

Nation and Universe

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THE TANNER LECTURES ON HUMAN VALUES

Delivered at
Brasenose College, Oxford University

May 1 and 8, 1989

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TWO KINDS OF UNIVERSALISM

I

Much has been written in recent years about moral absolutism and moral relativism, foundationalism and contextualism, monism and pluralism, universalism and particularism —all the fervent *isms* —and yet our understanding of these simple polarities does not seem to advance. Advocates of liberal enlightenment confront advocates of communal tradition; those who aspire to global reach confront those who yearn for local intensity. We all know one another's lines. In every argument, we anticipate the opening gambits; we have memorized the standard replies and the follow-up moves; no one's closing flourish is at all surprising. The different positions can be defended well or badly; it is still possible to win a debate, much as one might win a game of chess, with superior skill or the quickness to seize upon an opponent's mistakes. But victories of this kind have no larger resonance. So I have looked for a way of being persuasive without trying to be victorious, a way of escaping the conventional oppositions or, at least, of redescribing them in less contentious terms. I want to argue from within what I, and many others, have taken to be the opposing camp; I want to take my stand among the universalists and suggest that there is another universalism, a nonstandard variety, which encompasses and perhaps even helps to explain the appeal of moral particularism.

I shall begin my argument with the historical example of Judaism, which has often been criticized (not without reason) as a tribal religion, the very emblem of a particularist creed. And yet Judaism is one of the chief sources of the two universalisms, the first of which became standard when it was adopted within

Christianity. It probably would have become standard even if Judaism rather than Christianity had triumphed in the ancient world —not only because of its strength among the Jews but also because of a certain connection, which will become apparent as I go along, between the first universalism and the idea or the experience of triumph.

The first universalism holds that as there is one God, so there is one law, one justice, one correct understanding of the good life or the good society or the good regime, one salvation, one messiah, one millennium for all humanity. I will call this the “covering-law” version of universalism, though in Christian doctrine it is not law so much as the sacrifice of the son of God that “covers” all men and women everywhere —so that the line “Christ died for your sins” can be addressed to any person in any time or place and will always be true, the pronoun having an indefinite and infinite reference. However many sinners there are, and whoever they are, Christ died for *them*. But I mean to defer here to Jewish “legalism” (and to later natural law arguments), where the aim is to provide an account of what it means not to sin, to live well or, at least, rightly. Covering-law universalism has been called an “alternative” doctrine within Judaism, but by prophetic times it was a very well established alternative, and perhaps even the dominant doctrine, at least in the written literature of the Jews.¹ Jewish tribalism had by then been reinterpreted and reconstructed in a way that made it instrumental to a universal end. The Jews were chosen for a purpose, which had to do not only with their own history but also with the history of the human race. That is the meaning of Isaiah’s description of Israel as “a light unto the nations.”² One light for all the nations, who will eventually be uniformly enlightened: though, the light being somewhat dim and the nations

¹ Paul D. Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), pp. 312–24.

² Isa. 49:6; cf. 42:6. All biblical quotations are from the King James version.

recalcitrant, this may take a long time. It may take until the end of time.

The end can be described in militant and triumphant terms as the victory of the universalizing tribe; or it can be described more modestly as the “coming in” or the “going up” of the nations. “And many people shall go and say Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.”³ Whatever its form, the result is an identical triumph of religious and moral singularity —many people will climb one mountain. The hope for a triumph of this sort has been incorporated into the daily prayers: “On that day the Lord shall be one and his name shall be one.”⁴ Until that day, this first universalism can take on the character of a mission, as it often did in the history of Christianity and, later on, in the imperialism of nations that called themselves Christian. You will all remember these lines from Kipling’s “Song of the English” :

Keep ye the law —be swift in all obedience —
Clear the land of evil, drive the road and
bridge the ford.
Make ye sure to each his own
That he reap where he hath sown.
By the peace among our peoples, let men know
we serve the Lord.⁵

Eventually, roads and bridges built and peace secured, “our peoples,” all the subject nations, will learn to serve the Lord on their own; for now, “we” must rule over them. The experience of nations that do not keep the law is radically devalued. This is a common feature of covering-law universalism. The Lord’s servants

³ Isa. 2:3.

⁴ *Daily Prayer Book: Ha-Siddur Ha-Shalem*, trans. Philip Birnbaum (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1977), p. 138. See the discussion of this line in George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 1:228–31; 2:371–74.

⁵ “A Song of the English,” in *Rudyard Kipling’s Verse: Inclusive Edition, 1885–1926* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1927), pp. 194–95.

stand in the center of history, constitute its main current, while the histories of the others are so many chronicles of ignorance and meaningless strife. Indeed, there is a sense in which they have no history at all — as in the Hegelian/Marxist conception — since nothing of world-historical significance has happened to them. Nothing of world-historical significance will ever happen to them except insofar as they move toward and merge with the main current. The Christian version of this sort of thing, the inspiration of much missionizing activity, is well known, as are its secular analogues. But there is a Jewish version too, according to which the exile and dispersion of the Jews, though in one sense a punishment for their sins, was in another sense central to God's own world-historical design. It served to ensure that the true monotheistic faith would have local adherents and exemplars everywhere in the world — a dispersed light, but a light still.⁶ The exile is hard on its particulars but good for the generality. Monotheism in this view is the burden of the Jews, much as civilization is the burden of Kipling's English and communism of Marx's working class.

Since at any given moment some people know the law and some people do not, some people keep it and some people do not, this first universalism makes for a certain pride among the knowers and keepers — the chosen, the elect, the true believers, the vanguard. Of course, the rejection of pride is commonly one of the covering laws and, as I have already suggested, the triumph of God can come in ways that do not invite the triumphalism of his servants. Still, it is always the case that these men and women (we can disagree over who they are) live right now in a fashion that all men and women will one day imitate. They possess right now a body of knowledge and a legal code that one day will be

⁶ Judah Halevi, *The Kuzari: An Argument for the Faith of Israel*, trans. Hartwig Hirschfeld (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), pp. 226–27; Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Horeb: A Philosophy of Jewish Laws and Observances*, trans. I. Grunfeld (London: Soncino Press, 1962), 1:143–44.

universally accepted, What is the state of mind and feeling appropriate to such people? If not pride, then certainly confidence: we can recognize covering-law universalism by the confidence it inspires.

The second universalism is the true alternative doctrine in Jewish history; we have to recover it from its biblical fragments. Once Judaism is in full-scale conflict with Christianity, it is repressed; it reappears in secular form in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century romanticism. The crucial fragment comes from the prophet Amos, who has God ask:

Are ye not as children of the
Ethiopians unto me, O children
of Israel? . . .

Have I not brought Israel out of the
land of Egypt,

And the Philistines from Capthor,
And the Syrians from Kir?⁷

These questions suggest that there is not one exodus, one divine redemption, one moment of liberation, for all mankind, the way there is, according to Christian doctrine, one redeeming sacrifice. Liberation is a particular experience, repeated for each oppressed people. At the same time, it is in every case a good experience, for God is the common liberator. Each people has *its own* liberation at the hands of a single God, the same God in every case, who presumably finds oppression universally hateful. I propose to call this argument reiterative universalism. What makes it different from covering-law universalism is its particularist focus and its pluralizing tendency. We have no reason to think that the exodus of the Philistines or the Syrians is identical with the exodus of Israel, or that it culminates in a similar covenant, or even that the laws of the three peoples are or ought to be the same.

⁷ Amos 9:7.

There are two very different ways of elaborating on a historical event like the exodus of Israel from Egypt. It can be made pivotal in a universal history, as if all humanity, though not present at the sea or the mountain, had at least been represented there. Then the experience of Israel's liberation belongs to everyone. Or it can be made exemplary, pivotal only in a particular history, which other people can repeat —*must* repeat if the experience is ever to belong to them —in their own fashion. The exodus from Egypt liberates only Israel, only the people whose exodus it was, but other liberations are always possible. In this second view, there is no universal history, but rather a series of histories (which probably do not converge or converge only at the mythical end of time— like the many national roads to communism) in each of which value can be found. I assume that Amos would not have said “equal value,” nor do I want to insist that equality of that sort follows from the idea of reiteration. Nevertheless, the purpose of Amos's questions is to rebuke the pride of the Israelites. They are not the only chosen or the only liberated people; the God of Israel attends to other nations as well. Isaiah makes the same point, presumably for the same purpose, in an even more dramatic way:

For [the Egyptians] shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors. And he shall send them a savior, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day. . . . In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.⁸

Instead of many people, one mountain, what we have here is one God, many blessings. And as the blessings are distinct, so the histories of the three nations do not converge toward a single history.

