

*Will Kymlicka and Kathryn Walker*

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**Rooted Cosmopolitanism**  
Canada and the World



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# **Rooted Cosmopolitanism**



# 1

## Rooted Cosmopolitanism: Canada and the World

*Will Kymlicka and Kathryn Walker*

In the contemporary world, human beings often combine profound local, ethnic, religious, or national attachments with a commitment to cosmopolitan values and principles that transcend those more local boundaries. The aim of this volume is to explore the interplay between local attachments and cosmopolitan values, through a critical exploration of the idea of “rooted cosmopolitanism.” Cosmopolitanism itself is a theory originating in the fourth century BCE. It posits that our political and moral existence should be played out on a world stage and that each of us belongs to a community of human beings that transcends the particularities of local affiliation. Although cosmopolitanism is usually understood as requiring us to set aside our more local attachments, a new school of thought argues that the outward-bound cosmopolitan perspective requires and involves the very roots it claims to transcend. This idea of rooted cosmopolitanism was popularized by Kwame Anthony Appiah (1996, 2006) in the mid-1990s, and has since been adopted in various forms by a range of political theorists and philosophers. The essays in this volume examine rooted cosmopolitanism using Canada as a test case, exploring how the local attachments and identities that characterize Canadians facilitate or impede cosmopolitan concerns.

Canada provides particularly fertile ground for exploring these ideas. As we discuss below, the idea that “being Canadian” includes or entails “being a good citizen of the world” has a long history in Canadian public debate and academic discourse, and is underpinned by several structural features of Canada’s internal political dynamics and its position in the world. We can therefore learn a great deal about the potential for rooted cosmopolitanism, and its limits, by examining the Canadian case.

In the process, we hope to bring into dialogue three bodies of scholarship that have remained relatively isolated from each other. There is



considerable work in the social sciences devoted to how nations and national identities have adapted to processes of globalization, but this is rarely linked to the normative debates about rooted cosmopolitanism. Similarly, there is a great deal of important work by normative theorists on ideas of cosmopolitanism and global justice, but few attempts have been made to study how these ideas are manifested (or not) in particular national contexts. Finally, although much has been written on Canadian nationalism, it tends to focus on either our internal ethnic/linguistic diversity or our relations with the United States rather than on its links to cosmopolitanism. Our aim is to link these debates so as to enrich and deepen our understandings of national identity, cosmopolitan values, and Canadian studies.

### **Why Rooted Cosmopolitanism? Why Now?**

Since the 1990s, there has been a dramatic revival in philosophical discussions of cosmopolitanism. Commenting on this trend, David Miller (2008, 23) claims that “‘cosmopolitan’ is probably now the preferred self-description of most political philosophers who write about global justice.” It is no accident that this renewed interest in global conceptions of humanity coincides with concrete trends of globalization in economic, political, technological, cultural, and social sectors. Indeed, we could say that globalization has made some form of cosmopolitanism virtually inevitable. The pressures of globalization – environmental concerns, refugees, the migration of peoples, awareness of the crimes of genocidal regimes, terrorism, multinational trade, and advances in communication technology – have made older ideas of national autarky or isolation increasingly untenable. There is growing recognition of the need for some normative conception of global community, responsibility, and governance.

However, if current realities have made some form of cosmopolitanism inevitable, these realities have also made clear that we need to revise our inherited ideas of cosmopolitanism. In the past, self-styled cosmopolitans typically endorsed an amalgam of moral, political, and cultural cosmopolitanism. *Moral* cosmopolitanism holds that all human beings are subject to a common moral code and that birthplace is morally irrelevant to someone’s moral worth. *Political* cosmopolitanism maintains the need for institutions of global governance. *Cultural* cosmopolitanism emphasizes the idea of a common global culture, and/or the ability of individuals to move freely and comfortably between different cultures, so that people feel culturally at home wherever they are in the world. For many Enlightenment cosmopolitans, these dimensions were strongly inter-

connected: we should recognize the equal moral worth of all human beings by creating a single world political order united around a single common language and global culture. (For Condorcet, for example, the language and culture of this cosmopolitan order would of course be French.)

Today, however, these Enlightenment images of cosmopolitanism seem paradoxically both utopian and dystopian. They are utopian in their expectations of a democratic world state, but dystopian in their suppression of cultural and linguistic diversity and in the way they open the door to imperialism. Indeed, European colonialism was often justified as a means of spreading a cosmopolitan order and ethos. The core idea of cosmopolitanism may be to recognize the moral worth of people beyond our borders, particularly the poor and needy, but its historical practice has often been to extend the power and influence of privileged elites in the wealthy West while doing little if anything to benefit the truly disadvantaged. In this sense, cosmopolitanism has been aptly described by Craig Calhoun as the “class consciousness of the frequent flier” (Calhoun 2002).

Any defensible conception of cosmopolitanism for today’s world must avoid these connotations. It must be a postcolonial cosmopolitanism, divorced from ideas of either cultural homogenization or political unification, accepting of cultural diversity and of the rights of the world’s peoples to local autonomy. And it is in this context that ideas of rooted cosmopolitanism have emerged. (Some authors prefer slightly different terminology, such as “anchored cosmopolitanism” [Dallmayr 2003], “situated cosmopolitanism” [Baynes 2007], “embedded cosmopolitanism” [Erskine 2008], “vernacular cosmopolitanism” [Werbner 2006], or “republican cosmopolitanism” [Chung 2003], to express a similar idea.) Rooted cosmopolitanism attempts to maintain the commitment to moral cosmopolitanism, while revising earlier commitments to a world state or a common global culture, and affirming instead the enduring reality and value of cultural diversity and local or national self-government.

Even as rooted cosmopolitanism affirms the legitimacy of national self-government, however, it also entails revising our traditional understanding of “nationhood.” For many rooted cosmopolitans, the nation can no longer be seen as the locus of unqualified sovereignty, exclusive loyalty, or blind patriotism. People’s attachment to their ethnic cultures and national states must be constrained by moral cosmopolitan commitments to human rights, global justice, and international law. Rooted cosmopolitanism, in short, attempts to redefine our traditional understandings of both cosmopolitanism and nationhood.

