June 16: An old man shouting “Britain First” murders Jo Cox, a member of the British Parliament and a leading voice against Britain leaving the European Union.

June 23: Britain votes to leave the European Union.

Most of these events would have seemed unlikely just a few years ago. But with right-wing nationalism and ISIS-inspired terrorism on the rise before that fateful month, and with the string of horrors that have occurred after that month (including so many terrorist attacks in Europe and the Middle East, and the killings of so many unarmed black men and police officers in the United States), political violence and political upheaval have come to feel like the new normal. 2016 is an emotional turning point, and it may come to be remembered as the year that the Western world turned away from—or at least slowed down—its long march toward globalization and transnational entities such as the European Union.

What on earth is happening? And why is it happening in some of the most economically successful countries in the world?

It would behoove us all, therefore, to understand the two sides better. Even the Scandinavian countries, which have experienced little political violence in the last few years, are seeing surging support for right-wing parties with strongly anti-immigrant and anti-EU views.
In my previous essay for the Center for Humans and Nature, “How Capitalism Changes Conscience,” I discussed research using the World Values Survey, which shows that rising prosperity changes the values of the educated elite, particularly in capital cities and university towns. In an essay in *The American Interest* entitled, “When and Why Nationalism Beats Globalism,” I described how this new cosmopolitan elite then acts and talks in ways that insult, alienate, and energize many of their fellow citizens, particularly those who have a psychological predisposition to authoritarianism. The globalists strongly support open borders and high levels of immigration while (often) opposing efforts to encourage assimilation of the new arrivals. (“Integration” is usually acceptable, but “assimilation” is controversial.) The globalists generally support transnational organizations, even when these organizations require reductions in national sovereignty. The globalists frequently accuse their opponents of racism.

I drew on work by the political scientist Karen Stenner to show how these sorts of steps add up to a “normative threat”—a perceived threat to the existing moral order that activates the “authoritarian dynamic” in those who are predisposed to authoritarianism. So if you want to understand why nationalism and right-wing populism have grown so strong so quickly, you must start by looking at the actions of the globalists. In a sense, the globalists “started it.” They initiated the chain of events which have caused right-wing nationalist reactions in many countries. This is consistent with scholarship suggesting that conservative movements are usually best understood as reactions to waves of change promoted by progressives.

In my *American Interest* essay I offered advice (from Stenner) about how the globalists can manage nationalist reactions and reduce their intensity. Here are her key recommendations:

Paradoxically, then, it would seem that we can best limit intolerance of difference by parading, talking about, and applauding our sameness...Ultimately, nothing inspires greater tolerance from the intolerant than an abundance of common and unifying beliefs, practices, rituals, institutions, and processes.

Stenner and I were both offering advice to the globalists on how best to manage the “problem” of nationalism. But in this essay I would like to dig deeper into the moral worldviews of the two sides and take them seriously as moral worldviews worthy of respect. The conflict between globalists and nationalists is likely to be front and center in many Western nations for the next decade or more. It will probably grind on in Europe until the European Union either achieves its goal of “ever-greater union” in a way that garners widespread popular support, or else breaks up and returns to a trading block of nation-states with lower aspirations for union. And the battle will grind on in the United States long after Donald Trump leaves the national stage, as the United States becomes a “majority minority” country sometime between 2050 and 2060.

It would behoove us all, therefore, to understand the two sides better. What do globalists want, and why? What do nationalists want, and why? The answers will differ across nations based on their differing historical, economic, and demographic trajectories. Yet if we step back far enough, we will see networks of psychological traits and philosophical commitments—recognizable across countries and centuries—that predispose some people to join one team or the other. I’ll end this essay with a discussion of patriotism, including an approach to patriotism that might be endorsed by both sides in some countries.

**WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?**

Please read the following two paragraphs, and note how they make you feel. Does one “speak” to you? Does one strike you as being vaguely offensive?

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<tr>
<td>Imagine there’s no countries. It isn’t hard to do. Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion too. Imagine all the people, living life in peace. You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one. I hope someday you’ll join us, and the world will be as one.</td>
<td>It is not true that human activity can be released from all restraint. . . . Man’s characteristic privilege is that the bond he accepts is not physical but moral; that is, social. He is governed not by a material environment brutally imposed on him, but by a conscience superior to his own, the superiority of which he feels.</td>
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Figure 1. The LVD test

I call this the “LVD Test,” which stands for Lennon vs. Durkheim. John Lennon’s song “Imagine” is a good candidate for being the anthem of the globalists. It is progressive in that it looks forward to a utopian future. It is anti-nationalist and anti-religious. It is, in essence, anti-parochial. Anything that divides people into separate groups or identities is bad; removing borders and divisions is good.

