

Chapter 5

Which Love of Country? Tensions, Questions, and Contexts for Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism in Education

Claudia Schumann

Talking about love may be too easy, or rather too difficult. How can we avoid simply praising it or falling into sentimental platitudes? One way of finding a way between these two extremes may be to take as our guide an attempt to think about the dialectic between love and justice.

Paul Ricoeur, “Love and Justice,” p. 23

5.1 Introduction

As I am thinking and writing about the possible meanings of patriotism in education, German newspapers comment on the victory of the German football team against Argentina in the World Cup Final with titles such as “Wir sind wieder ... wer?” (*Der Spiegel* 29 July 2014, title page). While asserting that “we are someone” again, they at the same time raise the question of who it is that we are or have become again. The images below the title offer in a “close-up of the nation”¹ a soccer player to the left of the page, chancellor Merkel in the middle, and a woman wearing a veil to the right of the page. While the breadth of who seems to make up Germany as a nation in these days is symbolized through the iconic depiction of soccer shoes, Merkel’s trademark hand folding, and the Muslim veil, the unity of all these differences is symbolized by the German flag that covers and camouflages all three of them. And the new-found national pride is further supported by outside perspectives on the success, as foreign newspaper titles read: “World Cup victory confirms Germany supremacy on almost every measure” (Taylor 2014). At the same time, the media report on commemoration services with politicians warning of the fanaticism and extensive nationalism in Europe leading to the beginning of World

¹ Subtitle of the same article (*Der Spiegel* 29 July 2014).

C. Schumann (✉)

Department of Education, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden
e-mail: claudia.schumann@edu.su.se; clschumann@googlemail.com

War I; other reports follow on the crisis in the Ukraine, its struggle for national integrity and independence from Russia, on the war between Israel and the Hamas in Gaza counting more than 1000 civilian deaths to date, and on the hoisting of the black flags of the ISIS, signposts of thousands of brutally violent killings in the name of the erection of an Islamic state in Iraq and Syria.

These headlines, for me, are indicative of why patriotism needs to be discussed in relation to cosmopolitanism. The urgency and need for clarifying our conceptions of each respectively and critically reflecting on their possible compatibility is stressed not only by the fact that these headlines make apparent that, also in our present day, for many the notion of country remains much more than an empty signifier, but also because they illustrate the wide range of promises as well as the dangers connected to the notion of love for country. The paper starts out by considering the reasons which Martha Nussbaum gives in more recent publications for departing from her earlier cosmopolitan position, which has been prominently and widely discussed in educational and political theory, in favor of now promoting “a globally sensitive patriotism” (2008, p. 78). Beyond aiming at drawing attention to an as yet only scarcely discussed shift in Nussbaum’s thought, her reasons for endorsing patriotism will be shown as exemplary for related argumentations by other authors, especially insofar as love of country as a motivating force for civic duty is understood as in tension or even as incompatible with cosmopolitan aspirations. In the next part, the motivation for turning to patriotism as articulated by Nussbaum and others will be questioned and demonstrated to rely on mistaken understandings of love of country as a possessive emotion. It will be argued that moral judgment with regard to the *patria* as well as from a cosmopolitan stance is equally tied to our sensitivities and equally requires their education. Furthermore, we will look at Axel Honneth’s notion of solidarity as a form of love inflected by justice as a possible alternative for conceptualizing patriotic attachment. The final section of the paper will put forth an argument for the compatibility of a critical cosmopolitanism with a critical patriotism. In particular, a critical patriotism needs to transgress the inward-directed focus of much writing on patriotism and take into account an outward perspective, as suggested by Papastephanou (2012, 2013), including how a country is seen by noncitizens, the historical relationships to other countries, and the sort of obligations that arise in terms of historical justice in relation to other countries. If we take patriotism in this outward-looking perspective seriously, we also come to understand why it would be a mistake to skip patriotism altogether as some critics have suggested (e.g., Kateb 2000). Rather than constructing cosmopolitanism and patriotism as mutually exclusive opposites, critical cosmopolitanism and critical patriotism can be shown to have different but complementary and mutually corrective functions.

