APPIAH Kwame Anthony, The Ethics of Identity, Princeton University Press, 2005.

put the matter paradoxically: impartiality is a strictly position-dependent obligation. What is a virtue in a referee is not a virtue in a prize-fighter's wife.

Let me summarize my worries about "moral equality." First, I urged that the model of distributive justice was a poor fit with particularist goods. *My friend Mary* is not simply an instantiation of the general good represented by *friendship*; she's not like one first-class stamp on a roll of first-class stamps. Second, I maintained that equality wasn't what morality demanded of us as individuals; it denotes a regulative ideal for political, not personal, conduct. We go wrong when we conflate personal and political ideals, and, in particular, when we assume that, because there are connections between the two, they are the same.

Which brings us to the next term of the challenge: that special obligations are, indeed, *obligations*. It's one thing to say that you're permitted to give way to partiality, that the political ideal of moral equality doesn't automatically rule it out. It's another thing to say you *must*. What is the nature of this particular *must*?

Two Concepts of Obligation

A principal source of confusion here arises from all those do-the-right-thing words: "duties," "responsibilities," "obligations." They present two kinds of reasons for action as one. At various points in this book (as advertised in the preface) I've been following Ronald Dworkin in marking a distinction between morality, which has to do with what we owe to others, and ethics, which has to do with what kind of life it is good for us to lead. Ethical considerations are responsive to what Williams calls our "ground projects," our individual conception of what kind of person we seek to be. This is a broad bundle, and it subsumes a variant definition of the ethical that Avishai Margalit (building on Michael Walzer and others) offers, one whose tighter focus will be especially useful here. Here, the distinction between the ethical and the moral corresponds to "thick" relations—which invoke a community founded in a shared past or "collective memory"—and "thin" relations, which we have with strangers, and which are stipulatively entailed by a shared humanity. Margalit has recently suggested that

"ought" in the ethical context is used in something like the sense of the "medical ought": the assertion "you ought to take your medicine," he notes, is "relative to the assumption that you want to be healthy."[26] (No such rider attaches to the moral ought, since morality is what persons, qua persons, owe to persons, qua persons.) Margalit's notion of the ethical helpfully amplifies a crucial aspect of Dworkin's: our projects—and, with them, our sense of what it is to live well—involve creating a life out of materials and circumstances that we have been given; this involves developing an identity, enmeshed in larger, collective narratives but not exhausted by them. It involves social forms—attorney, bird-watcher—that, as Raz says, make certain activities and projects possible. It involves, equally, a sense of belonging, of being situated within a larger narrative or narratives. With all this in mind, I want to see what happens when we distinguish between the moral ought and the ethical ought.

In chapter 2, we saw how idealizations were typically guided by some purpose, some set of interests. We could tell a story about someone that was all about causation and constraint, and another story that was all about freedom and choice; and which story it made sense to tell depended upon what we were interested in—what we were trying to explain, to make sense of, to accomplish. (By way of a crude example: retributive justice concerns itself with agency; distributive justice concerns itself with structure. The first attends to our choices; the second to our option set. The first speaks of decision; the second speaks of circumstances.) The central idealization of liberal theory is, of course, the "moral person," who, in virtue of being a human being, has various obligations to other human beings. The interests that conjure up the moral person are those of social justice—which is to say, of the well-ordered *society*, the just *state*, the ideal of liberal *governance*. The realm of the ethical, by contrast, encompasses what you must do as an embedded self with thick relations to others. The interests that entrain the "ethical self" are those of specific, encumbered human beings who are members of particular communities. To create a life, I've said, is to create a life out of the materials that history has given you. An identity is always articulated through concepts (and practices) made available to you by religion, society, school, and state, mediated by family, peers, friends. Bear in mind, too, that the sort of ethical identities that

Margalit focuses on do not exhaust the factors relevant to making a good life. Some aspects of your individual identity set, or what I've been calling your individuality, are brand-name collective identities and some are anything but: Male, Methodist, Scrabble Enthusiast, Aramaic Scholar, son of this man and this woman—all the scarcely countable coordinates that specify *you*. Ethical concerns and constraints arise from my individuality; moral ones arise from my personhood. Ethical ones govern how I behave toward people with whom I have a thick relationship—and tend to be more demanding the thicker that relationship is.

