Affirming human dignity in the wake of terrorist attacks

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Abstract

A society's commitment to the values of democracy, humanity, and openness in the wake of terrorist attacks requires continued affirmation of the principle of equal human dignity, which underlies each of these values. Two consequences of affirming equal human dignity in such a context are ironical. First, because human equality is a spiritual (non-material) principle that affirms the equal and inalienable basic dignity of all persons regardless of moral stature or behavior, it must affirm the elemental basic dignity of the terrorist as equal to that of the victims, although the terrorist has expressly based his or her actions on a denial of that equality. Second, toleration, especially toleration of free speech, allows individuals and groups expressing intolerance to flourish, condoning (to a point) the expression of viewpoints that dehumanize specified others, expressions that ironically undermine acceptance of the principle of equality itself by nourishing hatred and intolerance. Ensuring social respect for the basic equality of all persons after a terrorist attack thus requires social resilience in accepting these ironies and the social tensions that reflect them.

Introduction

This essay is about the value and the difficulty of social commitment to the principle of universal human equality after the shock of terror. I will take as my starting point the events in Norway of July 22, 2011.

Two days after the terror attacks perpetrated by Anders Behring Breivik on that date, at a memorial service in Oslo Cathedral, Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg identified core values that Norwegians will never be shaken into abandoning as "democracy," "openness," and "humanity."[1] I would argue that each of these values, understood as elements forming a society's self-constitution and operating as guiding principles for its policies and actions, is rooted in a more basic value: the value of recognizing and affirming universal human equality. For example, *democracy* is based on the idea that, as a matter of principle, all of a polity's citizens *equally* deserve to be included as participants in social or national self-governance. *Openness* in social affairs and communications reflects the conviction that tolerance, transparency, and freedom of speech properly guarantee *equal* opportunity for self-determination. And *humanity*, identified as a political value, denotes the idea that all citizens, as equally belonging to the human family, are *equally* deserving of humane treatment and consideration within society.

Consequently, if a society is to retain and strengthen its commitment to being a democratic, open, and humane society in the wake of acts of terror, it must continue to effectively affirm the founding value of universal human equality.

That said, there are some ironies inherent in such an affirmation – the term *irony* referring here to an incongruity or contradiction between an intention, or an anticipated order of things, and an actual consequence. I will first discuss two of these ironies, and then address the resilience required of a society that accepts and embraces them.

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1   Stoltenberg's speech in Oslo Cathedral concluded: "In the middle of all these tragic events, I am proud to live in a country that has stood firm at a critical time. I am deeply impressed by how much dignity and compassion I have seen. We are a small nation, but a proud people. *We will never abandon our values. Our reply is: more democracy, more openness, and more humanity.* But never naivety. No one has said it better than the AUF girl who was interviewed by CNN: 'If one man can show so much hate, think how much love we could show, standing together.'" (Batty, 2011). Emphasis added.

Ironies

A first irony comes to light through recognizing implications of the fact that human equality, as a universal principle, must be applied to even the most degraded persons because it functions as a *non-material* principle, unaffected by character or behavior. Human equality, that is, is not evidenced in, and therefore is asserted independently of, physical characteristics, psychological capacities, moral and intellectual achievements, and personal actions. To put it simply: there is no *concrete* or *empirically measurable* equality manifest among humans. "Human equality" therefore, to speak with philosophical precision, is the distinctly *spiritual* idea that persons share an equal, inalienable human worth, or dignity, with which they are endowed simply by virtue of being human, an inherent dignity that no person enjoys in greater measure than any other.[2] The term "spiritual" here, it should be noted, is not a synonym for "religious," or meant to be suggestive of any specific religious commitment; it simply means (in line with a primary dictionary definition of the word) *that which is not physical, material, or temporal* – that which is *incorporeal*. Modern political conceptions of human equality and of equal human rights – such as those presented, for example, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] (1948), the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000), the Helsinki Accord (1975), and the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (1949) – are grounded in the view that all persons are equal in this "spiritual" sense, in that each human existence enjoys, beyond any and all corporeal, mental, or temporal phenomena, an incalculable (or infinite) value, on the basis of which this existence is deemed irreplaceable. It is the recognition of this incalculable "spiritual" worth and irreplaceability that leads frequently, even among secular moral philosophers, to the affirmation that all persons have an equally "sacred" value (see Joas, 2013, pp. 49–64, 140–70); thus Kant, for example, speaks of "reverence" as "the only becoming expression" for describing apt appreciation of the value of human beings (Kant, 1964, p. 103).

