy and more justice wherever we find them.[27] And, in the present world, numerous, and perhaps often the most important, struggles for democracy are fuelled by a sense of national identity.

Brighouse thinks it unclear what it would be like to lack a cultural context of choice. But that seems to us false. We have a clear example

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27 Jocelyne Couture, 'An Ethical Response to Globalization: Justice or Solidarity?' in Jay Drydyk and Peter Penz, eds., *Global Justice, Global Democracy* (Winnipeg/Halifax: Fernwood 1997), 124–37

of people lacking a cultural context of choice in the case of slaves brought over from Africa by slave traders, people thrown together after their capture who were often from heterogeneous cultures with different languages and who were forced in some way to try to speak their master's language and accept (and first to gain some understanding of what it was to accept) his way of ordering them about and, inasmuch as they had any understanding of it, some of his culture. Even if they (counterfactually) had been allowed to make choices, they lacked, at least in the early period of their enslavement, a cultural context of choice. Any case, though *somewhat* less clearly, of people thrown into an alien culture lacking a command of the language, unable, except in very limited circumstances, to use their own, where the ways of doing and responding to things are foreign and baffling to them, is a case of people lacking a cultural context of choice. The Lithuanian immigrants in Chicago, as they are depicted in the first half of Upton Sinclair's naturalistic novel, *The Jungle*, are vivid and convincing examples of people lacking a cultural context of choice. The interaction of their old culture with the new one uncomprehendingly yields very little meaning and content to their choices. They live in a moral and social wilderness where they lurch with very little understanding or control over their situation, from one horrible circumstance to another – mostly uncomprehendingly – until slowly, and painfully, after a considerable period of time, they partly catch on to how this new society works and impacts on them, though even then their situation is not much better. But for a considerable time, the resources of their old culture fail them in their new situation as they are battered back and forth by their new culture – something which is hardly 'their culture' at all – in ways they do not understand. They are lacking a cultural context of choice, and their autonomy and self-respect are undermined. And they are shown no respect at all, let alone equal respect. There is, as far as we can see, no great puzzle about what it is for people to lack a cultural context of choice in these circumstances. Brighouse, in a manner not unknown to philosophers, is making a problem where there isn't one.

Brighouse next argues that, even assuming that the idea of lacking a cultural context of choice makes sense, Kymlicka's argument is still mistaken that in certain circumstances the state can rightly privilege nations and that the state, for minority nations and national minori-

ties, can sometimes rightly grant them group differentiated rights. Kymlicka's conception, Brighouse points out, is static not dynamic, synchronic not diachronic, and thus it does not attend to the dynamic effects of the reproduction of culture. But it is essential that we attend to this. Consider (counterfactually) what could, and he argues predictably would, have happened in Wales if liberal nationalist ideas had been in place there 150 years ago. At that time, Brighouse remarks, "the vast majority of the inhabitants of Wales were Welsh-speakers, most of them monolingual." Yet they were surrounded by a vast sea of English-speakers. When one considers the whole of the United Kingdom very few people spoke Welsh as compared with English. Now, Brighouse asks us to consider, "two counterfactual histories." Neither involve violations of liberal justice, but in History *A*, the one that would presumably be favoured by liberal nationalists, special language rights are granted to the Welsh to shield them from the recurrent *de facto* pressure of English and to protect the integrity of the Welsh nation with its distinctive culture. In History *B*, by contrast, no special language rights are granted. Given the pressures on Wales from the wider English-speaking society, with History *B* we would in time move from a population which for the most part spoke only Welsh to a population which spoke only English or both English and Welsh. With History *A*, Brighouse has it, we would have continued on with the vast majority of Welsh remaining monolingual Welsh-speakers. But this, he argues, would work against their autonomy and their equality of opportunity because there would for them be "far fewer cultural and material opportunities" than for the people in History *B* who come to a mastery of English. Monolingual Welsh-speakers – what he takes to be the result of History *A* – would, unlike the monolingual English-speakers or the bilingual Welsh/English-speakers of History *B*, have a "realistic access to a much less diverse range of potential life-partners, access to a much less rich body of literature, drama, scholarship, and popular culture in their own language, access to a much less extensive and desirable range of well-paying and rewarding employment opportunities." From this Brighouse concludes that we should not go the route of liberal nationalists which would result in History *A*, but take instead the perhaps somewhat paternalistic 'cosmopolitan' route that would result from History *B*. Social policy, he claims, if it is reasonable, should take the line that would lead to History *B* rather than History *A*.

This assumes, without reason, that Welsh liberal nationalists would be so remarkably stupid and lacking in foresight as to not recognize that a small nation such as Wales would need, in addition to protecting and furthering the use of their own national language and with that indirectly their culture, to see to it that the Welsh *also* learn English. But to see that does not take very great intelligence or foresight. If liberal nationalists were to have come into the environment of a mostly monolingual Welsh-speaking culture of 150 years ago, they would have (if they had their wits about them) argued strenuously for (1) protecting the Welsh language and culture *and* (2) the learning of English. Indeed that is the present position of Welsh nationalists. When there was an earlier national awakening among the Dutch and the Danes, as small nations then threatened with being drowned in a sea of German- and English-speakers, Dutch and Danish nationalists developed policies to protect their own languages and cultures while also insisting on educational policies, including language acquisition, which gave the Danes and the Dutch a window on the world. With two or more languages rather than only one, they came to have even greater equality of opportunity than their English, German, and French counterparts who, given the far greater extent of the use of their languages, tended understandably to be more frequently monolingual than members of small nations with geographically more limited languages. In small nations at least, liberal nationalism and greater equality of opportunity go hand in hand as do (*pace* Brighouse and Levine) liberal nationalism and cosmopolitanism. There is no reason to think Wales would be different from Holland and Denmark (or for that matter all of Scandinavia), and a similar situation obtains for francophones in Quebec. Brighouse seems to assume that nationalism must be inward looking, backward, defensive, and either hostile to or indifferent to ideas from outside. This is unfortunately true of some nationalisms, but, as we have seen, it is not true of others – we speak here of some really existing nationalisms and not just of the very idea of justified nationalism – and, by definition, it cannot be true of liberal nationalism.

