

How Love Matters for Justice

O I see flashing that this America is only you and me,
Its power, weapons, testimony, are you and me, . . .
Freedom, language, poems, employments, are you and me,
Past, present, future, are you and me.

—Walt Whitman, “By Blue Ontario’s Shore”

I. Reinventing the “Civil Religion”

After the French Revolution, politics changed in Europe. Fraternity came to the fore. No longer held together by fear of a monarch and obedience to his arbitrary will, citizens had to imagine new ways to live with one another. Because any successful nation needs to be able to demand sacrifice for a common good, they had to ask how sacrifice and common effort would be possible in the absence of monarchical coercion. Hence arose many proposals for a “civil religion” or a “religion of humanity,” a public cultivation of sympathy, love, and concern that could motivate a range of valuable actions, from military defense to philanthropy (and, as time went on, tax compliance). As new nations arose around the world, the thought of non-Europeans contributed to the enrichment of these ideas.

Part I examined this history, which reveals so much about the promises and pitfalls of such an enterprise. Thought about civic emotion quickly split into two branches. Both traditions sought extended sympathy and opposed narrow egoism and greed. But one strand, represented by Rousseau and by Comte, whose ideas had great influence around the world, held that emotional efficacy requires coercive homogeneity.

Partisans of this tradition advanced proposals for emotional solidarity without creating spaces for critical freedom. This lack of concern for dissent and critique affected, naturally, the type of political love to which they aspired. Rousseauian/Comtean love was not quirky, personal, like the love of one individual for another; instead, everything was engineered so as to produce people who loved and thought alike and experienced mass emotions.

On the other side, Mozart and Da Ponte, Mill, and Tagore agreed with Rousseau and Comte about the need for extended sympathy, but they conceived of this sympathy in a far more variegated and even antinomian way. It is not surprising that their metaphors for the new political love were drawn from lyric poetry, dissident music, and even comedy.

These two traditions, in conversation with each other and with political leaders thinking about these questions, provide us with rich resources for contemporary thought. Our argument strongly defended the Mozart/Mill/Tagore tradition against its rivals, as capable of creating and sustaining a more attractive type of society.

The Mozart/Mill/Tagore tradition, however attractive, still stood in need of further development: above all, it needed a richer account of human psychology. We can hardly solve social problems without understanding both the resources on which we may draw and the problems that lie in our way. Part II turned to that issue, laying the foundation for contemporary proposals in the spirit of Mozart, Mill, and Tagore by taking account of recent research in psychology, anthropology, and primatology. In particular, Part II argued that narrowness of sympathy is not society's only challenge. Ubiquitous problems of discrimination and group subordination require us to think about the role played in human development by disgust and shame at the human body itself, a problem that no other species seems to have. Promoting social justice, as Walt Whitman saw, requires addressing the roots of human self-disgust by forging a healthier relationship to the human body. Part II argued, further, in a Millian spirit, that a healthy society needs to counteract the tendencies all human beings share toward submissiveness to authority and peer pressure.

The account of development presented in Part II made it clear that respect is not the public emotion good societies require, or at least not

the only one. Respect on its own is cold and inert, insufficient to overcome the bad tendencies that lead human beings to tyrannize over one another. Disgust denies fundamental human dignity to groups of people, portraying them instead as animals. Consequently respect grounded in the idea of human dignity will prove impotent to include all citizens on terms of equality unless it is nourished by imaginative engagement with the lives of others and by an inner grasp of their full and equal humanity. Imaginative empathy, however, can be deployed by sadists. The type of imaginative engagement society needs, Part II argued, is nourished by love. Love, then, matters for justice—especially when justice is incomplete and an aspiration (as in all real nations), but even in an achieved society of human beings, were such to exist.

But if we agree that love matters for justice, we still do not have an account of *how* it matters, how a decent society might arrange, compatibly with liberal freedom, to invite citizens to have emotional experiences of the sort that the theory imagines. Part III therefore turned to history, albeit with further theoretical arguments, showing a variety of ways in which this ideal theory might be and has been real. Through detailed reflection on the cultivation of patriotism, the use of public festivals of both the comic and the tragic sort, and a range of public strategies to undermine several pernicious emotions, we saw a variety of different ways to approach our problems, and we saw how powerful they can be in promoting emotional experience, within a context protective of liberty.

