Patriotism, Local and Global

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Introduction

"Patriotism" has, of course, been understood in numerous ways. I want to propose yet another one here. It derives from a definition of politics according to which it consists of neither the struggle over power nor the management of affairs of state or government; rather, politics is the practice of responding to conflict with dialogue.

What this means, exactly, should become clear as the essay unfolds. It begins by distinguishing between the ideas of "patriotism" and "nationalism" in historical, conceptual, and geographical terms. Patriotism, it is claimed, constitutes a political philosophy, a very general account of the form, or forms, of dialogue that citizens should engage in when responding to their conflicts. Nationalism, by contrast, is a political ideology, which is best understood as an account of the kinds of things citizens should be saying within those dialogues, in particular, when they take the form of negotiation. Then, in contrast to proceduralist and value pluralist political philosophies, patriotism is shown to uphold "conversation first, negotiation second, force third" as its central political maxim. Finally, the essay concludes with the claim that we should – all of us – be affirming a global patriotism, alongside the more local forms.

Patriotism and Nationalism

The two words, it goes without saying, are often used synonymously. But thinkers as different as George Orwell and Hannah Arendt have raised their objections, and they are right to do so.[1] Before explaining why, however, it's worth noting that both patriotism and nationalism support the idea that people should do more than take merely instrumental stances towards one another. Because to do only this is to be capable of sharing strictly "public goods," as economists call them, such things as dams or highways, whereas it is "common goods" that are the bases of genuine

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[1] See Orwell, "Notes on Nationalism," in *England, Your England: And Other Essays* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1953); and Arendt, "Herzl and Lazare," in *The Jewish Writings*, eds. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), p. 338.

communities. And if there is one thing about which both patriots and nationalists can agree, it is that there can be no real countries without them.

But what kind of community is a country? Countries are best understood as civic rather than national communities, since they are, above all, communities of citizens. One reason this must be so is that many of them contain more than one nation. States often fail to recognize this officially, of course, but it is the reality, even if only sociologically speaking. That is why it would have been better to have called the most encompassing political organization in the world the "United States" rather than "United Nations," since this would help us to appreciate how it's possible for many nations to share a single state. Alas, the name appears to have been taken.

Not that we should be satisfied with "United States" either; as we shall see, "Uniting States" would have been best. But first we need to look more closely at the distinction between patriotism and nationalism. The two differ in at least three ways: historically, conceptually, and geographically.

Regarding history, a "patriot" – to both the American and French revolutionaries, for example – is someone who "loves the laws," in Montesquieu famous phrase. Republican Rome was perhaps the chief model here, according to which citizens are friends of a sort, those who fulfill the ideal of *vivere civile* by making the laws that govern how they live their lives. Only this way can they ensure that those laws express their common good and so may be followed willingly, even spontaneously, rather than because of the police. Indeed, this is the only way a citizenry can be considered truly free. That, at least, is the central claim of the civic humanist tradition of political thought, one which extends back even further than Rome to the ancient Greek idea of the *polis*.[2]

Nationalism is different. For one thing, it is quintessentially modern, which is why the ancient Jewish "nation" in the Bible is today probably best referred to as a "religious community" instead. Of course, Jews have also come to constitute a nation in the modern, secular sense as well – one which, like all other nations, is lived through largely quotidian practices. These are carried out free of hierarchical institutions or structures that, whether conceived in terms of houses of worship or a Great Chain of Being, in some sense link them to the transcendent. Perhaps this is why the Jewish

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[2] See J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, 2nd ed.).

community in Israel, which is embraced by most secular and religious Jews today (though not all[3]), is often said to be supported by the political ideology known as "Zionism" rather than "Jewish nationalism," since the latter expression fails to make enough room for the religious.

