Kai Nielsen

Cosmopolitanism, Universalism and Particularism in an Age of Nationalism and Multiculturalism

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I

To think about morality seriously is among other things to hope that it has, or can be reasonably made to have, some reasonable form of objectivity. What form it can take, and still make sense, is a deeply contested—though I do not say an essentially contested—matter. Indeed its very possibility can and has been reasonably challenged. (Mackie 1946 and Mackie 1977) In this essay I shall argue (1) that the form of objectivity should be the form of intersubjectivity best captured by the coherentist method of appealing to considered convictions in wide reflective equilibrium; (2) that such a method will yield a conception of morality that is both (a) universalistic and (b) particularistic and contextual and, I will further argue, that any reasonable morality must be both (a) and (b); (3) that, moving on to the domain of politics, at least for we moderns or (if you will) post-moderns, a justified morality must be a cosmopolitan morality, but that, since universalism and contextualism/particularism require each other (or so I shall argue), a cosmopolitan morality should accept a liberal nationalism— in a certain way a particularism—as a correct stance to take to political life *under certain circumstances*.[1] I will then (4) further explicate the claim made in (3) and will illustrate it briefly with respect to Quebec nationalism and more fully, and much more controversially, I will argue (5)—and as a further illustration of (3)—that, given the treatment of African-Americans in the United States, they may very well be justified in arguing for the recognition of a distinct African-American nation there and to struggle for its acceptance in order to have some reasonable measure of self-governance and to be in a position where they will be accepted as equals and as persons deserving respect. This fifth contention (5) will seem to many very problematic to say the least. I fear it will sound racist to some, if not in intent at least in effect. Whether they think that or not, it will also seem to many to be so unrealistic as to be off the wall; to be, that is, something so utopian that it should be rejected out of hand. When I turn to (5) I shall seek to come to grips with these points. Finally (6) I shall criticize identity-politics and the form of multiculturalism that goes with it while explicating and defending another form of multiculturalism arguing that it meshes well with liberal nationalism and is an essential ingredient in a modern cosmopolitan society.

II

I turn now to (1): reflective equilibrium. We cannot, if we would be even remotely realistic, but start in moral reflection and inquiry from where we are—with what we really feel and believe to be right and wrong. There is no coherent alternative to seeing things by our own lights. Nothing could have more credibility as a *startingpoint* than our firmest considered convictions. What else could be a starting point for being authoritative for our conduct if they are not? (Scanlon 1992) The point is that, that notwithstanding, it should *not* remain the case that in seeking objectivity and moral adequacy that these considered convictions just remain there as bits of "received opinion" to just be accepted come what may.

That, however, is not at all the way these considered convictions function in the method of wide reflective equilibrium. We have in fact a heterogeneous mass of considered convictions, some stronger and more deeply considered than others. Moreover, these considered convictions are also at different levels of generality and abstraction. We need to see from this jumble whether we can forge something coherent with some rhyme and reason, with, that is, some kind of consistent rationale that we would reflectively endorse. So we need to compare them, to sift them for consistency and fit and ascertain the relative weights of many of them, again relying on our considered convictions. And we need, as well, to see the point, or points, of having a morality, any morality, at all. (Nielsen 1989) We are convinced, for example, that to inflict suffering is evil. That plainly is a firm considered conviction. Yet a chemotherapist typically acts rightly when he causes suffering, a psychiatrist at least sometimes acts rightly when she gets a patient to face an unpleasant truth about himself, an athlete, as does a writer as well, sometimes at least, acts rightly when she pushes herself to the limit to achieve her goal. So while the avoidance of suffering is a great good, it has to be balanced against other moral and normative considerations in seeking to ascertain what we should do and how we should live. We seek, if we are reasonable and morally committed, to forge a consistent and coherent fit of our considered convictions, relying most heavily on those in which we have the greatest confidence. They all—in being considered convictions—have an *initial* credibility. What else could have if they do not? And to say that nothing has or could have is just arbitrarily and dogmatically to give up on morality.

Our preferences and desires—to turn now to other candidates—are too helter-skelter and too changing, free-floating with moods and chance contacts, to underpin our considered convictions. Indeed some of them are determined by our considered convictions. Moreover, we recognize, if we are at all reflective, that *some* of the things that we firmly desire are desires that ought not to be desired. That we prefer something is not irrelevant to its being good, but it is not at all decisive. Nor do we get from the desired to the desirable by simply finding out what are our most intense and persistent desires or in any other way our strongest desires. Preferences no doubt form a part of the ingredients of our

considered convictions. We would not have any considered convictions if we did not have preferences and interests. But to stand as considered convictions they must have been reflected on, endorsed in reflection, taken to heart and squared with other considerations as well as with what we think—and with good reasons—we know about the world. (Falk 1986) But, as the last remark brings to light, we do not only seek to forge a consistent set of our considered convictions, we seek to square them with what we know about the world: with various factual considerations, physical, biological, social and psychological, and with (among those available to us) the best warranted psychological and social theories about human beings and their society and, more generally, about the world in which we live. We need as well to consider accounts of the functions of morality and more broadly moral theories as well as historical and anthropological narratives and what we have gleaned from novelists and dramatists about what human life and society are like. (Nielsen 1996, 12-21 and 159-206)

The need is to take this melange of considerations and to try to forge them into the most consistent whole we can, for a time, gain. This will give us plenty of critical grip on our considered convictions so that they will not just sit there uncritically in our moral thought as received opinions: the inculturating voice of our elders and our society. When we have done these things we have, for a time, achieved wide reflective equilibrium.

This reflective equilibrium will eventually—sometimes sooner, sometimes later—be upset by new considerations coming to our attention or by reflective reconsideration of what we have already considered or, more than likely, both together. Moreover, wide reflective equilibrium is always incomplete; it never yields a picture of a complete and entirely coherent morality. Indeed it is unclear that we have anything like a reasonable understanding of what we are asking for here. Yet it can, and would, if this method were conscientiously applied, be a move in the direction of increased coherency. And this shows how we can get an enhanced critical purchase on our moral convictions and move with this greater coherency to an increased objectivity in the form of a more reasonable intersubjectivity: more reasonable because (a) more coherent than our common-sense morality, (b) having our firm reflective and knowledgeable *endorsement* and (c) giving greater attention to the facts that are salient in and for our moral lives. (Nielsen 1998a) Before, where we had something which was more or less a jumble and a mess, now we have a greater coherency in our considered convictions and beliefs. This intersubjectivity, that is, is a rational one yielding a greater consistency and coherency than we had before and a more reflective attunement.

In this way we can see that we are not caught in an ethnocentrism, a subjectivism, a nihilism, or even a relativism. We do not, of course, get certainty; *fallibilism* is inescapable; but Quine, Davidson and Rorty, if not Peirce and Dewey before them, have taught us that the quest for certainty is both an illusory quest and, as well, unnecessary to make sense of our lives, our society and our world.

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This fallibilism is also historicist. (Rorty 1998, 290-306) Hegel was right about no one being able to overleap history; but historicism is not relativism. It does not say that whatever is believed to be right is right or right in the cultural circle in which it is believed to be right. And historicism is not a subjectivism. It does not say that for you, whoever you are, what you deeply and honestly feel determines what is right or even right for you. (Nielsen 1996, 25-77)

III

My second claim (2) is that such a method, if intelligently applied, will yield an account of morality that is both, on the one hand, contextualist/particularist and on the other hand universalistic and that, appearances to the contrary, these two things reasonably go together. To see that this is so, it is better to first start with the particularist/contextualist side and to work with examples. How people should comport themselves sexually has changed with the advent of AIDS; how a just war could be pursued has changed with the advent of nuclear weapons; how and the extent to which fishing should be pursued has changed with the threatened depletion of fish stocks. Things are plainly in good measure contextual and particularistic here. What should be done in considerable part changes with time, place and situation because *the objective situation is different*. It is not just a matter of attitudes changing or of the attitudes we just happen to have—or at least not principally—but a matter of the world turning which *causes* and indeed *justifies*, as well, changed moral views. I do not say this is always so, but it very frequently and importantly is so. There is nothing, that is, that is subjective or relativistic here, though there is something contextual. It is not infrequently the case that for any person or group at time *t* and in any context y, A should be done. And when context y shifts to context z and the objective features of y and z are relevantly different, we should say that for any person or group at time *t*1 and in a context of type z, B should be done. The claims here are perfectly universalizable (generalizable) and not infrequently universal at least in a determinate context, e.g. holds for all industrial societies. There is no conflict between particularism/contextualism and universalism here. In fact they require each other. Our beliefs and convictions reasonably change because the world changes in certain ways including the people in it. But if z was the right thing to do before the change then it remains the right thing to do until the change occurs. And if something else becomes the right thing to do after that change then it remains the right thing to do in all relevantly similar situations where that change occurs. There are different types of cases than the ones discussed above and there is more to be said here. But things can be handled in these other cases in a similar manner. Moreover, this contextualism meshes nicely with the method of wide reflective equilibrium.