It is correct to say, as Brighouse does, that "our ability to revise our practices and question authority depends crucially on what other opportunities are available to us." This, of course, is not the only thing this ability depends on, but it is one crucial feature and having these abilities (*pace* Dostoyevsky) is an unproblematically good thing. This

leads us to the conclusion that we should have cultural conditions which make exit from a culture an easy thing. Ready availability of exit will enhance things all around. Autonomous people must have the ability to reconsider and revise their conceptions of the good and of the polities in which they would wish to live. This, Brighouse agrees with liberal nationalists, supports both an interest in cultural membership *and* the standard Rawlsian liberties with their ban on the very idea of an authoritative conception of the good life required of all, or indeed of any *authoritative* conception of the good life, period. If such *authoritative* conception is an essential ingredient of communitarianism then communitarianism is incompatible with liberalism including liberal nationalism.

The crucial moral importance of reconsideration and revisability also supports, as we have seen, having permeable boundaries between nations and cultures. This a liberal nationalist should neither resist nor deplore; indeed he should welcome it. But special language rights do not threaten that, contrary to what Brighouse believes. Special language rights for the Québécois and the Welsh have not inhibited their access to the surrounding English-speaking culture(s) or kept them from becoming reasonably fluent in English. It is also probably true that special language rights, unsupplemented by a thorough English-language instruction, will even more thoroughly ghettoize and marginalize the peoples of the First Nations in Canada, Australia, and the United States than they already are. The injustice of their treatment, rooted in having such unequal resources and unequal material opportunities, will most probably, though no doubt unintentionally, be exacerbated rather than alleviated by their having and exercising such language rights *if* that is not supplemented by a thorough grounding in English or in some circumstances in French. But again we should not attribute such stupidities, without very good evidence, to the nationalist leaders of the First Nations. There is no reason, any more than there was for the Welsh, why they cannot have the protection of their own language and culture *and* access to a wider world. With that both migrating out and remaining in will become real options.

Brighouse thinks – though if our arguments above have been near to the mark it is not evident that he is justified in thinking that – that it would be better for a liberal society – including a socialist society – to "design a cultural policy aimed not at protecting any particular cul-

ture, but at the long-term integration of different cultures, so that it is easy to move between them and *perhaps difficult to differentiate between them*" (italics ours). If this 'integration of different cultures' only meant that culture is permeable, then it is something to applaud and support; no *liberal* nationalist, if he is thinking straight, will oppose it. It is a moral truism that we should all be for open societies. But if permeability of cultures and ease of movement led to a world that made it difficult to differentiate between different cultures or societies, then that would be a very great loss indeed. It isn't that diversity is necessarily an *intrinsic* good, but, for at least the reasons that J. S. Mill and Isaiah Berlin have so tirelessly adumbrated, it is a very great instrumental good. For cultures to so collapse or melt (choose your metaphor) into each other would not be, as Brighouse calls it, cosmopolitanism but barbarism. It would be as if we had developed a universal Esperanto or that one language – say, English or French or Chinese – became in time the universal and *sole* language of the world, so that all of world literature would have to be rendered in one language and, from the time of such a linguistic and cultural 'unification,' written in one language and from one cultural point of view. Suppose that English were that language and that culture, and we had to read (as most of us unfortunately do) Sophocles, Dante, Cervantes, Proust, Grass, and Marquez in English and that all the nuances of life that go with these various – sometimes radically various – languages and their associated cultures would be lost to us humans. That would be a horror that would impoverish our lives and deprive individuals of a *cultural* context of choice by so eroding cultural differences. Rather than promoting equality of opportunity, as Brighouse believes it would, and enhancing autonomy, it would limit us by leaving nothing for us to immigrate to or migrate to or transform ourselves into. We would all be much the same with no experiments in living left for us, with whatever difficulty, to try out. The resulting equality would be the equality of *sameness* that anti-egalitarians have tried to foist on egalitarians and that egalitarians, interpreting equality quite differently (say, in a more Rawlsian, Senian, or Barryian way), have rightly resisted as a caricature.

Cultural change, adaptation, and borrowing is very often a good thing – sometimes we gain from having a certain hybrid vigour. The opportunity should always be there and never blocked in an authoritarian way, though sometimes some changes may be argued against

and reasonably resisted, e.g., the 'McDonaldization' of Russia or anywhere else. But *assimilation*, Brighouse's 'cosmopolitanism,' should generally be resisted strenuously. Such a homogenization of the human race is no genuine cosmopolitanism, even under 'a policy of gentle detachment' from one's culture. Attachment and loyalty to a nation, or to some smaller group in premodern circumstances, and the ability to recognize and feel the importance of such local attachments are widespread among us and are, to speak normatively, essential to our very self-definition – a sense of who we are – which in turn is crucial to our sense of self-respect and autonomy. Permeable, fluid cultures are also a good thing, but a deliberate policy of eroding cultures so that they may be replaced by some 'universal civilization' is not. It misses all the valuable things about local attachments that such thinkers as in an earlier period Herder and coming to our contemporaries such diverse philosophers as Isaiah Berlin, Hans Gadamer, David Miller, G. A. Cohen, Yael Tamir, and Will Kymlicka have brought to our attention.

Brighouse's principle, with which he concludes his essay, is an important one which a liberal nationalist and, we believe, anyone (or at least anyone touched by the Enlightenment) should accept (as far as its general thrust goes). It is the principle that we should "aim at making more permeable the boundaries between cultures so as to facilitate the realization of the values of autonomy and legitimacy over the long term, as well as equality between individuals across and within cultures." *Perhaps*, as Brighouse believes, this principle is actually compatible with the policy of benign neglect. We have tried here to give some reasons for doubting that. But it is plainly compatible with liberal nationalism, and we have seen that we have independent grounds for opting for liberal nationalism rather than for benign neglect.

Brighouse, like Levine and Martha Nussbaum, has taken it that we have a forced option between nationalism and cosmopolitanism.[28] One can, they believe, be one or the other but not both, though, of course, one might be neither. We have argued, on the contrary, that a sound nationalism must also be a cosmopolitanism and that in certain circumstances (that we have spelled out) a sound cosmopolitanism will also support nationalist commitments of a distinctive sort.