Reiterative universalism can always be given a covering-law form. We can claim, for example, that oppression is always

⁸ Isa. 19:20–25.

wrong, or that we ought to respond morally and politically to the cry of every oppressed people (as God is sometimes said to do), or that we should value every liberation. But these are covering laws of a special sort: first, they are learned from experience, through a historical engagement with otherness —Israel, the Philistines, the Syrians; second, because they are learned in this way, they impose upon us a respect for particularity, for different experiences of bondage and pain, by different people, whose liberation takes different forms; and finally, because they are qualified by difference, they are less likely to inspire confidence in those who know them. Indeed, it is always possible that covering laws of this sort will produce mental and moral outcomes that contradict their likely intention: that we will be overwhelmed by the sheer heterogeneity of human life and surrender all belief in the relevance of our own history for anyone else. And if our history is irrelevant to them, so will theirs be to us. We retreat to inwardness and disinterest. Acknowledging difference makes for indifference. Though we grant the value of Egyptian liberation, we have no reason to promote it. It is God's business, or it is the business of the Egyptians. We are not engaged; we have no world-historical mission; we are, if only by default, advocates of nonintervention. But not only by default, for reiterative universalism derives in part from a certain view of what it means to have a history of one's own. So nonintervention can claim a positive foundation: the state of mind and feeling most appropriate to this second universalism is tolerance and mutual respect.⁹

II

Given the "burden" of a monotheistic faith, reiterative universalism could never be anything more than a possibility within Judaism. But a God conceived to be active in history, engaged in the world, makes it always a lively possibility. There is no reason

⁹ See the discussion of tolerance in David B. Wong, *Moral Relativity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), chap. 12.

to confine such a God—who is, moreover, omnipotent and omnipresent—to Jewish history or even to the Jewish version of world history. Is not the strength of his hand everywhere in evidence? And is not he, with regard to all the nations, evenhanded? Consider these lines from Jeremiah (once again, it is God who is talking) :

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.¹⁰

Clearly the reference here is to all the nations, though each one is considered independently of the others, at its own “instant.” We might suppose that God judges them all by the same standard; the phrase “evil in my sight” refers always to the same set of evil acts. But this is not necessarily the case. If God covenants separately with each nation or if he blesses each nation differently, then it would make sense to suggest that he holds each of them to its own standard. There is a set of evil acts for each nation, though the different sets certainly overlap. Or, if there is only one set of evil acts (fixed by the overlap: murder, betrayal, oppression, and so on), it might still be the case that the good is produced in multiple sets—for goodness is not (I come back to this point in my second lecture) the simple opposite of evil. It is because there are multiple sets, different kinds of goods, that there must also be multiple blessings. In either of these views, God is himself a reiterative universalist, governing and constraining but not overruling the diversity of humankind.

It might nonetheless be argued that this second universalism works best if one makes a kind of peace with the idea that divinity

¹⁰ Jer. 18:7–10.

itself is diverse and plural, Of this there is scarcely a hint in the Jewish Bible, though the prophet Micah comes close to such an argument in the following verses (the first of which is more often quoted than the second: “And they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid. . . . For all peoples will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.”¹¹ The second verse is commonly taken to be a survival of some earlier belief which held that each people has its own god, the god of Israel but one among many. But to take it this way does not explain the survival. Why did successive editors preserve and include the second verse? In any case, the two verses fit together; they have a parallel form and are joined by the conjunction “for” (Hebrew: *ki*), as if the happy “sitting” described in the first is a consequence of the plural “walking” described in the second. Perhaps that is Micah’s meaning; it is certainly one of the arguments most often made on behalf of reiterative universalism —that the tolerance it inspires makes for peace. How many of us will sit quietly under our vines and fig trees once the agents of the first universalism go to work, making sure that everyone is properly covered by the covering law?

But perhaps pluralism under the vines and fig trees does not require pluralism in the heavens above but only a plurality of divine names here on earth: “for all peoples will walk every one in the name of his god.” And that plurality may be consistent, at least in principle, with the single, omnipotent God of Israel who creates men and women in his own image —hence as creative men and women. For then God himself must make some kind of peace with their plurality and creativity.¹² The artists among them will

¹¹ Mic. 4:4-5.

¹² According to the rabbis of the Talmud, human difference, if not quite human creativity, is the special feature of divine creation: “If a man strikes many coins from one mold, they all resemble one another, but the Supreme King of Kings . . . fashioned every man in the stamp of the first man, and yet not one of them resembles his fellow” (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 37a).

not all paint the same picture; the playwrights will not write the same play; the philosophers will not produce the same account of the good; and the theologians will not call God by the same name. What human beings have in common is just this creative power, which is not the power to do the same thing in the same way but the power to do many different things in different ways: divine omnipotence (dimly) reflected, distributed, and particularized. Here is a creation story —it is not, I concede, the dominant version —that supports the doctrine of reiterative universalism.¹³

III

But however things are with divine creativity, the values and virtues of human creativity can best be understood in the reiterative mode. Independence, inner direction, individualism, self-determination, self-government, freedom, autonomy: all these can be regarded as universal values, but they all have particularist implications. (The case is the same, though the particularism is greatly heightened, with the chief virtues of romanticism: originality, authenticity, nonconformity, and so on.) We can readily imagine a covering law something like “Self-determination is the right of every people/nation.” But this is a law that quickly runs out; it cannot specify its own substantive outcomes. For we value the outcomes only insofar as they are self-determined, and determinations vary with selves. Reiterated acts of self-determination produce a world of difference. New covering laws may come into effect, of course, as the production continues. But it is hard to see what value self-determination could have if it were entirely “covered,” legally controlled at every point. When Moses (speaking, once again, for God) tells the Israelites, “I have set before you life and death . . . therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed

¹³I have been helped here by David Hartman’s account of the moral meaning of creation in *A Living Covenant: The Innovative Spirit in Traditional Judaism* (New York: Free Press, 1985), esp. pp. 22–24, 265–66.

may live,” we may agree that the choice is in some sense free, but the life that is chosen is surely not self-determined.¹⁴ On the other hand, when we watch the Jews, later on, arguing over the interpretation of God’s laws and creating thereby a *way of life* —then we see what can properly be called a process of self-determination.

Self-determination is a value that I have to defend, if I defend it at all, even if I believe that unworthy or wrongful choices will often be made. (I may oppose self-determination in a particular case, however, if the agent’s choices in that case are sure or virtually sure to violate critically important moral principles; but I would still count myself as a defender of self-determination.) People have to choose for themselves, each people for itself. Hence, we determine our way of life, and they do, and they do, up to the nth they —and each determination will differ in significant ways from preceding and concurrent determinations. Obviously, we can criticize each other’s work, urge that it be made more like our own, for example, but unless our lives and liberties (or those of other presumptively innocent men and women) are injured or threatened by it, we cannot forcibly interfere. We cannot play the part of the police, enforcing the law, for (serious injury aside) the law runs out before it can be enforced. There is no covering law or set of laws that provides a sufficiently complete blueprint for our work or theirs. Nor is it the case that the laws agreed to by one people “cover” all the others, so that substantive imitation can replace procedural reiteration. There cannot be a replacement of that sort if the values and virtues of autonomy are real values and virtues.

The same argument holds for the individual as for the people/nation. If we value autonomy, we will want individual men and women to have their own lives. But if all lives are radically covered by a single set of covering laws, the idea of “own-ness” has no scope. Individual autonomy can be and undoubtedly is constrained in a variety of ways, but it cannot be and is not entirely

¹⁴ Deut. 30:19.

controlled. There is no single mode of “having” a life of one’s own. We are inclined to think that such a life must be made before it can be had, that is, we think of an individual life as a project, a career, an undertaking, something that we plan and then enact according to the plan. But this is simply our (collective) understanding of individuality; it does not get at the thing-in-itself; it does not suggest the only legitimate or authentic way of being an individual. In fact, it is entirely possible to inherit a life and still possess it as one’s own; and it is also possible to find a life, literally light upon it, with no forethought at all. In any account of autonomy, there has to be room not only for different self-determinations but also for different kinds of self-possession.

Reiterative universalism is not concerned only with the varieties of selfhood. The values and virtues of attachment are also best understood in the reiterative mode. Love, loyalty, faithfulness, friendship, devotion, commitment, patriotism: any or all of these can be universally enjoined, but the injunction is necessarily abstract; it does not govern the substantive experience. “Love thy neighbor” is a familiar covering law; every particular love relationship that it covers, however, is unique. The case is the same with group attachments, including those that constitute the family, the primary group. Tolstoy was wrong to claim that “all happy families resemble one another.”¹⁵ Novelists have, I suppose, good and sufficient reasons to focus on familial unhappiness, but if happy families are ones whose members are (among other things) mutually attached, we can be sure that the attachments are complex and diverse, varying within families as well as among them—and varying even more obviously across the range of cultures, where the very idea of familial attachment is differently understood. One can specify how lovers or family members should treat one another only in the most general ways—and these are not the ways that give the relationships their specificity and value.

¹⁵ Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, pt. 1, chap. 1.