IV

I shall now turn to (3), namely the claim that, at least for we moderns, a justified morality must be a *cosmopolitan* morality and I will further argue that it will also be a morality that recognizes the importance of local identities and that in certain circumstances a cosmopolitan will also, and quite consistently so, be a liberal nationalist. (Couture and Nielsen 1996, 579-662, Nielsen 1999 and Kymlicka forthcoming)

What is it to be a cosmopolitan and to be committed to a cosmopolitan morality? Here Martha Nussbaum is a good guide. In her *Cultivating Humanity*, Nussbaum, essentially following the Stoics, argues that a cosmopolitan will be a world citizen, not in the literal sense that we should seek to set up a world state or a world government or even necessarily that we should attempt to construct forms of political organization that transcend and override local and national forms of political organization. Moral cosmopolitanism does not commit itself to legal or institutional cosmopolitanism though it need not deny its possibility either. (Couture 1999) World citizenship is not to be taken literally, but as an expression of a moral ideal. We, Nussbaum has it, should give our first allegiance to *no* mere form of government, no temporal power but to the moral community made up of the humanity of all human beings. One should always behave so as to treat with respect the dignity of reason and moral choice in every human being, no matter where that person was born, no matter what that person's rank or gender or status may be. (Nussbaum 1997, 59)

To be committed to such an ideal involves understanding that we are part of a universal community of humanity whose ends are the moral ends of justice and human well-being. Stoic cosmopolitans did not deny the reality or the importance of local allegiances, or seek to replace them, but they did advert to the fact that not infrequently damage was done to the human community by the factionalism caused by local allegiances and they noted as well "how easy it is for local or national identities and their associated hatreds to be manipulated by self-seeking individuals for their own gain." (Nussbaum 1997, 60)

Nussbaum, correcting a mistaken emphasis in an earlier essay on cosmopolitanism, argues that this cosmopolitan commitment, this taking oneself, in the sense already specified, to be a citizen of the world, should *not* lead one "to give up local affiliations, which can frequently be the source of great richness in life." (Nussbaum 1997, 60 and, for the earlier skewed emphasis, see Nussbaum 1996) Still, important as they are, these local affiliations must not stand in the way of a cosmopolitan's commitment "to humanity as a whole." (Nussbaum 1997, 60) We need to keep firmly before our minds, and at the core of our commitments, the idea that the life of everyone matters and matters equally. The very taking of a universalist moral point of view involves coming to regard it as a crucial task of the moral community to "work to make all human beings part of our community of dialogue and concern, showing respect for the human wherever it occurs, and allowing that respect to constrain our national or local politics." (Nussbaum 1997, 60-61)

That notwithstanding, it is deeply mistaken, Nussbaum has it, again following the Stoics, to try to ignore the near and dear. The love of the near and dear, the importance of local identities, are fundamental human traits and a very reasonable and humanly appealing way to comport oneself as a citizen of the world. Indeed it is probably also an inescapable way and, where it avoids ethnocentrism, a reasonable one at that and not just a bowing to fate. Nussbaum writes

> Each of us should take our stand where life has placed us, and devote to our immediate surroundings a special affection and attention. These differences can and do enjoin special obligations that all of us should execute, since we should all do our duties in the life we happen to have, rather than imagining that we are beings without location or memory. But at the same time we recognize that there is something more fundamental about us than the place where we happen to find ourselves, and that this more fundamental basis of citizenship is shared across all divisions. (Nussbaum 1997, 61)

In this way Nussbaum consistently combines the insights of Herder and the Stoics.

Paradoxically and hyperbolically, but still rightly, Michel Trembly said somewhere, speaking of writers, that the more local you get the more universal you will be. It is crucial in moral reflection to be able to see the universal in certain particulars, so a cosmopolitan may be, and not infrequently is, intensely loyal to a particular nation or group while at the same time having commitments to the whole of humanity and is, as well, a person who regards it as being essential to the moral point of view that we must *not* take the attitude of "my country right or wrong but still my country". We must refuse to put the interests of our country before wider human interests: we must, as cosmopolitans, and as moral beings, take the wider interests of humanity as a whole as something to which we are committed and which overrides, where they conflict, commitments to our country. Still this does allow us, and arguably requires us in certain circumstances, to support liberal nationalism as well as certain other local identities. (Couture and Nielsen 1996, 579-662, Nielsen 1999 and Kymlicka forthcoming) People, if things in the human community as a whole are to go well, must attend to their commitments to the near and dear.

V

I now turn to that and thus to my fourth (4) point. I need first to say what nationalism is and then what a distinct form of nationalism—liberal nationalism—is. (Tamir 1993, Kymlicka 1995b, Kymlicka forthcoming and Couture and Nielsen 1996) There are, it is crucial to understand, nationalisms and nationalisms and some are not at all to be encouraged but to be fought wherever they occur. (Couture and Nielsen 1996 and Walzer 1995) A nationalist of

whatever stripe is someone who cares for her nation and seeing, or at least believing, its independence threatened or realizing that it has not yet been achieved, seeks to securely sustain or to achieve, as the case may be, some form of sovereignty, some form of self-governance, for her nation. In speaking of a nation I am speaking of *a people* who constitute a political community. A nation is a group of people with (a) a distinctive history, distinctive traditions, customs, typically, but not always (e.g. the Scots), with a distinctive language (but always with a language or a small set of languages which is (are) the publically used language or languages in the society), with a distinctive encompassing (societal) culture and (b) as well, with *a sense that they are a people* sustaining or seeking some form of self-governance. (Miller 1995, Kymlicka 1995a and Seymour1996) To be a nation a people will almost invariably inhabit a territory which they regard as their homeland or, if in Diaspora, they will have an aspiration to inhabit a place that will become their homeland. I say "almost invariably" for neither of these things appear, at least, to apply to Gypsies or Kurds.

Nations, to continue, are, on the one hand, distinct from ethnic groups, to wit, immigrants from various countries seeking to integrate into the country into which they have immigrated and without political aspirations to form a distinct political community and without a conception of a homeland distinct from the homeland of the country to which they have immigrated. (Nielsen 1996-97 and Kymlicka forthcoming) Nations are, on the other hand, also distinct from national minorities, namely people historically located in a nation and as a distinct part of that nation, but who have as well another encompassing (societal) culture which is that of an adjacent nation (e.g. anglophones in Quebec and francophones in Ontario). (Seymour 1996) They are people, that is, with a dual sense of nationhood, though this is not to say that only national minorities have a dual sense of nationhood.

Nationalists seek the flourishing and sustaining of their nation with its distinctive encompassing (societal) culture. They are particularly concerned that it achieve self-governance where that does not already obtain or to secure it where it is fragile. There are, as I have remarked, nationalisms and nationalisms. But they all have the above aims. Some forms are barbaric and vicious, others are liberal and tolerant. (Couture and Nielsen 1996) In the most extreme forms, non-liberal nationalisms engage, where the opportunity is at hand, in genocide and ethnic cleansing. And even in less virulent forms, they are xenophobic, exclusionist, typically racist, tracing national origin to ethnic or sometimes even racial origins. For them, national identity is in the blood or in an *inherited* encompassing (societal) culture or both and is *not* something that can be acquired as something that comes with cultural attunement, from living in a certain place and accepting the constitutional essentials of the society in which you live and by taking yourself to be a member of such a society and being accepted as such. Where membership in the nation is marked by descent, we have ethnic nationalisms and they are incompatible with universalism or cosmopolitanism or indeed, as Engels put it, with just plain human decency.

These are the bad nationalisms that are through and through incompatible with taking the moral point of view. (Prager 1996)

There are, however, *liberal* nationalisms thoroughly compatible with universalism and cosmopolitanism. First of all liberal nationalists are liberal in the senses that Isaiah Berlin, John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin are liberals: committed, that is, to pluralism and tolerance. (I do not speak here of something quite different, namely of neo-liberal economic doctrines with the extreme individualism that goes with it.) (Nielsen 1998b) Liberal nationalists, like Herder and David Miller, see the vital importance to people of their local identities, which include, in conditions of modernity, national identities: things that Berlin and Nussbaum as well see as vital to the flourishing of human beings. (Miller 1995) But access to national membership (nationality) is not on such an account through descent—that is through blood or having old stock membership in some encompassing culture—but through cultural attunement, a willingness to accept membership in the nation and to recognize others similarly attuned and similarly inclined as members. Such nationalisms are just the opposite of exclusionary, ethnocentric and xenophobic—the ethnic nationalisms that are rightly so much despised and in certain circumstances feared. Liberal nationalisms are, by contrast, open and tolerant and are compatible with universalism and cosmopolitanism in the ways I have shown particularism/contextualism is and in the ways having local identities—something we can hardly escape having in any case—are compatible with cosmopolitanism. (Berlin 1980, 333-355, Berlin 1991, 238-261 and Berlin 1998) These, by contrast with ethnic nationalism, are the good nationalisms.

This liberal nationalism, though not nearly as common as ethnic nationalism, is not just a model in the heads of some theoreticians, but has had instantiations and is now having new instantiations. The independence struggles of Norway and Iceland from Sweden and Denmark respectively were liberal nationalisms. And both the seceding nations and the nations seceded from were and are liberal democracies, indeed liberal social democracies, and the struggle, though bitter, was carried on within the framework and parameters of liberal democracy.

In our time we have nationalist movements—indeed powerful nationalist movements—in Flanders, Catalonia, Quebec, Puerto Rico, Scotland and Wales and all these nationalist movements are liberal nationalisms and the states opposing them are also liberal states in liberal societies. So neither in theory nor practice do nationalisms have to be the intolerant aggressive movements that are characteristic of ethnic nationalisms. Quebec, for example, is a liberal society as Canada is a liberal society. Many Quebeckers feel that their culture and language—the very thing that makes Quebeckers a people—are threatened not by the untoward intentions of the federal government but by the facts of demography and by their inescapable immersion as seven million French-speaking people in a sea of two hundred and eighty million English-speakers. Nothing may be able to stop this erosion. However, Quebec nationalists believe, that only by Quebec coming to be sovereign, with

a government committed to the preservation of francophone culture and language, is there much of a chance for cultural survival of the Quebec nation to say nothing of its cultural flourishing. That, together with the perfectly reasonable wish of a people to be *maitre chez nous*, fuels strong nationalist movements in Quebec. (Couture 1995 and 1997) But it is a liberal nationalism where membership in the nation is open and not a closed ethnic nationalism. (Nielsen 1996-97 and Kymlicka forthcoming) It is not only old stock francophone Quebeckers who are full-fledged members of the Quebec nation. The struggle for Quebec sovereignty is intense and bitter, as was the struggle for Norwegian and Icelandic sovereignty, but it will be fought out within the limits of liberal democracy alone. However it gets settled, if it ever gets settled, it will be settled with words and votes and not guns and tanks.