Be that as it may, consider what Charles Taylor has had to say about the rise of modern nationalism:

> The causes of modern nationalism are very deep and have to do with the erosion of earlier communities and identifications: the withering away of local community, the decline of religious identifications which often by-passed nationality. Indeed, the very notion of a group identification founded on a relation to the supernatural is strange to many moderns in Atlantic civilization; and the local neighbourhood society cannot have the place it once had. But people need a group identification, and the obvious one to take the place of the earlier forms is the one that springs to the attention of the speaking animal, namely, nationality based on language.[4]

Had such nations been around during ancient times, thinkers such as Aristotle would probably have described their members as sharing not only a form of friendship (*philía*) but also other kinds of love. These include the love between relatives (*storgē*), given that the members of a nation often see themselves as a kind of family, and the love that can lead to producing relatives (*érōs*), as with the passion expressed in so much nationalist poetry. And depending on a given nation's history, we can expect these three to be variously combined in different proportions. Moreover, despite the distinction with religious communities, which should be maintained, we may also add religious love to the mix, since it would be wrong to assume that national communities are *wholly* secular.[5] But this raises the difficult question of the sometimes opposing, sometimes synergizing, relations between religion and ethics, as when religious love takes the form of what Christians call *agápē*,

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[3] See, for example, Allan Nadler, "Piety and Politics: The Case of the Satmar Rebbe," *Judaism* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 135–52.

[4] Taylor, "Why Do Nations Have to Become States?" in *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism*, ed. Guy Laforest (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), p. 42.

[5] See my "Secular Nationhood? The Importance of Language in the Life of Nations," in *Patriotic Elaborations: Essays in Practical Philosophy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).

since its selflessness and universalism is often very hard to reconcile with ethical particularism. Indeed, when Christian writers compare *agápē* to the other forms of love, they tend to stress not only its superiority but also how easily the others can degenerate into self-aggrandizement, or worse.[6]

Regardless, all of the above suggests that we ought to recognize how, today, the United States, France, and Israel are not nations but civic or political communities, states each of which happen to contain more than one nation: the anglophone majority American nation alongside the Hawaiian, Puerto Rican, other Hispanic and perhaps African American minority nations in the United States; the francophone majority French nation alongside the Basque, Breton, Catalan, and Corsican *micronations* in France; and the Jewish majority national and religious community alongside the Arab Israeli or (part of the) Palestinian minority nation in Israel. Alas, these realities have been obscured by the continuing influence of the Westphalian, "nation-state" model of what a country is or should be. It is what has prevented many of us from appreciating how "nation*s*-state" is usually much more accurate.[7]

Still, it was not long after the American and French revolutions that the call of the modern national community became very loud indeed. This is why national liberty tends nowadays to predominate over political liberty, the liberty of the civic community. As noted, the latter is chiefly concerned with the ability of citizens to make the laws that govern how they live their lives. For this reason, we should see it as essentially a matter of "self-government." Of course, self-government can and should also take place not only at the country-wide state level but also more locally: think of the various civic communities identified as regional, provincial, municipal, or borough, not to mention the policy-making carried out by the many non-governmental organizations found in civil society, from self-governing charities, daycares, schools, and unions, to universities, professional associations, and advocacy groups. It is the patriotic sentiments sustained when all of these communities, together, succeed at making citizens feel truly at home that the political community as a whole can be considered durable. And that is when it is most able

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[6] See, for example, Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, eds. and trans. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995 [1847]), part 1, II.B; and C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: HarperCollins, 2002 [1960]), ch. 6.

[7] The expression "nations-state" is from Ian Angus, *The Undiscovered Country: Essays in Canadian Intellectual Culture* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2013), esp. pp. 139, 231–32.

to fend off threats from demagogues and other populists, those essentially anti-political actors who feed, above all, on citizen alienation.