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28 Nussbaum, 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism,' 2–20, and 'Reply,' 131–44

However, since it is a contentious issue between us and Brighouse and Levine, and indeed more widely, we should say a few more words about what cosmopolitanism is. A cosmopolitan (taken as an ideal type) is a person of wide interests and sympathies, familiar with many ways of viewing things and living; she is a person who is at home in all parts of the world, a person whose view of things is not restricted to that of any one nation or religion or particular cultural orientation and, very crucially, is not fettered by the prejudices of the people of any community, but conversant with and attuned to the ways of viewing things of many cultures. She is also a person who can make a reflective and impartial assessment of these views or, where assessment is not an issue or even much of a possibility or relevant, she can, and does, appreciate a wide variety of these views. In that way she is a person of the world, at home in a wide variety of places and with a mind set that would leave her at home throughout the world. In that sense cosmopolitans are persons of the world free from prejudices. This, of course, is a hyperbolical characterization. No one is literally at home throughout the world. But it is an ideal conception which people who are cosmopolitans aspire to approximate as much as is possible, and it reflects an underlying attitude which is that of the cosmopolitan. Above all, cosmopolitanism is the opposite of ethnocentrism and an inward turning particularism.

Sometimes it is taken that a cosmopolitan will be without national or culturally particular attachments – without any group identity at all – and both Brighouse and Levine make capital out of this sometimes supposed feature of cosmopolitanism in setting cosmopolitanism against nationalism. We do not think, some dictionaries to the contrary notwithstanding, this is a core feature of cosmopolitanism. But if it were, it would make it practically impossible for anyone to be a cosmopolitan, for no one is without particular cultural attachments and identities. And no one can totally free herself from the culture of the society in which she was socialized. Moreover, there seems to be a contradiction in the very requirements of such a cosmopolitanism. To have sympathies for many ways of living, viewing things and for all human beings, one has to know in the first place *what it is to feel sympathy at all*. This is arguably not something that we are born with, but something that we learn very early in a given environment. Whether or not one succeeds in freeing oneself from one's initial attachments, one cannot

free oneself from the sense – the particular sense that one has acquired in one's initial environment – of what it is to feel attachments, sympathies, and the like. And if, *per impossible*, one were to succeed in doing so how could it be possible for one to experience sympathy for many ways of living, viewing things and for all human beings? Such cosmopolitans, if there really could be such people, would be cold, indifferent beings more comparable to the international capitalist who claims to be a citizen of the world. No one can *just* be a citizen of the world. The whole idea, if we try to take it with something approaching literalness, is absurd.[29] Nor, for reasons we have adumbrated, is it desirable that anyone should be. *If* we promote cosmopolitanism as Brighouse does, as committed to "deliberately trying to erode the significance of national sentiment within civic life," then we would in effect promote the erosion of any sense of attachment in civic life and with that the very basis of a more reasonable cosmopolitanism. But there is no need to so characterize cosmopolitanism. A cosmopolitan will not be without such attachments though she must, in the ideal case, to be a genuine cosmopolitan, be without cultural prejudices or blinders. In real-life circumstances she must approximate that. She must, as well, be interested in phenomena across the world, be able to see and appreciate the point, purpose, and value of many different views of the world and the attitudes of many people and of diverse ways of living. She will (as we have seen) have local attachments, and prize them, but she must not, if she is a cosmopolitan, regard them as the sole source, as even the most important source, of appropriateness for humankind or let them fetter her understanding and appreciation of other ways of viewing and responding to things or just assume that they are the superior ways. The cosmopolitan's interests and attunements must be, to put it concisely, world-wide.

So construed – and not at all arbitrarily – cosmopolitanism is as perfectly compatible with liberal nationalism as the distinctive particularisms of liberal nationalism are compatible with ethical universalism. Levine and Brighouse wish to see local attachments and national sentiments wither away, leaving us with a stark (or more likely

29 Michael Walzer, 'Spheres of Affection,' in Joshua Cohen, ed., *For Love of Country* (Boston: Beacon Press 1997), 125–7

a bland) 'cosmopolitanism.' We, by contrast, think local attachments are part of the very stuff of anything recognizable as a human life and that they should be harmonized with a cosmopolitan view of things. We believe, as well, and have argued the matter, that in certain determinate circumstances – circumstances we have specified – our local attachments should take the form of liberal nationalist attachments and that a cosmopolitan concern about the world requires, in some circumstances, that we give support to the local attachments of different peoples to their cultural identities, something which for them is a condition for their emancipation.

IV

We shall now turn to what in reality, if not in intent, is Allen Buchanan's critique of nationalism and nationalist views on secession. In this section we will contrast something of our particular rendering of liberal nationalism with Buchanan's anti-nationalism (or so we read it). Some forms of liberal nationalism take it as a very central task to articulate a conception of collective rights, and, using this conception, to argue for the collective rights of nations. While for many the very idea of collective rights is conceptually problematic and there are indeed persistent disagreements over how we are to construe them and over whether they are in some significant sense 'mythical,' still they are in a reasonably plain way not *morally* problematic, for it is clear enough (and about this there is a *reasonable* consensus, at least in liberal democracies) that there are rights to equality between all nations, rights to self-determination and to an equal respect of peoples. Those collective rights, however they are to be analyzed, are moral and need not, to have moral force, be legally recognized. We leave aside the question whether these moral rights should be registered in the constitution of nation-states and multination-states, or in the Charter of the United Nations, and thus whether they should become legal rights.

Secession, according to Buchanan, is acceptable only if either of the following two conditions are satisfied: (1) if the group suffers what are plainly recognized to be injustices (if, for instance, human rights are systematically violated within the group by the encompassing state, as in East Timor), or (2) if the group was once a state which was unjustly

taken by force by the now encompassing state (as was the case of the Baltic states). If neither of those two conditions is satisfied, then, Buchanan has it, the group is not morally justified in seceding. Buchanan sees secession as something which is essentially meant to repair past injustices: plain unproblematically recognized injustices.

This position already reveals Buchanan's individualist orientation, since he ignores certain problems related to the recognition, promotion, or defence of the collective rights of nations within the encompassing state. Let us suppose, as is often the case, that the encompassing state refuses to recognize its multinational character. This may lead to the ignoring of the diverse cultural, and indeed the multinational, character of the state and, as a result, induce some of the component nations to adopt a nationalist orientation. After all, nationalist movements are not invented out of the blue. Very often, they are brought about by a failure to recognize a minority nation within the state by the majority nation. How should we characterize such a situation according to Buchanan? Clearly it need have nothing to do with a systematic violation of human rights. It also may have nothing to do with recovering a state that was once conquered by force. But can't this nationalist demand for nationhood be justified, in accordance with Buchanan's account, by an appeal to past injustices, if we include among these failures the failure to respect the principles of equality, equal respect, and the self-determination of nations within the encompassing state? A liberal nationalist could accept Buchanan's severe constraints on the justifications of secession, namely that it must be remedial, while still criticizing him for his narrow individualistic account of justice. As long as it is agreed to include among the principles of justice the above collective requirements, then it appears that there are conditions under which secession would be justified even if the two conditions mentioned by Buchanan are not met.