VI

Some might find my arguments in support of liberal nationalism in places such as Quebec and Scotland at least plausible while thinking that my notion that there is or could (let alone should) be an African-American nation simply crazy. I do not, it should be noted, set it out as more than a *conjecture*: a moral and normatively political analogue of a hypothesis. But many, I fear, perhaps even most, will take it to be a wild and irresponsible conjecture. Let me try to meet this squarely and in what I hope is a reasonable manner in the spirit of cosmopolitanism, fallibilism, ethical universalism and liberal nationalism.

Some will say that I am off on the wrong foot for it is implausible to regard African-Americans as a nation or as a people. But this is false. African-Americans have a distinct history. African-Americans are people who have lived for a very long time and under distinctive—distinctively oppressive—conditions in America, conditions where segregation and exclusion was forced on them, and, over time, they have developed distinct traditions, institutions and have made distinctive cultural achievements. Their very exclusion from mainstream American society has greatly contributed to that. Indeed African-Americans are as American as apple pie (they certainly are not Africans), but they are very *distinctive* Americans with their own tragic history. They have, as well, or could readily come to have, by acts of determined political will, a distinct comprehensive (societal) culture. There is in the African-American community the requisite workforce, including a professional workforce, along with African-American institutions (left over from the segregation years), such as universities, which could provide a beginning basis for the developing of infrastructures that would enable African-Americans to become self-governing either as a nation-state or as a nation with equal standing within a genuinely multi-nation state. Unless one takes, I think incorrectly, "Black English" to be a distinct language, African-Americans do not have a distinct language, but then neither do the Scots and that does not keep Scotland from being a nation. Having a distinct language, or at least a distinct language in the region, is a very characteristic feature of a nation being a nation. But it is not a necessary feature

of nationhood. Having, though perhaps only in a Diaspora, a conception of a homeland is perhaps more essential to nationhood, for without having a distinct territory of their own or the prospect of such a territory, the sense in which they can be self-governing is very problematical. But the Kurds and the Gypsies are in that boat "they have no prospect of a home land" and they plainly are nations. (The Gypsies do not even want a homeland, though they do want some limited forms of self-governance.) African-Americans are by now, and have been for a long time, *a people* and as a people they could aspire to some form of political community with some form of self-governance. And keep in mind that there are kinds and degrees of self-governance and that sovereignty is never absolute in our interdependent world and, most particularly, with globalization. (Pogge 1994)

There is a subjective factor that is also crucial to nationhood, namely that *to be a nation, people must see themselves as a people, as a nation.* It might be denied that most African-Americans have any such consciousness. They do not see themselves as a people but *simply as Americans*—badly treated Americans but all the same as Americans—who *just happen to be black*. That is surely true of some, perhaps even of many, though I doubt that it is as pervasive as some people think. But it is also true that there is a growing sense among African-Americans that they are a people and not just scattered individuals who happen to be black. And with this awareness, and given the way they are treated, there quite naturally arises a militancy. Indeed at least arguably a justified militancy. Moreover, to recognize that you are a people is to recognized that you can become a nation (a political community). Indeed that is a very natural and reasonable thing for a people to wish to be. I am almost inclined to say that inevitably they would want to be a political community. And clearly to recognize that you are a nation is to recognize that you *should* have some form of self-governance—the most obviously democratic thing for a people. (Couture 1995 and 1997) Among African-Americans the number of individuals who see themselves as a people and who have a sense that they are a nation is probably on the rise. And that this consciousness should arise is perfectly understandable and natural since all the objective conditions for being a nation are there and the people in question are, as well, oppressed and excluded, and have been for a long time, by the white majority. Here, as the saying goes, it is, as it is in feminist struggles, a matter of consciousness raising.

However, the crucial question is *should* they seek to become a self-governing nation? Some—probably most—will argue that they should not. The thing, they will say, is for African-Americans firmly to integrate into American society as Irish, Italian and Jewish immigrants (among others) have integrated into American Society. They too were initially despised and in all sorts of ways discriminated against and treated with contempt, but with persistent struggle they came eventually to be recognized as full citizens with no—or almost no—barriers of discrimination standing against them. The noble ideal of W. E. B. DuBois is, it will be said, ideally speaking still the best option for African-Americans. Both black and white Americans, and other Americans as well,

should learn about African-American history and culture as well as (1) about other aspects of American culture and (2) about world culture so that all Americans could develop, free from racism and other forms of ethnocentrism, the cultural attunements of citizens of the world. (Nussbaum 1997, 148-185) A common encompassing (societal) culture could come into being in the United States (though surely not overnight) which would be a culture of tolerance and equal respect of all persons. In that very process Americans would, of course, shake off racist shackles.[2]

However, African-Americans have very good reasons to be skeptical that any such an encompassing liberal culture is around the corner. Indeed cynicism here is hardly out of order. They have had long and bitter experience of a very different reality. They were brought over from Africa as slaves in bestial conditions, abused and degraded as slaves in about every possible way. When finally freed they were still treated in ways that degraded and exploited them. They were treated as child-like inferior beings with little capacity for culture or sensitive human relations. They were excluded from White culture, lynched, violated, held in contempt, deprived of the opportunities other Americans routinely have.[3] Stereotyped as crudely violent people who will rob, knife and rape at will, they had to face a White population—a population Richard Wright depicts very well—with such deeply embedded stereotypes about their undisciplined aggression, wanton sexuality and dumb brutishness, stereotypes rooted in White racial mythology about their supposed savage African roots, which, unlike those with civilized European roots, made them, White mythology had it, devoid of culture and artistic and intellectual merit. (Mills 1997 and Nussbaum 1997, 148-185) What little culture there was left after the Africans were taken off the slave ships to sites "to be 'seasoned' before being transported to the plantations" was thought by whites to be rooted in a kind of "natural animality" devoid of the intellectuality and spiritualness of the superior White culture. (Mills 1997, 84) With this background, and long after the end of slavery, black people lived in such social conditions. (Wright 1998—first published in a cut version in 1940) In these conditions they were socialized by the dominant White culture into being ashamed of their blackness—the sure marker of their supposed animality and brutishness. With such a White dominated socializing, they often sought to be as like whites as possible while believing, or at least deeply fearing, that they were not capable of such achievements and believing (not without reason) that even if they were that this would not be accepted by the White community, that they would, as far as the desired wider community is concerned, always be homeless outsiders. (Nussbaum 1997, 148-185) This kind of bigoted cultural exclusion still, though somewhat diminished, goes on (though now often in disguised forms). But it is also the case that there still remain the undisguised cruder forms of racism. *De facto* segregation in housing is still the pattern at least in the large cities with African-Americans living in the most run down parts of the city with the poorest services and the worst schools. And police brutality and murder by KKK type whites still occurs, though less frequently than before the Civil Rights

Movement. Given such life experiences African-Americans are justified in being very skeptical indeed about the promise of there coming into being a tolerant non-racist society. How often should they turn the other cheek?

Why should African-Americans, with the experience of such vicious racism (all two hundred years of it) have much faith in DuBois's or Martin Luther King's noble ideals or think that they can follow the path of the Irish, Italians and Jews in American society? Why should they not recognize that they are *a people*—a nation—and say "We have had enough of this shit" and, abandoning the idea of integration into White society, set about constructing (from raw materials that are abundantly there) an African-American nation where at long last they can be self-governing, free of White contempt, aggression, abuse, and control?

I said initially that there are at least two things that are worrisome about my conjecture. First, that it may sound, or be taken to be, racist itself. It *may* sound like I am simply reversing things and substituting Black racism for White racism. My proposal might in this and related ways get linked with the vicious racist, and anti-Semitic to boot, views of Khalid Muhammed, Leonard Jeffries or Tony Martin. But this would be an utterly false linkage. There is no appeal on my account to a "blood memory" that just goes with being a Black, a kind of "memory" that whites cannot have. Indeed I reject, as most physical anthropologists do, the very idea (mere phenotypic distinctions aside) of Black, White, Yellow and Red races as a biological category. Being African-American is a sociological category not a biological one. African-American, that is, is a cultural notion. The African-American nation I envisage, like the Quebec or Scottish nations, would be open to anyone, white, red or yellow, as well as black: that is to say to anyone at all who shared that cultural attunement, shared in the *general* political commitments of the African-American nation, including not acting in a racist manner, and were people who were willing to accept what would be its constitutional essentials and abide by the basic laws. And there would be, on the conception I have in mind of an African-American nation, nothing like "Whitey out" to make whites feel unwelcome in the African-American nation, anymore than reasonable Quebec nationalists (including the Sovereignist government) want Anglos out. (I should add, parenthetically, that the vast majority of Quebec nationalists are reasonable nationalists, though there are always a few loose cannons in any movement.) In short, the nationalism of the African-American nation I am proposing would be a liberal nationalism and not a xenophobic racist ethnic nationalism.