The difference between this political liberty and the liberty of the nation should be clear, especially given the two unique conditions of the latter. The first, and better known, is "self-determination," wherein the nation is assured of having a major degree of control over its destiny – be it because its members form a clear majority in a democracy, or because one of them rules in a dictatorship (evidently, self-determination is very different from self-government). The second is the recognition of the nation by the state, or states, under whose sovereignty it lives. Often, this can be met purely symbolically, as with a clause in the state's constitution, or a symbol on its flag. So we can readily understand why Taylor has remarked that "anyone who can use the expression '*just* symbolic' has missed something essential about the nature of modern society."[8]

The fact that they are associated with different kinds of liberty is thus one way that patriotism and nationalism can be distinguished. To which we may now add that, conceptually, the two are also qualitatively different forms of thought, since patriotism is a political philosophy and nationalism is a political ideology. A political philosophy is a very general account of the form or forms of dialogue that citizens ought to engage in when responding to conflict. The advocates of different political philosophies can thus be seen as promoting different forms of dialogue. For example, proceduralist political philosophers such as utilitarians or Kantians call on people to appeal to a systematic theory of justice for guidance, and this means that they will need to plead their cases before whatever authority is charged with applying the theory. Often, that authority is identified with their country's supreme court, which is understood to make its rulings on the basis of a constitution that (it is hoped) conforms to the theory. One might nevertheless object that pleading is a far too unidirectional means of communication to count as a genuine form of dialogue: one meaning of the ancient Greek *dia-* is "between," which implies that there must be at least two distinct parties, *both* of whom are prepared to change on the basis of what they hear. A theory of justice, however, is something that has been already formulated beforehand, usually by a lone philosopher, and the act of putting it into practice is not supposed to alter its principles in any fundamental way. This – and the often highly sophisticated forms of reasoning required for formulating and applying what are, after all, extremely abstract principles – is why proceduralist

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[8] Taylor, "Impediments to a Canadian Future," in *Reconciling the Solitudes*, p. 194.

approaches are often powerless to alleviate the sense of alienation that they encourage ordinary citizens to feel towards both their principles and the experts (judges, lawyers, and bureaucrats) charged with applying them.

This criticism is not one that political philosophers who subscribe to value pluralism must face, since they favour negotiation over pleading – and negotiation, at least when carried out in good faith, does indeed consist of the kind of give-and-take that allows us to speak of a genuine back-and-forth between two or more interlocutors. It is because value pluralists tend to conceive of values as incommensurable with each other that they believe the principles expressing them cannot be interlocked, and so that there simply cannot be a systematic theory of justice that is true to all of them. This is why, instead of turning to such a theory for guidance, they think the best we can do is to make trade-offs with each other – to compromise as part of a struggle for balanced accommodations.

Patriotic political philosophy is different, since it would have us respond to political conflict with conversation before turning to negotiation or, following it, pleading. While conversing, interlocutors exchange (sometimes very critical) interpretations of given practices in order to bring about (sometimes very radical) transformations of the values underlying them. They need to do this if they are to have a hope of making the values compatible, of reconciling, rather than merely accommodating, their conflict. When successful, the values, and so the common good of those upholding them, may be said to have been developed and realised – a goal which, evidently, comes down to us from the civic humanist tradition. Nowadays, however, patriots tend to have a much stronger sense of history than their forebears, which is why contemporary patriotism's conception of reconciliation can be associated with the idea of progress. This is also why it makes sense to situate the conversational response to conflict on the left-wing of a reconceived political spectrum. But since conversation is an extremely fragile mode of dialogue, we must accept that there will often be no choice but to negotiate and so to take on a more centrist attitude towards a given conflict. And should those negotiations break down, making pleading or less civilized forms of force unavoidable, then it will be necessary to move to the right. It all depends on one's judgment of the circumstances.[9]

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[9] See my "Political Philosophies and Political Ideologies," in *Patriotic Elaborations*.

Note that patriotic political philosophy has relatively little to say about content – about what positions, in particular, citizens should be taking as they converse, negotiate, or plead. True, some relatively simple maxims can be derived directly from the very idea of these forms of speech, such as that interlocutors must have enough to eat if they're not be distracted by hunger, or that those who are clearly set on undermining the civic community are not worth conversing with, just as those who are worthy ought to be listened to with an open mind as well as spoken to in ways conducive to reaching an understanding. But none of these maxims are capable of being articulated in categorical, much less systematic and so theoretical, ways, since they too depend on the circumstances.

