

Cosmopolitan hope

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COSMOPOLITAN HOPE¹

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‘The problems of the world cannot possibly be solved by skeptics or cynics whose horizons are limited by the obvious realities. We need men who can dream of things that never were and ask, why not?’ (attributed to John F. Kennedy)

‘[T]he world is not in itself inhospitable to political justice and its good. Our social world might have been different and there is hope for those at another time and place.’ John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*.²

§1 Introduction

The term ‘cosmopolitanism’ denotes various interconnected projects. Many arguments in the literature raise doubts about the relevance of national

¹ I would like to thank Jeremy Moss for his helpful comments. I would also like to thank audiences who discussed this paper with me at the Birkbeck Philosophy Society and the York Political Theory Workshop; in particular, Sue Mendus and Matt Matravers.

² John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 38.

and state boundaries to questions of justice: these questions connect with questions about the scope, assignment, and nature of cosmopolitan duties of justice. Cutting across these debates are discussions about the content of principles of global justice, raising questions about the universality of the values realized by these principles. And then there are various detailed questions about the nature of the institutions fit to deliver global justice.

These strands of cosmopolitan thought are important and flourishing. However, none of them directly addresses an objection to cosmopolitanism common outside of academic circles, which is that although the cosmopolitan ideal is acceptable in theory, it will never be realised in practice: cosmopolitans who hope for the realisation of this ideal are well-meaning but deluded people who lack a proper grasp of how the realities of human nature and social interaction limit what is achievable in political practice. The objection is that even if the moral arguments for cosmopolitanism work, hope for a cosmopolitan future is naive and misguided. I shall refer to this as the 'hard nosed' objection.

The hard nosed objection can be made in response to any ideal-oriented political project. Although my concern here is with cosmopolitanism, it will help to fix our thoughts to consider the objection as expressed against communism by Erwin Goldstine in Philip Roth's novel *I Married a Communist*.

... a person with an average intelligence cannot take this story, this fairy tale of Communism, and swallow it. 'We will do something that will be wonderful ...' But we know what our brother is, don't we? He's a shit. And we know what our friend is, don't we? He's a semi-shit. And we are semi-shits. So how can it be wonderful? Not even cynicism, not

even skepticism, just ordinary powers of human observation tell us *that is not possible*.³

Substitute ‘cosmopolitanism’ for ‘communism’ in this passage and we have the objection I shall address. Despite Goldstine’s claims to the contrary, the hard nosed objection is a subtle form of scepticism about cosmopolitan justice. What the hard nosed objector is sceptical about is not the moral requirement to seek global justice that lies at the heart of cosmopolitanism. The hard nosed objector accepts (or, at least, does not reject) this requirement and instead questions - often in knowing, world weary tones – whether it is reasonable to hope that the state of affairs aimed at by requirement will be realised.

There are two ways to cash out this objection. First, that the cosmopolitan objective is not a *legitimate* object of hope; and second, that cosmopolitan hope, even if legitimate, is *unsound*. *Pace* the objector, I shall argue that cosmopolitan hope is both legitimate and sound; that is, I shall argue that cosmopolitan hope is consistent with and permitted by the cosmopolitan requirement. This is sufficient to rebut the hard nosed objection. However, I shall also sketch two arguments for the stronger thesis that retaining commitment to the cosmopolitan ideal *requires* cosmopolitan hope, which means that the hard nosed objection cannot be made at all. Let me begin by laying out the cosmopolitan ideal, and the moral requirement that accompanies it.

§2 The Cosmopolitan Ideal

The ideal I take to be common to all forms of cosmopolitanism is this:

³ Philip Roth, *I Married a Communist* (London: Vintage, 1999), p. 95.

The cosmopolitan ideal: A world in which some fundamental principles of justice govern relations between all persons in all places.