Emile Durkheim was not a conservative, but as one of the founders of modern sociology he studied the forces that bound groups together and created communities in which individuals were willing to restrain...
themselves and live according to rules and norms. In his master work *Suicide* (from which the excerpt on the right is taken) he described the process by which individuals come to accept the constraint of external authority. Such constraint is essential for the creation of any society or institution. It is also generally good for people, Durkheim believed. Using only the primitive data available in the 1890s, Durkheim showed that people who are more tightly bound by ties of family, religion, and local community have lower rates of suicide. But when people escape from the constraints of community they live in a world of “anomie” or normlessness, and their rate of suicide goes up.

I use the LVD test when I lecture on political psychology because it is a quick and intuitively compelling way to begin a discussion about the ideal society. Compared to where your country is now, do you want to loosen it up or tighten it up? Do you want to make it more open to the outside, or do you think it’s all ready too open, and is in need of stronger borders and gates? A recent cover story in *The Economist* pointed to exactly this distinction as the new divide in the rich countries. The article quoted Stephan Shakespeare, a British pollster:

We are either “drawbridge up” or “drawbridge down”. Are you someone who feels your life is being encroached upon by criminals, gypsies, spongers, asylum-seekers, Brussels bureaucrats? Do you think the bad things will all go away if we lock the doors? Or do you think it’s a big beautiful world out there, full of good people, if only we could all open our arms and embrace each other?

That quote was written in 2005, but it could not be more timely in Europe or the United States today. The trends, fears, and alliances that brought us to the global turning point of 2016 were a long time in the making.

**WHAT IS HUMAN NATURE?**

The drawbridge quote points us to what is arguably the fundamental cause of the division between globalists and nationalists: their underlying theories of human nature. If you really believe that the world is “full of good people,” then why not lower the drawbridge and leave it down? But if you have a darker view of human nature and are inclined to see more threats in the world, then you’ll want to retain full control of the drawbridge, lower it selectively, and check people’s papers before you let them in. (The drawbridge metaphor works particularly well for Britain as it reconsiders its relationship with the European Union).

In his book *A Conflict of Visions*, the economist Thomas Sowell offers us a detailed and profound analysis of these two views of human nature. He calls them the “unconstrained vision” and the “constrained vision.” The key is whether you think that people need constraints to behave well, or whether constraints cause people to behave badly. Here are my paraphrases of Sowell, crafted to complement the Lennon and Durkheim quotes above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unconstrained Vision</th>
<th>Constrained Vision</th>
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<td>Human nature is malleable and can be improved—perhaps even perfected—if social conditions are improved. Anything is possible, if the artificial constraints placed on human beings can be removed. We must therefore free people from the petty tribal loyalties that cause mistrust and war.</td>
<td>Human beings need external structures or constraints in order to behave well, cooperate, and thrive. These external constraints include laws, institutions, customs, traditions, nations, and religions. These constraints are built up slowly and organically in local communities, but they can be destroyed quickly by radical reformers who don’t understand their value.</td>
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Figure 2. The two visions of human nature, from Thomas Sowell

Sowell explains his use of the term “vision” as a “pre-analytic cognitive act.” A vision is “what we sense or feel before we have constructed any systematic reasoning that could be called a theory.” Sowell’s use of a visual metaphor makes good psychological sense. When we open our eyes, we see the world effortlessly, without any awareness of the computation and guesswork that our visual system was doing behind the scenes. Reality presents itself to us as a fact, not an interpretation. Therefore, if someone else sees the physical world differently, it can be quite upsetting, as we learned in the Internet craze of 2015 when the world debated whether a dress in a photograph was black and blue or white and gold.

Sowell’s point is that social and political perception is like visual perception: social reality presents itself to us as fact, not as interpretation. People who hold the unconstrained vision believe that people are fundamentally good, and they think it is obvious that all have the same potential to succeed. Any inequality we find in the world is therefore obviously caused by institutionally entrenched racism, sexism, or some other form of injustice. This is why the unconstrained vision is usually held by people on the left; it underpins and gives rise to the progressive impulse to question, challenge, and replace existing institutions in the name of “social justice.”