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2   On the implicit presumption of a spiritual basis of inherent and inalienable dignity and rights in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and other human rights documents, see Hughes (2011).

The principle of human equality therefore affirms the terrorist to be an equally "revered" member of the overarching human "community of brothers and sisters" – which is, ironically, the very notion of community that *the terrorist has repudiated* through his or her actions. In the wake of an act of terror, the perpetrator no less than the victims is to be regarded, if the principle of human equality is to be upheld, as imbued with the "sacredness of personhood" – that is, as having incalculable value and being irreplaceable – and as having an *elemental* dignity *equal* to that of his or her victims. It is this basic dignity that properly protects the captured terrorist from being outcast to an "extra-legal" status and treated – say, through torture – as someone unprotected by a society's constitutionally established laws and rights (see Joas, 2013, p. 61). There follows the socially acknowledged "dignity" of a terrorist's right to trial by jury, to due considerations for self-explanation, and to respectful treatment in court – a respect notoriously exhibited, at the beginning of the trial in Norway of Anders Breivik in April, 2012, by the prosecutors and the counsel for the aggrieved shaking Breivik's hand at the start of the proceedings.

Obviously, to refer in this way to the terrorist's "equal basic human dignity" is not to suggest that the views or actions of terrorists are dignified. One must therefore distinguish two fundamental meanings of the term *dignity*. One meaning signifies a person's positive moral stature – a praiseworthiness, even a nobility, deriving from an admirable use of the distinctively human capabilities of free will, reason, moral discernment, interpersonal engagement, and self-transcending love. However, such *achieved* human dignity must be contrasted with what may be called elemental or *basic* human dignity. This is that basic dignity identified by a wide spectrum of national and international declarations, covenants, conventions, charters, and constitutions as the distinctive value or worth that belongs to all human beings *simply because they are human*. It is a dignity regarded as both *inherent* and *inalienable*, since it consists merely of the presence of elements and capacities that belong to personhood as such.[3] Furthermore, in modern political instruments such as the United

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3   Distinguishing these two meanings of dignity leads to the need to distinguish between two types of *respect* for human dignity. Alan Gewirth, for example, distinguishes what he calls "necessary respect," which consists in "an affirmative, rationally grounded recognition of a status that all human

Nations' *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* (both 1976), the United Nations' *Convention Against Torture* (1975), and the *Helsinki Accord* (1975), human rights are understood to *derive* from this equal basic, inherent dignity, since rights are the protections, opportunities, and obligations understood to be necessary for distinctively human capacities to flourish. As long as a person is alive, this basic dignity remains, no matter how corrupt, degraded, vicious, or reprehensible his or her actual outlooks, character, or actions may reasonably be judged to be. It cannot be negated or destroyed by any means whatsoever; nor can it ever become a dignity that is "less than equal" in relation to that of other persons.

Now, if one asserts that people are "equal in dignity," and thus "equal in rights," on the basis of a supra-physical and supra-psychological measure of evaluation, such an assertion can be philosophically defended only by affirming that the equal value of all humans presumes the *participation* of all persons in some kind of *transcendent* source of value. Each of these terms requires definition.

The term *transcendent* denotes a dimension of reality not intrinsically conditioned by the limitations, contingencies, changeability, and transience of the spatiotemporal universe.

Participation is used here in a philosophical sense corresponding to the Thomistic[4] term *participatio*, meaning "to share or partake in the nature of something." It refers in this case to human conscious existence as an act or process that shares the same substance with a transcendent reality and value from which it derives and which it reveals. Or, to put it another way, it refers to the fact that there is a transcendent reality that *co-constitutes* human conscious existence "through being present in it" (Voegelin, 1990, p. 90). This fact of personal participation in a transcendent reality and value, in an absolute value beyond variability and perishability, is philosophically the only guarantee of the validity of the notions

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beings have by virtue of their inherent dignity," from "contingent respect," which consists in the favorable appraisal of a person's accomplishments and moral development. Gewirth (1992), p. 17.