The examples in Part III yield at least three general lessons. First, our hunch was confirmed that good proposals for the cultivation of public emotion must be attentive to their place, their time, and the specific cultures of the variety of citizens who are their intended audience. One way of seeing this is to consider the relationship between two of this book's "heroes," Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. King emulated Gandhi, and he studied his career very closely. But he did not use the same strategies, or even the same type of self-fashioning. He understood that some very general Gandhian norms might possibly be realized in the U.S. context, but only through the adoption of some very American and un-Gandhian modes of rhetorical self-presentation. In so judging, he again followed Gandhi; for Gandhi, having lived a large part of his life outside India, saw India comparatively, with both immersion and

detachment. In consequence, he saw that a good strategy for India has to be keenly sensitive to a range of Indian traditions and cultures. The same is true with all of our proposals for public rhetoric and public art: they must be situated in their place and time, although parks and monuments, perhaps speeches too, also need to consider future as well as present time. To the extent that artists of international stature and residence are involved (for example, Frank Gehry and Anish Kapoor in Millennium Park), it is extremely important that their work be coordinated by someone who really knows the city and nation.

One interesting aspect of this contextualism is the question of cynicism. Some nations are ready for an appeal to strong public emotion, but in others events have made people disgusted with the public sphere. The Vietnam War made a whole generation of Americans shrink from appeals to patriotic emotion. The artist who would bring such people together needs to grapple with this, as Maya Lin so brilliantly did, creating an artwork that initially appeals to personal grief and detached critical reflection—both stances that remained available after the war—and, through those experiences, leads people toward an experience of reconciliation and shared grief.

I have just alluded to Walt Whitman's challenge to forge a less disgusted and healthier relationship with the body. The second general insight of the material before us lies here. From the very start of Part I we explored the danger posed by rigid gender roles to the possibilities of social cooperation, and Part II argued that some very common (and particularly male) gender conceptions are linked to "projective disgust" and social stratification. Through the normative analysis of emotions in the book as a whole, and ubiquitously in the examples considered in Part III, runs the invitation to think less rigidly about masculinity and femininity. Cherubino's male with a female voice, Gandhi's androgynous maternal self, Whitman's creation of a poetic persona who expresses the emotions of women, gay men, and racial minorities—all these ask us to think creatively and flexibly about the self and its embodiment, not discarding more traditional ways of being a male or a female, but understanding that culture is richer when these traditions are challenged and supplemented.

The third general insight yielded by Part III is that political love is and should be polymorphous. The love of parents for children, the love

of comrades, and romantic love all are capable of inspiring a public culture in different ways, and we should not be surprised or disappointed if different groups of citizens react to the same public speech or artwork in different emotional ways. A sports fan might think of her beloved team as her children, in whom she takes pride and whom she wants to protect from harm; a different fan might identify with the athletes and imagine being them, loving what they love; yet another fan might have a romantic attitude toward the athletes; another might think of them as friends or comrades. These attitudes will naturally vary with age, gender, and personality. How much greater is this variety in a nation—and yet all are forms of love, and all efficacious, in different ways, in prompting cooperative and unselfish behavior. The loves that prompt good behavior are likely to have some common features: a concern for the beloved as an end rather than a mere instrument; respect for the human dignity of the beloved; a willingness to limit one's own greedy desires in favor of the beloved. But many types and instances of love can have these features, as we have seen from the very beginning: Cherubino's love for the Countess is very different from the friendly love of the Countess and Susanna, and both of these are different, again, from the reciprocal romantic love at which Figaro and Susanna arrive at the opera's end. All, however, are altruistic, and all repudiate the obsessive search for personal status and honor in favor of reciprocity and vulnerability.

In short, while the goals and ideals of the society we have imagined do place constraints on the emotions that citizens should be encouraged to feel, they permit and actively encourage different citizens to inhabit the public sphere differently, as best suits each person's age, gender, goals, values, and personality. Even the most normatively charged works have this sort of space. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial does invite some type of respectful and contemplative attitude, and it would be an inappropriate response to gambol and play there as one does in Millennium Park's Crown Fountain. But the emotions that visitors have, responding appropriately to the work, include personal mourning, communal or national mourning, detached contemplation, personal self-examination, and no doubt many others. Political emotions are the real emotions of real people; because people are heterogeneous, having different opinions, histories, and personalities, they can be expected to love, mourn,

laugh, and strive for justice in specific and personal ways—particularly if their freedom of expression is protected and valued, as it is here. And some of them simply won't like Cherubino or wish to emulate his gentleness; they may prefer to play baseball, or cricket. Even so, they can find their own ways to respect and reciprocity. Cherubino and his descendants (the Bauls, Walt Whitman) are suggestive ideas, not a dictatorial program.