Whether the story you tell of your life is one of constraint or one of freedom relates, as I say, to the purpose of your story. So you might take it to be a fool's errand to reconcile the putative tensions between loyalty and impartiality, between the claims of my ties and relationships and the claims of universalism. Surely, an idealization that undergirds political theory need not take in all the relational differentia that are crucial when the project is what kind of life is a good one for me to live. Rather than integrating the two accounts, that is, you might suppose we'd do better to honor the disjunction—to say, for some purposes, I am a Person, and for others, I am a particular identitarian bundle swaddled in relational facts.[27] In particular, you might suppose that—as with the registers of structure and agency—it is useful to hive off the two vocabularies in connection with two separate projects: the political task of creating a well-ordered society and the personal task of leading a good life.

Well, we can do so—but only up to a point. What makes the realm of "soul making" so vexed and so fascinating is precisely that it represents the intersection between these two projects, and thus between these two normative registers. And the same, ultimately, is true of rooted cosmopolitanism: it is a composite project, a negotiation between disparate tasks. Generally speaking, associative duties can be categorized as *ethical* rather than moral.[28] They involve duties to yourself (in Dworkin's terms), insofar as they reflect your commitment to living a certain kind of life; they involve duties to an ethical community (in Margalit's terms), insofar as they reflect your participation in them, the fact that you enjoy thick relations with certain people through your identities. As with the classic—and vaguely congruent—Hegelian dis-

tinction between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*, this response to the challenge of reconciling loyalty and impersonal morality requires a mixed theory of value: one that has space for both project-dependent and objective principles; for obligations that are moral and universal and for obligations that are ethical and relative to our thick relations, to our projects—to our identities.[29]

To say that the ethical can't be assimilated to the moral, though, is not to say that the two are strangers to each other. Routine acts of supererogation, once other people have reason to take them for granted and have come to depend on them, can engender moral responsibilities.[30] In this way, an "ethical ought" may entrain a "moral ought"; moral obligations can play catch-up with ethical ones. In the forest of our obligations, it can be hard to distinguish bough from vine.

Let me try to head off two misinterpretations this discussion is bound to invite. One is to imagine a neat hierarchy wherein moral obligations must be, so to speak, lexically satisfied before we attend to ethical entreaties. (Advocates of "moderate patriotism" have urged something of the sort: special obligations are fine, so long as the demands of morality are met.)[31] A second temptation is to identify the contrast between the moral and the ethical with that between the compulsory and the optional.

Moral obligations must discipline ethical ones. Yet this is not to say that the obligations of universal morality must *always* get priority to ethical obligations—to others or to ourselves. Granted, certain ethical obligations would be simply ruled out by moral concerns of significant magnitude (there's *something* to the assumption of hierarchy); but such a rule is too rough-and-ready to guide us in finer-grained examples. Suppose you have the opportunity to achieve some project of tremendous importance to you, but to seize the opportunity requires breaking a promise. Say you've just heard about an architecture competition, and you know that a design you've labored on for years would be certain to win, so you race to get your balsa-wood model to the competition officials before the deadline—perforce breaking a promise (a lunch date, say) and the speed limit in order to do so. Only the most unattractive sort of moralism would automatically reproach you for your decision.[32] So there will be complicated trade-offs between these different normative registers, between what we have reason to do as abstract moral

agents and as the particular people we are: which is to say, between what we have moral reason to do and what we have reason to do, all things—the ethical now included—considered. This messiness makes the line between the moral and the ethical less bright and tight than a purist might like; but then few normative theories offer anything like algorithms for action (and those, like Benthamite utilitarianism, that do, often have preposterous consequences). Here, as often in normative theory, it is as well to remember the sound admonition Aristotle offered at the beginnings of the subject: in ethics we are "speaking about things which are true only for the most part."

