

CHAPTER 6

Education for Global Citizenship

In this chapter Kwame Anthony Appiah moves the discussion of civic education from a national to a global context. He demonstrates that the idea of global citizenship is older than written history—and certainly not uniquely a Western idea—and challenges some recent methods of fostering “citizens of the world.” Global civic education takes on a particular urgency in today’s world in which “each of us can realistically imagine contacting any other of our seven billion fellow humans and send that person something worth having,” or conversely “things that will cause harm.” His response is to advocate education to foster a cosmopolitan spirit.

Appiah notes that educating the hearts and minds of both young and old requires a strong sense that we are all on the same planet together and that each person matters, making today’s leanings toward unilateralism and fundamentalism particularly difficult to accept. He anticipates the themes of the next chapters: Benhabib’s exploration of the impact of the global on national citizenship and Løvlie’s focus on finding opportunities for civic education in the everyday concerns of all people. Appiah explains that “cosmopolitanism is universality plus difference,” a matter of huge import for how we relate and behave toward each other in the worldwide web which is the human world.

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Education for Global Citizenship

KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH

My mother was born in the West of England, on the edge of the Cotswold Hills, to a family that could trace its ancestry within a fifty mile radius back to the Norman period, nearly a millennium earlier. My father was born in the capital of the Ashanti region of Ghana, in a city where he could trace his ancestry to before the beginnings of the Asante kingdom at the turn of the eighteenth century. So when these two people, born so far apart, married in the 1950s in England, many people warned them that a mixed marriage was going to be difficult. And my parents agreed. You see, my father was a Methodist and my mother an Anglican. And that *was* a real challenge. After all, as Anglicans like to point out, John Wesley, founding father of Methodism, once said, rather pointedly, “If the Methodists leave the Church of England, I fear that God will leave the Methodists.”

At all events, therefore, I am the product of a mixed marriage. Baptized a Methodist, educated at Anglican schools, I went to Sunday school at a non-denominational church of which my mother was a member. St. George’s was my mother’s church; she was a member and an elder of it for more than fifty years. But her funeral was celebrated at the Methodist Cathedral, of which my father and grandfather were elders, though the minister of St. George’s and the Catholic Archbishop were among the officiating clergy. This was my mother’s choice. And if you had asked her what denomination she belonged to all those years, she would have told you that she belonged to the church of Christ, and that the rest was so many indifferent details. So much for the challenge of mixed marriages, at least in Ghana.

I am a child of my mother and of St. George’s. I learned Christianity and its moral ideas first of all from them. But I also learned something else from both my parents, something they exemplified when they decided to become man and wife. And that was a kind of openness to people and cultures beyond the ones they were raised in. My mother learned this, I think, from her parents, who had friends in many continents at a time when many English people were extremely provincial.

My father learned it, I think, from Kumasi, which, like many old capital cities is a polyglot, multi-cultural place, open to the world. But he learned it, too, from his schooling. Like many of those who had the rare opportunity to get a secondary school education in the far-flung

reaches of the British Empire, he was educated in the classics. He loved Latin. (He would have been delighted that he's had two grandsons who studied classics at Cambridge and another studying it at Oxford now.) By his bedside he kept not only his Bible but the works of Cicero and Marcus Aurelius, followers both of the sort of Stoicism that was central to the intellectual and moral life of the Roman elite by the first century, when Christianity was beginning to spread through the Hellenistic world of the Eastern empire. In his spiritual testament to us, his children, he told us that we should always remember that we were "citizens of the world"—he used those exact words, words that Marcus Aurelius would have recognized and agreed with. Marcus Aurelius, after all, wrote: "how close is the kinship between a man and the whole human race, for it is a community, not of a little blood or seed, but of the spirit."

A Citizen of the World

I want to explore one of those Stoic philosophical ideals, one expression of that being openness to others, that I learned first from my family; and, more particularly, about its significance for education in our present age. It is an ideal that's particularly useful when we are faced with the sorts of conflicts, grounded in religious, ethnic, racial, and national identities, which pervade our world. And as it happens, it is an ideal whose very name comes to us from the classical West. For its etymology is Greek, even though the man who coined the term came, like so much in the traditions of the West, from Asia Minor. Though I shall be tracing its Western roots, we can be confident, however, that this ideal, or something very like it, was independently invented in other continents at other times.