This, then, is the path we have traveled. Several general theoretical questions, however, still demand fuller comment.

II. Ideal and Real

We began with political ideals, imagining a nation that has made some taxing commitments to the freedom and well-being of all its citizens. Our examples, however, were drawn from history, and therefore from the flawed reality of real nations. Are we, then, developing an “ideal theory,” or dealing with people and institutions as they really are? This dichotomy, common enough in philosophy, is oversimple and misleading. Ideals are real: they direct our striving, our plans, our legal processes. Constitutions are ideal documents in the sense that they are not always perfectly implemented all the time, and also in the sense that they typically embody a nation's deepest aspirations. But they are also real, supplying a basis for legal action when the rights they guarantee are not delivered to a particular individual or group. The “freedom of speech,” the “free exercise of religion,” and the “equal protection of the laws” are all lofty ideals, yet they provide the basis for action and adjudication in the real world, for the education of real people, and for progress toward the amelioration of vexing social problems.

The ideal is real in another way: if it is a good ideal, it acknowledges human life as it is, and expresses a sense of how real people are. Real people are bodily and needy; they have a variety of human frailties and excellences; they are, quite simply, human beings, neither machines nor angels. Who can say what constitution a nation of angels would make? Who can say what constitution would be best suited to a nation of elephants or tigers or whales? The nation we imagine is a nation of, and for, human beings (albeit in complex interrelationships with other species),

and its constitution is a good one only to the extent that it incorporates an understanding of human life as it really is. (John Rawls understood this clearly, and that is why my project, although focused on aspiration rather than achieved justice, lies close to and complements his.)

The ideal, then, is real. At the same time, the real also contains the ideal. Real people aspire. They imagine possibilities better than the world they know, and they try to actualize them. At times their pursuit of the ideal can go astray, as people try to transcend the limits of humanness itself. We saw that a lot of difficulties for political life come from that type of self-repudiating aspiration. But not all pursuits of the idea have this doomed and counterproductive character. People who strive for this-worldly justice typically aspire to distant goals—prominently including theoretical goals—and are moved by them. That’s a large part of human reality, so any political thinker who rejects ideal theory rejects a lot of reality.

Our project is about just such real ideals and real striving. It is motivated by the difficulty of attaining and stabilizing lofty goals, but it understands those goals as parts of real-life human politics. The emotions on which it draws are real human emotions, and its psychology a nonideal and realistic human psychology. Like the speeches of Lincoln, King, and Nehru, it depicts a difficult task and a beautiful, distant goal—but in ways designed to move real people, who are moved by (realistically) ideal images of themselves and their world, as well as by the comedy of real bodies and their idiosyncrasies. So it is not distant from the real world, and it is entirely fitting that its examples come from real politics, though from a kind of politics in which leaders are trying to make things a lot better than they have previously been, correcting deep problems and moving forward to new achievements.

To put it another way, all love has aspects of the ideal, and political love no less than parental or personal love. When we love people, we want to be good to them, and this typically means being better than we sometimes, even usually, are. Personal love, like political love, is threatened by narrowness, partiality, and narcissism, and love therefore involves a continual struggle. There are certainly many ways in which ideals can deform love—if, for example, one’s love for a child is conditional on the child not having the flaws that are typical of children, or if

one's love for an adult is conditional on that person's being somehow beyond the human, an angel or disembodied spirit. So ideals can often endanger reality, or express a refusal of reality. To make love conditional on a human being's not being human and mortal is bad. To want to extend the life span and to think that death is a tragedy is humanly aspirational. (Tragic festivals remind us of the finality and deep sadness of death; they do not express a refusal of the basic lot of human beings.) The ideals that we are imagining are anchored in the reality of the human body and human psychology, so they simply reflect the undeniable fact that human beings want progress, beauty, and goodness. Any picture of the real that omits striving for something better brings an ugly and unhelpful kind of cynicism to political life, as it also does to adult love or the love between parents and children.