The moral requirement that accompanies the cosmopolitan ideal, and which is common to all forms of cosmopolitanism, is this:

The cosmopolitan requirement: any commitment to some fundamental principles of justice at the domestic level ought to be extended so as to generate principles of justice with cosmopolitan scope.⁴

The objective of cosmopolitan hope is the achievement of the cosmopolitan ideal of global justice through action fit to satisfy the demands of the cosmopolitan requirement. What cosmopolitans hope for is the extension of commitments to justice at the domestic level (however these commitments are generated, and whatever their content) to the global level so as to create a world governed by principles of global justice. The hard nosed objector aims to prise apart acceptance of the cosmopolitan requirement (which she endorses, or at least does not reject) and commitment to – as evinced in hope for - the cosmopolitan ideal: the hard nosed objector accepts the demands of the cosmopolitan requirement but rejects hope for the cosmopolitan ideal as naive and misguided. The hard nosed objector is not an outright sceptic about all aspects of

⁴ This formulation owes much to Simon Caney's statement of the 'principal cosmopolitan claim', 'International Distributive Justice', *Political Studies*, Vol. XLIX, No. 5, 2001, pp. 974-97, p. 977.

cosmopolitanism: she allows that we have the obligations stated in the cosmopolitan requirement, but thinks that these obligations can and ought to be defended as such without false hope for the world of global justice constitutive of the cosmopolitan ideal. The hard nosed objector is not a sceptic about the cosmopolitan obligations that we owe to one another, or the cosmopolitan rights that we hold against one another. Rather, the focus of the hard nosed objector's scepticism is the prospects for the creation of a cosmopolitan world order through the performance of the obligations laid down by the cosmopolitan requirement.

The form of cosmopolitan hope I shall defend can now be stated. Cosmopolitan hope is hope for the realisation of the cosmopolitan ideal: the objective of cosmopolitan hope is a world in which some fundamental principles of justice governing relations between individuals and groups at the domestic level also govern such relations at the global level. To hope for the cosmopolitan ideal is to hope that persons extend their commitment to some fundamental principles of justice at the domestic level to the global level, as demanded by the cosmopolitan requirement. The hard nosed objection is that hope for the cosmopolitan ideal, and the concomitant hope for the extension of commitment demanded by the cosmopolitan requirement, is naive because it fails to take seriously facts about the world which make the achievement of this state through action fit to satisfy the requirement impossible or unlikely, even though the requirement itself is legitimate. In that case, cosmopolitan hope is either illegitimate (because the cosmopolitan objective is not a fit object of hope), or unsound (because one or more components of cosmopolitan hope must be rejected). By way of addressing

the first version of the hard nosed objection I shall give a general account of the nature of hope.

§3 Hope

Cosmopolitan hope is hope for a specific objective as laid out in the cosmopolitan ideal. Let me outline in general terms what it is to have a specific hope before considering whether the cosmopolitan ideal yields a legitimate objective for specific hope.⁵

Specific hope is hope aimed at an objective which exists in the future, is believed to be good by the hoper, and is desired by the hoper in virtue of this belief. Furthermore, hope generates a disposition to act so as to make the realisation of hope's objective more probable whenever possible, all else being equal. Without this disposition, a hoper lacks the practical commitment to her objective that is characteristic of hope: we would think it odd to describe a person as hoping for an objective if she fails to act so as to realise the objective when presented with a real opportunity to do so.

The motivation to pursue an objective that issues from hope must be distinguished from motivational states with different provenances. The motivation to pursue hope's objective consists of a desire for the objective in virtue of the hoper's belief that the objective is good. In contrast, a motivation to pursue an objective which does not issue from hope (if it is to be characterised in terms of belief and desire at all) can consist of a desire for

⁵ For a good general account of different forms of hope, and useful specific accounts of how the concept of hope figures in the work of Immanuel Kant, Ernst Bloch, and Gabriel Marcel, see J.J. Godfrey, *A Philosophy of Human Hope* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987).

the objective in spite of the agent's belief that the objective is bad. For example, if I desire a glass of wine and I believe that there is a bottle on the shelf, I will be motivated to open the bottle and pour a glass, all else being equal; and I may be so motivated despite my belief that drinking wine will do me harm. However, with respect to hope, it must be the case that I desire what I hope for because I believe it to be good: we do not hope for objectives we believe to be bad (even if we are nevertheless motivated to pursue them).

