

Rogers M. Smith

*Paths to a more cosmopolitan  
human condition*

To be good citizens of the World and the Nation we live in, yet to have especial fellowship with the descendants of our ancestors, is perfectly consistent with true patriotism and universal philanthropy.

– Constitution and Rules of the  
Welsh Society of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, 1799<sup>1</sup>

The reassuring assertion of the Pennsylvania Welsh at the end of the eighteenth century that their Society was “perfectly consistent with true patriotism and universal philanthropy” may well have been an effort to fend off arguments of the sort John Quincy Adams would make in 1818 – that being “American” meant casting “off the European skin, never to resume it.”<sup>2</sup> Then, and perhaps even more today, many have

doubted that people can simultaneously embrace their ethnic identity, citizenship in a nation-state, and some sense of world citizenship in ways that are perfectly consistent, making themselves good citizens in all three regards.

In most places today, the appeals of ethnicity or nationalism or other more particular allegiances seem far more potent than any ideal of cosmopolitan citizenship. Many of those who do endorse cosmopolitan commitments, in turn, criticize both strong particularistic attachments to “the descendants of our ancestors” and local or national patriotism. Contemporary political theorists seek to weigh the merits of claims for these and other identities, portraying them as inescapably in at least partial conflict. Likewise, many contemporary political struggles are over which allegiances will prevail in practice.

This essay is not a contribution to philosophic debates over the propriety

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1 Cited in Hywel M. Davies, *Transatlantic Brethren: Rev. Samuel Jones (1735 – 1814) and His Friends: Baptists in Wales, Pennsylvania, and Beyond* (Lehigh, Pa.: Lehigh University Press, 1995), 239. I am grateful to Douglas Bradburn for this reference.

2 Moses Rischin, ed., *Immigration and the American Tradition* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), 47.

of aspiring to be “good citizens of the World” or over what such cosmopolitan citizenship ought to entail institutionally. It is also not an effort to show that ethnic attachments, national patriotism, and world citizenship are in fact wholly consistent. I simply presume that people should share the sentiments of the Pennsylvania Welsh: it is, *ceteris paribus*, desirable for people to try to be good global citizens as well as good national patriots and good members of other communities, including those defined by shared ancestry.

Good global citizenship need not include support for membership in a formal global political regime or for any particular set of global institutions, though it might do so. I mean by the term what some scholars call moral cosmopolitanism: any of a range of conceptions that define appropriate conduct through reference to what is taken to be the good of all humanity – and not just individuals, families, or specific communities.<sup>3</sup> My aim here is to consider how those who believe in the importance of giving weight to the good of humanity, however that good is defined, might encourage others to take more seriously the goal of being good citizens of the world. Thus my interest is in one dimension of what Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins have influentially termed “cosmopolitics,” the political processes that might foster beliefs and behaviors that elevate moral cosmopolitan concerns.<sup>4</sup>

3 See, for example, Gerard Delanty, “The Cosmopolitan Imagination: Critical Cosmopolitanism and Social Theory,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 57 (28) (2006).

4 Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, eds., *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

Promoting cosmopolitan sentiments and conduct is daunting not only because many reject cosmopolitan aspirations. Even among those favorably inclined, there are bound to be many conflicting notions of what good world citizenship entails. A cosmopolitics that merely advances a specific, albeit universalistic, vision of good global citizenship in preference to all others is unlikely to succeed.

I suggest a three-part strategy for fostering greater concern for the good of all humanity. It includes persuading democratic regimes to accept a permanent obligation to expand opportunities for voice to as many as possible of those whom they affect, insofar as they can practically do so. Second, it encourages everywhere an ethics of political discourse in which participants articulate the more global implications of their positions, especially in regard to problems that affect all humanity. Third, it embraces coalition building among proponents of distinct visions of the human good and of the means to cope with humanity’s common problems, fully recognizing that coalitions may need to be secured and sustained by compromises that frustrate many defensible aspirations.

My arguments build in part on those I advanced in *Stories of Peoplehood*.<sup>5</sup> In that book I analyzed the types of persuasive narratives that current and would-be political elites use to inspire a sense of valued political community. *Stories of Peoplehood* presumes that a sense of political membership is not just socially but also politically constructed: though source materials can come from many spheres

5 Rogers M. Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood: The Politics and Morals of Political Membership* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

of life, elites possessing or aspiring to governing (though not necessarily office-holding) power articulate and institutionalize their conceptions of who does and does not belong to a society via their laws and public policies.