The ideal I have in mind is cosmopolitanism; and the earliest figure whom we know of who said he was a citizen of the world—a *kosmou polites* in Greek, which is where, of course, our word "cosmopolitan" comes from—was a man called Diogenes.

Diogenes was a philosopher and the founder of the philosophical movement later called "Cynicism." He was born some time in the late fifth century in Sinope, on the Southern coast of the Black Sea, in what is now Turkey. The Cynics rejected tradition and local loyalty and generally opposed what everybody else thought of as "civilized" behavior. Diogenes himself lived naked, tradition reports, in a large terracotta pot. It is said that he did what my English nanny would have called "his business" in public. He also did what Hugh Hefner would probably call *his* business in public, too. He was, in short, a sort of fourth

century BCE performance artist. And he was called a Cynic—*kuon* in Greek means “dog”—presumably because he lived like a dog: the Cynics are just the doggy philosophers. No wonder they kicked him out of Sinope.

But, as I say, for better or worse, Diogenes is also the first person who’s reported to have said he was a “citizen of the world.” Now this is a metaphor, of course. Because citizens share a state and there was no world state—no *kosmopolis*—for Diogenes to be a citizen of. So, like anyone who adopts this metaphor, he had to decide what to mean by it.

One thing that Diogenes *didn’t* mean was that he favored a single world government. He once met someone who did: Alexander of Macedon, Alexander the Great, who favored, as you know, government of the world by Alexander of Macedon. The story goes that Alexander came across Diogenes one sunny day, this time not in his terracotta pot but in a hole in the ground. The Macedonian world conqueror, who as Aristotle’s student had been brought up to respect philosophers, asked Diogenes if there was anything he could do for him. “Sure,” Diogenes said, “you can get out of my light.” Diogenes was clearly not a fan of Alexander or, we may suppose, of his project of global domination. (This must have upset Alexander, who is supposed to have said: “If I had not been Alexander, I should have liked to have been Diogenes.”)

And that’s the first thing I’d like to take from Diogenes in interpreting the metaphor of global citizenship: no world government, not even by a student of Aristotle’s. We can think of ourselves, Diogenes wanted to say, as fellow citizens, even if we aren’t—and don’t want to be—members of a single political community, subject to a single government.

A second idea we can take from Diogenes is that we should care about the fate of all our fellow human beings, not just the ones in our own political community. Just as within your community, you should care about every one of your fellow citizens, so in the world as a whole you should care for your fellow world-citizens, your fellow humans. And, furthermore—this is a third idea from Diogenes—we can borrow good ideas from all over the world, not just from within our own society. It’s worth listening to others because they may have something to teach us; it’s worth their listening to us, because they may have something to learn.

We don’t have any writings from Diogenes, partly, I suspect, because, like Socrates, he believed that conversation—which goes both ways and in which you can learn as well as teach—was a better way of communicating than writing messages to people who couldn’t answer back. That’s a final thing I want to borrow from him: the value of

dialogue, conversation as a fundamental mode of human communication. These three ideas, then, I, a twenty-first American citizen of Anglo-Ghanaian ancestry, want to borrow from a citizen of Sinope who dreamed of global citizenship twenty four centuries ago: (1) we don't need a single world government, but (2) we must care for the fate of all human beings, inside and outside our own societies, and (3) we have much to gain from conversation with one another across differences.

The Idea of Cosmopolitanism

Globalization has made this ancient ideal relevant, which it wasn't really in Diogenes' or Aurelius' day. You see, there are two obvious conditions on making citizenship real: *knowledge* about the lives of other citizens, on the one hand, and the *power* to affect them, on the other. And Diogenes didn't know about most people—in China and Japan, in South America, in equatorial Africa, even in Western or Northern Europe—and nothing he did was likely to have much impact on them (at least so far as he knew) either. The fact is you can't give real meaning to the idea that we're all fellow citizens if you can't affect each other and you don't know about each other.