A further component of specific hope is a belief about the future in which its objective exists. This belief can be characterised in two ways: (1) that the objective is possible; (2) that the objective is probable. The success of the hard nosed objection to cosmopolitan hope (on the first interpretation of it) turns on which of these descriptions of the belief about the future in which hope's objective exists is accurate.

On the first 'possibility' interpretation, specific hope involves the belief that the objective of hope is both logically and physically possible.

Commitment to the logical possibility of hope's objective provides a minimal constraint on the content of the belief about the future in which hope's objective exists: all it rules out is hope for an objective which contains a formal contradiction (for example, hope that I both pass and fail the exam).

Commitment to the physical possibility of hope's objective is a more demanding constraint. What I mean by the claim that an objective is 'physically possible' is that, given what we know about the world and the agents inhabiting it, that objective could exist in the world.⁶ Thus,

⁶ For more on the senses of possibility appealed to here see the entry on 'possibility' in Ted Honderich (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 706-7.

commitment to this constraint ensures that the hoper believes that her objective could be realised in the world she inhabits. This constraint means that the hoper believes that the future in which a hoped for objective exists is *her* future. Without this constraint a person could counter intuitively be said to hope for an objective she believes to be logically possible, but which she believes could not be realised in the actual world. To illustrate, consider a person who believes that it would be a good thing to live forever, desires this for herself in virtue of this belief, and is disposed to do things she believes will increase the odds of her living forever, whenever possible, even though she knows that, *qua* human, she cannot live forever. On the account of hope just suggested, this person is not accurately described as hoping to live forever. Although the proposition towards which her attitudes of belief and desire are directed - 'that I should live forever' – involve no logical contradiction, the state described by this proposition - that of eternal life - is not physically possible, given human biology. Rather than describing this person as hoping for everlasting life, we would describe her as wishing for or fantasising about it.

On the second 'probability' interpretation, specific hope involves not only the belief that the objective of hope is possible, but furthermore the belief that it is probable. This interpretation should be rejected on the grounds that it has the unwelcome implication that hope collapses either into blind faith, or into optimism, and there is good reason to think that hope is distinct from both these attitudes towards future objectives. Let me explain.

There are two ways in which the judgement that hope's objective is probable could be supported. First, by reference to the hoper's belief that she has evidence to support this probability judgement, and second, by reference

to a non-evidence related belief held by the hoper (for example, a belief in divine providence). If the hoper's judgement that her objective is probable is supported by an evidence-related belief, then her hope takes the form of optimism.⁷ The optimist believes that the future is likely to bring to pass those things she desires and believes to be good; the optimist believes, let us say, that the probability of the objectives she desires is 0.5 or more. The optimist's reason for believing this is that she believes she has evidence that it is probable that her desires will be fulfilled. The evidence that the optimist marshals to support her judgements about the future sometimes turns out to be nothing more than a projection of her own good will on to the world: optimists are often nothing but wishful thinkers. However, that is besides the point. The optimist believes that she has evidence for judgements about the future, regardless of whether the evidence she believes herself to have is good evidence (or evidence at all): in virtue of the evidence she believes that she has, the optimist thinks that the future is laid out in a way that is likely to satisfy her desires for the objectives about which she is optimistic. In contrast, if the hoper's judgement that her objective is probable is supported by a non-evidence related belief, then her hope takes the form of blind faith. Here, the hoper judges that the probability of her objective is 0.5 or more, and supports this judgement by reference to, for example, her belief in the existence of a benevolent god.