5.2 Martha Nussbaum's Shift from Cosmopolitanism to Patriotism

The discussion on patriotism is notoriously polarizing. On one side of the spectrum, we find scholars such as George Kateb who consider patriotism “a mistake twice over” and find it “surprising and deplorable [...] that the mistake of patriotism is elaborated theoretically and promoted by people who should know better” (Kateb 2000, p. 901). On the other hand, we find scholars arguing that abandoning patriotism would imply “necessarily to give up on building a *democratic* national community” (Callan 2009, p. 66). The worry about the loss of “a shared sense of nationhood” destroying the “fragile bond of belonging” which then can no longer serve as “an instrument for political change towards justice” (Callan 2009, p. 66) is commonly voiced by scholars from secular Western democracies. Other important criticisms of a “general incrimination of the politics of any national affect” (Papastephanou 2012, p. 187) have been raised by postcolonial theorists arguing that critics of (nationalist) patriotisms “sidestepped the fact that it was precisely decolonization that, unconsciously or not, they were also attacking” (Brennan 1989, p. 1). Interestingly and not much noticed, Martha Nussbaum has moved from one end of this spectrum to the other. In 1996 she argued in the widely discussed *For Love of Country?* that “the worthy goals of patriotism” would indeed be better served by “the very old ideal of the cosmopolitan, the person whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings” (Nussbaum 1996, p. 4). However, in later years, and much less recognized in the academic discussion in education as well as in political theory, Nussbaum went on to change her mind and discards cosmopolitanism in order to now argue for “teaching patriotism” (Nussbaum 2012, p. 213; cf. also Nussbaum 2008). How radical a departure she has made is shown in the following quote:

I do not [...] even endorse cosmopolitanism as a correct comprehensive doctrine. Further thought about Stoic cosmopolitanism, and particularly the strict form of it developed by Marcus Aurelius, persuaded me that the denial of particular attachments leaves life empty of meaning for most of us. (Nussbaum 2008, p. 80)

We will consider later in which way her more recent outright rejection of cosmopolitanism and the whole-hearted embrace of patriotism might be connected to a certain narrowness of her own outlook on cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, in a closer analysis of her arguments for this change of mind, we will find that Nussbaum’s “notion of a globally sensitive patriotism is not the easy target that many critics of patriotic attachment and concomitant education set for themselves” (Papastephanou 2013, p. 169). Nonetheless, we will also find that the underlying conception of patriotism and the hopes connected to it are constructed in a way that creates an artificial tension and ultimate incompatibility with cosmopolitan aspirations and furthermore seems to not serve well what Nussbaum considers the “worthy goals of patriotism” to begin with.

So which reasons does Nussbaum give for her shift to patriotism in education? First of all, she stresses the “importance of particularistic forms of love and

attachment” as providing “the foundation of political principles” (Nussbaum 2008, p. 80). Secondly, she says that cosmopolitanism implies “the denial of particular attachments [which] leaves life empty of meaning for most of us” and that “the solution to problems of particular attachments ought not to be this total uprooting, so destructive of the human personality” (ibid.). This brings to mind an argument which Alasdair MacIntyre developed already in 1984 that “the moral standpoint and the patriotic standpoint are systematically incompatible” (MacIntyre 1984, p. 5) since the partiality of the patriot stands in blatant contradiction with the widespread understanding of liberal morality holding that moral judgment and action requires us “to judge as any rational person would judge, independently of his or her interests, affections and social position” (ibid.).

