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The Virtue in Patriotism

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“Patriotism,” Samuel Johnson is famously reported to have said, “is the last refuge of a scoundrel” (Boswell 1900, 115). So be it. But Johnson had a scoundrel in mind, and not patriotism,¹ and it is my task here to make the case for the importance of modest patriotism – what Igor Primoratz has called “worldly patriotism” (Primoratz 2006, chap. 6) – and, to the extent that I am able, secure it against its exploitation by scoundrels.

My argument proceeds as follows. Because it is my intention to distinguish as well as link patriotism and nationalism, Section 1 sketches several working definitions and provides a rationale for my conceptualization of patriotism. In Section 2, I offer what is sometimes spoken of as a philosophical anthropology – an account of human nature and the conditions for its flourishing. In Section 3, this is embedded in a conception of civil society appropriate to the development of patriotic commitments. The status of those commitments is explored in Section 4. Sections 3–5, which constitute the chapter’s argumentative heart, provide a cautious defense of patriotism as expressive of an important identity-conferring commitment. In Section 6, I defend patriotism against the charge that it endemically tends to bad faith before indicating, in Section 7, why patriotism and nationalism tend to converge and why, morally hazardous though this may be, patriotism is to be monitored rather than resisted.

1 Some Definitional Preliminaries

In the course of this discussion, I make use of several key terms – patriotism, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and multiculturalism. Here, I offer some working definitions.

Patriotism and nationalism are sometimes conflated and, as I have already presaged, may reasonably converge in practice; nevertheless, it is heuristically important to distinguish them. Although both are, for reasons I indicate, forms of associational loyalty, patriotism is loyalty linked to a specific *patria* – a country – whereas the loyalty of nationalism is connected primarily to a *people*, defined by other, mostly ethnic and historical considerations. Although peoples generally have a territorial base (a homeland), nations are groupings based on ethnic (or perhaps racial) factors that often have religious, linguistic, folk, and other cultural dimensions, considerations that may also be invoked in support of patriotism but often exist independently of it. In nation-states, nation and *patria* – and so nationalism and patriotism – tend to converge, and this no doubt contributes to their frequent conflation and confusion. A significant reason for this convergence, I later suggest, is that nations generally need some form of territorial autonomy if they are to maintain their integrity and countries need some form of national identity if they are to inspire patriotic commitment.

Cosmopolitanism, an umbrella term for a variety of positions, can be contrasted with either nationalism or patriotism. It can be construed either as an alternative to nationalism, embracing a universalistic humanism that eschews the particularistic connections characteristic of nationalism; or it can be seen as an alternative to patriotism, most plausibly the incorporation of separate self-determining polities into a federation of states bound by overarching identity-conferring institutional norms and procedures. Increasing tendencies toward globalization – based on international trade and finance, information technology, international crime and terrorism, as well as human mobility – have greatly stimulated the contemporary interest in various cosmopolitanisms. I associate multiculturalism with a *patria* and polity that in some sense embraces national diversity. I have more to say about some of these matters later.

Zooming in, now, on patriotism, we find that most dictionaries and many commentators characterize it as *love of country*. My own preference, already indicated, is to characterize patriotism as *loyalty to country*. Love and loyalty are, of course, not exclusive, and I have no principled objection to the former characterization. Nevertheless, I think it is more helpful to see patriotism as a form of loyalty.² Loyalty is inherently particularistic in a way that love is not. I happen to love New Zealand, though it is not my country. And I also love my apartment in New York, though it is not mine in the sense that my country is mine. I identify with my country in a way that I do not identify with my

apartment. Loyalty embodies that identification. Further, although *love* suggests the passion that many patriots feel for their country, such passion is not required for patriotic commitments to be genuine. Of course, one might not wish to deny that a patriot who answers the call to serve also loves his country, but it may be a kind of love more closely associated with service to or concern for another than that characterized by passion. Part of the problem is that the English word “love” covers too much. As Eamonn Callan observes, it is broad enough to cover a fickle love, whereas patriotism must be construed in terms of constancy (2010, 253; cf. Callan 2006, 527). Not that I want to eschew or marginalize the passion that is often associated with patriotism. Just because patriots identify with the country they willingly serve, we should expect there to be an emotional component to their patriotism, even when it is quite muted and mixed with apprehension and some upset because they have been called upon to serve in a particular way. The problems we have with love we do not have with loyalty, even though loyalty itself is generally infused with feeling. I return to this later.

The object of patriotic loyalty – the *patria* or country – also needs some explication. A country – one’s country – is not to be identified with either its state or government, although a country will incorporate a polity. Mark Twain’s observation that his “kind of loyalty was loyalty to one’s country, not its institutions or office holders” draws on this point (1971, chap. 13). We need to think of a country in more holistic terms, generally as comprising a land, a terrain, a people, a culture, a history, a collective self-understanding, and a network of social institutions framed and bound together by the distinctive juridical structure of a governing order.³ A country is a narrative *personalized* entity that reaches backward and forward and embodies distinctive (though not uniform) forms of life.⁴ Patriotism is not free-floating – one does not start off as patriotic and then look for a country to which to be patriotic. One’s patriotism is always developed – if it develops at all – in the context of some particular country, whether Australia or the United States or Ecuador. Certainly, it can change, but it is always particularized. The person who wishes that there was a country about which he could feel patriotic is not patriotic, even though he would like to be.

There is clearly more to be said about what a country is and what it is about a country that inspires patriotism, and some of that emerges later. It should, however, be noted that the idea of a country already carries within it the cultural seeds of a form of nationalism. Those who seek to defend their country are not interested only in its acreage or government but also in its cultural character and its freedom from domination by subversive ways as well as powers. The questions we need to consider are whether a country constitutes the kind of associational entity that warrants or even requires our loyalty and, if so, how demanding that loyalty ought to be.

Before offering answers to these questions, we need to zoom in further on the idea of loyalty which, I suggest, constitutes the virtue in patriotism. As I see it, loyalty is the virtue that we cultivate to enable us to stick with the objects of associative relations that we have come to value for their own sake (as *mine* or *ours*), especially when it may not appear personally advantageous to persevere with their demands or expectations of us.⁵ As individuals, we are strongly tempted to act in ways that are occurrently self-serving, especially in circumstances in which the various associative ties we have developed place demands on us that require, if not sacrifice, then significant personal cost. Without loyal bonds, we would be inclined to *cut loose* from (or undermine) otherwise important associative ties, not necessarily for weighty reasons but for the immediate advantage of doing so. Although I later suggest that it is advantageous to our long-term interests to stick with some, at least, of the associative ties we develop and come to value for their own sakes, our everyday experience may sometimes incline us to abandon those ties for more immediate advantage. Loyalty is the virtue of staying with the associative object by not succumbing to such short-term advantage. Disloyalty is shown when the reason for our jeopardizing or forsaking the tie we have to the associative object is narrowly self-serving.

Although, on my account, loyalty is the virtue of sticking with and supporting an associative object in the face of narrowly self-serving temptation, it does not follow that every loyalty that is developed is ipso facto virtuous. There is no particular virtuousness in being a loyal Nazi. Not every object of loyalty is worthy of it. That is a hazard of most, if not all, virtues. The honor among thieves, generosity toward oppressive causes, and courageous defense of an evil regime all represent misdirections of virtue. The question that confronts us here, as already noted, is whether and to what extent *patriae* are appropriate objects of loyalty. To provide an argument for this I now prepare.