Every lover must love for himself; it must be *his own* love, not some universal love, that he offers to the other person. To be sure, there is an argument within Christianity according to which the only love that we can offer to others is the overflowing love with which God loves us.¹⁶ But I think that it is a misunderstanding of the Christian God, certainly of the Jewish God, a failure to grasp the meaning of his omnipotence, to suggest that his love is always the same. We should assume, instead, that divine love is differentiated every time it is focused on a particular human being — else it would not be his love *for me* (or you). But even if divine love is not differentiated in this way, human love certainly is. When it is communicated to others, it takes on different intensities, it is expressed in different ways, and it carries different emotional and moral entailments. The differences are sometimes personal, sometimes cultural, but they are in any case crucial to the experience. We know love in its differences and would not recognize it as love if it were ever wholly conventionalized, submitted to the rule of a covering law.

Patriotism or the love of country is similarly known in its differences: how would it be possible to love one's country if it were indistinguishable from all the others? Different countries command different kinds and degrees of loyalty. These are the attachments through which the "self" in the phrase "national self-determination" is constituted, and as determinations vary with selves, so national selves vary with kinds of attachment. In political life, the values of autonomy and loyalty work together to produce diversity — men and women differently associated, whose mutual attachments are differently expressed, enacted, and celebrated. If people are to love their country, Edmund Burke wrote, their country must be lovely.¹⁷ Yes; and perhaps we can find some

¹⁶ Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip Watson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

¹⁷ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: J. M. Dent [Everyman's Library], 1910), p. 75.

minimal standards of loveliness that everyone will acknowledge (or, more likely, some widely recognized, because widely experienced, forms of ugliness), but for the most part what is lovely is determined in the eyes of the beholder. There is no universal aesthetic for countries.

Is there a universal ethic? Justice is certainly the chief of the values and virtues that are claimed for the covering-law account. “But let judgment run down as waters,” says Amos, “and righteousness as a mighty stream.”¹⁸ In the geography of ethics, as it is commonly understood, there is only one mighty stream, one Nile or Mississippi that floods and fertilizes the whole world. There is only one just social order, and all the negative injunctions of the theory of righteousness —against killing, torturing, oppressing, lying, cheating, and so on —invite covering-law expression: the general and absolute “Thou shalt not!” Similarly, any exceptions to such laws must be exceptions for everyone, everywhere, as in the standard example of killing in self-defense.

Justice seems to be universal in character for the same reason that autonomy and attachment are reiterative —out of recognition of and respect for the human agents who create the moral world and who come, by virtue of that creativity, to have lives and countries of their own. Their creations are greatly diverse and always particular, but there is something singular and universal about their creativity, some brute fact of agency captured, as I have already suggested, by the claim that all human agents have been created in the image of a creator God. Justice is the tribute we have learned to pay to the brute fact and the divine image. The principles and rules of justice have been worked out, over many centuries, so as to protect human agents and set them free for their creative (reiterative) tasks: one set of principles for one set of agents. But there is a problem here. It is certainly possible to build an account of justice on the foundation of agency. Start with equal respect for the agents (and every man and woman equally an

¹⁸ Amos 5:24.

agent), and there is probably no clear stopping point short of a fully elaborated description of a just society. Looking at the elaborated description, however, we may well feel that we have made too much of agency — for the more we make of it, the less there is for it to make. Why should we value human agency if we are unwilling to give it any room for maneuver and invention?

If we think of justice as a social invention, variously made, one more product of human creativity, then its making does not seem all that different from the practical working out of autonomy and attachment. What reasons do we have to expect a singular and universal justice? Is that not like protecting the plurality of playwrights while insisting that they all write the same play? But do not all the playwrights require the same protection — not, to be sure, against unfriendly audiences or bad reviews, but against censorship and persecution? How are we to draw the line between covering laws and reiterative moralities?

IV

I want now to look at an attempt by a contemporary philosopher to draw this critical line — Stuart Hampshire's essay "Morality and Convention."¹⁹ Hampshire provides an especially useful argument because he is equally sensitive to the claims of particular ways of life rooted in "local memories and local attachments" and to the claims of a universal morality "arising from a shared humanity and an entirely general norm of reasonableness." The first set of claims is strongest, he thinks, in those parts of morality that have to do with "the prohibitions and prescriptions that govern sexual morality and family relationships and the duties of friendship."²⁰ "Govern" here is one of the verbs of particularity: in these areas, at least, we are to determine our own pro-

¹⁹ Stuart Hampshire, *Morality and Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), chap. 6.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 134–35.

hibitions and prescriptions. The second set of claims finds its proper place in the principles of right and the rules of distribution. “Principles” and “rules” here are nouns with global reach; their content is supplied by a reason that belongs to no one in particular.

This is to mark off autonomy and attachment from justice in a way that seems to fit nicely with the distinction between reiterative and covering-law universalism. With regard to kinship and friendship, Hampshire recognizes a “license for distinctiveness.” With regard to distribution, he recognizes a “requirement of convergence.” His “license” allows for many different histories; his “requirement” suggests a steady (and familiar) pressure toward singularity.²¹ The values and virtues of autonomy and attachment are matters of custom, feeling, and habit; and there is no reason why they should be the same in different societies (hence the “license” is itself universal). The values and virtues of justice are a matter for rational argument; in principle, they should be similar, if not identical, everywhere.

It is not easy, however, to make practical sense of this distinction. Consider for a moment the question of family relationships, that is, the kinship system. In most of the societies that anthropologists study (and still, to some extent, in our own), the rules of kinship are also the rules of distributive justice. They determine who lives with whom, who sleeps with whom, who defers to whom, who has power over whom, who gives dowries to whom, and who inherits from whom — and once all this has been determined not much room is left for the imposition of a rational and universal distributive code. Now the license for distinctiveness and the requirement of convergence come starkly into conflict, for they both seem to govern the same terrain.

Hampshire deals with this conflict by suggesting that justice serves as a kind of negative constraint on autonomy and attachment. What rationality requires, he writes, is “that the rules and conventions [in this case, of sexual morality] should not cause evi-

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

dent and avoidable unhappiness or offend accepted principles of fairness.” This is a proposal for cultural diversity within the limits of reason alone (or of common sense: what does “accepted” mean?), and the proposal will seem more or less attractive depending on how limiting the limits are. For Hampshire, the model of cultural diversity is the diversity of natural languages, with their radically distinct and seemingly arbitrary grammars and “rules of propriety,” and the model of the rational limits is the “presumed deep structure in all languages.”²²

But this linguistic analogy is also a puzzle, for the deep structure of language, which is indeed reiterated in all natural languages, constitutes rather than regulates the various grammars. Were we ever to find a language with an alternative deep structure we would have to surrender the universality presumption; we would not set about “correcting” the deviant language. But covering laws in morality —the “accepted principles” of justice, for example —are precisely regulative in character: were Hampshire to find a morality without them, he would want, presumably, to criticize and correct it.

It is entirely possible that our reiterated moralities and ways of life have a common deep structure. But the more important question for us is whether they have a common substance. Is there in fact a single set of principles located somewhere in the core of every morality, regulating all the workings-out of autonomy and attachment? Put this way, the question invites a negative answer; we have only to consult the anthropological literature. Reiteration makes for difference. We will find, however, an overlapping plurality of sets, each of which bears a family resemblance to the others. Hence we will know them (all) to be principles of justice, and we may well be led, by the interactions of states and peoples, say, to interpret them in ways that emphasize their common features. But our interpretations can do no more than suggest the *differentiated commonalities* of justice — for these common fea-

²² Ibid., p. 136.

tures are always incorporated within a particular cultural system and elaborated in highly specific ways. We abstract from the differences to a universal code, something like H. L. A. Hart's "minimum natural law."²³ But there can never be a single correct statement of the code, any more than there can be a single set of positive laws that gets the natural law right once and for all. Every statement is also an interpretation, carrying, let us say, philosophical freight; and it is likely to take on, additionally, the cultural freight of the language in which it is stated.

In any case, the same search for commonality and the same abstraction is possible, as the world grows smaller, in the realms of sexuality and kinship. So if the abstracted code sets some limits on social practice, it does so across the full range of moral life, and not only with regard to justice. And the possibility of differentiation also exists across the range: there is no distinction of areas here, no separable social space where covering-law universalism can play a dominant part. When we draw the critical line, there is nothing on the other side. Either the covering law covers everything—or better, only trivialities are reiterated: each people has its own folk dances—or everything is reiterated, and (partially) differentiated in the course of reiteration, including justice itself.²⁴

²³ H. L. A. Hart, *The Concept of Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 189–95.