But, as I say, we don't live in Diogenes' world. Only in the last few centuries, as every human community has gradually been drawn into a single web of trade and a global network of information, have we come to a point where each of us can realistically imagine contacting any other of our seven billion fellow humans and sending that person something worth having: a radio, an antibiotic, a good idea. Unfortunately, we can now also send, through negligence as easily as malice, things that will cause harm: a virus, an airborne pollutant, a bad idea. And the possibilities of good and of ill are multiplied beyond all measure when it comes to policies carried out by governments in our name.

Together, we can ruin poor farmers by dumping our subsidized grain into their markets, cripple industries by punitive tariffs, deliver weapons that will kill thousands upon thousands. Together, we can raise standards of living by adopting new policies on trade and aid, prevent or treat diseases with vaccines and pharmaceuticals, take measures against global climate change, encourage resistance to tyranny and a concern for the worth of each human life. In short: the existence of global media means we *can* now know about one another; and global interconnections—economic, political, military, ecological—mean we

can (indeed we inevitably *will*) affect one other. So now we really *need* a cosmopolitan spirit.

That spirit thinks of us all as bound together across the species but also accepts that we will make different choices—within and across nations—about how to make our lives. Notice that the cosmopolitan values cultural diversity because of what it makes possible for people. At the heart of modern cosmopolitanism is respect for diversity of culture, not because cultures matter in themselves, but because people matter, and culture matters to people. So where culture is bad for people—individual men, women, and children—the cosmopolitan doesn't have to be tolerant of it. We don't need to treat genocide or human rights abuses as just another part of the quaint diversity of the species, a local taste that some totalitarians just happen to have.

And, of course, the worldwide web of information—radio, television, telephones, the Internet—means not only that we can affect lives everywhere but that we can learn about life anywhere, too. Each person you know about and can affect is someone to whom you have responsibilities: to say this is just to affirm the very idea of morality. The challenge, then, is to take minds and hearts formed over the long millennia of living in local troops and equip them with ideas and institutions that will allow us to live together as the global tribe we have become. And that means shaping hearts and minds for our life together on this planet, beginning, of course, with the education of the young.

Part of what we need there is, of course, to do with the content of schooling: curriculum for a global age. I'll get back to that issue at the end. But I want to begin by thinking about education more broadly conceived than the learning of information, however essential information is.

Education for the Global Community

Aristotle—Alexander's teacher—thought of ethics as a field with a practical payoff. Its aim was to think about what was good for us humans; what it is to have and to be and to do what is good. Aristotle's father, Nicomachus, was the doctor of Amyntas, Alexander's grandfather, which explains both why Aristotle got an aristocratic education—doctors to the powerful, then as now, were rich—and why Philip, Alexander's father, chose him to be his son's tutor. So it's not surprising that he took the process of developing children into well-behaved adults very seriously. Central to his *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, is an account of character as something we develop in the course of a life.

Central, too, is the idea of the community, the *polis*, as the context in which and for which we develop. The organized community should aim to shape the citizens to their common life. You play a role, too, of course, in your own development. Your community shapes you; you help shape others; you help shape yourself.

Now this all seems roughly right to me—barring some worries about Aristotle’s understanding of character, to which I’ll return.¹ But taking Aristotle’s project seriously, while accepting the idea that we live in many overlapping communities—not just a single *polis*—requires us to think of education, in our present world, as a matter of shaping people for the global community as well as more local ones. It leads us to ask about the global community and its institutions the question Aristotle asked, in effect, about the *polis*: How can the community be organized to make its members ready for a life in common? Formal education, of course, is controlled by local communities: nations, states, counties, cities, families. Above the nation there are no institutions that have real power over the shaping of schools and what goes on in them. So it may be that there is little or nothing that the global community can do through global institutions to shape people for our global life in common. But once we recognize that one community we participate in is the cosmos, we can ask, at each of the levels where we manage education, how we should take account of that level of community in thinking how we should prepare young people for life in the world.