2 Human Flourishing and Human Association

Humans are part of the living natural order, along with plants and animals. As part of that order, they have life cycles – they flourish and die, and their growth, flourishing, and decline are a function of various conditions and circumstances, internal and external. Unlike plants and many animals, however, the complete conditions for human flourishing are not genetically encoded, but are a function of what we may term social circumstances – what we learn from others and how we relate to them. More than any (other) animal, sociality is central to human development and, for the most part, flourishing.⁶ That is, humans do not mature and flourish in isolation, needing only material sustenance, but their flourishing is enabled and to some extent constituted by various

associational connections and ties – families, friends, schools, and a range of other relations and institutions through which, if all goes well, they will also learn to be autonomous, sensitive, morally discerning, and competent beings, able to craft, within broader or narrower limits, decent lives for themselves.⁷

Implicit in this account of human flourishing is not only a recognition of the importance that learning has in human development and growth but also of various forms of social interaction. To the extent that we develop ends of our own, projects, or even life plans, we are likely to require the supportive presence of and engagement with other people, social practices, and institutions. Moreover, it is highly likely that, if they are to be realized, some of our ends will be collective in the sense of relying on the consciously cooperative endeavors with others. What we learn – at least, what we learn within liberal societies – is how to oversee our own flourishing in community with others.

Although many of the associational connections we form are and will remain largely instrumental in character, some will come to be valued for their own sake. That is, some associations will themselves become sources of satisfaction and meaning to us. This is almost certainly true of good friendships, which, as Aristotle recognized, are central to a good life, but it will often be or become true of other relations and associations – some of which (our families, perhaps) may have a central role in our lives, but others of which may be less central but still significant (the sporting club to which we belong or the political party that we join). In such cases, where associative relations have come to acquire intrinsic value for us and we identify with them as *ours*, we will also develop bonds of loyalty. Inter alia, loyalty will develop as the disposition to stick with the object of our intrinsically valued association in the face of temptations and other pressures to self-servingly compromise their associational underpinnings.

Obviously, some of our loyalties will be more central and resilient than others: the loyalty we develop to a sporting club is likely to be less important to us than the loyalty we develop to our families. In many cases, a particular prioritizing of loyalties will achieve some sort of social recognition – we generally expect people to value loyalty to their families over loyalty to their sporting clubs. That is because we consider that the relational values implicit in the former are more important to human flourishing (probably instrumentally as well as intrinsically) than those implicit in the latter.⁸

Of some relevance to the issue of patriotism, our associative connections may be either self-chosen or given, allowing that there may be degrees to which we can exercise control over them. We have little choice about our family or ethnicity, and so, to the extent that we develop loyalties to them, there will be little choice about the particular family or ethnic group to which any loyalty will be developed. By some sort of contrast, we generally have considerable choice over who will be our friends and marriage partners. Patriotic ties, or the citizenships in which such ties are usually grounded, tend to develop toward

the unchosen end, a fact that can have some relevance to the acceptability of a person's patriotism. Although we may have some choice about whether to be patriotic (or to give up our patriotism), patriotism is usually inculcated, and we often have limited choices about the object of our patriotism.

Coming to value an associative relationship for its own sake is not inconsistent with also valuing it instrumentally. Most close friendships (often referred to as end-friendships) are valued not only for the intrinsic satisfactions associated with our being related to particular others as friends but also because friends can be counted upon to be there for us when help is needed. Although the two kinds of value are not reducible to the other, they may be linked. A friend who is never there for us and who will never put herself out for us, and not just because she is in no position to do so, may well become our erstwhile friend or show herself to have been a false friend.

For most of us, at least those of us privileged to live in liberal democratic societies, our flourishing is mediated via multiple associational involvements – a significant number of friends, different family groupings, and various educational, cultural, vocational, religious, sporting, and professional involvements. For the most part, these involvements work in manageable concert, with recognized prioritizations in the event that tensions arise, even though it is also appreciated that disruptive conflicts will occasionally occur. What is of critical importance, however, is that many of these associational groupings and connections, along with the people who populate them, require substantial infrastructures and mediating structures if they are to be sustained. That is, our flourishing presupposes a stable and functional network of supporting institutional structures and processes.

It is at this point that the issue of a polity (or, more accurately, *polities*) arises – though not *de novo* – because the cluster of associations that I have suggested are important to our flourishing would not have developed to the point at which they could help us were it not for the prior existence of at least a (local, regional, and national) political order. The formation of *polities* is as much a matter of social evolution as of conscious decision making. That is why *the state* as we now tend to think of it is a latecomer in the human social order. Let me now attempt to develop this.

3 Flourishing and Civic Order

The ultimate question here is whether a person's country or *patria* is the kind of associative arrangement that it would be good or even obligatory to value for its own sake, as one's own, thus engendering loyal commitments and obligations to it. It is by no means self-evident that it is. It is argued that patriotism is on a par with racism or almost inevitably engenders bad faith (Gomberg 1990;

Keller 2005). Even Primoratz, who approaches patriotism in his usual measured fashion, concludes that unless construed as *ethical* patriotism – something of a revisionist claim – patriotism is morally neutral: “morally speaking, it has nothing to be said for it” (2002, 456). So it is incumbent on me to offer an argument for seeing what Primoratz dubs “worldly patriotism” as something to be morally anticipated in the ordinary course of events.

In making my case, I work with a variant of a familiar though admittedly controversial argument in political philosophy – that of the social contract.⁹ Provided that we think of the contract as a normative construct for thinking about liberal democratic polities rather than as a piece of social history, I believe that some of its more controversial aspects can be harmlessly bracketed.

As I wish to exploit it, the argument starts with an assumption that, *as we encounter them*, humans are agents whose relations with each other are, at their deepest level, governed by moral considerations.¹⁰ The point is not that all human conduct is morally motivated and justified, but that in determining how to live, humans give a notional preeminence to moral (or, perhaps, ethical) considerations.¹¹ This is not to dispute Bernard Williams’s arguments about the importance that personal projects will have for the way in which we structure our lives, but to recognize that, as even Williams sometimes appears to do, our deepest and most defining projects need to pass some form of moral muster if the claim that without them we would not have a life worth living is to bear the argumentative weight it is accorded (1981, 14, 18, and esp. 17; Williams 1973, 116).

The capacity to determine our conduct by means of normative judgments of appropriateness and inappropriateness as well as the exercise of this capacity is what – for Immanuel Kant – constitutes our dignity as humans: “the dignity of man consists precisely in his capacity to make universal law, although only on condition of being himself also subject to the laws he makes” (1956, sec. II, Akad. 440). Classical social contractarians such as John Locke spoke instead of a *natural law*, discernible by all rational beings as properly mediating the relations of natural rights holders. But however we formulate the argument – and there are many ways of making it – the fundamental point is that we accord moral considerations a distinctive and authoritative place in human associational life.