In the Canadian case, for example, Quebec nationalists cannot claim that the human rights of Quebeckers have not been fully respected most of the time, and it is problematic to invoke an event that took place more than two centuries ago in order to justify secession. There is something like a statute of limitations here. If something like that is not invoked the world would be a very chaotic place indeed. As Marx observed, throughout history someone was always conquering and plundering someone else. But, past history aside, it could be

argued that Quebeckers have not been recognized as a people, and thus have not been treated as an equal people within Canada. While lip service has been paid to the multinational conception of the two founding nations, it has, some ideological rhetoric aside, never been accepted as a reality. Quebec nationalists would claim, and we believe not unreasonably, that their language has not been properly protected by the federal government (through a policy of bilingualism that was thoroughly applied only in Quebec and New Brunswick), and that their culture has not been adequately protected because the federal government assimilated the culture of one of the two founding peoples within a policy of multiculturalism, in effect treating francophone Quebeckers as an ethnic group rather than as one of the two founding nations. Nationalists would also argue that Quebec's moral self-determination was not respected within Canada (by repatriating the constitution without the consent of the population of Quebec and against the explicit will of the vast majority of members in Quebec's National Assembly). It is not our purpose here to determine whether these arguments are sound and empirically validated. But it is our contention that, *if they are*, then they would lend support to the national aspirations of Quebeckers and provide grounds that could justify the secession of Quebec. That, *if* the above empirical claims *are true*, seems at least to be straightforward enough. Yet, given Buchanan's grounds for a justified secession, secession would not be justified even then. But this, to understate it, seems to put in question his grounds: the underlying rationale of his claim.

The problems that we are raising stem from Quebec – the Quebec nation – being confronted repeatedly by the refusal of the federal government to recognize the multinational character of an encompassing multination state. Or, perhaps what is better called, because of the non-recognition, a pseudo-multination state. The case of Quebec is not unique. Similar situations have emerged repeatedly in recent history. Whenever a nation wants more autonomy and is unable to achieve it within a multination state, there is a *prima facie* case for choosing to become independent if this is the only option left and if it is what its members want after they have shown this by a democratic vote as, for instance, in a referendum.

So it should be admitted that sometimes a nation within a *de facto* multination state may (and perhaps should) choose the course of po-

litical independence if it is unable to get sufficient recognition, autonomy, equal opportunity for economic development, and internal self-determination within the encompassing state. But Buchanan seems to be unable to account for that or to accept it. Moreover, he seems to have no counter arguments to show that such a reasonably straightforward claim is mistaken; to show, that is, that a nation, under such conditions should not secede or even consider secession as a very serious option.

Buchanan questions the very legitimacy of accepting a general non-remedial right of self-determination, even if this right does not include a right to secede. In our above responses to him, we accepted for the sake of the discussion that he might be partly right in adopting severe constraints on secession, and we agreed with him as well, again for the sake of that discussion, that secession, to be justified, had to be remedial. But we disagreed with him on the scope of what is to count as 'remedial' in this case. We also rejected Buchanan's narrow – or so it seems to us – scope in this regard. But these constraints, whether they are too narrow or whether they include principles of justice between peoples, apply in the case where a nation wants to exercise its right to self-determination. They constrain the exercise of that very right. This does not, however, mean that the nations have no general right to self-determination. Why should we say, as Buchanan does, that nations do not even have a moral right of self-determination *as such*? His argument is that a liberal must acknowledge what is indeed a social fact, namely, that individuals rank differently their various allegiances. The importance they give to their different affiliations will be different from time to time and will be different from one individual to another. Allowing a general right to self-determination for the nation requires, according to Buchanan, imposing a particular order of priority upon all the individual members of society concerning group affiliations. It seems that it would require overriding the familiar Rawlsian neutrality concerning conceptions of the good and of life-plans articulated by Brighouse which we wholeheartedly accepted in the previous section. To impose such a priority is in reality an insult made against particular choices and sets of values of individuals in our societies, and it thus violates cultural pluralism and the respect for persons. It is in this very important way essentially illiberal. This being so, Buchanan's conclusion is

that we must abandon even a general right of *self-determination* for nations, and we must do it even if the right in question does not involve a right to *secede*.

In order to arrive at what seems to us such an astonishing result, Buchanan confuses, or so we think, a number of important but still distinct matters. He must first ignore the fact that it might be sufficient in order to justify nationalist aspirations to found them upon a moral view according to which national communities simply constitute *a* good among others and not *the* good or the highest good. *Pace* Buchanan, it is not necessary to argue that national communities are *the* most important communities or associations. They need not be the most valuable community for each and every individual or indeed even for any individual. Citizens have all sorts of communal attachments, and their belonging to a national community may be just one among many. Even if the majority within a population were to assign less importance to their national affiliation than to their city, family, sexual group or whatever, national affiliation could still count as something that was an important good for them. But that does not entail that they regard it as the highest good, or even that they regard it as a primary good. So *pace* Buchanan, liberal nationalism is compatible with the idea that individuals might have multiple allegiances that give rise to complex self-identifications. It is fully compatible with the idea – an idea that seems to be plainly so – that different people have different priorities *vis-à-vis* their different identifications. Surely there are many individuals in the United States who do not care about their national identity, but no one would even suggest that it would then be illiberal for the United States as a country to exercise a right to self-determination. And how can it be plausibly claimed that simply by doing so, the United States would violate the equal respect principle?

Why should Buchanan claim that nationalists must be committed to ranking national affiliations above all other communal affiliations? Perhaps one reason is this. As an individualist, Buchanan can accept only individualistic justifications to the principle of national self-determination. According to that account groups have rights only if all the individuals within the group give importance to their group membership as a source of self-identification. One of the most powerful arguments to that effect, arguably individualistic, comes from Will Kymlicka who appeals to Rawls's idea of a primary good.