Neither of these characterisations of hope is satisfactory, as can be seen by considering the following example. Imagine a mother whose teenage daughter has been missing for six months who retains hope that one day she will return. The mother does not think that the return of her daughter is

⁷ See Margaret Boden, 'Optimism', *Philosophy*, Vol. XLI, No. 158, 1966, pp. 291-303.

probable, which is not to say that she thinks it is improbable either. Rather, she makes no judgements about its probability. That is what makes her situation so painful: she simply does not know. The mother does not make predictions about what the future contains in her hoping: she does not 'pocket the future in advance'.⁸ It might be that she keeps open the possibility of her daughter's return without calculating the odds because she has no evidence which enables her to make this calculation, and she is agnostic about the existence of a benevolent god. However, the point is that her failure to make probability judgements about her daughter's return does not prevent her from hoping for it. That the mother makes no judgements about the probability of her daughter's return, but is accurately described as hoping for her daughter's return, militates against any account of hope which makes judgements of the probability of hope's objectives a necessary component of hope, whether supported by evidence-related beliefs or not.⁹

Refraining from judging the probability of an objective is, I think, characteristic of all forms of specific hope: specific hope is characterised by a

⁸ Philip Stratton-Lake, *The Future of Reason: Kant's conception of the finitude of thinking*, PhD thesis, University of Essex, 1990, p. 129.

⁹ A qualification is necessary here. In order for the mother to keep alive hope for her daughter's return it must be the case that she does not judge her daughter's return to be contracertain or certain. The judgement that her daughter's return is contracertain - that is, has a probability of 0 - is inconsistent with the belief that her daughter's return is physically possible. And the judgement that her daughter's return is certain - that is, has a probability of 1 - is characteristic not of hope for an objective, but rather of expectation or anticipation. In that case, judgements about the probability of hope's objectives are constitutive of hope, but only to the extent that the probability objective is not judged to be 0 or 1. (I shall suppress this qualification in the subsequent discussion).

radical uncertainty with respect to its objectives, which shows that it is a mistake to characterise it in terms of probability judgements about these objectives. Of course, specific hope can be -- and often is -- accompanied by blind faith or optimistic judgements about the probability of hope's objective. But these judgements are not components of hope.

This fact about hope explains why pessimism with respect to an objective differs from hopelessness with respect to that objective. Pessimism with respect to a specific objective, like optimism, is either premised on the pessimist's belief that she has evidence to support her belief that the objective she is pessimistic about is improbable, or on a non-evidence related belief (perhaps the pessimist is just a misery guts, or believes in the existence of a malevolent god). In contrast, a loss of hope with respect to an objective does not depend on judgements about the objective's improbability; indeed, it is a feature of specific hope that it often becomes more intense the less probable the objective is believed by the hoper to be. In that case, pessimism about an objective and hope for that objective are consistent: hope can be retained even in the bleakest of circumstances. A loss of specific hope only attends the hoper's judgement that her objective is impossible, or contraindicated. Upon making such a judgement the hoper despairs of realising her objective.

Given this account of specific hope it is clear that the cosmopolitan ideal yields a legitimate objective for specific hope. The cosmopolitan objective exists in the future, and is believed to be good and possible by cosmopolitans who desire it in virtue of their belief that it is good, and yields a disposition in them to act so as to make the realisation of the cosmopolitan objective more likely, all else being equal. Furthermore, and importantly, it is

not the case that those who hope for the cosmopolitan objective must be optimistic about this objective.¹⁰ The upshot of the discussion in this section is that hard nosed objectors who claim that cosmopolitan hope is misguided because the cosmopolitan ideal is *unlikely* to be realised make a misplaced objection. Cosmopolitans can be, and often are, deeply pessimistic about the prospects for realising the cosmopolitan ideal, and yet continue to hope for it. To reach these cosmopolitans the hard nosed objector must claim that although cosmopolitan hope is legitimate insofar as it yields an objective which can be hoped for, such hope is not sound.

§4 Is Cosmopolitan Hope Sound?

Specific hope has four fundamental components.

- (1) a belief that hope's objective is possible;
- (2) a belief that hope's objective is good;
- (3) a desire for hope's objective in virtue of the belief that it is good;
- (4) a disposition to act so as to make hope's objective more probable (all else being equal) yielded by (1) - (3).

There are conditions related to each of these components according to which a specific hope can be judged to be sound. The first condition relates to the belief that the objective of hope is good: a hard nosed objector might claim that this provides a component of sound hope if and only if this belief is

¹⁰ See, for example, Darrel Moellendorf, *Cosmopolitan Justice* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002), p. 176.

true. So, let us turn to the ways in which a belief about the goodness of any hope's objectives could be false.