You can see how the second temptation—assimilating the ethical to the voluntary—arises. You can't opt out of the human race, whereas associational duties normally involve metaphysically contingent features of who you are.[33] Metaphysically contingent doesn't mean optional, however. It is tempting to distinguish these cases by insisting that your participation in ethical relationships is voluntary. Margalit suggests something like that. "There is no obligation, in my view, to be engaged in ethical relations," he says. "It remains an option to lead a polite solitary life with no engagements and no commitments of the sort involved in ethical life." The picture of choice can be misleading. As he acknowledges, many ethical engagements "are forced on us in much the same way that family relations are."[34] Opting out is not always feasible, or even possible: many relational identities are far from voluntary. George Eliot's Will Ladislaw, asked to explain his "preference" for his beloved, explodes, "I never had a preference for her, any more than I had a preference for breathing."[35] Indeed, we do not choose to fall in love, any more than we choose the circumstances into which we are born. You do not choose to be a son or daughter; a Serb or a Bosnian; a Korean or an Mbuti. (The great Russian cellist Gregor Piatigorsky insisted the same was true of his profession: "Nobody can really choose music as a profession," he used to say. "It chooses you." That is why we speak of "vocations": they call to us; we don't summon them.) In all sorts of ways, as we've seen, our identities are neither wholly scripted for us nor wholly scripted by us.

All the same, the fact that you did not choose to be your mother's son does not mean you have no special responsibilities as a result. Unlike moral strictures, special responsibilities of this sort are fulfilled in

degree. *Thou shalt not kill* is a test you take pass-fail. *Honor thy father and thy mother* admits of gradations. When we speak of a good American, or a good Catholic—or, indeed, a good son—the "good" qualifies the identitarian project: it is an ethical, not a moral, predicate. One could, consistent with the demands of morality, be an OK American, a mediocre Catholic, a so-so son.

What's increasingly clear, I hope, is that we're omitting information when we employ the term "obligation" indifferently to designate moral and ethical oughts. Moral judgments provide reasons for action. But ethical ones provide reasons, too—just reasons of a different order, because they are relative to an agent's identity set, to our individuality. They bear on what kind of person we are, or wish to be. All of which invites the thought that there is a zone of "ought," of ethical obligation, that is intermediate between the wholly required and the wholly supererogatory.[36] Kant, in the *Critique of Judgment*, said that in making aesthetic judgments "one solicits assent from everyone else."[37] You might suppose there's a similar distinction to be drawn here: where morality requires compliance, ethics calls for it.

Let me suggest another way of marking the difference between two forms of obligation, the moral and the ethical. Even if defection from what morality requires were rampant in some society, the requirements of morality would be undiminished. Societies ought not to engage in genocide but avidly do so. What's right and wrong, morally, doesn't depend upon the vagaries of our motivations. (This point is not to be confused with the entirely separate question, central to debates over moral internalism, about whether moral judgments, once you have accepted them, are in themselves action-guiding.) By contrast, the realm of the ethical *is* motivationally sensitive. In some matrilineal societies, for instance, you have a strong sense of special obligation toward the offspring of your uncle on the distaff side. Thus in the Akan region of Ghana the relevant relational term—*nua*—doesn't distinguish between your siblings and your maternal cousins; when you say someone is your sister or brother, you have to go on to specify "same mother, same father."[38] If, because of various shifts in the mores of family structure, this ceased to be so, the ethical obligations would cease to be what they were. (And, as socially entrenched as kinship structure would appear to be, there have been just such familial reconfigurations around Africa's

"matrilineal belt," just as the privileging of the paternal line has diminished in many American families.) The arena of thick relations—of special obligations—is motivationally sensitive in just this way: it depends upon specific norms that determine the ethical significance of various relational facts.[39] Conduct that is shaped by ethical concerns—by our membership in an ethical community, which is to say, by aspects of our collective identities—is part of what gives content to those ethical relations, that ethical community, that identity. Ethical obligation, that is, is internal to the identity. Who you are is constituted, in part, by what you care about; to cease to care about those things would be to cease to be the sort of person you are. Since an ethical community is constituted in part by special responsibilities that obtain among its members, if nobody felt such special responsibilities, there would be no such community, no such demands.[40] In the realm of the ethical, you can *only* get an "ought" from an "is."