It does, however, make sense to appeal to preconceived doctrines when it comes to negotiation. And this is where political ideologies come in. Because whenever one has no choice but to balance values against each other, then it can indeed be worthwhile to invoke an ideology, be it liberalism, conservatism, socialism, feminism, environmentalism, or some other such doctrine – it all depends on one's understanding of the political culture, that is, of the traditions of one's civic community and the best ways of fulfilling them. Ideologies can help since they tell us how values should be ranked and so weighed: crudely put, liberalism prioritizes the liberty of the individual; conservatism order through controlled change; socialism equality; and so on. But ideologies can also serve as obstacles when we rely upon them prematurely, since conversation requires interlocutors that are willing to listen to each other rather than to some doctrine.

Of course, nationalism is the ideology favoured by those who would rank the needs of the national community above all others. And it goes without saying that one of the most significant among these is the nation's liberty. Nationalists nevertheless rightly consider their culture – both its preservation and development – to be even more important than national liberation. This is because culture is the *raison d'être* of the nation; there is no point in struggling for freedom if you haven't secured your nation's heritage first. The modern Greeks (who seem to have forgotten all about the *polis*) have been well aware of this, as the following bit of history makes clear:

> Athens – 1821. Greeks are fighting for their independence. In Athens, they besiege the Acropolis, a stronghold of the Turkish occupiers. As the siege grinds on, the Turks' ammunition runs short. They begin to dismantle sections of the Parthenon, prying out the 2,300-year-old lead clamps and melting them down for bullets. The Greek fighters,

> horrified at this defacement of their patrimony, send the Turks a supply of bullets.
> Better to arm their foes, they decide, than to let the ancient temple come to harm.[10]

Only true nationalists would fight in this way.

If patriotism is indeed a political philosophy and nationalism a political ideology, then it should be possible for a patriot to be a nationalist – or not, since one could always be a patriotic liberal, conservative, socialist, feminist, green, and so on instead (or even a mixture of two or more of these). In fact, some call themselves patriots while at the same time opposing nationalism – Hegel, for one, or in our own day Jürgen Habermas, for another.[11] Note, however, that their patriotisms are different from the one described here, since they assume that the civic or political community, and so its common good, can be conceived of as a unity, whereas it is a central assumption of this essay that any successful conversation can, at best, bring citizens *closer towards* unity. This is because the reconciliation of values is never more than a matter of *further* integrating them, the assumption being that a perfect, in the sense of complete, reconciliation is impossible. For one thing, any resolution of a given conflict is bound to lead to new perspectives, and these are bound to produce new conflicts; it has always been thus and there is every reason to believe that it will continue to be so. For another, it is, again, necessary to accept that conversations tend to fail, and so that we will have no choice but to dirty our hands with the compromises of negotiation. At such times talk of unification will be even less appropriate.[12] That said, negotiating only after genuine attempts at conversation have failed makes a great deal of sense. When value pluralists recommend negotiation, they can appeal to no more than the virtue of toleration in the hopes of maintaining a spirit of good faith between what they sometimes identify as "moral enemies."[13] But when patriots negotiate, they do so, as we've seen, with civic friends. And this, surely, means that the negotiations will be far more sustainable.[14]

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[10] Jeff Jacoby, "'The Essence of Greekness', So Far Away from Home," *International Herald Tribune*, 5 April 1999, p. 7.

[11] See Shlomo Avineri, "Hegel and Nationalism," *Review of Politics* 24, no. 4 (Oct. 1962): 461–84; and Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), esp. appendix II.

[12] See my "Dirty Hands: The One and the Many," *The Monist* 101, no. 2 (April 2018): 150–69.

[13] Stuart Hampshire, *Justice Is Conflict* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 46.