But people who hold the constrained vision of hu-
man nature see things differently. They start from the presupposition that people are deeply flawed, egocentric, irrational, and prone to violence. They see peace and civil order as hard-won accomplishments; barbarians and chaos are always waiting to crash through the gates. Furthermore, it seems obvious to them that people are different—some are smarter, stronger, or harder working than others, and therefore the mere presence of inequality in the world is not proof of injustice. This is why the constrained vision is usually held by people on the right; it underpins and gives rise to the conservative impulse to maintain the status quo, even when that status quo contains inequalities, and even when the person him or herself seems (to a progressive) to be a victim of that status quo.

Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* describes the constrained view succinctly:

Society requires not only that the passions of individuals should be subjected, but that even in the mass and body, as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection...In this sense the restraints on men, as well as their liberties, are to be reckoned among their rights.9

**IS PAROCHIALISM GOOD OR BAD?**

Globalists see nationalists as hopelessly parochial. The word “parochial” means, literally, concerned with matters of the local parish, rather than the larger world. But as it is commonly used, the word is an insult. OxfordDictionaries.com offers these synonyms: narrow-minded, illiberal, intolerant, conservative. Indeed, English voters who favored Brexit were often mocked as “Little Englanders”—racist xenophobes who wanted to raise the drawbridge and turn their backs on the world, even if that would lead to breaking up Great Britain by losing Scotland and Northern Ireland. I do not think that most nationalists, or most people who favored Brexit, can be fairly called “racist.” I think that term is thrown around far too casually and used too superficially to describe anyone who disagrees with globalist policies on immigration. It is true, however, that neo-Nazis and others who focus on preserving the genes, blood, or race of the host country, rather than its culture and values, are always nationalists, never globalists. There is an ugly fringe on the far right of most nationalist parties, and the Internet has let them become much more visible in recent years.

But this does not mean that parochialism itself is bad, and some philosophers who hold the constrained view of human nature have offered a principled defense of it. Burke, also in his *Reflections*, noted the moral benefits of local attachments and the moral depravity of those who shun them:

To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country, and to mankind. The interest of that portion of social arrangement is a trust in the hands of all those who compose it; and as none but bad men would justify it in abuse, none but traitors would barter it away for their own personal advantage.10

Burke noted that “turbulent, discontented men of quality” who are “puffed up with personal pride and arrogance, generally despise their own order.”

Adam Smith offered a similar argument that parochialism and local commitments more generally are good things because they cause people to apply themselves in ways that can do the most good:

That wisdom which contrived the system of human affections...seems to have judged that the interest of the great society of mankind would be best promoted by directing the principal attention of each individual to that particular portion of it, which was most within the sphere both of his abilities and of his understanding.11

Burke and Smith are each offering a moral justification for parochialism—for caring more about those close to you than those far away. Burke and Smith doubted that people freed from local commitments and parochial identities would work as hard or care as much about distant others. Indeed, the repeated finding that conservatives in the United States give a larger percentage of their money and time to charity than do more cosmopolitan progressives seems to support their speculation. Most of the charity effect seems to be due to the greater religiosity of conservatives, rather than to conservative ideology per se; nonetheless, the fact that the active ingredient is involvement in local religious communities (whether right-leaning or left-leaning) seems to bear out Burke’s conjecture that “little platoons,” whatever their other effects, pull us out of ourselves and toward others.12
IS PATRIOTISM GOOD OR BAD?

Given their fundamental disagreements over human nature and the moral value of parochialism, it is inevitable that Globalists and Nationalists would disagree about the moral value of patriotism.

Most definitions of patriotism refer to positive feelings about one’s country (love, devotion, pride) and a sense of duty or obligation to support or protect it. Patriotism is therefore a form of parochialism—it is a commitment to a local and circumscribed group instead of adopting a universal or “citizen of the world” identity. This is why Globalists are often critical of patriotism, and why they sometimes say things about patriotism, or about their country, that Nationalists perceive to be disloyal at best, and treasonous at worst.

When a country is attacked by a foreign enemy, there is almost always a surge of patriotism. People have a strong urge to come together, and many of them reach for the flag. Americans saw this happen after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and again after the Al Qaeda attacks of September 11, 2001. Britain saw this happen at the start of both World Wars, and again after the Al Qaeda attacks on the London transport system in 2005. In the wake of those terrorist attacks, British intellectuals debated whether some form of patriotism was compatible with progressivism.

