The Muslim Question in Europe

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Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s own understanding without the guidance of another. . . . The motto of Enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude!* Have courage to use your own understanding.

—**Immanuel Kant**, *Political Writings*

Next to love of parents for their children, the strongest instinct both national and moral which exists in man is love of his country.

—**Edmund Burke**, *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*

Perhaps nobody yet has been truthful enough about what “truthfulness” is.

—**Friedrich Nietzsche**, *Beyond Good and Evil*

I employ the German notion of *Kulturkampf* (literally, “culture struggle”) to connote an ideological battle among liberalism, nationalism, and postmodernism. As intimated in the preceding chapter, I contend that none of the three public philosophies has been able decisively to discredit or defeat its rivals philosophically or politically. Each public philosophy has distilled such compelling arguments for its integral tenets that it has proven able to defend itself against philosophical or political marginalization. The enduring normative stalemate produces fertile ground for the emergence of mutual fragilization. Although each public philosophy doubtless has its share of staunchly committed proponents, a great number of political activists and citizens develop normative ambivalence. The latter results from a combination of budding diffidence regarding moral stances with which one closely identifies and creeping sympathy toward positions with which one does not closely identify. Mutual fragilization intensifies with fragmentation—that is, when normative slogans become detached from the systematic mother philosophy and deployed as performative utterances designed to sway political actors. Empirical demonstration of both mutual fragilization and fragmentation will have to await the case study chapters.
The current chapter aims to familiarize readers with liberalism, nationalism, and postmodernism as public philosophies. I want to create enough familiarity that readers can easily identify liberal, nationalist, or postmodern fragments as such when they come forth in the discourse on the Muslim question treated in subsequent chapters. I also aim to prepare readers for mutual fragilization. This I do by deliberately presenting generous interpretations of liberalism, nationalism, and postmodernism. I portray each public philosophy in its own terms and best light. I lay special stress on the reasoning buttressing arguments that figure prominently in the politics of immigration in Europe. Rather than side with a particular public philosophy, I wish to impress upon readers the plurality of persuasive normative outlooks that deal with European Muslims.

**Liberalism**

The intellectual origins of liberalism lie in the European Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pioneering thinkers of that era, such as Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and many others, argued that liberty, equality, reason, and progress represent righteous ends befitting all human beings. Regardless of liberalism’s complex evolution over time, the philosophy’s central aspiration remains to this day a society of free and equal human beings exercising their individual and collective reason to improve their lives.

For the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment the most redoubtable obstacles standing in the way of this lofty ideal were ignorance and tyranny taught and imposed by the unholy alliance of altar and crown. The (for the most part Roman Catholic) church was accused of preaching not only error and superstition but also, worse, blind obedience to authority. For instance, Baruch Spinoza, whose *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* [1670] represented one of the earliest and most scathing critiques, charged: “Philosophy has no end in view save truth; faith . . . looks for nothing but obedience and piety” (1951: 189). Of the many human tragedies and follies that resulted from rampant credulity none came in for more scorn than the religious wars all too frequently endorsed by priests and waged by princes. In *Le Bon sens* (Common Sense), published in 1772, Baron d’Holbach lamented:

In all parts of our globe, intoxicated fanatics have been seen cutting each other’s throats, lighting funeral piles, committing, without scruple and even as a duty, the greatest crimes and shedding torrents of blood. . . . For what? . . . On behalf of a being, who exists only in their imagination, and who has made himself known only by the ravages, disputes, and follies, he has caused upon the earth. (Quoted in Bronner 2004: 165)
David Hume derided the Crusades as “the most signal and most durable monument of human folly that has yet appeared in any age or nation” (quoted in Tyerman 2006: xiv). With his characteristic wit, Voltaire (1969: 295) caustically quipped in 1769: “The Church must surely be divine, since seventeen centuries of roguery and imbecility were not capable of destroying it.” The church was also said to be implicated in political tyranny by way of its support for the notion of the divine-right king whose absolute mundane authority was purportedly authorized by God. Locke (1980: 48), for example, in *Two Treatises of Government* [1689], excoriated the doctrine as nothing more than a continuation of the state of war of every man against every man wherein, however, the monarch has an overwhelming advantage. Across the English Channel, the Dutch republican Eric Walten (1689: 6) condemned monarchy as a euphemism for “slavery.”

For the *lumières*, French and non-French alike, the cure for this sorry state of affairs was a strong dose of reason—that is, enlightenment. This did not necessarily have to mean an antipathy for religion per se. The preference rather was, to quote Kant’s famous title from 1793, *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason*. Whether atheist, deist, or otherwise, Enlightenment thinkers generally shared the belief that reason rather than scripture, human rather than divine authority, ought to be the final arbiter (on earth) of what was true or false (Spragens 1981: 53). Moral philosophers enviously sought to emulate natural philosophers like Newton, whose great discoveries of the physical laws of nature were widely disseminated, for example, in the popular *Encyclopedia* of Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d’Alembert (Israel 2006: 201–3). The moral philosophers postulated the existence of a rationally ordered metaphysical universe whose eternally valid moral laws, like natural physical laws, were comprehensible through reason. In 1770, d’Holbach maintained that “morals is the science of the relations that subsist between the minds, the wills, and the actions of men, in the same manner that geometry is the science of the relations that are found between bodies” (Holbach 1970: 98). Kant (1996: xi) declared reason supreme in all matters:

Our age is the genuine age of criticism, to which everything must submit. Religion through its holiness and legislation through its majesty seek to exempt themselves from it. But in this way they incite a just suspicion against themselves, and cannot lay claim to that unfeigned respect that reason grants only to that which has been able to withstand its free and public examination.

The great appeal of reason lay in its presumed universal accessibility. All humans were postulated to have the capacity to think rationally, one
reason debate should be free and public. In his *Discourse on Methods* [1637], Descartes (1971: 7) maintained that “the power of judging well and of distinguishing truth from falsehood, which is what we properly mean by good sense or reason, is naturally equal in all men.” Similarly, Kant (1949: 228) declared reason to be “clear, irrepressible, and distinctly audible even to the most ordinary man.” Humanity’s universal capacity to reason meant that the moral laws could not only be discovered but also verified and internalized by all human beings. A universal and knowable morality for all of humankind made possible the realization of Friedrich Schiller’s noble vision of “all men becoming brothers” that Ludwig van Beethoven unforgettably put to music in the final movement of the Ninth Symphony.

The universality of human reason confirmed the moral validity of equality and liberty for all. For centuries elites of various stripes had sought to legitimize their superior power by proclaiming their superior wisdom. But if all humans possess the equal ability to reason and reason is the final arbiter of right and wrong, it followed that all persons must be naturally and fundamentally equal. “Being furnished with like faculties,” wrote Locke in the *Second Treatise*, “there cannot be supposed any . . . subordination among us.” Furthermore, if all individuals can think rationally, they should be free to lead their lives as they see fit rather than being made to follow the imposed direction of self-appointed superiors—“a liberty to follow my own will in all things where the rule prescribes not; and not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary will of another man.” By “rule” Locke meant “no other legislative power, but that established, by consent, in the common-wealth” (Locke 1980: 17). Being subject to the laws of a government formed by the rational consent of the governed (or social contract) was not seen as a violation of individual liberty. The rational consent of the governed meant that democratic law amounted to self-legislated morality rather than heteronomy. Of course, if all persons were equal, then one’s rightful liberty had to end where it impinged on another’s. Thus Kant (1949: 128), in *The Idea for a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent* [1784], wrote that each citizen should be allowed to seek “his welfare in any way he chooses, as long as (his way) can coexist with the freedom of the others.” In *Ancient and Modern Liberty* [1819], Benjamin Constant nicely expressed the centrality of individual autonomy for liberalism:

Liberty is everyman’s right to be subject to the law alone, the right of not being arrested, tried, put to death or in any way molested, by the caprice of one or more individuals. It is every one’s right to express his own opinion, to attend to his own art, to come and go, to associate with others. It is, lastly, every one’s right to influence the
administration of the state either by nominating all or some of its officers, or by his advice, demands and petitions, which the authorities are in a greater or less degree obliged to take into account. (Quoted in Ruggerio 1927: 167–68)

Rational, free, and equal persons could be expected to improve their lot both individually and collectively. The Enlightenment bequeathed to posterity an extraordinary enthusiasm for progress. “The course of human affairs as a whole,” wrote Kant (1991: 234), “does not begin with good and then proceed to evil, but develops gradually from the worse to the better, and each individual is for his own part called upon by nature to contribute towards this progress to the best of his ability.” Though the obstacles were doubtless great, Enlightenment thinkers believed that one day all persons could be liberated and educated to take control over their lives and steer them toward betterment. No one deserved to be deemed so destitute, be-nighted, or subjugated that the liberating rays of enlightenment could not shine upon him. “The perfectibility of the person,” declared Marquis de Condorcet (1804: 371), “is indefinite.”

**Liberal Voluntarism and Perfectionism**

Liberalism not only champions but also depends on liberty, equality, rationality, and progress for its legitimization. Because it claims to be a self-legislated morality, liberalism requires persons who are granted liberty and equality to act rationally and progressively. Essentially, it needs persons neither to prevent nor to endanger their own freedom or that of anyone else. If they do either, they cast doubt on the very universality of human reason on which liberalism morally rests.

There has long been a debate within liberalism regarding how much government intervention, if any, is needed to achieve liberal ends. Isaiah Berlin (2002) famously analyzed the debate as one between negative and positive freedom. The former emphasizes freedom from government intervention into one’s private affairs and the latter the freedom to develop with government assistance into a better person capable of genuine self-mastery. Others label the two outlooks “classical” and “modern” liberalism (Ryan 2012: 24). I prefer the labels “liberal voluntarism” and “liberal perfectionism” but I have in mind a distinction similar to Berlin’s. Liberal voluntarism wants persons to have free choice, while liberal perfectionism wants them to make the right choice. It deserves underscoring that the two represent poles between which liberal philosophers and philosophies gravitate rather than enclosed camps with firm delineations of members.
and nonmembers. There prevails an unavoidable “slipperiness” between them (Ryan 2012: 22).

Liberal voluntarism worries more about governments that make mistakes than individuals who do so. Individuals should be free to err because error can represent an important dimension of the beneficial learning process leading into maturity. By contrast, when the state errs, its errors ramify widely. With this in mind, John Stuart Mill (1975: 15), in On Liberty [1859], laid out the harm principle, whereby “the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant.” The English utilitarian provocatively articulated his opprobrium for social engineering, indeed for any kind of pressure to conform, when he wrote: “If mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind” (Mill 1975: 23). A few years earlier, Alexis de Tocqueville (1952: 62–63), in L’Ancien Régime et la Révolution [1856], had averred that “each man, being presumed to have received from nature the enlightenment necessary to conduct himself, has from birth an equal and inviolable right to live independently of others in all that concerns him alone, and to forge his own destiny as he wishes.” Compelling citizens to do the right thing amounted to nothing more than the illusion of progress, a cure that was worse than the disease: “A State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes, will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished” (Mill 1975: 141). Kant (1998: 107) too had denounced a government that would police or legislate morality: “Woe to the legislator who would want to bring about through coercion a polity directed to ethical ends! For he would thereby not only achieve the very opposite of ethical ends, but also undermine his political ends and render them insecure.”