So far I have simply described a space where partiality seems to be situated; I have not said why partiality might be of value. In fact, the most powerful defense of partiality is the simplest: for human beings, relationships are an important good—I would be inclined to say they were objectively valuable—and many (noninstrumental) relationships, as Scheffler rightly insists, require partiality. These relationships are constituted, in part, by the sense of special caring between those involved, and couldn't exist "unless they are seen as providing reasons for unequal treatment."[41] The pronoun "my" *is* magical, and we'd be inclined to view someone wholly unsusceptible to its magic as a monster, or, possibly, a utilitarian. A little earlier, I complained about the idea that treating people equally—in the sense of adhering to the ideal of equal respect—means treating people the same. I went on to say that the political doctrine that the state should show equal concern toward its citizens has been mistaken for a moral imperative that persons should show equal concern to one another. For, of course, we do not relate to others only as "persons"; we relate to them as people—as siblings, cousins, friends, teammates, colleagues, fellow Kiwanis Club members, and so forth. In the terms I've been introducing, the requirements of "thin" moral relations—what we owe to persons—do not rule out (though they may bound) the existence of "thick" ethical relations. The social nature of our projects, our self-understandings through

identity groups, underpins the thick ethical relations we have with certain others, and explains why our treatment of people, above the baseline moral dictum of *suum cuique tribunes*, varies with who they are. And because we are a social species, such relations are objectively good. (In these cases, we can say that a relationship of this sort is *a good for you* and also objectively enshrines a good.)

Suppose you're with me so far. It's good to have social ties, we can all agree; and relationships that matter provide reasons for partiality, for unequal treatment. Our identities, our identifications, make some ties matter to us, and give rise to ethical communities. But a defense of partiality—of special responsibilities, associative duties—is only a necessary condition for a defense of national identities; it is far from a sufficient one. After all, nations, those "imagined communities," in Benedict Anderson's classic formulation, can seem awfully big, and awfully arbitrary. It could still be that special responsibilities make sense within truly thick relations (with lovers, family, friends) but not within the imaginary fraternity we have with our conationals. Even if you accept that some ethical relations, some ethical communities, provide reasons for partiality, you could still wonder whether nations are among them.

Cosmopolitan Patriotism

In a recent satirical fable, the writer George Saunders assayed the subject of "fluid-nations," citizenship of which depends not on geographical contiguity but on "values, loyalties, and/or habitual patterns of behavior" that traverse geo-national borders. Among such fluid-nations are People Who Say They Hate Television but Admit to Watching It Now and Then, Just to Relax; Elderly Persons Whose First Thought Upon Hearing of a Death Is Relief That They Are Still Alive, Followed by Guilt for Having Had That First Feeling; and Makes Excellent Strudel. His fictive social scientists in the field of Patriotic Studies have, in the course of their researches, arrived at some notable findings. For example, an analysis of World War II statistics showed that, in the clash between American and German soldiers, fellow citizens of the fluid-nation Men Who Fish did not hesitate to kill each other. On the

other hand, we're told, Individuals Reluctant to Kill for an Abstraction did show deficits in geo-national patriotism:

> Results indicated that citizens of Individuals Reluctant to Kill for an Abstraction scored, on average, thirty-nine points lower on the National-Allegiance Criterion than did members of the control group. . . . Shown photographs of members of an opposing geo-nation, and asked, "What sort of person do you believe this person to be?," citizens of Individuals Reluctant to Kill for an Abstraction were sixty-four per cent more likely to choose the response "Don't know, would have to meet them first." Given the opportunity to poke with a rubber baton a citizen of a geo-nation traditionally opposed to their geo-nation (an individual who was at that time taunting them with a slogan from a list of Provocative Slogans), citizens of Individuals Reluctant to Kill for an Abstraction were found to be seventy-one per cent less likely to poke than were members of the control group.[42]

Saunders is having sport, in part, with the patent arbitrariness of the ways human beings sort themselves out, the absurdity of categorical chauvinisms. For one evident abstraction is, of course, the nation itself. What gives the satire its force is that actual full-blooded nations do feel different from these notional categories. But should they? Are they entitled to the claims they make upon our evaluative affect?