[14] See my *From Pluralist to Patriotic Politics: Putting Practice First* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Lastly, turning to the geographical difference between patriotism and nationalism, it is best grasped by invoking yet another kind of community: the ethnic. It is because we normally join ethnic communities through being born into them that, as Max Weber once pointed out, to share an ethnicity is to share a belief in "common descent."[15] This can also be true of religious and national communities, but not necessarily, since one can always convert and language and culture are things that people can adopt. As for the civic community, it is, of course, often possible to obtain new citizenship through immigration. These differences should make it evident that one can not only be a member of more than one community, as well as kind of community, at the same time, but also that the concepts of ethnic and civic nationalism, so dear to political scientists, obscure rather than clarify and so would be best abandoned.

The geography becomes relevant when we notice another difference between national, civic, and ethnic communities, namely, that only the members of the first two can be said to feel a special sort of attachment to a fixed and clearly demarcated piece of territory. When those who identify with an ethnicity have something like these feelings, they will tend to be directed towards the territory of the "mother country," which will be found outside of the borders of the state where they presently live. The Chinese- or Italian-Canadian ethnic communities, for example, while often situated in particular neighbourhoods within Canada, are not so in any permanent way. But the same cannot be said of, say, the nation of francophone Quebecers, since it is hard to imagine it ever changing its geographic home.

Unlike the nation, the civic community's territory is, again, less a matter of the land than of the jurisdiction of the state, since it is within its borders that its laws, and so citizens' self-government, apply. Ever since Montesquieu, however, many have assumed that modern states are unlike the *polis* in being too large to sustain genuine civic communities. The claim has roots in Aristotle's idea that the *polis* should not be so big that citizens could not know each others' characters.[16] But then Aristotle never dreamed of Gutenberg's invention, nor Montesquieu of the telephone, radio, or television, not to mention the Internet. It is thanks to innovations in communications technology such as these that we can, today, go so far as to speak of the existence

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[15] Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischoff *et al.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 389.

[16] See *Aristotle's Politics*, ed. and trans. Carnes Lord (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013, 2nd ed.), VII.4

of not only a global civil society but also the beginnings of a global civic community.[17] Because conversations can and do take place across borders; and sometimes, of course, they are about politics. Indeed, they must be if we're ever properly to respond to many of the challenges faced by the world today: regarding the environment, the global economy, and war, to mention just a few. These, then, are why we are in need of a global patriotism.

A Global Patriotism

This is the patriotism of all who conceive of themselves as citizens of the world. It makes sense to invoke it even though there exists at present no global state to express it institutionally. Nor should the fact that people also feel loyalty to other, local communities put the existence of this global one in question. Because after all, we can and should love different people, and in different ways.

Just as local patriotism ought to be distinguished from nationalism, global patriotism should not be confused with cosmopolitanism. For one thing, the latter is not a philosophy but another political ideology. Cosmopolitans are those who, should they find themselves negotiating conflicts between the global and the local, favour the former, whereas nationalists, again, favour the latter. And since patriots favour conversation, they will, to repeat the point, negotiate only after the conversation has broken down. So it is at such times that we may witness an encounter between, say, a patriotic cosmopolitan and a patriotic nationalist – each of whom, we can hope, will recognize the legitimacy, at least, of the other. Not that patriotic cosmopolitans are typical, since cosmopolitans have long tended to arrive at their ideology (if they would even agree to call it an ideology) on the basis of an abstract universalism, one that, today, tends to take the form of a theory of human rights. And those who find universal theories attractive tend to have little place for the idea of a global civic or political community towards which one might feel patriotic; instead, their chief loyalty is usually to a set of abstract principles, one that they hope will be applied by institutions such as the International Court of Justice. True, cosmopolitans will occasionally be heard invoking the idea of a "global community," but one has to wonder at the notion of a community that consists of rights-bearing *human beings*, that is, of the members of a certain biological species. Must not real communities consist of *persons* instead, which is to say of people with historically situated identities? Indeed, as Kierkegaard once complained, the love

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[17] Harold A. Innis' ideas about the relations between media and the cultural development of civilizations are relevant here: *Empire and Communications* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

of abstract humanity is a decadent, because fantastic, form of love, since "at a distance one's neighbour is only a figment of the imagination."[18]