4   By "Thomistic term" is meant that the term is known from the philosophy and theology of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274).

of both equal basic worth and equal human rights.[5] As Jacques Maritain has stated the point: "[A] person possesses absolute dignity because he is in direct relationship with the absolute" (Maritain, 1971, p. 4). This relationship of participation is what gives basic dignity and rights their complete metaphysical independence from all differences of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, physical condition, psychological capacity and disposition, worldview, and character-formation.

So when, after undergoing the shock of a terrorist attack, a society resists the temptation to become less open and less inclusive – does not, for example, restrict the freedoms of some persons in an effort to ease the tensions of diversity and disagreement – and instead responds by exhibiting a commitment to, in Stoltenberg's words, "*more* democracy, *more* openness, *more* humanity," it not only reaffirms a commitment to the principles of human equality and of universal inclusion of persons in the human family, but also implicitly affirms the fact that all persons are grounded in a common transcendent *source* of personal value, a spiritual reality that both transcends and embraces all personal differences.

A central component in the display of such a commitment will be a refusal on the part of a society's members and representatives to engage in discourse or to adopt policies that degrade or dehumanize certain specified "others." These "others" might include persons identified on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, or religion; political opponents; proponents of certain ideologies; and of course terrorists. After a terror attack, there is inevitably an impulse to demonize and dehumanize the agents of terror, along with all the members of whatever group they claim to represent or appear to represent – to re-enact in reverse the dehumanizing attitudes of the terrorist toward his or her victims. But since terrorists, too, remain members of the human family, they cannot be demoted to the status of a "non-person" and excluded from the system of laws that protects a person's rights without some damage not only to the fabric of

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5   On the notion of *transcendent value*, and on its relation to, and status as the ontological ground of, the value of persons, or *personal value*, see Lonergan (1972), pp. 31–32, 115–16. "Absolute" = ab-solute; i.e., non-dissolvable.

social commitment to the principle of equality, but to the sense – which must always be promoted in a democratic and open society – that every person, no matter how deranged his interpretation of things and repulsive and degraded his actions, can only excommunicate himself from reality so far, since *personhood* always retains its participation in the transcendent reality and value from which it ontologically derives. Ironically, then, the terrorist who intentionally outrages the principle of human equality must be acknowledged by such a society as retaining an elemental dignity equal to that of all other persons.

There is a second irony to be found in a society's commitment to the principle of human equality after the shock of terror. This irony arises from a society's dedication to the value of *openness*, as actualized in policies reflecting the principle of tolerance and, especially, in laws that guarantee freedom of speech. The irony is that such toleration and protection are the conditions for the *nurturing and expansion* of intolerance to the degree that they create a culture in which can *flourish* expressions of intolerant disrespect for groups identified on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual preference, religious affiliation, political outlook, or any other marker that can be used to demote a specified part of humanity to the category of a humanly unequal, or even "sub-human," other. The right to freedom of speech, which constitutes one of the core values of a democratic and open society, condones, up to a point, spoken and written statements and arguments that attack the principle of human equality itself. This irony is particularly acute in the functioning of social media – internet-based and mobile, device-based communications between individuals and communities – which in principle advance the political realization of equality by granting each citizen with access to technology a public "voice" but which at the same time allow for many of these voices to denounce, explicitly or implicitly, human equality, equal rights, or equal opportunity.

Freedom of speech, even in the most open and democratic of nations, is not absolute. Libel and slander, open public broadcast of obscene material, certain types of pornography, speech intended to create unnecessary fear or panic – all of these, and other speech-actions, visual expressions, and writings, broach the limits of legally accepted discourse or actions.