This has not been a cynical book, but it has been a realistic book. It has tried to face squarely the problems that a realistic human psychology shows us, and its "heroes" are real people, not dreams. Martin Luther King Jr., Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohandas Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt—these people certainly could be called dreamers, and this is a partial truth. All, however, were also highly strategic and skilled leaders who turned dreams into workable realities, in part by using the beauty of ideals to motivate real people. Like them, this book is not pretending that we have already reached the promised land: it is a book of motion and struggle, and it is rooted in history. But history does contain surprising instances of productive dreaming, from the birth of the United States and of the Indian democracy to a wide range of struggles against prejudice and hate. So there is no need to apologize for the fact that beautiful dreams are central to this book, and there would be no reason, short of an ugly cynicism that is false to the complexity of history, to think that beauty spells unreality. Indeed, part of what this book is saying is that the real is more beautiful than the lofty unreal.

III. Particular and General

Throughout this book, and especially in Part III, we have grappled with the problem that any appeal to love in the context of politics makes vivid: how to balance love's inherent particularism and partiality with the need

to create and sustain policies that are fair to all. If purely abstract and principle-dependent sentiments are too tepid and empty of motivating content, as we have argued, and if a deeper and more powerful altruism has its roots in and is modeled on personal particular love, then we have to think hard about how this love can support justice, not subvert it. (Rawls left this project unelaborated, and that is how I believe my project complements his.)

One important fact about the conception of political emotion defended here is that it is not totalizing: it leaves spaces for citizens to have particular relationships with people and causes they love, in the part of their lives that is carried out apart from politics, under the aegis of whatever comprehensive view of life they favor, since the society I imagine is a form of political liberalism. The political is in that sense narrow, merely one part of what people are asked to care about.

But we have argued that the political too should be particularistic, in the sense that it takes its cue from the Bauls and their way of approaching general ideals through deep personal attachments. In the developmental process, children learn to love symbolic surrogates for their nation before they understand its abstract ideals, and the particular leads them to the general. But adults too, through the tragic and comic festivals that a good society offers, are also led, as on that long bridge in Millennium Park, from particular experiences of joy or grief to more general and inclusive sentiments. Both tragedy and comedy themselves create many such bridges. Political love exists in an uneasy oscillation between the particular and the general, in which the particular is never repudiated, but is seen in a way that promotes inclusiveness, and in which the general becomes motivationally powerful through its link to particular symbols and songs and sculptures. Principle-dependent emotions such as those envisaged by Rawls are thus reached by a route that tethers them to the particularistic imagination and to personal love, and these deep roots continue to infuse the principles even when we achieve them.

The dangers of bias inherent in particularistic emotion are kept in check through the rule of law and through a strong critical culture. But they are also checked by the specific way in which political ideals are realized particularistically. Some works of art encourage us to see common human predicaments and to reach out to others who are not like

ourselves, and those are among the ones that a wise society will value most. Since I agree with Rawls in valuing sentiments directed to core political commitments, I have devoted particular attention to these “bridges” and to the works of art that construct them.

IV. Civic Culture and “Political Liberalism”

The society we have imagined is heterogeneous. It contains different religions, different ethnic, racial, and sexual groups, and a wide range of political views. Respecting this heterogeneity, we have insisted, requires practicing politics in the spirit of Rawlsian “political liberalism,” not building institutions or the shape of the public culture around a single dominant group and its ideas.¹ This commitment has raised tough questions throughout: How can the public culture of a nation that repudiates all religious and ideological establishments have enough substance and texture to be capable of the type of poetry, oratory, and art that moves real people?

Political liberalism requires the public culture to be both narrow and thin: narrow in that it does not comment on every single aspect of human life, but only those of most pertinence to politics (including, however, basic social and economic rights); thin, in that it makes no commitments on divisive metaphysical matters, such as eternal life or the nature of the soul. It must be such as to become, over time, the object of an “overlapping consensus” among the many reasonable overall views of life that the society contains. We certainly do not need to show that an overlapping consensus currently exists: neither Rawls’s conception nor mine requires this. We do, however, need to show that in time one might evolve, and in order to show that, we need to show that the imagined public culture does not create a hierarchy of religions or other views of life, and does not demote or marginalize any at the expense of others.

