

## INTRODUCTION

When my son was ten I took him to see the movie *Three Kings* (1999). A dark caper-comedy set in the final days of the first Gulf War, *Three Kings* presents that war as a meaningless spectacle performed largely for the benefit of the television cameras, a war that nevertheless killed a lot of people and, after encouraging resistance to Saddam Hussein, left those Iraqis who rose against him to be slaughtered by the Republican Guard.<sup>1</sup> One of the film's characteristic sequences follows the path of a bullet through the inner organs of the person who's been shot. Another, this one memorable enough to have been parodied on *South Park*, shows a flagrantly decent American soldier, played by Mark Wahlberg, who is captured and tortured by electric shock in a basement bunker. Wahlberg's Iraqi interrogator, speaking accented but highly idiomatic American, says that his house has been hit by an American bomb. His child is dead and his wife has had her legs blown off. He asks the strapped-down Wahlberg how he would like it if the Iraqis came to America and bombed *his* house. The scene suddenly shifts to a tranquil American home with a mother cradling a baby in her arms. There is an explosion, and darkness fills the screen.

As we were leaving the theater I asked my son what he thought of the movie. He said he liked it. I asked him why. He thought for a minute and said, "Well, it's not one of those 'I'm great, you stink' movies."

Cosmopolitanism has never been so popular. Across a variety of academic disciplines and in the more respectable regions of the press the concept is repeatedly evoked whenever attention is paid to the movement of peoples and cultures and the creative mixtures that emerge as they interact. Since cultural mixture is now understood to be more or less universal and something that only the wrong people, xenophobes, racists, and so on, would want to resist, neither the pervasiveness of the term *cosmopolitanism* nor the whiff of pious euphoria it gives off should be surprising. What *is* surprising is that the concept's runaway popularity does not seem to have resulted in a general practice of exposing "I'm great, you stink" stories, especially the ones we ourselves tell, even when such stories emerge in contexts like Iraq and Afghanistan, where war making is more than a hypothetical option and where the stories will therefore bear responsibility for inciting or justifying large-scale loss of life.<sup>2</sup> Cosmopolitanism's original meaning—the overriding of local loyalties by a cosmic, transnational, or species-wide perspective—has tended to fade into the background, and it has taken with it the prospect that cosmopolitanism will interfere with the perpetrating of violence. This book tries to bring that prospect into the foreground again. With the Long Gulf War (the war against Iraq) now over, at least formally, but the war in Afghanistan celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2011, and others like these plausibly waiting around the corner, priority on the cosmopolitan agenda should go to the problem of transnational aggression, especially ours. Here is a challenge to face or, for those who disagree, to dispute: either cosmopolitanism detaches Americans from their nation and does so in time of war, when the price of such detachment rises precipitously, or it is not worth getting very excited about.

In recalling an older, more restrictive sense of cosmopolitanism, my purpose is not to reproach recent theorists for reframing the concept as a cultural particular, thereby allowing it to proliferate widely. The philosophical debate over the particular and the universal is one that for various reasons I prefer not to be drawn into and that I think can be legitimately avoided. I take the cultural relativizing of cosmopolitanism as a significant event in the recent intellectual history of the United States. It would be erroneous to think of it as a simple error. I myself would be badly placed to wish it away, having propagandized for it (with some mixed feelings, but on the whole more positive than negative ones) over some twenty years. But

there are two objections to the strong culturalist program which, though only partial, I would like to see factored back in. The first concerns timing. What we need from cosmopolitanism does not stand still. The sophist Gorgias of Leontini said that no one has ever been able to define “the art of the right moment.” At the time, this was probably an argument against Socratic universalism, but in the present moment it supplies a motive for reconsidering the virtues of cosmopolitanism’s universalist impulse, which is to say, its impulse toward global justice. Cosmopolitanism behaves differently when it is applied at different times and places, and above all as it is applied (as I will argue it has been, most often unconsciously) at different scales. Working from what seems to be the same principle, that is, saying no to “I’m great, you stink,” the scales of the classroom, neighborhood, city, region, nation, and world of nations can produce different results.

Lessons learned on a school playground may work pretty well when raised to the scale of a military conflict between the United States and Iraq, but the translation is never automatic; it’s not hard to imagine how the casual equation of one scale with another could go very, very wrong. I have heard a thirteen-year-old defend the Israelites’ ethnic cleansing of the Midianites by very implausible analogy with the problem of dealing with a lunchroom bully. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, and perhaps this will hold for some time to come, the crucial instance of non-identity of scales seems to me the line dividing cosmopolitanism at the national level from cosmopolitanism at the transnational level. These two scales, each claiming to embody cosmopolitanism, in fact produce distinct cosmopolitanisms, which is to say, distinct and perhaps even antithetical politics.<sup>3</sup> We (by “we” I mean the category to which likely readers of this book might belong, however it is named) have to be ready to take account of this difference and to balance our priorities accordingly.

My second objection is to the influential, if only implicit, assumption that these different scales are themselves incommensurable particulars, parallels which by definition will never cross or contradict each other. My point is not that cosmopolitanism and patriotism are always and inevitably antithetical to one another. They aren’t. Cosmopolitan politics of the pragmatic sort that I argue for throughout this book would be much more difficult if political projects could not draw on loyalties and affiliations functioning simultaneously at diverse scales. On the other hand, cosmopolitics is

absolutely inconceivable if the dilemma of having to choose between different affiliations is not at least a theoretical possibility. Let us at least entertain the notion that the scales might one day collide—that the moment might come when it would be necessary to choose. I myself believe that Americans inhabit such a moment. Today, I think, the larger, planetary scale trumps the smaller, national scale—not because it is larger, as if arithmetically greater meant normatively superior, but as a matter of present politics, a matter of timing.

I will argue, accordingly, that the cosmopolitan explorations and debates that have preoccupied the cultural disciplines for the past two decades can be clarified, and with them the responsibilities of intellectuals, by a focus on “I’m great, you stink” at the transnational scale. My proposal is that what we write and teach should be guided by the impulse to expose and shame narratives that organize the world of nations, often with great subtlety, according to that principle. At the very least we should be open to sharing my son’s delight and approval when “I’m great, you stink” narratives are replaced, as in *Three Kings*, by others that organize the world of nations in some more self-implicating and ethically balanced way.

This may not seem to be asking for very much. The basic insight was within the capacities of a ten-year-old—albeit a ten-year-old who was attending the United Nations International School and who, after seeing a science fiction movie, had already observed, “You know, dad, to the aliens *we’re* the aliens.” But given the general disinclination to factor in the possible viewpoints of aliens, the recognition and rejection of “I’m great, you stink” seems after all to set quite a high standard for cosmopolitanism. And if you take into account, on the one hand, the increasingly routinized self-satisfaction of today’s cosmopolitanism studies and, on the other hand, the confusions and imperatives, some unprecedented and some all too predictable, brought to us by the present conjuncture, nothing less strenuous would seem to do.

