



Patriotism

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Though the average person may take patriotism for granted as a natural feeling of loyalty to one's country, among philosophers the nature, moral standing, and political significance of patriotism have always been contentious. On the one hand, there are those who defend patriotic loyalty as either a duty or a virtue and extol it as an indispensable condition of a viable polity. On the other hand, critics of patriotism maintain that it is morally suspect to prefer one's country and compatriots, and doing so offends against impartial justice and hinders universal human solidarity.

Today patriotism is a topic of debate not only in moral philosophy but also in political theory, where it is often brought up as a test case in the confrontation between liberals and communitarians. These debates have produced much high-quality writing, the best of which is here presented in this wide-ranging collection of essays by philosophers and political theorists. All the main varieties of patriotism are covered—moderate and extreme, as well as ethnic/cultural and political—and both critics and defenders are given a hearing. Editor Igor Primoratz has also included articles that discuss the history of the term in moral and political discourse in the English-speaking world, the distinctively American type of patriotism, the relation of patriotism to nationalism and racism, and the tension between patriotism and universal human solidarity, especially as this issue relates to foreign aid.

As the first anthology to treat patriotism in its own right, this work emphasizes that patriotism is a distinct moral and political outlook, and is not merely a variety of nationalism or the emotional underpinning of nationalist theories. As such, it will be an important resource for courses in philosophy and political science, and will also serve as an accessible general reader for the interested layperson.

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