Taken together with my earlier remarks about the essential sociality of humans, virtue or morality (not to be identified with a particular moral theory) thus assumes a fundamental importance for human flourishing: *ceteris paribus*, according preeminence to moral considerations will be a precondition for human flourishing. Now, add to this the further point that I made at the end of the last section, namely, that for those of us whose conception of human flourishing has been nurtured by liberal values, there will most likely be a great diversity and complexity to our associational involvements. Apart from distinctively individual goals, we will belong to diverse, valued, and intersecting

associative relations. Two further features of this, already implicit in some of my previous remarks, deserve notice. First, there is our flexibility or even malleability (cf. Passmore 1965). There may be no one fixed way in which we can individually flourish and our individual ways of flourishing may develop and change over time. And second, the diversity of associational involvements that most of us have and that we recognize as integral to our flourishing tends to function as a kind of *check-and-balance* mechanism that keeps us individually from monomaniacal passions and socially from megalomaniacal institutions: there is a *jostle* and *juggle* to our lives that works in favor of mediating social institutions.

My contention here is that the complexity and diversity of our associational involvements is practically manageable only if there is some form of morally responsive social order, one that both provides for the coordination and support of such involvements and responds in situations in which normative boundaries have been breached. As the old social contractarians saw it, although the ideal situation would be for the *natural law* that undergirds our individual relations also to mediate our various and diverse associative involvements, nevertheless, for people as we find them, that is not how it goes (Locke 1764, chap. 9). Individually, we tend to be too self-centered or shortsighted for that. Therefore, as those contractarians observed, in order to mediate our social interactions and secure them against invasion, it makes good sense that we pursue some form of social organization that will both regulate our individual relations and oversee our various associative involvements. For classical liberals, this form of social organization was centrally represented by the system of law making, adjudication, and enforcement that is at the heart of the juridical order we refer to as a polity or state. The state – or a state-like formation – ordinarily constitutes the administrative core of a country or *patria*. Note, however, that such a regulatory order was not intended to constitute an abandonment of a powerless morality so much as an articulation of it for a complex social environment. The various dimensions of that civic order are themselves susceptible to and in need of moral scrutiny and criticism. There is nothing sacrosanct about a state or even the state.

I emphasize that the state is not itself a country or *patria*, and as Mark Twain observes in the earlier quote, one may oppose a particular state formation in the name of the country. One may also defend the formation of a state without committing to the importance of a country. Nevertheless, it is almost always the case that some state formation (or interlocking series of formations) will constitute a critical juridical structure within a country/*patria*. This is because states bind together, moderate, imprint themselves on, and help to secure the people, land, terrain, culture, history, and network of social institutions that comprise a country. Patriotism as I understand it is to be conceived of as a loyalty that has regard to this complex whole. It encompasses or is at least linked with a governed social order that reaches backward and forward and

embodies a distinctive and roughly characterizable (though not uniform) form of life. As noted earlier, any actual patriotism will not be free-floating – it will always be particularized. Thus, a patriot will be Australian, American, Italian, or Ecuadorian, and it should be possible to provide some broad and recognizable, even if somewhat contestable and evolving, specification of what it is to be each of these.¹²

Although this account of a *patria* may look rather instrumental – and indeed has an important instrumental dimension to it – we can also see how it comes to and indeed ought to be valued not merely instrumentally but also for its own sake as an aspect of what one perceives oneself to be. Not only does a country enable the protection of rights and mediation among potentially conflicting groupings, but this complex also becomes integral to the *distinctive forms of life* that its citizens will value for their own sake and with which they identify as aspects of their flourishing. Thus, Australians will and ought to develop a loyalty to Australia – to forms of life that are constituted not only by social, cultural, and political institutions but also by the land and environment represented in the complex unity that is a country – *their* country. Their identities are, in part, created by and expressed through that complex of institutional and cultural forms that constitute it as what it is. So also will and ought it to be for Americans to the United States and Germans to Germany. Australians will not value Germany in this way, and the French will not value Australia in that way. Nor should they. Nevertheless, Americans, Germans, and Australians may each acknowledge the legitimacy of and even admire others' distinctive patriotisms.¹³ With the advance of globalization, it is important that such mutuality of patriotic recognition occurs. Moreover, in multicultural societies – such as the United States – that have been consciously constructed via broad immigration policies combined with liberal social ideals, there may even be celebrations of hyphenated patriots: Irish Americans, Chinese Americans, and even Newyoricans, people who blend forms of life in distinctive ways. Although it is assumed that there will be some compromise and even subordination of traditions and loyalties in such blendings, they need not be seen as inimical to American patriotism but as partially constitutive of it.

It is not easy to pin down what is distinctive about each country and therefore not easy to give precise content to, say, Australian or American patriotism. Indeed, there may be varying and even conflicting accounts of what it involves. There is no unitary set of patriotically relevant characteristics, but rather overlapping clusters of factors that articulate a broadly recognizable representation of the country – in its diversity as well as unity. We should probably think in terms of a mostly shared commitment to basic institutions (as enshrined in founding documents or a constitution), a mostly shared primary language, a symbolically recounted history, widely shared social rituals, a distinctive territory, and beyond that a large number of characteristics (with

relations among them), some of which will engage some citizens more than others but that are nevertheless held together by structural bonds and institutional and cultural overlaps.

Just because of the integrative and formative role that a country can be expected to play in the lives of its citizens, especially those who have been born in it, patriotic loyalty is not only likely to develop but also to carry normative significance. That is, a country's citizens are likely to develop a normative commitment to it and will be prepared to *put out* for their country in the event that it is threatened or falls short of how they conceive it to be. Patriots will (ordinarily) fight for their country's security and may well support a coherent (albeit contested) immigration policy. To do so will be important to their identity and integral to their flourishing. This, however, does not require that patriots be committed to a rigid cultural, ethnic, political, or religious status quo – a problematic expectation in an increasingly interconnected world. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, a country will have both a narrative and aspirational aspect to it. When it comes to change, though, patriots are more likely to be reformers than revolutionaries.¹⁴ John F. Kennedy's rousing "ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country" captures the essence of this form of patriotism (1961). It sees the country not as a means but also as an end. And in opposition to those advocating a blind or unthinking patriotism, Carl Schurz put it succinctly: "My country, right or wrong; if right, to be *kept* right; and if wrong, to be *set* right" (1872, 1287). Although such patriotism may elicit the supreme sacrifice of dying for one's country, it may also embrace a robust but loyal opposition.

The point, basically, is this: countries frame our lives in important ways. They frame them, not only in the sense that they moderate many of the associational ties that are integral to our identities, but because of what they themselves distinctively contribute to the character of those ties – a specific history, geography, political tradition, culture, and economy. They come themselves to be part of the identity we acquire and for which, ipso facto, we develop loyal obligations.