What conjuncture is that? For the purpose of assessing the responsibilities of intellectuals, whose work today is genuinely urgent and also necessarily slower than that of the talking head or real-time blogger, conjunctures require duration; they cannot take their cue from last week’s sensational headlines. The sense of the present moment implied here starts with topical events that, in the absence of a closure called for and promised, have meta-

morphosed into long-term and self-perpetuating conditions. I mean, first of all, the violence in the Middle East that has been initiated and supported by the United States. By the time this book is published, all U.S. troops may have finally left Iraq. One can hope. But habitual Israeli brutality against Palestinians will almost certainly not have ended, sustained as it is by the calm, long-term assurance that, whatever the number of casualties, the American government will never show more than token displeasure against its closest regional ally. Nor, despite all the excitement and uncertainty over Tunisia and Egypt, will we have seen the end of U.S. support for monarchical dictatorships in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. The so-called war on terror, which likewise has proved to be stubbornly bipartisan, even in an era that declares the end of bipartisanship, will continue to offer geopolitical strategists a blank check.<sup>4</sup> The prospect of U.S. forces withdrawing from Afghanistan has been announced, but that still seems distant. It is unlikely that missiles from U.S. planes and drones will have stopped killing civilians in their beds in Pakistan as well as Afghanistan and then time after time becoming the objects of an apology or an investigation.

Behind all these bits of news and the many others I have not mentioned there is a more widespread object that calls for investigation, apology, and, like any real apology, a change in our ways. I mean the common sense that reduces background news like this to background noise. What is it that enables all this inflicting of pain on people outside our borders to go on and on? As in the case of Abu Ghraib, the question is, Why has there been no regime-toppling scandal? What allows such things to seem structural, hence more or less acceptable? The best name for this body of largely unconscious and often self-contradictory presuppositions, propositions that may push in very different directions from official truths and official values, even plain-as-day values like “I think torture is never justified,” is also the simplest name available: nationalism.

“I’m great, you stink” doesn’t usually take the form of bloodthirsty enthusiasm for the long-distance murder of foreign civilians. These days, at least, nationalism is not so self-flaunting or loudly belligerent. On the contrary, it usually seems a quiet default setting that relishes an intermittent solidarity with fellow nationals and wishes no harm to anyone. At the same time, however, it assumes, or is not quite ready to dispute, the principle that people far away don’t matter as much as Americans do or don’t matter as

much as Americans do as long as Americans' survival is at stake—or perhaps merely their self-interest. This assumption seems to hold even if, as is so richly and incontrovertibly the case for Americans, the things done in their name by their government and their corporations end up killing their children, maiming their wives or husbands, or having other seriously injurious effects on them for which these particular acts of violence can stand as metaphors. It is this long-term common sense that is the proper object of polemic or even of reeducation on the part of teachers, scholars, and other cultural workers: the indifference, the ignorance, the lazy habits of backing one's own and of not thinking too much about the other side that maintain a sort of perpetual rehearsal for future military interventions while they also legitimate and enable ongoing ones.

Physical aggression is only the most visible way in which suffering is visited first and foremost on foreigners. Subsidies to U.S. agribusiness, which make it impossible for small farmers abroad to compete with prices in the United States and drive them off their land and into the slums, are one example among many. Why is it that such subsidies seem vulnerable to critique, to the extent that they are, only on the grounds of hypocrisy, that is, because we preach free trade but don't practice it? Why are they not denounced on the stronger grounds of their consequences for the planet's non-American inhabitants? If asked, we would probably not respond that non-Americans don't matter. Yet what other conclusion can be drawn from the fact that the question is *not* asked? Global violence is also at work, to take up one instance among many, in the U.S.-backed regime of intellectual property. Large numbers of people in undeveloped nations are dying of AIDS for lack of affordable medications that in the United States have drastically cut the mortality rate of that disease. But when the governments of Thailand and Argentina recently tried to import cheaper, generic drugs to treat their populations, the U.S. House of Representatives put them on its priority watch list of countries that do not respect intellectual property rights.<sup>5</sup> This is not just the familiar weighing of profits against lives, but a weighing of American profits against Thai and Argentinian lives. No lesser word than *nationalism* will serve to describe this state of affairs.

In the United States the habit of blaming other nations—these days, most often China, followed by other nations of Asia and the Middle East, though Africa and Latin America are close behind, and even European countries are

potentially fair game—makes it utterly uncontroversial to export everyday economic suffering as much as possible to regions of the world that do not vote in U.S. elections and indeed can be mocked as anti-American if they protest. Even the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 is often blamed not on the oil industry and the government’s deregulation of it but indirectly on Arab states and America’s dependence on them. The fact that perceived dependence on products from elsewhere sounds like a pathological condition, even to progressives, and indeed is opposed by almost no one except champions of unfettered free trade capitalism, shows how profoundly nationalistic common sense remains. So-called lost jobs in the United States are similarly blamed on foreign states, which are supposed to be stealing those jobs, rather than on, say, American corporations that ship them offshore. There is no historical questioning of the process by which Americans obtained those jobs in the first place. No one asks whether, judging by the same standard, other countries would have been equally justified in reporting a theft of jobs back in the nineteenth century when certain manufacturing industries moved from Europe to the United States, or whether non-Americans are wrong to depend on commodities produced here in order to be sold over there, giving Americans many of those jobs they still have. In all the to-do over China’s supposed manipulation of its exchange rate, has anyone been publicly inquiring as to whether the policy of the United States on exchange rates has worked against the U.S. national interest as Washington and Wall Street understand it? Who wrote the supposedly neutral rules that China is supposedly breaking? And who follows them? And, again, why is no one even asking these questions? The shameless, infantile clinging to a double standard, one for the United States and another for every other country, is predictable and sensible from a nationalist perspective but unacceptable from a cosmopolitan perspective.

What I’ve described so far, deeply corrupt as I hope it sounds, is only business as usual. But there is also new business on the agenda. Looking forward, it seems likely that people in the United States are on the verge of a new wave of nationalism, nationalism that may well take politically disorienting forms, that may well show up in unexpected constituencies, and that will put to the test the commitments of those who assume themselves not to be nationalists. On the “Styles” page for 6 September 2007 the *New York Times* ran a story on a new fashion for “Made in America” labels—new not

in the sense that the moral imperative to “buy American” is new (as Dana Frank shows in her book of that name, economic nationalism has been going strong since the Boston Tea Party), but new in the sense that it is appealing to a new market: sophisticated progressives. “Made in the U.S.A.,” the *Times* story says, “used to be a label primarily flaunted by consumers in the Rust Belt and rural regions. Increasingly, it is a status symbol for cosmopolitan bobos.” The reason most often given for such behavior is unimpeachable: “heightened concern for workplace and environmental issues” (c1). But such concern would have to target American products as well, and perhaps primarily. That doesn’t seem to be the tendency. This “move by the affluent left to conspicuously ‘Buy American,’” an inversion of the internationalist sensibility that it always wore as a badge of distinction, is also about “supporting the United States economy” (c6). In other words, “the National Public Radio demographic” is flirting “with a cause long associated with the Rush Limbaugh crowd” (c6).<sup>6</sup>

If you’re a conscientious, paid-up member of the NPR demographic, it’s easy enough to wrinkle your nose at the ravings of a Limbaugh or, before his banishment from CNN, an anti-immigrant hysteric like Lou Dobbs. Feelings may be less clear, however, when the subject under discussion is, say, Michael Moore, who came close to blaming the Saudi Arabian government for 9/11, or William Greider of *The Nation*, who has taken up Ross Perot’s phrase “that giant sucking sound,” or a commentator on MSNBC. Progressives, too, have their reasons for putting their countrymen first and economizing on concern about others, even if those others are going to be immediately affected by decisions taken in the United States. Nationalism can be a very democratic impulse as long as what you mean by *democracy* refers only to what goes on inside your own borders. Consider the slew of books that have recently appeared, before as well as during the economic crisis that began in 2008, which mix ecological virtue—how to have less of an impact on the planet—with more or less undisguised xenophobia or anti-Chinese racism, as in Sara Bongiorni’s *A Year without “Made in China”* (John Wiley, 2007), the story of the Bongiorni family’s “yearlong boycott of Chinese goods” (1). The fact that this title was considered acceptable to a mainstream publisher is itself worthy of thought. Imagine the reaction if Americans were told of titles like *A Year without “Made in USA.”* Faith that the divine will intends the inhabitants of the middle latitudes of the North



American continent to get the lion's share of the world's goods and services is equally apparent in Roger Simmermaker's *How Americans Can Buy American: The Power of Consumer Patriotism* (2008), now in its third edition. But even an infinitely more enlightened book like Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* (Harper, 2007) seems to assume that Americans would be better off if they did not trade with other countries at all. What that might mean to their level of employment or standard of living goes unquestioned. Ecological virtue is enlisted (abusively, in my view) in support of an ideal of self-sufficiency, and the ideal of self-sufficiency then does a passive-aggressive flip-flop into economic nationalism. Americans alone, Americans first.