²⁴ An argument somewhat similar to Hampshire's is suggested in Aurel Kolnai's essay "Erroneous Conscience." Kolnai has a fine sensitivity to the thickness and diversity of moral experience. He argues, nonetheless, against the claim that there are "different moralities." Morality is necessarily singular in character, but it is diversified by our "affiliations." For moral experience is always the experience of particular people, located in a time and place, and attached to particular other people. "Thus the social entities to which we naturally belong or which we join by free choice embody, among other things, certain distinctive moral features, performances, and accents . . . our loyalty toward them conforms to a general moral demand [i.e., a "covering law"], and in its turn begets certain derived moral obligations: from our familial, national, religious, political, etc., affiliations will arise for each of us a set of moral by-laws." A distinct set, not just because the bylaws have as their "incidental point of application" different families and nations, but also because the affiliations they reflect constitute in each case a distinct "framework of life" or "sphere of duties" with its own "features, performances, and accents." Morality is particularized through the operation of what Kolnai calls "non-moral facts" (our associational inclinations, our passionate attachments). But the processes

V

Reiterative universalism, however, is still a form of universalism. I have already suggested the ways in which it invites covering-law expression: the warrant for reiteration (like Hampshire's license for distinctiveness) is itself universal. I do not mean that the warrant preexists every reiterative effort — though it might do that if we took it to be a divine warrant —but only that every claim to moral making, every claim to shape a way of life, justifies the claims that come later. And the experience of reiteration makes it possible, at least, for people to acknowledge the diversity of claims. Just as we are capable of recognizing a particular history as our own and another history as someone else's, and both of them as human histories, so we are capable of recognizing a particular understanding of autonomy and attachment as our own and another understanding as someone else's, and both of them as moral understandings. We can see the family resemblances and acknowledge at the same time the particular character of each member of the family. The acknowledgment is additive and inductive, as I suggested earlier, and so it does not require an external standpoint or a universal perspective (from which we might leap immediately to a covering law). We stand where we are and learn from our encounters with other people. What we learn is that we have no special standing; the claims that we make they make too, the children of Israel and the children of the Ethiopians, But it is a moral act to recognize otherness in this way. If reiteration is, as I believe, a true story, then it carries in its telling the sorts of moral limits that are usually said to come only from covering-law universalism.

set in motion by these "facts" would seem to go very far toward producing, if not different moralities, then different understandings and experiences of morality — hence, different ways of life. The "moral obligation of honesty" would doubtless survive these processes with only minor variation, but it is hard to believe that the rules of distributive justice would not be significantly differentiated in their course (*Ethics, Value and Reality: Selected Papers of Aurel Kolnai*, introduction by Bernard Williams and David Wiggins [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978], pp. 21–22).

Reiteration is also universal in its occasions. We may make our own moralities, but we do not make them randomly or any which way. The autonomous and attached agents are persons of a certain sort, morally creative human beings, and the moralities they create must fit the experiences they have.²⁵ The experiences that make for moral making have to do most often with lordship and bondage, that is, with oppression, vulnerability, and fear, and, pervasively, the exercise of power —experiences that require us to justify ourselves and to appeal for help to one another. We respond to the requirement creatively, which is to say, differently, though most often, perhaps, with the misplaced confidence that ours is the only legitimate response. What the historical record suggests, however, is that there is a wide range of possible responses and a significant number of actual responses that are legitimate in at least this sense, that they fit the experiences; they meet the requirements of their occasions.

These requirements can be inadequately or dishonestly met, but it is hard to see how they might be missed entirely. It is a common and often accurate criticism of existing moralities, for example, that they conceal the fact of oppression and so serve the interests of the oppressors. But no morality made by human beings, in the face of human experience, can serve the interests of oppressors alone. For no particular human interest can be served without opening the way to a wider service. Consider again the exodus story, which has as its apparent moral starting point Israel's consciousness of oppression. "And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up to God by reason of the bondage."²⁶ The bondage was the reason for the cry, and this suggests an already established understanding of what a free human life is or might be like. However such lives are socially assigned, they can be claimed by anyone. We can be

²⁵ Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

²⁶ Exod. 2:23.

sure that the Philistines and the Syrians made similar (but not identical) claims: they also “cried” —though their cries were thematically as well as idiomatically different from those of the Israelites. Moral making encompasses and enables these cries, always providing (or sooner or later providing) principles of justice in terms of which they make sense.

Every response to a moral occasion can be criticized from the standpoint of other, earlier or concurrent, responses. We can learn from each other, even when the lesson learned is not exactly what the other intended to teach. The value of the gift is not fixed by the giver. Nevertheless, there is a value in gifts: one nation can in fact be a “light” to another. Moral makers (legislators and prophets and also ordinary men and women) are like artists or writers who pick up elements of one another’s style, or even borrow plots, not for the sake of imitation but in order to strengthen their own work. So we make ourselves better without making ourselves the same. Indeed, we cannot make ourselves the same without denying or repressing our creative power. But denial and repression are themselves creative, if perverse, uses of that same power and are always followed by other uses.

Consider now a more concrete illustration of our different responses to similar moral occasions. I begin with the strongest contemporary candidate for covering-law status: the principle that human beings are entitled to equal respect and concern.²⁷ The relevant moral occasion is the experience of humiliation or degradation —conquest, slavery, ostracism, pariah status. Some of the men and women who are conquered, enslaved, ostracized, or de-classed will respond with arguments about respect —drawing on the resources of the existing morality. But because this response has to be repeated again and again in different circumstances, with different resources, the idea of respect is itself differentiated and its names are multiplied: honor, dignity, worth, standing, recognition,

²⁷ See Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 180–83.

esteem, and so on. These are all the same thing, perhaps, under a sufficiently abstract description; in practice, in everyday life, they are very different things. We can hardly treat everyone in accordance with all of them; nor is it clear, in fact, despite the covering law, that we can treat everyone equally in accordance with any one of them. The injunction of the covering law presupposes the universality that it is intended to create. Only God can show equal respect and concern for each of the creatures created in his image. This does not preclude particularly fashioned relationships with individual men and women, but it does preclude the sort of favoritism that the biblical God regularly displays —as, for example, when he prefers Abel’s sacrifice to Cain’s. The fact that even God is imagined to play favorites suggests how hard it is for us to imagine ourselves behaving differently.

In practice, again, we show equal respect and concern only when our roles require it and then only over the population relevant to the roles. Today, the injunction is most often directed to state officials: they must exemplify this sort of egalitarianism in all their dealings with citizens of the state (but not with anyone else). The citizens are, so to speak, collectively their favorites, but among citizens no further favoritism is allowed. And then the same injunction is reiterated for other officials and other sets of citizens. The effective covering law is that all officials should treat their *fellow* citizens with equal respect and concern. But this is another one of those covering laws that immediately makes for difference. Neither the same fellowship nor the same idea of respect will be universally shared —and then what demands respect is only indirectly the individual himself; it is more immediately the way of life, the culture of respect and concern, that he shares with his fellows. Hence, the law has this form: people should be treated in accordance with their own ideas about how they should be treated (or, to guard against arrogance and presumption and to protect people with inferiority complexes or what Marxists call “false consciousness,” according to the ideal stan-

dards of their own way of life). That is not an unimportant moral rule, but it is probably best understood in the reiterative rather than the covering-law mode.

We respect the different outcomes of the rule insofar as we recognize them as reiterations of our own moral effort, undertaken on similar occasions but in different historical circumstances and under the influence of different beliefs about the world. Respecting the outcomes does not preclude criticizing them, nor need it prevent us from calling into question the beliefs on which they rest. But the most common occasion for criticism is the failure of practical outcomes to match conceptual ones: performances falling short of promises. Thus we might express a special concern for our own children and recognize that another set of parents were doing the same thing—even though what they were actually doing, the concrete behavior through which their concern was expressed, was significantly different from our own. And then, since we know what it means to express concern, we will also be able to recognize cases where there was no genuine concern at all but rather abuse or neglect (or no equal concern but rather favoritism and discrimination). Similarly with states and officials: we have little difficulty in recognizing situations where, whatever is being said, the required moral effort is not in fact being made—as in the case, for example, of British officials and Irish peasants in the years 1845–49.²⁸ But that is not to say that when the effort is made it must always be made in the same way.

So I have a special concern for my own children, my friends, my comrades, and my fellow citizens. And so do you. What reiterative universalism requires is that we recognize the legitimacy of these repeated acts of moral specialization. I make some people special, but that only means that they are special for me; and I am capable of acknowledging *and ought to acknowledge* that other people are special for you. What we might then think of as re-

²⁸ C. B. Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger: Ireland, 1845–1849* (London: Harper and Row, 1962).

stricted or particularized covering laws extend across each field of specialization. But there is no cover across all the fields except for the cover provided by mutual recognition and then by our different accounts of the commonalities of reiteration. Perhaps there is a general rule that all the fields must be covered; we must meet the requirements of our moral occasions. We must explain and defend ourselves, ground our complaints, justify our claims, situate ourselves within the moral world, and contribute as best we can to its construction and reconstruction. But we do all these things among ourselves, in some particular here-and-now, working with a local set of concepts and values. This is only to say again that reiteration is a true story.

Reiterative universalism operates mostly within the limits of ours and theirs —not of Reason with a capital “R” but of our reason and their reason. It requires respect for the others, who are just as much moral makers as we are. That does not mean that the moralities we and they make are of equal value (or disvalue). There is no single uniform or eternal standard of value; standards get reiterated too. But at any moment in time, a given morality may prove inadequate to its occasions, or its practice may fail to measure up to its own standards or to a newly developed or dimly made out set of alternative standards —for reiteration is a continuous and contentious activity. The largest requirement of morality, then, the core principle of any universalism, is that we find some way of engaging in that activity while living in peace with the other actors.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION REVISITED

I

In this second lecture, I want to try to make the argument developed in the first do some serious work —to use the ideas of covering-law and reiterative universalism in a discussion of the national question. I will begin by restating the two ideas, dwelling for a moment on the second, which is less familiar. Covering-law

universalism describes the standard philosophical effort to bring all human activities, all social arrangements, all political practices, under a single set of principles or a single conception of the right or the good. The idea of reiteration, by contrast, reflects an understanding that morality is made again and again; hence there cannot be a single stable covering law. Moral creativity is plural in its incidence and differentiated in its outcomes —and yet, it is not wholly differentiated, as if the agents and subjects of all moralities had no common kinship. In fact, they can recognize themselves and one another as moral makers, and from this recognition there follows the minimalist universalism of reiteration.