George Monbiot, a leading thinker of the British left, took a strong position against the moral value of patriotism. In an essay titled “The New Chauvinism,” Monbiot rejected what he called “an emerging national consensus,” which included some left-of-center writers, that “what we need in Britain is a renewed sense of patriotism.”

Monbiot granted that a widely shared sense of patriotism might make British citizens (including Muslim citizens) less likely to attack each other, but he made the good counter-point that patriotism makes the state more inclined to attack other countries, for it knows it is likely to command the support of its people. If patriotism were not such a powerful force in the US, could Bush have invaded Iraq?

Monbiot then asserted that “internationalists” (i.e., globalists) should use a strictly utilitarian framework to resolve moral questions because internationalists believe that all lives are of equal worth. He then argued that from this utilitarian perspective, patriotism is almost always unethical:

When confronted with a conflict between the interests of your country and those of another, patriotism, by definition, demands that you should choose those of your own. Internationalism, by contrast, means choosing the option which delivers most good or least harm to people, regardless of where they live. It tells us that someone living in Kinshasa is of no less worth than someone living in Kensington, and that a policy which favours the interests of 100 British people at the expense of 101 Congolese is one we should not pursue. Patriotism, if it means anything, tells us we should favour the interests of the 100 British people. How do you reconcile this choice with liberalism? How, for that matter, do you distinguish it from racism?

This is the kind of statement that turns many people away from Globalism. Most people believe that their own government should place their welfare above that of foreigners, just as most people believe that their own spouse, mother, friend, boss, or teammate should care more about them than about a stranger far away. The willingness to erase local loyalties and obligations in order to maximize overall utility makes sense in John Lennon’s imaginary world, but it is sacrilege from a Durkheimian perspective in which people have distinctive duties tied to their particular roles and relationships. And if Burke and Smith are correct, then universalism won’t even deliver the benefits in reality that it promises in the abstract.

To be a nationalist, in America or in Europe, is to be frequently lectured to and called a rube by the globalist elite. The globalists assert things to be obvious and indisputable facts (e.g., “diversity is our strength”) that seem to nationalists to be obvious and indisputable falsehoods. The globalists explain away the nationalists’ policy preferences as resulting both from lack of education and from selfishness (i.e., not wanting immigrants taking scarce resources from the National Health Service). The globalists assemble panels of economists and other academics, and sometimes even movie stars, to argue their case. This is why Brexit leader Michael Gove said, “I think people in this country have had enough of experts.” This is why Donald Trump’s attacks on “political correctness” have won him the gratitude of so many working-class and rural white voters. Even if you are a globalist, can you see why nationalists are often full of seething resentment? Can you see why people who feel a deep emotional attachment to their country and want to preserve its
sovereignty and culture are angry at people who tell them that they are wrong to do so?

So let us take another look at patriotism. Are there forms that might be acceptable to both globalists and to nationalists?

**PATRIOTISM RECONSIDERED**

As the conflict between globalists and nationalists has moved to center stage in many countries in recent months, several commentators have offered insightful new thinking about patriotism and nationalism. The key question all have addressed is: how can people show love and loyalty to their nation in ways that bring benefits to their nation while minimizing the harm done both to immigrants within the country and to citizens of other countries?

The economist Larry Summers responded to the Brexit vote with an article titled: “Voters Deserve Responsible Nationalism not Reflex Globalism.” As an economist who is firmly convinced of the value of international trade, he acknowledged that big trade agreements, such as NAFTA, have often failed to live up to the hype that had been used to sell them to voters. He noted that “the willingness of people to be intimidated by experts into supporting cosmopolitan outcomes appears for the moment to have been exhausted.” He urged Western nations to adopt a new approach that directly rejects Monbiot’s universalism:

A new approach has to start from the idea that the basic responsibility of government is to maximise the welfare of citizens, not to pursue some abstract concept of the global good... What is needed is a responsible nationalism—an approach where it is understood that countries are expected to pursue their citizens’ economic welfare as a primary objective but where their ability to harm the interests of citizens elsewhere is circumscribed. International agreements would be judged not by how much is harmonised or by how many barriers are torn down but whether citizens are empowered.