Now in focusing on what we—we together and we singly—do deliberately, there’s a risk of overstating the role of the planned and the deliberate in this process. Education—the intentional transmission of culture from one generation to the next—is only a small part of socialization—the process by which our society shapes our ideas, our habits, our practices. And we are prone to exaggerate the role, even in education, of teaching, as opposed to the sort of learning that occurs when nothing is deliberately being taught.

Take language: speak around children and they will learn. They will learn faster if you do some of the things that we spontaneously do around children, like talking baby-talk, which turns out to help the infant brain individuate phonemes; but even if you just sat a baby in a chair at dinner every night, she’d figure it out. Now the exposure to language, to people speaking and responding, is obviously necessary. But what we naturally do with children works to transmit language to them without our having any theoretical appreciation of how. Of course many people have had theories about how language acquisition works, but until recently, they have usually been badly wrong. (Recall

Augustine's account of how he learned to speak, which Wittgenstein criticizes in the *Philosophical Investigations*.) We do it without knowing how we do it. In the last century or so, it is true, we have begun to understand what we are doing. And that makes it possible for us to help with the language learning of children with cognitive disabilities and to accelerate, if we want to, language acquisition in normal children. But most people still pick up most languages in the old ways.

Similar things can be said about the complex set of beliefs, emotions, and habits of response that are required for social life in general and for what we call "morality" in particular. People develop, in the right contexts, much of what we want them to have for adult life: language, sociability, a moral sense. Part of the reason for this has been known for ages. We are natural imitators. As John Locke put it in *Some Thoughts on Education* (1692):

Having under consideration how great the influence of company is, and how prone we are all, especially children, to imitation, I must here take the liberty to mind parents of this one thing, viz. That he that will have his son have a respect for him and his orders, must himself have a great reverence for his son. *Maxima debetur pueris reverentia*. You must do nothing before him, which you would not have him imitate.²

But Locke also thought, famously, that the minds of children were more malleable than they actually are: "I imagine the minds of children as easily turn'd this or that way, as water it self . . .,"³ he says, at the start of the second paragraph of *Some Thoughts on Education*. And that is a metaphor which, at the very least, risks misleading.

Impact of Context and Community on Children

First of all, in the sense in which this is true, it strikes me that it is not just true of children. Our minds are fantastically sensitive to an odd array of environmental features that make a huge difference in how we behave, and in ways of which we are normally completely unaware. This is the message of many decades of psychological research. Back in 1972, Alice M. Isen and Paula Levin had found that, if you dropped your papers outside a phone booth in a shopping mall, you were far more likely to be helped by someone who had just had the good fortune of finding a dime waiting for them in the return slot. A year later, John Darley and Daniel Batson discovered that Princeton seminary students, even those who had just been reflecting on the Gospel account of the Good Samaritan, were much less likely to stop to help someone

“slumped in a doorway, apparently in some sort of distress” if they’d been told that they were late for an appointment. In a 1975 study, people were much less likely to help someone who “accidentally” dropped a pile of papers when the ambient noise level was 85 decibels than when it was 65 decibels. More recently, Robert Baron and Jill Thomley showed that you were more likely to get change for a dollar outside a fragrant bakery shop than standing near a “neutral-smelling dry-goods store.”⁴

Many of these effects are extremely powerful: huge differences in behavior flow from differences in circumstances that seem of little or no normative consequence. Putting the dime in the slot in that shopping mall raised the proportion of those who helped pick up the papers from 1 out of 25 to 6 out of 7; that is, from almost no one to almost everyone. Seminararians in a hurry are six times less likely to stop like a Good Samaritan.⁵ Knowing what I’ve just told you, you should surely be a little less confident that “she’s helpful” is a good explanation next time someone stops to assist you in picking up your papers (especially if you’re outside a bakery!). This is the source of my skepticism about Aristotle’s talk of character.

But, second, there are also many habits of mind, natural to children, which are remarkably resistant to channeling away from their present courses. Some children just don’t like some foods; and you can force them to eat them only at the cost of unacceptable cruelty. These are idiosyncratic ways in which children are hard to channel. There are also more tendencies of mind that are hard to eradicate or induce in anyone. Sometimes the water runs in channels of our nature too swift and deep for diversion.