The other misgiving—and a very real one—about my proposal for forming an African-American nation with some form of self-governance is that it might be utopian in a bad sense. If African-Americans went for a nation-*state* they would surely be quickly crushed by the power of the American army under the direction of the American government. For Americans, the Civil War supposedly settled questions of secession as far as the United States is concerned. But, alternatively, African-Americans could perhaps go for the status of an equal nation in a *genuinely* multi-nation state. The United States, as

Canada and New Zealand, with respect to its Aboriginal peoples, is slowly, hesitantly and not unambivalently, moving in the direction of accepting them as First Nations. Why not a somewhat similar thing for African-Americans? To be sure there is the question of land—there is no distinct territorial homeland for African-Americans. And there should be no blinking at the fact that this is a very real problem. Puerto Ricans could easily (if there were the political will on both sides) come to have such national self-governance but not so African-Americans. But it is not impossible that a sense of fairness and guilt, mixed with prudence and a sense of political expediency, and maybe even some fear, could lead eventually—say, thirty years down the road—to a carving out of the United States——particularly if it also remained part of the United States, now transformed into a *multi-nation state*—a territory that could serve as the homeland of an African-American nation so conceived.

Alternatively, without such a territorial carving out, an African-American nation could gain a measure of self-governance by the creation of parallel institutions within the nation-state that is the United States, including crucially parallel legal and law enforcement institutions, where African-Americans would have some reasonable measure of firm self-governance (firm control) and have a secure sense of being accepted and respected. And, unlike with the old segregationist policies, individuals would not be fixed in just one set of the parallel institutions. They could, at will, move from one jurisdiction to another as Swiss move from one canton to another. The society would be, if such a model every became operationalized, an open society. And that is not wildly utopian, for something like this is already beginning to happen for the First Nations—including its members living in urban areas—in Canada, New Zealand and the United States, though there is the quite legitimate worry that some "blood test" is being appealed to, precluding membership in the nation being open. (Bissonnette 1998) This must not be allowed to happen either in the case of Aboriginal peoples or African-Americans. Such a thing is plainly incompatible with a cosmopolitan morality.

There is a lot more to be said about the merits—or lack thereof—of there coming into being of an African-American nation, but here there is no more space. It is, however, essential to recognize that at this stage it is, as I initially warned, no more than a *conjecture* to be tested against the actual and potential political conceptions of people and against other social realities and feasible possibilities. It is, of course, for African-Americans themselves to decide what course they should take. It is not for me or for any other intellectual, African-American or not, to try to tell them what to do. That not only would be foolish, it would be arrogant as well. We intellectuals should not try to play philosopher-king, something that is absurd in any case. But we can proffer conjectures, construct narratives and make arguments that the people involved (in this case African-Americans) may consider if they so choose. And that is exactly what I have been doing here.

With this in mind, reflect again on what is at issue. The DuBois-King type stance is obviously cosmopolitan, but so—though not so obviously so—is the

option, as I conceive of it, of an African-American nation. It is something that we should, perhaps now, after two hundred years of persistent vicious racism against African-Americans, go for. At least it deserves serious consideration. This is indeed a nationalism—an African-American nationalism—but the nationalism being advocated here is a liberal nationalism fully compatible with cosmopolitanism and universalism. Indeed, given the inescapable importance of local identities for people to have a secure sense of identity and for their flourishing, cosmopolitanism and universalism requires, under conditions of modernity, nationalism when local identities—identities that are compatible with cosmopolitanism and universalism—are under threat or insecure. (Couture and Nielsen 1996, 579-662) Surely, going way back to their capture, transportation to the Americas from Africa and to their "seasoning", the identities of African-Americans have always been assaulted, treated as something of no account, as they have been treated as being of no account. This certainly gives them a strong reason to be nationalistic—to be African-American nationalists—and for those of us who are not African-Americans to support them. It yields a good reason for them to see themselves as a nation and to struggle to be secure as a nation. They have, as we have seen, the objective characteristics of a nation. The rest is a matter of so seeing themselves and of political will and a willingness to struggle. It is standard feature of a democracy for people, including *a people*, to seek some reasonable form of self-governance. To have, that is, a democratic control over their lives. (Walzer 1995) This is something that people very much want as they show by their behaviour when they do not have it. Going for a nation of their own is perfectly compatible with cosmopolitanism and universalism and, given what the objective situation is and is likely to continue to be, it may even be required by cosmopolitanism and universalism.

My biggest worry is not about the ideal moral and intellectual tenability of my conjecture, but about whether it is *too* utopian, whether it is so utterly unfeasible, such that no matter what could be said in favour of it from the point of view of ideal theory, that in reality it is, and will remain for the foreseeable future, a non-starter. Given the depth of racism in the United States and the strength of American nationalism, is it even remotely possible that the white majority would ever let anything like that happen? Perhaps not—perhaps even very probably not. There is little reason to be optimistic about the racial scene there or, for that matter, elsewhere.

However something like the following may give us some small measure of hope for the eventual instantiation, in some form, of an African-American nation. Among a not insignificant number of the white American population—particularly the somewhat better educated part—there is a considerable guilt about the treatment of African-Americans and, with or without a sense of guilt, a recognition of how very unjustly (to put it mildly) they have been and are being treated. It is hardly something that fits well with America's reflective image of itself. Such considerations might eventually, if efforts at integration continue to fail, turn a not insignificant number of Americans (both white and black) in favour of an intelligent and normatively attractive proposal for an

African-American nation. From the point of view of the white population, its racism notwithstanding, there are self-interested reasons, as well as moral ones, to favour the instantiation of such a nation in some form. Some whites might get very weary of the constant racial tensions, strife and periodic violence. Fed up with the hassle, they might realize that in order "to get the blacks off their backs" they should accept some form of African-American nation.[4] They might come to see, as a good prudential measure, the coming into existence of an African-American nation as a stable way of ending all, or at least most, of the trouble and fuss. And they also might come to realize that this could be done at no very great cost to themselves. Moreover, they might even come to be convinced that half-measures will not work. Unless there come to be conditions—non-reservation-like conditions—where African-Americans could have a reasonable economic life, comparable to that of white Americans, the African-American nation would not be stable and the old social problems of American society linked with racism will return like the repressed.[5] So we can see how morality and self-interest could ride tandem here.

All that seems to me reasonable and plausible, but still I cannot but feel uneasy. Perhaps I am engaging in another exercise of the spirit-seer? Something not uncommon for philosophers. Perhaps my proposal expects too much of people—expects us to be more rational than it is reasonable to expect us to be? But then again perhaps not. What I am saying is that it is not a proposal to be rejected out of hand as too unfeasible to even be considered. Remember that in the 60s French radical students, in a way no one expected, caused the French state to totter and remember how suddenly the Soviet Empire and the apartheid regime in South Africa collapsed when very few expected them to. History is full of little surprises. We should be wary of easy judgements about what is impossible and we should not just assume that tomorrow must be like today. And again there is the Gramsci thing about the pessimism of the intellect and the optimism of the will. Even academics, as Chomsky, Russell, de Beauvoir and Sartre have shown us, can engage in political struggle in good conscience (including good intellectual conscience) and sometimes to good effect.

VII

I turn now to (6), a consideration of multiculturalism. The term "multiculturalism" is multiply ambiguous. I shall not by any means probe all its ambiguities, seek to sort out all its uses, investigate all of the many important issues to which multiculturalism gives rise or to examine all of the different ways a recognition of what the increasingly deep cultural diversity in our societies means for how we should view ourselves. Indeed to even claim to be doing such a thing would exhibit an absurd *hubris*. I shall examine multiculturalism as *social fact* and as an educational and political project and in the course of doing this I shall note how multiculturalism as a political project stands in tension with

feminism in such a way that to be acceptable to an informed liberal society such a multiculturalism will have to be carefully qualified so that it will square with certain morally salient realities that feminists have brought to our attention. (Okin 1998) And in so doing I shall return, though now from a somewhat different perspective, to some of the central themes of the first four sections of this essay.

I shall begin by characterizing some different things that have been meant by "multiculturalism":

1.   *Social multiculturalism.* To speak of multicultural societies is to speak of societies where people from many different cultural backgrounds and with many different cultural affinities live together and where there is extant in the societies in question the belief that the dominant culture should not impose unnecessarily on the sensibilities and life styles of the minority cultures.[6]

2.   *Multiculturalism as a political principle.* The government—and most saliently governments of liberal societies—should act so as to protect and sustain the cultural diversity that *social multiculturalism* records. Governments should do this by preventing discrimination on the basis of cultural identity, by not discriminating in its own practices ("negative multiculturalism") and by acting positively to insure the continued viability of minority cultures ("positive multiculturalism"). (Poole 1996, 410)

3.   *Pluralistic educational multiculturalism.* Educational systems should be devised so that students should come to know about cultures other than their own and most particularly about the diverse cultures of the people with whom they live. It should also be the case that the dominant culture (typically the majority culture) in a multicultural society should not be unduly privileged over minority cultures and that this should be clearly evidenced in the educational policies of the nation.[7]

4.   *Particularistic educational multiculturalism.* Educational systems in multicultural societies should be devised so that students from these various cultures will be educated principally in their own particular cultures. No attempt should be made to bridge the various cultures or to give the members of these often very different cultures, or even to encourage them to come to have, the educational and cultural wherewithal to understand and appreciate cultures other than their own or to understand the encompassing culture in which they live. The crucial thing is that their education be in and from the point of view of their own particular culture.

I shall, on the one hand, staunchly oppose and argue against *particularistic educational multiculturalism* and the *identity-politics* that characteristically go with it. On the other hand, I shall argue—with some essential feminist qualifications—both for *multiculturalism as a political principle* and for *pluralistic educational multiculturalism.* And I will argue, as well, that it is not only

compatible with liberal nationalism, but that in culturally diverse societies liberal nationalism must support it.