Kymlicka believes that individuals see their own communal attachments to a nation as a primary good. Indeed, they are not only taken by them to be a primary good, the very having of a national identity, Kymlicka argues, is a primary good. We should then protect their cultural affiliation to a national group by protecting and promoting their individual rights to maintain their cultural belonging. A right to national self-determination is thus given an instrumental defence. And so the validity of self-determination depends largely on whether individuals do give a priority, though perhaps only strategically, to their national affiliations.

However, to argue that nationality (a sense of national identity) is a primary good is not to argue that individuals must, do, or even should give priority to their national affiliations over any other affiliations they may happen to have. Probably very few do, but that is not the issue here. The issue is the same as the issue that occurs about any primary good. It is the empirical and causal claim that a national identity or, so as to include some more primitive societies, some form of group identity or cultural membership is necessary (as matter of empirical fact necessary) for people to gain or secure the having of anything else they may want, including, of course, what other identities they prize. Something is a primary good if it is something which is necessary for people to have in order to achieve or realize their ends, no matter what they are. The claim is being made that having a national identity, some group identity, or some cultural membership, is necessary in that way. It has nothing to do with whether people give priority to national affiliation. It rather rests on whether a sense of national identity, no matter what priority they give to it, in conditions of modernity, with the kind of sense of cultural membership that goes with it, is necessary – empirically necessary – to achieve whatever ends people may happen to have. It has nothing to do with how they order their preferences. We sought in section III to counter Brighouse's claims that Kymlicka is mistaken in his belief that cultural membership is a primary good. But if cultural membership and having a sense of national identity are primary goods, then they have a strategic role in our lives. They *may* also be inherently good or intrinsically good (assuming we know what we are talking about here). But whether or not that is so, Kymlicka, if his argument is sound, has provided a secure basis for national self-determination that, whatever

his intention, is quite independent of individualistic commitments about the ordering of our affiliations or what we want or philosophically problematic claims about what is or isn't inherently or intrinsically good. Rather, it is an empirical causal claim about what we need to get whatever it is that we want. Again, we are following Rawls's methodological claim about these matters. We travel metaphysically and philosophically light. Buchanan in effect foists controversial metaphysical commitments on liberal nationalists that simply need not be there. Liberal nationalists can be good Rawlsians and travel metaphysically light.

Whenever someone speaks of introducing collective rights and of accepting a reasonable competition between individual and collective rights, individualists tend to interpret that as a claim that there must be an *absolute* priority of collective rights over individual rights. But someone who rejects ethical individualism may do it without endorsing ethical collectivism. We might say, echoing John Austin on another topic, that they take in each other's dirty linen. The claim of liberal nationalists who are not ethical individualists is that individual and collective rights can cohabit side by side and be both accepted without any claim that one has an absolute priority, or even a general presumption of priority, over the other. Sometimes an individual right will trump a collective right and sometimes a collective right will trump an individual right and sometimes we will not know what to say. *The correct account should be neither collectivist nor individualist. One can be an anti-individualist without embracing any form of collectivism.* There might be, and we believe there should be, reasonable limits imposed one on the other by individual and collective rights. And there is no algorithm or general formula specifying what is their appropriate balance. We need to be contextualist and pragmatist about that.

This being so, Buchanan's argument is at the very least problematic. Someone might give more importance to her family than to the city in which she lives, more importance to the city than to her federated state, and more importance to that federated state than to the country (or nation or both). It is quite possible that there are many people like that. But as long as she still gives some importance (perhaps only strategic importance) to the more encompassing group, whether it is the country or nation or both, why not accept the claim that it (the country, nation, or both) has a right to self-determination? It seems simply arbitrary not to do so.

Similar considerations work against Buchanan's suggestion that self-determination is incompatible with the dynamic cultural pluralism which is a characteristic of contemporary liberal societies. *Pace* Buchanan, in accepting self-determination we are not creating barriers to changes in the conception of the good of individuals. On the contrary, if we seriously consider the dynamic character of cultural pluralism within contemporary liberal societies, we should recognize the existence and normative acceptability of multination states and should accept that the component nations within those states have the general right to some form of self-determination.

Buchanan also ignores the fundamental difference raised by Rawls between a political community and an association. One can remove oneself from an association, but one cannot help, to some extent at least, having to integrate, if one remains in a society, within a political community. The argument here is not that we are bound to a political community, even to a genuinely democratic community, in the way we are bound to a linguistic and cultural community, for the links are in this latter case even stronger. We can leave a country or a political community more easily than we can leave a cultural or linguistic affiliation, but there remains still an important difference between a political community and an association. The idea is that in liberal democracies, we shall find political communities, i.e., sets of institutions which govern (in the distinctive way of liberal democracies) society as a whole, wherever we go. There are, of course, many associations which we will never join, and indeed it is in principle possible not to be part of any associations (political parties, trade unions, school associations, etc.), but we can hardly fail to be a member of a political community. We can decide to leave a particular political community and join another, but we can hardly decide to leave, if we want to have any kind of life at all, all political communities. Now, as was argued in the introduction, nations are a particular specie of political community. All political communities in modern societies are the expression of one or many national communities. So, even if we ignore the particular linguistic and cultural attachments involved in these specific political communities that we call nations, there is still a difference in kind between political communities and associations. By blurring the distinction between political communities and associations, Buchanan misses an important difference between nations and other forms of allegiance.

Buchanan also confuses the decision to recognize a particular right to self-determination with the mistaken view, which he attributes to nationalists, according to which it is *only* nations that are good candidates for self-determination. All other groups, in his view, are not such good candidates. The mistake here – or so we believe – is not the previous one that led Buchanan to believe that nations, according to nationalists, had to be the *most important* form of community. It is the more radical mistake of imputing, without grounds, the belief to nationalists that all other affiliations are devoid of any worth whatsoever as possible subjects of self-determination. Nationalists must, according to Buchanan, believe that nations are the *only* communities that can exercise a right of self-determination. Other communities, he alleges that nationalists believe, are not entitled to such a claim. Is this right? If it were right, then it would seem that other groups are devoid of a certain kind of good enjoyed by national communities. But why should this be?