4 Some Cautions

At this point, I need to offer some clarifications and qualifications, especially as they relate to my underlying conception of a country as a normatively significant associational object. I have three points to make concerning the scope of a *patria*, its narrative character, and its possibilities for evil:

(1) When I speak of a country or *patria* and of patriotism as loyalty to one's *patria*, I do not want to fix the idea of *patria* too narrowly. As we presently

conceive of them, *patriae* are usually thought to comprise clusters of factors including land, language or dialect, cultural traditions, and institutions structured by the kind of constitutional and juridical orders that emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, in some form or other, *countries* have existed for millennia, and human flourishing does not need a modern *state* for its realization. That is partly because some of the central associative elements for human flourishing – family, ethnic group, village organizations, and religious communities, all integral parts of what we speak of as countries – have very ancient histories and probably did not require anything as elaborate as the modern state for their coordination and sustenance. Nevertheless, they needed *something*, as the contractarian artifice of a state of nature was designed to show.¹⁵

Early in the *Politics*, Aristotle remarks that “man is by nature a political animal” (1885, 1: 1253a2; see also Mulgan 1974). To understand what he is getting at, we need to take account of an important part of Aristotle’s methodology. He believes that if you want to understand something’s nature, you should look at it when it is fully or ideally realized. Humans, Aristotle thinks, come to realize themselves fully only in the context of a *polis* or city-state and not in some prepolitical association. What for Aristotle is a *polis* we might now think of as a country. So important is the *polis* for Aristotle that he is prepared to say that “the state (*polis*) is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual” (1885, 1: 1253a19). What I think Aristotle is suggesting here is that for the full development of the individual, for the individual’s flourishing, or achievement of *eudaimonia*, it is necessary that there be an overarching or framing social order with which an individual engages. *Patriae* offer distinctive forms of social experience and participation, and only a social order as embracing as a *patria* is able to foster and hold together the variety of associational arrangements that is necessary for our full realization.¹⁶ As I have suggested, the most stable and successful kind of *patria* will probably have a constitution, be governed by law, and be likely to include a set of administrative institutional structures to promulgate, adjudicate, and enforce them. It will countenance, support, mediate, and imprint a wide range of flexible and distinctive cultural options and opportunities for participation. In addition, it will look outward as well as inward; it will be concerned about the security of its borders, its physical environment, and its way of life, concerned with outside threats as well as disruption from within.

So, in conceiving of patriotism as loyalty to one’s country, I do not want to structure the *patria* too rigidly. Patriotism is simply loyalty to the overarching territory and narrative social order of which one is a member, generally as a *citizen*. It may be something as small as the Athenian *polis*, and in theory, it could even be something as expansive as the ancient amphictyony or modern European Union (EU). One may have loyalties to both France and the EU, just as one may have loyalties to the State of Queensland as well as to Australia.

One may of course have a stronger or more demanding loyalty to one than to the other, and as secessionists will insist, sometimes, one may have to choose between them. Generally, though, a *patria* will be seen as the structure through which one is connected by *citizenship*.

Might countries wither away? Well, the state, which provides a specific kind of structural glue, might wither away. It is, after all, like so many of the ways of ordering our social milieux, contingent on a range of considerations that could be other than they are. I do not suppose that angels need a state, though they might still have a *patria*. And people as we find them may become other than what they are. But I suspect that, even with all the interest in, on the one hand, cosmopolitanism (with its many varieties) and, on the other hand, anarchism, some form of *patria* will need to be with us for a long time to come. Even though the countries of the EU may largely agree to certain broader constraints and commonalities (such as the euro), they have not done so at the expense of their patriotic heritages. Certainly, (Westphalian) countries have their moral dangers – chauvinism, jingoism, isolationism, and internal repression being prime among them. But such excesses are not written into their fabric or into patriotism.¹⁷ We need not commit ourselves timelessly to some form of social organization to see it as worthy or even demanding of our current support.

Even though I think that for the foreseeable future states will remain the primary context for our flourishing, I do not wish to underestimate the contingency of this argument for our flourishing. Martha Nussbaum, for example, a strong supporter of flourishing conceived of as the development of capabilities, does not find adequate the form of patriotism that I defend here (2011). Instead, partly as a consequence of our increasing global interconnectedness, she moves in a more cosmopolitan direction (Nussbaum 1996).

(2) The second thing to emphasize is that *patriae* are historical continuants. As I have already noted, we should construe countries as dynamic entities. Their territorial boundaries and constitution may remain stable over a long period of time, but their characters are likely to display considerable variation, depending in part on leadership, migration, economic conditions, population changes, war and its absence, and so forth.¹⁸ Occasionally, a country may *cease to exist* and then be reconstituted, as was the case with Poland between 1795 and 1918. Writing about countries in more normative terms, Alasdair MacIntyre and Richard Rorty have characterized them as narratives or projects – not simply formal structures or static unities but ongoing political and cultural phenomena that to varying degrees live up to or fall short of the normative ways in which they imagine themselves (MacIntyre 1984; Rorty 1998). A patriotism that is dedicated to the status quo is conservative in a way in which patriotism – and probably any loyalty – is not meant to be. When Carl Schurz says that the patriot needs to *keep* or *set* right his country, he reflects

this normative dynamic. Albert Hirschman provides a broader theoretical framework through his view – shared by other political economists – that all institutions have a natural tendency to decline in respect of that for which they stand and their recuperation requires the loyalty of their members and beneficiaries, because only those who are loyal will be willing to invest the effort that is required to restore the institution to its varied ideals or, more aspirationally, to progress it toward what it holds itself to be (1970). More generally, though, countries will see themselves as evolving on a number of fronts.

Post 9/11, when for a time it became a popular political strategy to tar as *disloyal* critics of the George W. Bush administration, a rash of “Dissent is not Disloyalty” bumper stickers began to appear. As the critics saw it, the form taken by the US response to terrorism was incompatible with values for which the country had historically stood, albeit only imperfectly realized, and their opposition to counterterrorist tactics and the invasion of Iraq were intended to recall the country – and especially its political leadership – to the liberal democratic values enshrined in its Declaration of Independence, Constitution, aspirational public rhetoric, and a fair bit of its history.

Even though patriotism is not compatible with contempt for one’s country, it may be compatible with a great deal of criticism of what one’s country has become or has failed to become.¹⁹ A case in point was the lively dispute in Israel over a 2009 *Los Angeles Times* Op-Ed written by Neve Gordon, Chair of the Politics Department at Ben Gurion University, in which he called for a graduated boycott of Israel for its treatment of Palestinians (2009). Gordon was called a traitor, even by many liberal nationalists, and efforts were made to dismiss or demote him. Was he unpatriotic? I believe not, even though people may construe their patriotism in diverse ways. There is no reason why a Jew who has chosen to live and rear his family in Israel because he is glad to live in a country in which he can feel at home *as a Jew* should not feel patriotically indignant that under its current leadership and as a result of social polarization, the country has increasingly become, as he called it, an “apartheid regime” and in need of tough love.²⁰ Wanting to put pressure on one’s country to act in ways that reflect what one considers to be its core liberal democratic values is not the same as wanting its destruction. The key to continued patriotism is whether the patriotic critic believes his country to be redeemable or whether, instead, the offenses it has committed are viewed as too serious to be forgivable (as many German Jews did). If one sees one’s country as an ongoing project, with successes as well as failures, but one nevertheless remains optimistic about it (and, probably, about one’s ability to contribute to that project), one might speak of continued patriotic loyalty despite harsh criticism of the status quo (cf. Keller 2005, 577).

Debates of the kind just adverted to nevertheless suggest that countries need not have a single harmonious narrative, but may instead embody a range of

overlapping and even contested narratives that play out in the ongoing political process and social conflicts that tend to be part of our social experience.