Political elites often have considerable will to power, so one might expect them to portray the potential membership of the societies they seek to influence as broadly as possible. That is, the more over whom they may wield power, the merrier. But in reality, leaders face both external and internal constraints. The coalitions they seek to build must have core constituents, and those core constituents generally have economic interests, identities, and ideological values that make them unwilling to tolerate certain other groups as fellow members of their society. Trying to alter those commitments, as opposed to complying with or catering to them, is often more trouble than it is worth. Furthermore, most political leaders recognize that some groups will oppose them no matter what they do; and so leaders wish to see those groups disempowered in – or, ideally, excluded from – their political community. Finally, like most people, elites are motivated not only by the will to power, however strong such desires may be. They, too, have principles, purposes, identities, and economic interests that make them want to exclude certain populations.<sup>6</sup>

For all these reasons, political elites usually advance particularistic stories of peoplehood. They contend that if those whom they portray as compatriots give their primary allegiances to their nation (or state, province, city, tribe, religious sect, ethnic association, social movement, etc.), good things will follow. Some leaders promise wealth;

6 Ibid., 56, 102.

others, physical security; still others, a share of political power, within that political community and in the larger world.

Most also advance particularistic ‘ethically constitutive’ stories: accounts contending that membership in a specific political community expresses and fulfills something intrinsic to members’ identities that has ethical worth. That *something* can be many things, including a shared religious identity, linguistic and cultural heritage, sense of world historical mission, or desire for “fellowship with the descendants of our ancestors,” conceived of as a community especially valuable to and for ‘us.’ These ethically constitutive stories respond to a fundamental human desire for a sense of meaningful belonging, and they help to inspire allegiances that hold communities together through hard times. As a result, leaders of political communities have always included ethically constitutive themes, along with ones promising wealth and power, in their stories of peoplehood.<sup>7</sup>

All people have thus grown up with identities and values shaped by such stories. It follows, then, that they are generally attracted to leaders who articulate narratives of peoplehood in a compelling fashion, reinforcing the belief that their allegiances should go first and foremost to some particular community or set of communities, and not to all humanity.<sup>8</sup> Those who offer more cosmopolitan vi-

7 Ibid., 64 – 72.

8 It may seem that the power of more particular senses of attachment and allegiance can be explained simply through the fact that people know their family members and neighbors better than they do the inhabitants of distant regions. But while face-to-face interactions certainly can foster tendencies to embrace particularistic identities, recent history has provided many examples of longtime neighbors trans-

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sions appear at best to be dreamy-eyed utopians; at worst, advocates of irresponsibility, apostasy, and betrayal.

In any case, because the various accounts of the cosmopolitan good – and the forms of political organization and association that can best realize it – often conflict with one another, activists must form more particular alliances with like-minded cosmopolitans against rival cosmopolitans, as well as against many nationalists, tribalists, and localists, if they are to make political gains. And so, the particularizing politics of peoplehood perpetuates itself.

Yet, as powerful as these tendencies are, they remain only tendencies – probable patterns of political behavior, not iron laws. Many factors throughout history have prompted people to think and feel beyond the bounds of their particular political communities. Students of different forms of globalization believe such factors comprise a rising tide today.

These factors include the spread of world-spanning communications, information, and transportation systems; the transnational networks and organizations these systems enable; the deregulation of capital markets, the proliferation of international free trade agreements, and the accompanying rise of multinational corporations and heightened flows of capital, labor, and goods; the development of regional and international security alliances; the growing awareness of environmental trends that endanger populations around the globe; and the rise in international human rights agreements and institutions. Along with other factors, these devel-

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formed into rival partisans of transnational religious and ethnic identities, from the former Yugoslavia to Iraq to Rwanda. Proximity alone neither defines nor determines particularistic attachments.

opments are prompting more and more people to think of their well-being as bound up with the decisions and actions of billions of distant persons, with whom they belong to what philosopher David Held calls “overlapping communities of fate.”<sup>9</sup>

To some degree, Bruce Robbins argues, these interconnections are already shaping “habits of thought and feeling” that reach beyond traditional boundaries. But, as he also recognizes, our new senses of multiple belonging do not necessarily translate into concern for the good of all those who affect us.<sup>10</sup> In fact, these connections can be interpreted as reasons to bond more closely with those whom we see as our most trustworthy fellows, against the diverse many who now have the power and, perhaps, the will to harm us.