As a matter of fact, nationalists are only committed to the view that nations are in general (in modern societies) the only communities in a position to exercise a right to a *political* self-determination which would involve the right to secession. Linguistic groups, cultural communities, national minorities, groups of immigrants and so on may also enjoy a certain amount of self-determination, but in general not the right of secession. Does that mean that nations should be treated as more important? Different kinds of groups perform different sorts of actions with different rationales. Does that mean that nationalists, and particularly liberal nationalists, must, or even do, implicitly presuppose that some groups are more important than others? The point should be clear. It is not because nations are, in general, the only communities that could legitimately be entitled, under special circumstances, to exercise a full right of self-determination that we must on that basis conclude that they are the most valuable form of communal attachment or the only communities or associations entitled to some form of self-determination. Churches, universities, unions, and corporations have, and should have, and indeed could hardly function if they did not have, some limited forms of self-governance and, in that sense, some forms of self-determination. And the nationalist need not, and should not, say that these collectivities are less important than nations. The whole idea of ranking here, apart from some particular and contextually determined purposes, is absurd. Are universities more or less important than trade

unions? Only a blinkered person would think that there is an answer to that question or that we are any worse off without an answer.

It should also be added that liberal nationalists can accept the principle according to which, in a sense, *all* groups that accept liberal principles have a 'right to self-determination.' It is just that their self-determination is secured by a charter of rights and liberties or by the fundamental principles that apply to individuals in the constitutions of liberal democracies. Families, religious groups, trade unions, and political associations all have some kind of self-determination. Why should the nationalist be committed to the absurdity of denying that? If the country of which we are a part adopts fundamental principles such as freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of belief and opinion, then we can confidently claim that all these groups are in a sense entitled within these countries to self-determination. And if a country did not adopt them then it would not be a liberal democracy. But liberal nationalists are defending nationalism and the right, under certain circumstances, to secession within the limits of liberal democracy alone. They need not deny that secession may be justified in other circumstances as well, but that is not their brief.

V

For those of us who happen to be Canadians, as some would put it, or as others would put it, Canadians or Quebeckers – there is no neutral way of putting the matter – questions of nationalism and secession are not merely of theoretical interest. How our society or societies should be ordered turns to some considerable extent on how these questions should be answered. The Quebec sovereignty issue is also one crucial test case concerning the justifiability of liberal nationalism. Of the essays in this volume, Joel Prager's is unique in engaging in a detailed examination bringing to bear many factual considerations concerning the issue of Quebec sovereignty. He wants to see developed a social scientific theory which will tell us what is the relative weight of the various factors involved in the formation of Quebec voters' preferences for or against sovereignty. His contention is that a theory of rational behaviour, as developed in micro-economic theory, will provide the appropriate framework for the development of such a social theory.

Taken in the context of this general contention, it is therefore not surprising to see that for him, the best way to explain Quebeckers' aspirations for sovereignty is that 'Quebeckers seek to maximize their well-being.' But Joel Prager takes this literally; that is, for him well-being comes to economic advantage and his conjecture is, therefore, that the prospect of economic affluence is what best explains Quebeckers' preferences concerning sovereignty. The greater the prospects are, the greater will be their support to the project of sovereignty. We do not want to discuss the empirical plausibility of that conjecture, but it seems to us that Prager is too quick in moving from the premise that fears of economic catastrophe can temper aspirations to sovereignty to the conclusion that the support for sovereignty will increase proportionally to the increasing of the economic gains to be expected. Risk aversion is one thing, and greed is another. While the first one is arguably part of a rational behaviour, the second, as the marginalist economists have shown, is often not.[30] Prager here could have used a bit of that rational-choice theory's wisdom. But his reductionist view goes with a mistake frequently made by those seeking to give explanations in terms of a single causal quantifiable factor.

The grand scientific theory of nationalism Joel Prager wants to see developed has no intention in common with the normative theories that have been articulated in this volume. The intent of such scientific theory is not to say what is right or wrong but to give causal explanations, using game-theoretic models, and to make predictions. Such a theory, if we were to have a sound one, could with predictive reliability ascertain whether Quebec voters are likely to go for the sovereignty option. Such a reliable account would clearly be of great interest both to the Parti Québécois in planning strategy concerning how to win the struggle for secession and to the federalists in trying to defeat it. It could also be useful when the time comes to decide which promises or threats, depending on which side you are on, are likely to be the most effective. Such explanations, we are frequently told by proponents of game-theory as a methodological tool for social science, are normatively neutral. Jocelyne Couture argued that in so believing, social theorists are de-

30 See, for instance, Amartya Kumar Sen, 'Equality of What?' in Sterling M. McMurrin (ed.), *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1980), 195–220.

ceiving themselves.[31] Engaging in what she called 'social Darwinism,' they flatly reason as if they had derived an 'ought' from an 'is,' most of the time without realizing it. Joel Prager's contribution is no exception. Whether his account of Quebeckers' reasons for supporting sovereignty is empirically to the point or not (*we* think it is false), the message Prager's explanatory-predictive account tentatively delivers remains the same: people's preferences are there and they are what should guide the behaviour of the political actors; actual people's preferences, as they just happen to turn out to be, are the ones which should be taken into consideration and the ones that the society should be prepared to adjust to and reinforce. Because they *are* there, they *ought* to be there and of course, with the help of such an explanation, if it is taken seriously by the politicians, these preferences will be reinforced. The naïve belief that game theoretic explanations in social science are normatively neutral is not so different, in its consequences and its general background assumptions, from the reduction, made in this volume by Liah Greenfeld, of *de jure* legitimacy to *de facto* legitimacy.