Still there are things we have now learned about shaping the human heart. It is pretty clear, for example, that bigotry toward members of one’s own community is something that can be both created and destroyed by the circumstances in which people are raised. Long ago in the history of social psychology, Gordon Allport argued for what is called the Contact Hypothesis. Roughly, it says that contact between individuals of different groups makes hostility and prejudice less likely if it occurs in a framework that meets a few important conditions: crucially, it must be on terms of equality and it must be in an activity where shared goals are pursued in contexts of mutual dependency. This is one reason that our integrated military produces people who are less racist, on average, when they leave than when they arrive. It is one reason, I suspect, why straight soldiers who have worked together with gay comrades in Holland or Israel or Britain are less homophobic than many

American soldiers. It is why white football and basketball players are more relaxed around black people and more engaged with racial justice than some of their peers. (Consider Jack Kemp and Bill Bradley: two politicians at opposite ends of our political spectrum who share exactly two things, experience as sportsmen in mixed-race sports and a concern in their political careers—often to their political disadvantage—to do the right thing racially.)

It is this that makes the segregation of communities within a single society potentially so disastrous; for segregation makes it unlikely that children will meet and collaborate, acquiring the experience of mutual reliance on terms of rough equality. We can do something about this, in principle, within the nation, by desegregating our communities and our schools. But what can we do across nations, since nations are, by definition, communities of people segregated from other nations? The answer, I think, is simple enough. We should be doing, so far as we can, what schools and colleges have increasingly been doing: encouraging young people to go abroad and work and study with young people in other nations, and inviting young people of other nations to study here. Cross-national educational projects—whether pursued in the virtual common space of the Internet or the literal common space of the semester abroad—are absolutely crucial, if this is right, to a cosmopolitan education—an education for a global age. And the good that it brings is a matter of practical habit more than theoretical conviction.

Cosmopolitan Ideals

Nevertheless, theory is important, too. And we should communicate the cosmopolitan ideals as ideas as well as through the experience of working together across nations. And so I want to end, as I promised, by discussing how to articulate cosmopolitanism as a theory to be considered by anyone wishing to introduce cosmopolitan ideas as part of the school curriculum.

We should begin by insisting that cosmopolitanism is a double-stranded tradition: in a slogan, it is universality plus difference. I have already hinted at *why* cosmopolitans accept, indeed celebrate, the wide range of legitimate human diversity. But I want to be more explicit about this. Why, after all, should we not do, in the name of universal concern, what missionaries of many faiths have done? Why shouldn't we go out into the world guided by the truth and help others to live by it, too?

One reason is that cosmopolitans inherit from our Greek forebears a recognition of the fallibility of human knowledge. Cosmopolitanism begins with the philosophical doctrine of fallibilism—the recognition that we may be mistaken, even when we have looked carefully at the evidence and applied our highest mental capacities. A fallibilist knows that he or she is likely to make mistakes about things. We have views, and we take our own views seriously. But we are always open to the possibility that it may turn out that we're wrong. To put it simply: if I'm wrong about something, maybe I can learn from others, even if they are wrong about something else.

But there's a second reason, one whose roots are found in a more modern idea: the idea that each human individual is charged with ultimate responsibility for his or her own life. The dignity of each human being resides, in part, exactly in his or her capacity for and right to self-management. Because of this, it's important that human beings live by standards they themselves believe in, even if those standards are wrong. As John Stuart Mill put it in *On Liberty*, some one and a half centuries ago: "If a person possesses any tolerable amount of common sense and experience, his own mode of laying out his existence is best, not because it is the best in itself, but because it is his own mode."⁶

It's best, that is, when people live by ideals they themselves believe in. If I force a man to do what I take to be right when he doesn't think it is right—or stop a woman from doing what I take to be wrong, when she doesn't agree that it's wrong—there's a sense in which I am not making their lives better, *even if what I take to be right or wrong really is right or wrong*. Of course, if the wrong someone is doing harms others, I may have to stop her anyway, because the universal concern that underlies cosmopolitanism means that it matters to me that every human life should go well. But if she is of sound mind and the wrong she is planning to do affects only her own fate, then the right way to express my concern for her is not to force her to do the right thing, but to try to persuade her she is mistaken.