This is indeed a challenging restriction, but it does not doom our project. Symbols that are resonant sometimes come out of a religious tradition, but they can be appropriated into the general language of a society without being exclusionary, if they are advanced in connection with a robust pluralism. Thus King draws a lot of his imagery from the prophets (though also from Shakespeare and popular music); he uses

those references, however, as a kind of civic poetry, and he makes it very clear that he looks to a future that includes everyone on a basis of equality. Gandhi, similarly, uses Hindu symbolism, but surrounds it with careful ritual gestures that emphasize the equality of Muslims and Christians. Other examples in Part III—Central Park, Millennium Park, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and many more—are free from even the appearance of establishment. So political liberalism reminds us to remain vigilant about the problem of pluralism and the dangers of hierarchy and establishment, but it does not doom the public culture to banality or silence.

In one way, the project attempted in this book is distinctly helpful to the goals of political liberalism, for it shows over and over again that, and how, real people of many different religions and other identities may be brought together around a common set of values through the power of art and symbol. Poetry, music, and art are great uniters: they take people out of themselves and forge a shared community. When people laugh together, whether at Bill Mauldin's cartoons or at the reflected images of their own bodies in the curved surfaces of Anish Kapoor's Cloud Gate, they share something they did not share before, and their differences become smaller. Shared grief—whether on the Gettysburg battlefield or at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial—has a similar uniting, and even healing, power. Songs of national pride and aspiration have a similar capacity to forge or reforge a national identity. "*Jana Gana Mana*" announces explicitly that Indians from different regions and different religions come together around a shared set of political ideals, but countless examples of public art and rhetoric perform this same task implicitly. How could the idea of *e pluribus unum* ever be real? The arts provide a large part of the answer. Their allure invites real people to join together, where without public poetry they might have remained apart.

V. Content and Freedom

Invite, not coerce. The society this book imagines, and its entire argument, gives a large place to critical freedom. It is to be expected, then, that some people will go to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and others will stay away, that some people will hate and criticize the artworks of

Millennium Park while others will find them moving and playful, that some will think King's speech a shopworn set of clichés while others will continue to find it inspiring. That disagreement is actually part of the ideal. As we've seen, real public artists have many ways of dramatizing the dignity and beauty of the critical spirit. Indeed, they often help a society keep that spirit strong in a time of stress, by portraying it in an attractive poetic light. The fact that India is a highly successful democracy, in which critical freedom is real, owes much to Gandhi's choice of Tagore's "*Ekla Cholo Re*" as anthem of the freedom movement. Chicago's choice of *To Kill a Mockingbird* as the first book read in the One Book, One Chicago program reminds everyone that the capacity for risk-taking dissent is a core value of American public culture, needed to solve society's problems.

But isn't society jeopardizing critical freedom every time it urges citizens to have strong emotions of one sort rather than the other? Surely not. First of all, as I just said, the critical spirit itself is one thing toward which it is important to cultivate emotional attachment, urging people to care about it and fight to clear away the obstacles to it. Since critical freedom is always under threat, it's a good idea to bring children up to think of Atticus Finch as a hero, or to sing "*Ekla Cholo Re*."

Second, it is just wrong to think that an invitation to strong emotion must be coercive. It all depends on what becomes of the person who refuses the invitation, and that is why robust protection for freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion must be a key part of the institutional backdrop of this project. A prominent part of these protections, as we saw in Chapter 8, must be protection for young dissenters in schools, where peer pressure is particularly likely to be coercive even when law is not. Teaching patriotism in the schools invites, but we are allowed to rebel.

Most important, it is just mistaken to think that a society that protects the critical spirit should be neutral or halfhearted about its own core values. Any good society has definite ideas of what is good and bad: for example, that racism is bad and equal respect is good. There is nothing illiberal about that definiteness—so long as the free speech of dissenters is protected. The freedom of dissent is not jeopardized by passionate rhetoric directed at society's most cherished goals and aims; dissenters

remain free to contest those goals. Meanwhile, there is nothing illiberal about the society trying hard to realize its goals, drawing on whatever emotional support it can muster. It would be simply bizarre to suppose that Martin Luther King Jr. was against the freedom of speech because he passionately opposed racism and did not include a proracism argument along with his antiracism arguments. And it would be equally bizarre to suppose that it is illiberal mind control to ask children to hear King's speech on a solemn holiday and not to hear, on that same day, with equal enthusiasm, speeches by racial bigots.