(3) Even if *patriae* are complex associative arrangements that are good or important to have, it does not follow that every *patria* is a good one or that loyalty to every *patria* is warranted. This applies particularly in relation to the state, a central element in most *patriae*. The failures of a particular *patria*'s infrastructure may make revolution or administrative collapse desirable. In this respect, *patriae* may not be so different from families. Familial relationships may be important to a good life, but the same may not hold for what particular families or family members have become. Some families are toxic and particular family members may be evil, and the loyalty that may be owed to them (and that is generally incumbent on us by virtue of our associational connections) will not be deserved and ought to be forgone or overridden by other considerations.²¹

I take it, for example, that Stalinist Russia was fundamentally flawed, that the Third Reich's reinterpretation of *Deutschland über alles* was deeply misguided, and that these regimes created conditions that made acceptable expressions of patriotic loyalty exceedingly difficult and probably unseemly. And so, from the claim that patriotism is justified, even obligatory, it would not follow that it is acceptable no matter what or that it is obligatory *tout court*. Particular countries – especially as expressed through their state apparatuses – may forfeit their claim to the loyalty of their citizens. This, presumably, was the contention of American colonists in the latter part of the eighteenth century as they contemplated their loyalty to England. No doubt, there will be considerable disagreement about what a country has to do to forfeit the loyalty of its citizens or to make revolution justifiable – that is, the kind of revolution that will transform it into a significantly different or *new* country.²² But we would not have to resolve that to agree that some particular *patria* might either lose its legitimacy or at least any moral claim it has to the loyalty of its members.

5 Clarifying the Status of Patriotic Loyalty

I have endeavored to sketch the outlines of an argument to the effect that patriotic loyalty is not merely permissible but, in the event that one's country shows evidence of being able to live up to what it aspires to or claims for itself, good to cultivate. Let me try to fill that out and extend it further. The relevant considerations take us in two directions – on the one hand, to see the instrumental value of patriotic loyalty and, on the other hand, to see its intrinsic value for those who are its citizens. If I am right in thinking that, for most of us – that is, for twenty-first-century liberals – our flourishing requires not simply a large variety of associative involvements and other social and cultural

ties but also their effective coordination, support, and oversight, then we have the basic ingredients for some sort of instrumental argument in favor of support for a civic order or country. If we add to this that the complex of associational ties is held together as some sort of unity – that is, as a broadly conceived way of life embedded within and sustained by a distinctively characterizable country – then it is likely that we will view it not simply as instrumentally valuable but also as integral to our identity and therefore intrinsically valuable. In identifying with it, we see our commitment to it as obligatory.

Of course, we may view it as less. But what I am suggesting is that, as would be the case were we to see friendships or familial or other intimate relations simply as instrumentally valuable, we would be shortchanging them and lay ourselves open to criticism for viewing them as only or at most a convenience.

The obligations of patriotism will generally be diverse. Not only may there be a *prima facie* obligation to serve one's country in the event that it is attacked, but one may also have a *prima facie* obligation not to migrate to another country simply for reasons of personal advancement. In some cases, no doubt, the obligation is not very strong (and easily overridden), as leaving would not jeopardize the interests of one's country. In other cases, however, one's leaving may be part of a brain drain that seriously depletes a country of some of its most valuable and critical resources.²³

There are two subsidiary issues that probably need attention at this point: (1) what should we consider our patriotic obligations to be and (2) how strong are such obligations? In an extended discussion of patriotism, each would warrant more attention than I provide in the sketch that follows:

(1) At a minimum, patriotic obligations will require that we do not act in ways that jeopardize our country's interests. This is one reason that a person may have a patriotic obligation not to be part of a brain drain. And no doubt, it rules out the passing on of national security information to an enemy country or, perhaps, to revolutionary forces within one's country.²⁴ Positively, patriotism may require that one agree to defend one's country in the event that it is attacked, though I doubt whether this extends to being obligated to fight in whatever wars one's country chooses to involve itself. Thus, I doubt whether it was a *patriotic* obligation for Australian or even US forces to serve in Iraq (whatever other arguments one might give for their doing so).

These expectations pretty much follow from the view that loyalty is perseverance in the conditions that sustain an identity-contributing relationship or affiliation. Patriotism expects from us some form of self-sacrificial commitment to the well-being of our country. That said, what one views as legitimate patriotic obligations will, to some extent, also be a function of the strength of the association we have with our country. Even though each person should ordinarily recognize some minimal patriotic obligations by virtue of what the

country is for the person whose particular identity is enabled and expressed through it, what additional patriotic obligations a person has is likely to reflect other, and perhaps more individual, dimensions of the association that exists. As with family relationships, the more that a particular family member means to one, the greater the burdens or obligations of loyalty are likely to be. If, however, one's country has failed badly in its coordinating and supportive function, as a child of African slaves or German Jew might feel, then little or nothing may be owed as a matter of patriotic obligation. For most of us, however – especially those of us in liberal democracies – something by way of patriotic commitment ought to be expected. Moreover, given the entropic tendencies of institutions, some active and costly engagement in the maintenance of social and political life would seem to be a reasonable expectation.

Of course, not every obligation that one has to a country will be a patriotic obligation. The obligation to pay taxes on earnings is a political obligation, but probably not a patriotic one. It is more like a membership obligation; it is, moreover, an obligation shared with earners who are not members of a polity. Voting too might ordinarily be seen as a membership obligation rather than as a patriotic one, though other more costly forms of political participation may more appropriately be patriotically motivated. Patriotic obligations will be those that arise from an identification that is formed – or that is expected to be forged – between a person and a particular country. They will cover a range of acts, some fairly symbolic, others quite sacrificial, ranging from ritual (though not necessarily uncritical) celebrations of its history to volunteering to defend it – acts that deflect us from the temptations of narrow self-servingness.

(2) Not every failure to fulfill a patriotic obligation will constitute disloyalty. From the fact that we have patriotic obligations, it does not follow that we should give them precedence over all other normative claims to which we may be subject. Even legitimate patriotic obligations may be overridden, and sometimes there may be difficult decisions to make about which of two obligations (including loyalty-reflective ones) should be given precedence. Sartre's example of the young man who is faced with a choice between attending to the needs of his ailing mother and joining the French Resistance is a case in point (Sartre 1974, 35–38). Even countries that are inclined to rate patriotic duties very highly may make concessions to family commitments if, for example, others in the family have sacrificed their lives in their country's service.²⁵

In cases in which such normative conflicts arise, we will need to engage in a process of judgment, in which a range of considerations will need to be assembled and then traded off and balanced against each other. I know of no algorithmic way of doing this. It is not possible to argue that wider obligations take precedence over narrower obligations; a lot depends on the content

of the obligations, matters relating to urgency, the sacrifices involved, the consequences of giving precedence to one, and so on. It should, however, be possible to enumerate some of the factors that are likely to come into play and to initiate a deliberative process in which they can be brought into play.

6 Does Patriotism Encourage Bad Faith?

So far, I have suggested that a country is the kind of associative object that *ceteris paribus* may rightly expect our patriotic commitment. But another dimension of that commitment might give us pause. Simon Keller believes that the problem with patriotism lies not primarily with the kinds of claims that countries may reasonably make of us as with the demands of loyalty – loyalty in general and in particular loyalty to country – which, he suggests, inclines us to bad faith and is therefore *probably a vice* (2005, 566).

At this point, I want to sidestep an extended discussion of Keller's primarily attitudinal account of loyalty (2007, 21). As I have indicated, I see loyalty as constituted primarily by perseverance in the expectations involved in maintaining a particularistic association or relationship and – especially – perseverance in the face of self-serving temptations to compromise those expectations. That is, it is a disposition to behave in a certain way toward an associative object with which one identifies – a disposition to act in ways that respect the associative object's interests. Although I think Keller's account makes loyalty more vulnerable to corruption and manipulation than I am prepared to accept, I nevertheless agree with him that loyalty (and not just patriotic loyalty) is susceptible to bad faith. However, as I shall argue, this susceptibility is better seen as a moral hazard of patriotism than as a reason to steer clear of it.