It is quite apparent that Nussbaum in her later writings seems to align the stance of the cosmopolitan with this understanding of morality and that she seems to agree with MacIntyre that the strongest argument for patriotism being a virtue lies in the following rationale:

If first of all it is the case that I can only apprehend the rules of morality in the version in which they are incarnated in some specific community; and *if* secondly it is the case that the justification of morality must be in terms of particular goods enjoyed within the life of particular communities; and *if* thirdly it is the case that I am characteristically brought into being and maintained as a moral agent only through the particular kinds of moral sustenance afforded by my community, then it is clear that deprived of this community, I am unlikely to flourish as a moral agent. [...] Detached from my community, I will be apt to lose my hold upon all genuine standards of judgment. (MacIntyre 1984, p. 10f.)

In her arguments for patriotism, Nussbaum appears convinced that cosmopolitanism in a similar sense that MacIntyre puts forth for liberal morality would require us to be an “impartial actor, and one who in his impartiality is doomed to rootlessness, to be a citizen of nowhere” (MacIntyre 1984, p. 12). Also in philosophy of education, it has been argued that “national sentiment can provide this bonding” (White 1996, p. 331) which is needed to transcend immediate self-interest and that the love of country is an important means to underpin the civic friendship which is required to animate citizens for projects such as the fair redistribution of goods (cf. e.g., White 1996, p. 331f.; also White 2001).

In my prior work on cosmopolitanism (Schumann 2012; Schumann and Adami 2013), I have already contested the conceptualization of cosmopolitanism as a form of identity which stands in opposition to local and particular forms of being bound. In line with other proponents of rooted cosmopolitanism, I have stressed the importance of the critical dimension of Diogenes’ claim to being a citizen of the world, arguing that the real conflict line does not lie between a stylized universalism and particularism, but that the “distinction which should matter is that between a badly understood cosmopolitanism which means nothing but the economically inspired extension of reification on a global scale, and between a critical cosmopolitanism which provides an analytical-descriptive as well as a normative resource for theorizing the withstanding, untangling and going beyond such reifications on a global scale” (Schumann 2012, p. 229). As Marianna Papastephanou carefully works out in her article on Nussbaum’s turn to patriotism, it is precisely the narrow fixation on

the late Stoic conception of cosmopolitanism which “traps her political thought in either/ors” and the “oppositional connection of cosmopolitanism and patriotism as attachments that operate at cross-purposes [which] effaces the possibility of conceptualizing them as a set and a subset whose synergy has mutually corrective and directive effects” (Papastephanou 2013, p. 168). However, before looking more closely into the ways in which I think it can and should be argued that a critical cosmopolitanism is actually compatible with a critically understood patriotism much in the way as suggested by Papastephanou, I think it is worthwhile to look at the way in which the understanding of moral judgment as abstraction from all particular attachment and sentiment is inherently mistaken which puts into question the main argument given for their conception of patriotism by both MacIntyre and Nussbaum.

5.3 Questioning the Motivation for Teaching Patriotism

We have seen in the previous discussion that one of the main incentives for Nussbaum to encourage patriotism and dismiss cosmopolitanism is due to her conviction that cosmopolitanism requires the denial of particular attachments, thus undermining the very basis on which we first develop into moral actors. In the following I would now like to take a look at the intricate argument which Alice Crary has put forth in *Beyond Moral Judgment* (2007) regarding the question of the impartiality requirement for moral judgment. Her line of reasoning is of great interest here because it pinpoints the internal confusion I find with Nussbaum’s conception of cosmopolitanism and the conclusions that follow for her endorsement of patriotism. Following the later works of Wittgenstein, Crary has developed a thoroughgoing criticism of what she names the “abstraction requirement” which is widely spread in many varieties of contemporary moral theory and which she argues is “internally confused” (Crary 2007, p. 26). Crary draws an “image of a natural language as a non-neutral, intrinsically moral acquisition” (2007, p. 41) and argues that “learning to speak is inseparable from the adoption of a practical orientation toward the world – specifically, one that bears the imprint of the speaker’s individuality” (2007, p. 43). When we learn how to use a concept correctly, we do not make reference to a “fixed linguistic competence” (2007, p. 41), but we know intrapersonal differences (e.g., through age-dependent cognitive differences) as well as interpersonal differences (e.g., in relation to the understanding symbolic meanings), which we take into consideration when we judge the correctness of the use of a particular concept. In this way, learning a language we also acquire different intra- and interpersonal practical orientations which “encode a view of what matters most in life or how best to live” (2007, p. 43), so that “learning to speak is inseparable from the development of an – individual – moral outlook” (ibid.). Hence, she demonstrates that if it is not “possible to get our minds around how things are independently of the possession of any sensitivities, we [...] make room for an alternative conception on which the exercise of rationality necessarily presupposes the possession of