Rooted cosmopolitanism is not a monolithic doctrine, and it is worth distinguishing weaker and stronger forms of the claim that cosmopolitanism requires roots. The weakest form merely argues that rooted attachments (to local self-government and to cultural diversity) are not inherently inconsistent with global responsibilities. In this view, cosmopolitanism leaves room for meaningful rooted attachments and vice versa. A stronger form argues that rooted attachments are functionally required to achieve cosmopolitan goals. For example, it is often argued that the achievement of cosmopolitan goals requires the existence of political units capable of engaging in legitimate collective decisions and effective agency, and this requires building a sense of membership in and attachment to bounded political communities. To achieve any political goals, including cosmopolitan goals, there must be cohesive and legitimate political units, and such cohesion and legitimacy in turn requires building a sense of belonging or, if you prefer, patriotism. Without bounded communities that inspire feelings of patriotism, there will be no political units with the functional capacity to pursue cosmopolitan commitments.

An even stronger form of rooted cosmopolitanism holds that particularist attachments can be the moral sources of cosmopolitan commitments. Particularist attachments can serve as “sources” in at least two different senses. One version of this argument states that particularist attachments are epistemologically required even to understand cosmopolitan goals. In this view, we can come to understand the moral significance of “the other” only because we have first been immersed in our own particular communities and ways of life, which give us a “thick” or “deep” sense of moral value and moral responsibility. If we lacked these particularist attachments, and hence saw the world only as a collection of abstract and undifferentiated human beings with their universal human rights, we would lack the concepts, virtues, and practices needed to understand truly why the lives of others matter, or what justice requires of us. People must first be successfully socialized into the habits and practices of moral particularism before they are epistemologically or psychologically capable of morally engaging with the claims of distant others.<sup>1</sup>

Rooted attachments may serve as moral sources in a second and even stronger sense: namely, they may contain within them the seeds of more universalistic commitments, such that we can appeal to people’s sense of rooted attachments to help motivate cosmopolitan commitments. In this view, people pursue cosmopolitan commitments because this is what their particular attachments require of them. For example, people

become good citizens of the world because this is part of what it means to be a good Canadian: being Canadian motivates being or becoming a cosmopolitan. Immersion in the loyalties and attachments of “being Canadian” does not just help to develop certain moral capacities that are presupposed by cosmopolitanism, such as a sense of responsibility; rather, Canadianness itself may impel people toward cosmopolitanism, as people attempt to more fully explore or express their sense of being Canadian.

Of these different formulations, it is this final and strongest articulation of rooted cosmopolitanism that is the most controversial.<sup>2</sup> As various essays in this volume discuss, the idea that cosmopolitan commitments leave room for more particularistic attachments is widely accepted, although how much room is very much open to debate. Similarly, the idea that bounded communities can provide the effective collective agency necessary for the attainment of cosmopolitan goals is widely recognized, particularly given the dystopian nature of older ideas of a single world state. And the idea that immersion in particularistic attachments precedes more abstract or impartial reasoning is familiar – it is widely recognized, for example, that if children do not form bonds of love and trust within the family, they are unlikely to develop an effective sense of justice later in life.

But to argue that our rooted attachments – including our national attachments – are the very source of our cosmopolitan commitments is more controversial and counterintuitive. The fact that nation-states can draw on strong national identities and patriotisms makes them potentially effective vehicles of collective agency for achieving cosmopolitan goals, if and when citizens decide to pursue such goals, but can we really say that these strong national identifications and patriotisms *motivate* cosmopolitanism? Does not history tell us that the most serious obstacle to cosmopolitanism in the modern world is precisely the moral blinders and national egoism associated with nationalism?

Yet, as Alison Brysk (2009) notes, national identity politics can be constructive. Indeed, her empirical study of “global good Samaritans” suggests that countries that act as good global citizens do so precisely because of their national identities. It is worth quoting her summary in full:

In a world riven by resurgent nationalism, reactive fundamentalism, and constructed clash of civilizations, modernist social science counsels universalist materialism as a bulwark against parochial chaos. But political communities are inevitably constituted and oriented by some set of values, and national versions of cosmopolitan values can serve as an

alternative to both neoliberal homogenization and the defensive, competitive particularism it evokes. Canadian soldiers sacrificing their lives in Afghanistan, or Swedish taxpayers bankrolling African refugees are not just trying to be better human beings – they take national pride in expressing their identity as Swedes or Canadians through these global contributions, and acting globally builds national identities as “Canadian peacekeepers” or “Swedish volunteers.” The lesson of the post-Cold War world is that identities do not melt away with modernization, so that our best bet for global cooperation is to enhance and mobilize constructive national values, and promote national identification with positive aspects of global good citizenship. (Brysk 2009, 221)

This is the promise of rooted cosmopolitanism: that the very same national identities that bind people deeply to their own particular national community and territory can also mobilize moral commitment to distant others, and that inculcating and affirming a sense of Swedishness or Canadianness among co-nationals can simultaneously inculcate and affirm a sense of global citizenship.

This helps to clarify what is new and distinctive about the idea of rooted cosmopolitanism. Questions about how insiders should treat outsiders and strangers are as old as political philosophy, dating back to the ancient Greeks, and addressed in all the major world religions (Sullivan and Kymlicka 2007). But the idea of rooted cosmopolitanism is not just a new name for this old debate about duties toward insiders versus duties toward outsiders. Rooted cosmopolitanism is born of historically specific political circumstances, and is intimately tied to the evolving nature and function of modern democratic nation-states and the role they play in mediating moral and political cosmopolitanism.

Moral cosmopolitanism is a straightforward invitation to appreciate the moral equality of humanity in general, and many people throughout the ages have found this idea compelling, for the same basic reasons. Beliefs about how to translate this moral position into political practice are much more variable historically, however, and the rise of rooted cosmopolitanism reflects a specific set of political circumstances. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, it was widely assumed that the best hope of achieving moral cosmopolitan values lay in (1) overcoming national partialities and nationalist ideologies, and (2) creating new forms of transnational and global governance. Cosmopolitanism has often been defined as antagonistic to nationalism (see Beck 2006; Brighouse and Brock 2005; Cabrera 2004; Habermas 1998; Held 2002,

2005; Moellendorf 2005; Nussbaum 1996) and as requiring individuals to renounce national partialities, and the bloody history of twentieth-century Europe seemed to confirm that supremacist nationalist ideologies are prone to violence, aggression, and ultimately genocide against those who are seen as “not one of us.” The hope for cosmopolitanism, therefore, lay in overcoming nation-based politics through the building of transnational global institutions, such as the United Nations and the European Union.

Today, however, many commentators have become both more pessimistic about the prospects of transnational governance and more optimistic about the transformative and constructive potential of nation-based politics. On the one hand, it has become increasingly clear that any attempt to put moral cosmopolitanism into political practice requires serious attention to issues of legitimacy and authority, and schemes of global governance fall short in this regard. For example, what legitimacy does the United Nations have, given that its members are not elected by the people they represent? Legitimate government must be democratic government, and democratic government appears to require bounded political communities. All schemes for global governance are faced with serious “democratic deficits,” undermining their potential to advance moral cosmopolitan goals.