In the twentieth century, the critical distinction between the right and the good emerged within liberal discourse. As experience with (relatively) freer societies accumulated, it became obvious that free persons would not, as many Enlightenment thinkers had hoped, converge on a unified vision of the good life. As mentioned, Berlin argued that there were equally rational and compelling reasons for embracing liberalism as there were for espousing nationalism, even though the two philosophies were incompatible and incommensurable. “The necessity of choosing between absolute claims is then an inescapable characteristic of the human condition” (Berlin 1969: 169). Similarly, Rawls (2001: 3) developed the notion of “reasonable pluralism”: 
I believe a democratic society is not and cannot be a community, where by a community I mean a body of persons united in affirming the same comprehensive, or partially comprehensive, doctrine. The fact of reasonable pluralism which characterizes a society with free institutions makes this impossible. This is the fact of profound and irreconcilable differences in citizens’ reasonable comprehensive religious and philosophical conceptions of the world, and in their views of the moral and aesthetic values to be sought in human life.

From the perspective of liberal voluntarism, the fact of reasonable pluralism should not alarm the state. The liberal state should focus its attention on guaranteeing rights rather than supporting a particular vision of the good life. It should concern itself with “procedural consensus” rather than substantive ethics (Habermas 1998: 226). It should stipulate and regulate the (fair) rules but not the results of the political game. It should act as umpire rather than coach. Government should ensure coercion-free public discourse in which all have an equal say in the making of laws that pertain to them (Habermas 1984; 1987a). Another metaphor is that of the “night watchman” (Nozick 1974: 26–27). The state should guard against the violation of its citizens’ rights but refrain from instructing citizens what to do with their rights. The emphasis on rights rather than the good should include above all guaranteeing individual liberty and equality before the law and maintaining the rule of law. In this vein, Brian Barry (1996: 538) asserts that “the basic idea of liberalism is to create a set of rights under which people are treated equal in certain respects, and then leave them to deploy these rights (alone or in association with others) in pursuit of their own ends.”

By contrast, liberal perfectionism fears bad choice. Many Enlightenment thinkers harbored doubts about the liberation of the masses. Kant (1838: 264) observed that the “Volk consists of idiots”; Hume (1754: 250) regretted that the “bulk of mankind” are “governed by authority, not reason.” No one more famously voiced the concern than Rousseau (1967: 7), who in the opening line to the first chapter of Du contrat social [1762], penned the unforgettable observation: “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.” The chains were centuries of subjection to repression, ignorance, and poverty that the Geneva native had detailed in the Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men [1754]. Rousseau (1967: 22) further maintained that it, therefore, is often necessary that men should be “forced to be free.” This represented no contradiction for the Genevan polymath, as he explained in his beloved novel Émile [1762], so long as the mandated instruction led to self-mastery in the end. As for politics, Rousseau (1967: 41) contended that “the people always desire what is good, but do not always
discern it.” Rousseau (1967: 42, 43, 45) theorized the need for a “great legislator” who “by his genius” would possess a prophet-like combination of wisdom, prudence, and charisma that would enable him to “compel without violence and persuade without convincing.” His noble and indispensable task was to guide individual citizens to transcend their petty, parochial interests, come together as a body politic and generate the “general will” (volonté générale) in the public interest. Additionally, the legislator was to establish and preach a “civil religion” (religion civile) whose basic tenets were to inspire harmony and loyalty to the state (Rousseau 1967: 145–47).

He who dares undertake to give institutions to a nation ought to feel himself capable . . . of altering man’s constitution in order to strengthen it; of substituting a social and moral existence for the independent and physical existence which we have all received from nature. (Rousseau 1967: 43)

Although the French (Rousseau to be sure but also Henri de St. Simon and Auguste Comte) are often loathed or lauded for social engineering, others too discerned the need for a guiding hand of the state. Kant (1991: 134), for one, wrote:

If a certain use to which freedom is put is itself a hindrance to freedom in accordance with universal laws (i.e. if it is contrary to right), any coercion which is used against it will be a hindrance to a hindrance of freedom, and will thus be consonant with freedom in accordance with universal laws—that is, it will be right.

Similarly, Mill (1975: 16), who worked for the East India Company, believed that “despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end.”

Arguably the most consequential thrust for positive liberty has come, since the mid-nineteenth century roughly, with the insistence on and struggle for social in addition to civil and political rights for all (Marshall 1950). Whether called “New Liberalism” in Britain or “Social Democracy” on the Continent, the principal aim of this progressive movement turned out to be to provide working-class individuals the same basic opportunities that upper- and middle-class persons presumably can give themselves independently (Habermas 1962). The tradition reproached laissez-faire capitalism for generating and tolerating miserable living conditions for the masses that not only impoverished them but also effectively blocked them from developing self-respect and self-mastery (Ryan 2012: 33–34).
In his wartime report *Social Insurance and Allied Service* [1942], William Beveridge argued that a comprehensive social welfare state was necessary to free Britons from the “Five Great Evils of Want, Disease, Idleness, Ignorance and Squalor” (quoted in Hemerijck 2013: 122). In fact, welfare states that provided social security “from cradle to grave” were eventually realized across northwestern Europe in the generation following World War II (Hemerijck 2013: 121–25).

Other theories of positive liberty look beyond social rights to fostering civic-mindedness. Republicanism, for example, has long insisted that only through civic engagement with fellow citizens can individuals realize their full potential. Even when free, a life lived exclusively in the private sphere remains parochial and impoverished—that is, less than it should be (Viroli 1997; Pocock 1975; Arendt 1958: 22–78). Quentin Skinner (1990: 304) argues that “if we wish to enjoy as much freedom as we can hope to attain within political society, there is good reason for us to act in the first instance as virtuous citizens, placing the common good above the pursuit of any individual or factional ends.” What Cécile Laborde (2002: 611) dubs “civic patriotism” requires

... that they be willing to engage in the [public] conversation, that they see it as their own, and that they learn the skills which allow them to participate in it. So, while requiring that all citizens be socialized into the same political culture, it does not take this culture as a fixed legacy but as a “lived” experience.

Republicanism contends that citizens ultimately learn civic virtue only by doing citizenship—that is, by actively engaging in self-government. They therefore need to be encouraged and in some cases enabled by the state to participate in public life and dialogue. Such support, according to Laborde (2008: 24), necessitates “not only the just distribution of goods and resources but also the expansion of basic powers, virtues, and capabilities, including those of personal autonomy, civic skills, and self-respect.” Persons who lack these qualities should not be left alone by the state, as liberal voluntarism posits, but rather helped to help themselves.

Deliberative democracy represents a turn in democratic theory from mere choice to informed choice. It represents an attempt to go beyond guaranteeing mere access to decision-making to guaranteeing the quality of decision-making (Keenan 2003; Richardson 2002; Fung and Wright 2001; Dryzek 2000; Benhabib 1996; Buchstein 1995; Barber 1984). According to deliberative democracy, good decisions only emerge through and at the conclusion of rational collective deliberation. All impediments to rational
discussion need to be eliminated. These include not only external obstacles, such as coercion, intimidation, and deception, but also internal obstructions, such as adherence to superstition or the inability to reflect critically. Habermas (1998: 44) stipulates the necessary conditions for the domination-free communication at the core of deliberative democracy as

(i) that nobody who could make a relevant contribution may be excluded; (ii) that all participants are granted an equal opportunity to make contributions; (iii) that all participants must mean what they say; and (iv) their communication must be freed from external and internal coercion so that ‘yes’ or ‘no’ stances that participants adopt on criticizable validity claims are motivated solely by the rational force of the better reasons.

Deliberative democracy is functioning as it should when citizens can provide a reasonable account of the arguments for and against a specific policy that was adopted, including an appreciation of, not necessarily however agreement with, why one line of reasoning prevailed over the others.

The liberal democratic state should enable all its citizens to deliberate rationally, offering assistance to those not able to do so independently.

Because most citizens live most of their lives in civil society outside of conventional politics, deliberative theories seek to structure civil society so as to better equip citizens to deliberate in politics. . . . As democratic theorists have long recognized, democracy cannot thrive without a well-educated citizenry. An important part of democratic education is learning how to deliberate well enough to be able to hold representatives accountable. Without a civil society that provides rehearsal space for political deliberation, citizens are less likely to be politically effective. (Gutmann and Thompson 2004: 35)

It follows that the liberal state should foster those organizations that encourage rational deliberation and not shrink from proscribing those that discourage or threaten it (Gutmann and Thompson 2004: 61). Critics who object to government overreach must keep in mind that democracies, because they are governed by the people and not by some enlightened despot or cadre, have an existential interest in well-educated citizens. Tolerating widespread civic apathy invites poor governance at best and political suicide at worst. After all, “we cannot simply assume that people are good liberal democrats.” In some circumstances, “liberalism with a spine” is called for (Macedo 2000: 5).
Cosmopolitanism and Liberal Multiculturalism

Both liberal voluntarism and liberal perfectionism have profound implications for the politics of immigration. To address the former first, it prescribes a thin conception of citizenship that translates into advocacy for cosmopolitanism and liberal multiculturalism. According to cosmopolitanism, citizenship should not require any thick or profound attachment to or identification with a larger group. In order to guarantee individual autonomy, the rights of democratic citizenship should never be contingent on one’s creed, race, gender, ethnicity, or, most importantly for immigration, one’s nationality. Citizenship should be de-territorialized and de-ethnicized and attached to personhood rather than peoplehood (Delanty 2009: 131). Residence itself (in some accounts legal or even long-term) should suffice to make immigrants eligible for rights fully equal to those of native citizens (Ellermann 2014; Carens 2013; Tonkiss 2013; Abizadeh 2012; Beck and Grande 2007; Benhabib 2004; Habermas 2003; Rubio-Marin 2000). Rainer Bauböck (2007: 2423), for example, endorses “stakeholder citizenship” for all “individuals whose circumstances of life link their future well-being to the flourishing of a particular polity.”