A rough analogy may serve to illustrate my argument. Think of a hundred architects, from different times and places, each one engaged in designing the same sort of building, a home, say, or a temple or a school. They are each trying as best they can to get the building right, a goal they have in common with moral makers. But they are not trying to design the same building —the one perfect building, which, if any of them did get it right, would make all future designs unnecessary (we would just go on building that one building over and over again). In principle, they could all get it right, even if all their buildings were radically different from one another. For though their efforts are similarly occasioned by the need for a place to live or pray or study, their circumstances and conceptions are dissimilar; they understand places differently, and also living, praying, and studying. In practice, of course, they will not get it right; all their buildings will be controversial, subject to criticism and improvement, serving eventually as the background of new designs and new understandings of design. At the same time, since they are all designing buildings for human beings, there will be certain features common to all the buildings, and reiterated theories about these features will always be one source of architectural criticism.

In a similar way, morally creative men and women produce many different moralities, none of them the one perfect morality

that would render their creativity superfluous. From the differentiated commonalities of these creations, we can recognize all of them as the work of human hands, and our accounts of what is common and why provide us with a set (itself never perfectly understood or articulated) of universal constraints. But one can make too much of these constraints, so that they overwhelm the creative effort, pressing us all to live in accordance with a single ideal, a practical orthodoxy of one sort or another. I have argued that this is the usual thrust of the covering-law view —and that it is better, in morality as in architecture, to leave room for the reiteration of difference. But what if the things we make (buildings, codes, countries) turn out to be ugly?

II

It is not only morality but also immorality that gets reiterated in the course of human history. There are, however, important differences between the two reiterations. We would not talk of “making” immoralities, only of acting immorally; for when we act immorally we do not act in accordance with a theory of immorality and we do not conceptualize our activity or elaborate it into a series of injunctions and rules. We usually lie about what we are doing, sometimes to other people, sometimes to ourselves. We do evil, thinking or pretending that we are doing good. There are contradictions, then, between what is said and what is done whenever what is done is wrong. But the contradiction between theory and practice, pervasive in morality, is entirely missing in immorality. No theoretical construction of evil, no “doctrine of ill-doing” exists that can be betrayed in practice.

This point is not a logical one. We can easily enough imagine a theorist of evil who was also a timid soul —a hypocrite, therefore, who failed to live down to the standards he defended. Perhaps the Marquis de Sade, despite a few tawdry adventures, was a person of this sort. But there have not been many such people.

The positive doctrinal creation, the making of immorality, is as uncommon as the practice of immorality is common. People do evil in the same repetitive way in which they do good, but they do not think about evil in the same way. It may be that there is less to think about, at least in this sense: that goodness is more readily elaborated and differentiated, while evil has a more singular and uniform character.²⁹ I do not mean to deny the imaginativeness that can be invested in cruelty, say, but cruelty is imaginative in practice, not in theory. It would be a waste of creative energy to develop an account, let alone a series of accounts, of the bad life. We understand the bad life in negative or oppositional terms. But it is not the case that every version of the good life has an opposite that is a version of the bad life. Rather, one of the standard form of badness is an opposition to or denial of the principles and rules that make all the versions possible —and then evil is an overt, active, and inventive opposition.

I can make the same point in the language of my first lecture. We act immorally whenever we deny to other people the warrant for or what I will now call the rights of reiteration, that is, the right to act autonomously and the right to form attachments in accordance with a particular understanding of the good life. Or, immorality is commonly expressed in a refusal to recognize in others the moral agency and the creative powers that we claim for ourselves. And immorality passes into evil when the refusal is willful and violent, turning the others, against their will, into beings “less than human” (or, less human than we are). Conduct of this sort will usually be accompanied by theoretical justifications, but these will not take the form of creative immoralities. Justification is always moral in character, and the justification of evil is no exception. The central problem of moral creativity is that it encompasses and justifies evil actions. My purpose in this

²⁹ This argument was suggested to me by Adi Ophir. Compare Barrington Moore on “the unity of misery and the diversity of happiness” in *Reflections on the Causes of Human Misery and upon Certain Proposals to Eliminate Them* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), chap. 1.

second lecture is to address this problem, looking in some detail at one of the most commonly reiterated theories of autonomy and attachment, the theory of nationalism.

Certainly, there is evil enough in our domestic societies, among ourselves, in families, schools, markets, corporations, and states. But it is probably true that the greatest evils in human history have occurred and continue to occur between nations, and a certain sort of nationalism has been the political carrier of these evils, as well as their theoretical justification. To see our own nation in a certain way is also to will evil toward some or all of the others. At the same time, however, nationalism is one of the most direct expressions of collective autonomy and attachment. That is why, in my first lecture, I took national self-determination as the paradigmatic form of moral reiteration: first one nation, and then another. The paradigm, to be sure, is conceptually limited and historically contingent. The nation is by no means the most important of the collectivities within which moral ideas and ways of life have been elaborated. The experience of ancient Israel in this regard is distinctly unusual. Even with reference to self-determination, the national entity, itself differently constituted and understood in different historical periods, could as easily be replaced by the clan or the tribe or the city-state or the community of faith.³⁰ The argument, for better and worse, would be the same. Any collectivity can provide the institutional structures and the patterns of agency necessary for working out a version of the good life. And any collectivity can display the egoism, arrogance, and general nastiness that we associate today with the rogue nation. In any case, it is this association that I want to investigate.

III

The nation is for us the chief representative of particularity. And on one standard philosophical view, particularity makes for

³⁰But see Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), which suggests that our national communities, though not our nationalist ideologies, are very old.

nastiness; groups like the nation, as soon as they are politically organized, eagerly take up the business of self-aggrandizement, seizing, dominating, and destroying rival groups (which act in exactly the same way whenever they can). Edmund Wilson, in his book on the American Civil War, expresses this view in biological terms: “In a recent . . . film showing life at the bottom of the sea, a primitive organism called a sea slug is seen gobbling up small organisms through a large orifice at one end of its body; confronted with another sea slug of an only slightly lesser size, it ingurgitates that, too, . . . The wars fought by human beings are stimulated as a rule . . . by the same instincts as the voracity of the sea slug.”³¹

But it would be difficult to construct a plausible account of international society on this model. And if we replace instincts with interests and interests with conceptions of interest (or ideologies), we will not get anything like a uniform voraciousness. Nations, even nation-states, behave very differently according to their (reiterated and differentiated) understandings of themselves and of their place in the world. Writing about individuals in domestic society, Machiavelli suggests a class basis for such understandings: “If we consider the objects of the nobles and of the people, we must see that the first have a great desire to dominate, while the latter have only the wish not to be dominated . . . to live in the enjoyment of liberty.”³² Conceivably, there are “noble” and “plebeian” nations, the first always a threat, the second always threatened. It is not only a question of instinct and size, as with Wilson’s sea slugs, but also of ambition and honor. And then the classic solution to the problem of domination is this: the less ambitious or smaller and weaker individuals or nations, whose only wish is not to be dominated, band together, invent something like

³¹ Edmund Wilson, *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. xi.

³² Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, bk. 1, chap. 5, trans. Christian Detmold (New York: Modern Library, 1940), p. 122.

covering-law universalism, and create a political agency —the state —to enforce the law. In international society, covering-law universalism, were it ever to be fully effective, would require a universal state.

But the classic solution works best in domestic society, where the nobles are indeed defeated, though usually not, as Machiavelli advised, exterminated, and a state is fashioned which, sometimes at least, protects its members from domination. What lies behind this success, when and where it occurs, is the common culture of the two classes. Though their material life is very different, and though they develop somewhat different moral understandings and an often antagonistic politics, they are likely to share a wide range of cultural artifacts —language, religion, historical memory, the calendar and its holidays, the sense of place, a specific experience of art and music —and as a result of some or all of these, what we call “nationality.” The emergent nation-state, then, can be viewed by its members as an appropriate and already familiar framework for the exercise of autonomy and the formation of attachments. The strongest evidence that they do in fact view it this way came in 1914, with the collapse of Marxist internationalism. The international proletariat, apparently, had no common culture; nor is there much commonality in what is sometimes called, with more hope than insight, the community of nations. Hence the plebeian nations are unlikely to imagine a universal state (as individual plebeians might well imagine the nation-state) as a framework within which *their own* culture could find expression. Perhaps no existing culture would find expression in such a frame; perhaps the language of the universal state would be Esperanto and its morality an Esperanto-like code. But the more plausible expectation of the plebeian nations is that universalism would take shape as a “noble” imposition.