Conversely, the idea of the nation-state, which was widely discredited by the horrors of the Second World War, has regained (some of) its legitimacy, as (some) nation-states have proven their capacity to combine a commitment to the welfare of their own citizens with a commitment to good global citizenship. To be sure, nationalism needs to be moderated by commitments to human rights and global justice, but studies such as Brysk’s (2009) suggest that a suitably chastened form of nationalism or patriotism can help provide sources of moral motivation, help identify and respect morally relevant particularities that are essential aspects of our moral lives, and help provide sites for effective political participation and democratic accountability.

It is this constellation of factors that helps to explain the specificity of rooted cosmopolitanism. Like all forms of cosmopolitanism, rooted cosmopolitanism appeals to the moral worth of all human beings, including those far away from us. But it takes seriously the political power of nation-states and of national identities in the modern world, as well as the weakness of global political institutions, and attempts to make both moral sense of these facts and moral use of them, placing them at the service of cosmopolitan goals.

### **Rooting Cosmopolitanism in State, Nation, and Community**

The various versions of rooted cosmopolitanism differ not only in their account of the roles that roots play – philosophical, political, epistemological, motivational – but also in their account of what these roots consist in. Which kinds of particularistic attachments and loyalties serve as appropriate roots for cosmopolitan values? An almost infinite list of such attachments can be (and have been) invoked in the literature, but for our purposes it may be worth distinguishing three broad (but also overlapping) accounts of how and where cosmopolitanism should be rooted.

First, some theorists explore how attachment to a particular(ist) *state* is compatible with, or necessary to, cosmopolitanism. The focus here is on the importance of bounded political communities, without necessarily assuming or hoping that these boundaries of the state coincide with those of a “nation.” This statist approach is evident in Lea Ypi’s “Statist Cosmopolitanism” (2008) and James Bohman’s “Republican Cosmopolitanism” (2004), both of which argue that moral cosmopolitanism, even though it involves a moral commitment to others transcending state boundaries, requires the bounded political community of the state. For example, Ypi (2008, 48) argues that if we accept that every needy individual in the world has a justified claim to certain primary goods (moral cosmopolitanism), and if the nature of the claim is such that it requires the transformations of political institutions, then political communities provide the “unique associative sphere in which cosmopolitanism obtains political agency, may be legitimately enforced and cohesively maintained.” Similar arguments are advanced by Bohman (2004), Fred Dallmayr (2003, 438), and Philip Pettit (2010).

The idea shared by all of these theories is that state-based political communities offer necessary motivation, legitimacy, agency, cohesion, and accountability. Yet these theorists often insist that relying in this way on bounded political communities does not require appealing to distinctly nationalist identities or ideologies, and that citizens of bounded political communities need not (and indeed should not) be assumed to share national identities. Ryoa Chung (2003), for example, argues that the conditions of globalization require a new non-nationalistic conceptualization of republicanism, one that challenges the belief that republican citizenship must be tied to a specific nation,<sup>3</sup> therefore making the cosmopolitan extension of citizenship viable (see also Benhabib 2006). A republican cosmopolitanism, in this view, can and should be “postnational.”

A second approach contests this attempt to divorce state from nation, and argues that cosmopolitanism must be rooted in particular(ist) *nations*, not just in (denationalized or postnational) states. Kai Nielsen (2005, 284), for example, argues that it is distinctly national political units that serve to root cosmopolitanism: “One can, as a rooted cosmopolitan, be a good Dane and a loyal European as one can be a good Icelander and a loyal citizen of the world.” Similarly, Kok-Chor Tan (2006) defends the reciprocal consistency, and indeed interdependence, of “liberal cosmopolitanism” and “liberal nationalism.” Both theorists argue that when properly understood, cosmopolitanism does not oppose national commitments; on the contrary, a correct conception of cosmopolitanism *includes* the understanding that national attachments are critical to our moral and political lives, and to the very possibility of cosmopolitanism itself. One of the requirements of global justice – one of the things we owe to those outside our nation – is precisely respect for their national identities and national autonomy, even if (and indeed especially if) those nations lack their own state. David Miller’s account (2002, 2008) makes similar claims. In this book, Patti Lenard, Margaret Moore, and Joseph-Yvon Thériault argue that properly (liberally) conceived, nationalism includes a commitment to universal ideals and values, including ideas of respect for other nations and peoples; in other words, a correct nationalism is already a form of cosmopolitanism.

A third approach seeks to broaden our options, looking beyond either state or nation to locate other possible ways of “rooting” cosmopolitanism. Toni Erskine (2008), for example, has recently defended an account of “Embedded Cosmopolitanism.” Drawing on Marilyn Friedman’s idea that the socially situated self is constituted by multiple and diverse communities, Erskine holds that moral reasoning needs to take into account the specific sites of moral concern, and as a consequence the abstract universalism of traditional cosmopolitanism should be jettisoned. For Erskine, however – and this is the distinguishing feature of her account – the requisite moral particularism is not and should not be confined to state borders or to national spheres of obligation. The sites of moral concern are diverse, multiple, national, *and* transnational; critically, they are detached from the nation and the state. Thus Erskine raises the possibility that the rooting of cosmopolitanism can, and should, function beyond both the state and the nation.

In some cases, this third account is seen as supplementing either state- or nation-based versions of rooted cosmopolitanism, offering further potential sites for the rooting of cosmopolitan values.<sup>4</sup> In other cases,



however, the demand to look beyond the state and nation is driven by hostility to both state and nation, or at least hostility to the high modernist ideologies of statehood and nationhood advanced by hegemonic political elites, and to the kinds of governmentality they have pursued. Among various postcolonialist and Foucaultian theorists, the prospects for a truly emancipatory cosmopolitanism lie with coalitions and alliances among precisely those left outside state- and nation-based projects, such as indigenous peoples or migrant workers. A successful rooted cosmopolitanism will therefore be a “minoritarian” or “indigenous” cosmopolitanism – “a cosmopolitan community envisaged in marginality,” as Homi Bhabha (1996) puts it.<sup>5</sup> These sorts of “new radical cosmopolitanisms from below” are still rooted in particularistic solidarities, not in an unrooted and impartial humanitarianism, but these solidarities are beyond, and to some extent against, the state and nation (Cheah 2006, 491).<sup>6</sup> In the words of Sheldon Pollack and his co-authors (2002, 6):

The cosmopolitanism of our times does not spring from the capitalized “virtues” of Rationality, Universality and Progress; nor is it embodied in the myth of the nation writ large in the figure of the citizen of the world. Cosmopolitans today are often the victims of modernity, failed by capitalism’s upward mobility, and bereft of those comforts and customs of national belonging. Refugees, peoples of the diaspora, and migrants and exiles represent the spirit of the cosmopolitical community.