If we believe our multiple, overlapping, and proliferating forms of connectedness and dependency are evidence of the moral propriety of acting in ways conducive to the good of all humanity, how might we convince those who believe otherwise to think more as we do? Precisely because we must seek to persuade extraordinarily diverse populations with a panorama of moral and political commitments, no single strategy is likely to suffice. Here I suggest three forms of advocacy that have promise.

The first path is aimed at all who already endorse democracy as the most just or, in some way, the best available form of government. As the great modern democratic theorist Robert Dahl has

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9 David Held, “Regulating Globalization? The Reinvention of Politics,” *International Sociology* 15 (2000): 396, 399 – 400.

10 Bruce Robbins, “Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism,” in Cheah and Robbins, *Cosmopolitics*, 3.

long conceded, one of democracy's fundamental difficulties is its inability to generate principled standards for deciding who should be part of a self-governing demos and who can be left out.<sup>11</sup>

Ian Shapiro and others have suggested a "principle of affected interests" for decision making, according to which all persons who have significant stakes in a particular issue, but no one else, would be entitled to participate in its resolution.<sup>12</sup> But in an increasingly interwoven world, more and more people can reasonably be said to have significant stakes in more and more issues. The principle of affected interests seems to suggest then that only a global democratic state could be legitimate. Yet it is virtually impossible to envision such a state as politically attainable; and it is at least equally difficult to see how governance on such a scale could be meaningfully democratic.

Recent democratic theorists have responded to this problem in ways that reject the literal creation of global citizenship while still suggesting paths toward wider acceptance of moral cosmopolitanism. Following Rousseau, Jane Gordon has argued that, for the sorts of reasons just sketched, democratic legitimacy does not demand the creation of a cosmopolitan democracy. But it does require that democracies accept an obligation to pursue "generality" both in policies and in memberships, in ways that are likely to promote more inclusive societies over time. They are not obligated to extend the vote to all who are significantly affected by a *particular* decision; but they are obligated to ex-

tend full membership, including full political rights, to all those who can claim to have had their identities and statuses significantly constituted by their recurrent interactions with a putatively democratic political community.

Gordon reads W. E. B. DuBois's account of African American "double consciousness" as describing an identity that, while not simply "American," was so deeply shaped by, and so substantially a part of, America that there could be no plausible American democratic "general will" that did not include concern for African Americans as integral to the good of the American people. That, in turn, demanded that African Americans be accepted as full members of the American people that defined and expressed its democratic "general will." And because all democracies have populations that are not recognized as full members, yet are significantly shaped by, and participating in, their collective lives, all must have boundaries that are "permeable and shifting," ever expanding to include populations with such claims, even as they are also constructed to abet coexistence with other communities, "other generalities."<sup>13</sup>

Rainer Bauböck has similarly argued that because human beings appear to have a "general disposition and desire to be members of comprehensively self-governing communities," it is both prudent and right to accept the division of humanity into a variety of particular communities in which participation in meaningful self-governance is possible. He finds the principle of affected interest too "vague and overinclusive" as

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11 Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 139, 146 – 147.

12 Ian Shapiro, *Democratic Justice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 39.

13 Jane Anna Gordon, "Double Consciousness and the Problem of Political Legitimacy," in Lewis R. Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon, eds., *Not Only the Master's Tools: African-American Studies in Theory and Practice* (Boulder, Co.: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), 221.

a standard for extending democratic rights, fearing that it might make particular, relatively autonomous self-governing communities unsustainable.<sup>14</sup>

But, Bauböck suggests, people who have to spend major amounts of their lives in more than one political community, often in ways that have value for significant portions of both communities, have legitimate claims to be treated as ‘stakeholders’ entitled to citizenship, even if this renders them dual citizens, with political rights in more than one locale. However, such multiple memberships, and in general the drawing of boundaries between democratic political communities, should be constructed only in ways that are politically compatible with the maintenance of peacefully interacting yet distinct self-governing communities. The obligation to include can be legitimately mitigated if doing so would foster conflicts within and between societies so severe as to endanger their survival as democracies.<sup>15</sup>

Common to these views of democratic legitimacy is the conviction that it is appropriate for members of modern democratic communities to have forms of what the Pennsylvania Welsh termed “true patriotism,” or deep attachments to the societies in which they can participate in extensive if not comprehensive self-governance. Yet these and many other democrats insist that citizens of particular democracies cannot legitimately disavow substantial concern with at least some inside and outside their

14 Rainer Bauböck, “Expansive Citizenship – Voting Beyond Territory and Membership,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 38 (686) (2005).