certain sensitivities” (Crary 2007, p. 118f.). Crary recognizes that a certain form of impartiality might be required for moral judgment, but she also emphasizes that in ordinary situations what we mean by impartiality is merely “an abstraction from those routes of feeling that threaten to distort moral judgment” (2007, p. 203) and that this should not be confused with the philosophical question “whether every affective propensity we have as such represents a potential threat to such judgment” (2007, p. 204). In her account of moral judgment, which is grounded in the idea that there is a moral dimension to all of language, there is room for cases in which an ascription of subjective properties “figures in the best, objectively most accurate account of how things are and, further, that the person who lacks the subjective endowments that would allow her to recognize them is simply missing something” (2007, p. 28). If Crary’s analyses are correct, then moral judgment with regard to our *patria* just as much as in a cosmopolitan stance with regard to global issues is deeply tied to our sensitivities and requires abstraction from some of these sensitivities only in so far as these might preclude sound judgment. More importantly, it requires a thoroughgoing education of these sensitivities in order to be able to arrive at an objective and rational assessment of how things actually stand and what course of action is the right one to take.

The idea that a genuine affective dimension plays an important role also for cosmopolitanism and that cosmopolitanism should not be reduced to merely legalistic, negative duty, “based on some relationship of reciprocity of benefits” (MacIntyre 1984, p. 5), was recognized by Nussbaum in her reply to the critics of her early prominent writings on cosmopolitanism. She then defended that children, “long before they encounter patriotism,” “they know hunger and loneliness, they have probably encountered death [...], they know something of humanity” (Nussbaum 1996, p. 143) and that by not letting themselves “become encrusted by the demands of local ideology, they were able to respond to a human face and form” (*ibid.*, p. 144). While the patriotic stance here became strongly equated with ideological nationalism, the cosmopolitan stance, the response to human face and form, was clearly identified with more than a narrowly rationalistic, principled dutifulness. What seems to have changed her opinions in the following years is the idea that educating national sentiment, since directed at a “circle” that is closer to the self than the whole world or humanity as such, is able to engender stronger “sentiments of love and support” (Nussbaum 2008, p. 81) than educating for cosmopolitanism ever could.

Papastephanou has developed a convincing critique of Nussbaum’s model of concentric circles and has suggested an eccentric model of cosmopolitanism instead (Papastephanou 2012; especially chapter 2). Indeed, in her discussion of Aristotle’s argument against Plato, Nussbaum betrays most overtly her model of love as one that not only starts from the self and leads outside and back to the self but as a model of love of country which is thoroughly emotivist and possessive. In apparent agreement with her reconstructed Aristotle, she summarizes his insights claiming that “to make someone love something requires making them to see it as ‘their own,’ and, preferably also, as ‘the only one they have’” (Nussbaum 2012, p. 232). There is a lot that could be said about this conception of love. Thinking about even closer circles

than the nation, we could wonder if we would consider it a genuine form of love if our partner, parent, or child would really primarily love us because they consider us their own or the only one they have. But leaving these broader questions aside, it seems doubtful that a love so conceived could actually do the kind of work that Nussbaum wants for the worthy goals of patriotism, namely, the de-centering of the self. Would such a possessive emotion not really just lead to an extended self-centeredness, an extended sense of self-importance and egotism, a form of self-aggrandizement much in the way as Kateb claims that patriotism is “only disguised self-worship” (Kateb 2000, p. 923)? Such a conception would then contribute to the opposite of what Nussbaum hopes patriotism to do; it would certainly not lead to “the sacrifice of self-interest” in “the struggle for justice” (Nussbaum 2012, p. 250).