### **Critical Perspective on Rooted Cosmopolitanism**

Rooted cosmopolitanism is therefore not a single or simple doctrine, but rather a loose umbrella covering a range of different views both about *how* particularistic solidarities complement good global citizenship and about *which* particularistic solidarities do so. Despite this looseness, or perhaps because of it, rooted cosmopolitanism has quickly established itself as an exciting and attractive position within political theory. Indeed, one could argue that it now dominates the field. As Pnina Werbner (2006, 496) notes, we used to ask “whether the local, parochial, rooted, culturally specific and demotic may co-exist with the translocal, transnational, transcendent, elitist, enlightened, universalist and modernist.” But today “the question is often reversed to ask whether there can be an enlightened normative cosmopolitanism which is not rooted, in the final analysis, in patriotic and culturally committed loyalties and understandings.”

Nonetheless, rooted cosmopolitanism has also faced a number of objections. As with any attempt to negotiate and define a middle ground

between traditional oppositions – in this case, cosmopolitanism and nationalism – there are worries about the intellectual coherence of the resulting position. Is the negotiation balanced, doing justice to both sides of the debate? To critics, some versions of rooted cosmopolitanism are really just old-fashioned cosmopolitanism, and pay only lip service to particularist values. For example, critics have argued that the particularities of nationalism and patriotism are given such a secondary status within Tan’s Liberal Cosmopolitanism that his theory effectively undermines, deactivates, or problematically limits their significance (see Chapter 2 of this book). Conversely, some versions of rooted cosmopolitanism appear to be essentially an endorsement of nationalism, with only a window dressing of cosmopolitanism. Critics argue, for example, that David Miller’s weak cosmopolitanism, with its minimalist account of global justice, does not deserve to be called a form of cosmopolitanism at all (see Chapter 9).

A further worry concerns the psychological or political stability of this compromise: can it ever really work as a basis for either individual commitment or political agendas? Perhaps our particular biases are too deeply engrained to be balanced with more universal concerns, such that our cosmopolitan aspirations will always be tainted by the roots that rooted cosmopolitanism requires and endorses. Or, conversely, perhaps the universalizing imperatives of cosmopolitanism will always run roughshod over respect for cultural difference and local autonomy, operating as a hegemonic and imperial force.

Yet others might argue, from a more metaethical perspective, that this search for a middle ground is inherently misguided. Perhaps universalism and particularism should remain irreconcilable opposites. On the one hand, neo-Kantians such as Onora O’Neill (1996, 39-44) argue that it is precisely the operation of universality that defines morality. Without the bracketing of our partial biases, including national partialities, we can never attain a truly moral position. On the other hand, a wide range of theorists – feminist theorists of an ethics of care (such as Virginia Held, Nel Noddings, Joan Tronto, and Carol Gilligan), communitarians (such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, and Michael Walzer), and Nietzscheans or post-Nietzscheans<sup>7</sup> (such as Michel Foucault, Zygmunt Bauman, and Richard Rorty) – have argued that constraining or subordinating our partial commitments to impartialist norms of moral cosmopolitanism reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of moral reasoning, which is always partial and particularistic.

Even if we think that both partiality and universality play a legitimate role in moral reasoning, it does not follow that we should be seeking to

unify them within a single theory. Thomas Nagel (2005), for example, insists on the necessary fragmentation of value. Questioning the “monism” of global justice, Nagel argues that there are multiple irreducible sources of value in human life, which cannot be subsumed within a single theoretical framework. Perhaps there are some problems that call for a purely cosmopolitan response; perhaps there are other problems that are best addressed from a purely statist or national position. Why the drive to theoretical univocality?

These and other concerns are addressed in several of the chapters in this book. It seems clear, however, that rooted cosmopolitanism has established itself as a serious position within the literature, worthy of more sustained exploration. Indeed, many of these worries are best addressed by exploring rooted cosmopolitanism in practice, to see how particularist attachments and universalist commitments interact in specific times and places, such as contemporary Canada.

### **Why Canada?**

We believe that Canada provides a compelling test case for ideas of rooted cosmopolitanism. On the one hand, there can be no question of the enduring power of national identities and loyalties within Canada. Compared with other Western democracies, Canadians express above-average levels of national pride and national identity. We are not at all a postnational society that has renounced or transcended the identities and practices of nationhood. At the same time, however, it is often said that Canadian national identities have always been permeable to more cosmopolitan concerns. Indeed, much of the literature on Canada’s role in the world seems to presuppose such a linkage between being Canadian and being “a good citizen of the world.” Expressing a certain *zeitgeist* in Canada’s self-understanding, this scholarship offers a vision of Canadian nationhood as a seedbed for global citizenship.

One can find countless expressions of this idea. For example, in the recent volume *What Is a Canadian?* Thomas Franck (2006, 37) claims that a Canadian is “humanity’s best answer to the most complex puzzle of the twenty-first century: how to accommodate, within a functioning persona, the multiple identities layered on each person in an era in which responsibility to the global must coherently contend with loyalties to the nation and the local.” Following suit, Jennifer Welsh (2004, 189) proposes “a simple but ambitious vision for Canada’s global role: as Model Citizen.” In her study of countries that are “global good Samaritans,” Brysk (2009, 93) argues that Canada’s commitment to global justice is rooted in its “benign form of liberal nationalism.”

In short, the idea that Canada is a potential model or prototype of rooted cosmopolitanism is “in the air.” It has never, however, been subjected to a serious critical analysis. In what ways, precisely, does being Canadian facilitate or impede being a “citizen of the world”? In what ways does being rooted in Canada help to enable and inform cosmopolitan commitments?

A quick survey of the “Canada in the World” literature suggests a range of factors that make Canadian nationhood potentially more amenable to rooted cosmopolitanism. The first is Canada’s ethnic and linguistic diversity. As a country built on treaties and political agreements among Aboriginal peoples, French, British, and immigrant groups, Canada has never had the dream or delusion of sharing a common language or ethnic culture. As a result, we have always needed to build bonds of solidarity and political dialogue across ethnic and linguistic lines. The idea that we have moral obligations to or political relations with only those who are “like us” has made little sense in Canada. In that sense, citizenship and solidarity within Canada has a more “cosmopolitan” potential, and may therefore be easier to extend to those beyond our borders.