As I've suggested, a defense of partiality that proceeds from the paradigm of friendship or family cannot, without modification, be invoked in defense of national partiality. It is one thing to make the case for partiality involving those with whom we have face-to-face social connections: that relations of love and friendship are a deep and universal human good surely goes without saying (not that this stopped me from saying it). But nationalism posits a relation among strangers. Indeed, in its historical ascent, nationalism, which is often contrasted with individualism, can equally seem to be a spawn of individualism. One thing that distinguishes national identities from the other ascribed identities with which they sometimes compete (your child, your spouse, your vassal, and other such relational identities) is that *fellow national* is a "category of equivalent persons," sustained by impersonal mediating institutions, as the sociologist Craig Calhoun has argued.[43] The partiality of the nationalist may be thicker than water, but it is thinner than blood.

It's important to remember how abstract a thing the nation really is. National partiality is, of course, what the concept of cosmopolitanism is usually assumed to oppose, and yet the connection between the two is more complicated than this. Nationalism itself has much in common with its putative antithesis, cosmopolitanism: for nationalism, too, exhorts quite a loftily abstract level of allegiance—a vast, encompassing project that extends far beyond ourselves and our families. (For Ghanaians of my father's generation, national feeling was a hard-won achievement, one enabled by political principle and dispassion: though it did not supplant the special obligations one had with respect to one's *ethnie*, matriclan, and family, it did, in some sense, demote them.) That's what makes the contrast between cosmopolitanism and nationalism so vexed. Nations, if they aren't universal enough for the universalist, certainly aren't local enough for the localist. To cast it in the terms of the preceding discussion, if special responsibilities are thought to be worrying because they represent an abridgment of moral universalism, cosmopolitanism is thought to be worrying because it represents an abridgment of special responsibilities. But what's troublesome about cosmopolitanism—that it sometimes puts the abstract demands of a categorical identity (in this case, a shared humanity) above our rooted, *Blut-und-Boden* loyalties—is just what's troublesome about nationalism. If national allegiances are reasons for actions, they will sometimes interfere with the reasons presented by more local, and "thicker," allegiances. (Recall Sartre's famous story, in "Existentialism as Humanism," of the student who, during the Second World War, must wrestle with an agonizing dilemma: his brother has been killed by the Nazis, and he is all his mother has left. Shall he fight to free France, even though his mother would be devastated to lose him? Which takes priority, mother or motherland?)

Indeed, the usual complaints that nationalists hurl at cosmopolitans are complaints that have been hurled at nationalists, and with greater justice: nationalism, too, has been charged with effacing local partialities and solidarities, with promulgating norms that undermine local traditions and customs—with being a force for homogeneity. Upholding differences among groups, I said in chapter 4, typically entails the erasure of differences within groups. (If cosmopolitans are never fully cosmopolitan, the locals are never fully local.) As Friedrich Meinecke

observed a century ago, "Cosmopolitanism and nationalism stood side by side in a close, living relationship for a long time."[44] Certainly liberal advocates of each have often been, as it were, intellectual compatriots.

In a recent, eloquent defense of cosmopolitanism, Martha Nussbaum writes:

> We should recognize humanity whenever it occurs, and give its fundamental ingredients, reason and moral capacity, our first allegiance and respect. . . .
>
> The idea of the world citizen is in this way the ancestor and the source of Kant's idea of the "kingdom of ends," and has a similar function in inspiring and regulating moral and political conduct. One should always behave so as to treat with equal respect the dignity of reason and moral choice in every human being.

At the same time, Nussbaum says that, for cosmopolitans, "it is right to give the local an additional measure of concern." In her view, "the primary reason a cosmopolitan should have for this is not that the local is better per se, but rather that this is the only sensible way to do good."[45] Thus speaks the liberal cosmopolitan.