Still, because cosmopolitanism is fallibilist, cosmopolitan conversation across cultural and political and social and economic and religious boundaries is not about wholesale conversion: it's about learning as well as teaching; it's about listening as well as talking. Even when I am trying to persuade someone that what they see as right is wrong, I am also hearing arguments that what I think is wrong is right.

Now global conversation is a metaphor; it needs interpretation, just as the metaphor of global citizenship needed interpreting.

Because, of course, you and I can't literally converse with the other seven billion or so strangers who inhabit the planet. But a global community of cosmopolitans will consist of people who want to learn about other ways of life, through anthropology and history, novels, movies, news stories in newspapers, on radio, and television. Indeed, let me make my first entirely concrete practical proposal—practical for anyone with a Netflix account, at least. Do what people all around the world are already doing with *American* movies: see at least one movie with subtitles a month.

Objections to Cosmopolitanism

Perhaps all this seems to you entirely uncontroversial, banal even. But there are certainly enemies of cosmopolitanism all around. Cosmopolitanism is universality plus difference, I said, and that means that cosmopolitans have two kinds of enemies: those who deny the legitimacy of universality and those who deny the legitimacy of difference. The first kind of enemy often rejects the demand for universality in the name of the nation: "Cosmopolitanism as an ethical commitment strains to extend our concrete realities to include some distant and generalized 'others' who, we are told, are our global neighbours," a Canadian commentator once wrote. "The idea might give you the warm-and-fuzzies, but it's nothing for which you'd be willing to go to war."⁷ But that supposes that universal concern requires us to be constantly risking our lives for strangers around the world just as—the nationalist supposes—we are willing to risk our lives for our literal fellow citizens.

This objection misunderstands what cosmopolitanism is saying. For cosmopolitans recognize that our own nations make more demands of us than does the human community, just as our families make more demands on us than our nations. To say that every human matters is not to deny that some people matter more to each of us than others. Some American Christians send money to suffering fellow Christians in southern Sudan; writers, through PEN International, campaign for the freedom of other writers, imprisoned around the world; women in Sweden work for women's rights in South Asia; Indians in the Punjab worry about the fate of Punjabis in Canada and Britain.

To insist on universality is only to say that every human being has certain minimum entitlements—many of them expressed in the vocabulary of human rights; and that it is also the obligation of every human

being to do his or her fair share in making sure that everybody gets what they are entitled to. It is, of course, not easy in practice to say what that fair share is. But the cosmopolitan insists that each of us has to ask him or herself: Am I doing my fair share to make sure everyone has the chance at the dignified human existence that we are all entitled to? A patriot will want to do more than this minimum for her fellow countryman. The cosmopolitan is only insisting that she cannot do less than this for the rest of humankind. But there is another kind of enemy that we need to respond to: these objectors share our belief in universality, but they do not care, as cosmopolitans do, for difference.

The Fundamentalist Challenge

I want to discuss one such breed of counter-cosmopolitan: the new fundamentalists who pose one of the most serious threats to cosmopolitan cohabitation today. For we must accept that they believe in the universality of their faith: nothing would make them happier than the conversion of all of humanity.

As the French scholar Olivier Roy writes in his superb account of the phenomenon, *Globalized Islam*:

Of course, by definition Islam is universal, but after the time of the Prophet and his companions (the Salaf) it has always been embedded in given cultures. These cultures seem now a mere product of history and the results of many influences and idiosyncrasies. For fundamentalists (and also for some liberals) there is nothing in these cultures to be proud of, because they have altered the pristine message of Islam. Globalization is a good opportunity to dissociate Islam from any given culture and to provide a model that could work beyond any culture.⁸

So how, in principle, should we distinguish benign and malign forms of universalism?

You could try an appeal to tolerance. Yet there are plenty of things that the heroes of radical Islam are happy to tolerate. They don't care if you eat kebabs or meatballs or kung pao chicken, as long as the meat is halal; your hijab can be silk or linen or viscose. On the other hand, there are limits to cosmopolitan tolerance. We will sometimes want to intervene in other places, because what is going on there violates our fundamental principles so deeply. We, too, can see moral error. And when it is serious enough—genocide is the uncontroversial case—we will not stop with conversation. Tolerance doesn't mean that you find nothing *intolerable*.