It is not just the sheer level of diversity that matters, but also the way this diversity connects different groups of Canadians to different parts of the world. For example, the origin of Canada as a pact between British and French settlers has ensured that Canada plays a central role in both the Commonwealth and La Francophonie, linking Canada to many countries around the world. And as successive waves of immigrants have come to Canada, they have helped create new linkages to yet other countries. Foreign-born citizens often retain strong links to the “old country” – an identification that is legitimated by Canada’s multiculturalism policy, which affirms the legitimacy of ethnic identities and which encourages the self-organization of ethnic groups on the basis of their national origin. While these ethnic groups lobby primarily to improve their own treatment within Canada, they also, naturally, seek to influence Canada’s foreign policy toward their country of origin.<sup>8</sup> Aboriginal peoples have also engaged in their own forms of transnational linkages, uniting with indigenous peoples from the rest of the world as part of the international indigenous movement (Henderson 2008).

In all of these ways, the politics of diversity within Canada connects Canadians to those beyond our borders, yet without threatening the integrity of the state. Even as the Canadian state seeks to inculcate a shared sense of nationhood, it has not typically seen this as requiring the repudiation of transnational ties and loyalties, whether the identification of the Québécois with La Francophonie, or of immigrants

with their country of origin, or of English Canadians with the Commonwealth. This has given Canada a special interest – indeed, expertise – in the global challenge of living with diversity and with multiple identities.

A second factor is Canada's ambiguous status as a "middle power" country. We are not strong enough to impose our views on other peoples, and indeed not even strong enough to defend ourselves militarily. So fantasies of imperial conquest or unlimited sovereignty have little resonance in Canada, and we are dependent on international rules and alliances for our security and prosperity. Yet as a wealthy state with powerful allies, we can nonetheless play an important role in shaping these international rules. In short, being a good citizen of the world, and encouraging the good citizenship of other countries, is in our interest. This is reflected in a long history of Canadian commitments to cosmopolitan ideals. For example, Canada was instrumental in the development of United Nations peacekeeping forces: in the heat of the Suez Crisis in 1956, Foreign Affairs Minister Lester B. Pearson proposed a UN peacekeeping force composed of soldiers from non-combatant countries to separate the warring armies and supervise a ceasefire. Other examples include Canadian leadership in the global fight against AIDS (Stephen Lewis), in the human rights movement (Louise Arbour), in banning landmines (Lloyd Axworthy), among many others. Although often described as examples of altruism, this sort of multilateralism is very much in the self-interest of middle powers like Canada, who depend on international law and international institutions and alliances to contain threats to their security and prosperity.<sup>9</sup>

For reasons stemming from both our internal diversity and our geopolitical status, therefore, Canada may be well placed to serve as a laboratory for practices of rooted cosmopolitanism.<sup>10</sup> And indeed in her study of "global good Samaritans," Brysk suggests that Canada has many of the preconditions that are optimal for developing practices of good global citizenship.

But of course this is only one-half of the story. As Brysk (2009, 40) notes, even under optimal conditions, practices of good global citizenship need to struggle against countervailing forces, including "alternative discourses of security threat, parochial nationalism, and narrowly material, short-term calculation," as well pressures of "fundamentalisms, neoliberal atomization, and postliberal complacency." And even a cursory glance at Canadian history reveals many ways in which Canadians have utterly failed to be good citizens of the world. If we have

an honourable history of participating in, or indeed initiating, certain projects of multilateralist humanitarianism, we also have a long and dishonourable history of eager participation in the imperialist adventures of our British allies. Indeed, there have been times when “imperialism was one form of Canadian nationalism” (Berger 1970, 259). As dissension grew in the British Empire at the turn of the twentieth century, Canada stood by the imperial power, sending troops to the Sudan campaign (1896-99) and the Second Boer War (1899-1902), acting as “an enthusiastic junior partner in British imperialism in Africa” (Thakkar 2008, 138). Commemorating this, the memorial arch at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario, is inscribed with words in memory of the graduates who “gave their lives for the Empire.”

Similarly, if we have an honourable history of respecting the diversity of peoples and cultures, we also have a dishonourable history of discrimination at home and abroad. After all, Canada is built on the original sin of the European dispossession of Aboriginal peoples, and this initial act of racism has been compounded by many others, including the residential schools policy (from the 1840s to 1996), with its mandate to “civilize” and Christianize Aboriginal children. Similar racist attitudes characterized our immigration policy, including the 1914 turning back of the *Komagata Maru*, the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act, the 1939 refusal to admit Jewish refugees on board the SS *St. Louis*, and the 1942 detention of 22,000 Japanese Canadians.

Sadly, these shortcomings in Canada’s global citizenship are not solely things of the past, they also characterize current policies. A particularly striking example, discussed in Chapter 10, concerns Canada’s record on pollution and climate change. Canada is one of the greatest consumers of energy per capita (roughly fifty times the consumption rate of Bangladesh), our energy consumption surpasses that of all of Africa’s 760 million inhabitants, and although Canada makes up less than one-half of 1 percent of the world’s population, it is the world’s eighth-largest producer of carbon dioxide (Ostling 2009). This is a paradigm case where countries must learn to place cosmopolitan values above short-term national self-interest, yet Canada’s efforts to do so have been meagre. Despite having been an early supporter of the Kyoto Protocol, Canadian initiatives to meet its protocol obligations have simply not lived up to the Kyoto commitment. It is expected that Canada will be in default of its Kyoto obligations by some billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, by far the worst breach of any nation (Flannery 2009). Moreover, according to the Sierra Club (2008), Canada’s failure to meet its Kyoto

obligations means that the country is now in contravention of international and domestic law. In this respect, Canada has been rightly described as a “rogue state” (Broadhead 2001). An impartial review of other policy fields – including global trade agreements – would suggest that Canada not only operates in a very self-interested manner but is more than happy to exercise its power to bully states that are poorer and weaker.

These are not just minor blemishes on the Canadian record but rather raise deep and difficult questions about the very possibility of rooted cosmopolitanism. We might like to think that there is something “un-Canadian” about these cases where we have failed to live up to ideals of good global citizenship, or that they are temporary bumps on our road to truly cosmopolitan nationhood. But we need to take seriously the prospect that such failures are endemic to our identities and practices of Canadian nationhood. Perhaps there are limits on the extent to which ideas of nationhood, including Canadian nationhood, can be transformed in a truly cosmopolitan direction. Perhaps national identities are invariably prone to both national egoism and national exclusion, which are simply hidden rather than actually addressed by Canada’s self-image as a model of diversity and global citizenship.