For Keller, being a patriot is more than being loyal to country. It is, he writes, "to have a serious loyalty to country, one that is not characterized by the phenomenology of choice, is essentially grounded in the country's being yours, and involves reference to (what are taken to be) valuable defining qualities of the country" (2005, 577). Parsing Keller's account, a patriot has a loyalty to country – that is, is emotionally committed to taking the country's side. More than that, however, patriotic loyalty involves a serious commitment – it requires those who have it to be willing to make significant sacrifices for it; such loyalty (or its specific coloration) is generally not chosen but determined by one's place of birth; and although it is rooted in the relationship one bears to it, it must also make reference to certain features of the country that are seen as having value "from the neutral point of view" (2005, 574).

Given such an account, how does loyalty, and in particular patriotic loyalty, *constitutionally* incline one to what Sartre speaks of as bad faith – that is, "hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth" (quoted in Keller

2005, 579)? As I read Keller, more than one feature of patriotic loyalty contributes to this strong tendency, though such features do not contribute independently but in some sort of concert. First of all, there is the fact that one does not generally have much choice about the specific object of one's patriotic loyalty – say, the United States or Australia. A particular country becomes the object of our potential loyalty by virtue of our being born in it (or of our parents being citizens of it). An individual who thinks he or she ought to be patriotic does not then ask the question: of which country? (Keller 2005, 568). The country is given. Secondly, patriotic identification is usually inculcated from a young age; an emotional bond is fostered and reinforced by means of certain propositions about the country's history and characteristics that are intended to constitute it a source of pride (Keller 2005, 581). What this results in, Keller believes, is a set of beliefs about one's country which, though believed to be true and to warrant patriotic loyalty, are largely impervious to challenge and, in that resistance to challenge – self-deception, if you will – the patriot's bad faith is manifested.

My response to this account is, first of all, to concede that patriotism is prone to manipulation and, moreover, *is* frequently manipulated. The fact that the official educational systems and political apparatuses of most countries foster – often deliberately – an idealized and relatively uncritical patriotism makes their citizens especially vulnerable to a corrupted or blind patriotism and in certain cases even chauvinism and jingoism.

The question to be asked, however, is whether that vulnerability is sufficient to constitute the loyalty involved in patriotism as a vice rather than as an easily manipulable and corrupted virtue. I argue for the latter. My argument has three main points: (1) much of what contributes to patriotic connection has little to do with kinds of problematic normative beliefs about a country that trouble Keller; (2) a good deal of patriotic discourse is aspirational in a way that is supportive of criticism; and (3) although patriotism is quite compatible with having one's eyes open with respect to one's country, we should not see all resistance to criticism as signaling bad faith:

(1) Although, as I have already suggested, there is a contingency about countries, I do not think of them as easily dispensable. For most of us, our countries provide an important cultural, historical, and environmental as well as secure context for our living and flourishing. However, as well as having only instrumental value for us, they are usually important sources of meaning and identification.

Critical to Keller's position is the view that “truly patriotic loyalty is entangled with a conception of the beloved country as having certain valuable characteristics, characteristics that make it, in some minimal way at least, genuinely worthy of patriotic loyalty” (Keller 2005, 574). Such characteristics will “have value from the neutral point of view.” I do not deny that there may be such

characteristics, but Keller's account of patriotism asks us to focus too narrowly. A significant part of what draws us to *our* country, rather than to *patria* in some amorphous sense, comprises features that possess no special significance from a neutral point of view but are very specific to the country itself and that may have relatively little resonance for people from other countries. It is often these that give countries their distinctive character and make the patriot feel that her country is special in a way that other countries are not. To start with a trivial – but not so trivial – example, the Australian connection to and fondness for Vegemite is unlikely to be shared by others. It is almost certainly an acquired taste, and one that Australians acquire from a very young age, as part of the process of acquiring their tastes. Yet it has a certain iconic status for most Australians. Many other ways of seeing, feeling, thinking, and being that are distinctively Australian are also acquired in much the same way and are strongly associated with specifically Australian patriotism. Think of Australian forms of humor, the culture of laid-back mateship, its outdoorsy and can-do attitudes, and so forth. Think also of how much, even in what is reputedly the most metropolitan country in the world, the Australian psyche is informed by its landscapes and bushland. A powerful example of the latter can be found in Dorothea Mackellar's "My Country," a poem that many Australians learn in childhood as part of their Australian enculturation (1908). Apart from the absence of chauvinism and jingoism, what is interesting about this paean to Australia is that it is written in the recognition that what makes Australians distinctively and peculiarly Australian is something for which others cannot be expected to have much feeling. Consider the first two stanzas, in which Mackellar contrasts what helps to inform British patriotism with her own:

*The love of field and coppice, of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens is running in your veins.
Strong love of grey-blue distance, brown streams and soft, dim skies –
I know but cannot share it, my love is otherwise.*

*I love a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges, of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons, I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror – the wide brown land for me!*

Of course, there is far more than landscape to patriotism, and there is often a soft pedaling of a murky past and compromised present. Nevertheless, the focus in much patriotism may be on those distinctive features of a country that make it desirable for those who live in it, as features and hues of their patrial experience, and not from some neutral point of view, or as *better than* others. It is this complex of features that helps to sustain our attachment even when we become aware of less desirable aspects of its social history. It may also and – one

hopes – should manifest itself in a recognition that others may and, indeed, should value their own countries in their own distinctive ways.

(2) A further point about many patriotic declarations is that they have an idealistic or aspirational character – that is, they constitute benchmarks against which the actual country can be measured. Most likely, these will map or reflect universalist moral values – such as the rule of law, democratic institutions, cultural vibrancy, and so on. Or more likely, given the particularism of patriotism, these aspirational benchmarks will comprise distinctive specifications of such universalist moral values – democracy American style or an Australianized version of the rule of law. In a country such as the United States, which is structured around ideals rather than ethnicity and ancient history, aspirational points of reference are likely to predominate. As a primarily migrant country, what binds its citizens, apart from various cultural distinctives, are – in this case – liberal democratic ideals embedded in uniquely fashioned institutions. These constitute a means to critique the status quo – a loyal opposition that calls for the country to be made right as well as kept right – without abandoning the patriotism. This is not to deny that there is often blindness involved – particularly in some invocations of *American exceptionalism*. Nevertheless, it is notable that Katharine Lee Bates's much loved and intensely patriotic "America the Beautiful" does not hold back from Schurz's call to repair its flaws:

*O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thy every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self control,
Thy liberty in law (1895; see also Sherr 2001).*

If we view countries as narratives or projects – not stone monuments – then we are given the freedom and even an encouragement to subject *what is* to the scrutiny of *what might or should be*. It may be in the interest of the powers that be or status quo to cast either the present or a favored patriotic representation in stone, but most countries – at least those professing liberal democratic values – contain sufficient normative resources to enable a self-critical patriotism.

(3) Nevertheless, I accept that patriotism will to some degree be informed by a set of founding and later historical myths – idealized and even falsified stories of hardship, heroism, and triumph – and that these are often inappropriately represented to exemplify values *from the neutral point of view*.