As for public artworks, monuments, and parks, it's not even possible for them to be emotionally neutral: they have to be organized in one way rather than some other way, and if they have any emotional impact at all, it must be of some definite type. So if you come near them, you make yourself vulnerable to the invitation they offer. Even this, however, is not an objectionable type of paternalism, because it does not remove critique or choice. As the story of the Roosevelt Memorial showed, critique can often even reshape the work itself; only time will tell. At most, then, the invitation offered by a park or a monument is like the "nudge" depicted in Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein's "libertarian paternalism": it sets a default option, but it doesn't prevent you from doing, saying, or thinking otherwise.² Most people who walk through the Vietnam Veterans Memorial will find their emotions challenged in certain specific ways. That's how the artist has constructed the work. But one can always simply not go there, or go there steeled against the work's invitation. Public artworks have to set a default option; the only alternative to that is to have no public art at all, or only art of such stunning mediocrity that it communicates nothing.

When art is not mediocre, it is in fact all the more unlikely that it will impose a snoozy conformity and homogeneity. When we think of totalitarian regimes that attempted to impose their vision through art, we always find bad art: Soviet realism and its many soporific cousins. Real artists are dissenters, like Tagore's "madcap" Bauls. This book has sided from the beginning with the unpredictable and idiosyncratic in art: with the Crown Fountain and Cloud Gate, with Tagore's Baul-inspired poetry. Comte's desire to control the artists and prescribe their content to them was misguided.

In short, there is nothing wrong with a nation's taking a stand, including an emotional stand, and a stand made vivid through the arts. Nations should stand for something—indeed, for many things. And they should impart this vision in many ways. The only thing that would endanger freedom would be the suppression of divergent opinions.

VI. Intrinsic and Instrumental

But, we still must ask, *how* does love matter for justice? Are the public emotions we have imagined simply instruments, tools that a just society uses to achieve its goals and stabilize them once achieved? Or are they, as realized in the real lives of citizens, part of the goal toward which society is striving? To put it another way: If we once achieved our political goals, and had well-grounded confidence that they would be stably sustained into the future, would we have no further need of political love? Even though our argument has been that stability is not in fact possible without an emotional involvement that contains particularistic as well as principle-dependent elements, we still need to pose this question, because it goes to the very heart of what we are seeking. Do we want something that is simply very useful, like a Swiss army knife (and let's suppose that there's no other tool that can do various important jobs as well as this knife can), or is it something with its own distinctive value and beauty, without which our public lives would be incomplete? At the end of *Figaro*, the chorus says that “only love” made their day end in happiness. But is love like a ladder that might be thrown over once happiness is achieved? Or is it part of any (public) happiness that we should acknowledge as such?

Much of the tradition discussing a “civil religion” is ambiguous on this point. Mazzini, for example, imagines patriotism in ways that suggest the instrumental conception, even using tool metaphors (it is a “lever”), although he does not deny that patriotic emotion might also be part and parcel of the good society once achieved. Daniel Batson's research on compassion, to which we have frequently turned to illuminate motivational questions, values emotional experience to the extent that it promotes altruistic behavior, and not to the extent that it leads to partiality and unevenness—although, like Mazzini, Batson does not deny that there might be a type of compassion that is part and parcel of a good person,

without which a person who behaves very altruistically might be judged to be incomplete. John Stuart Mill and Rabindranath Tagore, our two primary theoretical guides, incline strongly toward giving emotion a more intrinsic role, though both also acknowledge its usefulness. Mill's "religion of humanity" is not just a handy device for reconciling individual and general utility; it is, he strongly suggests, an appropriate way to relate to others, and Mill's *Autobiography* insists on the importance of emotional development for a meaningful life. Tagore's contempt for deadness and his evident love for richness of emotion leave little doubt that he would judge any society that achieved distributive goals without an inner enlivening of the heart not only impossible, but very unattractive. Rawls's treatment of political emotion in *A Theory of Justice* strongly suggests the intrinsic conception: the emotions of love and gratitude he describes are valuable parts of an ideal of the citizen. In *Political Liberalism*, however, he appears to bracket this claim, and he offers no argument that addresses the point.