So it appears, indeed, to the noble nations as well. And it is at this point that their national ambition becomes morally interesting. If ambition is merely appetite, if it is satisfactorily explained

as a will to power, a desire to dominate for the sheer pleasure (or for any of the other advantages) of domination, then the nobility of the noble nations has only psychological interest. We have to understand it in order to repress or contain it. But national leaders and the intellectuals they enlist commonly give reasons for their pursuit of domination. They need to justify themselves; hence their reasons are moral reasons, which take the form — I am not sure that any other is available — of covering-law universalism. They seek to extend their power, so the leaders and intellectuals say, only in order to enforce the law:

Make ye sure to each his own
That he reap where he hath sown.

Kipling, of course, is a poet of imperialism, and we are likely to think of nationalism as the ideology of anti-imperial revolt. But empires in the modern world are acquired and sustained by nations, and the ideology of imperialism is also nationalist in character, inviting us to recognize (and approve of) a nation-with-a-mission. Freedom is the primary goal of the anti-imperial revolt; the imperial nation aims higher — at civilization, enlightenment, modernity, democracy, communism, and so on. In a brilliant book on the nation as an “imagined community,” Benedict Anderson has argued that nationalism necessarily involves an acceptance of limits: “The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them . . . has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet.”³³ That is true enough, and helps to explain why reiterative universalism has long been a favorite doctrine of nationalist intellectuals. But it has never been the only

³³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 16.

doctrine; there have always been other intellectuals who, if they did not dream of a wholly naturalized humanity, no foreigners left in the world, dreamed nonetheless of a humanity whose life would be shaped by the values of one of the nations that composed it — the whole world, say, made safe for democracy.

This is covering-law universalism; it is different, no doubt, from the religious version of the same thing but not entirely different. Indeed, to imagine a nation-with-a-mission is to come very close to Jewish, if not to Christian, understandings of universalism. It is appropriate, then, that one of the strongest defenses of the idea of a national mission comes from a contemporary Jewish philosopher. “No nation in the world,” writes Martin Buber, “has [self-preservation and self-assertion] as its only task, for just as an individual who wishes only to preserve and assert himself leads an unjustified and meaningless existence, so a nation with no other aim deserves to pass away.” Every nation, Buber says, has (or should quickly find!) a “mission” of its own — a claim that sets up the central problem of his political thought: how to draw the “line of demarcation” between different and possibly conflicting national missions so that all of them can be (reiteratively) pursued. But though it is his word, “mission” does not seem to me the word that best expresses Buber’s meaning — for it belongs to the world of the covering law, and that is not his world. He is arguing for a commitment to the kind of belief or value that might inspire and sustain a common life and lift it out of mere existence. No doubt he has views about the most appropriate beliefs and values, at least for his own people. At the same time, however, he denies that there is any “scale of values” with which national commitments can be ranked and ordered.³⁴ Among missionaries, such denials are uncommon, if not impossible. Nor are national missions, especially noble ones, at all easy to mark off from one another. They have global reach; they reflect the highest aspira-

³⁴ Martin Buber, *Israel and the World: Essays in a Time of Crisis* (New York: Schocken, 1963), pp. 221, 248.

tions; and they require a kind of triumph that is incompatible with Buber's commitment to reiteration. If one believes in the covering law, how is it possible to avoid the further belief that some missions are more urgent, more valuable to a suffering or benighted humanity, than others?

In fact, what I have been calling "covering-law universalism" often takes more modest forms: the civilizing mission of this or that nation may extend only to a few neighboring tribes; the correct ideological position may be imposed only on the country next door; immoral and unnatural practices may be stamped out only in the scattered provinces of a minor empire. One does what one can. All such efforts, however, are universalist in spirit — first, because they are governed by a "law" whose coverage is not limited to the people among whom it was first enforced; and second, because they are aimed at the good of other people. We are inclined today to doubt the legitimacy of the coverage and the sincerity of the aim — except in our own case, when doubt is commonly repressed. But I suspect that the legitimacy and sincerity have always been doubted, except in the local case. Covering-law universalism is a jealous God, and all the other gods but mine are idols.

Of course, the covering law is always a cover for expansion and exploitation. But it would be wrong to assume that that is all it is. There has probably never been a case of national aggrandizement that did not draw on, that did not have to draw on, the idealism of (some of) the members of the nation. And idealism here means their belief in this or that version of covering-law universalism and in themselves as agents of the law. They carry to foreign lands a culture to which other people ought to be assimilated or a doctrine by which they ought to be ruled. They teach the others a way of life that more closely expresses natural law or divine command or historical development. Might such beliefs ever be true? In his articles on India, Marx argued that a particular set of them was true, while at the same time denying the idealism of their agents. The more advanced nations, as if moved by an invisible hand, did

good for the people they conquered and oppressed. “England it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan, was actuated only by the vilest interests. . . . But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England, she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about the revolution.”³⁵ In the next historical stage, socialist governments in the advanced nations would play the same revolutionary role with greater self-awareness and, presumably, less violence. But Marx’s argument depends, like all other covering-law universalisms, on the further belief that mankind has a single destiny, which all its members must alike “fulfill.” We have no way of knowing our destiny, however, and there is probably more historical warrant for expectations of difference—even in the local uses, say, of new and universal technologies. For now, at least, every attempt to enforce singularity is an act of faith, exactly as such attempts were at the time of the Islamic conquests or the crusades of Christendom.

Marx was also wrong to insist that the English in India were “actuated *only* by the vilest interests.” No doubt, their interests were mixed, as human interests always are. We would probably not be inclined to say of John Stuart Mill, working in the London offices of the East India Company, that he was doing something vile, moved only by personal or national selfishness.³⁶ But we do judge imperial expansion and colonial domination harshly, and for good reason. Expansion and domination deny to their victims the rights of reiteration: autonomous development and freely chosen attachment. The denial is immediately effective even if its intention is, as it surely would have been had Marx or Mill been

³⁵ Karl Marx, “The British Rule in India,” in *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization*, ed. Shlomo Avineri (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1969), p. 94.

³⁶ See Mill’s defense of his role, which is not entirely different from Marx’s defense: *On Liberty*, reprinted as chap. 2 in *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, ed. Marshall Cohen (New York: Modern Library, 1961), pp. 197–98.

in charge, to vindicate those same rights in the long run. For what underlies this benevolent intention is the morally dangerous belief that the victims have somehow lost their powers of agency, their cultural and moral creativity, their capacity to shape their own lives. They are dim, unenlightened, barbarian, ignorant, and passive —trapped in a stagnant traditionalism, cut off from history itself, helplessly waiting to be rescued by the more advanced nations.

IV

The victim nations, plebians all, prove this belief to be false whenever they resist the power that dominates them — as the Indians did in 1857, in the Sepoy Rebellion, long before they had reaped the benefits of the English social revolution. Indeed, the resistance falsifies not only the imperial nation's view of its subjects but also, soon enough, its view of itself. To sustain their empire, the agents of enlightenment must adopt the manner and methods of the barbarians. A harsh cruelty is necessary to enforce the covering laws of civilization and to further the cause of progress. And when the resistance is renewed, the cruelty is increased. Nationalism, in its best-known version, is the creed of the resistance, especially of the resistance in its second phase, when self-consciousness has been heightened by repression. It is "the ideology," as Tom Nairn has written, "of weaker, less developed countries struggling to free themselves from alien oppression."³⁷ Each nationalist movement produces its own variant of this ideology. I shall make no attempt to catalogue the actual and possible varieties; they are best understood as the products of reiteration: similar struggles) or at least struggles to which we give the same name) with different ideological and practical outcomes. But these are now reactive reiterations, and they involve certain distortions in what we might imagine as the normal processes of cultural

³⁷ Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: NLB, 1977), p. 331.

production —when production is free from both the constraints of imperial power and the imperatives of resistance. Perhaps normality of this sort is utopian: normal nowhere. Distortion is still the right word to describe the pressures that push (some) new nations toward an imperialism of their own.

Nationalist ideology in the “less developed countries” often has a forced or hothouse quality. The making of cultures and moralities is a process within which, at any particular moment, many elements are in play. But the effort to generate a coherent nationalism, driven by political urgencies, has highly artificial results; its protagonists are less interested in sustaining the process than in inventing a homogeneous and unilinear “tradition.” And then the nationalist movement or the state that it creates will try to suppress whatever does not fit the invention. It is indeed a problem of reiterative processes that they can themselves be reiterated; there is no patent, as Anderson has written, on the idea of liberation. If the global reach of imperial covering laws is challenged by nationalism, so the local reach of nationalism can be challenged by still more localized and parochial communities —Greater India, for example, by Pakistan, Kashmir, Dravidistan, and so on —each one claiming its right to enact its own culture. The leaders and intellectuals of nationalist movements commonly demand a full stop, absolute loyalty to the nation as they conceive it. But that conception, designed to serve an immediate political purpose, is necessarily subject to further development and differentiation.³⁸ The test of every nationalism, then, is the “nation” that comes next. I will come back to this point later on.