15 Rainer Bauböck, “Political Boundaries in a Multilevel Democracy,” in Seyla Benhabib, Ian Shapiro, and Danilo Petranovi, eds., *Identities, Affiliations, and Allegiances* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 98, 102.

current geographic borders who are not full fellow citizens. They are always obliged to ask whether some not granted that status have in fact been or become so extensively engaged with and by the life of the society that they should be granted citizenship within it, should they so desire.

If tensions are so severe that it appears politically impossible to extend civic memberships to all the persons and groups who have legitimate claims to full citizenship, the obligations of societies aspiring to democratic legitimacy do not cease. They must consider instead allowing not only some persons but even some communities they now govern to gain greater autonomy or full independence. They may also be obligated to extend meaningful voice in their affairs to populations and communities that are outside their current formal bounds but with whom they are deeply interconnected – via systems of confederation, joint administrative commissions, or judicial tribunals – to decide particular matters of shared concern, regularly renewed treaty agreements, or other such arrangements. Even if extending citizenship or accepting dual citizenship is not the answer, democratic legitimacy still calls for mechanisms promoting attentiveness to the concerns of at least these semioutsiders, if not all humanity.

The promotion of these sorts of policies and institutions is far from hopelessly utopian, for they do not constitute full-scale assaults on allegiances to particular democratic communities, either in principle or in practice. But if these policies and institutions became more common, they might help the members of democratic societies to think more regularly and seriously about how their collective policies, and their very collective existence, affect those whom they

do not now regard as full fellow citizens. They might foster a sense that it is right, indeed obligatory, to give weight to the interests, values, and aspirations of those populations. And insofar as citizens experience the consequences of such concern as beneficial, at least in the long run, they may become still more willing to widen their memberships, or to take more seriously the claims of outsiders they affect. That is a step toward a politics of good global citizenship.

The goal of promoting cosmopolitan concern might also be advanced through a second route, which does not depend on appeals to democratic standards of legitimacy, though it is arguably also required by them. In recent years, many normative theorists have advocated views concerning the ethics of public discourse appropriate in, at least, modern liberal democracies. Here, as on many matters, much inspiration has been drawn from John Rawls – in this case his influential discussions of the standards of “public reason.” Rawls argued for conducting political discourse largely according to standards acceptable to other “reasonable” citizens, defined as those who endorse “a constitutional democratic regime and its companion idea of legitimate law,” whatever the differences in their broader philosophic or religious “comprehensive views.”<sup>16</sup> Many writers, including me, have criticized Rawls’s standards as too restrictive, arguing that clashing “comprehensive views” ought to be part of a robust democratic politics.<sup>17</sup>

16 John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 132 – 133, 136 – 138.

17 Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood*, 180 – 186, and see for example Nicholas Wolterstorff, “The Role of Religion in Decision and Discussion of

Yet I want to argue for one feature of a desirable ethics of public discourse that may seem still more restrictive than Rawls’s view and that should apply in any society, not just democratic ones – so it may also seem imperialistic. It is an extension of my earlier arguments for receptivity – though not uncritical receptivity – to the political articulation of all sincerely held comprehensive views. I suggest that political participants in any society should feel obliged, and should press their allies as well as their opponents, to elaborate what their preferred policies imply, not just for the members of their political community, but for humanity as a whole.

I am not quite so unrealistic as to think that political actors will or even should do so in intricate detail and on all matters of public concern. But in an age of intensified global communications, leaders and educated publics in every country cannot pretend to be unaware that domestic energy production, manufacturing, transportation systems, and consumption practices contribute to environmental and energy problems that affect much of the world’s population. Most already participate in one or more transnational associations and organizations that seek, at least putatively, to safeguard against military conflict and to combat international crime, from the United Nations to NATO, Interpol, the African Union, and more. Many also

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Public Issues,” in Robert Audi and Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 67 – 120. Jeff Spinner-Halev, *Surviving Diversity: Religion and Democratic Citizenship* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 142 – 165; Troy Dostert, *Beyond Political Liberalism: Toward a Post-Secular Ethics of Public Life* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 1 – 90.

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have regional and international trade agreements and relationships with international investors and lenders that officially link their domestic economies with many others. Therefore few leaders can deny that their policies are likely to have repercussions for millions, often billions, outside their borders. Without insisting that they must attach any specific moral value to the fates of any or all of those millions and billions, it is altogether appropriate for them to state what the broader consequences of their major policy measures may be.