War was mentioned as one of reasons we're in need of a global patriotism. It goes without saying that war has served as one of the two basic means whereby people have attempted to bring international conflicts to an close, the other being diplomacy, that is, negotiation (sometimes in good faith, sometimes not). If we put conversation first, however, we insert an extra step into the conflict resolution process – one that, if successful, would make the others unnecessary. Not that, to repeat the point, there is any guarantee that these conversations will succeed. Still, we can be sure that, if we never try, real peace-making opportunities will be missed.[19]

Or consider the 2008 global financial crisis. If there's one thing that it should have made clear to all, it is that there is a pressing need for states to reform their macroeconomic policies. Because *ad hoc* policy co-ordination, driven as it mainly has been by instrumental considerations, remains inadequate. True, the leading economic powers were able to inject liquidity into turbulent markets, as well as to recapitalize or reorganize many troubled financial institutions. But all this took place behind a veil of ignorance, so to speak. For citizens − not least those in the United States – were, and continue to be, largely ignorant of the degree to which funds raised through their taxes served, and continue to serve, as the investor of last resort for foreign institutions such as other countries' major banks. American politicians, in particular, have simply failed to inform their constituents of the reality of this global fiscal federalism, and they have done so out of an (understandable) fear of the backlash that would arise once taxpayers realised that they have been supporting much more than their local state. Only the highly technical nature of the global financial apparatus has allowed this state of affairs to remain hidden. Sooner or later, however, the truth is bound to get out.[20]

As it should. For the hypocrisy underlying this "noble lie," as some see it, is simply not sustainable. Only by giving the world's civic or political community its due can we properly support inter-state fiscal cooperation and in this way complement, rather than compete with, the

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[18] Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, p. 89. For more on this matter, see my "The Ironic Tragedy of Human Rights," in *Patriotic Elaborations*; and "We Are All Compatriots," in Will Kymlicka and Kathryn Walker, eds., *Rooted Cosmopolitanism: Canada and the World* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012).

[19] See my "Taking War Seriously," *Philosophy* 94, no. 1 (Jan. 2019): 139–60.

[20] See Louis W. Pauly, "The Old and the New Politics of International Financial Stability," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 47, no. 5 (Nov. 2009): 955–75. Adam McKay's popular film, *The Big Short* (2015), has helped lift the veil as regards American support for American banks and investment firms, but not those outside the country.

more local patriotisms. True, many of the relevant differences are bound to be irreconcilable. But we will never know which ones are, and which are not, if we never even try to reconcile them.

Naïveté?

This modern patriotism, with its conversations about the common good, certainly sounds nice. But is it realistic? Are people truly capable of the degree of generosity of spirit that it appears to require? And even if they are, would not the vast disparities of power between them undermine any such conversation? Perhaps not if this were a perfect world, but then such a world would already be just and so would have no need of patriotic or any other kind of political philosophy. Indeed, such a world would have no need of politics.

Thankfully, that is not the world we live in. In any case, conversation does not require generosity – on the contrary. Because it is good-faith *negotiators* who must be willing to make concessions and so compromise the values they hold dear; the whole point of conversation, recall, is reconciliation, and when a reconciliation is reached it will be "win-win" for all concerned. Conversation is in everyone's interests: the rich and the powerful as well as the poor and the weak. The only exception to this involves those who see their interests in terms of glory, especially the Homeric kind that comes from defeating an adversary rather than reconciling with a friend or compatriot. In fact, patriotism should be understood as asserting the centrality of a form of honour that is distinct from glory – distinct not only because of its irenic attitude but also because it rejects the idea that honour, too, is necessarily zero-sum and hierarchical. That notion is relevant only to premodern conceptions of honour, which we should today recognize as degraded forms of it. For what is it to converse with a compatriot over a political disagreement if not to honour them in some sense? We could pose the same question as regards the laws and institutions that manage to express the citizenry's common good. This is why patriotic politics can be seen as a way of counteracting the status-anxiety experienced by many of our fellow citizens – those who, for example, suffer from unemployment, or feel culturally sidelined because they have, say, been repeatedly derided by satirical news shows.[21] Greg Littman has made the obvious but important observation that "mocking someone is a *particularly* bad tool for making a point to them. People who are mocked