The “forcing” of nationalism has a second result; it helps to account for the regressive character of many nationalist ideologies. I hasten to add that “regressive” is a misleading term if it suggests that the processes of cultural creativity move in a single direction,

³⁸ See Clifford Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States,” in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 255–310.

toward a goal that is uniformly affirmed. But they do *move*, and just as the need to generate a coherent ideology may cut off the movement, so the need to oppose the “civilizing” or progressive ends of covering-law universalism may reverse it. Then the new ideology is likely to proclaim the sacredness of everything old and archaic in the national heritage and to assign a higher value than was ever assigned before to religious fundamentalism and cultural integrity. Gandhi’s spinning wheel is the sort of symbol that many nationalists seek, evocative of a cherished, if mostly mythical, past.³⁹

Normally, the ancient and honorable usages of the nation are subject to a continuous (and also continuously contested) revision. Now the agents of revision are likely to be called disloyal and its products inauthentic. And though authenticity is, one would think, always relative to a particular national history (and dubious even in its relativity, given the actual variousness and the internal contradictions of all such histories), nationalist intellectuals often reach for a stronger argument: that their culture, morality, and politics is authentic *tout court* —real, historical, orthodox, organic, faithful, uncorrupted, pure, and enduring —and so superior to all the synthetic, unnatural, and hybrid creations of other peoples. Here they imitate the universalists they oppose, insisting that national cultures can be ranked on a single scale. They adopt new criteria and reverse the old order, but they retain the ranking. In this sense, though not in many others, nationalist perversity resembles enlightenment virtue.

But this response to imperial enlightenment and its covering laws, this invention of a “superior” traditionalism, is often inadequate to its occasion —and it suggests very nicely what such inadequacy means and how it can be recognized. The occasion is a history of oppressive and degrading rule; the response is both ideological and practical; and it is inadequate insofar as it reproduces,

³⁹ See Francis Hutchins, *Spontaneous Revolution: The Quit India Movement* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1971), chaps. 3, 4, 5.

rather than resolves, the occasion. Nations with “superior” traditions are quick to impose themselves on smaller and weaker nations in their midst or on their borders, quick to repeat what Isaiah Berlin, in his essay on Herder, describes as “the barbarous disregard of . . . spontaneous, natural forms of human self-expression.”⁴⁰ The disregard is only made easier by the new oppressors’ claim that they stand at the very top of the scale of naturalness and spontaneity.

V

The rank ordering of cultures always threatens the men and women whose culture it devalues. There is no innocent ranking, as if we could give grades that were merely hortatory and not invidious. Low grades are invitations to, and potential justifications for, “barbarous disregard,” and that last phrase translates often enough into a politics of conquest and repression. But have I not just given a low grade to certain national cultures? Have I not set up a rank ordering according to which nations committed to rank ordering rank low? Yes, I have done exactly that: following the minimalist universalism that governs reiteration, I have proposed a very limited ranking, which is compatible with recognizing rather than disregarding (most of) the “spontaneous, natural forms of human self-expression.” But I want to leave open the possibility that “barbarous disregard” is also, sometimes, spontaneous and natural. If it is, then it needs theoretical devaluation and political control. This is only to acknowledge that while there are (as the prophet Isaiah proclaimed) blessings available to every nation, not every nationalism is blessed.

The point of a limited ranking of this sort is to protect the commonality of nations from the “noble” nations — and also from plebeian nations aspiring to join the ranks of the noble. The point is to devalue nobility whenever it aims, as Machiavelli thought it

⁴⁰ Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas* (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 159.

always would, at domination. I have argued that covering-law universalism, in its different versions, is the most important of the doctrines that justify (I do not say bring about) this “noble” nationalism. I want to argue now that the theory of reiterative universalism provides the best account of nationalism in general and the most adequate constraint on its various immoralities. The adequacy, of course, is conceptual, not practical; I shall not have much to say about practical constraints. But then, why is the standard of adequacy not met perfectly well by a single covering law that prohibits conquest and oppression? Do not most versions of covering-law universalism include a law of that sort? The problem lies with the other laws, which commonly require national cultures to conform to a single standard and which devalue those that fall short. A doctrine is not conceptually adequate by virtue of one of its concepts, so long as this one is undermined by all the others. Marxism (or Marxism-Leninism) once again provides a useful example, when it simultaneously upholds the right of national self-determination and defends revolutionary wars against nations that resist the forces of historical advance. The Marxist concept of developmental stages, even when it is conceived in predictive rather than normative terms, stands uneasily alongside the concept of self-determination.⁴¹

Reiterative universalism, by contrast, makes no predictions at all. Or, at least, it makes no predictions about the substance of the successive reiterations. There is a general prediction, suggested by those deviant lines from Micah that I quoted in my first lecture: if each of us walks with his own god, then all of us will sit at peace under our vines and fig trees. In his defense of religious toleration, John Locke makes a similar prediction: “The establishment of this one thing,” he wrote, “would take away all ground of complaints and tumults upon account of conscience.” I suppose

⁴¹ For a complete account of the Marxist argument, see Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

that it is a piece of extraordinary optimism to suggest that there will not be ungrounded complaints and tumults, but that was Locke's claim: "There is only one thing which gathers people into seditious commotions, and that is oppression."⁴² The parallel argument for international society would hold that oppression is the sole cause of all the wars of national liberation and national unification that have plagued the modern world. The peace of vines and fig trees will finally arrive when consciences are no longer constrained and nations are set free.

I have in the past defended a weakened and chastened version of this argument.⁴³ It does appear, however, that peace is a more immediate outcome of religious toleration than of national liberation. The most obvious reason for this is that churches do not come attached to territories, and so the reiterative processes that split and divide churches do not often provoke territorial disputes. The control of holy places is disputed, of course, but mostly it is other-worldly territory that is at issue. Nationalism, by contrast, is much more significantly an ideology of place. New nationalisms make for contested places, either because populations are intermixed or because borders are uncertain; and these contests are readily enacted in blood. But whatever nationalist leaders and intellectuals say about the places for which they fight, no body of land is like the body of the baby brought before King Solomon: it does not die if it is divided. Partition is almost always an available (though rarely a neat) solution in territorial disputes.

New nationalisms are probably more dangerous when they take on universalist missions than when they make localized claims to territory. Now they are like the old religions, before religion was domesticated by toleration, and they often assume a religious character. Advocates of enlightenment universalism are then surprised

⁴² John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Patrick Romanell (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950), pp. 52, 54.

⁴³ Michael Walzer, "The Reform of the International System," in *Studies of War and Peace* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1986), pp. 227–40.

to find themselves no longer alone in the field — secular modernizers, for example, suddenly confronted by religious fundamentalists, men and women complacent about the future overtaken by men and women passionate about the past. Theorists of reiteration, who are equally incapable of predicting the next version of cultural or political nationalism, at least expect to be surprised. They are prepared for a succession of nationalist claims, and they are also prepared to make some (modest) judgments about the successive nations.

VI

The critical test of any nationalism comes when it has to cope with the surprise of a new nation or, more accurately, of a new liberation movement laying claim to nationhood. The experience is common enough, and the test, I suppose, is commonly failed. There are many examples: Turkey and the Armenians, Nigeria and the Ibos, Iraq and the Kurds, Israel and the Palestinians—though in the last two of these, the story is not yet over. In the first two, the number of dead Armenians and Ibos suggests the extent of the evil that failure involves and helps to explain the harsh judgment that is so often passed on nationalism as an ideology. But it is important to stress that nationalism in these cases was also the ideology of the victims, and though it is always possible to condemn both sides —the victors for the murders they have actually committed and the victims for the murders they would have committed —I think it more seemly at least to consider the possibility that the defeated nation, had it encountered a less harsh opposition, would have opted for peace. Sometimes it would, and sometimes it would not: no singular judgment is possible, as if all nationalists, everywhere, stood in defiance of some universal covering law. Eric Hobsbawm argued for something like this wholesale condemnation when he wrote that “nationalism by definition subordinates all other interests to those of its specific

‘nation.’”⁴⁴ This is to understand nationalism as a form of collective egoism. It is better understood, however, as a form of collective individualism —which is to say that nationalist movements and nation-states, like individual men and women, behave both well and badly and must be judged accordingly.⁴⁵

There is nothing that we should feel bound to condemn in the nationalist politics defended, for example, by Giuseppe Mazzini, who founded Young Italy and then went on to help in the founding of Young Switzerland and Young Germany. Like the man who wanted to dance at every wedding, Mazzini was eager to endorse every reiteration of Italy’s national struggle —but he remained throughout his life an Italian nationalist. His liberal nationalism, at least as he lived it, is a classic example of reiterative universalism. When he wrote about it, however, he did not always capture the full force of reiteration. Consider his famous image of the universal orchestra. In this orchestra, each nation plays its own instrument, but apparently not its own music, for the result, Mazzini seems to suggest, is a single harmonious symphony.⁴⁶ It is useful to compare this supposedly happy picture with Marx’s reference to the orchestra, in the third volume of *Capital*, as a model for cooperative work in a socialist factory.⁴⁷ This is also

⁴⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, “Some Reflections on *The Break-Up of Britain*,” in *New Left Review* 105 (Sept.–Oct. 1977), p. 9.