There are some objectives of hope -- malformed objectives -- which, we think, ought not to be hoped for. Some hopes are plain spiteful and malicious: hope for an innocent person to come to some harm. Others might be well-grounded but still nefarious in content: hope for an old enemy to contract a fatal disease, or to die poor and lonely. Still others are personal and born of unhappiness: hope to be run over by a bus, or killed in a plane crash. We think that a person with such hopes would be better off without them. This intuitive judgement can be cashed out in at least three ways:

- (i) that the hope's objective is *morally objectionable*
- (ii) that the hoper would *be a better person* without these hopes
- (iii) that the hoper would *do better* without these hopes

The first interpretation (i) imports moral and ethical values into the judgements of malformed objectives. The second interpretation (ii) translates these judgements of the objective into judgements of the person who hopes for the objective. The third interpretation (iii) treats malformed objectives as instrumental impediments to the achievement of the hoper's other goals and aims; here, hope's objectives are judged by criteria of instrumental rationality. The three interpretations are consistent if it is the case that a person does better only when she is better - that is, if instrumental success in achieving goals and aims matters only when those goals and aims are morally or ethically good – and if the moral quality of a person can be judged by the moral quality of what she hopes for.

Before considering how these criticisms might apply to cosmopolitan hope it is worth noting that criticisms which focus on the dispositional component of hope in (4) collapse into one or another of the criticisms of the goodness of hope's objectives as laid out in (i)-(iii). In criticism of the disposition to act so as to make the cosmopolitan objective probable (4), it might be claimed

- (a) that this disposition harms the hoper, or
- (b) that this disposition harms others

If (a) is claimed then only (ii) or (iii) above can be intended: the harm that the disposition causes the hoper can only be moral harm, or harm to the hoper's capacities to pursue whatever other ends she has. If (b) is claimed, then what we are offered is an interpretation of (i) above. So, in dismissing criticisms of the first component of cosmopolitan hope as they appear in (i), (ii), and (iii) I shall also be dismissing criticisms of the fourth component of cosmopolitan hope (and I will not return to these criticisms later).

Is the cosmopolitan objective malformed in any of these ways? With respect to (iii), it is hard to see how hope for the cosmopolitan ideal must impede any cosmopolitan hoper's pursuit of their other aims. Of course, we can dream up an example of an obsessed cosmopolitan who spends day and night trying to convince people to extend their commitment to basic rights beyond their domestic context by trying to show how reasoning about rights in the domestic context must transfer to the global context. But what is wrong here has nothing to do with the content of the hoper's objective, and everything to do with the manner in which it is pursued. If the hard nosed

objection to the soundness of cosmopolitan hope relates to the moral quality of the cosmopolitan objective, then it must be cashed out via the claims in (i) and/or (ii).

To object as in (i) that the cosmopolitan objective is malformed according to moral criteria requires an argument to show that there is something morally objectionable about a situation in which people extend their commitment to principles of justice in a local context to a global context, whatever these principles are, so as to create a cosmopolitan world of global justice. If we are of a virtue ethics bent, this claim can be interpreted so as to yield the putative hard nosed judgement informed by (ii) that a person who hopes for the cosmopolitan objective would be a better person without this hope.

The problem with both of these interpretations is simply that they are not available to the hard nosed objector. As I made clear in the Introduction, the hard nosed objector does not question the legitimacy of the cosmopolitan moral requirement; to return to Erwin Goldstine, his claim is that he and humanity are “shits” or “semi-shits”, and that this prevents them from realising a “wonderful” political state. What the hard nosed objector doubts is whether hope for the cosmopolitan ideal to be realised through action fit to satisfy the requirement is well placed, whereas the objection under consideration addresses the moral quality of the objective of cosmopolitan hope. Given that the hard nosed objector accepts that the cosmopolitan requirement is a legitimate moral requirement, she cannot object to cosmopolitan hope by questioning the morality of its objective as aimed at by the requirement.