Cosmopolitanism implies a commitment to liberal multiculturalism. If the liberal state welcomes all, then it should not concern itself with telling citizens which language(s) to speak, god(s) to worship, lifestyle(s) to lead, group(s) to embrace. Their affiliations are their own private affair. Indeed, liberal multiculturalism reconceptualizes robust affiliation with a particular culture from a vice that threatens to undermine liberal universalism to a virtue that enhances personal autonomy. Vigorous affiliation with a chosen tradition can enrich and strengthen one’s personal beliefs. Moreover, just such a sense of secure belonging and connectedness can fortify an individual to resist the fearsome pressures of conformity in mass consumer society (Bielefeldt 2007; Kymlicka 1995).

Liberal multiculturalism [as] a normative principle that affirms . . . a political attitude of fostering and encouraging the prosperity, cultural and material, of cultural groups within a society, and respecting their identity, is justified by considerations of freedom and human dignity. . . . The preservation of their culture is justified only in terms of its contribution to the well-being of people. (Raz 1994a: 189, 186)

If cultural identity and pride are integral to personal autonomy, as is for example private property, then the liberal state should protect them as well. In Will Kymlicka’s (1995: 113) words, the state “should aim at insuring that all national groups have the opportunity to maintain themselves as a distinct culture.” The state should adopt a neutral position that refrains from privileging any
particular cultural expression or group over others. In Joseph Raz’s (1994a: 174) “liberal multiculturalism,” the state “consists . . . of diverse communities and belongs to none of them.” Exclusivist notions—“Italy is for the Italians,” “French is the language of France,” “Britain is a Christian country”—should enjoy no normative sway in truly cosmopolitan and multicultural societies that treat all human beings with equal respect and dignity.

The neutrality of the law vis-à-vis internal ethical differentiations stems from the fact that in complex societies the citizenry as a whole can no longer be held together by a substantive consensus on values but only by a consensus on the procedures for the legitimate enactment of laws and the legitimate exercise of power. . . . Hence the ethical integration of groups and subcultures with their own collective identities must be uncoupled from the abstract political integration that includes all citizens equally. (Habermas 1998: 225)

**Liberal Assimilationism**

As far as immigration is concerned, liberal perfectionism translates into preference for liberal assimilationism. The latter urges the state to encourage, demand, and even test the assimilation of immigrants to liberal values, usually generally understood as the moral principles anchored in the receiving country’s (liberal democratic) constitution. Habermas (1998: 229), for instance, claims that “constitutional patriotism” must be mandatory:

A democratic constitutional state . . . can require of immigrants only the political socialization described in (1) [“Assent to the principles of the constitution”] (and practically speaking can expect to see it only in the second generation). This enables it to preserve the identity of the political community, which nothing, including immigration, is permitted to encroach upon, since that identity is founded on the constitutional principles anchored in the political culture and not on the basic ethical orientations of the cultural form of life predominant in that country.

By requiring identification with the liberal values of the constitution, liberal assimilationism prescribes a thicker form of citizenship that entails in some important respects becoming liberal-minded. Although Habermas (1998: 227) has said that “loyalty [to the constitution] . . . cannot be legally enforced,” if one wants to require it, then disloyalty must either be penalized or corrected through mandatory instruction. It is not surprising that Habermas (2008a: 27) in his reflections on “post-secular society” writes:
The constitutional state confronts its citizens with the demanding expectations of an ethics of citizenship that reaches beyond mere obedience to the law. Religious citizens and communities must not only superficially adjust to the constitutional order. They are expected to appropriate the secular legitimisation of constitutional principles under the very premises of their own faith.

This reflects a political identity so thick as to affect the way persons worship. Laborde (2002: 609) too advocates a thick requirement for immigrants that “includes familiarity with collective institutions, political rituals and rhetoric, types of discourses, and accumulated habits and expectations stemming from previous conversations.” Her “critical republicanism” mandates “autonomy-promoting education” for those unable or unwilling to embrace individual autonomy for all persons: “Vulnerable individuals—in particular female members of minority groups—must be equipped to resist the multiple forms of domination they are potentially subjected to: public and private, secular and religious, ethnocentric and patriarchal” (Laborde 2008: 168–69; see also Scheffer 2011: 309–10).

Like liberal voluntarism and liberal perfectionism, liberal multiculturalism and assimilationism represent normative poles between which liberal theories tend to gravitate. I thus deliberately quoted Habermas under both rubrics to underscore just this point. Other theorists too demonstrate “slipperiness” between thin and thick notions of liberal citizenship. Although Raz (1994a: 174) endorses “liberal multiculturalism,” for example, he also notes the necessity of a common political culture:

Members of all cultural groups . . . will have to acquire a common political language and conventions of conduct to be able to participate effectively in the competition for resources and the protection of group as well as individual interests in a shared political arena.

(Raz 1994b: 77)

Because it champions liberty but does so with absolute moral certitude, liberalism will always harbor a built-in tension between voluntarism and perfectionism, what Spragens (1981) calls the “irony of liberal reason” (see also Gray 1996: 21–22).

**Nationalism**

The origins of nationalism are contested. Some consider it a purely modern phenomenon, accompanying, for example, industrialization (Gellner 1983) or the expansion of the print medium (Anderson 1991). Others stress older
roots. The book of Genesis, of course, associates the creation of different nations of peoples speaking different languages with God’s destruction of the Tower of Babel. Patriotism has its etymological roots in the Latin word *patria*. Originating in Roman times and surviving throughout the Middle Ages, *patria* connoted loyalty to one’s community, but community understood in a much more parochial sense than the modern nation. There existed too the notion of *natio* closely associated with *lingua*. Students at medieval universities were, for instance, enrolled according to their *natio*, typically determined by their mother tongue. Caricatures of whole peoples—the “niggardly English,” “stern Germans,” “passionate Italians,” “lazy Irish,” and so forth—have been bantered to and fro in Europe for ages. In a more systematic, scholarly manner, John Armstrong (1982) uncovered “nations before nationalism,” something like identifiable ethnic tribes bearing common, persistent characteristics that distinguished them from other tribes and who in modern times would gain or seek a nation-state. Anthony Smith (1986) calls roughly similar groupings *ethnies*, each of which was conscious of itself as a people with a history and without which modern European leaders could not have built nation-states as we know them today. There were also states and territories, such as France, England, the Netherlands, and arguably Sweden, assembled and governed by absolutist monarchs that appeared identifiably national—that is, French, English, Dutch, Swedish—in contrast to multiethnic empires such as the Habsburg and Ottoman dynasties, well before the nation actually governed in the modern democratic sense of a sovereign people in control of a state came into being (Marx 2003).

**Particularism**

That modern democratic nation-state was first proclaimed (in Europe) by the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* in 1789. Article III reads: “The nation is essentially the source of all sovereignty.” This is why Rousseau, the celebrated philosopher of the Revolution, is sometimes called the intellectual father of modern nationalism (Smith 1991: 88), though in truth he championed republicanism modeled on the ancient *polis*. It was actually Johann Gottfried Herder who coined the term “nationalism.” The Lutheran pastor of Bückeburg and one-time student of Kant insisted that the Revolution was distinctively French. Against its proponents, especially Napoleon I, who conquered far and wide across Europe in the name of defending and spreading the purportedly universal values of the Revolution, Herder retorted that the Revolution was particularistic. He argued that the principles of the *Declaration* could not have the same meaning for Germans (or any non-Frenchmen for that matter) because they were written in the French, not the German, language; that the Revolution could never inspire the Germans in
the same way because it was launched and lived by Frenchmen and not by Germans; that the republic founded by Frenchmen in 1789 could never feel like the right model for Germans because they did not found it. Every phenomenon, Herder averred, is inescapably a product of the ultimately unique context—language, culture, time, place—in which it comes to life and remains only truly appreciable by those who share that context. “Not a country, not a people, not a natural history, not a state, are like one another,” he wrote in *Another Philosophy of History for the Education of Mankind* [1774]. “Hence the True, the Good, the Beautiful in them are not similar either. If one does not search for this, if one blindly takes another nation as a model, everything is extinguished” (Herder 1877–1913: 4:472).

The alleged sources of national particularism vary. Herder stressed language. To be sure, he acknowledged other factors: “The original character of a nation is derived from its family traits, its climate, its type of life, its education, its first efforts and its habitual occupations” (quoted in Sternhell 2010: 201). But among these specifically interconnected factors none was more important than language: “Has a nation anything more precious than the language of its fathers? In it dwell its entire world of tradition, history, religion, principles of existence; its whole heart and soul” (Herder 1877–1913: 17:58). Language formed the core of what Herder (1877–1913: 8:392) termed the *Volksgeist*, literally a “people's soul,” its “inner character,” its particular “genius” (Herder 1877–1913: 25:10). The Volksgeist represented a people’s “center of gravity” (Herder 1877–1913: 5:509), the ultimately inscrutable and even ineffable something that made one person Italian, another German, and, moreover, enabled both of them automatically to recognize the difference. Herder deemed it tragic to lose or, worse, to abandon one’s mother tongue, the “dictionary of the soul” (quoted in Gillies 1945: 37). For example, he heaped scorn on the pronounced Francophilia of the court of Frederick the Great, where only French was spoken. Germans, he believed, could never amount to more than second-class Frenchmen and therefore should not endeavor to emulate them no matter how great they seemed. “Nations evolve in accordance with the place, the time, and their inner character. Each one bears within itself the harmony of its perfection, not comparable to any others” (Herder 1984: 3:759).

Montesquieu underscored climate. In the *Spirit of the Laws* [1748], he maintained that laws

should be so adapted to the people for which they are created, that it should be a great coincidence if the laws of one nation suit another. . . . They ought to be fitted to the *physical conditions* of a country, to its climate, whether cold, hot or temperate; to the nature of its
soil, to its situation and extent, and to the way of life of its people whether it is agricultural or pastoral or that of hunters. (Montes-quivieu 1950–1955: 1:8–9)

It should be noted, however, that the French baron, like other philosophes, did believe in natural law, knowable through reason and whose moral principles needed to be customized to fit particular national settings.

Religion represented the critical bonding agent for the French patriot (of the France of Louis XIV rather than 1789) Joseph de Maistre. In Considérations sur la France [1796], he pilloried the Revolution for its secularizing tendencies. Acts such as the Constitution of the Clergy, he contended, dangerously diluted Roman Catholicism, whose unadulterated version he took to be an integral part of French identity. “A man must have lost his senses to believe that God has commissioned academies to tell us what He is and what is our duty to Him. . . . Those who speak or write in such a way as to rob a people of its natural dogma should be hanged like burglars” (Maistre 1884–1887: 5:108). The comte cast aspersions on the idea of a civic religion whose universal secular principles could apply to all mankind. He dismissed the Enlightenment axiom of a single human nature with a notorious quip: “I have seen in my life French, Italians, Russians, etc. I even know, thanks to Montesquieu, that one can be Persian; but as for man, I declare I have never met him in my life” (Maistre 1989: 145). He insisted that “nations, like individuals, have their character and even their mission. . . . Each of them reveals to the observer an unalterable character” (Maistre 1989: 71).