Compare this with Giuseppe Mazzini, the great prophet of Italian nationalism, urging his nationalist creed upon the workers of Italy:

> Your first duties—first as regards importance—are, as I have already told you, towards Humanity. You are *men* before you are either citizens or fathers. If you do not embrace the whole human family in your affection; if you do not bear witness to your belief in the Unity of that family, . . . if, wheresoever a fellow-creature suffers, or the dignity of human nature is violated by falsehood or tyranny—you are not ready, if able, to aid the unhappy, and do not feel called upon to combat, if able, for the redemption of the betrayed and oppressed—you violate your law of life, you comprehend not that Religion which will be the guide and blessing of the future.
>
> But what can each of you, singly, *do* for the moral improvement and progress of Humanity? . . . The individual is too insignificant, and Humanity too vast. The mariner of Brittany prays to God as he puts to sea; "*Help me, my God! my boat is so small and Thy ocean so wide!*" And this prayer is the true expression of the condition of each one of you, until you find the means of infinitely multiplying your forces and powers of action. This means was provided for you by God when He gave you a country.[46]

We do not go too far to say these are, in their fundamental suppositions, the same creed: localism is an instrument to achieve universal ideals, universal goals. This sort of Goldilocks defense of the nation—as a way station between the two extremes, one too big, one too small—appeals both to the putative cosmopolitan and to the putative nationalist, united in their shared humanism. As Mazzini goes on to insist, "In labouring for our own country on the right principle, we labour for Humanity. Our country is the fulcrum of the lever we have to wield for the common good." Thus speaks the liberal nationalist.

Mazzini's heartfelt humanism is hardly anomalous even among those who have most treasured the particularity of local custom. In an often-quoted passage from *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Burke wrote: "To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ, as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country and to mankind." Far from being hostile to cosmopolitanism, the argument posits the culminating value of universalism, that overarching love of humanity; that's how love of the little platoon is justified, as a first step along the path.[47]

For reasons that will now be familiar, of course, we cannot be content with such merely instrumental accounts of national sentiment. Yes, to be a citizen of the world is to be concerned for your fellow citizens, and, as Nussbaum says, the way you live that concern is often just by doing things for people in particular places. A citizen of the world can make the world better by making some local place better, even though that place need not be the place of her literal or original citizenship. This is why, when my father told us we were citizens of the world, he went on to tell us that we should work, for that reason, for the good of the places where—whether for the moment or for a lifetime—we had pitched our tents. Still, given my father's sense of loyalty to Ghana, to the Asante, and to his matriclan, among other ties, he would have expected others to be loyal to their national, ethnic, and familial identities: and such loyalty could not be a coolly cerebral decision, an impartial calculation as to how one would best make the world a better place. (He would have had pity for Mrs. Jellyby's neglected young daughter, who is driven to exclaim, "I wish Africa was dead!") On the contrary, he knew that many of these sorts of relationships could not exist without a

feeling of special obligation. He would have his children be cosmopolitan, but—in both senses—*partial* cosmopolitans.

Needless to say, the nation is hardly unique in involving "a category of equivalent persons." Most collective identities connect us to strangers, people whom we will never meet: fellow Catholics, fellow lesbians, fellow mathematicians, fellow Angelinos. If, as I say, you come to interpret and shape your sense of yourself, and your life, through such identifications, the conduct of perfect strangers may inspire in you feelings of pride or shame. These identifications will help determine your projects, and help provide reasons for action. Who we are, as any viable cosmopolitanism must acknowledge, helps determine what we care about. To adopt the national project (and we should acknowledge the complexity of such projects; as I say, Ghana, as a project, had much to do with the postcolonial hopes of independence) is, in some measure, to lead a certain kind of life. *Imagined*, as Benedict Anderson would insist, doesn't mean unreal: nothing could be more powerful than the human imagination. Indeed, it's a notable fact that you can experience a sense of special responsibility toward nationals who are not conationals. Consider Lord Byron, sailing to Greece to participate in a rebellion against the Turks. Or even the (very) complicated ethnic sympathies of a colonial figure like T. E. Lawrence, whom we know, after all, not as Lawrence of England, but as Lawrence of Arabia. Or the foreigners, the International Brigade, who, alongside the republicans, fought the Falangists during the Spanish Civil War: here, a fight for universal principles—a fight against fascism—usually came to entail more local forms of identification. But there's no better example of the phenomenon than the Corsican we know as Napoleon—born Nabulio—who, before he became the embodiment of French empire, had been a vehemently anti-French patriot of his island nation. The identifications that give rise to our ethical concerns aren't simply inherited; one's national loyalties aren't determined solely by the geography of one's nativity.