I would like to suggest that if we are looking for a form of love or emotional-affective attachment to others which can play “the role of the ‘cement’ of society” (Papastephanou 2012, p. 188), we do not need to drag up such loaded words as “sacrifice” reminiscent of religious martyrdom but might be better off looking in a place such as what Axel Honneth has demarcated in his *Struggle for Recognition* (1992/1995) in terms of social esteem or solidarity. As is well known, Honneth distinguishes between three different forms of recognition that he considers essential for identity formation: love, moral respect, and social esteem (solidarity). While love describes the forms of unconditional and highly partial personal recognition one receives from primary caretakers and in romantic relationships, moral respect should be accorded equally to everyone regardless of their personal traits or features. However, his interpretation of Mead and Hegel leads Honneth to stipulate that these two forms of recognition in themselves are not sufficient. Rather, in order for a society to not succumb to a merely legalistic structure based on negative freedom and constraints, we require a third form of recognition, a form of social esteem which is accorded to each individual of a society qua individual, which means an appreciation of the specific values and contributions a concrete person brings to the community and which implies our active and positive interest in the projects that another person pursues. Its demands go not as far as the demands and commitments of personal love, but solidarity is affective sentiment inflected by the logic of justice – in a similar vein as Ricoeur argues that while the logic of love, the logic of superabundance, is distinct from the logic of justice, the logic of equivalence, they need to be dialectically related to each other (cf. Ricoeur 1996, 37).

5.4 Reconciling Critical Cosmopolitanism with Critical Patriotism: The Importance of Context

But where do these reflections on love and solidarity leave us with regard to the question of the meaning of patriotism for education and its relation to a cosmopolitan education? As we have learned from Crary, good moral judgment requires the education of (practical) sensitivities just as much for the patriot as it does for the

cosmopolitan. As we can learn from Honneth and Ricoeur, it is just as undesirable to teach patriotism as it is undesirable to teach cosmopolitanism purely driven by the logic of equivalence. Surely, we can and should aim to foster solidarity in a local just as much as in a global context. But what is the place then for patriotism in education? In which way does it retain a distinctive sense from cosmopolitanism? Much of what I have said so far could be read as suggesting a form of civic or even constitutional patriotism as suggested most prominently by Habermas, and it could be argued to be served well by underpinning it with national sentiment within appropriate constraints as suggested by John White (see above). In my prior work on cosmopolitanism, I have argued that the main critical impetus of a cosmopolitan stance is to commit ourselves to “non-reifying forms of boundedness” (Schumann 2012, p. 230) and to “taking responsibility for making the situational and historical contexts of our own claims and demands visible” (ibid.) as well as gaining an understanding for the contexts in which others might raise claims and demands toward us. This context sensitivity leads to an understanding of patriotism which I would like to spell out in terms of two main aspects which Papastephanou has importantly drawn attention to in her reconceptualization of a critical patriotism.

Papastephanou points out that much of the recent literature on patriotism has focused on what she terms an “internal patriotism” (2012, p. 191), stressing the importance of patriotic bounds and the “obligations to compatriots” (ibid.) whose enacting is assisted through patriotic affect and sentiment. Looking at recent publications on patriotism in philosophy of education, this inward-looking perspective appears indeed prominent. When Michael Hand discusses the benefits of patriotism as “a spur to civic duty” (Hand 2011, p. 25) and as “a source of pleasure” (ibid., p. 27), he considers patriotism only in terms of its relevance for the patriots of this *patria* but not in terms of its relationship to its outsiders. Only when discussing the negative effect of patriotism as an “impediment to civic judgment” (ibid., p. 29), the external perspective becomes indirectly activated in the example of the “immoral imperial excess [which] has been part of America’s presence in the world” (Miller; quoted in Hand 2011, p. 30).