With the rise of East Asia and America's loss of its once-unchallenged economic preeminence, the sentiment of economic nationalism in the United States can only be expected to intensify, and as it intensifies it can be expected to make itself available for conversion into a more openly belligerent, overtly militarist nationalism. A nation that has lost or is losing its economic hegemony but still possesses a high-tech arsenal of conventional and nuclear weapons out of all proportion to that of any other nation, and indeed has never kicked the habit of using military force whenever a glimmer of opportunity presented itself, is a very, very dangerous nation. Passive nationalism, which not only bucks at any criticism of what American men and women in uniform do once they are placed in harm's way but also refrains from asking how they got there, awaits only the proper occasion to rear up into a more proactive, less harmless state of mind. And occasions are sure to present themselves.

This view of the conjuncture would seem to require some stock taking on the part of American intellectuals. If America is a wounded giant, likely to writhe and flail in all directions as it is beset by pesky debtors and competitors, it may be that American humanists should start training themselves for a more modest and appropriate pedagogy. They might, for example, try backing off a bit from the project of instructing the world in how to wear its identities lightly—this is one way in which cosmopolitanism is often conceived—and instead try defending the world as far as possible against the destruction that the American behemoth is likely to inflict as it staggers, bumps, and smashes. Even if the giant makes a recovery, which is possible—this book does not rest its claims on a confidently negative prognosis—it

seems hard to imagine that there will not be a good deal of damage in the meantime.<sup>7</sup> Under such circumstances it may be that education of any sort simply cannot do much practical good. But to the extent that it can, there is a strong case to be made that teachers' first, crude, and unavoidable task is to teach American citizens that they are also citizens of a larger world, a world that they should do their best to treat more carefully and equitably; in other words, to teach cosmopolitanism, understood first and foremost as the ability to detach Americans from the national self-interest as it has been presented to them.

This brings me to the question of how cosmopolitanism *has* been understood. Some of the answer has already been alluded to above, and more will be explained below. But to summarize: over the past two decades cosmopolitanism has been understood (1) at smaller rather than larger scales. In part for that reason it has been understood (2) as an attitude that offers no necessary or significant challenge to nationalism.

In the years after the Cold War, probably in part because the binaries of that war were no longer imposing their fearful symmetry, the definition of cosmopolitanism suddenly loosened. For antiquity and the Enlightenment (I speak roughly here), cosmopolitanism had meant a relatively straightforward antithesis to local loyalties. On the whole, the term signified an attitude of detachment from one's place of origin and a transfer of primary loyalty to a larger social collectivity.<sup>8</sup> Those who saw cosmopolitanism as courageously ethical and those who saw it as treasonous, perverse, or politically evasive tended to agree that it was rare, a category destined to remain underpopulated, if not socially empty. Since around 1989, however, it has filled up. Two decades later, the question is how this filling up should be weighed and measured.

Whether it is associated with the transnational turn or with the rise of international civil society, this redefinition of cosmopolitanism was, first of all, a democratization. Membership in the once exclusively Western, exclusively upper-class club was now open to a much less privileged cast of characters. The shift first struck me as I followed the always interesting intellectual trajectory of the historian of anthropology James Clifford. In 1980, in an influential review of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Clifford had used the term *cosmopolitan* to describe the humanist side of Said, of which he strongly disapproved. This was the side that claimed "the privilege of

standing above cultural particularism, of aspiring to the universalist power that speaks for humanity,” a privilege “invented by a totalizing Western liberalism.” Ten years later, in Clifford’s essay “Traveling Cultures,” the term *cosmopolitan* had migrated from Western anthropologists and travelers to “the host of servants, helpers, companions, guides, bearers, etc. [who had] been discursively excluded from the role of proper travelers because of their race and class” (106). These too, Clifford now said, had “their specific cosmopolitan viewpoints” (107), viewpoints that were well worth retrieving. *Cosmopolitanism* had become a term of approval.

This discovery of “cosmopolitanism from below” brought a great deal of excitement to me and to many others in the 1990s.<sup>9</sup> The concept was genuinely fruitful, and one could only be glad when it multiplied. In the cultural disciplines in particular it opened up what would turn out to be a very productive program of work, most of it empirical research into the transnational subjectivity of particular cultures, subaltern groups, diasporas, and so forth, some of it philosophical meditation on that research. “Unrecorded Lives,” the title John C. Hawley gives to the introduction of his *India in Africa, Africa in India: Indian Ocean Cosmopolitanism*, defines the characteristic emphasis. Here, as in many other writings, a term weighty with distinguished associations from classical Greece and the European Enlightenment is brought forward in order to confer honor on unrecorded lives, especially non-Western lives, which, as was now noticed, had not merely stayed in place in order to be studied by visiting cosmopolitan westerners but were themselves mobile and cross-cultural.<sup>10</sup>

Because the vectors of mobility and the cultures crossed were themselves so various, this democratizing could also be described as a pluralizing of cosmopolitanism. When Diogenes called himself a *kosmo-politis*, or “citizen of the world,” all the plurality seemed to be on the side of the polis, or city-state. Of city-states there were many examples, and each was distinguished in various ways from the others. But there seemed to be only one way to be a citizen of the world. Cosmopolitanism had a singular essence: it meant refusing particular political affiliations and obligations, as Diogenes refused to serve Sinope, and declaring loyalty instead to a more universal community, however hypothetical. Now, however, instead of a single, definitive criterion the concept indicated a variety of social borders, a variety of crossings, a variety of attachments newly acquired and transformed as well

as attachments broken.<sup>11</sup> There was suddenly perceived to be a variety of cosmopolitanisms. Logically enough, the term came to be modified by an ever-increasing number of adjectives—rooted, vernacular, discrepant, patriotic, actually existing, and so on—each insisting in its own way that cosmopolitanism was particular, situated, and irreducibly plural. Just as logically, however, such pluralization put into question the value of these cosmopolitanisms. The move from singular to plural thereby could also be expressed as a shift from normative to descriptive cosmopolitanism. This phrasing suggests that cosmopolitanism is no longer a self-evident honorific, no longer realizes a predetermined positive value, but can be described only in its empirical detail, with decisions as to its value provisionally suspended.