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[21] On how status-anxiety is behind the Brexit referendum result in Britain as well as the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, see Ian Leslie, "There's One Word that Explains Why I Got It Wrong over Brexit and Trump," *New Statesman*, 15 December 2016.

feel disrespected and people tend not to listen to those they think are disrespecting them."[22] Real patriots know this, and they do because, despite the claims of all those from Cervantes to the sociologist Peter Berger, they know that honour in the modern world is anything but obsolete.[23]

As for the worry that interlocutors unequal in power cannot converse, the very idea of conversation assumes that those involved have no wish to put pressure on their opponents, or to manipulate them in any way. Otherwise, how could they possibly learn to bring about the transformations that reconciliation requires? Of course, it's often the case that the rich and powerful are unwilling or unable to converse, but this can also be true of the weak and poor, especially when they have suffered oppression. For the traumas of victimhood, not to mention the temptations of revenge, can make it extremely difficult to listen with an open mind.

One may wonder, however, how it is possible that there has already been so much progress given that there has yet to be much in the way of conversational responses to political conflict – think of the delegitimization of the institution of slavery, of the rise of gender equality and civil rights for minorities as well as a welfare state that has helped meet the needs of the poor. Yet could it be that these accomplishments would have been realized even *more* quickly had those calling for them done so *less* aggressively? There will, of course, always be some on the other side who will never listen and so who will have to be forced, one way or another, to go along. But there's a reason why we say that those who live by the sword die by the sword – and if there is one thing we know *a priori* about the difference between the strong and the weak, it is that the former are more powerful than the latter: who, then, should we expect to win the vast majority of the struggles between them? Would not the attempt to convince, rather than vanquish, thus serve as a more effective strategy, at least at first? After all, conversations between unequals take place every day, which suggests that there must be many times when the problem is strictly one of people's *unwillingness* to converse. And aside, again, from the followers of Homer, this can only be because they are ignorant about conversation – about what it requires as well as what it can bring.

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[22] Littman, "Seriously Funny: Mockery as a Political Weapon," in Jason Hold, ed., *The Ultimate Daily Show and Philosophy: More Moments of Zen, More Indecision Theory* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), p. 59.

[23] On the supposed obsolescence of honour, see Cervantes, *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. John Rutherford (London: Penguin Books, 2000 [1605, 1615]); as well as Peter Berger, "On the Obsolescence of the Concept of Honor," in Stanley Hauerwas and Alasdair MacIntyre, eds., *Revisions: Changing Perspectives in Moral Philosophy* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1983). I explore the alternative, patriotic conception of honour in my novel, *The Adventurous Young Philosopher Theo Hoshen of Toronto* (Montreal: Angst Patrol, 2013).

Philosophers deserve much of the blame for this. Many of us are not as far from Homer as we believe; one has only to think of our discipline's all-too macho reputation. From Socrates' crushing of his interlocutors in Plato's so-called dialogues; to Boethius' inability to get an attentive ear from Philosophy, his "nurse" who repeatedly employs martial metaphors; to the willingness of Hegel's masters to fight to the death for recognition from their slaves; to John Stuart Mill's famous declaration that truth comes best from "the rough process of a struggle between combatants fighting under hostile banners"; to Foucault's fearless, because dangerous, speech; to Habermas' well-known praise of the force (even if somehow unforced) of the better argument – few philosophers seem aware of conversation's extreme fragility.[24] No wonder Plato has been called "the war lover," and Derrida has rallied his fellow deconstructionists to engage in a "violence against violence."[25] Perhaps, then, Musil was right (at least as regards theorists): "Philosophers are violent and aggressive persons who, having no army at their disposal, bring the world into subjection to themselves by means of locking it up in a system."[26] And perhaps that is why so many of us have made the mistake of thinking that conversation requires (impossibly) equal interlocutors, when what is really needed is no more than that form of "symmetry" present whenever people concerned about their common good are willing to speak and listen in turn.[27]