Then, as I said at the start, we cosmopolitans believe in universal truth, too, though we are less certain that we have it all already. It is not

skepticism about the very idea of truth that guides us; it is realism about how hard the truth is to find. One truth we hold to, however, is that every human being has obligations to every other. Everybody matters: that is our central idea. And it sharply limits the scope of our tolerance.

To say what, in principle, distinguishes the cosmopolitan from the counter-cosmopolitan, we plainly need to go beyond talk of truth and tolerance. One distinctively cosmopolitan commitment is to *pluralism*. Cosmopolitans think that there are many values worth living by and that you cannot live by all of them. So we hope and expect that different people and different societies will embody different values. (But they have to be values *worth* living by.) And of course our *fallibilism* means that, unlike the fundamentalist, we accept that our knowledge is imperfect, provisional, subject to revision in the face of new evidence.

The neo-fundamentalist conception of a global *ummah*, by contrast, admits to local variations—but only in matters that don't matter. These counter-cosmopolitans, like many Christian fundamentalists, do think that there is one right way for all human beings to live; that all the differences must be in the details. If your concern is global homogeneity, this utopia, not the world that capitalism is producing, is the one that you should worry about. Still, the universalisms in the name of religion are hardly the only ones that invert the cosmopolitan creed. In the name of universal humanity, you can be the kind of Marxist, like Pol Pot, who wants to eradicate all religion, just as easily as you can be the Grand Inquisitor supervising an auto-da-fé.

All of these men want everyone on their side, so we can share with them their vision. “Indeed, I’m a trustworthy adviser to you,” Osama bin Laden said in a 2002 “message to the American people.” “I invite you to the happiness of this world and the hereafter and to escape your dry, miserable, materialistic life that is without soul. I invite you to Islam, that calls to follow of the path of Allah alone, who has no partners, the path which calls for justice and forbids oppression and crimes.” Join us, the counter-cosmopolitans say, and we will all be sisters and brothers. But each of them plans to trample on our differences—to trample *us* to death, if necessary—if we will not join them. Their motto might as well be that sardonic German saying:

Und willst du nicht mein Bruder sein,
So schlag' ich Dir den Schädel ein.
(If you don't want to be my brother,
Then I'll smash your skull in.)

For the counter-cosmopolitans, then, universalism issues in uniformity. The cosmopolitan may be happy to abide by the Golden Rule about doing unto others as you would have them do unto you. But cosmopolitans care if those others don't *want* to be done unto as I would be done unto. It's not necessarily the end of the matter, but it's something we think we need to take account of. Our understanding of toleration means interacting on terms of respect with those who see the world differently. We cosmopolitans think we might learn something even from those we disagree with. We think people have a right to their own lives.

It is crucial to insist, at a moment when we are most conscious of Muslims who hate cosmopolitanism, that there are now, and there have always been, cosmopolitan proponents of Islam. Over the last two centuries, one can identify distinguished Islamic scholars who have engaged seriously with ideas from outside Islam. In the nineteenth century, Sayyid Ahmad Khan in India and Muhammad 'Adbuh in Egypt both sought to develop Muslim visions of modernity. More recently, Mahmud Muhammad Taha in Sudan, Tariq Ramadan in Europe, and Khaled Abou El-Fadl in the United States have all developed their views in dialogue with the non-Muslim world.

These Muslim thinkers are wildly different, but each of them challenges—and with a far more extensive grounding in the corpus of earlier Muslim scholarship than al-Zawahiri—the fundamentalist conceptions of sharia.⁹ Ahmed al-Tayeb, president of Al-Azhar, the world's oldest Muslim university (in fact, the oldest university, period), has invited the archbishop of Canterbury to speak from his pulpit. And he has said, "God created diverse peoples. Had He wanted to create a single *ummah*, He would have, but He chose to make them different until the day of resurrection. Every Muslim must fully understand this principle. A relationship based on conflict is futile."¹⁰ Insofar as they think there is something to discuss, al-Zawahiri's syllogism decrees all these men to be "disbelievers."