At the same time, all signs suggested that a celebration was in full swing. But if this cosmopolitanism was indeed descriptive rather than normative, then what exactly was there to celebrate? This question was implicit in Clifford's about-face, though I myself took some years to recognize it. How much of a change was there, in fact, between Clifford's use of the word *cosmopolitan* in 1990 and his use of it in 1980? In the second statement and in the new efforts of description and retrieval that it helped stimulate, *cosmopolitan* was no longer being used as a term of disapproval. But if it had become a term of praise, exactly how much of what Clifford had disapproved of in the original, normative concept was being praised now? Did the new, nonelite cosmopolitans protest, like Said, against Orientalism or neo-imperialism? Did they claim the same privilege that Clifford had chastised Said for claiming, the privilege of speaking for humanity? Or, agreeing with Clifford's critique of Said from 1980, did they unite with nationalists in a new, small-is-beautiful, anti-universalist coalition opposed to all those who falsely made translocal claims? To put these questions somewhat differently: Were they cosmopolitans merely by virtue of their mobility, whether they had learned something from that mobility or not? Or were they also cosmopolitans in the more demanding sense of having fashioned their transnational experience and multiple loyalties into a worldview that, like Said's, differed from that of any of the nations where they had lived, a worldview that was somehow more responsible to the bigger picture? The latter possibility would suggest that they, like Said, took nationalism as an implicit antagonist. The former would suggest that Said's task had been

silently repudiated: that the new, nonelite cosmopolitans instead favored particular experiences of border crossing they might desire to see publicly expressed but would not want to see generalized. In short, it was now an open question whether the experiences that “guides, assistants, translators, carriers, etc.” (107) were now seen as sharing had anything at all to do with Said’s demands for global justice.<sup>12</sup>

Uncertainty as to cosmopolitanism’s normative payoff, whether it still had one, and if so what it might be, was perhaps the inevitable result of an inflated conceptual currency. Once a great many people were perceived to possess it, cosmopolitanism could hardly be expected to sustain the high market value it had been assigned when, though controversial, it was considered elitist or not for the faint of heart or simply scarce. As it expanded, one might have predicted that it would forfeit some of its ethical prestige. And that is what has happened. In the past twenty years the population of those described as cosmopolitan has increased so rapidly as to make some wonder whether anyone is left whom the concept does not cover, and this has been recognized as a problem for what Pnina Werbner calls its “ethical grounding.” “At the present cosmopolitan moment in anthropology,” Werbner writes, “there is a temptation to label almost anyone—African labour migrants, urbanites, Pentecostals, traders, diasporics—‘cosmopolitan.’ This obscures the ethical grounding of the new cosmopolitan anthropology in ideas of tolerance, inclusiveness, hospitality, personal autonomy, emancipation” (17).<sup>13</sup> Werbner understates the problem. Tolerance, inclusiveness, hospitality, and so on are nice ideas, but were they ever enough of an “ethical grounding”? This question has also been posed outside the academy. True, usage in the press, which is plentiful and largely enthusiastic, tends to be even less normatively demanding than Werbner’s. Many references to cosmopolitanism content themselves with connecting diversity of cuisine to desirability of real estate. Describing locations where it’s not as hard as you might think to find couscous, tofu, decaf latte, or some other nonnative comestible, they tend to imply that these are stylish, pleasant places to live because cultural difference is tolerated and encouraged.<sup>14</sup> Appreciation of cultural difference seems to be the concept’s outer limit as it is popularly understood. But this does not lead to universal satisfaction. Murmurs can be overheard asking whether cosmopolitanism really entails anything more than “let’s be

nice and respect each other.” In other words, it’s a fine injunction as far as it goes—but how far is that? Has the concept been evacuated of all ethical substance, leaving nothing more than a marker of transnational movement?

Once it came to refer to mobility as such and to the forms of complex and simultaneous belonging that mobility was held to produce, thus inviting discovery by scholars in an ever-proliferating variety of contact zones, trade routes, diasporic affiliations, culinary and musical and sexual styles, premodern and prenatal political regimes, and unlikely tourist destinations, cosmopolitanism surrendered much of its focus on conflict with the nation and, by logical extension, on resistance to conflict between nations. Once it could be seen as happening at scales smaller than the nation but also within nation formation itself, where subidentities are pressured to adapt or dissolve, it could no longer be identified by its friction with the nation. The dominant motive in the discussions of the 1990s seems to have been, on the contrary, a desire for reconciliation with the nation. In 1994 the former poet laureate Robert Pinsky presented Martha Nussbaum’s cosmopolitanism as “a view of the world that would be true only if people were not driven by emotions” (87). By the end of the decade, the truth of cosmopolitanism no longer seemed to preclude the emotions, even emotions as particularistic and apparently inconsequential as rooting for a local team. Pinsky rejected cosmopolitanism in favor of passionate patriotism. But for many writers patriotism itself could now be redescribed as a variant of cosmopolitanism. Or at least American patriotism could. For the historian David Hollinger and the literary critic Ross Posnock, for example, cosmopolitanism referred to a multicultural America’s ability to hold its separate racial and ethnic identities at arm’s length and rise above them. In *Postethnic America*, Hollinger argued his preference for a cosmopolitan rather than a pluralist vision of multiculturalism, an ideal of America that, while appreciating diversity, “is willing to put the future of every culture at risk through the sympathetic but critical scrutiny of other cultures” (85). In *Color and Culture* Posnock argued for a deracialized culture, or what he called, citing the legal philosopher Jeremy Waldron, “the cosmopolitan recognition that one lives as a ‘mixed-up self’ ‘in a mixed-up world’ where ancestral imperatives do not exert a preordained authority” (3).<sup>15</sup>

In 2001, laying out the results of a decade’s insights and spirited controversies, Hollinger drew a line between the old cosmopolitanism, which he

designated as empty, and a new cosmopolitanism, which he described as full and stocked with a great number of examples. On the old, empty, rootless side was the cosmopolitanism of Nussbaum, demanding primary allegiance to the community of humankind at the expense of all smaller allegiances. On the full side, the large and growing field of what Hollinger called new cosmopolitans refused the absoluteness of Nussbaum's commitment to humanity as a whole and instead tried to fill cosmopolitanism with historical particulars, reconceiving it as a balance of sorts between the particular and the universal. Though differing from each other, as might be expected from Hollinger's inclusion of so many critics of cosmopolitanism who might have preferred to describe themselves as pronationalists, the new cosmopolitans were said to share the impulse "to bring cosmopolitanism down to earth, to indicate that cosmopolitanism can deliver some of the goods ostensibly provided by patriots, provincials, parochials, populists, tribalists, and above all nationalists." Those who had been qualifying cosmopolitanism with adjectives like vernacular, critical, local, rooted, discrepant, comparative, pop, and actually existing had done so, Hollinger argued, in order to load up the otherwise empty concept with "history, the masses of mankind, the realities of power, and the need for politically viable solidarities."<sup>16</sup>

This new cosmopolitanism, a movement in which Hollinger generously counts my own work, has never been uncontested.<sup>17</sup> As Hollinger says, it has also never spoken with a single voice. But many new cosmopolitans have found it convenient to identify themselves with the supple, persuasive voice of the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, whom I discuss in chapter 1. Since Appiah's major theme is the compatibility of cosmopolitanism and patriotism, his authority has encouraged a devout, if paradoxical, identification between cosmopolitanism and its old national antithesis. In the United States today, whatever the case in Ghana, that's arguably not a consummation to be wished. It may be that, as the code word of choice for a moderate multiculturalism in the American mold that renounces separatist assertions of ethnic or racial identity, domestic cosmopolitanism disciplines citizens in much the same way that planetary-scale cosmopolitanism tries to discipline nations. Yet whatever the pros and cons domestically, its primary effect at the planetary scale is to congratulate Americans on being who they already are. It encourages America's belief that its conduct in the world has been and remains on the side of the angels. There is no need to trot out the

list of American military interventions around the world since 1900 or even since 1945—a list that is still capable of seeming much longer than one would have thought, so adept are we all at forgetting past unpleasantness—in order to see what effects that belief can have. Being cosmopolitan in the domestic sense, happy to be culturally hybrid or unhappy with any sense of identity insistent enough to disturb the harmony of the group, does not seem to have done much to deter U.S. military aggression in Latin America or in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Pakistan, the militarism that the United States supports in its allies (like Israel’s lethal commando raid on ships carrying humanitarian supplies to Gaza at the end of May 2010), its promiscuous and sometimes fatal labeling of nonallies as terrorists. Americans’ patriotic cosmopolitanism does not seem to have subverted in any way their usual oblique versions of “I’m great, you stink,” like “where have the American jobs gone?” or “you can’t buy anything these days that isn’t made in China” or “look how they treat their women.”