What does this book itself say? The question of political liberalism makes this a hard rather than easy question. If we want a political conception that can ultimately become the object of an overlapping consensus among people who have many different religious and secular views of life, it had better be thin in certain ways, not making too many controversial claims about what is ultimately worthwhile in life. When we enter the contested terrain of emotions such as compassion and love, when we talk of tragic grief and comic celebration, we have an easier time bringing everyone on board if we say that these forms of public observance, and the emotions they cultivate, are like that Swiss army knife, useful for getting a job done, but not necessarily valuable in and of themselves. As to that deeper question, each person must judge for him- or herself, in accordance with his or her overall conception. There is a lot of evidence that public emotions are instrumentally useful in this way, and that they are not dispensable so long as stability is a problem to be grappled with—which is to say, so long as nations are governed by fallible human beings, and most certainly in nations where the aspiration to justice is as yet incomplete. So it is easy to be tempted to quit while we are ahead, saying something thin and uncontroversial rather than something deeper and more potentially contentious.

Is it, however, more contentious, when we are thinking of nonideal societies arguing about and aspiring to justice? So often people are not satisfied at all with their nation as it is, and yet they are bound to it deep in their hearts. That's the sort of love this book has tried to describe, embracing imperfection while striving for justice. Just as personal love and friendship are at their best when they are directed not at ideal images of the person, but, instead, at the whole person with flaws and faults (not, of course, without criticizing or arguing), so too with love of a city or country: it gets under one's skin, is undeterred by imperfection, and thus enables diverse people, most of them dissatisfied with reality, but in many different and incompatible ways, to embrace one another and enter a common future.

And now we see something that might not have been evident before: this project's demand for love, rather than ratcheting up the demands imposed by the political conception in a way that makes "overlapping consensus" more difficult to achieve, actually ratchets the demands down, by imagining emotions that do not presuppose full agreement on principles and institutions or even agreement that these lack major flaws. Just as two people can be friends and even lovers when their religions, their political views, and their ultimate goals in life differ, so citizens in the society we are imagining, or many of them at least, can share the heterogeneous experiences we have described—at least some of those experiences, and some of the time. So what we're asking, when we ask whether these emotions are intrinsically valuable, is not as threatening to political liberalism as it might at first have seemed.

What, then, are we asking? Let's put the question this way. Suppose we had a society of liberal New Deal-ish body snatchers: people do all the altruistic things that we hope for, and sustain the nation's institutions by exactly the same sorts of actions that might have been done out of real feeling—only they are not really feeling anything. They are just shells of people, feeling nothing in their hearts. It's telling, in the movies on that theme, that the body snatchers betray their nonhumanness by an inability to appreciate music, and particularly jazz, which demands a responsiveness to improvisation and eroticism that both Whitman and Tagore would have understood as hallmarks of the passionate citizen. In our experiment things are made more complicated by the fact that we

have to concede that these people may be feeling many things in their personal lives—they are not body snatchers all the way through—but it’s just a range of civic emotions that are mere form and show on their part, not sustained by real feeling.

Now of course the first thing we want to say is that the approach taken in this book does not require real feeling all the time. It just wants enough people to feel enough, enough of the time, and that is not even supposed to be a precise metric. But it is totally to be expected that some, even many, people will not be moved by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, will never enjoy their trips to Millennium Park, et cetera. Some people are more like body snatchers (just going through the motions) than others, particularly in their civic lives. And even emotionally responsive people are fickle, with pockets of deadness and inattention. Moreover, there are many types of love, and we are therefore imagining a family of sentiments, not a single emotion.

Next we can say that in fact such a body-snatcher conception of public emotion will not work. We don’t need to get to intrinsic value to have strong reasons for wanting a culture in which people are not just going through the motions of caring about one another. What holds people together must be more real than that or the power of self-interest will take over. Our question, then, is more theoretical than practical.

Still, it seems important. Ideals are real. Even if we don’t attain them, they direct our search. So, what is our ideal of the good citizen? Do we imagine a good citizen as an impeccably right-acting sort of body snatcher, or as someone who really has love? The question Iris Murdoch asked long ago about personal virtue also has importance for political life. Murdoch imagined a mother-in-law, M, who resents her daughter-in-law, D.³ She finds D pert, vulgar, and annoying. Being a very well-bred woman, M conceals these feelings and judgments, and Murdoch stipulates that this concealment is totally successful: so far as outward conduct is concerned, M behaves exactly as if she loved D. But she has no love in her heart. Nonetheless, realizing that her judgments are prompted by less-than-admirable facts about herself (class prejudice, personal envy), she sets herself the task of seeing D “justly and lovingly,” so that over time she comes to have within the attitudes that she has successfully feigned without.