Most relevant to our topic, open societies forbid what is generally called "hate speech." Broadly defined, hate speech includes writing, speech, displays of symbols, or conduct that expresses contempt for, denigrates, or incites hatred, prejudice, or violence against any specified group or individual. Chapter 13 of Norway's General Civil Penal Code, for example, outlaws any public utterance of "discriminatory or hateful expression," the latter being defined as any public expression that either threatens or "insults" anyone, or incites "contempt" for anyone, due to such factors as ethnicity, skin color, religion, or sexual preference (Section 135a). It also forbids "publicly insult[ing]" or "show[ing] contempt" for any creed whose "practice is permitted in the realm …" (Section 142). Such laws are certainly more stringent than those in the United States. With respect to so-called "hate speech," United States case law deriving from interpretations of the Constitutional protection of freedom of speech has tended toward limiting only language aimed at direct incitement of violence. But in fact, although the Norwegian laws just cited are stricter in their prohibitions, they are not typically enforced except in cases where speech, again, is interpreted as a direct incitement to violence. This is understandable, as Norwegian like American society is dedicated to freedom of speech as a crucial component of *effective* openness, where the value of openness is based on two fundamental convictions regarding the human good. The first conviction is that repression or censorship of a person's expression of opinions – however contrary to broadly accepted social values they may be, or however insulting to a particular group – constitutes the infringement of a basic human right, that of freedom of expression. The second conviction is that political and legal protection of an open "marketplace of ideas" is the soundest means of assuring that genuinely rational discourse and the expression of enlightened moral viewpoints will effectively counterbalance and to some degree disempower irrational discourse and immoral viewpoints.[6]

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6   The phrase "marketplace of ideas" was first used by Justice William O. Douglas in a U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1953, though the metaphor first appears in John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1859). The idea that a free and open "exchange" of ideas would facilitate the discovery and ultimate dominance of truth pervades the thinking of major writers of the Enlightenment (e.g., Kant) and the Reformation (e.g., Milton).

Generally speaking, then, there is no alternative, for a society committed to upholding the values of "democracy, openness, and humanity," to allowing the public expression of racist, sexist, and xenophobic outlooks; of ethnic or religion-specific slurs; of the notion that inclusive immigration policies are immoral; or of the view that policies of "multicultural tolerance" are harmful and destructive of the body politic and so should be abolished – as long as these expressions are not interpretable as direct incitements to violence or lawless action. An *open democracy* must therefore tolerate widespread public expression of messages that are *anti-democratic and expressly intolerant*, whose principal purpose is to disrupt and, if possible, destroy the conviction that humanity is a universal community of brothers and sisters endowed with equal basic dignity, each of whom should enjoy equal rights of opportunity and self-determination and legal protection from those who would restrict their freedoms.[7]

Resilience

Any society that, after a terrorist attack, successfully safeguards and exhibits allegiance to political values founded on the principle of basic human equality will have to exhibit resilience in many respects. One aspect of this resilience will entail recognizing and accepting the two ironies just described: 1) the irony of embracing the personhood of the terrorist as equally sacred as the personhood of his victims despite his or her violent rejection of the principle of human equality; and 2) the irony that effective political loyalty to the principle of equality encourages the flourishing of public expression of opinions that show contempt, and seek to destroy respect, for that very principle.

What, then, would help enable a society to develop, sustain and exhibit this particular type of resilience, to accept these ironies, or more carefully put, to accept and embrace the *inescapable social tensions* that embody

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7   See, in this regard, the essays in Hare & Weinstein (2009). A careful study of the character of "hate speech" laws in liberal democracies, and their enforcement, would illuminate the unique circumstances of certain countries where historical and situational peculiarities have led to reasonable restrictions on "free speech," such as the German Criminal Code's outlawing of symbols or expressions associated with the Nazi Party (identified as an "unconstitutional organization"), such as the swastika, the "Heil Hitler" greeting," and the *Horst-Wessel-Lied*.

and reflect them? Let me suggest two factors that, in my view, might play a major role.

First, safeguarding a society's commitment to the principle of human equality after the shock of a terror attack would be aided by the explicit espousal by governmental and other social representatives of a dedication to recognizing that the basic dignity of all persons derives from their being *participants in a truth and value that is timeless* – or, as Vaclav Havel once put it, that human equality and human rights have their origin in "the dimensions of the infinite, and of eternity" (Havel, 1995).[8] This would be especially important when terrorist attacks are religiously motivated – because a terrorist who commits mass murder under the banner of being a Christian "holy warrior" or "crusader" (as Anders Breivik did), or, for another example, in proclaimed allegiance to the holy cause of Islamic *jihad*, inevitably invites from some persons a reaction that identifies the embrace of any notion of the transcendent and the "sacred" as intrinsically harmful, as leading of itself to intolerance and violence. There is a post-Enlightenment stream of thought, in our day well represented by the "New Atheists" Sam Harris and Richard Dawkins, that links any commitment to a transcendent, absolute reality with irrationality and illiberal violence (Harris, 2005; Dawkins, 2008).