This point does not apply to the United States alone. (Taking the United States as the sole origin of evil and injustice in the world would not, needless to say, be a properly cosmopolitan position.) High on everyone’s list of new, nonelite cosmopolitans in the 1990s were the transnational subjects of the various immigrant diasporas: Salvadorans in the United States, Sikhs in Canada, Senegalese in France, Serbs in Australia, and so on. Thanks in part to improved technologies of communication and transportation, many migrants remained closely connected with their place of origin and could be said to experience multiple national belonging. Had they therefore acquired, as it was imagined they might, some degree of detachment from nationalism or at least some interesting enrichment or complication of it? Had they become cosmopolitans in the old sense of the word? What *was* their state of feeling or indifference, affiliation or disaffiliation, with regard to the nation? Looking at diasporic communities in Sri Lanka, Namibia, Punjab, and Quebec, Arjun Appadurai hesitated between categorizing their identities and aspirations as cosmopolitan or “nonnational” or, on the contrary, as “trojan nationalisms” (417).<sup>18</sup> For Benedict Anderson, what diasporas tended to produce was nationalism, more precisely nationalism of a new, more virulent type. Bringing hostility toward others into nationalism or inciting further a potential for hostility that already existed there, what he called “long-distance nationalism” was not cosmopolitanism-



from-below but, on the contrary, a pathology of global inequality; its effect was to make domestic, preexisting nationalism, which he saw as basically benign and a matter of internal solidarity rather than hostility toward others, infinitely more dangerous. Long-distance nationalism was “a rapidly spreading phenomenon whereby well-off immigrants to the rich, advanced countries (and their children) are becoming key sources of money, guns, and extremist propaganda in their distant, putative countries of origin—in perfect safety and without any form of accountability” (150).<sup>19</sup> His instances included support for violent Hindu fundamentalism among South Asians living in North America, Irish-American support for the Irish Republican Army, and the Zionism of Jewish-American settlers doing God’s work by occupying the West Bank. Writing in the same spirit, Craig Calhoun noted that “migrants whose visions of their home cultures were more conservative and ideological than their originals” figured prominently in the events of 11 September 2001.<sup>20</sup> For him, too, it was not obvious how much there was to prize, normatively speaking, in the cosmopolitan subjectivity of the new, nonelite cosmopolitans (if indeed they could properly count as nonelite, which Anderson clearly doubts) that was now being so eagerly retrieved. Busy answering the charge of elitism by demonstrating again and again the number of subaltern groups that can qualify for cosmopolitan status, theorists of cosmopolitanism seemed to have devoted much less energy to the question of whether and to what extent these solidarities are moving away from “I’m great, you stink”—whether and to what extent the multiplying of loyalties or belongings produces critical distance from all or any of these belongings.

These are my questions as well. But to pose them is not to pretend to have answered them. I try to explore them here in a spirit that remains cautiously optimistic about the project of the new cosmopolitanism. It is true that rubbing two national affiliations together will not inevitably produce a cool detachment from “I’m great, you stink.” The outcome may indeed be ethnic hatred that heats up and bursts into flame. But the result may also be the cosmopolitan sensibility of an Edward Said or a Noam Chomsky, each arguably fashioned in and through multiple national affiliations, American-Palestinian and American-Jewish, respectively. All the votes are not yet in on emergent forms of flexible and multisite citizenship. If the paradox of cosmopolitanism as multiple and overlapping belonging has become familiar,

it's because, paradoxical or not, there is more and more historical evidence that such attachment can and does generate forms of detachment. Detachment is not an illusion; it is a social fact visibly embodied in actual lives and commitments. My son's "I'm great, you stink" comment is a small but non-trivial sign of a countercurrent within common sense that might be called, borrowing from Antonio Gramsci's "national-popular," the international-popular. It surely takes some of its rhetorical power, as Chomsky does, from the universal availability of the Golden Rule, whose potential for the production of insidious analogies between what is done unto you and what is done unto others should never be underestimated. Cosmopolitanism is promiscuous in its sources of energy and inspiration, religious as well as secular.

Cosmopolitan detachment has also, no doubt, found champions among free market individualists, who are all too eager to declare themselves free of any and all belonging. To say so is not, however, to discredit it; it is merely to offer evidence that cosmopolitanism is powered by real historical forces. No one should expect all these forces either to be ideologically pure or to produce nothing but conservative, system-affirming effects. If you inspect the popular genre of the commodity history, you will see the Euro-American consumer treated as the innocent victim of tradition-minded, superstitious, and officiously misguided regulators who try, but always fail, to keep exotic new commodities out of her or his hands. This is capitalist propaganda, flattering the consumer as well as the commodity, and it will unfortunately help undermine necessary projects of regulation—for example, the effort to regulate financial markets. Yet it is also a refreshing and important departure from civilizational self-flattery. The supposed primitives whose lands send chocolate, tea, coffee, coca, and so on to the metropolis are shown to be basically right in their traditional valuing of those materials, and the prohibition-generating West is shown to be silly and wrong. Again and again the commodity histories offer occasions for an energetic and far-reaching self-anthropologization of Western civilization.<sup>21</sup> On these occasions, one need not hesitate to say that some of the wind in cosmopolitanism's sails comes from capitalism.

The point is general and important. The interests of the capitalist system may coincide for a time with the interests of a given nation, but the two sets of interests never remain identical for long, and the historical tendency for

them to drift apart can be exploited. It seems entirely within the dialectical spirit of Karl Marx to try to fashion a left politics that would use the contradictions of capitalism against nationalism (where we need it now) as well as against capitalism itself. Let me try to rephrase this point, which is central to everything that follows. The demand for detachment from the nation may sound like an abstract moral imperative, a simple return to the normative Kantian conception of cosmopolitanism. My title alludes to Immanuel Kant's "Perpetual Peace"—an expression of graveyard humor on Kant's part, intended for "heads of state who can never get enough of war"—and I will not discourage anyone who is open to Kant's ethical plea for an alternative. After all, the wars go on, and we are counting the bodies every day. Julien Benda, whose *Treason of the Intellectuals* (1928) charged French intellectuals with caving in to the pressures of national belonging in a time of national crisis and thus betraying their vocation, would have had a field day with the liberal hawks who in 2003 flocked to the national project of invading Iraq. Assuming, as Benda does, that intellectuals indeed have a vocation and that their vocation is cosmopolitanism is no doubt self-flattering and elitist. But the risk of self-aggrandizement, real as it is, seems less worrisome than the risk of complicity in the daily, democratically supported bombing of civilian populations and its various nonmilitary equivalents.