Indeed, even the cases where Canada is said to be acting as a global good Samaritan may not be as they appear. Consider the case of peace-keeping, which Brysk and others cite as the quintessential expression of Canadian rooted cosmopolitanism. Some commentators, such as Sherene Razack (2004) and Sunera Thobani (2007), argue that Canadian peace-keeping is essentially a projection of racism, and deeply informed by ideologies of white supremacy rooted in the national imaginary of Canada as a white settler state. For example, according to Razack (2004, 17, 156):

Peacekeeping today is a kind of war, a race war waged by those who constitute themselves as civilized, modern and democratic against those who are constituted as savage, tribal and immoral ... [Canadian] peacekeepers imagine themselves as going to the Third World to sort out the tribalisms, ethnic hatreds, and warring tribes that now characterize so much of Africa and Eastern Europe. They go as members of a family of civilized nations, nations that understand themselves to be carrying the traditional white man’s burden of instructing and civilizing the natives.

Similarly, Thobani argues that the apparent openness to Others said to characterize Canadian multiculturalism is in fact a way of maintaining

a sense of racial privilege. White Canadians have adopted the self-identity of being tolerant and open cosmopolitans precisely to preserve their sense of superiority over the racialized Other:

With whiteness coming to signify tolerance, a willingness to change and a cosmopolitan sensibility, people of colour could be tied all the more readily to cultural parochialism, authoritarianism, essentialism and intolerance. Multiculturalism as a specific policy and socio-political racial ideology has thus come to attest to the enduring superiority of whiteness, of its ability to transform and accommodate itself to changing times and new opportunities. It became a framework that assumed a certain rigidity in the cultures of racial others, of their enduring inferiority, immaturity, and the need for their reformulation under the tutelage of progressive – always modernizing – western superiority. (Thobani 2007, 155)<sup>11</sup>

In short, the self-identity of Canadians as rooted cosmopolitans is not a reflection of a “constructive” and “benign” liberal nationalism that reaches out to Others as moral equals, but rather is a form of “exaltation” that “constitutes that national subject as belonging to a higher order of humanity” (Thobani 2007, 248).<sup>12</sup>

Although they themselves do not put it in quite these terms, Razack and Thobani can be seen as acknowledging the reality and power of rooted cosmopolitanism. That is, they agree with Brysk that Canada’s global citizenship is rooted in and motivated by our national identity, and that Canadians take national pride in being citizens of the world. They argue, however, that this link between national identity and global citizenship is itself a product of ideologies of racial supremacy, and operates to reproduce that ideology, both domestically and internationally.

It is precisely this sort of clash of perceptions and interpretations that makes Canada such an interesting test case for ideas of rooted cosmopolitanism. The Canadian experience can be invoked both to show why rooted cosmopolitanism is a feasible and compelling project and to show why it is a dangerous delusion. The chapters in this volume explore these competing views about the potential for, and limits to, rooted cosmopolitanism in Canada. As we will see, there are no simple answers to this question. Norms and practices of nationhood in Canada are related in complex ways to norms and practices of global citizenship, and our aim in this book is to try to identify some of the factors that mediate this relationship, pushing it in one direction or another, in different times and places, on different issues.



### **Overview of this Book**

This book is divided into two broad parts. Part 1 explores the theory of rooted cosmopolitanism itself; Part 2 examines the practice of rooted cosmopolitanism in a variety of settings in Canadian social and political life.

Part 1 contains five chapters by Kok-Chor Tan, Patti Lenard and Margaret Moore, Joseph-Yvon Thériault, Daniel Weinstock, and Charles Blattberg. Each explores the meaning of rooted cosmopolitanism, contrasting it with other forms of cosmopolitanism, considering its relationship to nationalism, and examining its nature and scope.

The first three chapters – by Tan, Lenard and Moore, and Thériault – all seek to defend some version of the rooted cosmopolitan thesis by showing how national attachments need not conflict with cosmopolitan principles and values, and may indeed help to advance them. Tan focuses on the relationship between cosmopolitanism and national patriotism. He begins by distinguishing moral cosmopolitanism as a theory regarding the scope of justice from both political and cultural cosmopolitanism, and argues that once we make this distinction, cosmopolitanism need not conflict with patriotism. When we understand cosmopolitanism as a desire to be a just citizen of the world, and not as a call for a world state or cultural homogenization, then cosmopolitanism need not contradict the common features of patriotism, such as a strong identification with a particular state, a strong sense of solidarity with fellow citizens, and a belief that there is something intrinsically valuable in patriotic relations. As we noted earlier, some critics worry that his account makes room for only a very attenuated sense of patriotism, entirely subordinated to cosmopolitan principles. Tan responds directly to this critique, noting that the task of reconciling partial attachments with impartial obligations is one that arises at multiple levels, and that we have successful models in both theory and practice for addressing this challenge.

Lenard and Moore also defend the potential consistency of cosmopolitanism and nationalism, but they note that this reconciliation depends on how precisely we spell out the requirements of global distributive justice. In particular, they argue that the prospects for rooted cosmopolitanism depend on rejecting the “global luck egalitarian” form of cosmopolitanism of the sort defended by Tan. According to Lenard and Moore, if cosmopolitanism is to make room for liberal nationalism (and vice versa), our conception of global justice must incorporate a meaningful role for collective national responsibility, and must acknowledge the legitimacy of national claims to territory – both of which, they argue,

are incompatible with a strict version of global luck egalitarianism. They conclude by considering how these ideas of national responsibility and national territory can be affirmed while still preserving a meaningful sense of global justice.

Joseph-Yvon Thériault defends perhaps the strongest form of rooted cosmopolitanism, emphasizing that nationhood is not only consistent with, but is in fact a vehicle for, cosmopolitan values. He argues that the tension between “the claims of the tribe” and the “claims of the human” is an essential feature of modern politics, and that the task of liberal-democratic nationalism is precisely to reconcile them, by combining cultural particularity and territorial boundaries with universal values. Thériault argues that although all modern democracies are instantiations of a rooted cosmopolitanism by which universal democratic values are situated within particular cultures and places, the rooted cosmopolitan nature of the modern nation is most visible in small societies such as Quebec because their cultural vulnerability requires more conscious and careful attention to their “rootedness.” Drawing on two examples from Quebec history, Thériault illustrates how this modern democratic nationalism can serve as a vehicle of both cultural rootedness and universal values.