This linkage can seem compelling, since commitment to one or another religiously understood "absolute" has so commonly functioned as a goad to, justification for, and rationalization of violence and terror. However, a little reflection makes it clear that a conviction that existential commitment to a transcendent, absolute value is *in and of itself* the cause of a person's engaging in the violence of terror is a diagnostic blunder. It is not faith in a transcendent reality that causes intolerance and violence; if it did, Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King, Jr., would have been violent. But the diagnostic error that identifies affirmation of transcendent reality as the *cause* of the terroristic violence of a self-proclaimed "holy warrior" like Breivik is not merely inaccurate, but socially dangerous – because it makes it difficult for people who ascribe to it to recognize that

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8   This affirmation, characteristic of Havel, was made in a speech delivered at the inauguration of the Human Rights Building in Strasbourg, which houses the European Court of Human Rights.

human equality is a spiritual, and not a corporeal, truth, and cannot be valid unless all persons are ontologically rooted in a transcendent value that makes itself manifest in the infinite and incommensurable dignity or worth of each person. In fact, to the degree that this spiritual fact is not obscured, but *iterated and made intelligible* by representative political and social voices, a society committed to the values, cultures, and institutions of democracy will be strengthened; because such voices – as, for instance, that of Vaclav Havel – express clearly what the four main authors of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights understood perfectly well: that a rigorous affirmation of universal equality and rights presupposes, *if only by implication*, an unchanging and transcendent basis (Hughes, 2011, pp. 3–9, 15–17).

Such a strengthening, though, however successful, would never be able to eliminate the voices of those who distort some idea of transcendent reality to serve visions of intolerance that dehumanize selected groups – no more than a democracy would ever see the disappearance of those who condemn openness and equality on the basis of some *secular* creed or vision. For in every society, there will be those who are drawn toward intolerant and hateful attitudes that they understand to represent the religious *or* the secular worldview or mission with which they identify. After all, humans are free; and freedom will always, in some, find exercise in turning away from sound rational and moral discernment toward interpretations of self, society, and world grounded in bias and oversight, selfishness and self-aggrandizement, fear and anxiety.

The principal reason why this is so, why "the biased will always be among us," is that, first, the majority of people will always not only be disturbed by injustice and disorder in social and political life, but will seek to understand their causes; and, second, a number of these will always become convinced that they have identified the *primary* cause of injustice and disorder *in the very existence of specified "others."* These "others" will then be conceptually and rhetorically isolated – through speechifying, partisan journal and "news" outlets, and now especially through social media – as the troublemakers, the malefactors, the disrupters of comity, the subverters of justice. The desire to be confident that one knows the *source* of society's imperfections and evils, and

through this identification to have then worked out the *solution* to ridding society of its problems, will always for some be too strong a desire to resist. For the human heart longs for certainty, and for the feelings of safety and freedom from anxiety that are provided by a sense of certitude about ultimate truths and values. So for some, a simple diagnosis and a simple solution is adopted: the problem is specified "others"; and consequently these others – whether identified as Jews, Muslims, Protestants, Catholics, unbelievers, Marxists, the bourgeoisie, conservatives, liberals, men, women, homosexuals, multiculturalists, Serbs, Croats, Greeks, Turks – you name it – must therefore be resisted, disempowered, suppressed and excluded. Moreover, to temperaments drawn not only toward such simplistic conceptions of social good and evil, but also toward a passionate sense of obligation to *assist physically in the defeat of* the specified sources of injustice and disorder, the use of violence will frequently appear to be justified.