The next possibility for interpretation of the hard nosed objection is that it relates to the belief that the cosmopolitan objective is logically and

physically possible. Criteria for the soundness of this component relate to the truth of the belief: a hard nosed objector might insist that this belief must be true in order for the hope to be sound.

To believe that an objective is physically possible is to believe that it is logically possible and that it could be realised in the actual world. So, to show that belief in the cosmopolitan objective is false requires showing either that it contains or entails a logical contradiction, or that it could not exist in the actual world. If either of these things can be established, then the hard nosed objector can reject cosmopolitan hope on the grounds that it involves a false belief. It is clear that the cosmopolitan objective does not contain or entail a logical contradiction. In that case, the hard nosed objector must show that the cosmopolitan objective could not be realised in the actual world, despite its achievement in other possible worlds which differ from this one. How might this case be argued?

Here, hard nosed objectors tend to invite reflection on history and human nature. Surely, they argue, any honest and sober reflection on the course of human history shows that the belief that human beings as they are could overcome all the enmities and hatreds that divide them in order to extend their local commitment to justice so as to achieve the cosmopolitan ideal is false (remember Erwin Goldstine). Regardless of what is true in other possible worlds, in this one the record of history shows that it is not possible for people to transform their reasoning about justice in the way stated by the cosmopolitan objective.

There are at least three reflections which should lead us to be suspicious of such arguments. First, although it is true that human history is bathed in blood and hatred, it is also true that great progress has been made

with respect to the extension of the scope of principles of justice so as to include groups of people who were hitherto oppressed or despised. In many places slavery has been abolished, women have the vote, homosexuality is not a crime, and religion can be practised freely. Of course, it might be objected that these inclusions do not really represent progress, but we can safely ignore this response. Second, even if such progress had not been made there would still not be grounds for asserting the physical impossibility of the cosmopolitan objective. Human beings are malleable: their past practices do not determine their future ones. Finally, cosmopolitans can accept that human history makes realisation of the cosmopolitan ideal overwhelmingly unlikely, but as we saw in §3, pessimism with respect to the prospects for an objective is quite consistent with hope for that objective.

The final form that an objection to the soundness of cosmopolitan hope might take relates to the desire for its objective in virtue of the belief that the objective is good.¹¹ A *prima facie* attractive way to think about criteria of soundness according to which the desire for any hope's objective is to be judged relates to the extent to which it harmonises with the proper purposes and functioning of human beings: the desire component of cosmopolitan hope is sound if and only if this desire promotes – or is at least consistent with – the proper purposes of human beings.

¹¹ There are real problems raised by the question of whether a belief in the goodness of an objective can generate a desire for it, or whether the motivation to pursue a good objective requires an extant desire for the objective believed to be good. But this is a problem for anyone interested in the relationship between commitment to a moral ideal or principle and the motivation to act so as to realise that ideal or satisfy that principle. I make no comment on this tangled web here.

A hard nosed objection taking this form would have to show that desiring the cosmopolitan objective conflicts with proper human purposes, *even when* the content of the objective is not morally objectionable (so as to avoid the collapse of this objection into the one considered earlier which relates to the moral quality of hope's objective). The cosmopolitan objective is a state in which persons extend their commitment to some fundamental local principles of justice to the global level. It might be objected that any person who desires this objective has a conception of humanity as possessed of, and capable of exercising, their reason in the same way, so as to extend their local commitments to principles of justice in order to come to accept the same global principles of justice. It could be argued that this is in conflict with the proper purposes and functioning of a human being because part of what it is for any person to exercise her reason correctly is for her to accept that others may legitimately exercise their reason in a different way. So, the hard nosed objector might claim that to desire the cosmopolitan objective is to desire something which must be rejected by the hoper when she exercises her reason correctly. If we think that the correct use of reason is part of any account of proper human functioning and purposes, then a desire for the cosmopolitan objective is unsound.