For Edmund Burke, it was the incremental unfolding of a shared history that stamped a people. He viewed a nation as inhering in a kind of quasi-sacred pact or “partnership . . . obtained in many generations . . . between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born” to honor the nation’s achievements of the past, cherish those of the present, and make possible those of the future (Burke 1973: 110). The Irish-born representative to the British House of Commons abhorred the French Revolution for trying to invent a polity and people from scratch.

A nation is not an idea only of a local extent, an individual momentary aggression, but it is an idea of continuity, which extends in time as well as in numbers, and in space. And it is not the choice of one day, or one set of people, not a tumultuary or giddy choice; it is a deliberate election of ages and generation, it is a Constitution made by what is ten thousand times better than choice. (Burke 1803–1827: 10:96–97)
Homogeneity

It takes no clairvoyant to discern a proclivity for national homogeneity among nationalist thinkers. They tend to fear foreign elements as a dilution of the national character. For instance, Fichte (1968: 215), in his famous Addresses to the German Nation in French-occupied Berlin during the winter of 1807/1808, maintained:

Those who speak the same language are joined to each other by a multitude of invisible bonds by nature herself. . . . They belong together and are by nature one and an inseparable whole. Such a whole, if it wishes to absorb and mingle with itself any other people of different descent and language, cannot do so without itself becoming confused, in the beginning at any rate, and violently disturbing the even progress of its culture.

Similarly, de Maistre (Maistre 1989: 270) warned that “the excessive introduction of foreign words . . . is one of the surest signs of a people’s degradation.” Montesquieu (1989: 310) advised readers to be “careful not to change the general spirit of the nation.” “If the character is generally good, what difference do a few faults make?”

The faults might be prejudices against nonnatives. The founding fathers of particularism not only defended national prejudice; they lionized it. In prejudices lay embedded the collected and bequeathed wisdom of a people—not wisdom in an erudite, bookish form but in the form of “common sense” palatable to ordinary folks, what Vico (1948: para. 142) described as “judgment without reflection felt in common by the whole of a people, order, nation, or the whole human race.” In a thought that is often echoed with regard to Islam in Europe today, Herder noted that “the introduction of any foreign religion is very dangerous. It always destroys the national character and honorable prejudices” (quoted in Sternhell 2010: 309). Burke too celebrated prejudice: “Instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree, and . . . we cherish them because they are prejudices; and the longer they have lasted and the more generally they have prevailed, the more we cherish them” (Burke 1973: 100).

Nation-state

Prejudice constituted an important element of the collective but unique wisdom of a people that made it imperative that each nation have its own state. In a slogan often uttered by European nationalists striving throughout the nineteenth century for national self-determination against empires like
the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian, the Italian nation-builder Giuseppe Mazzini proclaimed “every nation a state, only one state for the entire nation” (quoted in Glover 1997: 12). If each nation is truly unique, has its own “soul,” then it follows (in nationalist logic) that only it can govern itself aright. “Wherever a separate language is found, there a separate nation exists, which has the right to take independent charge of its affairs and to govern itself” (Fichte 1968: 184). Only natives can understand the singular needs of their nation; foreign rulers or rules will ultimately destroy a nation. Nationalism further postulates that the individual can experience the fullest richness and felicity of human life only as part of a national community—that is, as a communal “We” as opposed to an isolated “I” (Hegel 1953: 110). The nation binds its individual members to a reassuring community beyond the immediate family and grants them a kind of immortality by antedating and outlasting their own physical existence. Liberalism’s freedom for the individual alone is incomplete at best and chimerical at worst. True freedom can, from the nationalist perspective, be enjoyed only collectively as a member of a nation living with co-nationals in sovereign control of “our” nation-state. No one developed this idea of collective national freedom more thoroughly and systematically than Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who called its realization “the divine Idea as it exists on earth.”

What counts in a state is the practice of acting according to a common will. . . . This spiritual content then constitutes the essence of the individual as well as that of the people. It is one life in all, a grand object, a great purpose and content on which depend all individual happiness and all private decisions. The state does not exist for the citizens; on the contrary, one could say that the state is the end and they are its means. But the means-end relation is not fitting here. For the state is not the abstract confronting the citizens; they are parts of it, like members of an organic body, where no member is end and none is means. (Hegel 1953: 50–52)

Egalitarian Nationalism

Hegel’s vision represents the core aspiration of egalitarian nationalism. Though they did not all articulate as intricate, systematic, and dialectical a philosophy as the great savant of Jena, most important nationalist thinkers and activists of the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries subscribed to some version of this ideal in which each nation gains genuine independence over its own affairs. They were optimistic that peoples afforded self-determination would be content and therefore live together in international harmony. Herder painted the vision of a grand international
garden of humanity, with each independent nation symbolizing one of the beautifully blossoming flowers. Egalitarian nationalists tended to denounce all forms of cultural or political chauvinism, chief among them imperialism. Burke, to his credit, deplored his own beloved Britain’s empire, and not only for its mistreatment of his Irish brethren but also the peoples of Asia and Africa whom it subjugated. Herder poured vitriol not only on French expansionism but also on the European colonies around the world that wrongly quashed different peoples’ right to self-determination. Egalitarian nationalism arguably reached its political highpoint (in Europe) during the revolutions of 1848, the “springtime of the peoples,” when many Kultur-nationen (nations without a state) sought to form democratic nation-states independent of various empires and kingdoms, the so-called “prisons of the peoples” (see Alter 1994: 39–65).

**Antagonistic Nationalism**

Many students of nationalism note a transformation to a more chauvinistic variety of nationalism after 1848, ultimately culminating in the two world wars (Kohn 1955: 50–80; Hayes 1931: 164–231). Variously labeled as “integral nationalism” (Hayes 1931: 164), “primordialism” (Sutherland 2012: 132), “jingoism” (Heywood 2012: 188), “biological nationalism” (Kohn 1955: 73), “ethnic nationalism” (Smith 1991: 82), or simply (proto)“fascism” (Kohn 1955: 78), I prefer “antagonistic nationalism” to describe the view of “our nation” as in a kind of Darwinian survival-of-the-fittest competition with all other nations (Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* appeared in 1859). It lays equal if not greater stress on identifying, neutralizing, and even eliminating perceived external and internal enemies of the nation rather than merely nourishing and celebrating the national character. While some claim that antagonistic nationalism was more prominent in central and eastern Europe (Smith 1991: 81–82; Kohn 1946: 329–454; also see Marx 2003 against this thesis), I read egalitarian and antagonistic nationalism as poles between which nationalists across Europe move. Both poles belong to a single ideological orbit philosophically rooted in metaphysical particularism. Both variants share the particularistic notions that the world is divided into unique nations, that the nations represent for their members their most meaningful association or community (beyond the family) without which their lives are less than complete, and that for this reason it is critical to protect and nurture the national culture or character—to wit, maintain homogeneity. The antagonistic variant injects into an otherwise naively idealistic nationalism a dose of sober realism by maintaining that in a world populated by distinct peoples, nations and nation-states will inevitably collide and conflict. It adds the sociopolitical insight that such enmity tends to reinforce national solidarity.
Antagonistic nationalism arguably received its most philosophically profound and sociopolitically incisive articulation by Carl Schmitt (1976), especially in *Der Begriff des Politischen (The Concept of the Political)* from 1927. Schmitt did not originate the outlook, however. Hints of it turn up in numerous conservative and nationalist thinkers and activists, such as Fichte, Ernest Renan, Hippolyte Taine, Charles Maurras, Giovanni Gentile, Paul de Man, Ezra Pound, W. B. Yeats, Robert Brasillach, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, Maurice Barrès, Ernst Jünger, Otto and Gregor Strasser, Georges Valois, Oswald Mosley, and Oswald Spengler. Long discredited after World War II due to the author’s membership in the Nazi Party, Schmitt’s work has experienced a deserved reassessment in recent decades (Tralau 2010; Agamben 2005; Mouffe 2000). Not only are his interpretations based on rigorous philosophizing about the shortcomings and contradictions of liberalism and democracy but are also now validated by a virtual mountain of social scientific research into how persons view and treat those whom they deem different from themselves (Kosic and Phalet 2006; Stolz 2000; Taguieff 1988; Lévi-Straus 1985; Horowitz 1985; Tajfel 1982).

Schmitt rejected the Enlightenment notion of a common ethics that could unite all peoples. He referred to the political world as a “pluriverse rather than a universe,” in which war between nations was likely if not inevitable (Schmitt 1996: 53). In fact, for the Berlin professor politics ultimately boiled down to a relationship between friend and enemy (*Freund und Feind*): “The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy” and “Were this distinction to vanish then political life would vanish altogether” (Schmitt 1996: 26). In order to prevail against the enemy and avoid annihilation, a people had to be homogeneous and its members loyal to the state (ultimately to the point of dying for it). Schmitt abhorred the divisive politics of parliamentary democracy and postulated that only the threat (real or imagined) of an enemy (external and internal) could overcome the divisiveness of interest-group politics:

The endeavour of a normal state consists above all in assuring total peace within the state and its territory. . . . As long as the state is a political entity the requirement for internal peace compels it in critical situations to decide also upon the domestic enemy. Every state provides, therefore, some kind of formula for the declaration of an internal enemy. (Schmitt 1996: 46)

Indeed, Schmitt believed that denying or appeasing the enemy amounted to treason, such that “if a part of the population declares that it no longer recognizes enemies, then, depending on the circumstance, it joins their side
and aids them. Such a declaration does not abolish the reality of the friend-
and-enemy distinction” (Schmitt 1996: 51). A nation that tolerated internal
diversity and discord was doomed to extinction: “If a people no longer pos-
sesses the energy or the will to maintain itself in the sphere of politics, the
latter will not thereby vanish from the world. Only a weak people will disap-

Nativism

The ideological progeny of antagonistic nationalism, what I term “nativism,”
lay largely dormant in Western Europe and marginalized to the political
fringe for a generation following World War II due to its association with
fascism and the Holocaust. It was in opposition to large-scale postwar im-
migration that nativism revived (in the domestic politics of Western Eu-
ropean polities) and began its gradual but steady rise into the legitimate,
mainstream public philosophy it represents today. The earliest nativist ar-

guments to reach the political limelight after World War II likely fell from
the lips of British Conservative MP Enoch Powell. On 20 April 1968 in Bir-
mingham, he delivered his “River of Blood” speech in which he presaged
massive civil unrest in Britain “of American proportions” if immigration
was not curbed. Supported (according to Gallup) by 74 percent of Britons,
many of whom marched in protest against his immediate sacking as shadow
defense secretary by Edward Heath, the address by the intellectual-turned-
politician was built on classic particularist presuppositions: “The West In-
dian or Asian does not, by being born in England become an Englishman.
In law he becomes a United Kingdom citizen by birth; in fact he is a West
Indian or an Asian still” (quoted in Hansen 2000: 188). Across the Eng-
lish Channel, it was Jean-Marie Le Pen who brought the argument against
“unassimilated” immigrants into mainstream French politics: “As a general
rule, we believe populations should live in their own territories, within their
own historical borders. When cultural and ethnic identities are mixed, it
makes for an explosive combination” (quoted in Holmes 2000: 67, 70). In
Germany, it was the fifteen German professors who in 1982 published the
Heidelberg Manifesto, which warned:

Peoples are... living systems of a high order, each with its own
systematic characteristics which are transmitted genetically and
through tradition. For this reason the integration of large masses of
non-German foreigners is impossible for the simultaneous preserva-
tion of our people, and leads to the well-known ethnic catastrophes
of multicultural societies. (Quoted in Chin 2007: 148)
Analysts choose different labels for this outlook, such as “integralism” (Holmes 2000: 6), “cultural racism” (Wieviorka 2002: 141), or the “new racism” (Barker 1981), but they all tend to discern a transformation from an older form of racial discrimination based on biological differences and claims of racial inferiority and superiority to a newer differentalist form emphasizing allegedly unbridgeable cultural differences that purportedly necessitate the separation of ethnic cultural communities (Wieviorka 2002: 143).