What should we say about such myths? No doubt, blind patriots will refuse to accept murky truths about their country's past. Just as those who think that morality will be threatened if belief in God is called into question, there are those who think that patriotism requires that one avert one's eyes from serious historical engagement and that one should perpetuate the sanitized myths of early schooling lest the country be corrupted and weakened from within. I hold no brief for blind patriotism or blind loyalty of any kind, whether to friends, family, or faith. But it is also a myth that learning the truth about one's country will undermine one's patriotism. No doubt, it may if one's patriotism is sustained by a single thread. But if, as I have suggested, one's patriotism involves a complex engagement with one's country, confronting the murky past or even present will not generally undermine a patriotic commitment. One may stay resolutely patriotic at the same time as one acknowledges the failures and crimes of the past. Indeed, acknowledging those failures and crimes may enable an equally strong but more mature patriotism to develop – one that is less conservative and more reformist.

Nevertheless, it is to be expected that there will be some initial resistance to reports of the bad doings of one's country. Resistance is bound to occur whenever trust (however created) already exists and something comes along to challenge that trust. Whenever an associative bond is challenged – whether it concerns one's spouse, child, friend, profession, or country – such resistance will be encountered. Trust formed would not be trust were one not to display an initial predisposition to take the side of that in which one has placed one's trust.²⁶ That said, criticism is no reason for an automatic or knee-jerk rejection of its validity. If an Australian patriot is presented with information about the settlement and development of her country and of its military history – that is, about the treatment of early convicts, the ongoing situation of its indigenous peoples, and the foolish debacles of Gallipoli and Vietnam – this may sit uncomfortably with idealized stories of early exploration, drovers, and wartime heroism. It may take some courage to confront these, just as it may take courage to confront negative stories one hears about a friend or family member. But to be and remain a patriot, one need not reject such stories out of hand or hide one's head in the sand. It is fully compatible with one's being a patriot to wish to be assured that what one hears is seriously, thoughtfully, and not maliciously intended. At the same time, an educated and thoughtful patriot – any educated and thoughtful patriot – will probably realize that a good deal of every national history is written from a particular viewpoint and that it is all too likely that some of her country's historical hagiography will be overblown.²⁷

The real worry for me is not patriotism, which I regard as valuable and even important, but the manipulation of patriotism by the powers that be to reinforce and further their much more limited partisan goals. This manipulation takes place in a number of ways. One way is to rigidify patriotism to mean loyalty to

the current regime rather than loyalty to the larger narrative or project. A second way is to characterize dissent as disloyalty rather than recognize the legitimacy of a loyal opposition. A third way is to encourage the kind of bad faith that Keller sees as endemic to patriotism. And this can be done by controlling curricula and media in various ways. Unfortunately, each manipulative strategy is more prevalent than it should be.

The question that might now be asked is whether manipulations of patriotism are so prevalent and, given the disparity of power between a country's formal apparatus and its citizens, so virulent, that we do better to discourage patriotism altogether than to develop a more informed patriotism. I believe that this is a question to which Keller and I are inclined to offer different answers. I think patriotism is often prone to bad faith; he believes that on some occasions the bad faith of patriotism can be overcome. Callan raises a similar question in "Love, Idolatry, and Patriotism." Although he casts his discussion in terms of love of country and of how blinding love can be (but see Wolf 2014), the argument is as easily framed in terms of loyalty and its susceptibility to manipulation. Callan opines that "if humanity could make a bargain with God to make patriotism disappear, so that all its harms evaporated along with its benefits, maybe we should take the deal" (2006, 525–526). Nevertheless, he acknowledges, "no such bargain is on offer." We live in a world in which patriotism is and will remain a fact of our lives, and we do better to cultivate what he calls an innocent patriotism than simply to suffer the costs of idolatrous patriotism.

Callan probably comes down on the same side as Keller – seeing it as a troubling fact of the world that we live in, but whose problems are capable of mitigation. I, on the other hand, have wanted to argue that there are important identity-conferring aspects to patriotism, linked no doubt to the instrumental role that countries play in our lives but, because of their integrative character, are not limited to a merely instrumental role. Patriotism (like every other particularistic commitment) needs to be tamed so that its virtues are not overwhelmed by the vices to which it is prone.

7 The Convergence of Patriotism and Nationalism

Supporters of patriotism, along with those who see patriotism as morally neutral, frequently compare it favorably with nationalism, seeing the latter as, if not jingoistic, then at least chauvinistic. As Sydney Harris puts it,

Patriotism is proud of a country's virtues and eager to correct its deficiencies; it also acknowledges the legitimate patriotism of other countries, with their own specific virtues. The pride of nationalism, however, trumpets its country's virtues

and denies its deficiencies, while it is contemptuous toward the virtues of other countries. It wants to be, and proclaims itself to be, “the greatest,” but greatness is not required of a country; only goodness is. (1982, 209–210)

Although there is some truth to the contrast, it is, I believe, conveniently overdrawn. On the one hand, it fails to appreciate the rich and important sense of identification that membership of a national group can bring (such as membership in a larger *family*); on the other hand, it fails to recognize the extent to which patriotic loyalty needs to incorporate certain factors that are also elements of nationalism.

If a country is conceived of as something to which loyalty is appropriately given, it is because it comprises not merely a territory and a constitution but also a historical and cultural identity. It is often as though one is personally related to it. The relationship is not to be construed in terms of identification with a socially uniform group, but as a complex intertwining of distinct persons and groupings, unified in somewhat the same way as Wittgenstein’s rope (1953, sec. 67).

In a controversial attempt to capture this, John Stuart Mill argued that the free institutions that comprise a liberal democratic polity are hard to sustain if a country is made up of different nationalities: “Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist.” And “It is in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities” (1977, chap. 16). Mill recognizes that this is not always possible because of intermingling that has occurred, but he seeks to make as much virtue as possible out of this. His preferences, however, are clear: some form of assimilation is generally the better way to go:

Whatever really tends to the admixture of nationalities, and the blending of their attributes and peculiarities in a common union, is a benefit to the human race. Not by extinguishing types, of which, in these cases, sufficient examples are sure to remain, but by softening their extreme forms, and filling up the intervals between them. (Mill 1977)

This appears more benign than it is. Arguing that “experience proves that it is possible for one nationality to merge and be absorbed in another,” Mill contentiously adds: “when it was originally an inferior backward portion of the human race the absorption is greatly to [a country’s] advantage.” Although this reeks of nineteenth-century colonialism, the problem with which Mill grappled – that of developing a stable political culture – remains. This is especially the case in a multicultural or immigrant society. We should imagine a solution that

leads in the direction of both/and rather than either/or – ideally, at least in countries formed largely through migration, of a multiculturalism held together by supervening values and traditions that are respectful but also respecting.