It is pointless, I think, for those of us who are not Muslims to say what is true and what is false in Islam; just as it would be inane for al-Zawahiri to weigh in on whether, say, contraception or capital punishment is consistent with Christianity. It is up to those who want to sail under the flags of Christianity or of Islam to determine (and explain, if they wish to) what their banners mean. That is their fight. But among those who call themselves Muslims, there are more tolerant exponents and there have been more tolerant times. We can observe the historical fact that there have been societies that called themselves Muslim and

practiced toleration (including, in the earliest period, under the command of the Prophet himself). So it is heartening, at least for a cosmopolitan, that there are now many Muslim voices speaking for religious toleration and arguing for it from within the interpretative traditions of Islam.

Modern religious fundamentalism—whether Christian, Moslem, Jewish, Buddhist, or Hindu—is exactly that: modern. And each of these world traditions has extremely anti-cosmopolitan versions, as, indeed, does Marxism, the great modern secular ideology. But all have existed in cosmopolitan forms: fallibilist, pluralist, committed to conversation across differences, recognizing the ultimate responsibility of individuals for their own lives.

That Islam, in particular, is compatible with cosmopolitanism is no more surprising than that Christianity should be. Both, after all, draw on the same philosophical and religious roots, and as I said at the start, Christianity begins as a cosmopolitan religion, in part because of its Stoic inheritance. Equally obvious is the role of Greek philosophical traditions in shaping the philosophical traditions of Islam. But as I also said, there is no reason to think that the impulse to cosmopolitanism comes solely from the Hellenistic world or out of the West; after all, as Amartya Sen's recent work has reminded us, one of history's most cosmopolitan leaders was the sixteenth century Mughal emperor Jala-uddin Muhammad Akbar, a descendant both of Timur (or Tamburlane), the fourteenth century Lord of Central Asia, and (it is said) of Genghis Khan, the twelfth to thirteenth century Mongolian Emperor.

Cosmopolitanism, so it seems to me, is a temperament that is to be found on every continent. . . . I learned it, as I said, not in England or America, but growing up in Ghana.

NOTES

1. For these worries, see Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Experiments in Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), Chapter 2, "The Case Against Character." See also the remarks on social psychology below.

2. John Locke, *Some Thoughts on Education*, The Harvard Classics, vol. 37 (1) (New York: P. F. Collier and Son Company, 1909–1914), Section 71.

3. *Ibid.*, Section 2.

4. A. M. Isen and P. F. Levin, "The Effect of Feeling Good on Helping: Cookies and Kindness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 21 (1972): 384–88; J. M. Darley and C. D. Batson, "From Jerusalem to Jericho": A Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27 (1973): 100–108; K. E. Matthews and L. K. Cannon, "Environmental Noise Level as a Determinant of Helping Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32 (1975): 571–77; R. A. Baron and J. Thomley, "A Whiff of Reality: Positive Affect as a Potential Mediator

of the Effects of Pleasant Fragrances on Task Performance and Helping," *Environment and Behavior* 26 (1994): 766–84. All are cited in John M. Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 30–34, 181.

5. And people are about one-tenth as likely to help someone behind a curtain who has had what sounds like an accident, if there's someone else standing by who does nothing. B. Latane and J. Rodin, "A Lady in Distress: Inhibiting Effects of Friends and Strangers on Bystander Intervention," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 5 (1969): 189–202. As cited in Doris, *Lack of Character*.

6. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 3, para 14.

7. Robert Sibley, "Globalization and the Meaning of Canadian Life," *Canadian Review of Books* 28, no.8/9 (Winter 2000).

8. Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 25. Though published in the United States, the book uses (mostly) British spelling. I have silently Americanized it for the convenience of the reader.

9. For Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Taha see the essays (respectively) by Javed Majeed and Mohamed Mahmoud in *Islam and Modernity: Muslim Intellectuals Respond* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000) (there are references to Muhammad 'Abduh throughout the book); Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Khaled Abou El-Fadl, *The Place of Tolerance in Islam* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

10. See the interview by Rania Al Malky in *Egypt Today* 26, no. 2 (February 2005).