One way in which this objection can be made in more detail is with a version of Rawls' 'burdens of judgement' argument for acceptance of the permanence of reasonable pluralism.¹² Rawls argues that part of what it is for a person to exercise her reason correctly with respect to questions of justice is for her to accept that everyone's reason operates under 'burdens of judgement'. The burdens of judgement are particularly weighty with respect

to political matters (such as those addressed by cosmopolitanism), thinks Rawls, 'in view of the very great complexity of the questions raised, the often impressionistic nature of the evidence, and the severity of the conflicts they commonly address'.¹³ The existence of these burdens means that we should not expect the free exercise of reason by all persons to lead each of them to reach the same conclusions on moral, religious, and philosophical questions as they bear on their political judgements: they might, but this would be a result of coincidence rather than as a result of the conclusions they come to share having been uniquely determined by reason. Rawls' argument is that the correct exercise of reason by a person will lead her to accept that the correct exercise of reason by others need not deliver agreement between them on various important questions. Making the hard nosed objection in these terms, the argument is that the desire for the cosmopolitan objective conflicts with the demands of reason. The burdens of judgement make it unreasonable to expect that all persons should employ the same method of reasoning to reach agreement on global principles of justice. If we think it is an important part of proper human functioning that reason is exercised correctly, then desire for the cosmopolitan objective makes cosmopolitan hope unsound.

This version of the objection makes an illicit move. It is not necessary for realisation of the cosmopolitan objective through satisfaction of the cosmopolitan requirement that all persons employ *the same* method of reasoning to support global principles of justice. Rather, the cosmopolitan

¹² I do not attribute the following argument to Rawls.

¹³ John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, p. 36. See also *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 54-7.

requirement states that each person ought to extend commitments to local principles of justice to justify the same principles at the global level, whatever the reasoning they use to support this commitment. It is consistent with realisation of the cosmopolitan ideal through this requirement that there is a plurality of methods of reasoning about global justice, and desire for the cosmopolitan objective carries no more of a requirement for uniformity than the ideal that is realised when the objective is achieved. Given that the cosmopolitan requirement governs the relationship between reasoning about justice in local and global contexts, if reasoning in local contexts is diverse, then the cosmopolitan requirement does not demand uniformity of reasoning to support global principles. All it demands is the extension in each local context of reasoning-generated commitments to local principles of justice to the global level. In that case, there can be as many paths to global principles of justice as there are local contexts.

§5 Is Cosmopolitan Hope Required?

The argument thus far has shown that cosmopolitan hope is consistent with, and thus permitted by, commitment to the cosmopolitan requirement: §3 established the legitimacy of the cosmopolitan ideal as an objective of hope, and §4 that cosmopolitan hope is sound. However, in response to the hard nosed objector we may want to make the stronger claim that cosmopolitan hope is furthermore required given commitment to the cosmopolitan requirement. I shall indicate two ways in which this stronger conclusion could be established.

The first argument invokes the Kantian principle “ought” implies “can”. This principle states that it must be possible to perform the actions, or create

the state of affairs, demanded by any moral requirements expressible in an “ought” statement. If the Kantian principle is true then hard nosed acceptance of the cosmopolitan requirement straightforwardly requires acceptance that what it aims at is possible (as argued in §3). However, hard nosed acceptance of the cosmopolitan requirement as a *moral* requirement also involves acceptance that what it aims at is good. If we ought to desire what is good, and be disposed to bring it about wherever possible, then anyone who accepts the cosmopolitan requirement ought to hope for the realisation of the cosmopolitan ideal, because the requirement aims at this ideal. In virtue of accepting the cosmopolitan requirement the hard nosed objector is committed to hope for the cosmopolitan ideal.

The second argument is also Kantian. The hard nosed objector endorses the cosmopolitan requirement, which demands the extension of local commitments to justice to the global level. The hard nosed objection aims to prise apart commitment to this requirement from hope for the cosmopolitan ideal wherein the extension creates a world of global justice: one hard nosed objection (considered in §2) is that hope for this ideal is misguided given facts about the world and human beings which make the ideal impossible. However, we might claim that it is not facts about the world or human nature that make cosmopolitan hope misguided, but rather the hard nosed conception of the cosmopolitan ideal as impossible *itself* that undermines cosmopolitan hope, and that commitment to the cosmopolitan requirement requires the abandonment of this hard nosed attitude to the cosmopolitan ideal through the cultivation of cosmopolitan hope.