In their different ways, therefore, Tan, Lenard and Moore, and Thériault all affirm the basic cogency and desirability of reconciling cosmopolitanism and liberal nationalism. The final two chapters in Part 1 offer a more dissenting note. Weinstock engages in a careful analysis of a range of arguments for rooted cosmopolitanism, all of which he views as essentially efforts to water down the demands of cosmopolitanism in order to leave more room for national partiality or favouritism. He finds all of these arguments wanting, and concludes that, at least from a philosophical perspective, cosmopolitanism should be seen as prior to, and setting the limits of, national attachments.

Charles Blattberg, by contrast, attacks rooted cosmopolitanism from the other direction. In his view, influential accounts of rooted cosmopolitanism remain too wedded to “abstract” forms of impartial moral reasoning that are incapable of engaging people’s moral sympathies. An effective moral practice must be rooted in everyday forms of conversation, through which particular forms of patriotism will emerge. These forms of conversation-based patriotism will inevitably have a local flavour, but Blattberg argues that they need not be indifferent to distant others, if those others can be seen as already part of “who we are.” In the Canadian case, he argues that a concern for foreigners is part and

parcel of the enactment of our national identity properly pursued, and that thinking of refugees in these terms – as part of who we are in Canada – is more effective than seeking to defend refugee claimants in the abstract language of human rights. In this way, Blattberg ends up with a position that is close to that sought by defenders of rooted cosmopolitanism, but he insists that developing a more expansive form of conversation-based patriotism is different from, and more realistic than, developing a more rooted form of abstract cosmopolitan principles.

Having explored a range of perspectives on the meaning of rooted cosmopolitanism, we turn in Part 2 to an exploration of rooted cosmopolitanism in practice in Canadian life. Four chapters – by Scott Schaffer, Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Howard Adelman and Robert Paehlke – consider issues of both domestic and foreign policy where cosmopolitan ideals might be at play.

Part 2 begins with two chapters on the connections between cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism and immigration in Canada. As we noted earlier, one of the core arguments for seeing Canada as a potential model of rooted cosmopolitanism is the extent to which Canadians have always had to build solidarity across ethnic and racial lines, to construct forms of national identity that include people from all over the world, and to respect and accommodate the diversity of people's ethnic and geographical attachments. This experience of accommodating "the world in Canada" is said to have lessons for, and to naturally encourage, an active engagement of "Canada in the world." Yet, as we also noted, many critics argue that this fabled openness of Canadian national identity involves a racialized denigration of other peoples and cultures, both at home and abroad. A crucial task, therefore, is to examine these links between domestic diversity and cosmopolitan commitments – a task taken up in these two chapters.

In Chapter 7, Schaffer argues that the recent debate on "reasonable accommodation" in Quebec offers a unique opportunity to explore how rooted cosmopolitanism is lived in Canada. Like Thobani and Razack, he notes that traditional forms of cosmopolitan tolerance tacitly rehearse a colonial world view in which the Other (of the postcolonial South) is viewed as a passive and silent recipient in its encounter with the well-meaning and enlightened cosmopolitan (of the colonial West and North). To overcome this dynamic, he defends a model of rooted cosmopolitanism predicated on an acknowledgment – by both native-born and immigrant – of our incompleteness, and hence the need for a fusion of horizons through "diatopical hermeneutics." He argues that this model,

gestured at but not fully articulated in the Bouchard-Taylor Report, applies to our interactions with others at a local, national, and global level, since the duty of openness to the Other arises at all levels, and so applies to both domestic diversity and global relationships.

Abu-Laban uses the foreign domestic worker program in Canada as her test case for examining issues of rooted cosmopolitanism. She notes that the traditional debate about the relationship between the (national) “us” and the (distant) “other” has operated in a gender-blind way: neither the “us” nor the “other” has been conceptualized in gender-specific terms. The result, she argues, is a persistent failure in the cosmopolitanism literature to take into account issues of care, and the role of care in global migration. The Live-In Caregiver Program in Canada has been seen by some commentators as a form of racialized exclusion from the national body, and by other commentators as evidence of Canada’s inclusive approach to immigration and citizenship. In Abu-Laban’s account, we can resolve this debate only through an approach based on the values of “care ethics” – an approach that would attune immigration policy to gender and other markers of difference, would compel a way of seeing our interconnectedness at many levels, and would demand that attention be paid to the most vulnerable. Such an approach, she argues, would force us to link the local and the global, by forcing us to ask what sort of moral worth is attributed to care and caring relationships; moreover, it would do so not only at the domestic level but also in terms of the caring relationships that are either nurtured or inhibited in the societies from which caregivers are drawn. A rooted cosmopolitan approach to gendered migration, such as the caregiver program, would insist that we affirm the moral value of caring relationships at home and abroad.

In the final two chapters, we turn from domestic immigration policy to the international context, examining how Canada’s global actions do or do not exhibit forms of rooted cosmopolitanism. In his chapter, Adelman examines Canada’s role in the global “responsibility to protect” (R2P) debate. As we noted earlier, Canada’s active championing of the R2P doctrine at the United Nations has often been cited as an example of this country’s rooted cosmopolitanism. Adelman argues, however, that cosmopolitan ideologies distort rather than illuminate our moral thinking about humanitarian interventions. Like Blattberg, he argues that cosmopolitanism has proven morally and politically ineffective. Indeed, he traces a precipitous long-term decline in cosmopolitan aspirations along all of its various cultural, political, legal, and moral

dimensions, to the point that the currently fashionable forms of “rooted moral cosmopolitanism” are so weak as to be essentially morally bankrupt. Rather than trying to resuscitate this failed cosmopolitan project, Adelman argues that a better approach lies in what he calls “Scottish communitarianism,” which avoids the high-minded but ultimately vacuous pronouncements of rooted moral cosmopolitanism and focuses instead on more practical issues of accommodating conflicting interests and identities. He demonstrates the difference between these approaches by contrasting the failure of R2P (reflective of rooted moral cosmopolitanism) with the partial effectiveness of Canadian engagement with Darfur (reflective of Scottish communitarianism).