Papastephanou in contrast argues for the necessity of emphasizing an outward-looking perspective for a critical patriotism (2013, p. 174) which “raises legitimate demands and protects the rights of a particular people without nationalist claims to superiority and expects its people to be fair to others” (2012, p. 191). While the focus of external patriotism lies “on debates about how one’s *patria* is or should be” (ibid., p. 190), in contrast to the cosmopolitan concern with the whole world, it is nevertheless compatible with a broader and critical cosmopolitanism and does not stand in contradiction to it. Eamonn Callan’s definition of patriotism as “a project of collective self-rule in which the achievement of domestic justice is combined with due regard for the rights and interests of others with whom the world is shared” (Callan 2006, p. 546) only superficially includes the external perspective. The external perspective on patriotism which Papastephanou claims runs deeper. It calls attention to the fact that our picture of our own *patria* also has to take into critical account outsiders’ points of view on it. Thus, critically reflecting on relations with national others becomes a visible demand and an integral part of patriotism

(compatible with a critical cosmopolitanism, nevertheless having a distinct character and function). It allows clarifying the political obligations that arise for the patriot because of her country's implication in the history of its outside, and it helps to make sense of the way in which patriotism can become politically activated, as in the wave of decolonization which started in the second part of the last century. Civic and constitutional patriotisms run the danger of underestimating "that national distinctiveness has had a specifically empowering role in people's resisting domination" (ibid., p. 195), and they do this through a depoliticized understanding of culture. Therefore, in addition to stressing and demonstrating the legitimacy of this outward dimension of patriotism, Papastephanou furthermore proposes to shift the focus of patriotism from the nation back to the *ethnos* (2013, p. 193ff.). "Nation" is not only easily conflated with the nation-state and carries negative associations to the historically predominant exclusivist and arrogant stance of nationalisms, but it also relates back etymologically to the Roman goddess of birth and origin (cf. ibid., p. 196). "Ethnos" in contrast can be shown to carry connotations which "bring together the stability of the common abode (home) with the mobility of flow and of a common navigation, the collective passage (homelessness) through a half-remembered, half-forgotten past and an unknown and uncertain future" (Papastephanou 2013, p. 197). In the idea of *ethnos* as "a group of people (or animals) cohabiting a specific land and having a specific way of living" (Ibid.), the notions of birth and hereditary lineage remain secondary. While Papastephanou remains wary of the pitfalls of *ethnos* as well, she argues that patriotism could "better betheorized by the term 'ethnic' rather than 'national' because the word *ethnos* comprises as yet unexplored counterfactual possibilities" (ibid., p. 198).

As I am writing this paper, I am myself in the process of relocating from Germany to Sweden for the next years to come. What might distinguish the love that I might find or grow toward my new country of residence, possibly becoming another *patria* for me, from the love that countless other Germans not living there nevertheless feel deeply toward Sweden? This German romance with Sweden is a love based on projective images not originating in but fostered through highly popular TV crime shows and romantic family dramas set in Sweden and produced for the sentimental desires of the German audience. The most blatant difference, as I see it, will not lie primarily in the inward, emotivist dimension of patriotism but in what Papastephanou characterizes as the outward dimension. Insofar as I am enjoying immediate benefits and profits from being a Swedish resident, I might have to consider other obligations to and claims by those countries with which Sweden has been historically entangled. And insofar as I come to enjoy and maybe love aspects of the specific way of living in this country, my transformed cultural identity might become politically activated in case of perceived threat to that which I might have come to cherish in ways that the German TV audience might not.

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