Consider an analogy.¹⁴ A person stands at the edge of a crevasse and is committed to continuing forward. In order to be able to jump across she has to believe that she *can* make the jump and, importantly, this belief alters the probability of making a successful jump: if she cannot talk herself into this state of belief then her ability to make the jump will be impaired and she is less likely to be successful than if she believes that she can do it. Making the jump *as if* she can reach the other side increases the likelihood that she will in fact reach the other side. We might claim that the hard nosed objector is in the same position as the ravine jumper with respect to the cosmopolitan ideal. Whereas the ravine jumper is committed to continuing forward, the objector is committed to extending her commitments to justice in the way demanded by the cosmopolitan requirement. The ravine jumper who doubts her ability to make the jump thereby lessens her chances of successfully making the jump; the objector who questions possibility of the cosmopolitan ideal thereby impairs her capacity to act so as to satisfy the cosmopolitan requirement. The requirement demands of each person that she extend her commitment to justice at the local level to the global level: if I believe, in a hard nosed way, that the ideal to be realised by satisfaction of this requirement by all persons is impossible then my own capacity to act so as to satisfy this requirement will be damaged. By being hard nosed with respect to the cosmopolitan ideal, the objector deprives herself of the motivation to act in the way demanded by the cosmopolitan requirement: what is the point of such action, given that the ideal towards which the requirement points is ultimately quixotic? In virtue of the practical demands made by the cosmopolitan requirement, a hard nosed objector genuinely committed to it must not divest herself of the motivation to

¹⁴ Thanks are due to Sue Mendus for discussion on this point.

pursue it by judging it to be impossible: she must act as if the objective is possible, which is tantamount to cherishing specific hope for it.¹⁵

§6 Conclusion

To recap, the hard nosed objection to cosmopolitan hope is that although the cosmopolitan requirement is legitimate, hope for the cosmopolitan ideal is misplaced. I have considered different ways in which the hard nosed objection might be understood. First, that the cosmopolitan ideal is highly improbable, and so not a fit object of hope. In response, I argued that hope does not involve judgements of the probability of hope's objectives, in which case this criticism misses its target. Second, I considered various hard nosed ways of attacking the four components of cosmopolitan hope, and I argued that none of them establishes that such hope is unsound. Furthermore, I suggested in the last section that the commitment to the cosmopolitan requirement on the part of the hard nosed objector requires cosmopolitan hope. If this stronger thesis is true then the objection not only fails to show that hope for the cosmopolitan ideal ought to be abandoned, but is furthermore internally inconsistent: commitment to the cosmopolitan requirement makes cosmopolitan hope a duty.

¹⁵ Kant makes a similar point when he claims the following with respect to the 'irresistible veto' that 'There shall be no war': "even if the fulfilment of this pacific intention were forever to remain a pious hope, we should still not be deceiving ourselves if we made it our maxim to work unceasingly towards it, for it is our duty to do so." Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* Part I, §II: Public Right, in Hans Reiss (ed.), *Kant's Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 174.

In conclusion, the discussion here has both a political and a philosophical focus. The political focus is on the nature and demands of cosmopolitanism. The (more oblique) philosophical focus is on the relationship between moral requirements, moral ideals, and moral motivation. The philosophical contention to which the arguments here contribute is that acceptance of any moral requirement demands commitment to a future ideal state of affairs in which all persons act so as to satisfy that requirement. To characterise the commitment to an ideal that acceptance of a moral requirement carries in terms of hope is to characterise it as a practical commitment. When I accept a moral requirement I must commit to more than just the thought that it would be nice if that requirement were satisfied in all cases: I must commit to action to bring about that state of affairs, and this commitment rules out a conception of that future state of affairs as impossible. In relation to hard nosed people, the challenge is this: either abandon commitment to the cosmopolitan requirement, or cultivate hope for a future world of global justice.