Examining immigration rather than trade, the philosopher David Miller just published a book with the timely title *Strangers in Our Midst*. Like Summers, he concludes that states do have special duties to care for their own citizens, even as they attempt to act humanely toward others. In the end he recommends that the immigration policies of liberal democracies be guided by four values: weak cosmopolitanism, national self-determination, fairness, and social integration. By “weak cosmopolitanism” he means a broadly humanitarian orientation in which “we must always consider the effects of our actions on all those who will bear the consequences, no matter who they are or whether they are in any way connected to us,” yet at the same time, he believes we are not obligated to treat the claims and interests of non-citizens as equal to those of citizens. Miller specifically rejects as overly demanding and unrealistic a “strong cosmopolitanism” in which all human beings have equal claim on each nation’s care, protection, and money.

And finally, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks wrote a column about the Globalist-Nationalist debate titled “We Take Care of Our Own.” He summarized my American Interest essay and then improved upon it by showing how America in particular can easily formulate a patriotism acceptable to both sides. He notes that America, unlike most other countries, was founded as a universalist nation. It has long been a source of pride that America takes people from many countries and unites them behind American ideals. Like Stenner, Brooks criticizes “the forces of multiculturalism” for damaging America’s longstanding commitment to cultural union and assimilation. This damage left an opening, he says, for Donald Trump’s unwelcoming nationalism, which has more in common with the kind of “European blood and soil” nationalism that is often overtly racist.

Brooks concludes that:

The way out of this debate is not to go nationalist or globalist. It’s to return to American nationalism—espoused by people like Walt Whitman—which combines an inclusive definition of who is Our Own with a fervent commitment to assimilate and Take Care of them.

Brooks’ essay was published on July 15, 2016, six days before Donald Trump gave his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention in which he painted a dark vision of America going to hell in a dangerous world. Trump’s nationalism was all about “us” versus “them” and how we can kick them out or otherwise defeat them. It was the opposite of Brooks’ recommendation; it was what Summers would call “irresponsible nationalism.”

The Democrats, in contrast, in their convention, did exactly what Brooks urged. It is to be expected that the Democrats would feature speakers from all races, each waving the American flag symbolically or literally; that’s normal convention showmanship. But
for many viewers, the emotional highlight of the week occurred on Thursday, July 28, 2016, just before Hil-
lary Clinton was introduced by her daughter, Chelsea. The speaker before Chelsea was Khizr Khan, an im-
migrant from Pakistan whose son Humayun joined the U.S. Army and fought in Iraq. Humayun died a hero’s death, having stepped forward to intercept an approaching car loaded with explosives. He saved the soldiers under his command and possibly many more on the base they were guarding. His father addressed the convention and the country:

Tonight we are honored to stand here as par-
ents of Captain Humayun Khan and as patriotic American Muslims—with undivided loyalty to our country. Like many immigrants, we came to this country empty-handed. We believed in American democracy; that with hard work and goodness of this country, we could share in and contribute to its blessings.

Then, directly addressing his remarks to Donald Trump, who had said he would try to restrict Muslim immigration to America:

Let me ask you [Mr. Trump]: have you even read the United States constitution? I will gladly lend you my copy. [He pulls out his copy from his jacket pocket.] In this document, look for the words “liberty” and “equal protection of law.” Have you ever been to Arlington Cemetery? Go look at the graves of brave patriots who died defending the United States of America. You will see all faiths, genders, and ethnic-
ities. You have sacrificed nothing and no one.17

Khan’s embrace of America, its values, and its con-
stitution was a stirring example of a kind of patriotism that can unite most nationalists and most globalists. It celebrates “us” without denigrating “them.” It is wel-
coming and assimilationist. This approach may not work in countries that define themselves by the histo-
ary of a single ethnic group. But with some tinkering it should work in Britain (which can take credit for having pioneered so many liberal institutions), in France (whose revolution was one of ideas and rights), and in other countries that have long traditions of openness, or of taking in refugees.

Diversity is difficult and often divisive. It’s not shades of skin color that divide; it is the perception that people in other groups have different values, and that they behave in ways that violate our moral world-
dview. Among the most important divisions within many Western nations is now the division between
globalists and nationalists. The two sides have many real differences that must be worked out by a long and difficult political process. But political disagreements may become more tractable if both sides can under-
stand each other a little better, and if both sides share a love of their country that is both passionate and—to varying degrees, perhaps—welcoming.


NOTES

tionalism-beats-globalism/.
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