Joel Prager is not claiming that he has something to say on whether Quebec sovereigntists are *right* or *wrong*. His contribution is not intended either to tell whether, and under which conditions, Quebec secession would be *justified*. It is, however, such questions, though usually posed more generally than just about Quebec, that have been at the centre of interest in this volume, as well as in Miller's *On Nationality*, Tamir's *Liberal Nationalism*, Buchanan's *On Secession*, and in the work, on these and related topics, of G. A. Cohen, David Gauthier, Will Kymlicka, Ross Poole, and Michael Walzer. More sociological accounts, such as Benedict Anderson's, Ernest Gellner's, and E. J. Hobsbawm's, did not attempt to utilize anything like a *wert-frei* sociology (proclaimed by Liah Greenfeld). They neither tried to isolate 'a purely factual side' from 'a purely normative side' nor attempted to treat them separately: sometimes doing the 'purely factual thing' and at other times 'the purely normative thing.' Nor have they for a mo-

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31 Jocelyne Couture, 'Decision Theory, Individualistic Explanations and Social Darwinism,' in R.S. Cohen and M. Marion, eds., *Quebec Studies in the Philosophy of Science* in *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 168 (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1995), 229–46.

ment thought that their descriptions can be free of all normative interpretation and conceptualization. Their assumptions, and our contention, is that our language games and forms of life neither are nor can be balkanized like that.[32]

Moreover, as we have seen, an adequate normative political theory or account – we did not say *'purely* normative theory,' for there is no such thing – must consider what *can* be the case in considering what *ought* to be the case. It is surely right, as Carol Prager argued and Joel Prager correctly assumed, that it is silly to take a high *a priori* moralistic road or a 'purist' highly abstract normative ethical theory road and then, proceeding quixotically, to try to ascertain how society should be ordered without a careful consideration of the realistic possibilities of how it can be ordered at a certain historical time and in a certain place. Even *ideal* normative theory, in Rawls's sense of ideal theory, can only operate in a *partial* abstraction from this constraint and then only for very circumscribed purposes, making all kinds of deliberately counterfactual assumptions in seeking to gain a clear conceptualization of some deliberately simplified, for purposes of perspicuous modelling, artificial situations.

One very important point made by Carol Prager is that a theory that reasonably concerns itself with the various possibilities should ask what are the comparative likelihoods of the various possible (feasible) scenarios and what are their advantages and disadvantages when compared to one another. We need to start on the daunting task of trying to figure these things out, by taking very seriously the task of accurately ascertaining what is the case and clearly representing it. That is a necessary prolegomena for ascertaining the possibilities. We can hardly know whether ethnic enmities can be eroded in a given situation without knowing how strong they are in that situation and something of their causes. That is not sufficient for our coming to know whether there is much chance that they can be eroded or even weakened, but it is necessary. To know the possibilities we have to know something about what the social realities actually are.

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32 Jocelyne Couture and Kai Nielsen, 'Whither Moral Philosophy?' in Jocelyne Couture and Kai Nielsen, eds., *On the Relevance of Metaethics* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press 1995), 273–332

However, not all social realities are equally relevant to our consideration of what we should do in light of the realistic possibilities. Normative reflection has its place here. Normative reflection, for instance, could lead us to realize that it is a terrible thing for a people to lose their language and culture. What is of vital interest, where that possibility is at issue (though that, of course, is not the only thing of interest), is what the best demographic theory tells us about (in the case of Quebec) whether the French language and, with it, francophone culture is threatened in Montreal and not, as Joel Prager at least seems to believe, what polls and surveys reveal about what Montrealers believe about whether French is threatened. Whether French is threatened is a scientific issue, and the opinions of the person-on-the-street or, for that matter, the philosopher in his philosopher's closet, are not very relevant. They are hardly bits of evidence for what is the case or is likely to become the case. And, to say this is not scientism or science worship, but just plain realism about how, in this domain, belief should be fixed.

In debates about Quebec secession, this point needs to be kept firmly in mind. We also need to consider whether in Quebec, and specifically in Montreal, the French language is actually threatened or whether that is francophone paranoia, as some claim, or an understandable, but all the same unjustified, anxiety as some others claim. Here a knowledge of the demographic facts is crucial, including a good understanding of whether we have any sufficiently uncontroversial account of these facts or any sufficiently developed science of demography to draw firm conclusions about what is likely to happen if we just let things run their course as distinct from adopting certain hopefully preventive policies. We very much need to have some reliable demographic predictions here.

Here is a consideration concerning what should be done to ascertain what we critical intellectuals should conclude ourselves and advocate to other people. We need to (1) get the best account that we can get of what the demographic facts are. Depending on what that account says is likely to happen, we should (2) articulate various scenarios about what to do which reflect the various possibilities. We should then (3) try to ascertain which of these various scenarios with their plans of action would most likely best protect the French language from erosion. Critical intellectuals should (4) argue that *ceteris paribus* the plans of action that best protect French language should be adopted.

We say *ceteris paribus* because, as Joel Prager rightly notes, if the costs of protecting their language were to seriously hurt themselves economically or to work (as Brighouse believes) against their autonomy or the autonomy of the non-francophone citizens and landed immigrants of Quebec, then it would not be so obvious what, everything considered, should be done. Here our normative judgments, if they are to be justified, must take into serious consideration what is most reasonable to believe about the economic situation in the case of secession – whether Quebec be (1) fully sovereign, that is, a nation-state of its own, or (2) a sovereign nation in partnership with Canada (and the terms of this must be carefully specified) – as compared with the case if Quebec remained in Canada as it is presently constituted. Case (2), if it is to be more than a phrase, would result in Quebec coming to be a part of a genuine multination state with all the different component nations (including the First Nations) having some very considerable political and legal autonomy. But such a multination state would be (*pace* Joel Prager) very different from the present Canadian state. Each component nation would be fully recognized as a genuine nation. We also need to consider the probability of such a multination state coming into being and being stable. Serious consideration must also be given to the possibilities of enhanced or lessened autonomy for all citizens and landed immigrants of Quebec with or without secession.

We get nowhere in such concrete normative political thinking without close attention to these and similar factual claims and possibilities. But likewise we would not understand what weighting or attention to give to the various factual considerations involved, including the factual possibilities, without attending (*pace* Greenfeld) *to what we think, particularly with adequate knowledge and on due reflection, is right, appropriate, or desirable in such situations and why*. We need, that is, to do some hard specific normative thinking without being fettered by positivist ghosts. We should see here the importance of John Dewey's insistence that we should never consider values in isolation (attempted isolation) from facts or (at least where social and political issues are involved) facts in isolation (attempted isolation) from values.[33]

33 Kai Nielsen, *On Transforming Philosophy* (Boulder: Westview Press 1995), 145–253

Here we need to take all of the relevant considerations together: considerations about the attrition of language and culture, about economic security, and about autonomy, equality, rights, and democratic determination. Considering them all we need to see how they best can be made to fit into a coherent whole (a coherent assemblage of beliefs of all sorts, and of desires as well) that rational, reasonable, and informed people accept, or would accept, when they are being reflective concerning how to orient their lives. Doing this is very different from a simple nose-count of the preferences of people as a poll or survey would do.