The social fact of cultural diversity in our modern industrial societies (and even in many societies which are not industrial) must be taken as an empirical given and it is a moral truism (readily acknowledged in reflective equilibrium) that the dominant culture should not impose unnecessarily on the sensibilities and life styles of minority cultures. That—or so multiculturalists believe—just goes with a respect for persons and a commitment to democracy though there is, of course, lots of room for reasonable dispute about what is to count as "unnecessarily" in such a context. Here, as frequently elsewhere, what John Rawls calls the burdens of judgement should come into play. (Rawls 1993, 54-58)

Let me commence my argument by citing something that Ross Poole says about what I have here called social multiculturalism and multiculturalism as a political principle. He makes the remark I am about to quote in the context of discussing Australian society, but similar remarks could, and should, be made about the various societies of the Western industrial world. "Sometimes," Poole remarks, "multiculturalism" is used simply to assert that Australia is *in fact* a culturally diverse society, comprising people from a variety of different backgrounds, who are likely to speak different languages, practice different religions, have different social conventions and rituals, eat different foods, and so on. However, those who claim multiculturalism as a fact usually do so in order to assert multiculturalism as a *value*: that it is a good thing, and that living in a multicultural society allows for a richer and more interesting life than is possible in a culturally homogeneous society. (Poole 1996, 409-410)

Many but not all of the arguments for this are familiar. There are the reasons for preferring a culturally diverse society to a homogeneous one brought forcefully to our attention by John Stuart Mill and Isaiah Berlin. There is, of course, a needed caveat concerning the value of diverse peoples living together, namely, and obviously, that they do not live together like the Serbs and the Albanians or the Hutu and Tutsis. That is to say that there not be sharp tension and sometimes fanatical and deadly conflict, but instead there be a generally not unfriendly interaction, tolerance and hopefully mutual trust. In such a society by comparison with even a peaceful homogeneous society the range of human possibilities will be greatly increased. And with such a variety of options in such a complex society, while it can be felt to be daunting and alienating and perhaps sometimes even threatening, it nonetheless remains the case that such societies provide a variety of life chances that will enhance our sense of a life worth living. Moreover, if we can be clearheaded about these matters, we will see that there is no reason for regarding such a society as threatening if the society is a genuinely tolerant one. With such a society there are many roads that can be taken; people are not locked into a particular way of life or a set of rigid rules. This, though it might put the fear of God into some people, is generally liberating. The awareness and the availability of alternatives is the

road to informed and reflectively facilitated choice about how to live one's life. Without this awareness such choices and commitments are not even possible. Social diversity is a condition necessary for autonomy or at the very least for a reasonably full autonomy.

Another related argument for the desirability of the preservation and enhancement of a culturally diverse society is less familiar and more indirect than the above argument. But it may be even more decisive. It goes like this: we cannot reduce an ought to an is or value to fact or deduce one from the other.[8] They are different notions with different functions in our discourses and in our lives. But, that notwithstanding, we should also recognize that the norms and values we have or even *can* have are structured by the situations we are in and the feasible possibilities we have. We are, and inescapably, beings of distinct historically situated cultures. Cultures, like languages, of course, change and come in and out of history. They are not forever. Historically situated as we are, we can and do within limits alter our cultures over time. Sometimes, though rarely and with great effort, we as individuals can even largely abandon a culture into which we have been socialized. The realities here are fluid though not amorphous and not without, at any given time, reasonably determinate shapes. The sense of being a people or having membership in a cultural group is something brought into being in history out of a host of local struggles for recognition. (Walker 1996 and 1997) But such membership is real enough for all of that. (Miller 1995) The contingencies of such origins along with their plain historical finitude do not at all gainsay that.

Our cultures exist in the languages we use, the traditions and practices that are ours, the social interactions in which we are at home, the symbols we recognize as ours and the like. These things in considerable measure form our identity and determine what are meaningful choices for us. Moreover, we are born into a culture and however we might change we inescapably *start* from there and are deeply affected by our starting points no matter how much we might later revolt: even successfully revolt. "It is," as Poole well puts it, "rather that our cultural identity provides the context within which we choose, and sometimes the criteria on which we choose; it is not itself an object of choice. Culture in this sense is embodied in our sense of individual identity and in the social practices within which we exist." (Poole 1996, 411) It changes over time, but at any time we are constituted by it in this way. (Miller 1995, 119-134).

We should also recognize that modern societies—our connected, interdependent and vastly migratory world—are, and inescapably so, culturally diverse. These societies are becoming increasingly multicultural—"multicultural" taken now as denoting a *social fact*—while at the same time becoming more porous. (Miller 1995) If these very diverse cultures are not recognized and acknowledged—if their members remain, socially speaking, largely invisible—the people in them will have a severely damaged sense of identity. Without such a recognition we will, like Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas, have an impoverished sense of ourselves. Without such recognition and acceptance in culturally dense and culturally diverse societies, many people, who take, as

almost all of us do, their identity in considerable measure from their particular culture, will be gravely harmed and they, in such circumstances, will not be able to flourish. It will be very difficult for them to be, except in repressed, inarticulate and ambivalent ways, the culturally distinctive people they could be if they were not so treated. Their very individual identities will be put under stress and they will have their autonomy diminished. In response, to try, following the old melting pot ideology, to homogenize people—to assimilate them in such a way that everyone has the culture of the dominant culture and *only that*—will lead to alienation and disaffection and will be destructive of the very autonomy that liberalism prizes.

This gives us a further, though related, reason to prefer a culturally diverse society to a homogeneous one. With a homogeneous society we would have a society which might give some people living in such a society a greater sense of security and at homeness in the world than they have in the world they live in now. But, given the social facts and realistic possibilities, that is illusory; and, the attempt to sustain it (hopeless though it is) causes great harm to people and limits (as we have seen) the options of everyone. There is a powerful potential in multicultural societies, with these diverse interpenetrating cultures, and where there is an understanding and acknowledgement of their diversities, for making it the case that people in these societies will sometimes be able, within reasonably flexible limits, to alter their societies (the nation they are part of) in accordance with their reflective choosing. They will not make it over *de novo*, but they will be able to some degree to alter it. Where people gain this ability, they will be able to fuse or coherently accommodate various elements in their different cultures and there will come on stream social conditions that will more readily enable some individuals in at least some cultures to become a part of another culture (to come to inhabit a different cultural space). All of these things will enhance autonomy and enrich human lives by extending life possibilities. We need not in such societies remain stuck in the same old cultural rut. People will typically want to retain their culture (or at least most of it), but in such a world they will usually not want it to remain unchanged: fixed in the past where their lives consist in doing what in their particular societies is the thing done. (Miller 1995)

Cultural survival, as we have seen, is important to people. But we need to understand what it comes to in societies such as our own. We live in pluralist societies with diverse cultures. It is an evident social fact that modern industrial societies such as the United States are multicultural societies. (I speak now not of multicultural policies or agendas but of multiculturalism as a social fact.) I have argued that it is a good thing that this is so (that this factual state of our societies obtains) and that efforts should be made by the state in a multicultural society to protect—where this can be reasonably done and where the members of the groups in question so wish—the survival and integrity of the various sub-units of the society.

However, while this may generally be a good thing to do in liberal societies, it is not, if my arguments are sound, *always* a good thing to do or even *very often* a good thing to do period where some of the particular cultures in question within liberal societies are plainly *illiberal*. It is here where feminist criticisms of multiculturalism have force. (Okin 1998) Fundamentalist religions— Jewish, Christian and Islamic—readily come to mind, as well as some of the very authoritarian and patriarchal cultures of some immigrant groups. Some cultures (to take the very extreme cases) accept slavery, widow burning, chitoridectomes, infanticide, arranged marriages, forced child marriage (the young girl has to marry whether she wants to or not), and the like. And these practices are an integral part of the cultures in which they are practiced.

Should liberal societies protect these cultures—these subunits, where they exist, in their midst—and seek to preserve their survival? Should liberals accept the "argument", as something settling what should be done, that this is our culture, this is the way we do things and this is how we believe we should do things? Must, or should, liberals accept this unadorned appeal to a doing of the thing done in the name of cultural tolerance and respect for human beings? And is the preserving of diverse cultures, no matter what they are like, something which simply has intrinsic or inherent value? Should we liberals accept, most particularly in our societies, but indeed anywhere, where something can be done about it without causing still more harm, such barbaric cultural practices and seek to preserve intact the cultures that have them? (Praeger 1996)

We should challenge, and indeed reject, the *normative* side of claims in defense of these practices which take as normatively decisive (1) the assertion that this is how we do things in our society *coupled with* (2) the normative claim that each society is of equal worth including the moral systems that go with and are integral to each society. We should bite the bullet concerning the response "You are just attempting to impose your liberal values on us, but we do not accept them and there is no good non-question begging reason why we should." We should point out that in rejecting such a doing-of-the-thing-done-claim that we are not acting arbitrarily. In such circumstances we liberals may very well have to (where we can) impose things if there is no other way of ending such practices and if so acting—as unfortunately it not infrequently does—will not make things (everything considered) still worse. (Praeger 1996) And we are justified in so acting in such circumstances. The following considerations show, I believe, that in doing so we are not acting arbitrarily or arrogantly. Imposing things is, of course, not to the liking of liberals. But it is also the case that not to do this, where this is the only feasible way of putting an end to certain social practices, runs against liberal moral beliefs of a very fundamental sort: including beliefs about harm to others, avoiding human suffering, equality (including equality of the sexes) and respect for human beings (including respect for their autonomy). Arranged child marriages (whether coerced or not), to take an example, run against deep liberal convictions about sexual equality, the value of autonomy, and respect for persons. (It is unclear how they

could be anything but coerced.)