We err, however, if we associate nativism exclusively with the Far Right. A large number of reputable contemporary scholars voice concern that cultural heterogeneity and multiculturalism erode national well-being. Although Alain de Benoist has been accused of supporting the radical Right, he has openly rejected Le Pen and the National Front. Nevertheless, the director of the influential Nouvelle Droite think-tank Groupement de recherche et d’études pour la civilisation européenne (GRECE) opposes immigration on grounds that it threatens to transform France into the United States, a “mere agglomeration of men and women from all countries” that as a result has no culture, only a “lack of culture” (Benoist 1979: 398). He prefers the affirmation of collective singularities, the spiritual reappropriation of heritages, the clear awareness of roots and specific cultures” (Benoist 1977: 19; see also Champetier and de Benoist 1999). Dominique Schnapper (1998: 112, 80) too dislikes “multiculturalism,” because it can degenerate into “Lebanon.” The daughter of Raymond Aron contends that only a homogenous national culture can transcend the divisive conflicts of local and regional identifications (“ethnies”). Moreover, she rejects as insufficiently binding the abstract universalism of Kant’s cosmopolitanism or Habermas’s constitutional patriotism in favor of a “cultural homogeneity” forged through commonly lived experiences, such as serving in the same military force, speaking the same language, practicing the same religion, and living according to the same customs and mores (Schnapper 1998: 30, 116).

Historical experience has demonstrated that the minimization of cultural and historical difference has been the most economical, and probably the most effective means of transcending ethnic identities. Objective homogeneity of population is not enough to create a nation, but it is true that it favors the interaction of social life and of political society. That is why the formation of the nation was always accompanied by policies aimed at reducing particularisms, not only political but cultural. (Schnapper 1998: 116)

Although Schnapper insists on labeling her variety “civic nationalism” in contradistinction to “ethno-nationalism” (76), it is nigh impossible to read
Community of Citizens: On the Modern Idea of Nationality and escape the impression that the author believes her beloved France was much better off before the onslaught of large-scale postwar immigration (see, for instance, 155–69).

Likewise, the eminent German legal philosopher Ernst-Wolfgang Börkenförde sides with cultural homogeneity over abstract universalism:

A relative homogenization in a shared culture is needed . . . if the society which tends to become atomized is to be reunited into a unity capable of concerted action, in spite of being differentiated into a multiplicity of parts. This task is performed by the nation and its attendant national consciousness along with, and in succession to, religion. . . . Thus the ultimate goal cannot be to overtake national identity and replace it with something else, not even with a universalism of human rights. (Börkenförde 1995)

British political philosopher David Miller worries about the negative impact of cultural diversity on social solidarity. Social justice, he postulates, has a real chance of emerging and persisting only in societies “whose members acknowledge ties of solidarity” (Miller 1995: 93). Furthermore, “without a common national identity, there is nothing to hold citizens together” (Miller 1992: 94). “National character,” he explains,

will include political principles such as belief in democracy and the rule of law . . . [including] social norms such as filling in your income tax return or queuing as a way of deciding who gets on the bus first. It may also embrace certain cultural ideals, for instance religious beliefs or a commitment to preserve the purity of the national language. (Miller 1995: 25–26)

Indeed, empirical studies have shown a strong correlation between social homogeneity and generous redistributive welfare policies (Alesina and Glaeser 2006; Putnam 2007). For Miller (2000: 27), this is how things should be, for “nations are ethical communities. . . . The duties we owe to our fellow-nationals are different from, and more extensive than, the duties we owe to humans as such.”

Though hardly as chauvinistic as Schmitt, or Far Right politicians like Le Pen for that matter, these more respectable scholars nevertheless view unassimilated immigrants as detrimental to the receiving society. They are, therefore, in some fashion enemies simply by virtue of not conforming to the national character of the majority. It should come as no surprise, then, that Schmitt’s “friend-enemy” realism turns up in their scholarship. Thus,
Schnapper (1994: 183) underscores that “collective attachments are always affirmed in opposition to others,” while Miller (1989: 67–68) contends “that communities just are particularistic. In seeing myself as a member of a community, I see myself as participating in a particular way of life marked off from other communities by its distinctive characteristics.” The consequences for Muslim immigrants (examined in detail in subsequent chapters) are unmistakable: assimilate, depart, or remain as unwelcome, marginalized residents.

**Communitarianism**

As far as immigration is concerned, communitarianism represents the ideological progeny of egalitarian nationalism. Contemporary communitarianism maintains, however, that each bona fide community ought to be able to preserve and practice the norms and values that make it distinct regardless of where the physical frontiers of nation-states fall (Walzer 1983: 314). Communities of immigrants should be neither expected nor compelled to forsake their language, religion, manners, or anything else integral to their distinct identity as a result of having immigrated to a new homeland. While what I term “communitarianism” is often dubbed “multiculturalism,” by detractors and proponents alike, I prefer the former label because there are liberal and postmodern varieties of multiculturalism that are philosophically distinct from communitarianism. The latter prizes the good over the right—not, however, the universal good postulated in liberal perfectionism, but rather the particular good envisaged differently by distinct communities (MacIntyre 1984: 220). Contemporary communitarianism reimagines Herder’s particularistic claim (quoted previously) that “the True, the Good, the Beautiful in them [nations] are not similar” to fit a transnational age of migration in which it is not possible or even perhaps desirable for an entire nation to inhabit the same territory that it calls its own.

Before his death at the age of 102 in 2002, Hans-Georg Gadamer articulated the arguably most philosophically sophisticated version of modern-day Herderism. Richly and creatively borrowing from philosophical traditions such as Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology, Friedrich Schleiermacher’s and Wilhelm Dilthey’s hermeneutics, and Ferdinand de Saussure’s semiotics, Gadamer developed his influential notion of distinct “horizons of experience.” Each significant community lives within its own horizon of understanding that defines its world, or how the members collectively experience it. A common language constitutes an important, to be sure, but not the sole ingredient of the horizon. “All human knowledge of the world is linguistically mediated. Our first orientation to the world fulfills itself in the learning of language. But not only this. The linguistic nature [Sprachlichkeit] of
our being-in-the-world articulates in the end the whole realm of our experience” (Gadamer 2007: 65). A horizon is, furthermore, not something we choose. Rather, it represents a collection of shared experiences and outlooks that we inherit and share as part of a persisting community.

For we live in what has been handed down to us, and this is not just a specific region of our experience of the world that we call the “cultural tradition,” which only consists of texts and monuments and which are able to pass on to us a linguistically constituted and historically documented sense. No, it is the world itself which is communicatively experienced and continuously entrusted to us as an infinitely open task to pass on. It is never the world as it was on its first day but the world as it has come down to us. (Gadamer 2007: 26)

The author of Truth and Method [1960] and public debating opponent of liberal icon Habermas, Gadamer readily admitted that horizons amounted to prejudices, but like many metaphysical particularists before him, he adjudged these as neither avoidable nor deplorable: “It is not so much our judgments as it is our prejudices that constitute our being.” These “pre-understandings,” as he preferred to label them, “constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience . . . whereby what we encounter says something to us” (Gadamer 2007: 74, 9). Prejudice and other aspects of our horizon, if properly valued, held out for the German hermeneutist the promise to make possible firmer bonds of solidarity among members of a community than are possible through instrumental consent. Gadamer understood himself to be rehabilitating and modernizing Aristotle’s notion of ethos—political solidarity and unity of purpose built on philia (friendship) as opposed to facturum (arrived at via reason).

“Friendship” in a philosophical reflection is a term for solidarity. But solidarity is a form of experiencing the world and social reality which one cannot bring about and make possible through objectivistic plans to overcome this solidarity through artificial institutions. On the contrary, solidarity exists before all possible overt acceptance and before the working of institutions, economic orders, legal orders, or social customs. It carries them and makes them possible. (Gadamer 2007: 271)

Like Herder, Gadamer deemed a world of profound, even ultimately insurmountable diversity richer and healthier for the human soul than a world standardized through and through according to the dictates of pure
reason. Like Herder, he refused to ditch the vision of diverse communities living in harmony with one another, appreciating and embracing rather than deprecating and loathing their differences. He urged his admirers to work toward a “fusion of horizons” (1975: 289–90) by opening their minds to the perspectives of other horizons in ways that could broaden their own. Gadamer warned that a final, absolute fusion would forever elude us, but seeking it nonetheless would provide a much more intriguing philosophical journey than rationalist monism. Gadamer’s was a deeply humane message admonishing his fellow humans to cherish that which made their specific community invaluable to them, to appreciate that other communities cherished their common values equally as strongly, and to embrace that diversity rather than recoil from it.