In the final chapter, Paehlke explores the challenge of climate change, noting that it is a paradigm case of the sort of issue that requires a rooted cosmopolitan approach. It is a decisively global problem – no country can solve the problem on its own – but one that requires effective action to be taken at a national level, through national-level debates and consensus. Given Canada’s cosmopolitan self-image, one might have expected Canada to be a world leader on this issue. And indeed public opinion seems to strongly support such action. Yet, as we noted earlier, Canada has been one of the world’s worst laggards on climate change. What explains this? Paehlke suggests that the problem is not that Canadians’ expressed cosmopolitan values are illusory, but rather that they have been undermined by a range of political and institutional factors, such as federalism. Although optimistic that these barriers can be overcome, his chapter is a sober reminder of the vast gulf that can separate expressed cosmopolitan values and effective political action. As we have seen, rooted cosmopolitanism was intended to help reduce that gulf by drawing on the legitimacy and loyalty of nation-states as vehicles for cosmopolitan projects. But as Paehlke shows, the “nation-state” is not always the coherent and effective collective agent that rooted cosmopolitans would like it to be, at least in the Canadian case. Indeed, the fragmented nature of the Canadian federal system raises important questions about the appropriate unit or level for rooted cosmopolitan projects – perhaps municipal or provincial governments, rather than centralized national governments, are the best bet for leveraging particular attachments in the service of cosmopolitan goals.

### **Conclusion**

We began this introductory chapter by saying that while current developments at the global level make some form of cosmopolitan ethics inevitable, they also discredit those traditional forms of cosmopolitanism that

have been associated with cultural homogenization and unified global governance. This is the challenge to which rooted cosmopolitanism seeks to respond, offering a new image of how the irreducible plurality of culturally distinct and politically bounded communities can nonetheless respect and advance universal cosmopolitan values. This has been an exciting idea, not least for Canadians, given the deep diversity and plurality of our cultures and communities.

But is it a coherent and realistic idea? The chapters in this book obviously represent just a first step in the investigation of the prospects for rooted cosmopolitanism, and it would be premature to draw any firm conclusions. As we have seen, the various authors defend a wide range of views about both the conceptual coherence and political feasibility of projects of rooted cosmopolitanism. Yet they all affirm the urgency of the challenge to which rooted cosmopolitanism is a response. There is no reason whatsoever to think that the salience of either our local attachments or our global responsibilities will fade in the foreseeable future. We will continue to live in a world where powerful local loyalties and solidarities coexist with the increasingly urgent moral claims of distinct and distant others. We hope that the essays found in this book will enrich our understanding of the universe of possibilities for addressing this challenge, and that they will stimulate further research into the theory and practice of rooted cosmopolitanism.

### Notes

- 1 This version of the rooted cosmopolitanism thesis is closely related to the debate in sociology about “enlightened localism.” See Gregg 2003 and the 2010 symposium on enlightened localism in *Comparative Sociology*. Indeed, in a sense, rooted cosmopolitanism can be seen as the flip side of enlightened localism. Rooted cosmopolitanism seeks to overcome the limitations of traditional forms of cosmopolitanism by highlighting the significance of local autonomy and cultural difference; enlightened localism seeks to overcome the limitations of traditional forms of “parochial localism” by highlighting how the claims of outsiders can “enlighten” local practices and make them more encompassing. The desire to “root” cosmopolitanism and the desire to “enlighten” localism arguably reflect the same constellation of factors: i.e., the need to find a way of thinking and acting morally that acknowledges the increasingly global nature of our interactions while avoiding the dangers and impossibilities of traditional cultural and political cosmopolitanism.
- 2 It is not always easy to determine which authors are advancing which version of the rooted cosmopolitan thesis: defenders often invoke a mix of arguments about philosophical consistency, political functionality, epistemological preconditions, and moral motivation without distinguishing them. For a clear statement of both the political functionality and moral motivation arguments, see Ypi 2010.

- 3 Similar arguments are made by Lena Halldenius (2010) and Cécile Laborde (2010).
- 4 For example, Keeble (2007, 123) argues that transnational non-governmental organizations are the most viable path through which human security can be pursued globally, concretizing the idea that cosmopolitanism can be rooted in affiliations that are neither national nor state-based. She also emphasizes, however, that this empowering of civil society organizations is intimately tied up with state-based foreign policy, itself predicated on particular national identities. One way to enact a cosmopolitan national identity is to empower transnational civil society organizations.
- 5 For a similar view, see Appadurai 1993 and 2000. On “indigenous cosmopolitanism,” see Biolsi 2005. On minoritarian cosmopolitanism, see Pollack et al. 2002, 6.
- 6 Cheah himself is skeptical of these postnational, transnational, or supranational accounts of rooted cosmopolitanism, and argues that national forms of solidarity remain normatively significant.
- 7 On the use of these terms, see Dallmayr 2003, 430.
- 8 On how immigration/multiculturalism generates a “predisposition to international activism,” see Gwyn 1999, 15, and Brysk 2009, 89-90.
- 9 Welsh (2004, 165) argues that “internationalism has also become a defining feature of the new Canadian identity,” but as Mackenzie (2009, 331-32) notes, “these engagements were firmly rooted in Canada’s international alignment and alliances,” and neglect of this fact has led people to exaggerate how disinterested our behaviour has been. Multilateralism is presented as a Canadian virtue, but in fact is a necessity given our limited power.
- 10 One can think of other factors, such as Canada’s unique geography. The largest country in the world, Canada spans 9,093,507 square kilometres, 20 terrestrial and marine ecozones (as classified by Environment Canada), and 52 of the world’s 825 terrestrial ecoregions (as classified by the World Wildlife Foundation). Consequently, Canada has grappled with the demands of disparate ecological systems and concerns; in this expanse of climatic and vegetative conditions, flood and drought, heat and cold, feast and famine are contemporaneous. Canada’s broad and complex ecological horizon has required that the nation develop an equally broad and equally complex environmental understanding. Our geographic diversity may play a role in positioning Canada as uniquely cosmopolitan by forcing Canadians to develop bonds of solidarity that transcend the very different physical landscapes and regional economies we inhabit.
- 11 This is not unique to Canada. Melamed (2006) makes a similar argument about how official anti-racism in the United States serves to “renew white privilege” by presenting white liberals as the heroic protagonists or “saviours” of American ideals, both domestically and internationally.
- 12 As Bell (2010) notes, the idea of being hospitable to and welcoming of Others is also a way in which the native-born reassert their legitimate sovereignty and ownership of the state. To open up one’s house to strangers implies that this is indeed one’s house to begin with, which is not obvious in the case of settler states like Canada, since the land originally belonged to indigenous peoples. Extending an invitation to guests is a way in which settler societies can shore up their sense that they are “at home” in lands they have usurped from others.

Here again, what looks at first glance like an expansive and inclusive evolution of national identity can operate to reaffirm and entrench an old power dynamic of dispossession.

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