That said, what I am arguing for would be more accurately described not as a Kantian but a Hegelian cosmopolitanism: an imperative that emerges in, is limited by, and takes support from the unrepeatability of history. As Hollinger says, the adjective historical is another way of describing the new cosmopolitanism, though I would like to turn it in the direction of a still newer cosmopolitanism. By *historical* I probably mean more things than can be explained satisfactorily in a brief introduction, but let me at least mention three linked points. (1) I assume, following Thomas Haskell's argument on the origins of humanitarianism, that ethical obligations to strangers are not atemporal and absolute but rather proportionate to historically developing technologies of communication and transportation, which is to say, social mechanisms that stretch solidarity and make larger versions of it seem imaginable and feasible.<sup>22</sup> (2) This assumption implies another: that it is impossible to know in advance how far cosmopolitanism's normative impulse can or should extend. Cosmopolitanism as I see it is not abstract universalism in disguise, a call for detachment from the nation that begins

with the United States, but is in fact aimed at all nations equally, powerful or powerless, in whatever situation or stage of development they find themselves.<sup>23</sup> If it were, it would be susceptible to the charge that I elaborate apropos of Chomsky and the Golden Rule in chapter 2: in the act of applying, very properly, the same standard to our own nation that we apply to other nations, we might also be seen as arrogating to ourselves the right to set the standard and thus to choose one that can comfortably be applied to us as well as others because it favors us at the expense of others. (I make this argument about Walter Michaels, whose rhetoric is very Chomsky-like in this respect, though the charge would not, I think, properly pertain to Chomsky himself.) In other words, antinationalism is fine as a critique of the United States, but it would be dangerous if universalized, that is, extended to other, less powerful countries. In my view, the issue of how far antinationalism extends cannot be adjudicated once and for all. “Less powerful” is neither a fixed signifier nor a stand-in for virtue. Power cannot be expected to sit still. It was never so neatly and conveniently distributed as to justify either Americano-centrism or Americano-phobia. Thinking historically therefore means neither universalizing nor refusing to universalize. It means I need not and in fact do not root against nations which have been denied sovereignty when they try to achieve it, like the Palestinians or the world’s three hundred million indigenous people; sometimes the proper cosmopolitan position is a demand for statehood, for without it certain options for transnational agency are non-starters. As a matter of principle, cosmopolitanism’s range of application simply cannot be decided a priori.

(3) It follows that cosmopolitanism at the planetary scale cannot properly be accused (the accusation goes back at least to Jean Jacques Rousseau) of evading domestic political responsibilities. Those responsibilities cannot be shielded from its normative glare, however harsh and unaccustomed. George Orwell notes in *The Road to Wigan Pier* that he first discovered class injustice in England because the English working class supplied an analogy for the Burmese, whom he had learned to see as victims of imperialism when he served the empire abroad. When he was growing up in England there was no scandal about class; it seemed like second nature. He needed Burma in order to defamiliarize it. A similar defamiliarization might work in America. Many Americans have learned that English has a grammar—grammar not being much taught in American schools—only by encounter-

ing the grammar of a foreign language. The same may hold for class, which in America largely remains untaught and indeed unspeakable. All analogies are imprecise, which was precisely my point about the nonalignment of different scales. Yet as such they are also the portals of discovery. Crucial to my argument here is Immanuel Wallerstein's notion of the modern capitalist system (discussed in chapter 3) as one structured so as to permit the global North to siphon off surplus from the global South. If this is the system under which we live, then the unsettling but inevitable result is that the meaning of class identity is transformed in both regions.<sup>24</sup> What it means to be a worker in the global North includes both being exploited and being the beneficiary of exploitation performed on your behalf. One cannot responsibly do class politics in the United States without knowing this. Understanding cosmopolitanism historically means understanding how, for better or worse, different scales do interfere with each other.

From the usual perspective of the new cosmopolitanism, the cosmopolitanism of Said and Chomsky and Nussbaum can look ahistorical or old, a matter of principles universally applied without special dispensation for allies, neighbors, or compatriots and hence in denial about its own historical belonging while also weakened by the lack of outreach to particular constituencies. Said himself saw his intellectual practice as cultivated in and by exile, a "secular criticism" defined against the theological partialities and dogmas imposed by all forms of social belonging and most damagingly by nationalism. Chomsky appears to see his cosmopolitanism as a simple, natural application at the level of the species of a species-wide capacity for rational thought. Neither of these self-perceptions satisfactorily accounts for the locations Said and Chomsky have occupied or the political clout they have wielded. But if political commitment can be conceived as another form of multiple and overlapping loyalty, that is, as a form of belonging in its own right, then Said and Chomsky too can be made to count as new cosmopolitans rather than representatives of an unsituated normative abstraction. (A version of this case could also be made about Nussbaum.)<sup>25</sup> And if so, then we can perhaps also use Said and Chomsky as a standard by which to judge their fellow new cosmopolitans. Like Said and Chomsky, in other words, they can be asked what they represent, how far their words carry, and above all what content those words will bear. Perhaps the new cosmopolitanism can be asked to do the same kind of political work as the

old. Perhaps it can even be asked to fulfill promises that the old cosmopolitanism made but was itself unable to keep.

This talk of cosmopolitanisms old and new may seem to complicate the issue needlessly. For some readers there will seem to be a very simple problem here. Isn't this version of the new cosmopolitanism just detachment by another, fancier name? And isn't it therefore a political mistake? It would seem to encourage a political irresponsibility that is already too prevalent and is indeed a known deformation of intellectuals in our time. In his book *The Intellectuals and the Flag* (2006) Todd Gitlin takes this view. He sees Said and Chomsky as quintessential representatives of an empty and therefore hopeless cosmopolitanism (153). When Gitlin brings up the word *cosmopolitanism* (130), he does not in fact speak scornfully of it. On the contrary, he suggests that for the members of his 1960s generation the rejection of patriotism offered their "most powerful public emotion" (131). But whether because the strategies of the 1960s failed or because circumstances have changed, what Gitlin calls for now is a patriotic about-face. He does so in the name of political effectiveness. Cosmopolitans like Said and Chomsky, he says, make up a "fundamentalist left" whose mistake is to condemn "the American use of force" (153) as such. This takes them out of the political game: "Viewing US power as an indivisible evil, the fundamentalist left has logically foregone the possibility of any effective opposition beforehand. . . . It takes refuge in the margins, displaying its clean hands, and recuses itself" (153).<sup>26</sup>

I share Gitlin's suspicion of moral purity and complacent marginality. I will have a brief say in chapter 7 about the limits of a certain academic anti-imperialism in America. Many sins are committed daily in anti-imperialism's name. Critics of imperialism also have a responsibility to those against whom those sins are committed. The fact that bad governance is so often the explanation given by the global North for its gross disparity in resources with the global South is no excuse for the symmetrical lie that all evil comes from the metropolis. I agree with Gitlin as well about the need to enlist (American) national solidarity on behalf of the welfare state, an argument I've made elsewhere and return to below.<sup>27</sup> Though my target in this book is first and foremost American support for American militarism, I find it absurd to contend that there can be no such thing as meaningful reform at home as long as violence continues to be perpetrated abroad. To believe that

all suffering is produced by a single, undifferentiated, all-seeing agency is to throw one's lot in with theology.