For Charles Taylor (1995: 256), an avid admirer of Gadamer, the only way to encourage human diversity, rather than asphyxiate it through the imposition of an artificial universalism, is to organize diverse societies according to the principle of “the presumption of equal worth.” “As a presumption, the claim is that all human cultures that have animated whole societies over some considerable stretch of time have something important to say to all human beings . . . so all should enjoy the presumption that their traditional culture has value” (Taylor 1995: 252–53). The principle translates into what the Canadian philosopher calls the “politics of recognition,” which is distinct from and not infrequently in conflict with “the politics of equal dignity.” The latter, founded on liberalism, presumes that all humans are fundamentally the same (in the abstract) and therefore prizes equal or identical treatment regardless of differences in race, creed, nationality, gender, and so on. By contrast, the politics of recognition foregrounds communities’ particularities and therefore prizes recognizing and encouraging them. As Taylor (1994: 43) explains,

The reproach the first makes to the second is just that it violates the principle of nondiscrimination. The reproach the second makes to the first is that it negates identity by forcing people into a homogeneous mold that is untrue to them. This would be bad enough if the mold were itself neutral—nobody’s mold in particular. But the complaint generally goes further. The claim is that the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles of the politics of equal dignity is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture. As it turns out, then, only the minority or suppressed cultures are being forced to take alien form. Consequently, the supposedly fair and difference-blind society is not only inhuman (because suppressing identities) but also, in a subtle and unconscious way, itself highly discriminatory.
No community should have to live according to standards alien to it. For Walzer (1983: 314), “justice is rooted in the distinct understandings of places, honors, jobs, things of all sorts that constitute a shared way of life. To override those understandings is (always) to act unjustly.”

**Postmodernism**

Like nationalism, postmodernism rejects liberalism’s universalism. However, whereas nationalism has been in many ways antirational, for instance in its celebration of prejudice, postmodernism has tended to be hyperrational. Postmodernism employs the Enlightenment’s sharpest tool, reason, but utilizes it to interrogate rationalism itself. In this way, postmodernism represents less an anti-Enlightenment movement, like nationalism, and more an extension, or better, even a culmination of the Enlightenment tradition. For postmodernism maintains that the human intellect has developed to a state of such penetrating perspicacity in late modernity as to render belief in universal truths and values intellectually unsophisticated (Vattimo 2006: 165). The truth about truthfulness, to invoke Nietzsche’s remark at the head of the chapter, is that apodictic or Absolute Truth does not exist. Rather, “truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions” (Nietzsche 1954: 47). In place of illusory timeless truth, postmodernism discerns infinite interpretations—that is, competing truth claims none of which can indubitably demonstrate its validity over and above rivals. The irreducible multiplicity of perspectives—perspectivism—ultimately undermines all attempts to form a metaphysical bedrock on which firmly to build our lives individually or collectively—nihilism.

Postmodern perspectivism and nihilism thus differ markedly from nationalism’s particularism. The latter posits a particular but single culture or character for each nation (or community) that provides its members a mostly taken-for-granted, inscrutable-but-secure, lasting, holistic sense of who they are and what they stand for. By contrast, postmodernism reads our societies and ourselves as sites of a hurly burly, even schizophrenic and constantly morphing patchwork of meanings that generate hybrid and fluid identities and values that make final closure or certainty elusive. The resulting impermanence, furthermore, renders overarching political consensus, whether liberal or national, chimerical and impossible.

**Perspectivism**

Nietzsche (1968: 267), arguably the intellectual father of postmodernism, originated the notion of “perspectivism.” He rejected positivism’s postulate of unequivocal facts with a now famous aphorism: “No, facts is precisely
what there is not, only interpretations” (1968: 267)—to wit, “There are many kinds of eyes . . . and consequently there are many kinds of ‘truths,’ and consequently there is no truth” (Nietzsche 1968: 291). Nietzsche averred that the epistemological notion of truthfulness was philosophically indefensible despite millennia of presupposing it in the Western tradition, whether in ancient Greek thought, monotheism, or modern science, all of which, for Nietzsche, were of a piece in their inveterate monism. The formally trained philologist interpreted language as the starting point of the yearning for apodictic truth. Language depicts a world that we quite understandably want to believe is “true” or actually “out there” in a way that corresponds to how our language describes it. But wishing something to be true does not make it so. Indeed, Nietzsche contended that serious scrutiny eventually exposes every truth claim, including the belief in God, to be a self-soothing illusion (1968: 45). “The ‘apparent’ world,” he scribbled in Twilight of the Idols, “is the only one: the ‘true’ world is merely added by a lie” (Nietzsche 1967–1977: 4:481). The “first perfect nihilist of Europe” (Nietzsche 1968: 3) chastised his readers’ immature yearning for truth and implored them to confront both the constructed and contested nature of knowledge:

But I should think that today we are at least far from the ridiculous immodesty that would be involved in decreeing from our corner that perspectives are permitted only from this corner. Rather has the world become “infinite” for us all over again, inasmuch as we cannot reject the possibility that it may include infinite interpretations. (Nietzsche 1974: para. 374)

Subsequent thinkers in the postmodern tradition have augmented Nietzsche’s seminal insights. (Late) Wittgenstein, for instance, argued that language, rather than representing more or less accurately the independent essence of objective things, actually assigns meaning to things. Moreover, “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” (Wittgenstein 1958: sec. 43). Needless to say, usage varies from one linguistic context to the next depending on the specific rules and understandings of the language application (understood loosely as “grammar”). “Essence is expressed by grammar. . . . Grammar tells what object anything is. (Theology as grammar)” (Wittgenstein 1958: sec. 371, 373). Different grammars or “language games” can therefore impart very different meanings to the “same” object. Competing interpretations are neither valid nor invalid, merely different.

Was Augustine in error, then, when he called upon God on every page of the Confessions? But—one might say—if he was not in error, surely the Buddhist holy man was—or anyone else—whose religion
gives expression to completely new views. But none of them was in error, except when he set forth a theory. (Wittgenstein 1993: 119)

The Austrian school teacher turned Cambridge don conceded that most humans do not perceive the ongoing subtle changes to their language game that to them appears stable (Wittgenstein 1958: sec. 18; 1969: sec. 99). Nonetheless, the illusion of stability cannot ultimately shield one from potentially upsetting alterations in the language game or from coming into contact with different language games altogether. Despite originally setting out to provide perfect philosophical certainty in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922), Wittgenstein wound up asserting that philosophy can offer no comfortable escape from “the groundlessness of our believing” (Wittgenstein 1969: sec 166), “cannot give it any foundation” (Wittgenstein 1958: sec. 124).

Wittgenstein’s contemporaries were drawing equally arresting conclusions, albeit from different angles. Max Weber (1922: 154), for example, argued that our enhanced ability to reason led us further from rather than closer to certainty:

> It is the destiny of a cultural epoch which has tasted of the tree of knowledge to know that we cannot decipher the meaning of world events, regardless of how completely we may study them. We must, rather, be prepared to create them ourselves and to know that world-views can never be the product of factual knowledge. Thus the highest ideals, those which move us most powerfully, can become valid only by being in combat with the ideals of other men, which are as sacred to them as ours are to us.

His compatriot Martin Heidegger maintained that what persons take as reality (“being in the world” or *Dasein*) is a product of “Enframing” (*Ge-stell*). The latter is more of an occlusion of than an opening to the fullness of being (*Sein*) that enframed persons forget has happened (*Seinsvergessenheit*).

World picture, when understood essentially, does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as picture. What is, in its entirety, is now taken in such a way that it first is in being and only is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth. (Heidegger 1977: 129–30)

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who was deeply influenced by Heidegger, preferred to see the body as the most important frame of reference. All experience, he argued, must needs take place through and in the body. “Our
constant aim,” he explained in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, “is to elucidate the primary function whereby we bring into existence, for ourselves, or take hold upon a space, the object or the instrument, and to describe the body as the place where this appropriation occurs” (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 154). The French philosopher thus rejected the Cartesian distinction between mind and body (“I think, therefore, I am”) and with it the quest for a purely abstract perception of the world that, because it was thought to be disembodied, was reputed to be objective. Nor did Merleau-Ponty advance a version of biological determinism whereby the body as the identical physiological configuration in all humans generates identical experience for all. On the contrary, he interpreted the body as the complex and indeterminate site not only of physiological and psychological structures but also of accumulated experiences that, all taken together, made possible an infinite array of lived meanings even within a single embodied person.

A generation later, Jacques Derrida (1991) further enriched perspectivism with his influential notion of *différance*. Untranslatable due its intended double meaning (in French) of deferral and difference, the neologism conveys the claim that any word (and by extension any concept) only acquires meaning in relation to other words, words that are not only anterior to and concurrent with it, but also words that will emerge in the future. Thus, for any word there can be no fixed or permanent meaning (final or correct interpretation); it is infinitely deferred and therefore potentially different from one moment to the next. “There is nothing outside the text” with which to (in)validate the text’s meaning (Derrida 1976: 158). The ineluctable and interminable intertextuality of language is tantamount for Derrida to “the deconstruction of the transcendental signified, which at one time or another, would place a reassuring end to the reference from sign to sign” (Derrida 1976: 49). Because we can comprehend and experience the world only through language, our understandings of it have to be forever indeterminate, mutable, and plural (Derrida 1992). Ours is a world of “infinite variabilities” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 201).

**Will to Power**

Postmodernist insistence on the constructed nature of truth begs the ultimately political question of how some representations of truth come to prevail (even if temporarily) over others. Needless to say, Nietzsche had an answer. In *The Will to Power*, he asked:

*By which means does a virtue come to power?* By exactly the same means as a political party: the slandering, inculpation, undermining of virtues that oppose it and are already in power, by rebaptizing
them, by systematic persecution and mockery. Therefore: through sheer “immorality.” (Nietzsche 1968: 172)

Nietzsche discerned an intrinsic and mutually reinforcing relationship between knowledge and power. At the root of every truth claim, he argued, lay an often unconscious drive to dominate others, to force them to live by one’s own interpretation of the world. “It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and the For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as the norm” (1968: 267). For example, the self-declared anti-Christ contended that Christianity was a perspective that was motivated by the mediocre masses to constrain the brilliant and gifted few. The critical insight bequeathed to postmodernism was that knowledge and power cannot be decoupled. The former is always implicated in ultimately political relations of power.

Michel Foucault has arguably done more than any other postmodern analyst to deepen the understanding of the interconnected relationship between power and knowledge.

“Truth” is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements. . . . It is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. (1984: 74)

The crux of the Frenchman’s exploration of the “microphysics of power” is that knowledge is constructed by an interlocking, mutually reinforcing nexus of resources, institutions, administrators, and experts that becomes strategically positioned in such a way as to establish its representation of reality (both normative and empirical) as “objective.” This form of “governmentality” operates through normalization. The dominant discourse and the institutions and actors that produce and administer it form a definition of “normal” and therewith simultaneously establish, diagnose, sequester, and discipline the “abnormal.” Furthermore, the “normalizing gaze” not only defines and spotlights the negative Other but also conveniently projects back a positive and reinforcing image of the “normal ones” who live the dominant discourse’s representation as objective truth.