The cultures we seek to sustain and protect, I submit, must themselves be liberal cultures or at least not such illiberal cultures that they respect neither the rights nor have regard for the well-being or equal moral standing of people in their cultures. In conditions of modernity, this survival of liberal cultures is the only kind of cultural survival we should be interested in. (This is not to say that we should not be interested in the survival of isolated primitive societies where people are not living in conditions of modernity. But we should not be concerned with the survival of modern illiberal cultures such as we see instanced in Saudi Arabia or North Korea.) We should seek to protect what Rawls calls a reasonable pluralism, but we should not seek to protect just any old pluralism, namely a pluralism that would include deeply illiberal views. (Rawls 1993, 129-144 and Nielsen 1998a) Liberals should not be so "wet" that they will not rely on and defend their own fundamental values. (Rorty 1991, 175-196) They should seek to protect and to achieve the survival only of those cultures (perhaps primitive cultures living in isolation aside) which accept the general tenets of what Rawls calls political liberalism. The commitment to equality and autonomy there, and to the equal standing of all persons, will not allow political liberals—to say nothing of comprehensive liberals—to seek cultural survival for deeply sexist, racist or homophobic illiberal cultures. (Putting them down by force *may* be wrong, but to do nothing to protect or sustain, let alone nurture, their cultural survival is in order.) We seek a multicultural society, but *not* one in which everything accepted in some culture or other goes—including some deeply hurtful and repressive things.

Multiculturalism as a political principle, building on the fact of social multiculturalism, rejects relativism (even metaethical relativism) and it will not be concerned to protect the survival of cultures that are sexist, racist or homophobic. Indeed a liberal state—to live up to the very idea of a liberal state—should not only be actively critical of such cultures, but should pass laws, where this can be effectively done, to prohibit sexist, racist and homophobic behaviour. People have free speech rights so a liberal state cannot, and indeed should not, prevent them from saying sexist, racist or anti-gay or anti-lesbian things, except in clear contexts where it is an excitement to act or in other such extreme circumstances such as teaching children that the holocaust never occurred. But where they act against races, against women or against homosexuals, then the liberal state must act to prevent such things. The autonomy and security of people needs to be protected.

VIII

Pluralistic educational multiculturalism fits well with *multiculturalism as a political principle*. Given (1) the facts of *social multiculturalism*, (2) the acceptance of the belief that the dominant culture should not impose unnecessarily on the sensibilities and life styles of the minority cultures and (3), and most pertinently here, the acceptance of the belief that the government should act

to protect and sustain social and individual diversity where it remains in accordance with a reasonable pluralism, then, where (1), (2) and (3) hold, the *general* outlines of a policy of pluralistic educational multiculturalism should be reasonably evident. There will be, and reasonably so, considerable dispute about its *details* but the *general thrust* of such an educational policy should be relatively clear. (Nussbaum 1997)

I shall speak here of the United States. But relevantly parallel things—though of course contextually distinct things—should be said for the other settler nations (e.g. Canada and New Zealand) and for Europe and the modern industrial world generally. In primary and secondary schools in the United States science, mathematics, a firm mastery of English language skills, and (starting at a very early age) the teaching of foreign languages with an emphasis on Spanish, should become part of the educational regime of all students. Geography must be taught, beginning with the United States and going to the rest of the Americas and then to the world. Students in this diverse population should learn about each other; learn, that is, about the countries of origin of the other students populating their classrooms and the other people they see on the streets. History teaching should follow a similar pattern. Though it should be included, it should not simply be about the Anglo-Saxon ancestry and the development of American institutions with their Anglo-Saxon heritage. It should, as well, consist in a study of Native American society, African-American society (with an understanding of the slave trade and slavery seared into the minds of all students), an unbiased understanding of Mexican-United States relations (including, importantly, the history of these relations), and a reasonable knowledge of Hispanic life more generally including the situation of contemporary Hispanics in the United States. The long cruel and bigoted history of anti-Semitism and its pervasiveness in the United States, and the Christian world generally, must be taught. Students, of course, should learn about Nazi anti-Semitism, but they should not come to think that anti-Semitism was only or even principally a German-Austrian phenomenon, though they should come to know that that was its worst manifestation. World history should not be neglected. However, it should not simply be European history but genuinely *World* history with some emphasis on the places where many of the people who now populate the United States came from, particularly where their origin, at least in memory, is still relevant to them.

A similar pattern should obtain for literature and the arts. Small children should read the fairy tales of a considerable variety of nations and see the art of a similarly large sampling of nations. It will be particularly important in the doing of this that something of the culture of the different people inhabiting their classrooms will become vividly alive to all the students: that in this way they should all get to know about each other. (Wolff 1994, 181-185) As they grow older, they should, of course, read more developed literature, but again on the same pattern and including the same rationale, though that should not be the sole rationale for such reading.

University education should follow a similar pattern, though now, of course, the study of history and literature should be in greater depth and with more sophistication. In addition there should be required courses in anthropology, sociology and economic history. Anthropology, both physical and social, is particularly strategic for there the myths of race and racism will be exploded, ethnocentrism described, explained and exposed and students will learn about people very different from themselves (including the various peoples in their classrooms). They should also, during the course of their university education, be required to make an in-depth study of a culture distinct from their own, ideally with some knowledge of the language that goes with that culture. They will see, set before them vividly, if the course is well structured and well taught, a detailed illustrative example of one of the various experiments in living (different from their own) in which we human beings have engaged.[9] In conjunction with the more capsule depictions of various cultures of considerable diversity that their study of anthropology will have brought to their attention, such an in-depth study will enable them to come to see both how very various we are and to see some things—very deep things—that, our diversity notwithstanding, remain in common between us. (Winch 1964)

Concerning literature there will be a dispute about the canon. I do not deny for a moment that there is a canon and that students should read these writers or at least a goodly number of them. Students should not miss Sophocles, Shakespeare, Austin, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Schiller, Flaubert, Melville, Balzac, Màrquez, Grass and the like. (If that is too demanding, at least they should gain an acquaintance with a sampling of such writers.) But we need an expanded canon to include great works of literature from (among other places) the Indian subcontinent, China and Japan. And, as Susan Wolff has astutely observed, we need, as well, to learn, without any particular concern about canonhood, the literature of the various peoples that we—that is, in this context, the varied people of the United States—are. (Wolff 1994, 84-85) Students should, as very crucial examples, read and discuss together in their classrooms, and hopefully outside the classroom as well, Richard Wright's *Native Son* and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. And for similar reasons they should read and discuss Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*. These novels will tell us a lot about who we are and who we have been and help us to realize how who we are now is connected to who we have been. We did not spring like Zeus full-blown into the world.[10]

If implemented in educational programs, the various things I have described in the last few pages, taken together, will do much to bring about in the population a very desirable form of multiculturalism. It will help create human beings of understanding and tolerance: civilized human beings who will fit Martha Nussbaum's conception of world citizens, keenly attuned, though not *only* attuned, to their own varied cultures in the larger society in which they live. Here we have a world citizen form of multiculturalism rather than an identity-politics form. (Nussbaum 1997, 111)

IX

I have argued against the not infrequent stereotype that all is dross that is multiculturalism. But there are some forms that are dross and these forms, unfortunately, have been taken in some quarters to be multiculturalism *period*. I turn now to them and from yea-saying to nay-saying. The forms I have in mind, I have, finding a term for the whole family, called *particularistic educational multiculturalism*. Closely related to it is a cluster of philosophical political views, including preeminently identity-politics. These views are usually associated with particularistic educational multiculturalism and typically are deployed as philosophical supports of it.

While rejecting *particularistic educational multiculturalism*, I do *not* want to say that it is completely beside the track. Particularly for oppressed groups such as African-Americans, Hispanics, Moslems, Jews (at one time), gays and lesbians, it is vital that they come to understand intimately, accurately and in detail their own lives, including, of course, the cultural and historical setting of their lives. Doing this is facilitated by reading the writing of people who share and have shared that condition and have thought about it deeply and with intellectual and emotional integrity. It is also important that among the people who teach these subjects to oppressed groups that there be instructors who are from their own cultural group. They will provide the students with role models and they are the persons who are likely to have the deepest understanding of the life being written about and will be in the best position to raise the most insightful critical questions about it. But not necessarily so and not always so. Sometimes an outsider who has a knowledgeable and sympathetic understanding of the culture (including that of the oppressed group) can bring to both the general culture and the particular culture of the oppressed group sympathy as well as critical distance. With this understanding and affective attunement, an outsider might see crucial things that an insider may miss. We need, for the best understanding that we can get concerning a particular culture, both sorts of teachers. And in the classroom it is important, as well, that we have a mix of people taking the class and not just the people of a particular cultural group balkanizing themselves. There is the problem of the presence in the classroom of ignorantly antagonistic people or people who are so emotionally blocked that they cannot understand what is being read and discussed. With a good pluralistic multicultural education in the primary and secondary schools such phenomena should become relatively rare. But where this phenomena does exist, a good teacher should (predictive "should") be able to cope with it in ways that are not disruptive to the class or personally insulting, negating the very respect for persons we wish to achieve.