⁴⁵ “Egoism” ranks the self ahead of all other selves; “individualism” has no such connotation. In a roughly analogous way, “racism,” “sexism,” and “chauvinism” imply a rank ordering of races, sexes, and states, but “nationalism” works differently: it is entirely compatible with a theory of incommensurability (like Buber’s) or with a simple agnosticism about ranks and orders. Nationalists are more like patriots, in that they can respect and value commitments similar to their own in other people —and they can do so, unlike egoists, without viewing the others as competitors and antagonists. (This is not to say that there are not many nationalists who adopt both a collective version of egoism and a political version of racism.)

⁴⁶ So the “harmony” and “mission” metaphors get mixed: “From the harmonious interplay of [each people’s] mission will derive the general mission of all peoples” (*The Living Thoughts of Mazzini*, ed. Ignazio Silone [Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972], p. 55).

⁴⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Frederick Engels (New York: International Publishers, 1967), 3:383.

odd given what we know about the dictatorial behavior of directors in most great orchestras, but the reference is appropriate in this sense: that the workers in a factory cooperate in the production of a single product. There is no similar cooperation in international society, where the different national players are likely to produce a cacophony rather than a symphony — music only to the modernist (or perhaps the postmodernist) ear. In fact, there is not one performance but a series of performances, and nationalist intellectuals like Mazzini are to be praised when they acknowledge the right of the other players to play what they please. They are to be praised even more highly if they are also prepared to listen to what the others play.

Do not some of the others play well and some badly? It will certainly seem so to those of us who are accustomed to our own music and (even more) to those of us who take our own music to be mandated by a universal aesthetics. But all that we can say with any assurance is that they play *what they play* well or badly — and no doubt have their own critics who tell them so. This kind of criticism can also be morally important, and I do not mean to underestimate it. Nor do I mean to underestimate our own less assured judgments about the internal harmonies and disharmonies, so to speak, of particular national cultures. But these are not judgments about nationalism in general or in particular. The proper judgment of nationalism has to do with the attitudes and practices it adopts toward other nations.

There is no universal model for a national culture, no covering law or set of laws that controls the development of a nation, But there is a universal model for the behavior of one nation toward the others — a model that Herder thought natural to all nations: “He [did] not see,” writes Berlin, “why one community, absorbed in the development of its own native talent, should not respect a similar activity on the part of others.”⁴⁸ This is indeed the core principle of reiterative universalism, but nothing in recent history

⁴⁸ *Vico and Herder*, p. 164.

suggests that the respect it enjoins comes naturally, not to old nations and not even to new ones, despite their own recent experience of oppression and liberation. Often enough, as I have already suggested, new nations are new oppressors, because of the monolithic character of their nationalist ideology or because of the claims they make to cultural authenticity or to a “nobility” of their own, and then to a universalizing mission. Sometimes they are genuinely insecure in their newness, uncertain of their own political unity and physical safety, threatened by (but also, often, more fearful than they need be of) the national minorities in their midst. In all such cases, reiterative universalism operates as a constraint, ruling out policies that are inconsistent with the further “development of native talent” and local cultures. But it also happens that new nationalisms, “absorbed” in their own development, literally fail to see the nation that is standing next in line. They are self-absorbed and blind. Now the necessary moral task is admonition, a kind of moral pointing toward the other. Martin Buber provides a nice example, very much in the reiterative mode. In 1929, responding to those of his fellow Zionists who thought Arab nationalism an “artificial” (that is, an imperial) creation, he wrote: “We know that . . . we have genuine national unity and a real nationalist movement; why should we assume that these do not exist among the Arabs?”⁴⁹

VII

The advantage of the reiterative mode is that it recognizes the value of what it admonishes. Confronting nationalist blindness, it is not itself blind to the strength and meaning of nationalism (Buber remained a Zionist). Here the contrast with covering-law universalists is especially clear, and I should like to make this contrast the conclusion of my argument. Defenders of one or another version of the covering law have sometimes also defended the

⁴⁹ Martin Buber, *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*, ed. Paul R. Mendes-Flohr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 91.

cause of the nation that comes next. We may take Jean-Paul Sartre's commitment to Algerian national liberation as a classic case. (Though France was not itself a new nation, it had only just emerged from a period of occupation and resistance.) Sartre's politics in the 1950s was very brave, but it was also blind with a blindness that is as characteristic of universalism as self-absorption is characteristic of nationalism. For the foundation of his politics was the firm belief that Algerian nationalists were morally and politically identical to French leftists (like himself) and would create a just society in accordance with the universal principles acknowledged on the French left.⁵⁰ The FLN, Sartre believed (setting himself up to be surprised), was the historic agent of his own covering-law universalism. This was a radically false view of the FLN, but it was held with such confidence that it is difficult even to imagine what Sartre would have said had he understood its falseness: the possibility, so far as we can tell from his writings, was never considered. What would his general position have been had he recognized that reiterated liberations produce in each case a new and different, and often morally problematic, outcome?

When it is combined with covering-law universalism, this recognition can give rise to a purely instrumental view of national liberation. According to Eric Hobsbawm, this is the proper Marxist view: "The fundamental criterion of Marxist pragmatic judgment has always been whether nationalism as such, or any specific case of it, advances the cause of socialism."⁵¹ Only those liberation movements that get things right, that hold the correct ideological position, deserve support. (Not quite true: there may be Marxist reasons for supporting a particular movement that have nothing to do with ideology but only with the international balance of power. This is an even more radical instrumentalism, and I will not take it up here.) Sartrean blindness makes it virtually impossible to criti-

⁵⁰ See Sartre's preface to Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), pp. 7–26.

⁵¹ "Some Reflections," p. 10.

cize liberation movements; Hobsbawm's pragmatic Marxism provides a clear-cut critical standard. But this does not seem to me the right standard, for it cannot be the case that socialism is the one and only legitimate nationalist goal. It is, indeed, a misunderstanding of the phrase "national liberation" to insist that the process it describes can have only one endpoint, for this denies to the adjective any qualifying power over the noun. Liberation properly depends upon its subject, that is, upon the history of the nation, the autonomous processes of cultural creativity, the pattern of mutual attachment, and so on. When we criticize nationalist movements, we must look, as I have already argued, at the attitude they adopt toward other nations, not at the quality of their internal life. That is not to say, again, that we cannot also criticize their internal life. But reiterative rights do not wait upon ideological correctness.

A nation is a historic community, connected to a meaningful place, enacting and revising a way of life, aiming at political or cultural self-determination. I have waited until my last breath to offer this definition, since I do not want to suggest too strong a link between nation and community. Communities can take other forms, as they have in the past and no doubt will in the future. But all the forms have pluralism in common —if communities are real, they are also different —and nations are probably the best current examples of this pluralism. When we think of the nation we are led to think of boundaries (as Anderson argues) and then we are led to think of other nations: this is a useful intellectual progress.

Reiterative universalism offers a way of understanding and justifying those boundaries. There is no sure way, given the circumstances of national life, to get them right. Nor is it any part of my argument that these boundaries should always be state boundaries. Political sovereignty is one outcome of national liberation, not the only one, not always the best possible one. If reiteration makes for a world of nations, it also makes for what the

American political theorist Horace Kallen called a “nation of nationalities.”⁵² It is compatible with any political framework that permits cultural pluralism and diverse ways of life. Multinational empires, though they are inconsistent with democratic principles, are not inconsistent with the principles of reiterative universalism, so long as the different nations are allowed to live in accordance with their own ways, free from czarist “russification,” for example, or any of its historical equivalents.

“Russification” provides a nice illustration of the wasteful and no doubt unjust war of state officials against cultural creativity and pluralism. Politics aims at unity: from many, one. But this is a unity that can be achieved in very different ways: by accommodating differences (as in the case of religious toleration) as well as by repressing it, by inclusion as well as forced assimilation, negotiation as well as coercion, federal or corporate arrangements as well as centralized states. Reiterative universalism favors the first alternative in each of these pairs. Given the first alternative, it is not incompatible with a common citizenship embracing a plurality of nations.⁵³

Covering-law universalism, by contrast, offers a way of explaining and justifying assimilation, integration, and unification, within and across states and empires; it looks to a time when all nations converge on the same moral and political regime or to a time when nationalism itself has been definitively superseded and all boundaries erased. These ends can be described in more evocative terms: global democracy, international communism, world government, the rule of the messiah. I mean to disparage all of these, though not because I find the laws or ways of life they propose entirely unattractive. I mean to disparage them because they would require us to disregard or repress processes of cultural creativity and pat-

⁵² Horace Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924).

⁵³ For a defense of this “civil” commonality, see Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution,” esp. pp. 309–10.

terns of mutual attachment that we ought to value. Nor could we sustain the disregard or the repression without violating the most important of the covering laws —without acting immorally, though always, of course, with “noble” intentions.