Besides Foucault’s (1978; 1979; 1988) own case studies into sexual, criminal, and psychological deviance, Edward Said’s Orientalism (1978) rightfully stands as one of the most celebrated Foucauldian analyses of how a power-knowledge discourse actually functions in all its complexity. The
discourse of Orientalism, according to Said, enables and legitimizes European domination of the “Orient.”

Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, selling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (Said 1978: 3)

The Palestinian American scholar contended that “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (Said 1978: 3). Furthermore, following both Nietzsche’s and Foucault’s insistence on the constructed and imposed nature of knowledge, Said (1978: 6) cautioned:

One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away. . . . What we must respect and try to grasp is the sheer knitted-together strength of Orientalist discourse, its very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions, and its redoubtable durability.

Said’s work profoundly contributed to Postcolonial Studies, which interrogates Eurocentrism past and present and, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, has had a considerable impact on the politics of immigration in Europe.

**Hobbesian Postmodernism**

Both Foucault and Said have come under criticism for exaggerating the power of a single discourse to dominate over all others. Jean-François Lyotard (1984), for example, maintains that the “postmodern condition” is such that no “meta-narrative” can remain beyond suspicion and contestation. Similarly, Giorgio Agamben (2005: 83) observes that “contemporary politics . . . all over the planet unhinges and empties traditions and beliefs, ideologies and religions, identities and communities.” The erstwhile liberal turned postmodernist John Gray (1995: 85) has something similar in mind when expressing grave doubt about the prospects for a political consensus rooted in liberalism, noting “the intellectual foundations of the Enlightenment
project have fallen away; but liberal theory, for the most part, proceeds as if nothing has happened.” Likewise, Bhikhu Parekh (2000: 13) argues that liberalism is a substantive doctrine advocating a specific view of man, society and the world and embedded in and giving rise to a distinct way of life. As such it represents a particular cultural perspective and cannot provide a broad and impartial enough framework to conceptualise other cultures or their relations with it.

Truth claims of all sorts are regularly recognized as and challenged for being implicated in political power relations. “Today,” observes Gianni Vattimo (2006: 128), we all know that television lies and that the media do not in the least supply disinterested and objective representations of the world, and . . . even what we call “nature” is only accessible to us through scientific paradigms fraught with historicity and loaded with theory, hence with “prejudice.”

Alluding to Hobbes’s notorious “Leviathan,” a state so awesomely powerful that it alone can keep the peace among otherwise warring factions whose worldviews know no common ground, Etienne Balibar (2004: 201) insists: There can be no new “Leviathan” that would regulate belief and officialize knowledge (“institute the truth,” as the modern state has done through its schools and universities), and there is even less possibility for a new “civic religion” that would relativize “traditional” or “revealed” religions and relegate them to private choice.

“Hobbesian postmodernism” (meaning, like Balibar, sans Leviathan) is the shorthand label I give to this outlook, according to which overlapping political consensus, ethical or procedural, is impossible, and bald political contestation remains the final arbiter among vying adherents of competing worldviews. Stanley Fish (1999: 14, 12), for instance, dismisses the efforts of prominent contemporary liberal philosophers like Rawls and Habermas to anchor consensual politics in universally reasonable and fair procedures: there can be “no hope of a procedural republic from which divisive issues have been banished and in which we can all just get along. . . . Conflict is always just around the corner (Hobbes was right).” This is because competing groups enter politics today informed by firmly held worldviews that are not only incompatible but incommensurable, each representing “an orthodoxy to itself, fully equipped with dogma, criteria for evidence, founding texts,
exemplary achievements, heroes, villains, goals, agenda, and all the rest” (Fish 1999: 218). In the absence of commonly recognized standards or principles by which to evaluate competing outlooks, political struggle becomes the final arbiter. “Everything is politics,” declares Fish (1999: 9). There is no escaping “the political game.” “Play it (the lesson is superfluous; what else could you do?) and play it to win” (Fish 1999: 7, 240). One does this by taking whatever political and rhetorical steps are deemed necessary to make one’s preferred outlook the “prestige discourse” and one’s opponents’ the stigmatized discourse. Gray (1995: 90) likewise recommends abandoning idealistic quests for harmony and settling for a postmodern “modus vivendi.” Such an arrangement does not even constitute the proverbial “agreeing to disagree.” Rather, conflicting, though perhaps parleying parties come to the realization that it is more convenient, less disruptive, to permit one another variously constructed and understood zones of discretion in which their particular mores predominate. The borders of such zones will inevitably be contested, and opposing parties will from time to time vehemently and even violently clash. Though perhaps unsettling, this is simply the Hobbesian reality of postmodern life and society.

Although both advocate a separatism of sorts, Hobbesian postmodernism and communitarianism should not be confounded. The latter reposes on ethical consensus—namely, on the principle of the presumption of equal worth. Different communities recognize and respect the borders separating them. The better metaphor for grasping Hobbesian postmodernism is the turf war where the borders themselves are contested and fluid. To be sure, vying parties might reach a stalemate or even a truce, but neither represents an agreement regarding overall principles or procedures of mutual governance. The parties never fully relinquish the effort to expand their sphere of influence because they view politics as a zero-sum game in which one either dominates or is dominated. Chantal Mouffe (2000: 45) claims that “no final resolution or equilibrium . . . is ever possible, and there can be only temporary, pragmatic, unstable and precarious negotiations of the tension.” What is necessary is a “constant process of negotiation and renegotiation—through different hegemonic articulations.”

As far as immigration is concerned, Hobbesian postmodernism casts doubt and suspicion on the notion, let alone actual achievement, of genuine community held together by common norms and values respected by all or most members. The only real community, claims Jean-Luc Nancy (1991), is “the inoperative community.” Gray (1995: 911–92), for example, pours cold water over the smug confidence that immigrants will eventually adopt Western individualism on account of its allegedly unequivocal superiority, arguing that “the evidence of recent Asian immigrant groups, who do as well or better on all measures of well being in the absence of any
commitment to an idea of autonomy, and perhaps because they have no such commitment, are compelling counter examples.” Similarly, Parekh (1999: 71) points to many “adult, sane, and educated women” who “freely” undergo clitoridectomy or engage in polygamy because in their worldview these practices make perfectly good sense. The confidence of decidedly anti-Western Islamists to resist Westernization both outside and inside Europe has been mounting since the Iranian Revolution of 1979 (Göle 2011). Germany’s foremost expert on German Islamism, Werner Schiffauer (2007: 79), contends that Islamists are so firmly entrenched and well organized that relations between them and their opponents “must almost by necessity lead to an agonising conflict-oriented fight for recognition.” With similar Hobbesian postmodern candor did Tariq Modood (1990: 144) refer to Britain’s Muslims as “the group that British society is currently being forced to adjust to or defeat.” Parekh (2000: 238) mirthlessly notes that diverse “political communities are exceedingly difficult to hold together and, as history shows, there is no means of knowing what might precipitate their break up.” If a multicultural society’s effort to cohere “proves inadequate, it should avoid repressive violence and accept its misfortune as part of the inescapable frailty of all human institutions.”

**Hospitable Postmodernism**

Hobbesian postmodernism can seem frightfully grim. One thinks of Foucault’s (1980: 90) oft-cited inversion of Carl von Clausewitz’s famous dictum: politics is the continuation of war by other means. But postmodern politics does not necessarily have to degenerate into rampant “mixophobia”; there are opportunities for “mixophilia” as well (Bauman 2003: 27). Certainly in the global cities of today, “groups of different backgrounds, ethnic and otherwise, cannot help but enter into relations with each other, no matter how great the desire for separateness and the attempt to maintain cultural purity” (Ang 2001: 89–90). What I dub “hospitable postmodernism” seeks to conceptualize such relations in ways that can prove cooperative and mutually beneficial to actors taking radically different positions—a “modus covivendi” rather than a mere modus vivendi (Bauman 2003: 32). What is necessary for constructive as opposed to destructive relations to have a chance of emerging is, according to Derrida (2001: 22–23), “unconditional hospitality, offered a priori to every other, to all newcomers, whoever they may be.” Similarly, in his analysis of what ought to be done When Faiths Collide, Martin Marty invokes the metaphor of “risky hospitality,” inviting “strangers” to one’s table without the guarantee that the encounter will turn out to be agreeable. The best one can hope for is a
thickening of the discourse. It will not produce anything so near as a straight-arrow secular rational approach. It will eventuate in a thicket, a bramble, of entangled and sometimes not completely unentangleable strands, mixed with branches or other growths. But is it likely to reflect not only the messiness of a pluralist society but also repositories of options that would not have been contemplated in the world of the Rawlsians. (Marty 2005: 121)

Marty succinctly enunciates the essential spirit of hospitable postmodernism. It neither promises nor even aspires to anything remotely as harmonious or as stable as nationalist homogeneity, or liberal consensus for that matter. Though hospitable postmodernism does not foreclose cooperation, it nonetheless acknowledges that the unexamined and interminable diversity of postmodernity makes firm certainty and lasting accord unlikely, if not impossible. We do well, therefore, not to exaggerate the differences between Hobbesian and hospitable postmodernism. They represent poles between which postmodern theorists gravitate. Often the same thinker expresses elements of both, hospitable postmodernism typically emerging in gentler moments when the writer is trying to reassure readers that embracing postmodernism does not have to entail a headlong leap off the precipice of moral absolutism into a relativistic abyss of anarchic turmoil. Take Mouffe, for instance. Although she invokes Schmitt to underscore the inescapably antagonistic dimension of politics, in the end she articulates her own theory of “agonistic pluralism.” Hers is a vision in which differing parties come to see themselves not as Schmitt’s enemies, but as “adversaries, adversaries being defined in a paradoxical way as ‘friendly enemies,’ that is, persons who are friends because they share a common symbolic space but also enemies because they want to organize this common symbolic space in a different way” (Mouffe 2000: 9). Fish (1999: 15) claims “that conflict is manageable only in the short run and that structures of conciliation and harmony are forever fragile and must always be shored up, with uncertain success.” For his part, Parekh (2008: 2) outlines a “new politics of identity” rooted in the “spirit of human solidarity.” But by his lights such solidarity can only emerge through recognizing and embracing the infinite differentness of fellow humans and not through ignoring or suppressing particularities through abstract universalism. “Particularity or difference is valued, but not particularism, which absolutizes it. The universal is valued, but not universalism, at least not of the kind that sets itself in opposition to and despises the particular” (Parekh 2008: 3). Modood (2007: 150) goes so far as to maintain that a common “national identity” is “necessary to make a success of a multicultural society.” However, he immediately qualifies: “Not
assimilation into an undifferentiated national identity; that is unrealistic and oppressive as a policy. An inclusive national identity is respectful of and builds upon the identities that people value and does not trample upon them.” Furthermore, it “should be woven in debate and discussion, not reduced to a list” (Modood 2007: 153).