Most centrally, *particularistic multiculturalism*, if it is transformed into educational policy, will balkanize people, deepen them in their ethnocentrism and make impossible, or at least very difficult, the having of anything like a shared political and societal culture—an encompassing culture—that would make these various people *a people*. Most people in the United States, if they think

about it at all, think of themselves as a people—think of themselves as Americans. They are not like some Basques in Spain who do not think of themselves as Spanish at all. Indeed these Basques self-consciously reject such a cultural identity. There are many hyphenated Americans such as Chinese-Americans, Polish-Americans, African-Americans, Irish-Americans, Jewish-Americans and the like. But they are all Americans and, as such, are a people, a nation, and recognize themselves as such. If such a culturally particularistic multicultural education becomes successful—something I do not think there is much chance of happening—we would have to drop the hyphen. But then there would be very few Americans anymore. The United States in such a circumstance (given that social multiculturalism is a fact) would come to lack the social glue essential to sustain a nation. It would become a helter-skelter of peoples without an overarching political community and an encompassing societal culture and thus no longer a nation. The claim of identity-politics that only members of a particular group have the ability to understand the perspective of that group is not only false, it tends as well to be pernicious for it would confirm people in their ethnocentricity with the prejudices and blindness that go with it, undermine their very nationhood, make cross-cultural understanding very difficult indeed and undercut the very aims of a world citizen form of multiculturalism. (Nussbaum 1997, 110-111)

X

I will now in this final section bring my arguments for a liberal nationalism and a pluralistic multiculturalism together. The burden of my argument shall be that it is not only the case that liberal nationalism and a pluralistic multiculturalism are compatible, but that, in circumstances where a liberal nationalism is needed in modern industrial societies, they *require* one another.

This will involve me in arguing against a central claim that is typical of most, though not all, liberalism, namely the claim that *the state must be neutral.* I shall argue *au contraire* that, while in someways the state can and should be neutral, there are other more central ways in which it *cannot* be neutral and, *even if it could,* it *should not* be neutral.

The standard liberal line is that in the policies that a liberal state pursues it must aim at neutrality. (Brighouse 1996, 374-379) However, in opposing this it is important that I not be misunderstood. I fully agree with the kind of defense (with its distinctive limitation in scope) that Rawls gives for a certain kind of state neutrality. That is to say, given the facts of social multiculturalism, i.e. the fact that modern societies are irreducibly and inescapably pluralistic containing within them a plethora 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 in most instances be neutral between them. Rawls rightly argues, as have many others, that the state must not favour some such conceptions at the expense of others. We must have state neutrality concerning conceptions of the good life. More precisely, where conceptions of the good

life do not run counter to the basic constitutional order of the liberal state in question or the conception of political legitimacy that goes with it or the family of political principles of justice of the fundamental political culture of the liberal state in question, then, as the holder of a monopoly on the use of legitimate coercive force in its territory and as an institution possessing a mechanism which enables it to be accountable to all citizens, the state should pass, in these circumstances, as little judgment as possible on the content—or for that matter on the form—of the ways of life of its own citizens. Here I, like many others, am in complete accord with Rawls. And I do not see that communitarian critics such as Charles Taylor or Michael Sandel have done anything at all to undermine Rawls's argument.

However, for Rawls, and here I also follow him, neither the liberal state nor any other state can or should be neutral with respect to constitutional essentials or the family of liberal political principles of justice that goes with that liberal constitutional order and helps specify its conception of legitimacy. Rawls, it is important to understand, is *not* saying that the state should support *his own* conception of justice, namely his conception of justice as fairness. This would not be in accordance with the burdens of judgment or be a reasonable expectation. Rather the state must support, remaining neutral between the various members, the *family of liberal political principles of justice*—*themselves quite various—of which justice as fairness is a prominent member*. It must support this *family* of principles without coming down in favour of any one principle or (as in Rawls's case) a particular set of principles or a particular philosophical articulation of a liberal conception of justice. It will not absurdly set as a task for *government officials* in making social policy to try to sort out whether John Rawls's or Amartya Sen's or Richard Arneson's or Ronald Dworkin's or G. A. Cohen's or Brian Barry's account is the more adequate. It will not, that is, try to play philosopher-king. (Rawls 1997)   We may, of course, as individual intellectuals, who have thought about this matter, favour and appeal to one or another of the members of this family of principles and conceptions of political justice in our own private philosophical thinking and in philosophical and political discussions with others. Or, if in one way or another we are unsatisfied with all of them, we may be able to articulate our own conception and defend it in discussion with others. In doing either of these things, we will obviously— indeed this comes close to being a tautology—think, unless we get argued out of it, that the one we endorse or create is the most adequate conception of political justice now on offer. But when using *public reason* in trying to ascertain what should have the *authoritative* endorsement of the liberal state in which we live concerning matters of public policy or constitutional design and the like, we will not, in speaking of justice here, choose a particular member of the family of liberal conceptions but just appeal broadly to the *family of conceptions*. (Rawls 1997)   But we must—morally speaking "must"—appeal to this family of principles of justice in support of what we take to be the constitutional essentials of our politically liberal society and its conception of legitimacy against illiberal conceptions of political justice and state legitimacy and, as

well, against relativism (in its various forms), nihilism and against a conception of the moral life in which just anything we happen to endorse goes. To fail to do so would be to abandon liberalism and the view of the world that goes with it.

I now move to a related matter. The state should also not be neutral with respect to what Rawls calls the primary natural and social goods—things we (that is, any of us) need to make choices with any security at all or to be able to do the things we want or even may want to do or to be able to articulate any principles of justice at all. These things are necessary, as Rawls has well argued, for there to be any human and social life at all. This being so, the liberal state (or for that matter any state) cannot be *neutral* about them. The liberal state *must* be neutral concerning comprehensive conceptions of the good, concerning conceptions of *the* good life and conceptions of *the* good where they are compatible with liberal principles of justice. And, within the family of liberal principles of political justice, it must be neutral with respect to specific articulations of liberal principles of political justice.[11] But it must not be neutral concerning the demand for the availability *for all* of the primary natural and social goods, for they are necessary for any human flourishing—the flourishing that could go with any of these diverse cultures—and for the very possibility of there being principles of political justice and the institutions necessary for their realization.[12] This is something that is necessary for the survival of any of these diverse cultures and for the broader society in which they are embedded. Concerning such matters the liberal state cannot be neutral.

Rawls does not argue, but Will Kymlicka does, reasoning in a way that is very Rawlsian, that *membership in a cultural community is itself a primary good*. (Kymlicka 1989, 164-169) It, like health, security, some of the stock of means of the society and self-respect, is something that any rational person would want no matter what else she wants. If this is so, then nationality and a sense of national identity, a necessary part of what membership in a cultural community comes to in conditions of modernity, is *not something optional* for different comprehensive conceptions of the good and ways of life of particular cultures within modern multicultural industrial societies. Cultural membership, like the other primary goods, is something necessary for there to be social life. It, that is, like the other primary goods, is something essential for social life itself. States, liberal or otherwise, cannot be neutral here because cultural membership is something, to repeat, the human animal cannot do without. We could not even have a state—any kind of state at all—without it.

Secure cultural membership *in conditions of modernity* requires membership either in the nation of a nation-state or in a nation in a multination state. For there to be a constitutional state or for that matter any kind of state with its public political background culture, there must be one or at most two or three national languages that may well up from the diverse cultures of the multicultural society.[13] Without that we would have a tower of Babel rather than something like a political community with the encompassing culture that goes with it. There would be nothing like a public sphere or a background public political

culture that would make possible a political community, that is, a nation. We need a public common language here and again the state cannot be neutral about that. It must protect and culturally privilege its official (*de facto* or *de jure*) language or languages.

In modern industrial societies a nation provides the language(s) and the encompassing public culture in which various life plans, ways of life, and conceptions of the good come to be articulated and without which they could not be articulated or even conceived of and understood. These languages, and the encompassing cultures that go with them, provide *the cultural context of choice* in which these diverse choices are made. We can put it succinctly in this manner: no encompassing culture, no nation; no nation, no modern society. Without a common language or a small set of at least *de facto* official languages commonly spoken in the society in question, there will be no encompassing culture and thus nothing that even resembles a modern society. And without in modern societies an encompassing culture (something which goes with being a modern society), there can be no cultural context of choice at all and thus no autonomy.

Neither a nation-state nor a multination state can be neutral about such matters, for their very existence depends on these things being in place. A liberal state or liberal multination state is no exception. It is evident, as anything can be, that in any territory some privileged language or a limited number of privileged languages are necessary for there even to be a society at all and for there to be anything recognizable as a human life. A liberal state cannot be neutral about that.

So I have argued for the importance of a secure sense of group-identity (cultural membership). In modern circumstances that comes very centrally to having a secure sense of national-identity. This, as we have seen, can take, and indeed should take, liberal forms. And, as we have also seen, where this national-identity is threatened or insecure, this will generate nationalist movements and where these movements are liberal nationalist movements they can very well be justified and just. (They may be sometimes justified anyway, but that is another matter.) Nationalist movements, as well as being political, will also be cultural and not merely civic. But they cannot, where they are liberal nationalisms, be ethnic nationalisms where nationality is rooted in racial or ethnic origins (almost always mythical origins). Instead they will in liberal nationalisms be a matter of cultural attunement and acceptance of a given constitutional order. (Nielsen 1996-97) Nationality will be something open to everyone in the society including, of course, national minorities and immigrants—people with distinct, or partially distinct, cultures. Where they are immigrants, they will have to accept, to gain citizenship or landed immigrant status, the essentials of the constitutional order in question and gain some measure of cultural attunement, including normally some mastery of its official language (*de facto* or *de jure* official) or (where plural) one or more of its official languages (*de facto* or *de jure*) and, as well, some adaptation to (including some measure of acceptance of) the more general ways of doing things in the society.