It is an elementary psychological truth that judgments dividing the moral world into a good "us" and an evil "them" will *always* remain attractive, and will *always* be embraced by some, because the difficult alternative – for those who care deeply about social order and justice – is too existentially challenging. This alternative is to acknowledge a truth expressed with clarity by Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "[T]he line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either – but right through every human heart – and through all human hearts" (Solzhenitsyn, 1975, p. 615). To recognize and accept this truth means to acknowledge four elementary facts: first, that each person, oneself included, is flawed in moral outlook and accomplishment; second, that to gauge the moral quality or culpability of the motives, feelings, or thoughts of another human being is an extraordinarily difficult task; third, that the disorder and injustice in every society derives, primarily, from the *general human tendency* to engage in hasty, blind, or irrational judgments and irresponsible actions; and fourth, that the ideal of a "pure" or "purified" society, where injustice and disorder exist on such a limited scale that they are not a significant feature of the polity, is unrealizable. The most important implication of the truth articulated by Solzhenitsyn, and the deepest of political

ironies, is that a truly well ordered society – indeed, the best society achievable – is one in which it is broadly recognized among the citizenry that a significant degree of personal and social disorder is an irremovable and essential part of the social fabric.

So, a second factor that could play a major role in safeguarding a society's commitment to the principle of human equality and inclusiveness, after the shock of a terror attack, would be broad social recognition that there will always remain within civic life a *permanent tension* between those drawn toward intolerance and hatred and those whose psyches are drawn, instead, toward an empathic and principled inclusiveness. Advancing the social vision of increased "democracy, openness, and humanity" means in part, then, promoting and increasing an understanding of the *inescapability* of the social tension between tolerant and intolerant persons.

If we combine these two factors – social and governmental appreciation of both 1) the inescapably transcendent basis of human equality, and 2) the unavoidability of a degree of social disorder and tension due in part to the inevitable presence of intolerant, hateful, and violent persons – we may recognize an insight that lies at the core of much traditional philosophical and theological teaching about society and politics. This is the insight that the ideal of a "perfect society" is, on the one hand, of profound importance for existential and political orientation; but, on the other, must be recognized to be precisely that – an ideal, i.e., a transcendent ideal. Plato, who is often misrepresented as a political utopian, is in fact careful to make this point at the close of Book IX of *Republic*: that the perfect *politeia* exists, if at all, not on earth but only in "heaven," as a "pattern" that a person – through careful analysis of what justice entails – may study in order to bring the inward "city" of his or her psyche into good order, and so live with others in a proper manner (as exemplified by the virtue and discursive "openness" of Socrates) (*Republic*, 591d–592b).

The crucial point here is that there can indeed be in a society "more democracy, more openness, more humanity," but never *complete* democracy, openness, and humanity. Furthermore, the progress that does consist in a broadening commitment to these principles and their

associated values can never be taken for granted. After the shock of terror, a society will be tested by strong temptations to limit civil liberties or rights, or to retreat into a protective, less inclusive nationalism. In other words, there is no *assured* progress in social affairs, nationally or internationally – no inexorable march toward an ever-more enlightened political world – as twentieth and twenty-first century history has made devastatingly clear. Progress and decline are both *ever-present possibilities* in social and political life; and the potential for certain types of decline – the ascendance of parochial and atavistic outlooks and policies; implementation of the barbarism of curtailing the rights of selected groups; even retreat from recognition of the equal basic dignity of all human beings – appears to be enhanced, in present times, in western European countries and the United States, as a result of continuing terrorist attacks, the challenges brought by large-scale immigration (both legal and illegal), and all of the difficulties, many unforeseen, of creating an adequately just and broadly well-functioning pluralistic society where differences of religious belief, political persuasion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, and cultural heritage are accommodated and legally protected.

Central to that accommodation and protection – and thus to progress, always at risk – is, as I have been arguing, broad societal commitment to the principle of universal human equality. And this is a commitment that can be not only sustained but also even *enhanced*, among a resilient people after the shock of terror. As Hans Joas has argued, experiences of extreme violence and "cultural trauma" can, under appropriate circumstances, serve as the catalyst for increased public commitment to universalist values – as when, for example, Nazi atrocities during the Second World War gave rise to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was recognizably crafted as a response to those outrages (Joas, 2013, pp. 72–73).[9] Thus a terrorist's attacks, driven by hatred and fear of certain human "others," may, in a final irony, become occasions for increased social awareness that respect for and *love of universal humanity* – arising from recognition of the equal basic dignity of every person – is the

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9   On "cultural trauma," see also Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, & Sztompka (2004).

most important value-orienting component in an open, humane, demo-cratic polity.

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