If I have so much more positive a view of Said and Chomsky, however, it's because I differ drastically on Gitlin's central argument, which comes in two steps: (1) that self-chosen marginality is the characteristic and inevitable fate of the cosmopolitan, who by nature is abstracted from real constituencies and real politics, and (2) that the only alternative to marginality is liberal patriotism. "The left helped force the United States out of Vietnam," Gitlin argues paradigmatically, "but did so at the cost of disconnecting itself from the nation" (135). For Gitlin, to disconnect yourself from the foreign policy of the United States is to disconnect yourself from the nation, and to disconnect yourself from the nation is to disconnect yourself from politics as such. Cosmopolitanism thus becomes the simple refusal of all belonging. It's as if Gitlin cannot imagine any form of political belonging for Americans that would connect them politically to others outside their nation or that, in doing so, could have any real effects.<sup>28</sup>

Imagining is always to be encouraged, but simple observation should suffice to raise some doubts about this position. The field of examples that my own presupposes is sketched out in considerable detail in a book called *Nongovernmental Politics* (2007) edited by Michel Feher, Gaëlle Krikorian, and Yates McKee.<sup>29</sup> This book assembles a number of reports by activists from various transnational organizations and movements, like the movements by and for European refugees and *sans papiers*, who have taken upon themselves political tasks in the transnational domain. It does so in order to argue that this is a domain of real political possibilities and responsibilities. In passing, it shows that this domain is neither politically irrelevant philanthropy, as someone like Gitlin might assume, nor a covert expression of the imperial will of the United States, as is often assumed by Gitlin's enemies. This is a case that should not need to be made. But there are people who seem to believe that when Human Rights Watch repeatedly condemns the human rights case by which the administration of George W. Bush justified its invasion of Iraq, or when the American Civil Liberties Union brings legal suits against the U.S. government over Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, these NGOs are actually helping the United States exercise global power or simply being self-righteous and self-interested while doing nothing whatsoever of

real political significance. Gitlin's view of cosmopolitanism's political emptiness is shared by any number of theorists with whom he otherwise shares very little. These theorists assume that the NGOs live and work in a supranational wasteland where no such thing as true politics is even conceivable. For Giorgio Agamben, for example, the humanitarian relief of refugees and the spread of human rights discourse belong to the same all-inclusive nightmare of "bare life" as the extermination camps of the Holocaust. Victims of total and incomprehensible disaster cannot be imagined, or imagine themselves, as political agents. From the perspective of the victims' political agency, efforts to help are indistinguishable from efforts to victimize. Thus *l'Europe des camps* can appear to blend into the extermination camps. For the writers of *Nongovernmental Politics*, on the other hand, refugees remain political agents. They are drawn to identification with the political systems they belonged to before they became refugees, and they are capable of highly varied identifications with other marginal groups; they are political subjects of a sort even in their dealings with NGOs. To pretend they are below the threshold of the political, Amy West argues, is almost to support their marginalization (410). Like Gitlin, though from an opposite perspective, she warns against the "romanticization of marginality" (412).

Any number of further instances might be given from this volume to illustrate the unromantic, everyday alternatives open to a cosmopolitan politics. One is the so-called planespotters who monitored obscure but publicly available data of the Federal Aviation Administration in order to figure out which civilian airlines were participating in the CIA's program of extraordinary rendition. Another is the project of the Israeli architect Eyal Weizman in collaboration with the human rights group B'Tselem to show that the apparently random pattern of new settlements in the Occupied Territories corresponds to a deliberate long-term plan to secure Israeli control of Palestine. A third is the work of the Council for Responsible Genetics, an NGO based in the United States, that tries to publicize how genetically engineered crops affect both agriculture in the global South and consumers in the global North. The political stakes articulated in this last example are pertinent to a number of other issues and organizations: the project of creating an as-yet-nonexistent political subject that would include both global South and global North and (as both cause and effect of such a subject) a discourse that would simultaneously address both the victims and



the beneficiaries of global capital. This is no small thing, to say the least. It is no surprise, therefore, that the groups and movements reaching out for it remain fragmentary, far from that level of relative self-consciousness and cohesion achieved by, say, domestic political parties in the nineteenth century or the international Communist movement in the twentieth. Yet many of them are also trying to find a working synthesis of collectivities and struggles that previous internationalisms did not recognize or have to deal with, like the situation of North Africans in Europe and people with HIV/AIDS, who are sometimes the same people.<sup>30</sup>

People with HIV/AIDS provide one last illustration of what this transnational politics means in practice. The coeditor of *Nongovernmental Politics* Gaëlle Krikorian offers an account of the struggle against the big pharmaceutical companies for democratic access to generic antiretroviral drugs.<sup>31</sup> The struggle succeeded, at least partially and provisionally. It succeeded because, though spearheaded by international NGOs, it was also able to enlist (along with the good offices of Jacques Chirac and Bernard Kouchner, not every progressive's favorite political figures) the willingness and resources of state governments, especially those of India and Brazil, which bravely defied the regime of intellectual property and did what was necessary to produce and export inexpensive generics. Cosmopolitics and politics at the level of the state, as this experience shows, are not mutually exclusive. The movement required even the unintended assistance of Bush. After the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the anthrax scare that followed, the Bush administration discovered that Bayer, which held the patent on the antibiotic used to treat anthrax, was demanding a rather high price. In this time of emergency the U.S. government threatened to suspend Bayer's patent and produce its own drugs: "This announcement was heard around the world. The United States was preparing to do for anthrax what it was trying to prevent developing countries from doing for AIDS" (256). It was a propaganda godsend for the NGOs, and they knew how to use it. Within a year there was "an international consensus in favor of access to medication" (256).<sup>32</sup> However precarious this victory has proved, it marked a moment of practical transnational politics whose immediate effect was incontestably what Gitlin calls improvement. If the word *improvement* does not apply to the treatment and survival of large numbers of people who were otherwise condemned to horrible, lingering deaths, what does it apply to? Its long-term effects may

also include a more general weakening of the regime of intellectual property. If there were any doubts that saving hundreds of thousands of lives should count as a systemic political victory, this should assuage them. In any event, it was not a victory that could have been won on the territory of any one nation or by the efforts of any one nationality. It was an example of real cosmopolitan politics.

I do not idealize the international NGOs, which, as has often been noted, are unelected and unaccountable and as shot through with conflicting values and interests as any other human enterprise. If there is no single norm on which all those who participate in these transnational groups and organizations have been able to agree, it's because there is as much variety among them as anywhere else. Those who see a continuity between U.S.-funded organizations fighting dictatorial regimes in Eastern Europe today, on the one hand, and on the other hand American policy, direct and covert, during the Cold War have a point. It is no wonder that many NGOs are staffed by recent alumni of the Western foreign policy establishment and seem intent on using humanitarian cover to pursue the same ends, like military intervention.<sup>33</sup> Properly considered, however, these facts simply make my case: if the Powers That Be have invested so heavily in fighting off the struggling constituencies and underfunded NGOs that challenge them, it seems clear that the transnational domain is, after all, a zone of real political struggle and real political belonging. It is not a mere excuse for self-chosen marginality or irresponsibility.