Just as strong ethnocultural nationalism needs to be kept from invidious exclusion, so formalistic patriotism, as represented in the *abstract procedures and principles* that comprise Habermas's *constitutional patriotism* (1989; also Habermas 1992),²⁸ needs more cultural body if it is to bind a people together. Neither the United States nor Switzerland exemplifies such formalism. They expend a good deal of energy on creating, celebrating, and maintaining a supervening *American way of life* or *Swissness*. Rather than eschewing both patriotism and nationalism, we need something of each. What is needed – and it is implicit in the territorial aspirations of nationalism and the cultural dimensions of patriotism – is some form of spatial delineation or overarching tradition that moves the nationalist in the direction of the liberal patriot and the patriot in the direction of the liberal nationalist. As Margaret Canovan points out, this convergence is achieved in much the same way in each case: both national identity and citizenship are perpetuated through birth (2000). The identity of a second generation is inherited from the new country of their migrant parents – in which they now become bearers of the new culture to which their parents came. If their parents came to the United States, then baseball and Thanksgiving will be *theirs*, along with whatever constitutional values they have been taught to pledge their allegiance. This need not require the abandonment of their national ties but their subsumption within the larger ties of a country that – aspirationally, at least – proclaims its multiculturalism. And that, of course, is congruent with the increasing globalization of the twenty-first century: a patriotism that can look out as well as within – that can value the patriotisms of others as well as its own.

8 Conclusion

Although there is a contingency about *patria*, humans as we encounter them are associative beings who flourish through their evolving engagement with and dependence on a diversity of social relations – friendships, familial relations, organizational, professional, religious involvements, and so on. This rich complex of social relations is largely sustainable because it is embedded in the larger social framework of political and other institutions that help give countries their stability, unity, and particular identity. Aside from constituting an important ingredient in our flourishing, patriotic loyalty helps to sustain its prerequisites. Although, like most loyalties, patriotic loyalty is beset by moral hazards and is vulnerable to exploitation, it remains within our power to question its demands and revise its terms. That it is frequently a refuge for

scoundrels is no reason to eschew it but rather to ensure that it is thoughtfully and critically exercised. Blind loyalty is no more a model for loyalty than blind trust is a model for trust.

Notes

1. Although Boswell provides no immediate context for Johnson's remark, it is quite likely that he has in mind what he considers *false* patriots – Edmund Burke and his supporters. See further, available at <http://www.samueljohnson.com/qotw02q2.html#0630>, accessed July 11, 2014. Elsewhere, Johnson indicates his own patriotism.
2. This is the approach taken by Alasdair MacIntyre, and though his discussion has garnered much criticism, this aspect has not. See MacIntyre (1984) and also Keller (2007).
3. Whether all of these are necessary and jointly sufficient is a question I leave aside. As with most complex concepts, there is a tendency for somewhat divergent conceptualizations to develop from core features, and as is common with social concepts, competing normative considerations are also likely to be at work. See, for example, W.B. Gallie (1955–1956). Ludwig Wittgenstein's analogical use of a rope when explicating the concept of a game (1953, sec. 65–71) has similarities to George Orwell's characterization of England as “an everlasting animal stretching into the future and the past, and, like all living things, having the power to change out of recognition and yet remain the same” (1941, part 1).
4. By *personalized*, I do not mean that a country is to be viewed as a person – as corporations sometimes are – but that our strong identification with countries incorporates those who populate them, fellow Americans or Australians.
5. I have developed this at greater length in Kleinig (2013, 2014).
6. I do not of course deny that some (other) animals experience/require long periods of nurture. Nevertheless, it is qualitatively different from that of humans, for whom the medium of a developed language is a potent tool for growth and flourishing.
7. For a more detailed and nuanced development of some of the ideas implicit in this section, see Kleinig and Evans (2013). A broad defense of this way of thinking is found in Foot (2003).
8. I state this only as a defeasible presumption. Nevertheless, those who reverse the social priorities can expect to have their decision challenged.
9. In doing so, I offer a distinctively liberal democratic argument for what will ultimately be an argument for patriotism. I do not suggest that patriotism cannot exist or cannot be given a justification under an alternative political structure.
10. This appeal to humans *as we encounter them* is not intended as a *Grundnorm*. It may be, as Karl Marx and others have argued, that, as we find them, humans are alienated from their *true natures*. But these speculative accounts must make their case, both negative and positive, in the face of what we must deal with at a day-to-day level.
11. Cf. Joseph Butler: “Had it [conscience] strength as it has right; had it power, as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely rule the world” (1970, sec. II, 14).

Of course, and here is a point that I am already bracketing, there is an ongoing debate about this supposed *overridingness* of moral considerations. I do not wish to deny its controversiality.

12. For some brief reflections on Australian identity, see Stephens (2003), and for some similarly brief reflections on American identity, see Friedman (2008).
13. Just as liberals can recognize the diverse ways in which individuals are able to lead flourishing lives, they can recognize the diverse ways in which different communities provide contexts for human flourishing.
14. Patriots are likely to be concerned particularly about cultural integrity and progress, environmental quality, political stability, and economic and social conditions. Not all patriots may agree about what it is for which they are putting out. Some may see their patriotism as maintaining a status quo, others may seek to recover a supposedly lost past, whereas yet others may seek to bring the country closer to certain ideals that have never been fully realized. Generally, though, patriotic advocates for change will want to bring about change in a relatively orderly manner. See Feinberg (1990, chap. 29).
15. An anarchical or even (universalist) cosmopolitan social order may work for angels but only dubiously for humans as we find them.
16. Aristotle's point is not that we cannot have a good or satisfying life without political participation, but that a life in which political participation is included is likely to be more fully realized than one without. One might compare with this his views on friendship and of the superiority of virtue friendship over companion friendship.
17. Thoreau, however, offers some reasons for thinking otherwise (1993, 4–16).
18. We would, for example, give markedly different accounts of Australian patriotism in 1850, 1950, and 2000.
19. I agree with Keller that there would be something very strange about a person who said: "I am a true, genuine patriot, but there is nothing much that I like about my country; there is nothing important about my country for which I feel any affection" (2005, 574). For a different view, however, see Boxill (2009).
20. See the article on Neve Gordon available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neve_Gordon, accessed July 11, 2014. Whether the boycott proposal was wise or practicable is another matter.
21. These other considerations may be other loyalties or, perhaps, universalistic moral principles. There is a contingency about other loyalties as well, even in relationships – such as friendships – to which they are integral.
22. There are clearly some significant ontological but normatively laden questions here about whether a territorially bound country at t_1 is the same as or different from a country at t_2 that has roughly the same territorial boundaries but is different in other respects.
23. Human resources may not be the only ones that it would be unpatriotic to *export*. Profiteering citizens may export natural resources that will leave a country seriously depleted.
24. It is probably appropriate to note at this point that not everything deemed to be of national security importance is rightly regarded as such. Whatever one's judgment about Edward Snowden, I doubt whether he is legitimately considered unpatriotic.

25. An issue that arises with some poignancy in Israel. In such cases, patriotically defending one's country might be seen as supererogatory.
26. Keller tendentiously contrasts our readiness to believe such stories of other countries with our reluctance to believe such stories of our own. It may be the case that we should not be too ready to believe them in either case. But in the case in which some form of trust has already been established, there is good reason to be demanding about any contrary evidence. That does not gainsay that such trust may be blind or misguided. What is needed is open-mindedness (not empty-mindedness or lack of commitment), and that is consistent with trust.
27. This is likely to be true of any associational commitment, whether it is one's family, one's friends, one's religious group, one's profession, or one's place of employment.
28. However, as Anna Stilz has persuasively argued, Habermas's account of constitutional patriotism is probably to be articulated as a much fuller and particularized democratic project, something that a person can value for the particular *local* form that it takes and not simply as a bare structure of universalizable political principles (2009, chap. 6). As such, a person may value – as part of her patriotic heritage – the particulars of her polity without seeing them as being of value from some neutral point of view. Even so, I think that such patriotism is cast too narrowly.

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