You could accept this catechism, of course, and still suppose that those things we have come, contingently, to value (not in that we have "chosen" to value them, but in that we could, consistent with our moral obligations, not do so), matter less than those that are morally incumbent upon us. In Nussbaum's view, "The accident of where one is

born is just that, an accident; any human being might have been born in any nation," and so such differences shouldn't "erect barriers between us and our fellow human beings." But here the notion of "accident" is overtaxed. The quality of being metaphysically necessary to who we are (e.g., date of birth, sex, and parentage, at least in one widely accepted account of personal identity) doesn't track with moral salience.[48] The fact that I am my mother's son is metaphysically contingent to her and metaphysically necessary to me: but nobody would claim any corresponding asymmetry in the special responsibilities that obtain between us. Even putting the topic of personal identity aside, we can agree that many of the things we care most about in life are the result of accident—we can wonder, with Carl Dennis, what might have happened had we taken a different trivial-seeming decision at some point in our lives. By accident I acquire a family; by accident I acquire a profound commitment to this or that social or political agenda. By accident, I am who I am.

The power of project-dependent values, then, can't be gainsaid, least of all when the project is national. Urging the unique force of nationalism, Benedict Anderson, whose *Imagined Communities* remains one of our most eloquent retheorizations of the nation, asks, "Who will willingly die for Comecon"—the old Eastern European Council for Mutual Economic Assistance—"or the EEC?" You see his point. Supranational economic organizations don't seem to involve the shared memories, the thick narratives, that nations (or families, or religions) do. They don't furnish *identities.* Their sway is purely formal; a matter of contract and treaty. If nobody will *give* his life for these organizations, it might have something to do with the fact that nobody *makes* his life out of them. But the rhetorical question—"Who would willingly die?"—would be misapplied if it were meant to single out nationalism from the various upstart contenders. Recall that, before the researchers intervened, the Rattlers were arming themselves with rocks for a raid against their rivals. A dismaying number of urban dwellers have died in intergang warfare—dying *as a* member of the Crips, say; killing *as a* member of the Bloods—and among them are strangers killed by strangers for wearing the wrong colors. These assailants are true to their tribe—and that tribe, we can safely conclude, does not consist of Individuals Reluctant to Kill for an Abstraction.[49]

Still, the matter of national citizenship does raise a number of persistent issues, especially in the context of international concerns. Nussbaum, defending cosmopolitanism *against* patriotism, argues that in "conceding that a morally arbitrary boundary such as the boundary of the nation has a deep and formative role in our deliberations, we seem to deprive ourselves of any principled way of arguing to citizens that they should in fact join hands" across the "boundaries of ethnicity, class, gender and race."[50] I can say what I think is wrong here only if I insist on the distinction between state and nation. Their conflation is a perfectly natural one for a modern person—even after Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Amritsar, Bosnia, Azerbaijan. But the yoking of nation and state in the Enlightenment was intended to bring the arbitrary boundaries of states into conformity with the "natural" ethnoterritorial boundaries of nations; the idea, of course, was that the boundaries of one could be arbitrary, while the boundaries of the other were not.

Not that I want to endorse this essentially Herderian way of thinking; I'm inclined to doubt that nations ever preexist states. A nation—here is a loose and unphilosophical definition—is an "imagined community" of traditions or ancestry running beyond the scale of the face-to-face and seeking political expression for itself. But all the nations I can think of that are not coterminous with states are the legacy of older state arrangements—as Asante is in what has become Ghana; as the Serbian and Croatian nations are in what used to be Yugoslavia.[51] I want, in fact, to distinguish the nation and the state to make a point entirely opposite to Herder's; namely, that if anything is arbitrary, it is not the state but the nation. Since human beings live in political orders narrower than the species, and since it is within those political orders that questions of public right and wrong are largely argued out and decided, the fact of being a fellow citizen—someone who is a member of the same order—is not, with respect to our normative commitments, arbitrary at all.[52]