As for the many non-philosophers who have acquiesced to this combativeness, perhaps it is because they have not been encouraged to appreciate how the reconciliation of conflict is at the heart of our obligations as citizens. When schools bother to provide a civic education, conflict resolution is rarely if ever the focus; as a result, little is done to undermine the powerful influence that the warrior ethic has had on our political cultures. Instead, the highest praise continues to go

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[24] See *Plato: The Collected Dialogues Including the Letters*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, trans. Benjamin Jowett *et al.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961); Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. and trans. P.G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 [c. 524]); Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. J.N. Findlay, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977 [1807]), pp. 111–18; Mill, *On Liberty* (1859), in *On Liberty and Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 49; Foucault, *Discourse & Truth* and *Parrēsia*, eds. Henri-Paul Fruchaud and Daniele Lorenzini (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019); and Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, p. 306.

[25] Leon Harold Craig, *The War Lover: A Study of Plato's* Republic (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); and Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 117.

[26] Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, vol. 1, trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins (London: Picador, 1979 [1930]), p. 300.

[27] On this symmetry, see Martin Buber, "Dialogue," in *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (Boston: Beacon Press, 1947).

to those who are willing to *fight* for justice, for rights, for "the little guy," etc., rather than, say, to those who have the humility to admit when they are wrong. At best, we are taught that toleration is the greatest political virtue, since it brings a willingness to compromise. But compromise, again, is essential to negotiation, not conversation. And conversation is better.

Two more patriotic suggestions to conclude. The first consists of a call for reforming political institutions so that they facilitate – or at least stop interfering with – conversation. Think, for example, of the symbolic value that could come from changing the architecture of the debating chambers in parliamentary democracies: instead of the traditional rectangular room in which government and opposition sit "two sword-lengths apart," implying that they are engaged in a zero-sum "clash" or "collision," parliamentarians could sit in a circular or semi-circular pattern, which suggests not only that they share a common good, even if only in principle, but also that subtly different rather than polar opposite positions on issues are to be expected, indeed welcomed. Perhaps the room could even be redesignated as a "conversing" rather than "debating" chamber − not out of the hope that only conversations would take place there, of course, but simply because it would make clear what should be the ideal, and thereby help make this form of dialogue a little more likely.[28]

Second, citizens who wish to become directly involved in politics should favour membership in political parties over interest groups and other such non-governmental organisations. Because parties – or at least those that are serious about attaining power – can only do so if they develop platforms that give a place to *all* of the relevant values. Instead of approaching issues narrowly, through the prism of a single concern, or set of concerns, they can and should engage in holistic thinking, the kind that relates each political position to many if not all of the others. In this way, they help to keep the common good the central concern, both within and without the party. And they can do this even though parties in democratic systems necessarily compete with each other for power when it comes to elections. While doing so makes them into "adversaries," they are still parts of a larger whole within which, ideally, they will be no more than "opponents."[29] After all, there must be some reason why the official opposition in Westminster systems is known as "His/Her Majesty's *Loyal* Opposition."

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[28] See my *Shall We Dance? A Patriotic Politics for Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), pp. 131–34.

[29] See my "Opponents vs. Adversaries in Plato's *Phaedo*," in *Patriotic Elaborations*.

Do these two suggestions undermine the claim, made above, that patriotic political philosophy is relatively silent about content, about the kinds of things that citizens ought to be saying when they converse about politics? On the contrary, they are meant to do no more than trace some of the lines over which people can be expected to diverge, sometimes radically. Yet when they cross those lines – those frontiers – they will do so, at least on occasion, not only because they disagree but also because they believe that this is the best way of reaching agreement. Put differently, we may say that theirs is a global, and not merely local, patriotism.