In arguing about sovereignty – Quebec sovereignty or any other – it is not, as Joel Prager has it, vital to determine what polls tell us about what people actually want, but to ascertain, as well as we can, what people *would* want *if they were well-informed, being reflective, not caught up in ideology, and were being both reasonable and rational.*[34] In the normative thinking in this volume, very often the effort on issues turning around nationalism was to show people what it would be like to arrange their views and feelings into such a coherent pattern, that is, to get them, in the vocabulary of Rawls, Norman Daniels, and Kai Nielsen, into wide reflective equilibrium. (Couture and Nielsen have put it in a distinctive way, taking on board some of Martha Nussbaum's emendations.[35])

Spreading out from this, an effort should be made to give people a narrative and argumentative account, and ask them to reflect on it, and then, taking these matters to heart, to make up their minds what they would opt for, what they would reflectively endorse. Joel Prager's recommended procedure, with its stress on ascertaining what people's preferences actually are, comes in effect – though we do not know whether this was his intention – to giving us to understand that outside of a democratic vote people cannot rightly have a view *authoritatively forced* on them. But accepting this does not mean that acting on their actual preferences is the right thing for them to do. This, as we have seen, is itself plainly a normative contention and not just a bit of realism; it is normativity (sometimes an unwitting normativity) without normative

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34 John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press 1993), 48–54

35 Couture and Nielsen, 'Whither Moral Philosophy?', 326–32

thinking. It is an attempt to sidestep normative thinking, as is Greenfeld's reduction of *de jure* legitimacy to *de facto* legitimacy. Liberal normative thinking does not take it to be *de jure* legitimate to simply force moral views on a people or for that matter on individuals. But such liberal thinking does not simply take *this belief itself* to be just one of their liberal preferences concerning which nothing argumentative can be said. Carol Prager in effect rightly argues that determining *de jure* legitimacy cannot be done without regard for what is taken to have *de facto* legitimacy. But, unlike Greenfeld, she does not think *de jure* legitimacy can be reduced to *de facto* legitimacy or that it just is, if it is a coherent conception, *de facto* legitimacy.[36] Neither social science nor anything else requires that. This central liberal normative notion can be, and has been, argued for, using the method of wide reflective equilibrium or, less pedantically expressed, an extensive coherentist account, taking people's considered judgments as having some initial, but of course defeatable, credibility.[37]

Quebec sovereigntists, in line with liberal nationalism, argue for sovereignty on the grounds that it would best preserve the self-identity of a people – in this instance francophone Quebeckers – by protecting their language and with it their culture. And this, they further argue, is essential to preserve their autonomy, self-respect, and well-being. It would also give all citizens of Quebec more democratic empowerment than they would otherwise have. It points out as well that these two things are not unrelated. But Quebec sovereigntists also argue that, at least after things settle down, citizens of a sovereign Quebec would be economically no worse off than they are now and possibly better off. The central thing to recognize here, they argue, is that no economic disaster would occur with Quebec sovereignty. Sovereigntists also argue that Canada (the rest of Canada, if you will), including Atlantic Canada, need not be harmed with the coming into being of a sovereign Quebec and that this will most plainly be true if Canada will, as Quebec wishes to, enter into a partnership with Quebec. And even if Canada

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36 Kai Nielsen, 'State Authority and Legitimation,' in Paul Harris, ed., *On Political Obligation* (London: Routledge 1990), 218–51

37 Nielsen, *Naturalism without Foundations*, 12–19, 169–200

does not, the continued economic viability of both countries requires them to cooperate and, as liberal states in interdependency with a cluster of other liberal states, they will cooperate, albeit perhaps grudgingly at first. It is not like being in those parts of the world where barbarous and irrational nationalisms flourish. Moreover, this does not make any strong rationalist claims about people's rationality, though it does, and not unreasonably, assume a rather minimal instrumental rationality, something with which both David Hume and Bertrand Russell would be perfectly content. Quebec sovereigntists also argue that the historically established rights of Quebec's national minority (the anglophones) will continue to be respected, that immigrant groups (the allophones of Quebec) will continue to have full citizenship rights (like anyone else), and that First Nations will be respected as nations with a distinctive, but limited, political autonomy. (For a specification of the distinction between national minorities and nations, see the introduction.)

Quebec sovereigntists not only argue for these things, they argue as well that these things are firm commitments of the Quebec government (commitments which, unfortunately, in the case of First Nations, have not been thoroughly carried out, but here Quebec is no worse off and arguably better off than Canada) and that they are, and always have been, firm commitments (again with the above qualification) of the Parti Québécois. It has been argued by some non-sovereigntists that such protestations by the Quebec government and the Parti Québécois should be taken with a grain of salt: they do not really mean them; they are just trying to soften people up for an acceptance of sovereignty. They are, that is, designed to sucker the gullible. Sovereigntists in turn reply that there is not a shred of evidence that people are being so suckered or even (more moderately) that the firm commitments described above are mere policy matters that might change as circumstances change. They are rather fundamental principles of liberal democracy which are as firm in Quebec as in any other liberal society. (The distinction between matters of policy and matters of principle, and the importance of making that distinction, has been well articulated by Ronald Dworkin.[38])

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38 Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 22–28 and 90–100

So this, stated succinctly, is something of the argument that Quebec sovereigntists make and it is, in fundamentals, the same as other liberal nationalists make. (The details, of course, will differ with differing situations.) And it is, as well, the narrative that Quebec sovereigntists articulate. Are their arguments sound and is their narrative a 'telling it like it is' and a plausible projection of how things might come to be? And is this something that a reflective, reasonable, and well-informed moral agent should accept, believing that it is not only reasonable to believe that it might come to be the case, but that it *should* come to be the case? Or are their arguments unsound and indeed so fundamentally flawed that no reconstructive retrieval of them is plausible? And are their narratives in reality 'just-so stories' more expressive of sovereigntist mythology and ideology than verisimilitude?

The point here is to note that a response to those questions, if anything determinate can be said, should be and will be determined, if it can be determined at all, and if people are being reasonable, by something like the coherentist way of proceeding (if 'method' is too grand a term) suggested in the last few paragraphs. Being for or against sovereignty is neither an arbitrary existential choice nor simply, positivist style, a matter of what you just happen to want: a matter of 'You pays your money and you takes your choice.'