What might possibly motivate political actors to accept, practice, and propagate this ethics of public discourse? That question is not as difficult as it may first seem. Within every relatively open society, those in power have rivals who wish to find grounds to challenge incumbents and win support, both from within and from outside their community's bounds. Whenever they believe the consequences of their policies for at least parts of the larger world are, or can be made to appear, more attractive than those of their opponents, they are likely to highlight such consequences and fault their adversaries for failing to do so.

Even if the main political actors in a particular community agree on measures that injure those outside their borders in ways that they do not wish to acknowledge, those injured can be counted on to insist that they admit these consequences, in globally audible and visible ways. People who perceive themselves as victims of selfish policies are likely to try to persuade many around the world that the irresponsible conduct immediately harming their portion of humanity will ultimately harm us all. Thus Gerard Delanty has argued that today "peoplehood is increasingly being defined in and through global communication with the result that 'we' is counterposed not only

by reference to a 'they' but by the abstract category of the world."<sup>18</sup> A number of fairly reliable political, economic, and social motives may reinforce the moral ones for supporting regular public acknowledgment and justification of the global consequences of the policies and practices political leaders adopt.

What is the point of urging such political discourse? After all, it is unlikely that a Rawls-like overlapping consensus on permissible and impermissible impacts will emerge. In many cases, the answers leaders would give, crafted chiefly with an eye to their domestic constituents, would only serve to highlight clashes in worldviews and values. But it is often useful to surface differences earlier rather than later, before they become acute. Also, if political actors around the world became more accustomed to spelling out the implications of the actions they favored for broader populations, they might become more conscious of adverse consequences they genuinely would prefer to avoid. Sometimes, what begins as a quest for reasons that can "sell" a policy turns into recognition that it is wiser not to put that particular product on show. Even when leaders are themselves indifferent to harmful consequences of their proposed measures, they may decide that the costs of having to defend those actions are too high to pay. Thus the spread of this sort of ethic of political discourse might help to make more customary processes of political decision making and action that give greater weight to the importance of at least appearing to be "good citizens of the World."

**I**t nonetheless remains a virtual certainty that notions of what constitutes the

<sup>18</sup> Delanty, "The Cosmopolitan Imagination," 30.

good of humanity will continue not only to vary but to be in sharp conflict. The final path to being “good citizens of the World” that I recommend represents the only politically sensible response to this plurality of cosmopolitan visions; yet it is still one that could be pursued more extensively and self-consciously than it now is.<sup>19</sup> The core idea is that all political, social, and economic actors, including intellectuals, who uphold a view of the human good should devote less time and energy to persuading all the world of the rectitude of their views, and more to identifying areas of agreement around which they can build broad coalitions to support appropriate policies and institutions.

To be sure, to discover any agreements, cosmopolitans must first articulate their distinctive ideas of what contributes to humanity’s well-being and why. Many will also want to persuade others to accept their views and follow their lead. Those activities are not only perfectly legitimate; if we accept the arguments just advanced concerning the need for a cosmopolitan component in all desirable ethics of public discourse, they are required. Yet, at times, those elaborating what they take to be God’s dictates for all humanity; or the philosophically derived moral requirements of individual human and animal rights; or the lessons of economics or the natural sciences for globally beneficial environmental, energy, health, and economic measures appear more determined to impose their answers on all in as pure a form as possible than they are to canvass areas of agreement.

In July 2007, for example, the Vatican indicated that because the Catholic Church is the one true, universal church,

19 I am grateful to Martin Heisler for illuminating discussions of the ideas in this section.

other Christian bodies should not be called churches.<sup>20</sup> On this issue at least, Catholic advocacy of a universalistic religious vision gives primacy to divisive assertions, not matters of common concern. Likewise, the current administration’s foreign policy, which actively propagates democracy and individual rights around the globe, has also been criticized, even by sympathetic conservatives, as “fantastic, disproportionate, [and] unwise” in the support it has given to “preemptive war” in Iraq.<sup>21</sup> Here, a universalistic political vision is being advanced via means that feature controversial coercive measures more than international cooperative ones. Lest these examples seem politically biased, let me add that many academic philosophers are often accused of offering views on global institutions, ecology, basic human rights, and kindred matters that are rigid and demanding to the point of becoming forms of intellectual imperialism.

These tendencies may be psychologically explicable. Those who believe firmly that they have grasped the universal human good may be especially likely to see concessions to other views as at best indulgence for errors, at worst as unforgivable abandonment of what true morality and human well-being require. It is also likely that anyone who subscribes to an account of the cosmopolitan good must regard some dimensions of it as not legitimately subject to compromise.