When I first wrote about cosmopolitanism in 1992, I tried to argue, though I did not manage as clearly as I would have wished, that the real problem lurking in the paradox of cosmopolitanism as a mode of belonging was not too old-fashioned a notion of cosmopolitanism but too narrow a notion of belonging. Cosmopolitanism, I said, is always situated, never a mere abstraction, never a matter of either belonging everywhere or belonging nowhere. On the other hand, what people meant when they spoke of the particular, the local, and the situated was always shot through with unacknowledged distances. It was never the warm and cuddly belonging they seemed to want, but always epistemologically uncertain and ethically strenuous. The consensus that “intellectuals are not detached but *situated*” (249) was no sooner put in place than it became a bit of a thought-stopper: “If our supposed distances are really localities, as we piously repeat, it is also true

that there are distances *within* what we thought were *merely* localities” (250). Most important, cosmopolitanism was about those distant things that we belong to or that belong to us by the very fact of existing where and when we do. In the introduction to *Cosmopolitics*, where that essay is republished, I wrote, “Instead of an ideal of detachment, actually existing cosmopolitanism is a reality of (re)attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance. . . . We are connected to all sorts of places, causally if not always consciously, including many we have never traveled to, that we have perhaps seen only on television—including the place where the television itself was manufactured” (3). This is the source of our responsibilities. “It is frightening to think how little progress has been made in turning invisibly determining and often exploitative connections into conscious and self-critical ones, how far we remain from mastering the sorts of allegiance, ethics, and action that might go with our complex and multiple belonging” (3).

The chapters that follow were written over the past decade as efforts (that is, essays in the older as well as the present sense of the word) to make further progress in this same urgent but paradoxical zone. They are almost equally motivated by rage against the militarism of the United States, on the one hand, and by the complexities of belonging, on the other—belonging, first of all, for me and many, if not most, readers in and to the United States. The chapters call for detachment, and their inevitable subject is belonging. I argue throughout the book, but especially in the chapters on Appiah (chapter 1), Chomsky (chapter 2), and Wallerstein (chapter 3), that local belonging, preemptory though it may be, offers no escape from cosmopolitanism’s normative or global justice dimension. The definition of the word *belonging* helps make this point. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to belong means, among other things, to be appropriate to, to pertain, concern, refer, to be the proper accompaniment, to be the property of, or the rightful property of, to be connected with, as in a family, society, or nation, a native or inhabitant of a place, or, again, a proper or rightful inhabitant. The meaning vacillates between accompanying and properly accompanying, between merely inhabiting and rightfully inhabiting, between being the property of and being the rightful property of. That is, the word itself stops one from evading the normative question, the question of rightfulness that is posed over and over in its history, as it is in ours.

As I've also said, however, norms are relative to historical circumstances and socio-technological possibilities. I do not pretend that cosmopolitanism as I present it definitively solves the problem of how to negotiate between obligations that fall to us because of where we live and those that come to us from afar through a kind of belonging at a distance. "Distant belongings," a phrase which might have served as the title of this book, is a reminder of those obligations we incur merely by getting dressed or consuming our usual caffeinated morning beverage.<sup>34</sup> It is no easy thing either to acknowledge these obligations at all or, on the other hand, to do so without falling into a sense of infinite, unredeemable indebtedness that is theological as well as politically unprofitable. How radically are we—we in the more or less comfortable metropolis—obliged to change our lives? In chapter 4, "The Sweatshop Sublime," I try to work through a properly secular or nontheological sense of responsibility in the face of global injustice.<sup>35</sup>

Tricked out as the defense of democracy, a concern with global injustice has served to excuse unfortunate exercises in military strong-arming. In the United States and other powerful countries such concern is always in danger of luring cosmopolitanism away from the antimilitarism I want for it and sending it out on missions I would want it to refuse, and indeed that I would define it in opposition to. There is no surefire way of protecting it from these temptations. Pacifism, a solution for some, will not work for those who cannot condemn the fight against Nazism or to end slavery or, for that matter, against colonial occupation. My somewhat old-fashioned emphasis on detachment from the national interest is intended in part to do this work. To demand that a proposed intervention, say, to stop genocide, not be part of a nationally self-interested plan to take revenge on an old adversary or control supplies of petroleum or secure some other geopolitical advantage is at least to reduce the likelihood that a global justice cosmopolitanism will get one into trouble rather than out of it. Still, a certain amount of trouble seems to me inescapable, as inescapable as the exercise of power itself. In the chapters on Said (chapter 5) and on Stefan Collini and Slavoj Žižek (chapter 6) I suggest that if intellectuals see belonging as the threat of self-betrayal, it is perhaps less out of fear of partiality than so as to stave off the realization of their relative but real empoweredness. Power is a large, though ordinarily hidden, element of what it means to belong. If you

see yourself as exilic or free-floating, then what is scariest about belonging is that you can no longer deny that you do possess power. Yet power is what cosmopolitan attachment requires if it is to stand up to military mobilization. In this sense, cosmopolitanism cannot afford either not to belong or, what follows from it, not to have any enemies. It is not a pure, disempowered virtue. After all, it has a somewhat intimate relation to nationalism's "I'm great, you stink."

These complications of belonging come to the fore in the last two chapters, which deal, respectively, with Louis Menand's history of pragmatism in *The Metaphysical Club* (chapter 7), a book that is provocatively organized around the Civil War as an instance of voluntary military intervention, and W. G. Sebald's lectures on the Allied bombardment of Germany in the Second World War (chapter 8). In the Menand chapter I worry over the sort of belonging that underlies domestic cosmopolitanism, with its ironic detachment from beliefs and identities, and can take the form of an apparently desirable anti-interventionism (where *The Metaphysical Club* starts) but equally well the form of military intervention (where the book ends). In the Sebald chapter I try to sharpen the paradox that while cosmopolitan detachment can be compromised by covert styles of national belonging, it can also require an intensification of national belonging, if only in the style (adopted by so many Germans after 1945) of national shame. The cosmopolitan project of making Americans see a relationship between the air attacks of 11 September 2001—which made good on the "how would you like it?" threat from *Three Kings*—and the decades of American foreign policy that preceded them, a crucial step in the pedagogy of national detachment, may require, I suggest, the nurturing of a kind of national belonging that American individualism has heretofore resisted.

When Raymond Williams set off the term *alignment* against the more familiar *commitment* and when Said developed the idiosyncratic terminology of *filiation* and *affiliation*, both were trying to square a circle: on the one hand, to see politics as free choice, irreducible to the prior givens of identity, and, on the other, to register the ways in which such a choice is in fact always determined in part by the situation in which one finds oneself. In renegotiating the balance between attachment and detachment, I'm trying both to redescribe the same dilemma and to give the paradox of cosmopolitanism and belonging an unusually aggressive spin. Here again I seek help in

etymology. As it happens, the English word *attachment* is cognate with the Italian *attaccare* and the Spanish *atacar*, meaning “to attack.” *Attachment* originally meant arrest, apprehension, and seizure; to attach was to lay hold of, as with hands, claws, or talons. In sixteenth-century England, *attach* had the explicit meaning of attack, as in laying siege to a castle. If we think of attachments first of all as connections by means of sympathy or affection, which is now the word’s primary sense, we are likely to forget the residual element of violence in our attachments or belongings. This book was written to help recall it. By this I mean, first of all, the military and economic violence perpetrated by the United States. But in order to answer that violence, I also recall and call on the cold, hard, ethically stringent memory of *detachment*—itself a word with military resonance—that attachment cannot escape. What cosmopolitanism must seek to become in order to make wars harder to mobilize is what William James called a moral equivalent of war. Both the history of English words and the history of American wars suggest that this enterprise is a bit less farfetched than it may seem. (In a forthcoming book entitled *The Beneficiary*, a sort of companion volume to this one, I argue that encouragement about the possibility of a global redistribution of resources can be found in, of all places, the experience of wartime rationing.) The national sentiment of “I’m great, you stink” being as violent and massive as it is, so violent and massive as to appear, in bad moments, not merely national but fatally coterminous with the human itself, the project of changing it needs all the force and all the forces it can muster. Cosmopolitanism cannot afford to be bland, pious, or powerless.