Murdoch's claim, which I endorse, is that this inner moral effort makes a difference: M has been active, has done something morally valuable, even if nothing out in the world of action is different as a result. It is this same contrast that I have in mind in the political case. In one case, citizens might be like empty automata, with no feelings at all, or they might, like the early M, be dutiful and self-controlled, feeling the wrong things but doing all the correct things. Contrasted with both of these is a picture in which citizens are emotionally alive, really reacting to one another with political love, at least sometimes and in some ways. Let us stipulate for the sake of the argument that the empty alternatives are stable, and that they successfully motivate altruistic action, although this is not likely to be the case.

Murdoch argued persuasively that the M with a rich inner life of imaginative and emotional effort is preferable to the dutiful M, for she has been morally active, trying to see D clearly and without prejudice. We can imagine many similar cases: for example, racists who behave impeccably, as contrasted with racists who sincerely engage in inner effort to see the world in a less biased way, even if they don't fully succeed. It seems clear that in the citizen case too, the citizen who really feels love of others is very different from the merely law-abiding dutiful citizen, in ways that make a difference to our analysis. Loving citizens are likely to be much more resourceful in action, but even if this is not the case—even if somehow or other the dutiful citizen were to do all the same things—we still should admire and prefer the citizen whose imagination and emotions are alive to the situation of the nation, and of its other citizens. As a political goal to strive for, the Tagorean/Whitmanian/Mozartian citizen is simply much more appealing than the inert dutiful citizen.

It would be surprising if we (I really mean, if I) found otherwise. After so much sympathetic discussion of love, imagination, and compassion, is it really likely that this book would have concluded that these parts of the personality are mere tools that could be deployed for limited ends by people who are content to be empty within, once their goals have been stably achieved? Still, even though this conclusion may have the air of a *parti pris*, the Murdochian argument is sound: the inner world is relevant to normative assessment, and it makes a difference to our conception of what we should be like as citizens, even where it doesn't make a

difference to any actual conduct. In our other significant roles in life we readily grant this, granting that imaginative M is better than dutiful M, that the parent who really loves is better than the parent who simply does all the right things, that the racist colleague who is struggling to overcome racist perceptions and reactions is superior to the one who merely acts impeccably. Why, then, would we suppose that in one of our most important roles in life, that of citizen, an empty shell is all we need to be? We simply don't accept that picture as an attractive goal. Indeed the very success of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* as political horror movie—whether its target is Communism or McCarthyism or both—testifies to the alarm and queasiness with which we contemplate the citizen who has become an empty shell. It also affirms our embrace of the quirky, unpredictable humanity of the citizen who really feels and imagines—in the movie, the citizen who responds to music.

To the extent that we are embarrassed by the idea of an emotion-driven politics (and Americans are more likely to be embarrassed than Indians, or indeed citizens in many other parts of the world), it is in part because of the legacy of post-Vietnam cynicism and alienation I have already mentioned, which has left its mark on all citizens of a certain age, at least to some extent. Other forms of alienation and cynicism also exist in the United States, in particular among racial minorities who have come to feel that politics offers them little hope. But this alienation—which at times in our history has given rise to a very passionate politics of dissent (both the civil rights movement and the anti-Vietnam War movement are such cases)—is not a cultural universal. And insofar as alienation is present in a given society, public artists and orators need, as we said, to take it into account, producing public artworks such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which honors the critical and introspective stance and finds a remarkable way to turn this very stance into community.

It will be said, and frequently too, that the demand for love made in this book is a tall order, and unrealistic given the present state of politics in more or less every country. But think what this objection really says. The objector presumably thinks that nations need technical calculation:

economic thought, military thought, good use of computer science and technology. So, nations need those things, but they do not need the heart? They need expertise, but do not need the sort of daily emotion, the sympathy, tears, and laughter, that we require of ourselves as parents, lovers, and friends, or the wonder with which we contemplate beauty? If that's what nations are like, one might well want to live elsewhere.

Speaking of his imaginary republic, as yet not fully realized, Walt Whitman wrote that "America is only you and me." We should aspire to nothing less.