Hospitable postmodernism seeks to transform strangeness into something to welcome rather than fear, “from a threat to an opportunity” (Mavelli 2012: 137). Kristeva (1991), for instance, argues that deep down we are each of us strangers to ourselves—an unavoidable state of the human condition that, however, can be tapped to ease and encourage openness vis-à-vis foreigners. Similarly, Bonnie Honig (2001: 4) urges reframing the conventional question of “What problems do foreigners pose for us?” to “What problems does foreignness solve for us?” Foreigners often transgress convention in ways that annoy natives. Honig (2001: 99) recommends reconceptualizing such disturbances as invigorating reminders that democracy itself originated in challenges to convention. These authors do not preach engaging otherness in order to emulate adversaries, but rather as a vehicle for expanded self-understanding. This is what Agamben (1993: 68) means when he writes: “The outside is not another space that resides beyond a determinate space, but rather, it is the passage, the exteriority that gives it access.”

Hospitable postmodernism especially prizes hybridity. Exploring rather than avoiding alterity, it is argued, yields hybrid perspectives, experiences, and identities that, even when initially uncomfortable, can prove to be salutary. Salman Rushdie, for instance, encourages readers to celebrate “hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes from new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs” (quoted in Joppke 1996: 488). Parekh (2008: 28) contends that hybridity enhances tolerance, for persons exposed to hybridity are less likely to fixate on a single identity and demand its defense or imposition on others. Homi Bhabha (1994: 226, 37) likewise welcomes the “hybridity as heresy” that surfaces in what he calls the “third space of enunciation.” The latter is “the ‘inter’—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space”—that can generate hitherto unimagined and unexperienced outlooks and perhaps even solutions to intractable conflicts. “And by exploring this Third Space,” he adds, “we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as others of ourselves” (Bhabha 1994: 38). Balibar (2004: 178) also champions the experience of “translation.” Building off the ideas of Umberto Eco, the French philosopher reminds readers that Europe, due to its enduring multilingual experience, has traditionally excelled in the art of translation, repeatedly making comprehensible to nonnative speakers ideas originally crafted in alien tongues. This noble tradition should be tapped and expanded to welcome non-European newcomers rather than jettisoned
in favor of a fortress Europe attitude. Similarly, Derrida (1992: 29) urges his fellow Europeans to be “the guardians of an idea of Europe . . . but of a Europe that consists precisely in not closing itself off in its own identity and in advancing itself in an exemplary way toward what it is not.” This would also seem to be the tenet of a brand of postmodern cosmopolitanism advocated by thinkers such as Ulrich Beck (2000), who want to untie cosmopolitanism from its tight moorings to Kantian universalism and make it a looser public philosophy that welcomes and celebrates difference while at the same time seeking to forge “political dialogs that cut across boundaries” (Radtke 2011).

Such dialogues should be totally open-ended and free of strict taboos. The conditions and conclusions should never be preordained. Claude Lefort (1988: 39), for example, favors “a regime founded upon the legitimacy of a debate as to what is legitimate and what is illegitimate—a debate which is necessarily without any guarantor and without any end.” Stuart Hall (2000: 235) adds:

A process of final political adjudication between rival definitions of ‘the good’ would be inimical to the whole multi-cultural project, since its effect would be to constitute every political space as a “war of manoeuvre” between entrenched and absolutized particular differences.

Open-endedness necessitates the relaxation of firm principle in favor of flexible, context-specific pragmatism. Solutions to conflicts that work will likely be local and last only temporarily before they need to be renegotiated. Modood (2007: 134), for example, warns that “there is no general remedy.” He recommends instead of a general principle to follow a “pragmatic, case-by-case, negotiated approach to dealing with controversy and conflict: not an ideological, ‘drawing a line in the sand’ mentality” (Modood 2009: 180).

It is worth reiterating that hospitable postmodernism “comes without guarantees” of success (Amin 2002: 973). This “means constant exposure to ambivalence—that is, to a situation with no decidable solution, with no foolproof choice, no unreflective knowledge of ‘how to go on’” (Bauman 1993: 245–46). It is more akin to an experiment, even a venture or gamble, that engaging difference will yield more agreeable results than limiting or suppressing it. Thus, Honig (2009: 38) encourages “an embrace of the perpetuity of political contestation.” Doing so can facilitate a self-overcoming [that] may take the form of civic commitments to practices of agonistic respect and to an ethos of pluralization that acknowledges the remainders of all forms of life by actively but not uncritically supporting the efforts of new identities to come into
being without prior guarantees about the rightness or justice of their claims.

Hospitable postmodernism is motivated by a sense that alternatives to it have proven themselves unable to manage the postmodern condition of unprecedented and unending difference.

The point of the dialogue is to deepen mutual understanding, expand sympathy and imagination, exchange not only arguments but also sensibilities, to get both parties to take a critical look at themselves, build up mutual trust, and to arrive at a more just and balanced view of both the contentious issues and their wider context. It must be robust, frank and critical, telling the truth as each party sees it, but always in the knowledge that it cannot be allowed to fail, because the only alternative to it is the vicious cycle of hatred and violence. (Parekh 2008: 170)

Conclusion

I have so far treated liberalism, nationalism, and postmodernism as separate public philosophies. I did note slipperiness between poles within each public philosophy. It remains in this conclusion to adumbrate ways in which borrowing and blending between public philosophies transpires. Such intermingling is symptomatic of the mutual fragilization spawned from a spreading awareness of the plurality of normative persuasiveness. Many thinkers fuse elements from more than one public philosophy because they seem compelling.

Take liberal nationalism, for example. Its expositors contend that liberal democracy functions best in a homogeneous national culture such as the putative European nation-state (before mass immigration). In this vein, Margaret Canovan (1996: 80) calls nationalism the “battery that makes liberal democracy run.” Yael Tamir (1993: 139) goes so far as to claim that “most liberals are liberal nationalists” because they typically conceive of liberalism as functioning within nation-states. Thus, although Laborde’s (2002: 610) “civic patriotism” is mainly rooted in shared liberal values, she concedes that within any given national setting a variety of “ethnic” practices will be maintained, because they are deemed innocuous (e.g., most street names), convenient (e.g., Christian calendar), or open to re-interpretation and deconstruction (e.g., aspects of national history). Civic patriotism... demands... that they [immigrants] feel “at home” with what must be a genuinely shared national identity.
Gravitating in the other direction, there can be no gainsaying that Miller (1995) or Schnapper (1998) both want to press their prized national homogeneity into service toward liberal democratic ends among nationals. Similarly, Taylor (1985: 187–210) hopes and believes that communitarianism can enhance rather than restrict personal autonomy.

As appealing or even as natural as liberal nationalism might seem, it cannot in the end avoid contradiction when confronted with large-scale immigration. If the goal of homogeneity is pursued in earnest, illiberal policies will have to be enacted that penalize or marginalize those who refuse or fail to conform. Inversely, if liberal equality is taken seriously, the equal treatment of nonconforming citizens is bound to erode national homogeneity (Tonkiss 2013: 22; Müller 2007: 9).

Border crossings with postmodernism are also discernible. We already saw, for example, that Mouffe’s (2000) postmodern theory of “agonistic pluralism” borrows heavily from Schmitt’s (1996) reading of the ineluctable friend-enemy relations among nation-states. Or listen to Bauman (1997: 57) laud liberalism’s moral centerpiece of individual autonomy:

There is a true emancipatory chance in postmodernity . . . through revealing conditions of individual freedom which transcend both national and ethnic/tribal limitations; through focusing on the right to choose as the sole human universality; on the ultimate, inalienable individual responsibility for that choice, and on the complex State- or tribe-managed mechanisms aimed at depriving the individual of the freedom of choice and that responsibility.

Liberal theories of deliberative democracy take a page from hospitable postmodernism when they call for open-ended dialogue. Jan Werner Müller’s (2007: 69) version of constitutional patriotism, for example, is “one that does not see constitutional cultures as fully ‘achieved’ and closed to self-critical learning, but rather views them as an ongoing project of realizing certain norms and values in an ‘ever more perfect’ way.” He furthermore takes inspiration from postmodernism’s idea of fluid, hybrid, negotiated identities when he envisages the “integration [of immigrants] not as something done to ‘them,’ but something accomplished in common through mutual deliberative engagement . . . in such a way that a reconstituted ‘we’ emerges” (Müller 2007: 89). Likewise, Gadamer’s (1975: 289–90) striving for a “fusion of horizons,” which, however, can never be fully realized, would seem to embrace both hybridity and open-endedness.

Again, however, borrowing and blending cannot fully avoid normative trouble spots. If liberalism declares equality and liberty for all inviolable, then the deliberative dialogue is not truly open-ended and free of foregone
conclusions. Relatedly, if postmodernism insists that the values by which humans live are ultimately the result of political struggle, it cannot guarantee that liberty and equality for all will prevail.

There is furthermore an unmistakable normative affinity among liberal, communitarian, and (hospitable) postmodern endorsements of multiculturalism. All three prefer a thin conception of citizenship that does not demand that immigrants identify so strongly with the receiving country that they wind up fully relinquishing the affiliations and values with which they emigrated. Additionally, all three wish to see different cultural communities cohabit in mutually beneficial relations. However, normatively speaking, liberal multiculturalism cannot tolerate communities that violate the liberty and equality of members—a criticism, as we shall see, that is often leveled against some Islamic organizations, particularly regarding their attitudes toward women. For its part, communitarianism, because of its central tenet of the presumption of equal worth, is normatively obligated to tolerate communities whose long-standing traditions and teachings prize other values (for example, obedience to God or to parents) over individual liberty. And not even the hospitable variety of postmodernism can guarantee a given cultural community that it will survive intact and not succumb to the corrosive forces of proliferating and intersecting worldviews.

We can also discern normative alliance among liberal assimilationism, nativism, and Hobbesian postmodernism. If one insists that immigrants should be required to assimilate to the national culture of the receiving society, but additionally maintains that the national culture is a liberal one, then liberal perfectionism and nativism obviously overlap. Indeed, we will frequently encounter just this argument in the case study chapters to follow. If one prefers a more preemptive, exclusionary, and aggressive strategy based on the claim that “our” liberal culture finds itself in an existential battle with “their” illiberal culture that can only be won in “our” favor by neutralizing and dominating “them,” then the potential alliance between nativism and Hobbesian postmodernism comes into sharp relief. Indeed, this is the essential logic of the popular “clash of civilizations” thesis (Huntington 1996), which, as we shall see, has found considerable purchase in Europe. But it should be and will be noted that such aggression toward Muslims casts grave doubt on the liberal credentials of its supporters. Furthermore, relentless aggression toward Islam can prompt a backlash from (some) Muslims that can endanger the security of the receiving nation in the form of so-called “terrorism.”