20 Susan Hogan, “Religion: Papal Document Seen by Some as Harsh, Intolerant,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, July 11, 2007, accessed on September 30, 2007, at <http://www.suntimes.com/lifestyles/religion/463069,CST-NWS-Vatican11.article>.

21 Charles R. Kesler, “Iraq and the Neoconservatives,” *Claremont Review of Books*, Summer 2007, at [http://www.claremont.org/publications/crb/article\\_print.asp?articleid=1383](http://www.claremont.org/publications/crb/article_print.asp?articleid=1383).

But surely not all dimensions; and if we really wish both to be good global citizens and to promote good global citizenship, we ought to strive as much as possible to identify what forms of good we can agree upon and pursue, rather than focusing on those forms that, in practice, only lend themselves to frequent and unyielding condemnations of misguided or malevolent others. There are important differences, but there are also important overlaps, in the accounts of the human good that we find in most variants of the world's major religions and in the neo-Kantian and utilitarian ethics that predominate in Western philosophical traditions. There are equally profound differences but also some relatively widespread agreements on the character of the common problems that humanity faces in the twenty-first century, with its challenges of environmental degradation, energy shortages, gross economic inequalities combined with intensifying economic interdependencies, population imbalances and immigration pressures, epidemic diseases, natural disasters, and international security concerns.

Agreements on answers to these common problems are admittedly much harder to come by, and to turn agreements into constructive actions is hardest of all. But that is why it makes sense for those who see themselves as cosmopolitans of some sort to seek out all those who are at all like-minded, and to strive actively to forge practical alliances with them on as many matters as proves politically possible. Doing so represents a practice of global citizenship that is more likely to produce constructive results, however limited, than any other course available to us. And if we wish to be "good citizens of the World," the quest for such results is something that we ought to take seri-

ously, if it is not indeed morally mandatory.

Though I will not attempt to detail them here – indeed, I have not tried to research them all – many such practical alliances are visible in the world today. And the increased practices of thinking and feeling beyond the nation suggest that many more may well be possible. It therefore does not seem particularly impractical to urge proponents of *cosmopolitan citizenship* to become first and foremost proponents of *coalition-building citizenship*, constantly on the alert to identify and seize opportunities for concrete, constructive collaborative political action.

This does mean that they should focus less on what is distinctive, or even what seems most important and most right about their views, and focus more on the features of their views that can be pursued with like-minded others in ways that have reasonable prospects for success. It also means rhetorically emphasizing the aspects of their outlooks that are not threatening to others, that instead foster confidence about the prospects for dealing with tensions peaceably and productively, even as activists acknowledge more quietly the inevitable tensions that must ultimately be confronted.

I perceive just such a rhetorical effort at reassurance and cooperation expressed in the statement by the Welsh Society of Pennsylvania with which this essay began. That Society in fact was relatively inclusive, open to persons of different ethnicities who wished to associate with and assist their Welsh neighbors; and it was receptive to the variety of denominations represented among the Welsh, although it was predominantly Baptist. Its constitution did not embody all the advice I have given here: raising controversial subjects that might

disrupt sociability was forbidden under penalty of fine, and in practice it sought more to aid Welsh immigrants to America than either the Welsh at home or immigrants of different origins.<sup>22</sup>

But it is not inappropriate for a group designed to aid immigrants and to promote good social relations to veer away from difficult issues that a larger political society cannot afford to ignore; and again, it is not my goal to argue against all special concern for fellow members of particular communities. The Welsh Society did help to foster a significant measure of moral cosmopolitanism by raising awareness of and interest in immigrants more generally, and by prompting communications with, and some measure of support for, Welsh communities both in Britain and America, as well as kindred religious communities.

The Pennsylvania Welsh also went on to contribute significantly to the building of the new American nation. In so doing, some in their ranks helped establish traditions of resistance to international and domestic slavery and to chauvinistic militarism that have, from cosmopolitan vantage points, been especially valuable and enduring contributions. At a minimum, then, their historic example suggests that if we do seek through democratic means to promote associations and communities that embrace the goal of being “good citizens of the world,” along with other forms of human fellowship, we may not soon achieve a genuine moral cosmopolis – but we will not have reason to regret that aspiration, or the ways in which we have sought to pursue it.

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22 Davies, *Transatlantic Brethren*, 239 – 240.