But in a liberal society this will not put people in the cultural straight-jacket. (Miller 1995) They need, of course, something of this attunement to the encompassing culture to get around and to flourish in the society in question. But liberal society—committed to a respect for persons—must show respect *for*, and some accommodation *to*, their distinctive cultures as well, since these are partially defining characteristics of who these persons are: that is, of their very identities. Without an acknowledgment of and an acceptance of this they will not be respected as persons. In this way a liberal nationalism, given *social multiculturalism*, must be *normatively* multicultural in something like the ways I have characterized and defended. However, not only members of the dominant culture in a multicultural society, but members of the minority cultures as well must, without it being necessary for these minority members to assimilate to the dominate culture, gain some measure of competence in and attunement to the encompassing culture at least in its main outlines. And this will involve some measure of acceptance of it. To that extent there must be *integration without the need to assimilate*. Without that we will have no society, no nation, at all, but a helter-skelter of windowless cultural monads. Nations need multicultures to be culturally rich encompassing cultures and multicultures, if they are at all reasonably to live together, need a nation with either a nation-state or a nation which is a part of a genuinely multination state. And to be a genuine multination state all of the component nations must be in some fundamental sense equal partners.[14] Cultures in a multiculture need one or another of these things to be secure and to flourish. In interaction these cultures will change each other and will change the encompassing culture as well. Moreover, these changes will generally be a matter of mutual advantage enriching the life of most of the individuals within the multicultural society. In our complex plural societies, a nationalism without multiculturalism is *ethno-centric* and a multiculturalism without nationalism, where nationalism is needed, or where there is not a secure nation with the sense of national-identity that goes with it, is *blind*, leaving people without an encompassing culture, something that is necessary in circumstances of modernity so that collective life together is something other than nasty, brutish and short and, as well, and connectedly, without anything that binds the people in question together. Indeed what (among other things) would make life nasty, brutish and short is precisely the absence of any such binding force. Durkheim was surely onto something here.

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NOTES

¹ I speak here of universalism and particularism, but I am inclined to take an Austinian-Wittgensteinian turn here and say that that very terminology—that very way of categorizing things—is more misleading than helpful. Substantively I am claiming that any adequate account of morality (including political morality) must have elements of both. It will acknowledge that in morality there are some generalizations and some principles, though the ones without scope qualifiers that might reasonably be accepted, such as, "Starving to death is a bad thing" are moral platitudes (not unimportant for all of that), while something non-platitudinous, such as Rawls's two principles of justice, hold, if indeed they hold, only in determinate circumstances. They do not apply everywhere and at all times. But, as Miller and Walzer well show, a lot of what counts morally is very contextual and needs determinate specification. Miller calls it a particularism and Walzer a reiterative universalism, which is just a label for a sensible universalizable form of particularism. They both make a lot of the contrast between universalism and particularism when this very way of categorization should be laid to rest as just more philosophical jargon that we could well do without. It turns no machinery in thinking about moral life and is better subject to philosophical dissolution. (Miller 1995, 49-58 and Walzer 1990, 509-515) Here Wittgensteinian therapy is quite to the point.

² It is not at all my intent to single out the United States as the sole racist culprit. Racism is a disgusting phenomenon occurring throughout most of the world. Moreover, plenty of places, in one way or another, are (to understate it) at least as bad as the United States. But the United States is certainly, and in ways relevant to my discussion of liberal nationalism, a key paradigm here. And, particularly given its strategic importance to the world, it is worth focusing on.

³ When I use the capital "W" rather than "w", where normally "w" would be used, as in "White culture" or "Whites", rather than "white culture" or "white people", I refer to the ideological self-conception of whites and not merely to their phenotypic differences. The same obtains when I use "Black", "Yellow" or "Red" rather than "black", "yellow" or "red".

⁴ The very idea of "getting the blacks off their backs" is, of course, a terrible bit of racist ideology. The blacks are not on the backs of the whites. Though it is not unreasonable to believe the reverse is true.

⁵ In discussion I was properly taken to task, when I presented a version of this essay at Brockport, for not stressing how essential it is that African-Americans have the economic wherewithal to be able to have some reasonable control over their lives. For without that wherewithal they will not have control over their lives. When the whites—I would say white capitalists and their facilitators—have the wealth and African-Americans are without wealth, political

control of their lives will be in a very important way unreal. I was gesturing at that above, but such gesturing is not enough. It is absolutely essential to make it crystal clear that an African-American nation without economic wealth will not carry with it liberation or enable African-Americans to flourish. The political and the economic must go together.

[6] Some might think I waffle with the phrase "impose unnecessarily". That, it might be said, lets anything in. It does not. In a summary statement some such qualification is necessary. But what "unnecessarily" in that context comes to is spelled out in the body of the essay. It does not admit of a capsule statement. I make plain, that is, in the course of my essay, what it is to "impose unnecessarily" in such a context.

[7] What I said about "impose unnecessarily" in the previous note goes here for "unduly privileged" as well.

[8] The is-ought, fact-value, gap (divide) has been both extensively criticized and extensively defended. Some have claimed that it is only a putative gap and that in reality there is no such gap or divide. Others have thought that it is genuine and of fundamental importance to a proper understanding of moral thought. Certainly, without a nuanced statement and careful qualifications, the no-ought-from-an-is position is not sustainable. But there are carefully qualified articulations of it that, at least arguably, are sustainable. Their importance in moral reasoning is more problematic. There may be a logical gap between the is and the ought while it still may be the case that this "logical truth" is of less importance than traditionally has been thought. See Nielsen (1989, 13-38) and, for a rather different view, see Putnam (1990, 135-178).

[9] There have been frequently expressed worries that with the increasing pervasiveness of globalization and related phenomena cultural diversity is disappearing. We soon will not have, the worry goes, these various experiments in living. We are all becoming more alike. We do indeed find radios on the banks of remote stretches of the Amazon tuned to the same popular music that is listened to in Albany; we find Coca-Cola and American movies throughout – more accurately almost throughout (e.g. Afghanistan) – the world. No place is so remote that it is not touched by the great capitalist centers. How much this is homogenizing us is an open question that dearly needs careful and concep-tually sophisticated empirical research. (We also need to get behind the metaphor "homogenize".) I think, however, that it is premature to announce the end of diversity. Rawls may even be right in believing that diversity will increase. Certainly the multicultural phenomena I have talked about in this essay—what I have called social multiculturalism—is plainly evident. The serious question remains—how deep does this diversity go? And is multi-cultural-ism as a normative adaptation to the facts of diversity much more than what Stanley Fish has called "boutique multiculturalism"? (Fish 1998, 69-88)

Here we need empirical research and not ideological posturing. But we also need to try to make up our minds about what sort of a people we want to be in such a world of, in some ways at least, intractable diversity. We care about ourselves as individuals, of course, but we also care about what kind of society we live in and some of us, at least, care about what kind of *a people* we are. And these last two concerns are not unconnected with our concern about ourselves as individuals. The results of empirical research will effect what we believe about these things, if we are reasonable, but it will not uniquely determine our commitments here.

[10] Here I have perhaps become too specific. I do not, of course, mean to give to understand that only these particular works of literature could achieve the things I am talking about or even that they can achieve them better than any alternatives. I take them rather as striking, important and plausible examples of the sort of thing that ought to be taught.

[11] Communitarians and Neo-Aristotelians often write as if we understood what we are talking about when we speak of "the good life" or even of "the good". That should be questioned. While we do have a grip on, in many circumstances, what it is to speak of "a good policy", "a good person" of "good intentions" and the like, it is anything but evident that we understand what we are talking about when we speak of "the good" or "the good life" or of "the true comprehensive conception of the good". We may very well believe (and indeed rightly believe) that language is on holiday here without being at all skeptical concerning our ability to know that certain things are good and others are bad, indeed sometimes so bad as to be evil.

[12] It might be remarked that while the primary natural and social goods are indeed goods that all people need to do anything they may want to do, it does not follow from that that it is true that the liberal state must be committed to trying to make these goods available to all. It is one thing to recognize that all people need to be provisioned with these primary goods; it is another thing again to believe that the liberal state must seek universal provision of these goods. Surely an illiberal state, defending an ideal of a privileged caste or class or hereditary aristocracy or the like, could acknowledge Rawls's claims concerning primary goods without being the least bit concerned about their being available to all, let alone their being equally available. But this could not be true of a liberal state, for it is committed to moral equality, namely to a belief that the life of everyone matters and matters equally. (Here is another way in which it cannot be neutral.) With that moral premise and the factual premise that all people need these primary goods to flourish, a liberal state is committed, given a few other not implausible propositions, to trying to make the primary goods available to all. It cannot, while remaining a liberal state, be neutral about that.

[13] South Africa presently (1999) has eleven official languages. That cannot be a stable situation for the South African state or for the modern industrial society that South Africa is. For there to be an encompassing culture, and thus a nation, it is essential that there be no more than a few languages in common use covering all of South Africa. Probably English will be the lingua franca of South Africa with cultural protection for African languages including Afrikaans. (It is important to remember—the role of most of them in apartheid notwithstanding—that Afrikaners, though of European origins, are Africans.)

[14] We need the qualifier "some fundamental sense"—a qualifier whose exact sense should be spelled out, but is not spelled out in this essay. We need a specification of what this comes to here, for, where multination states contain genuine nations as subunits, some of which are very small and with little in the way of infrastructure and wealth, it is difficult to see how they could be equal partners in a genuinely multination state. If English-speaking Canada and Quebec were the only subunits in what might eventually become a multination state, there would in this respect be little in the way of a problem between them. But reality is not that simple for there are the First Nations—genuine nations— that have a legitimate claim to be equal partners in the envisaged multination state. Yet in certain fairly obvious ways, they cannot, as a matter of fact, be equal partners at least as things stand now. The point is to spell out clearly the ways— really non-trivial ways—in which they can be, and indeed must be, equal partners. I certainly do not mean to give to understand that this cannot be done. But it needs to be done and clearly and without evasion and beyond the level of pieties. If Australia and New Zealand were to become multination states, there would be similar problems for them. And if the United States were to become a multinational state, there would also be similar problems concerning their First Nations as well as problems concerning Puerto Rico, Hawaii and Guam.