The nation *is* arbitrary, but not in the sense that we can discard it in our normative reflections. It is arbitrary in the root sense of that term; because its importance in our lives is, in the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s lapidary formulation, "dependent upon will or pleasure." Nations often matter more to people than do states: mono-ethnic Serbia makes more sense to some than multicultural Bosnia; a Hutu (or a Tutsi) Rwanda

makes more sense to others than a peaceful shared citizenship of Tutsi and Hutu; only when Britain or France became nations as well as states did ordinary citizens come to care much about being French or British.[53] But notice that the reason nations matter is that they matter to *individuals*. When nations matter ethically, they do so, in the first instance, for the same reason that football and opera matter: as things cared about by autonomous agents, whose autonomous desires we ought to acknowledge and take account of even if we cannot always accede to them. This isn't to adopt a voluntarist account of national identity (or, indeed, a voluntarist account of opera loving). It's just to stress that here we are in the realm of project-dependent values. If nationals are bound together, it is, as I have already said, on the Roman model, by language, law, and literature, and if they share an experience of events, it is not in propria persona, but through their shared exposure to narrations of those events: in folktale and novel and movie, in newspapers and magazines, on radio and television, in the national histories taught in modern national schools. Narrative was central to earlier forms of political identity, too: the Homeric poems for the Greek city-states; the Augustan poetry of Virgil (but also of Horace) for a cultivated Roman elite; the epic of Sundiata for Malinke societies in West Africa; the Vulgate for medieval Christendom; the story of Shaka for the Zulu nation. If there is something distinctive about the new, national, stories, perhaps it is this: that they bind citizens not in a shared relation to gods, kings, and heroes, but as fellow participants, "equivalent persons" in a common story. Modern political communities, that is, are bound together through representations in which the community itself is an actor; and what binds each of us to the community—and thus to each other—is our participation, through our national identity, in that action. Our modern solidarity derives from stories in which we participate through synecdoche.

States, on the other hand, have intrinsic moral value: they matter not because people care about them but because they regulate our lives through forms of coercion that will always require moral justification. State institutions matter because they are both necessary to so many modern human purposes and because they have so great a potential for abuse. As Hobbes famously saw, the state, to do its job, has to have a monopoly of certain forms of authorized coercion; and the exercise

of that authority cries out for (but often does not deserve) justification even in places, like so many postcolonial societies, where many people have no positive feeling for the state at all. Cosmopolitans, then, need not claim that the state is morally arbitrary in the way that I have suggested the nation is. There are many reasons to think that living in political communities narrower than the species is better for us than would be our engulfment in a single world-state: a Cosmopolis of which we cosmopolitans would be not figurative but literal citizens.

It is because humans live best on a smaller scale that liberal cosmopolitans should acknowledge the ethical salience of not just the state but the county, the town, the street, the business, the craft, the profession, the family *as* communities, as circles among the many circles narrower than the human horizon that are appropriate spheres of moral concern. They should, in short, endorse the right of others to live in democratic states, with rich possibilities of association within and across their borders, states of which they can be patriotic citizens. And, as cosmopolitans, they can claim that right for themselves.

To contemplate cosmopolitanism of this variety is to contemplate the *task* of cosmopolitanism, which is debate and conversation across nations. Within a legitimate polity, we can decree that all shall drive on the right; that torture shall be forbidden; that carbon emissions shall be restricted. (Within legitimate polities, there are also ways in which people may contest such decrees.) Political philosophy has, of course, had a great deal to say about how such a polity should be ordered, about what justice or legitimacy requires. But once we are speaking not within but among polities, we cannot rely upon decrees and injunctions. We must rely on the ability to listen and to talk to people whose commitments, beliefs, and projects may seem distant from our own.

Confrontation and Conversation

Early on in Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*, the narrator reports the observations of an "old French officer":

> *Le* POUR, *et le* CONTRE *se trouvent en chaque nation*; there is a balance, said he, of good and bad every where; and nothing but the knowing it is so